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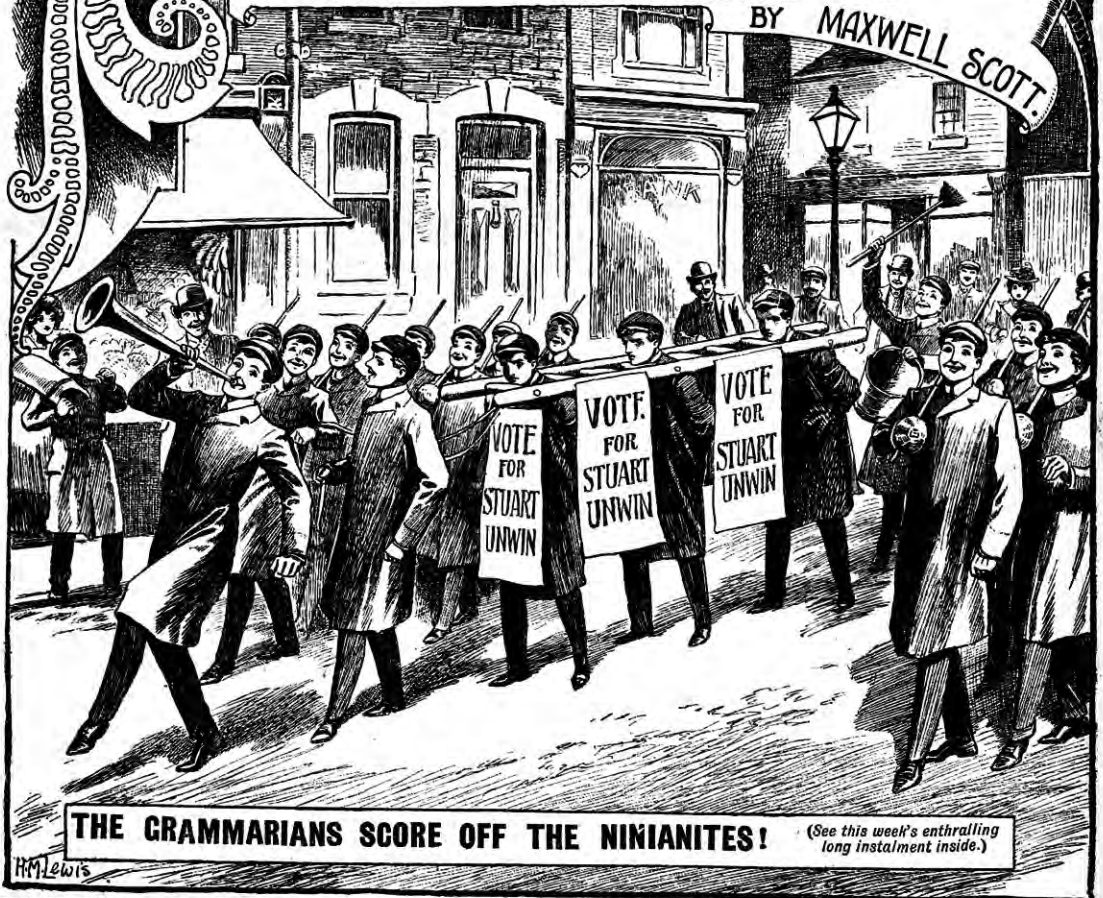
THE FIGHTING FIFTH

A TALE OF St NINIANS SCHOOL.

BY MAXWELL SCOTT.



THE GRAMMARIANS SCORE OFF THE NINIANITES!

(See this week's enthralling long instalment inside.)

No. 264. Vol. VI.] EVERY SATURDAY—ONE PENNY. [Saturday, June 22, 1907.

The Fighting Fifth

A TALE OF NIPPER AT ST. NINIAN'S SCHOOL.

BY POPULAR

MAXWELL SCOTT.

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 escaped convict from Greystones Prison falls over a cliff and is killed. On his body is found the gold locket which he stole from Lal, to whom it is now returned. Lal and Nipper decide on a hiding-place for it, but unaware to them are overheard by Gardner, a pupil at St. Ninian's, who is in difficulties with a bookmaker in the village.

Gardner pays a visit to the bookmaker to try and gain time before settling his debts. On the way he witnesses a laughable encounter between an old sergeant and a bill-sticker. Joe Fisher, the bookmaker, refuses to allow the lad any more time, and threatens to carry his complaint to the headmaster unless the money is paid within the next few days. The mysterious German, who is endeavouring to obtain possession of the locket, overhears the conversation, and offers to pay Gardner's debts on certain conditions.

(Now read this week's instalment.)

Gardner Consents.

"I MEAN," said Heinrich, "that if I lend you this money, and so enable you to escape the ruin and disgrace which threatens you, I shall expect you to render me a trifling service in return."

"I will do anything in reason," said Gardner eagerly. "What do you wish me to do?"

"You have a young Hindoo at St. Ninian's, named Chota Lal Nath Chandra Das," said Heinrich. "About three weeks ago he discovered an unknown man in a dirty boat; and this unknown man, just before his death, gave Das a small gold locket——"

"Now I know who you are!" cried Gardner, interrupting him. "You're the man who broke into Hamilton's study and tried to steal the locket! You're the man who met Das on Hampton Heath and threatened to shoot him unless he gave you the locket! You're Otto Heinrich, the German, in a fresh disguise!"

"I am," said Heinrich coolly. "For certain private reasons—perfectly honourable reasons, but reasons which I am under a pledge of secrecy not to reveal—I desire to inspect the locket. Mark my words—to inspect the locket. I do not wish to steal the locket. I do not want the locket itself. I merely wish to examine it for a moment or two.

"If I had found the locket in Hamilton's desk on the night I broke into his study I should not have taken it away. I should have examined it and replaced it in the desk. Similarly, if Das had had the locket in his possession when I met him on Hampton Heath, I should not have robbed him of it. I should merely have examined it in his presence, and I should then have given it back to him."

"But why ——" began Gardner.

"I cannot answer any questions," said Heinrich. "As I've already told you, my lips are sealed by a solemn pledge of secrecy. I can only say that, although my actions in the past may seem to you to be open to suspicion, though my methods may appear to you to savour of violence, you would be the first to admit, if you knew all the circumstances of the case, that I have only acted as any other honourable man would have acted in the delicate and difficult position in which I am placed.

"To return to the locket. As you know, it was stolen from Das by an escaped convict, who was afterwards killed by falling over the cliffs. It was found concealed in the convict's stocking, and was given back to Das yesterday afternoon. Do you know what he has done with it? Has he sent it to the bank, as he was advised to do, or is it still at the school?"

Like a flash the words which Gardner had overheard in the archway came back to him. As the reader will remember, he had heard Lal say that he would hide the locket "under that loose board behind Nipper's desk."

"You know where it is," said Heinrich eagerly. "I see by your face that you know where it is. Is it at the school?"

Gardner nodded his head.

"Good!" exclaimed the German, and his voice vibrated with suppressed excitement. "Would it be possible for you to get hold of it, without anybody's knowing, and bring it to me, and let me examine it?"

Gardner pondered for a moment before he replied. He could slip down to Nipper's study, when everybody else was in bed, and prise up the loose board in the floor. Yes, he could easily "get hold of the locket without anybody knowing."

"I might," he said. "But—but I'd rather not!"

Heinrich ignored the latter part of Gardner's reply.

"If you'll get the locket to-night," he said, "and meet me at any place and time you like to name, I'll give you ten pounds, which will pay what you owe to Fisher and leave you nearly five pounds for yourself. Twenty pounds!" he said, as Gardner hesitated.

Gardner's face was now as white as death. Twenty pounds! It was a big temptation. He would have nothing further to fear from Joe Fisher then. There would be no risk of being expelled then. And what harm would he be doing? The German wasn't going to steal the locket. He only wanted to look at it. Twenty pounds! Why shouldn't he accept the German's offer? He could replace the locket in its hiding-place, after Heinrich had examined it, and nobody would ever know that he had meddled with it.

"Will you swear that you'll give me the locket back after you've examined it?" he asked.

"I will," said Heinrich eagerly. "I'll examine it in your presence. It shall never leave your sight. You shall hold a revolver to my head whilst I'm examining it, if you like; and I swear by all I hold sacred that I'll return it to you, with twenty pounds, in less than five minutes—ay, in less than two!"

"Then I'll do it!" said Gardner, in a low, husky voice. "You know that clump of trees just opposite the school gates? Be there at midnight to-night, and as soon as the coast is clear I'll bring the locket to you."

Captured by the Enemy.

GARDNER, it will be remembered, had witnessed the encounter between Sergeant Quiggin and the bill-sticker, but had quitted the scene at the moment when the ladder slid sideways along the end of the barn and hurled the wooden-legged sergeant to the ground, with the bill-sticker, whose name was Trattles, on the top of him.

Although Gardner did not wait to see any more, it must not be assumed that nothing more happened. On the contrary, a great deal more happened.

"I'll 'ave the lor on yer for this!" howled Trattles, as he twined one hand in the sergeant's hair and battered the sergeant's face with the other. "I'll drummon yer for this, yer one-legged wiper! I'll learn yer to hinterfere with honest workmen in the lawful pursoot of their hoccupashun!"

"Lawful!" roared the sergeant, fastening his hands on his opponent's throat, and tightening his grip till the bill-sticker's eyes protruded from their sockets like the eyes of a crab. "Is it lawful to cover up another man's bills afore they've been up twenty-four hours? Answer me that, you cock-eyed, spindle-shanked son of a gun! D'you 'ear? Answer me that!"

Seeing that he was gripping the bill-sticker's windpipe with all his strength, and that Trattles was scarcely able to breathe, much less to speak, it is hardly necessary to add that he sergeant's question remained unanswered. To do the bill-sticker justice, he tried to answer the question; but his reply took the somewhat unintelligible form of an inarticulate "Glug-urug!"

"You'll 'ave the law on me, will you?" continued the sergeant. "You'll summon me, will you? The boot is on the other leg. It's me wot's goin' to 'ave the law on you for hobliteratin' one of Mr. Boswell's bills."

He flung the half-strangled bill-sticker aside and scrambled to his feet—or, rather, to his solitary foot. Gasping for breath, Trattles also picked himself up; and no sooner had he done so than the sergeant clutched him by the collar of his coat.

"Now, just you come along o' me," he said.

"Where to?" demanded Trattles.

"To the police-station, of course."

"Wot for?"

"Hang you! 'Aven't I told you?" thundered Sergeant Quiggin. "I'm goin' to give you in charge for coverin' up one of Mr. Boswell's bills, contrary to the statoot made and pervided—which same is a misjomeenyer in the heye of the law."

"Look 'ere," said Trattles, in a conciliatory voice. "Suppose we calls it quits, and lets bygones be bygones?"

"No fear!" said the sergeant. "I caught you in the hact, and I'm goin' to 'ave my pound of flesh."

"If yer take me to the stashun," said Trattles threateningly, "I shell give yer inter custody for assaultin' me and wastin' 'arf a bucket o' paste."

The sergeant snorted his disdain.

"Right about face—quick march!" he said, turning away and dragging Trattles after him.

"'Arf a mo'!" said Trattles, holding back. "Leggo my collar! If you're anxious to be took inter custody, I'm willin' to oblige yer. Leggo my collar, and I'll come with yer to the stashun as quiet as a lamb! But I ain't agoin' to leave my ladder and bucket and brush behind."

"You're goin' to do just wot I tell you," said the sergeant truculently. "Wot do I care for your ladder and your bucket and your brush? I'll send 'em go to Jericho! You come along o' me."

Realising that resistance would be futile—for the sergeant was a giant both in stature and strength—the bill-sticker yielded to the inevitable, and suffered his captor to lead him away in the direction of the village.

The barn, it will be remembered, was on the left-hand side of the road. On the right-hand side was a low stone wall, which formed one of the boundaries of the Grammar School ground. It may also be remembered that a few yards from the barn, in the opposite direction to the village, the road turned sharply to the left and ran past the gates of St. Ninian's. Anybody, therefore, coming from St. Ninian's and going to the village was compelled to pass the end of the barn.

A few seconds after Sergeant Quiggin and the bill-sticker had vanished in the direction of the village, four boys came round the corner from the direction of St. Ninian's. They were Nipper, Dick, Bob, and Lal.

"Hallo! Here's a ladder lying in the road!" exclaimed Bob, on catching sight of the bill-sticker's ladder.

"And an empty paste-bucket, too, by Jove!" cried Dick.

"And a whitewash-brush, all sticky with paste, and a bundle of posters," added Lal. "What a rum idea to leave all these things lying in the road! I wonder whom they belong to?"

"To a bill-sticker, probably," said Bob. "I say, Nip, here's a chance for you to distinguish yourself. You're a dabster at detective work. What's happened here? Why has the giddy bill-sticker vanquished and left his property behind him?"

As Bob uttered these words, a head rose up from behind the low stone wall on the other side of the road. The head belonged to Arnold, the leader of the Fifth Form at the Grammar School. He had intended to vault over the wall; but, on seeing the four Ninianites, he drew back, with a low whistle of mingled surprise and triumph.

"Hamilton, Starling, Arkle, and the nigger!" he chuckled to himself. "With a bit of luck, we ought to be able to bag the lot."

With which remark he turned swiftly on his heel and ran back towards the school.

In the meantime, Nipper had examined one of the posters in the bundle, and glanced up at the end of the barn, had gazed at the puddle of paste, and had taken note of the impressions in the snow.

He had not earned the title of "Nelson Lee's pupil" without deserving it. Even the great detective himself could not have pieced the clues together in a more conclusive fashion.

"It's easy to see what's happened, my beloved pals," said Nipper. "Look at that bill on the end of the barn—that yellow thing with 'Vote for Stuart-Unwin' on it! Quite dauup, isn't it? How long should you say it's been there?"

"Not long," said Dick. "In fact, I should say it's only just been stuck up."

"What's underneath it?"

"One old bill—the election addresses."

"Precisely!" said Nipper. "Now cast your optic on that mess in the snow. What's happened there?"

"It looks as if somebody had been rolling in the snow," said Bob.

"Somebody has been rolling in the snow, my son," said Nipper. "Two somebodies, in fact. One of 'em was the bill-sticker, no doubt, and the other was—who?"

"How do I know?" growled Bob.

"Then you must be blind," said Nipper. "Look at those round holes in the snow. What do you make of 'em?"

"A walking-stick?" suggested Lal.

"Ass!" said Nipper. "It'd be a jolly thick walking-stick that would make those holes. Look at 'em again. Well?"

"I give it up," said Lal, shaking his head.

"A wooden leg," said Nipper.

"By Jove, I believe you're right!" cried Lal.

"Of course I'm right," retorted Nipper. "I always am. How many wooden-legged men are there in Clevedon?"

"I only know of one," said Lal.

"Sergeant Quiggin," said Dick.

"Of course," said Nipper. "There's an election coming on for the County Council. Stewed Onions, alias Dr. Stuart-Unwin, is one of the candidates, and Napoleon Bonaparte Boswell is the other. Quiggin is working tooth and nail for Boswell, and this bill-sticker, judging by these posters, was employed by Stewed Onions. Now can you guess what's happened?"

"I think so," said Bob.

"Think so?" said Nipper scornfully. "It's as plain as the nose on Piggy's face. Sergeant Quiggin came round that corner, not many minutes since, and caught the bill-sticker in the act of covering up one of Boswell's posters. He went for him—as Quiggin would—and probably tried to pull him off the ladder. In the struggle, the bucket of paste was upset; then the ladder toppled over, and after the two men had rolled about in the snow for a bit, the sergeant dragged the other chap to his feet and marched him off to——"

The rest of the sentence was drowned by a shout of alarm from Lal.

"Look out! Grammarbugs!" he yelled.

With startled cries, his three chums spun round on their heels. At the same instant a dozen or more Grammarians, headed by Arnold, Crosby, Fleming, and Tattersall, sprang over the low stone wall and dashed across the road, with a chorus of exultant yells.

Quick as thought Nipper snatched up the empty paste-bucket, and, as Arnold rushed at him, he jammed the bucket upside-down over the Grammarian's head. Then, after giving Arnold a vigorous push that sent him reeling into the middle of the road, he lashed out right and left with his fists and sent two more of the Grammarians to grass.

In the meantime, Dick had armed himself with the whitewash-brush, and by dabbing the sticky end in Crosby's face, he stopped that doughty warrior's charge and landed him in the gutter. A swipe on the side of the head with the same weapon accounted for Tattersall, and a playful jig in the bread-basket took most of the wind out of Fleming's sails.

Needless to say, neither Bob nor Lal was idle in the meantime.

The former planted himself with his back to the barn, and by a vigorous use of his fists, not only kept his assailants at bay, but caused them to fall back. Lal, on the other hand, was not so fortunate; at least, he was not so fortunate just at first, for, after he had beaten off two of the Grammarians, a fresh pair fell to, fellow, nearly twice the height and weight of the young Hindoo—got under his guard, and flung his arm around Lal's waist.

"Hurroo! I've got one of 'em!" he yelled.

But he had caught a tartar! Lal had not learned ju-jitsu for nothing, and almost before the Grammarian's exultant shout had left his lips he went soaring through the air, and alighted on his back in the middle of the road!

"It's a case of cut and run for it now!" said Nipper, in a low voice, as the Grammarians, somewhat dazed by their sudden overthrow, withdrew to the other side of the road, and engaged in a whispered consultation. "Some of us are sure to be collared—perhaps all of us—but if one of us gets through, here must be no foolishness about not deserting his pals, or any rot of that kind. Whoever gets through, must leg it back to the school as fast as he can run, and bring as many of the chaps as he can collect to—— Look out! Here the bounders come!"

With a wild war-whoop that would not have disgraced a band of Indians, the Grammarians returned to the fray. They were four to one; and, acting on a prearranged plan, four of them rushed at the Nipper four at Bob, four at Dick, and four at Lal. The four who rushed at Nipper were Arnold, Crosby, Fleming, and Hyde.

Their method of attack was as simple as it was effective. Arnold sprang at Nipper as if to seize him by the throat. As Nipper struck out to defend himself, Crosby sprang at him on one side and Fleming on the other. Whilst Nipper was struggling with these two, and endeavouring to keep them at bay, Hyde dropped on his hands and knees, seized him by the ankles, and jerked him off his feet. Then all four threw themselves upon him in a body, and pinned him to the ground by the simple expedient of sitting on him.

The same mode of attack was adopted by the four of the Fifth Form, and was equally successful in the case of Dick and Bob. Lal, however, was too quick for his assailants; and when Tattersall dropped on his hands and knees, with the intention of seizing him by the ankle, the young Hindoo lashed out with his foot and loosened two of Tattersall's front teeth! Then, with the slipperiness of an eel, he wriggled out of his captors' grasp, and took to his heels in the direction of St. Ninian's.

Needless to say, his baffled captors, headed by Tattersall, lost no time in giving chase. But they might as well have tried to catch a hare. At every stride the fleet-footed Hindoo increased his lead; and, after following him for a couple of hundred yards, his pursuers abandoned the chase in despair, and returned to their companions.

St. Ninian's to the Rescue.

BY the time that Tattersall and his companions returned to the scene of conflict, Arnold and the others had secured their three prisoners—Nipper, Dick, and Bob—by twisting their arms behind their backs and tying their wrists together with handkerchiefs.

"Oh, I say! You haven't let the nigger escape, have you?" cried Arnold, when Tattersall and his fellow-pursuers appeared.

"We couldn't help it," panted Tattersall, who was out of breath with running. "We never even looked like catching him. He was ten yards in a hundred faster than the best of us."

"Has he gone back to St. Ninian's?"

"I expect so."

"Then we'd better make hay while the sun shines!" said Arnold. "If he's gone to the school, it won't be long before he's back with reinforcements. If we mean to have our revenge on these three rotters, the sooner we set to work the better! What shall we do to 'em?"

"Bury 'em up to their necks in snow!" suggested Hyde.

"Stick 'em in a row against the end of the barn, and shy snowballs at 'em!" said Fleming.

"Take 'em round the corner and duck 'em in the pond!" said Tattersall.

Arnold turned up his nose and shook his head.

"I don't think much of any of those wheezes," he said. "They're too meek and mild! Remember, these are the bounders who stole our grub and smashed up our rehearsal-party! Now we've got a chance to pay 'em out, we want to give it 'em piping-hot! Pelting 'em with snowballs and ducking 'em in the pond is too good for 'em!"

"Pip, pip! I have it!" cried Crosby, as a brilliant idea occurred to him. "See that poster?"

He pointed to one of the posters on the end of the barn. It was a picture-poster issued by the Liberal candidate at the time of the General Election, which had taken place a few weeks earlier. It was headed "Chinese Slavery in the Transvaal!" and depicted half a dozen Chinese "slaves" being led to the mines. The Chinamen were marching in single file, and each man was fettered to the man in front of him, and the man behind, by a chain, which was fastened to an iron collar round his neck.

"Let's fix 'em up like that!" said Crosby. "Let's make a chain-gang of 'em, and lead 'em in procession through the village!"

"But we haven't any chains," objected Arnold.

"But we've that!" chuckled Crosby, pointing to the bill-sticker's ladder—a short and rather broad ladder, with wide spaces between the rungs.

"And what good is that?" demanded the puzzled Arnold.

"I'll show you in half a tick!" said Crosby. "Stand these fellows in a row, one behind the other. Put Hamilton in front, and Arkle a yard and a half behind him, and Starling a yard and a half behind Arkle. Make 'em all face the same way."

The three captives were dragged to their feet and ranged in single file, a yard and a half apart.

"Now, Tatters," said Crosby, "you catch hold of that end of the ladder, and I'll take this end. Up with it! No; I don't want to rear it on end. Keep it level. Now lift it up a little bit higher than their heads. Now bring it over their heads. Now drop it down, so that their heads go through the spaces and the sides rest on their shoulders. That's the style!"

