



The Giddy Goats!



AN AMUSING, LONG, COMPLETE STORY OF THE CHUMS OF THE FOURTH FORM AT ROOKWOOD SCHOOL.

The BOYS' FRIEND 1 1/2

TWELVE PAGES!

No. 951. Vol. XIX. New Series.]

THREE HALFPENCE.

[Week Ending August 30th, 1919.]



TOO MUCH OF A SMOKE!

till all the smokes were gone! Mornington looked round at the unhappy crew.

There had been many a smoking-party held in Lattrey's study, but never such a dismal one as the present party. The Giddy Goats of Rookwood were going through it. They had gathered there to smoke, and Mornington's little game was to make them smoke.

The 1st Chapter. A Very Pressing Invitation.

"Step in, Morny!"
"Trot in, old scout!"
"We want to speak to you, Morny!"
Lattrey, Peele and Gower, of the Classical Fourth at Rookwood, spoke together.
Mornington was going towards the stairs with Jimmy Silver, when the trio called to him from the doorway of the first study.
Morny and Jimmy Silver had their bats under their arms, and were evidently bound for the cricket field.

Mornington, the new junior captain, and Jimmy Silver, who had formerly held that position, seemed to be on the best of terms with one another—a circumstance that was not at all a pleasing one to Lattrey & Co.
Morny paused a moment.
"Can't stop," he said. "I'm goin' down to the cricket!"
"Shan't keep you a few minutes," said Lattrey.
"Well, what is it?"
"Step into the study!"
"Oh, rot! You can speak to me here, I suppose," answered Mornington impatiently.
"You comin', Jimmy?" bawled

Arthur Edward Lovell from the stairs. Lovell and Raby and Newcome were waiting below.
"I'm coming!" answered Jimmy. And he went on. Mornington made a move to follow him, but Lattrey caught him by the sleeve.
"Look here, Morny—" he began.
"Oh, let me go—I've no time to waste!" said Mornington. "If you've got anything to say, say it, and have done!"
"Can't yell it out in the passage," said Lattrey sulkily. "Why can't you step into the study for a minute?"

Valentine Mornington made an impatient gesture.
"Oh, all right!"
He came into the study, and Lattrey closed the door. Mornington stood with his hand resting on his bat, looking at the trio with impatient inquiry. There had been a time when Morny had been on good terms with the three black sheep of the Fourth, but that time was quite past. And since he had become junior captain, Morny had hardly spoken to the trio.
"Well, go ahead!" he said.
"What is it? You three slackers thinkin' of takin' up cricket?"

"Ahem! No!"
"Well, I knew that!" grunted Morny. "Too much like work—what?"
"You haven't always been so jolly keen on cricket yourself!" said Peele tartly.
"Not unless there was a bet on the game," added Gower.
Morny flushed.
He did not like being reminded of the time when he had been one of the blackest of the black sheep. That time was past, and Morny would have been glad for it to be forgotten.
"Is that what you brought me in here to listen to?" he snapped.



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THE GIDDY GOATS!

Lattrey gave his comrades a warning glance.

"Not at all," he said. "Nothing of the kind. Won't you sit down, Morny?"

"No time!"

"This isn't chummy, you know."

"Well, I'm not chummy with this study," said Mornington coolly.

"What's the good of beatin' about the bush?"

"We used to be pally!" said Peele.

"We will be again, if you like—if you give up playin' the goat, an' take to playin' the game," said Mornington with a laugh.

"Oh, draw it mild! You can't spoof us!" growled Gower.

"Spoof you?" repeated Mornington.

"What do you mean, Gower?"

"Shut up, Gower!" said Lattrey hastily.

Cuthbert Gower gave a grunt.

"Well, look here, Morny," said Lattrey, in a conciliatory tone.

"You're junior captain now. You've got Jimmy Silver's job, and you're head of the Lower School."

"That's no news!"

"I mean, you're in a different position from what you used to be in."

"You've got power in your hands now," said Lattrey. "Junior captain has a lot of influence, and can do pretty well as he likes, so long as he has a backing among the fellows, and doesn't kick over the rules too much."

"You've been on the Good Little Georgie stunt for a long time now, haven't you?"

Morny's eyes gleamed a little.

"You must be getting fed up with it," pursued Lattrey. "Now, why not chuck it?"

"Chuck it?" repeated Morny.

"Yes; and have a good time like you used to. You can do it now, without fear of anybody, now you're junior captain. Jimmy Silver & Co. don't count now—they can be as goody-goody as they like by themselves in the end study. Let 'em rip! They can't interfere with you, and you can have a jolly good time! See?"

"I see!"

"You haven't realised what a difference it makes, being junior captain," continued Lattrey, encouraged by Morny's placid tone.

"You're really monarch of all you survey in the Fourth, you know. Jimmy Silver couldn't keep his end up against you now, if he chipped in. Why, with you as leader, we could have no end of a good time. And you must be feeling the want of a little excitement by this time!"

Morny nodded.

"Such as breakin' bounds at night, and goin' to the little parties at the Bird in Hand?" he suggested.

"That's it!"

"Backin' gee-gees, and handin' over my pocket-money to a boozy bookie?"

"Ahem!"

"Spoilin' my wind by smokin' cigarettes—"

"Oh rot!"

"And occasionally makin' myself sick with a cigar?"

"Look here, Morny—"

"It's a delightful prospect," said Mornington. "Especially the cigar. I remember seein' Gower tackle a big heroet once. It doubled him up, an' he was groanin' with anguish for hours afterwards. Weren't you, Gower?"

"Oh rats!" muttered Gower.

"It must have been a happy experience," said Mornington, "and the time a bookie was chasin' you, Peele, for money you owed him, an' threatenin' to call on the Head! That's a merry recollection, isn't it?"

"Oh rot!"

"Thanks for the offer!" said Morny. "Declined with thanks! Anythin' more to say?"

Lattrey & Co. looked at one another.

"Oh, don't talk out of your neck, Morny, old man," said Lattrey un-

easily. "I'll tell you what: we've got a little smoking-party on after tea."

"Ass!"

"Towny an' Topy are comin', and Smythe and Tracy of the Shell," said Lattrey. "We invite you, Morny!"

"Do come, old scout!" murmured Peele.

"Banker afterwards, if you like," said Lattrey. "But, anyhow, come to the smokin'-party, Morny. It will buck you up no end!"

Mornington looked curiously at the black sheep of the Fourth. There was no doubt about the eagerness of the Giddy Goats of Rookwood to welcome him back into the fold.

With the junior captain of the school at the head of their select fraternity, the Rookwood Goats felt that they would be able to "spread" themselves with much more freedom.

While Jimmy Silver was junior captain they had been under a cloud, and had been subject to raggings.

As Mornington seemed to hesitate, the looks of the black sheep became brighter and more confident.

Not one of them believed for a moment in the genuineness of Valentine Mornington's reform. Their view of it was that it was pure humbug, and now that Morny was captain of the Lower School, they did not see any further usefulness in the humbug.

It had been useful, no doubt, in helping Morny into the coveted position. Now it was time to "chuck it," and they felt that Morny, as a sensible fellow, ought to see that.

"Some jolly good smokes, Morny," said Peele temptingly. "Really good Turkish cigarettes—your favourite old brand, you remember."

"And plenty of them," added Gower. "We're doin' it in good style, Morny."

Morny grinned.

"Regardless of expense?" he asked.

"That's it!"

"You'll enjoy yourself, old chap," murmured Lattrey.

Mornington reflected, and the shady three watched him eagerly.

"Could I bring a friend or two?" asked Morny at last.

"Certainly, old top."

"I don't suppose Erroll would care to come," remarked Peele, with a grin.

"Oh, he'll come if I ask him!"

The trio looked doubtful. Kit Erroll, of the Fourth, certainly was not a fellow in their line at all.

"Oh, bring him, if he cares for it!" said Lattrey.

"And Jimmy Silver?" asked Morny.

Lattrey started.

"Silver wouldn't—"

"Well, can I ask him? I'll tell him it's a smokin' party, of course, an' he can suit himself."

"That's a go!" said Lattrey. "If Silver likes to come to a smokin' party, he's welcome."

"Done, then!" said Mornington.

"What time?"

"Six!"

"I'll be here!"

And Mornington, with a genial nod, left the study, and sauntered away down the passageway to the stairs, whistling cheerily.

The 2nd Chapter. Nice for the Nuts!

"Our win!" chuckled Mark Lattrey, in great satisfaction, when the junior captain was gone.

"Good!"

"Rippin'!"

Lattrey laughed.

"Of course, I knew he was only spoofin', with his blessed reform, an' all that!" he remarked. "It puzzled me a bit at first; but I soon spotted the little game. He was aimin' at the captaincy all along. There's too many goody-goody fellows at Rookwood for a Giddy Goat to set up for the captaincy; he couldn't have got elected. So Morny lay low—till he bagged the place away from Silver. That was the game."

"Plain enough," assented Gower.

"He's kept the spoof up longer than was necessary," said Lattrey.

"But I was pretty sure he was tirin' of it. Well, we've got Morny back."

"Bravo!"

"This means that Jimmy Silver & Co. take a back seat for good. As for Silver comin' here to a smokin' party—that's all rot! He won't!"

"Morny's goin' to ask him."

"And he'll refuse—and that may mean trouble between them, which is all the better. That solemn old fogey, Erroll, won't come, either. And if he gives Morny lectures, Morny may get fed up with 'im, too. I'm surprised that they've been pally so long."

"Morny's rather a swankin' cad," remarked Peele. "But he will be jolly useful to us—that's a cert! And if he loses money in this study—"

"And he will!" said Lattrey.

"He ain't so rich as he used to be, but he can always borrow money from that scrubby cousin of his in the Second Form. But it will be a big thing for us to have the junior captain one of our set."

"Yes, rather! Let's go and tell the chaps!"

Lattrey & Co. left the study, and walked along cheerily to Study No. 5.

Townsend and Topham, the dandies of the Fourth, were there at tea, with Tom Rawson, the scholarship junior. Towny and Topy were chatting to one another—without addressing any remarks to Rawson. Rawson was not sufficiently "class" for Towny and Topy to have anything to say to him. Besides, Rawson had put a very firm foot down on smoking in the study. And he was so "hefty" a youth, that Towny and Topy, after having had their heads knocked together once or twice, loftily and disdainfully let him have his way.

Townsend was telling his chum about what his aunt, the countess, had said to his elder brother, the baronet: it was quite a high-class conversation, and intended to impress Rawson with a proper sense of his study-mates' superiority. Unfortunately, it failed of its effect, as Rawson was "sapping" Virgil over his tea, and was too deep in Latin verses to heed what his lofty study-mates were saying.

"Trot in, old scouts!" said Townsend, as Lattrey & Co. appeared in the doorway.

The black sheep came in.

Lattrey lighted a cigarette.

"Have a fag?" he asked.

"Ahem! No, thanks!" said Townsend hastily.

"Not just now!" murmured Topham.

Lattrey blew out a cloud of smoke. Tom Rawson coughed and looked up from P. Virgilius Maro.

"Chuck that!" he said, tersely.

Lattrey appeared to be deaf. Although by no means so aristocratic as Towny and Topy, Lattrey made it a point to be "down" on Rawson, and to ignore his existence.

"You fellows—" he began.

"Did you hear me?" asked Rawson.

"You fellows will trot along at six!" said Lattrey, still unheeding.

"Morny's comin'!"

"Oh, good!"

"If you've got fags about, you might bring them along—it's goin' to be a regular orgy, old tops," said Peele.

"Rely on us!" smiled Townsend.

Rawson rose to his feet.

"I can't stand smoke in the study," he said. "You've no right to smoke here, Lattrey!"

"Did you address me?" asked Lattrey disdainfully, becoming conscious of Rawson's existence at last.

"Yes; put that smoke out, or take it out of the study!"

Lattrey's reply was to blow out a cloud of smoke, which made Rawson cough again.

There was a chuckle from the nuts in the study.

"That's enough!" growled Rawson.

He came towards Lattrey, with his hands up.

"Get out!" he said.

"Look here! You leave Lattrey alone!" said Townsend. "Shut up, an' behave yourself, Rawson. You're not in your pater's workshop now!"

"Mop up the cad!" suggested Peele.

"Yaas, so we will, if he don't behave!" said Topy, feeling strong in numbers. "Sit down, Rawson!"

"Are you going, Lattrey?"

"No fear!"

"Will you put that smoke out?"

"No!"

"Then, here goes!" said Rawson. He collared Lattrey promptly, and spun him towards the open doorway.

"Back up!" shouted Lattrey.

Peele and Gower seized Rawson at once, and Towny and Topy jumped up to help.

Rawson went spinning back across the room.

"Now come on again, you cad!" panted Gower.

Rawson did not answer; he picked

up a big cushion, and came on again with a rush. The cushion swiped right and left, and Gower went spinning in one direction, Peele in another. Then Lattrey caught it with his face, and went bumping into the passage.

The cushion swept round, and Townsend and Topham captured it together and tottered back.

There were five of the nuts; but the burly Rawson seemed to have it all his own way with the cushion to help.

Lattrey was gasping in the passage, showing no inclination whatever to come in again. He was also in difficulties with his cigarette, which had slipped into his mouth, and felt warm there.

Peele and Gower, dodging the swiping cushion, scrambled into the passage after him.

Rawson devoted his attention to his study-mates then. Towny and Topy dodged and twisted round the study, yelling, as Rawson chased them with the whirling cushion.

"Stoppit!" yelled Townsend.

"You horrid rufian—stoppit!"

"Get out, then!"

"Do you think we're goin' to get out of our own study to please you?" shrieked Topham.

"Yes, unless you want some more," said Rawson coolly.

Swipe, swipe, swipe!

Townsend sprawled on the carpet, and Topham jumped over him, and dodged into the passage, with the cushion behind.

Four furious faces glared in at Rawson—but they stayed in the passage. Rawson turned round to Townsend.

That breathless youth was staggering to his feet, when the cushion caught him again, and he sprawled downwards.

Swipe, swipe, swipe!

"Yow-ow! Stoppit! I'm goin', ain't I?" wailed Topy.

And he went.

Slam!

Tom Rawson returned to his tea, and P. Virgilius Maro, keeping the cushion handy in case it was wanted again.

But it was not wanted.

Outside the study five breathless and furious nuts uttered blood-curdling threats, but there seemed a general disinclination to put them into effect.

"Let's rush the rotter, an' smash him up!" gasped Peele.

"Let's rag him black and blue!" hissed Gower.

"After all, we don't want to be in the study with that cad!" said Cecil Townsend loftily. "I'm really ashamed of havin' laid hands on the low rotter. Let's go an' see Smythe."

"Yaas, let's!" gasped Topham.

"Oh, come on!" growled Lattrey.

"He, he, he! He, he, he!"

That offensive cachinnation came from Tubby Muffin, who was watching the dusty and breathless nuts from the door of Study No. 2.

Lattrey gave the fat Classical a savage look.

He feared Rawson; but he did not fear Tubby Muffin—which was rather unfortunate for the fat Tubby.

"Collar that fat owl!" snarled Lattrey.

"Yaas, give the fat cad a lesson!" said Topy.

"He, he, he! Oh, my hat! I say—Yaroooh!" roared Tubby Muffin, as the nuts rushed on him and collared him, sending him spinning into his study.

Crash!

There was a sound of a table that went whirling over and a crash of crockery.

"Yoooop! Yow-ow-woop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Lattrey.

"Let's go in and give him another!" exclaimed Gower.

Gower made a step towards the doorway; but he suddenly halted as Putty of the Fourth, Jones minor, and Higgs looked out. Tubby's study-mates were at home.

"What are you up to?" roared Higgs. "You've upset our tea! Come on, you chaps, and wipe up the passage with them!"

Lattrey & Co. fled.

Higgs and his comrades chased them to the head of the stairs, down which they ran; Gower, unfortunately last, being rolled down after the rest.

It was rather a breathless party that arrived at Adolphus Smythe's study, in the Shell quarters.

The 3rd Chapter. The Call of Duty!

"Not finished, Morny?"

Jimmy Silver & Co. were at the nets, improving the shining hour with cricket practice.

The match with Bagshot School was coming along; and the Rookwood cricketers were very keen on beating Bagshot, their old rivals. Morny was giving a great deal of attention to his

team, getting them into shape, in which he had the hearty support of Jimmy Silver.

Whether Jimmy Silver was exactly pleased by his fall from the junior captaincy was a question; but certainly he owed no grudge to the new skipper. Morny's career as captain, so far, had not been an unqualified success; but he was doing his best, and Jimmy Silver was backing him up. For which Morny was duly grateful, for he was well aware that his position would have been extremely uncomfortable if Jimmy had gone into opposition.

Lovell and Raby and Newcome, though they "grouched" at the change of skipper, followed Jimmy's lead; and in addition to Morny's own chum, Erroll, the Fistical Four were the new captain's chief supporters.

Morny had come away from the wicket, when Jimmy called to him. He nodded in reply.

"Yes, I've got an engagement for six," he answered.

"Oh, bother your engagements!" said Arthur Edward Lovell. "Stick to cricket!"

"But it's rather important," said Mornington. "And I want you four to come, and Erroll, too."

"Well, I was going to do some more bowling," said Jimmy Silver. "Tommy Dodd wants me to bowl to him."

"You can bowl to Dodd some other time, old scout."

"Well, what's on, anyway?" asked Raby.

"A little party in Lattrey's study."

Lovell glared.

"Blow Lattrey! Bother Lattrey! Bless Lattrey! I wouldn't be found dead in Lattrey's study!" he snorted.

"I don't want you to be found dead there, old top. I want you to come to the party."

"I don't quite catch on," said Jimmy Silver. "You're not pally with Lattrey and his set, Morny."

"Lattrey's extended the olive-branch," explained Mornington. "His idea is that now I've bagged the captaincy, I can give up playing the ox, and take to my merry old manners and customs. I'm offered the distinguished rank of great chief an' leader of the Giddy Goats of Rookwood."

"Morny!" exclaimed Erroll.

"Lattrey's laid in supplies of expensive smokes, and I'm asked to the party," said Mornington, while his companions stared at him blankly.

"I've got leave to bring my friends, so it's all right."

"You're asking us to a smoking-party!" ejaculated Newcome.

"Yaas!"

"You cheeky ass—"

"My dear man it's a great occasion. I tell you Lattrey's got no end of expensive smokes, and there's to be banker afterwards, if we care for it."

"Look here, Morny—" began Jimmy Silver.

"A very distinguished company, too," went on Mornington. "Smythe of the Shell—the nobby Adolphus; the glass of fashion an' the mould of form, you know—arbiter of elegance to the Lower School. Tracy, too—very entertainin' chap Tracy; knows all about the races—"

"Are you pulling our leg?" demanded Jimmy Silver restively.

"Not at all. There'll be Towny and Topy, too—to give the party a tone. Topy will tell us about his aunt, the countess."

"We know all about Topy's giddy aunt," said Jimmy Silver. "And I'm not coming."

"Same here!" said Lovell emphatically.

"Oh, do come!" urged Mornington.

"I want you to bring your bats, too."

"Our bats!" yelled Raby.



THE GIDDY GOATS!

(Continued from the previous page.)

School House, with their bats under their arms. Bulkeley of the Sixth, the captain of Rookwood, was heading for Big Side, and he stopped to speak to Mornington.

"Mornington!" "Hullo, Bulkeley!" "I've got a bone to pick with you," said Bulkeley quietly. "It seems that you're junior captain now. It's not my business to interfere in the arrangements of the juniors; but it may have occurred to you, possibly, that the junior captain has some duties to perform, as well as the senior captain."

"What's up, then?" asked Morny. "I'm afraid that there's several things up, that will have to be put down," answered Bulkeley grimly. "There's been fag-ends of cigarettes picked up in the Fourth Form passage? A playing-card was swept up by one of the maids, and Mr. Bootles has spoken to me about it." "Oh gad!" murmured Mornington.

The other juniors stood silent. They were well aware that since Jimmy Silver had ceased to be captain the Giddy Goats of Rookwood had become more reckless and impudent. The restraining hand was gone. It looked now as if they had been a little too reckless.

"So far as possible," went on Bulkeley, in the same quiet tone. "I think it's a good idea to let the junior captain keep order. Silver always seemed to manage fairly well. If I have to chip in officially, it will lead to some trouble—serious trouble. You don't seem to have realised, Mornington, what it's up to you to do. That's all, for the present."

And Bulkeley of the Sixth walked on, leaving Morny with a rather dismayed look on his face.

"Bulkeley's got on to it," said Lovell. "It's about time you made up your mind to take a hand, Morny."

Mornington nodded. "High time, it seems," he remarked. "Well, let's go ahead with our giddy duty. After we've done there will be a scarcity of cigarette-ends in the Fourth Form passage, I really think."

