

THE LEAGUE OF YOUNG ATHLETES!

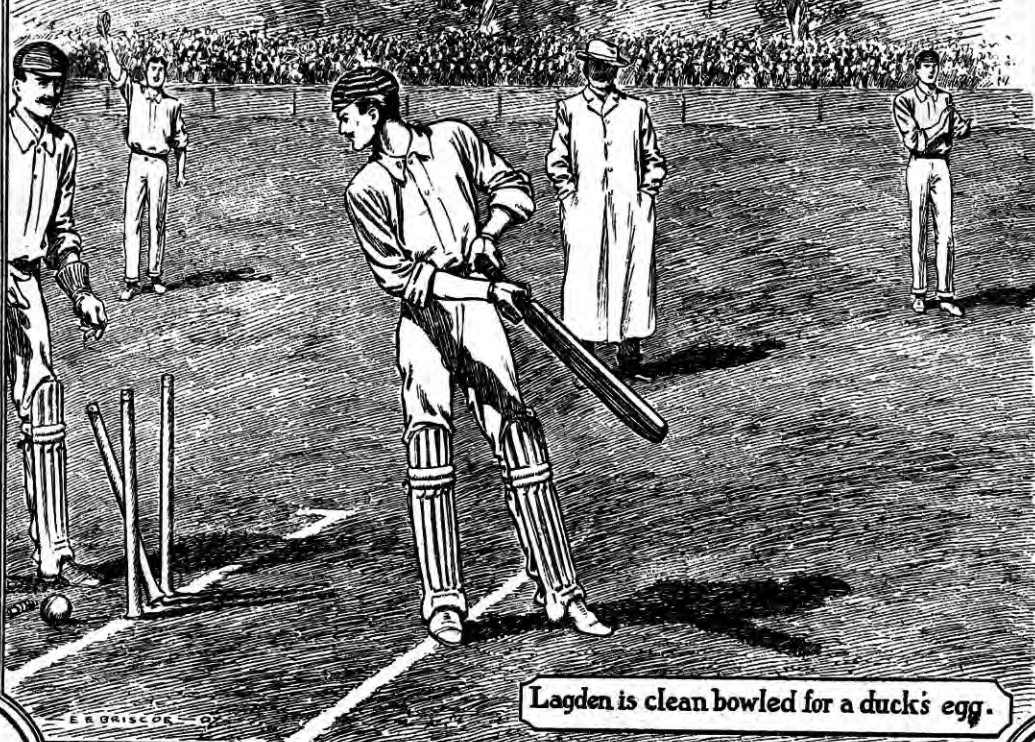
THE BOYS' REALM

of SPORT & ADVENTURE.

1^D

KING CRICKET!

By Charles Hamilton.



Lagden is clean bowled for a duck's egg.

FROM YOUR EDITOR'S CHAIR.



Latest Portrait of Your Editor (H. E.).

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

Next Week's Number.

IN next week's issue of THE BOYS' REALM will appear a fine long, complete cricket tale entitled:

"A PRIZE WORTH WINNING."

I can assure my friends that this story will hold their interest throughout, and will prove one of the finest athletic yarns I have ever published.

There will also appear in that number another of Mr. Murray Graydon's laughable Army stories, in which will be told how Ginger reformed, but got into a scrape all the same.

I should very much like my readers to write to me, telling me what they think of these two characters—Dennis and Ginger. They have been prominent in our paper for quite a long time now, and I am seriously considering asking Mr. Graydon to write me a serial tale detailing the adventures of these respectable, albeit provoking, clowns. If it is for my readers to say whether they would like a serial on these lines. Please write and tell me what you think about it.

Our Cricket League.

I AM glad to find that my new League is being taken up so well by the cricket clubs throughout the country. Already quite a large number of clubs have made applications to join the new organization, and I am expecting that many more will do so before I close the lists. There is still time for your club to make application, so speak to your secretary about it now.

If any cricket or other athletic clubs care to send me group portraits of their teams, I shall be glad to reproduce them in our columns. However, the result of the season's hard struggle will be the same way as I have done with the photographs of football teams during the past months. All photos should be clearly marked on the back with the name and address of the secretary, and the full title of the club. In cases where it is desired that the photographs should be returned, stamped addressed envelopes should be enclosed for this purpose.

Our columns are still open for cricket notices, athletic announcements, and news items, and along, and it shall be inserted free of charge.

CRICKET LEAGUE CONTINUED.

The following table gives the position of the leading teams in Section I of our Football League. Very soon, however, the result of the season's hard struggle will be known, and the fifteen happy winners of the Cups and Medals disclosed.

JUNIOR.							
	P.	W.	L.	D.	F. A. Pts.		
Nelson Villa F.C.	22	22	0	0	119	9	44
Newbury Juniors	22	22	0	0	125	22	44
Sidney A.F.C.	22	27	0	1	100	21	43
St. Andrew's	22	27	0	1	100	21	43
Newhall St. Edward's ..	22	19	0	2	106	23	41
Dart Hill Juniors	21	19	0	2	73	9	40
Handley Lea Boys	18	18	0	3	83	19	31
Canterbury Juniors	22	18	1	3	72	12	39
Exeter Juniors	22	17	1	1	104	20	31
Baywater Albion	22	18	1	3	88	28	30
Kettering Argyle	20	18	1	1	75	16	30
Leamington	22	18	1	1	76	23	26
Westall Crusaders	19	17	1	1	116	25	35
Melbourn Athletic	22	17	4	1	87	44	45
Kingsgate Athletic	19	16	2	2	115	42	31
Park Villa	20	14	1	5	64	32	32
St. Andrew's	18	15	0	3	89	19	31
Richmond Swifts	16	16	0	1	93	21	31
St. John's	22	17	1	1	104	20	31
Disbury Athletic	18	15	2	1	77	30	21

SENIOR.						
	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A. Pts.
Warrington St. John's ..	22	21	0	1	86	14 43
Tanfield Lea Athletic....	22	21	1	0	102	12 42
Eldon Park	22	19	0	3	54	10 41

Your Editor is always glad to hear from you about yourself or your favourite paper. He will answer you by post if you enclose a stamped addressed postcard or envelope. Write to him if you are in trouble, if you want information, or if you have any ideas for our paper. All letters to be addressed to the Editor of THE BOYS' REALM, 2, Carmelite House, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.3. If your letter is not replied to here, it may be answered in "The Boys' Friend" next Tuesday, or "The Boys' Herald" next Thursday. THE BOYS' REALM will be sent post free to any part of the world on the following terms: 12 months, 2s. 6d.; 3 months, 1s. 3d.—payable in advance by British stamps. Postal Orders or Money Orders to be sent to the Publisher, 2, Carmelite House, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.3.

He is Too Stout.

ONE of my friends, an Edinburgh reader, who will recognize his initials as E. H., writes to tell me that he suffers with stoutness about the abdomen, and asks me if I can tell him of a remedy.

Now, I know that a great many lads, who are stout because Nature wills it so, are annoyed by excess of fatty tissue in this way, so that by answering A. E. H. I shall probably provide interesting reading for others of the same kind.

In order to get my facts quite right I have consulted a well-known physical culturist, and he tells me that the cause of this kind of complaint is invariably got rid of by practising a number of body-bending exercises.

One way is to lie on your back on the shoulders fairly and squarely touching the carpet, and, while holding the body absolutely rigid in this position, to raise the legs and bend them forward as far as they will go. This puts great pressure upon the abdomen. The exercise must be done thoroughly and determinedly, and the muscles must be completely at the command of the person performing the exercise. That is to say, there must be no rolling about on the floor; the movements must be regular and symmetrical.

Another exercise is to merely bend the body as you sweep your hands, raised as high as possible, above your head in a movement to the floor. A further useful exercise is to place the hands on the hips, and to twist the body, keeping the legs immovable, first to the right and then to the left as far as the body will go.

The lad who suffers from stoutness of the abdomen should avoid eating any fattening food—such as pastry and puddings, and other diet of a particularly sweet or oily nature. If dieting and the performance of the exercises I have mentioned are persevered in, he should soon notice a difference for the better.

The Duties of an Excise Officer.

ONE of my Rothesham readers, J. W. W., sends me a cheery letter concerning our papers, and in the course of his interesting epistle he tells me that he is desirous of getting information regarding the Excise Department of the Civil Service, which he thinks of entering.

First of all, my friend wants to know what are the duties of an Excise officer. Well, these consist mainly in boarding vessels that enter our ports and rivers, and in examining their cargoes, in order to see that these comply with the regulations laid down. J. W. W. doubtless knows that tobacco and saccharine, spirits and gunpowder, to mention but a few articles, have to be carried in certain quantities and of certain qualities. The Excise officer has to see that the owners of the vessel or the cargo are not defying the law in order to cheat both the Government and the consumer.

The Excise officer, therefore, has more of an adventurous and outdoor life than his confrere in the Customs service, whose work is chiefly confined to bonded warehouses. A post is only to be obtained by passing the examination set by the Civil Service Commissioners, and here are a few further particulars that J. W. W. will find it to his advantage to know. Applicants for permission to sit at the examination held by the Commissioners must

OUT FRIDAY, MAY 3rd.