A shout of laughter from the Grammarians greeted the completion of Crosby's manœuvre.

"That's as good as chains and iron collars, isn't it?" chortled Crosby, rubbing his hands. "So long as their hands are tied, they can't get their heads out of the ladder, and they're bound to march in single file wherever we lead 'em!"

"We shall want a rope, though," said Arnold.

"What for?"

"To make 'em follow us," said Arnold. "Unless we drag 'em along, they'll not budge a single step!"

"Well, there's heaps of rope in the gym.," said Crosby. "Shall I fetch some?"

"Yes," said Arnold; "and you might as well bring some singlesticks while you're about it."

And that old coaching-horn that's hanging behind the door," suggested Hyde.

Crosby darted across the road, vaulted over the wall, and disappeared. Almost at the same moment Fleming's eyes fell on the bundle of posters which the bill-sticker had left behind. Some of them were copies of Dr. Stuart-Unwin's election address, and others were oblong, yellow posters, bearing the words, "Vote for Stuart-Unwin!" in big, black letters.

"I say, you chaps, I've got another idea!" exclaimed Fleming. "Why shouldn't we turn these bounders into a walking-advertisement for the Head?"

Dr. Stuart-Unwin, as the reader knows, was the headmaster of the Grammar School. As the reader also knows, he was one of the candidates for the vacant seat on the County Council, the other candidate being the village chemist, Napoleon Bonaparte Boswell.

Naturally, the Grammar School boys were ardent supporters of their headmaster's candidature; whilst Nipper and his chums were equally ardent supporters of Mr. Boswell.

"Why shouldn't we turn these bounders into a walking-advertisement for the Head?" said Fleming.

"As how?" inquired Arnold.

By way of reply, Fleming picked up one of the yellow posters, smeared the upper edge with paste, which he scraped out of the bucket, and stuck it on the side of the ladder in such a way that it hung down between Nipper and Bob, with the printed side outwards.

"We could stick another on the other side," he said, "and one on each side between Arkle and Starling; and then, when we marched 'em through the village, we should not only be paying off old scores on our own account, but we should be doing the Head a jolly good turn at the same time. And think of the joy of making three rotters—who're in favour of that idiot Boswell—act as sandwichmen for the Head!"

The suggestion was received with rapturous enthusiasm; and in little more time than it takes to tell, three more posters were hung on the ladder, a fifth was pinned on Dick's back and a sixth on Nipper's breast.

A moment later Crosby returned with a coil of rope, a dozen singlesticks with basket handles, and an ancient coaching-horn. The singlesticks having been distributed, a loop was made in the middle of the rope, and slipped round Nipper's neck.

Arnold and Fleming took charge of the ends of the rope; Crosby retained possession of the horn; Tattersall armed himself with the empty bucket and the paste-brush; and then the procession moved off in the following order:

Crosby led the way, blowing loudly on the horn. Arnold and Fleming came next, each of them holding one end of the rope, by means of which they dragged their prisoners after them.

Then came Nipper, Bob, and Dick, escorted by twelve Grammarians—six on each side, in double file—with singlesticks over their shoulders. Last of all came Tattersall, who seconded Crosby's efforts on the horn by banging on the empty bucket with the whitewash brush.

For a couple of hundred yards the procession pursued the even tenour of its way without encountering a solitary soul. It then turned into the main street of the village—and then the fun began.

Attracted by the din which Crosby and Tattersall were making, the villagers flocked to the doors of their houses and shops, under the impression that a circus had arrived.

Mr. Watson, the local greengrocer and the chairman of Dr. Stuart Unwin's election committee, was unpacking a barrel of apples outside his shop when the procession hove in sight—at least, he had been unpacking the cask, but had paused for a moment to chat to Captain Bruster, another of the doctor's staunch supporters, who was mounted on a piebald pony.

Like many others, Mr. Watson's and the captain's first impression was that the approaching procession was the vanguard of a travelling circus.

As soon as they realised their mistake—as soon as they grasped the true state of affairs—they both became overcome with merriment that Captain Bruster all but fell out of the saddle; whilst Mr. Watson leaned up against the outside of the shop door and literally bellowed with unseemly laughter.

"Bub-bub-bravo, Grammarians!" cried Mr. Watson, as the procession filed past the shop. "Your headmaster ought to be pup-pup-pup—"

He was going to say "proud of you," but the sentence ended in a shout of alarm, for at that moment, startled by a deafening blast from Crosby's horn, the pony suddenly reared up on its hind legs and deposited Captain Bruster in the gutter.

Luckily the captain was not hurt, but ere he could scramble to his feet the pony lashed out with his heels, smashing the barrel into splinters, and scattering apples in all directions. Then, with a snort of terror, he took the bit between his teeth and bolted down the street at a speed which defied pursuit.

By the time the market-place was reached the three Caninites had drained the cup of humiliation in its bitterest dregs. A moment later, however, their drooping spirits were revived by the sight of Sergeant Quiggin. He had taken the bill-sticker to the police-station, where he had been informed, of course, that the matter was too momentous if he wished to prosecute the man, and he was now on his way to take counsel of Mr. Boswell.

"Buck up, you chaps! Here's Sergeant Quiggin!" cried Nipper joyously, as the stalwart sergeant stumped round the corner of the street leading from the police-station. "He'll soon rescue us!"

Alas! his joy was premature. The moment the sergeant caught sight of the procession, and realised all it meant, he let out a roar of fury that would have done credit to a steamship's siren.

Snatching a stick from one of the bystanders, he stumped across the pavement and stepped into the road; then he pulled up with a sudden jerk, and a cry of dismay burst from his lips, followed by a roar of ribald laughter from the spectators and a mocking cheer from the Grammarians.

In stepping off the pavement he had stepped on a street-grate, and the end of his wooden leg had slipped through the grate, and had become firmly wedged between two of the bars. It snapped in two, and he came a cropper.

In the meantime, Mr. Napoleon Bonaparte Boswell, whose shop was on the other side of the market-place, had heard the braying of Crosby's horn, but had paid little attention to it. Hearing the shrieks of laughter which greeted the sergeant's downfall, however, he turned to William, his lanky, red-haired assistant, and testily requested him to "see what all that row is about."

William shuffled to the door, and started back with a gasp of consternation.

"It—it—it's them Grammarians!" he stammered. "They've got Master Hamilton and two of 'is friends, and—— Good gracious! The impident young rascals! They're acshally comin' 'ere!"

"Coming here!" growled Mr. Boswell, striding round the end of the counter. "Who's coming here? What do you——"

The question was never completed, for at that moment Mr. Boswell reached the door and perceived the procession, which, by Arnold's orders, had crossed the market-place, and had halted outside the chemist's shop.

"Good-evening, Mr. Boswell!" said Arnold, with a winning smile. "We've called to solicit your vote on behalf of Dr. Stuart-Unwin."

Mr. Boswell nearly had a fit. He glared at the Grammarians, at Nipper and his chums, at the yellow posters which hung from the ladder; then he elbowed William aside, and strode to the edge of the pavement.

"You—you insolent young ruffian!" he spluttered, shaking his fist in Arnold's face.

"I beg your pardon!" said Arnold sweetly. "Did you speak?"

"Release those boys at once!" thundered Mr. Boswell. "At once, do you hear?"

"A little louder, if you please!" murmured Arnold. "I'm rather hard of hearing."

"If you don't set them at liberty at once, I'll send for the police!" howled Mr. Boswell, foaming at the mouth with rage.

"Set them at liberty!" repeated Arnold. "My dear but misguided sir, you appear to be labouring under a delusion. Those young gentlemen have no desire to be set at liberty. They are engaged in a labour of love. They are converted now. They used to be Boswellites, but they're Unwinites now, and they're helping us to canvass for our candidate. May we count on your vote and support?"

This was more than Mr. Boswell could stand. In a frenzy of rage, he rushed at Arnold, and endeavoured to grab him by the arm.

With a mocking laugh the Grammarian nimbly eluded his grasp, whilst at the same moment Crosby stuck out his foot and tripped the chemist up.

The ironical cheer which burst from the Grammarians as Mr. Boswell fell sprawling on his back and rose was followed by an excited shout from Tattersall.

"Look out! Here they come!" he yelled.

"They" were Lal and a dozen members of the Fighting Fifth, who at that moment dashed into the market-place with a ringing cry of "Ninian's to the rescue!"

The battle which ensued lived long in the memories of those who were privileged to witness it. Again and again the Ninianites charged, and again and again they were driven back by well-directed volleys of snowballs.

But the Fighting Fifth was not to be denied, and after a desperate hand-to-hand encounter, in which Tattersall wielded the whitewash-brush with homeric valour, the Grammarians broke and fled.

Two minutes later Nipper, Dick, and Bob had been set at liberty, the yellow posters had been torn to ribbons, and the victors were on their way back to St. Ninian's.

Caught in the Act.

THERE were three "houses" at St. Ninian's, known respectively as, the School House, Mr. Rant's House, and Mr. Jerman's House.

These houses were not separate buildings standing apart from each other, as at some public schools, but were joined together in such a way as to form three sides of a square. The fourth side of the square, which was known as "the quad," was formed by the school chapel and a handsome Gothic dining-hall.

When you entered the quad., by passing through the carved stone gateway which divided the chapel from the hall, Mr. Jerman's House was in front of you, on the opposite side of the quad; the School House was on your left, and Mr. Rant's House was on your right.

In the schoolboy slang of St. Ninian's, the boys who lived in the School House were known as Coolies; those in Mr. Jerman's, House as Germs; and those in Mr. Rant's House as Ranters. Copley and Trott, for instance, were Coolies; Gardner, Proctor, Russell, Todd, and Lumsden were Germs; Nipper, Dick, Bob, Wagstaffe, and Lal were Ranters. The keenest rivalry existed between the various houses, and faction fights and dormitory raids were of daily or nightly occurrence.

The Fighting Fifth—in other words, the Lower Fifth Form at St. Ninian's—was composed, of course, of boys from all three houses. The numbers, naturally, varied from term to term, but in the term of which we write there were, in the Fighting Fifth, ten Coolies, ten Ranters, and five Germs.

As already stated, the keenest rivalry existed between the three houses; and although the Coolies, Ranters, and Germs in the Fighting Fifth were ready and willing to combine together to oppose a common enemy—such as the Grammar School bovs—this did not prevent their fighting amongst themselves at other times, and playing practical jokes on each other whenever the chance occurred.

For instance, when the Fighting Fifth rushed into the market-place and rescued Nipper and his chums from the clutches of the Grammarians, nobody fought harder, or performed more daring feats of valour, than Proctor and Russell. Yet half an hour earlier these same boys, finding Nipper's study deserted, had picked the lock of the cupboard door, had added the contents of the mustard-pot to the contents of the marmalade-jar, and had carefully mixed a teaspoonful of paraffin-oil with the contents of the cream-jug.

At the end of prep., which lasted from seven to eight, Nipper and Dick laid out the supper things, Bob and Lal cut the bread-and-butter, and Wagstaffe brewed the tea.

"Bread-and-butter and marmalade! Is that all there is for supper to-night?" growled Wagstaffe. "Aren't there any sardines left?"

"Not a fin!" said Nipper, pouring out the tea for himself and his chums.

"Then it's time we paid a visit to Pye's, and laid in a fresh stock of grub," said Wagstaffe, as he ladled out a large spoonful of marmalade and spread it thickly on a slice of bread-and-butter.

"Talking of Pye's," said Dick, "I've a proposition to make. You all agree, I suppose, that the Germs behaved like bricks this afternoon?"

"Rather!" said Bob, as he helped himself to cream. "If it hadn't been for the Germs—especially Proctor and Russell—we should never have been rescued."

"Well, what I propose," said Dick, "is that we invite the Germs to a slap-up feed at Pye's to-morrow afternoon, as a token of——"

Before he could say more, Wagstaffe staggered to his feet, with a stifled gasp of agony; whilst at the same moment Bob hurriedly set down his teacup, rushed to the fireplace, and spat out a mouthful of tea.

"What's up?" cried Nipper, gazing at the two boys in bewildered surprise.

(To be continued on Saturday next.)

CLUBS IN "THE BOYS' REALM" FOOTBALL LEAGUE.

SPRINGFIELD F.C.: Sec., A. Mellor, 125, Woodbank Terrace, Turncroft Lane, Stockport.

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.

SPECIAL NEWS FOR THIS WEEK—

IN A FORTNIGHT'S TIME THE MAMMOTH SUMMER DOUBLE NUMBER OF "THE BOYS' REALM" WILL APPEAR. IT WILL BE THE FINEST ISSUE EVER PUBLISHED.

Our Summer Double Number.

IT is a long time since I issued a Summer Double Number of THE BOYS' REALM—several years, in fact; but I think that all my friends will welcome the announcement that I purpose doing so this year. I have made arrangements for No. 266 of our paper, which appears in a fortnight's time, to be a magnificent Summer Double Number, crammed with fine stories and clever articles. I shall give a full list of the contents of this bumper issue of our paper next week; but I may tell my friends that, amongst the other attractions of what I intend to be an exceedingly fine number, will be double-length instalments of our popular serials "King Cricket," "The Fighting Fifth," and "The School on the Cliff." This in itself is, I am sure, welcome news for all my friends. Please ask your newsagent to save you a copy of our mammoth Summer Double Number, in order that you may not be disappointed. It will be extensively advertised, so that there is sure to be a rush on it.

Whilst on the subject of double numbers, I feel I must mention that the Summer Double Number of "The Boys' Friend" will be published on Tuesday next. On another page will be found a list of some of the thrilling contents of that number. I strongly recommend every lover of really good stories of adventure to buy a copy of next Tuesday's mammoth Double Number of the "Green 'Un."

A Remedy for Stiff Muscles.

"WELLWISHER" has sent me a cheery letter, in which he tells me that whenever he does the ground exercise—that is, lying upon the back and bringing up first one leg and then the other alternately—the muscles above the knees become stiff, and he is forced to give it up.

I thank my chum for his letter, and in answer to his inquiry as to how he may remove the stiffness of which he complains, I advise him to well rub the muscles above his knees every time he feels the stiffness with some good sweet-oil. This will make the muscles supple, and will soon rid him of the discomfort. If I were "Wellwisher," I would not give up practising the exercise he mentions, because the stiffness will permanently leave him if he perseveres with the oil-rubbing.

With regard to my chum's other inquiry as to the publication of another story of Lolanga and Sir Richard Losely in "The Union Jack," I can only tell him that the author responsible for the previous stories of these favourite characters is hard at work upon it now, and it shall appear at the first available opportunity.

Rearing Silkworms.

W. C. T. has written to ask me certain particulars as to the rearing of silkworms. This is a matter upon which my companion paper, "The Boys' Herald," which is devoted to hobby pursuits, is always ready to answer inquiries about. However, I think a good plan would be for W. C. T. to obtain a small book that I can recommend on this interesting subject of silkworm-rearing.

This book can be obtained from Mr. H. Glaisher, bookseller, 32, Charing Cross Road, London, W.C., price 1s.

My reader should send Mr. Glaisher a postal-order for a shilling, and ask him to send him a copy of "Silkworms," by E. A. Butler, B.A., B.Sc., in the "Young Collector" series of handbooks.

If there is anything in this little book that is not quite clear to my friend, I advise him to write to the Secretary of "The Boys' Herald" Hobby Club, who, I know, will be very pleased to help him all he can.

A Short-winded Footballer.

E. W. is one of my Birmingham chums, who has already commenced to train in preparation for the football season. One of his principal drawbacks, however, he finds is his short-windedness. Can I suggest a remedy? he asks. Well, E. W., short-windedness comes from want of condition. There is only one remedy for it, and that is to get oneself into a stronger physical state. Careful, steady training is the one thing needed.

My reader should also pay great attention to improving his lung capacity, and this can be done by practising breathing exercises night and morning.

Let my young friend, when he gets up, stand at an open window, and, shutting his mouth, take in a good deep breath—so deep that he finds his stomach pushed out by the force of the air which is being taken into his lungs. Then let him expire that breath very slowly after holding in for a second or two, as he does so, drawing in his stomach, and tightening the muscles of the abdomen.

Repeat this, and after a while he will find that he can do it twenty or thirty times without any trouble. He will also find that his lung capacity is beginning to increase, that his chest is expanding, and that the short-windedness—if at the same time he takes careful and sensible exercise—is disappearing.

NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED!

LOOK OUT FOR THE NEW VOLUMES OF "THE BOYS' FRIEND" LIBRARY,

PRICE 3D. EACH.

No. 21— "PETE'S HOLIDAY."
A splendid NEW and original long complete tale, dealing with the adventures of JACK, SAM, and PETE in Brighton and other holiday resorts, by S. CLARKE HOOK.

No. 22— "SPORTING LIFE."
An entirely NEW and original tale of SCHOOL, of CRICKET and of ADVENTURE at home and abroad, by A. S. HARDY.

ON SALE JULY 5th.

He Wants More Athletic Stories.

THE following letter has been sent me by one of my readers, who signs himself "Sport-Lover." As my friends will see upon reading it, my correspondent is desirous of seeing more athletic stories and articles in THE BOYS' REALM than are published now.

This is a matter which, I think, is best left to the decision of the readers of our paper. As they know quite well, I am always most anxious to please them in every way possible, and if they agree with "Sport-Lover," I will see what can be done in the way of increasing the number of athletic stories and articles.

I may say that, while I have published "Sport-Lover's" letter, I have also received a letter from a reader this week who complains about the amount of space taken up by sport stories and articles, and asking that more adventure tales shall be published; so that my friends will see that the question is quite an open one. This is the letter "Sport-Lover" has sent me:

"London.

"Dear Sir,—I have been a reader of THE BOYS' REALM now ever since the first number, but let me tell you this: I would have left off taking it in several years ago had it not been for the grand football and cricket stories and articles which have appeared in it.

"I do not read any of the other stories in the paper at all. It is simply through the football and cricket that I buy the paper. So I would like to ask you if you would not devote more space to athletic stories and articles than you do at present. The readers who do not take any interest in sports could find plenty of adventure stories in "The Boys' Friend" and "The Boys' Herald," and I am sure that the readers who love plenty of outdoor sports would be delighted if THE BOYS' REALM was made into a real athletic paper. Please excuse me for troubling you, and consider what I have asked you, and publish the answer in THE BOYS' REALM.—I remain, yours faithfully,

"SPORT-LOVER."

YOUR EDITOR (H. E.).

ANSWERS

OUR LEAGUE CORNER.

SECTION 1.

The following clubs in the Leagues mentioned have been awarded prize bats for the week ending Saturday, May 25th:

ST. CLARE CUP CRICKET LEAGUE.
St. Clare C.C.—Sec. (of League), Mr. George Such, c.o. Mrs. Maynard, 31, Kompshead Road, Camberwell.

DUNDEE & DISTRICT LEAGUE.
Clifton Bank C.C.—Sec., Mr. C. Ayling, 14, Rosefield Street, Dundee.

SOUTH LONDON CHURCH OF ENGLAND LEAGUE.
Christ Church (Greenwich) Lads Club.—Sec., Mr. H. Smith, 43, Colomb Street, Greenwich, S.E.

SUNDERLAND & DISTRICT LEAGUE.
Dock Street Institute C.C.—Sec., Mr. B. Taylor, 46, Forster Street, Sunderland.

EAST LONDON CHURCH LEAGUE.
Christ Church (Stepney) C.C.—Sec., Mr. H. Dudley, 69, Clinton Road, Bow, E.

NORTH LIVERPOOL AMATEUR LEAGUE.
Walton St. Mary's C.C.—Sec., Mr. S. C. Bennett, 18, Smithy Lane, Walton.

MERSEY CRICKET AND FOOTBALL LEAGUE.
Allan's C.C.—Sec., D. Theodorus, 67, Mozart Street, Liverpool. (By their own special desire the above Club have been sent a prize pair of leg-guards instead of a bat.)

The following letters, which have come to hand from some of the clubs winning our weekly prizes, prove that THE BOYS' REALM cricket bats are well worth the having:

OAKLEY C.C.
"Penrith,"
"Bascourtree Road,
"Leytonstone.
"May 25th, 1907.

"Dear Editor,—The Oakley C.C. direct me to send you their grateful thanks for the splendid bat which I received this morning.

"It came as a pleasant surprise, and the boys are pleased with it.

"Again thanking you, I am, yours faithfully,
"A. H. MITCHELL, Hon. Sec."

"8, Trafalgar Road,
"Greenwich, S.E.
"May 25th, 1907.

"Dear Sir,—I received your splendid prize bat this morning, and am highly pleased with it.

"Wishing your paper and also your leagues every success, I remain, yours faithfully,
W. FROUD."

EASTWOOD C.C.
"228, Picton Road,
"Wavertree,
"Liverpool.
"May 28th, 1907.

"Dear Sir,—I wish to thank you on behalf of the Eastwood team for the splendid bat which you sent us. It is far above anything we expected.

"Wishing your paper every success, I am, yours truly,
J. H. GERMAN, Sec."

HOLMESDALE A.C.C.
"91, Bungalow Road,
"S. Norwood, S.E.
"May 27th, 1907.

"Dear Sir,—I received your prize cricket-bat in good condition on Saturday morning last, and I beg to state that we used it on Saturday afternoon with good results. It greatly exceeded anticipations.

"Thanking you on behalf of the club, and wishing your paper great success, I remain, yours respectfully,
"A. H. LEPPARD, Hon. Sec."

ST. CLARE CUP CRICKET LEAGUE.
LEAGUE TABLE FOR MAY.

	P.	W.	L.	D.	Pts.	Runs.	Wkts.
St. Clare	1	1	0	0	2	109 for	4
Choumert	1	1	0	0	2	65 ,,	10
Primrose	2	1	1	0	2	131 ,,	20
Manwen	2	1	1	0	2	116 ,,	19
Stockwell	2	1	1	0	2	114 ,,	20
St. Peter's	2	1	1	0	2	76 ,,	20
Nhe	2	0	2	0	0	88 ,,	20

DUNDEE AND DISTRICT JUNIOR LEAGUE.
LEAGUE TABLE UP TO SATURDAY, MAY 25TH.

