

THE Boys' Herald 1d

A Healthy Paper for Manly Boys.

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EVERY THURSDAY—ONE PENNY.

WEEK ENDING FEBRUARY 17, 1906.

A Tale of
St. Basil's School.

TRUE AS A DIE.

By Clever
HENRY ST. JOHN.

(The opening chapters, specially re-written, will be found on the next page.)

Huggins Does His Duty — A Terrible Mistake — The Lonely Prisoner.

"I WONDER if Mr. Withers has been into the class-room?" the Head thought to himself. "I cannot understand it—such a lapse as this is is inexplicable! I can only hope that the boys have not seen him. I can—dear, dear—"

There was a tap on the door, which instantly opened, and Huggins, looking more than usually smug, walked in.

"Good-afternoon, Dr. Headford," he said, making a pretty bow. "No doubt you will wonder at my presence here, but I feel that my duty obliged me to come and make you acquainted with the unseemly doings of the Fourth Class!"

"Indeed!" said the Head blankly.
"Yes, indeed!" said Huggins, with a smirk. "My Aunt Sophia always instilled it into my mind never to shirk my duty, even though that duty might lead to unpleasant consequences!"

"Yes, yes, of course," said the Head. "Well, what is it? What do you want?"

"A scene of unexampled—"

"Please be brief," said the Head, "and do not attempt to use words that you imperfectly understand."

"I do assure you, my dear sir—"

"Don't call me 'my dear sir'!" said the Head angrily. "It savours of impertinence!"

"Oh, really?" said Huggins. "If no impertinence is intended?"

"Yes, yes! Well, what is it? Good gracious me, Huggins, I never knew anyone so fond of his own voice! Well, what is it, now?"

The Head broke off again as the door once more opened.

"Oh, dad— Sorry"—Molly Headford paused on the threshold—"I did not know that you were engaged! I will come—"

"Pray," said Huggins—"pray do not let me drive you away. I assure you that I will not detain your father for any length of time. I have heard of you, and, I may say, I have always heard you spoken of in terms of the highest compliment and—"

"Hold your tongue, Huggins!" roared the Head. "Great goodness, boy—if you are a boy! Sit down!"

"Oh, thank you, sir; but the young lady, you perceive, is still standing!" And Huggins waved his hand in the direction of the astonished girl. "I trust that I have a sufficiency of good manners not to—"

"Sit down!" roared the Head.

"Oh, indeed; as you command—"

Huggins sat down with a pained look on his face.

"Molly, my dear, come in and close the door after you. I have not the faintest idea what Huggins wants here, but it is nothing of a particularly private nature, I suppose."

Molly Headford came in, and looked at her father with an expression on her face that clearly asked, "What is it?"

"If you will sit down, my dear, for a few moments, until I have finished with Huggins—"

"Oh, pray do allow me to offer you my chair!"

said Huggins, jumping up. "We have been having lovely weather, have we not? I think—"

"Huggins, I don't know whether this is natural to you, or whether you are endeavouring to be humorous? In either event, your conduct is offensive!"

"If I offend, let me at once assure you, sir, that nothing is farther from my wish! On every occasion I endeavour to conduct myself with that propriety and dignity that is befitting a young gentleman! My dear aunt—"

The Head struck his desk a violent blow which made Huggins jump.

"One moment, sir," he cried sternly. "Your aunt, I have no doubt, is an exceedingly estimable woman. I am prepared to believe that her precepts are admirable; but as my time is very fully occupied, I do not feel that I am able to afford myself the intense pleasure of listening to you on the subject. I wish now to hear your business here with me, so that you



Crack! Crack! A horseman was laying vigorously about the ruffians who were attacking the schoolboys. Before Pender and his gang could escape, Mr. Herbert had wrought terrible havoc with his whip. (See this week's instalment.)

TRUE AS A DIE.

(Continued from the previous page.)

may retire at the earliest moment. Proceed at once. Say what you have to say, and go!

"I can well understand," said Huggins, "that you have but little leisure, so I apologise for my intrusion both to yourself and to this young lady."

Huggins turned and put his heels together and made a polite bow, which Molly acknowledged by turning red in the face and thrusting her handkerchief into her mouth.

"Ever since I can remember," Huggins went on, "it has always been instilled in my mind, by my aunt—"

"Go on!" said the Head hopelessly. "Go on, Huggins!"

"To ever speak the truth; in fact, to use a common and vulgar expression, to speak the truth, and shun the—ahem—"

He put his hand over his mouth and coughed, and turned apologetically towards Molly.

"Huggins," said the Head, in an exasperated voice, "I will give you two minutes! If in that time you have not stated your business you will go without unburdening yourself! Now, sir!"

"My fellow-pupils of the Fourth Form are not quite so gentlemanly as I should have liked," said Huggins. "On many occasions I have noticed things that have pained me—behaviour which can only be termed vulgar! Indeed, sometimes so vulgar as to be extremely offensive. Wilshin, in particular, is extremely coarse. Earle and Bimby, though of kinder dispositions, are also inclined to vulgarity! But do not think, sir, that I have come to complain of these boys. Oh, dear, no! I say that, unfortunately, the boys with whom I am obliged to associate are for the most part vulgar, and very often offensive! But in this particular instance—"

"One minute and a half, Huggins!" said the Head, looking at his watch.

"In this particular instance I say, sir, that I have not come to lay a complaint against my fellow-pupils, but against another person who, I deeply regret to say, is in a state of inebriety, and certainly is not—"

"T. at will do, Huggins! I have no wish to hear any more," said the Head. "You can go."

"But, sir, would it not be well for you to take some steps in his—"

"Go out of the room, sir, at once, and don't presume to dictate to me!" shouted the Head. "Nothing is farther from my wish; nothing—"

Tap, tap! The door opened, and Toogood put his head in.

"I got him into bed, sir, but a rare old rumpus he kicked up! Bless you, I had to fair tear his clothes off! But there he is, sir, and lest he should get up again, I've took the liberty of taking his clothes away and locking the door on him, sir!"

"Yes, yes, Toogood. This is very worrying; terribly—"

"Do I understand you to say," said Huggins, "that you have put that inebriated person into a bed?"

"Love us!" said Toogood; "if this ain't a oddity!"

"I say," repeated Huggins, "do I understand you to say—"

"Huggins, if I hear another word from you—go, sir, go out of the room! Do you hear me? I will not be pestered with you!"

"So long as I know that that person is not in a position to offend—"

"Put that youth outside the door, Toogood!" said the Head.

Toogood took Huggins by his shoulders and rushed him out. Outside in the passage there was a scuffle and a dismal yell, and then Toogood came back.

"I've put him out, sir. I never see anything like it! Where was it bred and reared, if I might make so bold?"

"It does not matter, Toogood," said the Head. "He is not—not quite like the other boys; early training; that sort of thing. Well, you say you have put Mr. Withers to bed—"

"Put Mr. Withers to bed!" cried Miss Molly. "Oh, father!"

"My dear, don't interrupt. I am really getting seriously annoyed with all these interruptions," said the Head. "I am much put out. Mr. Withers is unfortunately not very well."

"That's it, sir," said Toogood. "He have been took serious bad. You wouldn't believe the trouble I had getting him upstairs, and the names he called me! To think—"

"Oh, dear!" said Molly. "Poor Mr. Withers!"

"I was thinking it was poor old Toogood," said Toogood; "but that, as the saying is, is a matter of opinion. Well, sir, the struggle I had, to be sure, to get him to go to bed and sleep it—that is to say, sir, to go to sleep! He fair fought me over it—struggled like a lionatic, and said, sir, as how we was mad—me and you, begging your pardon! Mad, sir, and—"

Tap, tap! Again the door opened, and again Huggins appeared.

"How dare you!" roared the Head. "How dare you come back, when—"

"I have returned," said Huggins, "because I believed it my duty to inform you, sir, that this person—he pointed at Toogood—is guilty of speaking a deliberate untruth!"

"Me!" gasped Toogood. "Me guilty of deliberate speaking—"

"I say that this person has intentionally misled you, sir! The creature is not in his bed, but is—"

"Then he have got out! And, believe me, sir, I took his clothes away," said Toogood. "He must have got out of the windy and shinned down the rain-water pipe! I never see such a man, never in my—"

"He has his clothes on!" said Huggins. "You have deceived your master! The person is now in the Fourth Form class-room, sir, and he is singing a song! If you will have the kindness to listen you will probably hear the offensive sound!"

Huggins paused. From afar there came the sound of muffled music.

"Well, it's a liker to me!" said Toogood.

The Head went to the door hastily. "It will cease," he said briefly, "at once! Toogood, come with me! This is beyond anything I have yet suffered here! Come!"

The Head strode down the passage and flung open the door of the Fourth class-room. From within there came the sounds of melody.

"Am I not right?" inquired Huggins.

"Hold your tongue!" said the Head.

"Good gracious me, what does this mean?" he gasped. "Who is this person?"

Sergeant Benson was sitting on Mr. Withers's overturned desk in the middle of the room, a short clay pipe in one hand with which he was beating time, while he roared at the top of his voice a strange ditty with an unrecognisable tune.

"Stop! Stop, instantly!" cried the Head. "Who are you, sir? Are you not General Greatorex's manservant? You boys, back to your places, every one of you!"

The Head stalked into the room, followed by Toogood and Huggins.

"This is the person who—" began Huggins.

"Silence!"

"Now what's the matter?" said Benson in an aggrieved voice. "There's no peace nowhere!"

"What are you doing in here?"

"Me! Setting—jest setting down," said Benson, "and singin', to pass the time pleasant. I'm not one to bear no ill-will against no one, and now I've got over my scrap with Boneyparty, why, I'm as happy as a sandboy!"

"You will rise and go out of this room and house instantly, and I shall communicate with General Greatorex on the subject! I suppose you know who I am, fellow?"

"Know who you are, feller? Bless me, so I do! I thought you was some old lady in the petticoats at first, but now I do believe you are old what's-his-name, the master here."

"Yes, I am 'old what's-his-name, the master here!" said the Head grimly. "And you have my permission to take your departure at once!"

Benson shambled to his feet.

"No offence meant, and none taken," he said unsteadily. "I looked in as I were passing by, jest to see how things were, and—like that—and I dropped in and give 'em a song, seeing they was low-speritted; and in comes Old Daddy Longnose and kicks up a rumpus, and me and him had a bit of an up-an'-a-downer!"

"You had no right here," said the Head; "you will go at once! I am ashamed of you all, allowing this man to come here and make such an exhibition of himself!"

"Exactly!" said Huggins. "I was perfectly sure that you would—"

"Hold your tongue, Huggins, and go back to your place! Now, sir, you go at once! Toogood, see this person off the premises!"

"Well, it was like this," said Benson argumentatively; "I were passin' by, and I thought I'd look in—"

"Put that person outside, Toogood!"

"Oh, don't worry about me!" said Benson, scrambling towards the door. "I know when I'm in the wrong, I do, and what I've got to say on the matter is this here. I were passin' by, and I thought I would drop in and—"

"Outside!" said Toogood.

He took Benson by the arm firmly but gently, and propelled him towards the door. At the door Benson made a desperate stand for a moment.

"I should like to explain," he bellowed; "it were like this. I was passin' by, and I thought I would drop—"

"You come out of it!" said Toogood.

"Now," said the Head sternly, "I wish for an explanation. How did that man come in here? One of you boys open the windows, please; the smell of spirits is positively sickening!"

Wilshin opened the window.

"You hear?" said the Head. "An explanation!"

"Allow me to explain the matter, sir," said Huggins. "I was a witness to the whole affair."

"Sit down, you—your howling ass!" growled Bimby, under his breath.

"No, indeed; I will not sit down; nor am I the rude name that you called me!" said Huggins.

"Who called you a rude name, Huggins?" said the Head.

"Bimby did, sir. It is not for the first time, and I object!"

"Yes, yes! Well?"

"The person," said Huggins, "came to the window and tapped. I was naturally astonished, as I do not remember having ever seen him before. His features—"

"It does not matter about his features. Go on, sir!" said the Head.

"Well, sir, as I was saying, this person came to the window. And Bimby and—Ow, ow, ow! Dear me—dear me!"

"What can the matter be with you, Huggins? What is it?"

"I have been brutally kicked upon the leg, sir," said Huggins, whimpering. "Bimby kicked me most brutally, and in the most—"

"Bimby," said the Head in a voice of thunder, "stand up on the form, so that for the present you will be out of harm's way, and also as a reminder to me that I have to give you a caning presently."

Bimby and Earle opened the window and invited the man in; in fact, they assisted him, said Huggins, snivelling. "They helped him in, and then a most disgraceful scene took place. The man seated himself at the master's desk and began to sing in a really dreadful voice. Then the master, Mr. Withers, came into the room, and ordered him to leave. He would not; and, indeed, began to fight with Mr. Withers. I understood that Mr. Withers came to tell you about it, but I presume he did not, and—"

"That will do. Sit down, Huggins. It seems that you, Bimby, and you, Earle, are in the main responsible for this disgraceful business. Both of you will go at once to my study and wait there till I come."

Bimby got down from his perch on the form and went out, and Earle followed him.

"I shall have to kill it," Bimby muttered. "It has got to be done."

Earle groaned.

"We've been a pair of silly asses!" he said. "It serves us right!"

"Oh, of course it does!" said Bimby. "I am delighted to think I am going to be flogged. You can't think how pleased I am. Shut up; you make me tired, Earle junior. As for that—that Huggins—"

The Head stayed for a few minutes to address a few remarks to the rest of the Form then he went out.

The Head himself was feeling anything but happy. The treatment Mr. Withers had been subjected to worried him. Mr. Withers, he could now plainly understand, was entirely guiltless of any ill-doing. He had been assaulted by that wretched creature Benson, and had come to complain about him. The Head shuddered.

"It proves how ill-advised one is to jump at conclusions," he muttered. "Now I really did think that Mr. Withers was—well, not sober, and—and—well, the position is one of extreme awkwardness."

The Head went upstairs and tapped gently on Mr. Withers's bed-room door.

"Mr. Withers!" he said mildly. "Mr. Withers, may I speak to you?"

No answer.

The Head tapped again.

"Mr. Withers," he said, a little more loudly. "I should like a few words with you."

"The few words that we have had are quite sufficient," said a voice from within. "I have been subjected to the grossest ill-usage. I have been insulted grossly and vilely. But I will have redress. You understand, sir. Dr. Headford, I say I will have redress!"

"To redress? Oh, certainly! Yes, I remember. Toogood took your clothes. I will

go and find him. Meanwhile, have the kindness to open the door. I should like to speak to you. There has been a mistake. I cannot tell you how grieved—"

"Your grief will not affect me, sir, and I refuse to open the door. I have not got the key. I have been locked in like a common malefactor by your orders—your orders, Dr. Headford!" Mr. Withers screamed through the keyhole.

"If you will allow me—"

"I won't! No mere words will wipe out this stain!" shrieked Mr. Withers. "I have been subjected to the grossest ill-usage, flung down, my clothes simply rent from me, thrust into bed, locked in, and now—now you come here and tell me there has been a mistake!"

"My dear sir—"

"Don't tell me!" shouted Mr. Withers. "Don't 'dear sir' me! I am not a passionate man, but this is beyond even my endurance. The worm will turn, sir. I demand that you instantly unlock this door and return me my clothing, in order that I may dress myself!"

"Yes—yes, of course," said the Head soothingly. "I will go at once and see about it."

"I shall write to the governors of the school!" Mr. Withers yelled through the keyhole. "I will detail to them the gross ill-usage and indignities I have suffered—"

"My dear Mr. Withers, if you will permit me—"

"Ne, never—never!" said Mr. Withers. "Never, sir, while I have breath in my body!"

"But, my dear—"

"No, I will hear nothing—absolutely nothing! I have been treated as I would not treat a dog. I would not tear the clothes from the body of a dog and hurl him into bed. I say that I will listen to nothing! I am wounded in—"

"Believe me, my dear sir, allow—"

"Nothing of the kind. I say, let me out at once! Open this door!"

"Yes, yes, I will do so. I will get the key and your clothes from Toogood. He exceeded his authority. I will give him a month's notice!"

The Head rushed off downstairs to search for Toogood, but there was no sign of him to be seen. Toogood, as a matter of fact, had gone off with Benson, forgetting all about Mr. Withers.

The Head rushed frantically up and down, but no Toogood was to be seen. Then he dashed to his study.

"You two boys go—go and look for Toogood! Tell him I want him instantly. You hear me? Fly off at once, search everywhere! Tell him I must have the key!"

Earle and Bimby needed no second bidding. But Toogood was not to be found, and, meanwhile, Mr. Withers, with his bed-clothes dragged around him, was striding up and down the floor of his room, uttering threats against everyone and anyone at the top of his voice.

"Be patient," said the Head through the keyhole. "Mr. Withers, I implore you to be patient. All will be well. Toogood has been sent for."

"All will be well, will it? Never!" said Mr. Withers. "My sufferings! Think of the crushing blow at my self-esteem! To be put to bed; to—Oh, I am beside myself!"

"My dear sir—"

"No soft words will undo the wrong that I have suffered."

"Mr. Withers, you have my sincere—"

"I don't want them; I won't listen. I want nothing but my clothes."

"It is very unfortunate," said the Head. "I cannot understand where Toogood has gone! Dear me—" He paused. There was the sound of tramping feet from below. The boys had come home from the football field. "Perhaps it is Toogood," the Head thought, and dashed off to the top of the stairs. But it was not Toogood.

"He will be here very soon now," said the Head, going back to the keyhole. "I am sure he will be here very soon!"

A harsh laugh from within answered him.

"Dear, dear, dear!" muttered the Head. "This is most trying, Mr. Withers. I say, he will be here very soon."

"Hullo! What's up? Oh, beg your pardon, sir! I didn't know it was you," said Cobb. "I thought—"

"Yes, yes," said the Head, "exactly. No need, no need at all."

"What the dickens is up?" wondered Cobb. "Anything I can do, sir?" he asked pleasantly.

"Do! Certainly not! Go away—nothing at all!"

"What did you say?" asked Mr. Withers from within.

"I did not speak—I mean, I did not speak to you—to Cobb—to—Go away, Cobb. This

(Continued on the next page.)

The First Chapters Specially Re-written for New Readers.

The Coming of the New Boy.

EVEN before Malcolm Warrington made his appearance at the famous old school of St. Basil's, Mr. Withers, the deservedly unpopular master of the Fourth Form, learnt something about the new boy's family history, which, with his usual mean and ungenerous spirit, he meant to use for the purpose of making Malcolm's lot an unhappy one.

Through reading a letter not intended for his eyes, he gathered that years before Warrington's father—who had held a high position in the Army—had been condemned on a charge of treason, and banished from his native land. Now, although many believed Colonel Ian Warrington guiltless of the charge brought against him, his innocence had never been proved. Malcolm was quite unaware of all this, believing his father to be on service in India.

Friends and Foes.

Of course, Malcolm was sure that the charge could not be true; still, he was greatly upset.

The bullying and sneers Malcolm endured at the hands of his thoughtless schoolfellows were lightened by the friendship of Harry Belton, the school captain, a kind-hearted young fellow, who knew all about Warrington and the unhappy cloud hanging over his father. Besides Belton, Malcolm also found he had temporary friends in Arthur Earle and Bimby, while those who made themselves his enemies were Wilshin, Gerring, Peters, and Cartwright.

Huggins Creates Amusement.

However, for a time attention was directed away from Warrington by the arrival of another new boy, Wilberforce Huggins, who hitherto has been petted and spoiled by indulgent maiden aunts. The peculiarities of Huggins provided the

other boys with a great deal of amusement, especially as the innocent-minded youth set his back up against Wilshin, for whom he had conceived a cordial dislike. In Malcolm, however, the simple lad found a staunch supporter.

The Three-cornered Brotherhood.

But the fact that Warrington rescued Benson, the servant of General Greatorex, from drowning quickly changed the attitude of the better spirits of the school towards him. By Earle, Bimby, and Eldred he was invited to join their Brotherhood of the Three Corners—seemingly a great honour.

The New Paper.

It was unfortunate, as matters eventually turned out, when Bimby suggested that the Brotherhood should bring out a paper of its own. The idea was a good one, certainly, and met with instant support. Accordingly, the paper was brought out. But it happened to

contain many little bits of information concerning Mr. Withers, Wilshin, and the rest of his crew, which were far from complimentary.

Its First and Last Appearance.

Unfortunately, Wilshin succeeded in getting hold of the paper. He handed it immediately to Mr. Withers, who, outraged at the personal remarks concerning himself made therein, at once took it to the Head. Very few minutes after, Dr. Headford made his appearance in the school-room with the paper in his hand.

The consequences which followed this escapade need not be detailed here; anyway, they were of rather a painful nature. Things, however, were livened up by the appearance of Sergeant Benson on the scene. Unwittingly, Benson was the means of getting Mr. Withers accused of taking more drink than was good for him.

The result of this is told in this week's instalment.

(Now continue on the front page.)

is a private matter between Mr. Withers and myself."

"Oh, ah!" said Cobb. "Yes, I beg pardon. I—" he went on wonderingly.

"I say, Mr. Withers, that ere long Toogood will return with the key. I will then—" "Now, then, who's that spying through the keyhole?" demanded a voice, and at the same moment the Head received a resounding slap that made him jump into the air.

"How dare—" he cried.

"Oh—I—I—" Hacker gasped—"I didn't—that is, I thought, don't you see, I—" "You have hurt me seriously," said the Head.

"What did you say?" said Mr. Withers.

"I did not speak; I was addressing Hacker."

"I am very sorry, sir. I didn't see. It was rather dim, and I saw someone stooping, and I thought I—I can't say how sorry I am."

"Yes, yes—exactly. I understand. A mistake—go away. Under the circumstances, I accept the explanation. Please go away!"

"If there's anything I can do, sir—" said Hacker.

"Go away at once! I wish to be alone."

"Rum idea," thought Hacker. "Wants to be alone in the passage! What's up, I wonder?"

But he passed on.

"Dr. Headford, as a man of honour, I appeal to you to unlock this door and return me my clothes," said Mr. Withers.

"My dear sir, I am doing so—that is, I will do so. Believe me—Do you hear what I say? I say, believe me that I will do anything in my power to—to—I cannot understand why Toogood does not come. It is most unfortunate, Mr. Withers. I apologise. It was a mistake—a great mistake. I did you a wrong. Believe me, I—"

"Anything the matter here?" asked a voice.

"House on fire, or— Beg pardon, sir; I didn't know it was you!"

"Yes, yes, it is me—that is to say, I—I—Earle, nothing the matter at all! I am merely talking to Mr. Withers."

"Oh!" said Earle senior. "Mr. Withers—why don't he open the door, sir? Is there—"

"Go away, Earle! Mr. Withers and I wish to have a few words in private. I beg you to go away."

"Very well, sir. I am sorry I intruded. I—I didn't know, you see," Earle went on.

"Mr. Withers, be patient," said the Head.

"Toogood has been sent for. He will return; and all will yet be well. Believe me, I am suffering to the full as much as—"

"How many times don't I tell you dot I don't no talking have mit von anuders der bassages in?" demanded a voice.

It was Herr Spielbaum, the German master—the little short-sighted, bumptious German master.

"It is I!" said the Head with dignity.

"So id vas!" said Herr Spielbaum. "You vas talking mit yourselves, ain't id?"

"No, certainly not! I am speaking to Mr. Withers on a—a matter of private importance!"

"Ach, soh, und vy ain'd Misder Vidlers here to speak mit us?"

"Mr. Withers is here—he is in his room; we are conversing—As a matter of fact, Mr. Withers is within his room, Herr Spielbaum!"

"Soh, und Misder Vidlers vas in his room, und you vas in der passage, und Misder Vidlers in his room speaks, und you'in der bassage speaks; and so mit von anuders what for?"

"This is a matter"—said the Head desperately—"a private matter! Mr. Withers and I understand one another perfectly, you see."

Herr Spielbaum banged his fat fist on the door.

"Misder Vidlers, vy you don'd come your room mit oud und speag Dogtor Headford der bassage in?"

"Go away!" said Mr. Withers. "I don't understand German!"

"Ach, I vas speag English, ain'd I—I say vat you der room stay in viles. Dr. Headford der bassage stays in. I say how can you speak der head-master mit?"

"Believe me, this is a matter"—said the Head—"a matter that Mr. Withers and I are quite in accord with one another on. I should be very greatly obliged if you would go away."

Herr Spielbaum went on:

"I don't mage understanding of such foolishment!" he muttered. "What dey talk mit der keyhole for? Ach, dose English, vat senses!"

An hour passed, and another. It was a trying time for the Head. He went up and down the flight of stairs about two hundred and fifty times during the period, and each time he went down, he came back to tell Mr. Withers that it was all right, and that Toogood was just coming.

But Toogood, with a glass of ale before him and the congenial society of the Welcome Home around him, was in no hurry to come back.

It was close on ten when he did come back, and by that time the boys had all gone to bed, in the firm belief that Mr. Withers had been stricken down by some terrible illness; and that the Head was standing outside in case anyone should go so near as to take the infection.

Hacker and one or two others said it was madness. They said that Mr. Withers had always been subject to insanity, and that it had broken out in him at last!

