MEDALS AND DIPLOMAS FOR YOUNG ATHLETES. (SEE INSIDE.)

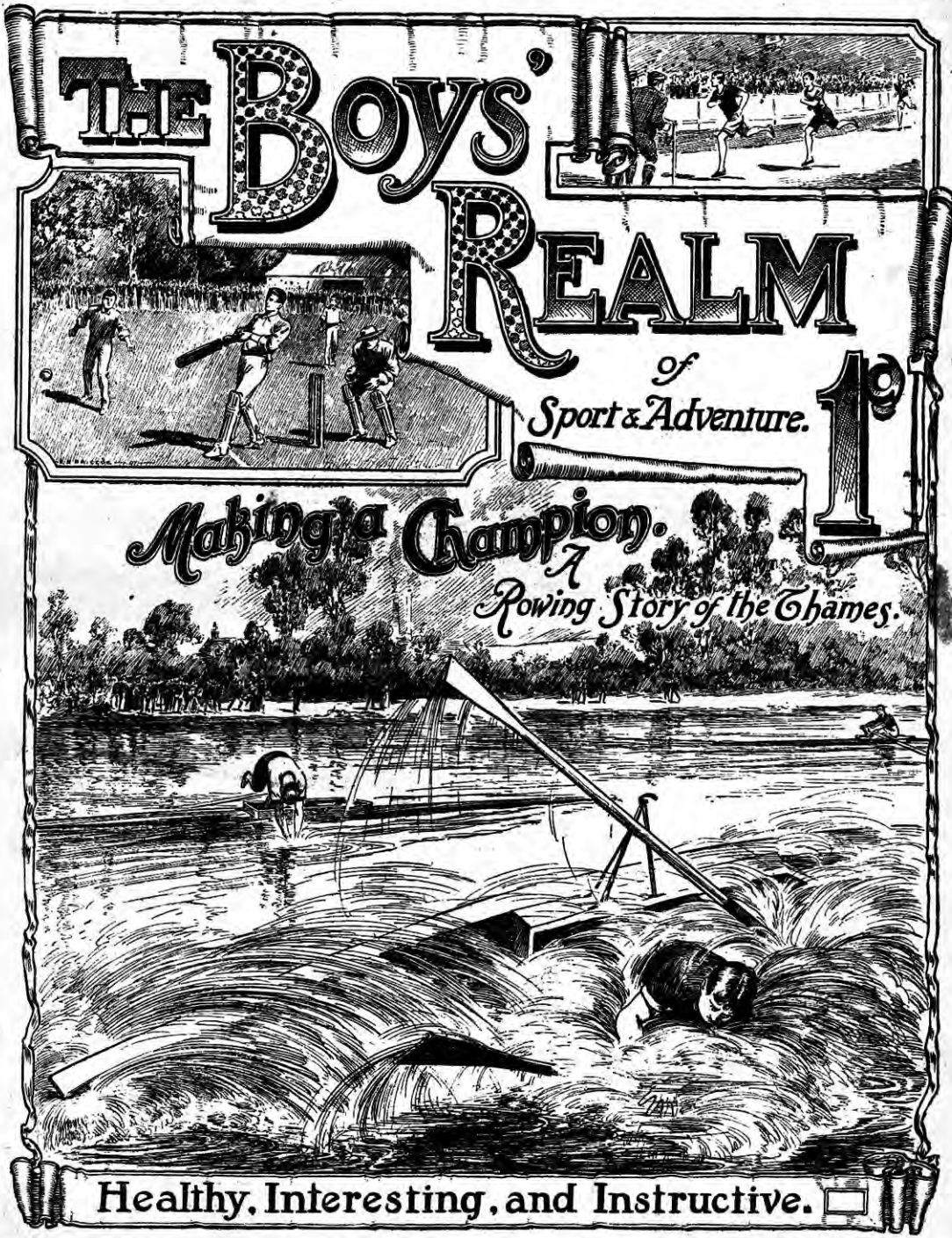
THE BOYS' REALM

of Sport & Adventure.

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Making a Champion.

A Rowing Story of the Thames.



Healthy, Interesting, and Instructive.

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MAKING A CHAMPION.

A ROWING STORY OF THE THAMES.

BY ARTHUR S. HARDY.

THE 1st CHAPTER.
Arthur Stanton is Humiliated—Alfred Hall Gives some Candid Advice.

"ISN'T that Stanton out there?"

The speaker was one of a group of four seated within the club-room of the Cygnet Rowing Club boathouse at Putney, and with the words he indicated a fat, good-looking, unwieldy youth who sat on the balcony outside.

"Yes, that's Stanton, right enough!" responded Edgar Grice, in reply to his chum Heaton's question.

Spring had changed into summer, and Arthur Stanton, leaning lazily back in a deep-seated cane armchair, glanced with blinking eyelids across the river to where the green of Bishop's Park shone brilliantly in the sun.

Arthur Stanton was a young gentleman of means, with a mad passion for sculling. His one great ambition was to win some big race at an up-the-river regatta, and to further this ambition he had joined the Cygnet Rowing Club.

But success had not come to him. Though possessed of amazing strength, his weight, and his disposition to put on flesh on the slightest provocation, together with his love of good eating, prevented his ever getting fit enough to scull his best, or from pulling his weight.

Stanton fancied his sculling, nevertheless, and being a good-natured, generous fellow, accustomed to speak his thoughts without reserve, he had frequently boasted of his ability in the clubhouse, with the result that many who did not understand him had got into the habit of regarding him as a young, vainglorious fool, and Arthur Stanton was the butt of the club-room.

The good fellow didn't mind being twitted a bit. He saw no venom in the attacks his clubmates made upon him. If he had he would have been the first to resent it, and there would have been a row. But he put up with their chaffing, and set out for his row down the Thames upon ebb and flood each day as regularly as clockwork, trying to fit himself for the great day when he would be able to win the sculls at some big regatta out of hand.

He felt sure that one day he would succeed. He had read every book upon sculling ever written. He had often chatted with Gardner, Guy Nickalls, Fox, and Kelly upon the aquatic art, and he had such confidence in his own ability that he refused the assistance of a professional coach and so, with faults in style that increased with every outing, he pulled his racing craft jerkily along the stream to the no small delight and amusement of the members of the Cygnet who had chosen to make him their butt.

Arthur Stanton was not popular. He had inherited a fortune of £40,000 from his father, and this, by judicious investment, he had doubled in the course of a few years.

He was not yet twenty-four years of age, and his great success, his unbounded confidence in himself, and his easy and unsuspecting manner rendered him an object for jealous envy amongst his comrades.

Yet he was a good chap. The professionals who looked after the boats and the boathouse loved him. He always had a sympathetic word for them. He was always trying to do some good for them; and he tipped better than anybody else attached to the Cygnet.

There was one professional, Alfred Hall, an ex-winner of Doggett's Coat and Badge, a young man of twenty-two, who would have laid down his life for Arthur Stanton any day.

When Hall had married, a year before, on very slender means, Arthur Stanton, without saying a word, had bought a small house for him in the neighbourhood of Putney, and had presented it to the newly-married couple as a wedding-present.

Alfred Hall was only waiting an opportunity to show his gratitude. That opportunity, though he hardly dreamed of it as he bustled into the club-room with some teetotal drinks for Grice and his friends, was soon to come.

"I tell you what it is," said Sydney Heaton, as he seized hold of a glass of tonic-water, "I'm sick of Stanton and his airs, Grice. I wish to goodness we could get him out of the club. He and his sculling! He reckons he's a second Kelly. By Jove, what fun it would be, Grice, if you could get him on for a match—Putney to Mortlake! Kid him that he is good enough to win the Wingfield Sculls. You could have a dinner for six tacked on to it as a bet. Champagne, and all that sort of thing, you know. You wouldn't be running any risk, as you'd be bound to beat the beggar. What do you say?"

"By Jove, it's a grand idea!" said Edgar Grice, laughing. "I'll go and tackle him now. Hallo, Stanton!"

"Yes," cried the fat youth lazily from the balcony-seat, in answer to the shout.

"We want you. Come in here quick!"

Stanton, with a yawn—for he was not too pleased at being roused from his siesta, in which he had indulged to ease his aching muscles, rose from the cane chair and came leisurely into the club-room.

It was plainly apparent then how fat he was. He had been called the "fat boy" at school, and again when he had gone up to Rugby. Fat he was still, and his boyish face and ruddy cheeks looked strangely out of place surmounting his huge frame.

"You're coming on in your sculling, are you not, Stanton?" said Heaton, with a wink at his friend Grice.

"Well, I really believe I am," answered Stanton frankly. "When I was out this morning it seemed to me that I managed to get along better than ever. By Jove, I did make the boat skim past the Crab Tree! I don't think I've ever rowed better."

"Think you're good enough to enter for the Diamonds, at Henley, with Grice?" asked Heaton, with another wink at his friend.

"I'm sure I am," said Stanton proudly. "I wouldn't think of letting the chance pass. I'm going to train like blazes. I'll be fitter than ever I've been in my life when Henley comes round."

"Well," said Heaton, inwardly exploding with laughter at the ludicrous figure he fancied Stanton cut, whilst the other two members of the club, who were seated, had all they could do to refrain from bursting into laughter outright, "it wouldn't do you any harm to have a sort of private match with Grice, would it? Grice is the best sculler in the club. I reckon he will win the Diamonds with ease. There's nothing in England can touch him, and I don't think the Americans they will send over will be any good. If you can hold Grice over the Henley distance you will be doing well, Stanton, and even if he beat you it would give you heart to train, wouldn't it, as you've got a good deal of flesh to get off you know?"

Arthur Stanton smiled broadly. He did not suspect a trap.

"I will row Grice, with pleasure!" he said. "Over the championship course, eh?"

"Well, that's rather far," demurred the fat youth. "Let us say from Putney to Chiswick Church. That is quite far enough, especially with the river full of craft."

"Well, then," said Grice, "from Putney to Chiswick be it, Stanton. I don't mind what distance you make it, for you're bound to win, you know"—with a wink at Heaton. "Come, now, as to the prize. We won't make it a money one, you know. Pure-blooded amateurism, and all that sort of thing. What do you say for a dinner for six at the Carlton, Stanton?"

The fat youth's eyes sparkled. The thought of the excellence of Carlton cooking appealed to him irresistibly.

"Certainly," he said. "Let it be a dinner for six at the Carlton. There will be myself Grice, you, Heaton, and Rogers and Pearson here; and we will include our captain, Thompson. He'll appreciate the compliment. Now, when shall we row?"

"Oh, Saturday week," said Grice carelessly; "or Saturday, if you like."

"Make it Saturday," said Stanton eagerly. "The sooner the better. I'm in such douced good form, you know."

"I know you are," said Heaton, with a smile. "If I were you, Grice, I should hedge."

At this Rogers and Pearson, who were listening with delight to the chipping of the unpopular Stanton, burst into an uncontrollable fit of laughter, and left the room.

"It's too much of a joke," roared Rogers, doubling up in the dressing-room. "Stanton's as good as a play."

Meanwhile, the unsuspecting Stanton had watched Rogers and Pearson exit in surprise.

"Really I can't see what those beggars are laughing at," he muttered. Then he added aloud: "All right, Grice, on Saturday. It will be in the evening, of course, at half-past six, when the tide serves?"

"Certainly," said Grice gravely; and Stanton, delighted at having secured the match, returned to his seat upon the balcony, and, unable to resist the seductions of good tobacco, lit a meerschaum pipe, and puffed away to his heart's content.

All this time the professional, Alfred Hall, had been listening to the conversation with a grave face. He liked Arthur Stanton. He knew him to be the best-hearted man in the club, and he loathed to see him made fun of.

As he watched the fat youth smoking contentedly now he turned swiftly on Grice and Heaton, who were screaming with laughter at the joke.

"I don't think it's quite fair, sir," said the winner of Doggett's Coat and Badge gravely, "for you to have the gentleman on like that. You know very well he hasn't got a chance. He's not fit to row a race against you, Mr. Grice, even if he had the ability to beat you, which he hasn't. It's robbing him, and as he is a rare plucked 'un he won't give the race up even when he's beat. He may do himself personal injury."

"Stanton a plucked 'un!" said Grice, with a sneer. "It's the first time I've heard that. Heaton—what do you say?"

"I should think so," said Heaton, with a laugh. "Besides, the brute is unbearable, with his 'gas' and his conceit of himself. It is time it was all taken out of him, and when you've beaten him, Grice, we will make it so hot for him in the club that he'll be jolly glad to resign. And the sooner he is out of it the better."

"I don't know about that, sir," chimed in Alfred Hall quickly and a little indignantly. "It seems to me that Mr. Stanton kept the club going by subscribing heavily to the building-fund when we had the new dressing-rooms and locker-room added, and I don't know what we should have done for prizes if he hadn't given so many last year. The club would feel a draught without him."

Grice flushed angrily. Alfred Hall's words went home to him, for neither he nor Heaton had subscribed to the club building-fund, or had even given a single prize during the last five years, though they had taken many from the club.

"Look here, Hall," said the club's champion sculler indignantly, "your place is to look after the boats, attend to the wants of the members, and mind your own business. Whatever we may think right to do, you have no call to question it; and I tell you what, if you continue to give advice where it is not wanted I shall complain to the club's committee, and we will get another professional to look after us. There are plenty of them about who would be only too glad of the job—do you understand?"

"Yes, sir," answered Alfred Hall humbly; and after casting one glance in Arthur Stanton's direction he turned on his heel and walked out of the club-room without another word.

On the following Saturday evening, there was a record gathering of members of the Cygnet Rowing Club, all of whom had turned up to enjoy the fun of seeing Arthur Stanton beaten.

It was said that the fat youth had put in an astounding amount of practice during the week, and that Alfred Hall had been out with him coaching him, and giving him the best advice, in order to get him into something like shape for the race. But it was also well-known that the unusual amount of exercise Arthur Stanton had indulged in had increased his appetite two-fold, and in order to satisfy the cravings of hunger he had partaken of such a diet that his chance of winning the race was absolutely hopeless. That dinner at the Carlton for six would have to be paid for by him.

The club's launch was out in the river with full steam up, and absolutely packed. It wanted a few minutes to the time of the start, the tide was swinging down on the top of the flood, and already Edgar Grice had entered his racing-shell and was pulling her gracefully out into the river to where the stake-boats were moored.

Arthur Stanton was a little late, and when he appeared the crowd which had gathered on the hard gave him a vociferous cheer. And well they might, for the fat youth presented an imposing appearance. He possessed a gigantic frame, and not all of it was clothed in fat. There was a deal of real, hard muscle there. His biceps were enormous, and there was a roundness about the forearm that excited the envy of many a professional waterman who had come down to look on.

"If he could only get fit!" groaned Alfred Hall, as he stooped over Stanton's racing-shell and slipped the sculls into their places. "My word, he'd make the best of them sit up then!"

"Everything ready?" asked Arthur Stanton of the professional.

"Yes, sir."

The bulky hero of the match took his place upon the sliding-seat.

"Don't forget what I told you, sir," Alfred Hall said, as the big man prepared to pull his racing-shell into midstream. "Keep moving evenly. Do nothing to retard the progress of the boat. Don't jerk, whatever you do, and swing easily upon your slide. Let the slide be subservient to the swing, sir. And whatever you do, don't get excited, sir, and hoick your scull ends up at the beginning of the stroke. Keep the feather right to the turn, sir. Let the sculls fall to their natural depths before you apply your stroke, and when you do apply it, apply it evenly. You won't do so badly if you can remember all those points, sir."

"I'll try to, Hall," said Arthur Stanton genially. "Thank you!"

And the next moment he was swinging his boat away. Alfred Hall gave him one look and shook his head.

"He'll get crab-catching before Hammersmith, for a cert," he muttered. "He ain't used to the excitement of racing. He can't swim much neither. I must keep nigh him in case of accidents."

The professional then got into his light craft, and with a few deft strokes of the sculls, and in a style which called forth the admiration of the bystanders, he impelled his little craft into midstream and waited a few lengths in advance for the principals to start.

He hadn't long to wait, for the starter, wasting no time, snapped his pistol, and the two racing-shells gave way. To the astonishment of not a few on the launch, and of Alfred Hall himself, the fat Arthur Stanton, keeping his balance to a nicety, and applying his strength just as it should be applied, with the first dozen strokes forced his boat to the front. He was sculling in fine form, and do what he would, Edgar Grice could not get on equal terms with him. They swept along on the flood at an amazing pace, and ere the end of the embankment was reached, Arthur Stanton was two lengths and a half in front, and going strong.

The Doggett's Coat and Badge man held him easily enough, however, for there was no professional sculler upon the Thames who could equal Alfred Hall, and as he swept alongside his pupil, the waterman was quick to notice that the fat youth was holding out signals of distress, whilst Edgar Grice, who had never varied his stroke for an instant, was sculling as coolly as you please, and Hall knew that the challenger had the race at his mercy.

Grice was content to permit his rival to do the leading until the mile mark was reached, and here he made his effort and began to go up hand over hand.

Realising the danger of defeat, Arthur Stanton hereabouts began to abandon the rhythm of his stroke, with the result that between the jerks the craft buried her nose deep in the water, and her even progress was disturbed. She lost way between each of the strokes, and Grice, who was far too good a waterman to permit such a fault, with a few vigorous strokes drove his boat up level, and ere another hundred yards had been rowed had obtained a lead of two lengths, which he was increasing with every stroke he took. Stanton had made a good race of it for a mile, but he was obviously outclassed, and as the full realisation of the fact came to him he bit his lip almost through, and tears welled into his eyes. It was the first time he had discovered by actual experience how poor a "plater" he really was, and not the fine thoroughbred racehorse he had imagined himself to be. Those who had flattered him in the clubhouse had doubtless done so because of his wealth, and the way in which he helped the club. Grice was the first man who had offered to row him, and the loser knew by the laughter on board the launch that the whole thing had been a put-up job to make him look ridiculous in the eyes of his clubmates.

In his desperation he pounded the water with his sculls until, despite his now utterly unorthodox method of sculling, by sheer strength he managed to haul back some of his lost ground from Grice, and Alfred Hall, who was the only one of all those who looked on who understood how much the effort cost poor Stanton, shouted to him in encouragement:

"You're gaining, sir!" he cried. "You're gaining. Stick to it! You'll win yet!"

But before Harrods was reached poor Stanton had shot his bolt. His arms hung from his shoulders like lumps of lead, the aching of his muscles was exquisite agony, and his cramped hands only held the sculls by mechanical pressure. He was beaten to the world.

Then, of a sudden, what Alfred Hall had expected happened. One of the sculler's blades was dug deep into the water as if in search of the bottom, the loom caught in the rowlock, and the next moment the racing-shell was bottom upmost, and Arthur Stanton, with his feet entangled in the stretcher-straps, was struggling fiercely in the water in a desperate battle with death.

The professional knew the full extent of the danger. He slipped his feet out of the straps and was over the side of his racing-shell in a moment. A swift stroke or two carried him to the drowning man. He dived below the surface. By some miraculous means and his own determination, he managed to free Stanton's feet, and then, supporting the eighteen stone of human flesh, he struggled valiantly to reach the shore.

Arthur Stanton, half-drowned already, had not the strength to struggle longer.

"I'm done, Hall," he complained. "Let me go. Let me sink. It don't much matter!"

"No, sir!" gasped the waterman, whose stout heart rejoiced, because at last a chance had come to him to repay the gentleman for his great kindness. "If you go under, I go too!"

But neither of them was born to be drowned. The club's launch was brought about and steamed quietly up to them, and willing hands dragged them aboard. As for Grice, he sculled quietly over the course to the finish, and then quietly paddled back to enjoy his triumph.

However, the joke did not seem quite so successful as had been anticipated. Arthur Stanton's great pluck had won him the good opinion of many who had hitherto scoffed at him, and his narrow escape from drowning had sobered the rest.

He had taken his beating in such a sportsmanlike spirit, admitting that Grice was much the better man, and that it had been foolish of him to race, that no one could laugh at him any longer, and Grice felt angry to think that he should have been the means of eliciting such sympathy for the rich and ridiculous fat youth he envied.

Meanwhile, Arthur Hall had assisted Arthur Stanton to dress.

"It's no good," said the fat youth, with a deep sigh. "I shall never make a sculler, Hall. I intend to give it up. I shall resign my membership of the club, and take to golf or something of that sort where I sha'n't have to exert myself so much, and where I shall be in no danger of being drowned."

"And let them have the laugh of you, sir?" queried the young waterman.

"I don't know that I care whether they laugh at me or not," said Arthur Stanton, with a sigh.

"Do you know what's wrong with you, sir?" asked the waterman boldly.

"Everything, I should say," was the sad response.

"Your diet is wrong, sir," said Alfred Hall. "No man who eats as you do could ever do any good at sculling. You are too fat, for another thing. It isn't all constitutional, either, sir. I'd undertake to get rid of most of that for you, sir, in a fortnight; and if you placed yourself in my hands and allowed me to train you, at the same time promising to carry out my instructions to the letter, I'd undertake by the time Henley comes round to turn you out a sculler who'd beat Edgar Grice for certain over the Diamonds Course."

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Arthur Stanton gazed at the waterman with wide-open eyes.

"You're not serious, are you, Hall?" he said, a spark of hope rising in his breast.

"Dead, bed-rock serious, sir."

"Explain."

"Well, sir, at the start of the race to-day, when you remembered what I had told you, and sculled as a man ought to scull, by reason of your greater strength you pulled right away from Mr. Grice."

"On sufferance."

"Pardon me, sir, he was doing all he knew. But then, you see, you weren't fit, and as soon as the strain came you could not respond to it. Your diet was all wrong. You couldn't stay. Your muscles were encumbered by superfluous fat. They tired quickly. Then you fell into the old jerky style that would lose even a champion a race. Grice had the pull of you there. He has style, sir; there is no mistake about that. But you'll beat him, if you leave yourself in my hands."

"You mean it, Hall? You're not saying this to comfort me?"

"Did you ever know me tell anything but the truth, sir?" asked the young waterman, hurt.

"I don't say things merely to please my patrons."

Arthur Stanton thought a while.

"You saved my life, Hall," he said presently. "I shall never forget that. I'll place myself in your hands. What am I to do?"

"Get rid of your fat first, sir."

"I can't, lad. It's constitutional. The faster I work it off, the faster it comes again."

"Wrong diet, sir," said Alfred Hall laconically. "We'll soon get rid of it for you, and then you can begin to think about sculling."

"How am I to do it, then, Hall?"

"Go to Llandrindod, in Wales, and take the special diet and the water there. In a fortnight you won't know yourself, sir. I remember when Mr. Murray Carson, the actor, wanted to get his weight down in order to play 'Captain Kettle' at the Adelphi Theatre, that he went there, and when he came back and played, he was so small that the critics were astounded, and wouldn't for a time believe that it was the same man. You ought to have seen what he got off himself, sir. You go there. I'll make a champion of you soon enough, sir, when you come back."

Arthur Stanton broke into a broad smile, and offered the young waterman his hand.

"As soon as our dinner at the Carlton is over, Hall," he said, "I will go, and if you can do anything with me afterwards, I shall not forget you, I promise."

"Please don't say anything about that, sir," answered the young waterman, flushing. "I want no payment but your good word, sir."

THE 2nd CHAPTER.
Grice is Surprised and Suffers Defeat.

It was Henley time, and the regatta course looked a picture. There had been no rain to spoil the racing of the opening day, and the lawns at Fawley Court and all along the bank, with their flowering gardens of roses, presented a magnificent picture, restful to the eye. Behind the booms were crowded more boats than the regatta had hitherto known, and stationed at their moorings, for which the fees had been excessively high, were some of the finest houseboats the Thames had ever seen.

Bands played on some of the lawns, streams of people lined the banks wherever possible, and with the sun shining down from above upon white-clothed men and women, upon brilliantly-coloured sunshades and cushions, the scene was one long to be remembered.

In no other country in the world could such a gathering be got together. There was a sun haze upon the green hills that formed a background when looking down the straight regatta course towards the island, and the racing was in full swing.

Of the preliminary heats for the Diamonds rowed the day before, Edgar Grice, the popular Cygnet man, had romped in an easy winner from Otto Hagan, of America. The time had been very fast, and the Diamonds were looked upon as a certainty for him.

The other heats had been well contested, and some good men were left in, but the times had all been considerably slower than that of Grice's heat, and some of the competitors had been well pressed, too.

The surprise entry for the regatta was that of Arthur Stanton, of the Cygnet Rowing Club, whom Grice declared to be an outsider, not good enough to win a race at a fourth-class regatta; and the surprise of the meeting so far had been Stanton's refusal to row over when his opponent, Svenig, a Dane, had failed to put in an appearance, owing to a flaw in his racing-shell. Arthur Stanton had appealed to the regatta committee, it was said, for the race to be postponed until the next day, in order to give the Dane a chance. It was sporting of him, at all events, and Stanton made countless friends, especially among the fair sex, by his chivalrous action.

But now the rumour got abroad that the Dane's boat could not be got ready, and Stanton had at length, reluctantly enough, decided to row over. He came paddling along down stream amongst the craft as the course was cleared, and members of the Cygnet Rowing Club, who had not set eyes on him since the night of the dinner for six at the Carlton Hotel, stared in amazement as they saw a tall, stalwart, broomed Hercules sweep easily by, whose big frame did not carry one ounce of superfluous fat upon it.

Here was a change indeed! What did it all mean? And Hall, the professional, had resigned his position at the Cygnet Club a month ago, too, and had not been seen either. Mystery of mysteries!