	P.	W.	L.	For	Runs. Agst.	Pts.
Clifton Bank	4	3	1	191	153	6
Taybank XI.	3	2	1	131	87	4
Clydesdale XI.	3	2	1	115	99	4
Belmont	3	1	2	185	133	2
Richmond	3	1	2	159	190	2
Fernhall	2	0	2	95	142	0

SECTION 2.

The secretary is glad to announce that this section of our cricket league is proving most successful. Applications for entry are still coming in, but the lists will be finally closed at the end of this month. Therefore, any clubs desirous of entering should make application at once, or it will be too late. At an early date the League tables will appear, and also an announcement concerning the number of matches each club will be expected to play during the season.

The following clubs have been awarded BOYS' REALM bats, these having, in your Editor's opinion, put up the best show in the matches played on Saturday, May 25th:

JUNIOR DIVISION—REBECCA C.C.
Sec., F. Bentham, 10, Wynne Street, Westgate, Bradford, Yorks.

SENIOR DIVISION—LOVELY LANE C.C.
Sec., E. Kendrick, 58, Lovely Lane, Warrington.

THE LEAGUE OF YOUNG ATHLETES.

It is a matter of great satisfaction to those who have founded this great organisation (Your Editor and his staff) that it is already an assured success. Thousands of readers all over the country have sent in applications to join the League of Young Athletes, and it has taxed the labours of a very large staff to keep pace with them. Even now there are still some medals to be despatched, and Your Editor asks that those who have not yet received theirs will wait patiently for them. Owing to the very large number which have to be sent out, some delay has necessarily been caused. Everything is being done, however, to despatch them with as much expedition as possible.

DAILY MAIL.

TRAINING TELLS!

A STIRRING ATHLETIC STORY By A. S. HARDY.

"I'm done," said Willoughby minor, and the next moment he faltered in his stride, reeling badly. It was only by a marvellous effort of self-control that his elder brother held him up.

THE 1st CHAPTER.
Something Wrong With the School.

THERE was no doubt about it, Claverhouse School were in a tight place. Their vaunted superiority in both batting and bowling over Drayton Town, against whom was usually played the big cricket match of the year, was not apparent in the play.

The Town had done fairly well with a first innings of 123 in a one-day match. Steady batting, with nothing brilliant about it, had characterised their efforts in their innings, and their captain, who had the good fortune to put up top score, was bowled ninth man for thirty-four. Extras made eleven more, so that the rest of the batsmen had compiled seventy-eight between them.

The School had looked upon the knocking off of 124 runs—the number required to win—as quite a simple matter for them, and their captain—Monson—for once allowing his conceit to get the better of him—though to his credit be it said he rarely allowed himself to underrate the powers of an opposing side—went in with a bright smile as if victory were already assured.

But a ball with any amount of break on it, bowled a little wide to leg, flicked in and took his wicket—fourth ball of the over—for a duck; and, with their best man out, the School set themselves to work to win the game.

Captain Monson's face was a study as he walked back to the tent and hurled his bat to the ground.

"It serves me jolly well right!" he muttered. "I'd got my muddle-headed brain full of calculations as to what I was going to do with the Town bowling, and how many runs I was going to make, instead of looking upon the opposition as something to be met with resolution and respect, and here I am—out. Serves me right—serves me right—serves me right!"

Willoughby major had just gone to the wicket. He was a fine, crisp bat, inclined to take risks, but if he collared the bowling, the very man to take the sting out of it, and a roar from the schoolboys who had assembled round the pitch told Monson that a boundary had been hit.

He looked towards the wicket. No, it was not a boundary; the men were running it out. A fieldsman was chasing the flying ball, and Willoughby major and Judson major, who had gone with his captain to the wickets to open the innings, were flying between the stumps as hard as they could go.

They ran five, and at the end of it Monson noticed that Willoughby leant over his bat in distress, signing to Judson major to wait a bit ere he played, in order that he might regain his breath.

"Willoughby unfit, as usual," muttered the captain. "The fool! If I could only get him and his so-called 'smart set' to give up their smoking, it would be a jolly sight better for them and the school athletics. The beggar won't stay long at the wickets. His condition isn't good enough."

The captain's thought was justified two overs later, when Willoughby major, who, with his younger brother Willoughby minor, was among the biggest boys in the school, was clean bowled off his pads, being late with his stroke owing to that want of breath of his.

He came back to the tent looking pale of face, his chest heaving in distress, and his brow covered with beads of perspiration.

"Your brother had better go in, Willoughby," said the captain sarcastically. "He's sure to be as much in want of good exercise as you are. Two of the mainstays of the side ruined through indulgence in tobacco! Nice sort of thing, isn't it? By George, I shall have to rely on young Judson out there and his brother to pull the game out of the fire, after all! They set an example to you chaps, which you might all follow with advantage."

And Captain Monson looked round the group of players gathered in the tent, a sneer of contempt on his lips to think that all of them, pals of the Willoughbys, who wielded immense influence over the rest of the school, should be victims of the smoking craze that had lost Claverhouse much of its prestige in athletics during the past two years.

The two Judsons, juniors both, but big lads for their age, were bright, intelligent boys. They were well liked at Claverhouse, but looked upon as being too proud for their position.

They never joined the rest of the lads in, what they termed, their "smoking contests," in which each had tried to outvie the other in burning the pernicious weed, and most regular in their habits—virtues which do not lend themselves to popularity in one's earlier days at school.

Still, the two Judsons were smart boys. They stuck to their studies, and they stuck to their athletics. Though neither of them was a flier at cricket, football, swimming, running, or fives, they were fair average athletes at these games, and they were both as steady as a rock.

Their reliability had endeared them to Monson, and the captain of the School now crossed to Judson minor, a dark-haired, good-looking boy, who was carefully examining his bat in a corner of the tent.

"Judson minor," he said, "you go in next, and see if you can't make a stand with your brother. I look upon you to save the game now that I have been ass enough to chuck away my wicket. Do you understand?"

"Yes," answered young Judson, nodding at his captain, with a bright smile. "My brother Edgar is very steady out there, and if I can get in with him he'll inspire me with confidence."

Judson minor had not long to wait, for the younger Willoughby, wishing to vindicate the honour of the family, pulled one round to leg, and, not getting fairly hold of it, was beautifully caught by Moore, of the Town, who got the ball low down.

Only sixteen runs were recorded upon the board, and three men were out. Judson minor, seizing his bat, went in to join his brother Edgar, and they smiled cheerfully at each other.

"Stick to it, young 'un!" said Judson major, who was a fine, upstanding, fair-haired boy, though a junior. "The rest of 'em are suffering from the smoking-fever. If we can't get a few, it's all over with the School."

Judson minor nodded, and very carefully took his centre and marked the batting-crease. The first ball he received was a fast full pitch; but his eye was true, his wrists were flexible, and, getting wrists, arms, and shoulders into the stroke, he sent it away with a crack to the boundary, and the School cheered again.

It was indeed a fine hit, and Captain Monson seemed pleased. It was an earnest of more to follow. Judson minor stopped the next two, both being too dangerous to meddle with, and then, with change of over, his brother got the ball.

Edgar was set, but careful. Though not brilliant, the Town bowling was too good to take liberties with; and besides, the team knew they were winning, and that means a lot. However, he got a couple of twos, and the score began to rise.

But just when the School's hopes were highest a sad calamity happened.

Judson minor, in playing a ball that pitched a bit short, got too far under it, and, to his dismay, up it went into the air, giving the fieldsmen plenty of time to judge the catch.

Two of them ran for it, and there was just a possibility that they might collide and lose the chance; but, shouting to his comrade to stop, the Town captain—Hughes—got beneath the dropping ball. He made no mistake. His keen fingers closed round it, and, with a swing of his hand behind his back, he sent it soaring into the air with a cheerful:

"How's that?"

Judson minor knew, and, tucking his bat beneath his arm, he left the wicket, having only hit up ten. He felt a little sore with himself. He was in fine batting humour. He felt sure that if he could have stayed at the wickets a little longer he would have played himself in, and, with his brother set, the pair might have saved the game.

"I'm awfully sorry, Monson!" he said to his captain. "I ought to have restrained myself, and let the ball alone. I wasn't quite set. Yet it looked simple enough. I'm afraid I've let the side down. I wish I'd done better. I'm sorry."

"Never mind, my lad," said the captain; "it can't be helped. Only, I tell you frankly, I wouldn't have had you out at this juncture for something. All these smoking young cads—the Willoughby lot—are shaking with nervousness. All they think about is showing off. They want to get the runs without having the hardships of practice to undergo, forgetting that a man doesn't become a cricketer except by hard work and patient study. He's born first, we know; but he has to practise before he's made. Now, then, Pepper, get the dust out of your eyes, and get to the wicket. You don't want to keep the Town waiting all day long, do you? And see whether you can't do something for the School. You're big enough, goodness knows."

Pepper was a huge lad; in fact, the biggest boy in the school. He had a good-tempered, intelligent face, and wasn't half a bad sort. But he had got into the smoking habit with the Willoughbys, and did not seem so keen on games as he used to be.

He walked to the wickets full of confidence, and he took as much trouble about the preliminaries as Dr. W. G. Grace himself. He need not have taken the trouble, for the first ball he received took his middle stump, and another good man was out. The score stood as it did when Judson minor left the wicket, but the men out now numbered five.

Thirty-four for five, with three extras! It was a miserable total.

Armstrong, the next man in, made seven; whilst Judson added twelve more to the total. Then, with the score at fifty-three, Armstrong was stumped in reaching forward to a ball; and hardly had the next man in got to the wicket than all the School hopes vanished, for Judson, in endeavouring to drive a half-volley to the boundary, did not get properly hold of it, and had the mortification of seeing a lithe Town man get cleverly to the ball, and he, too, was out. Fifty-three for seven!

The last three men in, all Willoughbyites, made but a feeble attempt to liven up affairs, and the side was all out for sixty-five, leaving the Town with a handsome victory for the first time for twelve years.

There being plenty of time left for play, the Town went in again, and, elated at their victory, the batsmen simply bit the Claverhouse bowling all over the field. The captain's face was a study. He looked at the School eleven, sleek mouchers all of them, with the exception of the two Judsons, and a feeling of rage took possession of him.

He knew that the Willoughbys were not half bad chaps. He knew that most of the boys composing the School eleven that day were jolly good sorts, and it struck him as being an infernal shame that because of Willoughby's conceit of himself as a tobacco-smoker the school should have gone to pot.

"Oh, don't try to coax me round!" he said to Willoughby major, who had been trying to excuse himself when the match was at length over. "If you were to tell me until doomsday that you do no harm by sitting up as late as you can in your foul den, with all the windows shut, and the door stuffed up so that no smell of smoke shall get out into the corridors, and all of you smoking like factory chimneys, I wouldn't believe it. Look what an exhibition you made of yourself at the wickets to-day! Even the Town captain made a remark about it. Something has got to be done. As captain of this school I am responsible for its welfare in the games, and I won't have it made the laughing-stock of the country-side even for you, Willoughby. There's got to be a change. Either you stop your smoking club, or I'll stop it for you."

And with that he turned and walked away, leaving the elder Willoughby, looking a little shame-faced, certainly, but very stubborn at least, to chew over his words as he pleased.

THE 2nd CHAPTER.
Captain Monson Puts His Foot Down.

"WILLOUGHBY MAJOR is holding another smoking seance to-night."

It was Judson minor who spoke.

Captain Monson laughed.

"You've got hold of the wrong word, youngster," he said. "There's nothing wildly spiritualistic about smoking. Call it a meeting of the smoking club, as Willoughby likes to call it. Hang it?" Here Monson's brows contracted. "After all the hints I've given them, and all I've done to try and break them of the habit. It's most annoying!"

"Of course, Monson," said Judson minor, looking at his captain critically, "smoking isn't really a crime, is it. If it were, so many people wouldn't do it."

The Claverhouse captain looked serious.

"That's just it, Judson minor," he said. "smoking isn't a crime. Willoughby takes that standpoint himself, and is continually running it down very throat. Some of the beggars—Armstrong, for instance, is one—who take part in these smoking club meetings which Willoughby major prides himself about, are pretty fit; and they think, because they are strong and healthy, that they can smoke as much as they like. If it were good for them, would the Head be so down on it? If it were good for them, would I, as captain of the school, be down on it? It doesn't do a grown man much harm, for he can resist a good many things in the shape of poison, and does; but when a lad's at school, growing fast, and wants to put his lungs to the best use, what's the good of him smoking packets on packets of cigarettes, which make him short-winded, interfere with his nerves, render him short-sighted, and incapable of getting the best out of himself that is in him?"

Judson minor nodded, and a dozen school-boys gathered round to listen to their captain's eloquent address. Judson major being amongst them.

"Look how the school played in the match with the Town," said Monson, raising his voice, "and look how they have played since! Some of them say," he went on bitterly, "that they won't play their best because I've found fault with them. That's a nice thing for Claverhouse boys to say, isn't it? But it isn't that. They wouldn't mind a bit what I said to them if they weren't rendered touchy by their confounded habit. I don't want anything. I only ask any of you in the school who care about the games to play them with a will, and to give up smoking until you have left school, college, or Varsity. I'm not a non-smoker. I had a cigar myself last holidays, and mighty ill it made me. I can tell you. I don't say I shall be a confirmed smoker when I have given up athletics for good; but as long as I continue to take part in them you'll never see me smoke, or," he added firmly, "drink, either. I leave that to the Willoughbyites!"

As the captain ceased to speak the boys burst into a cheer.

"Bravo, Monson!" cried a cheeky junior.

"Three cheers for old Monson! He's a jolly good fellow!"

"Let's put the smoking club down," said another. "Let's raid the Willoughbys' rooms to-night, and rag the place. It serves them right. It'll show them that we mean business."

The captain held up his hand.

"No," he said; "we can't have anything of that sort. Horseplay of that kind will never be tolerated at Claverhouse while I am its captain. But I tell you what I intend to do. I am going to make an appearance at the smoking club to-night, and I'll bring those fellows to their senses." He turned to Judson major. "Judson," he said, "you are one with me in all this, and the most improved athlete in the school. That is because you don't smoke, and pay strict attention to training. So does your brother; and, though the Willoughbys despise you both, I shan't be a bit surprised to see you both make a jolly good show in the sports in the autumn. I should like you both to come with me to-night. Meet me in the schoolhouse at eight o'clock."

Edgar Judson nodded.

"I'll be there," he said.

And then he and his dark-haired younger brother set off at a swinging run for the school.

At eight o'clock to the minute the two brothers left their study and went down to the schoolhouse. Monson was there waiting for them, looking unusually serious for him.

"We're in good time," said the Claverhouse captain. "My fag, whom I sent along to spy out the land, says the club is in session; so we'll just go along and surprise them."

Monson and the two Judsons proceeded along first one passage and then another, and then up the flight of steps which led to that part of the modern wing of Claverhouse in which the elder Willoughby had a fine set of rooms. Arriving outside the door they listened, and were in time to hear a wild outburst of laughter.

Monson rapped heavily upon the door, and the laughter ceased. He knocked again.

"Who's there?" cried the elder Willoughby from within.

"Monson!" cried the captain loudly.

"Open the door!"

There was a long pause, doubtless in which those inside the room were discussing whether they could open the door or not, and then at length they heard the key turned, the bolts drawn top and bottom, and the door at length opened.

Without a word, Monson strode into the room with Judson major and Judson minor at his heels. The door was promptly closed by Willoughby, and the Claverhouse captain gazed around.

At first it was difficult to see anything for the dense smoke that filled the place, there being only one gas jet alight, and that half turned down. But, getting used to it, Monson made out Armstrong, Pepper, Willoughby minor, and three or four other toadies of the Willoughbys, seated around in Willoughby's luxurious chairs—for he had taste had Willoughby—smoking either pipes or cigarettes; while on a table near were some bottles and glasses and a syphon of soda-water.

The captain, as he saw these last, strode to the table and examined them. There were two or three bottles of mild dinner-ale, and two of stout, and a bottle of whisky, which, however, he was glad to see, had scarcely been touched. The Claverhouse captain's face blazed with anger as he faced round.

"Who ordered this rubbish to be sent here?" he said. "You can't tell me Taylor, our tuck-man, got it for you? I'd have him dismissed if I thought that. I suppose it was you smuggled it in, Willoughby?"

"What if it was?" asked Willoughby major defiantly.

"Just this," said the captain quietly; "and those who knew him well had reason to believe that he was most to be feared when his quiet mood was on him. "That I mean to put a stop to it. The smoking was bad enough. This is worse!"

He picked up the bottle of whisky, and, with a crash, sent it flying into the grate, where liquid and broken glass made a sad mess. He then placed a bottle of stout in each pocket.

"You can have the dinner-ale," he said. "And now listen to me. You are, all of you, going the wrong road. There is nothing very clever in the way you are carrying on. There's Pepper, there, as big as an ox, who thinks he can do what he likes, and yet, to win the medal for best athlete in the school in sports. I am glad he thinks so. But at present I can't see any of you doing very well. Training tells, and there's not one of you anything like fit. I'd back either of the Judsons here, who have never been top-class, according to some of you, to beat any of you in this room now at any distance from 100 yards to a mile. Just you leave the smoke and the drink alone, lads, and you'll be all the better for it. I've had my say. I'm sick of talking. You can go your own road now. I shan't attempt to interfere with you again. I am disgusted with the lot of you. I predict you with more regret!"

He paused, and Willoughby major, whose eyes were flashing with rage at the indignity he had been subjected to at the hands of his captain, who had dared to throw away his liquor, spoke up.

"I guess you had your say, Monson," he said, "there's the door, and you can get out!"

"I'll go when I think I will!" returned the Claverhouse captain calmly.

"Well, then, if Judsons have got to go, and mighty quick!" said Willoughby major. "We can put up with you being here, because you are the school captain, but they have not the slightest right. They are juniors."

"They have had me put them up into the Sixth," said Monson quietly; "a reward for their industry and perseverance! They are on an equality with you now, Willoughby, and your younger brother is not likely to go up at all this term, judging by the way he's going on."

"Out with the Judsons!" cried Pepper, springing from his seat at a cue from the younger Willoughby, his eyes flashing with unnatural excitement. "Out with them!"

He rushed forward, followed by the younger Willoughby and Armstrong, but was met with a straight left-hander smack on the mark, which sent him reeling backward, and the next instant the captain of the form was pounding right from Judson major, who was as hard as nails, and hit with the strength of a Hercules.

"You needn't trouble to put us out!" said Judson major coolly. "We don't want to stay. Come along, young 'un"—this to his brother—"I don't think we shall break our hearts at having to go. If a brick like Monson can't bring them to their senses, they are much better left as they are."

The two Judsons left the room, and Monson, following a few seconds later, Willoughby major closed, locked, and bolted the door, and the meeting of the smoking club was resumed; but with not such a great degree success as the members had intended it to be is open to question.

They had much to think over.

"Rum," said Willoughby major, just before "lights out." "You two all a set of duffers! Just as if we haven't got as much chance in the sports as those non-smoking beggars! Monson is a fair athlete; but I bet Pepper beats him in the mile, if I don't!"

And he drank off a glass of beer. Armstrong found himself wondering whether with Willoughby major the wish was not father to the thought.

THE 3rd CHAPTER.
Captain Monson Carries His Point.

It wanted a week to the day of the annual school sports at Claverhouse, and up on the board in the schoolhouse the printed papers were pinned, in which the various events were described, and spaces left for such boys as wished to take part in any given race to affix their names.

The first names of all to go down were those of the Judsons, and as the crowd of schoolboys gathered about the board, with Captain Monson looking grimly on, there was a wild buzz of amazement.

"I say, look here!" cried Armstrong. "They've been and put their names to every blessed event! What cheek! They must fancy themselves. Anyway, it swells the prize-list funds; that's one good thing! And, I say, what a beastly shame! Look what they've been and done! They've made the three-legged race a quarter-mile—one lap of the track! Confound it! Who ever heard of a quarter-mile three-legged race? It's a beastly shame! Nobody will finish."

"Those who have taken the trouble to get fit will finish!" said the captain grimly. "Those who haven't may not. Some of you smokers will be a bit hard hit, I'm thinking, before they get out."

"Well, anyway," cried Pepper, "the races are not going to be run on our beastly grass-track with its six laps to the mile! We're going to have them on the Victoria Ground, down in the town. That's a cinder-path, boys, and we can get a good gate. Who's idea was that?"

"The Head and I discussed it," said the captain. "And he agreed with me that very few of you beggars, who are only half-trained, will be able to stand the pace of the cinder-path; whereas you might lumber home on the slow and heavy grass-track of the school ground."

Willoughby major scowled, and, seizing the dangling pencil, scrawled his name down to several events. His younger brother followed suit, and then Armstrong and Pepper appended their signatures to the list.

The rest of the schoolboys who intended to take part in the sports then added their names where they thought fit, and before long the lists were complete.

Both the Willoughbys, following the Judsons' lead, put their names down for every event. Willoughby major now turned to the Claverhouse captain.

He and his younger brother were a magnificent pair at the three-legged race. They had put up a record over the two hundred yards for juniors, and as seniors had won the race with ease during the past two years. They looked upon themselves as invincible, and certainly were better together than any other pair in the school.

"Why have you increased the distance to a quarter of a mile, Monson?" asked Willoughby major, assuming a patronising air with his captain.

"Because," said the captain, with emphasis, "I am determined that you should not reap any benefit from your neglect of your training. There is no other pair in the school as fast as you and your brother at the three-legged race; but there are some who could run you close. Therefore I have increased the distance to a quarter of a mile, so that you will, at least, have to race hard to win. I don't see why the race should be given to you."

"I don't. 140 yards will make any difference!" said the elder Willoughby, with a sneer. "Why, we could fall down, get up again, and beat any pair that are likely to come against us!"