Morny & Co. entered the School House, and proceeded upstairs to the Fourth Form passage. They met Tom Rawson at the top of the stairs, and Morny called to him.

"Join up, Rawson," he said.

"What's up?" asked Rawson. "Smokin'-party in Lattrey's study."

"Go and eat coke!" retorted Rawson. "No time for such rot, or inclination, either."

"There seems to be a lot of misunderstanding about," said Mornington, laughing. "We're going in as executioners, dear boy, and we may want help."

"Oh, I see! I'll come, if that's the case."

"Follow your leader."

There were seven sturdy juniors now heading for Lattrey's study. There were an equal number of the noble fraternity known as the Giddy Goats in that select apartment, waiting for Morny. Mornington had said that he would bring his friends. But it was certain that Lattrey & Co. would be surprised, and anything but pleased, when Morny arrived with his friends.

The 4th Chapter. Doggish!

"So Morny's comin'!" Adolphus Smythe leaned back in the armchair in Lattrey's study, and blew out a little cloud of smoke.

The smoking-party had gathered. Smythe and Tracy of the Shell were there, and Towny and Topsy, as well as the three owners of the study.

Lattrey, Peele, and Gower, as a matter of fact, were a good deal keener on naps than on the smokes. They had an eye to business. The three young rascals were black sheep of a rather deeper dye than their guests. But, for the

present, cigarettes were the order of the day. It was not quite six, but the smokes were "going."

"Yes, he's coming," said Lattrey. "Promised to come."

"I fancied he would come round in time," remarked Adolphus sagely. "In fact, I told Tracy as much—didn't I, Tracy?"

"You did, old sport," answered Tracy.

"Hullo! I hear footsteps!" smiled Lattrey. "Here comes our dear reformed Morny!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Footsteps approached the door of the study, and there was a tap, and it opened. But it was the fat face of Tubby Muffin that looked in.

The Giddy Goats stared at him.

"Get out!" snapped Peele.

"Travel, you fat rotter!" growled Lattrey.

Tubby Muffin blinked in at the smoking-party.

"I thought it was a feed," he said, in a tone of deep disappointment.

"Well, it isn't. Get out!"

"Shut the door after you, fatty!"

"Oh, I don't mind joining you!" said Tubby Muffin genially. "I'm a bit rorty myself, you know—quite a

room! This isn't good enough for Rookwood, I can tell you!"

And Tubby Muffin shook a fat forefinger accusingly at the merry blades of Rookwood, who gave him Hunnish looks.

"I heard Mr. Bootles speaking to Bulkeley this morning," continued Tubby. "Old Bootles suspects that smoking goes on in the Fourth Form studies. He told Bulkeley so. Now, I really think it's my duty, having caught you in the act, to mention it to Bulkeley. What do you think?"

"You fat rotter!"

"If you treated me as a pal," said Tubby, "I should be bound to keep it dark, out of friendship. But you're not treating me as a pal. Now, I put it to you, Lattrey—are you treating me as a pal?"

Lattrey grasped a stump.

Tubby Muffin eyed him very warily.

"Hold on, Lattrey," said Gower hastily. "We don't want Bulkeley of the Sixth brought here."

"By gad, no!" concurred Smythe of the Shell. "If that fat little beast is goin' to sneak—"

"Some fellows have a sense of duty," said Tubby Muffin loftily. "I'm ashamed of you chaps! I can't let this go on."

Lattrey laid down the stump with a savage look. The fat Classical had the upper hand. Lattrey & Co. dared not let a Sixth Form prefect be brought to the study, already reeking with smoke.

"Let the fat brute come in!" muttered Peele.

"You can come in, Muffin," said Lattrey, between his teeth.

Tubby Muffin shook his head

from hospitable expression upon his thin, hard face.

Tubby selected a smoke with a very doggish air. He lighted it at Smythe's cigarette; and Adolphus contrived to let his lighted end touch Tubby's fat little nose.

There was a fiendish yell from Tubby as he jumped back, and a roar of laughter from the Rookwood Goats.

"Yaroooooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yow-ow-wooooo! You rotter!" howled Tubby. "You did that on purpose!"

"Quite an accident, I assure you, dear boy!" smiled Adolphus.

"Wow-wow-wow!"

Tubby Muffin rubbed his nose ruefully.

"Let me give you a light, Muffin," grinned Lattrey.

"Ow! Yow! I'll have a match."

Tubby, having finished with his nose, struck a match to light his cigarette. He blew out a cloud of smoke with an air of great enjoyment. Tubby rather fancied himself as a "dog," and he was determined to be as doggish as any other fellow in the study.

But before he was half-way through the cigarette he was smoking very slowly. He coughed several times and grunted expressively. Doggishness of the smoky variety did not quite agree with the ample supplies Tubby had taken in at tea-time.

"Time Morny was here," remarked Peele, with a glance at the clock.

"Here comes somebody."

There were footsteps in the pas-

he?" ejaculated Arthur Edward Lovell, in astonishment.

Reginald Muffin gave a fat chuckle. "What do you think?" he answered jauntily. "I'm a bit of a rorty dog, you know! A short life and a merry one! He, he, he!"

"Well, your life as a Giddy Goat is going to be a short one, Tubby," said Jimmy Silver. "I don't think it will be a very merry one, though."

"Not very!" grinned Raby.

"May as well lock the door," said Mornington. "We don't want to be interrupted, and we don't want any of our rorty friends to bolt."

"Turn the key, Rawson."

Rawson turned the key, and put it in his pocket. The Giddy Goat viewed that proceeding with growing alarm. Mark Lattrey's face was dark and apprehensive.

"If you fellows have come here to kick up a row—" he began.

Mornington nodded.

"Exactly!" he answered. "We've come to kick up quite a shindy! But don't mind us—get on with the smoking! We'll watch you."

"Look here—"

"Keep on with the smoking! So long as you're smoking, we won't touch you."

"Morny—" began Lovell.

"Leave it to me, Lovell, please. We'd better open the window and sit round it—I'm not used to tap-rooms. Don't mind us, my nutty friends—go on smoking."

The Giddy Goats blinked at Mornington in astonishment, and went on mechanically puffing at their cigarettes. Mornington opened the study window, and he and his companions sat round it, keeping as close to the fresh air as possible. Then, with smiling faces, they watched the smoking Goats of Rookwood.

The 5th Chapter.

A Peculiar Punishment.

Mark Lattrey's teeth closed hard on his cigarette.

The cad of the Fourth understood well enough now that Mornington had not come there to join the smoking-party.

It was evident that Morny had been pulling the Giddy Goat's leg when he accepted the invitation.

Whether Valentine Mornington's reform was genuine or not, he was still "keeping it up."

The fact that Erroll and Jimmy Silver were with him was a pretty plain proof that Morny had not come there to be "rorty."

All the nuts realised that, and they were puzzled and alarmed. Even Tubby Muffin realised that there was something wrong, and he blinked at Morny & Co. uneasily.

Exactly what Mornington intended was rather a puzzle.

In the days when Jimmy Silver was junior captain the Fistical Four would have thought nothing of raiding and ragging a study where a "smoking-party" was going on.

But Morny was leader now, and the Fistical Four were following his lead, as well as Erroll and Rawson.

And it seemed clear that Mornington was not intending a ragging.

He sat by the open window, with a smile on his face, watching the Giddy Goats; but the smile was a rather wicked one, and did not reassure the Goats.

The atmosphere of the study was rather thick by this time, and Jimmy Silver & Co. were glad to be by the open window. If the door had been unlocked there would probably have been a rush of the Giddy Goats to get away; but the door was locked, and the key was in Rawson's pocket. There was a long silence, while the Rookwood Goats smoked, and the unwelcome visitors watched them smoking.

Lattrey broke the silence at last.

"Look here, Morny! What's this game?" he asked, in a low voice of concentrated anger.

"Game?" repeated Mornington.

"Yes. You haven't come here to join us?"

"Not exactly."

"What do you want, then?"

"To watch you."

"You silly fool!" broke out Lattrey savagely. "What do you want to watch us for, you idiot?"

"I find you rather amusing."

"Look here—" began Adolphus Smythe.

"I'm lookin', dear old Smythey."

"I—I think we'd better be goin'," murmured Tracy. "I'd be obliged if you'd unlock the door, Rawson."

"Oh, yaas!" murmured Townsend.

Tom Rawson looked at Mornington for orders.

"Keep the key in your pocket," said Morny.

"Right you are!"

"Look here, Rawson!" broke out Topham. "You just unlock that



ASKING FOR IT! "Now come on, you cad!" panted Gower. Rawson did not answer; he picked up a big cushion and came on, with a rush! The cushion swiped right and left, and Gower went spinning in one direction, Peele in another. Then Lattrey caught it with his face, and went bumping into the passage.

rorty old dog, in fact. I'll come in, with pleasure."

"By gad!" said Smythe of the Shell. "Really, Lattrey, if you inflict that fat boulder on us—"

Mark Lattrey started to his feet.

"I'll clear him off fast enough, if he doesn't go!" he exclaimed. "Hand me over that cricket-stump, Gower."

"Here you are, old top."

Tubby Muffin backed into the passage.

"I say, Lattrey—" he began reproachfully.

Slam!

Lattrey returned to his seat. The next minute the study door reopened, and the fat face of Reginald Muffin appeared once more.

"Get out!" roared Lattrey.

"You don't want me to join you?" asked Tubby.

"No, you fat porpoise."

"Oh, very well! I suppose you fellows know that you are breaking the rules," said Tubby Muffin loftily.

"I'm sorry, but I feel bound to mention it to Bulkeley—"

"Wha-a-at!" ejaculated Adolphus Smythe.

"You fat sneak!" shouted Lattrey furiously.

"I'm not a sneak," said Tubby Muffin warmly. "I've got a sense of duty, that's all. Some fellows have. I'm shocked at you, Lattrey—surprised and shocked! Smoking in the study, like a gang of toppers in a tap-

loftily. Having gained an advantage, he meant to make the most of it.

"I'm afraid I couldn't accept an invitation put like that, Lattrey," he said. "Besides, I feel bound to mention to Bulkeley—"

"Do come in, Tubby!" said Lattrey, gritting his teeth. "We—we'll be pleased to have you!"

Tubby Muffin smiled beamingly.

"Sure you'd like me to join you, old tops?" he asked.

"Oh, yes, yes!"

"Then I'll come in," said Tubby cheerily. And he came in, and closed the door after him. "Of course, with matters on a friendly footing—"

What did you say, Smythey?"

"Nothin'!" muttered Adolphus.

"I thought you called me something."

"N-n-not at all."

"Oh, all right! Any smokes going?" asked Tubby Muffin, with quite a doggish air. "Any whisky about?"

"Oh, my aunt!" murmured Tracy.

There was no whisky, even in Lattrey's study. But the fat Tubby, having started as a Giddy Goat, evidently felt that it was up to him to go the whole hog, so to speak.

"Nunno!" stammered Lattrey.

"Here, help yourself to a fag."

He pushed the cheapest box of cigarettes towards Tubby, with a far

sage again—a good many footsteps. Then there came a rap at the door.

"Trot in, old sport!" called out Lattrey.

The door opened, and Mornington's smiling face was seen. The nuts of Rookwood gave him a cheery grin of welcome, and Tubby Muffin bestowed a genial nod upon him.

But the grin died away a little as Erroll and Jimmy Silver were seen behind Morny.

The junior captain entered the study. Jimmy Silver and Kit Erroll followed him in. And Lattrey & Co. looked quite grave as Lovell and Raby and Newcome and Rawson followed.

Rawson was the last, and he closed the door.

The study was pretty well crowded now.

"Well, here we are!" smiled Mornington.

"Ya-a-as, here you are!" stammered Adolphus Smythe.

"You said I might bring my friends, Lattrey."

"Ye-e-es."

"Well, I've brought them."

"Squat down somewhere, old tops," said Tubby Muffin. "Join us in a smoke—no end ripping, I assure you! Pass 'em the cigarettes, Smythe. Try these, Morny—you'll like 'em!"

"So Tubby's joined the Goats, has



THE GIDDY GOATS!

(Continued from the previous page.)

door! We don't care for your company, and we're goin'!"

"I don't care for yours," said Rawson cheerfully. "But you're not going till Morny gives the word."

"Morny's skipper, you know," remarked Jimmy Silver. "There's such a thing as discipline, Topsy."

"What have you planted yourselves in this study for, you rotters?!" muttered Lattrey, his eyes burning.

"I—I say, have a smoke, Morny, an' let's be pally," said Peele, extending a box of cigarettes to the junior captain.

Valentine Mornington shook his head.

"Thanks, I've given up smokin' long ago!" he answered.

"Oh, put on a smoke!" urged Gower uneasily.

"My dear man, you'll want all those smokes before you're through."

"Not a bit of it! We sha'n't be smokin' half this lot!"

"You will!" answered Mornington coolly.

"Eh?"

"Tubby, your smoke's gone out," said Mornington, with a stern look at the fat Classical.

"That's all right, old chap!" said Tubby. "I don't believe in over-doing it, you know. Fact is, I've been smokin' an awful lot to-day."

"You're going to smoke an awful lot more, too. Light another cigarette!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"Do you hear me?"

"Ye-es, but—"

"Do as you're told!"

"I—I don't want to, Morny," said Tubby, in alarm. "I—I—I'm feeling a bit queer inside now, I am really."

"You'll feel a bit queerer before this smokin'-party is over," answered Mornington. "Put on another fag at once."

"Wha-a-at for?"

"Because you're told, Rawson, you're nearest the fat bounder. Give him a dig with your bat, will you?"

"Certainly," said Rawson.

"I—I say— Yaroooh! Stoppit!" yelled Tubby Muffin, as he duly received the dig—rather an energetic one. "Yow-ow! Chuck it! I—I—I'll smoke another fag if you like, Morny! I—I want to."

"Whether you want to or not, you're goin' to!" said Mornington. "Now, then, sharp's the word!"

Slowly and unwillingly Reginald Muffin lighted another cigarette. He smoked it slowly—very slowly indeed. But he smoked it. Rawson was ready with his bat; and the cigarette seemed the lesser evil—at present. The time was soon to come when a thousand bats would seem a lesser evil than a cigarette to the hapless Tubby.

Lattrey & Co. looked at one another.

They understood now.

Mornington's little game was not a ragging. It was something more severe than a ragging. The Giddy Goats of Rookwood had gathered there to smoke—and Mornington was going to make them smoke—till all the smokes were gone. It was the junior captain's idea of making the punishment fit the crime—quite in keeping with Morny's whimsical character. Jimmy Silver & Co. chortled as they watched the expressions of the nuts.

"You have stopped smokin', Smythey," remarked Morny, a few minutes later.

"I've finished," said Adolphus.

"Not quite! Light up!"

"I—I—I'm not goin' to."

"Will you give Smythey a dig with your bat, Lovell?"

"Won't I?" grinned Arthur Edward. And he did.

There was a howl from Adolphus.

"Have another smoke, Smythey?"

"I—I—I don't mind if I do!" gasped Smythey.

"Go it!"

And Adolphus Smythey went it, with a face that was a picture of fury and horror—and that was gradually assuming a complexion of various colours, in which a sickly green predominated.

"Muffin!" rapped out Mornington. "Grooooh!"

"You're not smokin'."

"Ow! I—I can't! I—I'm not one of this lot, really, Morny," pleaded Tubby. "I—I just looked in to—speak to them about—about cricket, you know—and—"

"Give him your bat, Rawson."

"Ow! I—I'm just going to begin!" howled Tubby.

"Buck up, then!"

Two cigarettes had had a most alarming effect upon the inward regions of Reginald Muffin. But he started on a third.

"You're not smokin', Gower."

"I—I'm just goin' to—"

With a face like a demon, Cuthbert Gower lighted up again. In a dismal crowd, the unhappy Giddy Goats of Rookwood smoked, and smoked—and the ready bats kept them at it. There came an interruption at last, from Tubby Muffin. That plump youth rolled suddenly from his chair, and collapsed on the hearthrug, with his head in the fender. And the sounds that followed from the hapless Tubby resembled the weird sounds heard on a Channel steamer on a stormy day.

The 6th Chapter. Awful!

"Lattrey!"

"Hang you!"

"You're not smokin'."

"I won't!" hissed Lattrey between clenched teeth. "Hang you! I won't!"

"Oh, what a falling-off was there!" bladed Jimmy Silver. "You giddy blades gathered here to smoke. That was your special object. Now you say you won't, just as if you didn't like it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Give him your bat, Erroll!"

Erroll laughed, and gave Lattrey the business end of his bat. Lattrey uttered a peculiar gurgle as he tried to dodge. Then he sat very still.

"Leave off, you rotter!" he panted. "I—I—I'll smoke."

"Go it!" said Mornington, encouragingly.

Lattrey, with a fiendish face, lighted another cigarette. He was more hardened to smoking than his comrades, and he was standing it better; but he was feeling threats of upheaval within.

Tracy of the Shell had joined Tubby Muffin with his head in the fender. The rest kept their places, smoking slowly.

But they had to smoke.

There had been many a smoking-party held in Mark Lattrey's study; but certainly there had never been such a dismal one as the present party.

The Giddy Goats of Rookwood were going through it; and never had they so sincerely repented of their giddy-goatishness. A licking or a ragging would have been a joko to this.

Mornington watched them implacably.

It was high time the smart set of Rookwood had a lesson; and they were getting a lesson now, and a severe one.

Adolphus Smythe dropped a half-smoked cigarette to the floor, and leaned his head upon his hands, groaning deeply. The inward Adolphus was in a state of Bolshevism. Adolphus was feeling that a sentence of death would be a pleasure, compared with finishing that cigarette.

"You're not smokin', Smythey!" said Mornington.

Groan!

"You hear me, Adolphus?"

Groan!

Adolphus couldn't answer; he could only groan, and the groans were both loud and deep.

"Fancy Smythey getting fed up with smokin'!" grinned Lovell. "Who'd have thought it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Are you enjoying yourself down there, Tubby?"

"Grooooh!"

"Having a good time, Tracy?"

"Gug-gug-gug!"

Groan from Adolphus Smythe. Townsend and Topham had their heads on the table now, groaning in chorus with Adolphus, Lattrey, Peele, and Gower were still smoking feebly; they were the toughest of the Giddy Goats of Rookwood. But it was not long now before Cyril Peele collapsed. He rested his hands on his knees, groaned, and rocked himself in anguish.

Lattrey staggered to his feet. His face was white from rage, and the influence of the cigarettes.

"You rotters!" he muttered huskily. "You rotters! Ow! I—I won't touch another—I—I won't!"

"Prod him, Erroll!"

"Don't you think he's had enough, Morny?" murmured Erroll.

"Not till he collapses."

"Let him keep it up," chuckled Lovell. "It may be quite a long time before Lattrey gives another smoking-party in his study."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mornington started operations with his bat. Lattrey dodged and twisted—and the quick motion completed the work of many cigarettes. He collapsed into a chair, overcome.

Gower was the last. There was still a cigarette between his pallid lips; but he had ceased to smoke. He

sat quite still, his glassy gaze fixed before him stonily.

"Go it, Gower!" said Morny.

Gower did not answer, or look at him. He seemed to have been turned to stone, as if by the glance of the fabled Gorgon.

Mornington looked round at the unhappy crew. The cigarettes were not finished yet—there were plenty more. But it was pretty evident that they would never be smoked by Lattrey's smoking-party.

"Have they had enough, you fellows?" queried Mornington.

"Grooooh!"

"Ow! Ow! Grooooh!"

"Gug-gug-gug-gug!"

"Well, they sound as if they've had enough," said Jimmy Silver, laughing. "We'll give them a larger dose next time they have a smoking-party."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That's a good idea. We'll clear off now—it's a bit thick in here. I hope you fellows have been enjoying yourselves," said Mornington, looking at the hapless Goats. "You've had a really good time—a really roxy time. You ought to have enjoyed yourselves no end. Come on, you chaps!"

Tom Rawson unlocked the door, and Mornington & Co. walked out of the study. They were followed by a dismal chorus.

"Grooooh!"

"Ooooooch!"

"Oooo-er!"

"Gug-gug!"

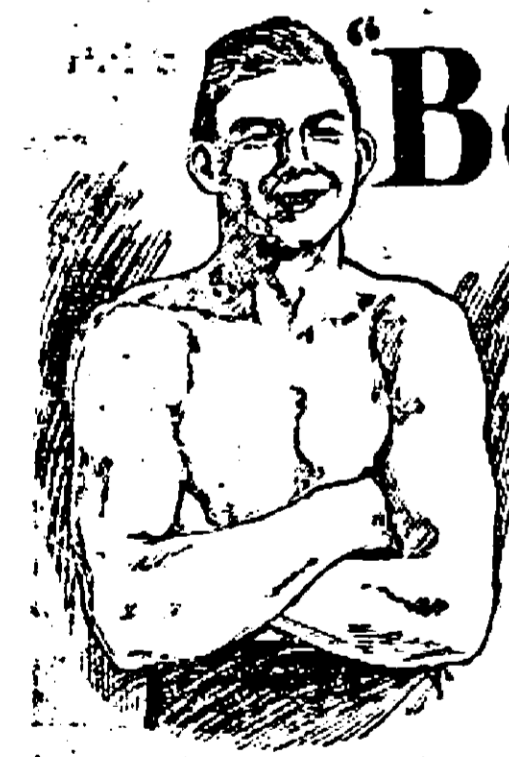
And the door closed upon the sufferings of the Giddy Goats.

