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# The BOYS' FRIEND 2d

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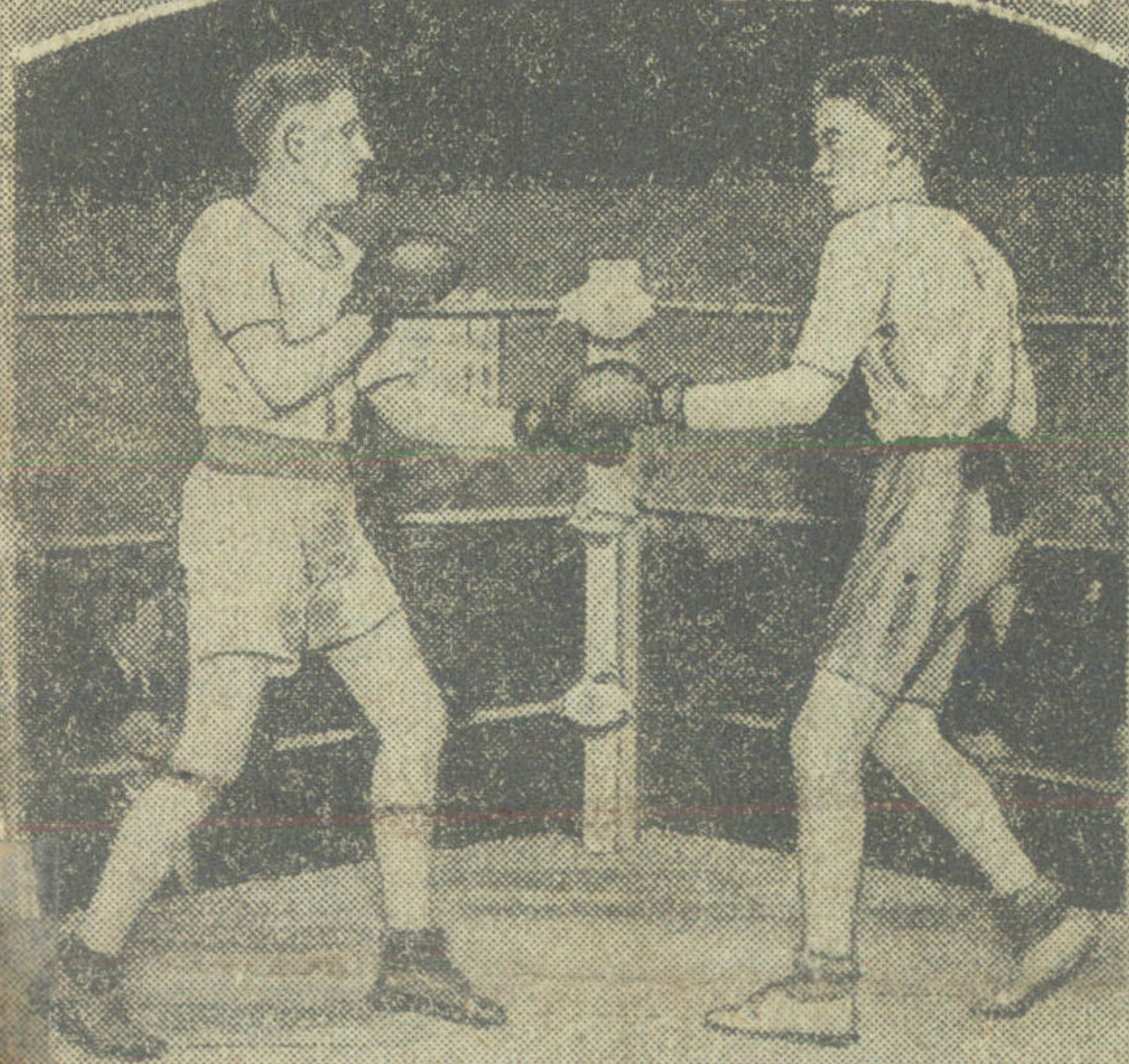
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THE BEST BOYS' PAPER IN THE WORLD!

[Week Ending January 3rd, 1925.]

## The BOYS' FRIEND BOOK OF BOXING



### CONTENTS

Many specially-interesting articles and heaps of wonderful real photographs.

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# The LION at BAY!

by Roger Fowey

THE INVASION OF ENGLAND—BRITISH PLANES ATTACK THE INVADERS' BEETLE-MACHINES!

(A breathless incident from the powerful new War Story in this issue.)



IT'S GREAT—THIS AMAZING MYSTERY STORY OF JIMMY SILVER & CO.  
OF ROOKWOOD SCHOOL!



The 1st Chapter.  
The Convict!

"Old on!"

Arthur Edward Lovell held on. He was so startled by the sudden rasping words, rapped out in the winter darkness, that his heart beat in great jumps as he stopped.

A shadowy form loomed up before him in the lane.

The hour was not late, but it was very dark. The road was a lonely one. From the village of Hadley Priors, almost to the gate of the Priory, Jimmy Silver's home, Lovell had not passed a single soul. Snow was falling lightly, the flakes whirled on a biting wind. It was not weather to tempt anyone abroad.

Lovell, indeed, had regretted a dozen times already that he had walked down to Hadley Priors after tea to inquire about a parcel at the post-office.

The parcel had not materialised, and Arthur Edward had had his walk for his pains.

True, there was the solace in store of telling Jimmy Silver & Co. what slackers they were when he got in.

But he hadn't got in yet.

With his coat collar turned up, his scarf tied tightly round his neck, his cap pulled down as low as it would pull, Lovell bent his head to the wind and trudged on through the snow, till that sudden call came from the misty, snowy darkness.

The prospective satisfaction of calling Jimmy Silver & Co. slackers for not turning out in such weather hardly consoled Lovell for having turned out in such weather himself. He was thinking yearningly of the blazing log fire and the circle of cheerful faces at the Priory, especially cousin Phyllis'. And then that hoarse, husky, rasping voice bade him "Old on!" And the shadowy figure loomed in the darkness and the falling flakes, and Lovell jumped and halted, and peered uneasily at the half-seen man.

"Who—what—?" he stammered.

"Old on!"

The man came closer, and Lovell's startled eyes scanned him in the gloom. He was a little man, a very little man, scarcely taller than the Rookwood junior, though he was forty years old at least. His face was hard and harsh and lined and savage, indeed desperate. His eyes glittered at Lovell in the darkness like the eyes of a wild animal. And the reason was not far to seek. The man was in rags and tatters that almost fluttered in the searching wind. But on the rags and tatters Lovell was able to discern an alarming symbol—the broad arrow of convict garb. With a breathless throbbing at his heart, the Rookwood junior realised that this man was an escaped convict, a dangerous character to meet on a lonely road in the winter dark.

# The Haunted Tower!

By OWEN CONQUEST.

(Author of the Tales of Rookwood appearing in the "Popular.")

Harry Wharton of Greyfriars School assists Jimmy Silver & Co. in clearing up the mystery of the Haunted Tower.

what 'rhino' you've got about you. Savvy?"

"I—I—" Lovell stammered.

"There's a shed in this here field. You come along!" muttered Little Wilson, stretching out a hard hand to grasp Lovell's arm. "I've been watching this 'ere road for hours, waiting for some bloke to come by on his own. You're my game! Come!"

Lovell breathed hard as the grasp of the convict touched his arm.

He had some money about him. His Christmas "tips" had been rather ample; but he was not thinking of that. But to be stripped in the bitter weather, to lend his clothes to help this scoundrel to escape justice, that was a different matter.

"Exchange no robbery," went on

"Don't you be afeared." There was a mocking intonation in the rasping voice. "I ain't going to 'urt you." Lovell pulled himself together.



**DESPERATE MEASURES!** Lovell clenched his hand, and, with a suddenness that took the convict by surprise, the Rookwood junior drove it desperately at the ruffian's jaw. Crash! With a muffled howl the convict pitched head-foremost to the ground.

"What do you want?" He backed away a pace, calculating his chances of dodging into the hedge, thick with snowdrifts.

"Jest a little 'elp, sir," said the mocking voice. "Don't you try to cut your lucky! I've 'ad five years' stretch for garrotting. Like me to try my 'and on you?"

The Rookwood junior breathed hard.

"You've 'eard of me, maybe? I reckon it's been in the papers. Little Wilson, that's me."

Lovell felt a chill. He had seen, scarcely heeding, a report in the newspapers that Jabez Wilson, otherwise Little Wilson, had escaped from Dartmoor a few days before Christmas.

Certainly it had never crossed his mind that the wandering outcast had wandered into Wiltshire, and that he was destined to meet him on this dark road, a quarter of a mile from any habitation.

The hard, brutal face peered at him.

"I ain't going to 'urt you. Not me. I only want your clothes and

the convict, with a savage grin. "I'll give you this 'ere clobber for yourn. See? I guess yourn will be a tight fit for me, but mine's loose enough for any cove. That there coat will cover up a bloke and give him a chance to cut his lucky, what? I ain't going to 'urt you. Come on!"

The sinewy fingers were on Lovell's arm. Little as the man was, half frozen by the bitter winter in his rags, he had plenty of strength. The strong grasp of his fingers showed that Lovell was nearly as big as the man, but that grasp made him realise that he was no match for him in a struggle.

He cast a glance up the road towards the Priory.

Only a quarter of a mile. He was late back, too, and surely some of his friends might have come to meet him on the road—Jimmy Silver or Raby or Newcome, or Harry Wharton of Greyfriars, who was spending the Christmas holiday with the Rookwooders.

But there was no sign of anyone coming in the gloom, no sound on

the road, save the wail of the wind in the leafless trees.

Lovell set his teeth.

He allowed the man to draw him towards a gap in the hedge, apparently surrendering, and the outcast was deceived. But Lovell was thinking of anything but surrender.

The bare idea of sneaking back to the Priory in the convict's rags, to confess that he had yielded up his clothes to the ruffian, was unendurable to Arthur Edward Lovell. His friends would be sympathetic, no doubt, but he could almost see their smiles. Worst of all, he could see the smile of cousin Phyllis.

What would Phyllis think of him?

That consideration, if no other, would have nerve Lovell to a desperate struggle.

The ruffian drew him towards the gap in the hedge banked with snow. He tramped through the thick snow, muttering exclamations, dragging the Rookwood junior after him by the arm.

And then suddenly Lovell acted.

His free hand was clenched, and, with a suddenness that took Mr. Jabez Wilson entirely by surprise, Lovell drove it desperately at the ruffian's jaw.

Crash!

With a muffled howl Little Wilson pitched head-foremost into the snow, and Lovell was free.

He did not linger an instant.

As the convict rolled in the snow Arthur Edward Lovell whirled away, and started up the road at a desperate run. And as he ran, through wind and darkness, he heard behind him the pat-pat-patter of rapid footsteps in fierce pursuit.

## The 2nd Chapter. A Fight in the Dark.

Harry Wharton stopped and listened.

The Greyfriars junior was tramping through the snow in the winter dark. The lights of the Priory had disappeared behind him. Wharton

in his face as he tramped through the snow.

From the darkness ahead there came the patter of running feet.

Someone, as yet unseen, was tearing towards him in the darkness—running as if for his life.

Wharton listened. The rapid footsteps came closer and closer. He heard the laboured, panting breathing.

"Is that you, Lovell?" he called out.

Crash!

From the darkness a hurried runner came hurtling, so suddenly that he crashed into the Greyfriars junior and sent him spinning backwards.

"Oh!" gasped Wharton.

He sat down in the snow abruptly. Arthur Edward Lovell reeled from the shock.

He lost his footing as he reeled, and went over in the snow, with a gasping cry.

Patter, patter, patter!

Wharton was aware of footsteps pattering on—coming rapidly closer, and he understood that there was a pursuer.

"You young 'ound! I've got you!"

Lovell, sprawling breathless, gave a choked cry as a shadowy figure loomed over him and a savage grasp closed on him.

"Help, help!"

"There ain't any blinkin' 'elp, you young 'ound!" snarled Little Wilson. "By gad! I'll make you sorry you 'it me!"

The savage grasp was on Lovell's throat, choking back his cry for help. Harry Wharton scrambled up out of the snow.

Scarcely two yards from him, in the gloom, there was a fierce struggle going on—between Lovell and his unknown assailant.

Wharton rushed forward.

He stumbled over the combatants as they rolled, struggling, in the snow—Lovell silent, choking, with a grip on his throat, fighting desperately for his life, the convict panting out savage exclamations.

The ruffian was uppermost. Wharton made out the diminutive but sinewy ruffian grasping the Rookwood junior, in the gloom, and he had a glimpse of Lovell's white, horrified face.

Then his grasp was on the ruffian, dragging him back from his victim.

The convict panted out a savage exclamation at the grasp of a new enemy, and turned on Wharton like a tiger.

A clenched fist, that seemed to Jabez Wilson like a lump of iron, crashed into the brutal face, and the convict dropped into the snow.

Lovell struggled up.

"Help!" he panted.

"I'm here!" panted Wharton.

"Back up, Lovell!"

"It's a convict—that escaped convict—"

"Collar him!"

Jabez Wilson was scrambling up. Probably the sinewy ruffian was a match for the two schoolboys in a struggle. But he did not stay to put the matter to the test.

He leaped back and eluded the rush of the juniors, turned, and fled into the darkness, panting out wild exclamations as he went.

"After him!" shouted Wharton.

"I—I can't! I'm winded!"

The Greyfriars junior, who had taken a hurried step after the fleeing convict, turned back at once.

Lovell was panting helplessly for breath, his throat still feeling the savage grasp of the garrotter.

Wharton caught him with a steady hand.

"All serene, old chap! We couldn't get him any way. Not much good chasing a man in darkness like this."

"It's Wharton, isn't it?" asked Lovell, peering at him dizzily.

"Yes. I came out to meet you—"

"Thank goodness you did!"

Lovell's voice was husky and shaken.

"The brute would have choked me. I believe—a regular wild beast! Ugh! I can feel his fingers on my throat now!"

"Let's get in," said Harry. "Mr. Silver will telephone to the police-station—that's the best thing. They'll be after him fast enough. Come on, lean on my arm."

The convict had vanished into the winter night; his fleeing footsteps died away in the wind.

Lovell, leaning rather heavily on the Greyfriars junior, almost tottered towards the Priory. And both the juniors were glad enough when the lighted windows gleamed through the darkness and the snow.

(Continued overleaf.)

"All Square!" is the magnificent long story of Jimmy Silver & Co. for next Monday. Be sure you read it!



# The Haunted Tower!



The 3rd Chapter. The Mysterious Light.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were very active the following day.

The encounter with the escaped convict had caused quite a sensation at the Priory.

Mr. Silver had telephoned at once to the police; and through the windy, snowy night, men had been hunting for the man who was wanted.

But they had not found him. Which was not surprising, for the hunt was difficult enough in the wild and wintry weather.

The probability was that "Little Wilson" had made the greatest haste out of the locality since his attack upon Lovell had revealed his presence there. Nevertheless, it was possible that he was hiding in some secluded recess of the woodlands—perhaps in the very park at the Priory, as Lovell impressively told his comrades.

So that day Jimmy Silver & Co. turned out to join in the hunt.

Harry Wharton went with them, of course; and the five juniors spent a hard day trudging through snow, and looking for "sign"—quite keen to help in laying the garrotter by the heels.

But "sign" was not to be found by the keenest Boy Scouts, as a fresh fall of snow had completely obliterated the footprints of the fugitive.

In looking for him, the Rook-wooders had north, south, east, and west to choose from, without a clue to guide them.

As a matter of fact, they did not expect success; but it was exciting to spend a keen winter's day on the hunt; and it was satisfactory, too, to make sure that the dangerous ruffian was not lurking anywhere near the Priory.

It was after dusk when the five juniors came tramping home, tired, but in quite good spirits after their day in the frosty air. Finding the fugitive on the snow-clad countryside was a good deal like finding a needle in a haystack, as they realised; so they were not very much disappointed at having failed to trace Mr. Jabez Wilson.