Heaton, who was standing with his chums Rogers and Pearson upon the lawn at Fawley, stared at them in amazement.

"Good gracious," he gasped, "'Fatty' has got fit! By Jove, he evidently means business! He's rowing in the name of the Cygnet, too. Grice was laughing and sneering at him last night, saying that he would bring the club into ridicule by his entry; but upon my word it doesn't look much like it. If looks go for anything he looks fit enough to win."

The others acquiesced, and they waited in silent impatience for Arthur Stanton to come along. Presently they were joined by Grice, who was clad in white flannels, and wore the Cygnet cap and blazer. The champion sculler looked fit to row for a kingdom.

"Seen Stanton?" asked Heaton, regarding his chum curiously.

"Yes," was the short answer. "Went to the dressing-rooms just now to wish him good luck. What's happened to the beggar? Where have his fat cheeks gone? He looked quite handsome. He's as hard as nails. Suppose he's sculling just as clumsily as ever. Upon my word I don't know what to make of it. Anyway, I know I'm drawn against him in the next heat."

"We shall soon see what he's worth," responded Heaton, setting his Zeiss glasses upon the island far down the river.

"Here he comes," he said presently. "And he seems to be moving, too."

The sculler was coming along, with the umpire's launch directly behind him. His sculls were flashing evenly and nicely and he was keeping a course as true as a die."

"He won't do that in the race," said Grice, shutting his lips.

Arthur Stanton was indulging in a long opener. His early morning practice had not been sufficient for him, and he wished to test what sculling was like in the full glare of the sun.

A round of handclapping came from down the course.

Why?

As the sculler drew nearer the reason was apparent. Arthur Stanton, once so clumsy a sculler, was moving with an ease and grace, and upon as even a slide as ever had been seen at Henley. The feather was carried right to the end of the swing forward, and the scull blades were turned crisp and clean, taking the water at the same moment, and drawn through with a correctness that would have satisfied an expert.

Gone was all Arthur Stanton's fat, and only a tall, brawny athlete remained, such an athlete that Britain might well be proud of, and the members of the Cygnet stared aghast.

He flashed past the winning post amidst a storm of applause, and at once ran his boat into the raft, and got ashore.

There Alfred Hall was awaiting him.

"Do you think I'll do, Hall?" asked the gentleman, with a genial smile lighting up his handsome features.

"Do, sir?" answered the waterman proudly. "You're going to surprise Henley, that's what you're going to do. Grice is in your heat, sir. Don't spare him. Remember how he had you over that race to Chiswick."

"I think I can turn the tables this time," remarked Arthur Stanton grimly.

"Don't get flurried, sir," said the waterman warningly. "Remember Grice is reckoned to be the best class man in the race, and you won't have anything to give away. Remember all the points I've taught you, and above all don't run into the piles or the booms. He won't spare you if you do."

"I'm bound to remember all the points," laughed Arthur Stanton, as he made his way towards the cold shower. "You've driven them into me, Hall, until they are part and parcel of myself."

On the course meanwhile Arthur Stanton's form had quickly been forgotten, though one or two men still praised the young Cygnet man's style, and excitement was soon raised to fever pitch by a fine race between Leander and the Belgians in a heat of the Grand Challenge. Leander won by three feet after seemingly being well beaten.

Then the Wyfolds, the Ladies, and the Visitors were rowed for, and yet another heat of the Diamonds.

This was won by Bulwer, a London Rowing Club man.

It was not until the close of the day's racing that Edgar Grice and Arthur Stanton went down to the starting post for their heat. Grice looked anxious, and ever and anon turned to regard his erstwhile despised opponent critically. What he saw did not tend to render him more confident. Stanton's style was perfect. Still, Grice had had pounds and pounds in hand at their previous meeting, and he was not disposed to look forward to defeat yet.

"I'll bet you fifty pound I beat you, Stanton," he said, in order to try and screw his courage up.

"No bet. I can't bet in money," was the quick reply. "I'll tell you what though, Grice, I'll bet you dinners for the club at the Carlton if you like. Champagne, you know."

That would mean a good deal more than fifty pound, yet Grice took the bet.

"All right," he said, though he didn't at all like the prospect in case he lost, for the money meant a lot to him.

The sun had by this time lost its fierceness, and Grice was glad, for he would not care for a real hot tussle in that tropical heat.

Some delay was made at the post owing to Grice's extra caution. It was plain he feared his man, and he overhauled his slide, his straps, and his sculls carefully before he signified that he was ready.

Down the course hundreds of people had left, making their way to the station in order to avoid the crush, for they reckoned Grice a certainty for this heat of the Diamonds. They regretted for ever afterwards that they did not stay behind.

Hall's instructions to his master had been:

"Let him get away, sir, and row a waiting race. Scull him down. You will find it pay, especially when he thinks he has won the race and finds, too late, that he has shot his bolt. You're strong enough to do it, sir."

Therefore at the pistol, though he got away smartly, Stanton did not put so much into it as Grice, nor did he row so many strokes in the first minute, and Grice at once slowed up with the lead.

Grice's eyes blazed with triumph. He had the pace of his rival! Still, when they had passed the island—and do what he would he could not get more than a length and a half away—Grice began to feel a trifle anxious. On they swept, the sculling of both men rousing the crowd to admiration. Of the two, Stanton was the prettier sculler to watch, Stanton, whom no one outside a rowing club had ever heard of, and everybody attached to one had always ridiculed! The big, bony man was sculling in true professional style. Presently, turning his head, he saw Grice yaw a bit athwart the stream. It was time for him to make his effort.

Never for an instant losing his beautiful even swing, he quickened and at the same time lengthened his stroke, and before Grice had realised the change in the position of affairs Stanton was alongside, sculling beautifully, and right in the centre of the stream.

How the people shouted! Grice began to spurt. Stanton pluckily responded, and the big man's boat forged ahead.

A foot! A yard! A quarter of a length! Half a length! One length! A length of daylight between!

Stanton was winning anyhow. The roar of the people clustered at the finish could be heard, and, setting his teeth in determination, Grice went in chase. He began to gain, but it was his last effort, and, quickening presently, Stanton drew right away, until fifty yards before the finish, Grice, with a groan, released his grasp of his sculls and toppled forward in his seat, completely rowed out.

And the rest? Well, Stanton won the final for the Diamonds in hollow fashion, and returned to Putney the hero of the Cygnet.

Grice had to pay for the dinner to the club, but so disgusted was he that he resigned his membership, and so long as Stanton entered for any regatta so would he scratch, for he dared not meet his conqueror again.

And what of Alfred Hall who had made a champion of Arthur Stanton? Well, he serves two masters—his club and Mr. Stanton—and his future in life is assured. His loyalty, and his great ability both as sculler and coach, stand out a shining example to all other watermen upon the river.

THE END.

(Next week a fine complete running tale by Jack North will appear.)

CLUBS IN "THE BOYS' REALM" FOOTBALL LEAGUE.



QUEEN STREET JUNIOR GUILD F.C.: Sec., Mr. Owers, 27, Kidd Street, Woolwich.

CLUBS IN "THE BOYS' REALM" FOOTBALL LEAGUE.



SOTON EAGLE F.C.: Sec., Master C. Picury, Eagle House, Palmerston, Southampton.

Great New Serial Starts Next Week!

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.

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. 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, 7s.; 6 months, 3s. 6d.; 3 months, 1s. 9d.—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.

It Starts Next Week.

I HAVE very great pleasure in announcing that in next Saturday's issue of THE BOYS' REALM the opening chapters of a stirring new school and adventure story will appear. The title of this yarn will be,

"THE SCHOOL ON THE CLIFF,"

and I can assure every one of my friends that it is going to score a marked success. I am absolutely certain of this fact, because as I read the story it thrilled me through and through, and I was not satisfied until I had read the very last word of the very last line. The central character is a lad named Jack Jaunty. This is not his real name—that will be revealed later on—but it is the name he goes by throughout the greater part of the story. I am expecting that Jack Jaunty will very shortly be as much loved a character with my friends as Tom Tartar was when the story of his adventures was being told in these pages. So, my loyal friends, look out for this great new story on Saturday next, and let all your friends know that it is about to commence.

A Running Story.

I HAVE been asked by a large number of readers to publish a long, complete running story in THE BOYS' REALM. As I always endeavour to meet the wishes of my friends whenever possible, I have made arrangements that next Saturday's issue of our paper shall contain a long, complete running tale by Mr. Clement Hale, entitled

"THE SILVERDALE HANDICAP."

The other complete story in that number will be one of Mr. Graydon's popular "Off-Duty Yarns," published under the title of "The Begum's Treasure."

Criticism From a Lincoln Chum.

FROM John F. P., one of my many chums who reside in Lincolnshire, I have received a rather long, but interesting letter. My friend tells me that he has been going to write to me for three years past; and besides being a reader of "The Boys' Friend" for five years, he has read "The Boys' Herald" and this paper since the issue of their first numbers. That stamps John F. P. as a loyal supporter of my papers, and as one whose criticism is to be taken seriously.

My friends know that I invite criticism at all times, and I thank John F. P. most sincerely for his letter. It is by the study of the letters from my chums, who have the best interests of their favourite papers at heart, that I am able to remedy any weak points that may show themselves, and altogether do my utmost to satisfy and please every reader. That is the spirit in which I take criticism, whether it is favourable or unfavourable to my periodicals.

My friend complains that some of my chums ask absurd questions, which I answer upon the Chat page. He also grumbles that the recipe for re-enamelling a bicycle has appeared so often in THE REALM. "The space," says John F. P., "might be given up to something more useful."

Now, in this matter I think my friend is just a wee bit selfish. An editor's duty is to endeavour to please not one reader individually, but as many as possible in every way conceivable. That I have succeeded in this effort—succeeded beyond the efforts of all other editors of boys' papers—is shown by the huge circulation of this paper. In running THE BOYS' REALM, in answering my readers' letters on the Chat page, I do not consider one reader, I consider them all.

When a reader writes asking me to tell him what to do with his yellow teeth, I tell him of a cheap preparation which will make them white. I do this not for his benefit alone, but for others who, seeing the recipe, will straightway commence cleaning their teeth, which they would not have done had the paragraph not been printed. Again, I printed the recipe for re-enamelling a bicycle on several occasions, because at the beginning of the cycling season so many of my friends, who had destroyed the copy of the paper containing the original recipe, wrote asking for it. I have had over a score of letters asking for this information in a single day. Should I be acting in the best interests of my friends were I to refuse them this information because it has appeared before?

John F. P. need not read these paragraphs when he sees them in my Chat on this page. He will find good value for his penny in other parts of the paper. John F. P. pays one penny for his weekly copy, but every issue costs me in salaries to my staff, payments to authors and artists, and in printing and publishing expenses, over £500. As I said, I think my friend is just a little bit selfish. He may not want a remedy for discoloured teeth or a recipe for re-enamelling a bicycle, but very many other readers do. Remember this, my friend, and think a little more kindly of the readers who possibly are younger and not so well informed as yourself.

John F. P. asked me not to regard his criticism as the outcome of bigoted ideas. I do not. May I hope, in return, that this reply to his letter will be accepted as my defence to his statements, and that there is not the slightest trace of ill-feeling in the matter. Again, my friend, I thank you very heartily for your most interesting missive.

OUT FRIDAY, JUNE 7TH.

TWO MORE NEW ADDITIONS TO

"The Boys' Friend" 3d. Complete Library.

No. 19—

"NELSON LEE'S PUPIL,"

A Complete Story of the Famous Detective.

HOW HE DISCOVERED AND ADOPTED "NIPPER."

By MAXWELL SCOTT.

No. 20—

"THREE BRITISH BOYS,"

A Splendid Complete School Tale.

By MAURICE MERRIMAN.

PLEASE ORDER YOUR COPIES TO-DAY.

He Wants to Become a Policeman.

A LONDON reader of THE BOYS' REALM, whose initials are A. F., wishes me to give him some information as to the means of entering the Metropolitan Police Force.

The following particulars will, I am sure, be read with interest by not only my friend, but by other readers:

In order to enter the police force the primary qualification is a good character. In most towns the standard of height is 5ft. 8in. A medical examination is stipulated, and is somewhat similar to that undergone by recruits in the Army and Navy. The other qualifications are simple reading, writing, and arithmetic, with special regard to spelling. If the candidate is accepted, he spends a period of time on probation, and then makes a declaration that he will serve the King dutifully and loyally.

The Metropolitan Police Force pay commences at 24s. per week, with an increment every two years until 30s. is reached. The uniform is provided, and consists of two pairs of boots, a tunic, a helmet, and two pairs of trousers each year, and an overcoat every three years.

The rules of the Force are very strict with regard to breaches of discipline.

Detectives are a distinct class, having their quarters at New Scotland Yard, S.W. They are selected from the police, and are chosen for their intelligence, aptitude for tracking criminals, superior education, and knowledge of foreign languages. They receive salaries according to their talents.

Application for admittance to the Metropolitan Police should be made to the local station or to the Chief Commissioner, New Scotland Yard, S.W.

In provincial Forces, application should be sent to the head constable of the district.

My Brief Reply Corner.

W. Thompson, 171, Moorland Road, Splott, Cardiff, would like to exchange a portrait postcard of Cardiff Rugby Football Club, the Springbok vanquishers, for a portrait postcard of the Newcastle United Football Team.

A book dealing with Ju-Jitsu can be obtained (S. D., Runcorn,) of Messrs. Spalding, Fetter Lane, London. Its price is 1s.

You might find the whereabouts of your aunt who lives in Belfast, F. B., Bethnal Green, if you were to insert an advertisement in either the "Belfast Weekly News" or the "Northern Whig." If you sent them a letter, enclosing a stamped postcard, the manager would tell you the cost of such an advertisement.

YOUR EDITOR (H.E.).

Daily Mail.

THE LEAGUE OF YOUNG ATHLETES.

A Great New Organisation affiliated to "The Boys' Realm," banding together Junior Athletes who have shown Marked Ability in given Sports by performing certain Feats set by the President.

To obtain a BOYS' REALM Diploma, and also to qualify for Membership of THE LEAGUE OF YOUNG ATHLETES, readers must perform one of the following feats:

SECTION 1.—SWIMMING.

To any reader up to the age of 16 who can swim 100 yards will be awarded a handsome embossed Diploma stating this fact and making him a member of the League of Young Athletes. In addition, a BOYS' REALM Third Class Standard Medal will be awarded to any reader who can perform one of the following tests up to and including 100 yards, a Second Class Medal for 200 yards, and a First Class Medal for 440 yards, in accordance with the conditions stated at foot.

Age 12-15. APPLICANTS MUST SWIM—		Age 16-18. APPLICANTS MUST SWIM—	
40 yards in	35 secs.	40 yards in	30 secs.
100 " "	1 m. 55 secs.	100 " "	1 m. 30 secs.
220 " "	4 m. 0 secs.	220 " "	3 m. 40 secs.
440 " "	8 m. 30 secs.	440 " "	8 m. 0 secs.

SECTION 2.—RUNNING.

Age 12-15. APPLICANTS MUST RUN—		Age 16-18. APPLICANTS MUST RUN—	
100 yards in	14 secs.	100 yards in	12 secs.
300 " "	45 secs.	300 " "	38 secs.
440 " "	60 secs.	440 " "	57 secs.
880 " "	2 m. 35 secs.	880 " "	2 m. 15 secs.
One mile "	5 m. 30 secs.	One mile "	5 m. 10 secs.

Application must be made on the Form below, and must be accompanied by details of the performance, vouched for by a headmaster, clergyman, trainer, or some responsible adult person approved by the President. A penny stamp for return postage must be enclosed.

THE LEAGUE OF YOUNG ATHLETES.

I (Name).....

(Address).....

desire to become a member of this Institution. Enclosed I send particulars of my performance.

To obtain a BOYS' REALM Standard Medal, in addition to the handsome Diploma awarded gratis, applicants should send Six of the above Forms cut from one issue of this paper. The necessary copies may be bought or obtained from friends.



PELHAM TO THE RESCUE!

THE STORY OF A CRICKET MATCH

BY MARTIN SHAW

THE 1st CHAPTER.
Twenty Pounds Wanted at Once.

"I'M in a hole, Frank—a brute of a hole! I must have twenty pounds before to-morrow week; and if you can't help me, I don't know what to do."

Frank Lawson whistled shrilly, and gazed into his friend's somewhat pale, unhealthy face.

"What do you think, Harold?" he answered, with a mirthless laugh. "You know my affairs as well as I do, or ought to, considering you're a clerk in Willis's Bank and I'm ditto in the Old County. They may pay princely salaries to johnnies in London banks, but if Littleton is a fair sample of a country town, they don't mean one to grow fat on what they give you here. But what's the trouble? What do you want the money so badly for?"

Harold Liversedge hesitated; then he looked almost fearfully up and down the quiet, country lane along which the two bank-clerks were walking as though afraid that there might be some unseen witness of what he was about to say. Finally he muttered:

"I was precious hard up. I'd got into debt, and borrowed twenty pounds out of the bank. I can keep it quiet till to-morrow week. But if I haven't replaced the cash by then the fat's in the fire, and——"

His silence was eloquent enough. And, indeed, what need was there of further explanation?

Frank Lawson's usually ruddy face took on a pallid hue.

"By Jove!" he said. "But I didn't think it was as bad as that. Is there no one to whom you can go?"

"No one," replied the other, with finality. "I haven't a thing in my possession that's worth as much. My old governor is as poor as a church mouse. I've no convenient rich uncle such as you read of in stories, and I'm about as likely to come into any money as I am of inventing a flying-machine. But something must be done, or I'm ruined, and they'll send me to gaol!"

"Can't you get a tip for a horserace that'll be a cert.," said Lawson, with a faint attempt at a smile, "or turn highwayman, or something?"

But it was plain that his comrade resented his efforts at witticism. "How can you talk like that, Frank?" he cried passionately. "I must raise the money somehow, I tell you."

"Must" seems a rum sort of word," responded the other. "What on earth you were to steal the money, for it comes to that, seeing that you never had any prospect of paying it back!"

"A nice sort of friend you are!" replied Liversedge miserably. "Can't you suggest anything I'd do—anything to pay it back."

"Rob Peter to pay Paul, eh?" remarked Lawson cynically. "There, I'm really beastly sorry for you, old man. Let's see if we can't think of some way out of the hole."

They walked on together in silence for a while. Suddenly Lawson said:

"You know Denton—Howard Denton, the draper's son? Well, he's more money than brains, though he's as close as can be about shelling out. Not that he'd give me the money, or lend it, for that matter. But he offered to bet me twenty to one in sovereigns the other day that Penwood would beat Littleton in the cricket match on Saturday."

"Well, of course he did," answered Liversedge, "seeing that Pelham is playing for Penwood. Considering that Pelham is about the best bowler in the county, and a very fair bat, too, the match is a give-away for Penwood. I don't see how that is going to help me."

"No," went on the other, "I dare say you don't; but supposing Pelham couldn't play. I reckon that Littleton could pull it off then, right enough."

"Yes, and if Denton got to know that Pelham wasn't going to turn up, naturally he wouldn't bet. There's nothing to be got out of that quarter."

"I'm not so sure about that," pursued Lawson. "Look here, Harold, set your wits to work. Supposing we could contrive to get the bet taken up, and could then manage it so that Pelham didn't turn up in time to play. What would be wrong with our chance of netting more than twenty quid? I'd offer to lay Denton thirty to one about Littleton's chance. He'd rise to the bait like a trout to a fly; and he'd pay right enough if he lost. I'll say that for him. He's mean, and all that, but he's a sportsman."

A wave of colour flooded Harold's cheeks.

"But how on earth are we going to get Pelham out of the way? He's a strong chap. We couldn't hope to kidnap him. That sort of thing only takes place in yarns."

"I'm not so sure," returned the other darkly. "I've got the pith of an idea; and I tell you this, Harold, that now the notion's come to me, I see a way of making more than a miserable twenty pounds over the business. Come back home to my digs, and we'll have a pow-pow. And keep your pecker up, old boy; I'll pull you out of the hole yet."

THE 2nd CHAPTER.
At the Tithe House.

THE cricket match of the year in Southshire was undoubtedly Penwood versus Littleton. It was only in the previous year to that in which our present story took place that Penwood had lowered the victorious colours of Littleton, who previous to that had been unbeaten for five years in succession.

And it was undoubtedly the advent of Dick Pelham to Penwood that had been the turning-point in the tide of defeat for the latter place, for Pelham was a cricketer of quite unusual calibre.

He had played for his University, and was undoubtedly one of the best and fastest bowlers in England. He had given up county cricket for two reasons.

Firstly, he had not the means to enable him to indulge in the game seriously as an amateur—he had a hatred of anything in the nature of veiled professionalism—and secondly, he had come to Penwood in order that he might there, amidst delightful surroundings and in a modest fashion, work at perfecting an invention he had long had in his mind—nothing more nor less than the perfection of an aeroplane, which he fondly hoped would be the first really serious contribution to the problem that had baffled scientists for so long—the problem of aerial navigation.

He had taken a little house with secluded grounds, and there he worked away at his hobby, taking relaxation from his labours in an occasional friendly cricket match.

"If the aeroplane is a failure," he would say jokingly, "I shall turn professional cricketer."

This year the fixture between the two clubs was to take place at Littleton, on the beautiful ground of Sir Robert Alford, himself at one time a fine cricketer.

Sir Robert prided himself on possessing one of the finest private grounds in England. It was due to his munificence and public spirit that Littleton town was able to boast so flourishing a club.

There was a man in Penwood village, a retired London tradesman, possessed of a competency that allowed him to live comfortably enough in the little place, who for some reason or other hated Pelham, though he was careful not to betray his innate dislike of the young man.

Pelham was deservedly popular in the village, and Blaker—such was the name of the ex-shopman—had enough sense to keep his dislikes to himself.

The day before the match Dick was somewhat surprised to receive a visit from Blaker, who appeared at the young man's house with a smile on his somewhat rubicund, coarse-featured face, to deliver himself in the following fashion:

"I'm very keen on Penwood winning the match to-morrow, Mr. Pelham, and I shall consider it an honour if you will allow me to drive you over to Littleton in my trap. I should think you might prefer that to going over in the charrybang with the rest of the eleven, and I've a noo mare as'll take us over in no time. It 'ud be an honour to me if you'd accept my invite."

The man spoke with the utmost friendliness, and though Dick was slightly surprised at receiving the invitation, he was far too much of a gentleman to betray anything of his true feelings.

He accepted the offer with cordiality, and put Blaker's officiousness down to the fact that it would appear as an honour to him. Blaker—to be seen in company with one who was, after all, a man of no little note in the cricketing world.

The day of the match dawned fair and fine, an ideal summer day, with a faint breeze to temper the heat of the sun, such an one as to rejoice indeed the heart of the true cricket-lover.

The match was timed to begin at eleven o'clock. Punctually at ten Blaker, on the box-seat of a smart little gig, between the shafts of which was a raking, strawberry mare, who gave evidence that she would indeed "take them over in no time," appeared at Pelham's modest abode.

They started at once. As they spun along the high-road Blaker said, with a smile:

"By the by, Mr. Pelham, what do you say to going by way of Honeysuckle Lane? It's only a little further, and we shall be sure to meet no motors that way. Besides, we shall pass Higham Tithe Barn, which is a fine specimen of such a place. If you've never seen it, you ought to. There ain't many of 'em left in the country."

"Excellent!" responded Dick, who was in the best of humours, in view of the game before him, for he loved cricket, as should all Britishers worthy of the name; and there was some satisfaction in knowing that if victory was to attend the efforts of Penwood it would be no little on account of his own prowess.

Neither did he notice the somewhat unpleasant grin that appeared on Blaker's face after his ready acquiescence to the ex-shopman's plan.

For how could he guess that there was anything sinister underlying Blaker's remarks. He had no enemy in the world, as far as he knew. Besides, there was absolutely no reason why anyone should wish him harm.

Presently the pair found themselves driving along a leafy, sequestered lane. Blaker pointed ahead with his whip.

"There's the barn," he said. "You can see it through the trees."

A tithe barn, it may be as well to explain, was in days gone by where the tenants of the lords of the manor on which the buildings was situated were wont to assemble to pay their tithes or taxes, and although there are numbers of these fine old structures scattered about the country, they are no longer used for the original purpose for which they were destined, not only as a storehouse of grain, but also to receive the tithes, as I have explained.

Higham Tithe Barn was a fine building of stone and timber, with a tiled roof, upon which the lichen grew, grey and gold and red, with here and there patches of green moss to add to the colour.

"Tell you what, Mr. Pelham," said Blaker, "why shouldn't we get down and have a look at the old place? We can get in, and if you haven't seen the interior, you ought to. It's hundred o' years old, and well worth lookin' at."

Pelham acquiesced in this suggestion readily enough. So Blaker hitched the mare to a gate-post, and side by side the two men approached the old place, which was set in the middle of a field, ringed round by trees.

Not a soul was in sight. The spot was remote, and seeing that it was Saturday, no labourers were there, for it was pay-morning, and they would surely be at the bailiff's office receiving their weekly wage. A huge oaken doorway opened into the great barn.

Blaker pushed open the portal and entered the huge structure, Pelham at his heels. As the latter crossed the threshold, he became suddenly aware of two shadowy forms that seemed to spring at him from out of the gloom—it was dark within the barn. Before he could raise a hand in self-defence, he was dealt a severe blow on the side of the head with a sandbag, or some similar missile. He dropped to the ground like a felled bullock, and consciousness left him.