"Toogood, where have you been all these hours? Where is the key of this room? How dare you go out and take the key and leave Mr. Withers like—like this? I— Give me the key, you wretched imbecile!"

"What's up?" said Toogood.

"Don't you understand me? The key!" shouted the Head, taking Toogood by the shoulders and shaking him.

"What about it? What's the matter? What—"

"Give— I say, I want—want the key of this room!"

"Well, why don't you take it then? What's

the matter? Ain't the key in the keyhole where I put it?"

It was! It had been there all the time! The Head had been scraping his nose against it and never knew it!

"Yes," he said, "of course—yes, I see. That will do. Go away, Toogood. Bring Mr. Withers' clothes here at once."

"Oh, ah, his clothes! I forgot I'd got his clothes! I suppose he's slept it off by now."

The Head turned the key and opened the door. He felt distinctly nervous. Mr. Withers was sitting in a chair in the middle of the room, with all his bed-clothes dragged round him.

"At last," he said, "at last I am liberated!"

The Head closed the door gently. It was not often that he had to eat humble pie, and when he did eat it, he did not want an audience.

Waylaid—The Terrors—A Foolish Enterprise.

"SILLY young beggar!" said Bimby anxiously. "He'll get nabbed, safe as eggs!"

Bimby went to the gate and looked out anxiously. In two minutes the dinner-bell would go, and Wilkington wasn't in sight.

Bimby had sent Wilkington, who was a useful beast of burden, down into Elphinstowe to

Just below the school the road took a sudden swerve to the left, so that the view of the road from the gate was inconsiderable.

"He's hurt himself or something, fallen down, or— Bust him! Come on!"

Bimby started off at a run. For now yell after yell was coming up from below the bend in the road.

Earle hesitated a moment, then broke into a run, too. And at the same time the clang of the dinner-bell sounded in his ears.

"We'll all three be late and get it," he muttered. "Can't help it, though."

"Dinner-bell!" shouted Malcolm, coming to the gate. "I say, there's the dinner-bell! Who's that yelling—someone hurt or—"

Malcolm hesitated a moment, then he too dashed out, and came down the road after the other two.

"I say, Earle," he gasped, "didn't you hear the dinner-bell? It has—"

Bimby had reached the bend and came to a sudden standstill. Then, with a yell, he dashed on, and was lost to sight.

"There's something up—something serious!" gasped Earle. "I say, buck up, Warrington!"

The two sped along side by side till they came to the bend.

Yes, there was something up, and something serious, too.

Wilkington lay face downward in the middle

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for a moment. But it was only for a moment. Bimby was already in the thick of it. Bimby the courageous had taken on all five single-handed, and was getting decidedly the worst of it; while Wilkington, bleeding and dishevelled, staggered to his feet and started off at a tottering run up the road.

Bimby was down. A terrific blow from Pender, the leader of the gang, had laid him low. But Bimby was on his feet again, looking like a young fury from the pit, as Earle and Malcolm came up.

"The brutes!" Bimby gasped. "See what they've been doing!" Bimby paused to spit out a broken tooth. "Lammed Wilkington and sneaked my kisses!"

"Any more of 'em coming?" Pender asked anxiously.

It seemed not, and the roughs, who had lost heart for a moment at the fresh arrival, grew bold again.

"What d'yer mean, rushing at us like that?" demanded Pender. "Hallo!" he added suddenly. "You agen, you?" He recognised Malcolm.

"Same kid we gave a doing to the other night," he yelled; "we'll give him another now! Come on!"

In a moment the three boys found themselves surrounded by the five.

"We'd better have got out of it while we could," muttered Earle. "Now we are in for it!"

It seemed so. Not one of the five but was not head and shoulders taller than either of the boys.

"Now you'll get what you want!" Pender made a rush at Malcolm and caught him by the hair.

But Malcolm lashed out manfully, and Pender let go for a moment. Then with renewed fury he gripped the boy again. For a moment they struggled, then went down with a crash in the road, Malcolm underneath and half crushed by the weight of the bully's body.

"Now, you young beauty, I'll show you!" muttered Pender, scrambling on to his knees, which he kept on Malcolm's chest. "I'll throttle the life out of you now!" He gripped Malcolm's throat and gripped hard.

"Don't you—you—"

The words died away in the boy's throat, he struggled, but could not move. For a few moments he fought desperately for the freedom he could not achieve; then everything began to grow faint and indistinct before his sight.

There was a rushing sound in his ears, a blood-red mist before his eyes, through which he could see the grinning, brutal face of Pender. And then—crack, crack, crack!

The grip on Malcolm's throat was released. Pender sprang to his feet, to receive a slash across the face with a whip, which brought a hoarse yell of agony from his throat. Then, clapping his hands over his face, Pender turned to run, but, stumbling over Malcolm's body, fell headlong into the road, where he lay howling with pain and terror.

Crack, crack! A horseman was laying about him vigorously, and now from the road above came the sound of shouting, and a moment more a stream of boys came in sight.

"Jingo, it's Mr. Herbert!" shouted Earle senior. "By George, what a jolly good thing he was here first! Now we've got 'em, and we'll pay them something that's been owing for some time!"

It was Mr. Herbert from Greatorex Park who had come thus opportunely. And Mr. Herbert, soon understanding what was amiss, had done a good deal of execution in a very short time. Pender was down, so were two others; the other two were making for the village as hard as they could pelt. But, seeing that the boys from the school were near, and would be able to settle with the three who were down, Mr. Herbert wheeled his horse about and went thundering down the road in pursuit of the terror-stricken ruffians.

(This magnificent serial will be continued in a long instalment in next week's issue, which will also contain a special four-page long, complete tale, entitled **THE PRUSSIAN SPIES**, by that famous writer, Armytage Graham. Remember also that the sequel to "Always Honest" starts in a fortnight's time. Its title is **HONESTY WINS!**)



"Now, then, who's that spying through the keyhole?" demanded a boyish voice, and at the same moment the Head received a resounding slap that caused him to jump into the air,

get two packets of toffee and a quarter of a pound of mother's kiss.

"Mother's kiss" was a particular delight of Bimby's. Perhaps it was called mother's kiss because it was sweet—at any rate, it was certainly sweet. It was made of sugar and raisins, old sweets that had gone stale in the sun, shop sweepings, and other delicacies, and it was boiled into great unshapely lumps, which Bimby loved to tuck away in the side of his face.

But there was no mother's kiss and no Wilkington, and Bimby looked up anxiously at the clock.

"Bust him! I say, Earle, that young beggar Wilkington ain't come back. Little rotter!"

"How long has he been gone?"

"He bunked out the moment school was over, and he's had time. What's that?" Bimby paused, and listened intently. "Sounded like a yell, didn't it?"

"Sounded like your"—Earle was going to say "grandmother." But at that moment the sound smote his ears. It was distinctly a yell.

"Wilkington! I'll bet there's something up. Come on!" Bimby dashed out into the road and Earle followed.

of the road, and seated on Wilkington's back were three of the Elphinstowe terrors.

Two more of the gang were seated on the bank by the roadway, and all five were busily munching Bimby's refreshments.

As for Wilkington, he had fared badly. His nose was bleeding profusely, his clothes were torn, and now half the life was being squashed out of him by the combined weight of the three terrors.

"It's that brute Pender and his gang," Bimby thought. His blood boiled. Wilkington was only a little bit of a chap, and those three brutes sitting on him. Bimby forgot himself entirely in his outburst of righteous indignation. "You eads, get off him! You howling brutes!" he yelled, darting down on the unprepared terrors.

"Hallo, here's more of the school!" shouted Pender. "Look out!"

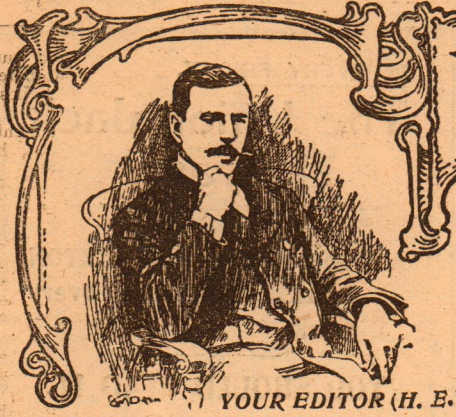
Bimby, like a young fury, hurled himself upon them and struck out right and left.

"Get off him, you beasts, get off!"

It was at this moment that Earle and Malcolm turned the corner.

"The same brutes who went for your brother and me that night!" shouted Malcolm.

"There's five of 'em," said Earle, losing heart



YOUR EDITOR (H. E.)

YOUR EDITOR'S ADVICE

Your Editor is always glad to hear from you about yourself or your favourite paper. He will answer you by post if you send a stamped addressed postcard or envelope. Write to him if you are in trouble, if you want information, or if you have any ideas for our paper. All letters to be addressed to the Editor of THE BOYS' HERALD, 2, Carmelite House, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.

If your letter is not replied to here, it may be answered in "The Boys' Realm" next Saturday, or "The Boys' Friend" next Tuesday. It will pay you to get a copy of each and see.

Controller of
THE BOYS' HERALD—Thursday.
THE BOYS' REALM—Saturday.
THE BOYS' FRIEND—Tuesday.

In a Fortnight's Time.

I HAVE much pleasure in telling my friends that the sequel to "Always Honest," the story by Mr. Allan Blair and myself, starts in this paper in a fortnight's time.

In the main, of course, this story will continue the adventures of Bob Welford, but so far as the new reader is concerned it will seem an absolutely new story, so that this week I want my friends to do me a little favour.

I don't often ask them to do me favours, but this week I want to put a special request to them. I want them to talk about the new story by Your Editor and Allan Blair, which commences in a fortnight's time. Its title is "HONESTY WINS."

and it will be found, I think I can say with proper modesty, quite as good as "Always Honest," and in some respects even more pleasing.

Anyway, my lads, I can promise you a jolly good story, so just do your old Editor a good turn, and tell your chums about "Honesty Wins," the new story, starting in a fortnight's time.

Sidney Drew's New Serial.

Every boy and every young man who has read THE HERALD and any other of my boys' papers for any length of time must have been pleased with the various clever stories which Mr. Sidney Drew has written. Now I am able to announce with considerable pleasure that Mr. Drew has written a new serial for THE BOYS' HERALD, entitled

"THE BLUE ORCHID,"

a tale dealing with the search for a wonderful flower. In this search are engaged Ferrers Lord, the millionaire, Rupert Thurston, Barry O'Rooney, Gan-Waga, and the always popular and amusing Ching-Lung.

I am quite sure in my own mind that this latest story from Mr. Sidney Drew's pen will be a great success, so, my friends, look out for a real good treat in THE BOYS' HERALD in three weeks' time.

A New Story by Manville Fenn.

Every reader of THE HERALD who has bought it from the first number will remember with considerable pleasure Manville Fenn's wonderful tale, "Trapper Dan." I have, therefore, much pleasure in telling all of them who are admirers of this famous author, now justly regarded as the premier boys' writer of today, that I have secured Manville Fenn's latest story. Its title has not been fixed upon, but I hope to be able to publish the first instalment very shortly, and I think in making this announcement I am not claiming more than is deserved when I say that this tale will prove very acceptable to THE BOYS' HERALD readers.

I do not suppose there is one boy in the United Kingdom who has not at some time or other read Manville Fenn's stories, so that this good news will come with additional interest to every lad who is a subscriber to THE BOYS' HERALD.

Spread the good news, my friends. It is well worth talking about. The fact that Mr. Fenn is writing this story for THE BOYS' HERALD is still further proof, if such a thing were needed, that our paper is perfectly fit to enter the home of any boy, no matter how carefully he has been brought up.

Our Correspondence College.

I knew when I started this that I was adding one more to the long list of successes with which "The Boys' Friend" has been connected. I am delighted to find it is so. The number of readers who have joined the college, and who have received the first lesson, is astonishing. I had hardly dared to hope that the scheme would be so immediately successful; indeed, I was quite prepared to find that at first only a few boys would take advantage of my splendid offer, but as it is, boys have found how thoroughly the college is being worked, how great is the value they get for their twelve coupons, and the number of students grows and grows until it is apparent to me that we shall soon have not hundreds, but thousands. Instead of a slow rate of progress, we have already jumped off with several hundreds of students at the start. This is most gratifying and encouraging, and I have to thank my friends for the splendid support they have given me, and I also congratulate every one of my lads who has had the good sense to avail himself of this offer.

Understand, my lads, that "The Boys' Friend" Correspondence College is not a plaything. It is a very serious and a very expensive undertaking. It has a staff of teachers and examiners which is every whit as good, and in many respects better, than that of any other correspondence college.

In making this announcement I am not boasting. I am stating a cold, hard fact, which cannot be disproved.

And yet I am giving my friends all the advantages of this institution for twelve coupons cut from one of my papers. I want in connection with these coupons to point out one very important fact. Any boy who likes can join the college this week by cutting out twelve coupons from this week's issue of either THE BOYS' HERALD or "The Boys' Friend"—that is to say, twelve coupons cut from either paper will enter a lad into the college, and procure for him the first set of lessons. If you cannot get the coupons all from THE BOYS' HERALD, you can, perhaps, get them from "The Boys' Friend" this week, in which similar coupons appear. Perhaps you can get only three coupons from THE BOYS' HERALD; then you must cut the other nine from "The Boys' Friend," or nine from THE BOYS' HERALD and three from "The Boys' Friend" will do. It does not matter from which paper the coupons are cut out, so long as they all bear the same number, 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5, as the case may be.

Remember this—that a boy can start his course of lessons at any time. If you don't want to join this week, join next week; it makes no difference to the instruction you will receive. A boy doesn't lose anything from the fact that he joins a week or two after another boy. All the same, my lads, I hope that those of you who are thinking of taking up some post in the Civil Service, or who wish to learn shorthand, or go through a thorough course of English composition, will speedily make up your minds, and join.

So hearty has been the response that I am almost afraid I shall have to withdraw this offer for a little while in order to cope with the enormous amount of work which has been thrown upon us by the large number of students, so I would point out to you that if you wish to be in time you had better hurry up. You should bear in mind that for your twelve coupons—which, if you sell the papers from which they are cut, will cost you nothing—you get education that anywhere else would

cost you from two to five guineas. So hurry up, my lads. Every ambitious boy, every lad whose education has not been quite as complete as he would like it, every lad who wants to get on, should join "The Boys' Friend" Correspondence College. You will be astonished, you will be pleased with the completeness with which the system is carried out.

Each student is treated individually, and I am certain you will be surprised and delighted to find how thorough is the attention and instruction which are given.

I hope soon to be able to announce many successes on the part of boys who have been prepared in "The Boys' Friend" Correspondence College.

Is His Trade Harmful?

Ernest J. is a Quarrybank reader of THE BOYS' HERALD who follows the trade of a painter, and he asks me to give him my opinion on this question: "Is painting harmful?"

I may say that it all depends upon the con-



A new Football Story by Mr. A. S. Hardy, entitled "The Blue Crusaders," is now starting in "The Boys' Realm." You should make a point of reading it.

stitution of the lad or man who follows this calling. There are some people whose physical condition is speedily affected by the smell of paint. It makes them sick; gives them what the doctors call "painters' colic." It is probable that my young friend is suffering from this trouble, because he speaks of having been very queer. In this case I would recommend him to seek some other trade—carpentering, joinery, or building. He would certainly be unwise to continue to follow a trade which affects his health, although the ordinary strong, healthy individual might not be knocked over by this calling.

Still, there is no getting away from the fact that certain people are very badly affected by the smell of paint, and these people ought to avoid coming into contact with it as much as they possibly can.

I can sympathise with my young friend because I myself, whenever I happen to be for any length of time in a room which has been newly painted, get a splitting headache, and yet, as a rule, I am a man who enjoys pretty vigorous health.

My young friend Ernest J., after putting this question of paint-sickness to me, tells me that

he is thinking of joining the League of Health and Strength.

I am sorry to find that he is only thinking about it. Why does he not make up his mind at once, fill in the coupon, take the pledges, and make application for membership?

My dear lad, don't delay any longer! There is nothing in the rules governing the League of Health and Strength to which any lad need be ashamed of subscribing, but there is in them much which, if you follow them out, will do you an immensity of good. So, Ernest, live up to your name, send in your application at once, and stick steadfastly and earnestly to the promises which you are about to make.

Our League of Health and Strength.

While I am on the subject of the League of Health and Strength, I would like to tell my friends how rapidly it is growing. I hope soon to be able to announce the fact that ten thousand members have already been enrolled. The number is getting very near this now, and it is my earnest wish that it will soon exceed ten thousand.

On this subject of the League, one of my Banbury friends says he thinks it is a shame that I should pay for the badges and cost of printing in connection with this League, and he makes the suggestion that every member who really wishes to live up to his promises should make a point of sending sixpence as his part of the expense to which I am put.

Not a bit of it. My purpose in establishing the League of Health and Strength was to make it a helpful band—a spur to the lad who might be tempted into evil habits. I do not mind the expense which the conducting of this League involves me in. Indeed, I am glad to be able to spend money in so good, so sound, and so excellent a cause. What I would like to find is that every boy who joins the League makes a determined effort to get ten other boys to follow his example. Ten other boys may sound a lot, but the number is not a great one. I can assure my friends who are members of the League that the boy who resolves to get these ten members can do so if he makes a determined and persistent effort.

I have no doubt that some of my friends who are members, and have tried to secure other members, have been laughed at by their fellows, but you can take it from me, my lads, you can afford to ignore these thoughtless sneers, because you are on the winning side. You are on a good thing, you are doing a good thing, and, what is more, you are behaving in a sensible, intelligent fashion, which will benefit you in an unconscious but, nevertheless, certain way as the years go round. So, Heraldites, just give a thought this week to joining the League of Health and Strength. Believe me, I shall be glad to welcome you as members.

FOOTBALL COMPETITION RESULT.

Singularly enough, whereas the Ninth Football Competition produced a large crop of successful competitors, in the special cup-tie contest nobody succeeded in sending in an absolutely correct forecast. Ten readers' lists, however, had only two errors each, and between these ten competitors I have decided to divide the prize-money, £6 15s. in all (27 goals at 5s. per goal) equally. By this arrangement each of the following will receive a Post Office order to the value of 15s. 6d.:

- H. A. Cross, 58, Coniston Avenue, Newcastle-on-Tyne.
- W. Taylor, 66, Cambridge Street, Rotherham.
- A. Thompson, 28, North Hedley Street, Millfield, Sunderland.
- H. B. Butler, 12, Campion Terrace, Cricklewood, N.W.
- P. Hayward, 30, Hartland Road, Fareham.
- M. M. Statter, 51, Knott's Lane, Colne, Lancs.
- B. Ramsom, 12, Charles Street, Haymarket, S.W.
- L. Cowell, 19, Appley Lane, Appley Bridge, near Wigan.
- G. W. Robinson, Heath Hill House, Blackheath, S.E.

YOUR EDITOR (H.E.)

DAILY MAIL

The League of Health and Strength. For "Boys' Herald" Readers Only!

Briefly, the object of this important New League is the encouraging of boys to grow up into strong men physically and morally—true specimens of the great race and Empire to which they belong. To this end Your Editor has laid down the five following rules, with which every boy who wishes to become a member must comply:

NO SMOKING (TILL 21). NO DRINKING OF INTOXICANTS AS BEVERAGES. NO SWEARING. NO GAMBLING. NO EVIL HABITS.

In connection with this League of Health and Strength there is a SECRET PASSWORD, which is known ONLY TO MEMBERS, a handsome CERTIFICATE, and a beautifully-designed BADGE, which every boy should get and be proud to wear.

Conditions of Membership.—All one has to do to become a Member of this League is to fill in the following Application Form, and send it, with ONE Penny Stamp to cover the cost of posting certificate to Member, to the Secretary, BOYS' HERALD'S League of Health and Strength (Room 27), 2, Carmelite House, Carmelite Street, London, E.C. If, however, you desire the handsome League Badge, in addition to the Certificate, then you must enclose TWO of these Application Forms—cut from the current number of THE BOYS' HERALD, with your ONE penny stamp to cover cost of posting Certificate and Badge to you. Boys who are already League Members, but have not yet sent for their Badges, must enclose ONE Stamp and ONE Application Form only, with letter stating that they are already Members, and require the Badge alone.

This Coupon is available until
FEBRUARY 21st.

I, THE UNDERSIGNED, being desirous of becoming a Member of THE LEAGUE OF HEALTH AND STRENGTH, do ALTOGETHER from Smoking until 21 years of age; To Abstain from Drinking Intoxicating Liquors as Beverages; Not to Use Bad Language; Not to Indulge in Any Form of Gambling; and To Steadfastly Keep from all Bad Habits.

Name _____

Date _____ Address _____



Always Honest.

A Great Human Story of Real Life, by
Hamilton Edwards (YOUR EDITOR) and Allan Blair.

A Few Words with my New Friends.

FOR years Bob Welford and Walt had been waifs of the London streets, till one day a rascally ex-solicitor comes along with a fortune belonging to one of the lads. Now, in reality, this fortune belongs to Bob. Yet Crane—the solicitor—for purposes of his own, brings forward Walt as the rightful heir.

It is not long before poor, honest, hard-working Bob finds out that the money which weak-willed, foolish Walt is flinging about so recklessly, and is being robbed of on every side by men like Crane, Sir Seton Renfrew, and others, should have come to him; but, almost friendless as he is, and practically penniless, how can he hope to obtain his rights?

Acting in concert with the villains surrounding Walt are two arch-villains, the Vampire and Rudford, who have murdered a confederate named Mo Crooks, because he was about to turn traitor to their cause.

Through the machinations of Bob's enemies the lad is continually losing his situations, and on several occasions his life is threatened. At last, however, his luck seems as if it is about to turn, for he receives a satisfactory reply in response to his repeated applications for work. Punctually at the appointed time Bob puts in an appearance at the office of a Mr. Foldwinter, by whom he is engaged. Unknown to Bob, Mr. Foldwinter is an engraver of spurious Bank of England notes, and is, moreover, a member of the Vampire's gang.

Meanwhile Foxy Pike still pursues his course of robbing Walt Dyson. He takes him to a betting club, where he induces Walt to put his money on horses which have no earthly chance of winning. By an accident, however, Walt wins a large sum of money, and the proprietor of the betting-club, to avoid paying up, pretends that the police have raided the place. Walt, therefore, has to leave without receiving his money.

By his employer Bob Welford is sent with a packet of forged banknotes to the house of the Vampire. As he stands without the door he hears a voice which brings back to him the recollection of an incident which had happened on the night Mo Crooks was murdered.

Now, the forged notes entrusted to Bob are for the purpose of handing over to Solly Izzard, the proprietor of the betting-club, who owes Walt a large sum of money. With these—being in league with the Vampire, Sir Seton Renfrew and the rest—he is to pay Walt Dyson. He does so. Thus this part of the swindle is completed. But it now becomes necessary to make sure that Walt does not part with any of the notes. To ensure this, the Vampire arranges with two scoundrels to attack Walt and take the bundle of notes from him. Bob Welford, however, arrives on the scene in time to prevent this, but not, however, before poor Walt has been knocked senseless. Without hesitating, Bob lifts the unconscious youth in his arms and carries him to his own room, where he puts him tenderly upon his own bed.

From this point you can go straight on with this fascinating story.

YOUR EDITOR (H. E.).

Walt Disappears, and Leaves Behind a Present for Bob.

WITH Walt opening his eyes, Bob had to avert his. This was a little strange, seeing that for the last ten minutes or so Bob had scarcely removed his gaze from the face of the other. But during those minutes of suspense—the while he had bathed Walt's forehead with water, and chafed his cold, limp hands—Bob's thoughts had skipped the last few months and had travelled with lightning swiftness back to the time when they had been so much together.

Everything had come to him in a torrent of pathetic recollection. The old days of privation, when they had shared sordid lodging and scanty board in company with Mother Gurdle; when they had tramped their weary way through the streets of London day after day, trying to earn a few miserable pence; when they had exchanged boyish thoughts and confidences such as are only exchanged by two sympathetic souls moving along the same toilsome journey.

All these things, we say, had come back to Bob in a flood of memory. They had been mingled with the dreadful fear that Walt, lying there unconscious on the bed before him, might never recover. A spasm of sorrow had laid hold upon Bob's heart, sorrow born of a reproachful feeling that during those later times, after

Walt had been stolen from him—for such interpretation he continued to put upon their separation—he might have done more to win him back.

Why had he ever ceased in his efforts to seek Walt out and persuade him to renew the old friendship which should never have been broken? Such was the form of Bob's remorse and self-reproachings. His heart melted within him, and emotion had its way unchecked.

That was why, when Walt did at length open his eyes, Bob had to turn away till the tears which filled his own had disappeared. He banished them by a quick movement of his hand and a great effort of his will. Then, bending over the boy upon the bed, he murmured in a low voice filled with affection:

"Walt! Dear old Walt! You've come back to me at last!"

Walt's eyes turned from the wall upon which they had been fixed, to Bob. As yet he had not realised fully his situation; only dimly had the remembrance of what had happened begun to come back to him.

"What—what's bin the matter?" he asked weakly. "My head's all-funny—as if I'd bin bashed."

"All right, Walt; you'll be better soon."

"No, they ain't took anything," he answered. "But it's funny, you a-comin' along, and me bein' 'ere!"