"The bobbies will have him sooner or later," Raby remarked, as they tramped up the drive to the house, "and, anyhow, he can't be having a glorious time, skulking about in the open air, in this jolly weather, in rags."

"Serve him right!" said Lovell. "Awful brute, you know. If Wharton hadn't come up yesterday in time I really believe he would have made an end of me."

"Jolly lucky Wharton was with us for Christmas," said Jimmy Silver with a smile to the Greyfriars junior.

"Yes, rather," said Lovell. "And I've thought of something, too—after tea we'll have a bit of a search nearer home. Of course, it's not likely that the brute would dare to come near the house, but he might—and nobody ever goes near the haunted tower. Just imagine his dodging in there and hanging about only a hundred yards from us."

"Not likely!" said Newcome.

"Well, I know it's not likely, but it's possible, and we'll jolly well have a look after tea," said Lovell.

"Not a bad idea," said Harry Wharton. "This is the first I've heard of the haunted tower. Is that the place?"

He made a gesture towards the

(Continued from previous page.)

ancient, half-ruined tower, massed with ivy, that loomed up dimly into view as they drew nearer the house.

"That's it," said Jimmy Silver. "It's haunted—hem—more or less, by the giddy ghost of the last prior. This show was a priory once, hence its name. Of course, it's been a lot altered. But that old tower is part of the original building."

"And the ghost?"

"It's been seen lots of times," said Jimmy with a smile. "You see, the old prior refused to travel when the order came down from the King to close the priory—jolly old Henry the Eighth, you know. He is said to have shut himself up in that tower, and bolted and barred the door, and at night his light was seen burning in the window. When his ghost

times, though it's not easy to get hold of the chap who's actually seen him—everybody seems to have heard it from somebody else."

Harry Wharton laughed. "You fellows have never seen the light in the tower?" he asked.

"Yes, I have, one Christmas," said Jimmy. "And we searched, and found that a tramp had sneaked in there and lighted his pipe."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors paused for a minute on the snowy drive, under the leafless trees, and gazed towards the old tower, hanging like a black shadow against the dark sky and the glittering stars.

"Why, what—" ejaculated Jimmy suddenly.

"A light!"

"My hat!"

"The giddy ghost!" breathed Lovell.

Jimmy Silver & Co. stood and stared. The blackness of the old tower was broken by a moving gleam of light.

It appeared, disappeared, and appeared again. The effect was strange and eerie.

"The pater's had the idea of looking through the tower—the same idea that just occurred to Lovell."

"Oh, very likely," said Wharton.

"Unless it's the giddy convict looking for a camping-place," suggested Raby.

"We'll jolly soon see!"

The juniors hurried on towards the house, and the light in the tower was lost behind a mass of trees.

Cousin Phyllis met the party in the hall as they came in.

"Any luck?" she asked with a smile.

"No," said Jimmy. "The jolly old convict has cleared, I think. Phil, old girl, do you know whether anybody has gone to the haunted tower? Father—"

"No. Uncle is in the library," said Phyllis.

"Oh!" said Jimmy. "Any of the servants wouldn't be likely to go. They give the tower a wide berth after dark. There's a light in the tower, Phil. We're going to see what it is."

"The giddy convict," said Lovell with conviction. "I thought of it, you see. It never occurred to you fellows, but I thought of it."

footfalls were quite inaudible on the snow. But Arthur Edward felt that it was up to him to give directions. Lovell generally felt that.

"The juniors were close to the tower now."

From one of the narrow old windows—long since empty of glass—the moving light gleamed again.

It passed and disappeared.

"It's higher up now," whispered Lovell. "That's the top window, Jimmy."

"Hush!" said Raby.

"You silly ass!"

"Hush!" said Newcome. "Fathead!"

The juniors grinned in the darkness. As Lovell had told his comrades to hush, his comrades saw no reason why they shouldn't tell Lovell to hush. But Arthur Edward did not seem pleased, somehow.

"Come on!" said Jimmy.

"Is the door open?" asked Harry Wharton.

"There's no door. It's been gone for giddy ages. Only an arched doorway. Anybody can butt in. Mind the stone steps inside, they're jolly rocky."

The juniors reached the gloomy arched entrance of the tower. All within was dense blackness. From where they stood now they could not see the windows, and the mysterious light had vanished.

They listened intently.

If it was indeed the escaped convict who had penetrated into the haunted tower for refuge it was no light matter to run into the desperate man in the darkness, and they realised it. Lovell felt assured that it was Mr. Jabez Wilson. His reason, probably, was his keen desire to get even with Mr. Wilson for what had happened the day before. That was not very logical, but it was very like Lovell. The other fellows were much more disposed to believe that it was a tramp seeking shelter from the weather.

A faint sound came from within the tower. It was an indefinite sound of someone moving.

"That isn't the ghost!" murmured Raby. "Ghosts don't wear boots, do they?"

There was a faint chuckle.

"Hush!" said Lovell.

"Look here, Lovell, you ass—"

"Hush!" He's coming down the stairs," whispered Lovell. "I fancy he finds it rather too parky up there. I'm going in!"

"Careful, old man!"

"It's all right! I'm going to collar him as he comes down," whispered Lovell. "You fellows stand ready to rush in. There's a turn at the bottom of the stairs, you know, and he will walk right into my hands. I'll have him down before he knows what's happening."

"Suppose it's only a tramp?"

"It isn't!"

"But suppose it is?"

"Well, if it is, he's trespassing here, and it will serve him jolly well right!"

"Yes; but—"

"Stand ready!" whispered Lovell, and he trod cautiously into the black entrance of the tower.

Lovell had taken the lead in the affair. He did so because he felt that it was up to him, as the only member of the party who really had any sagacity.

His comrades were far from agreeing with him on that point. But they gave Lovell his head, so to speak, all the more because he had taken it, anyhow.

Arthur Edward Lovell groped carefully and cautiously in the darkness to the foot of the rather shaky stone staircase.

There he waited, breathing softly. There was a distinct sound of footsteps on the stone stairs above him now, and a gleam of light.

The light gleamed from above the turn in the stair.

Footfalls!

Closer and closer, as the man—evidently too solid for a ghost—came slowly and cautiously down the shaky stone steps.

The light came and went. It was clearly from a pocket electric torch, and the bulb ceased to glow whenever the pressure of the finger was relaxed.

A boot came into view, followed by a trouser-leg, round the bend of the spiral stair. The gleam of the light above just showed the boot and the trouser-leg to Lovell's watchful eyes.

Lovell did not wait for any more of the man to appear.

He plunged forward, and tackled the leg Ruggier style.

His grip fastened with sudden force on the ankle, and he dragged.

There was a yelp of astonishment

## ENTER THIS GRAND ONE-WEEK PICTURE-PUZZLE COMPETITION RIGHT AWAY!

### TWO REAL "BASSETT-LOWKE" MODEL RAILWAYS AND SIX FOOTBALLS OFFERED AS PRIZES!

#### INSTRUCTIONS.

On the right, here, is a splendid picture-puzzle competition in which you can all join—and there is no entrance fee.

Remember that each picture in the puzzle may represent part of a word, one, two, or three words, but not more than three words. Solutions containing alternatives will be disqualified.

ALL YOU HAVE TO DO is to solve the puzzle, which deals with the big Railway Book given FREE in the next issue of the BOYS' FRIEND. When you have done this to your satisfaction, write, IN INK, on one side of a clean sheet of paper, exactly what you think the puzzle tells you. Then sign your name, IN INK, on the coupon, cut out the whole tablet, pin your solution to it, and post to "Booklets" Competition No. 6, Boys' FRIEND Office, Gough House, Gough Square, London, E.C.4, so as to reach that address not later than THURSDAY, JANUARY 8th, 1925.

The two real "Bassett-Lowke" model railways will be awarded to the two readers whose solutions are correct, or most nearly correct, and the six footballs in order of merit.

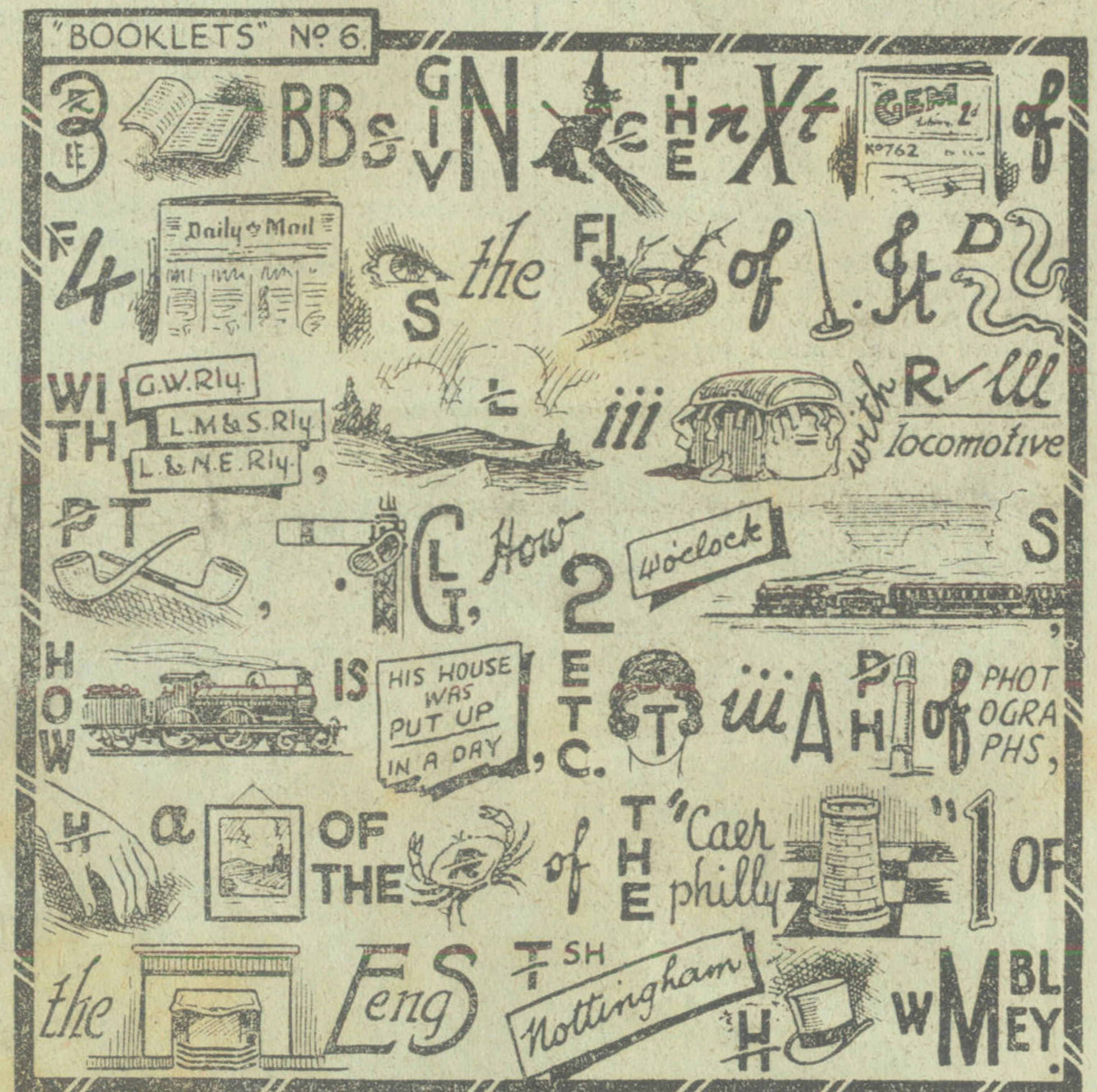
In the event of ties, the right to divide the value of the prizes is reserved, but the full amount will be awarded. It is a distinct condition of entry that the decision of the Editor must be accepted as final. You may send in as many attempts as you like, but each attempt must be accompanied by a separate picture and coupon, signed IN INK.

Employees of the proprietors of this journal are not eligible to compete.

walks it's heralded by a light in the tower. You can see it moving about, you know, as the ghost of the prior shifts from one place to another."

"What happened to the old chap at last?" asked Harry.

"According to one account he perished of hunger in the tower, and when they broke in at last they found him frozen stiff," said Jimmy. "It happened at Christmas-time—these things always do, you know. According to another version, they broke in, and he was killed with a sword-stroke. Another story is that he fell or jumped from a high window. But all the yarns agree that he haunts the place, and he's been seen lots of



I enter "BOOKLETS" Competition No. 6 and agree to accept the Editor's decision as final and binding.

Name .....

Address .....

E.F. Closing date, January 8th, 1925.

The Result of "Warships" Competition No. 10 appears on Page 430.

"There it is!" breathed Newcome. "It's gone!"

"There it is again!"

"It's moving about, and we see it from different windows," said Jimmy Silver quietly.

"Somebody's there!" said Harry Wharton.

"Not the ghost?" said Raby, but his voice was a little uncertain. In the darkness the shifting light in the tower had a strange effect on the juniors.

But the lighted windows of the house, shining in the distance, had a reassuring effect.

"I fancy I can guess what it is," said Jimmy, after a little thought.

"More likely a tramp looking for shelter," said Raby.

"Fathead! I think—"

"Well, let's go on and see," said Jimmy.

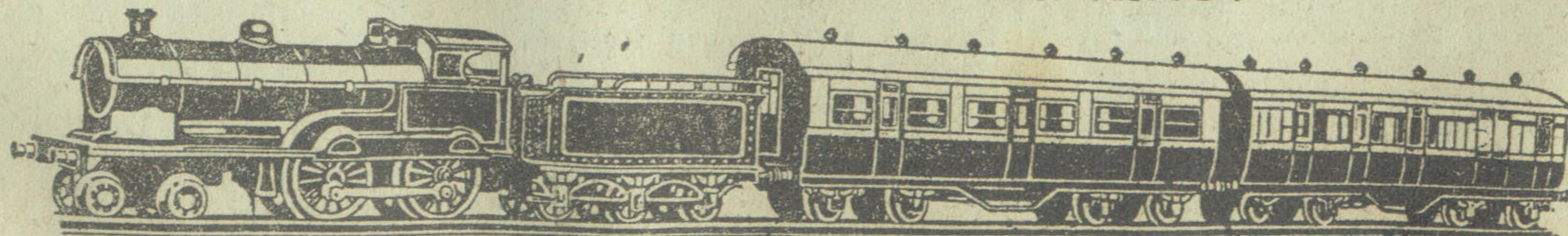
And the juniors turned out again in the winter darkness and tramped through the snow towards the haunted tower.

#### The 4th Chapter. Done in the Dark.

"Hush!" Arthur Edward Lovell whispered the word.

His comrades were making no sound, they did not speak, and their

### PRIZES WELL WORTH WINNING!



Here is an illustration of one of the splendid "Bassett-Lowke" model railways offered as prizes in the above one-week picture-puzzle competition. Get busy with it at once, boys!

The book that lasts a whole year—"The (1925) Holiday Annual." Packed with topping stories and other fine features! Price 6s.



and alarm, and a heavy body came hurtling down the lower steps.

Crash!  
The electric lamp, instantly extinguished, crashed on the stone.

In the black darkness, a heavy body rolled on Lovell, and he collapsed under it, still clinging manfully to his prisoner.

At the same time a fierce grip was fastened on Lovell—he was in the powerful grasp of the unseen.

"Help!" panted Lovell.  
The four juniors in the arched entrance rushed in recklessly.

They stumbled and trampled over Lovell and the unseen man he was struggling with in the darkness.

"Collar him!" panted Raby.  
"Oh! Ow! Geroff!"

"My hat! I— Yaroooh!"  
"I've got him!" shrieked Lovell.

"He's collared me—seize him! Collar the brute! Oh! Ow! Pin him, you duffers!"

"Here he is—"  
"Got him!"

It was a wild and confused struggle in the blackness. Raby had hold of a neck, and was holding on fiercely, till a frantic yell in Newcome's voice warned him that it was Newcome's neck he was clutching.