That night there were pallid faces among the Giddy Goats of Rookwood when they went to bed. In the dormitory of the Classical Fourth, Lattrey and Peele and Gower, Townsend and Topham, looked as if they were not finding life quite worth living. In the Shell quarters, Smythe and Tracy gloomed upon the dormitory, from the deepest depths of pessimism.

And the sufferers received no sympathy. Their pallid looks only excited the irrepressible merriment of the other Rookwood fellows. Lattrey did not answer when several juniors inquired when he was giving another smoking-party. It was very probable that while Mornington remained captain, the smoking-parties of the Giddy Goats of Rookwood would be few and far between.

THE END.

(Another long complete story of Jimmy Silver & Co. at Rookwood next Monday, entitled "The Right Sort!" By Owen Conquest. Don't miss it—but order next week's issue of the BOYS' FRIEND to-day.)



BOY MCCORMICK TALKS ON BOXING!

Personal Hints from the Light Heavy - Weight Champion of Great Britain.

"BOY" MCCORMICK.
Holder of Lord Lonsdale's Championship Belt.

Boxing is greatly to the fore just now, and as I am of the opinion that every boy should learn to defend himself, I readily fell in with the suggestion of the Editor of the BOYS' FRIEND that I should write a few instructive articles on scientific boxing for the benefit of his vast number of readers.

In the first place, it may interest you to know that I hold a world's record for winning a championship at such a young age. You see, I am not yet twenty, so I have plenty of time to win a world's boxing championship as well.

Determination and grit are, in my opinion, the two great factors that gain success in the "roped square." I went into the ring at the National Sporting Club full of determination to beat Harold Rolph in our fight for the Championship of Great Britain and Lord Lonsdale's Belt. It was this determination that helped to pull me through, for Rolph is a hard nut to crack, I can assure you. You boys who are enthusiastic in the boxing line, just remember always to stick to your purpose—never give in while you have an ounce of energy left in you—and victory will come your way nine times out of ten.

You can derive splendid qualities

from boxing—strength of character, will-power, self-reliance, and, last but not least, it will improve your physique and health in general. These are qualities that will help you on in after life, and will have a great bearing on your future career.

This week I am going to deal with position and footwork, and I should like you to master this thoroughly before you attempt anything else in the "noble art."

POSITION.

Stand at attention with arms to the sides. Make a half-right turn, and advance your left foot from twelve to twenty inches, just according to your height and the length of your leg. Your left toe should be facing your opponent, and your right toe pointing at an angle of about forty-five degrees. Extend your left hand about twelve inches from the shoulder, so that your hand is about level with the shoulder.

The thumb must be uppermost, with the knuckles facing your left. This will enable you to land a clean blow with the knuckle part of the glove.

Your elbow should be pointing downwards, and not out. This is most important, as a man boxing with his elbow pointing outwards cannot get the full force behind his punch, and at the same time telegraphs to his opponent that he is

going to hit. Just try this for yourselves, and you will discover my meaning. It is quite obvious that to hit out with the left whilst boxing with your elbow pointing outwards in the position I have just indicated, would necessitate your drawing your elbow in, thus telling your adversary in advance that you are going to hit, and you will find him fully prepared for you. At the same time, by keeping your elbow pointing downwards and a trifle in, you will find that you are able to land a perfectly straight left—the greatest blow in boxing, and the one that counts most. This is the direct and quickest route to the chin, and beats all the swings and hooks that are attempted by most present-day boxers.

I have explained fully the position of the left hand, so will now go on with the right, which is used principally for guarding purposes, but also for what is termed "finishing off."

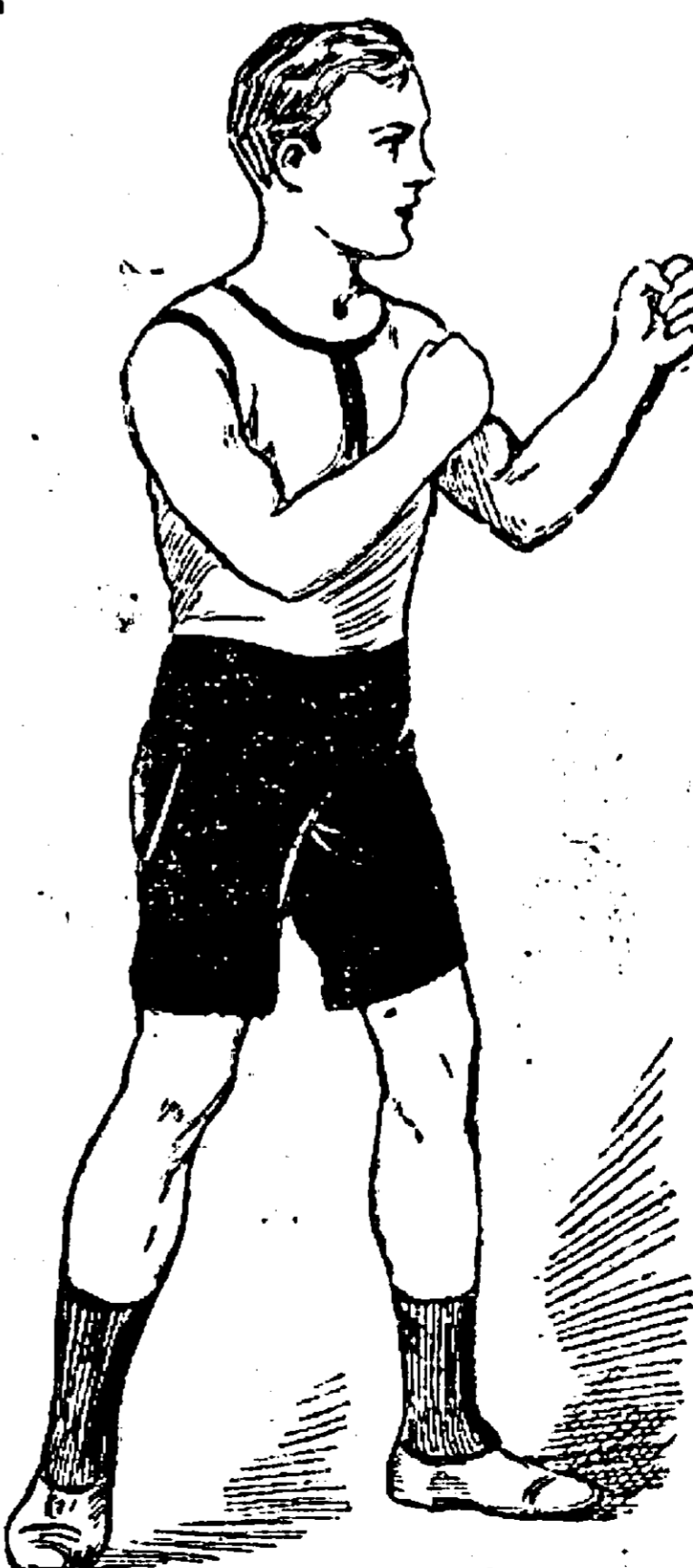
The right arm should be placed across the body so that the glove is almost on a level with the left shoulder. You will find that the right glove affords a certain amount of protection for the chin, whilst the elbow is also a protection against straight or swinging lefts to the body.

Keep the right arm about two inches from the body; for by extending your arm slightly in this manner you will have less difficulty in guarding your opponent's deliveries.

By carefully studying the foregoing you will have attained the perfect position of the arms and feet. The use of both hands I will deal with in a later article, as it is most essential for you to master the correct position thoroughly first; and when you have done so, you will have overcome one of the greatest obstacles barring your progress to success.

Another point of two before we leave the "position," and that is to remember that the whole frame must be held loosely and easily. Don't on any account let your muscles get taut. It is unnecessary to clench your fists or stand as if your feet were glued to the floor. You are wasting a deal of energy and strength.

It is quite time enough to clench your fist just immediately before your blow lands, and plenty soon enough to glue your feet firmly to the floor to withstand your opponent's onslaught.



Correct position of the hands and feet, as described in the accompanying article.

when you see him coming for you and you are in a position, for the moment, of being unable to slip him, sidestep, or get out of reach.

Hold yourself nice and easily, and divide the weight of the body equally on both feet. Slightly incline the body forward, and you are ready for attack or defence.

FOOTWORK.

Footwork is a very important factor in the boxer's make-up.

I should like to point out now that it is absolutely necessary for you to get about easily and quickly on the feet, and although you may be naturally active and light—even a first-class dancer—you will find that when you come to move about to avoid a blow, you will get your legs crossed and lose your balance.

Practice carefully the following movements, which constitute the A B C of footwork:

Stand in proper boxing attitude, then step forward with the left foot, following up with the right. Take three paces in this manner forward, and then retreat in like way, only using the right foot first and following back with the left.

The same thing applies in stepping sideways to the left or right.

When stepping to the left, use the left foot first. If to the right, then the right foot first.

At first you will have to do these movements slowly so as to thoroughly grasp their meaning. You can gradually increase in speed until you are easily able to move about to avoid a blow without losing your balance.

The forward movement will be found useful for attacking purposes, whilst the backward movement will enable you to get out of reach of your opponent should he be of the rushing kind.

Remember that the position of the feet controls every kind of offensive and defensive measure, and to maintain a perfect balance at all times, it is necessary for you to keep your right foot always in a direct line behind your left.

Boy McCormick



The SPORTS of ST. CLIVE'S

A Splendid New Sporting School Story.

By ARTHUR S. HARDY.

Summary of the Previous Installments.

St. Clive's is a famous sporting school, whose headmaster, Dr. Brooks, was a great athlete in his day.

Raynham, the captain of the school, is idolised by the junior boys, but has some enemies among the seniors, notably Parker and Bates, who, angry at their not being included in the trial race for the selection of the crew to meet Salt-house, manage, with the aid of two rascals from the town, to spoil the race.

News reaches St. Clive's that a convict has escaped, and Raynham, who has seen the convict, overhears a conversation between Dr. Brooks and the escaped man, in which it appears that the Head is befriending him. Raynham decides to keep his secret and watch events.

Some time later Dr. Brooks has cause to expel Lionel Parker, who leaves the school in disgrace. Instead of returning to his parents, he lives with his chum Bates in the town, and the two devise a scheme of revenge on Raynham. The captain of the school awakes one night to find a lurid glow in the sky. He clambers out on to the leads of the tower to investigate, and, to his horror, he discovers that it is the boathouse on fire. His voice rings out on the night: "The boathouse is on fire!"

(Now read on.)

The Burning of the Boathouse.

For some moments, while he stood staring at the distant blaze, realising what it must mean, Jack Raynham was almost stunned by the shock.

The boathouse was on fire! The boathouse was on fire!

The words mechanically beat themselves into his brain, depriving him for a few seconds of the power of action. But he was not the sort of boy to give way to emotion when action was needed.

He sprang wildly for the door that led on to the roof, and, taking care to close it even in his haste, leapt down the stairs like a deer.

Down he went, down until he reached the long corridor which led to his rooms.

"I must rouse some of the fellows!" he thought. And a moment later was pounding on Cawood's door. His fist fell heavily upon the panels.

"Hallo!" came in a tone of sleepy protest. "What's up?"

"Open the door, Cawood!" panted Jack. "It's I—Raynham!"

A startled exclamation assured him that Cawood was stirring. He heard the prefect's feet speeding to the door. It opened.

Cawood, with hair dishevelled and eyes heavy with sleep, stood before him in pyjamas. In an instant the big Sixth Form boy knew that there was something sadly amiss.

"What is it, Raynham?" he said, speaking quietly and straining his ears to listen.

"The boathouse is on fire. I suspect foul play. It looks as if the fire's got a firm hold. Get your things on, and go downstairs! Oh, rouse Wright and Hume on the way! I'll stir up Leake, and get hold of Mr. Bagshot."

"Right, old fellow! Sha'n't be a jiff!"

Cawood was backing into the room as he spoke. Raynham, knowing that he could rely upon him, then went to Leake's room and roused him.

Leake's response was immediate. Jack had more trouble to rouse the master, but he stirred him at last.

Mr. Bagshot opened the door with a frown of annoyance on his face, but the moment he saw that it was the school captain who had summoned him he was alert in a flash.

"I'll be ready in no time, Raynham!" he said. "This is indeed bad news. Weren't there any men left to watch the boathouse?"

"Yes; Blake and two others—Moby and Fairs, I believe. I told them to be on the watch, lest there

was foul play. I felt uneasy after that ugly business in the trial race. There must be more than accident in this."

"I'll be down in a moment, Raynham."

The captain ran to his own room, drew on a pair of cricketer-trousers—the first thing that came to his hand—retaining his pyjamas-jacket. He pulled on a pair of socks, and laced his shoes deliberately and securely. And even then he was one of the first to show up below. He waited, watching that flickering glare in the sky, with his heart swelling within him.

"I can't wait for the other fellows!" he muttered. And then, as he heard them coming, calling to one another as they descended the stairs, he yelled, "I'm going on!" through the doorway, and bolted.

Raynham knew what he was doing. He kept his head.

Setting a sound mile in four-fifty pace, he sped along the nearest route to the boathouse, the way being illuminated by the glare of the fire, which was reflected by the clouds that hung above the trees.

Raynham could hear the others coming, hot in chase of him.

Well, there were enough of them to do all there was to be done.

Doubtless somebody had taken steps to see that the school fire-brigade was called out. No time to wait for that, however.

On he ran, keeping to the good paths. And at last he saw the outline of the boathouse in front of him, showing through the trees.

Very hot and angry the flames looked at close range, and billowing masses of black smoke floated away on the fair breeze. He could see the moving waters of the silent river, alive, it seemed, with golden ripples.

Raynham sprinted, and reached the front of the boathouse.

He stared at the structure in blank dismay.

The fire had taken a curious course, and, having burnt out one half of the lower floor, had stormed the staircase and attacked the dressing-rooms above. Here it had eaten through the roof, from the broken parts of which tongues of flame leapt furiously.

The sparks rose as if from a giant blacksmith's forge. He could have admired the spectacle if it hadn't meant so much for the school. The door stood wide open, so that he could see within.

Was anybody there? What had become of Blake and the other two men whose duty it was to have watched that night?

He leapt to the entrance, and bellowed, hand to mouth:

"Is anybody there? Blake, where are you? Anybody about?"

The crackling of the flames and the sizzling of burning tar mocked him. The wind blew the flames sheer back, and as they advanced to the devouring attack again, with a roar that would have drowned any reply below a shout, Raynham drew back.

He was about to turn away, realising with a groan that the boat reserved for the race must have been among the first things that perished in the flames, when he fancied he heard a groan.

A cry burst from his lips. The groan came from inside the boathouse, or he was sadly mistaken.

He sprang forward, and would have passed into the inferno, when a man sprang forward, as if from nowhere, and seized him by the arm.

"You can't go in, my boy!" said a hard, metallic voice. "It would be risking your life. The roof will fall in in a moment. Stay where you are!"

Raynham attempted to throw away the restraining hand, and turned to look at its owner. He saw before him

a tall, well-built man of somewhere near middle age. The stranger wore a suit of well-cut clothes, and his face was half covered by a cap with a large peak.

Two glittering, searching eyes looked into his. Raynham's heart gave a leap within him. He had a feeling that he and the stranger had met before, though he could not remember where.

"Let me go! There's someone inside!" he cried. "Take your hand away, or—"

The stranger's grip was firm, but Raynham shook his hand away and leapt through the gaping door.

And, like many another brave hero, he was rewarded.

His foot struck against some yielding substance that lay upon the ground, and he fell headlong.

It was as well, for as he lay, the cooling air from outside filtering in beneath the layers of smoke enabled him to breathe, and his head cleared.

The throbbing of his brain was soothed for a moment.

He lay still, drinking in the reviving, pure air, and then, turning, groped for the thing over which he had fallen.

His hands touched it, and his heart leapt again. As he had thought, it was the body of a man. As his hands touched the body, the sound he had heard before saluted his ears—the man groaned feebly.

It was enough. Raynham got up on his knees and prepared for a mighty effort. Small portions of flaming debris were falling like golden rain from above. He set his arms beneath the prostrate form, and heaved him up. He got him across his shoulder, adjusting the weight to a nicety, and then, rising, made in the direction of the door. He had chosen his course deliberately, carefully. It was no haphazard guess.

Holding his breath, and keeping a straight course, he stepped firmly and boldly forward.

The cool breeze touched his cheek. The cloud of smoke that was blinding him cleared. Before him he saw the river.

And so Raynham staggered out of the burning boathouse, carrying his precious burden, whilst a loud, triumphant shout rang from the lips of those who were there to see.

Doubts and Suspicions.

When Jack opened his eyes again, he found himself lying upon soft, cool grass, and there were kindly faces round him.

He was blinded by the intense glare that touched everything around, and frowned for a moment, puzzled to remember what had happened.

A kindly hand was thrust below his neck, and his head was raised up.

"Drink this, Raynham," said a gentle voice, and he recognised Mr. Bagshot, who smiled at him.

A cup was held to his lips, and he drank the cooling, refreshing water it contained greedily. Then he struggled up.

It was an amazing scene that met his gaze. Nearly all the boys of St. Clive's, seniors and juniors, had come down from the school, it seemed, and they wore the most astounding medley of strange attire that ever Jack had seen. He could see M. Lenoire, the French-master, capering and gesticulating on the bank, near the river. A little apart stood the Head, directing the school fire-brigade. The brigade had brought the hand-drawn engine with them, and were pumping water on the shell of the boathouse, but it was wasted effort.

The roof of the building had fallen in, and the flames were soaring to the sky.

"I think I brought somebody out of the boathouse," murmured Jack, as he struggled to rise. "Who was it?"

"Blake," was the instant reply.

"Poor fellow! Is he badly hurt?"

"The fire doesn't seem to have damaged him much," answered Arthur Cawood evasively. "And that



RAYNHAM TO THE RESCUE! Raynham staggered out of the boathouse, carrying his precious burden, whilst a loud triumphant shout rang from the lips of those who were there to see. But the stranger in the cap, who stood aloof from the others with his arms folded across his chest, stared gloomily on.

The next moment he was fighting his way through the blinding, choking smoke. Pieces of burning woodwork began to fall from above.

Myriads of sparks ran over the wooden beams and the ceiling above. The heat was stifling. He could see red tongues of flame, deadened by the smoke, above him.

Bending low, he groped about him, coughing, choking.

"Where are you?" he gasped. "Where are you?" He strained his ears to catch a reply, but none came. He stumbled against a beam, and recoiled from it. He could no longer tell where he was.

His head struck against an obstruction, half stunning him.

He no longer knew where the door was, and felt faint. Yet the last thing in the world he thought about was giving up his search.

Mr. Bagshot, Arthur Cawood, George Leake, David Hume, and Wright were there, and one other—the man with the cap—who stood aloof from the rest, with his arms folded across his chest, staring gloomily on. The cry he uttered made itself heard above the others:

"He's a hero, by Christopher!"

"It's Raynham!" screamed George Leake, through trembling lips, whilst tears filled his eyes. "It's Raynham! And he's saved the fellow, whoever he is! Oh, Jack!"

Raynham kept upon his course, sucking in deep breaths. He advanced until he was well clear of the doomed boathouse, and then faced his chums with a smile.

"Take him, you chaps!" he managed to jerk out, and then, swaying forward, fell before they could catch him, and rolled with his burden at their feet.

chap whom we found here when we arrived, is looking after him. The doctor's been sent for!"

Jack caught Cawood by the arm. "Arthur, old bean," he cried, "you're keeping something back! Is Blake dead?"

"No."

"No; what then—"

"Oh, he got a smack on the head, and he's in a bad way! Raynham—I don't know what's happened to the other two, but they weren't at their posts. Blake must have been attacked. The boathouse was broken into, and purposely set on fire, and—"

Raynham fell back with a gasp of horror. What was the matter with St. Clive's? What evil genius was it who brought bad luck upon the school? In the past St. Clive's could show much sensational history, but always in the way of remarkable



THE SPORTS OF ST. CLIVE'S!

(Continued from
previous page.)

He knew who the stranger was now—remembered where he had met him. He was the convict whom he had met under such dramatic circumstances in the school grounds some time ago; but now the man wore respectable clothes, his hair was growing, there was a slight moustache on his upper lip. Soon he would be sufficiently respectable to go abroad in the light of day. And Dr. Brooks was protecting him.