"All right," said the captain. "You are at perfect liberty to try it if you like. But I shouldn't advise you to, that's all!"

Every morning and evening after the lists for the sports had been filled, those boys who meant to take part in the various races were to be seen on the school playing-grounds practising assiduously, and doing their very best to get fit. The members of Willoughby's smoking club, in a half-hearted way, abandoned their usual meetings; but Captain Monson, who was well posted as to their doings, had no difficulty in finding out that they met every other night, and that though the smoking was not perhaps quite so heavy as of yore, it was still indulged in.

The day of the sports came round, and every boy in the school, almost, had a crowd of friends and relations down to see the fun. The fact that the sports were to be held upon the famous Victoria Ground in Drayton, lent especial importance to the occasion, and the ground itself was gay with bunting, and looking its very best.

The day began with the 100 yards race for juniors, in heats; then that for seniors followed, and in the latter Willoughby major always a fine sprinter, simply romped away with the final, with Pepper in close attendance, and both the Judsons well beaten.

The Sixth Form lad smiled triumphantly at his captain, as much as to say: "Where's your smoking now?"

The half-mile for seniors produced a grand race. Both Willoughbys, the two Judsons, Monson, Armstrong, and Pepper went in this. These represented pretty well the pick of the school on the flat.

It was a very fine race, and the Willoughbys, Armstrong, and Pepper showed up prominently right from the crack of the pistol. It seemed that one of these must run away with the race. Monson and the two Judsons were a little right behind at the conclusion of the first lap, when the bell rang. But then a change came over the race. Judson major drew out, closely followed by his younger brother and Monson, and in the last straight these passed the others like a flash, and the captain of Claverhouse gained a splendid victory by a yard from Edgar Judson, with Judson minor close up third.

When the runners had recovered, the faces of the Willoughby faction were a study. There could be no doubt about it, not one of them had properly stayed home; whereas the two Judsons and Monson had not turned a hair at the finish.

Then Willoughby came to a decision, which, had he dreamt of it a day ago would have surprised him. He withdrew from the mile. His brother followed suit. But Pepper insisted on going.

Willoughby had determined to reserve himself for the quarter, the jumping, and, with his brother, for the three-legged race.

The mile was a sensational race, and an exact repetition of the half-mile at the finish, though on this occasion the Claverhouse captain won the race by five yards from Edgar Judson. Pepper, who ran a grand race for three-parts of the distance, was outpaced in the run in, and finding himself unable to finish, he reeled over on the grass, where he was violently sick, and so all afterwards that he decided not to run again. Pepper was a fine man, and it was an ignominious admission of his want of fitness.

In the quarter-mile dash, the school had another surprise. In this, the younger Judson made the pace for his brother, and, scorching whatever chance he might have had of victory to the good cause; and so fast was the pace, that when the bend for home was reached, and Willoughby made his effort, he found that he could not keep it up, and slackening in the last fifty yards, he allowed Judson major to go away and win as he pleased by over ten yards, whilst he reeled in to the tape, hardly able to finish, and almost permitting young Judson to get up on the post.

Willoughby major had had enough of it. There was no doubt about it, he did not feel as fit as he had done in previous years, when he had gone right through the programme without missing an event, and he frowned gloomily as he realised that perhaps Monson had been right after all.

He threw himself on the grass, extending his arms above his head as he lay fat on his back, panting for breath.

"Young 'un," he gasped, as his brother came up, "I'm not going in anything else. So we'll reserve ourselves for the three-legged race now. No one can possibly beat us in that. We are bound to win. We'll make the pace such a cracker that the pistol, old man, that no one will have a chance of getting up."

The three-legged race for seniors over the quarter-mile was the last event but one of the day, being followed by the steeplechase, in which the cross-country runners had a chance to distinguish themselves.

Four pairs were going. The two Judsons, the two Willoughbys, Armstrong and Shuter, and Maidment and Gathaway. The two Willoughbys, we have said, made the pace, and with the race ever since they had been at the school, were, of course, tremendous favourites.

"Are you ready?"

Bang!

Immediately the two Willoughbys, getting into their stride with amazing celerity, shot from the mark along the track, at once opening out a big gap between themselves and the other three pairs.

Then Armstrong and Shuter, and Maidment and Gathaway went going; but the two Judsons had started off with the wrong legs, with the result that Judson senior had pulled his brother down, and the pair were rolling on the cinder-path. They recovered themselves in wonderful fashion, and recalling their mistake as coolly as if no race was being run, they set their outside legs in motion together and went in grim pursuit of the leaders.

The two Willoughbys were by this time right ahead of the field. The other pairs were toiling after, but amidst cheers and roars of laughter, the favourites sped along seeming to have the race at their mercy.

There was a lot of gibing at the Judsons as they passed the spectators, but the brothers, grimly determined, sped on. Soon it was seen that they were gaining appreciably, and a cheer went up. When two hundred and twenty yards had been covered they passed Maidment and Gathaway amidst cheers, and shortly afterwards Armstrong and Shuter passed Shuter, of which pair Armstrong was blowing badly. The two Willoughbys were still well ahead.

But the Judsons were gaining. They were turning the bend in the final straight now.

"Go it, Willoughby!" "Stick to it, Willoughby!"

It was a fine race. But now the Judsons were gaining rapidly, and Maidment and Gathaway, who were not members of the smoking club like the passed Armstrong and Shuter, who had dropped right behind, and were hanging on to the Judsons' heels.

These two closed in rapidly on the Willoughbys. They were nearing home now, and Willoughby major had had enough of it. Pace and want of condition had told.

"I'm done," he said, and the next moment he faltered in his stride, reeling badly. It was only by a marvellous effort of self-control that his brother kept him up, but that effort was fatal. They lost their stride. They swayed almost off the track, and the two Judsons swept by. Then Maidment and Gathaway followed, being beaten ten yards by the victors, and the two Willoughbys, and Armstrong and Shuter did not finish.

It was a bitter defeat for the favourites; but they had learnt the invaluable lesson in athletics, that training tells.

That night Captain Monson had a very serious interview with the brothers Willoughby, an interview which had a beneficial effect upon the school, for the following day it was announced in the school-house, when the muster had withdrawn, that Willoughby's smoking club was abolished.

Was it an accident, I wonder, that next year Willoughby major took the medal given to the best athlete in the school, which Captain Monson had won at the sports-meeting we have dealt with in our story? I think not, for Willoughby afterwards, in addressing the school, declared that "Training tells!"

It is a Claverhouse axiom now.

(Another fine long, complete athletic tale next Saturday.)

THE SCHOOL ON THE CLIFF.

A Magnificent New Story of Stirring Adventure.

By E. HARCOURT BURRAGE.

THESE ARE THE PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS IN THIS FINE NEW STORY.

JACK JAUNTY, a lad of unknown parentage, who, as a baby, was cast up on the shores of an island off the village of Sterneraig.

THE STRANGER, a curious character who resides alone on an island called the Bowl. He it was that rescued Jack Jaunty from a watery grave. Fourteen years have since passed away.

BOB BAXTER, an old fisherman, in whose charge the Stranger put Jack Jaunty until he was old enough to be sent to the School on the Cliff at Sterneraig. That is where we find him now.

PETER PINNICK, a morose, unsociable fisherman, who nurses an imaginary grievance against the Stranger and against Jack Jaunty.

DAN CALLIS, AARON DOWNEY, GERARD INGLIS, and RICKEY HOPKINS, pupils at the School on the Cliff.

Our story opens on a warm sunny day. Dan Callis, a pupil at the School on the Cliff, and a bully, is daring another lad, Gerard Inglis by name, to descend the Seagull's Cliff. Jack warns him not to do so, but a little later the lad is discovered on a ledge half-way down the face of the cliff insensible. From this perilous position he is rescued by Jack Jaunty.

A stranger arrives at Sterneraig that afternoon, and picking up an acquaintanceship with Peter Pinnick, a surly fisherman, questions him about Jack Jaunty. Peter is obliged against his will to tell the man all he knows.

At the invitation of the Stranger the boys from the School on the Cliff spend a day's holiday on the Bowl Island. Here Jack Jaunty is attacked in a cave by Peter Pinnick and Bob Baxter's son. He is rescued by Gerard Inglis, and Jack asks Gerard to keep the matter a secret for the time being.

A heavy storm comes on, which prevents the boys from returning to the mainland that night, so they camp out in a tent which the Stranger supplies. Meanwhile Mr. Ferrula, an assistant-master at the school, has been indulging in a series of gyrations in a boat, being eventually swept out to sea. He is rescued by a boatload of fishermen just before the storm breaks.

(*Now read this week's instalment.*)

THE 9th CHAPTER.
After the Storm—Back Again—A Big Fish in a Net.

It was late when the rain ceased, and Mr. Bonnington, accompanied by his two tutors, wended their way back to the school. Mr. Ferrula was dignified but unpressed, and Mr. Redditch subdued but inwardly jubilant. The fact was, Mr. Bonnington had given the adventurous voyager a bit of what is sometimes called "a jacketing," not only for interfering with what did not concern him, but for giving his rescuers an amount of trouble he was not by any means able to pay for.

Nor did the fact of the fishermen's ignoring all payment retrieve him in the eyes of Mr. Bonnington.

"You have done wrong," he said; "and let it be a lesson to you through life. In future attempt to do nothing beyond your physical or mental strength."

Then came Mr. Bonnington's turn.

As had been expected, Mrs. Bonnington, by implication, put the storm upon him.

She wanted to know why he did not know it was coming, and she asked him how he could face the parents of the boys after they had been wet to the skin all night, catching their death with cold.

"You will have to bury two-thirds of your school, Mr. Bonnington," she said; "and I beg of you not to put the blame on me, for I won't have it."

But fair broke the morning, and at an early hour the boys were brought across the water safe and sound and in the highest spirits, only sorry that they had not been left on the island to live there for ever. They were in time for school, and did not want any breakfast, having had all they needed on the island, and in some cases a little more.

But playing high jinks on an island and schooling don't go well together. It was a morning of blunderings and reproof, a trying time for teachers and the taught, and they were glad when it was over. As all had done so badly, and with a fair excuse, no special punishments were awarded, and the day being fine the boys were permitted to take their usual outdoor exercise before dinner.

Some went roaming about the cliff, others hurried down to the sea, among them Jack, Nickey, Gerard, and Will Radcliffe. These four were together, and, if not on mischief bent, they were in the humour for any fun that might offer itself. It was the noontide hour, and the greater part of the simple inhabitants, being early feeders, were at dinner. But there was one who was not going to dine, or had dined, and that was Peter Pinnick. How or when he had returned Jack did not know, but there he was lying on an outspread net, upon his back, in the shadow of one of the boats, snoring most awfully.

Jack Jaunty saw an opportunity of paying back part of what he owed the ruffian, and, of course, was not going to throw it away.

"Let us get the net about him, and run him along the beach," he said.

Peter's hand was against every boy, and every boy's hand was against him. Jack's suggestion was accepted as one worthy of all support.

The net was drawn over Pinnick, and the ends gathered together in a trice. Jack, with a deft hand, proceeded to tie up the net something after the fashion of a cloth with a pudding inside it.

Peter Pinnick woke up.

"Hallo! What now? Here, you Jaunty chap, you let me out!"

"Now, boys," cried Jack, "run him along! The tide is coming in. We can take him out and leave him for a good washing!"

THE 10th CHAPTER.
A New Pupil and Other Fresh Arrivals.

PETER shouted and used very bad language, but the boys had him safe enough. He was safe as the lion of the fable in the net, and there was no little mouse to help him out.

He had not even his jack-knife to cut a hole in it. The boys saw him feel in his pockets without finding it, and laughed with glee. Ignoring his vows of vengeance, they dragged him along, his shouts and oaths breaking rudely on the stillness of the noon. But nobody came to his aid. It is true some peeped from the doors of their huts, but when they saw who it was in trouble, they went back again, or watched the scene with laughing faces from the shadow of their homes.

So Peter was tumbled and dragged along until the fear entered his coward heart that the affair might end seriously.

"Stop!" he yelled. "Don't go no further! The tide'll be on me in a few minutes. Oh, you Jaunty, you're a ba-a-a-d boy! Come, stop, will you!"

"Further out!" cried Jack. "He is to be drowned to-day. There's nobody looking. Pull away!"

The boys worked hard, the perspiration poured down their faces, for it was not an easy thing to get Peter along. He kicked in the net, and bit at it like a madman, until there was in his appearance a great deal more of the wild beast than the man.

It was a strong net, and a new one, not easy to break through, or he might have speedily gained his freedom. As it was, he was as helpless as a big fish within its folds. The boys dragged him out about fifty yards upon the sands, and then they stopped.

"Good-bye, Peter!" said Jack. "Don't waste your breath howling, as nobody can hear you. The tide will soon be in."

"You won't leave me to drown!" implored Peter hoarsely. "You don't!"

"Oh, don't talk about dare not," replied Jack coolly, "because we mean to do it. Come along, boys; the dinner-bell will be ringing directly.

"Hi! Stop!" roared Peter. "I've something to tell you that you would like to know—something I found out on the island yonder."

"Don't want to know it," sang out Jack cheerily. "Tell it to the little fishes!"

Jack did not mean to leave him to drown, and knew that would not be the end of it; but he just wanted to give the ruffian a scare, and the attempt to do so had been crowned with success.

Half-way towards the cliff he turned, and said that he had no fear of becoming a murderer, for Peter Pinnick was doing what most people would have done under the circumstances.

He was rolling over and over towards the shore. Enveloped in a heavy net, and with a considerable length of it to drag along, he presented a very funny appearance, and the little pleasure there might have been in the position was not enhanced by the arrival of several of the fishermen, some of them swallowing their last bit of dinner, on the scene.

They did not assist Peter, but encouraged him with cries.

"Roll, Peter—roll! Go it, and you'll win yet!"

After travelling a few yards, Peter stopped to regain his breath, and, as luck would have it, an extra-sized wave broke on the shore, and sent a broad, thin sheet of water rolling up the sands. It came right up to Peter, who yelled "Murder!" and resumed his rolling performance towards the beach. By this time half the population had arrived on the scene, and there was just such a little knot accompanying Peter as one sees when a man is performing some feat of walking on the high road. Nobody offered to help him. His piteous cries were only answered with laughter. All they said was:

"Roll, Peter—roll! The tide's a-coming!"

And he did roll, until heated to the colour of a boiled lobster, and, thoroughly pumped out, he touched the shingle.

Then he knew he was safe, and stopped.

For a while he eyed the group gathered about him with the sullen glare of a caged rat. But presently he said, quietly enough:

"Somebody untie the net and let me out. It's Bob Baxter's net, and I don't want to kick a hole in it."

"You'd better not," said Bob himself, as he pushed his way to the front. "What are you doing of, you great booby, a-swaddling yourself up in a thing meant for fishes?"

Bob, who had seen all and knew all, stooped down to loosen the knot, which he pretended was so mighty tight that his fingers would not untie it.

"A man like you," he said, "is old enough to give up these fool's tricks; and don't you let me catch you coming it with any net again. There you are. Get up and go home. If you want to amuse yourself like a child, get a hoop and some marbles and a peg-top."

To all this Peter Pinnick answered not a word.

Having shaken off the net, he got upon his feet, and gave his arms and knees a rub. Then slowly he passed through the crowd and walked towards the path up the cliff. There was a fixed look in his eyes, which some, who saw it, afterwards said was the ugliest thing their eyes had seen for many a day.

"He'll take it out of the boys somehow," they said.

And they were, to an extent, right in their opinion. Peter Pinnick meant to have his revenge one day.

Jack had made a bitter enemy in Peter Pinnick; but, quite indifferent to what the feeling of that personage might be towards him, and satisfied for the present with having humiliated him, he sauntered off with Gerard Inglis.

The boys wended their way up the cliff, through the village, and in so doing had to pass Bob Baxter's house. By the door Mrs. Baxter was standing. Her eyes were red—evidence that she had been weeping.

"Good-morning, mother!" said Jack.

He always addressed her so, because he knew it pleased her, and she had to all intents and purposes been a mother to him.

"Can I speak to you alone, Master Jack?" she said.

Although she had reared him, she always, as Bob did, put the prefix to his name, for they argued between them that Jack was no ordinary boy, "but just something above us," they would say.

Jack went into the house with her, and she closed the door.

"Oh, my brave boy, Jim——" she began, wringing her hands.

(Continued on the next page.)

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The School on the Cliff.

(Continued from the previous page.)

"What has happened to him?" asked Jack, alarmed on her account.

"Oh, that is what I want to know!" the wretched mother sobbed. "He's gone—run away!"

"When, and to where?" asked Jack.

"We don't know," said Mrs. Baxter. "That 'ere Peter Pinnick says they come home together on the day they went fishing, same as when you went to the Bowl. Whou was it? I'm in that state I don't know."

"Well, if he came home, why isn't he here?" queried Jack.

"Because he's run away, and Heaven only knows what will become of him! My only son—my boy!"

It was pitifully painful to see her in such a state, but Jack could do nothing but give her a few words of comfort. His mind, of course, went back to the Bowl, and it flashed upon him that Jim might have met with foul play there. But he was not in a position to prove anything, and he had given his word to Jim that he would not say anything about the attack made upon him, and his subsequent suffering. He offered her such a consolation as words could give.

"It is only one of Jim's tricks," he said; "and he will be home again soon."

Rejoining Gerard, he told him what was wrong, and Gerard also was of opinion that Jim was playing a game with his parents.

"But if he doesn't come home in a day or two," he said, "something ought to be done."

"I shall probably call on Peter Pinnick to explain how he fared when he parted with him," replied Jack.

As they came in sight of the school they saw a carriage standing by the door. Groelton, the house-porter, was removing some luggage from the roof.

"New boy," said Jack.

"Got some good luggage, too," said Gerard.

"I hope he isn't a swell," returned Jack.

The new boy was standing by the door as they passed round to the ordinary entrance for boys. There was not much of the swell in his looks, although the clothes he wore were of the best. He was a tall lad, of about the same age as Gerard, with a stoop in his shoulders. He looked at them in a sidelong, covert way as they passed, which Jack did not like.

"That fellow will not do for me," he said.

"I don't exactly like him," responded Gerard.

They saw nothing more of the new-comer until school was resumed. Presumably he lunched with Mr. Bonnington, for he did not appear in the boys' dining-room. He was brought into school, and introduced as Mark Ricketts, a ward in Chancery.

The way Mr. Bonnington rolled out "ward in Chancery" showed that he thought a deal of it; but to the majority of the boys the words conveyed no meaning. Unfortunately for himself, the new-comer was appointed to a seat between Nickey Hopkins and Will Raddle, between whom a war of whispers was no uncommon thing.

Mark Ricketts took his seat, and sat for a while with his eyes on his desk, taking no notice of anyone. Mr. Ferrula brought him some books, and directed him to study certain portions thereof, which he proceeded to do apparently with the closest attention. Nickey favoured him with several glances expressive of distaste, and tried to lure him from his labours by coughing and touching him with his elbow.

At last he said:

"Haven't you got a word to say for your self?"

Mark raised his eyes for a moment; then, letting them fall, said, in a quiet undertone:

"I wish to learn my lessons, please!"

The indignation of Nickey rose to boiling-heat, and Will Raddle was likewise moved.

"Oh, you are a regular little beauty, I can see!" said Nickey. "What do you mean by coming to a school like this? Why didn't you go to—to a reformatory?"

The new-comer started as if he had been stung by a whip, and again he looked up, with an angry flash in his eyes.

"How dare you talk to me as if I were a thief?" he asked.

"Well, the word reformatory slipped out before I really thought what it was," replied Nickey easily. "I'll take it back, if you like, or, if you choose, you may give me a hiding for it—if you can!"

"I don't fight; it's vulgar!" said Mark.

"Silence!" cried Mr. Bonnington.

And as he plainly directed the remark to Nickey, that young gentleman thought it better to subside into quietude for a time.

An unfortunate impression was created all round by Mark Ricketts. The boys throughout instinctively disliked him, so did both the ushers; and Mr. Bonnington had more of his being a ward in Chancery than anything else. As for Mrs. Bonnington, she had declared she had never seen a boy who was so repelling to her. After school he roamed about alone, and out of sheer kindness to him Jack Jaunty went up and asked him if he would not like to join in a game of cricket. He simply answered:

"No; I don't care for play!"

"Well, we've got something now," said Jack, disgusted; "the fellow acts on me like a wet blanket!"

The next day there was another addition to the neighbourhood, although not to the school.

About a quarter of a mile from the village, there stood a low, rambling house, called Norton's Folly. It was built partly of wood and partly of brick and stone, and its original owner died there seven years before. Since then it had remained empty. The people of Stonecraig thought it never would be let again, and the usual ghost had been associated with it for a year or so; but now, behold, it was taken, and the new residents came and took possession of it suddenly.

It came upon everybody by surprise, but the fact was the agent lived far away, and what he did in business was not likely to be heard of by the simple people by the sea. Of course, the boys were the first to ascertain who had come thither to live. Nickey Hopkins was the first scout, and he found a handsome, portly man surveying the front of the bungalow, with two girls, and a lady about twenty-seven. He was sure the latter was a governess, for she addressed the gentleman as "Mr. Belton."

"What sort of girls are they?" asked Jack carelessly, as he pulled off his coat and folded it up neatly.

It was the hour to retire, and some half-score youngsters were preparing for bed.

"Fizers!" replied Nickey earnestly. "I don't think much of girls generally, but I must say those took my fancy."

"Well, what are they like?" asked Jack.

"Fair or dark, tall or short?"

"They've got fluffy yellow hair and blue eyes," said Nickey, as he got into bed; "and they were dressed in blue serge, and one of them looked at me and laughed. If you want to know anything more about them, you can go up to-morrow and see for yourself."

As all further questions concerning the new-comers only elicited from Nickey a series of grunts and finally snores, Jack called him several hard names, which were endorsed by others equally curious, and then they all went to sleep.