Jimmy Silver had a grasp on a rough, overcoated figure, and Harry Wharton succeeded in getting his hands on the collar of the same overcoat. Between them they dragged Lovell's assailant over, and he rolled on the ground with the two juniors sprawling over him and clinging to him like cats.

Lovell staggered up.  
"Have you got him? Hold him! I'll get a light."

Lovell groped in his pocket for his electric lamp.

He jerked it out, and flashed on the light.

The sudden illumination shone on a strange scene.

Raby was panting for breath and rubbing his nose, upon which an elbow had crashed like a steam-hammer, as it seemed to George Raby. Newcome was sprawling on the stairs, where he had fallen after Raby had let go his neck. A powerful, rather stout man was struggling breathlessly in the grasp of Harry Wharton and Jimmy Silver. Even at a glance Lovell saw that he was too big for Mr. Jabez Wilson, and the same glance showed that he was in uniform.

"Why—what—what—" stuttered Lovell.

"Who—what—" panted Wharton.  
He released the stout man at once, and Jimmy Silver followed his example.

"Blumpy!" ejaculated Jimmy.  
"A—a—a bobby!" stuttered Lovell.

Mr. Blumpy, the police-constable of Hadley Priors, sat up, pumping in breath with a crimson face. He was looking very dishevelled.

"You—you—you—" he spluttered.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Wharton.  
"You—you—" Mr. Blumpy spluttered and spluttered, almost fizzing like a squib, in his breathless indignation.

"You young raskils! And me thinking that that blooming convict had got 'old of me! Ow! Gug-gug-gug!"

"Oh dear!" murmured Lovell.  
"Ow, ow, ow!"

"What on earth were you doing here, Blumpy?" exclaimed Jimmy Silver. He gave the breathless constable a hand to rise.

Mr. Blumpy snorted.  
"Wot should I be doing?" he demanded.

"I was searching the place, as my dooty was, in case that blinking convict was 'iding 'ere. I had your father's permission, young man, and I'll see that Mr. Silver 'ears about these 'ere tricks played on an officer of the law in the execution of his dooty."

And Mr. Blumpy puffed and blew with indignation.

"Looking for the convict!" breathed Lovell. "Oh, my hat! So—so—so were we! I—I thought it was the convict when I collared you and—"

"You young hass!"  
"Of course, Lovell's done it!" said Raby, with a grin. "He would, you know. Just like Lovell!"

"Oh, just!" concurred Newcome.  
"Lovell all over!"

"Well, how was I to know—" began Lovell warily.

"Playing tricks on a constable in the execution of his dooty!" snorted Mr. Blumpy. "Young raskils! I will—"

Mr. Blumpy was very much annoyed. Undoubtedly he had had a rather startling shock when he was collared—supposing that he was in

the grasp of the desperate man he was hunting for. It had been a mutual mistake.

"I'm going up to the 'ouse now!" he said wrathfully. Mr. Silver shall 'ear of this—"

"Hold on a minute," said Jimmy Silver softly, and he signed to the other fellows to clear.

Arthur Edward Lovell, with a very red face, was glad to go; and Raby and Newcome and Harry Wharton followed him. Jimmy Silver remained a minute or two with Mr. Blumpy, soothing him. Perhaps it was the soft answer that turned away wrath—and perhaps it was a couple of half-crowns, slipped into Mr. Blumpy's hand, that helped to turn it away.

At all events, when Jimmy Silver followed his friends from the tower Mr. Blumpy's voice was heard saying in quite amicable tones:

"All right, sir—all right, Master Silver! Mistakes will 'appen! Good-night, young gentlemen."

To turn on the light, and sit up in bed reading, was a resource on a sleepless night—but Lovell, generally a very sound sleeper, had not thought of bringing any book to his room.

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THE FINEST SCHOOL STORY EVER WRITTEN!



# The CAPTAIN OF THE FOURTH!

By FRANK RICHARDS.

(Author of the famous tales of Greyfriars School appearing in the "Magnet" Library.)

The new boy of the Fourth Form at St. Kit's receives a rough handling from Rex Tracy & Co.!

### The 1st Chapter.

When it seems that Rex Tracy will become the new captain of the Fourth Form at St. Kit's without there being a contest, Algernon Aubrey St. Leger persuades his cousin and study-mate, Harry Wilmot, to oppose the leader of the nuts of the Fourth. As both Wilmot and Tracy secure ten votes on election-day, it is decided to take another count on the following Saturday, in case one of the Fourth-Formers decides to change his mind and vote for the other candidate. All the Fourth, however, remain firm to their parties, and, therefore, when it is learned that Bob Rake, a new junior hailing from Australia, is coming to St. Kit's on the Saturday and is to be placed in the Fourth, great is the rivalry of the two parties to secure his vote which will decide the issue. In spite of the fact that Rake is assigned to the top study which is the apartment of the nuts of the Fourth, the Australian junior votes for Harry Wilmot in the election, and thus the captaincy is at last decided in Wilmot's favour. Tracy, who is very much annoyed with the way Rake voted, determines to get even with the new boy at the first opportunity.

### The 2nd Chapter.

#### The Ragging of Bob Rake.

"Here he is!"  
 "Here's the rotter!"  
 "Here's the cad!"  
 Bob Rake grinned.  
 It was a sort of chorus that greeted him as he threw open the door of the top study, in the Fourth Form passage at St. Kit's, and entered. But certainly it was not a chorus of welcome.  
 There was quite a crowd of juniors in the top study.  
 Tracy, the defeated candidate in the captain's election that had taken place that afternoon, stood leaning on the mantelpiece, his hands driven deep into his pockets, and a scowl on his face. He fixed a black and bitter look on the new junior as he entered the study.  
 Lumley and Howard and Verney minor were seated around the fire; but they jumped up at the sight of Bob Rake.  
 Dick Durance was reclining in the armchair, with his legs crossed, and a slight smile on his face. He was the only member of the happy family of nuts who did not glare at the new fellow, and join in the general chorus that greeted Bob Rake's entrance.  
 "Here's the beastly cad!" continued Tracy; "here's the rotter that lost us the election."  
 "He's got the cheek to come here!" said Lumley.  
 "Some cads have cheek enough for anythin'!" remarked Howard.  
 "I'm glad he's come," said Tracy, with a venomous look. "We can deal with him now."  
 "Yes, rather."  
 Bob Rake looked at the glowering faces round him, and did not seem very much disturbed.

There were five juniors in the study, and they were all his enemies. The new junior from Australia was venturing into something like a lion's den in entering the top study. But it was evident that Bob Rake dared to be a Daniel!  
 "Hallo, old tops!" he said cheerily. "What's biting you? This is a pretty sort of welcome to give to a new fellow, in his own study, on his first day at St. Kit's. Have I had the awful misfortune to displease your High Mightinesses in any way?"  
 "You rotter!"  
 "You cad!"  
 "You outsider!"  
 "Don't get on with the list," said Bob Rake; "I've got that by heart already. Besides, I don't allow fellows to call me names like that. It looks to me as if somebody is going to have his nose punched pretty soon."  
 "You rotten outsider!" recommended Lumley.  
 Bob took a step towards Lumley, a glint coming into his blue eyes. Lumley broke off quite suddenly.  
 "Enough of that!" said Bob quietly; "you've paid me enough compliments. What's the trouble?"  
 "You know what the trouble is, you—" Tracy paused at the word "rotter." He did not like the glint in the Australian's eyes, any more than Lumley did. "You know well enough. There was a tie in the election for Form captain this afternoon, and you wedged in and voted for Harry Wilmot, and did me out of it. That's the trouble."  
 "Jolly glad that I arrived at St. Kit's on this merry Saturday," said Bob. "Just in time to frustrate your knavish tricks, Tracy, what? You wouldn't cut much ice as Form captain in the Fourth. I don't know much about Wilmot, but I fancy he's ever so much better a man for the job."  
 "What?"  
 "Ever so much better a man for the job."  
 Tracy breathed hard.  
 There was a slight chuckle from Durance, in the armchair. Durance seemed to find something entertaining in the genial coolness of the youth from "down under."  
 "This is my study, it seems," said Bob, glancing round him.  
 "Mr. Rawlings told me so, at all events. Do all you fellows belong here?"  
 "No!" snapped Verney minor.  
 "Oh, I don't mind—I'm not particular," Bob Rake assured him. "Still, a little more room would be a comfort. How many belong here?"  
 "Tracy and I," said Durance, as nobody else troubled to answer.  
 "Then we shall be three," said Bob cheerily. "I hope we shall get on together. We haven't started well, certainly. But you'll find me quite nice on closer acquaintance. I hope I shall find you fellows the same. It doesn't look like it—but I hope so."

"You've got plenty to say for yourself for a new kid," remarked Durance.  
 "Always had," said Bob Rake.  
 "You refused to vote for me in the Form election—" began Tracy.



**WILMOT CHIPS IN!** Tracy was about to bring the fives bat down again upon the spreadeagled Bob Rake when Harry Wilmot burst into the study. "Stop!" The bat came down—but before it reached Bob Harry's grasp was on Tracy's shoulder, and the chief of the nuts was dragged away. The fives bat swept down into space, and cracked on Tracy's knee. There was a yell from Tracy. "Ow! Wow!"

"That's over and done with," said Bob amicably. "Wilmot is captain of the Fourth now. He seems a decent sort of chap."  
 "He's a rotten outsider."  
 "Oh, rats!"  
 "If you'd given me your vote I should have been Form captain. It needed only one to turn the scale."  
 "That's ancient history now," urged Bob.  
 "Do you think we're going to stand you in this study after that?" demanded Tracy.  
 Bob looked at him.  
 "I don't quite see how you're going to help it," he answered. "The Form-master has placed me here, and it's my study too."  
 "You're not comin' in here."  
 "It seems to me that I've come."  
 "You're goin' out on your neck," explained Tracy.  
 Bob Rake laughed.  
 "But before you go you're goin' to get the raggin' of your life, for votin' against me in the election," added Tracy.  
 "That's the game," said Howard, and he slipped round behind Bob Rake and closed the door of the study.  
 "I say—" began Durance, un-

crossing his legs, and sitting up in the armchair. Tracy interrupted him savagely:  
 "None of your rot, Dick! He's goin' through it."  
 Durance shrugged his shoulders.  
 "Oh, all right!" he said; "might let him off, as he's a new kid. I expect it was Algy talked him into votin' for Wilmot. Algy could talk the hind leg off a mule."  
 "I'll make Algy St. Leger sit up, too, somehow," said Tracy. "And as for Wilmot, let him try to come the Form captain over us, that's all! We'll give him somethin' to think about. Now we're goin' to deal with this sneakin' cad who lost us the election. Collar him!"  
 Bob Rake did not seem alarmed, even then. The five juniors made a general move towards him, and he backed to the door, and stood against it, and put his hands up.  
 His genial face was still good-humoured, but his blue eyes were glinting. As a matter of fact, he had fully expected trouble with the St. Kit's nuts, and he was prepared for it.  
 "One at a time," he suggested.  
 "Fair play's a jewel."  
 "It's not a fight—it's a raggin'," said Tracy loftily.  
 "That's how it stands, dear boy," said Durance. "I advise you not to hit out. You'll get it worse."

The next moment Bob's right swept downwards, and Verney minor yelled as he felt it crash on his head.  
 But he held on, and his comrades came swarming to his aid. Lumley got hold of Rake's right arm, Howard of his left. They held on tenaciously—indeed, they held on for dear life! They were afraid of what might happen if they let that sturdy junior's arms go.  
 Tracy was on his feet quickly enough, with a blaze of rage in his eyes. He rushed at the Cornstalk, as Bob struggled with three foes, and struck. Bob caught the drive on his chest without being able to defend himself, and he rolled over, with Lumley and Howard and Verney still clinging to him. The four of them sprawled and struggled on the floor.  
 Tracy bent over Bob, as he struggled furiously, and raised his clenched fist for another blow. His arm was caught and dragged back, and he turned his head and glared at Durance.  
 "Let go, you fool!" he yelled.  
 "Easy does it," said Durance.  
 "You're not hittin' a chap when he's down, in this study!"  
 "You fool—"  
 "Raggin' is all very well, but there's a limit," said Durance. "You can give him the fives bat on his bags. But you're not punchin' him on the floor, old bean."  
 "Shove him across the table, then!" snarled Tracy.  
 "Right-ho!"  
 Bob Rake was still struggling strenuously. But five pairs of hands were on him, and even the sturdy Bob could not deal with such odds. He was swept off the floor, and slammed face down on the study table.  
 "Pin him!" gasped Tracy.  
 "We've got him!"  
 "You rotters!" roared Bob.  
 "I'll smash you for this!"  
 "Quiet, you cad!" said Lumley, giving his arm a twist.  
 "Ow!"  
 "Mind he doesn't get loose, while I get the bat," said Tracy.  
 "Hurry up, old bean."  
 With a pair of hands grasping each arm and leg, Bob Rake was spreadeagled on the study table, and he resisted in vain. Tracy picked up the fives bat and came back to the table, his eyes glittering.  
 "Go it!" chuckled Lumley.  
 "Whack, whack, whack!"  
 "Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob.  
 "I'll—I'll smash you—"   
 "Whack, whack!"  
 "Yooooooop!"  
 "Whack, whack, whack!"  
 "Easy does it, old bean," murmured Durance.  
 Tracy snarled, and laid on with the bat with all the strength of his arm. And Bob Rake, helpless in the grasp of the nuts, wriggled and roared, as the shower of vicious blows descended.

### Something Like a Scrap.

"They're goin' it!"  
 Algernon Aubrey St. Leger, the ornament of the Fourth Form at St. Kit's, made that remark in Study No. 5.  
 Bunny Bootles chuckled.  
 Harry Wilmot, the new captain of the Fourth Form, laid down his pen and rose to his feet, his face darkening.  
 Harry Wilmot—once known as Harry Nameless—had been elected captain of the Fourth that afternoon. He owed his election to Bob Rake's vote. And he knew what the uproar from the top study, meant. Tracy & Co. were "taking it out" of the new junior for their defeat at the election.  
 Algy glanced at him as he rose.  
 "Chippin' in?" he asked.  
 "Yes."  
 "It's an awful bore," murmured Algernon Aubrey plaintively; "I hate raggin'. An' I'm quite exhausted with the yeoman's service I put into the election to-day. But I suppose it's up to us."  
 "Oh, let him alone," said Bunny Bootles. "That chap Rake is a bit cheeky. It will do him good."  
 (Continued overleaf.)

Make certain you obtain the BOYS' FRIEND Book of Boxing given away FREE with this number. And don't forget to tell your pals about it!





# The CAPTAIN OF THE FOURTH!

By FRANK RICHARDS

(Continued from previous page.)

Harry did not heed the cad of the Fourth. He mounted the step at the end of the passage that led to the top study. Algernon Aubrey St. Leger followed him, pushing back his spotless cuffs. Algy hated scrapping; it was liable to soil his cuffs and disarrange his elegant attire. But he was quite a good man in a scrap when he set his noble mind to it.

The captain of the Fourth threw open the door of the top study. A rather startling scene met his gaze.

Bob Rake, spread-eagled on the study table, was wriggling and struggling fiercely in the grasp of four of the nuts, while Rex Tracy was lashing him savagely with the fives bat. The sounding whacks could be heard at the other end of the Fourth Form passage.

"You rotters!" roared Bob. "Jevver hear of fair play in this study? Yow-ow-ow!"

Whack!  
"Yaroooh!"  
Tracy had the bat raised again for another swipe, when Harry Wilmot burst into the study.

"Stop!"  
The bat came down—but before it reached Bob, Harry's grasp was on Tracy's shoulder, and the chief of the nuts was dragged away. The fives bat swept down into space, and cracked on Tracy's knee. There was a yell from Tracy this time.

"Ow! Oh gad! Wow!"  
Wilmot flung Tracy aside, and

"Shut up, Bunny!"  
"Well, I think he's cheeky," said Bunny; "got too much to say for himself, you know. I'm not going to chip in."