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be not less than nineteen years of age, nor more than twenty-two, and they must be unmarried. The examination is in the following subjects—handwriting, English composition, including orthography, arithmetic, and general returns in summaries, and general geography. Payment of a fee of 5s. is also necessary.

As further advice to my chum, I may tell him that "The Boys' Friend," Correspondence College makes it a special business to train young men desirous of entering the Excise Department, and if my friend writes to The Principal, 2, Carmelite House, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.3, he will receive full particulars as to the course of lessons from that gentleman by return of post.

Penketh Albion F.C.—Secretary, Mr. F. Davies, North View, Penketh, near Warrington. Lovell United F.C.—Secretary, Mr. C. Lee, 45, Merriest Street, Leeds.

Section II.
SOUTHAMPTON DISTRICT AMATEUR LEAGUE.
St. Matthew's Club F.C.—Sec., Mr. R. B. Messer, 9, Oxford Avenue, Southampton.

OUR SILVER CUPS.
More Letters from Grateful Secretaries.
THREE TOWNS AND DISTRICT LEAGUE.

"Dear Sir,—I am very pleased with it. Very soon I can express my thanks, or that of the committee, to you for the trophy. That you must heartily on behalf of the committee.—Yours,
"JOSEPH FLYNN, Hon. Secretary."

ANSFIELD PLAIN AND DISTRICT MINOR LEAGUE.
"Dear Sir,—The Cup arrived quite safely on Wednesday morning. I am very pleased with it. Very soon I can express my thanks, or that of the committee, to you for the trophy. That you must heartily on behalf of the committee.—Yours,
"JOSEPH FLYNN, Hon. Secretary."

EDINBURGH AND DISTRICT SECONDARY JUNIOR FOOTBALL LEAGUE.
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About Officers in the Army and Navy.

W. J. of Gateshead, sends me a enthusiastic letter about THE BOYS' REALM. He wants to know whether officers in the Navy began their careers as ordinary seamen, or whether they were specially trained for the positions. They were specially trained, W. J., just as officers in the Army are specially trained before taking up their appointments.

The private and the ordinary seamen are admitted after fulfilling the necessary tests as to physique, good behaviour, and elementary education. The Government thereafter undertakes to teach them their duties. This they do to a certain measure in the case of officers, but each applicant for a commission, as it is termed, has to pass a strict examination, not only in general education of a high order, but also in respect of special knowledge they have acquired while training for the appointments. Thus, an Army applicant would be tested as to his knowledge of gunnery, tactics, and the like; while the would-be naval officer would be required to show his abilities as a navigator, and his knowledge of charts and maps, as well as management of men and guns.

Some men, of course, are appointed officers in the Army and the Navy by promotion from the ranks, because of some specially praiseworthy action, but such occurrences are very rare. Some, again, win their positions by entering for and passing the examinations set by the Government. These examinations are by no means easy, but successful.

With regard to your taking in "The Boys' Herald," W. J., I am sure you cannot find a better means of increasing your knowledge of the world, and if you are at all interested in hobbies, it will soon be indispensable to you.

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Would-be Drummer-boy.

G. H., one of my friends in Kensington, London, wishes me to tell him how he can enter the Army as a drummer-boy.

Drummer-boy, in fact, all musicians for the various bands of the regiments of the British Army are recruited chiefly from the sons of soldiers and ex-soldiers. They are trained at the Military School of Music, Krattler Hall, Twickenham, London, S.W.

My reader, G. H., will have to be to write to the superintendent of the school of music at the above address, and state his desire to become a drummer-boy. If there are any vacancies, he will be instructed when applying for the examination to pass the necessary tests before he can be admitted. The limits of age are fourteen to sixteen.

YOUR EDITOR (H. E.).

Daily Mail.

for which I beg to thank you. I may say it has quite exceeded our expectations.—Yours faithfully,
"JOSEPH FLYNN, Secretary."

BOGNOR AND DISTRICT JUNIOR FOOTBALL LEAGUE.

"Dear Sir,—I beg to acknowledge receipt of Cup, which arrived safe and sound yesterday. It is quite beyond me to express my thanks, or that of the committee, to you for the trophy. That you must heartily on behalf of the committee.—Yours,
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Are You Going to Join the League of Young Athletes?

Alma and Her Father.

"What would be the use of that?" asked Will.
 "I am going ashore myself, and I will have him arrested for me."
 Hal had formed plans which had met with the approval of his friends. All could see the necessity of completing their work by securing or killing the pirate leaders.

It would not be sufficient to launch the rest of pirates. They must be utterly destroyed. Half Valdivia was in ruins. The city was down—a mere heap of stones—and many of the streets were impassable. But the inhabitants were already returning to their homes. What Hal had heard, they were sick of their pirate associates, and desirous of being free from their sway, so that they could return to their homes.

If Hal felt the force to the mercy of Broody and Caroli de Livana.
 Again Hal had his own interests to serve. He could not afford to confute on his return home, if ever he did return. And last, but not least, he had to ascertain the fate of Alma and her father. That he was speedily to learn, for he was going to the convent that night to make it his headquarters.

Marvalda assured him that half a dozen would be enough to take care of the pirates, and he could not do better than make it his base of operations. Will was to remain in the city, and with him, Caroli de Livana, with the remainder secured the country.

Don Tarva de Rialdo would also be there, and would be a great help to Hal. Alma would be a secure retreat for her; so Inez said.

None, of course, had the faintest suspicion that such a fate was within the grasp of the convent walls, and chance was to bring the rivals together. What then would follow? How would the peaceful work upon the future of Hal and Alma?

That convent, once the abode of peaceful nuns, was fated to become the scene of blood and strife. The noise of the party that was to be there was quite dark all was ready. One boat laden with necessities was on its way to the shore, and the other, carrying Hal, his friends, and two-thirds of the crew, followed.

Alma, as before, was guide.
 On the shore they formed, Inez being under the care of her father and Will Warrington. Each man of the crew was to be assigned to a duty. The party, however, being enjoined, they proceeded on their way.

Marvalda in due time signified that their destination was reached. They went forward to the convent, leaving Inez with the rest for an escort. It was now half-past ten, and a light, as before, was burning in one of the windows. Hal, his friends, and two-thirds of the crew, followed.

"A message from the dell," replied Marvalda in a foreign voice.

"Freedom and De Livana."

The noise of the bells being withdrawn was then heard, and the door was slowly opened. Alma, and Marvalda, by the door alone, Velasquez stood in the porch with a lamp in his hand.

"Who is it?" he said. "Hal! Marvalda! Traitor!"

He raised the lamp to cast it at him, but Alma was too quick for the old man, and he seized him by the wrist.

The old man dropped the lamp, and it exploded with the report of a small cannon. The oil spread about and burst into a sheet of flame. Marvalda stepped back, dragging the old Spaniard with him to the same moment. Hal and his men advanced, and the latter began to tread upon the flames with the object of extinguishing them.

"Hold that old man fast!" cried Hal.
 But Velasquez, with a sudden wrench, had freed himself, and was now gone away into the darkness of the night.

"The oil was burnt out, and there was no harm done beyond a slight scorching of the walls of the dell."

"The place is ours," said Hal.
 "Stay, there are others inside!" cried Marvalda.

Another door was opened half-way down the hall, and two figures appeared.

A man and a woman—Alma and her father. But Alma was a lighted room, and Hal recognized his long-lost love. With a cry of joy, he bounded forward, but Alma, with a look of horror, and looked at him with aversion and horror.

"How dare you come here!" he cried.
 "Alma," she said, "I will not speak to you."

"Yes," she said, "as a traitor who forges his name, I will not speak to you."

Her father, with a warning motion of the hand, dragged Alma to the door, and closed upon her the accursed and diabolical hall.

Half Doubts and Fears—He Goes Away, A Dastardly Attack.

"Now, what may this mean?" muttered Hal. "I have come so far, and risked so much, to be repulsed in the end?"

His mind was momentarily unhinged by the

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shock, and even when it had recovered itself he was still sorely troubled. His conscience was not altogether free, for he knew that at times he had not been impartial to the charms of Inez. If he could be momentarily faithless, why might not Alma have been the same? Or, worse still, had he come to love her? He could not tell. He was sure of one thing, however, and that was, that he would never again be a pirate. He would be a man of honor, and he would be a man of honor.

"Open, here!" he said. "Let me speak to you."

The answer came from Mr. Warrington.

"You had better go away. Alma has no desire to see you."

"You had better come to rescue you," urged Hal. "Will is with me."

"Will-my son!" cried the old man.

"The same," said Inez.

"Send him to me, and I will bless you for that."

Hal turned moodily away, and had one of the men bring up the rest of the party. Then he entered the room occupied by Velasquez and his friends.

"What dark cloud has come between us?" he asked himself. "It must be Livana. If it is only slander, all may yet be well; but if—"

Oh, I dare not think of her as the wife of that villain!

He sat brooding until Will, followed by Don Tarva and Inez, appeared. To them he briefly explained what had happened.

"Go to them," he said to Will, "and hear what it is that has come between us."

Will left them and hastened to the room occupied by his father and sister. He knocked at the door.

"Who is there?" asked Mr. Warrington within.

"I will—your son."