Raynham's brain whirled. Since the Head placed such implicit trust in him, it would seem as if it could not have been he who'd set the boathouse on fire. But who, then, had done the foul deed? Perhaps Blake would be able to tell them when he came round. But would he ever come round?

Raynham leant against the trunk of a tree, and watched the doctor as he busied himself over the patient, or looked at the boathouse, now reduced to utter ruin.

He saw the remains of the roof fall in, and the sparks fly heavenward in a triumphant whirl. Then the light began to die away, and the darkness to supervene.

An ambulance-party came, and Blake was borne away by gentle hands, the bearers walking with broken step. The doctor paced beside them. The masters began to restore order among the boys, and to send them back to the school. They marched off in dejected groups, some of them talking in hushed whispers, most of them silent and too abashed to speak.

Lost in reverie, the school captain might have remained there after all had gone, but a hand touched his arm.

It was Dr. Brooks who addressed him. "My dear fellow, you must be tired out! You did nobly! It's no use waiting here! Go back and get to bed!"

"But—the boathouse, sir—and the boats! We have no racing eight left now! We shall have to scratch against Salthouse! It seems a shame to—"

Raynham's lips trembled, and he spoke with bitterness.

"We'll think about the boat in the morning. Don't worry! I sha'n't forget this, Raynham!"

"I want to find out who fired the boathouse, sir! The scoundrels tried to murder Blake! If Morby and Fairs did it—"

"They know nothing about it, my lad! They'd left the boathouse, and went into Banford to get something to drink. Their crime does not go beyond a neglect of duty. I have dismissed them. The police shall take the matter up to-morrow!"

Raynham looked past the Head at the sinister figure of the stranger, who stood gloomily silent a few paces away. What did he know about it? He was a convict. The man must have committed some crime to have suffered imprisonment. What of him?

Dr. Brooks seemed to answer the unspoken question by linking his arm with that of the stranger.

"We'll walk up to the house together, Gilbert," he said. "Raynham, my boy, you must go to bed."

"I'll look after him, sir," came in a cheery voice, and George Leake, placing his arm about Raynham's middle, urged him away from the tree.

So they left the scene of the disaster, their way back being dully illuminated by the dying light of the fading fire.

Jack saw the doctor and his companion turn away from the big School House, and blundered on with Leake. They entered the School House together, and Leake led Jack up to his rooms.

"Get to bed, old man," he said persuasively. "I know this has hit you hard. But don't worry, old fellow. Are you feeling all right?"

"All right, thank you, George!"

"Good-night, then!" And Leake grasped Raynham by the hand.

The firm pressure of his fingers soothed the captain's shattered nerves, and he braced himself up.

"What a blackguardly shame it is!" he said. "And did you see poor Blake's face, George?"

"Yes, I saw it. And I heard what

Dr. Green said just before they put him on the stretcher. He thinks Blake will pull through, but he says he would have died had he stayed in that boathouse another minute. If he lives, he'll owe his life to you, Jack."

"I'm glad of that. I'm glad I went in. Good-night, George!"

Raynham entered his room, and Leake drew the door to gently.

Feeling dazed and tired, and suffering from a splitting headache, caused by the foul smoke he'd breathed inside the burning boathouse, the captain of St. Clive's drew his things off, and pulled on his pyjamas. Yet, tired as he was, he felt that he could not go to bed just yet. He dropped into a chair by the window, and stared out into the darkness. A dull red glow showed above the tree. Slowly it died away, until trees and black sky merged in one sweeping whole.

So the fire was out, and the boathouse had been burned to the ground.

Jack's head nodded, and his eyes closed sleepily.

Opening them again, he looked across at the doctor's house. With a start he saw that the strange light was showing again upon the roof.

What sinister meaning did that light possess?

He watched it, fascinated, wondering.

Then of a sudden it went out. For a long time he waited, expecting it to reappear; but it did not come again, and at last the tired and jaded boy crept into bed, rolled himself in the clothes, and dropped off to sleep.

And he slept like a dead man until the clamour of the school bell awakened him again. Then he got up, bathed, dressed himself, and went downstairs to learn that all that had happened the night before was not as he had half hoped it would prove—nothing but a dream.

How a New Racing Eight Came to St. Clive's.

All day long the police were coming or going from Dr. Brooks' house. The boys, as they laboured in the class-rooms, could hear the rattle and whirl of the vehicle that bore the salvage corps to the scene of the fire by way of the main road, and the side lane that led down to the river.

Suppressed whispers could be heard on every hand, and the masters found that the boys showed very little application during the morning school hours. Afterwards a rush was made to the river, and excited groups of boys gathered to talk over the catastrophe, and wonder who had done the foul deed.

The race with Salthouse was off, of course. What a rotten shame! How Salthouse would crow! They'd licked St. Clive's to a frazzle the year before, when influenza had weakened the St. Clive's boat; and now St. Clive's would have to scratch.

But with it all the boys were able to speak with pride of Raynham. What a stunning chap he was! How they worshipped him!

Young Stunt, who used to fag for Parker, having ventured a suggestion "that any other chap would have done all that Raynham had done, and a jolly sight more," was promptly ducked, and ran blubbing back to school.

Raynham came down to the river with Leake, Hume, and Cawood, and the boys ran cheering round him.

He silenced them with a look, and, holding up his hand, said:

"None of that, you duffers! There's nothing to yell about! You'd all better go back to the school."

He walked round the ruins with Leake and the others, and they stood talking for a while.

Young Cayley, who had Syd Gray and Frank Sharp with him, watched the prefects breathlessly. They were paying a deal of attention to the door of the boathouse, which curiously enough had not been burned with the rest of the wooden building. It had scarcely been damaged at all—by the fire, that is to say.

But where the lock had been were gaping cracks. The wood was splintered. The lock had been broken away.

"Cawood," said Raynham, pointing, "look at that! The boathouse was broken into! I expect we shall hear, if Blake is ever able to speak again, that he was inside when that happened. I expect he offered resistance, and was beaten down."

They remained for some time examining the door, and then walked slowly back to the school, with the juniors dogging their footsteps at a safe distance, and other boys peeping at them in awe from behind the trees and shrubs.

"Look!" said Peter Cayley. "Raynham's going to Dr. Brooks'!"

It was true. Raynham, leaving his chums, walked over to the doctor's house, and vanished within its splendid doorway.

He went straight to the doctor's study.

The Head received him with smiling face and outstretched hand.

"Ah, Raynham, I'm truly pleased to see you!" he cried. "I have much to say. Blake is out of danger, you'll be glad to hear. The injuries to his head are not as bad as the doctor had supposed. He recovered consciousness an hour ago, but was not permitted to speak. The doctor gave him a sleeping-draught, which will keep him quiet for some hours. But he will not die."

Raynham's face cleared, and his eyes gleamed brightly. There was a flicker of a smile on his lips as he answered.

"I'm glad to hear that, sir!" His voice had its old cheerfulness. "Have you been down to see the ruins?"

"Yes."

"Did you examine the door, sir?"

"Yes. It had been smashed in. The police have the matter in hand, and I have offered a £100 reward for the arrest and conviction of the villains who set the place on fire. There is no clue so far. But the police have hopes."

Raynham sidged, frowning again.

"What's the matter, my boy?"

"I was thinking of that stranger, sir, who followed me to the boathouse."

The Head gave back look for look.

"What about him?"

"Might he not have done it?"

"Raynham," and the Head's voice was stern, "he is an old friend of mine! I would trust him with my life. Let that suffice. And now about the boathouse."

It was with evident relief that Dr. Brooks changed the subject. "I have arranged for the place to be rebuilt on a handsome scale. Out of evil cometh good. The work will be started immediately. The salvage-men have completed their examination. You will have a new and up-to-date boathouse before next season—one that will not burn very readily. And now, what about this race with Salthouse? We must postpone it, I suppose. I've wired Bains"—Bains was the Head of the rival school—

"this morning. We've got to get a boat for you chaps, and you must get used to it. It would be adding injury upon injury if you were to lose the race now because your crew were not used to your new boat, Raynham."

Raynham laughed breezily at that.

"Oh, we sha'n't mind getting beaten," he answered. "And we'll make no excuses if Salthouse get home first. If we can get a boat in time I don't see why we should postpone the race at all. I'm sure none of the fellows would object. I certainly shouldn't."

Just then the telephone-bell rang loudly.

"Excuse me a moment, Raynham," said the Head, seizing the instrument and removing the receiver, which he placed at his ear. "This may be Bains. Hallo! Hallo! Who's there? Dr. Brooks speaking. Yes. I'm St. Clive's. Ah—h'm—yes—yes—"

The disjointed and one-sided conversation which followed interested Raynham, because he was able to follow the gist of it. It was Salthouse speaking, and they appeared to be offering St. Clive's a racing-boat.

Dr. Brooks presently turned to the captain of St. Clive's.

"Raynham, my boy," he said, "Dr. Bains tells me that he can lend you a racing eight, if you care to accept it. He's willing to send it off by road this afternoon, and it will arrive here by evening, oars and all, ready to take the river!"

"Then we'll accept the loan of it with pleasure, sir."

"Ah, but wait a moment! He says it's a centre-seated boat, and none of you are used to that. It would be a terrible handicap."

"Haven't they got a boat in the old style, sir?"

"Apparently not. They always used the centre-seated type. I have asked Bains."

"I don't think we would be able to get a racing eight sent here from London or Cambridge, sir, under a few days at the earliest, and I'd rather use a centre-seated boat from Salthouse than a duffing craft from anywhere else. We would, at least, have the assurance that it is a tip-top craft. They wouldn't be bad sportsmen enough to send us a dud."

"Dud is slang, Raynham! I do not encourage slang at St. Clive's." And the doctor's eyes twinkled merrily.

"What shall I say? Will you have the boat Bains offers sent on?"

"Yes, sir. Ask him to send it."

"And the race? Shall I say we would like Salthouse to postpone it for a week?"

"No, sir."

"Eh? What's that?"

"We stick to the original date, sir. We'll be able to get a bit of practice before the race. We must trust to luck for the rest."

"You mean that?"

"Most emphatically! I want to get the race over."

"Oh, very well! St. Clive's will be beaten. But I sha'n't mind as long as we put up a decent show. And at the worse Salthouse won't have so very much to crow about."

Dr. Brooks applied himself to the telephone again, the interrupted conversation was completed, and a few minutes later Raynham was hurrying to the schoolhouse to tell Cawood and the rest of the crew that they would have to race in a centre-seated boat.

Raynham sent fags round to summon the crew to his rooms, and there he told them the fate that was in store for them. They received the news with cries of dismay.

"It's jolly good of Salthouse to send us a boat," observed Leake. "But it will be precious little use to us, I reckon, after all the practice we have put in in our own boats. It would take a long time for us to get the best out of her. Still, we mustn't grumble, I suppose, and we'll have to accept a licking with a good heart."

"Who says we're going to be licked?" demanded Mollison of the Fifth, the stocky little fellow who rowed bow.

"What else can we expect, you duffer?" fumed David Hume.

"Nothing, I suppose, but I hate to hear you fellows talk about it."

"At any rate," said Raynham, "smile, you fellows, smile! If we are to be beaten we'll face the music like men!"

They dispersed somewhat gloomily, but when they faced the rest of the fellows they were smiling.

The news ran through the school like magic. Salthouse were sending a boat for St. Clive's to row in. It was due to arrive that evening. What a sell for the scoundrels who set fire to the boathouse, in the hope of stopping the race, no doubt!

Good old Raynham wasn't even going to alter the date, which he could have done had he liked, of course, for Salthouse would never have raised an objection under the circumstances! How was that for high?

If Raynham had been popular before, he was idolised now. What a captain he was. You couldn't daunt him, no matter what you did.

And after the race he was going to fight one of the bullies of the town. If they had dared, the boys, especially the juniors, would have stormed Raynham's study, have taken him out by main force, and have carried him shoulder-high round the grounds.

"The worst of it is, though," observed Jerry Hill dejectedly, "the beggar don't like a fellow to make a fuss of him."

Late that afternoon the playing-fields were deserted, and the boys gathered in a crowd near the school gates, to watch for the arrival of the boat from Salthouse.

Scouts peered over the boundary walls or ran out into the road to look.

At last, a shout and a whoop in the distance told the waiting boys that the boat was coming.

Breathlessly they watched the gates, and presently through them paced a big and powerful horse, drawing a lorry behind it, on which the racing-boat could be seen. It had been carefully packed and strapped in place, and was protected with ropes and sheets.

The stately horse, ambling forward, drew the boat past the rows of cheering boys, and in this manner the boat which Raynham and his crew were to use in their latest effort to lower the colours of Salthouse, arrived at St. Clive's.

The grinning driver gave the horse the whip, and it quickened its pace as it approached the schoolhouse.

Beside the vehicle, in front of it, behind it, ran a crowd of cheering boys, waving their caps frantically.

"Hurrah!" yelled Jerry Hill. "Hurrah! Bravo, Salthouse! Good old Raynham! Three cheers for St. Clive's! I say, you chaps, we'll lick 'em yet!"

(Another grand instalment of this splendid serial in next Monday's BOYS' FRIEND. To avoid disappointment, order in advance.)

achievements in school, or on the playing-fields, or river. Nothing untoward like this had ever occurred before.

He held his hand to his head, and pulled himself together.

"Where is Blake?" he asked. "I'd like to go to him!"

"At any rate, if he recovers, he'll have you to thank for saving him, Jack," said David Hume. "By gad, how you must have run to have got down here so far ahead of us! You must have smashed all records. I wonder you had the strength left to go in and fish Blake out. When we arrived, it was impossible to enter, and we all thought you were lost until you came staggering out with Blake over your shoulder. That strange man said he tried to prevent your going in—"

"He did!" said Raynham curtly. "I'd like to have a look at him, too! I wonder was it he who set the boathouse on fire?"

Raynham pressed forward, waving the big-eyed schoolboys, who barred the way, back. On the grass, in a place of safety, with the trees growing round, he saw Blake lying, with the stranger bending over him. Two of the masters were in attendance. There was no sign of Dr. Green yet.

Raynham quickened his pace, and bent over Blake.

He saw the stranger binding the poor fellow's head up with some bandages, which had been provided somehow. There was blood upon them. Blake's face was as white as paper, and his eyes were closed. Dark circles showed around them. His lips were slightly parted, and he was moaning feebly.

"Stand back, my boy!" said the stranger curtly. "You can do no good here! He's in safe hands until the doctor comes!"

"I want to look at him," answered Raynham, and the other raised his eyes with a flash.

Again that quaint feeling that he had met the man before, came over the school captain, and his face grew stern.

"Oh, it's you, my boy!" said the stranger gently. "I thought it was one of the others. I've done the best I could for the poor fellow. But you must be pretty used up. I never saw anyone run as you ran from the school, and what you did afterwards was marvellous!"

"You followed me!" cried Raynham, watching the deft play of the stranger's fingers.

"Yes, I was at your heels all the way, but I could hardly hold you!"

Raynham arched his brows in surprise. He was able to calculate now that he had probably put up the fastest time he'd ever made over the distance that separated the boathouse from the school, and this man, who must be twice his age, had kept pace with him. It seemed odd.

"Where do you live? Who are you? What were you doing lurking about the grounds?" demanded Raynham hotly. There was a menacing hiss in his voice, and the other smiled slyly.

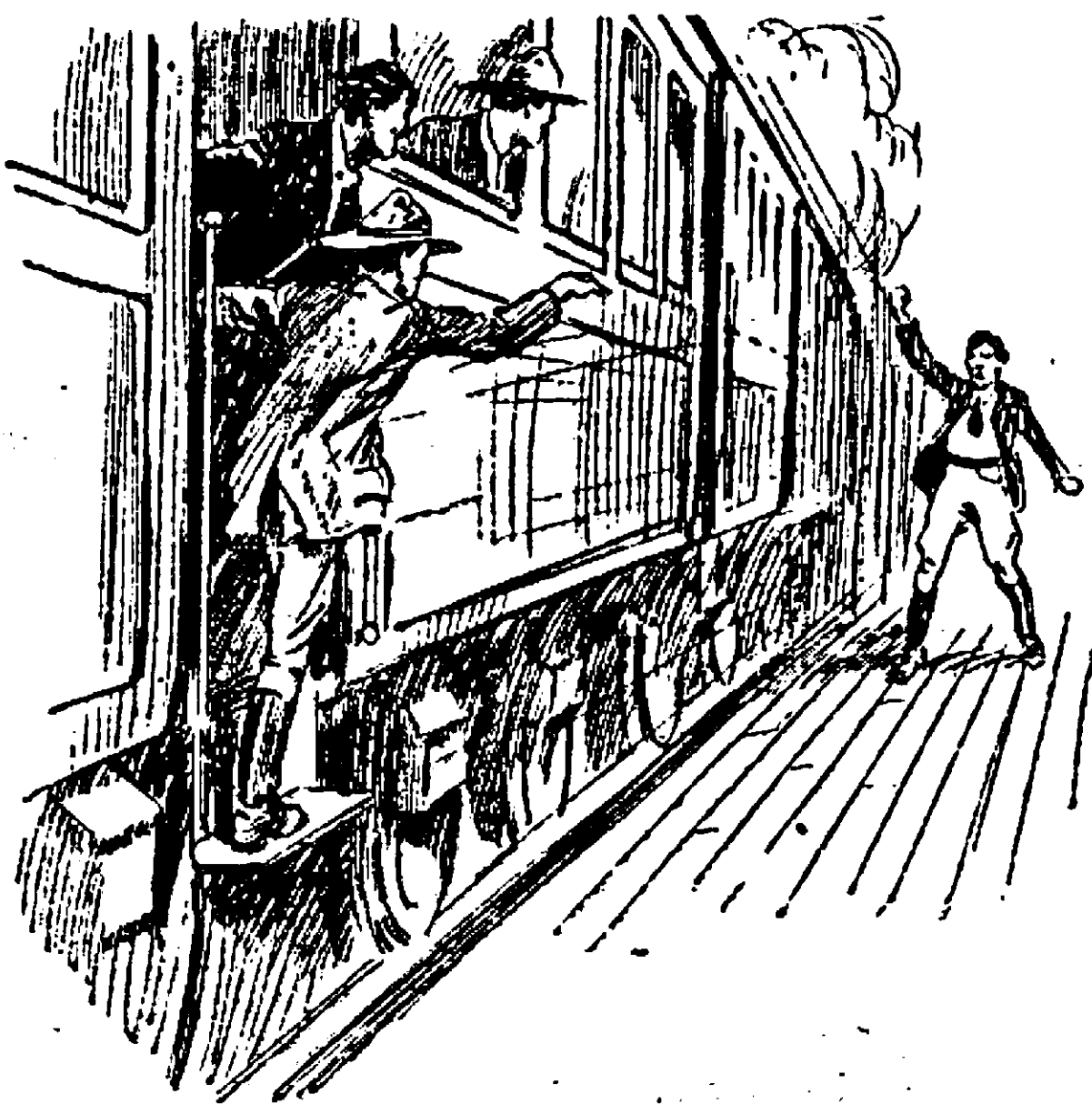
"Oh, I was taking a walk!" he replied. "I often do! I saw the glare of the fire, and wondered whether I could be of any use. Then I heard you running—"

"But you'd no right to be here! You sha'n't leave the school grounds until we learn something more satisfactory about you!" said Raynham, and the stranger was quick to note and appreciate the threat behind the words.

At that moment, Dr. Brooks came on. He'd heard what Raynham said. "Raynham, my dear fellow," he said, "I don't think you need press the matter further. This gentleman is a friend of mine. I can answer for him! Ah, here's Dr. Green!"

The Head turned to meet the doctor, who came up bearing a case beneath his right arm, and a bag in his left hand.

Raynham fell back with a start.



AWAY WESTWARD!

A Splendid, Complete Holiday
Story of the Chums of the
School in the Backwoods.

BY ...
MARTIN CLIFFORD.

The 1st Chapter.

The Guileless Stranger.

"Hold on, sonnies!"
Frank Richards & Co. drew rein as a horseman rode out of the trees ahead in the trail, and called to them. The chums of Cedar Creek School were riding southward from the Thompson Valley, en route for the railroad at Kamloops. Cedar Creek had broken up for the holidays, and Frank Richards, Bob Lawless, and Vere Beauclere were starting for their holiday on the Pacific coast. There was a long journey before them, and they were starting on it in the cheeriest of spirits. Their bags were strapped on behind their saddles. The bags were to be taken on the railway, and the horses sent back from Kamloops in charge of a ranchman returning from the town. For some hours they had seen nobody as they trotted along the lonely trail, till the stranger rode out from the trees and hailed them.

"Hallo!" sang out Bob Lawless cheerily. "Anything wanted?"
"I guess so!"