"Yes, it's wonderful, Walt—wonderful! But now you are here you'll stay with me, won't you—at any rate, till you're better? And we'll be friends again, Walt, just as we used to be when—"

Bob broke off in his speech, for once more that quiver of pain had flitted across Walt's features, making him close his eyes this time.

"I—I ain't feelin' up to much," he murmured hoarsely. "I'm feelin' queer. I wants to sleep and—"

"You shall sleep, Walt. I oughtn't to have bothered you with talking yet. I won't say another word. Go to sleep, old chap, and you'll be a lot better when you wake up."

Walt answered nothing. His eyes remained closed, his breathing grew easier and regular. Bob sat upon the bed looking at him for some time. His thoughts were busy again, and once more he felt that inclination to cry. But he forced back his tears with an effort, and, silently rising, moved towards the door.

"He's sound asleep," he murmured to himself; "and will most likely sleep till morning."



Bob rushed to the table and picked up the letter. It was from Walt, and pinned to it was a bank-note for twenty pounds.

You know me, don't you, Walt? I'm Bob—your old pal, Bob Welford."

"Bob Welford!" There was a twitching of Walt's face and a half closing of his eyes again, as if the utterance of the familiar name had caused him pain. "'Ow did I get 'ere?" he added, after a pause.

"I brought you," answered Bob. "I found you in the street. Two men were setting about you. One of them bolted when he heard me coming up, and the other one scooted, too, when I slipped into him. He was on his knees going through your pockets, Walt. Have you lost anything? Did they—"

A wave of hardness tightened Walt's lips and changed the expression of his eyes. Weak and in pain though he was, his hand travelled to his breast-pocket. Then a trembling sigh of relief escaped him. The wad of banknotes was safe; so also was his watch.

It'll do him good. And I'm getting tired, too. I'll go downstairs and tell Mrs. Wiltshire what's happened. Perhaps she won't mind my sleeping on the sofa in the back sitting-room."

Late though it was, Mrs. Wiltshire, the landlady, was still stitching away in the kitchen. She was not over-sympathetic on hearing Bob's hurried story. Her life was a hard one—a long, grim struggle with poverty and distress—and her own troubles seemed to monopolise nearly all her feelings of pity. Nevertheless, she gave her consent to Bob's doing as he wished, and he, bidding her good-night, passed into the little sitting-room, and fully dressed as he was, threw himself upon the rickety horsehair-covered sofa. In a very few minutes he was sound asleep.

He awoke in the morning at his customary early hour. For a moment he lay with open

eyes, regarding in wonder his unwonted surroundings. Quickly, however, he remembered what had happened, and then, without hesitation, he sprang up from the couch.

His first thought—indeed, all his thoughts just now—were of Walt. How was Walt, he wondered. He would go upstairs and see.

He passed out of the room and silently ascended the stairs. Quietly, in case Walt should still be sleeping, he turned the handle of his room door. For a moment he could see nothing. With the blind drawn, and the full light of morning not yet come, it took him a few seconds to discern the outline of the bed. When he did so he moved two or three paces forward, and, bending down, looked.

Then his heart gave a great leap. For now, his eyes becoming used to the semi-darkness, he could see the bed distinctly.

There was the tumbled pillow, there were the bed-clothes half thrown back. But of Walt not a sign!

Wild thoughts surged through Bob's mind. With a little cry he sprang to the window and pulled up the blind. With the added light which came in through the window he looked again. He looked at the empty bed and about the room, stepped across to the other side, and even looked into the cupboard which was there.

But look where he might, there was no trace of Walt; no sign that he had ever been there, beyond the empty bed with the blankets thrown back.

Stay! Was there no other sign? What was that upon the little table which stood against the wall on the further side of the room?

It had caught Bob's eye suddenly, a glint of white—a piece of paper, with a brush and comb placed upon it, so that no chance gust of air might blow it away.

Bob stepped quickly across to the table in a maze of wonderment. There were two pieces of paper—one pinned beneath the other.

The under piece rustled to the touch; the covering piece was half a sheet of notepaper, torn apparently from a letter. Upon it were scrawled a few words.

"Dear Bob,—I've a-gawn. I cudden stay 'ere. It is better as we shudden be together agen. I am leevin' you sumthin', pleeze accept of it in remembrance of
WALT."

That was all. The note was brief, ill-spelt, but full of perplexing suggestion. With fingers that shook a little, Bob turned the written message over and looked at the other paper which was pinned to it. Then his heart gave a great throb, and his eyes stretched wide as he gazed upon it.

It was a bank note for £20!

Walt Returns to the Vampire, and the Vampire Has an Interview with Martin Crane.

WHAT had become of Walt Dyson? How had he disappeared? When Bob, overnight, seated by his bedside, had thought him asleep, he had not really been so. He merely feigned to be asleep in order to avoid answering Bob's questions, which he felt sure would come.

Somehow or other there was that at work in his mind which made him ashamed to look Bob in the face, or to answer any questions regarding his position which Bob might put to him. So he had sought refuge in pretended slumber. Presently Bob had left the room, as Walt had hoped he would.

The candle was still burning on the table, and at it Walt, with half-opened eyes, lay looking and blinking for some time. His mind was active; the blow he had received on the head seemed to have quite sobered him.

He was wondering what he ought to do. That he would not stay with Bob he had already decided. Deep down in his nature there remained a liking for his old chum, and a vague desire to pour his heart out to him and tell him of everything that had happened since they had parted.

But a conflicting thought came up to counteract that. After all, was Bob everything that he seemed? Was he just the kind-hearted, good-natured friend that he appeared to be? Or was his behaviour just one of his artful wiles to worm himself into his, Walt's, confidence?

Walt, as we know, had been warned against Bob by Martin Crane and the others, and these warnings were now revived fresh in his memory. But for that he might on this night have thrown off all his reserve, let drop from him like a burden all the evil influence of his new-found friends and once more have resumed his old-time intimacy with Bob.

What a world of care and suffering it might have saved him had this transient prompting of conscience only been obeyed! As it was, the other feelings prevailed. He would leave this house, would leave it ere Bob awoke in the morning.

With this determination in his aching head he lay for an hour or more. All was quiet in the house; upon the table the candle still flickered. Fully dressed, Walt rose slowly from the bed, then sat down on the edge of it with his chin in his hands.

Suddenly a thought struck him. He put his hand in his pocket and drew out a letter. From this he tore off a blank half-sheet. A small silver pencil-case dangled with one or two other things from his watch-chain, he detached it and moved softly over to the table. Then he bent down and started to write.

Another thought came to him now. He took from his breast-pocket the wad of banknotes and selected one for £20. Conscience was at work again. A good impulse was upon him, an impulse of gratitude and affection for old time's

ALWAYS HONEST.

 (Continued from the previous page.)

sake. He bent over the sheet of paper again, laboriously wrote two or three lines, then, pinning the banknote to the paper, he placed it on the table and put a hairbrush upon it to keep it from blowing away.

His mind was fully made up now. He extinguished the candle, crossed over to the door, and listened. Not a sound was there within the house. Opening the door gently he passed out, and closed it again after him.

There was a bright moon in the sky, and some of the light, streaming in through the window, lighted up the narrow stairs. He descended cautiously step by step. The regular breathing of someone asleep reached his ears as he found himself in the passage leading to the street door. It was Bob, though Walt knew it not.

He went to the front door and let himself out. Once in the street he hurried away as fast as he could, turning several corners as if in a vague way he feared pursuit.

Ten minutes later, and just as the clock of St. Dunstan's Church was striking two, he was pulling the bell at the Vampire's house in Stepney Green. He waited what seemed an hour, but what was in reality only a few minutes. Then a soft, shuffling step came along the passage, and a second or two after the Vampire himself opened the door.

"My dear little Walter! Walter, my little dear! Oh where have you been, Walter? Wherever have you been? Why, your head is cut, my poor lamb!"

The Jew poured out the words, as, having fastened the door behind him, he followed Walt into the long room.

"I've bin set about, that's what I've bin done to!" explained Walt sulkily.

"Oh, why did you slip away from Foxy? He looked everywhere for you, but couldn't find you. Then he came home alone, and told me how he had missed you, and he nearly sobbed his poor heart out thinkin' about you before he went to sleep!"

"Me give him the slip!" retorted Walt indignantly. "Was't other way about, I reckon! 'E told me to walk on while 'e paid the cabman."

"It's dreadful, Walter, dreadful! Tell your old Vampy how it all happened."

Walt gave as clear an account as he could of the attack.

"They was after my oof, that's what they was after!" he concluded. "And they'd 'ave got it, too, on'y—"

He paused suddenly, thinking that it might be better to conceal Bob's part in the affair.

"Yes, yes! Only—what, my dear?" asked the Vampire.

"Why, another bloke 'appened to come up jist as they'd got me down and was runnin' the rule over me. When they see him they done a guy!"

"And they didn't get—didn't get your money, my dear?" There was a peculiar note in the Vampire's voice.

"No; I've got it 'ere all right," answered Walt, pulling out the wad of banknotes.

The Vampire turned his head away to hide the look which came into his eyes. Those two men, then, whom Foxy had set on to attack Walt had failed! Some other means must be adopted to get hold of the banknotes!

"Poor dear little Walt, what a close shave for you! But, look here, you had best let your old Vampy take care of the money for you! You can have a bit at a time, jist as you want it. It ain't safe for you to carry so much about with you. Let your old Vampy mind it for you, my dear!"

Whether Walt would have done so in the ordinary way is uncertain, but at this moment a pain in his wounded head made him turn pale and reel in the chair where he sat. His grasp of the notes relaxed, and the wad fell to the floor.

The Vampire made a dive for it, and thrust it deep into his pocket.

"You are ill, my little dear!" he exclaimed, and darted to the cupboard for the brandy bottle.

He poured out some spirit and placed it to Walt's lips. The youth rallied a little almost at once, but he still looked deadly pale.

"You had better get to bed, my dear," suggested the Vampire. "Bed is the best place for you. There, that's right!" He raised him to his feet and started to help him from the room.

"You'll be better in the morning, ever so much better!"

He led Walt up the stairs to his room, then in a minute took his departure.

During his conversation with Walt the Jew's demeanour had suggested sympathy and pity. Now, with startling suddenness, his manner changed as he descended the stairs. His brow wrinkled, anxiety fixed itself in his eyes. He returned at once to the long room, where he sat alone. His long, ugly fingers curled in his beard, at which he tugged as if in perplexity.

As he sat thus, staring hard at the fire, the door was stealthily opened and in came Foxy Pike.

"Allo, Vampy!" said the youth in an undertone. "He's come back, then. I heard him talkin' to you. You've got a look on your phiz about as sour as vinegar! What's wrong?"

"Everything's wrong, Foxy! Nothing seems to go right jist now!"

"What? Did them two make a mess of it? Didn't they get hold o' them flash notes, arter all?"

The Vampire shook his head.

"No," he answered, "they didn't. Somebody came up jist as they knocked Dyson down and they had to run away. But that don't matter now. I've got the notes; they're in my pocket.

It ain't the notes that's worrying me, Foxy; it's what you told me about Bellersby."

"Yes; that is a bit queer, old 'un—him refusin' to hand over any more rhino to Walt."

"It's worse than queer; it alters our game, my dear, it alters our game! Dyson ain't any good to us unless he can get money."

"But it'll come all right, won't it?" queried the other. "When Walt told me about it I didn't worry much. I reckon Crane will put things right. He'll twist Bellersby round his little finger, jist as he do everybody else."

Both the Vampire's hands were fixed in his beard, which he was twisting as if it were a rope.

"Crane—yes," he murmured. "Crane is the man to do it! I must see Crane the first thing in the morning, my dear. I'll go up to St. John's Wood; we mustn't have any delay about this. Bellersby must be made to pay up—must be brought to his senses, and Crane is the man to do it!"

Full of his intention of making Martin Crane acquainted with what had taken place between Walt Dyson and Mr. Samuel Bellersby, the Vampire set out immediately after breakfast on the following morning.

He reached the house in St. John's Wood in due time, and was at once admitted to the presence of the ex-solicitor. At some length, and in very forcible fashion, the Vampire explained to Crane the business upon which he had come.

During the telling of the story the ex-lawyer paced up and down the room and continued the movement, without speaking, until after the Jew had finished.

"This is strange," Crane at length remarked, pausing in his walk and standing with folded arms before his visitor—"this is strange, and somewhat unexpected. I do not quite know what Bellersby means. I cannot understand his game. But I'll find out!" he continued, his voice growing more vehement. "I'll find out before many hours have passed!"

"Why should he refuse to pay out?" queried the Vampire. "There must be some reason for it."

"I have told you I do not quite understand his reason," answered Crane. "I can only guess. Bellersby is getting frightened—that's what I should think. Frightened—bah! What is there to be frightened of? The whole thing is as safe as it can be. There is no one to dispute Walter Dyson's claim. Mother Gurdle is dead, and she was the only person who could have really proved which of the two boys in her care was the son of Henry Dyson—the man who left all this money. What, then, has Bellersby got to be afraid of? I must go and see him without loss of time."

He paced up and down the room again, his puckered brow, fierce eyes, and quivering lip plainly showing the agitation of his mind. He turned on the Vampire again with composed face.

"I have made up my mind what to do," he said quietly. "I am going to see Bellersby now. I shall do my best to persuade him to go on as he has hitherto been doing, and I hope I shall succeed. But if I fail—and the possibility must be considered—other measures must be resorted to."

"Ha! Other measures?"

The Vampire's hands were slowly rubbing together.

"Yes," said Crane, in the same even tone, "other measures, in the carrying out of which I may require your help and that of Rudford." A keen glance of inquiry shot from the Vampire's eyes.

"You must understand," pursued Crane, "that Bellersby has in his possession all the documents which I so laboriously collected. The will of Henry Dyson, leaving his whole fortune to his son; the signed statement of Mother Gurdle; the bonds, securities, deeds—all the documents, in fact, are in Bellersby's hands. Without them we can do nothing. So it comes to this, that should Bellersby still persist in his refusal to advance more money—why, then—why, then—"

He paused, looking hard at the Vampire.

The old Jew nodded his head, crumpling his beard on his chest.

"I see," he murmured—"I understand, Crane! If Bellersby still refuses, then somehow or other the documents must be got from him. That's what you mean—eh?"

"Yes, somehow or other they must be got from him," answered Crane.

"That is why you will want my help and Rudford's?"

The ex-solicitor nodded.

"Yes, that is why," he said. "But perhaps, after all, it will not be necessary. Now I will go and see Bellersby."

The Vampire Finds a Hard Nut to Crack.

THEN you refuse, Bellersby, to pay out any more money?"

"I absolutely refuse, Crane! I have paid out enough already, I think. Young Dyson has received over twenty thousand pounds."

"And what is twenty thousand pounds," retorted Crane, "when you hold security for something like a quarter of a million!"

Samuel Bellersby shrugged his shoulders.

"I am sorry, my dear Crane," he said, "but it is useless to discuss the matter further. I need hardly tell you that it is not my own money I have been advancing. I have borrowed the money—at a pretty big rate of interest—and my principal is getting, if not exactly tired, at any rate a little shy."

"Why should he get shy?" asked Crane, with some irritation.

Again Bellersby shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't know," he answered, "unless he's just a trifle suspicious that everything isn't quite in order; that possibly when the time comes for administering the estate of the late Henry Dyson there may be some dispute as to who is the heir."

"But how can there be any dispute?" Crane demanded. "Remember that the testator died in New Zealand a long time ago. For some reason or other—perhaps because a good many years back, when he was in England, I did some legal business for him—he appointed me executor. In a letter which he dictated and signed upon his deathbed he desired me to seek out his son who, as a baby, he had left in charge of a nurse. You know the story, for I have told it you before, of how that nurse sank through drink, and when Henry Dyson's remittances ceased to arrive she had perforce to take up her residence in common lodging-houses. It was at a common lodging-house that I found her, and with her the boy—the heir to Henry Dyson's property."

"Two boys, to put it correctly," struck in Bellersby, "one of whom was the heir to Henry Dyson's property."

"Well, as you will," said Crane, with an impatient wave of his hands. "So long as one of them was the heir what matters it? The property is a very real and a very substantial one."

"The heir is a very real one, too," Bellersby retorted. "The game you have been playing—"

"We—the game we have been playing!" corrected the other.

"Oh, all right! It makes but little difference jist now. Let me put it this way. The game that has been played has been for pretty high stakes. The odds have been long, and the risks therefore great."

"Risks! How are the risks great?"

"I will not try and hide from you, Crane, the fact that whispers are getting about. I have heard them in one or two places. Owing to certain attacks which have been made upon young Robert Welford, he has on more than one occasion, it seems, consulted the police. Consequently the police are getting suspicious."

"Let them be suspicious!" retorted Crane. "Their suspicions are quite vague, and they can't act upon them."

"I am perfectly aware of that," Bellersby returned. "At the same time, in my responsible position, I have decided to withdraw from the business."

"Very well, then," said Crane. "You will return to me all the documents which I handed over to you?"

"Certainly, with the greatest of pleasure," answered the other, and then added—"immediately the money advanced by me has been repaid, together with the interest thereon and the amount of my professional charges. Speaking roundly, I should say thirty thousand pounds would cover everything."

Martin Crane's features twitched. He had anticipated these words from Bellersby almost at the beginning of the stormy interview they had had, but now that the words were spoken he could not help betraying his feelings of bitter discomfiture. Thirty thousand pounds! How was he to raise such a sum? With the securities of the Dyson property in his possession he could do it easily; but the point was he had not got those securities, nor could he get them without first settling Bellersby's claims.

To get them by fair means, then, was beyond his power. He must resort to other measures.

He remained talking with Bellersby for some time, and examining papers, to get which the lawyer passed to and from the great safe that stood in a corner of his office.

Now, Samuel Bellersby had unlocked this safe with a key attached to a bunch, which, carelessly enough, he had placed upon his desk, leaving the safe open. It was during one of his several brief visits to the safe that Martin Crane secretly performed a curious action. He drew his hand from his pocket, and in that hand was an oblong block of wax. Swiftly stretching out his other hand, he seized the bunch of keys, noiselessly selected the key of the safe, and pressed it upon the soft wax. He replaced the bunch jist as Bellersby turned round from the safe, and reseated himself in his chair.

Again the pair went on talking, discussing details of the various transactions that had passed between Walt Dyson and Bellersby. At length Martin Crane rose to go.

"Good-day," he said, putting out his hand. "I am sorry you are not inclined to go on with the business. I suppose I must contrive to raise the money somehow, repay your loans, interest, and charges, and so clear up the matter between us. Good-day!"

And they parted.

Once outside Bellersby's office, Martin Crane walked quickly across Lincoln's Inn Fields into Holborn. There he hailed the first cab he saw. Behind his glasses his eyes gleamed with a strange light, and there was a deep furrow between them—a furrow not of perplexity, but of decision. He had made up his mind.

Eastward he drove, straight to Stepney Green. He alighted some little distance from the Vampire's house and walked quickly along till he reached it. Not one word did he say to the Vampire, who opened the door. Only a curt nod did he bestow upon him, and then followed him to an inner room.

"I have a job for you," the ex-solicitor said at length—"a job for you and Rudford."

The Vampire's eyes gleamed. He nodded as if he understood.

"You have been to see Bellersby—eh, Mr. Crane? You have made terms with him?"

"I have seen him, but he will not come to terms."

"What! He won't pay Walter any more money? You don't say that, Mr. Crane!"

"I do say it! He refuses to advance another

penny, also he refuses to give up the documents. Now, we must have those documents, you understand? We must have them!"

The Vampire nodded again.

"I think I understand, Mr. Crane," he said. "You want me to get 'em—eh? It's a little job in Rudford's line—eh? We are coming to business, Mr. Crane, we are coming to business!" He rubbed his hands gleefully.

"I see you follow my meaning," answered Crane. "It's jist what I want you to do. All the documents connected with the Dyson estate—I have told you something about that—are in a large safe in Bellersby's office. They are tied up in bundles at the bottom of the safe—in a deed box, on which the name 'Henry Dyson' is painted. You can make no mistake; it is quite easy."

"Easy, Mr. Crane?" queried the Vampire, lifting his eyebrows a little. "Easy, I dare say, once the safe is opened!"

"That is the simplest matter in the world!" Crane remarked drily.

He thrust his hand into his overcoat pocket and pulled out two blocks of wax.

"There you are!" he said, with a note of triumph in his tone. "I dare say you've got some ingenious friend who can make us keys from those impressions. This," he went on, pointing to one of the squares of wax, "is the key of Bellersby's outer office; this other is the key of the safe!"

Admiration gleamed in the Vampire's eyes.

"You're clever, Mr. Crane!" he said. "This will save us a lot of time and trouble. When is the little job to be done?"

"At the earliest possible moment," Crane replied; "to-night, if it can be arranged! There is no time to be lost."

"No time will be lost by me, Mr. Crane," the Jew answered, examining the wax impressions keenly. "I'll get these keys made at once."

"And you will do the job to-night?" Crane asked eagerly.

"We will try. But if not to-night, then to-morrow night."

"Good! And you will bring the documents to my house as soon as you get them? That's settled, then!"

The Vampire looked up quickly.

"Not quite, Mr. Crane," he said. "There is just one lee-tle thing more! For myself I would not trouble—as you know, I would work willingly for nothing—but Rudford is a very particular man, and he will want to know how much he is going to make out of it. It's an important job, ain't it, Mr. Crane, and means a good deal? It ought to be worth a thousand pounds?"

Crane turned his head quickly and pressed his lips together.

"A thousand pence, you mean!" he retorted sharply. "Why, the thing's as easy as possible now that you've got the impressions of the keys!"

"Yes, yes, yes, Mr. Crane; quite so!" said the Vampire smoothly. "But payment accordin' to results, you know, accordin' to results, and the results are likely to be very handsome to you. So we'll say a thousand pounds, Mr. Crane!"

"Very well, then! A thousand pounds when you bring me the documents!"

"Mr. Crane," said the Vampire, thrusting out his hand, "you may consider the documents yours!"

It was not late—at any rate, for London—barely eleven o'clock. Yet Lincoln's Inn Fields, wedged as it is between two of London's greatest and busiest arteries, lay as silent almost as a country churchyard. A policeman's footsteps echoed along the southern side, while two or three pedestrians hurried along the almost deserted pavements.

Two men there were who came through Little Turnstile from Holborn into the Fields who did not hurry. They were the Vampire and Rudford.

At a moderate pace they walked along, exchanging an occasional word in an undertone, though for the most part they were silent, their ears straining to catch the echo of those footsteps on the other side of the square.

They halted in a minute or two opposite a door.

"The coast is clear!" the Vampire whispered. "I'll keep a look-out!"

Without a word Rudford moved towards the door and fumbled with a skeleton-key at the lock. He managed that part of the business all right, but found, as he expected, that the door was bolted and chained. From a big pocket inside his coat he took out a brace and bit, and started to work at the door.

The Vampire slowly paced up and down the pavement, keeping a sharp look-out and ready to give the alarm at anyone's approach. But that side of the square was particularly lonely, and nobody came.

In a few minutes the expert burglar had overcome the difficulty of the bolt and chain, and had opened the door. With a low signal to the Vampire he opened the door and passed in.

The Vampire chuckled as he still continued pacing to and fro along the pavement. He knew now that the chief difficulty was over. Provided, as Rudford was, with a plan of the offices, the key of Bellersby's outer door and a key of the safe, the rest of his task would be easy.

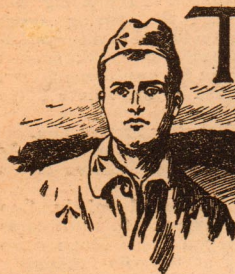
It proved so. Almost sooner than the Vampire expected he heard a slight noise at the door, and the next moment Rudford issued forth.

"All right!" whispered the latter as he joined the Jew, and they walked back, quicker now, towards Holborn.

"You've got the papers?"

"Yes, I've got 'em!" Rudford answered, tapping his bulging overcoat. "They're all here."

(To be continued in next Thursday's BOYS' HERALD, and to be followed by a sequel in a fortnight's time.)



THE ORDEAL OF HUGH VANE.

A Stirring New Serial, Telling how an Innocent Man Suffered for Another's Crime, and what was Done with Gotherby's Millions.

By MARTIN SHAW.

Author of "Fighting His Way" and other Successful Stories.

The Strange Experiences of the Escaped Convict.

BY an eccentric millionaire named Gotherby, who in his younger days had committed murder in Australia, Hugh Vane is left more than a million of money. Hugh is a convict in Dartmoor, undergoing ten years' penal servitude for a crime of which he is innocent. The young fellow, however, through the kindly assistance of a cattle-dealer named Pedgrift, escapes from prison, and reaches London. Here, disguised as a Mr. Harrison, he interviews the dead Gotherby's lawyer, Mr. John Carfax, but goes away without revealing his identity. No sooner, however, does he leave the lawyer's office than he is led by a strange man to a house where he meets with his uncle, Medwin Vane, who attempts to induce him to sign a paper making over Gotherby's million to him—Medwin Vane. This Hugh refuses to do, and in consequence is kept a close prisoner. He, however, effects an escape through the offices of a band of young hooligans calling themselves The Tigers.

That same day Hugh rescues a crippled lad named Jimmy Candler from a burning house. By the Candler's escaped convict is treated with the greatest kindness.