Algernon Aubrey laughed.  
"Don't!" he said. "It wouldn't be fair to the top study, Bunny, to spring such a terrific fightin' man as you on them."

"Oh, I say!"  
"Come on, St. Leger!" said Harry.

Algernon Aubrey carefully disposed his celebrated eyeglass in his waistcoat pocket, and followed his chum from Study No. 5.

Several of the Fourth had come out of their studies, attracted by the din that was proceeding from Study No. 9. Nobody seemed inclined to enter the lion's den and interfere, however.

"That new chap's getting it," remarked Catesby, with a grin. "I rather thought Tracy would take it out of his hide."

"Somebody ought to stop him," said Stubbs.

Catesby laughed.  
"I'm going to stop him," said Harry, as he came out of Study No. 5 quietly.

"Hallo! You're startin' pretty soon in your merry new duties as Form captain!" sneered Catesby.

he fell helplessly into the arm-chair. Then the captain of the Fourth turned to the others.

"Let Rake go at once!" he said curtly.

"Yaas, dear boys," said Algernon Aubrey, in the doorway. "The circus is over—ring down the merry curtain! Don't make me bark my knuckles on your noses."

said Harry quietly. "As captain of the Fourth I think I'm bound to stop this sort of thing."

"How long have you been captain of the Fourth?" sneered Durance.

"Long enough to put a stop to a cowardly ragging," answered Harry. "But, anyhow, I should chip in here. Let him go!"

the combat. Bunny was quite content to be a spectator when a combat was going on.

"Will you let Rake go?" snapped the captain of the Fourth.

"No."

"Then I'll make you!"

"Hear, hear!" said St. Leger.

Harry wasted no more time in words. Tracy had staggered to his feet, and stood with clenched hands and blazing eyes; but evidently hesitating to tackle Wilmot. The latter made a stride at Durance and grasped him.

Crash!  
Durance's fist came into his face in a second, and Harry staggered for a moment. The blow was swift and it was hard.

But in another moment the captain of the Fourth had returned it, and the two were fighting furiously.

Tracy made a rush then, to the aid of his comrade; but he found Algernon Aubrey in the way.

"You're my mutton, old bean!" said the dandy of St. Kit's genially.

"Get out of the way, you fool—"

"That's for your boko—"

"Yow-ow!"

Bob Rake, held now only by three, put up a sudden and strenuous struggle. Stubbs of the Fourth rushed into the study and laid violent hands on Lumley, dragging him off. Howard and Verney found that their hands were too full with Bob. He wrenched himself loose and rolled off the table.

He landed on his feet, actively, and spun round on the raggers with a blaze in his eyes.

"Now, then, you rotters!" he panted.

"Go it, old bean!" sang out Algy.

Algy, with all his dandified ways, was much too much for Tracy. That infuriated youth was penned in a corner of the study, Algy's fists keeping him there, and

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I'm rather particular about my knuckles. Catchy on?"

"Mind your own bizney!" yelled Lumley.

"Let him go, I tell you!"  
Lumley and Howard and Verney looked uncertain. But Dick Durance was made of sterner stuff. He had been only half-hearted in the ragging of the new boy; but he was quite whole-hearted in defying interference. He compressed his grip on Rake, and stared at Harry defiantly.

"Mind your own business," he snapped.  
"I think this is my business."

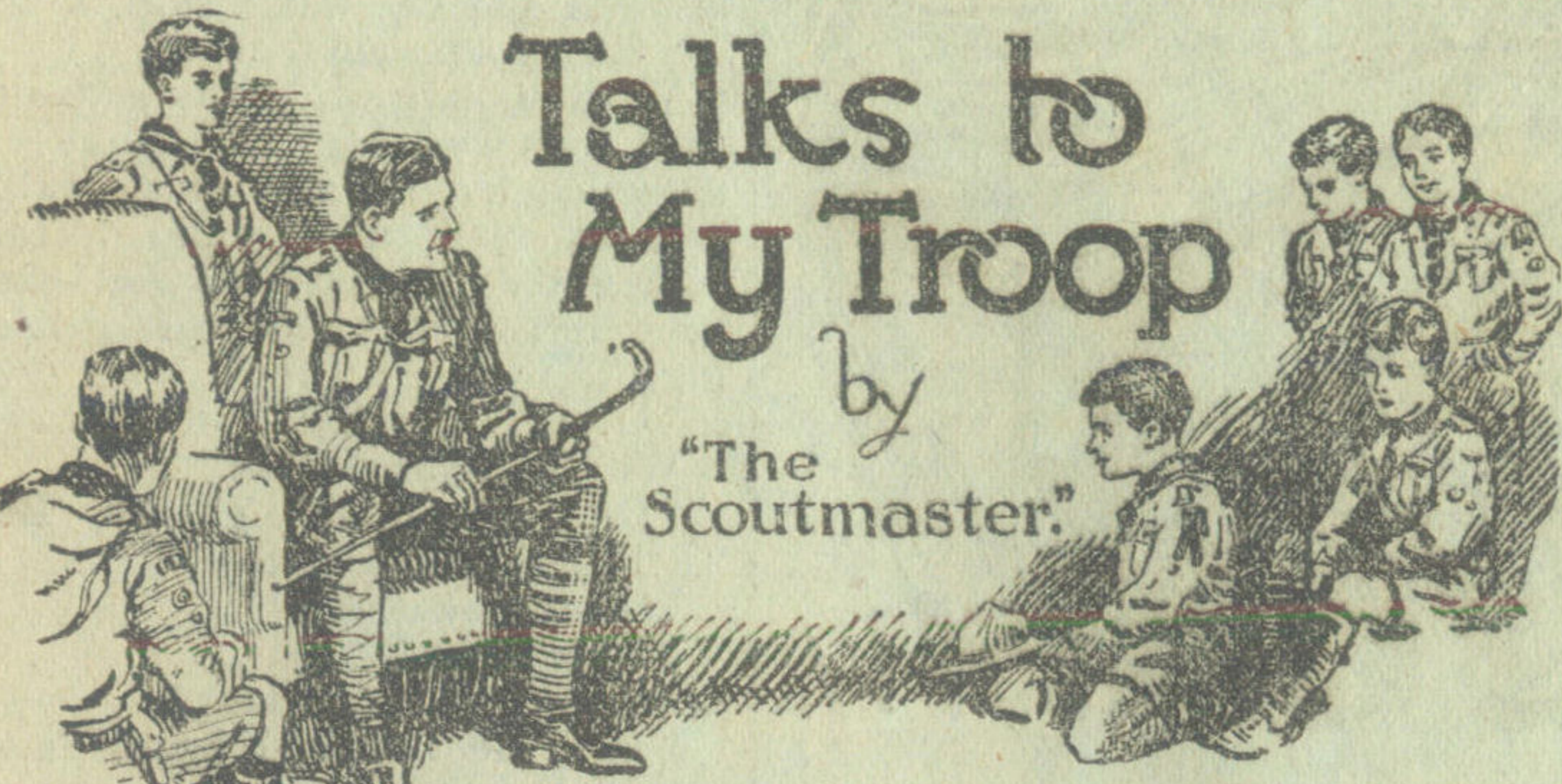
"Rats!"

"Is there goin' to be a fight?" murmured Algernon Aubrey.

"There is, if you interfere in this study," said Durance savagely.

Algy sighed.  
"Isn't it just my luck to have my best waistcoat on when there's goin' to be a scrap?" he said; "I suppose you fellows wouldn't be willin' to hang on, in statu quo, while I go an' change my waistcoat?"

"He, he, he!" came from Bunny Bootles, in the passage. The fat junior had followed his study-mates; not to take a hand in



## Talks to My Troop

by "The Scoutmaster."

"The Scoutmaster" will be pleased to answer any queries addressed to him, c/o the BOYS' FRIEND, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. A stamped addressed envelope for a reply should accompany all communications.

### No. 5.—HOW TO START A TROOP LOG.

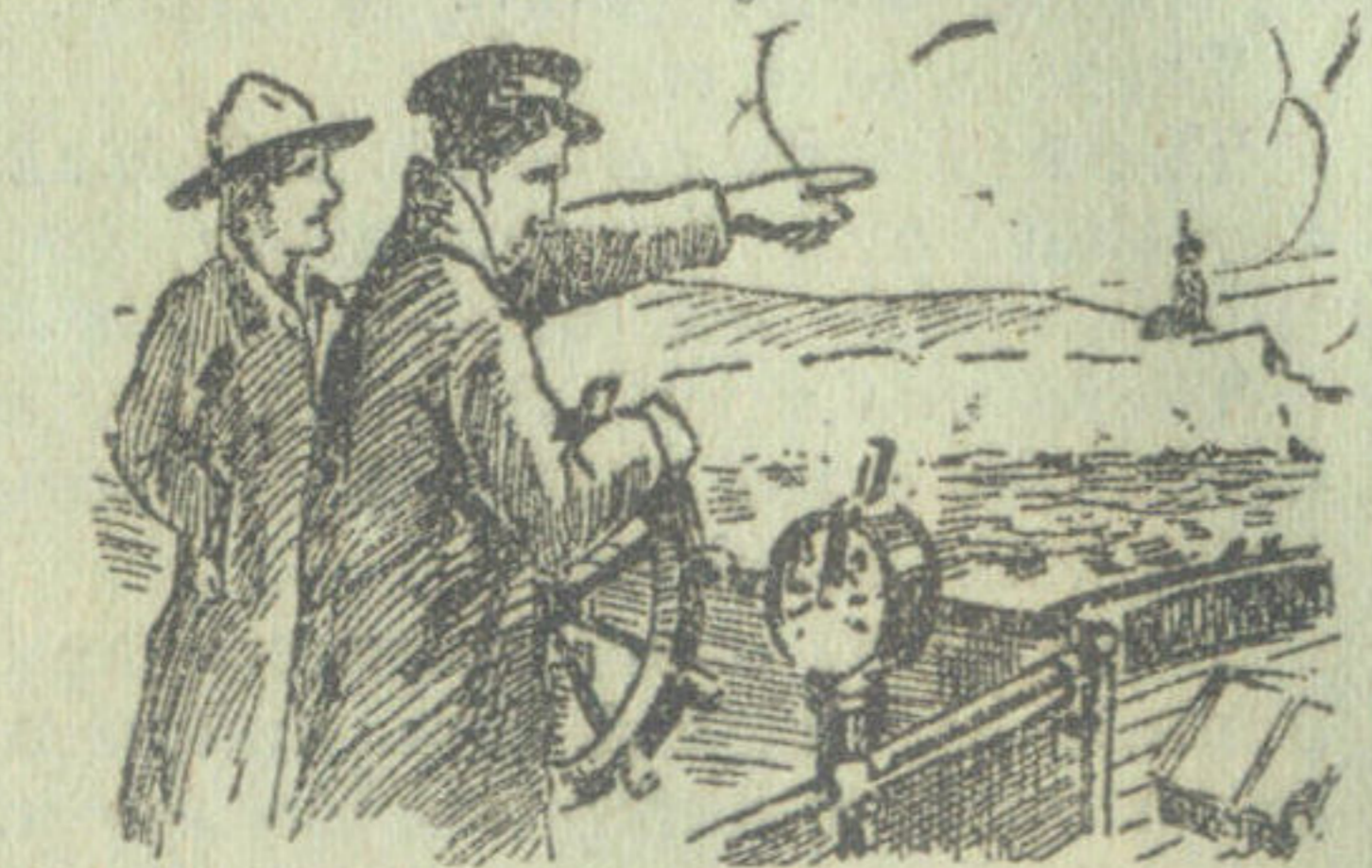
Rallen, old boy, put another lump of coal on the fire, and while you are about it you had better give an eye to those spuds under the grate, otherwise there will be no banquet to-night. It doesn't seem a twelve-month ago since we had our last baked potato supper, and yet here we are, in 1925, sitting around at the first Pow-wow of the New Year.

I hope you have all turned over your "new leaves." I think everybody feels "bucked" at the beginning of the year, and, even though we don't keep all our good resolutions, most of us are inclined to do a little stocktaking about the end of December, just to see where we stand with regard to the work we are going to do in the world. It's exactly the same with the troop. All things considered, we've done pretty well in the past, but we can't afford to stop still, and I want you fellows to make 1925 a distinct improvement on 1924.

Now, Jepson has got a topping idea, to begin with, and I've promised him to discuss it with you to-night. "Jeppy" could tell you all about it quite as well as I can—but there he is, you see, hiding his face in the last number of the Boys' Friend, and pretending that he never had a brain-wave in his life!

Well, Jepson says, "Why not start

a troop log?" That's not precisely the same sort of thing as a diary. A diary is more of a personal nature. Most people have a shot at keeping one at some time or another, but very few persevere to the end of the year. I suppose you know that yarn about a man who brought out a diary which he called a Popular Edition because it was only ruled to the end of February!



Just as a sea captain makes a note in a Log Book of all prominent objects his vessel passes during a voyage, so should scouts keep a similar record of their troop's proceedings.

No, a log is rather more serious. You have heard of a ship's log? Well, once when I was going down Channel on a little coasting steamer the captain invited me up on to the bridge. I noticed that he wrote down the names of the vessels we passed, and what time of day it was; also the names of prominent objects

along the coast, such as headlands and lighthouses, with the exact moment we came abreast of them; and, over and above all, that he jotted down notes about the weather, and the way the wind was blowing. When we "made" a port, that was entered, too, and so, you see, a ship's log is a very minute account of the voyage, and when there are collisions and wrecks at sea a log may be most important in determining whether anybody is to blame. I agree with Jeppy that it would be perfectly splendid to keep a similar record of our proceedings. Besides being a history of the troop, it would enable us to work out new stunts by referring to the old ones, and, best of all, we should have a list of fellows who had passed through the troop, with some idea of what had become of them.

I have seen a good many troop logs, and most of them were extremely interesting. A clever scribe can make his reports witty as well as accurate, and where there's a good photographer in the troop—like Jackson, for instance—or a chap who can do a neat pen-and-ink sketch—why, then a log becomes a thing of beauty and a joy for ever. I suggest that a two-shilling quarto exercise-book is about the thing we want. We should appoint a scribe, or editor, who would be responsible for what a printer calls the "lay-out"—that is, the arrangement of the matter on the pages—and all I'm going to do now is to give you some idea of the sort of stuff the troop log ought to contain.

First of all, the title-page—"Log of the Blank-blank Troop, for the year 1925"—and as we have been in existence for three years I think the first article should be a history of the troop up to date. It would be rather nice to have a record of how, when, and where the troop was founded, the names of the first officers and the first boys to join, and just a short resume of the camps and big shows we have had since we started.

That would bring us to January 1st, 1925, and I propose that we ask Jackson to take a very special group of the troop for this page. Then I should like to have everybody's signature—officers first and patrol leaders next, each at the head of his patrol. I think the headings should be, "Name," "Address," "Birth-

day," "Enrolled," and "Remarks"—and in this last column I should like to keep a record of when a chap goes to work for the first time, when he passes an exam, when he wins the "mile" or makes a "century," or bags a dozen wickets, and all that sort of thing. The true Scout plays for his side, and if a fellow covers



Say your troop purchases a spade, it is a good idea to make a note of the fact in the Log Book, for someone else may come along and lay claim to the article.

himself with glory, that's one up to the troop.

Someone who can draw might put in a little design for each patrol—the "Beavers," the "Lions," the "Eagles," and so on.

Meeting-nights and business-routine might very well go down in these opening pages, and then we come to a very important matter. You know what a stickler I am for keeping correct accounts? Well, I should want a page headed, "Troop Property and Balance-sheet as on January 1st, 1925," followed by a complete list of our belongings, and a neat little statement of our financial affairs. Do you remember the argument we had only the other day with our own landlord—nice old man that he is!—as to whether the spade belonged to him or to us? We had no record of the purchase, although I remember buying it in the first year we went to camp; but that isn't good enough, and no end of rows might be saved if every troop kept an inventory of its property.

Now, all the entries so far are what a printer would call "standing matter"—merely the machinery for carrying on; the rest of the year's work would be a record of the year's work.