The horseman eyed the schoolboys rather curiously. He was a big man, with a long, greyish beard and moustaches, and a pair of large spectacles perched on a hooked nose. He looked a good deal like a schoolmaster. The chums of Cedar Creek returned his scrutiny with interest.

"You boys know this trail, I suppose?" he asked.
"Correct!"

"Then perhaps you can tell me if I'm right for Kamloops?"
The three schoolboys smiled.

The spectacled stranger had his back to Kamloops, which was many a long mile distant. But Bob Lawless nodded gravely.

"You'll get there if you ride right on, in time," he answered.

"Is it far?"
"About twenty-five thousand miles the way you're going."

"Eh!"
"You'll have to keep right on past the North Pole," explained Bob Lawless, with great seriousness. "After that, you come down through Russia, I guess, and keep on to India—"

"What?"
"Then there's an ocean to swim and—"

"I guess you're being funny," said the bearded gentleman good-humouredly. "Do you mean that I'm riding away from the town?"

"Exactly!" said Bob, laughing.

"I guess I'm a stranger hereabouts. If you'll be good enough to point out the trail—"

"We're going to Kamloops," said Frank Richards.

"Oh, good! Then I guess if you don't object to my company, I'll ride along with you," said the stranger, and he wheeled his horse in the trail.

"I reckon you're welcome," said Bob Lawless. "But we don't get there to-day. We're camping out to-night on the plain."

"Oh, Jerusalem!" said the stranger.

Frank Richards & Co. rode on, the grey-bearded man riding with them. As they rode, he talked volubly, chiefly about himself. He explained that he had been wandering for most of the day on the plains, without meeting a soul. His name was Ebenezer Johnson, and he had been a master in a lumber school at Potter's Creek. Now he was going to Vancouver for the holidays. There was a simplicity about Mr. Johnson that rather interested the chums of Cedar Creek, and they good-naturedly made up their minds to see that he did not lose his way again that side of Kamloops.

The sun was sinking towards the far Pacific, and Bob Lawless was looking out for a favourable spot for camping.

He drew rein at last by the bank of a rippling creek, under a clump of trees.

"I guess this will fill the bill," he remarked.

Mr. Johnson glanced round him. "Stopping here for the night?" he asked.

"That's it."

"I guess I'm keeping on, if you'll point out the way," remarked Mr. Johnson. "I'm not used to camping out."

Bob Lawless smiled.

"I can point out the way right enough, but I guess you'll be puzzled to follow it," he said. "The trail's hardly marked in some places, and there's no signposts in this section, you know. You'd better camp with

"And your parents trust you all that way by yourselves?"

"Ha, ha! Yes, rather! We can look after ourselves, you know!"

"I should think so," said Frank, with a smile.

The chums of Cedar Creek soon showed Mr. Johnson that they knew how to look after themselves. They dismounted, and staked out the horses, and in a few minutes they had gathered dry brushwood, and lighted a camp-fire. The day had been hot, but the night was setting in with a cold wind from the hills.

Bob Lawless unpacked sandwiches, corn-cakes, and a cold fowl, while Frank Richards made coffee over the fire. The schoolboys' guest rested on a grassy knoll and watched them.

"Supper's ready, Mr. Johnson!" said Vere Beauclere at last.

And the quartette sat down round the fire to supper.

He could hear the steady breathing of his chums close at hand. Bob Lawless and Beauclere were still sleeping peacefully.

There was a sound of a trailing rope in the grass, and a stir from the horses. It ceased again.

"Only the horses moving!" Frank Richards reflected; and he settled down to sleep again, satisfied that it was some sound from the animals that had awakened him.

But he did not sleep again at once. Several times again there came a sound of stirring among the staked horses, and he thought drowsily that the animals were very restless. The sounds ceased at last, however.

But Frank wondered, drowsily, what was the cause of their restlessness, and the thought came into his head that a lynx might be lurking among the branches. At that thought, he started up from his blanket, and threw an armful of brushwood on the dying fire.

The camp-fire crackled and blazed up merrily.

Bob Lawless's eyes opened.

"Hallo! What's that?" he murmured, drowsily.

"Mending the fire, old scout!" answered Frank. "The horses don't seem to be quite easy."

"Oh, all right!"

"My hat!" ejaculated Frank, suddenly.

He was glancing round for the horses, and, to his amazement, they were not in sight.

Four steeds had been staked out with the trail-ropes when the campers turned in. Now, there was not a horse to be seen; and the ends of the ropes lay loose round the pegs—cut!

Frank Richards gave a shout.

"Bob—wake up!"

"What's the row?"

"The horses—they're gone!"

"What?"

Bob Lawless sprang to his feet. Frank's shout had awakened Vere Beauclere also, and the remittance-man's son was on his feet in a twinkling.



OUTWITTING THE HORSE-THIEF! A sudden sharp whistle left Vere Beauclere's lips: it was a signal to his horse; a signal that Demon knew well, and never failed to answer. The black horse swung round, and "Mr. Johnson" pitched forward on his saddle-bow, the revolver sinking to his side. Before he could recover himself, the three schoolboys rushed in with their cudgels.

us for the night, and strike Kamloops to-morrow. It's a good step yet."

Mr. Johnson looked dubious.

"I've never camped out before," he said.

"It's easy enough," said Bob, laughing. "Don't you worry, sir. We'll see you through."

"Your horse couldn't keep on to Kamloops without a rest," remarked Vere Beauclere.

Mr. Johnson nodded.

"I'm afraid that's so," he agreed. "But I hate to be a trouble to you young fellows—"

"Not at all!"

"Not a bit of it!"

"It's rather a change for us to be looking after a schoolmaster, seeing that we're schoolboys ourselves," grinned Bob Lawless.

Mr. Johnson laughed.

"Well, you're very kind, and if you'll let me trouble you, I'll join your camp," he said. "But if you are schoolboys, surely you are a long way from home by yourselves!"

"We're off for the holidays," explained Bob. "We're taking the railway to New Westminster, and then we're going up the coast to Pacific Point."

They chatted cheerily over the meal, Mr. Johnson displaying a keen interest in the plans the chums had laid for their holiday by the shore of the sunny Pacific.

The moon rode in a sky of dark velvet, and sailed over the trees. Bob Lawless rose from his log at last.

"I guess it's time we turned in," he remarked.

And, with their feet to the fire, the campers rolled themselves in their blankets, and settled down to sleep.

The 2nd Chapter.

A Thief in the Night.

Frank Richards awoke suddenly.

He had been dreaming of Cedar Creek School, when he came abruptly out of the arms of Morpheus.

His eyes opened, and he blinked round him in the gloom.

For a moment he expected to find himself in the familiar room at the Lawless Ranch. But the cold wind on his face, as he raised his head from the blanket, recalled his thoughts.

There was deep silence in the camp by the creek, and Frank wondered what had awakened him.

Overhead, the moon was glimmering through a network of foliage. The fire had died down very low.

They stared round blankly for the horses.

"Where's Mr. Johnson?" exclaimed Beauclere, suddenly.

Frank Richards had forgotten that gentleman for the moment.

He fairly blinked at the place by the fire where the campers' guest had been lying.

It was empty!

Mr. Johnson was gone!

Bob Lawless's teeth came together hard.

"Lit out!" he said. "Lit out—and taken our horses! Oh, thunder! Kick me, you galoots—kick me hard!"

"But—but what—" stammered Frank. "Perhaps he's gone after the horses—"

"Can't you see the ropes are cut? He's stolen the horses and lit out with them!" howled Bob.

"But—but a schoolmaster—"

"Schoolmaster be blowed! He's a horse thief, and he's taken us in!" yelled Bob Lawless. "And we've let him do it! He's a schoolmaster about as much as his name's Johnson, I guess—and he was no more going to Kamloops than he was going to China! He was after our outfit—and, by Jerusalem!—he's got it!"

"My hat!"
The chums of Cedar Creek looked at one another with feelings too deep for words.

They understood now. That guileless stranger, whom they had so kindly taken under their protection, was a horse-thief; and in the three unsuspecting schoolboys he had seen three innocent victims.

Bob Lawless clenched his hands.

"Fooled—by a sneaking horse-thief!" he muttered. "Oh, gum! What a start for our holiday! And I told popper that we could look after ourselves—and this is how we've begun!"

"The awful rascal!" muttered Beauclere.

"My hat! We shall have to get back to the ranch!" groaned Frank. "He's got our whole outfit!"

Bob's eyes gleamed.

"I guess we're not going back!" he said. "Why, we should be laughed to death at the ranch! I guess I can't face them and tell them we've started our holiday by being cleaned out by a horse-thief the first night!"

"But—"

"Nuff said! We've got to get after that skunk, and get our outfit back!"

Frank Richards looked round him helplessly. There was no sound from the trees save the cough of the wind in the branches. But Bob Lawless did not lose another moment.

The rancher's son dropped on his knees, in the depression of the grass where Mr. Johnson had lain down. He groped there with his hand, his chums watching him in silence.

"Good!" he exclaimed, as he sprang up. "He's not been gone long!"

"How do you know?"

"Because the place is still warm."

"Oh, good!" said Frank.

"I guess it's lucky you woke up, Franky, or the galoot would have got clear off, for sure," said Bob.

"He's not far away, I reckon, and we're going after him. If I had my gun—"

He gritted his teeth. "I reckon he will be heeled; but we've got to tackle him, and get our truck back, all the same. There's no time to lose. Get something in your fists and follow."

It was the work of a minute to cut cudgels in the thicket. Then Bob Lawless ran out of the trees, and surveyed the plain across which the trail ran southward.

On the open plain the moonlight shone almost as clear as day, and there was no moving figure to be seen.

"I guess he went through the wood," said Bob. "He's not followed the trail in the open. Of course, he wasn't going to Kamloops at all—and he wouldn't care to show up there with stolen horses, anyway. I shall pick up his trail in the timber easily enough!"

Bob was as good as his word.

The rancher's son was skilled in woodcraft, and to his keen eyes it was an easy matter to pick up the traces of the passage of a bunch of four horses through the thicket.

Bob led the way through the trees without a pause, his comrades keeping pace behind him.

The horse-thief had headed west through the timber, and the trees were too thick for rapid riding.

"Mr. Johnson" had undoubtedly expected not to be missed till the campers awoke at dawn, and by that time he would have been a dozen miles away, and far beyond the reach of pursuit.

As it happened, however, the chums of Cedar Creek were not far behind him.

In the dim moonlight that filtered through the branches above, Bob picked out the truck without a moment's hesitation; and Frank and Beauclere followed his lead unquestioningly. They proceeded at a run.

Bob halted suddenly, and held up his hand.

"Listen!" he whispered.

The three chums strained their ears.

"I guess we're close to the galoot!" said Bob Lawless grimly. "Come on!"

There was no need of picking up the trail now; the sound was guide enough, and the three schoolboys ran hard—stumbling over roots and logs occasionally, and picking themselves up and dashing on again.

The sounds of the horses came more clearly to them every minute. It seemed as if "Mr. Johnson" was having some trouble with his outfit.

Vere Beauclere's big black horse, Demon, was the most valuable prize of the three, but Demon was very likely to give trouble in a stranger's hands. In an open glade, where the moonlight fell clearly, the panting schoolboys caught sight of the horse-thief at last. He was riding his own steed, with the three trail-ropes in his hand, leading the stolen horses; and Demon was rearing and "cavorting" savagely. Again and again the



AWAY WESTWARD!

(Continued from the previous page.)

rushed forward as if moved by the same spring.

Crash!
Beauclerc was the first, and his heavy cudgel crashed on the horse-thief with a thud.

There was a fiendish yell from Ebenezer Johnson.

He reeled in the saddle, and, as he reeled, Frank Richards and Bob struck at him hard.

Demon was still straining at the trail-ropes, and the pull on it unseated the rascal as he reeled under the blows.

There was a crash as he landed in the grass.

The revolver exploded harmlessly as it flew from his hand.

"Our turn now!" panted Bob Lawless.

The horse-thief cast off the trail-ropes as he scrambled to his feet, his face black with fury.

But three smiting cudgels met him as he scrambled up, and he rolled in the grass again, groaning.

Bob Lawless crashed his cudgel upon the revolver. The horse-thief lay groaning, and the schoolboys gathered round him, with weapons ready if he tried to rise again.

"Will you have some more, you pesky thief?" asked Bob.

Groan!
"I guess we win this deal," remarked Bob. "And as the pesky galoot roped in our horses, we'll take away his! He can hoof it from here to where he hangs out when he's at home!"

"Good!" grinned Frank Richards. Mr. Johnson sat up dazedly, clasping his head in both hands.

He blinked dizzily at the chums of Cedar Creek, but was evidently not inclined to try any further conclusions with them.

He did not attempt to resist as Bob searched him for weapons, and took away a concealed knife, which he broke off short at the handle under his boot.

The chums secured their horses and mounted them, Bob taking the horse-thief's own steed by the reins.

Then the rascal staggered up, panting:

"Give me my horse!"

"I guess Shanks' pony is good enough for you!" said Bob Lawless coolly. "You were going to leave us on foot. I reckon we're not going to steal your horse, you jay; but we're going to let it loose on the trail, and you can hunt for it to-morrow, if you choose! Savvy?"

The horse-thief muttered a string of curses as the chums of Cedar Creek rode away, leading the captured steed.

But he did not attempt to follow. Without his weapons, he had no chance against the three sturdy schoolboys, and there was no help for him.

His savage oaths died away in the timber as the chums rode away and returned to their camp.

The recaptured horses were staked out again, and Bob Lawless led Mr. Johnson's steed out on the open trail. There a flick of the whip sent it galloping away to the south.

horse-thief struck the big black horse with his whip, but at each savage blow Demon became more fiercely restive.

The whole "outfit" had come to a halt in the glade, when the pursuers sighted it. Demon was rearing and pawing, and he made a sudden snatch at Mr. Johnson's whip-hand with his teeth. The horse-thief backed away with a curse, and drew a revolver from his hip.

The bearded face was aflame with rage.

Vere Beauclerc gave a cry. The intention of the ruffian was evident—to shoot the obstinate animal and clear off with the other two.

Beauclerc ran desperately forward. At the sound of the voice the horse-thief started, and turned in his saddle towards the schoolboys.

For a moment the rascal stared at them blankly. The sudden appearance of Frank Richards & Co. was evidently the last thing he had expected.

But he recovered himself quickly. The revolver, which had been about to threaten the black horse, turned upon the schoolboys as they ran up.

"Halt!"

"You rotten thief!" panted Frank Richards.

"Halt, or I'll drop you in your tracks!"

The horse-thief's eyes gleamed over the levelled revolver, and Frank Richards & Co. came to a sudden stop.

The 3rd Chapter.

Rough on Mr. Johnson!

"Stop where you are!"

The three schoolboys, panting for breath, stood with clenched hands, their eyes gleaming at the horse-thief.

With the revolver in his right hand, and the trail-ropes of the three stolen horses bunched in his left, the rascal looked at them, with a savage grin.

"I never reckoned I'd see you fresh young galoots again!" he said. "And now I guess I've seen enough of you! Turn right about, and make tracks, or down you go!"

"Oh, you rotter!" panted Frank. Bob Lawless breathed hard.

But it was impossible to rush on the levelled revolver, and the rancher's son held himself in check.

The horse-thief was master of the situation, but it was only for a moment.

A sudden sharp whistle left Vere Beauclerc's lips.

It was a signal to his horse—a signal that Demon knew well, and never failed to answer.

The black horse swung round and dragged at the trail-ropes held by the thief, nearly dragging him from the saddle with the sudden jerk.

Mr. Johnson pitched forward on his saddle-bow, the revolver sinking to his side, and, before he could recover himself, the three schoolboys

Bob grinned as he returned to the camp.

"I guess friend Ebenezer will have a long tramp before he ropes in that bit of horseflesh again!" he remarked.

"We'll keep a watch here till morning," said Beauclerc.

"You bet!"

And the three chums watched in turn, till dawn came flushing up above the distant summits of the Rocky Mountains.

But they were not disturbed. Evidently Mr. Ebenezer Johnson knew when he had had enough, and he did not approach the camp again.

Frank Richards & Co. rebuilt the camp-fire in the dawn, and breakfasted in cheery spirits.

They were elated by their victory over the horse-thief, though, as Bob remarked, it was as much due to Demon as to themselves.

They started cheerily on the trail after breakfast, keeping their eyes open at first for Mr. Johnson.

But nothing was seen of that gentleman, and they soon forgot his existence. They did not expect to set eyes on him again, though, as a matter of fact, if they had only known it, they were not by any means finished with him yet.

It was late in the afternoon that day when they rode into Kamloops.

There, at the railway hotel, they met Billy Cook, the foreman of the Lawless Ranch, who was in the railroad town on business for Mr. Lawless.

Billy Cook took charge of the horses, to take them back with him to the ranch, and that evening the chums spent looking round the town.

They were to start for the West on the morrow, and they returned to their hotel early to sleep.

As they drew near the building Bob Lawless stopped, with a sudden exclamation.

"By gum, there he is!"

"Who? My hat," shouted Frank, "the horse-thief!"

A dusty and tired-looking pilgrim was tramping up the streets, and, as the light from the railway hotel fell upon him, the chums of Cedar Creek recognised Ebenezer Johnson.

Apparently he had just arrived in Kamloops on foot.

He caught sight of them at the same moment and stopped. The next moment he darted away down a side-turning and vanished.

Bob Lawless made a movement in pursuit, and then stopped.

"After all, we've done with him, I guess," he said. "Let the scallywag go!"

"It seems that he was coming to Kamloops, after all," remarked Frank Richards, as they entered the hotel.

Vere Beauclerc looked thoughtful. "Unless he has followed us here," he said. "We gave him a rather rough handling, you know, and he looked malicious enough."

Bob Lawless laughed. "I reckon he can't hurt us if he is following us," he said. "If we come on him at close quarters, we'll handle him again!"

And the chums dismissed Mr. Ebenezer Johnson from their minds and went to bed.

The 4th Chapter.

On the Train!

"Here's the train!"

The big train was booming into the station from the east, and Frank Richards watched it with curious eyes.

From the far east of Canada the train had come, by the great Lakes, and over the Rocky Mountains by the Kicking Horse Pass.

Frank Richards remembered the train from the east which had landed him at Kamloops long before, when he first came to British Columbia to live at his uncle's ranch.

Now he was to take the train again on its westward journey, and, for the first time, to finish the crossing of the Continent.

As he looked at the shining metals, stretching away into the infinity of distance, Frank Richards could not help thinking of his old home.

But his old home, in the old country, existed no longer. His father was in India; his little sister, Hilda, at a boarding-school. Bob Lawless' clap on his shoulder interrupted his reflections.

"Time to get aboard, Franky."

"Right-ho!" answered Frank cheerily.

The three chums boarded the big train, with their bags.

Bob Lawless had been to the Pacific Coast before; but it was an exciting experience enough to his English cousin, and to Vere Beauclerc, and they looked about them with glistening eyes as the huge train boomed out of the station.

A young man came sauntering down the central aisle of the train, and paused near the three schoolboys.

"Bob Lawless, I guess?" he remarked.

Bob looked round quickly. "Hallo! You seem to know my name," he remarked.

"I dare say you'll remember mine," he said. "You've heard your father speak of Captain Carker, I dare say."

"I don't recall the name."

Captain Carker dropped into an unoccupied seat, with a smiling face. The chums of Cedar Creek looked at him. They were wary enough not to make friends with strangers, but it was evident that Captain Carker knew Bob Lawless, whether Bob knew him or not.

The captain was a young man, certainly not over thirty, with a clean-shaven face, save for a small, dark moustache, and very sharp eyes. He had a very pleasant and agreeable smile, and wore his Stetson hat a little on the back of his head. He was dressed like a prosperous rancher of the West.

He took out a cigarette-case, and extended it to the schoolboys.

"Smoke?" he asked.

"Thank you, no!" answered Bob, rather drily.

"You don't mind if I do?"

"Not at all."

Captain Carker lighted his cigarette.

"I guess you're trying to place me," he said, with a smile. "But I reckon it's years since you saw me, I came up to the ranch in the Thompson valley, buying cattle. How's your father?"

"Quite well, thanks!" answered Bob.

"Still keeping the ranch?"

"Oh, yes!"

"And you're still going to Cedar Creek School?"

"Correct!" answered Bob.

"Holidays now, I suppose?"

"That's so."

The chums were quite cordial to Captain Carker now. His references to Cedar Creek School bore out his statement that he knew Mr. Lawless.

"Going on to Vancouver?" he asked.

"No; New Westminster. We're going up the coast for a holiday at Pacific Point," explained Bob.

The young man nodded.

"Then I guess you'll see me again," he remarked. "I'm staying at Pacific Point for the summer holidays. I'm going there now. My fruit farm is only a couple of hours' ride from the place. I guess I'll show you over it any day you care to ride out."