THE 3rd CHAPTER.

IT was eleven o'clock, and the cricket field at Littleton presented a gay picture. There was a big tent, where luncheon was to be served for the rival elevens, and all round the ground were the inhabitants of the two places, and, indeed, of the whole neighbourhood; for, as has been stated, the match was one of the functions of the year for Penwood and Littleton.

The rival captains had tossed, and Littleton had won. The wicket being plumb and true, the owners had elected to go in first. Everything was ready for the start. Only Dick Pelham had not put in an appearance yet, and already speculation was rife as to what could have become of him.

The Penwood captain, to say nothing of his team, could not conceal their annoyance.

"This isn't like him," said Trevor, the Penwood skipper. "Let's hope he'll turn up soon. We can't keep Littleton waiting, though. We shall have to start without him, and James and Collins will have to start our bowling. If he doesn't turn up, I don't know what we shall do. We can't afford to give Littleton many runs, as it is."

However, as the minutes dragged on, and still Pelham showed no signs of appearing, a start was made without him, and a youth despatched to Penwood, six miles away, on a bicycle, to make inquiries concerning the missing cricketer.



A big motor-car throbs noisily towards the pavilion. One of its occupants is standing up and wildly waving his straw hat. It is Dick Pelham.

Pelham to the Rescue!

(Continued from the previous page.)

Neither Frank Lawson nor his chum Liversedge had put in an appearance on the ground yet. They did not leave their banks till about two o'clock. The draper's son, Howard Denton, though, however, got up regardless of expense, as the saying goes, and not a little perturbed at the non-arrival of Pelham.

As well he might be. For, secure in the belief that Pelham would play for Penwood, he had registered two bets at long odds with Harold Liversedge and Frank Lawson against Littleton. And without Pelham's lightning deliveries he knew that Penwood could not hope to win.

Where was Dick Pelham? That was the question that flew from mouth to mouth. He had not driven over from Penwood in the hired char-a-banc, neither could anyone say whether he had ever started from his house. The fact remained that he was absent, neither were Littleton slow to profit by his absence. The lunch interval came, and Littleton had scored 64 for four wickets, with two of their best bats in.

The boy had returned from Penwood to say that Pelham had left the house at about ten o'clock, presumably to come to Littleton, but the old woman who acted as housekeeper to the young fellow was unable to give any further information on the subject. No one thought of connecting Blaker with the young man's disappearance, neither was the ex-shopkeeper on the ground.

It was very evident that he did not intend to turn up. Yet no one thought of connecting his disappearance with foul play. There was nothing for it but that Penwood should continue to play a man short.

We need not dwell on the full details of the first innings of the Littleton eleven. Suffice it to say that they were all dismissed for the very creditable total of 125 at about three o'clock, leaving their rivals four hours either to win or to be beaten, for there would plainly be no time for both teams to have a couple of innings; so that the issue would hang on whether the ten men of Penwood could top their opponents' score.

The very first ball sent down by Tyler, the Littleton fast bowler, upset the stumps of Tom Prosser, Penwood's best bat; and three balls later the same bowler accounted for Airey, the blacksmith, a hard hitter who had often proved a thorn in Littleton's side, with only three runs on the telegraph.

At half-past three, more than half the wickets of the hapless eleven were down for a paltry 42 runs, twenty of which had been compiled by young Lightwood—a farmer, who was batting well and with confidence, though he could apparently get no one to stay with him.

Already the result of the match was a foregone conclusion. And in a shady corner of the ground Harold Liversedge and Frank Lawson lay on their backs, smoking cigarettes and already congratulating themselves that the bets they had made with Denton were as good as won.

"It'll be a lesson to me, Frank," Liversedge said, in a low voice. "I only hope to goodness we sha'n't get found out. It was a desperate remedy, but, by George, it was worth it!"

To which his chum replied:

"Nothing venture, nothing have, my boy."

THE 4th CHAPTER.
An Opportune Rescue.

DICK PELHAM came back to his senses to find himself lying, in semi-darkness, upon a piled-up bundle of straw, and for a few moments he could do nothing save lie perfectly motionless, and try and recall the events that had led up to his present plight.

Then he tried to get up, and, to his amazement and chagrin, discovered that he was bound hand and foot, and that none of his most strenuous efforts availed him in the slightest degree. A gag in his mouth made it impossible for him to utter any sound that might attract aid to his side.

Why he had been thus mishandled, thus bound and gagged by such dishonour, he could not for the life of him imagine. The whole affair savoured more of the lawless times of the last century than of these matter-of-fact, law-abiding days. Neither had he had anything of value on his person.

Who his assailants had been, he could not for the life of him imagine. He wondered whether Blaker had been treated in the same manner. One thing was very evident, there would be no cricket-match for him that afternoon.

He struggled again, wildly, impotently. The rascals who had brought him to this plight had done their work with thoroughness. Then a swift pang of dismay went through him. It was Saturday! To-morrow would be Sunday, and no one would be likely to come to the barn on the Sabbath. Even supposing his old housekeeper were to arouse folks to help find her master, they would never dream of looking for him in Higham Tithe Barn.

His only chance was Blaker. And, for all he knew to the contrary, Blaker might be in like evil plight to himself.

So the time dragged on, and the minutes seemed hours to the unfortunate young fellow. What could they all be thinking of him? How they would miss his bowling? Yet his regrets were as vain as his hopeless struggles to break loose.

After a while he must have dozed off into a fitful slumber, from which he was awakened by a sound of voices, and instantly his brain cleared, and his pulses thrilled with the prospect of a release from his quandary.

"What a gorgeous old place, Hal!" he heard a cultured voice say. "Don't I wish it belonged to me now! I'd have it restored and done up, you may bet. If there's anything in the business that has brought us here, if we do find what we're after, I'll try and buy back the old place. Have you got the plan? Let's have another look at it. The place we want must be over there in that corner where that heap of straw lies."



THIS FINE
GIPSY STORY
IS
JUST COMMENCING
IN
"The Boys' Herald."

Read it now, or you'll be sorry later.

Look out for this illustration on next Thursday's cover.

A minute or so later the helpless prisoner knew that the moment of his release had come. Two men were bending over him, with the utmost amazement writ large on their faces; two young fellows of about the same age as himself. It did not take them long to free him.

"What on earth is the meaning of this?" cried one of them. "Who are you, and how do you come here in this plight?"

In as few words as possible Dick told them the story of his discomfiture. Then he cried:

"What time is it?"

"Four o'clock," replied one of them—Hal Fenn, as he said his name was.

The other was Reginald Mortimer; he who had owned to having possessed more than a cursory interest in the old barn.

"I don't know what you want here," Dick Pelham went on rapidly; "but I must get back to Littleton with all the speed I can. I was due to play in a cricket-match there to-day. And I should like to explain that my absence was not of my own contriving."

"We have a motor-car outside," returned Mortimer; "we'll run you over in no time. I never heard such a rum tale. I wonder who on earth can have played this game for you! Our business has kept for a hundred and twenty years, it will doubtless keep for a few hours longer. So come on. I've heard of you as a cricketer. You were at Oxford with my brother David. He got his Blue when you did. And while we spin over I'll tell you my story, and why it is that Fate sent me and Hal here to the Tithe Barn. Talk about romance; strikes me we've lived through a pretty fair one to-day! I'll turn yarn-writer, and spin it when it's all over."

And though he did not quite do this, yet it was through his courtesy that the present historian has been able to tell the tale that he has endeavoured to set down for your delectation.

THE 5th CHAPTER.
At the Last Moment.

IT was a quarter-past four, and eight of the Penwood wickets were down for 86. In other words there was but one wicket to fall, and 67 runs to get for victory.

Lightwood was still in and well set. But, alas! for the hopes of his side. The last man was Dolman, the gardener of the vicar of Penwood, a very fair wicket-keeper, but as a bat, beneath contempt. The first straight ball would doubtless prove his undoing.

An indeed, it did, for Bert Dolman took middle with the most serious mien, straddled out his legs, and gripped his bat to smite wildly at a fast yorker on the leg-stump that shattered his stumps and brought a wild yell of delight to the lips of the supporters of Littleton.

For the match was over. The match had been won. Already the fielders began to move towards the pavilion, with jubilation writ large upon their countenance.

But, hallo! What is that? A big motor-car has suddenly shot through the gate opening on to the field—a car containing three men, one of whom, in the tonneau, is standing up and wildly waving his straw hat aloft.

It is seen that he is in flannels, that he wears a blazer of faded dark blue, the insignia of Oxford University.

The car throbs noisily towards the pavilion, skirting the line of spectators, who have now no eyes for anything save the figure standing up within it—the figure of Dick Pelham.

"Hold on!" he cries, that all may hear his words. "I'm late; but it wasn't my fault! Let me have my innings!"

For he can read the fateful message on the telegraph: "58—9—0!"

There were two persons present whose faces turned green with fear and apprehension—two young men, in cheap panamas and ready-made flannel suits, with startling ties, who rose guiltily to their feet and slunk off from the scene.

I need hardly tell you that their names were Harold Liversedge and Frank Lawson. "For conscience doth make cowards of us all!"

It was beyond credence that Dick Pelham and young Lightwood could win the match—could make 67 runs between them when the whole side had failed so lamentably. Yet, as Dick put his pads on and walked out towards the crease, he set his teeth hard.

The first ball sent down to him went to the leg boundary for four, the second he put through the slips, for a very pretty two, the third he patted past cover-point for one. This gave Lightwood the bowling, and the young farmer, thoroughly set, as we have seen, presented with an unlooked-for half-volley by Tyler, boldly carted it for one of the cleanest sixes ever witnessed on the Littleton ground.

Three more overs saw 90 up, and the Littleton captain put on two new bowlers. Dick Pelham promptly showed his appreciation of the change by smiting the new man twice running to the boundary for four, sending the 100 up, to a salvo of cheers from his admirers, two balls later with a very pretty glance shot through the slips.

One wicket to fall, and 26 runs to get! Would the last two hopes of Penwood pull the match out of the fire?

Let me out a long story short, and relieve your suspense by assuring you that they did, though just as 130 was registered, amid a perfect tornado of cheers, Lightwood was caught in the deep field when running out to hit. But what did that matter? Thanks to him and Dick Pelham the match had been lost and won.

And the two heroes of the day were carried shoulder-high to the pavilion by their supporters, while—to paraphrase Lord Macaulay—"o'en the ranks of Littleton could scarce forbear to cheer!" For the feat was one long to stand out in the annals of Southshire cricket.

THE 6th CHAPTER.
Dick Pelham is Lenient.

NOTHING now remains for us but that we should gather up the threads of the narrative. We will first explain how it came about that Reginald Mortimer and Hal Fenn happened to turn up at Higham Tithe Barn, and in the very nick of time, as far as the fate of the famous cricket match was concerned, and the thwarting of the plot that owed its inception to Lawson and Liversedge.

A hundred years ago Higham Manor, and, therefore, Tithe Barn as well, had been in the possession of the Mortimer family. The Mortimer of those days, always supposed to be a very wealthy man, had died, to leave to his heirs only a very slender portion, so slender, indeed, that it had been found necessary to sell the estate, notwithstanding the fact that there was evidence to show that somewhere or other he had concealed a large treasure, either in money or valuables.

It was left to Reginald Mortimer to chance upon—in what manner we need not concern ourselves—the key to the mystery of his ancestor's wealth, which, as it turned out, had been concealed within the old barn, mostly in solid gold coins, and worth at a generous estimate over one hundred thousand pounds sterling.

By a curious coincidence—and, after all, the world is full of such, for truth always beggars fiction—Mortimer had come to seek for his inheritance on the very day that had seen Dick's unlooked-for accident. How the coincidence had benefited Pelham and Littleton Cricket Club we have already seen.

On the Monday following the match, Dick received a visitor, in the person of John Morgan, manager of the bank in which Liversedge was a clerk. Let me give you the bank-manager's own words, to explain his presence at Pelham's house.

"The story I have to tell you, Mr. Pelham," said Morgan, after the usual polite formalities had passed between the two, "is a strange and not particularly edifying one. I am going to leave it to your judgment to pass sentence on the wretched youth responsible for the whole mad business. One of my clerks, by name Harold Liversedge, got into money difficulties some time ago. Not content with that, he borrowed—I use the word in its most liberal interpretation—twenty pounds from the coffers of the bank to tide over his liabilities.

"Then the time came when it was necessary that he should repay the loan, and he, together with another enterprising young ruffian, conceived the idea of taking steps to make Littleton win the match against Penwood, and by backing the former at long odds to recoup themselves handsomely for this misplaced ingenuity.

"It so happened that there is a certain man named Blaker, who, for no reason whatever, hates you, and Liversedge and his chum found that he was perfectly willing to aid them in any scheme that might have your discomfiture in it. What did the worthy Blaker do then? He actually hired a couple of ruffians to sandbag you, to truss you up in the Tithe Barn, and to leave you there until the match was over. Blaker was going to recoup you, after concocting a yarn that he himself had been roughly handled by the footpads, and was, therefore, unable to do anything sooner than he did.

"But the best-laid schemes will miscarry, as I need hardly remind you, and this one was doomed to failure, as you will understand better than I can tell you, for Liversedge, who made a clean breast of the whole business, was unable to say how you had been liberated from your unpleasant plight. But, anyhow, there's the story, and, as I have said, a peculiarly unedifying one it is."

For a few moments Dick said nothing. At last he said:

"Mr. Morgan"—there was a faint smile on his face as he spoke—"you must give the youngster another chance. He's had a lesson that, I'll swear, he won't forget as long as he lives. He and his pal must be pardoned. I hope you will grant me this favour. As for Blaker"—his jaw hardened—"I'll visit that gentleman with a horsewhip. If he cares to take out a summons for assault against me when I've finished with him he's perfectly at liberty to do so. But I can't help thinking that he'll take his licking lying down."

And in this surmise Dick proved a true prophet. More than that, he shortly afterwards took his burly figure and rubicund visage out of Penwood, vowing in his wild vengeance against his chastiser, threats that were never carried out.

Neither Dick Pelham nor John Morgan ever lived to regret the fact that they had decided on leniency towards the wretched bank-clerks.

Both are doing well at present, and are not likely ever to repeat the mad folly that so nearly ruined both for ever.

As for Dick Pelham, his name is now a household one all the world over, destined to be handed down to posterity in the company of James Watt, of Stephenson, of Arkwright, of Marconi, of all the giants whose names are writ large upon the golden book of scientific progress and energy. The Pelham Aeroplane was the machine that won the first prize of ten thousand pounds offered by a munificent daily paper to the first man who would sail through the air from London to Manchester and back. But to the people of Littleton he will for ever remain famous as the man who won the great match between Penwood and Littleton.

THE END.

(Two fine long, complete stories on Saturday next.)

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THE OPENING CHAPTERS IN BRIEF.

At the commencement of the new term at St. Ninian's a new boy arrives. He is an Indian Prince, and delights in the name of Chota Lal Nath Chandra Das. Lal comes into possession of a gold locket which is later on to have a great effect on his life. The owner of the locket is not known, but a German turns up one day and says that it belonged at one time to his sister, and asks that it may be handed over to him. But he is proved to be an impostor, and has to leave the school precipitately.

Lal is robbed of the gold locket by a convict who has escaped from Greystones Prison.

Nipper and his chums have some fun at the expense of Dr. Stuart-Unwin, the headmaster of the Grammar School, and are only saved from serious trouble by the intervention of Lal. The same evening, whilst coming up the school drive, Lal hears a stealthy footstep behind him, and a hand is suddenly clapped over his mouth.

(You read this week's instalment.)

Turning the Tables.

ARNOLD, Tattersall, and Crosby had been to Saltwick. They were on their way back to the Grammar School, and were in the act of passing the gates of St. Ninian's, when they saw Lal coming down the moonlit drive in company with Mr. Watson.

Except for the three Grammarians, and Lal and Mr. Watson, not a soul was in sight. The vast majority of the St. Ninian's boys were up at the school engaged in evening prep. The porter's lodge, which stood just inside the gates, was silent and deserted; for Barney had gone down to the village to fetch a parcel for Dr. Shuttleworth.

The recent reverses they had sustained at the hands of Lal and his chums still rankled in the Grammarians' memories, and the moment they caught sight of the young Hindoo, the same thought flashed into each of their minds. Here was a chance, or might be a chance, to pay off old scores.

After a hasty, whispered consultation, they concealed themselves in the shadow of the trees on the opposite side of the road. Here they waited until Lal, after watching Mr. Watson out of sight, started to walk back to the school. Then, with swift but noiseless steps, the three boys darted across the road and glided through the gates.

Suddenly, as already described, Lal heard a stealthy footstep just behind him. Ere he could turn round, however, Arnold leaped on him from behind, flung an arm around his neck, and clapped a hand over his mouth.

"Got him!" he cried exultingly. "Quick! Catch hold of his arms, you chaps!"

With an eel-like wriggle, Lal squirmed out of his captor's grasp, but no sooner had he done so than Crosby and Tattersall threw themselves upon him, and in less time than it takes to tell he was rolling in the snow, with the two Grammarians on the top of him!

"Stick to him! Stick to him!" panted Arnold, as he slid his hand across Lal's face in order to get it over his mouth again. "Whoroo! Can't he hit! I'll have a black eye after that! Crosby, you goat, catch hold of his wrists! Sit on his legs, Tatters! That's the style! Now bold him down while I tie my handkerchief over his mouth to prevent him calling out!"

He bound the handkerchief round the lower part of Lal's face. Then Crosby tied Lal's wrists together with another handkerchief, and Tattersall lashed his ankles together with a third.

"What a pity we didn't bring a camera with us!" chuckled Crosby, as they rose to their feet and surveyed their helpless captive. "Think what a ripping picture we could have taken for 'The Grammar School Gazette.' 'A moonlight scene at St. Ninian's; Sambo, the Sleuth-hound, in the Toils of the Enemy'!"

"'Or, The Final Defeat of the Darkie Detective'!" added Arnold, with a grin. "But we mustn't waste time in jawing! What shall we do with him now we've collared him!"

"Coulter's Coppice is only just over the way," said Crosby. "Let's carry him there, and stick an apple on his head—I've one in my pocket—and play at William Tell with him!"

"With snowballs, instead of bows and arrows!" said Arnold.

"M'yes! That's not a bad idea. It'll do to begin with, anyhow. Hang on to his legs, and I'll hang on to his shoulders, and Tatters can walk on in front to give us the tip if he sees anybody in the road."

Arnold and Crosby raised Lal from the ground, and Tattersall was about to lead the way down the drive, when the burly figure of Barney Maguire, the St. Ninian's porter, strode through the gates, with a bulky parcel under his arm.

It would be difficult to say who was the more astonished, Barney, or the Grammarians. Barney came to a sudden halt, and stared at the little procession in open-mouthed amazement.

Arnold and Crosby dropped Lal to the ground with a gasp of dismay; then, acting on a common impulse, the three boys made a dash for the gates, hoping to get through before the Irishman had time to regain his startled wits.

But Barney was too quick for them, or for two of them, at any rate! Dropping his parcel, he made a grab at Arnold, and caught him by the arm; whilst at the same instant, with his other hand, he clutched the collar of Crosby's coat.

Tattersall alone got safely through the gates, but even as he turned, with the intention of returning to his chums' assistance, he perceived a couple of St. Ninian's boys coming up the road from the direction of the village.

They were Wagstaffe and Bob! As the reader may remember, they had spent the afternoon and evening at Eastbourne, and were now returning to St. Ninian's.

"Hallo! There's one of those Grammar School lonts!" exclaimed Wagstaffe, on catching sight of Tattersall, who was standing in the middle of the moonlit road, hesitating how to act. "What's he loafing about our gates for, I wonder?"

"Nothing good, you can bet your boots!" said Bob, breaking into a run. "Come on! Let's collar the boundor and roll him in the snow!"

But Tattersall did not wait to be "collared." Realising that there was now no hope of rescuing his chums, he turned swiftly on his heel, and bolted in the opposite direction.

"Hallo! Where's he orf to?" shouted Arnold, who had no suspicion, of course, of the cause of Tattersall's sudden flight. "He might, at least, have had a try to rescue us!"

"Shure, it's meself wishes he had!" said Barney, with a grin. "Oi'd loike to have begged the lot av yo! Now, koindly explain the manin' of these outrajeous proceedin's Phwat do yo mane by threapassin' in these grounds, and phwat divilment have ye been at?"

The question was never completed, for at that moment Bob and Wagstaffe dashed past the gates in pursuit of Tattersall. At least, they had intended to dash past the gates, but, on catching sight of Barney and his prisoners, they pulled up with a whoop of mingled joy and surprise.

"Arnold and Crosby, by all that's holy!" cried Bob exultingly. "Good old Barney! Where did you collar the bounders, and what have they been up to?"

"Oi'll tell ye prisintly," said Barney. "In the manetoime there's a young gintleman there who'll be in need av yer attintion."

He nodded his head towards Lal, who was still lying gagged and helpless on the snow-clad drive about half a dozen yards away. In their excitement, neither Bob nor Wagstaffe had perceived him.

"Great Scott, it's Lal!" cried Bob. "Help me, Wag!"

The two boys fell on their knees by Lal's side, and he was soon freed from his bonds and helped to his feet.

"Now tell us what's happened!" said Bob. "That's soon done," said Lal. "Watson came to see the Head, and I walked down to the gates with him when he left. When I turned back to the school, these bounders and Tattersall set on me from behind, and overpowered me. After they had trussed me up, they were going to carry me to the coppice and pelt me with snowballs, when Barney arrived and bagged a brace of 'em!"

"And Oi'd have bagged the other, if ye hadn't frightened him away!" said Barney to Bob. "However, Oi've got two out av the three, so Oi won't complain!"

He swung his two trembling prisoners off their feet, planted them in front of him, and gripped the two coat-collars with one hand. Then he stretched out his other hand and pointed to the parcel he had dropped.

"Koindly hand me that parcel," he said to Lal. "It's for the docthor, an' he told me to bring it to him at wanst, as soon as Oi returned. We'll take these threapassors wid me at the same time."

"No, no!" cried Lal. "You mustn't take 'em to the Head!"

"An' why wouldn't Oi?" demanded Barney. "Isn't they threapassin' they are? An' didn't they summon two av our boys for threapassin' in their grounds last term?"

"That's true enough," said Bob. "But we don't play low-down games of that sort at St. Ninian's! We don't fight out our private quarrels in the police-court! There's no need to trouble the Head with this little affair. We'll deal with the rotters ourselves!"

"Then phwat'll Oi do with 'em, if Oi'm not to take 'em to the docthor?" asked Barney. "Oi'll do anything in raison to oblige ye, but ye'll have to be quick about it, for the docthor is waitin' for his parcel, and it's the sack Oi'll be afther gettin' if Oi don't hurry up wid it!"

Bob turned to Lal.

"Nipper ought to be in this," he said. "Where is he?"

"He and Dick are in our study, I expect," said Lal. "Anyhow, I left 'em there."

"Then I'll tell you what we'll do," said Bob. "We'll take these fellows into the lodge, and keep watch on them while Barney goes up to the school. After he has delivered his parcel to the Head, he can slip round to our study, and tell Nipper and Dick to come to us at once. When they arrive we'll try our prisoners by court-martial, and settle what their due is."

Barney readily fell in with this arrangement, and without any further ado Bob led the way into the lodge and lit the gas. Barney following with the two Grammarians, and Lal and Wagstaffe bringing up the rear.

The Siters Bit.

THE principal room on the ground floor of the lodge was a kitchen-living-room, with a low wooden ceiling, in which were several wood hooks, from which hung a couple of hams and a side of bacon. On a table by the window was a small pile of leather waist-belts, which belonged to various members of the St. Ninian's rifle-corps, for which Barney was paid for cleaning and keeping in order.

"Yo'd better tie 'em up afore Oi lave ye," suggested Barney. "Shure, ye're only three to two, and they're bigger boys than yo are. Thim belts will do—but hurry up, or the docthor will be comin' to see why Oi'm so late."

Bob buckled one of the belts round Arnold's ankles, and Lal performed a similar service for Crosby. As a further precaution, two more belts, fastened end to end, were passed round each boy's waist, over his arms, and tightly buckled behind his back.

"Illigant—very illigant!" said Barney, as he loosed his hold on the two crestfallen Grammarians. "Now Oi can lave yo with an aisy moind! Phwat'll Oi say to Hamilton an' Starlin'?"

"Just tell 'em to come down to the lodge as quick as they can," said Bob. "Tell 'em what has happened, if you like, but tell 'em to be quick, or the bell will ring before we've had our fun!"

Barney picked up his parcel and left the lodge. Almost at the same instant a boyish figure stole out of the shadow of the trees on the opposite side of the road, and crept up to the outside of the lodge window.

It was Tattersall, who had returned with a party of Grammarians bent on rescue.

One glance through the uncurtained window sufficed to show him that Wagstaffe, Bob, and Lal were the only guardians of the captives. Cautiously he tapped on the pane, and, keeping from the window and hold up his hand. Instantly a dozen other figures emerged from the shadow of the trees and glided across the road.

"It's a soft thing for us!" whispered Tattersall. "There's only three of 'em! Come on!"

A moment later the rescue-party had passed through the gates and had dashed into the lodge, leaving one of their number outside to act as sentinel.

Prep. was over, and Nipper and Dick were laying the cloth for supper, when Barney knocked at the study door.

"Ye're wanted down at the lodge," he said, with a grin. "We've collared two av thim Grammarians, an' Sir Robert and Mr. Wagstaffe an' the prince wud loike to consult wid ye."