Leaving the Candler's, Hugh resolves once more to see Mr. Carfax. To him he confesses that he is Vane, the escaped convict. Carfax, believing in his innocence, promises to aid him. But at this moment Medwin Vane arrives upon the scene, and longs to secure the capture of Hugh, who once again has to resort to flight. Through the London streets, over which a dense fog has settled, he goes, a crowd in full pursuit. At length, however, he throws his enemies off the scent. Then suddenly through the mist he hears a loud cry: "Help, help! I'm being murdered!"

With a yell, Hugh dashes off in the direction of the sound.

(From this point my new friends can take up the story to-day.)

Hugh Vane Has a Cold Bath, and Rescues Ezra Mew from a Watery Grave—Mystery.

THE cry for help came from the foot of a flight of steps leading down to the river. So much Hugh speedily discovered.

Instantly forgetful of his own perilous plight, mindful only of the fact that close at hand was someone in most desperate straits—he could hear the sounds that betokened a fierce scuffle, quick breathing, and hurried shufflings—he plunged through the opacity, and so down the stairway that led to the scene of the conflict.

At the foot of the steps he saw three shadowy figures, swaying hither and thither like ghosts, uncannily, shadowy in the fog.

"Down him, Sippy!" a harsh voice ground out to the accompaniment of a rasping sob of rage. "Chuck 'im in the blessed river, an' 'ave done wi' 'im! Blow 'im, 'e's like a eel!"

With a cry of rage Hugh hurled himself into the fray. As he did so, the two men, who were so evidently endeavouring to overcome the third, exerted themselves to the utmost, and with a gurgle of hideous satisfaction, swung the unknown victim off his feet and flung him into the darkness. The dull splash that rose up as his body splashed into the tideway struck swift horror into Vane's heart.

"You blackguards," he ground out—"you murderous blackguards!" And would have grappled with them.

But he had over-estimated his powers. It must be remembered that he was spent and weary, not only by reason of the fierce stress of his recent endeavours, but also from lack of food. He was in no fettle to cope with a pair of desperate hooligans, as these two evidently were.

A volley of language fell from the lips of one of the ruffians.

"If you will 'ave it," he muttered, as Hugh flung himself upon him, "why, then, down him, Sippy!" using the same phrase he had employed to egg his comrade on to encompass the downfall of the man they had just hurled to death.

Hugh struggled like a wild cat. But he was speedily overpowered. And then—then he was flung off his feet and hurled into the river, even as the other man had been.

A mocking laugh of triumph was the last thing he heard as he fell into the ice-cold water.

He rose at once and struck out blindly with the tide, racing onwards towards the sea.

He was a fine swimmer, and in spite of all that he had gone through—in spite of the blackness of his future—the instinct for life was still strong within him. He realized that much with an inward pang, as the thought flashed through him that only a short while previously he had contemplated seeking relief from his miseries in a watery grave. And now that the river held him in its cold embrace, the wild longing for life surged up anew within him.

It was horrible, this swimming through the thick blanket of mist, the yellow, viscous substance that merged water and air into one. He did not feel the cold, did not even experience difficulty in keeping afloat by reason of the weight of his clothes. The horror of the darkness, the mysterious gurgle of the river upon whose breast he lay, those were the certainties that drove all other speculations from his mind.

Then a new terror gripped him. His hand struck some obstacle, something soft, clammy, yielding. A moment more and something seemed to arise out of the water, a monster that gripped him by the arm, that began to drag him down, down, down into the sullen maw of the river.

He struck out wildly, desperately, beat off the writhing fingers of the thing that plucked at his clothes, his hair, his hands.

Then the truth of the mystery forced its way into his mind. It was no monster of the deep that had risen up out of the depths to seize him, but a man even as he was, a human being struggling desperately for existence, the mysterious unknown whom the hooligans on the Embankment had flung to a watery grave, and whom he had vainly endeavoured to rescue.

"Hold hard!" he managed to splutter, as soon as he had recovered sufficiently from his amazement. "You'll drown us both if you aren't careful! Put a hand on my shoulder! I'll try and strike out for the shore to the left here. We can't be far away."

"I—can't—swim," muttered the other huskily, and with the utmost difficulty of articulation. "Save me, and—"

"Don't talk," cut in Hugh shortly; and turning, he struck out fiercely towards the bank.

Who was this man that Fate had flung across his path? A vague feeling of dislike, of apprehension, awoke in Hugh's mind as he struggled gallantly on towards the Embankment, the unknown gripping him tightly by the shoulder, and the feeling, strangely enough, made him forget the desperate plight in which he was,

the scanty chance of winning through to safety, and to yet another effort to escape capture.

For the chance was, indeed, slender. Not only was he handicapped by his clothes, but he had also to support as best he might the helpless form of the unknown who clung to him. Added to which he was making for the slippery, precipitous side of the stone wall that shut off the river from the Embankment. A mouse in a bucket of water would have had as good a chance of escape under such conditions.

Then suddenly his fingers struck against some hard object floating upon the bosom of the tideway. He gripped the object wildly. A spasm of joy went through his frame. It was a plank of wood, a fragment of jettison hurrying out towards the sea.

"Catch hold of this plank!" he spluttered thickly. "It'll bear us both. And I'll kick out with my feet to see if I can drive inshore."

The unknown obeyed this injunction with alacrity. A moment or so more one end of the log was grinding against the stone face of the Embankment wall.

From the roadway above came the hubbub of many voices, the stampede of feet, all the sounds attendant on the conglomeration of a concourse of people.

Hugh set his teeth hard and kicked out with renewed effort, so that the plank was sent spinning forward along the side of the wall with the tide.

"They're still after me," he muttered, forgetful for the moment of the man beside him.

Yet the latter made no sound to show whether or no he had heard the low-voiced avowal.

A few moments later and the plank came to a standstill. It had been driven on to the lowest of a flight of stone steps leading up from the river's brim to the roadway.

With commendable alacrity the two sodden, dripping men clambered out of the water and up the stairs. The fog was just as thick, just as unyielding as it had been when they had been flung into the water by the two hooligans. The unknown laid a clammy hand on Hugh's soaked arm.

"Look ye here, young man," he said, in a thin, raspy voice, "you've saved Ezra Mew's life. And now Father Ezra's goin' to save yours. Oh, he's a philanthropist, is Father Ezzy! He's very, very fond of young men. And they're nearly all very, very fond o' him. There was two that weren't. You saw 'em try to throw poor old daddy into the river to drown. Well, we'll get even with them all right. And what's your name, my dear? Or shall I try and guess?" His speech ended in a mirthless, inharmonious cackle of laughter.

Hugh shivered. Was it merely the cold that gripped his bones, the sodden clothes that clung to his limbs, the raw fog that enveloped him, that were alone responsible for that shudder? Not altogether. Ezra Mew's voice had that in it which struck a cold thrill through Vane's heart.

"I am glad I saved you," he muttered dully. "I don't see how you can help me, though. My life's not in danger, and—"

"The hue and cry's not out, then?" broke in the other, in a low, ominous whisper. "The traps ain't after you, then? You'd better come with Ezra. He'll do you better than they would on the moor. Come, it's cold and wet standing here. Father Ezzy doesn't mind the fog. He could find his way home through the thickest. Come on!" And once more he

laid his clammy fingers on the young man's arm.

Hugh's heart sank still lower—if such were possible—within him. He felt much as a wild animal must feel when penned behind the iron bars of a cage. Who was this sinister little old man? That he knew the identity of his rescuer was very evident.

"Speech is silver, silence is gold." Hugh had long ago learnt the wisdom of that old proverb. He shut his teeth on the stream of questions, of conjectures that rose to his lips. With a shrug of the shoulders he began to continue the ascent of the stairs, with Ezra Mew's fingers still upon his arm.

And rack his brain as he might, he could not determine the true nature of the man at his side. Mew said no more. He shuffled on along the pavement with unerring, unhesitating steps, with Hugh following blindly at his side, amazed, as well he might be, at the certainty with which the old man threaded his way through the oppressive gloom.

It is, perhaps, superfluous to state that Hugh lost all sense of direction within five minutes of leaving the head of the stairway that obtained on to the Embankment. For with the fog as dense as it was, there were no bearings visible to be taken. After a while he muttered hoarsely: "Where are we? Where are we going?"

Ezra Mew laughed.

"We're going home, my dear," he replied softly; "home to ever such a snug, warm place. You're going to make the acquaintance of a lot of new brothers. I'm your daddy now, my dear. Father Ezzy won't let the police get hold of you. You needn't fret about that. You saved daddy, and daddy'll save you."

This speech, as may perhaps have been the desired object, only mystified the unfortunate Hugh the more. Yet it was evident that no matter how grateful the old man might be for having been saved from drowning he was, at the same time, anxious to impress on our hero the fact that he was altogether in his, Mew's, power.

Yet, had it not been for the fog, Hugh Vane would have broken loose from the man without any hesitation. There was within the convict's breast the utmost distaste and repugnance for this man of mystery. It was impossible to connect Ezra Mew with philanthropy pure and simple. That he had some ulterior motives in view, Hugh felt firmly convinced.

Yet he was cold, hungry, homeless, without a friend in the metropolis to whom he could turn for help. The fact that he was indeed a millionaire was only a piece of maddening irony. His riches were unattainable. He could do nothing, save await the development of the present situation. Who were the "new brothers" that Mew had promised he should make the acquaintance of? What was this "home" towards which their feet were turned?

In one way, the choking fog was of service. It hid from the gaze of passers-by—and every now and again the two men would cannon into some belated pedestrian—the two dripping, sodden figures, checked the inquiry that must have come from more than one source, as to how they had come to such a plight.

After a while it seemed to Hugh as though he had been walking for an enormous number of miles. He had long given up marvelling at the surety with which Ezra Mew held forward through the impenetrable gloom. There was soon little room left in his mind for any speculations, save on the subject of his own physical discomfort.

At last he felt that he must raise some sort of protest.

"I can't keep going much longer!" he said hoarsely. "I've had nothing to eat for hours, and no sleep worth speaking of. Where are we?"

"Only a little further now, my dear," returned Ezra Mew, in the same soft, insidious voice he had adopted all along. "They're low-down fellows, the police. They don't give one any time for rest, do they? But, never mind, you'll be safe with Ezra Mew. He'll be a daddy to you, my dear."

A blind feeling of rage against this unpleasant old being, who could, apparently, only harp on one string, the fact that Hugh was completely in his power, no matter how he might vary the theme of his tune, arose in Vane's breast. Yet, even as he was speculating as to the advisability of breaking loose from his companion, and throwing himself once more on the doubtful clemency of the streets, Mew stopped.

"Here we are," he said, in a low voice; "we're at home now. We'll soon have dry togs, and food and drink!"



The startled Smiler was flung to the ground with Vane's arm around him. He was in the grip of one who, for the moment, seemed endowed with superhuman strength.

The Ordeal of Hugh Vane

(Continued from the previous page.)

That they were in some quiet, mean street, standing before a dilapidated, dirty-looking doorway, was all that Hugh Vane could aver for certainty. In that quarter of the city they were—north, south, east, or west, he knew not. Ezra Mew stooped down and appeared to fumble beside the decayed flight of narrow steps that led up to the entrance of the house.

"None of your double or treble knocks for Ezra," he muttered, with a grin, as he rose to an upright position again. "Electricity is our friend, on'y we don't use it enough. You'd never guess as there was a hidden push in the stone there. So as we've no need for signals, no one as shouldn't, is able to find out the secret—eh?"

The door of the house slid open as if by magic. An instant more, Hugh found himself standing in a narrow hallway. Ezra Mew closed the door to behind him.

The elder placed his hand upon Hugh's arm.

"Keep close to me," he muttered. "We shall pass through a door in a minute—a door opening on to a flight of steps. There are twelve steps. Then we shall come to another door. And then we shall be home."

Hugh made no verbal retort. His heart was beating like a sledge-hammer against his ribs. There was something horribly uncanny about this silent, pitch-dark house, something strangely sinister in the way in which Ezra Mew piloted him along the inky corridor, and pushed open the unseen door opening on to the flight of stairs already mentioned.

Mew's fingers closed on the damp sleeve of the young man like a vice. The door swung to behind them.

"Mind the steps!" muttered Mew. "Remember, there are twelve of them!"

At the bottom of the flight, Mew paused. Vane conquered a wild desire to hurl himself upon the man, to take to his heels the way he had come, to repress a cry of rage falling from his lips. And yet what could he do? He was helpless, powerless. He could but allow his destiny to bear him on towards the unknown that lay in his path.

A door swung open before the old man's touch. Instantly there fell on Hugh's ears the sound of voices. He saw, moreover, a bright line of light, evidently coming through the chink of yet another door beyond.

"Warmth, jollity, food, my dear!" muttered Ezra Mew in his ear; and his voice seemed ghoully in its glee. "This is better than a narrow cell on the moor, eh—Mr. Vane?"

He shot the last two words out with a curious, hissing sibilance that tore away the last hope Hugh had had, that this dreadful old man did not know his real personality.

Then Mew flung open the last door. He almost pushed Hugh into the room beyond. Dazedly the young man stood, his eyes blinking owlishly in the light.

It was a strange sight upon which he gazed. The chamber was windowless. It must have been at one time a cellar. Yet now it was transformed into a living-room of by no means unprepossessing appearance.

At one end was a fireplace, in which a cheerful fire danced and crackled. Comfortable chairs were in the room, a table, pictures, evidences of unnatural refinement.

And the occupants of the room—some eight or nine young fellows, clad in various degrees of poverty, looking strangely out of place in so luxurious an environment.

They all turned their eyes towards the door as Mew entered. And seeing that he was not unattended, they sprang to their feet and gazed in astonishment at the pale-faced, dripping form of the convict.

Ezra Mew's low, evil laugh rang out. "How goes it with you, my kittens?" he cried. "Aren't you glad to see your old daddy? I'm late, my sons. And but for this good young gentleman here"—indicating Hugh with a wave of the hand—"I should never have seen your dear faces again. Your daddy came near to drowning, my kittens! He was thrown into the river. This young gentleman fished him out. You must be kind to him. He's going to join us, he is. Allow me to present you to Mr. Hugh Vane."

A hoarse cry of incredulity followed this naked declaration. As for Hugh, his whole soul rose up in revolt against the situation that had been forced upon him. He turned round and faced Mew squarely, with blazing eyes.

"What do you mean?" he ground out fiercely. "How do you know that I'm going to join you? Who are you? What is your business?"

He clenched his fists ominously. The next moment he found himself the centre of a group of hostile-looking young ruffians.

"We don't want no toff lags here, daddy!" cried out one of them shrilly. "And if 'e's a-goin' to show up nasty—well, say the word, and we'll soon jump on 'is 'ead!"

"Impetuous—impetuous as ever, Smiler!" purred the old man, his steely eyes twinkling like stars in the parchment-like face, devoid of hair.

"Mr. Vane is overtired. He's been swimming in the river. Then we had a long, weary walk through the fog. He'll be better when he's had some food and a rest. He knows we're his friends here. We ain't a-goin' to split on him, my dears, are we now? Oh, no, Daddy Mew and his kittens aren't that sort at all, are they?"

Worn out, exhausted though he was, Hugh determined upon one final effort to shake free

from the meshes of the net that had been cast over him so subtly. For there could be no doubt now as to the true nature of Ezra Mew and his "kittens." He was face to face with a modern embodiment of Fagin the Jew, had been suddenly flung into the midst of a thieves' kitchen, into an assemblage of youthful criminals, the guiding spirit of whom was evidently the dreadful old man, Ezra Mew.

It was towards the latter that he turned, and assuredly his pleading voice would have melted a heart of stone.

"I saved your life," he said, almost piteously. "Must I remind you of that fact? I've done you no harm, I wish none of you any! Let me go! I beg of you to let me go!"

Ezra Mew flung up his hands in well-feigned astonishment.

"Hark at him, my dears!" he said, turning towards his followers. "Just hark at him! It's Mister Hugh Vane who's speaking; Hugh Vane the convict, who ought at this moment to be working out on the nasty wet moor, instead of having a nice snug nest to creep to, with plenty of food, and surrounded by so many nice friends and well-wishers. Now, I ask you all: Ain't I the kindest and best of old daddys? Don't I look after my little kittens so well as never was? He saved my life! Of course, he did! And now I want to save his. Why, really—"

He shrugged his shoulders deprecatingly with a hideous simulation of incredulous wonderment, that nearly drove the hapless Hugh crazy.

Then Ezra Mew's quiet, unruffled voice made itself heard.

"Don't be hard on him, dears," he murmured; and Hugh gnashed his teeth at the sound of the already thoroughly hated tones. "He's over-excited. He wants food and drink and rest. That is right, isn't it, Hughie?" Words fail me to convey the hideous familiarity of the old man's voice. "I see it is. Let him loose. And you, Smiler dear, ain't goin' to bear no malice. You're goin' to get grub for him, like the dear you are"—for the Smiler had risen sullenly to his feet, and his sallow, unprepossessing countenance was further distorted by rage at the indignity that had been visited upon him.

Hugh's captors made no further effort to detain him. They fell apart without speech. And he, looking round in the unfriendly faces of the ruffianly gang, realised that he had been beaten. It was useless to try and kick against his destiny any more. He sank into a chair and covered his face with his hands. He had done all that was possible to extricate himself from the vile tangle. Let what must transpire now.

It was true what Mew had said. He was tired beyond belief—tired and, oh, so hungry! When he looked up there was food on the table close at hand—food and drink, though he was too weary to notice what it was that had been set out for his delectation.

Mechanically he ate and drank. And even as he had finished the last mouthful of the food set before him, even as he had drained the last

Then everything came back to the young man with a rush. He recalled the stirring scenes that had led to his being conducted to the mysterious cellar-chamber, the mad outbreak against Smiler that had resulted in his own discomfort, his supper, and then—then he must have fallen asleep.

He sat up and looked eagerly around him. Ezra Mew turned his head, and the hideously familiar smile played round the corners of his thin, cruel lips.

"Ah, my dear," he murmured quietly, "so you've wakened up! I expect you want some breakfast. Smiler, will you make Hugh some coffee?" Vane winced at the vile familiarity of the old man's tones. "But you can sleep, my dear. It's nigh ten o'clock. You've almost slept the clock round. But you'll be all the better for it, I lay."

Hugh made no verbal response to this speech. What, indeed, was there for him to say? He rose somewhat weakly and sat down on the edge of his couch. Mew came forward and thrust a paper in his hand.

"Here's the 'Weekly Mail,'" the old man said. "You'll find plenty about you there, Hughie, my son. Me and the Kittens is all proud of you, and we are all goin' to look after you as well as ever we can."

Mechanically Hugh took the news-sheet from Mew's hand. This is what glared at him from the printed page:

"THE RUNAWAY CONVICT TRACKED AT LAST. A DESPERATE CONFLICT."

"THE FOG SAVES THE CRIMINAL FOR THE TIME BEING."

"At last the real whereabouts of the convict Vane, whose escape from Dartmoor Gaol we have already recorded, is known. Somehow or another the convict managed to reach London. He then set about endeavouring to levy blackmail on his uncle, the wealthy banker, Mr. Medwin Vane. He paid a surreptitious visit to his uncle, murderously assaulted that gentleman, and then escaped. He was then traced to the office of a lawyer, Mr. John Carfax, of Lincoln's Inn. Medwin Vane ran the criminal to earth inside the lawyer's office. We regret to say that Carfax aided the convict to escape, and is now under arrest for the offence, which is indeed a pretty culpable one, and which may lead Carfax into very serious trouble. Vane then took to his heels, was traced to the Embankment, and swallowed up in the dense fog that has visited the metropolis in the last few hours. And up to the time of going to press no news has been heard of him. Yet his recapture, now that the authorities know where he is, can only be a matter of a few hours. Every seaport is warned, every police-station supplied with a full account of the convict. We sincerely hope that he may soon be laid by the heels. Desperate criminals such as this man are a menace to the public welfare. There is only one place for such as they—one or other of the big goals of the country."

Hugh read this amazing article through not once, but twice. Lies, lies—all lies! His uncle had been responsible for this vile slander. A criminal—a desperate, bloodthirsty criminal! That is what he—Hugh Vane—was, then, beyond all doubt, in the eyes of the world.

The paper slipped from the hapless young fellow's hands. A groan burst from his lips. He buried his face in his palms. Come what might, nothing save black ruin stared him in the face.

"Come, come, my dear," Ezra Mew's voice broke in upon his misery, "you've no cause to be so downhearted! Here you are as snug as you can be. Me and my Kittens ain't goin' to give you away. We don't love the slops so much as all that. I'll soon rig you in a pretty disguise, so as your own mother wouldn't know you. Then you takes the oath that makes you a Kitten and all's well. We're a rollicking crew, ain't we, Smiler? We're as happy a family as you could ever wish to see. There ain't no fear as you won't have a good time, Hughie, my son."

In the meanwhile Smiler was actively engaged in preparing breakfast. Before long he set down on the table a steaming cup of fragrant coffee, a rasher of bacon, and some bread.

Hugh was, after all, only flesh and blood. He had by no means determined to trundle under before Ezra Mew and his Kittens. Yet, at the same time, open hostility would be worse than useless. Diplomacy was indeed better than rebellion. More than that, he would need all the physical strength he could muster in view of the uncertain future before him. He made a hearty breakfast, and neither Ezra nor Smiler troubled to converse with him until he had appeased his appetite.

Then Ezra produced a box of Egyptian cigarettes, of a brand that made Hugh involuntarily open his eyes as he selected one.

"We only have the very best of everything here," chuckled Mew, as he noted Vane's surprise. "The best smokes, the best grub, the best o' pals. Why, see you here, Hughie"—his voice dropped to a confidential whisper—"I'm a business man. It ain't for the traps to inquire what my business is. Sometimes I make a mistake. I did yesterday, and I should have been a goner but for you, my dear—but not often. There's heaps of good things goin' in this world which are to be had for the pickin' up by clever boys. Ask Smiler, there! Ask him what old Daddy Ezra has done for him. Ask him what he's lookin' forward to before he's thirty—a settin' up on his own somewhere, with as much money as ever he need want. Oh, it's a fine life if you know how to do it and take a little care. And I likes you, Hughie. I want you to join us. If you don't, I can promise you one thing—you'll precious soon find yourself back with the other blokes at Dartmoor."

(To be continued in next Thursday's BOYS' HERALD. 16 pages. Price 1d.)



Hugh struggled like a wildcat. But he was speedily overpowered and flung into the river.

The youth who had been addressed as Smiler guffawed coarsely, and rapped out a vile oath. "Leave him to me, daddy," he said mockingly, "I'll coax him round all right!"

The youngster's thinly-veiled contempt tore away the last remnant of Hugh's restraint. With a cry of anger he turned and hurled himself at the Smiler's head. Another moment and the startled youth had been flung to the ground with Vane's arm around him, in the grip of one who for the moment had been endowed with a super-human strength.

And for a short space the Smiler's comrades were too much taken aback by this altogether unlooked-for attack to be capable of any coherent action.

Yet had they remained inactive long I really do not care to think how it would have fared with the hapless Smiler. For Hugh's fingers were round his throat, and he was writhing vainly, desperately to make that dreadful grip relax. It was the sight of his blackening countenance that broke the spell of amazement that had deprived his colleagues of the power of rescuing him.

Suddenly babel broke loose. Hugh was swung off his feet by half a dozen hands, and although he fought with all the fury of despair he could not hope, in his weakened state, to combat successfully the superior forces arrayed against him. In wondrously quick time he was overpowered, his hands forced behind his back, powerless to do aught save glare wildly in the faces of his captors.

drop of the wine in the glass, his head lolled forward.

Another moment and he was lapsed in slumber as profound as that of the grave itself.

Mew burst into a raucous chuckle.

"We'll soon tame him, boys," he whispered. "He'll make a fine kitten when he's broken in. For they've lots o' spirit, these gentlemen lags—lots o' spirit! Stretch him out by the fire; make him comfy. And then we'll have a nice talk altogether."

In Which Hugh Vane Learns Some Startling News and the True Intentions of Ezra Mew.

HUGH VANE opened his eyes with a start. For a few moments he lay inert, his mind a blank as to what had happened of late or where he was at that moment. All he could realise in the first flush of reawakening consciousness was that he was lying upon a bed, and that his tongue felt like leather in his mouth, while his limbs ached as though he had been subjected of late to a severe castigation.

His eyes, exploring the chamber in which he sat, fell upon the figure of Ezra Mew seated before the fire, while yet another form, that of the youth Smiler, stood idly near at hand, smoking a cigarette.

SHADOWED BY TWO.

A Stirring Long, Complete
10,000 Word
Story

The 1st Chapter.

A Strange Story—Into the Unknown.

THE walls of Manton Grange gleamed white in the moonlight; the whole structure stood out against the sapphire sky like some gaunt remnant of a bygone age. All without was peaceful and still; nothing to disturb the night but the wailing of the wind through the spectral trees. But within an upper room of Manton Grange was shortly and swiftly to happen a most tragic and sad occurrence.