A bell on the inner part of the door was hastily drawn back, and Inez and Alma stood before him. Behind the former was Alma, white and trembling. Velasquez failed them for the moment. Loving arms were entwined round their heads, and Alma kissed her brother again and again.

"Come in," said Mr. Warrington, as soon as he could speak. "The door, Alma, and let them intrude upon us."

"May not Hal come in?" inquired Will.

"No," replied Alma quickly. "Of all others, I fear this door against him."

"But why?" asked Will. "What has he done?"

"He is untrue to me," said Alma. "Let that suffice."

"No," said Will; "it will not suffice—at least, not for me. Hal is a brave, good fellow, and as such, he will not be so."

"To you, Will, but not to me," said Alma.

"He is not."

"You have had some poison poured into your ears."

"Will," said Alma, "with my own eyes I have seen how Alma has been with that Spanish creature."

"And who may the Spanish creature be?" asked Will.

"Inez Rialdo."

"Impossible!"

"Oh, Will, you answer me like a man. I can see in your face why you think it is impossible. You have given your heart to her."

"Never mind my heart, for the moment," said Will, pale to the lips. "but tell me what grounds you have to suppose Hal has been unfaithful to you?"

"I saw him talking love to Inez, who was too far to see."

"I have reason to think that she admired Hal from the first," said Will, "because she is a noble creature. He said, 'I have been deceived before by you. We can bear it."

"So she said," said Will, "at least—"

He stopped, and lifted his troubled eyes to Alma.

Her eyes were cold and proud; her lips were set in a stern line.

"What has passed between you and Inez?" she asked.

"Never mind," said Will; "it is all over. If you have seen them together as lovers, there is an end to everything. Was it long ago?"

"No; within two days."

"I am not a fool," said Will, and covered his face with his hands. Thus for a moment he sat, but when he looked up his face was calm.

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We must bear it as becomes our race. One thing we must do, and that is not to be too hasty."

"Have I not eyes?" demanded Alma. "Go ask him if he has not flirted with Inez. He will not, he dare not, deny it."

"But what is to be done?" groaned Will.

"You forget that with his side alone you can get away from here."

"Tell him," said Alma, "that I will accompany him. Will accept nothing from him, not even life."

"Father," said Will, "what do you say?"

"I cannot help you. This is the answer. You must decide between you."

Will rose up, and, after a few more words, returned to Hal, with mingled emotions surging in his breast.

"Tonight," he said briefly, "Alma would rather be alone."

"Is that all she has to say to me?" asked Hal.

"All."

"Then I will ask no more," said Hal.

"This is this!" said Inez de Rialdo. "A lovers' quarrel? Can it not be made up? You and I will—"

"Will do as he pleases," said Will coldly. "It would be better for you not to offer assistance."

Then he turned from her, and asked Hal what he thought he had for him. Inez looked angrily at him, but not for long; her face soon softened.

"Some little complication," she said; "it will put us out of the way."

"Will you look round the convent," said Hal to Will, "and select rooms, if there be such, suitable for Don Tarva and Inez; close the door, and see that no party on duty within! Then come to me here."

Will executed the first commission given him, and Inez retired to an apartment chosen for her. It was furnished with many comforts, and she was contented, so far; but her heart ached for Hal, who had simply bowed when they parted for the night. Her father accompanied her to the room selected—an apartment behind that occupied by Alma—and they passed by her door.

"What is wrong?" the father asked.

"I neither know nor care," answered Inez.

But one part of her answer was not quite correct. She did care for when she fell asleep that night her eyes were wet with tears.

When Will rejoined Hal the latter was lighting a cigar. On the table was a bottle of wine.

"Marvalda has found the cellar," said Will.

"Have a glass of hock. Sit down, and tell me what is the matter."

"Hal," said Will, "tell me truly, as a friend, have you ever made love to Inez?"

"If I have," said Hal, laughing, "my wooing has not been a pronounced success."

"That is not exactly an answer."

"No, Will, I have never made love to Inez, although I have felt a wee bit inclined to do so when we have been together."

"Have you ever made love to her near here?"

"No."

"Not within the last day or two?"

"My dear Will," said Hal, "how can you put that question to me, when you know that I know how things have gone?"

"You deny it, then?"

"In toto."

"Well, Alma says you have," said Will, with a sigh, "and I can only leave matters as they are."

"Fill up your glass," said Hal. "It is a light, good wine. Have a cigar, and let the dear girls go till the morning. When we have all slept, something may happen to put us right again."

Notwithstanding his light manner, Will could see that he was not himself. He did not like the idea of his daughter going to bed with a man who would have been his brother-in-law.

He was exactly happy. He had such faith in his friend that he did not believe for a moment that he would deceive him, and Alma must have made a mistake. On the morrow he would have a little more talk with her on the subject.

Will, however, was not so easily satisfied. He was a man of a very large receptacle in his breast for doubt, and when jealousy gets to work there is no knowing where the great-eyed monster will not unfurl its wings.

Marvalda came in with some rugs he had found, and with them he made up two rough beds for the night. He himself slept at all with Will, and the convent practically impregnable to ordinary assault. There were other matters

concerning the place which he had to report, and those, he said, would keep until the morning.

Having finished his bottle of wine and cigar, Hal lay down to sleep. His last words before he closed his eyes were:

"All right, between me and you, Will—ch?"

"Oh, yes!" replied Will.

"It is the women who are wrong," he supposed so.

"Good-night, old fellow!"

"Good-night!"

The arrival of the enemy—a short and sharp encounter—a great deed.

"HARK! What is that?"

It was Hal who spoke. He was awake, and sitting up listening to a curious grating noise somewhere near.

Will was also awake, and his ears likewise engaged in analysing the sounds they heard.

The noise appeared to come from somewhere on their right, and the two friends—for friends they were—were listening to it with some interest.

"This Hal knew to be an empty one, for he had looked into it some time before, and seen that it was quite bare, with two narrow windows, barred heavily, like the rest in the convent."

Hal had taken off his upper garments and kicked off his shoes. The former he now reeled, and the latter he was putting on, and when he was done, he went softly out of the room.

In the passage outside there was a lamp burning. It was turned down low, and standing near the main door was one of the men on guard.

He, too, was listening, with a puzzled face, and his hand on the hilt of his sword. He kept quiet, and put out the lamp. This was done, and then Hal entered the room.

"What is that?" he asked, with some uneasiness, for there was a faint light shining through the narrow windows, nearly shut out by the men of a man. That man was filling through the door.

Hal soon made out that there were a number of men outside, and he had no great difficulty in making out the cause of their arrival.

Velasquez had fetched them there, and, indeed, in evidence of it the voice of the old man could be heard occasionally giving whispered instructions for the men to keep quiet.

"These British have the ears of watch-dogs," Hal heard him say.

Hal, too, was listening. With a quiet, swift step he returned to Will, and in a few minutes the friends had arranged what to do. Hal put on his shoes, and they went out to the sentinel, whom they desired to fetch Marvalda and the men, all to come as silently as possible.

In a few minutes the whole party had gathered in the room, and Hal, with a slow, cautious movement, began to draw back the bolts.

Marvalda had brought a bottle of oil, some of which he poured on the bolts as Hal worked, and so without a sound they were moved back from their sockets. When all were clear, Hal heard the men in an undertone be ready for a rush.

"Never mind their numbers," he said, "but strike while they are off their guard."

All was ready now. The door was opened an inch or so, and then with a quick swing Hal threw it back.

"Strike them forward!" he cried.

He led the way, and, like water from a shattered reservoir, the Silver Stars poured out, and dashed into the thick of a body of men gathered under the wall of the convent.

The pirates were taken by surprise. Although it was still night, the sky was clear, and the multitude of stars shed a soft, luminous light that enabled the two bodies of men to see each other.

Crash! Flash! Swords were out, and revolvers were fired. Down fell one of the Silver Stars men, shot through the heart, to be immediately avenged by his comrade, who cut down half a dozen of the foe.

Hal and Will plunged into the thick of the fight, the former looking for Caroli de Livana.

(Another thrilling instalment of this fine serial will appear on Saturday next.)

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THE FIGHTING FIFTH.

(Continued from the previous page.)

abroad. Both Scotland Yard and the local chief constable were positive in their declarations that nobody named Dixon had wired to them, or had received any information from them, concerning the locket in Lal's possession.

After dinner on Saturday afternoon Mr. Rant sat for Lal and informed him of the result of his inquiries.

"So it is I thought," he said, in conclusion. "The fellow was a rank impostor. He wished to secure the locket, and except for the fact which he had accounted for in the 'Daily Mail' his story was a pure invention from beginning to end."

"But why should he take all that trouble, and run the risk of being, to get hold of the locket?" asked Lal. "It isn't very valuable. I shouldn't think it would fetch more than fifteen shillings or a sovereign at the outside."

"The locket which has also puzzled me," said Mr. Rant. "As you say, the locket isn't of any great value, and yet there is no doubt that the man was desperately anxious to get his hands on it. At present I cannot even suggest an explanation. Possibly we may discover the fellow's motives later, and in the meanwhile I wish to impose on you the necessity of taking the very greatest care of the locket."

"Would you like me to give it to you, sir?" asked Lal.