The two boys eagerly questioned him, and as soon as he had told them what had happened, they snatched up their caps and dashed downstairs. Whilst crossing the quad. they fell in with a number of Fifth Form boys, including Proctor and his chums.

"We've bagged a brace of Grammar bugs!" shouted Nipper. "They're in the lodge, and we're going to try 'em by court-martial. Come along and see the fun!"

His invitation met with a ready response, and a moment later a crowd of fifteen or twenty boys was racing down the moonlit drive.

Suddenly Nipper caught sight of a solitary figure standing outside the lodge door. It was the Grammarians' sentinel.

"That's a Grammarian!" gasped Nipper. "See! He's gone into the lodge. There must be more of 'em inside, and he's gone to warn them that——"

The sentence ended in a shout of execration, for at that moment a mob of yelling Grammarians, headed by Arnold and Crosby, rushed out of the lodge, shook their fists derisively, at the approaching Ninianites, and bolted through the gates.

"After 'em! After 'em!" yelled Proctor excitedly.

"Let's see if Lal and the others are all right first," suggested Nipper.

"There isn't time," said Proctor. "However, if you're feeling uneasy about 'em, you and Starling slip into the lodge, and we'll go after the Grammarians."

This course was adopted, and whilst Proctor and the rest rushed off in pursuit of the flying Grammarians, Nipper and Dick darted into the lodge.

In spite of their rage and indignation, the scene which greeted them sent them into fits of laughter. Wagstaffe, Bob, and Lal had been overpowered by the Grammarians, and a belt had been buckled round each boy's waist. The two hams and the side of bacon had then been taken down from the iron hooks in the ceiling, and the three boys had been hung up in their place. When Nipper and Dick burst into the room, therefore, they found their three chums dangling from the ceiling like so many overgrown spiders.

"When you've quite done laughing, p'r'aps you'll help us down!" growled Bob, in an aggrieved voice. "This may be very funny from your point of view, but this rotten belt is jolly well cutting me in two!"

"And I'm sure this book won't bear my weight much longer," moaned Wagstaffe. "I can feel it—— Ouch!"

The book gave way, and the fat boy dropped with a sickening squelch on the top of Dick.

"You don't seem to find it so amusing now!" said Wagstaffe, as Dick picked himself up and ruefully rubbed his head. "Why don't you laugh now?"

"How could I help laughing?" said Dick. "It was enough to make a jackass laugh!"

"And that's why you laughed, eh?" said Wagstaffe. "Well, if I were a jackass, I wouldn't go about telling folk!"

"Oh, stop rotting!" said Nipper impatiently. "Help me to lift these two down, and then we'll follow Proctor."

But there was no need to follow Proctor, for a few seconds after Bob and Lal had been rescued from their ignominious position, Proctor and his companions came streaming back with the news that the Grammarians had escaped.

"They bolted through the coppice," he said, "and reached their grounds before we could overtake 'em."

"Well, they've scored off us this time, and no giddy error!" said Nipper. "However, it's no use crying over spilt milk. What we've got to do is to——"

"Have supper!" interrupted Wagstaffe. "I'm as hungry as a hunter. Come on! You can jaw while I'm eating if you like!"

With which remark he picked up his cap and led the way back to the school.

"The Brand of Cain."

IT was long after midnight when the five chums got to sleep that night. It had been such a crowded day, and they had so much to tell each other.

In the first place they had to repeat, for the benefit of Bob and Wagstaffe, the tale of his adventure with the escaped convict, of the theft of the locket, and of his subsequent meeting with the mysterious German, whose name was now known to be Otto Heinrich.

Then, also for the benefit of Bob and Wagstaffe, the story had to be told of the meeting at the Mechanics' Institute. Following this, Lal related how he had hypnotised Mr. Watson, and how the danger which had threatened his chums had been averted. Finally, he told how he fell very flat after all the other exciting episodes—Bob and Wagstaffe described how they had spent their half-holiday in Eastbourne.

When every one had told his tale, the conversation veered round again to the subject of Lal's meeting with the convict.

"Do you know," said Bob, "I'm inclined to think that that ruined but where you met the chap was the same hut in which I hid myself when I ran away from here. You didn't know I'd ever run away from St. Ninian's? Well, I did! I'll tell you the yarn some day, but in the meantime I'm curious to know if your hut and mine are the same. What was your hut like?"

"I can't describe it," said Lal. "For I wasn't inside, and it was too dark to see it distinctly. But I can show you the place if you like."

"I'd like to see it, and that's a fact," said Bob. "What do you say, you fellows? To-morrow is Sunday, and we generally go for a walk on Sunday afternoon. Let's go to Hampton Heath to-morrow afternoon, and then Lal can point out the hut."

His suggestion met with the august approval of his chums, and the following afternoon, about three o'clock, they trudged off in a body to Hampton Heath.

The day was gloriously fine, with a keen nip of frost in the air. The high wind of the previous night had swept some parts of the road quite clear of snow, whilst in other places it had piled it up in enormous drifts of the most fantastic shapes.

The same conditions prevailed on Hampton Heath. In some places the ground was almost as bare as a table-top; in others, especially in the hollows and crevasses, the snow had drifted to a depth of several feet.

"This is better than I'd expected," said Nipper, as they turned into the bridle-path which crossed the heath. "There isn't half as much snow here as I thought there'd be."

"Don't crow too soon," said Dick. "The wind has had a fair go at the snow just here, and has swept most of it into that ravine, but wait till we—— Hallo! What's up now?"

About fifty yards ahead the path curved round the foot of a rocky, gorse-clad crag, on the other side of which was an old sand-pit. And the cause of Dick's startled exclamation was the sudden appearance of an agitated man who came running round the bend in the path, wringing his hands, chattering volubly to himself, and apparently half crazy with excitement and fear.

"It looks as if there'd been an accident," said Nipper. "Perhaps he was crossing the heath with a companion, and his companion has fallen into one of—— Great Scott! It's Piggy!"

"Piggy," as the reader will remember, was the irreverent nickname bestowed by the St. Ninian's boys on Mr. Montague Trigg, the

"The School on the Cliff" Starts Next Week.

mathematical master, and Mr. Wimple's rival for the hand and heart of Fraulein Hoffmann.

Owing to the fact that Mr. Trigg was extremely short-sighted—owing also, no doubt, to his agitation—he failed at first to perceive the boys. After running for some distance down the path, he suddenly pulled up and turned round. He staggered back a yard or two, then he halted again. Finally he threw up his hands with a gesture of despair, spun round on his heel, and came running down the path again, beating his fists on his breast and uttering the most inglorious groans.

Suddenly he caught sight of the five boys.

"Away!" he cried. "Flee from my accursed presence! Henceforth I am no fit companion for innocent youths! The hand of Cain is on my brow! I am a murderer! An assassin! My hands are red with human blood!"

The five boys stared at him in absolute stupefaction.

"A murderer!" gasped Nipper. "What—what has happened, sir?"

"I murdered him!" said Mr. Trigg, wringing his hands. "I slew him! His blood is on my head!"

There did not seem to be any blood on his head, nor yet on his hands. Nipper began to think that Mr. Trigg had suddenly taken leave of his senses.

"Won't you tell us what has happened, sir?" he asked.

"He insulted me," said Mr. Trigg. "I struck him. I did not mean to kill him. In intention I was innocent of his death. But I had underestimated my strength. I smote him, and he died!"

"Who?" asked Nipper.

"Theophilus Wimple!" said Mr. Trigg. "The science master at the Grammar School. I came for a walk across the heath, to admire the beauties of Nature. Not an evil thought was in my heart. Mr. Wimple followed me. Tracked me. Dogged my footsteps. He overtook me near the old sand-pit. He was mad with jealousy. He demanded an explanation of my conduct with regard to—to a certain lady."

"Fraulein Hoffman?" suggested Nipper.

Mr. Trigg started.

"Ah! Then my secret is known!" he said.

"Well, I happen to know that both you and Mr. Wimple have been paying your addresses to the fraulein," said Nipper. "But I'm interrupting your story, sir. Mr. Wimple overtook you and demanded an explanation of your conduct."

"He insolently demanded that I should abandon my suit," said Mr. Trigg. "His language was most insulting. In my anger I smote him. Smote him on the end of the nose. He—he—he——"

He covered his face with his hands, as if to shut out the horror of the scene.

"Well?" said Nipper. "You hit him—and then?"

"He reeled and fell," said Mr. Trigg. "Fell over the edge of the path. Fell into the old sand-pit!"

Nipper heaved a sigh of relief.

"Is that all?" he asked.

"All!" said Mr. Trigg. "Is it not enough? With one blow of my strong right arm I hurled him to his doom!"

"But how do you know you hurled him to his doom?" said Nipper, who now began to see his chance to be generous to an opponent in the comic side of the affair. "How do you know that he is dead? Did you see him after he fell into the sand-pit?"

"See him!" cried Mr. Trigg, with a shiver of horror. "No, boy, I did not see him. I am but human, and I could not bring myself to gaze upon the corpse of the man I had slain!"

"Bosh!" said Nipper rudely. "How do you know that he's a corpse? Why, you don't even know that he was seriously injured by his fall. In fact, considering that the sand-pit is pretty sure to be half full of snow, I think it's ten to one he didn't hurt himself at all."

"You think so?" said Mr. Trigg eagerly. "Heaven bless you for those words, my boy! You have instilled a gleam of hope into my distracted breast. But, no! You only seek to comfort me. In your heart you know that I am an assassin. You only seek to buoy me up with false hopes."

"Well, we can soon see," said Nipper, struggling hard to keep a serious face. "Come back to the sand-pit and——"

"No, no!" cried Mr. Trigg wildly. "I have striven to go back, but my courage shrinks from the ordeal. You go to the pit, and ascertain if Mr. Wimple is still alive, and I will wait here."

Nipper turned to Bob.

"You and Wag and Lal stay here with Mr. Trigg," he said, "while Dick and I go up to the sand-pit and find out what has really happened."

"Right you are!" said Bob, with a wink. "Sing out, if you need any help."

"It'll be jolly awkward for Piggy if the Pimple is seriously injured," said Dick, as he and Nipper hurried up the path.

"Injured your grandmother!" said Nipper. "The sand-pit isn't more than ten feet deep, and there's sure to be four or five feet of snow in it. He'd fall as softly as if he'd fallen on a pile of feather-beds. Probably he has crawled out by now, and we shall meet him round the corner."

But Nipper was wrong. No trace of Mr. Wimple was visible when they rounded the corner; but on hastening to the edge of the old sand-pit they perceived a sight that was almost as mirth-provoking as the scene which had greeted them in the lodge on the previous night.

The Challenge.

As Nipper had predicted, the sand-pit was half full of drifted snow, which, being soft and fleecy and loosely packed, had offered but little resistance to the weight of Mr. Wimple's podgy form. When he had fallen into the pit, alighting on his back, he had sunk into the snow to a depth of eighteen or twenty inches. His subsequent struggles to extricate himself had caused him to sink still deeper, and when Nipper and Dick peered over the edge of the sand-pit all that was visible of the unfortunate science master was his head and shoulders, two waving arms, and a pair of wriggling feet.

"Help—help!" he spluttered, on catching sight of the two chums. "You are St. Ninian's boys, I perceive, but you will not on that account desert me in my hour of need. I implore you to forget past animosities. I beseech you to be generous to an opponent in distress. I entreat you to assist me out of this morass."

"That's all right, sir," said Nipper, as he picked up a fallen branch which lay half buried in the snow on the edge of the pit. "Hang on to this, and we'll soon have you out."

Mr. Wimple clutched the end of the branch, and after one or two failures the two boys hauled him on to the path.

"You believe, no doubt, that this was an accident," he said, when he had overwhelmed them with his thanks. "You suppose, no doubt, that I fell into that pit. You are mistaken. You are labouring under a delusion. I was hurled into the pit by a murderous ruffian who attacked me unawares; and the author of this dastardly outrage was—prepare yourselves for a great surprise—your mathematical master, Mr. Trigg!"

"We knew it," said Nipper. "We met Mr. Trigg, and it was he who told us what had happened, and sent us to see if you were dead. He's waiting for us just round the corner. He's in a horrible funk, and——Look here, you needn't think we side with him because he happens to be one of our masters. In fact, I think he's treated you most disgracefully, and if you like to go and punch his head we'll form a ring and see fair play."

Mr. Wimple evinced no eagerness to accept this invitation. Fisticuffs were not his strong point.

"I—I don't think I'll do that," he said. "No, I don't think I'll punch his head. It will be more dignified, I think, to treat him with silent contempt."

Then he'll go and brag to Fraulein Hoffmann that he knocked you head-over-heels into the sand-pit, and you crawled away like a beaten cur," said Nipper. "Of course, you know your own business best, but if I were in love with a lady, and my rival treated me like that, I'd have my revenge, or perish in the attempt!"

"But—but I do not like the idea of demeaning myself by engaging in a vulgar bout of fisticuffs," said Mr. Wimple.

"Then I'll tell you what you can do," exclaimed Nipper, as a glorious idea flashed into his mischievous brain. "Send an ultimatum to him—I'll take it now—and challenge him to a duel with pistols, unless he sends you a written apology, and renounces all claim to Fraulein Hoffmann before six o'clock to-night!"

"Challenge him to a duel!" gasped Mr. Wimple. "Good gracious! He might accept the challenge!"

"Oh, you don't know Mr. Trigg!" said Nipper, warming to his idea. "He's the most frightful coward you ever met!"

"And think what a score it would be for you if you got the apology," added Dick, entering into the spirit of the joke. "You could show it to Fraulein Hoffmann, and it would dish Mr. Trigg's chances for ever."

Mr. Wimple evidently found the prospect alluring.

"You are sure he won't accept the challenge?" he said, turning to Nipper.

Nipper grinned derisively.

"If you could see what a funk he's in at the present moment," he said, "you wouldn't need to ask such a question."

"Then I'll do it," said Mr. Wimple valiantly. "Lead the way, and I will cast the gauntlet of defiance at the ruffian's feet!"

"No, you won't," said Nipper. "These affairs are always managed by seconds, you know. I'll be your second. You stay here while I deliver your challenge. I'll be back in a minute with Mr. Trigg's reply. You stay with Mr. Wimple, Dick."

He winked at Dick, darted round the corner, and returned to where Mr. Trigg was waiting with Wagstaffe, Bob, and Lal.



The hook gave way, and Wagstaffe dropped with a sickening squelch on the top of Dick.

"He isn't dead!" cried Mr. Trigg joyously. "I perceive by your face that he isn't dead."

"Dead! He isn't dead, sir," said Nipper. "In fact, he isn't hurt at all. But he's in a frightful rage—at least, he pretends to be in a frightful rage, but I've a shrewd idea it's only his bluff. Anyhow, he has sent me to tell you that he challenges you to a duel with pistols in Coulter's Coppice at half-past six to-morrow morning, unless you send him a written apology before six o'clock this evening, and renounce all claims on Fraulein Hoffmann."

Mr. Trigg turned pale, and a shudder of horror convulsed his lanky frame.

"The bloodthirsty ruffian!" he gasped. "The ferocious scoundrel! A duel with pistols, in the twentieth century, and in England! Good heavens, the man must be mad!"

"Does that mean that you refuse to accept his challenge?" asked Nipper.

"Certainly," said Mr. Trigg. "Nothing on earth would induce me to endanger my precious life by fighting a duel. Most certainly I refuse!"

"Then you can give up all hope of winning Fraulein Hoffman, sir," said Nipper. "She's a German, you know, and in Germany a man who refuses to fight a duel when he's challenged is looked upon as a despicable coward. No woman will speak to him, or have anything to do with him."

Mr. Trigg wrung his hands.

"This is a dreadful predicament!" he groaned. "It is extremely inconsiderate of Mr. Wimple to place me in such a false position. It is most embarrassing. If I accept his challenge, there is a considerable risk that I may be hurt. And I object to being hurt. I object very much. But I also object to be branded as a coward. Whatever am I to do?"

"Accept his challenge, sir," said Nipper promptly. "He's only bluffing, I'm sure. He isn't any keener on fighting a duel than you are. If he had thought there was the slightest risk of your accepting his challenge he would never have challenged you. He simply wants to frighten you into giving him an apology which he can show to Fraulein Hoffmann."

"Do you really think so?" said Mr. Trigg eagerly.

"I'm sure of it," said Nipper. "If you accept his challenge you'll give him the biggest shock he's ever had in all his life."

Mr. Trigg's courage returned by leaps and bounds.

"So ho! That's his little game, is it?" he said, drawing himself up to his full height and puffing out his chest. "He thinks to frighten Montague Trigg with his boastful vaporings. Good! I will teach the cur a needed lesson. His threats shall recoil on his own head. Go to him and say that I hurl his challenge back into his artificial teeth!"

"Meaning to say," said Nipper, "that you'll meet him in Coulter's Coppice at half-past six to-morrow morning?"

"Well—er—you can say so, of course," said Mr. Trigg. "But I trust that when the scoundrel sees that I am not to be cowed by his empty threats he will—er—er—let the matter drop."

"Will you not as Mr. Trigg's second?" asked Nipper, turning to Bob.

"Like a bird!" said Bob, grinning from ear to ear.

"I—er—desire you to refrain from exasperating my opponent," said Mr. Trigg nervously. "Tell him, of course, that I accept his challenge; but—er—put it as nicely and politely as you can. If he offers to withdraw his preposterous challenge you will accept his withdrawal at once—at once, you understand."

"Leave that to me, sir," said Bob. "Come along, Nip."

The two boys returned to Dick and Mr. Wimple.

"Mr. Trigg has appointed me his second, sir," said Bob gravely, doffing his cap. "He authorises me to say that he accepts your challenge, and will meet you in Coulter's Coppice at half past six to-morrow morning. Pistols for two and coffee for one!"

Mr. Wimple nearly fainted. He clutched Nipper wildly by the arm.

"You—you said he wouldn't accept the challenge!" he moaned. "See what you've let me in for! Oh, what shall I do now—what shall I do now?"

"Just do nothing, sir," said Nipper, with a reassuring wink. "He's only bluffing. Keep a bold front, and he'll climb down at the last minute, you'll see."

"But—but suppose he doesn't climb down?" groaned Mr. Wimple.

"Well, you've gone too far to draw back now," said Nipper heartlessly. "Think of Fraulein Hoffman! Would you like her to hear that you challenged your rival, and, when he accepted your challenge, you hadn't the pluck to meet him? Why, you'd be the laughing-stock of the district."

Mr. Wimple sat down on a snow-clad bolder by the side of the path and covered his face with his hands.

"Oh, why was I ever born?" he wailed. "Why did I let you persuade me to challenge him? The mere sight of firearms makes me ill. I should faint if a pistol went off within a mile of me!"

"Not you," said Nipper. "That's just your modesty! But perhaps it'll never come to a meeting. Perhaps Mr. Trigg will send you an apology this evening. Anyhow, I've promised to act as your second, and I'll see you through, whatever happens. If Mr. Trigg doesn't apologise I'll call for you at your rooms about a quarter-past six to-morrow morning. I've a brace of pistols belonging to the gunner, and I'll bring them with me. Au revoir!"

Before Mr. Wimple could call them back the three boys turned on their heels and rejoined Mr. Trigg. The latter was absolutely panic-stricken when he learned that Mr. Wimple had not withdrawn his challenge.

Ultimately, however, by impressing on Mr. Trigg that his rival was "merely bluffing," and would probably climb down at the last minute, the five boys managed to get him safely back to the school, where, after escorting him to his study, they adjourned to their own study and indulged in a wild war-dance of hilarious delight.

"This is the biggest scoop we've had this term!" chuckled Nipper. "It's too good to keep to ourselves. We'll pass the word round to all the other chaps in the Fighting Fifth, and we'll tell 'em to conceal themselves amongst the trees. We'll load the pistols with blank cartridges, and Dick and Lal shall take their pea-shooters with 'em. When the idiots fire at each other, Dick and Lal will plug 'em with a pea apiece, and if there isn't the giddiest scene you ever saw my name isn't Richard Hamilton!"

Little did he think as he uttered these words what a tragic sequel the duel was fated to have.

(This popular school serial will be continued in next week's BOYS' REALM.)

You Must Read This Grand Athletic Tale!



KING CRICKET!

A Fascinating New Story of County Cricket.

Specially Written for THE BOYS' REALM by One of Our Most Popular Authors.

*****

The Chief Characters in this Fine Story.

ARTHUR LOVELL, Loamshire's champion bat. He becomes a professional. His uncle is ruined by James Lagden.

KIT VALANCE, Loamshire's best bowler. He first comes to notice in the Colts' match, where he takes Arthur Lovell's wicket. Later he becomes Arthur's firm chum.

GEOFFREY LAGDEN, an amateur and a good bat. He is bitterly jealous of Arthur Lovell, whom he hates and endeavours to injure. He is Arthur's rival for the hand of Molly Hilton. A snobbish character.

JAMES LAGDEN, who has ruined Arthur's uncle.

BLANE, Captain of Loamshire, and the steady friend of Arthur and Kit. He is Molly Hilton's cousin.

PONSONBY, Geoffrey Lagden's friend, and a man of similar character—snobbish to a degree.

The first instalment tells how Arthur Lovell distinguishes himself in the Colts' match, in spite of the efforts which Geoffrey Lagden puts forth to keep him in the shade. In the second inning, just as Arthur is about to take his place at the wicket, Lagden tells him that his uncle is a ruined man, thus putting him of his form. As the startling news comes to leave the field, and speeds towards London to learn exactly what is amiss. His uncle tells him that James Lagden is the cause of his ruin.

Arthur realises that he can no longer retain his position as amateur cricketer for Loamshire, and sends in his resignation; but his friend Kit Valance suggests his turning professional. Arthur decides to do so. He rejoins his club, and in the first innings of the match against Leicestershire he lays the century.

Kit Valance has a twin brother who is not a credit to his family. He is constantly asking Kit for money, and because of the disgrace which publicity would bring, Kit lets him have it. But being in a rather tighter corner than usual Len Valance backs Somerset to beat Loamshire, and asks his brother to let down his side. Kit refuses indignantly, and in the first innings takes no less than three wickets.

Loamshire get the best of the first day's play, Arthur topping his century.

In desperation Len, with the aid of a confederate, kidnaps Kit, and plays in his place on the next day. The result is demoralising for Loamshire, for Len plays as badly as he can. Seeing that it is still possible for Somerset to be defeated, to make doubly sure Arthur Lovell is also kidnapped and locked in the same room as his friend.

(Now read this week's instalment.)

To Win or Lose?

"HAVE you seen Lovell?"

Blane, the Loamshire skipper, had asked that question more than once during the morning. Now he asked it again, with a shade of anxiety upon his brow.

It was the third day of the great match—Somerset v. Loamshire.

Interest in the match had been growing keener, and a great crowd, larger than on either of the previous days, was gathering to witness the final tussel between Lionel Palairet's team and the visiting county.

The Taunton ground, capable at a pinch of accommodating thirty thousand spectators, seemed to be likely to fill to overflowing.

For the match had been full of surprises.

The low total of Somerset's first innings, due chiefly to Kit Valance's splendid bowling, had come as the first surprise to the home crowd. Then Loamshire's fine innings, totalling 290, had seemed to indicate that victory would be an easy affair for the visitors. But neither had been so sensational as Somerset's recovery in their second innings.

Lionel Palairet and Braund had batted like Trojans for the home county, but Somerset's success had been mainly due to the inexplicable failure of Kit Valance's bowling. Contrary to all expectations, the visitors had been left with 164 to get on the third day of the eventful match.

Would they do it?

After Loamshire's splendid first innings, there seemed no reason why they should not, unless their batting fell off as their bowling had done.

But the glorious uncertainty of cricket was more conspicuous than ever in this contest, and the spectators, and the players themselves, were prepared for anything.

The hopes of Somerset's partisans had risen high, and the chance of the home county pulling out ahead, after all, keenly excited them. However the match turned out, it was certain to be a well-fought game, and the good Somerset folk were coming in their hundreds to see it.

"Have you seen Lovell?"

Blane, as we have said, was looking anxious. Arthur Lovell was not yet on the ground, though the time was drawing near for the day's play to begin. Blane had sent a groundsman to his quarters with a note, and the answer had come that Lovell was not there, and had been absent all night.

Kit Valance was the likeliest of the Loamshire men to know something about Lovell's movements, and the Loamshire skipper sought out the young professional to question him.

"I believe you left the ground with him last night, Valance," said Blane. "Do you know where he is now?"

Valance shook his head.

"Isn't he on the ground?"

"I shouldn't be inquiring after him if he were!" replied Blane, rather tartly.

"Well, I haven't seen him this morning."

"It's very strange. Lovell is usually the most punctual and reliable of fellows. Is it possible that any accident can have happened to him?" said Blane, looking decidedly worried.

"I don't see what can have happened."

"Where did you leave him last night?"

"We strolled into the country a bit, and parted. I believe he went straight home."

"No; he couldn't have, for I hear that he hasn't been home all night."

Valance began to look serious.

"I say, Blane, that's bad. Surely nothing can have happened to him? We should have heard something of it by this time, I should think."

"Yes, I suppose so."

Blane walked away with a troubled brow.

Where was Arthur Lovell? What did his strange absence from the match-ground imply? If it meant that Loamshire's best bat was to fail his side, as their best bowler had done, the match was as good as thrown away.

What could it mean? Lovell was the last man in the world to fail his side in an important match if he could help it. Had there been foul play?