In the largest apartment of the west wing slept Colonel Talbot. His head, now grey with years, rested quietly on the snowy pillow, whilst through the blind flashed a ray of silvery whiteness, which threw into relief the recumbent form of the man on the bed. The sleeper turned uneasily once or twice as a soft footfall broke the silence of the night. Again that sound and again the sleeper turned, then, as a board creaked noisily, he sat bolt upright, his hand moving instinctively to his pillow. Too late! A dark form rushed forward, seized the raised hand, swiftly forced a pad of some soft, yielding substance to the struggling man's mouth.

"Not a sound, oh, thou unholy possessor of that of the sacred dead, or death shall come swiftly!"

Colonel Talbot raised his eyes in the pale moonlight to the speaker's face. It was of an ashen greyness. The clothes this man wore brought back the memory of another land. Just for a second his mind flashed back involuntarily to far-away India.

"Wha—" But the utterance was quickly stifled as the silken tones of the Hindoo's voice fell softly. The colonel could see this man now, in his strange garb, his face hard set and firm, with a menacing light in his coal-black eyes.

"Colonel Talbot! I, Tarbut Singh, chosen of my fellows, the 'Brotherhood of Unending Life,' have journeyed from afar to get back the sacred ruby of Gotama. It is here, and before the day dawns I must be away with it in my keeping. Tell me quickly where it is!"

"You sound—" But once more the pad was pressed. The colonel sank back chilled by the baneful light in the eyes of the Hindoo. Tarbut Singh spoke again.

"I must quickly be away. Where is the great ruby of Gotama Buddha?" The pad was released just a little.

"You are a rogue, an impostor, a scoundrel! I have no ruby or anything else to deliver up to you!" growled the colonel as best he could.

"Well, accept the decree of the sacred brotherhood. I will find it ere I go." The Indian grasped the weakened arms, pressed tightly the colonel's hand. Then the scoundrel sped noiselessly away.

A minute later a white-robed figure rushed excitedly into the colonel's room.

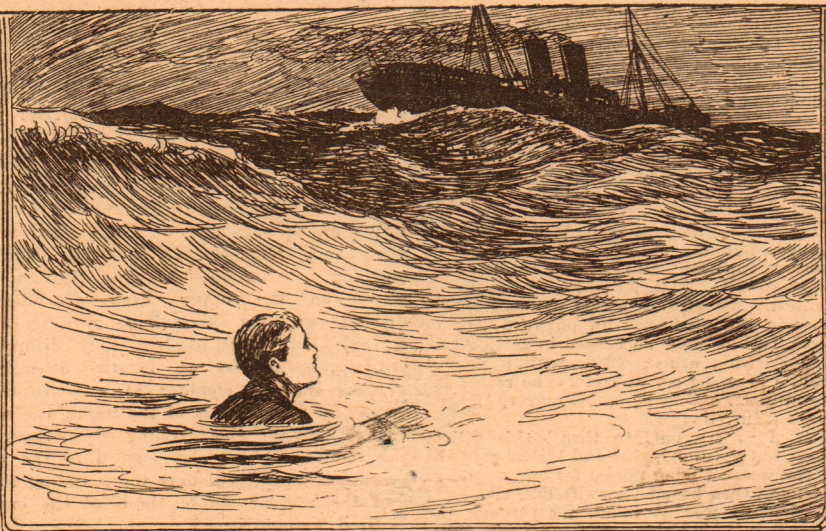
"Uncle, uncle! What is it? I heard a cry and I thought it came from here," asked Wilfred Talbot anxiously, as he saw his uncle's white, scared face looking more deathly still in the pale light.

"Yes, my lad, it was I; but you can't do anything. I shall be dead within the hour. Already I feel the chill of death coming on, and I know what these Indian poisons mean," replied the colonel, sinking back, now quite composed, on his pillow.

"What ever do you mean, uncle? Surely, you have not taken poison?" asked Wilfred wildly.

"I can tell you nothing now, except that a fluid, the action of which no power on earth can arrest, has been injected by a ring into my hand. Stay no longer now, I beseech you. Rush quickly to the library. See that all is safe, send at once for Dr. Fraser, and when you have had the place searched, come back to me."

There was no mistaking the authoritative tones of his uncle, so Wilfred dashed quickly from the room, becoming more bewildered every second. He gained the stairs, rushing blindly into the library. What a sight met his eyes! Papers and empty drawers in every direction, and a black-robed figure bending over his uncle's esecroire. With a shout of triumph the young fellow dashed forward as the thief turned with a cry of alarm; but before Wilfred reached his man he stopped dead, and fell back a pace before the menacing tube of a revolver. It was no time for words. Lowering his head, Wilfred dashed at the intruder. There was a flash and a report, the shattering of a mirror



The lights of the great steamship receded farther and farther from the swimmer, who still, however, continued to send lusty shouts across the tumbling waste of waters.

on the wall behind him; then, when the smoke cleared away, Wilfred found he was alone, while the open French window bore witness to the means whereby the would-be murderer had escaped.

The next half an hour was a busy time at Manton Grange. A Dr. Fraser from Rainforth had at once been sent for, the house and grounds had been thoroughly searched, but in vain for any sign of the mysterious Hindoo. From his unsuccessful investigations the nephew speedily returned to his uncle's chamber. Directly he entered the room he knew there was shortly to be a death-bed scene. The colonel's face was deathly pale, a peculiar light shone in the grey eyes, and the firm mouth was even now beginning to droop. The dying man motioned to the lad—for he was but little more, being barely twenty years of age—to his bedside; then, holding up his hand, showed one small spot that glowed a dull, angry red in the middle of the palm.

"My boy, that mark means my death! It was done, as I have said, by a ring worn by Tarbut Singh. Ah, I can see you are mystified, but I shall last long enough to tell you all. In less than half an hour Dr. Fraser should be here. By that time I shall be much as I am now. He will do all he can, but there is no power on earth can save me. I have seen this poison at work before, and you can't stop it. But let me tell you my story.

"I was awakened by a sound in this room. Before I could either defend myself or raise an alarm, I was rendered helpless by a man who entered—goodness knows how! He called himself Tarbut Singh, a member of some Hindoo brotherhood, and demanded of me the 'great ruby of Gotama Buddha.'"

"The great ruby of Gotama?" repeated Wilfred in amazement; and his face went a trifle whiter in the moonlight as he uttered the words, for the significance of such a possession was not lost upon him.

"Yes, my boy! Let me go on. This 'great ruby' which I refused to give up was given me in the Mutiny days by a dying brother officer, who declared that its possession, apart from its intrinsic value, would bring me great good fortune. It is supposed to be the central stone from the crown of Sakya-muni or Gotama Buddha, the immortal founder of the Buddhist religion, and there is a tradition that he who restores it to the tomb of Gotama shall, besides earning for himself enormous riches, gain for his fellows nirvana, or cessation of existence, a state to which every true Buddhist hopes to attain. Give me some water, my boy; it will keep me going a bit longer."

Wilfred placed the glass to the trembling lips, hoping each moment that the doctor would come.

Colonel Talbot continued:

Of Mystery, Peril, and
Adventure by a
Popular Author.

"I never thought much about restoring this ruby to the temple from which it was taken, for the simple reason that I never believed much in the tradition, and, for another thing, the temple is in the heart of Central India, where Kapalivastu once stood. There—" The colonel sank back.

Wilfred seized his uncle's hand, put it to his mouth, and again sucked hard at the spot where the poisoned point of the Hindoo's fatal ring had entered, then spat the saliva on to the floor.

Again the dying man essayed to speak, but Wilfred would hear no more. He forced him gently back to his pillow, and soothed as best he could the burning forehead.

"Wilfred! I must speak lad. I shall be dead soon. To you I leave—all. The great ruby has brought me to my death! Promise—to—restore—it. Promise, and I shall have no fear that you will meet with the same fate as has befallen me." Wilfred looked fondly in the ashen face and gave his assent.

There was a knock on the door, which was pushed inwards, and the doctor entered the room. As clearly as he could Wilfred Talbot explained the position of affairs.

A weak voice interrupted his explanations.

"Dr. Fraser, you cannot save me. There's nothing known in this country to stop the action of these Asiatic poisons," said the colonel. "I have been cruelly, fully done to death through no fault of my own. Still, it's the fortune of war, the—fortune—of—war. Doctor, witness—I—leave—all to my nephew here, Wilfred Talbot. The 'great ruby of Gotama' is in—"

The doctor bent lower, and just caught the dying man's last words.

"The great ruby is in my deed-box, under the flags of the turret in the western wing."

"No human power could have saved him, my boy," said Dr. Fraser, kindly placing his hand on Wilfred's shoulders. "He died by a quick and a sure death, probably by some extremely powerful vegetable alkaloid. You had better go now."

The young fellow took one last look at the kindly face, and, dazed and bewildered, passed from the chamber of death. The mystery of Gotama's jewel had opened up a new chapter in his life.

(Continued on the next page.)



The tiger crouched low, every muscle gathered ready to spring on the sleeping man. From the other side of the fire Donald raised his weapon and took careful aim at the tiger's eye.

SHADOWED BY TWO

(Continued from the previous page.)

The 2nd Chapter.

A Terrible Experience—A Shot from the Dark.

EXACTLY ten days after his uncle's death Wilfred Talbot set out from London, en route for far distant India, and after an hour or two in the great city took his seat in a first-class compartment of a southward-bound express.

"It will do me good to go abroad for a while!" he muttered to himself. "I am bound on an honourable errand—namely, to restore in the mystic temple Gotama's jewel, and with luck I shall carry it through."

Before long, tired of idle speculation, he prepared to snatch an hour's repose. On the seat beside him lay a small black box, inside which reposed the object of his mission. For a time he gazed at the box, then his eyes began to blink, his head fell just a little forward, and the traveller slept. Night was fast closing in as the express throbbed on its way. With a roar and a rattle it rushed through a great station, lights danced madly without the windows, and Wilfred awoke with a start.

"H'm! Where's that? Great Scott, I didn't know it was so late!" he muttered, as he glanced at his watch and saw it was half-past eight. "Another hour's run, and then we stop. Well, I'm for another snooze."

He settled himself in his corner, and—dreamt. Was it some horrible phantasma crowding into his overwrought brain, or was he really going through some terribly unnatural experience? He was still in the carriage; but what meant this great red cloud before his straining eyes? He shivered uneasily, and drew back with something of a look of fear on his face, but he still slept. And the curtain gradually lifted, leaving to his vision two discs glowing with an awful radiance. He must look—look—look—and then a mist came down, this time a mist of milky whiteness, and out of the veil came a man, tall and gaunt—a figure from another world.

"Back, Britisher! Back!" it seemed to say to him, holding up in solemn warning a withered arm. "I am Gotama, and thou shalt not approach. Back, before it is too late and the die is cast for ever!"

The mist died away, floated into nothingness, and the sleeper moved again as if troubled. Could he but have seen the strange scene in the carriage, could he but have realised the awful peril he was in, peril from the unknown, then no longer would he have lain inactive, sleeping. The awful dream would have been cast off, and Wilfred Talbot would have understood why it was his brain was playing such pranks with him; for there, kneeling on the floor of the carriage, and within three feet of the box, was Tarbut Singh, the Hindoo, who had killed Colonel Talbot!

The crafty face of the native was wreathed in a smile of triumph. Slowly, yet cautiously, he moved forward inch by inch, this time away from the Britisher, keeping the while his flashing eyes, ablaze with the power of hypnotic influence, on the face of the motionless man. Thus far Tarbut Singh had been successful in his operations. The door closed, yet not fastened—being wedged to with a twist of cotton-wool—told of the means of egress and of the readiness for exit, while the subtle power of hypnotism had robbed the sleeper's faculties of their usual keen perceptiveness.

Thus far, he said, had the agent of the Brotherhood of Unending Life been successful, but his triumph was short-lived, and to be dashed to the ground. Up to this point he had traded on Nature and Nature's laws; the hypnotic trance held its victim spellbound, but as the mind of the Hindoo wandered from the Britisher to the precious box at his side, so, too, in the sleeper's mind did the vision of Gotama fade away, and another take its place. It was that of a long, lean, grey-brown hand, with fingers extended, that glided, slowly—oh, so slowly!—towards a shining black box.

Nearer and nearer went the hand, until at last it was hovering like some bird of prey over the object of its quest; the dangling fingers twitched as if to close over the article, and Wilfred Talbot sprang up with a cry of alarm, to find himself struggling for life in the grip of a man from the unknown.

Only for the merest fraction of a second did the Britisher gaze with startled and astonished eyes into those of his assailant before he recognised in him the miscreant who had made an unsuccessful attempt on his life in his uncle's library at Manton Grange.

There was no time for further thought or cogitation, for, with a panther-like movement of his sinewy arm, the Hindoo clutched at his assailant's throat, forcing him back still more on to the cushioned seat. With a gigantic effort, Wilfred threw the man off, and, panting with his exertion, struggled gamely to his feet. It was his turn this time to be the aggressor, for, putting his whole weight into it, he rushed at the Hindoo, and his left arm shot out and landed with a sickening crash right in the other's face.

There was the fall of broken glass as the man reeled backwards from the weight of the blow, and in trying to save himself dashed one arm through the window at his back; then, as he recovered himself, with his dark eyes glowing with malignant fury and hatred, he rushed once more at his opponent. It was no time for thinking or for consideration; everything had to be

done on the spur of the moment, and Wilfred realised that the fight in the southward-bound express was a serious affair—a struggle for life or death.

Almost before he could defend himself or ward off his enemy's rush, Tarbut Singh, with a lithe bound, had come to hand-grips with his adversary, and was straining every nerve in his supple body to bring the contest to an end. His long, thin fingers closed tightly on Wilfred's throat, while he in turn had closed both arms around the Hindoo's back, and was striving might and main to force his man down on his knees.

Rolling and swaying to and fro as the train dashed on through the night, in the midst of the roar and rattle of the wheels and their rhythmic beat on the rail-joints, the two men, now almost exhausted, fought for the mastery—for the possession of the black box and the priceless gem it contained.

As regards size and strength Wilfred had the advantage, but for agility and cunning the Hindoo was superior. And it was a combination of these two latter qualities which was to decide the contest; for with an added pressure on his adversary's windpipe, and an outward jerk of his back, Tarbut Singh succeeded in getting free of the encircling arms; then, with a yell of triumph, a mocking cry of victory, he raised his free hand aloft, and in it, to his horror, Wilfred perceived a tiny dagger.

He tried to cry out, to thrust this villain from him, but in vain; higher and higher went the hand, the weapon hung poised for one second in mid air, and then began its swift descent.

But Nemesis was at hand, for through the open window behind the Britisher's back came a thin brown hand, a pair of glittering dark eyes followed the direction of a deadly tube; there was a momentary flash, followed by a deafening report, and the next instant, with a yell of agony, Tarbut Singh dropped the keen weapon from his shattered fingers; then, with a futile endeavour to save himself, crashed backwards against the wedged-to door, and vanished into the blackness without.

Through the open window peered for a moment a pair of eyes of dazzling brilliancy, while the smoke from the revolver the man held in his hand curled swiftly away, then both hands and eyes vanished as mysteriously as they had come, leaving the half-unconscious Britisher lying on his back, blinking dazedly up at the roof of the compartment.

"By Jove, that was a tough struggle!" he mentally ejaculated. He rose unsteadily to his feet, and pressed his hands to his throbbing temples. "Hallo! What's the matter? We're slowing up. Lights, too! Why, I must be getting to my journey's end!"

The speed of the express was diminishing very perceptibly; in fact, it had been doing so for the last three minutes, and very shortly would run into the station.

"But where the deuce did that revolver shot come from?" Wilfred asked himself, yet hardly recovered from the effect of his strange adventure. He looked round the carriage. There, on the seat, lay the black box; on the floor was the tiny Eastern dagger, while in the air remained the choking fumes of an exploded cartridge, but of the timely arrival there was no sign, nor any clue which might reveal his identity.

"It seems to me," said Wilfred, giving expression to his opinions aloud, "that someone must have been watching my struggle with that confounded Hindoo through the open window, and just at the critical moment did the necessary with his revolver. I wonder—"

But further speculation was cut short by the jarring of brakes; then with a series of jerks the night express pulled noisily into the brilliantly-lighted station, and Wilfred Talbot emerged, dumbfounded by the weirdness of his adventure and the impenetrable mystery that hung over the whole affair.

"It's no use making a fuss over it, that's certain," he told himself. "Ten chances to one, my story wouldn't be believed, so I'll keep mum, and pack Gotama's ruby carefully away about

OUR COLLEGE CORNER.

By the Principal of "The Boys' Friend" Correspondence College.

SEVERAL readers have written to me enclosing only one coupon, and asking for the first lesson in some subject to be forwarded to them. I hope it is now quite clear that twelve current coupons must be sent for each set of lessons in the Civil Service course, or for each lesson in English composition and essay writing, or shorthand. Of course, a reader may begin with coupons numbered 4 or 5, or any other number, so long as they are current coupons.

Many readers also have sent in twelve coupons for first lessons in subjects which have not as yet been advertised.

As before indicated, the scope of "The Boys' Friend" Correspondence College will be extended as it becomes necessary; in the meantime readers are advised to

carefully peruse the announcements in these columns

before they send in their coupons, and if in doubt upon any matter, write to me about it, enclosing a stamped envelope for a reply.

With regard to many intending students who have been unable to procure twelve copies of the paper, I must advise them to place their

orders for copies with their hewsagents beforehand.

Stamps cannot be accepted either in whole or in part payment for the lessons. There is one great predominating note in the huge pile of correspondence from students and those who intend to become students. It is a chorus of praise bestowed upon Your Editor for starting "The Boys' Friend" Correspondence College.

Here are some short extracts from a few letters:

"I wish to avail myself of the exceptional advantages of the B.F.C.C."

Speaking of the number of coupons which have to be sent for each lesson, another reader says:

"You may rest assured that every loyal reader of your papers will be only too glad to render you a consideration in return for the services which you have placed at their disposal, and I'm sure I'll do my share with the rest of them."

And here is what another friend of the paper says:

"I should think every reader of your paper would be heartily glad of this means of extending their education."

And now for a hearty good wish from a reader who has since become a student:

"My friends and myself quite appreciate the trouble you are taking over your readers, and trust that your scheme for education will meet with every success."

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And here is what another friend of the paper says:

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Once—twice Wilfred stopped in his walk, while a silent figure crouched low in the shadows; then, as the young fellow turned again, the mysterious watcher glided softly out of the gloom and approached his unconscious quarry. With a lithe but noiseless bound, he cleared the intervening two paces, his strong, powerful arm encircled the Britisher's neck, which was jerked sharply backwards in an ever-tightening grip, the ruffian's dexterous hand sought like lightning for the precious packet, and in less time than it takes to tell Wilfred Talbot had been neatly relieved of the charge for which he had already suffered so much.

But this was to be not merely an affair of manual dexterity on the part of an extremely clever and unscrupulous assailant, for although, during the brief moments in which Wilfred felt the nimble fingers of the thief all over him, so to speak, he had been rendered by the artful strategy of the man absolutely incapable of action, yet, as soon as the strangling grip on Wilfred's throat relaxed, he uttered a half-articulate cry of anger, put his left leg neatly behind that of his adversary, and the two came with a resounding crash to the deck. Like a flash both men sprang up even as they rolled apart. There was a crashing blow from Wilfred's right hand which landed square upon the man's jaw, and he fell all in a heap.

Now was the young Briton's chance, and like a flash he made a rush at the man's hand in which the package was tightly grasped. But he had miscalculated the fallen one's adroitness, for as he rushed he saw dimly outstretched, close to the deck, his enemy's arm. He felt a sudden upward jerk of his ankle, and at that moment the great vessel heeling over on her side, Wilfred, losing his balance, toppled over the ship's rail. With the triumphant cry of his enemy ringing in his ears, and the dim outline of his figure standing out in the fog visible to his terror-stricken eyes, Wilfred Talbot disappeared over the side of the vessel, and was engulfed in the surging waters.

He rose almost at once to the surface, dashed the spray quickly from his eyes, only to see the form of the man who had robbed him gazing into the raging abyss beneath. Wilfred raised a despairing cry for help, which came keen and clear on the fog-laden air, and the would-be assassin turned to go. But even as he swung round he received a crashing blow from behind, the prize for which he had committed such a dastardly crime was wrenched from his grasp, and before he could fully realise what had happened he found himself alone, while the swift shouting of orders, and the hurrying tramp of footsteps in another part of the ship, told of the efforts that were being made to save the drowning man.

Meanwhile, striking out as best he could in that rough, tumbling sea, Wilfred kept before him the great black mass with the dancing lights, the while sending up with all the force of his healthy lungs shout after shout. Little by little the Patna seemed to draw away in the gathering darkness, the lights appeared to get smaller and dimmer. He could no longer hear the throbs of the engines or the churning of the screws, and, worse than all, his strength was beginning perceptibly to fail.

"Help! Help! Help!" Over the waters, amidst the swirling waves, through the heavy, moisture-laden atmosphere, rang the despairing cry. It was a drowning man's last effort. Already he was feeling numbed and chilled to the bone; one moment on the crest of a great sullen wave, the next dashed down—down—down. It was awful; yet, with a choking sensation, he came once more to the surface, his indomitable pluck reasserted itself, and, fully determined to make one last, grand struggle, he turned his face to the now far-distant ship, and set up again his appeal for assistance.

But stout hearts and strong arms were doing their best for him, and a minute later, just at the critical time when he felt he must give up and resign himself to the power of the sea, he heard a lusty shout, and a boat, impelled by half a dozen oars, swept out of the darkness, and he knew he was saved.

It was not until many hours later that Wilfred was able fully to comprehend the events which had preceded his sudden and almost disastrous immersion in the icy-cold waters of the English Channel, and even then things came to him only in a halting, hesitating sort of manner. He knew that standing by his bed was the ship's doctor, and he knew, too, that he must not speak. Then his mind reverted to the terrible struggle on the deck. The great ruby had been taken from him! He had been robbed of his uncle's legacy! An emissary of the Brotherhood of Unending Life had torn the possession from his charge, and, worse than all, he had failed in his promise and his duty!

He tried in vain to conjure up in his distraught brain some image of the man who had robbed him, but he knew to his bitter regret that never for an instant had he caught sight of his adversary's face, so as to his identity it was impossible even to hazard a guess. He knew nothing of the strange occurrence that had taken place but a few moments later on the very scene of the struggle. He did not know that his first cry of anger as he struck out wildly at his opponent had been heard by an ever-watching friend, who helped appreciably towards the speed with which a boat was manned and lowered whilst he was in the trough of the sea.

Then his thoughts went back to the cold, pitiless waters, into which he now seemed to sink lower and lower, until he was resting peacefully on the ocean bed. Only the ocean bed happened to be the warm, comfortable bunk in his cabin, and the fast-receding lights of the vessel he thought he saw were the lights which threw a subdued glow on the young fellow's pallid face.

Wilfred Talbot was sleeping the sleep of the exhausted.

It was not until two days later that he was able to get about, feeling quite well and strong again. To say the least of it, the experiences of the past few days had been enough to get on the nerves of the strongest; but a robust constitution soon recovers from these temporary drawbacks, and so it came about that the second morning after his unexpected immersion in the water, when the ss. Patna was ploughing her way across the usually turbulent bay, Wilfred sprang from his bunk feeling once more like his old self.

Despite, however, the fact that by this time he felt physically fit, there was upon his mind the ever-depressing thought of the loss of Buddha's jewel. Who his assailant was, the dark night and adverse circumstances forbade him even to conjecture, but he did not despair of gleaming some clue as to the identity of the miscreant some time before the ship made her first stop, which was to be at Gibraltar.

Thoughts such as these occupied Wilfred's attention as he hastily completed his toilet; but they were suddenly diverted by the unexpected position in which he found in his trunk the small black box that had hitherto contained the priceless relic. There it lay, instead of at the bottom where he could have sworn he last placed it, in full view of his wonder-struck eyes, just inside his trunk!

With a feeling of utter bewilderment on his face he went down on his knees, bent over the large receptacle, and took the black box in his hands. With a strange feeling at his heart he flung back the lid. Then, with a loud cry of astonishment, he sprang to his feet, his face aflame with excitement. For there before him, bereft of its covering, was the matchless jewel, sparkling and scintillating with bewildering brilliance.

"Well, I'm blest!" he muttered half aloud. "If that doesn't beat cock-fighting! Here it was only two nights ago that the thing was stolen from me, preparatory to my being pitched into the sea. For two whole days and nights I've never left this cabin, and yet the first thing I find in my trunk is the same stone! I guess I've had about enough of this; the thing's a bit too uncanny for me! I almost wish I'd never seen it! Ah, I know what I'll do! I'll—"

He had uttered his thoughts aloud, and now he stopped just as some new idea or inspiration came to him.

He dwelt upon his words, as he remained with his back to the now half-opened door thinking deeply. But could he have seen behind him, could he but for one second have seen the cruel, dark face and the glittering eyes, the face of the being who was hanging so intently on the unfinished sentence, he would have thanked his lucky stars that he had not unconsciously divulged to his bitterest foe the course that he had made up his mind to follow.

Having placed the black box in a position of safety he made for the upper deck. Intensely practical, and endowed with his fair share of common-sense, he rightly came to the conclusion that the errand upon which he had so lightly embarked promised to be not only a serious, but an extremely dangerous undertaking; for by this time it was apparent that a member of the Brotherhood of Unending Life was determinedly dogging his footsteps, his aim the possession of the coveted gem.