"Oh, no," said Mr. Rant. "It will be as safe in Hamilton's desk as it would be in mine. But if anybody ever turns up to claim it, I want you to promise that you won't part with it until you have consulted me."

Lal readily gave the required promise, and then went up to his study, where he repeated the gist of Mr. Rant's news to his father. But the latter was not interested. They had long ago decided that in the case of Dixon was an impostor, and Mr. Rant's investigations did not tell them anything they had not already guessed. As a matter of fact, they were far more interested at that moment in discussing the question of how they should spend their Saturday half-holiday.

Nipper suggested another visit to Hill-foot Park; whilst Wagstaffe argued strenuously in favour of a "blow-out" at Pye's, the village tuck-shop. And whilst they were discussing these rival proposals, Dick, who was standing by the window, suddenly exclaimed:

"Jee-rusalem! Come here, you chaps. Quick, or you'll miss the treat of a lifetime! Here's Piggy disguised as a Russian Grand Duke!"

His four chums crowded to the window to see the trick, the mathematical master, magnificently arrayed in a sealskin cap, astrakhan gloves, and a fur-lined overcoat, with a cane in his right hand, and a diamond-studded cane, and cuffs that extended half-way up his elbows. He was marching proudly across the road, and a moment later he passed through the half-stone gateway and disappeared from view.

"Talk about Solomon in all his glory," laughed Nipper, as they turned away from the window. "I wonder where he's going. He must have something special on this afternoon, or he wouldn't have got himself up like that."

"Perhaps he's going to mash Fraulin Hoffmann," suggested Bob.

Mr. Trigg, as the reader will doubtless remember, was deeply enamoured of the assistant German mistress of the Cambridge House Collegiate School for Young Gentlewomen; and as the reader will also remember, he had a rival in the person of Mr. Wimpie, the science master at the Grammar School.

"By Jove, I shouldn't wonder if Bob is right," said Wagstaffe. "There's a bazaar and a musical evening at the church schoolroom this afternoon, and Fraulin Hoffmann is presiding at the refreshment stall."

"Then that's where Piggy's going, without a doubt," said Nipper. "You to see the Pimpie will be there too. What do you say, you chaps—shall we go to the giddy bazaar and see the fun?"

His proposal met with the ready acquiescence

of the others, and five minutes later the five chums were on their way to the village.

It was a clear, bright, frosty afternoon. There had been a slight fall of snow during the night, and the subsequent frost had made the roads as slippery as glass.

Outside the gates of St. Ninian's the road was fairly level, and continued level for about a mile. It then ran rather steeply downhill for a quarter of a mile, and at the bottom of the hill it turned sharply to the right in the direction of the village.

Half-way down this hill the five chums came to a long and beautifully-polished slide. It had been made by some of the village boys earlier in the day, and extended from the middle of the hill to the corner at the bottom.

A well-made slide is a temptation which few schoolboys can resist, even though they be members of the Royal Fifth in a big public school.

"Crikey! That's a ripping slide!" said Nipper, pulling up.

"Ripping!" said Dick. "As hard as steel and as smooth as glass."

"It's two hundred yards long, if it's a yard," said Bob.

"Aunt as straight as an arrow," added Wagstaffe.

Nipper glanced up the hill. Except for themselves, not a soul was in sight.

"It's a long time since I had a real old-fashioned slide," he sighed.

"Same here," said Dick. "And there's nobody about."

"To be, or not to be!" said Nipper, turning to the left.

"To be!" said Bob.

"I'm game," said Lal.



The next instant, with an ear-splitting shriek that sent a thrill of terror through the crowded room, Mr. Wimpie dived head foremost into the bran-tub.

"Ditto," said Wagstaffe. "Lead on, MacNip!"

Nipper took a short run, and launched himself on the long, straight, glassy slide. Dick followed next; then came Bob and Lal and Wagstaffe in the order named; and a moment later the five boys were whizzing down the hill, in single file, with the speed of an express.

"Put on steam, old Stick-in-the-mud!" cried Dick to Nipper, as they neared the foot of the hill, in single file, with the speed of an express.

"How the dickens—!" began Nipper; then he suddenly broke off with a gasp of alarm.

For at that moment the burly figure of Constable Wragg strode round the corner, less than half a dozen yards away.

"Look then! Out of the way, you silly owl!" yelled Nipper. In an agonised voice.

But the warning came too late. Almost before the last word had crossed Nipper's lips, and before the constable had time to perceive his danger, Nipper dashed into him at top speed, and bowled him over like a ninny.

Disturbed by this catastrophe, the others made a frantic effort to pull up. But the momentum they had acquired proved too much for them; and after a series of wildly exciting acrobatic feats, Dick crashed down on the top of Nipper and the constable; Bob fell flourishing on the top of Dick; Lal rolled over on the top of Bob; and Wagstaffe sat down heavily on the top of all of them.

"Murder! Oh! Fire!" gurgled the constable, who was at the bottom of the writhing,

struggling heap. "Owl! Take your foot out of my hair! Get hold of my nose! Oh, I'll 'ave the lot on yer for this, yer young varmint!"

One by one the five boys sorted themselves out and scrambled to their feet. The constable followed their example, replaced his helmet, and fished out his official notebook.

"Sliding on the public highway, contrary to the by-laws," he growled, as he opened his book. "Haulassing a hollerer of the lot in the execution of his duty. Forty bob or fourteen days at the very least! Your names, please, young gentlemen—"

"Oh, I say, Peter, you're not going to report us!" said Nipper.

"Forty bob, or fourteen days," repeated Wragg. "Amilton I know, and Starling I know, and Des I know." He wrote the three names in his notebook. "Next, please!"

"But it was a pure accident, you know," said Nipper. "Don't be hard on us, Peter. There'll be a holy row at the school if you summon us. Let us off this time. There's a nice, kind dear!"

"Next, please!" said the constable, glancing at Bob.

"My name's Arkle," said Bob grumpily—"Sir Robert Arkle, Barn. Don't forget the bar!"

"And mine's Wagstaffe," said the fat boy. "Don't forget the Wag!"

The constable wrote the two names down, then he closed his book and replaced it in his pocket.

"You'll get yer summonses to-morrow morning," he said curtly.

Nipper heaved a doleful sigh. "I suppose you're quite right, Peter," he said. "I've been a bit late, and we deserve to be punished. Yes, you're quite right, Peter, quite right! We don't bear you

any ill-will. We're sorry we knocked you down—aren't we, chaps?—and we'd like to compensate you for your injuries."

He pulled out half-a-crown. Dick produced a two-shilling-piece, and the others a shilling each.

"Here's seven-and-sixpence for you, Peter," said Nipper, as he pressed the coins into the constable's not unwilling palm. "That's for knocking you down, you know. You mustn't think we're trying to bribe you to let us off."

"We wouldn't dream of such a thing," said Dick piously.

"Not for worlds!" said Bob.

"We know it would be no use," said Wagstaffe; "in fact, it would make you quite angry if we tried to do such a thing."

"I think it was very kind of you," said Peter, waving his head.

"I'm not the sort of chap to be bribed."

"We know it," said Nipper. "And we admire you for it. You always do your duty, whatever happens."

"I try to," said Peter modestly. "At the same time, I don't know but what I may have been a bit too easy in what I said just now. If this little affair was really a accident—"

"Pure accident, Peter," said Nipper sweetly. "Bless my soul, we wouldn't hurt a hair of your dear old head! We love you too much!"

"Then we'll say no more about it," said the constable graciously. "But if ever such a thing happens again—"

"Oh, it won't happen again!" said Nipper,

with a grin. "It's too expensive! Good-bye, Peter! Our love to the missus and the kids."

By the way, have you seen anything of Mr. Trigg in the village? You know Mr. Trigg, of course?"

"Yes," replied the constable. "I saw him go into the church bazaar about ten minutes since."

"Then you were right," said Nipper, turning to Bob. "Piggy's at the mash this afternoon. Come along, you chaps; let's be to the merry church bazaar!"

THE 12TH CHAPTER.
Mr. Wimpie Has a "Hot Time."

THE church bazaar, or sale of work, was held in the parish school-room, and consisted for the most part of a number of stalls, laden with articles of clothing which had been sewn or knitted by the ladies of the congregation.

In addition to these stalls there was the customary "bran-tub," in which, for the payment of one penny, one could plunge one's head and extract a toy worth at least a farthing! There was also a band, which discoursed sweet music at short intervals, a cinematograph in one of the class-rooms, and a grand piano in another. And at the upper end of the room, in close proximity to the bran-tub, was the refreshment stall, where teas, coffees, and light refreshments were dispensed by Fraulin Hoffmann.

We'll be bankrupt before the end of the term, if we go on squandering money in this reckless way," said Nipper, when he and his chums had paid their shillings each at the door.

"We'll have more than fifteen months of fun, if the Pimpie is here!" said Dick.

"And he is," chuckled Bob. "Look! There he is, at the top of the room. And there's Piggy glaring at him as if he'd like to strangle him!"

The five boys threaded their way up the crowded room, and halted in front of the refreshment stall—a long, narrow table, on which were displayed a varied assortment of cakes and sandwiches, two urns, and a miscellaneous collection of cups and saucers and plates.