Had Blane seen the peculiar look in Valance's eyes at that moment he would have had little doubt upon the latter point.

The traitor smiled sardonically as he looked after the worried Loamshire skipper.

Not the faintest suspicion was there in Blane's mind that he had been speaking, not to Kit Valance, but to his twin-brother Len, who had so successfully personated the young bowler and brought Loamshire to the verge of defeat.

"Have you seen Lovell, Blane?" asked Colonel Hilton, as the Loamshire captain entered the pavilion. "I hear that he is not on the ground."

Blane shook his head, with a very disturbed expression.

"No, sir. He is certainly not on the ground, and I hear that he has been away from his quarters all night."

"That is very strange. Where is Valance? He should know—"

"I have just spoken to him, and he knows nothing of Lovell's movements since he parted with him last night."

Colonel Hilton knitted his brows.

"It's a beastly bother!" said Blane. "I intended to open the innings with Lovell. I wanted some good batting at the start to put heart into the side. Our failure yesterday had a very bad effect on the team. We want 164 to win, and we shall have to fight for it."

"But what can be the cause of Lovell's delay? If an accident had happened we should certainly have heard something of it."

"It is inexplicable, unless there has been foul play."

The colonel started.

"Do you suspect foul play, Blane?"

"I don't know what to suspect. But you know what Lagden said—that bookmaker fellow is down here, and has been getting at Valance. I am convinced that Valance's bad form yesterday was not by chance. Without proof it would not be fair to find him guilty, and I know a man cannot always be at the top of his form. But yesterday's display put my faith in him to a very severe test. If there was foul play there, there may be in other directions. Look!"

The Loamshire skipper jerked his thumb towards a man in the front line of the spectators, some distance from the pavilion—a red-faced man, in a white hat.

"Who is that?" asked the colonel.

"Sharp, the bookmaker. Lagden pointed him out to me. Is he here to watch Loamshire's defeat—does he know anything about it?"

And the Loamshire captain gritted his teeth.

"Perhaps we are taking too serious a view of the matter," the colonel remarked. "Lovell may turn up all right; there is yet time. Does he know that he is down first on the list?"

"Yes, certainly."

"Then I cannot understand it, unless, as you say, there has been foul play. If he has been giving us this anxiety for nothing, I shall speak very sharply to him about it!" the colonel said, compressing his lips. "But—but I can hardly think he is in fault. It would not be like him."

"Very unlike him." Blane looked at the clock. "I shall have to make a change in my plan. Lovell cannot go in first. If he arrives I shall send him in later. I will open with Ponsonby and myself."

"If the worst should happen, Blane—if Lovell should not turn up at all for the match—what do you think of Loamshire's chances?"

"Nothing," said the captain tersely; "we haven't any!"

"It's a bad look-out."

"We made 290 in our first innings," said Blane. "Lovell knocked up 140 of them. The other fellows had 150 between them. We want 164 to win to-day. You can work that out for yourself, sir."

"Well, we can only hope for the best, and that he will turn up. If he went in as last man, it would be better than nothing, and there's heaps of time for that."

"I intended to send in Valance last, because I have a feeling that he means to throw a wicket away!" said the captain. "If he played as false yesterday, he will do the same to-day. I shall partner him with our weakest bat, so that he can't do much harm. I hope Lovell will come. Hang it all!"

And the cricket captain turned away, worried and wrathful.

"Hallo, Blane!" said Lagden cheerfully. "Lovell doesn't seem to be here. Is he on the sick-list, or what?"



Kit was out of the cellar in a twinkling and rushing to Arthur's aid. Then took place a Titanic struggle.

"I don't know. Ponsonby, get your pads on!"

"I thought Lovell was going in first with you, skipper?" said Ponsonby, looking up from a conversation with Tunstall.

"So did I," growled Blane. "But as he's not here he can't go in, can he?"

There was a general exclamation from the amateurs of the Loamshire team.

"Do you mean to say that he's failed us?" exclaimed Lagden. "Well, of all the cheek! A chap who is paid to play not turning up for a match! By Jove!"

"There's been too much fuss made of the bounder!" said Ponsonby. "That's what's at the bottom of it. It's got into his head."

"Oh, rot!" growled Blane. "Something has kept him away, and I'm certain that it's not his own fault. Anyway, there's no time for talk, and we can't wait. He can go in later. I want you to open the innings with me, Ponsonby."

"Right-ho!" said Ponsonby. "I'm your man!"

"But, I say, the committee ought to take note of this," said Lagden. "You'll report it to them, of course, Blane?"

"I shall do as I think fit, and I'm not asking for any suggestions just at present!" said the Loamshire captain grimly.

And Geoffrey Lagden bit his lip, and let the subject drop.

It was high time for the innings to open. The crowd were showing signs of impatience. The Somerset bowler was sending down trials to the wicket-keeper to fill up time. There was no time to wait for Arthur Lovell.

Where was he? Would he come in time to take part in the match at all?

These questions weighed upon the Loamshire skipper's mind as he took his place at the wicket, and prepared to face the bowling of Lewis.

But he was too good a cricketer to allow mental worries to interfere with his play. Blane could always be relied upon to keep his end up and put on a good number of runs for his side.

Ponsonby, when he chose to exert himself, was a fine batsman, too; and so the Loamshire innings opened in very good style.

It was a thoroughly interesting game. The fine weather was lasting through the match, much to the satisfaction of the spectators. The cheery sound of wood meeting leather rang over the level green, and away went the batsmen running.

Colonel Hilton watched from the pavilion with a shadow on his face. Loamshire was opening well—but where was Arthur Lovell? Without their champion bat, the visiting county would never pile up the required number of runs to win. That hard-fought match would count as a defeat for Loamshire, after all.

Where was Arthur Lovell?

The Loamshire innings was doing very well. But his time was coming. Braund was bowling when the Loamshire score stood at 20. Blane hit out at the ball, and the next moment there was a shout of excitement round the field:

"Palairet—Palairet!"

"Well caught!"

Blane made a grimace. The leather was in the hand of the handsome captain of Somerset, who tossed it up and caught it again with a smile.

"How's that?"

There was only one possible answer to that question, and Blane put his bat under his arm and walked away to the pavilion.

Geoffrey Lagden already had his pads and batting-gloves on. Blane gave him a nod, and he picked up his bat and walked out of the pavilion, fastening a last button on his glove as he stepped on to the open, with an appearance of careless confidence.

As a matter of fact, Lagden was burning with excitement within. His chance had come!

He knew—or thought he knew—that Arthur Lovell would not appear for the day's play. He knew that his plot with Sharp and Len Valance had been successful. Loamshire had been robbed of her best batsman, and he would not return.

But Lagden's motive, which was a mystery to his confederates in the dastardly plot, was not to bring about the defeat of Loamshire, his own county. He was far from desiring that. He would rather his side lost the match than win it through Arthur Lovell's batting. That was true. But he hoped to win it without Lovell.

He had every confidence in himself. The failure of Valance's bowling on the previous day had shattered Loamshire's rosy prospects, and brought the county within sight of defeat. A fine display of batting would save them. Lovell would have saved them had he been there, but the plotters had taken care that he should not be there. Could Lagden do it?

He meant to try. The red-faced man in the white hat saw him come on, and grinned. He believed, from Lagden's joining in the plot, that the Loamshire man wanted his own side to lose, for some underhand reason, and it had not occurred to him that Lagden's desire was to distinguish himself by winning after getting rid of his rival.

Mr. Sharp had a disappointment and a heavy loss in store for him that day if Geoffrey Lagden could bring it to pass.

But could he?

That remained to be seen. Lagden began well. The first over against his wicket was a maiden, but after that he began to score. Braund, Lewis, and Martyn tried their skill

KING CRICKET.

(Continued from the previous page.)

upon him, but he was on his mettle as he had seldom been before, and he stopped everything that was sent down to him.

Twenty runs came to him in a very brief time, and he began to feel himself getting set at the wicket. His hopes were high. Was he to rival to-day Arthur Lovell's performance in the first Loamshire innings, and make the champion bat's absence a matter of little consequence?

He resolved that it should be so.

Loamshire stood at 50 when Ponsonby was clean bowled by Braund. Tunstall came in to join Lagden, but he knocked up forty-two before he was caught out. Then Tweedie came in to take his place. Tweedie was a fine bowler, as we know, but a very ordinary bat. He was stumped by the wicket-keeper, Newton, in attempting his sixth run.

Blane was looking blue.

The Loamshire wickets were going down at a rate that was quite alarming to the captain, who was waiting in vain for the arrival of his best bat.

The only hopeful feature of the innings, so far, was Lagden's batting. The Loamshire amateur was showing unusual form, though Blane had not the slightest hope that Lagden would succeed in pulling the game out of the fire.

As he seemed to be in extra special form, he might knock up sixty or seventy, but that he would go beyond the latter figure Blane did not believe.

Fortescue joined Lagden at the wickets. Fortescue excelled chiefly as a stone-waller, and he was a good man at wearing down the enemy's bowling.

Lunch was close at hand now, and the interval. Blane had been looking anxiously for Arthur Lovell, but the young professional had not put in an appearance. It was certain now that something untoward had happened, and Colonel Hilton had sent a note to the Taunton police to ask them to look into the matter.

But the colonel and the Loamshire captain felt that it was impossible that Lovell would leave them in the lurch in this way if he could possibly help it.

Something had happened, and both suspected foul play. Yet neither lost the faint, lingering hope that the Loamshire champion might yet turn up in time to bat for his side.

When the cricketers knocked off for lunch the Loamshire score stood at 70.

The batting had been very poor, and the bowling had been better than on either of the previous days. The unexpected prospect of victory made the Somersetshire bowlers buck up, and the fielding was particularly good. With the exception of Lagden, not out at lunch, Loamshire had done little.

Ninety-four runs were still wanted to win, and the best Loamshire men were out. The hopes of Somersetshire were high. At lunch there was only one topic over the Loamshire table, and that was the absence of Arthur Lovell.

Where was he?

Geoffrey Lagden and his set scoffed at the idea of an accident or foul play. They did not say so in as many words, but they hinted pretty plainly that Lovell had either failed his side through sheer carelessness, or else had been got at by someone interested in the defeat of Loamshire.

"Not that it may matter much to us," said Ponsonby, with a shrug of his shoulders. "Hang it, I have always been against this relying on professional players for a county team. A county ought to be represented by gentlemen!"

"Afid licked!" asked Blane sweetly.

"I believe that amateurs could keep their end up against any team."

"Well, I know they couldn't, except in special rare cases," replied the Loamshire skipper. "Take the professionals out of the Yorkshire team, for instance, and what would be left? As for what you say about a county being represented by gentlemen, any fellow who behaves himself and plays a straight game is a gentleman, and any other fellow who runs him down because his name isn't in Burke or Debrett is a——"

The Loamshire skipper paused; he was growing rather heated.

"Is a what?" asked Ponsonby, with a sneer.

"Well, a snob, is what I was going to say!" replied Blane, looking him full in the face, and then turning on his heel.

Ponsonby flushed red.

"Oh, don't mind him!" said Lagden carelessly. "He's cut up at Lovell not appearing for the match. He has always backed up those bounders Lovell and Valance through thick and thin, and, naturally, he feels a bit savage when they fail him like this. It shows everybody that he was in the wrong all the time, you see."

Ponsonby laughed.

"Dare say that's it, Lagden. I suppose I can overlook a little ebullition like that. But, I say, this match looks like being a nail in the coffin of Lovell and Valance, don't you think so?"

"It looks like it, and I shall be glad, for one! The county team will be all the better with those bounders outside it, if we could only manage to get Colonel Hilton and the committee to see it in that light."

And a good many heads nodded assent.

Still no sign of Lovell when the cricketers took the field again. Lionel Palairet led out his men to field, and the Loamshire batsmen went to the wickets.

Play was slow and eventless for some time. Lagden batted cautiously, determined not to spoil his chance by snatching at shadows. There was none of that dare and dash about him which had often helped Arthur Lovell to win for his side. He was of cold and cautious a nature to take risks, and a batsman who wanted to be quite safe every time was not likely to pile up runs very rapidly against the Somerset bowling.

The crowd were beginning to look bored and to crack jokes, after the manner of a cricket crowd, concerning the play. There were remarks about doles far niente and the rest cure in the pavilion enclosure, and inquiries from the "sixpennies" as to whether the batsmen had had the "tired feeling," and whether they wanted to go to sleep.

The score went up slowly.

The afternoon was wearing away, and Loamshire were six down when the figures stood at the even 90, of which fifty belonged to Geoffrey Lagden.

The spectators were getting impatient now at the prospect of an unfinished match, after the brilliant play of the first two days.

As the sun sank towards the west, the Somersetshire men seemed to "buck up" with ever-increasing energy, while the Loamshire play was decidedly slack.

Blane looked at his watch, and then at Colonel Hilton, with a shrug of the shoulders.

"Sixty-four to get to win," he said. "Arthur Lovell could do it yet; and I hate playing for a draw. But——"

"He will not come."

"No; I suppose we may as well give up all hope now," said Blane gloomily.

There was a shout from the field.

"How's that?"

"Out!"

Another Loamshire wicket down. Seven wickets down for 100. Chichester came in, and Lagden had the bowling again. Clack!

What was that?

It was a cunning ball from Braund. Lagden had played cautiously—perhaps a shade too cautiously, which is quite possible. At all events, there was his wicket in pieces, and the exultant "How's that?" ringing in his ears.

"Out!"

Lagden turned perfectly pale.

Out! It had come at last. The blow had fallen suddenly, just when his hopes were highest. His innings had been a long one, but he had only fifty runs to his credit. Fifty was a good figure, but where was the century he had hoped to compile? Where was Loamshire's victory that he was to have brought about?

A sickening feeling came over him. He was out; the fall of the bails had knelled his doom as a batsman. Out, with the consciousness that he had played for nothing, for worse than nothing, for he had not succeeded in saving his side. He had lost for his county!

Yes, lost for Loamshire, for Arthur Lovell, the only man who could have saved the side, was far away, a helpless prisoner, by his instrumentality.

And even Geoffrey Lagden was sportsman enough to feel a pang of misery and remorse now that the truth was fully borne upon him, through the mists of self-conceit, unmistakably, that he had robbed his side of a certain victory.

But there was no help for it now. Gnawing his underlip so bitterly that the blood came, he slowly turned towards the pavilion, rage and chagrin seething in his breast. He had failed. The blindest conceit could not comfort him now. He knew that he had failed, where Arthur Lovell would have succeeded, if he had been allowed to try.

Eight Loamshire wickets down for 100 runs. And one of the remaining batsmen was the man Blane suspected of treachery, of intending to play his side false. And there was still over half an hour to play.

Lagden reached the pavilion, and Blane, with a heavy heart, was about to sign to Valance to go on, when there was a sudden sound of commotion.

The Loamshire captain gave a quick start. Lagden turned round, pale as death, a savage blaze in his eyes.

Whose voice was that—those well-known tones, bringing suddenly, unexpectedly, a gleam of hope to Loamshire in that dark hour of impending defeat?

To Save His Side.

THE long day, which passed with so much ill-luck for Loamshire on the Taunton match-ground, dragged by wearily to the two prisoners in the lonely cottage. In black darkness, unconscious of the flight of time, the two cricketers remained while the heavy hours of that day rolled by. Only once since Arthur Lovell had been brought there had the dark cellar been visited by the kidnappers.

They had come to loosen the hands of the prisoners, so as to bring them food and drink, only bread and water, but very welcome to the captives when they arrived.

Two men came in, but as they carried no light, and the cellar was beyond the reach of daylight, it was impossible to see whom they were.

Whether the ruffians were still capable of some feeling of pity, or whether Len Valance, rascal as he was, had insisted that his brother should not be treated too badly, the comrades did not know; but the cords round their wrists were loosened for them to be free to eat, and left so.

Their captors did not speak a single word. Whether night had passed and it was day, whether day by day it was fresh again, they could not even guess. The closing door left them to solitude and silence again.

It did not take them long to wholly release their hands, and then they ate and drank, and felt like stronger for the meal.

"We have a chance now, Lovell," said Kit. He sat up in the darkness, and began to pick at the rope round his ankles. "At least we can free ourselves."

"True. But if there were any chance of our getting out of the cellar they would not have left our hands free," replied Arthur.

It seemed only too true.

"But there may be a chance they have overlooked," said Kit quietly. "At all events, we will do what we can."

"You are right."

The ropes were knotted tightly round their legs, and the unfastening of them was a long and weary task. But it was accomplished at last, and the two cricketers stood up, free to move, free to exercise and restore the circulation to their cramped limbs. Cramped they indeed were, and for a time the pain of it kept them helpless to make any further move, but gradually it passed away, and then they began to make an examination of their prison.

Lovell struck a match, and the light flickered on dirty, damp brick walls and a muddy earthen floor. Over their heads was the floor of the room above, thick planks on rafters. A flight of shaky steps led up to the trapdoor which gave access to the cellar.

Lovell ascended the steps and tried the trap. It was as firm as the floor around it. It was made to open upwards, and was now evidently secured by a bolt on the upper side, and probably by some heavy article of furniture placed upon it also.

Lovell, bracing himself under it, put his shoulder to the trap, and exerted all his strength in a terrible effort to force it up. The strain was terrible, and the veins stood out on the young athlete's face like whipcord, but the trap did not budge. Hardly a creak came from the wood, and Lovell's effort gradually relaxed. Exhausted, panting, he reeled down the wooden steps, and leaned against the wall of the cellar, breathing hard.

"It is useless," he said huskily. "It is as firm as a rock."

"I will try," said Kit.

He ascended the wooden steps, and, crouching on the second from the top, put his back under the trap, and strained his hardest to force it up. He felt that success than Lovell had had. The trap was immovable. There was a cracking sound from the wood, and that was all. With his brain almost swimming from the intensity of the effort, Kit reeled away, and sat on the steps, panting.

The effort had been in vain. The two cricketers were helpless prisoners in the cellar underneath the Red Cottage.

"I thought it," Lovell said quietly. "They would not have allowed us to use our limbs if there had been a chance."

A long, gloomy silence followed his words.

The position of the prisoners was less uncomfortable than it had been; but, so far as escape went, they might as well have been still lying bound upon the floor.

"If only knew the time," said Kit hoarsely. "If we only knew whether the match was over—whether it was won or lost! How long have we been here? It seems weeks, but it may be only hours since you came."

Kit's watch had long since run down. Lovell's had been broken in the struggle when he was seized, and so he could not even tell whether he had been more or less than twenty-four hours in that desolate den. As Kit had said, it seemed like weeks, but it might be only hours, that Lovell had been there. In the silence, the darkness, the stillness, it was impossible even to guess at the flight of time.

"They can have no object in keeping us prisoners after the match is over," said Lovell. "It must still be Wednesday, Kit, at the latest Wednesday night."

"Yes, I suppose so. Oh, the scoundrels!" Kit ground his teeth. "They shall pay dearly for this, once we are free again!"

During the long hours they had lain bound the comrades had compared notes. Arthur

(Continued on the next page.)

HOW I LEARNED TO PLAY CRICKET.

Fine New Series of Articles Written by Famous Wielders of the Willow.

AS we follow the doings of the premier cricketers of the day as recorded in the newspapers from time to time, the thought must occur to many of us, "How did these men learn to play the great game so well?" Realising this, a representative of THE BOYS' REALM has approached some of our great cricketers on the subject of how and where they learnt their cricket, the following being their replies:

No. 1.—JACK SHARP.

My first recollection of the game of cricket was in the large background of my father's premises at Hereford, where I was born. I was always very fond of the game, and received every encouragement from both my parents. The time I am now speaking of was before I went to a boy's school, so you may understand I was then pretty young. Later I went to Clyde House School, Hereford. The headmaster was a Mr. Baker, a very fine cricketer, who took a great interest in my enthusiasm for the game, and was, I think, very lenient with me in my studies, on account of my cricketing abilities. (I hope if this should meet his eye he will forgive this allusion.) We always had good pitches to play on, which, I think, is a very important matter in the making of a young cricketer.

When fourteen years of age I played with the colts of Herefordshire against the county, and scored thirty-eight, not out, and was, as you may guess, very proud of this performance. Through the recommendation of an old Herefordshire professional named Shepherd I received an engagement with the Liverpool Cricket Club at Aigburth. This was after I had played with Herefordshire County for two seasons, when I was seventeen years of age. I found it impossible to settle down to any business, as I was so fond of the game, so I thought I would try my luck as a professional, a course I have never regretted.

I was with the Liverpool club one season, and while there I shall never forget the kindness of Mr. E. Roper, the secretary of the club, who was the direct means of my going to Leyland, the late Mr. J. Stanning's training school for cricketers, where I had great opportunities of improving my cricket. Of Mr. Stanning's keenness for the game everyone in this part of the country is aware, and none appreciates his kindness and the great interest he took in all his professionals more than I do. We had good practice pitches, good bowlers, and a first-class coach like Allan Hill, the great Yorkshire bowler, so we had plenty of chance to improve and learn. From now on you can probably trace my career, which I have enjoyed greatly, and hope to do so for many more years to come.

J. Sharp

No. 2.—WALTER HEARNE.

Up to the time I was about sixteen years of age my cricket was strictly confined to casual games on a waste piece of ground in my native village of Chalfont St. Giles, Bucks. In those earlier days, before we could start the game it was necessary to remove the stones, etc., from what we were pleased to call our "pitch," and then one was prepared the only wickets available were our coats. Somewhere about the year 1880, however, a change came over our little cricket world, for owing to the exertions of the curate of our village—viz., Rev. E. G. Sellman—a club was formed, which was joined not only by us youngsters, but by several of the older cricketers who had belonged to a club which had fallen on evil times, and prematurely died.

Almost immediately on the formation of this club my brother Herbert and I showed form good enough to become the stock bowlers of the team. Indeed, so successful were we that, I believe, in one season we bowled unchanged throughout all the first innings of our opponents in all matches. Our cousin G. G. Hearne was about this time in his prime, and my two brothers Herbert and Jack and myself all walked to Rickmansworth, a distance of six miles, to see him play in an M.C.C. eleven that was matched against a local twenty-two. This, by the way, was the first time that either of us had even seen a good-class match.

During the luncheon interval we each sent a few balls down to him, and he was seemingly impressed by us, for he asked whether, if he could get us a match or two for the following season, we would accept. Our answer need not be recorded, but the next season, 1884, saw me installed as under-groundman and net-bowler to Streatham C.C., where I had the advantage of some useful hints from Fred Johnson, the old Surrey bowler.

In the following year I was engaged as groundman for the Gravesend Club, where I had to play in all matches, which, of course, helped to develop my bowling. I was also asked to play for the Kent Colts *v.* the Eleven, and took two wickets. In 1886 I was engaged by Kent County C.C. as ground bowler on the St. Lawrence Ground, Canterbury, and it was here I first met the late Harry Bass, who helped me on immensely with his sound hints and advice. The year 1887 was the first year I played for Kent.

Walter Hearne

know how Kit had been entrapped by his scapegrace brother's letter; and he had told his comrade of the day's play, and the supposed failure of Valance's bowling.

Arthur had known of Kit's twin-brother and double, but had it not been for the presence of the young Loamshire bowler now he could hardly have credited that he had been so deceived by a resemblance. But, of course, with the real Kit a prisoner in the dark cellar along with him, he could have no doubt upon the subject.

And, now that he knew the truth, he understood what had so deeply puzzled him before—the inexplicable failure of Valance's bowling in the second Somersetshire innings. He had stoutly refused to believe that his chums could be guilty of betraying his side; but, now that he knew that the bowler was a traitor impersonating Kit, he knew that the bowling had been purposely bad.

And there was a deep, angry indignation in Lovell's breast at his own part as he saw Len Valance was likely to have a rough time of it if ever the young Loamshire bat got within hitting distance of him.

Kit began to pace the cellar impatiently. Thinking of the match going on on the Taunton ground, of his rascally brother imposing upon the Loamshire team and throwing away the game, and of the obloquy that would fall upon himself in consequence, made the young bowler too restless and furious to keep still.

Arthur-Lovell stood thinking, trying to think out some plan of escape. He could think of nothing. He struck some more matches, and made a further examination of the cellar. There was no opening save at the trapdoor. The walls were of solid brick and mortar, and the ceiling of planks laid over rafters, and about a couple of feet over his head. Chance of escape there was absolutely none.

"Fury!" cried Arthur, at last. "Oh, that I had those scoundrels within reach! I say, Kit, let us have another try at the trap. I can't keep still. Perhaps we may be able to get at it together, and make some impression on it."

"Sure in trying," replied Kit, but without the least hope of success.

They ascended the flight of wooden steps. The steps were hardly wide enough for two to stand abreast. With a great deal of difficulty the two comrades found room to brace themselves together under the trap.

"Now!" muttered Arthur.

And at the word they threw their whole strength into a tremendous effort.

The trap cracked and creaked, but did not budge. Harder and harder they strained; another creak, but nothing more. A footstep sounded above, and there was a knock on the trap.

Sick with the futile effort, the comrades ceased it. The knock was repeated, and then came a voice, evidently from a man with his mouth placed close to the floor.

"You may as well chuck that, you fools! You can't get out. You'll be set free when the match at Taunton is over; it won't be long now."

Then a receding footstep.

"You heard that!" gasped Arthur. "The match is not yet over; if we could get out, there's a chance yet, Kit. I believe I felt something give slightly just now; one more effort, old man, if it kills us."

"I'm ready."