Moreover, Wilfred conjectured—and in this, too, he was right—that his mysterious attacker and the assassin of Manton Grange were one and the same, although—as he afterwards found out, to his great chagrin—all attempts to identify the murderer on board the ss. Patna were absolute failures.

However, there were one or two things which Wilfred could neither understand nor fully comprehend. Who was the owner of the face which had appeared at the window of the night express, and who had restored to the box the Buddha's gem? Both of these questions were to remain as a sealed book for many days to come.

Weighing all these circumstances carefully, the young fellow—never deficient in pluck and self-confidence—had yet the good sense to see that if matters went on as they had done he would stand but a poor chance against the extremely clever foe against whom he was matched. And fully believing that two heads are better than one, he had made up his mind as soon as Gibraltar was reached to wire to his cousin, Donald McKirk, who happened at that particular time to be kicking his legs idly in Cairo, to join him at Suez in a matter of the most urgent importance.

Gibraltar was reached after what seemed to Wilfred an eternity of time, and off to Cairo, where gay young Donald was having a jolly time, went the message, summoning that young man to meet the ss. Patna at Suez without fail.

Anxious to know what it was all about, the young Scotsman, when the time came, watched the giant ship draw in, wondering why it was Wilfred Talbot had drawn him away from Cairo, and what the matter of importance could really be.

The 4th Chapter.

A Cowardly Assailant—Wilfred in Peril—Kler Mani to the Rescue—The Man who Vanished.

"LOOK here, old man!" said Wilfred to his cousin, when they met at Port Said, for the first time for nearly three years. "I've got a strange story to tell you—a story which needs a bit of understanding, too, at least, as far as the cause of the affair is concerned. But before I begin I want to know what you are now doing, and what your present arrangements are?"

"Well, to tell you the truth, I'm—I'm—" "Playing the fool in Cairo!" interposed Wilfred laughing.

"I am afraid that's about what I am doing; at any rate, I'm game to join you if there's any fun on the boards."

"I think I can safely promise you a little excitement if you join me," responded Wilfred. "To boil the tale down, Don, it comes to this. Uncle has been murdered—"

"Murdered!" echoed the young Scot in amazement. "I've never heard anything of it! Good heavens! Who by?"

"Well, I'll tell you if you'll only give me time. Uncle was murdered by a Hindoo, the agent of some mysterious Indian brotherhood which is simply making every effort to secure a certain valuable gem supposed to have belonged to the great Gotama Buddha. But, to get on. So far the brutes have been unsuccessful, and the stone still remains in my possession.

"Two attempts have already been made upon my life. Once I have been saved by some being from the unknown, once the precious talisman has been stolen from me, and once it has been restored. When I tell you the strange tradition connected with it perhaps you will jump to the same conclusion that I have done."

Thereupon the young fellow told Don all that the reader knows, and at the finish the young Scot exclaimed, voicing his companion's opinion:

"I have it, I think! You are shadowed by two. One the agent of the Society of Unending Life, the other the representative of another brotherhood holding the belief that if you yourself restore the jewel you will be their king for ever

He soon had to admit to himself that in the darkness he had mistaken his way, and presently found himself within a few hundred yards of the place where he had left Donald twenty minutes before. Once or twice he fancied he detected the slight sound of a footfall behind him, then, as a dark form swiftly crossed the road some thirty yards in front, he began to grow uneasy.

Putting on a bold face Wilfred strode rapidly forward, but before he had taken three steps he knew he was being followed.

A rustling sound caught his ear, and he swung round like a flash—to catch sight of a villainous-looking Arab with a long, glittering knife grasped tightly in his hand crouching under the shadow of a mud wall he had just passed.

Barely had the Britisher time to turn again, to see, to his amazement and horror, the devilish figure of Tarbut Singh hurrying towards him, than the murderous Arab rushed forward and made a vicious lunge with his wicked-looking weapon.

It was no time for hesitation. Doubling his fists, Wilfred leaped at the would-be assassin, caught him a crashing blow under the jaw which sent him sprawling all in a heap, while the knife spun out of his hand and fell clattering in the road fifteen feet away. Wilfred dashed forward, picked up the weapon, and turned to face his second assailant; but as he faced round, knife in hand, he found he was alone. Tarbut Singh and his Arab ally had both disappeared.

The hour of midnight had just struck from an adjacent clock tower as Wilfred, footsore and weary after his long trudge through the deserted

or so, until we have got all that we shall want for our jaunt into the interior. I've been studying my plan, and I find that we have got to get to a place once called Kapalivastu, termed by my uncle "The Sacred City," right away in Central India, and mind you, that's a tidy way! We've got to get through the mountains, and then there's a long stretch of forest, jungle, swamp, and plain to be traversed."

"How far do you reckon it is?" asked Donald. "The way we shall have to go, I should think it can't be much less than three hundred miles, which, of course, means that we've got to get hold of a native servant or two, and a trusty guide. I want to get them now, so as to save trouble later on. The first part of our jaunt we can do by rail; after that we shall have to leave the beaten track and strike out on our own through the forests of Central India."

It was not an easy matter for the motley crowd of natives in Bombay to find one who knew much about the interior, but after a deal of trouble Wilfred had finally engaged a tall, olive-hued fellow of ferocious aspect, who asserted with much vehemence that he knew just where the English sahibs wanted to go, and the best way for them to get there.

"O Excellency!" he had said to Wilfred, "I will lead you to the great silent city of the plains, to the ruins of Kapalivastu the mysterious. Thou wouldst not find one of my countrymen in this great place who would guide you thither; but I, Suda Ban, fear not the curses of the gods, nor the spirits which dwell in those regions. For the white sahib's gold I will go."

And so it had been arranged, and with a couple of native servants, picked up from the harbour quarters a few days later, the little party set out for the interior.

It was perhaps as well for the two young Britishers that they did not know the peril they were in as soon as the railroad became no longer of service to them, and they were forced to press on through forest and swamp-land towards the far distant city.

Neither Wilfred nor Donald fully estimated the cunning of the foes against whom they were pitted. They did not know that ever since the two joined forces at Port Said they had been under the continual surveillance of the watchful Tarbut Singh; still less did they guess that the silent, fierce-looking Suda Ban was none other than their arch enemy, the agent of the dreaded Brotherhood of Unending Life in disguise.

For ten days the travellers, after leaving the railway, had pushed forward, getting deeper and deeper into the heart of the great Indian forest. Tarbut Singh, burning with the one desire to wrest from Wilfred Talbot the closely-guarded Gotama's gem, was waiting for his opportunity and ready to seize it.

Thrice he had been unsuccessful in his attempts on the Britisher's life; twice baffled by some power working secretly against him, and once by the young fellow's resourcefulness and courage.

Now, however, things began to look brighter for the crafty Hindoo. He went about his work of helping to prepare the evening meal with a smile of undisguised satisfaction on his cruel face; he knew that if the messenger he had despatched when civilisation was left behind did not fail him, before another day was past, ay, even before the forest was left behind, a whole crowd of fellow-fanatics would obey his summons, and surrounding the party, put them to death.

Tarbut Singh had found out to his chagrin that the thought of sowing dissension amongst the few camp-servants was not to be entertained for a moment; something there was standing between him and the means of accomplishing his desire, and that something was partly the loyalty of the remaining camp-servants to their masters.

Night fell quickly. A big fire had been lit to keep off the many savage beasts which lurked in the surrounding depths. The two native servants and the silent guide lay some distance away by a fire of their own, while the two Britishers stretched themselves lazily under the stars and sought their rest.

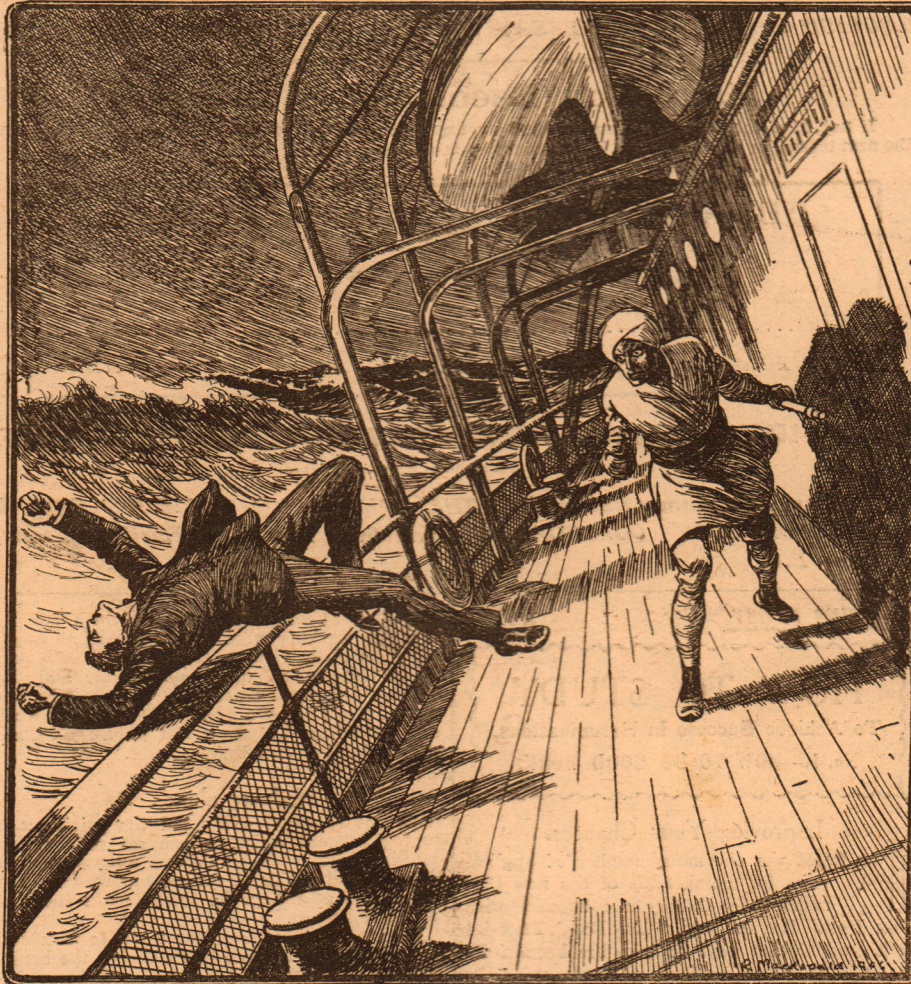
Within an hour everyone apparently was fast asleep; even the watchful Tarbut Singh had closed his eyes, overcome by the heat and fatigue of the day. It must have been close on two in the morning, when the big fire had burnt low into a pile of red embers, when the night-birds had ceased their chattering, and the whole forest was as grim and silent as the tomb, that Donald McKirk shifted his position, blinked once or twice in a tired, half-dazed fashion, then gazed steadily, wide awake, up at a twinkling star which every now and then became visible and seemed to go out as the gentle night wind rustled a leaf and hid it momentarily from his view.

Quite by instinct, the young Scot turned on his side and fixed his eyes across the smouldering blaze in the direction, beyond the sleeping form of his chum, of the shikaries.

Some seconds elapsed before his vision became accustomed to the dim, uncertain light, but when at last it did, a strange sight met his gaze. Bending, in the semi-darkness, and looking with the dull frelight playing on his lithe body like some crouching statue, over the recumbent form of Tarbut Singh was one of the native servants. He bent closer and closer towards the prostrate Hindoo, the while gazing keenly at the sleeping man's features; then quite distinctly, in his own tongue, the young Scot heard the watcher mutter to himself, "It is he! It is he!"

A second later and the native had dropped into a position of repose, while Donald began to turn over in his mind the strange happening he had just witnessed.

"I wonder what Kler Mani wants to find out about the guide?" he was saying to himself; "perhaps—" But he got no farther, for at that moment it seemed as if two small lights



Wilfred felt a sudden upward jerk of his ankle, and at the moment the vessel heeling over on her side, he lost his balance and toppled over the ship's rail into the sea.

and will gain for them the coveted Nirvana, or cessation of existence. One aims at destroying you to gain its end, the other at preserving you. Truly it is a case of being shadowed by two! Will I come with you—rather! Let's see, what time does the Patna leave; two-thirty to-morrow, is it? Ah, well—I'll be aboard by twelve; then, hurrah for India and the solving of this mystery!"

The two had left the Patna, which was coaling, some hours previous, and, interested much in the matter on hand, had wandered aimlessly about the dirty town, through noisy thoroughfares and down the squalid streets at Port Said, until the darkness was beginning rapidly to fall.

"Here, I say, this is driving it a bit close, old man!" ventured the young Scotsman, glancing at his watch. "I shall have to be off! Do you think you can find your way back to the quay alone?"

"Oh, yes!" replied Wilfred. "This isn't the first time I've been in Port Said and walked through the streets at night-time."

"Not a very safe or too pleasant an experience," laughed the Scot. "But I think I'll be off! Expect me at twelve to-morrow sharp!" And so saying he turned sharply on his heel and disappeared in the gloom.

Wilfred turned to retrace his steps, for he knew his way pretty well; but a feeling of uneasiness crept over him as he realised how far from the ship he had wandered, and then remembered that he was alone and unarmed in a squalid and native part of the town.

However, with a philosophic air he hurried along, down one street and another, and yet seemed to get no nearer his destination.

streets, came at last to the quay, and stepped on board the ss. Patna. Despite the lateness of the hour, lights were still visible on the great ship and preparations being made for departure on the morrow.

Thoroughly tired out, the young fellow retired to his cabin, and after having for the hundredth time since the eventful voyage began satisfied himself that the emblem which had led him into such tight corners was still safe, he turned in to sleep the sleep of the just. When at last he awoke he found the daylight streaming into his cabin; so, hurriedly dressing, he went to breakfast, and then patiently awaited the coming of Donald McKirk.

True to his promise, the young Scot crossed the gangway punctually at twelve o'clock, and shortly after, amidst the rattling of chains and the clank of the donkey-engine, the big ship drew away from her moorings and started on the remainder of her journey.

Contrary to the expectations of the two Britishers, nothing fresh occurred to give them an opportunity of connecting the links in this strange mystery. No one aboard the boat, as far as they could discover, answered to the scanty description which Wilfred Talbot was able to supply of his savage assailant; and so it came about that, still as mystified as ever, the two landed, without further happenings, in Bombay.

"Now, what's our next move, Wil?" asked Donald, as they stepped ashore and gave instructions to a dusky-hued porter to get their belongings to the Empress Hotel at the Cawnpore Corner.

"Well, we shall have to put up here for a day

SHADOWED BY TWO

(Continued from the previous page).

were twinkling away there on the edge of the clearing.

Donald looked intently at them, then a shiver of cold fear ran down his spine as the two specks of light seemed to shift and change in colour to green, as a second later, with a low, crouching crawl, an enormous tiger came towards him.

It stopped a few feet the other side of the fire, and fixed its great glaring eyes on the figure of Wilfred Talbot. With an inarticulate groan of despair, Donald realised that his only weapon was a revolver, which he silently drew from his hip, but ere he could present it the tiger had taken another step forward and stood, every muscle gathered, ready to spring on the sleeping man!

Donald raised his right arm and took careful aim as the embers suddenly flickered up and lit up the weird picture, his finger circled resolutely round the trigger of the little weapon; and even as the tremendous animal rose in the air, its claws extended, and its horrid gaping jaws open to tear its prey, there was a spurt of flame, a report which woke the echoes, as a dark figure dashed to the fire, seized a red-hot brand, and thrust it with all his strength into the tiger's mouth.

A yell of agony went up from the great beast, as, roaring with pain and anger, it bounded across the fire, scattering it in all directions, and, seizing the form of Tarbut Singh in its great claws, was speedily lost to view in the surrounding darkness.

"I say, what's the row?" asked Wilfred, springing to his feet, now thoroughly awakened by the sound of the revolver-shot and the agonised yell of the tiger.

Donald hurriedly explained what had happened, but turned round suddenly in surprise. Kler Mani had disappeared.

"Where is Kler Mani?" cried Donald. "It was he who saved you from death! My revolver would have been of but little use in staying the tiger's spring, but almost as the brute was upon you, after my bullet smashed its eye, Kler Mani rushed forward, seized a brand from the fire and did the necessary. Where in the name of goodness can he be? I suppose he's followed the tiger to see if he can do anything for Suda Ban?"

Although all the party tried to find his whereabouts, their efforts were futile, and as the first flush of dawn began to creep through the trees they gave up the search. No trace of the tiger, its victim, Suda Ban, or Kler Mani could be found.

Noonday saw the travellers once more prepared to push on towards the strange city whither they were bound, there at last to restore to its rightful place in the temple of Gotama Buddha the jewel which now was such a deadly and dangerous possession.

Hour succeeded hour as miles of the arid, sandy plains were left behind; then, as the sun began to set and the day drew to a close, the two noticed that the ground was rising perceptibly. Far ahead was a long ridge of sand, stretching away left and right as far as the eye could reach. The elevation was gained at last, and no sooner did Wilfred stand on the ridge than a cry of astonishment issued from his parched lips. He pointed to the astounding sight that met their gaze below.

"Look! Look!" he cried. "The Sacred City! It is Kapalivastu!"

Donald quickly joined him. There, not two hundred feet below them and some three miles distant, were the minarets and towers, the domes and roofs of a city hitherto unbeheld by the eyes of a white man.

The rest of our story is soon told. Riding into Kapalivastu, the two adventurers were at once met by the missing Kler Mani.

The mystery that had baffled Wilfred so long was a mystery no longer. Kler Mani explained that the attacks made on Wilfred's life from the time he left England, and the murder of his uncle, were the work of a Hindoo Brotherhood who had got to learn that the missing jewel from the crown of Gotama Buddha was in the possession of the owner of Mantong Grange.

To secure it, Tarbut Singh, an agent of these ruffians, first of all killed Colonel Talbot, and then made every effort to obtain the gem from Wilfred himself. But all this time the faithful Kler Mani, believing the young Britisher to be the future king of his people, had hovered round him like his guardian angel, foiling at every turn the machinations of the would-be destroyer.

Tracing the tiger far into the depths of the forest, Kler Mani had at last come upon the dead body of Tarbut Singh. Then he had made his way to the Sacred City.

It was not until some weeks had passed that the two adventurers were able to leave Kapalivastu. The strange inhabitants thereof were very loth to part with the man whom they firmly believed to be their rightful king; but so overjoyed were they at the restoration to its rightful place of the jewel of Gotama Buddha, and the prospect of an everlasting Nirwana, that they were at length prevailed upon to let our two friends depart in peace.

And the costly gems and jewels with which the two young Britishers were rewarded by a grateful people did much to compensate them for the many dangers through which they had passed.

(Next Thursday's BOYS' HERALD will contain an extra long, complete four-page story, entitled "The Prussian Spies," and written by the famous author of "Gillingham's Last Term." Remember also that our new serial, "Honesty Wins," starts in this paper in two weeks' time.)

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STARTING TO-DAY.

HOW TO STUDY

To Achieve Success in Examinations.

No. 1.—HOW TO DO GOOD WORK.

Improving Your Chances.

FROM the enormous number of applications for membership of the new Correspondence College in connection with THE BOYS' HERALD and "The Boys' Friend," it is evident that boys do take the keenest interest in their own welfare, and are anxious to improve by study their chances of success in life.

It cannot be denied that the boy who seizes upon all the educational advantages which are offered him is the boy who is going to stand well up when examination results are published; but the boy who is coming out at the top is he who in addition to seizing opportunities sets about study in a right and proper way. It is because I know this, because I realise how vitally important it is that the boy who studies at home should keep in his mind one or two well-defined rules, that I pen this little article of advice.

To study well means not only to get the best results from your labours, but also to acquire a fund of sound knowledge without the expenditure of too much time. But for home study to be a complete success, certain conditions are necessary. Briefly, these are as follows:

1. Definitely settle upon your course of work.
2. Work by time-table.
3. If possible, study alone.
4. Supply yourself with as many works of reference as you can.
5. Wherever possible make notes.
6. Keep a common-place book.

In the case of those lads who have decided to take up the offer of the Correspondence College, they will from the very onset have their course of work definitely decided upon. This is an advantage which every lad will do well to consider. So to every boy I would say most emphatically, "Settle upon

a definite course of study."

Next comes the vital point of working by a time-table. Nothing produces better results than this. Where you are studying four or

five different subjects, apportion them equally over the working week. Set yourself to apply a certain given time to the study of each particular subject on its proper night, and let nothing deter you from your purpose. In this way you will enjoy a systematic course of work which can have but one result when the examinations arrive, and that—success.

Then as to

studying alone.

It is not given to every lad the privilege of having a room which he can set aside as his den, in which to do his lessons, unhampered by the talk and doings of others, but where a boy enjoys this advantage he should make the best use of it he can.

No need is there for your room to look dull or uninteresting because it is a study; the handy boy can brighten up his room in a dozen different ways, and yet keep it as his work-room.

To the boy who has not a room to himself I would voice a word of good cheer. Although you may not appear to be so well off working in a room with others, although you may not think you are doing as well as you otherwise would, you are yet learning the greatest of all lessons which the boy student has to learn—

the lesson of concentration.

You have got to learn—even while conversation is buzzing around you and people are moving about—to concentrate your thoughts on the subject in hand, and this is the finest training for the examination-room you can possibly have.

Works of Reference.

No matter what you are studying, nor what examination you intend going in for, you will find works of reference of inestimable value. Good histories, good biographies, standard works on mathematics, gazetteers, encyclopaedias, dictionaries—all are useful to the general student and to the specialist. Most second-hand bookstalls will supply all your needs for a few shillings.

To make notes as you study is an excellent practice. Just jot down any interesting discovery you make, or any difficult point you cannot master. Keep question and answer by you; they are bound to come in useful later on.

Last, but not least, keep a common-place-book in which to enter or paste up any item of real interest you may hear, learn, or discover. Cuttings from newspapers, quotations from the writings of great men, queries, and replies to them have a value peculiarly their own to the lad who is climbing the ladder of fame.

(Another of these interesting and instructive articles next week.)

Nature and Her Children:

A New Series of Clever Story-Articles by the Author of "The Man with the Gun," etc., etc.

No. 5.—THE ALIEN.

From Other Lands.

I CALLED him the "alien" because he came to this country from Norway or Northern Russia, and because in other ways he resembled his human contemporary. As a matter of fact, he was just a common grey, or hooded, crow.

He arrived, he and his mate, one November afternoon in the teeth of a north-west gale.

In a weak moment I pitied these two lone birds—in fact, I even went so far as to open a rabbit which I had just shot and leave certain portions beside the alien for food. I could not help thinking even then that his countenance, as he scowled at me with one unblinking eye set under a black, low brow, was malign. His mate, by the way, was not a grey crow at all, but a black, or carrion, crow, which struck me as strange.

A few days later

I shot a snipe, which fell among some reeds, where I was unable to find it. I was, indeed, walking away from the place in disgust when who should appear from nowhere in particular but the alien and his mate. I stopped to see what they would do, whereupon they loafed about like "cab-runners" at a street corner. Then I walked away, and so soon as I was out of shot the alien dropped quietly into the reeds where I had lost my snipe. I returned in a hurry and obliged him to rise, which he did in a fluster, and at the place where he had risen I found the dead snipe.

After this I permitted these two crows to roam over the marshes at their will; but it is questionable whether I could have prevented them in any case. One or the other usually followed me when shooting, keeping carefully

out of gun-shot

the while, and marking down any game which I lost for its own food.

One day, during a spell of hard frost, a neighbour of mine, who kept a small poultry-farm close by, called to ask my advice about the steady disappearance of his eggs. I suggested that he should set traps, as the locks of the fowl-houses had not been tampered with. He set traps, and caught a neighbour's dog and his housekeeper's cat.

Then I advised him to sit up at night with a gun and watch. He did so the whole of one frosty night, but he saw nothing, and caught only a bad cold. Meanwhile the eggs continued to vanish

as if by magic,

and my friend, who usually had a good temper, became anything but amiable.

One wet day he came rushing round for me with the announcement that he had caught the culprit at last.

"What is it?" I asked, as we ran together back to his house.

"It's a big grey-and-black bird. I saw it fly in, and shut it in the fowlhouse," he replied.

"And how are you going to get it out?"

"Well," he admitted reluctantly, "I am hanged if I know! That is his beak," he continued, when a little later we stood outside the fowlhouse.

Something inside tapped and rasped violently at the little shutter by which the fowls gained access to and from their house. Then the caged fiend within, finding its efforts useless, turned its attention to the unfortunate inmates of the place, and, to judge by the harrowing din which ensued, and the appearance of the fowls afterwards, they had what Mr. Kipling calls

"a hectic time" of it.

As for my friend, he jumped about like a cat on hot bricks.

"Oh, my fowls—my fowls!" he shouted. "Name of a thousand fiends, it'll kill the lot!"