"We'll be glad to see it," said Bob.

Captain Carker chatted for a few minutes, and finished his cigarette, and then rose, nodded to the schoolboys, and strolled along the train.

"Rather an agreeable chap, that fellow," Frank Richards remarked, as the captain disappeared.

"I guess so; though I don't ever remember seeing him at the ranch," said Bob.

"He knows all about you, though."

"Yes, that so. I'm rather glad he's going to be at Pacific Point while we're there. What do you think, Cherub?"

Vere Beauclerc did not reply immediately.

His brows were knitted a little in a thoughtful frown. Frank Richards and Bob regarded him curiously.

"Don't you like the chap, Beau?" asked Frank.

"No."

"Why not?" asked Bob, in surprise. "He seems a jolly decent sort of chap, and he knows my father."

"You don't know him?" asked Beauclerc.

"Not from Adam! But he knows me."

"You don't remember seeing him before?"

"No."

"Nor you, Frank?"

"Not that I know of," said Frank Richards, puzzled. "What the dickens are you driving at, Beau?"

"I may be mistaken," said Beauclerc slowly, in a low voice, "but I think you've seen him before, and lately."

"When?"

"Last night, in the street at Kamloops, and the night before, in the timber on the trail."

"Wha-a-at?"

"And then he wore a grey beard and spectacles, and looked like a schoolmaster," said Beauclerc quietly.

The 5th Chapter.

Left Behind.

Frank Richards and Bob Lawless stared blankly at their chum.

Beauclerc had taken their breath away.

Not for a moment had they dreamed of any connection between the agreeable-looking young man and the horse-thief they had encountered on their way south from the Thompson valley.

"Beau!" ejaculated Frank at last.

"Cherub!" gasped Bob Lawless. "You're dreaming!"

But Vere Beauclerc's face was very grave.

"It may be a mistake," he said. "But his voice seemed familiar to me, though he's changed his tone; and as he sat there I was studying his features. Think of him with a grey beard and spectacles, and then picture him like that in your minds."

"By gum!" murmured Bob.

"He uses that rig as a disguise, of course," said Beauclerc. "It's safe. He looks like a respectable man; and, after committing a theft, he can alter his appearance and be safe. I believe he hasn't forgiven us for the way we dealt with him in the timber, and he has followed us for revenge. With all his smiling, he was as watchful as a cat; I noticed that."

"But—but he knows my father—"

"He knows what we told him while he was with us, when he called himself Ebenezer Johnson," answered Beauclerc.

"Oh!"

"Pulling our leg," said Frank Richards. "Of course—that accounts. We told Mr. Johnson all about Cedar Creek and the rest. But this chap isn't anything like that greybearded rascal—"

"Because he isn't in disguise now," answered Beauclerc. "I may be mistaken, of course; but I feel that I'm right. And if he's the man I think, I believe he will try to get us off the train somehow. He knows we have money with us, and he is revengeful for the way we handled him. If he tries to get us off the train—"

"We'll see," said Bob.

Beauclerc's words gave the chums plenty of food for thought.

It was not very pleasant to reflect that they were being "stalked" by a revengeful horse-thief.

During the morning they saw no more of Captain Carker; but when they went along to the luncheon-car they met him again, as agreeable and smiling as before.

The captain sat at their table for lunch, chatting agreeably; but the chums, watchful now, noted that several times he rubbed his head, as if he had some injury there. They remembered the cudgel blows they had given Mr. Ebenezer Johnson in the timber.

"I guess I'm going to stretch my legs at the next stop," Captain Carker remarked, after lunch. "Friend of mine lives at Logwood Camp, and he will lend me a horse."

"Is it a long stop, then?" asked Bob.

"Just over an hour. If you youngsters would care to ride round, I can find you some horses, and you can get back in plenty of time for the train," said the captain. "I dare say you're getting a bit tired of sitting in the train by this time."

"That's true enough," assented Bob.

"Then I'll fix it up with my friend at Logwood, to give you a ride. I'll look for you at the stop."

"Thank you, sir!"

"Not at all. Only too glad to be able to show Mr. Lawless' son a little attention," answered the captain.

The schoolboys returned to their seats after lunch, leaving the captain smoking in the car.

Bob Lawless left his chums, and went along to speak to the conductor, whom he found outside on the train platform.

"When's the next stop, conductor?" Bob Lawless inquired.

"Half an hour or so, at Logwood," was the reply.

"How long do we stop there?"

"Five minutes for the mails."

"Is that all?"

"Yep."

"No time to get off and look at the place?"

The conductor grinned.

"I guess you can hop off if you like," he answered. "But if you do, you'll have to hop on again pretty slick if you don't want to be left behind."

"What sort of a place is it?"

"Just a water camp."

"Oh!" said Bob.

He rejoined his chums, with a very thoughtful brow. Frank and Beauclerc listened quietly, while he explained what the conductor had told him.

"I guess the Cherub is right," said Bob. "The pesky captain says we stop there for an hour, and can ride round the town, and he knows jolly well it's only a few minutes' stop for

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the mail to be chucked into the train. If he got us off the cars, we shouldn't get on again."

"Just as Beau said!" muttered Frank Richards, with a deep breath. "And I dare say he's got friends there," said Bob grimly. "These water camps are pretty tough places, some of them. I rather reckon that as soon as the train was out of the station, we should find ourselves knocked on the head and cleaned out by the captain and his friends, and stranded. That's his little game."

Frank Richards' eyes gleamed. "It's plain enough!" he said. "Well, when he comes along, let's tell him plainly that we know him, and know his game, and—"

"And pitch into him," said Beauclere. "Not so jolly fast!" said Bob Lawless, with a grin. "Play up, and let him think he's pulling the wool over our eyes. Play the innocent—same as he did when he first landed on us. We'll get off the train with him—"

"What?"

"And get on again at the last tick, and take jolly good care that he doesn't!"

"Oh!"

Frank and Beauclere stared at Bob for a moment, and then burst into a laugh.

The chums of Cedar Creek were smiling when Captain Carker came strolling along a little later.

"Close on the stop now," the captain remarked. "Better get off the minute the cars stop, and make the most of the time."

"That's a good idea," assented Bob.

"Hallo! There go the brakes already!"

There was a jarring of the train. The long line of cars drew to a standstill by a rough wooden platform, with two or three log shanties beyond it. It was not a station—only a stop for water and mails; but Frank Richards & Co. followed the captain's lead with great docility, much to that gentleman's satisfaction.

The captain jumped down lightly to the rough wooden planks alongside, and the three schoolboys followed him.

"This way!" said Captain Carker.

He started across the planks, and the chums followed. They moved out behind a wooden shanty; and then, before the captain even knew what was happening, the three chums seized him.

Bump!

Captain Carker smote the ground with a mighty smite.

The next moment the three schoolboys were racing back to the train.

"Hurry up there!" roared the conductor wrathfully. "What the thunder did you get down for, you pesky young idiots? Do you want to be left behind?"

The train was beginning to move as Frank Richards & Co. scrambled aboard.

They laughed breathlessly.

"Pesky young jays!" growled the conductor, as he went on his way.

The schoolboys did not heed him.

They were watching the planks as the train moved on, waiting to see the captain.

A hatless, breathless man came tearing round the shanty, and raced along after the train.

It was Captain Carker.

Bob Lawless waved a hand to him. He was hopelessly left behind, and he realised it, for he halted, gasping, on the planks.

"Good-bye, captain!" yelled Bob.

"Good-bye, Mr. Johnson!" shouted Frank Richards.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Captain Carker, alias Ebenezer Johnson, stared at them, with fury in his face. He shook his fist savagely at the three grinning chums.

"You've done me this time!" he shouted. "But wait—wait a bit, and—"

The rest of his sentence was drowned in the distance and the roar of the train. And the last the chums of Cedar Creek saw of him was a crimson, furious face and a brandished fist. Whereat they chuckled as the cars swept away westward.

THE END.

NEXT MONDAY!

Another grand story of the Chums of Cedar Creek on holiday, entitled—

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"I wish I had a rich uncle."

"I have one."

"How delightful!"

"And he has thirteen children!"

First Male Thing: "I threw a kiss to a girl the other day."

Second Male Thing: "What did she say, then?"

First Male Thing: "She told me that I was the laziest man she ever saw!"

"Case of kidnapping up at our house this morning."

"That so? Call the police?"

"No! Called the kid; he'd overslept."

Mr. Wittles: "They make shoes out of every kind of skin these days."

Mr. Tibbles: "What about banana-skis?"

Mr. Wittles: "Oh, they make first-rate slippers!"

First Knut: "Isn't it really wonderful that we can get pearls out of oyster-shells?"

Second Knut: "Oh, I don't know. Some girls can get diamonds out of mugs!"

Mrs. Moonguy: "John, the baby has swallowed a penny! What on earth shall I do?"

Mr. Moonguy: "Oh, let him have it. It's his birthday next week!"

"That is a fool of a dog you've got!"

"Why, it has as much sense as I have!"

"That's what I said!"

Lady: "What caused you to be a tramp, my good man?"

Tramp: "The family physician, ma'am. He advised me to take long walks after meals, and I've been walking after them ever since!"

Horse Owner: "That's the worst piece of horseflesh I've seen for many a month. Come, won't you fatten him up?"

Trainer: "Shure, it's all he can do to carry the flesh he has on him now!"

First Man: "That chap doesn't look much like an editor, does he?"

Second Man: "No; he looks more like a pugilist."

First Man: "That's just it. He's done a bit of 'ead 'ittin' in his time!"

Teacher: "The bullet is driven out of the gun by the force of the gas produced by the explosion of the powder, and—"

Bright Pupil: "Excuse me, sir, but I always thought a bullet was lead, not driven!"

Employer: "Why were you discharged from your last place?"

Applicant: "For good behaviour."

Employer: "What do you mean by that?"

Applicant: "They took three months off my sentence!"

Squire: "Go upstairs, John, and you will see in the right-hand drawer of my desk—"

Butler: "Cigars, sir."

Squire: "How did you find them?"

Butler: "Very good, sir!"

Mr. Blotz (the ledger-clerk): "Er—if you don't mind, sir, I'd like to go to my mother-in-law's funeral on Wednesday."

The Boss: "I dare say! There are lots of chaps who'd like to go to their mother-in-law's funeral to-day!"

Kindly Old Gent: "Well, my little man, what would you like to be when you're grown up?"

Little Man: "I'd just like to be an old gent like you, with nothing to do but walk round an' ask questions."

Nell: "I hear their engagement was broken off through a misunderstanding."

Belle: "Yes. He understood she had money, and she understood he had."

A WALK IN THE COUNTRY.

By CLIVE FENN.

The late summer and early autumn are perhaps the most interesting times in the country. A fine September is a grand season for butterflies. The observant fellow who takes a real interest in the subject will soon get to know the likely spots where he can see the Vanessa butterflies—the Peacock, the Tortoise Shells (large and small), the Painted Lady, the Red Admiral, and the others of the variety. The caterpillars of several of these species affect the common stinging-nettle, the Vanessa Atalanta being one of them.

The young naturalist will find plenty to keep him busy as he passes down any side-lane or takes a foot-path across the fields or alongside a wood. The homely little Meadow Brown is as common as any butterfly, and perhaps as pleasing as any, though he is not a brilliant fellow like the Purple Emperor. The latter is very scarce these days; but some years since I saw it flitting high about the tops of some poplars in a Sussex lane. The Purple Emperor is one of the grandest types of butterflies, with its iridescent blue and purple sheen, and in size he comes almost at the head of the list. If you want to be polite to him call him the Apatura Iris.

Well worth watching are the movements of caterpillars these busy autumn days. You see brown, woolly specimens marching swiftly across a road seeking suitable spots for the transformation into the chrysalis. I own to being sorry when I hear of the wholesale destruction of butterflies, but in cases this is inevitable, for take the cabbage butterfly for example. He is responsible for the green and black caterpillars which munch up the cabbages, and leave only skeleton leaves for the grower to mourn over.

These few lines are not written for the fellow who is apt to get impatient if a companion wants to stop during a tramp and investigate things. But there are those who like to see what Nature is doing, and to such a stroll through an unfrequented part of the country is crammed full of interest. If you happen to meet him, just have a look at the stag beetle, with his businesslike jaws, or see if you cannot find specimens of the Cur-rant, the Tiger, or the Old Lady moth. The Green Oak moth, too, is worth inspection. It is a bright apple-green, and its devastations would be tremendous were it not for its arch-enemy, the Empis Tessellata, a little gnat-like fly. The Rev. J. G. Wood describes how, when entomologising, he came upon the Empis. "A curious kind of insect," he says, "caught my attention. It was partly green and partly glittering like a fly. A sweep of the net captured four or five, and then was disclosed the secret. The compound creature was, in fact, a living Empis, clasping in its arms the body of an Oak moth which it had killed, and into whose body its long beak was driven. Never did miser tighter grasp a golden coin than the Empis fasten its hold on its green prey." It is all up with the moth once, the Empis catches him. The demon is more to be feared than a hornet or a stag beetle.

Of course, there is a lot of scorn for the bug-hunter among some folks who do not care to give the time to study Nature, but the world of Nature is well worth studying. It is just as well to know the names of trees and their habits, for trees have customs. The bright-coated beetle who scampers out of view when you pass is a most interesting chap, and you will find all about him in a book at the library. Just watch the looper caterpillar, which probably you have seen, and note his curious methods. In a bit of open country you may chance upon the vivid Orange Tip (Euchloe Cardamines), to give him his Latin name, and I think you will agree that for real beauty he tops the list.

As a rule, there is no time for studies of this kind; but when a spare moment comes along, either by the sea or in the country, there is a lot of profit and pleasure in looking into the mysteries which have been there all the time. The war made no difference, for instance, to the starfish, which went on munching up bivalves just the same. A most interesting and hungry affair is the starfish. The starfish has a little stomach, and a very small mouth; but, none the less, it is a regular champion at an oyster feast.

But to get back to the country lane.

There is always plenty to see there. The life that goes on is amazing. I dare say you have noticed how the foolhardy ant builds his cities, frequently by the side of a track. The ant may be wise, but he is one of the rashest organisms you can ever meet in a day's march. He reminds one of some of the southerners who have homes on the sides of volcanoes. The volcano blows up, and upsets things generally, pouring out molten lava—this is about the unpleasantest thing to meet!—but after a bit, when matters have cooled down, the dwellers on the slopes of the eruptive mountain go back and begin to build and garden again, ready for the next explosion!

So with our somewhat fussy friend the ant. He makes a town close to where people walk—amidst old twigs and rubbish and earth. Some inquisitive passer-by stirs up the whole concern with his stick, and the ants have to begin all over again. It is rather as if a giant about two miles tall stirred up London with the ferrule of his umbrella. You see the ants picking up their property and carrying off their livestock and bustling away into cover. In about five minutes the whole place is deserted. The ants have removed their eggs and other portable articles, and tramped off out of danger. But you just pass that way a few days later. The ants will be back again!

If you get far enough away from the towns you stand a chance of meet-

ing with fine specimens of the Privet Hawk moth in the course of your rambles. He is a magnificent fellow, perhaps the handsomest found in this country. The caterpillar, too, from which he develops is extremely good to look at. The moth world is not much known to the majority of us, I suppose. There are comparatively few people who can name the different varieties. It was my good fortune once to find the Twenty Plume moth, a little sober-hued affair; but the beauty of his wings could not be surpassed by any of his bigger fellows.

It is not wasted time to look out for some of these marvels of Nature as you trudge down some country by-way on a pleasant autumn evening when the bracken is yellowing and the bramble has turned purple, for winter is coming. The robin knows this as well as anybody, and he has a special winter-is-coming song, though for the most part the other birds have ceased vocalism, and are holding in their voices till the next spring.

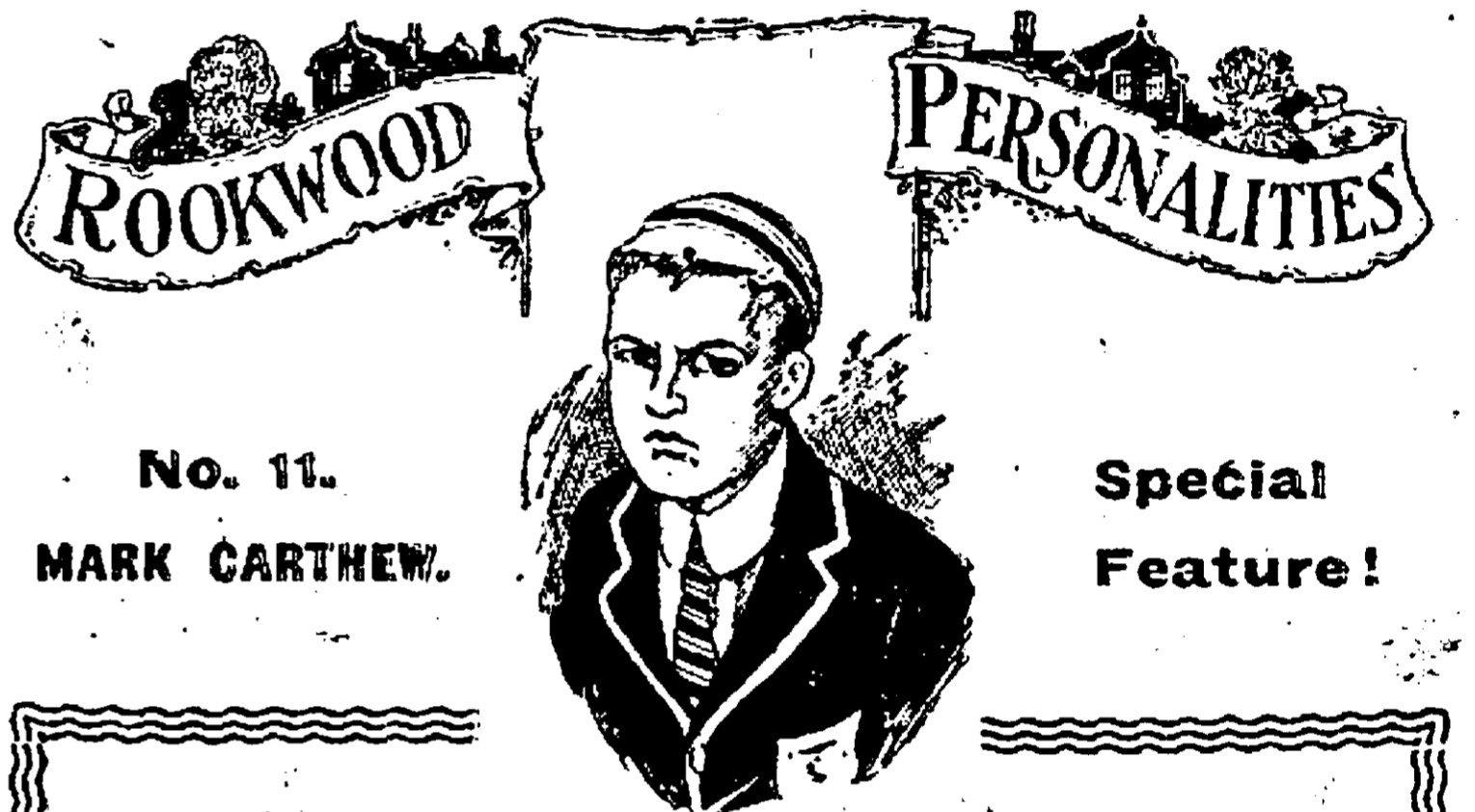
Mr. Hadsome: "Hallo, Harry, boy! Thinking of the future?"

Mr. Newlywed: "No. To-morrow's the wife's birthday, and I'm thinking of the present."

Bobby: "Mamma, the barometer has fallen!"

Ma: "Has it, dear? How much?"

Bobby: "About five feet. It's broken, too!"



No. 11.

MARK CARTHEN.

Special

Feature!

If Rookwood offered to reward
The biggest waster in it,
Carthew would surely sweep the board,
And very promptly win it!
A bully and a lanky lout,
He merits our displeasure,
We like to see him put to rout,
And punished in full measure!

When Rookwood's prefects went on strike
He failed to join the movement,
Said there was nothing to dislike,
And no need for improvement.
The captaincy he hoped to win—
A post which really mattered:
But Tubby Muffin then barged in,
And Carthew's dream was shattered!

Whilst Tubby reigned in solemn state,
The treacherous Sixth-Former
Encountered quite a sorry fate—
It could not well be warmer!
For he was forcibly held down
While Tubby Muffin licked him:
Nor could the juniors' laughter drown
The yelling of the victim!

However, Tubby was deposed,
And Carthew reigned thereafter:
But very soon his innings closed
Amid a storm of laughter.
When school and captain came to grips,
The blackleg soon surrendered:
And, conscious of his many slips,
His resignation tendered.