It need not be written up day by day—this isn't a diary, mind you—but outstanding events would be

faithfully recorded. For instance, you'll agree—especially after you've heard Rallen's speech—that our baked potato supper is an annual event of stupendous significance, and I dare say you would like to preserve an account of the "talks" we have been having for the last four or five weeks.

"Hikes," concerts, displays, and association parades would be duly chronicled, and where you could insert a photo or a programme the value of the descriptive article would be considerably enhanced. The troop takes part in district events, such as sports, swimming galas, and boxing matches; or in national events, like the Jamboree; and possibly the Commissioner, or some other "big gun," will come to headquarters on a visit of inspection. Our scribe would enter such happenings in his log, and if any of you fellows were to win the Medal of Merit, or the Silver Wolf, I should expect to see the fact recorded in the book of fame.

And that reminds me! I think we should have, somewhere in the beginning, a list of badges held by members of the troop. Additions made during the year would be summarised at the end of the log.

The greatest feature of all would be the account of our summer camp. Everybody should contribute one or two "impressions," and if to photographs and sketches we could add racy paragraphs, the camp section of the log would be well worth preserving.

But we must not forget the business side. I should like to see a record of expenses and bills of fare, and any other details of management likely to help us another year; also a little good-natured criticism from anybody who had a good suggestion to offer.

By Jove, those spuds smell awfully good, and I reckon they are about done. Well, there's nothing more to say. I've given you the outline of what a troop log ought to be, and if you like the notion we will start it right away.

"On Going Out to Work!" is the title of "The Scoutmaster's" talk for next Monday. Don't miss it, nor the splendid 20-page Railway Book given away FREE with every copy of the BOYS' FRIEND!



tapping and rapping incessantly. Stubbs was rolling on the carpet with Lumley punching away breathlessly. Harry and Durance were fighting fiercely; and Bob Rake had Verney and Howard to deal with. He dealt with them very effectively.

They faced him together—and Verney was swept off his feet with a terrific right-hander.

He landed on his back on the carpet, gasping; and he stayed there. He did not want any more.

Howard was driven across the study, towards the fireplace, till he stumbled on the fender. He was almost dazed by the shower of blows that rained on him. He dropped his hands at last in sheer desperation.

"Chuck it!" he gasped. "I—I give in."

"He, he, he!" came from Bunny Bootles.

"Lemme alone!" Lumley was howling under the hammering punches of Stubbs. "I give in, you beast! Oh gad! Yaroo! Lemme gerrup! I chuck it! Pec-cavi!"

"Had enough?" grinned Stubbs breathlessly.

"Yow—wow—ow! Yes."

Lumley was hors de combat. And Tracy slid down to a sitting position in the corner, where he was penned up by Algernon Aubrey. He, too, had had enough.

Of the happy family of nuts, only Durance was holding out. And good fighting man as Harry Wilmot was, Durance seemed to be holding his own.

Bob Rake looked round him breathlessly.

"All down but one!" he exclaimed. "Thanks, no end, for backing me up like this, you fellows!"

"Don't mench, dear boy," said Algernon Aubrey. "Sure you won't have any more, Tracy?"

"Ow, ow!" moaned Tracy.

"I don't want to persuade you, of course, old bean, if you'd rather chuck it," said Algy considerately.

"But if you want any more—"

"Grooogh!"

"Then I'll sit on the table and watch the circus," said Algernon Aubrey, with a deep yawn.

There was a yell from the passage.

"Cave! Here comes Oliphant!"

St. Leger sighed.

"I thought this dashed rumpus would bring a prefect up! Now there's goin' to be a row!"

**After the Fray.**

Oliphant of the Sixth, the captain of St. Kit's, strode into the top study with a frowning brow. Behind him the passage was swarming with juniors now—all the Fourth had turned out of their studies. Rows and rags were far from uncommon in the Fourth Form passage at St. Kit's; indeed, the Fourth rather prided themselves on being an unruly Form. But a battle-royal on this scale was rather out of the common; and it was not surprising that it had brought the head prefect on the scene.

"Stop that!" roared Oliphant. And as Harry and Durance did not seem to heed, the big Sixth-Former grasped them both, and dragged them apart.

Harry Wilmot dropped his hands at once. Durance, breathless, with a red stream trickling from his swollen nose, leaned on the wall and gasped for breath.

Oliphant frowned at them.

"What does this thumping row mean?" he exclaimed. "Do you know that you can be heard downstairs?"

"Yaas, I shouldn't wonder," murmured St. Leger.

"A precious set of hooligans you look," continued Oliphant.

"What's the row about? Sharp!"

"That meddlin' cad—" gasped Tracy.

"That nameless rotter—" panted Howard.

"A row over the result of the election, I suppose," said Oliphant.

"Yaas, dear boy," said Algy.

"Well, stop it at once!" said Oliphant.

"You fellows seem to have come into this study, so I take it you started the row—"

"Ahem!"

"Of course they did," said Tracy.

"I know it's the custom for the top study to belong to the captain of the Form," said Oliphant.

"But you might give the other fellows time to clear before you waded in to take possession, Wilmot."

Harry flushed.

"It's not that!" he exclaimed.

"I wasn't thinking of that when I came here."

"Then what did you come in



**NOT A FRIENDLY GREETING!** "Here he is!" "Here's the rotter!" "Here's the cad!" Bob Rake grinned. It was a sort of chorus that greeted him as he threw open the door of the top study in the Fourth Form passage at St. Kit's and entered.

here for? Just to pick a row with Tracy?"

"Just that!" snapped Tracy.

Harry closed his lips. But Bob Rake chimed in:

"Wilmot and St. Leger came in to lend me a hand, Oliphant. I was getting a ragging."

Oliphant understood then.

"Oh, I see! You've been ragging this new kid for voting against you, Tracy—is that it?"

"Only—ohly a lark, really—" stammered Tracy.

"That will do. Have they hurt you, Rake?"

Bob made a grimace. He had been very considerably hurt by the thrashing with the fives bat. But he was not at all disposed to complain to a prefect. He was prepared to deal out Tracy's punishment himself, for that matter.

"Oh, I'm not made of putty," he said cheerfully. "I can stand a bit of a licking. I'm not complaining."

"Good man!" murmured Algy.

"Well, let there be no more of

it," said Oliphant. "You hear that, Tracy?"

"Yes, Oliphant," muttered Tracy.

"If there's any more row in this study to-night, you'll hear from me," said the captain of St. Kit's.

"You fellows that don't belong here, get out!"

"Come on, old bean," said Algy gracefully, to his chum. "We'll shake the dust of this merry study from our feet—till Monday."

Harry did not speak. He left the study quietly with his chum.

Oliphant gave the dishevelled and gasping nuts a warning look, and followed them. Bob Rake was left alone in the lion's den.

But it was not much of a lion's den now. Tracy & Co. had been tamed. After the prefect's warning they would hardly have cared to proceed with the ragging; and they were feeling far from fit for any more rags. There was not one of the noble army of nuts who was not showing very plain traces of the combat.

Bob Rake looked at them, and grinned, and dabbed his nose with his handkerchief.

"Is it peace, my pippins?" he inquired.

"Oh, go an' eat coke!" growled Tracy.

"We'll make you squirm, some time!" muttered Lumley.

"Any old time you like," grinned Bob.

Tracy & Co. left the study together, to clean up after that terrific scrap, in the dormitory.

Bob Rake dabbed his nose again, and looked round him rather ruefully.

"Looks as if I shall have a merry time in this study," he murmured.

"Nice, cheery study-mates—I don't think! But what's the odds so long as you're 'appy?"

And after attending to his damages Bob Rake found room for his personal belongings in the study, and proceeded to arrange them—an occupation that kept him agreeably employed till bed-time.

When he joined the Fourth on their way to the dormitory he was looking little the worse for his experiences in the top study. But Tracy & Co. were looking a great deal the worse—and they scowled at Bob in the dormitory. Only Durance did not seem bitter. He came over to the new junior, as he sat on the edge of his bed taking his boots off.

Bob looked up at him quickly, half-expecting assault and battery. Dick Durance smiled slightly.

"All serene," he said. "I'm not on the giddy war-path."

"Glad to hear it, old top," said Bob. "Your nose looks as if it wouldn't stand much more damage."

"Yours isn't exactly a beauty."

Bob rubbed his rather swollen nose.

"It doesn't feel one," he said good-humouredly.

"I want to tell you I'm sorry about the raggin'," said Durance, in a low voice. "It was rotten cad-dish, and I'm sorry. That's all."

"Good man," said Bob, rather surprised. "It was a bit rotten, you know—a crowd piling on to one chap. But I don't bear malice. I hope we shall get on all right in the study."

"I hope so," said Durance.

And he walked away—to meet a savage stare from Rex Tracy.

"We're goin' to cut that cad," said Tracy angrily. "What are you speakin' to him for, Durance?"

"Oh, rats!"

"Look here—"

"Go and eat coke!" said Durance impatiently.

Which was all the satisfaction that the chief of the nuts received from his rather unruly follower.

Bob Rake had had a rather exciting time on his first day at St. Kit's. But he slept soundly in the Fourth Form dormitory; and when the rising-bell clanged out in the morning he was the first out of bed, in cheery spirits. And as Bunny Bootles seemed disinclined to rise, Bob obliged him by dragging off his bed-clothes and rolling him out, in sheer exuberance of spirits—a service for which he received anything but thanks from Bunny.

**No Trade.**

"Jolly old show!"

Bob Rake made that remark to himself as he strolled in the old quad at St. Kit's on the following morning.

It was Sunday—and Sunday was a very quiet day at St. Kit's.

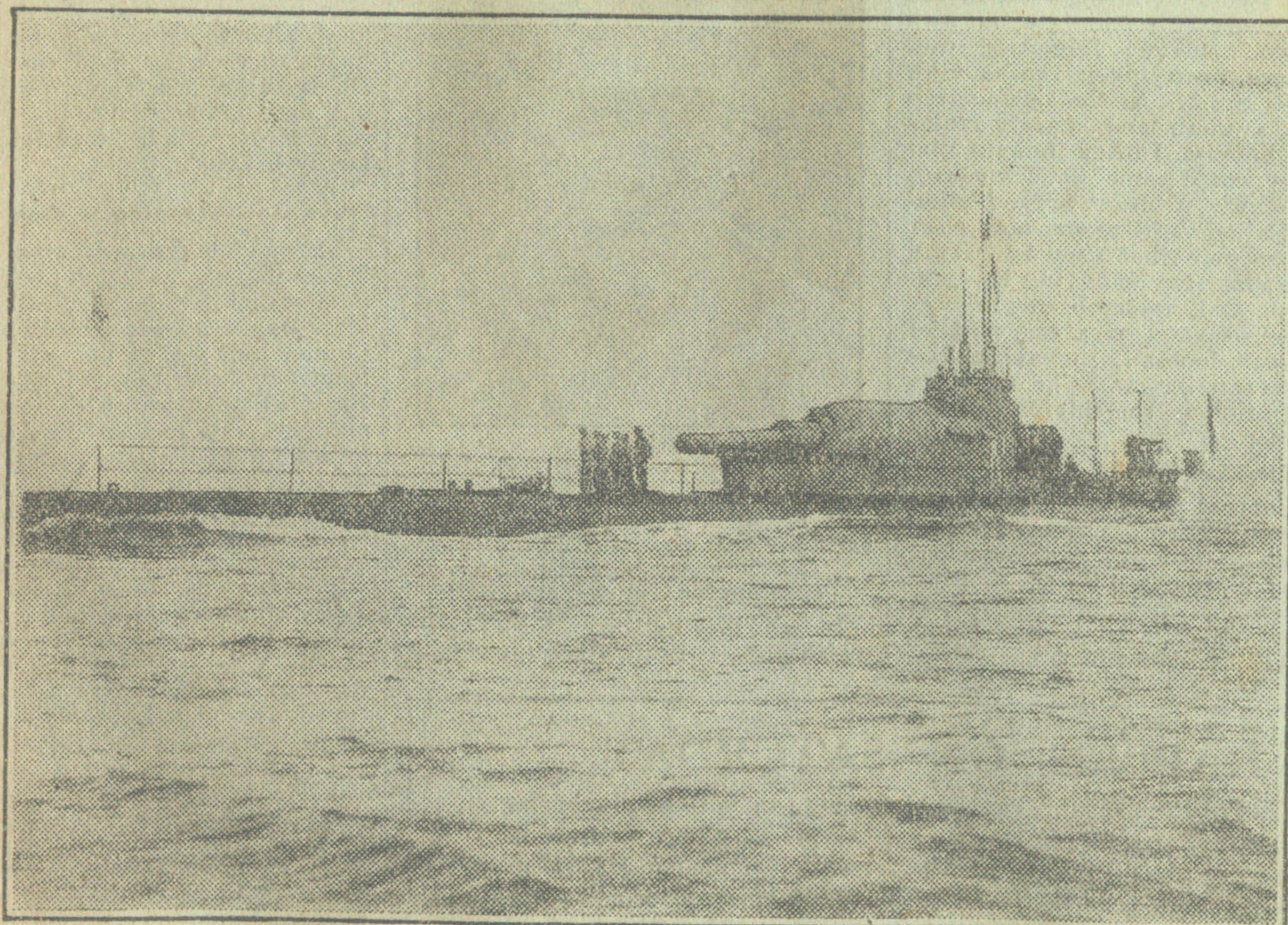
"Good form" required that "rags" should be barred on Sunday. There were two services that day, scripture with the Form master, and Milton; but it was an easy day for the St. Kit's fellows. Generally, "Sunday walks" filled in the leisure time; though Tracy & Co. found solace also in surreptitious cigarettes and in Carton's time there had even been "nap" in the top study. Bob Rake walked round the quad looking about him, much interested in the grey old buildings, the ancient ivy that clung to them, and the still more ancient oaks—some of which had been standing when the Plantagenets reigned in England.

It was all new enough to the youth from "down under," and he liked it all. He thought that he was going to be happy at St. Kit's; but, as a matter of fact, the cheery, good-tempered junior would have been happy anywhere. Quite content with his own company Bob Rake was sauntering round when

(Continued overleaf.)

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# The CAPTAIN OF THE FOURTH!

By FRANK RICHARDS

(Continued from previous page.)

"Oh, I see!" said Bob thoughtfully.

"He chooses his own study-mates," continued Bunny. "He won't let Tracy or Durance dig in the study, you bet. They'll have to turn out into Study No. 5. If you make yourself agreeable to Wilmot he may let you stay."

"I'm not likely to make myself specially agreeable to Wilmot or anybody else for that sort of reason," said Bob dryly.

"Hoity-toity!" said Bunny, with a grin. "You're a bit cheeky for a new kid, Rake. You'll get that taken out of you at St. Kit's."

"Fathead!" said Bob politely.

"Of course, Algy will be in the top study with Wilmot," said Bunny; "and, of course, little me. Wilmot couldn't part with me. He's expecting me to back him up in the ropes, and all that—in fact, I hardly think he could carry on without my assistance. I'm going to help him," added Bunny generously, "though really, with so many calls on my time, it will be a bit of trouble for me. But I'm the chap for standing by a pal."

"You look it!" said Bob. "If you like I'll use my influence with Wilmot, and get him to let you keep on in the top study."

"Bow-wow!"

"It's the best study in the Fourth," urged Bunny. "You don't want to be turned out of it, I suppose?"

Bunny Bootles came along and joined him.

Bunny bestowed an amiable grin on him.

"Bit dull to-day here," he remarked.

"Not at all," answered Bob.

"Awful bore, Sunday," said Bunny. "But there's no construe, you know—that's a compensation. 'Paradise Lost' is a frightful bore, and awful rot, but it's not so bad as construe, what?"

Bob laughed.

"Feeling a bit lonely, I suppose?" said Bunny.

"Oh, no."

"You don't pull with your study-mates, of course."

Bob Rake whistled a tune. He was not inclined to make a confidant of the fat junior.