And again they put forth their strength in a terrible effort. Was something giving? Alas! it was not the trap. There was a crack, a crash, and the two comrades found themselves flying downward, to fall bruised and shaken on the floor of the cellar, hurting their limbs considerably on the debris there.

They hardly knew what had happened for a moment. Then Arthur limped painfully to his feet.

"Are you hurt, Kit?"

"Only a knock or two. The steps have given way."

"Yes, and the last chance is gone."

Arthur Lovell struck one of his last matches. Overhead the trap was as firm as ever. On the ground lay the steps. The tremendous strain had not been up the trap, but it had displaced the flight of steps, which was merely a kind of broad wooden ladder fastened in a sloping position under the trapdoor. The latter it was now impossible to touch.

The crash had doubtless been heard from above, for the comrades could hear a sound of chuckling in the room overhead. Kit gave a groan.

"It is all up now."

But a notion had darted into Arthur's eyes—the flash of a new idea—of hope!

"Kit! It's a chance—it's Providence! Kit, look here!"

He stooped and picked up one of the two long, broad side-pieces between which the wooden steps had been clamped. Two of the steps were yet fastened to it.

"Do you understand?" cried Arthur, his eyes blazing with excitement. "Kit, there's only a plank floor above our heads, and with weapons like this——"

No more words were needed: Kit sprang to seize a similar fragment. The next moment terrific blows were crashing between the rafters, on the planks over their heads.

The floor of the room above was within two feet, easy reach for an assault. The boards were stout and strong, but they were not made to stand an attack like this. The heavy beams of wood, wielded with all the strength of powerful arms, crashed up against the planks with terrific force.

There was a cry of alarm in the room above. Little heed did the cricketers pay to that, little thought to their captors. They were only too anxious to get to close quarters with the scoundrels.

Crash! Crash! Crash!

A long, rending groan, and one of the planks went through. A glimmer of daylight came down into the cellar through broken wood and torn oilcloth. A quavering voice was heard above:

"Stop it! Stop it, do you hear, or I'll shoot!"

It was an empty threat, but even otherwise it would have had no effect upon the young cricketers, fierce and determined now with the hope of freedom.

Crash! Crash! Crash!

The boards were breaking through on all sides. Lovell dropped his beam, and caught at one of the cross-pieces with his hands, and swung himself up. There was an aperture amply large enough for him. A rough-looking fellow stood at him with a chair caught up by the back to strike him down.

Lovell, with a tremendous spring, gained the upper floor, and, dodging the descending chair, he closed with his foe.

"Kit! Kit!"

"I'm coming!"

Lovell was struggling with a powerful ruffian, and another was rushing upon him. Kit was out of the cellar, coming to his comrade's aid in a twinkling. He tackled the second rough with a strength and determination there was no gainsaying. Right round he whirled him, and sent him crashing through the opening in the smashed floor-boards.

The scoundrel went through into the cellar, and lay there groaning.

Quickly Kit sprang to Lovell's aid. The ruffian was holding his own, but with two against him he was soon dragged down, and sent headlong on top of his confederate in the cellar below. Lovell gripped Kit's hand. From underneath came a chorus of groans and curses.

"Free, Kit! There may yet be time! Come!"

There seemed to be no one else in the cottage. They ran out into the open air, taking in deep draughts of it with a keen satisfaction. The sun was reddening the west. The day was drawing to its close, but there was still an hour at least of light fit for cricket. Unless the Loamshire wickets had fallen very fast, the match was not yet over.

They dashed down to the road. The long imprisonment had told upon them, yet at that moment they felt fresh, keen, fit for anything. If only they could get on the ground in time to play, in time to baffle the dastardly plot, and save Loamshire from defeat!

If! It was a big—a very big if. They were far, far from Taunton, with no method of reaching the town but by walking, no conveyance, not even a human being in sight.

The new-born hope sank down again. It was too late!

Zip, zip!

Toot, toot!

Arthur Lovell made a movement to one side of the road as he heard the horn of an approaching motor-car. But then a new thought flashed into his mind. He sprang into the centre of the road and held up his hand. A powerful Mercedes car was sweeping down towards him, and the chauffeur had no choice but to stop, or to run over the young cricketer.

"What the——" he began.

Arthur did not heed him. He had thought of a last chance: a desperate one, but all there was left for him. He sprang to the side of the car. A gentleman was looking out to see why the chauffeur had stopped, and he fixed an astonished gaze upon Lovell.

"What—what the——"

"I do not know you, sir," said Lovell, speaking quickly but respectfully. "But I want to ask a favour of you. My friend and myself belong to the Loamshire team, playing Somerset to-day at Taunton; and we have been kidnapped by a gang of scoundrels, and have just escaped, too late to get to the ground. Would you—could you take us there, for the sake of the game and the good old game?"

He waited in tense suspense for the reply. The man was a stranger to him; but such an appeal would not be made in vain to a sportsman. The motorist's face expressed blank amazement for a moment, then it broke into a smile.

"Jump in!"

Away went the car, the two cricketers in it.

"Bravo!"

The cricket ground at last, and a shout ringing from it. The game was not yet over at all events. The car jerked to a stop.

"There you are," said the motorist.

"God bless you, sir!" said Arthur Lovell, as he jumped out, and Kit echoed his words. The motorist smiled, and the car moved off at a speed more moderate than that at which it had arrived.

"Lovell!"

Lovell's name was called out by a dozen voices. He ran swiftly into the pavilion.

"Am I in time?"

Kit was at his heels. Blake turned towards them in amazement. Lagden was just throwing down his bat.

"Am I in time?" cried Lovell again.

"Yes," shouted the Loamshire skipper, "in time to save the side. No time for words. You've got to change like lightning. You're next man in!"

To save his side? With sixty-four to get in half an hour. Could he do it?

(To be continued on Saturday next.)

OUR LEAGUE CORNER.

SECTION 1.

As announced in previous issues of THE BOYS' REALM, Your Editor hereby offers to present a large number of Solid Silver Challenge Cups as permanent trophies to bona-fide Cricket Leagues in the British Isles. Not only Silver Cups, but Solid Silver Medals will be presented to each of the members of the winning teams, and to each of the members of the running-up teams of the Leagues to which the Silver Cups are awarded. Application should be made now.

The President (Your Editor) has already promised to present the following Trophies and Medals—

Solid Silver Cup and Two Sets of Medals to THE SOUTH LONDON CHURCH OF ENGLAND CRICKET LEAGUE.

Headquarters—The Cecil Rooms, Woolwich Road, East Greenwich, S.E.
President—Rev. Cecil de Carteret, M.A.
Chairman—Rev. W. G. Carpenter, A.K.C.
Hon. Secretary—Mr. S. Hudson, The Schools, Creed Place, Greenwich, S.E.
Assistant Secretary—Mr. George Lee, 18, Creed Place, Greenwich, S.E.

Solid Silver Cup and Two Sets of Medals to DUNDEE & DISTRICT FIRST-CLASS JUNIOR CRICKET LEAGUE.

President—Mr. C. Duncan (Clydesdale XI.).
Vice-President—Mr. J. W. Coates (Tay Bank XI.).
Treasurer—Mr. J. Winter (Clydesdale XI.).
Secretary — Mr. J. A. Reid (Belmont), 12, Bellefield Avenue, Dundee.

Solid Silver Cup and Two Sets of Medals to PARK & DISTRICT JUNIOR CRICKET LEAGUE.

Secretary—Mr. H. B. Winrow, 26, Wavertree Road, Liverpool.

Solid Silver Cup and Two Sets of Medals to BLACKBURN & DISTRICT SUNDAY-SCHOOL CRICKET LEAGUE.

President—R. A. Yerburgh, Esq.
Secretary—Mr. H. Walker, jun., 53, Whatley New Road, Blackburn.

Solid Silver Cup to BEARWOOD & DISTRICT LEAGUE.

Secretary—Mr. R. Wheeler, Sabrina House, St. Matthew's Road, Smethwick.

Solid Silver Cup and One Set of Medals to THE MERSEY CRICKET LEAGUE.

Secretary—Mr. T. G. Hughes, 68, Wavertree Vale, Liverpool.

Solid Silver Cup and Two Sets of Medals to EAST LONDON CHURCH CRICKET LEAGUE.

Secretary—Mr. W. E. Pepper, 24, Arbery Road, Bow, E.

Solid Silver Cup and One Set of Medals to SUNDERLAND & DISTRICT NONCONFORMIST CRICKET LEAGUE.

Secretary—Mr. A. E. Pink, 50, Hastings Street, Sunderland.

Solid Silver Cup to SWINTON & DISTRICT CRICKET ALLIANCE.

Secretary—Mr. F. Phillips, Ebenezer Cottages, Charles Street, Swinton, Rotherham.

Two Sets of Medals to ST. CLARE CUP CRICKET LEAGUE.

Secretary—Mr. Geo. Such, c.o. Mrs. Maynard, 31, Kempshead Road, Camberwell.

Prizes of BOYS' REALM Cricket Bats have been sent to the following Clubs in the Leagues mentioned, the Secretaries of the latter having nominated them as the winners thereof:

EAST LONDON CHURCH LEAGUE.
ST. ANNE'S OLD BOYS' C.C.—Secretary: Mr. H. E. Newell, 41, Locksley Street, Limehouse, E.

DUNDEE & DISTRICT LEAGUE.
TAY BANK XI.—Secretary: Mr. J. G. Smith, Brotchie Place, Broughty Ferry.

SECTION 2.

Two Solid Silver Cups for Senior and Junior Clubs.

SOLID SILVER MEDALS for each Member of the Winning Club and Runners-up.

A HANDSOME CRICKET-BAT will be presented to Every Club Entering Some Time During the Season.

Rules and Conditions.

(a) Only clubs which have been established at least one season (exclusive of 1907) are eligible for entry, and the respectability and standing of the club must be vouched for by some responsible person.
(b) Where clubs have two or more teams, only the premier team matches will count.
(c) Clubs desirous of entering this contest may make application now. In doing so a list of their engagements between the dates mentioned above, with the average age of the opposing clubs, and a letter from the president of the club, should be sent to the Secretary, BOYS' REALM Cricket League (Section 2), 2, Carmelite House, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.
(d) The Cup and Medals will be presented at the end of the cricket season to the clubs in each section which Your Editor, the Secretary, and another umpire consider to hold the best records in the matches played between the dates stated above.
(e) Strict investigation will be made by the controllers of the League into the bona-fides of the entering clubs and their fixtures.
(f) All matches to be played under the Official Rules of Cricket.
(g) The Cups to be won outright.
(h) Opposing teams must, in every case, be of the same average age.
(i) The Junior Cup to be competed for by clubs whose members' average age does not exceed 18 years. The Senior Cup to be competed for by clubs whose members' average age does not exceed 18 years.

List of Clubs which Have Already Joined Section 2 of Our Cricket Leagues.

JUNIOR DIVISION.

Bebecca C.C. (Bradford).
Primitive Juniors (Middleton).
Wingate Juniors (Wingate).
Wilton C.C. (Bournemouth).
Oakley C.C. (Leytonstone).
Kingsgate Athletic (St. John's Wood).
Garfield C.C. (Shepherd's Bush).
Otley Celtic C.C.
Kentish Town Old Boys (West Ealing).
Sydenham United (St. Pancras).
St. Jude's (Sheffield).
Boxworth Juniors, Cirencester.
Excelsior C.C. (Holland Park).
Malmesbury O.C. (Southampton).
Kirby Juniors.

SENIOR DIVISION.

Camden C.C. (Camden Town).
St. Michael's C.C. (Edgware Road).
Victoria C.C. (Camberwell).
Wesley C.C (South Shields).
St. Jude's C.C. (Southwark).
Holmesdale C.C. (South Norwood).
White Star C.C. (Bradford).
Lovely Lane C.C. (Warrington).

Prizes of BOYS' REALM Cricket Bats have been awarded this week to the following clubs, these having, in Your Editor's opinion, put up the best show on Saturday, May 4th:

JUNIOR DIVISION—MALMESBURY C.C.
Secretary—Mr. E. Hase, 7, Havelock Terrace, Southampton.

SENIOR DIVISION—NORTHGATE WHITE STAR C.C.
Secretary—Mr. W. Smith, 2, Chain Street, Gratton Road, Westgate, Bradford.

Two Long, Complete Tales on Saturday Next.

RUNNING:

Mr. A. A. ELSON, winner of over 200 prizes, gives readers the benefit of valuable experience gained during his long career on the cinder-path.

Middle Distances. *(Continued from last week.)*

THOSE who know their own weakness in finishing, try to get well away from their field before the final stage of the race is entered upon, but this requires a big outlay and sacrifice of strength, probably at a critical part of the race. If, however, the young competitor is sure of his final sprinting power, he should lay well up with the leaders, and nurse himself for the final dash, being careful in so doing not to allow the opposition to take him by surprise. Once the "jump" into the final sprint to the tape has been taken, the young competitor should maintain this right to the end, or at least until it is perfectly certain that all opposition is over. A race may be often lost by easing just before the tape is reached, which is an ingrowing practice, particularly on grass, on which another competitor can come up from behind more silently than on cinders.

Training for the Half-mile.

My method of training for a half-mile was as follows: In the first stages of preparation I did nothing but short sprinting, striding through 150 to 200 yards at best speed. Gradually the distance covered was increased, as I felt capable of going on further and further, still keeping up a speedy stride. This procedure would be carried out until a limit of 600 yards had been reached, and this distance I would be able to cover comfortably in about three weeks—at top racing speed, having by virtue of gradual nursing retained my speed at the shorter when covering the longer distances—that is to say, staying power was being acquired without loss of speed.

Very occasionally I would jog a mile, and once a week, a full half-mile trial against the watch would show the improvement made. Although most of the work was done at 600 yards and lesser distances, I never once found any marked inability to stay through the whole distance at racing speed.

Once the half-mark of condition is reached, the heavy work must be eased off, especially with the younger school of athlete, and also if public racing is being attempted once or twice a week. One of the main essentials to success in middle distances is for the runner to possess plenty of vim and strength, and he must be careful when once racing has been commenced to refrain from

throwing away his energy

in practice, simply because he "feels like running."

It usually takes from five to six weeks to get into thorough trim for a middle-distance race, and once fit, maintenance of form is the next study. To know when one has arrived at the tiptop of form is to be wise. To be overtrained is infinitely worse than to be short of condition. Witness the anxiety and careful nursing of the Oxford and Cambridge Eights as the day of the contest draws near. It is the coach's special study to so time the training that his charges reach the same condition simultaneously with the date of the contest.

I would advise the young athlete to do rather too little of the hard preparation work I have indicated in my own method of training. It is in the nature of youth often to be over-zealous, but due regard should be given to the fact that those in their teens have not that physical endurance which comes with years. At the same time, it is much easier for the youngster to get fit than for the man advancing towards the close of "athletic years."

It is as well to

take a slight ease

just prior to the decision of the event trained for. How long this easy should extend depends upon the degree of fitness of condition arrived at. I have rested for nearly a week before contesting an important event, or when an arduous programme has had to be undertaken. A special preparation which I had for a series of races on the Continent terminated five days prior to the date of the first event.

In case of a rough voyage across the North Sea, I felt it advisable to reach Rotterdam, my destination, at least three days beforehand. Arrived there, I took nothing but slight walking exercise, and only once put on my spikes to test the track.

In the contest itself, an important one, I successfully fought out an exciting finish, after a terrible ding-dong race throughout the full half-mile it was run over. I was chief guest at a banquet the same evening, and on the morning had a long journey to the Hague, Holland, where I won three other races. I was again feted in the evening, and I left next morning for Brussels, a long weary train journey, whore, on the day following my arrival, and after much sight-seeing, I was again returned the winner at half a mile.

I believe, however, that had I not been careful in resting and nursing myself after having once arrived at the pink of condition, I could not have carried through such a strenuous programme.

In middle distances, an inch added to the stride makes a gain of seconds at the end of a run. A longer stride may be acquired by careful practice, but to overstride is exhausting, and care must be taken in endeavouring to improve in this direction.

(To be continued on Saturday next.)

SWIMMING:

Mr. WILLIAM HENRY, Secretary of the Royal Life-Saving Society, coaches readers in the important arts of Swimming and Life-Saving.

The Overarm Stroke. *(Continued from last week.)*

IT will be observed that when the top hand and arm are being returned for the next stroke the under arm and hand is performing the positive stroke, or when one arm is pulling the other is being recovered for the next stroke.

In practising the above stroke the learner should take particular care to lie upon his side, and in this way to prepare for the leg stroke, which, in the case of the correct overarm stroke, is entirely different to the ordinary breast stroke.

In the breast stroke the legs are kicked outwards wide apart, right and left; whilst in the overarm stroke the legs are moved as in walking or taking a long stroke or step—that is to say, one leg is kicked towards the front, and the other backwards, both being brought together in line with the body.

In giving particulars of the action of the arms for the overarm stroke, I stated that the arms act independently, and that the upper arm should be bent at the elbow. It should also be remembered that the stroke should not be made too long, either at the beginning or at the finish, and that the power of the arm stroke is greatest when the hands are passing the face and chest. The stroke with the hands should be finished with a flick or jerk.

When the upper hand is passing the face and chest, the legs should be opened for the leg stroke, and should be wide apart, ready for the closing kick at the moment when the hand is about to be lifted out of the water opposite to the waist.

A careful observer at the baths will note that the above description does not agree with the



BIRDSEYE VIEW OF THREE POSITIONS IN THE OVER-ARM STROKE.

(See Swimming Article for Explanation.)

action of the majority of swimmers. Most side-stroke swimmers pull with the upper arm at the moment when the legs are closing, but those who make

the fastest times,

and have won most of the English Championships, adopt the method I have described, as the movement helps greatly in averting the dead point, which is so very noticeable when the overarm is pulled together with the closure of the legs.

The learner will also observe that the action of the legs in the overarm stroke is entirely different to that used for the breast stroke. In the former, the top leg is brought forward and the under leg backward, somewhat similar to taking a long forward stride; but in the breast stroke the legs are kicked wide apart to the right and left.

To perform the leg kick for the overarm stroke properly much practice is necessary, and the best way of learning this kick is to turn on the side, and

take hold of the rail

which is fixed round most baths with the upper hand, and place the lower hand on the wall of the bath about eighteen inches below the upper one, and bring the body and legs to the surface in a straight line. Now open the legs wide apart, by pushing the upper leg forward, keeping it straight, and the lower leg bent at the knee, and brought backward in the position of Fig. 1.

The next movement is to close the legs with as much force as possible, by bringing the upper leg back in line with the body, and at the same moment straightening the lower one with force, and continue the action until the feet cross each other about six inches. The effective part of this stroke comes from the whole of the calf and step of the upper leg and the front of the lower leg as they are being closed with a swirl, thus sending the body forward.

(To be continued on Saturday next.)

CRICKET:

Mr. ALBERT TROTT, the famous County Cricketer and Coach, gives some very valuable instruction to Ambitious Cricketers.

Captaincy. *(Continued from last week.)*

AMONG boy captains, J. N. Crawford, at Repton, left behind a great example; while R. E. H. Baily impressed everybody with his tact and skill in handling his side two or three years ago at Lords. Success is given to few men who remain at the head of affairs as long and as happily as Lord Harris did when he led Kent, or Mr. John Dixon, when he commanded Nottingham. Both gentlemen were idolised by the cricketers who served under them, and the men from Trent Bridge never weary of telling you endless stories of the kindness and interest Mr. Dixon took in their affairs. He mastered the great difficulty of how to break down the reserve which too often exists between amateur and professional, and was a true friend in the hour of failure and shortcomings as well as on every other occasion.

The boy captain has undoubtedly a very hard position indeed, but he may, if he will, learn a very great deal of leadership, just as he may of batting or bowling. It is often my lot to go to schools, and one can tell from the way in which a side fields what kind of captain they have. He has swimming power, and like Noble can make a weak side stronger than it is, and he wants brains, especially when a club has a weak eleven, and has to meet stronger opponents.

Sometimes it will be his lot to play against a good side, whose efforts in many directions have been spoilt by the fact that they have an indifferent and incompetent leader. The captain in a school eleven is responsible for the game throughout the whole school, and must see that it is played properly, so that younger boys of promise may develop their ability and recruit the team in future years.

A few hints, then. First, choose for your captain, one who thoroughly understands the rules, and has judgment, good temper, fairness, and tact. If you can get all these combined in a capable wicket-keeper, it will be found a great advantage. From that position, he will be able to direct unseen and unnoticed the movements of the field. He must not mind trouble, and should be the earliest at practice, and also first on the ground on the day of the match.

One of the best captains that I ever knew was always to be seen on the field at least two hours before the game commenced. It was always a pleasure to go there; everything was ready, a start was always made in good time, and, besides, it is only courteous to the visiting side to be there to receive them. More than once I have seen even a county captain go on the ground some time after the game has commenced, and leave it before it is finished, when perhaps he has had his innings on the defeated side, not even remaining to take farewell of the other captain.

This is certainly not right. It is one of the captain's duties to go and look at the wicket on which the game is to be played, so that, if he is successful in winning the toss, he may know whether to take first innings or not. If the weather is fine, then go in first if you get the chance; if it is wet, as a rule, put the other side in.

Sometimes you will get what is called a fiery wicket. The sun may shine out on the ground with tropical fervour, and the wicket will be sticky for a short time, and then become hard and dry again; or it may dry slowly without the sun helping it at all, and the result is that the pace of the ball will vary tremendously. It is a golden opportunity for the captain if he has the right sort of bowlers, and knows how to use them. Again and again, on what is called a sticky wicket, I have seen a very powerful side dismissed for a small score.

(To be continued on Saturday next.)

ROWING:

A FAMOUS OARSMAN, and member of a well-known London Rowing Club tells our readers How to Excel at this Grand Pastime.

The Recovery. *(Continued from last week.)*

IMMEDIATELY following the finish comes the recovery, and here again most oarsmen acquire faults of style which are easily accounted for by the difficulty experienced by the beginner in trying to disengage his oar-blade from the water at the right time.

The beginner has been told to keep his oar-blade covered until his hands touch his chest; but he quickly discovers in practice that if he follows instructions, and does not disengage his oar at the correct moment, the oar-handle will strike his body very violently, and he will catch an undesirable crab.

Naturally, he looks for an easy way of avoiding this, and he will, as his arms begin to bend towards the finish of the stroke, allow his blade to get lighter and lighter as his arms come into the chest, until at last, as the hands touch, the blade is completely uncovered; or, if he does not escape the trouble in this way, he will, if he keeps his blade well covered, avoid the danger by wrenching the blade clear of the water by use of the muscles of his arms and shoulders.

If these faults are not promptly eradicated they will later on be impossible to cure. It is possible for a man to become a first-rate oarsman, even with some such fault in part remaining; but the disengagement of the oar from the water is so simple of accomplishment, and a good finish and recovery so essential to good rowing, that it seems a pity that it cannot be acquired at the outset by the ambitious young beginner.

Three Distinct Movements.

The oar-blade is disengaged from the water effectually by simply dropping the hands and forearms sharply, these working from the elbows as on a pivot. No other muscles should be permitted to come into play.

The drop of the hands and forearms is followed immediately by the drop of the wrists, by which means the oar is turned on to the feather.

The wrists dropped, they are at once pushed away, which strains the forearms.

Here are three distinct movements; but they should be made to form one continuous motion if a good recovery is to be acquired. There should be nothing jerky about them at all.

The use of the wrists should be noted. The wrists play a far more important part in the recovery than do the hands.

As the arms are being straightened on the recovery, just sufficient pressure must be put on the handle of the oar to keep the blade at the right height—viz., two or three inches, not more, above the surface of the water.

During the swing forward the arms must be kept quite straight, but not stiff or rigid. The oarsman must feel as if he had nothing more to do with his oar until his is to turn it square and drop it into the water for the beginning.

The beginner will find in making the recovery that as soon as the blade of the oar is disengaged from the water the pressure on the stretcher will cease, and he will feel inclined to assist in the recovery of the body by pulling at the straps of the stretcher with his feet.

But he must beware of continuing this pull too long; it must cease directly the slide forward is started.

Having in the foregoing articles fully explained the various points of the stroke, the faults that a beginner is likely to acquire, and the best way to correct them, I should like to add a few very valuable hints to the man who wishes to become a good oarsman.

A beginner should never commence rowing upon a sliding seat, but should use a fixed one. Not only will this give him one thing the less to think of, but it is only on a fixed seat that he can learn the true art of the swing and how to use his weight properly.

It is most important that the oar should be true in the rowlock, and it will be better for the novice if the rowlock is a bit stiff rather than the reverse.

When he gets into the boat for the first time, the beginner must sit exactly opposite his feet, and with his body held erect. Then, before he takes an oar into his hands, he must try and learn to swing his body according to the rules already laid down, and to remember that all the work has to be done by the body swing supported from the stretcher. The stretcher is the point from which he must get all his power, and he must never depend upon

the strength of his arms.

When he thinks he has sufficiently mastered the body swing to take a step further, he must learn to grasp the oar properly. He should grip the hands placed in the position heretofore explained—grasped by the fingers with the thumbs underneath and round the handle.

With the oar-blade flat upon the water, his wrists will rest as low down as convenient—well below his knuckles. The hands on the oar ought to be a handsbreadth apart.

He must bear in mind that the grasp of the oar must on no account be shifted; and so, when the oar is turned square the wrists, particularly the inside one, will be well arched.

The wrists will be rendered supple, and the beginner will learn how to use them properly by turning the oar on and off the feather a number of times.

(To be continued on Saturday next.)