Fraulin Hoffmann, looking very "feeling" in her dainty white apron and cap, stood behind the table. In front of her, at one end of the table, stood Mr. Trigg, with a cup of tea in one hand and a bathroom in the other.

At the opposite end of the table stood his rival, Mr. Wimpie, who was sipping a ham-sandwich.

"A lovely day, isn't it?" murmured Mr. Trigg, with a languishing glance at the fair German.

"I think it was very cold," said Fraulin Hoffmann, who was not in the best of humours. "Was your tea all right?"

"Delicious—most delicious!" said Mr. Trigg, rapturous.

"But how could it be otherwise when yours was the hand which—"

"Miss I trouble you for another ham-sandwich, please," growled Mr. Wimpie, from the other end of the table.

Mr. Trigg glared at the interrupter, who replied with a vindictive scowl. Wimpie paid for it.

"May I have another cup of tea, please?" snapped Mr. Trigg.

Mr. Wimpie ground his teeth, and if looks could kill, Mr. Trigg would have perished on the spot.

This went on for another quarter of an hour, first one and then the other trying to monopolise the attention of the German mistress. It was very amusing in its way; but it was not quite what Nipper & Co. had expected.

"Oh, I say, this is too slow for anything!" said Nipper at last. "I'm going to treat things up a bit!"

"How I've got Dick!"

"I'm going to buy a sandwich," said Nipper. "When I've got it, I'm going to ask for the mustard. When I've got the mustard, I want one of you to go and get me a bottle of ginger-pop, and I want another of you to bump into the Pimpie from behind, so as to distract his attention for a second or two."

"What's the idea?" asked Bob, in a mystified voice.

"You'll see," said Nipper, with a wink.

(To be continued on Saturday next.)

THIS IS DAVID GOODWIN'S GREAT NEW COLLIERY STORY.



By DAVID GOODWIN,
Author of Many Other Popular Stories.

THE FIRST CHAPTERS IN BRIEF.

A half-witted miser, known by his comrades as "Mad Matt," comes a morning one day in the Coed Colliery yard by stating that he is the owner of the mine, and that he only works there as a laborer because the role suits him better. In the midst of his harangue the real owner of the colliery, Mr. Kenyon Price, comes on the scene, and Matt repeats his statement in his hearing. When Mr. Price hears his tale his face turns very white, though he tries the affair off as it turns out that Matt's story is quite true. At one time his father was in partnership with Kenyon Price, and when he died, Price took his share as well as his own, an accident robbing Matt of his money and thereby preventing his making his claim.

Soon after the scene in the colliery yard Matt's meetings with an accident in the pit, which results totally. Roddy, then, and Tom, two little boys, who have always been friendly with Matt, know that the death of the poor fellow was no accident, but was deliberately planned by Kenyon Price and his underlings. These two lads are Matt's heirs, a tale having been made by the dead man to that effect.

The boys know they will not be believed if they tell the truth, as they have not a jot of evidence to support their statement. At the same time, Roddy cannot hold anything at the inquest, and when he tells what he knows he is severely reprimanded by the coroner for trying to cast a shadow on the name of an honorable gentleman like Kenyon Price.

When Roddy and Owen return to Matt's cottage after the inquest, they find a man with a bill of sale in possession of the house. The man tells them that the property Matt has left them is a place known as Starve-Crow Farm, and having no work, the boys decide to go there. Here they find a little old man, Daffyd, Roddy falls into the shaft of an old mine, and is pulled out.

Then the three explore the shaft, and are much gratified at the richness of the coal below. As Daffyd is climbing up to the mouth of the shaft the rope is cut by someone above, and he hurtles back into the shaft. Fortunately, he is unhurt, and finding there is no other way of getting out, he commences to climb the almost inaccessible sides of the shaft. Suddenly the boys below see Daffyd lurch and swing by one hand.

(See next day's installment.)

THE 20th CHAPTER. Kenyon Price Arrives.

A CRY burst from Tom's lips, for they thought it was all up with the climber, and a great peep of coal crashed down to the bottom. Roddy, by sheer luck, barely being able to do it. How Daffyd recovered himself they did not know, for the gloom and the drifting coal-dust hid him from them for the moment, but he did. The next glimpse they had of him was a bare two feet from their eyes. Then one boy, breathless with surprise, and he drew himself clear out of the shaft and rolled over on the ground beyond.

A ringing yell of triumph broke from both the boys' throats at once, answered by a feeble whoop from Daffyd. He lay out of sight, recovering his breath, and looking down at them looked down the gaping pit and grinned delightedly.

"We did you think that? Daffyd can climb better than a goat—eh?" he cried.

"By glory, it was humbug!" shouted Roddy. "I wish I may break my neck if ever I go back on you after this!"

"You don't want wings, old cock?" cried Tom, dancing with delight. "You can go anywhere, and beat a blind bird without 'em. Come down an' do it again."

"Ha!" said Daffyd, with a huge grin. "You know what I'd like now—eh? To go to your man—Sully, whether you call him—eh? I ask him how much he'll give me to leave you down there. What?"

He disappeared, and Tom looked rather taken aback, for the boy was gone some time. Roddy only laughed, however, and a little later Daffyd's red head showed like a meteor once more at the mouth of the shaft.

"Ter repe ice fast," he said; "you lose ter long. You was pouter pe quick, or you lose ter old bit!"

Roddy grabbed the rope and started. The first thirty yards were easy enough, but before he reached the top he was thoroughly blown and exhausted, and but for Daffyd's help at the last, would hardly have done it. However, he pulled himself outside at last, and to save time they called down to Tom—whom they could not see—to make a bowline in the rope and sit in

it, whereupon they hauled him up bodily. He danced a frantic war dance among the brambles as soon as his feet touched the ground.

"Daffyd, my buck, we owe you more than I'll ever be able to repay in ten lifetimes!" he said. "An' if by any chance we're ever millionaires, you shall jolly well be one, too, whether you like it or not."

"Rather," said Roddy; "but we sha'n't unless we hustle, so let's put on all speed. No one in sight, is there?" he added, taking a rapid look round the distance as he started off.

"Don't see anybody," said Tom. "Sully's hooked it long ago, of course. What's the first move?" (Let him arrested for trying to manslaughter us!)

"Rats!" said Roddy. "What good'll that do, an' how could we nail him? Rip off to Lawlor Williams as fast as we can travel, that's what we've got to do. Bryn y Garth colliery before everything! Come on! Are you with us, Daffyd?"

"There is no use for me to go to Aberford. I'll stay here and keep guard on ter farm. You'll come back."

"We'll be here to sleep again to-night, I reckon, with any luck. But it depends on how things go; there's no counting of anything. So long, old chap, an' expect us when you see us. We sha'n't forget what you've done for us, Daffyd."

"And I say, just turn Gripe loose when you get to the cottage," put in Tom. "He'll follow after, an' we might want him; there's no knowing."

Daffyd waved a cheery adieu, and made for the house, while the two others set off at a sharp run into a little while Gripe came bounding after them in response to Tom's whistle, and the boys and the dog kept up a steady double all the way to Aberford. They were not far from the cottage when they got to the place already. However, we can see him now make sure nothing does happen.

Mr. Williams received them in his office, with a smiling face, and before they could ask any questions he said:

"I've good news for you, my lads," he said. "You are rid of your white elephant for good and all. Bryn y Garth is sold!"

The boys, utterly taken aback, stared at him, speechless.

"Sold!" gasped Tom at last.

"Sold!" repeated the lawyer, rubbing his hands together. "It's off your hands, and will never trouble you again. Starve-Crow Farm has a new owner, and I've got a good price for it, too. How's that?"

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Roddy. "But it can't be bought and paid for?"

"To be honest and purposeful it is, my boy. The buyer has given me a written contract to purchase, and left a deposit in cash. I expect him back to-day, and seemed quite in a hurry to complete the purchase."

"Thank goodness!" cried Roddy. "Then we're in time. Come up, my boys, and see it. Mr. Williams, and send him back his money."

The lawyer stared.

"My dear Owen, what do you mean?" he exclaimed.

"I mean that Bryn y Garth does not pass out of our hands, and neither do Tom and I hold it; no one else need apply!"

"But, really, this is extraordinary!" said the lawyer, looking rather offended. "You know the farm is worthless, and I never dreamed of getting an offer at all. As trustees, I am empowered to sell it, and you also asked me to do so. But this mysterious buyer turned up to-day, and finding he seemed keen, I held out for a price, and actually got him to give £2 an acre!"

Tom burst into a roar of laughter.

"You don't mean it!" he said sarcastically. "That price amounts to £200 for the whole place!"

Mr. Williams, frowning at him, "I would not myself take the farm if you paid me in. But it seems to me you've won."

"Half a minute, Mr. Williams," said Roddy. "We don't want to offend you at all, an' we're sure you did sort best for us. But we aren't talking through our hats. The whole thing's a plant—on us and on you. I'll tell you the name of the man who made you that offer, and when he made it, before you speak here. Sully, Kenyon Price's viewer an' agent. An' he came—let's see—at about two o'clock."

"Quite right," said the astonished lawyer.

"About four years ago that same Mr. Sully had us, as he thought, so securely trapped that we'd never give any more trouble. Thanks to an angel with a red head, we're out in time to knock his little scheme sideways," said Tom.