"You'll have a new set to-morrow," said Bunny.

"How's that?" asked Bob, in surprise.

"You see, top study always belongs to the Form captain," explained Bunny. "It's always been so, ever since anybody can remember. Carton had it when he was here—and Tracy would have had it, if he'd been elected. Now Wilmot's captain of the Fourth he will claim the captain's study."

"No, I don't!" said Bob, rather shortly.

"Well, you will be, unless Wilmot consents to let you stay. You see, as Form captain, he decides."

Bob Rake was silent.

He had seen little of Harry Wilmot so far, but he rather liked what he had seen of him. But he was conscious now of a feeling of annoyance. Perhaps it was not

Bob Rake walked away; but the fat Bunny trotted along by his side. Evidently Bunny was not yet done with the new junior. Although Bob was not yet aware of it, Bunny had a special regard for new fellows—they were Bunny's game, so to speak. New fellows did not know him so well as old fellows, and were naturally less on their guard against Bunny's wiles.

"Selling some articles?" "That's it! You send a postal-order to a firm, you know, and they send you ten articles to sell among your friends," explained Bunny. "You make a profit—I mean, I'm not doing it for profit. I wouldn't! My idea is to supply fellows with things they need, cheap. Now, I've got a silver penknife that is just the thing you want! Look!"

Bunny rooted in his pockets, and produced a penknife. Bob Rake looked at it.

It was a penknife, certainly; and equally certainly it was not silver. Bunny opened the blades, which looked as if they would cut cheese, provided that it was not a hard cheese.

"Ripping, ain't it?" said Bunny, enthusiastically.

"It might rip butter," said Bob.

"Looks as if it wouldn't rip anything else—except margarine."

"Hem! I'm selling this knife at seven and six," said Bunny.

"I hope you'll find a purchaser," said Bob cordially. "Bit sorry for the purchaser, though."

Bunny Bootles coughed again.

"You being a friend, I'm going to let you have it for five bob," he said.

"Your mistake," said Bob Rake. "You're not doing anything of the kind, old top."

"How much will you give me for it, then?"

"Nothing at all."

"Shall I say half-a-crown?"

"Say anything you like," said Bob cheerfully. "It's a free country; and speech is free. Say fifteen pounds if you care to."

"Look here, Rake," said Bunny, in a burst of generosity. "I like you! You're the kind of chap I can pal with. I'm going to let you have this splendid silver penknife for eighteenpence."

"I think not!" said Bob, with a grin.

(Continued on the next page.)

## Result of BOYS' FRIEND "Warships" Competition.

No. 10.—H.M.S. SPENSER.

In this competition one competitor sent in a correct solution. THE FIRST PRIZE OF £5 has therefore been awarded to:

R. LOVE,

20, Enmore Green,

Shaftesbury, Dorset.

THE SIX OTHER PRIZES OF MATCH FOOTBALLS have been awarded to the following competitors whose solutions each contained one error:

A. E. Crook, West Street, Banwell, Somerset.

S. E. Heggadon, 42, Cattedown Road, Plymouth.

T. H. Jobson, 2, Charlotte Street, Tidal Basin.

Now get busy with the splendid new competition on page 422 of this issue.

## Two real Bassett-Lowke model railways and six footballs offered as prizes.

Bunny's intention to make mischief. But certainly he was succeeding in doing it, whether intentionally or not.

"If you'd like me to use my influence—"

"Oh, don't be an ass, Bootles," said Bob Rake, rather impatiently.

Bunny coughed.

"All the more room without you, of course," he said. "It practically depends on me whether you're turned out of the study to-morrow or not."

"Give us a rest, fatty."

James F. C. Nicol, Jericho, Forfar, N.B.

Ralph Peak, Heys Farm, Hollygrove, Dolecross, nr. Oldham.

R. W. Stratton, 63, High Street, Whittlesey, Cambs.

THE CORRECT SOLUTION IS AS FOLLOWS:

When destroyers were formed into flotillas, each was provided with a leader. The leader is larger and speedier than the craft attached to her, and operates as a flagship. H.M.S. Spenser is a typical example of this kind of vessel. A flotilla is a small quick-moving force that can be sent anywhere at a moment's notice.

"There's another matter I want to speak to you about, Rake," continued the fat junior. "It's rather important."

"Go ahead."

"Like a silver penknife?"

Bob stared at him.

"A silver penknife?" he repeated.

"Yes."

"Are you giving silver penknives away?" ejaculated Bob.

"Practically!" said Bunny.

"You see, I'm selling some articles—"

# FOOTBALL GOSSIP!

By "Goalie"

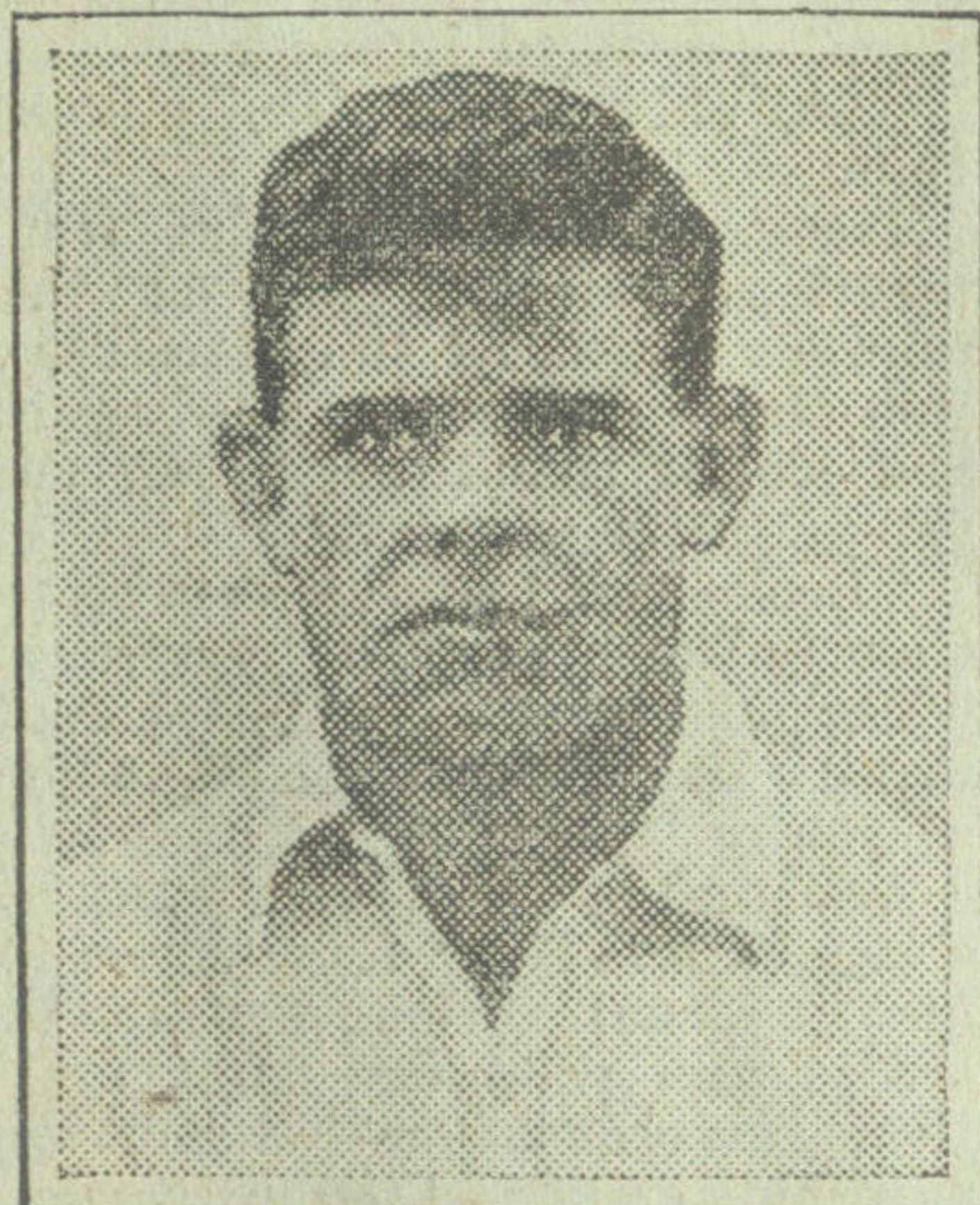
## The Cup Again!

By this time you will know all about the First Round proper of the so-called English Cup competition, but which is really the Football Association Challenge Cup. And on the tenth day of the New Year we shall see the long trail to Wembley definitely entered upon. The New Year is the time when good resolutions are made, and it is quite certain that no end of players individually, and clubs collectively, are just now making up their minds to atone in the New Year for the failures of the old year. And of course the Cup competition is the thing on which new hopes and new ambitions are concentrated. That is one of the big reasons why the coming of the Cup competition has been so ideally arranged; it provides a sort of second chance for the comparative failures of the League campaign.

## A Big Change Coming.

However, we shall have plenty of opportunities to discuss Cup matches and Cup progress between now and the end of April, and for the time being I am just wondering what the year 1925 will bring to football in the general sense. Without exactly taking on the role of "old Moore," I am going to prophesy one big change in the game before the end of 1925, and that big change concerns the offside rule. Believe me, my lads, the signs of the times are pointing in no uncertain way to the fact that the one-back game, as we call it, is on its last legs. For years and years this rule, and the way in which it has been worked by defenders to save their goal, has been a sort of nobody's darling of the game. Spectators have hated it because it interfered with their entertainment and produced too many stoppages in the average match. Attackers have

been annoyed by the offside trap because it has interfered with their schemes of progress, and referees have never had a good word for the rule, because it has so often proved



R. GALLOWAY. (Notts Forest.)

difficult—and at times even impossible—to interpret correctly.

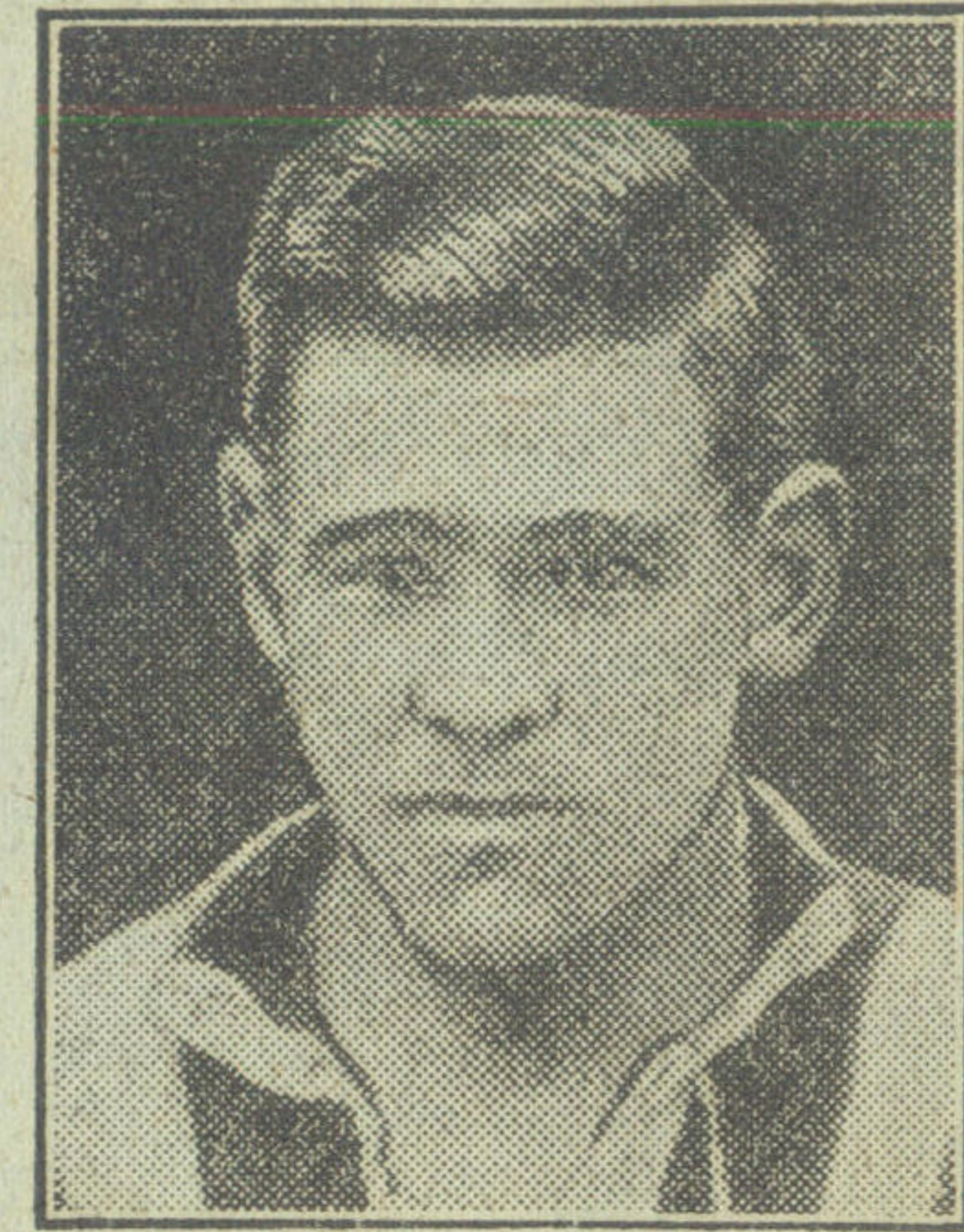
## Ruling for the Onlooker.

But there will be real alteration in the offside provisions before another football season dawns. Mind you, I am not included among the people who regard the offside rule as we now know it as the Alpha and Omega of every football ill. Indeed, I am not at all sure that drastic alterations on the lines I shall mention in a moment will prove such an unmixed blessing as some people appear to think. I have always held that the reason offside tactics have been so successful in big football has been because forwards played with their feet, entirely forgetting that they have been given brains with which to think. As the offside trap became a more and more popular form of defence, I often thought that the time would come when forwards would dodge it more or less automatically. But it seems now clear beyond dispute that they find it an obstacle far too big to be surmounted, and, remembering always that the spectator is a big part of present-day football, the authorities are now convinced of the necessity for alteration in the interests of the watchers.

## The Man Who Started It.

Even now it is not quite clear that the rule-makers of England are convinced of the necessity for alteration; but the representatives of most of the other countries are convinced, and, no matter what attitude England takes up at the next meeting of

the International Board, the offside rule will be altered. And the most likely change—which is a big one, of course—is to reduce the number of defenders necessary between goal and the man who receives the ball from three to two. If I am correct in this assumption, it follows that the old trick, started by Notts Forest players, and perfected by "Billy" McCracken,



J. BROAD. (Everton.)

will be as dead as that Christmas turkey which you had the other day.

## Hunting for Centre-Forwards.

In all the hunting for players which goes on in these days, the most

frantic search concerns men to fill the centre-forward berth. There is scarcely a big club in the country which is completely satisfied with the man who leads the attack, and during the present season there have been well-nigh endless changes and transfers in which centre-forwards have been concerned. If you doubt that the hunt for centres is very real, just look at the experience of Notts Forest since the war. First of all the Nottingham club went to Accrington and paid a big price for Patrick Nelis. He did not satisfy entirely, so then the Forest officials made a trip to Scotland to secure the services of Duncan Walker. This man found that goal-getting in England was, for him, a more difficult business than he had found it in Scotland. So the Forest people went out on another hunt, and recently signed Randolph Galloway from Derby County.

## From Goal-stopping to Goal-scoring

Galloway had a quick rise to fame. When playing as a full-back for the Sunderland Tramways team in the local league he was spotted by Derby County and signed on. He had not been long with the club when Steve Bloomer, that prince of forwards of another day, had an idea that Galloway would make a centre-forward. So to centre-forward he went, and was soon getting goals with the League side in that position.