Peter was tumbled and dragged along until the fear entered his coward heart that the affair might end seriously. "Stop!" he yelled. "Don't go no further! The tide'll be on me in a few minutes."

Gerard quietly proposed in the morning to Jack to have a run over to the Folly before breakfast, but Jack dissented.

"I've got an idea they are jolly girls," he said, "and I should not like to see them for the first time in curl papers."

"Oh, no!" said Gerard, with a shudder.

So, instead of going off to the Folly, they went down to the beach. Jack, as was often the case with him, was a little behind with some of his lessons, so he took his books with him and lay down beside a boat drawn up high and dry.

It was an old boat, the property of Bob Baxter, and hard by Peter Pinnick was prowling about with one of his companions of the Mermaid, a careless fellow of the name of Baylis, with no real vice in him, but easily led into mischief.

Peter saw Jack go behind the boat and sit down; Baylis was looking the other way. Pinnick, hating Jack with his whole heart, and longing to repay him for that net business, was ready to do him any ill, provided it could be carried through safely.

"How easy to push the boat over and smash him!" he thought.

He would have done it alone, but he thought it advisable to bring Baylis into it, so as to make it appear like an accident.

"Baylis," he said, "suppose we shove over the old boat of Bob Baxter's?"

"Wnst for?" asked Baylis sleepily.

"Oh, just for something to do—the fun of it, if you like. Bob talks of breaking it up."

"Oh, what's the good of working when there's no pay to it?" grunted Baylis.

"Well, let it alone, then," said Pinnick. "I was Jack, not under the boat, but sitting quietly on the side of it, in the act of closing the book he had been studying.

was going to ask you to have a morning's pint with me, but now——"

"Here, I'm ready, if there's beer in it," said Baylis.

Pinnick picked up a short mast lying near, and he and Baylis walked towards the boat.

"Let us do it quietly, so the boys don't see it done," whispered Pinnick. "They're a mischief-making lot, and will be sure to tell Bob if they knows of it."

Gerard and three or four others were seeking moving objects by the seashore, and amusing themselves in other ways, but none were looking in the direction of the boat. Everything was favourable to Pinnick's dastardly plot to kill Jack. He reckoned that after it was discovered it would be put down to accident, for Baylis would, for his own sake, keep silent.

Boats left like this one, on an even keel without any supports, often get thrown over on their sides by the wind.

Placing the short stump of the mast against the side, he whispered, "Lay hold, Baylis!" And then added: "Heave her, my lad!"

They were two powerful men, and the boat yielded at once to the pressure they put upon it, toppling over in a moment upon its side, in a strange, noiseless way that was more impressive than a crash would have been.

"There," said Baylis, "we've done it!"

"Hush!" said Pinnick, holding up his finger. "Can you hear anything?"

"I hear them boys a-laughing and a-splashing stones in the water," replied Baylis.

"I don't mean that," said Pinnick, whose face was now white under the brown of his sunburnt skin. "Under the boat I thought I heard a moan. Surely there couldn't have been anybody there."

"The Lord forbid!" ejaculated Baylis.

"I am a'most sure I heard something," said Pinnick. "Let's go round the other side and see."

They walked round, Peter Pinnick going first, and as he got a view of the other side of the boat he received a shock that made him reel. There

THE 11th CHAPTER.

A Terrible Struggle—Jack Makes New Friends at the Bungalow.

"YOU were out of your reckoning," said Jack coolly. "I happened to be getting up just as you were pushing the boat down."

"I—I didn't know you were there," stammered Pinnick.

"Oh, yes, you did!" replied Jack. "I was looking round the boat a moment ago, and saw you two creeping up, and suspected your little game. Baylis, I never thought you were such a scoundrel!"

"I'll swear I didn't so much as dream o' your being there!" cried Baylis excitedly.

"I believe you," said Jack. "But he did. See his face! Doesn't he look like a disappointed cur!"

The other boys, attracted by the voices of the speakers, came running up to see what was the matter. They were just in time to see Baylis rise in his wrath against Peter Pinnick.

"So you wanted to make a murderer of me, did you?" he said.

"Don't mind that young fool," replied Pinnick. "Come on to the Mermaid, and have your morning pint."

"Hang your morning pint!" roared Baylis. "Off with your jersey, and let us see which is best man."

"I won't," said Pinnick.

"Then we'll keep 'em on," said Baylis.

Baylis was not a scientific pugilist, any more than other fishermen, but he could hit hard, and down went Pinnick with a blow that would have felled an ox. The boys drew back a little, half terrified with the sight of that knockdown blow.

Pinnick, enraged to a point of madness, got up as quickly as he could, and the pair closed. It was a struggle between two untutored gladiators, and in its way a fearful sight. They dealt each other blows that would have stretched many men senseless on the ground; they closed and fell together, pounding away, and rolling about so that the dry sand rose in clouds about them.

It was such a sight as none of the boys had looked upon before, and did not aspire to look upon again. Two strong men in a fury, struggling for supremacy. What blows they dealt each other on the body, face, and head! The sound was like that of carpet-beating, and how they bore them was a mystery to the boys.

At last Baylis dealt Pinnick a blow on the side of the head that stretched him out still, and apparently dead. Then there was a moment's silence.

Baylis rose up slowly, wiping the blood from his face, and staring at his foe with an expression of dismay.

"I—I hope he hesn't killed!" he stammered.

Jack stooped down and looked at the senseless man. He was breathing in a short, jerky manner, that showed how heavily the blow had told upon him. It was, in a sense, satisfactory to find that he was not dead.

"He will come round soon," said Jack.

And this Peter Pinnick did. After a while his breathing improved; and, opening his eyes, he sat up, and stared about him like one awakening from a drunken sleep. Slowly his eyes wandered round the silent, white-faced group near, and by degrees consciousness of what had recently occurred returned. So did the pugnaciousness of Baylis.

"Have ye had enough?" he asked fiercely.

"Yes, for the present," replied Pinnick, as he drew out his handkerchief and wiped his face.

"Come away," said Jack to the other boys; "it isn't a nice sight."

They drew away; and Baylis, satisfied with his victory, lounged off up the beach. The boys hurried back to the school to breakfast, and to tell the story of that dreadful struggle between two strong men.

It haunted some of them for many hours afterwards, and to Jack it was a thing to remember all the days of his life.

We have spared our young readers many details of this fray, for such things do not make pretty writing, and are not good to read. They, like the records of old prize-fights, when men really fought, and did not play at fighting, have a brutalising tendency. Both combatants bore the marks of the struggle in their faces for a week afterwards.

Although Jack was deeply impressed with what he had seen, it did not lead him to forget the new people at the bungalow. That evening he wandered in the direction of the outlying building, and was rewarded with a sight of the fair occupants. He thought he had never seen two such beautiful creatures as the sisters were. Their "yellow" hair was of the brightest gold, and their eyes of blue were large and expressive. Mr. Belton, their father, was with them, standing by the garden-gate, looking seaward. In the background sat the lady who was their governess, reading a book. Jack doffed his cap as he passed, and Mr. Belton, returning the salute, asked him to stop.

"Can you tell me the name of the islands lying out there?" he asked.

Of course Jack could, and it was a congenial theme to him. Under the influence of golden hair and blue eyes he waxed quite eloquent upon them, and the Bowl was his chief subject.

By degrees he unfolded to the wondering listeners the story of his own life—the wreck, his rescue by the Stranger, and his subsequent career at school. Ivonne and Laura, as the girls were called by their father, said very little, and asked few questions; but they kept their eyes on Jack throughout, and Ivonne sighed more than once, like one absorbed in interest. The governess, who had just joined them, was also deeply interested in all he said, and Jack noticed that she was both good-looking and intelligent.

"Really," said Mr. Belton, "it is a most remarkable story, and will become, in after days, a legend of this charming spot. You have never heard anything of your parents?"

"No, indeed," said Jack sadly. "But there is little doubt they were both drowned."

"The name of the ship has never been discovered?"

"No. There were many wrecks at the time, so they tell me, and many vessels were utterly lost. It would have been some foreign craft, homeward bound, but wholly lost, and I have ceased to speculate upon it."

"Poor boy!"

It was Ivonne from whom the expression came; and Jack, turning, saw that her eyes were dim with tears.

"I don't like to think my lot a hard one," he said, "for I have been fortunate in finding the best of friends."

"Well and so," said Mr. Belton. "You have a grateful heart, and gratitude is a virtue. We are going for a walk. Will you come with us?"

What could Jack say? What would anyone in his place have said? He was only too glad and they walked on together away from the village, and presently came to one of the notable spots on the cliff.

(To be continued next week.)

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, when 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 contemptible character.

JAMES LAGDEN, who has ruined Arthur's uncle.

BLAKE, 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. Soon after a change in his fortunes necessitates his forfeiting his status as an amateur and turning professional.

Kit Valance, Arthur's bosom chum, has a twin brother named Len who is a rising star in the cricket world. 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 despair Len Valance, 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 so badly as he can that it is made still possible for Somerset to be defeated, to make doubly sure Arthur Lovell is also kidnapped and kept prisoner with his friend.

Loamshire seem doomed to defeat, but in the nick of time Arthur and Kit manage to escape, and Arthur pulls the game out of the fire, scoring the winning hit on the stroke of time. Lagden bribes Len Valance to injure Arthur in such a manner as to make it impossible for him to play in the next match against Yorkshire.

Len makes a bad blunder, and strikes down Blake, the captain of Loamshire, with a cricket ball in the dark, intending him for Arthur. Blake is unable to play in the coming match with Yorkshire, and Ponsonby is appointed in his place as captain. Being prejudiced against Arthur and Kit, Ponsonby keeps them in the background. Arthur is put in last, and by lunch-time Loamshire are all down for seventy-eight. How is the match to end?

(How read this week's instalment.)

The Yorkshire Innings.

LUNCH was over in the pavilion on the Bradford ground, and the cricketers were preparing to take the field again. Loamshire were not in high spirits. A total of seventy-eight for an innings finished up before lunch on the opening day of the match, was hardly encouraging to the visiting team.

Ponsonby, the new captain of Loamshire, had had his way, and he had paid dearly for it. He had kept Arthur Lovell in the background, and given his own personal friends every chance of making a hit.

Unfortunately, they had failed to do so, and the young professional had gone in too late to do anything for his side.

Ponsonby's obstinacy had had a result that he might have foreseen. The Yorkshire bowling had played havoc with the visitors' innings, and Loamshire were all out for a miserable total.

But Ponsonby was far from thinking of changing his tactics. What had happened only made him more angry and obstinate, and he was less inclined than ever to admit that he was in the wrong.

But he could not help feeling a grim foreboding as he led his men out to field. The Yorkshiremen were in such fine fettle that their innings was almost certain to be a long one, and the score might easily run into centuries.

Kit Valance, Loamshire's champion professional bowler, was the only one who was likely to make much impression upon batsmen like Lord Hawke, Hirst, Rhodes, and Tunnicliffe; but the new captain of Loamshire deliberately blinded himself to facts.

It would, indeed, have been a poor ending to his plans if, after keeping Lovell in the background, he had been compelled to rely upon Lovell's chum, and to give him every chance of distinguishing himself.

When the Loamshire captain led his men from the pavilion, Lovell and Valance were both placed to field, and the ball was given to Geoffrey Lagden.

Lagden was in pretty good bowling form, and he meant to do his level best to back up Ponsonby, and make the scheme a success.

But how his bowling would shape against Hawke and Hirst, was a question. Kit and Lovell exchanged a glance, but said no word. It was not their business to speak. They had only to obey, and to quietly look on while the match was sacrificed to an unsportsmanlike man's jealousy and obstinacy.

Lagden sent down a few trials to the wicket-keeper, Maynard. The Yorkshiremen opened their innings with Lord Hawke and Hirst. George Hirst, the splendid cricketer, whose bowling had done so much damage to Loamshire, received the first over from Lagden.

The crowd who had watched the luckless Loamshire innings in the morning were looking on eagerly now, freely predicting that Yorkshire would win the match with an innings to spare, and gloeful at the prospect.

And Hirst's first over was encouraging to the prophets. The first two balls he contented himself with stopping, and then he ran a four, and then a couple of boundaries followed, and the last ball gave him two; and the crowd cheered this fine start heartily.

"Bravo, Hirst!"

"Good old George!"

George Hirst smiled. He had already taken the measure of the Loamshire bowling, and he was cool and confident. Tweedie, the professional, bowled the second over against Lord Hawke's wicket.

The Yorkshire skipper played every ball with calm success. The over gave him only six, but it showed that Tweedie could not touch his wicket, and next to Kit Valance, the Scottish professional was the best bowler the Loamshire side could boast.

If the Loamshire fielding was equally weak, the Yorkshire innings was booked for a long life. Now, Hirst had the bowling again, and he was batting strongly. The man at the score-board was kept pretty busy. Hirst was hitting out in fine style, and it was nothing to him to lift the leather over the boundary.

With thirteen more runs to his credit, he still had the bowling when the field changed over. Ponsonby tossed the ball to Fortescue. The young amateur caught it, and looked at it quizzically.

"What do you want me to do with this, Ponsonby?" he asked innocently.

Ponsonby scowled. In his present humour, Fortescue's mocking fun was very hard to bear.

"Go on and bowl the next over!" he snapped.

"You want me to bowl against Hirst?"

"Haven't I told you so?"

"You're joking. You mean me to toss the ball to Kit Valance, of course, and——"

Ponsonby gritted his teeth.

"Don't do anything of the kind, Fortescue, or there'll be a row. I'm captain of this team. I've told you that once before. Do as I tell you."

Fortescue's expression changed. In spite of his light, mocking nature, he was a keen cricketer, and he was keenly desirous of seeing the game pulled out of the fire.

"I say, Pon, old man," he said, in a low voice, "give Valance a chance. You know I can't do anything like Valance. Give the chap a chance."

"Mind your own business!"

"You've made up your mind——"

"I've made up my mind to be obeyed on the cricket-field, so long as I'm captain of Loamshire!" growled Ponsonby. "If you say another word I'll order you off the field, and play Yorkshire a man short."

Fortescue bit his lip.

"Very well," he said quietly, "I shall obey orders, of course."

"And the sooner the better. You're keeping the field waiting."

Fortescue said no more. The fieldsmen had taken up their new positions, and the young amateur went on to bowl against George Hirst's wicket. He was simmering with anger within.

Ponsonby's obstinate folly was risking the game, or, rather, dooming Loamshire to certain defeat; but it was impossible to argue with or oppose a cricket captain on the field.

Fortescue, like Lovell, could only do as he was told. An incompetent captain was bad enough, but insubordination in the team would be worse.

George Hirst was waiting for the ball in his quiet way. Fortescue took a little run, and the ball went down, and Hirst stepped out to it and hit. Away went the ball, and the batsmen ran.

But the next moment there was a roar round the field. While the batsmen were running, cover-point was running, too, his eyes upturned, and crossing the level green like a flash of white.

And it was Arthur Lovell who had been assigned to that post by the Loamshire skipper. He was running hard, his eyes on the sky—on the round, dark object there. Would it fall into his hands, or plunge down into the turf?

Every eye was fixed on the fieldsman; every breath came quick and sharp. Was it to be a catch, and Hirst dismissed for twenty-seven?

Even Ponsonby forgot his jealous spite for a moment as he watched Arthur Lovell, and he was just then as fervently anxious for the catch to materialise as any of the Loamshires.

Down came the ball. With a faint sound, something between a click and a kiss, it sailed into the outstretched palm, and the fieldsman's fingers closed upon it like a vice.

"Caught!"

Ponsonby shouted out the word in his relief. It was taken up by the crowd of Yorkshire folk, keen sportsmen all, though they were keenly disappointed to see their favourite dismissed so early in the innings.

"Caught!"

"Oh, well caught!"

Lovell's face was flushed, his eyes sparkling. He had caught out George Hirst, the splendid Yorkshire batsman, for a small total, and his heart beat with a pleasurable triumph.

"Well caught!"

The shout was music to his ears. He came in from the field with a smile upon his face, and the ball in his hand.

"How's that?"

The umpire grinned.

"Out!"

Hirst took his defeat good-humouredly. The man of many centuries could afford a reverse every now and then, and, like a good cricketer as he was, he admired that splendid catch.

And he gave Lovell a friendly nod as he carried out his bat. Hirst disappeared into the pavilion, and Haigh came out to join Lord Hawke at the wickets. Fortescue finished the over against Haigh. But his good luck was at an end.

He would have the satisfaction of seeing in the score-sheet "Hirst, caught Lovell, bowled Fortescue," but that was about all the satisfaction that was in store for him. For Haigh cut his bowling all over the field. And when a three gave Lord Hawke the bowling, the Yorkshire skipper sent Fortescue's last ball over the boundary for four.

Fortescue made a grimace as he left the crease. He had done his level best, and as a matter of fact, Loamshire had been benefited by putting him on as a change bowler, as he had succeeded in giving Lovell the catch that dismissed Hirst.

But he could not touch the Yorkshire batting, and he knew it, and he was glad to be relieved of a task that was beyond his powers.

Kit Valance looked at the Loamshire captain involuntarily. Was the ball coming to him?

The young bowler had watched and seen how Arthur Lovell had been left out in the cold during the Loamshire innings, with indignation. He had not anticipated that his own turn would come, for the new Loamshire captain disliked him as much as he disliked Lovell. Now he knew that he had anticipated aright. For Lagden was given the ball.

It was evident that, whatever came of it, Kit Valance was not to be trusted with the ball, and Yorkshire had nothing to fear from Loamshire's champion bowler.

"Ponsonby has made his mind, Kit," muttered Lovell, as he came near Valance, when the field crossed over. "He means to play the game out—and it's all up with Loamshire."

And Kit Valance nodded a gloomy assent.

Luck was going strongly in favour of the White Roses.

Haigh and Lord Hawke between them were knocking up the runs in fine style, and the home score was already at ninety, with only one wicket down. The Loamshire men were on the alert for chances, especially the cricket chums, Lovell and Valance, but the batsmen were not the kind to give many chances, even to alert fieldsmen. But Kit Valance's chance came at last.

Haigh had hit out in the long field, and the ball seemed good enough for a four. The batsmen had crossed three times, while Kit was after the ball like a shot. The fourth run tempted them, to their sorrow. For Kit was on the ball, and he straightened and sent it in to the wicket-keeper with a single movement—a smart take and return which elicited a cheer from those of the spectators who were near enough to see it.

Maynard, at the wicket, was on the alert. The ball came in true as a die, and he grabbed it greedily, and with the same swing of the hand, crashed it on to the stumps.

Haigh had seen his peril, and he was straining every nerve to get home in time, and a couple of seconds later his bat clumped on the crease. Only a couple of seconds; but it was quite enough. The clump of the bat followed the crash of the falling wicket, and Maynard grinned up at the batsman.

"How's that, umpire?"

"Out!"

Haigh departed from the wicket. Ponsonby breathed a sigh of relief to see him go. Yorkshire were now two down for the even hundred, last man thirty. Yet there was a bitterness in the Loamshire captain's breast. Only two of the Loamshire fieldsmen had distinguished themselves, and those two were the players he had sought to keep in the shade—Lovell and Valance.

Rhodes came in to join Lord Hawke,

He has done it! A foot from the green turf Kit's hand has interposed, and the ball has dropped into it with a gentle click. Caught!

KING CRICKET.

(Continued from the previous page.)

Lagden bowled against his wicket, and more by luck than skill, he bowled the Yorkshireman with the last ball of the over.

Tunnicliffe was next man in.

Lagden, Tunstall, and Tweedie tried their skill upon Tunnicliffe in vain, and then Fortescue and Chichester were tried, with no better success.

Tunnicliffe and Lord Hawke were making the far fly now. The Yorkshire captain was nearing his century, and had evidently become set at the wicket, from which it seemed impossible for the Loamshire bowling or fielding to move him. He had already knocked up off his own bat considerably more than the whole total of the Loamshire first innings, a fact which the crowd were not long in remarking and commenting upon in jubilant tones.

And, indeed, it began to look as if Lord Hawke and Tunnicliffe would remain in for the rest of the afternoon, and even Ponsonby was looking serious. When the field crossed after an over which had given the batsmen, between them, sixteen, Lagden stopped to speak in a low tone to the captain.

"I say, Pon, old man, this looks bad!"

Ponsonby nodded without replying.

His expression showed how gloomy were his feelings.

"Our bowlers don't seem able to touch the Tykes," said Lagden. "What do you say to giving Kit Valance a chance?"

Ponsonby stared at him in blank amazement.

"Kit Valance! You know we agreed that this was to be an amateur's game, Lagden."

Lagden made a sign of impatient assent.

"Yes, yes, I know; but, after all, the chap is paid to bowl, and the prospect is looking black enough for us. We don't want to lose the game."

"You think we ought to call upon a professional for help, after snubbing him and leaving him out in the cold like this? He would laugh in his sleeve at us."

"That's better than losing the game and getting jagged by the committee."

"I'm the last thing I should have expected you to say, Lagden."

Lagden muttered an anathema. He had been able to twist Ponsonby round his finger to a certain extent, but he was finding out how that it was easier to make trouble than to soothe it down when made. Like the luckless magician of old, he had raised an evil spirit he could not command now that it was raised.

"Have some sense, Ponsonby. I don't want to put Valance forward any more than you do. But the game is at stake—and people will suspect—"

"Try one more over."

Lagden took the ball unwillingly.

"But, Pon, look here, I—"

"You're keeping the field waiting."

Ponsonby snapped out the words; his temper had been sorely tried, and he was not inclined to be very civil to his friend. Lagden flushed, and, biting his lip, went on unwillingly to bowl.

Lord Hawke, who seemed to be improving every minute, and getting more and more dangerous as an opponent to the adversaries, knocked that over all over the field. Lagden did his best, but his best was of no use when he simply was not up to the form of the Yorkshire captain, and the over ended with twelve more added to the Yorkshire total.