THE FIRST CHAPTERS IN BRIEF

Roddy Owen and Tom Hughes, two Welsh colliery lads, are the heirs of a certain Matthew Matthews, who was the rightful owner of the Aberford and Coed Coch Pits. But these collieries are in the hands of a man named Kenyon Price, who, by foul means, defrauded the late owner of them, and Roddy and Tom are determined to wrest them from his grasp.

The only other property left them by the late Matthew Matthews is a place known as Starve-Crow Farm. The boys, having been sacked from Kenyon Price's employ, go and take up residence at the little wooden shelter on this farm. Here they meet a wonderful little Welsh mountain boy named Dafydd Rees, with whom they become firm friends.

Whilst exploring their property they come across an old mine-shaft, and this they descend. They are astonished at the richness of the seam of coal beneath, and realise that with the necessary capital they could easily become rich men. They decide that they will set to work and save sufficient to start mining operations.

Roddy applies for a job at the Coed Coch Colliery. He is taken on, and Tom Hughes with him. The boys are at once set to work as hewers, and earn no little surprise at the large amount of coal tallied to them each day. In the evenings they return to Starve-Crow Farm.

Tom is badly injured by some runaway trams, and is taken to Starve-Crow Farm. The accident is believed to be the work of Mr. Sully, the overseer of the mine, who is in Kenyon Price's pay. A few days later the lads catch Jerry Crail, a putter, in the act of attempting to kill Gripe, their dog, with some pieces of poisoned meat.

(You read this week's instalment.)

In this story Mr. David Goodwin tells in his inimitable way how two colliery lads climbed the ladder to fame and fortune notwithstanding the many efforts their unscrupulous enemies put forth to prevent their doing so. The scene is laid in South Wales, and by reading the brief introduction the tale may be commenced to-day.



A MAGNIFICENT TALE OF COLLIERY LIFE.

By David Goodwin.

Jerry Shows Signs of Nervousness.

RODDY rushed at Gripe with great anxiety, grabbed him, passed a string through his collar, and fastened him up to the trunk of a young birch-tree.

"Sit on that ruffian. I want to make sure Gripe don't get any o' that vile stuff!" exclaimed Roddy.

"What stuff?" said Dafydd, who was holding the struggling and protesting Jerry. Roddy made no reply, but searched eagerly among the heather, and presently pounced on the thing Jerry had thrown down.

It was a piece of meat about the size of a large walnut. Roddy examined it, his brow contracted, and after a scrutiny he found other piece at the foot of the rocks. Then he turned to the captor and captive with a very dark expression on his face.

"Bring that skunk up to the cottage, Dafydd!" he said grimly.

"Why doncher let me go? I ain't done nothin'!" wailed Jerry.

"Don't shout yet. You'll do plenty of shoutin' before we've done with you," said Roddy, unbuckling Gripe. "Now, then, quick march, the procession!"

"What was he up to?" said the surprised Dafydd, bringing the prisoner along willynilly.

"I'll show you in a minute. We'll hold a little court-martial all on our own. I've got a surprise for you—an' for Jerry Crail, too!"

"I'll have the lor on yer!" whined Jerry. "I 'on't be mauled about like this 'ere!"

Roddy made no reply, and Tom, when the captive arrived, greeted him with sardonic surprise.

"Why, it's Mr. Jerry Crail, the clever young putter from the Aberford, who knows all about everybody an' what they do," said Tom thoughtfully. "The last time I saw you, Jerry, was on the grade, just before the trams came down an' smashed me up. I'm still an invalid, you see."

"I'd nothin' to do with that, I swear I 'adn't!" roared Jerry, in dismay.

"Ah, your conscience must be in a dicker condition," said Roddy, coming out of the cottage. "Who said you had? We're going to get at the truth, it seems to me."

"Did you come to inquire after my health, an' see how I was gettin' on?" said Tom.

"He came for something rather worse than that," said Roddy bitterly. "Do you know what is?"

He held up the two pieces of meat. Jerry turned pale.

"What's that," inquired Tom, "Jerry's dinner?"

"You've hit it," said Roddy quietly, his mouth looking very grim. "That's what it's goin' to be, but it's not what he meant it for. Look here!"

He pulled open one of the pieces of meat, showing it had been cut nearly through. In the cut was a liberal dose of greenish-white powder.

"Poison," said Roddy briefly. And then he turned to the captive, who was silent. "A pretty little job, an' one that just suits you," said Roddy bitterly. "Sully seems to be trustin' you rather more. So this was meant for Gripe, was it? You reckoned on his finding this an' eating it. I think it's very likely he would have. A very plucky bit of work."

Jerry tried to break in, but Roddy stopped him. Tom was frantic with indignation as he saw what the visit had meant.

"Sully's been very scared of Gripe for some time," continued Roddy. "He reckons him the most dangerous partner in the firm after all, maybe. So you were commissioned to find a way to get rid o' him, eh? I don't wonder—especially after Ike Solby's affair. You didn't know what you were lettin' yourself in for, coming to Bryn y Garth. Well, you're goin' to learn."

"It's all gammon!" cried Jerry. "That stuff ain't nothin' but salt! I meant to eat the meat for my dinner, only it's gone bad, an' I was just goin' to throw it away!"

"It smells fresh enough," said Roddy. "You needn't mind on that account. So this greeny-white stuff's salt, is it?"

"Yes!"

"Then you shall eat this lump, just as it is, an' prove your words. I'll see you do it, too," said Roddy, striding forward.

Jerry fell on his knees with a shriek.

"No, no! I won't! I won't! I won't, I tell yer!"

"You will, an' you'd better do it quietly. I can make you, with the greatest ease, Jerry, an' I'm goin' to."

"Don't," shrieked Jerry, turning white as a sheet, and grovelling as Rodwell caught hold of him, "you'll kill me! Take it away! Yes, it is poison! It's poison, I tell yer—enough to kill three men!"

"I know it's poison," returned Rodwell grimly. "Arsenic, unless I'm much mistaken. But you shall eat this meat none the less! You've tried as vile an' mastardly a trick as a fellow could dream of, an' Gripe's worth six of such as you. Mind, I mean what I say—You've never known me lie, an' I'm not lying now! You shall eat this stuff an' take your chance. Down with it, or I'll force you to. Quick!"

"I can't!" screamed Jerry. "It'll kill me! Let go!"

The Emotions of Jerry.

"COME, buck up," said Tom, never imagining that Roddy was serious.

"I don't quarrel with your bread-and-butter! Down with it, an' think of the poor beggars who haven't any cold meat at all!"

"You heard what I said?" added Roddy quietly.

Jerry was in the last extremity of fright. He stole a look at Roddy's face, and began grovelling afresh.

"You've got one minute to make up your mind," said his captor. "If I do it for you I shall probably hurt you."

The putter gave a despairing cry, and, jumping to his feet, tried to bolt for it. But Roddy had him in his grip instantly. The attempt was futile, and Jerry recognised it.

"Very good!" said Roddy. "Then I'll feed you myself. Open your mouth. It's no good struggling."

"Stop! Save me, somebody!" cried Jerry frantically. "I'm a dead man if 'e makes me do it! You wouldn't murder me, would yer?"

"Murder? Bosh!" said Rodwell. "It's your own doing, you young scoundrel! Did I put that poison in the meat? An' if it does, don't you richly deserve it?"

"Not for be killed!" blubbered Jerry.

"I don't agree with you there," said Rodwell darkly. "Even settin' aside this business, didn't you have a hand in that vile affair in the Aberford yesterday? You know well it was no accident! There's what's come of it!" he added fiercely, pointing to Tom. "Ain't it a miracle my chum, who's worth a hundred of you, wasn't killed? Those trams on the grade—"

"I never done it!" cried Jerry, trembling. "I swear I never! I only did what I was told! It warn't me that loosed the trams!"

"Oh, didn't you!"

"I don't even rightly know who it was. But let *me* off, guv'nor, an' I'll find out for yer. Straight I will! I'll find out and let yer know! I'm a good 'un at findin' things out, an' I'll serve yer faithful, only let me off!"

"D'you think I want to employ a red-handed little sneak like you?" exclaimed Roddy. "D'you take me for your precious viewer—eh? You've lived long enough to do these vile tricks! Tom an' Gripe ha' both just missed their finish through you, an' now I'll end it. You shall eat this meat an' take your chance. Now for it!"

He took the back of Jerry's neck in such a grip that the Aberford spy was forced to open his jaws, and gave a shout that echoed over the moor. The chunk of meat in Rodwell's hand was at once crammed swiftly into Jerry's cavernous throat, after which Roddy not only closed the captive's mouth tightly, but caught hold of his nose and held it.

Jerry's struggles were desperate, but there was no possible help for it. The grip on his nose and the want of breath soon forced him to swallow. Rodwell gave him plenty of time to make sure before he released him, and Jerry, staggering back, sat down heavily in the heather, and began to yell at the top of his voice.

Tom scrambled up and looked utterly aghast. A horrified protest rose to his lips, but a sudden quick wink from Roddy reassured him. Dafydd caught the wink, too, and began to grin, though he had been nearly as scared as Jerry for a moment.

"There's nothing to laugh at," said Roddy to Dafydd grimly. "Poisoning's one of the most awful deaths there is. We'd better leave him by himself for a bit."

The unfortunate Jerry was struggling in the heather, making wild efforts in various directions. Then he sat up, with a crimson face, and stared despairingly at the three.

"I can feel it workin'!" he gurgled wildly. "It's gettin' a grip o' my innards. I'm a dead man!"

"Whew! It works quickly, don't it?" said Roddy with interest, to his chums. "I never thought he'd feel it as soon as that. Don't go too near him, Tom!"

"I'm dyin'!" gasped Jerry. "Ow can you stand there lookin' at me?" His voice rose to a shriek. "Save me! Fetch a doctor—quick!"

"There ain't a doctor for three miles," said Roddy consolingly. "It's no use goin' for him; you'd be dead long before he got here. Don't take on, Jerry; it'll soon be all over. Lie back an' take it quietly."

"You'll be 'ung for this!" wailed Jerry, doubling himself up in the heather and squirming. "You'll be 'ung, all three of yer! Oo-oo-oo!"

"It isn't our fault if the meat you brought don't agree with you. I'm very sorry for you, Jerry. I thought you were humbugging when you said it was poison. Was it really a drug?"

"I told yer so over an' over again! You've killed me! Oh, get me somethin' for it—quick!"

"I've heard mustard-an'-water's the best thing for poison, if it's taken directly after," said Tom.

"It is," said Roddy. "I was just goin' to suggest it."

"Gimme some—quick!" shrieked Jerry.

"I can't do that," replied Roddy, shaking his head, "the responsibility's too great. I ain't a doctor, an' the coroner might blame me. But there's a tin o' mustard on the shelf in the cottage, and a mug, and a pail o' water."

"I wish I might live long enough ter see you all 'ung for this!" wailed Jerry, scrambling to his feet and running, doubled up, towards the cottage. The three chums followed, just in time to see him mix a liberal mugful of water and mustard with a trembling hand, and gulp it down.

When he had drained it he came outside again, and stood in the sunlight as if he were rooted to the spot. His face began to show many emotions, and its colour changed slowly from crimson to sea-green.

"I feel worse'n I felt before!" he gasped thickly. "I feel—oh—"

He turned away, and, staggering round the back of the cottage, disappeared behind a rock. Nobody followed.

"The mustard's gettin' to work," said Tom, grinning hugely, while Dafydd threw himself down and lay in the turf in spasms of laughter. Roddy alone looked serious, and said it was heartless to laugh at a matter of life and death.

Strange sounds came from behind the rock—sounds reminiscent of the sea, and many other things beside. Much was happening, though no curious eye peered behind the rock veil that screened events. The chums waited patiently for the result of it all, and it was some time before Jerry emerged and came forward, rather tottery on his feet, and with a very pale face and a pink nose.

"D'you think it's done you good?" said Roddy.

"I don't know!" groaned the patient. "If it ain't, nothin' will. But—"

"Yes; I think you're rather better," said Roddy, looking at him. "You may pull through it now with care. I should go home



The bucket, high up against the pulley, reversed itself just as Mr. Sully passed underneath, and down came a black avalanche of train-grease upon the viewer.

WITH PICK & LAMP.

(Continued from the previous page.)

and lie down, if I were you. But don't over-strain yourself. Don't do too much work makin' reports, or the poison may revive, an' you'll have a relapse. You aren't out of danger by a long way."

Jerry groaned again.

"And just remember," added Roddy, "that what you did is a crime against the law, Mr. Jerry Crail, an' a serious one. Six months is the least you'll get, if it comes to be known you've been layin' poison about. So you'd better not brag of it. You're an ugly-minded little sweep, and this is about the lowest-down trick you've tried yet. I've a mind to give you the other piece of meat, an' make sure you don't forget."

"Oh, save us, no!" gasped the spy, trembling. "Only let me get right away, mister! I'll never do wrong agen! I've 'ad enough! If this stuff don't kill me, I don't want nothin' in the world but to get right out for good. Ugh!"

"It's about the only safe plan for you," said Rodwell grimly. "I think you've learned the firm of Tom, Dafydd, Roddy, Gripe, & Co., Unlimited, ain't healthy to play the fool with, especially for a little worm like you. An' now you can go, an' our blessin' with you. Mind you don't start the arsenic workin' again!"

Down the hill, with sober steps and slow, but devoutly thankful to get away, went Jerry Crail. He disappeared round the spur of the mountain-side, and Bryn y Garth saw him no more. Dafydd and Tom turned to Rodwell and bombarded him with questions.

"It is all right, Roddy? Is he in any danger?" cried Tom.

"Danger your grandmother!" retorted Roddy. "What I shoved down the little beast's throat was a chunk of cold rabbit left over from last night, an' that's all. An' uncommonly nice bit it was, too, though he didn't seem to fancy it. The pieces o' poisoned meat are in the cottage."

"Glory!" said Tom, grinning from ear to ear. "That was great! But how did it make him double up like that?"

"Effect o' the imagination, I suppose," was Roddy's reply. "He fancied he felt the pains comin' on, after bein' sure he'd swallowed enough poison to kill a horse. I reckon he felt the real thing after he tried the mustard cure though. It was perfectly correct, y' know. Mustard's the proper antidote if you've swallowed anything dangerous. An' he went for it like a shot."

"It wass great!" chuckled Dafydd. "I wass really thought you were in such a rage that you had poisoned him, till I saw you gif a wink. He had no doubts apout it. I nefer saw anyone so scared to death."

"Serve him right!" said Roddy, pulling Gripe's ears affectionately. "But for a bit of luck, he'd have done for our friend here. Eh, old dog? It'd have only been his deserts if we'd let Gripe settle with him."

"Yes, inteet; to say nothing of ter fellow having had to do with Tom's injury, and nearly killed him, too. He wass as good as admit he had a hand in it."

"I believe, now, it was he who kept watch an' gave 'em to the office," said Tom.

"Well, we shall have no more trouble with him," Roddy replied. "We've rubbed the scare well in, an' he's got off cheaply, though he don't know it. I'll bet Bryn y Garth to a scuttle of coke he resigns his proud position as Sully's spy, an' that Mr. Jerry Crail will choose a walk of life that don't bring him quite so many shocks."



Rhys Evans and the Train-Grease.

TOM was much better next morning, though his shoulder was still rather stiff, and he wanted to return to work. Roddy would not hear of it, however, and Tom gave way on his chum's consenting to go instead.

"You lie up till the new week starts," said Roddy; "it's the only sensible thing to do, even considerin' the money. You wouldn't be able to do a proper day's hewin' now, an' the takings'd be so much less on pay-day. Whereas you're gettin' full pay now, at the same rate you earned last week, for every day you're away. I'll draw it for you, an' I'll see you get that compensation Sully promised, too."

Rodwell set off by himself, and arrived at the pits, wondering what sort of a reception he would get, and how they would treat him. It seemed to the youthful hewer that those who were aware he knew as much as they did would have some trouble to save their faces, after Tom's accident.

But, as usual, all went quite smoothly. Sully was not there. Rodwell presented himself at the office, and was met by Sandford, Sully's subordinate, and the boy asked him shortly enough what compensation Tom was to get. Mr. Sandford mentioned ten pounds.

"That's not half enough," said Roddy. "If he claimed under the Workmen's Compensation Law he'd get twenty pounds at least."

"Oh, no," replied the viewer's underling: "not for a dislocated shoulder and a bruise or two. It's not an injury like even a lost finger-joint. Especially as we're paying him full wages."

"Well, we'll go to law about it and see," said Roddy. "I'll get Mr. Wynne Williams, our solicitor, to take it up at once. We won't take less than twenty pounds. You won't mind its goin' to law, of course?"

Mr. Sandford looked rather disturbed, hummed and ha'd a good deal, and finally said he would lay the offer before his superiors, but feared they would not consent to give so much. Rodwell himself could start work at once, and had better do so.

Roddy left the office positively bursting with delight.

"They'll pay up," he said to himself. "I could see it by that chap's manner. He's got orders not to stick out, I'll bet. They'll never dare let the case come into court. Twenty pounds all in a lump, hurrah!"

He wished he had Tom there to receive the good news. It had only occurred to Roddy on the way down. He felt perfectly certain, after his interview, that they would pay, and he decided to see Mr. Williams before returning, if they failed to, and start the case at once.

"This sets us up better than a month's work, an' at no risk," he chuckled. "Wish I could ha' asked for more. But if I'd gone for the whole amount they'd have fought the case tooth an' nail, rather than let us get free of 'em with the full sum we want. Almost wish I'd risked it, though."

On his way to the shaft he met Terry Lloyd, and suddenly remembered, for the first time since Tom's accident, the scene there had been in the pit when Terry faced the viewer. Both of them were equally surprised to see the other.

"What, you back again, Roddy?" exclaimed the big pitman. "This beats cock-fightin'! How's Tom?"

"Tom's goin' on well; he can get about again now."

"Glory for that! But how the nation d'ye come to be here in the Coed Coch again, lad?"

"Decided to get back to work so as to lose no time. But I was goin' to ask you the same thing, Terry. It's a fact, I never thought to see you workin' here again after what you said to Sully. What came of it?"

"Well, that's what I'm wonderin' mesilf," said Terry, scratching his head. "It all seems to me a main queer affair."

"I don't wonder at that," said Roddy, grinning. "I'm quite o' your opinion. But how did you get over it? Some notice must ha' been taken of it?"

"Why, yes! Ye see, Sully took it so quiet at the time, an' Tom didn't say nothin', either, that I wondered if I hadn't made a fool o' mesilf."

"Ah!" said Roddy drily.

"Sully wasn't anywhere to be seen when I come up the shaft. Next mornin' I turned up at openin'-time, to inquire if anybody knew how things was with Tom, an' heard he wasn't dangerously hurt, arter all. You wasn't here, o' course, an' I began to think there couldn't be much in it, an' that I'd accused Sully wrongly. O' course, I never thought o' anything 'cept bein' sacked. I was quite prepared to hear orders given to chuck me out o' the yard, in which case I was ready an' willin' for a free fight—a thing that's always just meat an' drink to me."

"But you didn't get it?"

"No. Blessed if that chap who takes Sully's place didn't call me to the office, an' accuse me o' bein' drunk in the pit the day before, an' insultin' the head-viewer. That fair took me aback. I denied it flat, o' course, an' told him to bid Sully come an' say it to my face. 'Mr. Sully is not here,' says the chap. 'He said that the only excuse he can imagine for your extraordinary conduct yesterday is that you were not sober, which was plain enough. As, however, you are a steady man as a rule, and a good hewer, he will overlook it for this once. But, you understand, that if anything of the sort happens again you will be instantly dismissed. Now get to your stall.'

"That's what the fellow said," concluded Terry. "I began to think I really must ha' been a bit screwed; though I'd only taken a pint of ale before comin' to the pit. So, as it wasn't no use my bein' out o' work, I took on, an' was pretty thankful."

"Good business!" said Roddy.

"But now I want to know what the truth o' it is," said Terry; "seein' as you're the only one that can tell me. I ain't for workin' in that hole another day if Sully tried any put-up job on Tom Hughes. It ain't scarcely believable; but, still, I won't——"

"I'll just tell you this, Terry," said Rodwell. "The right thing for you to do is to take on an' work again. Since you use the words, you did make a fool of yourself. We're jolly grateful to you for takin' Tom's part, an' you're a brick. But there's nothin' for you to worry about at all, so go ahead."

"That ain't an answer," said Terry doggedly. "I want a plain 'yes' or 'no.'"

"Look here, Terry, you see me here, don't you, goin' to the shaft for the day's shift, same as usual. And as soon as Tom's fit again—to-morrow or next day—he'll be back here, too, an' go to work. That's answer enough, ain't it?"

Terry stared.

"Why, yes. You wouldn't come back if there was any foul play to be feared, I reckon. That's good enough, so let's go down the shaft together, me lad." He was silent for a moment. "Only I can't make out what was meant by the things you said when you thought Tom was outed."

"You should never pay much attention to what a chap says when he's excited," replied Roddy, with a slight smile. "That's the trouble with us Welsh, and you Irish. Our blood gets heated up mighty quick, an' we're apt to hit out all round, both with talk an' fists. I'm tryin' to learn holdin' myself in a bit."

"I like ructions mesilf," said the big pitman simply.

"Yes," was Roddy's reply; "but business before pleasure, that's a rare motto. Come on into the cage."

Down they went into the pit, and Roddy worked the rest of that day with Terry in the same stall on the grade. The wreckage of the trams, of course, had long ago been cleared up, and the broken line relaid, yet it made Roddy rather thoughtful as he passed the spot.

Everybody they met in the workings inquired eagerly after Tom, and were glad to get such good news of him. Terry and Rodwell were soon at work, holing out the coal, and the latter comforted himself by imagining each blow of his pick was directed at Sully's head. Thus he "holed out" with quite extraordinary accuracy and strength, and at the end of the shift had placed to his credit a record output of coal. As soon as ever he was clear of the colliery, Roddy made all speed back to Bryn y Garth with the great news.

"Twenty pounds!" cried Tom, when he heard of it. "Great jemini, what rippin' good luck! My eye, but they may start a train down the grade at me every day at that price!"

"Yes; it's the best thing that's happened to us yet," agreed Rodwell, "though it ain't my shoulder that was put out, old chap."

"Why, with what we've made already, it nearly brings us out! We want—let's see—only about twelve pounds more, don't we? Another three weeks, or less, an' we shall have got our fifty."

"Couldn't you haf made them pay more, Roddy?" said Dafydd.

Roddy explained why he believed it would not do to stand out for a larger sum; and Tom, after a little thought, agreed with him. Rodwell also related his interview with Terry Lloyd. Tom was so elated at the thought of the big stride their finances had made that he wanted to go back next day, but Roddy persuaded him to wait until they had actually got the money.

There was no further difficulty made about it. Roddy went to the office next day, and Sully still being absent, the official in charge tried to take a high hand, and make the boy accept less. Rodwell stood out stoutly, however, promising that an action should immediately be taken by Mr. Wynne Williams for damages, if he was not paid the full amount. The cheque was handed over to him—it had been ready all the time—and Roddy opened an account with it at the local bank at midday, thus making sure of the money.

Next day there was no holding Tom at all; and, having had a good spell of the moor and the trout, he strode into Aberford with Roddy in time for the first shift, feeling fitter than ever. The boy received quite an ovation from the pitmen, and quite forty of them would not be satisfied till they had shaken hands with him. Mr. Sully was back again, and saw this demonstration through the office window; but he did not show himself.

"I wonder the beggar's got the face to meet us at all," said Tom. "I owe him one over this affair."

"He never wanted for cheek," replied Roddy; "but, as to the rest, we've pretty well squared the account, with that twenty pounds at the bank."

"Ah; but he didn't pay that," said Tom meaningly. "It came out of Kenyon Price's pocket. I'll put in a little dig at Sully one of these days, just to show him I know who's the author o' that game."

"Well, no fallin' foul of him," said Roddy warningly. "No more Gripe business, or anything of that sort."

"Be aisy, as Terry says," was Tom's reply. "I won't upset the apple-cart. If a chance comes along, he shall have what's good for him, that's all. Hallo, Rhys, my boy! How's the world usin' you?"

"Fery well," said Rhys Evans, the former rival of the chums. "I wass fery glad to see you back, Tom. I ask Mr. Glass to let me putt for you and Pat, and he says all right."

"Good! You ain't jealous of us bein' made hewers? It's not our fault, you know."

"No. I wass soon learn to pe a hewer myself."

"I wonder they haven't made you one. How is it? There's a vacancy for a putter on our side, though."

"I wass hear that Jerry Crail does not come any more to ter pits. A coot riddance," said Rhys piously. "And I would like to putt for you."

The boys glanced at each other, with a wink.

"Jerry's gone," said Roddy, nodding. "Wasn't here yesterday, or the day before. Didn't expect to see him, either. Well, Rhys, my buck, come along! You're a big improvement on Jerry."

Evans wanted to hear what the boys knew about Jerry, and why he was absent; but they told him nothing, considering that the late spy had expiated his misdeeds, and might be left alone. In another twenty minutes all were hard at work in the stalls, and a good day's "graft" was done. They found Rhys a much nimbler putter than the departed Jerry.

Five days went by, and all progressed smoothly in the Aberford. The only incident of note was the arrival of six Belgian miners, who came to hew in the pit. Their arrival was not looked upon with any favour by the Welsh and English pitmen, who thought there was no need to bring foreigners in to fill places that British miners ought to have. It was rumoured, however, that Mr. Kenyon Price was short of hands. Hewers were not plentiful, and the Belgians were useful pitmen, and worked well. Where they had sprung from nobody knew.