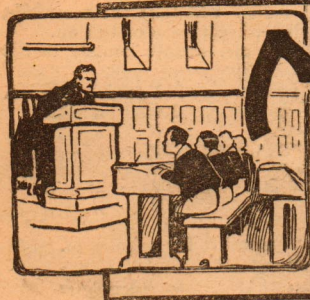
With a wild yell, he seized a stick and flung the door of the place open, intending to rush in and do battle with the unknown. But he forgot one little item, which upset his calculations, and, literally speaking, upset him also—he forgot that inside were some twenty-four fowls in a great hurry to get out. And they came out, too,

like a bursting shell,

a hurtling cloud of feathers, claws, and beaks. They were helped in their hurried exit from behind by a very frightened and exceedingly spiteful grey crow, who was himself frantically anxious to regain his freedom. As he whirled past me on extended wing, and flung himself out triumphantly to liberty and the upper air, I could not fail to recognise the bird of the one eye—for he had lost the other—and malign scowl—the alien.

Since then my friend and I have tried every means known to the cunning of man to exterminate the alien and his mate. As I write I can see, on the edge of the marsh, a single tall, gaunt tree. On the top of that tree is a great bunch of sticks, which might be called a nest, and beside that nest sits a solitary, ill-omened bird, and within the nest is, I know, another bird sitting on her eggs. They are the aliens, who have come to stop.

(To be continued in THE BOYS' HERALD.)



MASTER and PUPIL

TRUE STORIES OF SCHOOL LIFE
by GECIL HAYTER

No. 4.—A LABORATORY EXPERIMENT.

The 1st Chapter.

The Making of the Gas.

WETHERBY, known as "Pussy Wetherby," to distinguish him from his prefect brother, and Chalks, were shining lights of the chemistry class, and, though rather slack in the matter of games, were received intimately by Upper School, even by the high and lofty Sixth, in that they possessed weird and unholy knowledge and a private key giving access to the laboratory at all hours.

It was no unusual thing for a Sixth Form classic to ingratiate himself with them with an ulterior motive of being admitted to a private séance in "lab," and allowed to handle for himself wonderful and mysterious jars and liquids possessing strange and dangerous properties.

A series of big, dusty beakers on a shelf in the far corner by the door, and labelled "products of adult human lungs in twenty-four hours," always came in for special attention on these occasions, and were classified "as most infernal rummy."

Moreover, Pussy and Chalks, being in a class quite by themselves, and owing allegiance to no Form-master—divinity once a week was their only compulsory form—were personages distinctly to be envied.

They realised these advantages to the full, carefully refrained from wrecking their constitutions by overwork, and revelled in what they were pleased to call individual research, which mostly ended in devastating explosions or unearthly smells, which tainted the air for fifty yards round.

A most successful explosion had been engineered on the previous day. Pussy's hand was wrapped in not over-clean bandages, Chalks had three separate pieces of plaster on the left side of his face, one eyebrow singed, and the school carpenter was fixing new glass in one of the windows.

"Say, old man, she did whizz," chuckled Pussy meditatively, bending over a test-tube stand. "I thought for a moment the place was comin' down!"

Chalks nodded, a white-hot platinum wire in one hand.

"Young Dickson in Lower Fifth swears that old Spots—the mathematics master—leapt clean out of his chair and caught his knee-cap the deuce of a crack. They were up at Form when she happened. Hang you, Pussy, you've sneaked my filter papers again!"

"All right, don't get shirty! Plenty more in the drawer. Look out, your elbow's in the Bunsen flame!"

"What are you messin' with, so keen and earnest?"

Pussy looked up impatiently from an array of retorts, tubing, and cooling beakers. Evidently, some delicate operation of distillation was to the fore.

"Shut up, you ass! Wait a sec!"

A beaker collapsed with a tinkling crack under a too sudden change of temperature, and Pussy hurled it into the corner.

"Hang! That's the third time the thing's bust up! Just as it was all goin' so nicely, too! Here, Chalks, old man, give us a hand! Drat your filter papers. Look here, listen to this!" And he ran an acid-stained finger down an open page of Roscoe's "Inorganic Chemistry." "Here we are—'Nitrogen Triiodide!' Heap big medicine!"

Chalks peered over his shoulder at the big volume.

"Most dangerous explosive—infinite care in preparation—peculiarly sensitive to vibration. Sir Humphrey Davy estimates that—"

"Oh, I say," interrupted Chalks eagerly, "she is a beauty! What's all this—glass masks for protecting the face—rot? H'm—ha! As an instance. An infinitesimal speck, when placed on a filter paper in sunlight, will instantly explode under the influence of the vibration of a fly walking on the edge of the paper—a deep blue in colour—too dangerous for practical or commercial use—excessive caution in—"

Oh, my aunt, and to think I never spotted it! Pussy, you're a genius!" And Chalks executed a war-dance down the length of the laboratory.

"Look out, you'll upset my retort! Come on, let's try it! First of all we shall want the Iodide bottle." He pulled down a small phial half full of greyish, metallic-looking flakes.

"Then—"

"I say, Pussy, where's the gentle Puffer?"

The Puffer was an absent-minded and brilliant scientist who presided over their youthful labours, and was known as the best coach in any school in the South of England. His name was earned by a habit of his of blowing through his moustaches when perplexed.

"That's all right! Puffy's in town—won't be back till late afternoon. He told me so himself."

"Right oh!" And the two diligent in-

quirers after knowledge set to work with a zeal worthy of a better cause.

They had barely got their apparatus ready and begun the initial stages, when they were interrupted by a discreet knock at the door.

It was Beaumont and two others of the Upper Fifth.

"Sorry to bother you, Pussy, but, I say, can we come in for a bit? We are in the deuce of a hole, and want your help—you and Chalks. You see, you fellows know such a lot of rummy things, and we thought, p'raps, you'd be decent enough to lend us a hand. We can come in, can't we? Wouldn't do for us to be seen hangin' about here."

"Right oh! Shut the door, though. What's up? Chalks, turn that burner down."

The three sat down gingerly on the edge of the laboratory tables—not without apprehension—for Chalks and Pussy, when in a humorous vein, were apt to be ruthless; and they felt rather in the position of medieval French courtiers coming by stealth to consult René the Florentine—at least, they would have, had they ever heard of the latter gentleman's existence.

"What's that?" said Beaumont, eyeing the array of retorts and sniffing suspiciously.

"Oh, that—that's one of the higher Iodides of nitrogen!" answered Pussy, with magnificent unconcern, as though he had known it intimately from early childhood. "It's about forty times as explosive as



Mr. Ormond took one long sniff of the contents of the beaker, then gasping, choking, and speechless he staggered towards the laboratory door to cannon against Mr. Arkwright.

dynamite. Tricky stuff. We—er—we have to be careful, you know."

Beaumont's eyes gleamed; then he looked sad, and edged away a little.

"Too risky, I'm afraid," he said apologetically. "You see, it's like this. That brute 'Sponge-bags' has got a regular down on us."

Sponge-bags, alias Mr. Ormond, was an irascible, highly nervous man, who took upper school for French, and always wore shepherd's-plaid trousers, and was, perhaps, the most hated master in the school. Irritability made him unjust, and no boy can tolerate petty injustice.

"He's regularly down on us. Swears he'll report us all to the Head for slack work, and has stopped our half for extra prep. this afternoon, just as if we are a lot of dirty little fags. No reason for it, either. It's his filthy temper. We're all to go to Lower Fourth class-room this afternoon at half-past two, and do 'Malgré-lui' with him for two hours. Mayn't even work in our studies! It's sickenin'!"

Pussy whistled sympathetically, and removed a bottle of highly dangerous acid from under Beaumont's elbow.

"It's a rotten shame!" broke in Beaumont's supporters hotly.

Pussy nodded.

"But I don't see—" he began tentatively.

Beaumont cut him short.

"We shall be stuck up in Lower Fourth class-room, and"—with an impressive jerk of the head—"Lower Fourth is only just the other side of that wall. You two chaps can come and go as you like. Lucky bargees! So if you should

happen to be in here this afternoon—say about three—and you should by chance make a bit of a row or kick up an extra gorgeous smell, why—"

"I see," said Pussy; and Chalks grinned. "You might bear a hand," continued Beaumont. "You see, we want something a bit extra special, and we can't start an ordinary rowdy rag entirely on our own as if we were lower school. Anyway, Sponge-bags must be taught he can't monkey with the Fifth. Of course, if there's a row and you get dragged into it, it's our show, and we own up."

Pussy waved his hand as one above such sordid details.

"I see," he said. "Three o'clock, and extra special. Glad to help. I owe Sponge-bags something on my own. Now clear out, and don't come near us again, in case you're spotted. Oh, it shall be very extry speshul, sha'n't it, Chalky?"

The door closed cautiously, and the two conspirators grinned broadly.

"She'll wreck the whole shoot!" chortled Chalks.

"She—who?"

Chalks nodded towards the simmering retort.

"Don't be an ass!" said Pussy. "We should be collared. We want something more—what-d'ye-may-call-'em—more subtle. Something we can explain away natural like." He thumped the desk till the bottles danced. "I've got it! Simplest thing in the world! Sponge-bags always uses scent, too—white rose. 'Ugh, the brute! Come on, let's wade in.' He tripped the party wall at the end of the laboratory.

"Humph! 'Sponge-bags' desk should be about here. One foot, two foot, say eighteen inches from the ground ought to do it! Wonder what the wall's like?" He prodded it in one or two places with an iron spike. "Only lath and plaster stuff, as I expected—college economy! Sponge-bags shall have a giddy afternoon! Here, open this cupboard, and we'll commence drilling operations!"

shining light of noble science! Give 'em time to settle down a bit before we make her hum!"

They waited in anxious silence for ten long minutes, then, at a nod from Pussy, Chalks raised the unstopped blue bottle, and an oily stream trickled and gurgled down the funnel. Instantly a bubbling and sizzling arose in the two-necked apparatus, and little balloons of gas forced their way upwards from beneath the liquid surface, burst, and poured noiselessly through the tubing into Lower Fourth.

"That'll do! Give her more in five minutes!" said Pussy, and closed the cupboard door tightly. "Now for a giddy alibi!"

With quick fingers he unlocked the laboratory door, but without opening it, scattered notebooks and analysis tables over the desks, with a Bunsen burner or two alight, some test tubes in a stand, half-filled with gorgeously-coloured precipitates and a stray burette clip. The place took on quite a businesslike and studious atmosphere.

Pussy, meanwhile, after surveying his surroundings with a critical eye, devoted himself to preparing a beaker full of greenish-brown fumes in the laboratory in a remote corner.

"Tickle her up, Chalks!" he said, after an interval; and a second dose of acid trickled down the funnel. Then they listened—listened intently with ears glued to the wall.

In Lower Fourth all was glum silence, save for the rustling of dictionaries and the monotonous ticking of the clock.

Suddenly Mr. Ormond sniffed—a long-drawn, palpable sniff. Beaumont's face brightened, and two anxious listeners on the far side of the wall nudged each other ecstatically.

A faint indefinable something permeated Lower Fourth, a faint suggestion of sickly green colouring rather than anything tangible. Mr. Ormond buried his nose in a reeking handkerchief, and read on. Beaumont hacked Anstruther, who was next him, on the shin.

"They're at it!" he whispered. "They're at it all right! Sponge-bags has begun to fidget! Oh, golly! What's that?"

A sudden billow wave, reminiscent of rotten eggs, charnel houses and long-defunct cats, with an afterthought of putrescent vegetable matter, drifted towards him, and he coughed.

Mr. Ormond glared, and the next moment leapt from his seat, book in hand.

"Who the—what—what—"

Another wave, stronger, more-full-flavoured, insistently forced its way across the room and enveloped Lower Fourth in a loving embrace. The three seniors at the head of the Form started up, spluttering, and sent the bench over with a crash.

Mr. Ormond choked and foamed at the mouth, and shouted inarticulate orders. Beaumont, handkerchief to nose, leant against Anstruther's shoulder and gulped hysterically.

At a signal, the entire Fifth began to give an utterly realistic production of a cross-Chanel passage in a heavy gale, each according to his lights and abilities.

Mr. Ormond danced with rage, shouted "Silence!" and "Sit down!" and, suddenly subsiding into a white-rose scented handkerchief, bolted headlong for the door, followed by quite half the Fifth making uncouth noises.

"Cave! He's coming!" whispered Pussy, thumping Chalks on the back from sheer joy.

Chalks darted to a litter of test tubes and notebooks. Pussy plunged head and shoulders into the laboratory and crammed a handkerchief into his mouth to prevent an incipient attack of hiccup.

The laboratory door was flung open with a crash, and Mr. Ormond, white with rage and possibly other feelings, appeared in the opening.

"Wetherby—Johnson, what's the meaning of this—this outrage? Have you no sense of decency? I've been driven—positively driven out of my class-room by your filthy concoctions! What are you doing here out of hours?"

Pussy turned. His face was a trifle red with suppressed emotion, but Mr. Ormond was too far gone to notice details.

"The Puf—Mr. Arkwright has given us the key, sir," he answered mildly. "We can come here to work whenever we like; he wishes us to do a little original research in spare time."

"Original fiddlesticks! I tell you I've been driven out of my room by your abominations! It's disgusting, quite disgusting! I shall—"

Chalks gave vent to a prolonged sniff. The laboratory air was as pure as could be.

"I don't notice anything, sir! Lower Fourth, of course, is always a bit stuffy; but the ethyl-triethyl-methyl group—this was a shot at the longest name he knew—'have nothing very objectionable about them, and—"

"It might be this, sir," interposed Pussy, coming hurriedly to the rescue. "Would you recognise it, do you think?"

Mr. Ormond, thirsting for blood, incautiously fell into the trap, and thrust forward an inquisitive nose. Deftly Pussy jerked the covering from the top of the big beaker of chlorine gas, prepared in readiness.

Mr. Ormond took one sniff—a long one. The next instant, gasping, choking, and speechless, he was staggering towards the laboratory door, where he cannoned against Mr. Arkwright, newly returned.

"Good heavens, Ormond! What's up?" he cried, peering through his spectacles.

"It's nothing, sir," said Pussy, for Sponge-bags was still speechless; "only Mr. Ormond complained of the stiffness of his class-room. I fancied it might be due to some chlorine I was preparing, and he—took a mouthful of it. I don't think it can have been the chlorine though, sir. Shall I see him to his rooms?"

That evening there was rejoicing in Fifth Form studies. Sponge-bags had retired to bed with nervous headache, and Chalks and Pussy were honoured guests.

THE END.

(Another of these fine stories next week.)

How to Become a Volunteer.

The Third of a Series of Interesting and Instructive Articles on Military Life.

(The previous articles, which started in No. 133 of THE BOYS' HERALD, dealt with the manner of joining a corps, and the first drills and exercises the young recruit has to undergo.)

Sham-Fighting.

NE can get worked up to quite a state of excitement in these engagements, and for the moment almost believe that the enemy in front is a real one. This is fully understood by the authorities, and, to prevent accidents, the rule is laid down that the opposing parties are not to approach each other nearer than one hundred yards. Umpires are selected who watch the progress of the fray, and at the necessary moment the "cease fire" is sounded, and the engagement

is over. After a conference a decision will be announced as to which side has won. The termination of hostilities will no doubt be a relief to the recruit, for he will find the work a little fatiguing until he gets used to his uniform and equipments, especially if he is arrayed in full marching order. The "Fall in" will then be sounded, and the scattered men will form their company, and, while resting, will clean their rifles. This is always done at the first opportunity after firing with either blank or ball cartridges. The band then appears on the scene—they are generally invited to attend these affairs—and music will beguile the tired men on the march to where tea is to be obtained. This will be done justice to after their exertions. And then follows a smoking-concert. The captain takes the chair, and while the men are charging their pipes he will call upon those he knows are musically inclined for songs and recitations. This is the social side of Volunteering, and there will be a complete absence of restraint, the officers assisting the men to make the evening pass enjoyably.

At a reasonable hour the concert is terminated, and there will be a march back to the station in the darkness. But the journey will be enlivened by music from the band; and when they are tired, the countryside rings with choruses rolled out in marching time by the men, and merry jest and tuneful song will make the way seem short, until headquarters is again reached, and the recruit reaches home, with the feeling of having had an instructive, interesting, and an all-round jolly time.

Practice on the Range.

Having now put in most of his drills, the recruit must turn his attention to "firing his class." It is necessary that he should have some preliminary practice on the ranges before he undertakes this, although he has been coached at headquarters in rifle exercise, aiming drill, and Morris-tube practice. In actual firing on the ranges there is a lot to learn and master before the young Volunteer can become an expert shot. There are the recoil of the rifle when firing with ball-cartridge, and the ever-varying wind to take into consideration.

"Experienced shots" will take the recruit in hand, and he will receive plenty of tuition. As a recruit, he must fire 49 rounds in his class, as follows:

7	rounds, lying position, at 200 yards' distance,
7	" kneeling " " 200 " "
7	" standing " " 200 " "
7	" kneeling " " 300 " "
7	" kneeling " " 400 " "
7	" lying " " 500 " "
7	" lying " " 600 " "

4 points are counted for a bullseye.
3 " " " " an inner.
2 " " " " an outer.

Out of a possible 196 he must score 100 points to pass into the 1st class, and 50 points to pass into the 2nd class. If he scores less than 50 he is allowed to make other attempts until he does so, as it is necessary for him to score that minimum number to be efficient, and thereby earn the capitulation grant to his corps of 35s.

(To be continued in next Thursday's BOYS' HERALD.)

WE GIVE YOU FREE

As a huge advertisement your choice of either of these handsome presents for selling FIVE useful articles of Jewellery at 1s. 6d. each.

NO MONEY REQUIRED.

Just send a postcard with your Full Name and Address, promising to return the Jewellery within four weeks if you do not sell it. On receipt of your postcard we will at once send the FIVE articles, which you can sell in a few minutes among your friends. When sold you will send us the 7s. 6d. received for same, and we will at once despatch, absolutely free.

THE PRESENT YOU CHOOSE.

Together with the Jewellery will be sent a Catalogue of other Presents which you may choose from, including Gramophones, Musical Chests, Real Silver Watches, Real Gold and Diamond Rings, &c. &c. And even though you only sell two of the articles we will present you with one of our Renowned 'Globe' Timekeepers, Guaranteed for Three Years. We want you to see our Jewellery and judge as to the value yourself. You will receive the goods to-morrow if you send a postcard to-day. Address as follows—

SCOTTISH JEWELLERY EMPORIUM,
DEPT. 13E
205, BUCHANAN ST., GLASGOW.

A STYLISH PAIR OF BOOTS FOR 6/6.

As an advertisement we send a PAIR OF LADY'S OR GENT'S BOOTS or SHOES to any Address on receipt of

6^d DEPOSIT

and upon payment of the last of 14 weekly instalments of 6d. each, making a total of 7/6 in all. A Handsome Present is Given Free. Our net cash with order price is only 6/6, or 7/- cash within seven days. Ladies can have either Lace or Button. Send size of Boot you are wearing and state whether strong or light weight desired.

CRAIG, CRAIG & CO.
(Dept. B 5), 81, DUNLOP STREET, GLASGOW.

ABSOLUTELY TRUE.

25,000 Prizes Given Away Free. No Money Required. We give away free to any person Solid Gold Rings of all descriptions, cutlery, jewellery of all kinds, nickel silver timekeepers, besides hundreds of other useful articles which can be selected from our List. WE GIVE THESE FREE to any person selling 48 Beautiful Pictorial Postcards within 14 days. You can sell them in a day. It need not cost you a penny of your own money. We are also giving away free 20,000 Ladies' size and Gent's size Gun Metal or silvered Lever Watch, 10 years' warranty, and perfectly timed to a second; also 5,000 Ladies' and Gent's Real Diamond Rings (solid gold, hall-marked). Send us a postcard with your name and address. Don't delay.—ACTE & CO. (Dept. 61), 85, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

THE PEN YOU WANT.

THE "RELIABLE" Fountain Pen.

POST FREE **2/6** POST FREE

A reliable pen offered at a record price, only to readers of THE BOYS' HERALD. This is a golden opportunity, as it places a really good fountain pen within the reach of all.

IT SAVES Time, Money, & Trouble

A pleasure to look at and a pleasure to write with. Fitted with iridium-pointed

14-CARAT GOLD NIB,

with special twin-feed, and made of the finest vulcanite, beautifully chased. Sold, complete in box, with glass and rubber filler and full instructions for use.

FOR THE HOME & THE OFFICE. DON'T DELAY, BUT WRITE NOW.

Send a Postal Order for 2s. 6d. to THE NOVELTY AND GENERAL SUPPLY DEPT., 12 & 13, Broadway, Ludgate Hill, London, E.C., with your name and address clearly written.

Applications with regard to Advertisement Space in THE BOYS' HERALD should be addressed to the Advertisement Manager, 2, Carmelite House, Carmelite Street, E.C.

WORK FOR ALL.

We give a Nickel-Silver Timekeeper and Mexican Silvering Watch Chain, with guarantee to keep correct time for three years, or a Lady's or Gent's Rolled-Gold Ring, free to any person selling 48 Penny Pictorial Postcards within 21 days. You can sell them in an hour. Send name and address (Postcard will do).

BRITISH FINE ART CO., 115, STRAND, LONDON, W.C.

A REAL SILVER WATCH FOR 6/6

JUST AS AN ADVERTISEMENT We send this WATCH to any address on receipt of

6^d DEPOSIT

and upon the payment of the last of 14 weekly instalments of 6d. each, making a total of 7s. 6d. in all. A handsome Chain is Given Free. Our Net Cash with Order Price is only 6s. 6d. or 7s. Cash within 7 days. These Watches are Real Silver, Government Stamped Cases, 4-plate, jeweled movement, and perfectly timed. Guaranteed 5 years.

Send to-day to **CRAIG, CRAIG & Co.** (Dept. 5), 81, DUNLOP ST., GLASGOW.

LITTLE WORKS OF ART WRENCH PICTURE POSTCARDS.

On Sale at all High-Class STATIONERS' AND NEWSAGENTS'.

FREE to ALL.

We give a Nickel Silver Timekeeper, warranted for five years, or any other present you wish to select from our list, to any person selling Five Articles of Jewellery at 1s. within four weeks. You can sell them amongst your friends in a few hours. Write at once.

THE MUNSTER JEWELLERY CO., CORK.

BLUSHING.

FREE, to all sufferers, particulars of a proved home treatment that quickly removes all embarrassment, and permanently cures blushing and flushing of the face and neck. Send stamped envelope to Mr. F. C. TEMPLE (Specialist), 9, Pugh Place, Golden Square, London, W.

READ THE TRUTH.

We give you a Nickel Silver WATCH, or a Real Silver-mounted Umbrella, suitable for Lady or Gent, or other present as per list, for selling SEVENTY-TWO Up-to-Date Penny Postcards (Assorted) in ten beautiful colours (Works of Art). We allow five weeks for selling. Send name and address—postcard will do.

NATIONAL POSTCARD EXCHANGE, 86, ROSEBERY AVENUE LONDON, E.C.

FREE TO ALL

We give a Nickel Silver Timekeeper, Case of Spoons, etc., to any person selling 48 Penny Pictorial Postcards within four weeks. You can sell them amongst your friends in a few minutes. Write at once—a postcard will do.

THE PICTORIAL CARD CO., 57, FLEET STREET, LONDON, E.C.

FREE TO EVERYONE.

We give an Air Gun, Watch, or Melodeon, free to any person selling 72 Penny Pictorial Postcards within 4 weeks. When sold, send us the 6s., and we will forward you either of the above-mentioned Presents. Write at once (a postcard will do).

THE IRISH PICTORIAL CARD CO., 9, MAYLOR STREET, CORK.

IF YOU WANT GOLD.

If you want Gold Coast and other rare Stamps catalogued at over 4/-, write at once to **STAMP CO., GRANVILLE ROAD, BARNET.** This packet contains 50 different, including Gold Coast, Newfoundland, Persia, 2 China, Cuba, Shanghai, Costa Rica, &c. Post free, 2/6d.

BEFORE. BOYS! KEEP YOUR FEET WARM AFTER.

"LOOFITE" MEDICATED SOCK,

Price **6d. a PAIR.**

London House, Mayfield, Sussex. January 17th, 1905. Gentlemen.—Please send me six pairs of your "Loofite" Medicated Socks, sizes as follows: 2 ladies' (4) and 4 gent's (8). It is now eight weeks since I tried your Medicated Socks, and am able to say with the greatest pleasure and thankfulness. The sharp rheumatic pains, which at times have been positively excruciating, have now completely left me. It seems like a new lease of life, and this I can only put down to the "Loofite" Medicated Sock. I cannot say you have exaggerated in any single instance what you claim for your sock. I enclose postal order for the 6 pairs of socks. Again thanking you, I remain, yours truly, (Signed) **MARCHAND KNIGHT.**

This is the distressing cry now the cold, wet weather is with us. Tender and Inflamed Feet, Corns, and Rheumatic Pains in the joints soon unnerve and cripple an otherwise healthy person.