The field crossed over. Lagden stopped again to speak to Ponsonby. He smiled grimly at the thought that he was forced to plead for a chance to be given to the player he hated, and whom he would have been more than glad to leave in the shade. But Lagden had commonsense; he knew that a game lost by ignoring Lovell and Valance would mean trouble. The matter would not end there. The county committee would want to see explanations, and there would be a great deal of difficulty in finding one to give.

So long as there was a chance of winning the match, Lagden had been with Ponsonby heart and soul. Now that defeat lowered darkly over the visitors, he thought it was time for a change of tactics. But he had not counted upon the obstinacy of the man with whom he had to deal.

"Give Valance a chance this time, Pon."

"Throw the ball to Tunstall."

"I ask it as a favour."

"I am captain of this team."

Lagden gritted his teeth. He had never expected a rebuff like that from Ponsonby, but he had no choice but to obey orders. He tossed the ball to Maynard, who gave it to Tunstall, and the latter went on to bowl against Tunnicliffe. The Yorkshire batsman hit out heartily at Tunstall's bowling. Every hit was run out, with a total of ten for the over.

Then Lagden cast an appealing look at Ponsonby. The Loamshire captain, meanwhile, had been reflecting. He did not want to quarrel with Lagden, and yet to depart from the plan he had marked out for himself was a bitter pill for him to swallow.

He caught Lagden's look, and gave a short, sullen nod. Kit Valance, greatly to his amazement, was given the ball.

"You will bowl, Valance," said Ponsonby curtly. "I am going to give you a chance. Let me see what you can do."

"Certainly, sir," said Kit cheerfully.

He realised that the Loamshire captain had been compelled by circumstances to abandon his scheme, and though the young bowler naturally resented the way in which he had been treated, he fully intended to do his best for Loamshire. But luck was not with Kit Valance just then.

Lord Hawke was so firmly set at the wicket, that time was required even for a bowler like Kit Valance to make any impression upon him. Kit bowled his best, but the Yorkshire captain cut away the first ball for two, and the second for three, and then a couple of boundaries by Tunnicliffe followed.

Ponsonby scowled at Lagden. He had put Valance on against his will, and this was the result. The over ended, with Lord Hawke and Tunnicliffe still at the wickets, and Yorkshire sixteen runs to the good.

Kit Valance was not given another chance.

The next over was bowled by Tweedie, with more runs to Yorkshire, and when the next change was made, Ponsonby calmly ignored the young professional.

Kit Valance bit his lip hard.

He had only been given one chance, in a single over, but because he had achieved in six balls what the other Loamshire bowlers could not achieve in sixty, he was to be passed over, and left out of the bowling.

His want of luck in that over was an excuse for Ponsonby to act as he had decided to do; as much excuse as the Loamshire captain required.

Kit Valance went back to fielding, calm outwardly, but inwardly burning with indignant anger and contempt.

His reputation, to a large extent, depended upon his being given a chance, and this, of course, was important to a cricketer who depended upon the summer game for a livelihood.

Ponsonby, of course, cared not one rap for professional bowling averages, and Kit, to do him justice, was thinking far less of himself than of the game.

It was not his place to raise any objection to the orders of his captain, and he had learned discipline in a hard school.

What work fell to him he did quietly and well, and that was all he could do.

Lagden muttered a curse as he saw that Ponsonby was obstinately determined to go on his own way. He made one more attempt to make the Loamshire captain see reason, but with a want of success that kept him off the subject afterwards.

"Give Valance another chance, Pon," he muttered, as he came nearer the Loamshire captain. "He can do better than that if you let him try."

"Stuff!" said Ponsonby.

"Don't be an ass!" urged Lagden. "I know what we arranged, as well as you do. But the game is at stake, and it's time to think of that. It isn't as if I were asking you to put Lovell forward. We have other bowlers. But Valance is our big bowler. Unless we give him every chance we are done."

"And let the match be a triumph for Kit Valance, and all our careful planning end solely in his advantage!" sneered Ponsonby.

"If you think that will be rotten, but it's better than defeat."

"I don't see that defeat is certain. At least, we can play for a draw."

"Rot! Yorkshire will declare, and our next innings may not last over the second day."

Ponsonby shrugged his shoulders.

"Give Valance a chance," urged Lagden. "You must know how necessary I think it, when I, who hate him, urge you to put him forward."

"I don't see it."

"Are you as blind as a bat? I—"

Ponsonby gritted his teeth.

"That's not the way to speak to your captain, Lagden."

Geoffrey Lagden had hot words upon his tongue, but he controlled himself; it was not the time to utter them now. He had to be patient.

"Pon, old man, listen to reason."

"You're wasting time, Lagden. You are to bowl the next over."

"Confound it!" hissed Lagden. "I say—"

"That's enough!"

"Then you won't give Valance another chance?"

"No. I won't!"

And Ponsonby turned upon his heel to avoid further discussion.

Geoffrey Lagden ground his teeth with rage.

"The fool!" he muttered. "The absolute fool! How long does he think he will be captain of Loamshire if he shows his hand so plainly for all the world to see. The utter fool!"

That was the difference between the two men; both were snobbish, but Ponsonby was, to a great extent, what Lagden called him, a fool, while Lagden himself was a rascal. Lagden was ready and soul in the scheme to injure the players both of them hated; but he had sense enough to know that it would not do to go too far, with the eyes of the public and the county committee upon them. But Ponsonby was too much the slave of a dull obstinacy to see reason.

Lagden bowled the next over in a bad temper. Lord Hawke slashed it all over the ground, to an accompaniment of cheers from the crowd of enthusiastic Tykes round the railings.

The Yorkshire score was going up by leaps and bounds.

It was getting near time for drawing the stumps, and Lord Hawke and Tunnicliffe were still partners at the wickets, and backing each other up like giants.

Long and hard play had had no effect upon the two splendid cricketers, and they were possessed by a calm confidence born of the certain knowledge that the Loamshire bowling was not up to their form.

With tireless bats they cut the bowling about, giving the unhappy Loamshire fieldsmen enough leather-hunting to last them a lifetime, or so it seemed to them as they toiled to and fro in a hot sun.

Loud cheers had greeted Lord Hawke's feat in passing his century, and the Yorkshire captain was still batting with undiminished energy.

The crowd of canny Tykes were already assured confidently that the two splendid batsmen would be not out at the close of play for the first day of the match.

But the Yorkshire captain's time was coming.

It was only five minutes before the time appointed for the drawing of stumps that Kit Valance saw his chance.

Kit had been put into the long field, and he was watchful for chances, which, with such past masters of the art of batting as Lord Hawke and Tunnicliffe, were few and far between.

But the moment came after long weary waiting and watching, and Kit Valance was ready for it.

The ball was swooping down from a mighty swipe by his lordship, and the batsmen were running, and running again.

And Kit Valance was running, too.

Running as few fieldsmen could run, with lightning speed and his eye on the ball. But among the spectators who were watching him a general grin went round, for it seemed impossible that he could reach the ball in time.

Would he?

Fieldsmen and spectators and umpires were staring towards him in breathless anticipation.

No; the ball was down—down, and he was still panting after it in vain. But no: he flings himself forward, his hand is outstretched, and the outstretched hand is under the ball as it drops.

By heaven, he has done it!

A foot from the green turf his hand has interposed, the fieldsmen lying at full length, the ball turned upwards, and the ball has dropped into it with a gentle click!

Caught!

For a moment there is a silence of astonishment round the field.

Then from every throat breaks a roar of admiration for that splendid catch!

"Brave!"

"Well caught!"

"Well caught, indeed!"

Kit Valance springs to his feet, the leather tight in his hand.

The fall to the ground has not been a soft one, and his bones are aching, but he cares nothing for that.

He has got out Lord Hawke, he has dismissed the century compiler, he has possibly saved Loamshire!

That is all he thinks about now.

The cheering is deafening. The Yorkshire crowd know how to appreciate fine cricket, and a better catch than that has seldom been seen on a county ground.

"Well caught!"

"Oh, well caught!"

The appeal to the umpire is hardly necessary, but it is made. Lord Hawke does not wait for it; his bat is already under his arm, and he walks away towards the pavilion, out at last, but with a score to his credit that any batsman might have been proud of.

The day's play is over.

The Yorkshire score reads 250 for four wickets, last man 112, and play for the day closes with the dismissal of Lord Hawke.

And as the jubilant fieldsmen, weary and ready for a well-earned rest, go off the field, Arthur Lovell taps Kit on the shoulder.

Kit turns his head with a smile.

"Well done, Kit! Well done, old man! They will talk about that in Loamshire," said Lovell, with a smile of satisfaction and pride in his cricketing chum.

"It was touch and go," said Kit. "I thought I had missed it. A fraction of a second more and I should have lost it, and Lord Hawke would have started again to-morrow morning with Tunnicliffe. It was luck!"

"Luck, and splendid fielding," said Lovell. "No good trying to run down your catch, Kit. I know what I see. It was splendid. But what's the use of to-day's play?"

Kit gave a slight shrug of the shoulders. His reply was brief but very expressive.

"Rotten!"

Arthur Lovell laughed.

"I don't say I agree with you. Our first innings totalled 78: Yorkshire are four down for 250. Rather a difference there."

"I foretold trouble when Ponsonby became captain," said Kit, with a shake of the head. "I am sincerely sorry for Loamshire. This will be a blow to the colonel. If he had been on the ground I hardly think Ponsonby would have dared to go so far. As it is, he has spoiled the game for Loamshire; it's as good as lost."

"By Jove, do you really think so, Valance?" The two chums turned quickly as Fortescue's voice broke in.

The young amateur was standing smiling at them. Lovell and Kit, as usual, kept to themselves when the game was over. In an exclusive club like the Loamshire C.C.C. the amateurs did not mix off the field with the professionals.

Kit flushed slightly.

"I was not aware that anyone was listening to what I said, sir," he observed quietly.

Fortescue laughed.

"Which is the same as saying that I ought not to have surprised you—eh? Well, as a matter of fact, you are quite right; only, you see, I agree with you."

Kit nodded without replying.

He had too much self-respect to wish to be taken up in a patronising way by any of the amateur members of the team, and in the Loamshire Club there was very little cordiality shown by the amateurs to the professionals without a taint of patronage in it. But in this case he had misjudged Fortescue.

"I quite agree with you," went on the amateur, affecting not to notice the coldness of Kit's look and manner. "Ponsonby has thrown the game away—or will do so, unless he is stopped."

Still Kit did not speak.

"What do you think, Lovell?" the amateur went on, turning to Arthur.

"Really, it is not exactly the thing for a paid player in a cricket club to go around offering opinions upon his captain's conduct," Arthur said drily. "You had better discuss Mr. Ponsonby's shortcomings in the pavilion with the members."

"Oh, come, Lovell, I don't see that I've given you any reason to consider me a snob," said Fortescue. "I admit there's plenty of it in the Loamshire Club; it put us at the bottom of the list last season, and will prevent us from getting to the top this year."

"I know it."

"But you think the same as I do."

Lovell was silent. Whatever his thoughts were, he had no intention of stating them to a light, careless fellow like Fortescue; and, besides, there was no use in complaining.

Fortescue looked from one to the other with a slight expression of chagrin.

"I am speaking to you as a fellow cricketer," he said quietly. "I can see that Ponsonby is chucking the game away, and I want to stop him."

Arthur Lovell gave a start.

"How on earth do you propose to do that?" he exclaimed, startled out of his reserve. "The Tsar of Russia is not more autocratic than a cricket captain on the field."

"Quite so. But even a Tsar is called to account sometimes—by the Duma, for instance," said Fortescue. "In the case of a cricket autocrat, the Duma is constituted by the county committee."

"You are not thinking of appealing to the committee against the captain?"

"Why not?"

Arthur was silent. He was thinking of the old adage, "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread, but he did not like to utter that thought aloud.

"Colonel Hilton is head of the committee," resumed Fortescue. "Other members, I fancy, would have hesitation when charging the county captain, especially a man of Ponsonby's standing, and with the powerful backing he has in the committee itself. But the colonel is an old soldier, and he goes straight to the point. If he knew the game, Ponsonby was playing here he would come down on him like a hundred of bricks."

Lovell nodded.

"But Colonel Hilton is kept at home in Leamchester by Blanche's illness," he said.

Fortescue looked at him curiously.

"Then you think it would be a good idea to get him to interfere, Lovell, if it could be worked?" he asked.

Arthur Lovell did not reply.

Fortescue made an impatient gesture.

"Look here," he exclaimed, "I am speaking to you as one man to another—as one cricketer to another. I think I am entitled to have your opinion. I want your opinion, Lovell."

"I cannot give it to you, sir. A man in your position may act as he thinks proper, but a man in mine must guard carefully every action," replied Lovell. "I could not possibly allow myself to be concerned in such a matter."

Fortescue looked defeated.

"I dare say you're right," he admitted. "I have no right to ask you to commit yourself, though, of course, whatever you said, I should respect your confidence. Still, I can see pretty plainly what you think, though you won't speak out. I have made up my mind."

And he nodded his head in a determined way.

"I don't know what you are thinking of doing, sir," said Lovell quietly. "But, if I may speak as a friend, I should counsel you to do nothing in a hurry. It is easier to start trouble than to allay it afterwards."

Fortescue laughed slightly.

"You mean, you don't want me to make a fool of myself, for my own sake," he said good-humouredly. "You know I am hasty, and not much given to reflection. Well, I am going to think carefully over the matter to-night, and I shall not set till to-morrow. Yorkshire are certain to declare, and I don't expect to think so."

"Undoubtedly. They can easily afford to do so, and they will not risk making it an unfinished match. Lord Hawke will declare if he has sufficient runs in hand to feel certain that our second innings will not make it risky for him."

"Judging by our play so far, he has already sufficient for that," laughed Fortescue. "But the Tykes will knock up a couple of hundred more before lunch to-morrow, I expect."

He gave the two comrades a friendly nod and walked away.

(This splendid cricket story will be continued in next week's BOYS' REALM.)

The Paper for Boys Who Are Interested In Hobbies is "The Boys' Herald"—1d. Every Thursday.

JUMPING:

Mr. E. A. Baker, the Famous Jumping Expert, tells how REALMITES may excel at this sport.

The Long Jump.

THE long jump requires a straight and level track leading up to the "take-off" line, which is marked by a piece of wood 5ft. long and about 12in. by 2in. This plank, or "take-off" board, is let into the ground flush with the surface, and its top edge is coloured white so as to make it easily distinguishable to the eye. From the "take-off" runs a pit about 1ft. deep and 4ft. wide. Into this pit the jumper lands, the distance of his jump being measured from the inner edge of the "take-off" board. Each competitor is allowed three tries, and the best three competitors three more each.

Most boys can jump, but the best results can only be arrived at by adopting systematic methods in performing the feat. The first step in long jumping is to learn how to strike the "take-off" board truly and exactly. The best method is as follows: Start back from the "take-off" board with the foot with which you jump, and run ten strides. Place a mark there. Go back again to the "take-off" board, and repeat the striding up to fifteen strides, and place a mark there also. Then you may try a jump, taking a run of about thirty-five yards. Take care to strike the fifteen-pace mark with the foot from which you do not jump, and the ten-pace mark with the other foot, getting into rapid speed as you do so. This should enable you to strike the "take-off" board exactly. Practice until you are confident of striking these marks at top speed. It may be necessary to shift them backwards or forward slightly to suit the stride; but once they are comfortably right, measure the distances of the marks from the "take-off" with a tape, and you will always know where to place them for your next practice, or for the competition itself.

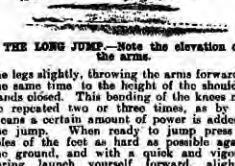
Speed in the preliminary run has much to do with the length of the jump. The highest speed should be reached three or four yards from the "take-off," and then every energy should be put forth to strike the "take-off" well, to get a good leg drive from it, and to attain elevation. Without good elevation the jump will be a short one. Therefore in practice, in order to make sure of getting this, a low hurdle is placed in the jumping pit, which the jumper clears in the course of his jump.

When in the air the arms come into play, both in the balancing of the body and in helping to throw it forward. When about to land, the legs should be thrown forward and not left straight down, as is the natural tendency of all young jumpers. The speed through the air and the throwing forward of the arms and body at the moment of landing will, with a little practice, prevent falling backwards into the pit. All the crack long jumpers, when in the air, make a spasmodic effort with arms and body to throw themselves forward, so as to increase the length of their jump.

To become successful at long jumping, much preliminary work is necessary, but once the art has been acquired, very little actual jumping practice should be indulged in, as there is a danger of straining the muscles. Sprinting, and occasionally a little hurdling, are adjuncts to long jumping practice.

The Long Jump Without a Run.

In order to execute a long or horizontal jump without a preliminary run, stand on the spot from which you wish to jump, then bend



THE LONG JUMP.—Note the elevation of the arms.

the legs slightly, throwing the arms forward at the same time to the height of the shoulders, hands closed. This bending of the knees must be repeated two or three times, as by this means a certain amount of power is added to the jump. When ready to jump press the soles of the feet as hard as possible against the ground, and with a quick and vigorous spring launch yourself forward, alighting almost on the tips of the toes. As soon as the feet alight upon the ground after the leap, bend the legs as much as possible, so that to a great extent, the force of the fall will be broken. The shock to the body which will otherwise be caused is almost obviated by this means. As in all other leaps, it is advisable to commence jumping short distances only at first, endeavouring always to leap neatly and gracefully, gradually extending the distance as proficiency is obtained. By attempting to leap too far at first the learner not only runs the risk of getting a sprained ankle, but also of leaping in a slovenly way.

(To be continued on Saturday next.)

DIVING:

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

Various Styles of Diving.

IT may now be assumed that the pupil, by assiduous practice, will have reached a satisfactory state of proficiency in swimming which will make him feel more or less at home in the water, and, feeling that he has the necessary confidence, will have an ambition to enter the water head-first, or learn how to dive.

Of diving or springing head or feet-first into the water, there is a great variety of methods. Recently I had occasion to make a careful study of the diving tables or list of dives as practised in Germany, Sweden, Austria, and Italy, and find that each of these lists contain forty to sixty different dives, which are made from a variety of boards, with and without spring, fixed at heights of two to thirty feet above the surface of the water.

In each of these countries the art of diving as a competitive sport is largely practised, as a result they have many fine divers who delight the spectators at swimming competitions by their graceful actions in the air and when entering the water. In Great Britain, diving as

a competitive sport

is comparatively new as compared with Germany or Sweden. It is on record that it has been indulged in as a sport in Sweden for over one hundred years, and it is perfectly clear that in Germany and Sweden a well thought-out system has been established for the proper conduct of such competitions, and much time has been devoted to the question of equity in the method of judging.

Being able to dive well adds greatly to the pleasure of a swim, and deserves every consideration. as it causes greater command over one's movements, strength of mind and nerve, as well as general athletic ability; therefore, diving, or taking a header, should be practised as soon as one is able to swim, and a graceful and proper manner of entering the water should be cultivated with care, for it is just as easy to learn to dive gracefully as clumsily, ordinary care being all that is necessary from the first.

Beginners are generally much alarmed when first told to enter the water head-first, and, as a result of this fear, they usually jump in feet-first. This method of entering the water is very serviceable when the depth is unknown, or when

Fig. 2.—The correct way of diving.

jumping from bridges

in order to try and save one struggling for life; but to jump into the water feet-first is not, in my opinion, to be looked upon as diving.

Most of those foolhardy persons who have attempted to leap from the Tower Bridge on the Thames, or the Suspension Bridge at New York—the latter is probably the highest on record—have achieved considerable notoriety or lost their life in their unjustifiable desire for fame; but, after all, it is not diving.

To dive is the act of springing into the water head-first, and this is practically the only method of entering the water which

a dashing swimmer

should allow himself to use. When the pupil has become familiar with the water, and has learned the proper use of his limbs in it, he will not be satisfied until he is able to throw some spirit into his pleasure and enter with a plunge.

In learning diving the pupil must practise with as much care and attention as he devoted to the other lessons which I have provided.

The progress will be gradual. In the first place the learner will take his stand on the side of the bath at a spot where the water is at least five feet deep. He will place his hands above his head, and lean over to the position shown in Fig. 1.

From this position he will gradually fall forward, and so glide into the water. After making several of these attempts at a dive, he should learn to make the movement correctly.

To do this, the legs must be placed together, and the body kept erect. In order to make the spring which will bring the body into the line shown in Fig. 2, the arms should be swung to the front, and the spring made from the board. As the feet leave the board they are thrown up, and the whole body straightened, as shown in the above diagram.

In order to make a good dive, the body must always be kept straight, and enter the water at a graceful angle, with as little splash as possible. As soon as the body is below the surface, the hands should be turned up, and if the arms are kept in their position beyond the head, with the back hollowed, the diver will regain the surface with ease.

(To be continued on Saturday next.)

THE A.A.A.:

Mr. A. A. ELSON, winner of over 200 prizes, gives readers full details concerning the work of the Amateur Athletic Association, and tells them how to join.

Rules and Penalties.

THE Amateur Athletic Association differs somewhat from many other governing bodies in sport, in that it controls a purely amateur body of athletes, and not a mixture of the amateur and professional combined. Its definition of an amateur is most strict, and does not permit that latitude of reading or construction which is frequently put upon the rules of other organisations. No one who has ever competed for money or a staked bet, or with or against a professional for any prize, or who has ever taught, pursued, or assisted in the practice of athletic exercises as a means of making a livelihood, may compete at an athletic meeting held under its laws. Every open athletic meeting held under its jurisdiction must be registered—that is to say, application must be made to the ruling body for a permit or license to hold such open meeting.

The Association was formed in 1866 for the purpose of undertaking the management of athletic meetings, the drafting of uniform rules, the repression of abuses, and also the holding of

an annual Championship meeting,

the honours gained at the latter being much coveted, as witness the increasing number of foreign and Colonial competitors each succeeding year.