It was only the following Tuesday, while the stalls were in full work, that another putter was sent to Tom's stall, and Rhys Evans was ordered off elsewhere. He was surprised, and very sorrowful about it.

"Wass I not do my work properly, sir?" he said to Mr. Glass, well knowing there was no fault to be found with him.

"Oh, yes, yes—quite," said Mr. Glass. "I'm not complaining. Get to No. 80 at once. They are waiting for you."

"I was nefer before shifted in ter middle of ter week," persisted Rhys. "Couldn't you let me stay, sir, whateffer? I——"

"You must obey orders, and get to your new stall," returned the under-viewer, who seemed put out. "The order is not mine," he added irritably.

"Fery well, sir," said Rhys gloomily. But he added, as he went out: "I will ask Mr. Sully himself to let me come pack. Yes, inteet!"

Mr. Glass departed, taking no notice. The kirving of the seam was started at once, and Terry Lloyd seemed rather amused at Rhys' faithfulness.

"He seemed mighty keen to stay an' putt for me, bedad," said Terry.

"Oh, it's you he's so fond of, is it?" said Tom, grinning. "I remember you're beltin' him with a wheel-strap only a week ago, for puttin' salt in your cold tea."

"He's a young spalpeen for playin' tricks; I never saw his like," said Terry. "All the same, he's a good enough kid. I'd like to see him go an' ask Lord Sully to shift him back," he added, grinning; "but he'd never have the cheek."

"He's got cheek enough, if that's all," said Tom; "but he won't do it, I reckon, for it'd do him no good whatever."

"It would be unheard-of," chuckled Terry. "A mere putter to go an' ask such a thing of Sully! He's a holy big pot, for a head-viewer."

"He's really actin'-manager, though they call him viewer," replied Tom. "Henley, the manager, don't do much except draw his pay. I wonder the boss keeps him on. Well, I wish we'd got Rhys back, anyhow; this new cub ain't worth his salt."

The putter sent in young Evans's place was a dull, heavy youth, who cared little about keeping pace with his work, and was of no interest at all. Neither chaff nor orders could make him any brisker, and the day's labour passed monotonously.

When it was over, Tom was delayed some time in finding Roddy, and as they went up the shaft the younger boy told his chum of the change of putters.

"It's just some spite of Sully's, I s'pose," said Roddy, "either against us or Rhys. But we'd better give him the tip to let Sully alone, or he'll be gettin' himself into hot water."

They waited for Rhys at the shaft top, but he did not come, and on making inquiries they learned that Rhys had been one of the first to quit the pit, that he had had a "row" with Sully at the office, and thereafter had left the yard. No details were to be had, however.

"Rum go," said Tom. "I hope he hasn't been an' bought any trouble. Let's call at his folks' house on the way out."

They looked in at the cottage where Rhys lived with his old uncle, but the boy was not there, though he had been seen in the town. Finally the two chums went back to Bryn y Garth none the wiser.

Next morning Roddy and Tom were in Aberford some time earlier than usual, intending to look Rhys up. They did not find him, and hearing he had already left for the colliery, they went there. Few of the men had arrived

WITH PICK & LAMP.

(Continued from the previous page.)

as yet, and the chums presently found Rhys by the hand-crane in front of the offices.

"Hallo! What are you up to?" said Roddy. "What's happened?"

"I was sacked, that iss all," replied Rhys bitterly, winding down the bucket that worked on the crane rope.

"Sacked!" exclaimed Tom.

"Yes intcot. I went to Mr. Sully yesterday in ter office, and asked him fery politely if he could let me putt again at your stall, because I work much petter there. He say 'No,' and got in a great rage. Then I ask him again to let me, and he wass tell me to leave the colliery for my impertinence, and nefer come pack."

"Whew!" said Roddy. "The sweep! You've been an' done it, though, Rhys. I never thought he'd fire you out, though, for a little thing like that."

"He wass got a spite against me and my uncle, you know," replied Rhys. "He like to have an excuse to sack me. But I think it was chiefly because I wanted to putt for you. And they will not gif me a job anywhere else either, because Sully's word iss enough for them."

"It's just what the beast would do!" said Tom indignantly. "We know that well enough. But what are you up to with that crane-bucket, though?"

"If Sully must sack me, I like to give him a little reminder before I go," said Rhys, with a grin. "There is some coal-dust in ter bottom of this bucket, and he pass under it. I wass a fery worker, and sacked for nothing, so he shall see."

Tom looked at the bucket, which was a large sheet-iron receptacle working on a gimbal, so that it could be turned upside-down on its own pivot to empty its contents. Then he looked up at the crane, at the office, and smiled lusciously.

Not far away stood several kegs of half-liquid train grease. Tom walked over to them, picked one up, and emptied it into the crane-bucket, stirring in afterwards a few gallons of water from the tanks.

"I say, what are you about?" said Roddy.

"Got a line on the bucket?" inquired Tom of Rhys.

"Yess; here it is."

"Hoist away, then."

Up went the bucket to the top of the crane till it reached the pulley-wheel, and then it stopped. The cord which Rhys had fastened to the basket now hung down, and the putter jerked it over one of the hooks on the side of the crane, so that the end hung down near the wheel, some distance away.

"That wass fine!" chuckled Rhys. "I nefer thought of ter train-oil! Now, if Mr. Sully——"

"I say, take care what you're up to, you two," said Roddy warningly. "It's all very well for Rhys, but——"

"I told you I owed Sully one," replied Tom, "an' this looks like the time when he gets it under the collar. Anybody see us at work, Rhys? No? Hallo, there's Terry callin'!"

"Something urgent, maybe," said Roddy. "Come on, Tom, an' see what he wants."

The chums departed, and learned from Terry that they had been shifted to another part of the workings. The discussion of this kept them some time, and they forgot all about Rhys Evans. When they returned, they saw him standing just beyond the crane, and Mr. Sully, who had just arrived, had unlocked the offices. He turned on the threshold and noticed the putter.

"Here, you," he called sharply. "didn't I tell you to take yourself off yesterday?"

"Yes intcot," said Rhys coolly.

"Then what do you mean by showing your unwashed face here, you little rascal?" cried the viewer.

"My face wass fery well washed," was Rhys's reply. He was about to move towards the side of the crane, when he saw that Tom had secretly got hold of the cord already, and was holding the end behind his back. Several pitmen standing by, stopped and grinned.

"You impertinent little imp!" cried the viewer, striding towards Rhys. "You shall have a thorough good hiding on the spot, to teach you manners! Let me get hold of you! I—— Oh! Ow!"

Tom gave the cord a rousing pull as he lounged against the crane. The bucket, high up against the pulley, reversed itself just as Mr. Sully passed underneath, and down came a black avalanche of train-grease upon the viewer, making him yell and stagger, while a shout of laughter went up from the pitmen.

(Another fine long instalment of this magnificent colliery tale will appear on Saturday next, when the opening chapters of "The School on the Cliff," our great new story of adventure, will appear. Don't miss it.)

CLUB NOTICES.

NOTICES AND CHALLENGES FROM READERS' OWN CLUBS, THESE ARE INSERTED FREE OF CHARGE

MATCHES WANTED for the cricket season. Thursday afternoons, in Hull (average age, 14–17). Apply to E. Blackman, Secretary, 12, Temple Street, Beverley Road, Hull.

TOWER HAMLETS C.C. (average age, 17; weak) have several away dates open. Apply to Cole, 134, Devonshire Street, Mile End, E.

ST. JAMES'S JUNIOR C.C. (average age, 15; weak) require home and away matches for this season. Away matches within five miles' radius of Forest Gate. Apply to G. Shaftain, Secretary, 100, Buxton Road, Stratford, E.

HUNSLET ALBION C.C. (average age, 14–16) would like to arrange matches with respectable teams within the Leeds area. All dates open. Also a few players wanted. Entrance fee, 1s. Apply to H. Rhodes, 27, Gasholder Place, Hunslet.

ST. AUGUSTINE'S C.C. (juniors: average age, 13; weak) require matches at home and short distances away. Ground, Highgate Woods. Apply to Chas. S. Towler, 1, Lansdowne Terrace, Archway Road, Highgate.

ST. STEPHEN'S ATHLETIC C.C. (average age, 16; weak) want away matches, June 1st, 15th, 29th; July 13th, 27th; August 17th, 24th; September 7th, 21st, 28th. Apply to J. B. Estock, 8, Abercrombie Street, Battersea.

ST. DAVID'S C.C. (average age, 16; weak), home and away. Most dates open. Apply to Creed, 100, St. James's Road, Holloway.

KNOWLE JUNIOR C.C. (average age, 16) require home and away matches within five miles' radius of Knowle, Bristol. Call or write to H. Radford, Secretary, 66, Barrowdene Road, Upper Knowle, Bristol.

MUIRHOUSE C.C. (average age, 15; weak) desire dates this season in and around Glasgow. Apply by post to Chas. McNeil, 347, Pollokshaws Road, Glasgow.

THISTLE C.C. (average age, 18; weak.) Away, June 15th and July 6th. Reserves: Home, August 19th; away, June 29th, July 13th and 20th. North London preferred. Write to S. Lewis, 20, Albion Road, Stoke Newington, N.

ST. MATTHEW'S C.C. (average age, 16) have open home (Clapham) July 20th, August 5th; away, June 8th, 13th; July 3rd; August 17th. Apply to W. E. Greadale, 271, Sayer Street, Walworth, S.E.

CAVENDISH ROAD C.C. (average age, 12–15), require matches at home and away for this season within five miles of Leeds. Apply to J. White, 5, Warren Terrace, off Institution Street, Woodhouse, Leeds.

THE 58th LONDON CO. C.C. (average age, 16; strong) have a few dates open, viz.: Home, June 22nd, July 20th, Sept. 28th; away, July 13th, August 24th, Sept. 7th. Write to Secretary, 33, Shakespeare Road, Stoke Newington.

HEREFORD ATHLETIC C.C. require home and away matches. Ground, London Fields. Apply to H. Stannard, 38, Hereford Street, Bethnal Green, N.E.

TYLORSTOWN CRESCENT C.C. (average age 17–18) want home and away matches with junior teams. Apply to John T. Davies, 9, Pleasant View, Tylorstown, Glam.

BOXWORTH UNITED C.C. (average age, 14–16), require a few good players for present season. Small subscription. Only respectable lads need apply. A splendid fixture list has been arranged, including August Bank Holiday. For full particulars write to Robert Jones, 160, Barnabury Road, Islington, N.

MUIRHOUSE C.C. require a few good players (average age, 15–16), respectable. Small subscription. Apply by letter to Chas. McNeil, 347, Pollokshaws Road, Glasgow.

RMALM ATHLETIC C.C. (2nd XI.) require a few good players, and also have a few open dates. Entrance fee, including cap, 1s. 6d. Apply to S. B. Fenton, 20, St. John's Villas, Highgate, N.

A SMALL LAD (age, 16) would like to join a cricket club of old standing. Willing to pay all extras if need. Apply to D. Lee, care of F. B. Johnson, Solicitor, 10, Hound's Gate, Nottingham.

A LAD (age, 15½) would like to join a football club for next season. Can play in goal or back. Must be in the district of Shepherd's Bush or Fulham. Send all replies, with particulars, to J. Meizer, 26, Richmond Gardens, Shepherd's Bush, London, W.

A BOY OF 15 would like a place in a football team in Edinburgh. Can play any position but goal and back. Write to Robert Henderson, 18, Sunbury Place, Edinburgh.

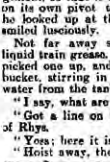
ST. PETER'S P.C. Wanted, for coming season, four or five lads, between 16 and 17. Should reside in the district of Mile End or Stepney. Apply to Henry Jacobs, 31, Nicholas Street, St. Peter's Road, Mile End, E.

YOUTH (age, 17) would like to join a running club in the neighbourhood of Plaistow. Apply to John T. Holmes, 60, Brooks Road, Stratford Road, Plaistow, E.

REALM SWIMMING CLUB. There are vacancies in the above club for a few more members. Entrance fee, 5d., including member's card. Baths, Hornsey Road, N. Competitions for prizes and medals will be held. Apply to S. B. Fenton, 20, St. John's Villas, Highgate, N.

WANTED, respectable teams to join league for the coming football season. Average age, 16–17. Teams in North End only need apply to W. J. Thompson, 3, Rockfield Road, Anfield, Liverpool; or to W. Roberts, 14, Lake Street, Anfield, Liverpool.

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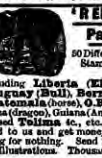
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GALLANT HAL
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The Return of Hal.

IN the chief cabin, which Alma entered, she found Inez and Mena both naturally alarmed by the recent explosion.

The thoughts of Inez had naturally turned to the town, and she wondered what fresh calamity had come upon the hapless place. A couch had been fitted up for her, and she rested on it, looking thin and pale, but evidently fast recovering from the injury she had received. Her life, indeed in that regard, was out of danger.

Alma sat down by her side like one utterly weary, and laid her hand upon the Spanish maiden's arm.

"Inez," she said, "you ought to be happy, for you and Will have been wise in making up your quarrel ere it was too late."

"We really had no quarrel," returned Inez. "It was a foolish misunderstanding—that is all. But why do you talk of anything being too late?"

Alma, struggling with emotion that racked her like some tormenting pain, tried to smile.

"I was only thinking that it might have been too late—one day," she said.

"Dearest," said Inez, "you cannot deceive me. Something has happened. Tell me what it is! Is it Will? Has anything—"

"Will is alive and well," said Alma. "He is on deck. The Spitfire has blown up; it was set on fire by the crew, and deserted. Oh, Inez—and Hal gallantly went to extinguish the flames—"

"Alma! It can never be!"

Inez, with a horrified face, rose up a little. Alma gently pushed her back again.

"Do not agitate yourself, Inez," she said; "it may be a serious thing for you if you do. It is my love who is dead, and yet all the weight of the misery be on me. To think that I should have thought him faithless, even for a moment."

"Alma," said Inez, "I have been frank with you. I told you all—my fancied love for him, and the temptations I put in his way. Seldom has man so nobly resisted them: he could not have done so unless he had given his whole heart to another."

"And now he is dead!" wailed Alma.

"Be sure of that ere you break your heart," said Inez. "Let me put my arms around you —oh, my sister. Pillow your head upon my breast. It is all I can do to help you in this dark hour."

Mena, who had been watching this scene with tears in her eyes, rose up and stole swiftly from the cabin. She was not wanted there, and she felt like one intruding. Late as it was, she had no desire for rest, and went on deck. There she found the men busy putting everything in order, going about silently, or, if speaking, not raising their voices above a whisper.

Lamps had been lighted, and hung up in various places to give them light. The work was going forward in the old methodical manner, but they had no heart in it. Little Trim was in command, for Will had gone away in a boat on the chance of picking up some survivor from the wreck, but of his success there was little hope.

What man could have been on that deck at the time of the explosion and live? Certainly, there were authentic records of wonderful escapes of men being blown high in the air, and coming down alive, but it was a chance of ten—nay, twenty thousand.

Mena was in a pitiful way. She felt the gloom of the hour, and was naturally softened towards her lover, Manly.

After all, he was the man of her heart, and Mittens had been used as a stimulant, simply to keep Manly up to high-lover mark. She wished he had been there to comfort her.

From the shore there came sounds that showed the people of Valdivia had not yet settled down.

Little Trim, leaning over the side watching for the return of Will, tried to analyse the uproar that came from the land.

Its real nature was difficult to make out, owing to the distance. It might be a riot or an ovation, shouts of terror or cheering; for sounds far away have all the same quality. They are melodious.

Those who have gone up in balloons say that at a certain height, even a cry of pain is music. Therefore, Little Trim was uncertain what the noises originated in, but it was certain that they were slowly increasing in volumes.

Hark! What is that? Cheering! Yes, good, lusty British cheering. It was outside the town, by the quay in the harbour, Little Trim judged, and the roar of other voices gathered strength.

"Some ovation by the water side," thought Little Trim. "What is the meaning of it?"

The men had heard it, too, and stopped work. Silently they stood upon the deck, listening.

Gradually the shouting died away to a continuous murmur, like that of the sound of the sea bearing on a distant shore, and then out of it there sprang the regular click, click of oars pulled by disciplined hands.

"There are two boats coming," said Little Trim, after listening intently. His heart fairly bounded within him. "Throw up a rocket, Derry!" he cried. "Let us see who is coming."

There was a few moments of intense suspense. All on deck knew what his hopes were, for it was theirs also. Like a current of electricity it had run from end to end of the ship.

The rocket apparatus was ready, and with a whiz, the fiery thing rose up in the air. It curved slightly in towards the town and burst. Then, by its floating light, the sea was illuminated, and all eyes were turned towards the spot from whence the sound of oars proceeded.

Yes! There were two boats, and standing up in the stern of the foremost was Will Warringham, waving his cap.

But what of the other, a few feet behind the first?

Sitting quietly at the tiller was the well-known gallant form of the captain of the Silver Star.

For a moment or two they saw him, and then darkness came again. But light was in their bosome, and a wild hurrah leapt from every lip.

"Not dead!" cried Little Trim hysterically. "I said so, and half thought so. He is not such a fool as to wait to be blown to pieces."

Mena had gone from the deck. With trembling limbs, agitated by joy, she had run down below with the good news.

Don Tarva de Rialdo, Mr. Warringham, and Marvalda, who had gone below, heavy with grief, heard the shout, and were coming up the companion, when they met Mena.

"He's not dead!" cried the girl; "they are all coming back. The Senorita Alma will go mad with joy."

"I had better break it to her," said Marvalda hurriedly. "But are you sure?"

Mena had no time to answer him, for another shout rose up from the deck and drowned her voice.

Marvalda turned round and hurried to the cabin. When he was within a foot or two of it, the door opened, and Alma stood before him.

"Who is it?" she asked, in a voice so strange that Marvalda shivered. "Has the sea given up its dead?"

"Go in," he answered. "I have something to tell you—it is good—but do not be agitated. We have reason to think—"

"I know!" cried Alma, in ringing tones. "He lives! Do not stop me. If I could bear to think him dead, surely I can meet him living. It will not kill me. But you must not try to keep me from him."

Marvalda drew aside, and saw her go up to the deck as if with wings.

"Others can take care of her," he said. "Let me see how it has affected my patient."

He went in and closed the door. On deck there was a wild, hilarious scene. Hal and his men were safe, and Hal, as he sprang on the deck, was met by a pair of extended arms, and the cry:

"Hal; forgive me!"

"I have nothing to forgive," he answered, as he took her in his arms.

Then she yielded to the terrible strain that had been upon her and fainted away. Putting aside all offers of assistance, Hal bore her down below, and he was followed by Will and his father. Then from the men who had accompanied Gallant Hal to the Spitfire, Little Trim got an account of their escape, if indeed, it could be called one.

They did not linger on board the doomed vessel after it was clear that they could do nothing to quench the flames, and they thought of coming back at once to the Silver Star.

Then Hal, as they pulled round the bow of the vessel, saw the conflagration in the town, and he decided on going to the assistance of the unfortunate people. His object was not only to help to put out the fire, but to see what the half-drunk, half-mad crew of the Spitfire were doing.

He never dreamt of the anxiety his absence would cause, his first thought being for the distracted inhabitants of Valdivia.

They pulled for the landing-stage and made for the conflagration, which, happily, was confined to three detached houses, and soon burnt itself out. But the mutinous seamen were giving trouble. Without a real leader, and no attempt at organisation, they had broken up into parties of two, three, and four, and were running a series of mucks about the town. Several desperate fights had taken place, and two Spaniards had been slain. The Spitfire men had suffered losses also. The appearance of Hal and his followers was the signal for their utter confusion. They either flew away into their country, or threw down their arms and begged for mercy.

The captives were taken in charge by the Spaniards and confined in a strong-room to await Hal's judgment in the morning. In a little more than half an hour the people were free of the new terror, and to Hal they poured out their thanks.

It was their cries of joy that reached Little Trim's ears. Will heard them also, and went ashore to meet Gallant Hal and his men returning to their boats with a vociferous mob of men behind them. On that meeting we need not dwell.

It can readily be imagined what Will felt, and Hal's surprise when he learnt that he was supposed to have been blown up in the Spitfire.

"Really, Will," he said, "you ought to have known me better."



The huge indiarubber mouth of the negro expanded in an amiable grin. Then Shrimp made another excruciating face, and the nigger threw back his head and laughed aloud. The plates crashed to the ground, and the wretched man stood shrieking with laughter, heedless of the ruin he had created. *(See the new story of "Harry Brandon, Actor," in "The Boys' Herald."*

"But we saw you there until the last moment or so," Will said.

"You may have seen my ghost, but not me," Hal said.

Well, he was not dead, and with all speed they returned to the Silver Star, as recorded. Alma, overcome by her emotions, had fainted, but there was nothing serious in that. She soon recovered herself, and then, after more congratulations all round, Marvalda advised them to seek repose.

It was good advice, and they took it. All of the Silver Star, save those who watched on deck and the prison-house of Broody, were now wrapped in slumber. The morning was soon there, and an early hour Hal was on deck again. A little rest did indeed suffice for him when there was a duty to be performed. Quietly he ordered his boat to be lowered, and returned to the shore to see if all were well at the convent, and to bring back his captive, the notorious Caroli de Livana. On reaching the shore the first thing he saw was a man lying dead upon the sand.

By his side was a cutlass. It was one of the men of the Spitfire.

"It is not for us to judge him," said Hal; "by-and-by we will give him all he claims now—a grave."

As there was a possibility of others being about, Hal left three of the men in charge of the boat, with orders to lay a few yards off the shore, and then hurried on to the convent.

There again was another surprise in waiting for them. As they drew near, they heard the sounds of loud knocking at the door. It was accompanied by shouting, and Hal rightly judged that some of the mutineers had found their way thither.

Coming in sight of the place, he saw them, half a dozen in number, knocking at the convent door with the handles of their cutlasses. Hal had only three men with him, but he went fearlessly forward.

"Give yourselves up!" he cried.

They turned on him, exhibiting faces still inflamed by drink, but they all appeared to know him.

"It's the hero of the Silver Star!" one cried.

Then they threw down their weapons, not exactly in fear, but in deference to Hal's reputation.

"You may do what you like with us, captain," said one of them. "We are tired of our lives, and have been so these many days."

An End to All Things Must Come.

CAROLI DE LIVANA was not on board. He and Broody were confined together with a double watch set over them. A number of men of the Spitfire were on board, having given themselves up, trusting to the mercy of the authorities at home. Prior to leaving the shore, Gallant Hal made preparations for firing the convent, by having it filled with brushwood. As a desecrated building it were better destroyed.

By its light the Silver Star set sail that night, leading south, to round the Cape, and then bear away to England. Gay hearts on board, and none gayer than Mittens. But the cause of his joy was no secret now—he had let it out at last.

Mittens was the owner of considerable wealth, and comparatively a rich man. Many years before, his father had set sail with a ship's crew to discover a lost treasure, hidden away on a coral reef outside an island, the name of which Mittens had forgotten. The prize, after a long search, was discovered. It consisted of a vast collection of jewels, supposed to have belonged to some great potentate, who had been robbed and murdered years and years ago. Anyway, it was a case of finding and keeping, and on finding the treasure it was divided among the crew, each man carrying his share about his person. Then came just what might have been expected.

Some of the men plotted together to murder the rest; and one night, when near the coast, a desperate fight took place. The father of Mittens leapt into the sea and was drowned. There he fell into the hands of pirates, who took him to a dell where their leader was. He was put into a small cave, where he had an opportunity to bury his wealth in a corner. That was one of the caves of the Diamond Dell.

To his dismay, he was taken from the place, shipped on board a pirate craft, and made to work as one of the crew. The ship was wrecked, and he was picked up by a passing English vessel and taken home.

He had a wife who long ago had given him up, and a son who thought he would never see his father again. That son was Mittens. He was a boy of fourteen then, and his father confided to him the story of his buried treasure. All he could do was to give him an idea of its whereabouts, and describe the place where he had hidden it. Then he died.

Mittens as a boy could do nothing. Mittens as a man could do very little. But he did his best. In various capacities he travelled about on board different ships, covertly inquiring and endeavouring to find out the cave. Sometimes he thought the story must be the outcome of a diseased brain, but, as a rule, he hoped on. Years and years he wandered about, showman, dealer, steward, purser, anything so that he could keep at sea; and at last, as we have described, he met with a reward. Many people may think that now, indeed, he could have Mena for a wife. But it was not so.

"It is not money I want," she said. "No, I must follow my heart."

And Manly had won that. Yet another secret was let out at the same time. Gallant Hal was the heir to a vast estate, the owner of a honoured name, and a title to be proud of. He was the last of a noble race, the owners of Castle Tourney, in the Midlands. He was, in short, the Marquis of Tourneyville.

The days of his boyhood and youth had been spent at sea, and it was only through the machinations of Broody and Captain Salter that he left the service, a profound indiscretion of no great moment was magnified into a dishonourable act, and he left the Navy with a cloud upon him.

To this had been added the reports of his being on a piratical mission in the Pacific, but now he had evidence of his innocence on board, and was taking back one of his chief accusers, a captive and virtually a condemned man. He had also secured the notorious Caroli de Livana, the author of many dark crimes, whose very existence had been denied by the Chilian Government, because of the strength of his following.

It was a great triumph, and now that the clouds had cleared away between him and Alma all went merry as a marriage-bell.

(To be concluded.)

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