BUT WHY SUFFER? When

which is **IMPREGNATED** with **BORACIC ACID, PINE OIL, &c.**

kills the pain, heals the Tender and Inflamed Foot, absorbs the shock when walking or running, and keeps the feet at an even temperature; while the combination of the Boracic Acid, Pine Oil, &c., drawn by the warmth of the feet into the system **CURES RHEUMATISM and SCIATIC PAINS.** Tender, Offensive, and Inflamed Feet, Corns, Chibbains, Rheumatism, and Sciatica are prevented and cured by wearing the "Loofite" Medicated Sock. Get a pair at once and enjoy a good walk. It will only cost you 6d. When ordering say what size boot or shoe worn (whether ladies' or gent's), and send postal order 6d., and a penny for postage (Foreign and Colonial orders 1s. extra), to **MORTON'S LONDON TOILET STORES (Dept. H), 159, RYE LANE, LONDON, S.E.**

Kirkdale, 36, Chatsworth Rd., West Dulwich, February 19th, 1905. Dear Sirs,—Would you be good enough to forward me another pair of "Loofite" Socks, size 6? I am so delighted with them, and find them very beneficial and stimulating for the feet. I always wear very thin shoes, and, walking a great deal, used often to get my feet damp, and, being very susceptible to colds, with disastrous results. Since wearing the "Loofite" Medicated Loofite Sock I find, in damp weather, myself quite free from colds; also my feet do not ache when walking long distances. I therefore feel very grateful to the inventor, and hope to recommend them on every possible occasion. Believe me to be, yours faithfully, (Signed) **MRS. L. SCOTT.**

Price **6d. a PAIR.**

The Football Detective.

A Stirring Tale of Nelson Lee and Our Great Winter Game.

BY MAXWELL SCOTT.

THE FOLLOWING PLAY LEADING PARTS IN THIS ENTHRALLING STORY OF DETECTIVE AND FOOTBALL LIFE.

FRANK GOODWIN - A young professional; a prominent member of the Newport Rovers Team.

NELSON LEE - The World's premier detective.

JOE MUMBY - A rascally bookmaker.

CAPTAIN GASKELL - Co-heir with Miss Nemo to a fortune of £100,000

JOSIAH MOXON - A scoundrelly lawyer.

MAGGIE NEMO - Frank Goodwin's young lady.

Leagued against Frank, Nelson Lee, and Maggie Nemo.

The Penalty Kick—"When Rogues Fall Out."

The whispered prayer had scarcely crossed Frank's lips ere the sun broke through the lowering clouds for the first time since the commencement of the match, and flooded the densely-crowded ground with a deluge of shimmering golden light. And even as the Heaven-sent light swept away the murky gloom which had hitherto enveloped the ground, so did it sweep away the mists of doubt and hesitation which had clouded Frank Goodwin's mind.

As if in answer to his prayer, the path of duty was revealed to him, clear, distinct, and unmistakable.

"I could not love thee, dear, so much,
Lov'd I not honour more."

The old, oft-quoted couplet rang in his ears and strengthened him in his resolve.

At all costs he would preserve his honour unsullied. Whatever the consequences to himself, to Maggie, to anybody, he would do his duty, honestly and conscientiously, to the best of his ability.

Drawing himself up to his full height, he glanced towards the goal, where Lawrence, alert and vigilant, was crouching with outstretched hands, ready to catch and intercept the ball.

Fainting with his right foot, Frank made as though he were about to kick the ball into the left-hand corner of the net.

Quick as thought, Lawrence sprang to that side of the goal; but even as he did so, Frank's left foot suddenly shot out, and ere the Newcastle custodian could get back, the ball whizzed under the cross-bar, just inside the right-hand post, and crashed into the quivering net!

The next instant the shrill scream of the whistle mingled with the roar of the crowd—the match was over—and the Rovers had won by one goal to none.

What words can describe the scene of enthusiasm which ensued? Of the forty thousand spectators on the ground, nearly a fourth had accompanied the Rovers from Newport; and the moment the referee raised the whistle to his lips, these ten thousand ecstatic Newportites swarmed over the barriers and raced towards the pavilion gate, cheering, laughing, shouting, and waving their hats in a perfect delirium of delight.

"Goodwin! Goodwin! Goodwin! Good old Goodwin! Well played, Frank! Bravo, Goodwin! Three cheers for Frank Goodwin! Hip, pip, hooray! Hip, hip, hooray! Hip, hip, hooray! One more! Hip, hip, hoo-ray-ay-ay!"

Such were a few of the shouts and cheers which roared and eddied round Frank Goodwin, as he and the rest of the team fought their way, step by step, through the surging crowd which had gathered outside the pavilion gate.

But Frank heard none of them. No flush of pleasure mantled his pallid cheek. No sparkle of triumph illumined his lustreless eyes. To himself he was repeating the concluding words of Mumby's note:

"If the Rovers win, the girl you love will be dead by the time you return to Newport!"

And the Rovers had won!

He had won the match; he had kept his honour unsullied; but—so he told himself—he had signed Maggie Nemo's death-warrant!

The reader will doubtless remember that the reason why the referee had awarded a penalty kick to the Rovers was because one of the Newcastle backs had deliberately tripped Loy Moxon, and had brought him down a few yards inside the penalty line. And it has already been recorded how Loy Moxon was, apparently, so completely winded by his fall that he had to be assisted off the field.

We have said that Loy was "apparently" winded, because, as a matter of fact, he was not winded at all.

There was no doubt about him having been tripped up. The foul had been deliberately committed, and the referee had been perfectly right in awarding a penalty kick. Nevertheless, when Loy Moxon rubbed his head, and gasped for breath, and gazed around him with a vacant air—when he limped off the field and into the dressing-room, leaning heavily on the trainer's arm—he was acting, simply acting.

For he wished to reach the dressing-room before the other players, and he wished to have a minute there, alone and unobserved.

As the reader knows, he had seen Captain Gaskell arrive in Newcastle before the match; he had seen Nelson Lee set to work to shadow Gaskell; and he himself had shadowed them both to a house in Carbrook Road.

Later, just before the match began, he had seen one of the programme-sellers enter the dressing-room and hand Frank Goodwin a note. He had heard the boy say that "somebody had shoved the note into his hand when he wasn't looking." And he had observed how Frank had acted when he had read the note; how he had reeled as though he had been struck; how his face had suddenly turned deathly white; how he had been oblivious to Nelson Lee's questions; how he had staggered on to the field of play, with



Loy Moxon was on the platform chatting to two of the directors of the team. "That's the man!" cried Mrs. Nix to Nelson Lee, and pointing to Loy.

the note still in his hand, like a man who had been mentally stunned and had lost all consciousness of his surroundings.

Later still, at half-time, he had seen Frank show the note to Nelson Lee. He had observed the look of excitement which had crossed the detective's face as he read the note, and he had seen him go to the door and speak to one of the attendants. And, finally, he had seen the detective fold up the note and place it in the inside pocket of his coat, which was hanging on one of the pegs in the dressing-room.

All this had piqued Loy Moxon's curiosity and had aroused his suspicions.

Why had Gaskell come to Newcastle? Why had he gone to the house in Carbrook Road? Who was living at that house? Why had Nelson Lee shadowed Gaskell? From whom was the note which Frank Goodwin had received? What was written in the note? Why had it been delivered in such a roundabout and mysterious fashion?

These and a thousand similar questions had chased each other through Loy Moxon's brain all the time the match had been in progress; and again and again he had muttered to himself, "If only I could see that note for half a minute!"

Almost on the stroke of time, as already described, one of the Newcastle backs deliberately tripped him up; and even as he pitched head-foremost to the ground, the exultant thought flashed into his brain that here was an opportunity for getting a glimpse at Frank Goodwin's note!

"N-no, I—I don't think I'm b-badly hurt!" he gasped, as the players crowded round him. "B-but my head is swimming, and—and I think I'd like to lie down a bit."

"So you shall," said Jonas, the Rovers' captain. "We sha'n't need you any more this afternoon, for time's up, and as soon as the penalty kick has been taken, the match will be at an end!"

He consulted the referee, and the latter having given his permission, the Rovers' trainer came out of the pavilion, gave Loy his arm, and assisted him off the field.

Meanwhile, the referee had awarded the Rovers a penalty kick, and by the time Loy Moxon and the trainer reached the dressing-room, Jonas had ordered Frank to take the kick, and the rest of the players were lining up behind the line.

"You needn't stay with me," said Loy, when he and the trainer entered the dressing-room, which was otherwise deserted. "I'll be all right now, and I know you're dying to see the result of the penalty-kick. Go and see Goodwin take the kick, and then come back and tell me if he scores."

Only too willingly the trainer hurried back to the stand; and the moment he had quitted the room, Loy darted to Nelson Lee's coat, thrust his hand into the inside pocket, and pulled out the coveted note!

"By the time you receive this note," he read, "I shall have told Maggie Nemo's deadliest enemy where she is concealed. Whilst you are playing football this afternoon, her enemy will be hastening to her hiding-place, intent on murdering her! If Newcastle wins, you will receive another note before you leave the ground, which will tell you where Maggie Nemo is, in time for you to save her. If the Rovers win, the girl you love will be dead by the time you return to Newport."

"This explains everything," muttered Loy, unconsciously making use of the same expression as Nelson Lee had used. "Maggie's deadliest enemy is Captain Gaskell, of course; so that if this note is genuine, it can only mean that Mumby has told Gaskell where Maggie Nemo is imprisoned."

"Gaskell went to 27, Carbrook Road this

Somebody in the room at the end of the passage uttered a startled exclamation. Loy strode into the room and discovered Mumby at his tea.

"You here!" gasped Mumby, starting to his feet. "How—how did you know I was at this house?"

Loy ignored the question. Having closed the door, he walked up to the bookmaker and looked him full in the face.

"Captain Gaskell was here this afternoon," he said.

"Well?" said Mumby uneasily. "You've sent a note to Frank Goodwin, telling him that you have informed Captain Gaskell where Maggie Nemo is imprisoned."

"How do you know?"

"I've seen the note."

"Well?"

"Is it true what you say in the note, or is it merely bluff? Have you really told Gaskell where the girl is?"

Mumby hesitated for a moment before he replied.

"Tell me first," he said, "who won the match this afternoon?"

"We did," said Loy. "Goodwin won the match for us, by means of a penalty-kick, on the stroke of time."

A spasm of rage distorted Mumby's face. "The Rovers have won?" he demanded.

"Yes; by one to none."

"Did Goodwin get my note?"

"Oh, yes! I saw him read it."

"And yet he won the match?"

"Yes. Probably he guessed all along that the note was only bluff."

"But it wasn't bluff," snarled Mumby; "it was gospel truth!"

A murderous light leaped into Loy's eyes.

"It was true?" he hissed. "You have really told Captain Gaskell where Maggie Nemo is imprisoned?"

"Yes," said Mumby recklessly; "and he's going to the old mill to-night to kill her!"

For a moment Loy stared at him in speechless fury; then, carried away by a sudden gust of rage, he clenched his fist and crashed it into the bookmaker's face.

"You treacherous cur!" he roared, as Mumby went sprawling on the floor. "After all my father has done for you you've betrayed his secret to Captain Gaskell! But I'll be even with you for this! One good turn deserves another! You've revealed the secret of Maggie's whereabouts to Gaskell, and now, in return, I'll reveal the secret of your whereabouts to the Newcastle police!"

He moved towards the door, but ere he had taken a couple of strides Mumby leaped to his feet, darted to the door, locked it, and planted his back against it.

"You're going to betray me to the police?" he demanded.

"I am!" said Loy coolly.

Quick as thought Mumby whipped out a revolver and levelled it at Loy's head.

"Swear that you won't—!" he began.

But ere he could complete the sentence Loy suddenly sprang at him and wrested the revolver from his grasp.

Livid with rage, Mumby hurled himself on Loy and grappled with him at close quarters.

For nearly half a minute the two men struggled in a desperate hand-to-hand encounter, whilst the woman already referred to hammered on the outside of the locked door, and demanded to know what they were doing.

Then, above the din of the scuffle, the sharp crack of a revolver rang through the room; and the next instant, to Loy's dismay, the bookmaker sank to the ground, with blood gushing from a wound on the left side of his chest.

In the course of the struggle Loy's finger had accidentally pressed the trigger of the weapon, and the bullet had entered Mumby's chest and had severed one of the main arteries.

For a moment Loy stared at the bookmaker's writhing form in horrified and panic-stricken stupefaction. Then, hearing the woman rush to the front door screaming "Murder!" and "Police!" at the top of her voice, he darted to the window, threw it up, sprang out into a small back-yard, climbed over the wall at the end, and took to his heels down a narrow, deserted lane at the back of Carbrook Road.

"I'm safe enough now," he muttered, as he turned into Ponteland Road. "The woman doesn't know who I am, and Mumby will be dead by the time they've broken the door open."

Slackening speed, he glanced at his watch. It was five o'clock.

"It was nearly half-past two when Gaskell arrived at the house in Carbrook Road," he mused. "Even if he returned to Newport by the very next train he couldn't leave Newcastle until four o'clock, which means that he won't be at Newport yet, but will land there in half an hour's time. I must wire to the gov'nor at once."

He turned into the first telegraph-office he came to and sent off the following telegram:

"Moxon, the Croft, Newport.—J. M. living in Newcastle. Saw G. this afternoon and gave him M. N.'s address. G. now on his way to interview M. N. Will probably arrive Newport 5.30. If you receive this too late to intercept him at the station, go to M. N.'s address at once, and take immediate steps to prevent G. molesting her.—Loy."

On the Track at Last.

"NOW for a quick change!" said Nelson Lee to Frank, when at last they had

struggled through the cheering crowd and had gained the shelter of the dressing-room. "Hurry up, for there's no time to be lost if we are to save Miss Nemo."

"You think there's a chance of saving her?" asked Frank eagerly.

"Mumby, where are you?"

"Joe Mumby?" she repeated.

"Yes," said Loy. "I know he's here, so you needn't pretend he isn't. Where is he?"

As the woman made no reply he pushed his way past her, and called out at the top of his voice:

"Mumby, where are you?"

"Mumby, where are you?"

"Mumby, where are you?"

The Football Detective.

(Continued from the previous page.)

"I do," said Nelson Lee. "I'll tell you why I think so presently. In the meantime, as I said before, there's no time to be lost; so hurry up and change your things as quickly as you can."

When they had both changed the detective led the way to the exit, where a hansom—which Nelson Lee had asked one of the attendants to order at half-time—was awaiting them.

"No. 27, Carbrook Road," said Nelson Lee as he and Frank sprang into the hansom. "Quick as you can, for we wish, if possible, to catch the 5.30 from the Central Station after we've been to Carbrook Road."

"Whom are we going to see at No. 27, Carbrook Road?" asked Frank, as the hansom dashed away.

The detective evaded the question. "Mumby says in his note that he has just told Maggie Nemo's deadliest enemy where she is concealed," he said. "Who is Maggie's deadliest enemy?"

"Captain Gaskell, of course," said Frank. "You know, of course, that Gaskell came up to Newcastle by the same train as ourselves to-day," continued the detective. "You also know that I shadowed him for an hour or so before the match; but you don't know—for I haven't had an opportunity of telling you yet—that I shadowed Captain Gaskell to a house numbered 27 in a street named Carbrook Road."

"Then that is why we are going to Carbrook Road," said Frank. "You expect to find Captain Gaskell there?"

The detective shook his head.

"How dense you are this afternoon!" he said. "Captain Gaskell wishes to find Miss Nemo in order that he may make away with her. Mumby knows where Miss Nemo is imprisoned. Mumby disappeared three weeks ago, and has been living in hiding ever since. Gaskell comes to Newcastle to-day, and at half-past two I see him enter a house in Carbrook Road. At three o'clock you receive a note from Mumby, in which he says that he has just told Maggie Nemo's deadliest enemy where she is imprisoned. What is the inference?"

"I see!" said Frank excitedly. "You think that Mumby is living at No. 27, Carbrook Road!"

"Of course!" said Nelson Lee. "And that is why I say there is still a chance—and a very good chance—of saving Maggie's life. For what does Mumby say in his note? He says 'If Newcastle wins, you will receive another note before you leave the ground, which will tell you where Maggie Nemo is, in time for you to save her.'"

"When Mumby wrote that note, he knew that the match would be over shortly after half-past four. In other words, he practically tells you in that note that if you discover where Maggie is imprisoned before, say, five o'clock, there will still be time for you to save her. It is now a quarter to five, and we shall be at Mumby's house in another ten minutes!"

"But we still don't know where Maggie is imprisoned," said Frank.

"That's why we're going to see Mumby!" said Nelson Lee. "He knows where she is."

Frank shook his head. "Mumby will never betray the secret to you and me," he said.

"Why not?" said Nelson Lee. "He betrayed the secret to Gaskell."

"That was because Gaskell bribed him with a large sum of money, no doubt."

"And what is to prevent our bribing him, too?"

Frank laughed a bitter laugh. "Fifteen pounds is all I possess in the world!" he said. "And Mumby is hardly likely to part with his secret for fifteen pounds."

"You are overlooking the fact," said Nelson Lee, "that there is a warrant out for Mumby's arrest. I shan't attempt to bribe him with money. I shall simply say to him, 'Tell me where Maggie Nemo is imprisoned, and I will forget that you are living at this house. Refuse, and I shall hand you over to the police as a fugitive from justice.'"

"Can you doubt what Mumby's answer will be?" he concluded. "Without a doubt he will tell us where Maggie is, and how we can save her, and within the next few hours your

sweetheart will be released, and all your troubles will be at an end."

By this time the hansom had reached the end of Carbrook Road, and a few moments later it pulled up at the garden gate of No. 27.

"Wait for us," said Nelson Lee to the driver, as he and Frank alighted. "I don't suppose we shall stay very long at this house, and we want you to drive us—"

The sentence ended in a startled gasp, for at that moment a revolver-shot rang out at the rear of the house, whilst a moment later the front door was suddenly flung open, and a wild-eyed woman rushed out, yelling "Police!" and "Murder!" at the top of her voice.

"What's the matter?" cried Nelson Lee, running up the path and catching the woman by the arm. "Speak! Quick! What has happened?"

"Police! Police! Police!" screamed the woman, half mad with terror.

A small crowd speedily collected outside the house, and presently a constable appeared.

"Now, my good woman," said the constable gruffly, "stop that screaming, and tell us what has happened."

"A young man knocked at the door about ten minutes since and asked to see Joe Mumby," said the woman, forgetting, in her terror, that Mumby's presence in the house was supposed to be a deadly secret. "Mumby was in the room at the back, and the young man went in to see him. By-and-by I heard 'em quarrelling, and then I heard 'em fighting. I went to the door of the room, and tried to open it, but it was locked; and whilst I was hammering on the outside of the door I heard somebody fire a revolver, and then I heard Mumby call out that he was done for."

he essayed to speak, but without success; then, at last he managed to gasp:

"Loy—Loy Moxon. He did this."

"Loy Moxon!" exclaimed the detective.

"Was he the young man who came to see you ten minutes ago?"

Mumby nodded and closed his eyes.

"Did he know that you had revealed the secret of Miss Nemo's whereabouts to Captain Gaskell?" asked Nelson Lee.

Mumby started, and once more opened his eyes.

"You—you have guessed," he murmured.

"I think so," said Nelson Lee. "Captain Gaskell came to see you this afternoon. You told him where Maggie Nemo is imprisoned. In some way or other Loy Moxon got to know of this. He came to this house after the match, and accused you of having betrayed him. You quarrelled, and he shot you. That's what happened, isn't it?"

Again Mumby nodded.

"But you'll—you'll avenge my death, won't you?" he gasped. "You'll have Loy—Loy arrested? If you'll promise, I'll tell you where Maggie Nemo is, and if you wire to the Newport police you'll still be in time—in time—"

A rush of blood to his mouth, choked his further utterance, and when, after coughing and gasping for nearly a minute, he finally sank back into the detective's arms, and ceased to breathe, both Nelson Lee and Frank, as well as the constable, believed that he had passed away.

But they were mistaken. Presently a feeble, fluttering sigh escaped from between his blood-stained lips, and a little later he opened his eyes.

For a moment he gazed earnestly at Nelson Lee; then his lips began to move.

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to the station, she'll be able to identify him as the young man who called to see Mumby, and then you can arrest him without a warrant."

The constable agreed to adopt this suggestion, and five minutes later two hansoms left 27, Carbrook-road. In the first were Nelson Lee and Frank; in the second were the constable and Mrs. Nix.

It was five-and-twenty past five when they reached the station. Loy was on the platform with the rest of the team, chatting to two of the directors.

"That's the man!" cried Mrs. Nix, pointing an accusing finger at Loy.

And before the other members of the team had recovered from their stupefaction, almost before Loy himself had grasped what was happening, the constable had uttered the formal words of arrest, the handcuffs had snapped on Loy Moxon's wrists, and he was being led away in custody.

"Maggie—old mill—two miles—cross—barn." A thousand times the detective repeated these words to himself, whilst he and Frank and the rest of the team were journeying from Newcastle to Newport. He left Frank to explain why

Loy had been arrested, and to describe what had happened at Carbrook Road. He himself, seated in a corner of the saloon, wrestled with Mumby's dying speech, and strove to read some meaning into its disjointed phrases.

"Maggie—old mill—two miles—cross—barn."

What could it mean?

"Barnby! Barnby!"

The train had reached Barnby, an important station about five miles from Newport, ere inspiration came to Nelson Lee.

"Barnby! Barnby!" shouted the porters.

The detective started.

"Barnby!" he muttered to himself. "Why didn't I think of that before? Is that what 'barn' means? Did Mumby say 'Barnby,' and I only caught 'barn'? Is Maggie imprisoned somewhere in the neighbourhood of Barnby?"

The train resumed its journey. Two miles from Newport a second inspiration came to the detective.

"By Jove, I begin to see daylight at last!" he exclaimed. "That cottage where I was imprisoned three weeks ago was on Barnby Moor. Near the cottage were four cross-roads, and about two miles beyond the cross-roads I remember seeing an old, half-ruined building, which I thought at the time looked like an ancient mill. Yes, I've solved the mystery at last! Maggie Nemo is

imprisoned in that old mill, two miles beyond the four cross-roads on Barnby Moor!"

He beckoned to Frank, and excitedly unfolded his theory.

"Sir George's dogcart will be waiting for me at Newport Station," he said in conclusion. "We'll dismiss the groom, and we'll drive to that old mill as fast as the horse can gallop. And perhaps—who knows?—we may yet be in time to save the girl you love!"

Two minutes later the train steamed into Newport Station. Long before the wheels had ceased to revolve, Nelson Lee and Frank sprang out of the saloon, and rushed into the station yard, where Sir George Halliday's dogcart, in charge of Cringle, was awaiting the detective's arrival.

"Out you come, Cringle!" said the detective, good-humouredly. "Mr. Goodwin and I are going to borrow the trap for an hour or two. I'll make it all right with Sir George afterwards."

Cringle stepped down, and Nelson Lee climbed into the driver's seat. Frank took his seat beside him, and at twenty-five minutes to eight the dogcart dashed through the station gates, and rattled off in the direction of Barnby Moor.

Would they reach the old mill in time?

(This enthralling story will be continued in next Thursday's BOYS' HERALD. Don't forget to tell your chums that a sequel to "Always Honest" entitled "Honesty Wins," written by Your Editor (HAMILTON EDWARDS) and Allan Blair starts in this paper in two weeks' time.)



Frank's foot suddenly shot out, and ere the Newcastle custodian could get back into goal, the ball whizzed under the cross bar, and crashed into the quivering net.

That was all the detective waited to hear. With Frank and the constable at his heels he dashed into the house, thundered down the passage, and hurled himself against the door of the little back room.

The door flew open with a crash, revealing the all but lifeless form of Joe Mumby lying in a pool of blood beside the open window.

"That's the way the villain has escaped!" cried Nelson Lee, pointing to the window. "After him, you two, whilst I attend to Mumby!"

Frank and the constable vaulted through the window, but presently returned with the news that they could find no trace of the unknown "young man" to whom the woman had referred.

By that time Nelson Lee had staunched the bleeding from Mumby's wound, but it was evident at a glance that the bookmaker was rapidly sinking, and had not many minutes to live.

"You'd better send for a doctor," said Nelson Lee to the constable. "The poor fellow will be dead before the doctor arrives, but nevertheless you'd better send for one."

"Has he spoken yet?" asked the constable, after he had sent the woman for the nearest doctor.

"No," said Nelson Lee. "But I've just managed to force a little brandy between his lips, and it appears to have somewhat revived him."

He had scarcely finished speaking ere Mumby opened his eyes. On seeing the well-known face of Nelson Lee bending over him, a blaze of triumph illumined his eyes. Several times

quickly the detective bent his head, and strained his ears.

"Maggie—old mill—two miles—cross—barn"

That was all the detective heard, and ere he could question Mumby a convulsive shudder shook the bookmaker's form, the death-rattle gurgled in his throat, and all was over.

"I'm afraid there's no hope of saving Maggie now," said Nelson Lee to Frank, when they had laid the lifeless form on the couch and had covered it with a sheet. "It is evident, from what Mumby said, that our only chance of saving her would be to wire to the Newport police, and tell them where she is; and how can we do that when we don't know where she is?"

Frank made no reply. His heart was too full for words.

"I can only suppose, from Mumby's dying words," continued Nelson Lee, "that Maggie is imprisoned in some barn attached to some old mill, and within two miles of some cross—perhaps a market cross. But how can I act on information so vague and indefinite as that? How can I? Ah, here comes the doctor!"

At that moment Mrs. Nix returned with the doctor. After the latter had examined Mumby, and had pronounced life to be extinct, the detective turned to the constable.

"You heard Mumby say that the man who shot him was a man named Loy Moxon?" he said. "Moxon is a member of the Rovers' team, and will be leaving for Newport by the half-past five train. If you take this woman