One does not join this organisation directly, but by means of taking up membership in a club which is affiliated to it. The club is responsible to the Association for seeing that the new member it elects signs the usual declaration (as set out above) respecting his amateur status, which amateur status must be upheld so long as membership continues.

The A.A.A., to quote its familiar short title, is lenient to those who have unconsciously broken faith with its rules—that is to say, anyone who has competed at a meeting not held under its permit or license, and therefore unregistered, such unregistered meetings often including professionals amongst the competitors. The Association will often reinstate the offender, merely a slight penalty being enforced. At the same time it endeavours to put down with a strong hand any abuses practised by those within its ranks, the punishment meted out being suspension, temporary or permanent, according to

the gravity of the offence.

The Amateur Athletic Association, although a very powerful organisation, is yet a kindly one to the young beginner or novice who would follow under its banner. It permits him to compete at all open athletic meetings held under its laws for a period of twelve months from the date of his first entry as an "Unattached" competitor. That means that although the strength of its affiliated clubs is everything to it, the Association stipulates that so long as the competitor is an amateur, in strict accordance with its definition of an amateur, no compulsion will be brought to bear upon him to join it (through membership of one of its affiliated clubs), and unless he is so disposed he may remain unattached, whilst at the same time taking advantage of all the benefits and protection afforded by its ruling. It is like presenting a "taster" without pressing to buy.

After that period of twelve months has expired, the young athlete may no longer compete at open meetings under its laws without membership of an affiliated club. A recent ruling on this subject was passed, to the following effect:

"That after the first year every competitor in open races under A.A.A. laws must be a member of an affiliated club, or of a club which is a member of an affiliated association or kindred body recognised by the A.A.A. Competitors in local, closed, scholars', or veterans' event to be exempt."

The government of athletics by the Association is carried on by representatives from each of the affiliated clubs, formed into

a general committee,

from which committee various sub-committees spring. The representation of this general committee is dependent upon the total membership of the club concerned. Some clubs will have more than one representative on the board of control by reason of their membership being much larger than that of another club.

All open events at meetings under the A.A.A. laws are handicapped by various official handicappers appointed by the Association. Events confined to club members and all closed events may be handicapped by the club handicapper, usually an old member of the club.

(To be continued on Saturday next.)

CRICKET:

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

Fielding. *(Continued from last week.)*

DAVID DENTON of Yorkshire, is another great field, and the way he springs after the ball is delightful while his mounting, ground-fielding, and returning could not be improved upon.

G. L. Jessop, George Hirst, and A. O. Jones are certainly other good models. Beautiful fielding is a pleasing thing to the eye, and every cricketer should take part in the drudgery if there is any there. The constant practice which it entails is amply repaid by the personal satisfaction which one experiences at bringing off a good catch, or a fine piece of ground-fielding. I remember in Australia, some years ago, Brockwell and Albert Ward, who were always fond of stealing runs, had started the innings at Brisbane, and forgot S. E. Gregory was at cover-point. He picked up the ball smartly as Ward started for a short run, and making a splendid return, the wicket went down, and the cheers which rang out showed that good fielding had attractions for the public. Another time, Barlow, who had never seen Gregory field, started stealing runs, and despite the warning of poor Johnny Briggs, would persist in it. The great cover-point met the ball, threw it in, and long before Barlow could reach his wicket, it was down.

You will do well to remember to keep your legs together when the ball is hit straight to you, and while you are picking it up not to stand with them wide apart, so that the ball may slip through them to the boundary, as once occurred to me. In the slips they will be open. Watch, too, the player who will receive the ball when it is thrown in, and back him in case of a miss. Directly the ball is hit, run at top speed, and

use both hands

whenever possible. Above all, whatever position is given to you, take it up and be alert, and not moon about in the aimless way that I have seen some do.

Finally, try and throw in well. One very good plan is to place a stump in the middle of the ground, and if one man stands about seventy yards on one side, and another the corresponding distance on the other, there is no difficulty in the matter. Each throws and fields in turn, and however bad it is, improvement comes by practice.

Strive to be like Leonard Braund, the brilliant Somerset fieldsman. Place him where you will, he is not long in bring off as marvellous a catch in the out-field, or at short-leg, as he frequently does at first-slip. You cannot all be busy bees like Braund—but you can be better than you are.

Where Shall I Field?

I shall omit the wicket-keeper from consideration, and include him in an article by himself.

The slips demand attention. The number of men stationed there depends upon the bowling; for fast bowling there may be three or even four. It only used to be short and cover-slip, but now we say first, second, third, and fourth-slip. The duties of each are much alike, but you must remember it is a most difficult position to fill. The boy you should decide which he will choose—a position near the wicket or farther out. For the former, and especially is this true of first-slip, you must be quite certain of catching with either right or left hand. Some lads snap at the ball and do not let it reach their hand — a bad habit, which means bruised finger-tips and

fumbling with the ball.

A county captain describes the qualifications for slip as being quickness of eye and hand, and the possession of the power of catching with extreme certainty.

Fig. 1.—The first lesson in diving. *(See column 2.)*

"Keep your eyes open and do not talk" is my motto. Many of slips in County cricket who will talk—often gentlemen speak to professional players, who are bound to answer any remarks made—and then catches are dropped. It has happened to me. My custom is to bend forward, because it is easier to reach catches off the ground, and to move in any required direction. My hands are held stretched out ready for a catch, while my legs are far apart, so that I may easily fall forward, as I often do, to secure the ball.

As to where to stand. Both the pace of the bowler and the state of the wicket must decide this. If both are slow, slip will be close in; but the captain will assign an exact spot, from which you must not move. When in position, mark the spot, so you can return to it at the end of the over.

(To be continued on Saturday next.)

A Bright, Breezy Tale of the Sea.

Stowaway Steve

A Magnificent Sea Story.

By a Popular Author.

THE 1st CHAPTER.
On Board the Susan Lobjoit.

STEVIE RAYNE made up his mind he'd stand no more of it. The blows old Blaggs had rained on him, simply because, having a cold, he broke on the top notes of his song, should be the last. As to the "bolting" Blaggs had promised him as soon as they reached home—well, that should be the last, for the ample reason that it shouldn't come off at all.

Ever since he could remember he had been Blaggs's slave and the victim of his tyranny and cruelty; in rain or shine he had conducted the old man from public-house door to door, and sung his songs till the coppers rang in the pannikin—the coppers that Blaggs converted into beer, grudging Stevie the few rags which covered him, the few crusts that formed his meals, and Blaggs was always throwing at him that he clothed and fed him.

Besides, Stevie was getting older, and was beginning to understand and be ashamed of being a party to fraud. Blaggs was no more blind than he himself. It was all very well for Blaggs to chuckle at the "mugs" believing his whining yarns about losing his sight in a coalmine explosion. Why, the nearest approach to a coalmine he had ever been in was Daddy Durin's coal-cellar, when he found it open and "pinched" a bucketful of coals. The old ladies who shed tears as Blaggs "told the tale," ought to have seen him aiming nobbly bits at Stevie for refusing to be a party to the theft. Looking back on the years of misery, starvation, and suffering, the lad made up his mind he would have no more of it. He would assert himself, if Blaggs killed him for it. Perhaps he would. Well, it seemed to Stevie that wouldn't much matter. The life he had been leading had been so hard, so unendurable. Even if Blaggs was his uncle, which at times Stevie doubted, neither that nor anything else gave him the right to act the merciless and cruel tyrant. He would stand it no longer.

At last they reached the wretched attic which nominated the "good ome" Blaggs was always bragging he had "kep' for yer." The flaming cheeks, the husky voice, told that he was what his pals called "three-parts seven-eighths." When like that, he was always cruellest of all. He placed the bottle of "white satin" carefully on the mantelshelf, then flung his hat and stick with a rattle in a corner. Then he took from a nail the belt which served him for a razor strop.

"Now, you aggorawatin' little 'ound," he hiccoughed. "I'm a-goin' to put yer through it!"

"Don't—don't belt me, uncle!" the lad cried, all of a shiver with sudden dread. "That buckle's so sorry it strikes like a stone; besides, it cuts like a knife! You know you nearly got run in for cuttin' my head open with it last year!"

"Yes, an' you'd a-gloried in it if I'd got the three weeks' 'ard the toff said I oughter. Kim on, take orf yer jacket! I'm a-goin' to welt yer black an' blue!"

"No—no! I won't! I won't!"

"What, yer won't! Kim 'ere! Whoosh!"

The belt whistled as it cut the air—and only the air. With an oath Blaggs staggered forward, brandishing it for another blow. In an access of terror and of desperation, Stevie had swiftly snatched up a chair, and parried with it. It was a race between the blows. Crash!

The chair had won. Blaggs crashed down in a heap, groaned with an oath "You've done me in!" rolled over, then lay quite still.

And where he lay a crimson stream from his grizzled head was flowing, a tiny crimson pool.

"What have I done? What have I done?" the terrified lad exclaimed. "I have killed him! I shall be hanged for it! Uncle! Uncle! Speak! Speak!"

But there was no answer. The heavy eyelids were almost closed on the bloodshot eyes; round the grey-bearded lips was gathering a crimson froth. Silently, stealthily the lad arose, crept on tiptoe down the stairs and out into the bitter winter night, bound he knew not whither.

Through the long night Stevie tramped, urged by one impulse and desire—to get as far away as possible from the scene of the tragedy. Starting at every voice, shrinking at every sight of a policeman, so that many a burly, helmeted giant scanned him with suspicion, and expressed in soliloquy the opinion that that nipper had been up to something.

The chill, grey dawn found him still tramping on, shivering and dejected, when, observing a loose rail in the palisade of a tumbledown old wharf, he crept through in quest of a safe pitch for a few hours' shelter.

A cargo steamer lay alongside, with no one visible aboard. Her deck was even with the quay, for she was fully laden. Stevie, with a glance around, clambered aboard, cautiously crept aft, descended a companion-way, and finding an empty bunk, risking everything, crept into it, and was soon in a sound slumber that lasted for hours.

"Well, blow me if this don't win the ship's biscuit! Here, come out o' that! Who are yer? What are yer? Where are—— Why are yer?"

The burly giant in jumper and sea-boots hauled Stevie out of the bunk and up the ladder and the hatchway on to the deck, and Stevie found himself the centre of a knot of red-faced mariners, and, looking round, he was bewildered to find stretching fore and aft and on either beam a wild waste of waters.

He was at sea. The wonderful sea he had read of and dreamed of for years and years was all around him, its salt spray was stinging his cheeks, the very air he inhaled was salted with that beautiful bracing sea.

But he was on trial. Stern men were demanding what right he had to be aboard the ship. It was being impressed on him that he was a trespasser, a stowaway, and, as such, liable, on reaching shore, to arrest.

In answer, he told the truth, and, if not all the truth, nothing but the truth. How, homeless and destitute, he had crept aboard for shelter and a few hours' sleep. And when they elicited that he was fatherless and motherless as well as homeless, the big, rough men, some of whom had little lads of their own, told him to dry his eyes and cheer up, and one of them, called Ben Hubbuck, grounted:

"You're a bad boy, that's sartan sure. I nivvir knew a boy worth his salt who wasn't a bad boy in some way or other. So just you come along o' me."

And, frowning fiercely, he led Stevie to the cook's galley, and sternly set in front of him a basin of savoury soup, which he aggressively demanded him to "get outside of."

Stevie had not been twenty-four hours aboard the good ship Susan Lobjoit, so named after her skipper's better half, before her crew and the skipper himself allowed that, while their stowaway was an "oudacious young willin for stowin' away at all, he was the gratefullest young willin" they had ever encountered.

Away down Channel the little cargo steamer laboured, and the salt air, the good, plain living brought a healthy bronze to the cheeks that had been so white and thin.

Rounding Land's End, she stood up St. George's Channel for Swansea. Stevie had never been so happy in his life.

Only at times, lying awake in his bunk or keeping watch on deck under the stars, now and then came to him the recollection of Blaggs lying in a heap with the crimson trickling through his matted hair, and the wonder what news he would hear ashore.

Wool-gathering again!" growled Cap'n Lobjoit, giving Stevie a friendly cuff. "Drat me, if I don't think yer've summat on yer mind, young 'un—eh?" The lad coloured so swiftly that the skipper's suspicions might have been confirmed but for something that distracted his thoughts.

A shout, a splash! Ben Hubbuck, washing deck, reaching overside to haul in a bucket of sea water, had overbalanced—was gone! Rushing to the side and flinging over a lifebuoy, they saw him already in their wake, a black dot in a streak of foamy white.

"He's gone!" the skipper groaned. "Hi! Look out! Why, the lad's gone, too! My, what a plucked 'un! An' what a dive!"

With straining eyes they followed the slight form of the lad ploughing his way through the churning wake. Stevie's one joy in the dreary old life had been his swims night and morning in the "Serps," and he was utilising now the experience there attained.

"I always said the little villain was as good as gold!" growled Esau Shadbolt. "Look! Look! He's almost reached him! Ah!"

He turned away his head. Ben had of a sudden disappeared, and his messmates groaned:

"He's gone!"

"Look! Look! My stars, what a plucked 'un!" the skipper roared.

For Stevie, reaching in a few more strokes the spot where Ben had gone down, of a sudden kicked up his heels and dived.

For many dread moments they waited in agonised suspense, then of a sudden a glad shout went up from them all.

For of a sudden two heads bobbed up out of the sea—one Ben Hubbuck, the other the curly head of the stowaway.

And they saw that, though Ben was unconscious and inert, Stevie had both hands twisted securely in his grizzled hair and blue-worsted, cardigan jacket; saw also that Stevie was treading water strenuously, while the ship's boat, already launched, was shooting out towards him.

"'Twill take a power of bilge to settle old Ben," exclaimed Mr. Mumbles confidently; "and Stevie 'll never let him sink again while he himself's afloat! Give him a cheer, lads, to keep his spirits up. Now, then, all together, one after the other!"

Across the deep there rolled from their stentorian, bull-like throats the all-important question:

"What's the matter with Stevie?"

The big roar died away; on the silence came the swishing of the waves against the ship, the dull throb, throb of her reversing engines, and across the glistening gleam and through the gleaming spray, the answer:

"He's all right! Hip, hip, horray!"

The ship's dinghy had reached them. Ben was safely hauled aboard.

"To save time they were pulling back to the ship, with Stevie clinging to the dinghy's stern; Captain Lobjoit and Dan Leesar, meantime, punching, rubbing, and rolling Ben back to consciousness. And Esau Shadbolt, in a voice broken with emotion, declared his convictions that Ben "was a-comin' round right enough," and his belief that he could already "'ear 'im a-swearin'."

A few minutes later they had reached the ship, and in order to restore Mr. Hubbuck, his messmates had poured down his throat sufficient raw rum to have suffocated any ordinary individual.

Within a quarter of an hour Ben had recovered not only animation, but consciousness, and, struggling violently and offering to fight his messmates two at a time, had been forcibly and snugly stowed away in his bunk; and Stevie, having "shifted" into dry clothes, was seated at the table in little danger of "weltin'" decks, devouring a savoury dish of fried sausages with a vigour of British boyhood.

The good ship Susan Lobjoit duly made Swansea, discharged her cargo, and returned to London laden with Welsh coal: then unloaded coal, which transformed the ordinarily clean and tidy Stevie into a very plausible imitation of a chimney-sweep, or an inhabitant of the Honolulu Islands.

But Stevie, whose way was, as we know, to look always on the sunny side, and who was convinced that it was indeed an ill wind which blow nobody good, found consolation even in his coat of coal-dust, covering not only his apparel, but his hands and face. There was less chance, thus disguised and masked, of being recognised. Nor was this long in being put to proof.

THE 2nd CHAPTER.
The Return to London Town.

HOMEWARD-BOUND, the Susan Lobjoit steamed up Thames, and anchored off the self-same wharf whence the stowaway had boarded her.

Stevie remained aboard, ostensibly engaged in reading by the light of the forecastle lamp, until he was practically dragged ashore by Ben Hubbuck, who was insisting on doing some substantial token of friendship for the youngster who had so pluckily saved his life.

But Stevie, who had already firmly refused a monetary reward, turned on the simple, rugged Ben almost angrily—he could not quite be angry with one of so simple and guileless a nature.

"Ben," he said firmly, "I've had enough of this nonsense of yours, trying to make out that I've done more than my bounden duty in just keeping a messmate afloat; and, look here, Ben, if you say another word about reward, if you dare waste a shilling of your wages on buying anything for me, I'll never speak to you again as long as I live. I'll desert this ship, and if any of you tumble in again, blow me, if I'll come in after you—there!"

Mr. Hubbuck, lifting his sou'wester, scratched his tousled head, remarking:

"I ain't afeard of that last, Stevie, 'cause it ain't your nature to, but in case of offendin' yer into either of the two former actions, I'll give in; arter all, nothin' I could buy yer out of my means would be good enough, to my mind, for such a plucky little messmate as you've proved yourself to me."

And the weather-tanned, hardy old seafarer drew a sleeve of his guernsey across his eyes to brush away a strange and sudden mist.

They went ashore, Stevie somewhat mystifying his comrades by his unwillingness to walk or remain out of the shadows. They, however, understood and respected his disinclination to accompany them within the taverns where they forgathered with other toilers of the deep, and, during one of these adjournments, Stevie made his way down to the slummy old street in quest of news of Blaggs. And there with him was Deener Grubb, the nipper Blaggs was always holding up as a pattern to him—the craftiest, wickedest little pickpocket and "kinchin" layworker in all that network of slums.

As for the latter, his fate had been his own seeking; so far as Stevie was concerned, it was a pure and unavoidable accident—an accident he had done all in his power to prevent and risked his life to remedy.

Still, the awful thought struck a chill to his heart. After all, a life was a life. Would he be always haunted by that terrible remorse? He had once heard a man recite a poem about a man named Eugene Aram, who lived in the dream which was not really a dream, which was a confession of a murder done in a moment. He remembered four lines of it, and as he wandered there they seemed to hammer themselves upon his brain:

"And still no peace for the restless clay
Will wave or wind allow.
The horrid thing pursues me still;
It stands before me now!"

What was that? Casting a scared look around, Stevie beheld, emerging out of a public-house door, there in the cold, blue-green moonlight, a face—a ghastly face—the face of Blaggs!

With a wild shriek he fled, never stopping running till he reached the wharf gates; so that the night watchman grumpily demanded what was "is 'urry, an' who was a-running of 'im, an' what hanky-panky 'ad 'e been up to."

He stammered that he belonged to the Susan Lobjoit, and was overdue aboard, as he wriggled through the wicket let in the big iron gate. And the watchman, following his retreating form with a suspicious gaze, growled to himself:

"Now, what's that nipper been a-doin' of, I wonder! Looks as if 'e's been up to some mischief, an', bein' a boy, ten to one 'e 'as." And for some considerable time after Stevie disappeared, that weather-tanned old custodian mumbled, between puffs of his short, black clay: "I wonder what I'd like to know what that there youngster 'as been a-doin' of to be in that 'urry, an' fair winded. Strikes me there's some mystery about 'im. Hallo! Who might you be, an' what might you be wantin'?"

For a wizened little face now looking up at him, and a pair of crafty little eyes were peering up from under narrow, wrinkled brows, and a snarling voice replied:

"Well, I might be the Prince of Wales or the Duke of Westminster, but I ain't; an' I might be a-wantin' of the loan of a ten-pun' note, but I ain't, an' if I did I shouldn't get it."

"What are you doin' loafin' round 'ere?" grunted the watchman, with keenest suspicions now aroused.

"What am I a-doin' of?" the street-arab answered. "Well, I'm presumin' at the present moment to breathe the air and stand on the earth, if you've got no objection; an', in addition, I'm a-doin' of a-waitin' of a polite, amisable, pleasant-spoken, and good-lookin' old gentleman; in fact, in the language of the poets, a reg'lar old toff."

"I don't want none of your lip," said the watchman darkly; "you just sheer off while you're safe!"

"Right-ho!" said the youngster. "But afore I sheers, I wants to know if you've seen a youngster somethin' about my size—in fact, just the same sort of chap as me—comin' along this way in a hurry."

The watchman eyed Deener more keenly than ever.

"Yus," he answered gruffly, "I 'ave seen a young 'un comin' along 'ere in a 'urry. I can't say 'e was like me in the last. Just reg'lar respectable of appearance, an' better lookin' an' spoken."

Master Deener with an effort repressed his indignation.

"Which way did 'e go?" he asked excitedly.

"Well, for the matter of that, he went through the gate," said the watchman; "an' in a bit of a 'urry, too. What's 'e been up to?"

"Nothin' to 'is credit, you can bet!" snarled Deener.

"Just what struck me," said the watchman. "Fact is, I shouldn't 'ave bin so very much surprised to 'ave seen a bobby at 'is 'eels."

"It wouldn't 'ave bin the first time," Deener sniggered caustically; "an' it's very probable as 'ow it won't be the last. Just tell me where 'e's gone to—an', mind, I'm askin' in the interests of justice."

"Well," answered the watchman, after a

pause, "'e said as 'ow 'e was a-goin' to the steamship Susan Lobjoit; but if 'e's such a scamp as you re a-makin' out, like as not 'e was a-lyin'."

"Oh, no," said Deener quickly; "'e ain't the sort to tell a lie!" Then, conscious that he had inadvertently said a good word for Stevie, he added hastily: "Not when tellin' the truth would do as well, an' perhaps be safer."

He shuffled off, leaving the watchman more mystified than ever, and chuckling at the prospect of dealing yet another coward's stab at the brave and generous lad who had never done him any harm, but whom, however, he had grown to hate so unreasonably because of the very qualities which he possessed and Deener lacked.

Later that night, the crew of the Susan Lobjoit returned, Messrs. Shadbolt, Hubbuck, and Leezer, walking none too steadily, arm-in-arm, and declaring to earth, sea, stars, and sky that "they wouldn't go home till morning." As they entered the harbour gates the watchman addressed Mr. Hubbuck impressively:

"Belay there, ye rolling barrel of swipes! Pull yourself together; maybe there's a red light ahead of ye!"