"An' it isn't £200 that'll buy Bryn y Garth," added Roddy. "ner £4,000. Ner £14,000. There's just time to stop the deal, you say, sir?"

"Yes, I think so. But has a value been discovered in Starve-Crow Farm?" said the amazed Mr. Williams.

"That's it, sir. An' this buyer of yours tried to choose us out of it. You know how Matt died in the Aberford pit? It was because he stood in the way of a great man. You'll know who I mean, sir. We came rather near dyin' in a different way to-day, for the same reason. We were to ha' been the victims, sir, and you the cat'spaw!"

The lawyer flashed, and his keen face hardened.

"If any man is trying to play with me," he said grimly, "he will find himself badly mistaken; nor do I care who up it. What's this?"

"Hallo!" said Tom, glancing through the window as the horn of a motor was heard.

"Here's Kenyon Price in his car. He's come to finish the deal!"

"By gum!" An' we're sixty feet down the Bryn y Garth shaft!" murmured Roddy, between his teeth. "The biggest snags and snakes mistakes, you see. Now for it!"

The door opened, and a clerk showed Mr. Kenyon Price into the room. The great colliery magnate entered with a heavy stride.

THE 21st CHAPTER.

Mr. Kenyon Price Resolves a Shock.

AS the colliery-owner entered the office, Roddy touched Tom on the arm, and the two boys melted so quietly and quickly back into the shadow at the far end of the room that the great magnate, beyond that by the time Kenyon Price was

fairly inside the office they were out of sight, nor had he noticed them.

"Good-evening," Mr. Williams," said the magnate briefly. "I was just in time to catch you, alone. I feared you would have gone. There is a little business I wish to have settled. You are alone?"

The lawyer hesitated. He was rather taken aback, both by the visitor's entry and the sudden disappearance of the boys into the next room.

At any other time he would have probably called them back. But Mr. Williams's anger had been aroused. He was the trustee for this legacy of theirs, and from what the boys had just told him, he began to understand that somebody was trying to get the better of them, and of him, too. If there was anything likely to "put his back up," that was it. He was a sharp lawyer, but an honest one, and did not like his being played with, so he determined to find out exactly what was going on.

He greeted Mr. Kenyon Price with perfect politeness, and motioned him to a chair.

"To what do I owe the honor of this visit?" he said coolly.

"We are both men of business," said Mr. Kenyon Price. "I will come to the point at once. A little while ago my agent, Mr. Sully, came here and secured some land from you—the Starve-Crow Farm."

The lawyer nodded.

"I thought I would come up and settle the matter, as I may be leaving the town for a time," said Mr. Price, "so I am here to pay you the full purchase money. You can then give me a receipt for it, and have the necessary papers made out at your convenience."

The colliery magnate took out his cheque-book with a flourish—it was a way he had—and produced a fountain pen. But Mr. Williams did not move.

"I'm afraid not, Mr. Price," he said dryly. "I am not sure you can have it."

The visitor looked aghast.

"What do you mean?" he exclaimed.

"I mean that the farm is not for sale. I am sorry, but I made a mistake with your agent."

"But good gracious, man," said the proprietor of Coed Colliery angrily. "You cannot draw back now! The deposit has been paid, and I hold your receipt for it! I insist—"

"You shall have the deposit back at once," said the lawyer, opening a drawer and handing him a cheque—the one Mr. Sully had given him. "I am only trustee, and I believe the owners do not want to sell."

"You mean you want a bigger price," said the magnate, with a shrug of his shoulders, "contesting the cheque-book? Well, I will give another £100, but no more."

"Not at all," said Mr. Williams. "Starve-Crow Farm is not on the market. I have nothing further to add, Mr. Price."

Mr. Price's anger, and dismay as well, were as much as he could keep under. But he kept his temper.

"Come, Mr. Williams, what is the meaning of this?" he said, in an oily voice. "There must be some reason for it. You agreed with Mr. Sully to sell the land. It is quite worthless."



There was a reading crash in the entrance, a blinding glare of light, and the door opened, and Roddy fell back with a cry as the cold came thundering down with deadly force. Then there was silence deep as the grave.

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A STORY OF AN EVENTFUL YACHT RACE.

By MARTIN SHAW.

THE 1st CHAPTER.

B-Z-Z! B-Z-Z! B-Z-Z! B-Z-Z! The faint, regular hissing sound went on and on from the interior of the shed, a sound which, faint though it was, could be plainly heard by the diminutive figure outside in the darkness. It was a glorious night in early summer, the scene the little Cornish fishing village of Perran, a tiny harbour round two important points, Moy and Garmouth, five miles from a railway-station, and as yet undiscovered by any real trippers.

Dick Perrick, the lad outside the shed, stole nearer to the big door. His heart was beating fiercely within him. "Who can be there?" So ran his unspoken thought. "And what's he up to? Rokon I'd better get in and see."

There was good cause for his apprehension. For the building contained the only just completed cutter, *Pride of the West*, the boat that owed its being to Nicholas Trethewey, young Squire Trethewey, and himself. All the winter they had been labouring in their spare time at the construction of the *Pride of the West*, the cutter that they had vowed should be the first to sail. Had they not entered her for the Regatta? Ay, and she had already been down the slip that led to the harbour, had been christened and launched with proper ceremony, and had proved herself as swift and as speedy a little craft as their hearts could wish.

And to-morrow was the opening day of the regatta—to-morrow was to see the *Pride of the West* engaged in her first contest. It was easy to understand Dick's feelings, then, as he stood outside in the darkness and listened to the mysterious sounds proceeding from the interior of the shed.

The *Pride of the West* had been run up into the shed the day before. Nicholas Trethewey had said that he would be down there at 6 a.m. The two lads went to see what was going on. A thorough overhaul of the cutter, preparatory to running her down the slipway again, and sailing over to Moy to take part in the race they had entered their hearts on.

It was now 2 a.m. Dick had been unable to sleep. Something had urged him to steal out of his little cottage on the cliff, where he lived with his father, to go down to the wharf to take yet another look at the vessel that was as dear to him and which he thought it had been a thing of flesh and blood. And, indeed, was it not the work of their brains and hands, their own conception and design?

As the scraping noise had ceased now. All seemed quiet within the shed. Dick pushed the great door open with as little noise as possible, and peered inside.

At the sight that met his gaze his heart seemed to rise into his mouth.

A man was kneeling on the centre of the cutter's deck, with a dark lantern in his hand, the ray from which fell full on the mainmast, just where the spar ran into the timbers of the deck. Close to him lay a thin, vicious-looking saw. And Dick's trained eye told him at once what it was that the fellow had been doing.

He had been sawing through the mast. He had cut half-way through the iron spar. He was now obliterating all traces of his foul work with putty and varnish. He was going to scrap the fact that the mast had been tampered with.

Who the ruffian was, Dick had not the faintest idea. His back was to him, and he was working so close to the mast that he could not see his face. He was working so close to the mast that he could not see his face. He was working so close to the mast that he could not see his face.

Dick was fifteen, a well-grown, sturdy Cornish boy, who was used to the noisy, lardy race. He clenched his fists. He would show this unknown scoundrel that he had to deal with a youngster who could give as good as he got.

"What are ye up to?" he said, in a firm, angry voice.

The man averted round with a slight cry. Dick had a vision of a dark, saturnine face, of a pair of cold, black, vindictive eyes, and then the light was extinguished. An instant more, and the man had dashed at the boy, had bowed him over and over in the impetuosity of his rush, and disappeared into the darkness before Dick had time to give chase.

And, indeed, when Perrick did pick himself up and dart into the open, there was no trace of the aggressor to be seen. To have given chase would have been worse than useless. There were hundreds of ways which he might have taken.

"But I know who it was," muttered Dick. "Twas Jarvis, the squire's footman. And he shall pay for it, sure as my name's what it is." The first consideration was for the *Pride of the West*. He had a box of matches in his

pocket. A hurried examination of the wanton damage inflicted by the man Jarvis told the lad that the first puff of wind would snap the spar off at the stem like a carrot. And to-morrow was the day of the race!

For a few seconds he stood as though paralysed. Then he clenched his teeth. "I won't be best yet," he murmured; and, turning, he sped out of the shed and away towards the path that led up the cliff.

Five minutes later Solomon Perrick was awakened out of a sound slumber by being vigorously shaken, while a voice, the voice of his son Dick, resounded in his ears. "Wake up, dad, wake up—ye must! Jarvis, the squire's footman, has seen through the mast of the *Pride of the West*," I tried to tell him, but he got away. And to-morrow we're due at Moy. Mas's Nicholas and me. An' he's comin' down at six o'clock to launch her."

Solomon Perrick tumbled out of bed with the alacrity he had shown on many an occasion when answering the summons to man the life-boat. He hurried into his clothes, and while he did so, he fired off questions innumerable. Then he said:

"What's one thing to be done, Dick. We'll have to take my spar as I was getting ready for the lugger. Shall I fit your little cutter, right?" "We've three hours to make the thing ship-shape in, and when Mas's Nicholas do come down, he'll find everything as I said," I tried to tell him, but he got away. And to-morrow we're due at Moy. Mas's Nicholas and me. An' he's comin' down at six o'clock to launch her."