Writing of the hunt for centre-forwards reminds me that just as Galloway made rather a dramatic change in his position on the field, so did James Broad, who was recently transferred to Everton. In the old days Broad thought that he could best serve his football club in goal, and he was actually a professional goalkeeper at one time. Then there came a day when the centre-forward of his team didn't turn up, and so Jimmy Broad was given the job. And a fine goal-scoring centre-forward he has been ever since.

"Goalie"

(Look out for another splendid footer article next week.)

## WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN ON SATURDAY.

Below will be found our expert's opinion of the probable results of the big games to be played on Saturday, January 3rd. The likely winning side is printed in capitals. Where a draw is anticipated, both clubs are printed in smaller letters.

First Division.	Second Division.	First Division. Scottish League.
Birmingham v. Sunderland.	BLACKPOOL v. Hull City.	Aberdeen v. Falkirk.
BURNLEY v. Preston North End.	Bradford City v. Wolverhampton Wan.	AIRDRIEONANS v. Celtic.
Bury v. Bolton Wanderers.	CHELSEA v. Oldham Athletic.	AYR UNITED v. Hearts.
LEEDS UNITED v. Cardiff City.	CRYSTAL PALACE v. Clapton Orient.	Dundee v. Partick Thistle.
LIVERPOOL v. Arsenal.	DERBY COUNTY v. Portsmouth.	HIBERNIANS v. Kilmarnock.
Newcastle United v. Aston Villa.	MANCHESTER UNITED v. Stoke.	MOTHERWELL v. Queen's Park.
NOTTINGHAM F. v. Manchester City.	Middlesbrough v. Leicester City.	RAITH ROVERS v. Hamilton Acads.
SHEFFIELD UNITED v. Huddersfield T.	Port Vale v. Barnsley.	RANGERS v. Morton.
TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR v. Notts C.	SOUTHAMPTON v. The Wednesday.	ST. MIRREN v. Cowdenbeath.
WEST BROMWICH ALBION v. Everton.	SOUTH SHIELDS v. Fulham.	THIRD LANARK v. St. Johnstone.
WEST HAM UNITED v. Blackburn Rov.	STOCKPORT COUNTY v. Coventry City.	



"Dash it all," said Bunny, "I never was a chap for haggling. Make it a bob, and the penknife's yours."

"Try again, old top." "Don't you want this magnificent silver penknife?" demanded Bunny, in a tone more of sorrow than of anger.

"Nix!" "Well, if you don't want it, don't have it. Don't walk away, Rake—I haven't finished yet. How would you like this ink-eraser? Sixpence."

"I shouldn't like it at all." "As a pal you can have it for three D."

"Take it away and bury it!" The ink-eraser disappeared into Bunny's pocket. But the St. Kit's merchant was not finished yet. He dived a fat hand into another pocket and produced a corkscrew.

"That's what I call a bargain," said Bunny, holding up the corkscrew with an ecstatic expression. "That's only two shillings."

"I hope you'll meet somebody who wants to buy a corkscrew," said Bob, who was beginning to be rather entertained.

"Every fellow needs one, of course," said Bunny. "You can have it for eightpence."

"I'll wait till I feel the need." "I say, Rake, you're jolly hard to please, you know. But I've got a musical-box here. Look—"

"My hat! You are a sort of walking Whiteley's!" said Bob.

"It plays Elgar's 'Pomp and Circumstance' march," said Bunny. "Tinker Smith was delighted with it—Smith's musical, you know. He offered me seven-and-six, but it couldn't be done. But I'm letting you have it for five bob."

"You're not," said Bob, shaking his head.

"I am, really—"

"I may be mistaken," chuckled Bob Rake, "but I really think you're not."

"Well, look at this fountain-pen—"

Bob Rake walked away instead of looking at the new article produced from Bunny's capacious pockets. The fat junior shouted after him.

"Don't you want this splendid fountain-pen, Rake?"

"No thanks," said Bob, over his shoulder.

"Only four bob—"

"Four rats!"

"Look here, you cheeky cad—"

Bob Rake chuckled, and walked off. He was growing fed-up with the St. Kit's merchant, and the many articles he had for sale.

"Rotter!" roared Bunny, in great wrath.

And the fat junior wandered away disconsolately—doubtless seeking another purchaser for his many valuable "articles."

Quite a Good Stunt.

"After you with that match!" Tracy was the speaker.

The nuts of the Fourth were gathered in the top study, after going through the pains and pangs of Milton with Mr. Rawlings. Perhaps they felt that they were entitled to a little relaxation after exploring the beauties of the great blind poet. Their relaxation was after a form that would have earned them a severe caning from Mr. Rawlings if he had beheld it. Probably Dr. Chenies, the reverend Head of St. Kit's, would have almost fainted if he had seen Tracy & Co. smoking cigarettes round the study fire on a Sunday afternoon.

Durance passed the match to Rex Tracy, who lighted his cigarette and scowled over it. Tracy was not in a good temper. His nose was a little swollen, and one of his eyes had a "mouse" under it—relics of the scrap in the study on Saturday evening. He was not feeling at peace with himself or with the universe; and the Head's eloquent sermon that morning in school chapel had had no effect whatever on Tracy—probably because he had slept through it.

So Rex Tracy smoked and scowled, and Durance smoked and smiled cynically, and Verney minor, Howard, and Lumley smoked and looked vacant—as they generally looked whether they were smoking or not.

"That cad's leavin' the study alone, anyhow," Lumley remarked.

Apparently he referred to the breezy youth from "down under."

"He'd better," growled Tracy.

"Just like him to butt in," said Howard.

"Fellows do butt into their own studies," remarked Durance.

Tracy turned on him with a snap.

"You're bound to have something to say for the rotter," he said. "You spoke to him in the dorm last night. You know we're goin' to cut him."

"Yes, rather!" said Verney emphatically.

"Dear men," said Durance. "Let your Uncle Dick address you for your own good. Are we givin' up this study to-morrow to the cheery new captain of the Fourth?"

"No!" hissed Tracy.

"Can you help it?" asked Lumley. "Top study has always belonged to the Form captain. It's the rule. I remember old Carton collared it fast enough when he was elected, and you backed him up, Durance, and you, Tracy. I don't see—"

"Lots of things you don't see," yawned Durance. "The fact is, this is the most comfy study in the Fourth. I don't want to turn out." "I don't, either," said Tracy.

"It's so nice to have a decent study to sock our pals into—dear chaps like these fellows," Durance nodded towards Lumley and company. "The fact is, I think it's time a new rule was made about the top study. Harry Wilmot is Form captain right enough. But he's practically a new fellow at St. Kit's. I rather admire the chap."

"Oh, you do, do you?" snarled Tracy.

Durance nodded with irritating coolness.

"I do! I detest him like poison."

him to our manly bosoms and treat him as one of the happy family." "We're not!" yelled Howard, rubbing his nose.

"We are!"

"You silly ass—"

"You cheeky chump—"

"Hold on, you fellows!" said Tracy. "Dick's got some stunt in his queer brain—you know him. Go ahead, you ass, and tell us what you're thinkin'."

"I'm thinkin' of keepin' the top study," said Durance. "Don't you see? Bob Rake is the heftiest fightin' man who ever happened at St. Kit's. There are fellows in the Shell, and even in the Fifth, who couldn't stand up to him. Under the peculiar cires, Bob Rake is goin' to be an asset to this study. We don't want him here. Granted! But we'd rather have Rake here than turn out and leave the study to Harry Nameless—I mean Wilmot. See the wheeze? We take up Rake an' make much of him—treat him as a pal—and we use him to knock spots off anybody who tries to bag captain's study from us."

Tracy whistled.

"Well, you've got a head on you, Dick," said Lumley admiringly.

"I always said you had."

"Thanks!" yawned Durance.

Tracy wrinkled his brows in thought. He disliked Bob Rake—as he disliked any fellow who was hearty and wholesome and thoroughly decent. But his dislike of Rake was meek and mild compared with his bitter hatred for Harry Wilmot. He would have been willing to greet Bob as a long-lost brother for the sake of a score over the captain of the Fourth.

He nodded his head at last.

"Good man!" he said. "You're no fool, Dick!"

"Sorry I can't say the same for you, old scout," said Durance genially.

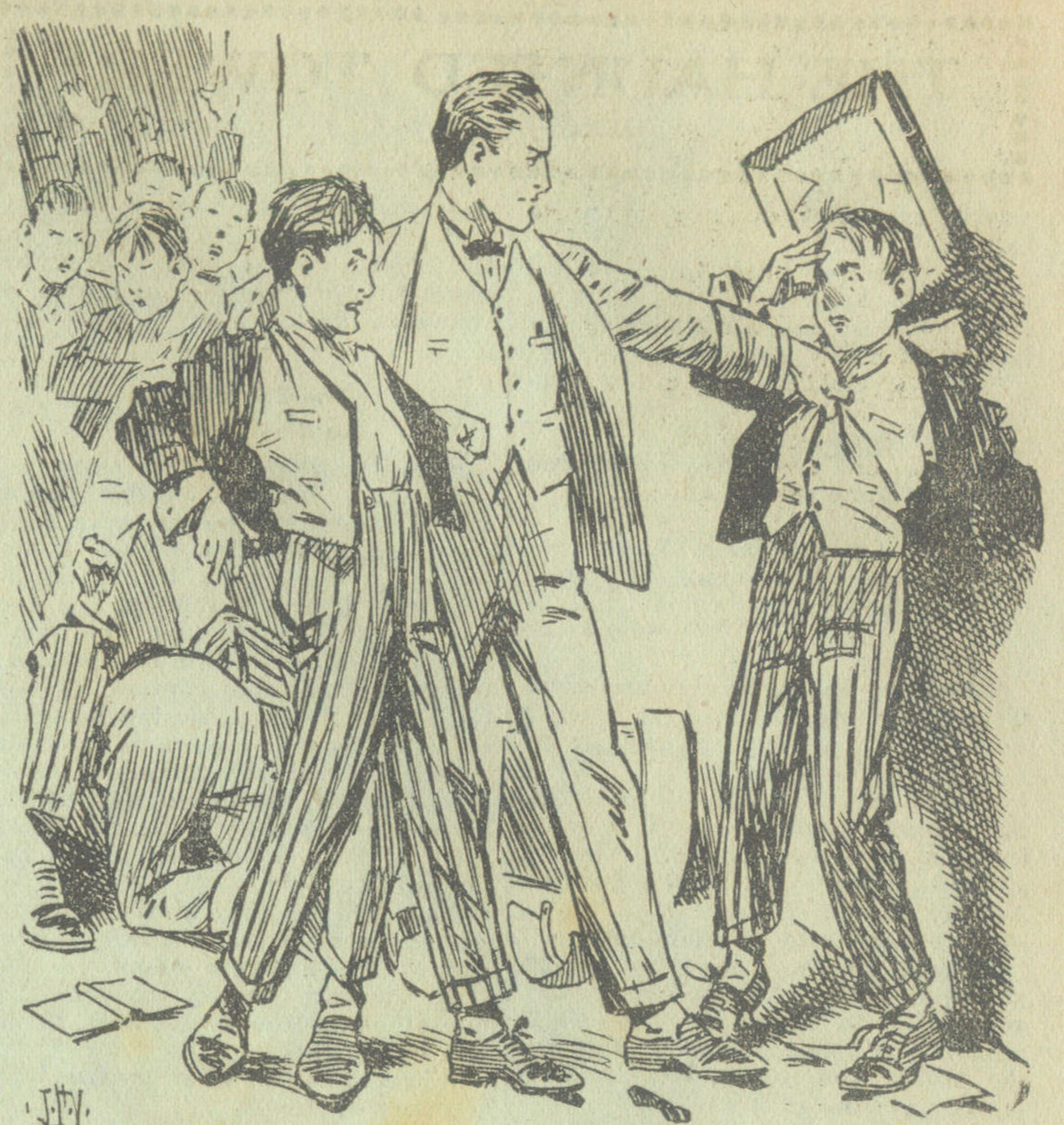
"Oh, don't be an ass! Rake's a new fellow and probably won't know about captain's custom," said Tracy. "If he does we can tell him it's all rot. Stands to reason he'd like to dig in this study, and will resent bein' turned out. We'll rub that in."

"Hard!" grinned Lumley.

"I think very likely he could lick Nameless in a stand-up fight!" continued Tracy. "Anyhow, I'd like to see them at it, confound them both!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Dick's right about Nameless bein' unlikely to call in the prefects," said Tracy thoughtfully. "He's a chap to stand up for himself. If he's chucked out of the study—and kept out—he will have



SEPARATED! Oliphant of the Sixth strode into the top study with a frowning brow. "Stop that fighting!" he roared. And as Harry Wilmot and Durance did not seem to heed the captain of St. Kit's grasped them both, and dragged them apart.

to knuckle under. Form captain can't go whinin' to the prefects about his wrongs, really."

"That's it!" said Durance.

"Bob Rake will be no end of an asset."

"Sort of bulldog to guard the study," said Howard; and the nuts chuckled.

"So that's why you spoke to him in dorm last night," said Tracy. "Of course, I couldn't guess that, Dick!"

Durance flushed.

"That wasn't the reason," he said curtly.

"Then what was it?"

"Nothin' you'd understand," said Durance. "I've thought of this stunt to-day—this mornin', in fact, while the Head was wheezin' to us in chapel. I rather think that with Rake to back us up we can keep the study. It's worth tryin', anyhow."

"Yes, rather!" said Verney.

Tracy's eyes glistened.

"What-ho!" he said. "We'll have the ruffian here, talk to him nicely, stand him a spread, and enlist him fairly on our side. The beast hits frightfully hard—all the better if he's hittin' Wilmot. How are we goin' to set about it, Dick? Give us the programme."

"Easy enough! He's not a suspicious chap—you can see that in his face. Tell him you're sorry for the misunderstandin', and ask him to let bygones be bygones. Make him one of us."

"I'll do it! After all, I can find a chance of takin' it out of him later on," remarked Tracy thoughtfully.

Durance set his lips.

"There's a limit," he said icily.

"Oh, rot!"

"I mean it, Tracy. I'm up against Harry Nameless all the time, an' I want to keep the study, but if Bob Rake is taken in here to be one of our crowd, it's goin' to be honest Injun."

"You're gettin' jolly particular," sneered Tracy.

"Perhaps! But I mean what I say."

Tracy shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh, have it your own way," he said. "Anyhow, we keep the study. Dash it all, if we keep the study through Rake I shall feel quite nice to him. I'll go and look for the beastly prize-fighter now."

"Do!"

And Rex Tracy quitted the top study in search of Bob Rake of the Fourth.

(There will be another long instalment of this ripping school story in next week's BOYS' FRIEND. Don't miss it, nor the topping 20-page Railway Book given FREE with every copy!)

Advertisement for 'Railway Book' featuring a train illustration and promotional text: 'ANOTHER SPLENDID GIFT FOR YOU! This ripping 20-page book is given away FREE with every copy of next Monday's—' 'The Boys' Friend Railway Book' 'Many specially interesting articles and heaps of top-notch photographs. 20 LARGE PAGES!' 'BOYS' FRIEND! Tell ALL your pals about it!' 'Our great new competition on page 422 tells you more about next Monday's splendid FREE gift. Why not win a prize?'



THE HAUNTED TOWER!

(Continued from page 423.)

your stars. But don't you try to call out."

Lovell was not likely to try to call out. He knew that the savage, sinewy hands could have choked out his life in a few seconds.

"You're alone?" hissed the convict.

"Yes," breathed Lovell.

"What's this 'ere place?" muttered Jabez. "Some sort of a ruin?"

"Yes."

"Is there a 'ouse 'andy?"

"Yes; the other side of the trees."

"That's where you come from, is it?"

"Yes."

"And they're all awake, are they, p'raps coming 'ere arter you?"

Jabez's sinewy fingers groped on Lovell's throat again.

"No!" panted Lovell. "No! Nobody knows you're here. I—I came from my bed-room window. There's a balcony and steps to the garden. Nobody knows."

The savage grip relaxed again.

"That's all the better for you!" muttered Jabez. "S'elp me, I've a good mind to swing for you. So I will, if you make a sound. Tell me the truth, you young 'ound. You say you got out of a winder?"