A tyrant of the first degree,
The decent sort detest him:
And misadventures, as you'll see,
Will constantly molest him.
By means of dynamite, he'd pass
To some exalted station:
But he will never rise, alas!
In Rookwood's estimation

—THE ROOKWOOD RHYMESTER.



SKULL ISLAND!

An Amazing New Adventure Story, introducing the Chums of the School-ship "Bombay Castle."

By DUNCAN STORM.

NEW READERS COMMENCE HERE!

The famous school-ship, the Bombay Castle, is on her way to the South Seas on an educational voyage, with a mixed crowd of schoolboys drawn from many of the most famous schools in England. Our old friends, Dick Dorrington, Chip, Skeleton, Porkis, Chu, and Pongo Walker, with their famous pet animals, are of the number. Captain Handyman is in command of the liner, Dr. Crabhunter is the Head of the floating school, and "Scorch" Wilkinson is responsible for the boys' discipline.

At the last moment Dick, Chip, Porkis, and Pongo manage to smuggle on-board a quaint old riverside character, calling himself Captain Bones. Captain Bones is a little blind man of great age who sailed the South Seas in the bad old days, and is more than suspected of being a retired pirate himself.

In Captain Handyman's younger days he and MacStaggers, the chief engineer, had been very badly treated by the Sultan of Bashee, and it is with the intention of paying off an old score that the Bombay Castle arrives at Bashee. Ikey Cohen, the shrewd Jewish junior, induces Prince Chulungtoon to change places with him for one night, and Ikey, with the help of Maintop, the Kroo boy, captures the Sultan in his own palace, and brings him aboard the Bombay Castle in a sack. Ikey tells Captain Handyman that a plot is in progress to raid the ship at midnight, and silently but swiftly the school ship is made ready for the attack.

The captured Sultan of Bashee is being entertained by the Lower School to a feast of cake and liquorice water, when the ship's carpenter enters the cabin and closes the deadlights.

(Read on from here.)

The Sultan Runs Amok!

Chips proceeded to screw a circular steel plate over each porthole.

"What are you shipping the deadlights for when we are lying at anchor, Chipsey?" demanded Pigo.

Chips had been warned that he must not say anything that might scare the smaller boys. So he did not breathe a word about the expected attack.

"Why, young gentleman," said he, as he clamped the deadlights home. "It's to keep out the fog and th' fever. In these tropical parts there's a lot o' queer things knocks about in the fog."

This false alarm over, the youngsters came crawling out from under the beds, and the feast was resumed.

The cake was nearly demolished, and the eyes of the boys were turning on the fruit, when there was a sudden crash, and a bump alongside. Then followed the sounds of heavy thumps on deck, and roar of steam, and hideous yells.

The last slab of cake, halfway to Pigo's mouth, was held in mid-air.

"Crikey!" exclaimed Pigo.

"What's that?" There was another heavy crash against the side of the ship, followed by the thump of grappling irons, thrown to catch the rail of the main deck.

Some of the fags turned pale as they heard the hideous yells and the crack of rifles outside.

Then Ikey let his secret go—the secret with which he had been bursting all through the feast.

"It's pirates, you chaps!" said he. "Those chaps ashore planned a surprise attack on us at midnight!"

The sultan had half started up from the bed at the sound of the attack.

"Let's go up on deck and see what's going on!" cried Pigo.

But Ikey shook his head.

"It's no good, Pigo!" said he. "No Lower School boys are allowed on deck. The steel collision doors in the passages outside are closed now, and we are battened down. There is a guard on each door."

Ikey swelled his chest.

"We've got the pirate chief here!" said he proudly. "And we have got to guard him. He will try to escape whilst this is on! Slip a boot in your pillows, you chaps, and get across the doors. I don't trust him."

Boots were hastily snatched up. One kid grabbed a hockey club, another a bat, and they gathered round the doors of the dormitory. There were two of these opening into the alleyway outside.

Ikey's precautions were not in vain.

The Sultan of Bashee was a more slippery customer than even Captain Handyman had allowed for. He knew that if he could only gain the deck and make a flying leap into one of his junks which were now pounding alongside, he could make good his escape.

And Captain Handyman, in giving him a nice easy pair of handcuffs, had not reckoned on the tiny flexible hand which the sultan had inherited with his Malay blood.

Under the cover of his sleeves, the sultan had slipped the handcuffs as easily as any handcuff king who ever performed on the music-hall stage.

And from the slack of his baggy pants he had reached for an ugly stabbing kris which he always kept hidden away as a last means of self-defence against his friends ashore.

With a yell to the Prince Chulungtoon to follow him, the sultan made a sudden, tiger-like spring from the bed.

"Look out!" yelled Corkey. "He's got a knife!"

The sultan had indeed got a knife, and meant to use it, too!

It was a nasty poisoned blade, as dangerous as the tooth of a cobra, for a single scratch from it meant death.

But the kids stood steady as he leaped for them. A Malay running amok in a small cabin is no joke. And it was the smallness of the cabin that saved them.

For, before the maddened sultan could stab or throw that terrible blade, he was slammed in the face with a weighted pillow.

Another pillow was hurled on the point of the knife. A hockey club descended with a crash on the royal wrist, and the knife clattered to the floor, whilst the infuriated pirate chief was borne to the floor under a scrambling, squirming mass of Lower School boys.

"On the ball, school!" yelled one.

"Sit on his head!" shouted another.

In vain the sultan, maddened by opium, bhong, and the sounds of fighting on deck, strove to rise and hurl off this mass of kids.

The little prince made no attempt to assist his illustrious relative. He sat on the floor in the corner of the dormitory watching the scene with solemn eyes. It was evidently quite a novelty to him to see the tyrant of Bashee sprawling and yelling under a pile of shouting kids. The Lower School were thoroughly enjoying themselves now. They were getting their share of the fight against the pirates.

The sultan fought like a tiger, but they were too many for him. With the cords of tuck-boxes, they hastily bound him. When he tried to scratch, they dragged wicket-keeping gloves over his hands and lashed these on. When he tried to bite them, they rammed a rubber sponge in his mouth. Then, running a cricket stump under his knees, they trussed him for cock-fighting, and heaved him up on the bed, where they stood guard over him with bats and hockey sticks whilst, alongside and overhead, the fight against the pirates raged with increasing fury.

The Attack!

It was as well, perhaps, that the younger and more nervous of the Lower School kids did not see the fight that took place as soon as the first great mandarin junk of the sultan's navy came booming up out of the fog, and, drifting down on the rapid tide, crashed into the side of the Bombay Castle, hurling her grappling irons over the rail, and making fast with a skill that was born of long practice.

Her decks were swarming with yellow-faced scoundrels, about as rough a mob as could be found in all the seven seas. For, to make up his war complement, Bong Toon had swept out the jail of Bashee and had called in all the chain gangs of convicts who were working about the port and the town.

It might have been claimed that every member of the crew of that first junk that engaged with the Bombay Castle was a murderer.

They had thought to make a complete surprise of the ship, and, for a few moments, as they made fast alongside, they were not undecieved.

Not a sound came from the great steamship. It was plain that everyone on board was asleep.

This was the sort of job that the pirate gangs of the Sultan of Bashee loved. To rush a sleeping ship and to catch every member of the crew asleep was their speciality.

Silently, padded hooked ladders were slipped up and caught on the rail. There were twelve ladders, all of light bamboo, and up these the pirates came swarming like cats.

Their first inkling that things were not going according to plan was when the first member of the boarding-party suddenly thrust his head into a

loop of barbed wire which caught him under the chin.

Then the rush on the ladder shoved him off, and he was left hanging in the barbed-wire tangle that hung round the rails.

There was a dismal yell, which was followed by screams and shouts, as half a dozen heads were thrust into this unexpected obstacle.

Another junk came crashing alongside on the tide, clumsily swinging to her helm.

There was no more thought of surprise now.

A stinkpot of earthenware, full of combustibles, was hurled from the masthead of the leading junk on to the boat-deck with the intention of setting the ship alight.

But it did not break.

It fell near Dick Dorrington, who had been warned of these missiles.

He picked it up and hurled it over the rail, and it fell with a crash and a burst of flame into the yelling, struggling mob that surged on the crowded deck of the great mandarin junk alongside.

The Upper School boys had been posted on the boat-deck, and were ordered in the lifeboats that were standing in their chocks there as the safest place in the ship. They were armed with rifles, old firebars, sacks of coal, bottles of petrol fitted with fuses, and with flares and fires of all kinds, which they were directed to drop down on to the attacking craft alongside.

Chu, who was crouching in the lifeboat, opened a box of coloured flares fitted with fuses, and, lighting these one after another, hurled them down on to the deck of the junk, lighting her up as bright as day with red, green, and white fires.

In the fighting-top of the junk, which swung close by the boat, was a yellow-faced pirate, who was busy lighting the fuses of stinkpots and pitching these on the hurricane-deck below, with the intention of setting the ship afire.

And, as the pirates crowded to the side of the craft, the junk heeled under their weight, bringing this ruffian nearer and nearer to the gunwale of the lifeboat in which the boys were sheltering.

A daring plan was forming in Dick Dorrington's brain as he saw that busy pigtailed head swing closer and closer to the top deck of the Bombay Castle as the mast of the junk heeled over.

"See if you can pull that chap out of the top without his pals seeing!" he shouted in Arty Dove's ear.

Arty nodded. He understood.

Closer and closer swung the Chink in the little basket-like fighting-top. He was too busy taking the fire-bombs out of the basket as they were hoisted up to him, lighting their fuses, and dropping them on board the Bombay Castle, to have spotted the boys in the lifeboat at the davits.

Arty reached out as the mast swung to them, and, grabbing the astonished thrower of stinkpots by the scruff of his neck and the stump of his pigtail, jerked him into the boat, and laid him quiet with a thump on the point of the jaw that would have put an ox to sleep.

At the same moment, Dick leaped for the fighting-top of the junk, followed by Chip.

"A rope—quick!" gasped Chip through the smother of smoke and fog that wrapped the fight, as it were, in a blanket.

A coil of stout rope was thrown to him, and Chip made it fast about the topmast of the great junk.

Then he and Dick, squatting down in the fighting-top of the junk, waited for the next basket of stinkpots to be hoisted up to them from the junk's deck.

Up it came, and the two, picking up the tinder which the bomb-thrower had dropped, lighted up pot after pot, and dropped these, not on the decks of the Bombay Castle, but on the deck of the junk below.

The Bombay Castle had taken no hurt from these missiles, for her decks were streaming with water, pumped over them at pressure to prevent her from being fired.

This, however, was not the case with the junk. The pots which Dick and Chip hurled from her masthead on to her stern quickly caught the woodwork of her clumsy stern.

The obliging Chinese at the foot of the mast on which they were perched was so jammed in by the crowd of his yelling mates, that he did not see the pots were falling, not on the Bombay Castle, but on the junk itself.

So he obligingly hoisted up basket after basket, and Dick and Chip, hanging in the junk's fighting-top, lit the fuses of these, and hurled them into the smother below.

And soon a great red flare told them that their work had succeeded. The

junk was well alight, and her crew, instead of trying to rush the decks of the Bombay Castle, were beginning to drop overboard like rats, and were swimming to the shore.

Warded Off!

Chip and Dick swarmed back on the Bombay Castle from the mast of the mandarin junk, which was now well alight with her own stink-pots.

These ancient Chinese missiles were not very dangerous on the decks of the Bombay Castle. The utmost they could do, when they burst and sent their flaring contents right and left, was to scorch the decks. But precautions were taken against this by the hoses, which kept the decks well flooded with a constant stream of water.

It was different, however, with the old mandarin junk on which the boys had dropped these primitive bombs. She was as dry as tinder through lying in the sun in that blistering little harbour ashore. Furthermore, it was the habit of the Admiralty of Bashee to paint their navy in bright colours with a sort of highly resinous lacquer.

They liked plenty of this paint, and they liked bright colours, and they laid these on thick, regardless of the inflammability of the material. So the result was that the junk caught like a torch.

Her crew leaped overside, yelling and squealing like a lot of rats, and the flaring vessel lay against the side of the Bombay Castle, a real danger, for she was likely to be full of gunpowder stowed in the haphazard style of Bashee.

As it was, she was blistering the paint of the Bombay Castle in fine style, and flaring against her ports in a manner that suggested the possibility that she would make even this steel vessel red-hot.

"Quick!" gasped Dick. "Down to the deck below!"

He leaped out of the lifeboat in which they were taking shelter. There were plenty of soaked blankets about, placed in readiness to smother any stink-pots or other flares which might be thrown on board, and Chu and Chip were quick to follow his example.

Snatching up sharp fire hatchets, they dropped down the ladders on to the deck below, for it was on the rail of this deck that the junk had got her grappels fast. And these still held, though the roaring sheets of flame were playing round them.

Shots whistled along the decks from other craft that were swarming round the ship as the yellow scoundrels on board, seeing their leading junk thus turned into a fire-ship, strove to prevent them cutting her away.

But the craft fore and aft of her sheered off their own grappels swiftly, sure sign that they knew that she had a lot of powder aboard.

Smack! Smack!

The ugly leaden bullets from all sorts of queer old firearms slapped and flattened on the steel walls of the deckhouses. But the plucky boys, followed by their clumps, dodged along the decks, avoiding the bullets and flames by falling on their hands and knees.

Wrapped in the wet blankets, they avoided the fierce flare of the burning junk as far as possible. But the flames swept over them and, but for the soaked blankets they had wrapped about their heads and shoulders, they must have been badly burned as they hacked and slashed away at the grapple-ropes.

They were no easy cutting, for the ropes were cored with metal wire, and it was touch and go as to whether the boys could succeed in cutting through these cores before the flames drove them back.

But one by one they parted, and it was left to Arty Dove to tackle the last and the thickest rope.

He had to stand up to this job, so that he could swing his axe, and shot after shot whistled about his ears; but Arty hung doggedly to his task, putting forth all his enormous strength.

Ping! There was a drone like the parting of a piano string, and the flaring junk, caught by the strong tide that was running down the lagoon, began rapidly to drift astern.

A yell of warning went up from the other craft which had attacked the ship further along her side as this great lumbering craft bore down on them. The pirates had succeeded in slashing and tearing through the wire-entanglements, and were just gaining the deck.

But here they met with the steam hoses under full pressure. Some were knocked head over heels by the enormous pressure of water. Others leaped back to avoid a roaring blast of steam, for Mr. MacStaggers' boilers were working well below.

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The School Friend

1/2 ID. Every
Thursday

SKULL ISLAND!

(Continued from the previous page.)

But it was the burning junk that did the trick.

Crash!
She landed into the first craft astern with all her weight, smashing the ropes of its grapnels like pack-threads. The two craft became entangled and locked together, and, with their combined weight, made short work of tearing away a third junk which had caught like a leech to the side of the bravo old Bombay Castle.

Huge yells broke out from these craft as they found themselves caught in the grip of their own fire-ship, and as a fourth and last junk joined in the giddy dance, away the four went whirling astern, leaving that side of the Bombay Castle clear of attackers. But the result of the boys' work was not yet complete. There was a crash and a yell astern as the mass of craft smashed into the two junks which were coming up astern to complete the attack.

These had lost the Bombay Castle in the mist. But they found their own mandarin junk full tilt.

And not one of the four hundred pirates who were stowed away on these entangled craft stayed to see what Chip called the fireworks.

The boys ran astern to get a view of what was happening. But they could see little or nothing but a bright red blur in the mist.

Then followed a huge flash in the fog, and a deafening report that made every plate in the Bombay Castle shiver.

The junk had blown up.
"Look out, chaps!" cried Chip. "Take cover! Some of that stuff will be coming down directly!"

They bolted for the cover of the half-deck astern, and Chip's precaution proved a wise one, for, no sooner had they taken shelter, than a huge bank of charred and smouldering timber came down with a crash on deck, scattering sparks in all directions. And this was the last of the great mandarin junk, the proud flagship of the Navy of Bashee.

In the meantime, on the other side of the ship, where the attack had been weaker and the barbed wire stronger, the pirate crews of the smaller junks were getting a busy time of it.

Many of these were open boats, and their experience of big steamships was small. Otherwise, a large prahu containing fifty men would not have clinched with the Bombay Castle right under the circulation exhaust.

The result was that this huge rush of water filled up the prahu in two minutes, and she hung at her grapnel-ropes, submerged.

And what the attackers on the other side of the ship had got in fire, these smaller craft got in water.

As, with fierce yells, the yellow-faced gang fixed their light-hooked bamboo scaling-ladders in the rails and swung themselves up on deck, they were met with the full force of the ship's hydrants in their faces.

A few managed to gain the deck, but these met a worse fate than that of having their faces washed, for behind the men with the hoses were the pick of the stokehold gang of the Bombay Castle, all heavy-weight and middle-weight champions of their parishes.

The Chinese and Malays, armed with knives, were no match for these champions armed with fists. They did not get a look in against the sledgehammer blows which were dealt them, but were sent spinning about the decks like nippins.

And the hoses had their effect on the prahus, which were mostly open craft. A large hose with a powerful delivery, with pumps working at full speed behind it, will speedily fill up even a large prahu, and when the water is mixed with boiling steam and a rain of heavy iron firebars, things begin to get a trifle hot even for a half-maddened pirate full up with opium and bhong.

So the pirates on the wet side of the ship soon had enough of it. They were washed or they tumbled back into their boats, they were hurled overboard with blackened eyes and tapped noses. They dropped over the side into the water, regardless of barbed wire, to get away from these terrible men who hit with their hands like sledgehammers, and who smashed and bashed, regardless of knives and krisses.

They cut away their grapnels, and allowed their boats to drift away astern in a roaring, tangled mess, and, as they drifted, they started with Malay hotbloodedness to fight amongst themselves.

There was quite a pretty naval

battle going on in the fog as they dropped away on the strong current, hitting, stabbing, and clubbing one another in the dark.

Then Captain Handyman came down from the bridge where he had been directing operations.

"Who were the fellows who tackled that big mandarin junk?" he demanded.

Chip looked modest.
"I think it was Dick Dorrington, sir," said he.

But Dick Dorrington promptly disclaimed the credit.

"It was Chip, sir, and Arty, and the rest of them!" he urged.

Captain Handyman was beaming.
"Well," he exclaimed, "whoever it was, he had the makings of a naval commander in him! It was a fine action, and well carried out. Upon my word, I am beginning to grow proud of the boys of the Bombay Castle."

And he marched round his scorched decks and twisted rails, taking stock of the damage, which was really not so much after all, considering the fierce storm of fire-balls which had been hurled on the decks, and the great flare of the junk alongside.

But in the music-room he found disaster.

There was Captain Bones, lying flat on his back, waving his Obi-stick and trying hard to kick with his wooden-leg.

And on the chest of Captain Bones sat Umpty Ginsen, leading-stoker of the Bombay Castle, holding him down to keep him out of trouble.

"Let me up! Let me up, you

stick of Umpty's face. Perhaps the magic stick had no power over stokers. Perhaps Umpty had, as he said, no teeth which could be set aching by the power of the stick.

At any rate, Captain Bones was not able to exercise his hypnotic powers upon the massive stoker.

The more he wagged the grinning ivory skull in front of Umpty Ginsen, the more Umpty grinned back amiably at the skull. He was not tied up in knots of anguish and fear as Billy Goadger had been. He just smiled at the stick as though it were his oldest friend.

And Captain Bones, knowing that the skull had no more effect on the grinning Umpty than wagging a penny cane in front of his eyes, ceased to waggle, and rewarded the stalwart of the stokehold with a wondering look in his blind eyes.

His hypnotic power had taken no hold on Umpty, and his dread Obi-stick was useless. He might just as well have tried to put the Obi on the cheerful Umpty with a sugar-stick!

Captain Bones was nearly heart-broken. He had lost his chance of taking part in the prettiest fight he had seen, or, rather, heard, in his life.

He went off to his cabin, grumbling that since sails had gone off the sea, and stokers had come on it, life was no longer worth living. So he would take off his wooden-leg and go to bed.

The boys rummaged round the boat-deck with the captain, showing

which were now busy fighting one another astern.

"I wonder whether any of the fellows were killed?" said the plaintive voice of Tilly from his hiding-place.

"I shouldn't care if some of that Dorrington lot had got it in the neck!" growled Goadger.

The boys nudged one another.

"I hope that beastly Chink they are so fond of—that yellow-faced chap, Chu—has been done in by some of his own countrymen!" said Tilly.

And Chu's chums prodded him in the ribs whilst these charitable remarks were passed.

Chu nodded. He made a sign to the boys to stay still whilst he slipped down below. He slid away like a shadow in the darkness, and soon came back with his arms filled with strange Chinese garments and hats which formed part of his native wardrobe, and which were most uncommonly like the clothes worn by the natives of Bashee.