It was five o'clock when Nicholas Trethewey jumped out of bed. He performed his daily ablutions, and then he went down to the wharf, and a swim in the bay would complete that.

As he drew near to the shed he was surprised to hear a sound of hammering issuing therefrom. His curiosity deepened as he found himself gazing at Solomon Perrick and his son putting the finishing touches to the stopping of new rivets in the mast that had formerly graced the *Pride of the West* lying on the ground beside the slipway leading downwards to the slips that was to allow the cutter to take the water.

"What on earth's up?" he cried, his blue eyes clouded with bewilderment. "You've been fitting a new spar? Why? What was wrong with ours? It was a grand bit of timber."

He looked earnestly from father to son.

Solomon scratched his head.

"You tell Mas's Nicholas, Dick," he said gruffly.

In a few words as possible Dick told his father. Nicholas heard him out in silence, though his expression was eloquent enough. And as soon as Dick had finished his story, he burst out with:

"Dad had words with Jarvis yesterday. I caught Jarvis awinging dad's famous old spoon port. I told dad. The fellow was sacked at once. It was as plain as punch. He wanted to be revenged on me, so he did that, the bounder! I'll bet he's miles away by this time. And you two boys saved us. For we should have gone to sea not knowing anything about the awen-through mast, and then by Jove, what you're a couple of chaps if ever there were such. And I believe that spar is the one you got for your lugger, Solomon."

Solomon grinned at his father.

"I can see another spar, Mas's Nicholas," he said easily. "You go and win the race at Moy, and show they Moy chaps as Perran knows how to build a cutter—50, and sail it. There'll be plenty of breezes afore long. The sun got up nasty and red. I'll blow afore night. Not as what you men be afraid. The *Pride'll* stand anything. An' that's more than can be said for a lot of 'ese resin cutters. Skimmin' flashes, that's what they be, we're more room than a crab-pot. You go and win, Mas's Nicholas."

For a moment Nicholas said nothing. Then he held out his hand. The brown fisherman took it and gave it a squeeze that brought the tears to the lad's eyes.

"Thank you, Solomon," said Nicholas. "I'll never forget what you've done for us."

An hour later the *Pride of the West* ran gracefully down the slipway and into the placid waters of the little harbour, a gay stream of bunting fluttering at her truck, her snow-white hull and spoolless deck-boards in keeping with the snowy cloth of her suit of sail. Perran built from stem to stern, and with the exception of the new mast and certain of the metal fittings, absolutely the work of the squire's own and his fatherman.

Her little cabin was provisioned for the

day. The two lads jumped aboard, and Nicholas prepared to hoist the mainmast, while Dick ran aft and seized the tiller. Suddenly a chorus of shouts fell on the ears of the lads. They looked shoreward. A crowd was running towards the harbour from the village—a crowd of men, women, and children, who all seemed to have lost their senses, seeing that one and all were screaming and shouting like maniacs.

Nicholas waved his blue yacht-captain, and hurried in sympathy. He knew right well what it all meant. The village had turned out on bloc to give the adventurous lads a proper send-off. That accounted for the fact that hitherto the trio had had the harbour to themselves. Perran had meant to do the thing properly. No one was to steal a march on his neighbour. And without any warning the Perran village band, at the tail of the procession, struck up a martial air.

An hour later, the *Pride* was skimming daintily across the smooth water that marked the entrance to the estuary, upon either side of which was the town of Moy.

A fair scene it was, indeed, that glorious summer day, the wind ruffled the old town gleaming in the sunshine, the water alive with sailing-craft of every description—from the big raters, to the little cockle-boats, with here and there a steam yacht—the quays lined with spectators, with sailing-craft, the whole place agog with interest. For the *Pride of the West* was one of the events of the year in western Cornwall, and excursionists were drawn thither, by land and water, from far and near.

The *Pride of the West* had been entered for the race that day, in the eyes of the natives, by far the most important contest of the regatta. It was only open to boats owned within twenty miles each side of Moy, and for the last five years (the race had been won by a

Goran boat, the owner of which was confident of again carrying off the prize this year.

The Goran boat was, without doubt, a fine little craft. She had no contra-board on her keel, as the *Pride* had, but, to make up for this, she was of unusually large draught and big sail area, her deep hull holding her stiff in half a gale. She was also very quick in start—that is to say, she lost hardly any way during the time that elapsed between the letting fly of the jib-sheets, and the drawing of the forestay, when going about. She was, moreover, owned and sailed by two brothers, named Matta, men who had been used to the handling of a sailing-boat since their earliest days. Though, as far as that goes, both Nicholas and Dick Perrick had started their nautical education before they could either read or write.

As the *Pride* entered the estuary, their formidable rival ran across their bows, and one of the Goran men, for Goran Hanton, as all the world knows, is the centre of the Cornish crab and lobster industry.

Before the start of the race there were some needful preliminaries to be gone through, such as the official measurement of the competing boats, to see that they fulfilled the required conditions, the verification of their tonnage and of their prescribed radius, the drawing of lots for stations, all of which formalities having been safely performed, our two heroes prepared themselves for the fray.

Nicholas drew No. 1, the southward station at the start, and was informed that he was to go to his station at least a quarter of an hour before the race was to begin—that is to say, at a quarter to twelve.

The course was no intricate one; merely a run out to the Blackstone Lighthouse, four miles out at sea, the lighthouse being placed on an isolated rock that had, prior to the construction of the light, been a terrible source of danger to shipping—round the Blackstone, and then back to the buoy at the entrance to West Harbour.

The boat first back was to be the winner, for the competing craft, all being of the same tonnage, or approximately so, did not have to concern themselves with time allowances. Hence, the race was purely a question of skilful handling, and a real test of speed.

At last the time came for the firing of the

(Continued on the next page.)

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starting-gale. The weather had changed considerably since the morning, and is looked at through Solomon Petrich's prognostication of that weather was to be verified.

Thick clouds had piled up from the north-west, though, as there was a breeze from the south, the sea was comparatively calm. Yet angry squalls blew across the surface of the sea. Both Dick and Nicholas agreed that it would be advisable to sail under mainsail and foresail. Jib and topsail might be brought into use later on.

"How long this gale, first of all," said Nicholas, as he gripped the tiller, while Dick busied himself with attending to the sheets.

It was a pretty sight to see the little boat joggling and jolting, ready in position waiting for the signal-gun to give them the word to start.

The signal had been rippling merrily against the combings, and the Dick chivered like a restless racehorse as Dick hauled in the sheets, while Nicholas put the boat up as close as he dared into the wind, ready in swim round when the crucial moment should come.

Boom! The signal had been given. Nicholas put the helm down without a moment's hesitation, and the Pride, bending down until the water was almost flush with the hatchway-combings, skimmed off on the starboard tack like a greyhound released from the leash.

At the same time, which coincided in the same way, the Susan and Mary—both the names of the wives of the brothers—Mattas had drawn the second start—the one next to our heroes—and the boat, darted off at the same moment as the Pride.

"Luff a bit, Mattas! Nicholas!" said Dick eagerly. "We must try and blanket their bows!" And Nicholas steered nearer to the wind, with the result that the Pride edged in towards the rival cutter, keeping off a considerable amount of breeze, a manoeuvre that had the result of sending the head-boards of the Gorian boat, as well as convincing the Mattas that not only had they a speedy rival, but that the boys, whose they had looked down upon with no little contempt, were at least conversant with swimming more than the mere rudiments of sailing.

And in spite of the base attempt made by Jarvis, the dismissed footman, to run the boys off the cutter, soon gave evidence that she was a vessel possessed of a remarkable turn of speed, for she quickly took the lead, drawing further and further away every minute of the race.

The first two miles were passed, by which time the Pride was half a mile ahead of the next boat, which was the Susan and Mary—a pinkie boat hanging close to the heels of the Gorian lugger, the other competitors in a bunch behind these two.

And then suddenly a remarkable change came over the scene. Quite suddenly, the wind veered round so as to come from the north, and suddenly fierce squalls sped across the face of the sea.

Luckily Nicholas, at the helm, had his eye to windward, and his voice rang out:

"Let go fore and jib halleards! Cast off the main-lead! Dick! Obeyed without a moment's hesitation."

The Pride staggered uneasily for a second or two, there was an angry flapping of canvas as young Petrich followed out his comrade's directions, and then the boat flew off before the wind, heading straight out to the open sea.

The Mattas did not stagger so easily. They had been too intent on beating their youthful rivals to pay full attention to the unexpected squall. There was a crack at the mast, and the boat, with a crash, rolled over the gaff itself broke at the throat. Had not Stephen Mattas, the younger brother, been so intent on the race, and brought the sail down with a run, the Susan and Mary would have run a good chance of being capsized, stiff sea-boat though she was.

Seeing Mattas was in his mouth and roared out something to the boys, which neither of them could hear, but which both of them knew he was shouting to the cabin-boy. They waved back in answer.

Yet Stephen Mattas had merely shouted to them that they were incurring danger by running on. He knew that the wind would shift round still further before long, with the result that the sea would rise considerably, and place the boys in a position of extreme danger.