"Yes!" panted the helpless Rook-wooder.

"Leave it open behind you?"

"Of course!"

"I reckon you'll 'ave left footmarks in this 'ere snow." The man was muttering to himself. "Yes, I reckon so. I reckon I shall be able to find that winder."

Lovell shuddered.

"Not a sound! I'll—I'll twist your neck if you open your mouth. I'm arter grub! I'm starving! I'm going to chance it! And p'raps something else—something in the way of swag, I reckon. This 'ere is a chance for me. Quiet!"

The grasp on Lovell's throat silenced the shout he tried to utter, as he realised what his rashness had done. The way was open into Mr. Silver's house to this thief and ruffian. Robbery, with any amount of violence that was necessary to the purpose, was in Jabez's mind now. Lovell, heedless of his own danger, tried to shout, but only a moan came forth, as the sinewy fingers choked it back.

In utter, helpless horror the Rook-wood junior gave himself up for lost. But savage and ferocious as he was, the convict evidently did not want to "swing" for Lovell, as he expressed it. A bunch of rags was jammed into the junior's mouth, gagging him. Then, helpless in the man's powerful grasp, Lovell felt himself bound, by the wrists and the ankles, with strips from the convict's rags.

The grasp on him was suddenly released, and the dark shadow of the convict vanished.

He heard the soft footfalls, then there was silence.

Lovell writhed madly in his bonds.

He knew where the man was gone—following the track the reckless junior had left in the snow, a sure guide to the window that had been left open. Robbery, violence, perhaps murder! The convict, desperate as a wild beast at bay, was likely to stick at little in his endeavour to obtain food, clothes, money. This chance, which might mean escape and safety for him, was his last chance. Lovell realised it, and he struggled like a madman to free himself, to give warning before it was too late.

But Jabez had done his work too well for that. The tight knots held the schoolboy helpless. The gag jammed into his mouth defied all his efforts. Only a faint moaning came from him as he twisted and writhed on the stone flags.

And the convict, knowing that he was safe, was picking his way, silently, cautiously, towards the sleeping house, famished and desperate, a wild beast in the form of a man. Lovell pictured it, and he struggled,

and struggled, furiously, frantically, and still he struggled in vain, and the silence of the winter night remained unbroken by the shout he strove to utter.

The 7th Chapter. Laid by the Heels.

Harry Wharton smiled faintly.

He was still at his window, hidden in the shadows as he sat there, looking out into the dim night. It was not only the aching bruise on his head that kept him wakeful and restless. He was thinking of many things. Matters of late had not been fortunate for the captain of the Greyfriars Remove. He felt no desire to sleep, and he was a little interested, too, to see Arthur Edward Lovell return from his visit to the haunted tower, crestfallen, for Wharton had little doubt that Lovell had fancied the light.

Now he was returning. A figure had appeared from the shadow of the dark trees, a figure about Lovell's size, stealing quietly towards the house, along the track that Lovell had left in the snow.

Wharton smiled as he watched the approaching figure.

But after a minute or two the smile died from his lips, and he started, knitting his brows and staring at the approaching figure intently.

Why was Lovell creeping along in that stealthy way? Why was he watching as he came along the track in the snow? Surely he knew the way back to his own window? And the figure, though much about Lovell's size, seemed rather larger than Lovell as it came nearer. It came nearer and clearer, and Harry Wharton discerned that it was clad in tattered rags. It was not Lovell!

Then he knew.

"Jabez Wilson!"

What Lovell had found at the old tower, whether he had found anything, Wharton did not know. But he knew that this tattered figure, scarcely larger than a schoolboy's, was the figure of the ruffian he had fought with the previous day—"Little Wilson," the garrotter! Lovell was not returning the way he had come. It was the escaped convict who was coming in his place!

Wharton's heart beat, and he breathed hard. But he did not lose his coolness for a moment.

The ruffian must have come on Lovell, must have learned something from him, for he was heading direct for the balcony, the open window-shutters. His object was plain—to enter the house, to plunder. Wharton's face set grimly.

At a time when he was "up against" it, on ill terms with his own friends, kind-hearted Jimmy Silver had asked him to stay for Christmas, and Jimmy's father had welcomed him hospitably. Now there was a chance of repaying Jimmy's kindness and Mr. Silver's hospitality. The danger of it mattered nothing. Wharton was glad of the chance.

He moved quietly to the fire-grate, and picked up the poker—a heavy one. He gripped it firmly in his hand and stepped back to the window, keeping in cover of the curtains.

There was a faint sound on the balcony, of feet scraping in snow. The Greyfriars junior peered out, and the tattered figure of the convict was black against the starlight.

The ruffian was hesitating.

He had expected to find the shutters of one window open, and he had found two open windows. He was standing with bent head, listening—like a wild beast for the hunters.

Wharton, listening intently, heard the faint sounds as the desperate man stepped into Lovell's room from the balcony.

With a cool, set face, Wharton stepped out of his own room, out into the powdery snow of the balcony, and along to Lovell's window.

There was a sound of movement in the room.

From the darkness within Harry Wharton caught the glint of two startled, savage eyes glaring at him as he shadowed the open window. He heard a panting breath.

There was a muttered exclamation.

What happened next came like a lightning flash. It was fortunate for the Greyfriars junior, in that wild moment, that his heart was stout, and his nerve good.

Like a leaping tiger, the tattered figure of the convict came springing from the window. He was discovered. He was cornered within walls, and he leaped out like a tiger from a trap, his only thought escape. His savage face, his glinting eyes, his clutching hands came at Wharton like some dreadful vision from the darkness.

The junior reeled back in the ferocious grip.

He reeled, with clutching hands at his throat. But as he reeled he struck, and the heavy iron crashed on the convict's head.

Half-stunned, wholly dazed, the convict sprawled helplessly, and the next moment Wharton's knee was on him, pinning him to the sill, and the iron poker was lifted over his glaring face.

"Keep still, or I'll brain you!"

And the savage face covered from the lifted weapon.

"Help!" Wharton's ringing voice rang and echoed along the balcony and into the rooms. "Help! Thieves! Help!"

Jimmy Silver, in pyjamas, heedless of the cold, was out on the balcony in a twinkling. Raby and Newcome were not long after him. The house was in a buzz now. Mr. Silver's voice was heard calling. Startled servants were shouting. Lights blazed up all over the building.

Help—ample help was quick to come, but it was not needed. Jabez Wilson was already a prisoner in the hands of Jimmy Silver & Co. and Harry Wharton, and while the Rook-wooders held him helpless, the Greyfriars junior tore strips from his rags and bound his hands behind his back. By the time Mr. Silver arrived on the spot Jabez Wilson, garrotter and convict, was a bound and helpless prisoner.

Police-constable Blumpy, roused by the telephone, came tramping joyfully through the darkness and snow to take possession of the man who was wanted, and who had so long defied capture. Jabez, filling the echoes with profanity, was handed over to him, and glad enough were Jimmy Silver's household to see the last of him. But before that Arthur Edward Lovell had been rescued from his bonds in the haunted tower, and had rejoined his friends—a little crestfallen perhaps, but overjoyed to hear of the part the Greyfriars guest had played, and of the capture of the convict.

"Good man!" said Lovell. "Good man! Jolly lucky Wharton was here for Christmas, Jimmy—what?"

"What-ho!" said Jimmy Silver heartily.

But by morning Arthur Edward Lovell, having reflected on the matter, had come somehow to the conclusion that the convict's capture was, in reality, chiefly due to him, Arthur Edward. Would it have happened if he hadn't seen the light in the tower, and if he hadn't gone out to explore, and if—and if— There were many ifs. While not belittling at all the part Harry Wharton had played, Lovell could not help feeling that he, Arthur Edward, had really done the trick, so to speak; and, feeling that this was so, he was bound to point out the facts to his comrades.

Whereupon Jimmy Silver & Co. answered Lovell in the plain language natural to the Fourth Form at Rook-wood, and Harry Wharton smiled cheerily, quite willing to let Arthur Edward bag all the satisfaction he could from his adventure in the Haunted Tower.

THE END.

(Simply top-hole! "All Square!"—next week's long story of Jimmy Silver & Co. of Rookwood School. Don't miss it, nor the superb 20-page Railway Book given FREE with every copy of the BOYS' FRIEND!)

IN YOUR EDITOR'S DEN



Your Editor is always pleased to hear from his readers upon any subject. Address your letters to: Editor, "Boys' Friend," The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

RINGING UP THE NEW YEAR.

There is a good old message to all, which goes along with the present boom number of the BOYS' FRIEND. But, though old, this message to wish everybody a Happy New Year is also young—young as 1925, about which we have great hopes. A prosperous New Year then in all the traffic of life, in work, in sport, and the rest of the programme which lies ahead.

THIRTY YEARS ON!

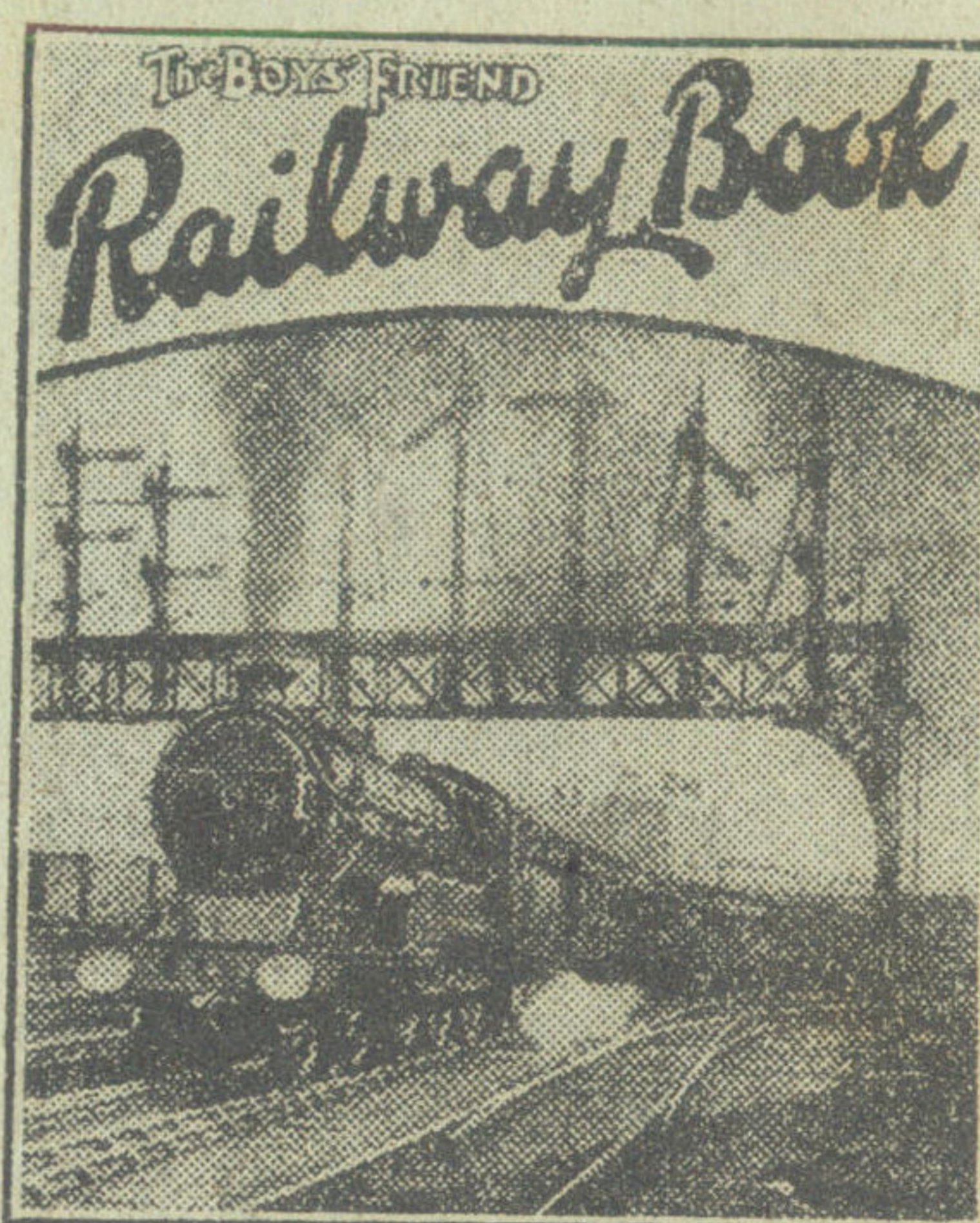
It is well to remember that in a few brief weeks the BOYS' FRIEND reaches its thirtieth birthday. I shall have more to say about this anniversary a bit later on. It will suffice now if I point out that the old "Green 'Un" has more than kept level in the race. It has slipped away past the foremost. What's more we are going on to bigger triumphs.

THAT FREE BOXING BOOK!

Be sure you get this week's magnificent Boxing Book! Tell your pals of the fine chance offered this week. Whisper in the ear of the first chum you meet that our new serial: "The Lion at Bay!" is a real big affair. It has got the rare old fighting spirit. There may be carpings and criticisms and cavillings, but when peril comes these get swept into the dustbin. "The Lion at Bay!" It's a tale of immense import, and it gets you from the start.

A RAILWAY BOOK!

Nobody must miss next Monday's prime Railway Book. This is simply fascinating. No need to work up an interest in the iron road. We have all got that. But the new Railway Book will satisfy our curiosity concerning lots of matters. Here is a small reproduction of the cover, to impress it on your memory!



This book contains interesting articles about locomotives, and signals and signalling, while there are heaps of first-class photographs showing in vivid style all the latest types and improvements. You will read here about the ceaseless vigilance which rules in railway affairs. New ideas are always being taken up. There is a spirit about the iron way as full of motive power as a crack engine on a trunk route.

THE LION'S TALE!

Next week's instalment of the war serial is inspiring. It is calculated to sweep away any jaded feelings. It gets you back to things which are worth while. Those things spell enthusiasm. Keith and Don are in it up to their necks, and the telling is good all through. Mark the thrilling incident of the wrecked pipe-plane, and the savagery of the Green Army.

"SAVED FROM THE SACRIFICE!"

Look out, too, for a tremendous yarn of Dick Dorrington & Co., of the Bombay Castle. Duncan Storm will see you through a network of perils in which the urbane Lal Tata is deeply concerned.

"ALL SQUARE!"

Cheery young Jimmy Silver figures in this tip-top Rookwood story for Monday next. The "Co." are in it, too, naturally, and there are many mighty happenings at the Priory, the home of "Uncle James."

"THE CAPTAIN OF THE FOURTH!"

This is grand news! See Frank Richards' serial of St. Kit's in the new issue. Then you will understand all about it. Bob Rake, the new fellow, has a big part to play. So has the genial Bunny Bootles, and he plays up jolly well as the mirthful stand-by.

ANOTHER GREAT COMPETITION!

There are topping prizes to be won. You know BOYS' FRIEND prizes are the best. The subject of the next competition is the Grand Free Book to be given away in a fortnight's time. Circulate the good news.

"ON GOING OUT TO WORK!"

That's the subject of "The Scoutmaster's" new "Talk." It tells you what you want to know. It eases the start wonderfully if you know the ropes. "The Scoutmaster" is a thundering good guide.

THE GOODS FROM "GOALIE!"

That learned footer expert has another cheery chat next week, and lets one into several interesting secrets. Among my reminders this time must come a reference to this week's superb "Magnet" Plate of a famous warship. Another thing to be mentioned is the fact that the "Holiday Annual" is still on sale, but that splendid book will soon be "all out," so make haste to acquire a copy.

BY THE WAY.

Back numbers of the BOYS' FRIEND containing Free Books on sports and hobbies can be obtained by ordering them from your newsagent or bookshop, price 2d. each. If you have any difficulty send to the Back Number Dept., the Amalgamated Press, Bear Alley, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. If forwarded direct, stamps to cover postage should be enclosed.

Your Editor.

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