The boys caught on to the trick that Chu intended to play on the two lurking bullies. They slipped into the garments which the Chinese boy had brought up, and they grasped the boat-stretchers which he had collected from the boats, which looked in the gloom as near like Chinese swords as made no difference.

But Chu was not satisfied even with this effect. Up the ladders came trooping, soft-footed and silent, a grinning gang of stokers, who were in the secret of the trick, and they stood on the deck, silent and waiting.

"I say, Tilly!" said the voice of

And, greatly to Goadger's horror, the stoker he supposed to be desperately wounded flopped against the staves of his hiding-place.

"It was that there big chap with the two swords wot done it, 'Orace!' sobbed Coke Malone. "He's a one, 'e is! 'E'll kill the lot of 'em. You ought to 'ave seen 'im cut ole 'Arry in 'arves just now, an' split Percy 'Obbs like a sixpenny 'addick!"

Goadger was now trembling so much in the barrel that a loose stave rattled audibly as his knee pressed against it.

Coke Malone gave a hollow cough and a good death-rattle, which he had picked up at a blood-and-thunder drama.

"Kiss me, Percy!" he moaned. "I'm dyin' now. Me feet is gettin' very cold, and now it's got up ter me knees. It's your turn nex', Percy. Ho!"

Coke's voice faded away. Then he seemed to revive with a last kick.

"Most of the young gents is killed!" he announced. "Nice young gents they all was, an' very open-minded. There was only one of them that I couldn't abear, an' that was that young party Gudgeon or Goadger. 'E was a wash-out, 'e was. 'E 'adn't got any 'eart! Ho! Ma ticket is punched, Percy! I'm goin'!"

And, with a prolonged death-rattle, Coke Malone gave up the imaginary ghost, whilst Goadger and Tilly, scared out of their wits, fairly rattled in their barrels.

Then Tinker Harkness, another wag of the stokehold, took up his jape.

Tinker was a good actor. He had played leading parts in a penny gaff, and he knew what good acting was. And he wasn't going to allow himself to be beaten by Coke Malone.

Chased by Chip, who looked very fierce in his queer-shaped Chinese cap, Tinker dropped on his knees.

"Oh, spare me, sir!" he cried. "I have never done you a wrong! I have never killed a flea! I have never done anything! And I've got a poor old mother at home in England, waitin' for her sailor boy! Spare me, an' take the chap who is hidin' in this barrel!"

With a shrill Chinese yell of delight the boys dashed at the barrels in which Goadger and Tilly were hiding.

With a shove they sent these spinning out on the deck, and tipped the two lurking bullies, sending them sprawling like a cast of dice.

In an instant the riotous mob of supposed Chinese pirates were all over them, whacking at them with boat stretchers, yelling like fiends, and looking hideous in the dim light of the boat deck.

As Arty Dove afterwards remarked, they looked so much like the real thing that he was almost running away from himself.

Goadger roared with fear as he lay full length along the deck.

Captain Handyman, watching the little comedy from the shadow of a boat, doubled up with laughter.

Whack, whack, whack!

All Goadger knew about it was that he was surrounded by a mob of yelling Bashee pirates, who were trying to hack him to pieces, and who were only prevented from doing so by the fact that they were all trying to hack at once.

He staggered to his knees.

"Spare me!" he yelled.

Then a sudden inspiration seized him as he saw Tilly also get up on his knees.

"Kill him instead!" he cried, pointing to Tilly.

He felt the blows of the swords now. But they did not cut. They warned him, and they all hit in one place.

Tilly was getting it on the same place, yelling for his dear life.

Then the supposed pirates could keep it up no longer. The stokers, who were supposed to have been cut down in the struggle, and who lay stiff and stark on deck, also broke up. Their dead bodies sat up and roared with laughter, and the Chinese pirates roared till the tears ran down their faces as the two bullies, hardly yet understanding what had happened, raced along the boat deck, leaped down the ladders, and bolted to their quarters below, where they hid themselves under their beds in panic.

And the dead stokers and the Chinese pirates who had killed them rolled on the boat deck together, slapping one another on the back, chuckling, and wiping away their tears of laughter.

(Another exciting instalment of this grand adventure serial again next Monday in the BOYS' FRIEND.)



TURNING THE TABLES!

Closer and closer swung the Chink in the little fighting-top, and as he came into reach Arty grabbed him by the scruff of the neck, and laid him quiet with a thump on the jaw.

ruffian!" roared Captain Bones. "Let me get at 'em! Let me do my bit of fightin'! I'll show the yellow-faced rascals! I'll paste 'em!"

"But th' fightin's all over now, cappen!" said Umpty, grinning all over his face. "What's the good o' you fightin' if there's nothing left to fight?"

And Umpty grinned amiably at the boys.

"Law, young gents!" he exclaimed. "What a little fightin' rooster 'e is! One of us 'as 'ad to sit on 'is chest all the time to keep 'im from joinin' in th' party and gettin' knocked on 'is 'ead!"

"You scoundrels!" exclaimed Captain Bones. "You scoundrels! I'll give you a taste of my Obi-stick. I will when I get up! I'll make your teeth ache for you!"

Umpty Ginsen grinned again, showing a pair of jaws from which all teeth had long since disappeared by fighting, or by stokehold extraction, where they take out an aching tooth by the simple process of laying hold of it with a pair of tongs and holding a red-hot rake to the nose of the patient.

"You won't make any o' my teeth ache with your ole Obi-stick!" said he, winking cheerfully at the grinning skull which crowned the old gentleman's stick. "I ain't got no teeth!"

And he rose from the indignant captain's chest, whilst the boys and Captain Handyman roared with laughter as they helped the ruffled pirate to his feet.

Captain Bones flourished the Obi-

him where they had managed to lash the masthead of the mandarin junk so that Chip and Dick could bomb her with her own petards.

Suddenly, they heard a groan from a barrel that stood in a sheltered and safe corner. Then a voice spoke.

It was the voice of Bully Goadger, and it sounded very hollow and forlorn.

"Do you think it's all over, Tilly?" he asked. "Do you think those beastly pirates have gone away? And what was that beastly explosion?"

"I don't know," piped a miserable voice from another empty barrel. "I don't think they ought to bring us chaps to these beastly out-of-the-way places amongst a lot of savages! Captain Handyman ought to know better. We don't pay our school-money to run into awful dangers like these. It ought not to be done! And then to expect us to fight the brutes! I think it was rather a brainy idea of yours, Goady, to think of getting in here!"

"I thought so, too!" replied the voice of Goadger. "It was about the safest place on this deck, and if we had tried to bunk down below they would have said that we were funkng it!"

Captain Handyman put his finger to his lips as a sign for silence whilst these two cowardly bullies talked from barrel to barrel.

It was plain that they did not know that the pirates had sheered off, and that their ears were deceived by the deriding yells of the gang of stokers on deck, who were chipping an unseen mob of the pirate craft,

Goadger, from his barrel, "things seem quieter now. I believe they have beaten the brutes off! We ought to be making a show on deck. I'm going to put my head up!"

"Oh, don't do that yet, Goady!" exclaimed Tilly, his teeth chattering.

"I am sure that I heard some of the brutes jump on this deck some time before that explosion. They may be lurking about up here, hiding!"

"So they might!" said Goadger.

"And you might bring them down on us!" whispered Tilly.

At last Goadger could stand the confinement in the barrel no longer. He put up his head, and this was the signal for a furious mock-combat between the party of stokers and the party of spurious Chinese.

The stokers yelled at the top of their voices. Chu, leading the mock Chinese, set a pattern of a Chinese war-cry, which the boys imitated to perfection.

Pistol-shots cracked in the air. There were punchings and thumpings and stampings, and the clatter of steel close by the barrels in which the terrified bullies were hiding.

The stokers really played their part very well.

Coke Malone, the leading-stoker of the No. 3 Stokehold, fell with a realistic groan close against the barrel, making a horrid, gurgling noise in his throat.

"I've stopped it, 'Orace!" said he to an imaginary friend, who was supposed to be watching his last moments. "Prop me up against this 'ere barrel, so that I can die comfortable!"

IN YOUR EDITOR'S DEN.

Write to me whenever you are in doubt or difficulty. Tell me about yourself; let me know what you think of the BOYS' FRIEND. All readers who write to me, and enclose a stamped envelope or postcard, may be sure of receiving a prompt and kindly reply by post. All letters should be addressed: "The Editor, the BOYS' FRIEND, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4."

Readers of the BOYS' FRIEND are invited to contribute short original paragraphs of general interest for publication on this page. Cash prizes of five shillings and half a crown, according to merit, will be awarded to the senders of all paragraphs published.

FOR NEXT MONDAY.

The title of our next Rookwood story is

"THE RIGHT SORT!"

By Owen Conquest,

in which the new master of the Fourth Form, who has come to Rookwood in the temporary absence of Mr. Bootles, has to face a very unpleasant situation. Jimmy Silver & Co. are firm in their loyalty to him, while Smythe & Co., naturally, take the most ill-natured view of the case. The development of the story speedily shows which of the two parties are right.

The next story of the chums of the Backwoods' School is entitled,

"THE MAN FROM THE SEA!"

By Martin Clifford.

This is a real holiday story, and the adventures of the chums on holiday on the wonderful Pacific Coast make splendid reading indeed.

In next week's instalment of

"THE SPORTS OF ST. OLIVE'S!"

By Arthur S. Hardy,

the long-prepared-for boat-race between Salthouse and St. Olive's comes off at last, and the question of superiority between the two schools on the river is finally decided, after an heroic struggle.

In

"SKULL ISLAND!"

By Duncan Storm,

next week's instalment is a most exciting one, full of thrilling adventure in strange seas, spiced with schoolboy fun, and written in that bright and breezy manner which is Duncan Storm's own secret. There is not a dull line in the story.

The next of the Rookwood Rhymester's series deals with one of the heroes of the Modern Side at Rookwood, viz.,

TOMMY DOYLE,

whose lively character is hit off to a "T."

SOMETHING SPECIAL.

The first of our splendid new series of Boxing Articles, by

'BOY' McCORMICK,

which is published in this issue, will, I am confident, meet with a great reception from every one of the thousands of keen boxing enthusiasts among my readers. The boxing experts among my friends to whom I have shown the complete series of articles are loud in their praise of them. One of them, Mr. Stanley Hooper, who is himself a great boxing instructor, and holds the title of Fly-weight Champion of Essex and the Eastern Counties, writes: "Boy' McCormick's articles are nothing less than a valuable series of boxing lessons, for which many an amateur would be glad to pay several guineas. In my opinion, careful study of such a course of 'lessons,' written by a really first-rate boxer such as 'Boy' McCormick is, is the very best way for an amateur to learn to improve his boxing—short, of course, of having actual sparring practice with the master himself."

The second article, which will appear in next week's BOYS' FRIEND, will be as valuable and interesting as the first; and I would ask all my readers to draw their chums' attention to this splendid series of articles, which 'Boy' McCormick, holder of the Lonsdale Championship Belt, and Light Heavy-weight Champion of Great Britain, has written exclusively for the BOYS' FRIEND.

A CHEERY FARM-WORKER.

I work at a farm, and get up about half-past-five every morning in summer, and five o'clock in winter. In summer I usually fetch my horses into the stable from the field, clean them and yoke them, and then I have my breakfast. I am very fond of my horses, and when we turn out into the field we seem to work well together. When I do not have to work the horses I help my father and brother to milk the cows, as we have not had a man for some time past. We have got all our hay, and singled all our turnips, in fact, we have hoed them for the last time. The next business is carting manure up a narrow, rocky lane. My work varies from six to ten. When I have a chance I go cycling, but there is not much time, as farmers who are behind-hand with their hay, etc., lure me, and so I am generally working, but I am happy. With three cheers for the BOYS' FRIEND, and all the other companion papers, I close.

Mariott Revett, of Coppice House Farm, Rivelin, near Sheffield, who sent in this graphic little pen-picture of his daily life, is to be congratulated. He works hard, and is happy and contented with his lot. And I hope he will be pleased when he receives a little present of five shillings from me next Saturday morning!

FROM A COUNTRY READER.

Thorpeiness is one of the prettiest places in Suffolk. It is not a busy, hustling place like some of our large seaside resorts, but just the ideal spot for a city worker suffering from mental weariness who wishes for a quiet holiday far from the madding crowd. It took me twenty-five minutes from my home to reach the little village by the sea. There is no railway-station, only a "halt." On either side of the road into Thorpeiness stretch the dunes, covered with bracken and purple heather. Close to the village is a wonderful lake dotted with small islands. I hired a boat, and though I had never been in a boat before I managed fairly well. One of the islands is called "Peter Pan's Property," and another the "Blue Lagoon." On the mainland there are houses down to the green edge of the lake. Far away to the right lies the sea, with steamships on the horizon leaving long trails of black smoke. As I looked round I could not help but feel a deep sympathy for the lads who live in great cities. I was nearly swamped as I sat dreaming, but got back to the landing-stage all right. Here I bought some cakes, oranges, and ginger-beer, and had a frugal meal as I sat by an old fishing-vessel. I had another row later on. It was a most enjoyable time.

Alfred Cattermole, 74, Potash Cottage, Benhall, Saxmundham, sent in this paragraph, and it is evident that my chum is a true lover of a country life. The way he writes makes us city dwellers long for a whiff of the fresh Suffolk breeze. I am sending him the sum of half-a-crown at the end of the week.

WHAT THE WAR HAS DONE.

It is, however, simply astonishing what changes the war has wrought in social customs. Before 1914 people fought shy of strangers in railway trains. There was the don't-speak-to-me look on all sides. As a rule, except perhaps in the north, where a railway journey is a different pair of shoes altogether, folks showed that they did not want any chatty pleasantries from those to whom they had not been introduced. The stolid

silence of a railway compartment in this country was the wonder of a Frenchman. Vastly different it is the other side. Step into one of the cheery, ambling trains with their roof seats which stroll out of Paris through Butignolles to Versailles, Fontainebleau, or Compeigne, and you find, or you did so before the war—I have not been that way for years—that every body was immensely interested in you and your family, and your general opinions on politics and whether you liked mustard with beef, etc. In this country a stranger was seldom welcomed in a railway carriage. That is, before the war. The cheery soldiers broke the ice. They brought axes to it—not axes to grind. They don't use many of those in the Army, unless it is a comrade's axe, and the comrade wants help. There is far less of the system we have heard of: "Here's a stranger! Heave half a brick at him!" That is one of the things which the war improved. Of course, nobody wants any truck with the over-plausible party who carries a pack of cards and suggests a friendly little game. He is no use to anybody. I fancy that the children have helped the reform onwards. Youngsters, when they are nice, natural youngsters, always talk to each other. A dog or a baby helps matters, too. Jerome K. Jerome tells a humorous yarn of a stiff-as-starch evening party where one set of folks declined to talk to another set whose members had not got so much money in the bank. But suddenly a big Newfoundland dog came rushing into the room, and the first thing he did was to whisk down a screen which divided them, and sweep the ornaments off an occasional table with his tail. The next thing those present knew was that they were all laughing together.

WHEN IN DOUBT LEAVE OUT.

This was the advice given to a young journalist I knew. Sound enough, too. It is better than having to print a contradiction the day after. I was reminded of the matter when reading a note from a Grimsby reader the other day. He said a certain London paper had grossly misrepresented his famous town. Evidently, the writer of the paragraph did not know Grimsby, nor anything concerning the grand fishing fleet of the celebrated port. He only ought to have known! Ignorance is just about the worst failing in anyone who has the handling of news. He lets things go to press which exasperates the local man at the other end who knows all the points, and he gets his paper laughed at.

FRANK REDWELL.

I feel interested in Frank Redwell. He is fifteen, and he has been appointed station constable at that dear old Surrey town, Reigate. It is beginning young, but, according to all accounts, he will do well. Judging from his portrait, he is a keen, brainy fellow, and he has that look about him which suggests that counting beans up to five, or any number, or tackling much stiffer propositions, will come as easy to him as shelling peas. Frank is young, and has, consequently, plenty of time, which is lucky, for, without a doubt, he has a long way to go before he has done. Good luck to him, and to Reigate for putting him into the job.

THE FATE OF AUSTRIA.

There are a good many lovers of history among the readers of the BOYS' FRIEND. I expect they have been mightily interested in the reports about Austria. Now the Peace is a fact, Austria, as she has existed for

more than a century, will cease to exist. There will be a small State bearing the name. Austria was the successor of the Holy Roman Empire. Voltaire said the name was right enough, so far as it went, only the Holy Roman Empire was not Holy, was not Roman, and was not an Empire. Austria will be an empire no more.

For many and many years past there has been

A gentle tapping,
As of someone softly rapping,
At the chamber door

of the Austrian Empire. Trouble has been threatening that country all the time. It was as ramshackle as a wheezy old four-wheel cab, such as one sees come creaking out of the back streets on occasions when all the taxi men are engaged. Austria was doomed. If her rulers had been wise enough to keep away from Kaiser Wilhelm they might have weathered the storm. Austria might have become a strong modern State, but this is doubtful. The pity was, anyway, that Vienna went to war. She had everything to lose—and she has lost it.

WHEN IT RAINS.

It is safe to assert that we shall have wet days during the holidays, just as we always do have them. You remember what the poet said, and he was right on the wicket, though poets are sometimes dead off. It is quite cheery when you find yourself landed at a country farm or cottage, or at a seaside lodging, with the rain coming down cats and dogs, to be able to pass an hour or two of the downpour with a game of the pencil and paper kind, either writing comic notices or reviews of books, each member of the party adding a bit to the folded paper as it is passed round, without knowing anything that has gone before, or running verses together of the ancient and still always popular kind. You know the sort of thing:

There was an old lady of Ewhurst,
Who always got into her pew first,
So as not to be late she had two
hours to wait—
This punctual party of Ewhurst.

Or the lines of the gentleman who was as fond of forestry as William Hohenzollern:

There was a young curate of
Datchet,
Who lopped off his thumb with a
hatchet,
When they said, "Leave off chop-
ping,
For this comes of lopping,"
He chopped off the other to match
it.

I am not going to suggest these are wit quickeners. To start with, the readers of the Companion Papers do not stand in need of such, but they make a laugh, and help to pass a bright hour.

WHO INVENTED GUNPOWDER?

The honour of the discovery has been attributed to many people, but Roger Bacon is generally supposed to have made the great find. I was interested the other day when on a journey to hear what a chance fellow-traveller had to say on the subject. He had a very decided American accent, and he was wearing one of the soft hats which can be pressed into any old shape. He sat down facing me, and told me that if explosives had never been invented the world would be a great deal happier. It sounds reasonable enough. "The man who invented explosives," said my friend, "did a wicked thing. What we want is to invent things which will make people happy. We do not want to

blow them up. People ought to be kind to each other, and be ready to put themselves out of their way to oblige." I was quite ready to agree, but at the same time it is as well to remember that explosives are used for other things than blowing up folks. Moreover, the Hun required to be blown up to teach him a lesson he would not forget in a hurry. There are other individuals, too, who would be all the better if they were "blown up" now and then. Besides all that, what about the bygone ages, before anybody knew anything concerning gunpowder, or its more powerful brothers whose names end in "ite"? We have no cause for thinking folks were any more amiable then than now. And yet the world might be a better place if only everybody tried to play the game and to think of others. Anyone can start the business right away by being considerate to the next person who comes along.

A LOVE OF HISTORY.

When in doubt find out! It is always worth while. There are free libraries pretty well everywhere. It is a pleasure to get such a question as this: "Can you tell me when the Emperor Dash Blank signed the Treaty with the King of Somewhere?" Of course, I do not carry all the treaties in my head. Who does? But it is just as well to refer to the records of such matters. Knowledge is power—the only power worth having, really. I think a fellow is wise who makes a note of something he sees in a newspaper—something which puzzles him. It is not worth it to remain ignorant of things. Among my letters recently was one from a lad who was exercised in his mind about the arms and style of the French Royal Family. I frequently see errors on this point in papers which ought to know better.

AN ODE TO THE EDITOR.

Many thanks to "Muriel" for the following lines:

Who tries to make us understand,
He is a friend to all the band
Of loyal readers in the land?
Our Editor.

Who answers questions by the score,
Is willing quite to answer more,
Although they oft must be a bore?
Our Editor.

Who has to know Tom Merry's
height,
And whether Gussy's spats are white,
And which of two would win a fight?
Our Editor.

Whose patience really is elastic,
With his replies is never drastic,
Although sometimes a bit sarcastic?
Our Editor.

Who is it that I hope to see,
When he can have a moment free,
To spare a word for little me?
Our Editor.

Who, when he reads these lines to-
day,
Will tap his head and gently say,
"Poor kid! Her mind has gone
astray"?
Our Editor.

Nothing of the sort, "Muriel"! On the contrary, I should say, judg-
ing from your sprightly verses, you
are very much "all there"!

Your Editor