And, indeed, after a little while, the lads were quick to perceive that that they would soon be face to face with peril.

"Look here, Dick," said Nicholas gravely, though he had to raise his voice considerably, as he was to be heard by his comrade, "I don't altogether like the look of things. It's going to be a small sea put about and make for Perran."

But Dick shook his head.

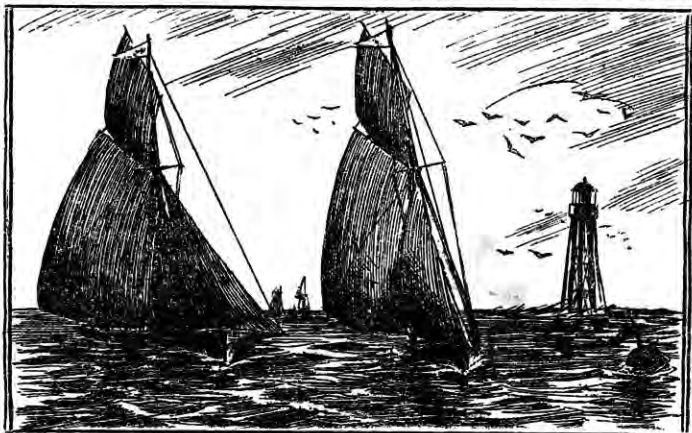
"We can't do that now," he said gravely: "we should never fetch the harbour. There'll be a big sea running on, and you know what it's like trying to get in in the teeth of a still

south-easter, and that's where the wind'll be afore long. We'd better hold on, under as little canvas as we can, and try and fetch Garrigue. We shall be all right there. It'll be a good test of the Pride's dunn, and as long as the wind keeps where it is, we can't come to much harm. I'll make everything snug. We've got a nice little bit of grub in the cabin—it was as tiny enough cabin, in all conscience." So they may as well make the best of things.

He spoke cheerily, and Nicholas answered him with a smile. They were both lucky British youngsters, and it was the height of improbability that either of them would be so ignorant of the fact that he had the faintest vestige of uncertainty. Yet neither of them could know that they were about to run into one of the worst storms that ever ravaged the coasts of Britain at such a time of the year. The great storm of the early summer of 1888 will not readily be forgotten by those who went through it.

Every moment the wind seemed to increase in force, and the waves with it. The restlessness of the competing vessels, outdistanced so completely by the speedy Pride, were dying for May Harbour—or, rather, were beating up under the shelter of the land.

In the meanwhile, the Pride, under double-reefed mainsail and jib, flew along over the angry sea. Were the wind to hold for another hour the lads had confidence that they would be able to fetch Garrigue with but little difficulty. At this rate, they would be able to congratulate themselves on the splendid sea-going qualities of their craft when the wind shifted round to the northward again, to blow with redoubled intensity.



Boom! The signal had been given. Nicholas put the helm down without a moment's hesitation, and the Pride, bending down until the water was almost flush with the hatchway-combings, skimmed off on the starboard tack like a greyhound released from the leash. The Gorian boat darted off at the same moment as the Pride.

And by this time they had got well away from any protection the shore might have afforded them owing to the change of wind. There was nothing for it but to put down the helm and bear away still further a-lee.

At this rate," yelled Nicholas, "we shall reach Perran." And he laughed gaily enough as he cast his eyes aloft, though in his heart he knew that their position was anything but an enviable one.

THE 2ND CHAPTER.

The Yankee Millionaire.

SILAS P. DOCKING was a millionaire, and as his name proclaimed, an American. In the early summer of the year 1888, Mr. Docking found himself in the Spanish port of Barcelona, a town that he speedily convinced himself he had little use for, as he expressed it in his own words: "Antiquities and Spanish dainties were not all in Mr. Docking's line—he had made his little surprise to hear that he determined to shake the dust of Spain off his feet with all possible expedition."

Hence it came about that he looked his passage aboard a Spanish steamer bound for Plymouth.

"I'm turned well sick of Spanish railways," he said. "Let's see if they can run a boat any better!"—though this was not the real reason for his preferring to go by sea to England. He was unlike most Americans, passionately fond of the sea, though he accorded admittance as much; and he was agreeably surprised to find that El Rey Alfonso the King Alfonso, as the steamer he had taken was fine, fitted in an up-to-date, not to say luxurious, fashion.

There were, however, few passengers on the ship. The captain and crew were all foreigners; the skipper and his officers Spaniards; the deck hands and stewards drawn from every nationality imaginable, so it came to the Yankee

In due course the steamer started, and had an uneventful voyage until the coast of France was left on the starboard quarter, and it looked as though nothing could happen to break the monotony of the voyage.

But the sea knew no laws; and when almost in sight of the coast of England, the Roy Alfonso ran into the teeth of a tremendous gale.

The storm in itself the ship would surely have weathered. But there must have been an undiscovered flaw in the stout of her propeller-shaft; for just when the gale was at its worst, the shaft broke, and the vessel, from a distressed condition, was transformed into a helpless mass of iron and steel, a storm-tossed box containing two or three hundred human souls, and a congregation of useless machinery.

As soon as the crew realised the true state of affairs they threw aside all discipline and restraint. It became a case of every man for himself, and the devil take the hindmost! A mad rush was made for the vessel's bows, which were lowered pell-mell into the water, crowded gurgle down with a wild roar of raving madmen. The result was as lamentable, as terrible as it was inevitable.

Each boat as it took the water was capsize by the awful sea that was now running. Such scenes are, thank Heaven, rare in the annals of the world. But the sailors, who were cowards in the world they are miserable. The wails of the doomed wretches rose up above the clamour of the gale.

But there was one man who kept his brain

station on the summit of the cliff over Perran had become visible.

"Bar accidents," said Nicholas, "we'll make the harbour in an hour and a half!"

THE 3RD CHAPTER.

The House of Tredaway.

SQUIRE TREDAWAY had been a widower for nearly forty years, for his wife, who was of the old school, was only two years old. Always somewhat of a recluse, the squire had retired completely into his shell and was not to be bothered, and he had been devotedly worshipped.

Not a rich man—as riches are esteemed in those days of Rand magnates and kings of finance—he was nevertheless a miser, and Nicholas, who he had always hoped, would never have to carve out a career for himself. Not that Nicholas was a waster, and had been educated, destined for the Navy, and had been educated at home for that purpose. He was to become a midshipman the following year.

Three months before the opening of the story, the squire, who like many another would have been better advised to leave matters alone, had turned out to invest nearly all his money, was induced to take a holiday, and was induced to take a holiday that had promised a very lucrative rate of interest on the squire's disney, had turned out to be a very bad investment. In fact, the unhappy man was face to face with ruin. It was night-time. Nicholas had not yet returned home. He had gone off to look in the park. He had been too much occupied with his own business to care to bother his head with the matter.

Hence, although the gale had passed away and all Perran was anxious to avail itself of the breeze, the Pride of the West and her crew of two, Squire Tredaway sat alone wrestling with his misfortune. The miserable problem of winning back a fortune that seemed to have vanished into thin air, as indeed it had, was his only thought. At last he rose to his feet with a groan.

"It's no good," he muttered: "the music will have to be faced. And what on earth I'm to do now, Heaven alone knows."

Hardly had the words left his lips before the door of the study opened unceremoniously enough to admit Nicholas. The squire, who was dressed in dishevelled, wet clothes, and who looked like a man who had been through a bad time, turned round to see what the matter was. He had been too much occupied with his own business to care to bother his head with the matter.

Docking, for he was, of course, who was a few poor years, and he had hands forward and held out his hand.

"Your son has saved my life," he said, without any ceremony, beating about the bush. "I owe him more than I can say—more than the other young men. I'm Silas P. Docking, of Pennsylvania, U.S.A., and I want you to let me take him home with me. He saved my life. I'll make a rich man of him if you'll let me."

For a few moments the squire could hardly believe the evidence of his own senses. It was the darkest hour; and yet how could he tell the story of his ruin to the Yankee millionaire?

It was impossible, said a melodrama, or in some of our own country tales, for the squire to accept Docking's aid, either for his son or for himself. Tredaway was a man of flesh and blood, with the result that he was forced to accept the squire's foolish speculations and rash conduct. There is but one answer to the question.

It was as well, as well as it could be, admitting that Silas P. Docking had not stored the fallen fortunes of the house of Tredaway, but also took Nicholas into his business, with the result that he had soon small reason to feel sorry for the part he had played in the rescue of the millionaire. Neither was he a fortune teller.

The Pride of the West was a man of a race since that day, and she is still a true little craft. The rascally Jarvis, whose attempt at revenge on himself was thwarted by Dick and his father, was the whole of his life, because of him I never know nor care. He became never troubled either Nicholas or the squire again.

And here, I think, we may bid good-bye to Nicholas Tredaway, to Dick Petrich, and to the squire. Silas P. Docking died a few years ago, and left the whole of his vast fortune to Nicholas, for the millionaire was without heir or kin in the world.

And if you would see Nicholas Tredaway in the flesh, you must go to Tredaway in Cornwall.

THE END.

(Next week a fine, complete cricket story, entitled "A Price Worth Winning" will appear.)

THE BOYS' REALM.
ONE PENNY EVERY TUESDAY.