Mr. Hubbuck, slowly divesting himself of his reefer, inquired if the watchman wanted to have a round, in which event he expressed his willingness to accommodating him at that game till daylight.

"Put on your coat, Ben, you old fool!" said the watchman. "An', look 'ere, I want ter know if there 'appens to be aboard your craft a nipper of a cabin-boy an' deck-'and."

"What, that 'ere 'im?" the reystering three demanded in a breath, and suddenly pulling themselves together.

"Only this," said the watchman grumpily; "yer'd better keep yer eye on 'im, 'cause, from what I 'ear, 'e's a reg'lar right-down bad lot, an' 'ad the perlice after 'im more'n once, an' as like as not will 'ave 'em on 'is 'eels again."

This time Esau Shadbolt it was who offered to accommodate the watchman with not merely one or any limited number of rounds, but with a scrap to the finish; and only the physical as well as moral persuasion of his comrades prevailed on Esau, and prevented his carrying his offer into execution whether the watchman desired to accept it or not.

Reaching the ship, they made for their respective bunks, and learned that Stevie had already sought his own. By the glimmer of a cabin-lamp, Shadbolt and Hubbuck peered into the bunk where Stevie lay sleeping.

"Him a bad lot! Him chivied by the perlice!" exclaimed Mr. Hubbuck. "The very idea! Dy'ever 'ear such ridiculous nonsense as that idiot of a watchman was a-talkin'?"

"Never in my nat'ral," said Mr. Shadbolt. "Dear 'eart alive! That there little chap only wants one of them there golden 'alos round that curly 'ead, an' a pair o' wings a-sproutin' out of 'is shoulders, to be one o' them there cherubs as yer sees in the pictures. 'Ark, 'e's whisperin' in 'is sleep."

Yes; the curly head rolled on the coarse pillow, and Stevie murmured:

"They sha'n't catch me—sha'n't drag me through the street—they sha'n't send me to the cell!"

The two sailors, with a start, looked at each other hard. The sleeping lad was shuddering violently, and he murmured:

"Mercy, mercy—he's dead! I've killed him, and I shall hear his dying cry all my days!"

"'E's dreamin'," said Hubbuck—"only dreamin'!"

His messmate answered:

"In course 'e is, Ben; and, in course, what people talks in dreams, ain't to be taken no manner of notice of whatsoever, seein' as how as the sayin' is, dreams goes by contraries. Come away!"

Nevertheless, they stumbled into their respective bunks that night with a troubled mind, each, however, insisting to himself that however black things might appear against that plucky little cabin-boy, if the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth were told, it would be found that he was not to blame.

Such feverish sleep as Stevie Rayne managed that night to snatch was haunted throughout with dreams so terrible that it was a relief to him when the blaze of day fell grey and cold through the hatchway of his cabin. Tumbling up, he donned his slops, and soon was busy holystoning the decks of the Susan Lobjoit, and in hard, honest work, which is the best antidote to nerves or morbidity, he was forgetting the terrors that had oppressed him and whistling blithely as a lark.

Dan Leezer, Ben Hubbuck, and Esau Shadbolt, refreshed with a night's sleep and a sousing of cold heads in buckets of salt water, were jerking their thumbs over their respective shoulders, chuckling to each other with cheerful sarcasm:

"Looks a dosp'rate willin,' 'e do, don't 'e?"

"Looks like a 'ardened criminal—what do you think?"

"D'y' ever 'ear a prison-bird pipe like that?"

Of a sudden the blithe whistling stopped, the boy was staring across the bulwarks with the gaze of one who sees ghosts. Following that appalled gaze, they beheld, approaching along the quay, a policeman, accompanied by a youth with the face of an old man—wrinkled, wizened, with crafty eyes.

And of a sudden, Stevie, leaving his bucket and dropping his holystone, scrambled to his feet and dashed past them, and, scrambling like a cat down the ladder of the new empty main hold, disappeared. The three exchanged interrogative glances. What did it mean? The constable and his companion halted at their gangway, were crossing it, were coming aboard. Without a word Esau Shadbolt, going down upon his knees, began industriously applying Stevie's holystone upon the deck, his companions meanwhile turning to face the uninvited visitors as they stepped aboard.

"I want your cabin-boy," blustered the police-constable.

"Want a cabin-boy? Lor bless yer, no, we don't want no cabin-boy," said the second mate, scratching his grizzled head as if in perplexity. "Esau, yonder, does the boy's work aboard this ship," he added, with a grin.

P.-c. Jubb knit his brows with angry surprise.

"I never asked whether you wanted a cabin-boy. I said I wanted your cabin-boy!" he shouted angrily.

And Ben replied stolidly:

"Oh, you did, did you? In course, that makes all the difference."

"Of course it does, you fat-headed idiot!" roared Jubb. "But don't waste my time arguying, but fetch the young varmint out!"

"Fetch 'im out, eh?" Ben repeated, with a still more exasperating deliberation. "That's easier said than done."

"How's that?" shouted Deener and Jubb in a breath; and Ben and Dan grinned in chorus:

"Cause as 'ow we ain't got no cabin-boy to fetch out. You're the cabin-boy aboard this craft, ain't yer?"

And Esau Shadbolt, industriously holystoning, choked back certain indignant remarks just on the tip of his tongue, and answered jerkily:

"In—course—I—is, Benjamin."

Jubb and Deener exchanged glances.

"It seems we're on a wrong track," said the former to his companion. Then to Ben: "It's like this 'ere—we're arter a well-known and desperate young criminal of the name of Stevie Rayne, who told the watchman last night he belonged to the Susan Lobjoit."

"What desperate young criminal? What might 'e 'ave been doin' of?" Ben asked, in awe-stricken tones.

And P.-c. Jubb replied:

"It would be easier to say what 'e ain't been guilty of than what 'e 'as. 'E's a fair terror at seven-an'-twelve. 'E was as near a touch of murderer of the uncle of this 'ere very party."

"What, our Stevie?" was the exclamation, almost on Ben's lips; but he suppressed it, and, with a swift, warning glance at Dan, replied: "What a holy little terror; but, in course, a reg'lar rapscallion like 'im wouldn't be particular as to tellin' of the truth, an' I should think the very fact of 'is a-sayin' as he belonged to this 'ere ship, would be enough to satisfy you that 'e didn't."

P.-c. Jubb, turning to Deener, remarked sapiently:

"There's somethin' in that, ain't there?"

That young gentleman meditatively replied:

"You're right; this old josser ain't such a fool as 'e looks."

Which remark caused Mr Leezer to breathe heavily with suppressed emotion, what time he glared at the undeserved utterer of the remark. But before he had quite made up his mind over which bulwark to fling him, Mr. Deener—remarking: "Come along, or else he'll slip us altogether"—had recrossed the gangway on to the quay, followed by P.-c. Jubb.

Not until the Susan Lobjoit had taken in her cargo, weighed anchor, and again put to sea, did Stevie emerge from his hiding-place, and then it was scarcely the same Stevie they had known, so downcast was his look, so red were his eyes. Not a word had been spoken to the captain, nor indeed to any other member of the crew by the three rough sailors who had interviewed the cabin-boy's pursuers. Indeed, as if by mutual instinct, they had refrained from even mentioning the subject to each other, and had replied to Captain Lobjoit's inquiries as to what was the matter with that there Stevie, with strangely surly and evasive answers, that they were unlessed if they knew, or if they 'ad time to worry their 'eads with findin' out.

But that night, when the Susan Lobjoit under full steam was ploughing her way up Channel through the night, and Stevie, resting his chin upon his folded arms, was gazing moodily across the moonlit sea, an ordinarily rough and heavy hand was laid lightly and gently on his shoulder. Turning, he met the troubled face of Esau Shadbolt. He turned away his eyes, and would have moved away, but that big, bluff sailor muttered:

"Stevie, what's the matter? What are yer 'idin' yourself away for from us all, cold-shouldern us as is your friends, Stevie. I don't believe half of it's true what that swelled-'eaded copper and that little gutter-snipe along with 'im told us about you, and I'd take my dyin' oath that you 'ad provocation, for as very 'ard tempted, to do as much of it as happened to be true. But, Stevie, my laddie, if it was all true, and if there was more to be scored up against you, it wouldn't make no difference, Stevie, to me an' Ben an' Dan, an' we shouldn't turn our backs on the little shipmate as risked 'is life to save one of ours. No, not for all the coppers and the gutter-snipes in the wide."

Stevie looked up at the bronzed and wrinkled face through a haze of tears he could not keep back. With outstretched palm he gripped the hairy, horny, honest hand, and said:

"Esau, you've put heart in me just when everything was seeming dark and gloomy. You don't believe half of it against me, Esau—don't believe any of it! They've got evidence against me—evidence that would put me away without it. All the same, I'm glad them three overgrown baldies 'as made it up with Stevie. Wonder what they fell out about?"

"Stevie, you have remained to your doom!" said the skipper. "What matter?" said Stevie simply. "I wait with my captain, and I stand by him even to the end!" And the two gripped hands on the bulwarks of the blazing ship.

THE 3rd CHAPTER.
How Stevie Saved the Susan Lobjoit.

"FIRE!"

Always terrible that cry falls on the ear even by the light of day, still more terrible in the stillness of the night. Terrible on land, most terrible of all it is when heard at sea by night.

Stevie, sprang from his bunk in his berth, in a moment had slipped into his duds and scrambled up on deck.

"All hands for'ard to the pumps! Stand by with the ship's boat!"

Then the fight began between the Fire King and the crew of the cargo steamer—rough, rugged, untutored mariners, but brave as any who on the decks of the King's own ships, wage battle with the foes of Britain.

To and fro the tide of battle ebbed and flowed. Now it seemed the Fire King must prevail, and the word was given to be ready for a rush to the davits and the boat; but then once more smoke and flames would be beaten back, and high in their hearts the hope would spring they would save the good ship, after all. But all at once a cry of horror came from every throat. The flames had seized the afterhold wherein was stored the case of blasting explosives shipped at London. With shouts, with threats, Captain Lobjoit hustled, hauled, and dragged his men into the boat. Now they lowered alongside. Standing on the bulwarks, holding to the rattines, he shouted:

"Push off! Pull for your lives!"

And they called back, above the roar of flames and winds:

"When you're aboard along of us. Quick, skipper, jump!"

But he shook his bowed and grizzled head.

"No, no, my lads! You have wives, sweethearts, children, homes. This old hooker is home and all to me. I stay here alone!"

Knowing the man, they obeyed, and their oars swept them over the night-veiled bosom of the deep away from the lurid, crimson flare, that angry bank of churning smoke. Standing there, he murmured:

"Well, after all, it's the sailor's way—yes, it's the way at sea. The captain sticks to his ship, and if she sinks, goes down with her aloud!"

"Not all alone, sir, this time!"

He started at a voice beside him, a touch upon his arm. In the crimson glow, he turned and looked upon the steadfast face of Stevie Rayne.

"Boy," he exclaimed, "why did you not leave in the boat? They thought you were aboard."

"I know, sir; but even in the darkness and the scurry I knew there wasn't room for one more, even for a lad. As you said, sir, they have homes and children. I have no home. There's nobody to miss me."

"Then more's the pity," said the skipper, even in that hour of dread. "A braver lad never trod a British deck. Stevie, you have remained to your doom!"

"What matter?" said the stowaway simply. "I wait with my captain, and I stand by him even to the end."

They gripped hands on the bulwark of the blazing ship, and even as they did so the ship heaved round and lay up-wind, so that the flames that had menaced her hold were beaten back, and, as if Providence had directly interposed, she gave a lurch to leeward, half burying her starboard-beam in a big roller that came tumbling upon her.

Like limpets the skipper and the stowaway both clung to her bulwarks, even though they were half stunned by the shock and half drowned by the sweeping sea.

But 'tis an ill-wind blows no good, and the squall that had brought along that roller had saved the Susan Lobjoit, for as the surging roller swept her deck and filled her hold, the Fire King, with a hissing cloud of steam, loosed his grip and died.

Stowaway and skipper pulled themselves together and dashed towards the hold containing the explosives, and, wrenching off tarpaulins and battens, hauled them out and jettisoned the consignments.

"Now, come what may," the skipper cried, "the Susan Lobjoit's saved—saved by her stowaway, Stevie Rayne. My wife and I have neither chick nor child, but when, please Heaven, we reach land, henceforth you are our son!"

And it was so. The Susan Lobjoit's crew had been picked up, and a tug had been sent out in the forlorn hope of assisting the good ship that all deemed doomed.

Judge of the delight of all concerned when she was towed into harbour, her cargo and her woodwork damaged, but otherwise a good, seaworthy vessel still, and, best of all, her skipper and her stowaway safe and sound.

Captain Lobjoit kept his word. Bloggs, hearing of Stevie's exploit through the papers, came along full of bluff and threats, only, however, to be himself arrested and to be sent, after Stevie had told his story to the magistrate, to prison for a rogue and vagabond.

Good Mrs. Lobjoit readily took to her home and heart as an adopted son the nipper who had saved the ship that was her namesake, and there is to this day no happier member of the Susan Lobjoit's crew than the youngster who came aboard her a friendless, homeless, hopeless stowaway.

THE END.

(Two long, complete tales next Saturday.)

CLUB NOTICES.

NOTICES AND CHALLENCES FROM READERS' OWN CLUBS. THESE ARE INSERTED FREE OF CHARGE.

MERLEWOOD C.C. (average age, 16; weak) require home and away matches.—Apply, pro tem, J. H. Neill, 10, Peabody Buildings, Southwark Street, S.E.

DARTMOUTH VICTORIA C.C. (average age, 17; medium) want matches with respectable teams at home and away within five miles' radius of the town. All dates open.—Apply, W. H. Thompson, Secretary, 15, High Street, West Bromwich, Staffs.

PENTONIAN C.C. (average age, 13; weak) desire matches, home, for the following dates: June 22nd and 29th; July 6th, 13th and 20th; August 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th and 31st; September 7th, 14th, 21st and 28th.—Apply, G. Grimaldi, 17, Rhodes Street, Roman Road, Barnsbury, London, N.

GOLDEN STAR C.C. (average age 14; weak) require matches for the season. Have all dates open home and away.—Apply, J. Mumford, 26, Little Surrey Street, Blackfriars Road, S.E.

GILSTEAD WESLEYAN C.C. (average age, 14-16) would like to arrange fixtures at once with any team within six miles' radius of Bingley.—Apply L. Whitwham, Secretary, 39, Ferncliffe Road, Bingley, Yorks.

PORTBACH WESLEYAN JUNIORS C.C. (average age, 15) would like to play respectable clubs within a two-mile radius of Stockton.—Apply, A. Griffiths, Secretary, 15, Hanlon Street, Stockton-on-Tees.

BANGLAGH C.C. (average age, 15½; medium) want matches at Battersea or Clapham. All dates open.—Apply, W. H. Taylor, 129, Alderney Street, Pimlico, S.W.

ST. MARY'S C.C., Kilburn (average age, 15; weak), want home and away matches. All dates, except August 24th, open.—Apply, J. Teale, 87, Broomsleigh Street, Mill Lane, West Hampstead, N.W.

ST. PAUL'S CHURCH JUNIORS C.C. (average age, 14), home and away matches wanted, Saturday afternoons and Monday nights. All dates open.—Apply, John A. Kenyon, Secretary, 27, Westleigh Lane, Leigh, Lancs.

ASHINGTON CHURCH LADS' BRIGADE C.C. have several dates vacant. Junior clubs in the Blyth and Morpeth district who desire fixtures can have particulars on application.—Apply, J. A. Gibson, Hon. Secretary, 20, Langwell Crescent, Ashington, Northumberland.

EASTBOURNE C.C. (average age, 14-18; weak), have the following dates open: Home, July 20th; August 17th. Away, June 1st and 16th; July 13th and 27th; August 10th and 24th.—Apply, R. E. F. Cotton, Oxford House, Bethnal Green, E.

PRIMROSE C.C. (average age, 14-15; strong) have open dates for the coming season, home and away. Home ground, Battersea Park.—Apply, H. Day, 37, Price's Street, Blackfriars, S.E.

WHITE STAR C.C. require away matches, several dates open.—Apply, F. Harding 23, Garnet Street, Hackney Road, N.E.

WILD ROSE C.C. (average age, 15; weak) require matches for the rest of the season. Also players wanted (age, 13-16) who live in or near West Ham.—Apply, James Regan, 27, Rotham Street, Stratford.

ST. BARNABAS C.C. (average age, 14) have all dates open, home and away. Only respectable clubs need apply to V. Taylor 37, Elsenham Street, Southfields, S.W.

ST. JAMES'S JUNIORS C.C. (average age, 14; weak) want a few good players (preferably bowlers) in S.E. district. Also away matches (all dates open) within four miles' radius of London Bridge, S.E.—Apply, G. H. Brown, 165, St. James's Street, Bermondsey, S.E.

A FEW LADS wishing to join a respectable club; two bowlers and two wicket-keepers and batsmen.—Apply, A. T. Hall, 125, Whett Street, Smethwick, near Birmingham.

ANY LADS (age, 16-18) willing to join a cricket club should apply at once to Albert Makin, 36, Upper Medlock Street, Hulme.

LAD (aged 16) would like to join a cricket team in Bristol, a good wicket-keeper and batsman. Also, would like to join a football team for coming season. Will pay small subscription.—Apply by post to J. L. Mannering, 40, Garnet Street, Chessels, Bedminster, Bristol.

LAD (18) would like to join cricket club in North London; fair all-round player.—Write, G. F., 21, Oxford Road, Islington, N.

ST. WILFRID'S CHOIR v. SHEFFIELD NELSON VILLA.—On the ground of the former. St. Wilfrid's (left) before the magnificent bowling of Tom Moran, who took eight wickets for 10 runs, seven being clean bowled. Theo. Sievewright took six wickets for 21 for the home team.

BOYS between the ages of 12 and 18 wishing to form a swimming squadron or a club in Liverpool and district please write at once to J. Fox, 3, Mission Square, Phythian Street, Liverpool.

YOUTHS wishing to form a club for wrestling, boxing, etc., should apply to J. Farly, Coventry Road, near Sandy Lane, Birmingham.

A GOOD 8s. 11d. pair of Football Boots for 3s. 11d. Have been worn three times. In new condition; size 7.—Send postcard to Mr. B. Monk, 19, Brynland Avenue, Bishopston, Bristol, W. (confidential).

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,

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To any reader up to the age of 16 who can swim 100 yards will be awarded a handsome 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 performances, 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.

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Your Editor Asks a Favour! Please Give This Copy to a Friend Who Does Not Read THE REALM.

A Magnificent Tale of Colliery Life. By DAVID GOODWIN.

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 waif and 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 cause no little surprise as the large amount of coal falling to them each day. In the evenings they return to Starve-Crow Farm.

Roddy has a row with some Belgian pitmen who have a spite against him. They are driven off by Terry Lloyd, a friendly hewer, and depart with many threats for the future.

Much to the boys' surprise Kenyon Price invites them over to his house to have a little private conversation. He mentions the seam of coal which runs through their land, and promises to find the capital to start work on it on the condition that he has a half share in the proceeds. The boys refuse contemptuously, and Kenyon Price orders them to leave his house.

(You read this week's instalment.)

How the Belgian Hewers Sought Trouble.

WITHOUT another word the two boys walked out of the great house, leaving their host, Kenyon Price by name, to wrath, and rejoined Gripe, who was waiting patiently for them on the door-step. The footmen slammed the doors behind them, and they strode away into the night in silence.

"The fat's in the fire now," said Tom—"fairly frizzling."

"You wouldn't have it any other way, would you?" said Roddy.

"No; but war's fairly declared, and we've burned our boats. I never thought he'd show his hand like that."

"There was nobody else to hear him. He didn't give himself away very much, either. I thought he did the whole thing rather cleverly. No end of a way he got in at the last, though. Well, we've answered his blessed invitation, an' heard what he had to say. I'm glad we came."

"What d'you think about it?" queried Tom, as they tramped back to the moor. "I suppose, strictly, it would have been a big thing for us if he'd gone into partnership with us. All the difficulties would ha' been wiped away, then. We should have made our fortunes."

"Very likely; or been diddled out of them. There's no sayin' which."

"I think he'd ha' been only too glad to play straight an' give us fair shares, to keep us quiet and make himself safe, after what's passed. I dare say the house an' motor-cars an' money would have come along all right enough."

"Why, you don't suppose we're going into partnership with a murderer—for he's no better," said Roddy sharply. "Would you have any truck with a scoundrel like that for the sake of some dirty money?"

"No jolly fear!" said Tom. "I quite agree with your plan, an' I like our way best."

"He'd like to make us a present of a share in our own colliery," growled Rodwell. "That's about it comes to. Precious kind of him, ain't it?"

"Be hanged to him!" said Tom. "We'll fight it out. We've beaten him up to now, an' we'll do it again. We'll fight, for poor old Matt's sake, as well as our own. Fancy a partnership with his murderer, after what Matt did for us!" cried Tom, getting excited. "It's war to the knife, now!"

"Why, we've nearly made the money we need already."

"Bryn y Garth against Coed Coch—the terrier against the mastiff; it'll be a rare sportin' struggle!" said Tom, his eyes sparkling. "And in another week or two we shall be our own masters. He won't chuck us out of the Aberford Pit, will he?"

"Not likely. Nothin's more unlikely. But whether he'll try to interfere with us there again is another matter. I don't think so myself."

"I do. Sully's got standin' orders to make things hot for us; that's my opinion. An', more than that, he hates us so much I believe he'd be glad to do it on his own account, without any askin'."

"Well, you can't expect a chap to love you tenderly if you set bulldogs at him, an' empty rails of ingrease on to his head," remarked Roddy. "But I think we'll soon be quit of the Coed Coch. There's a light in the cottage. Dafydd's waitin' up for us."

The youthful mountaineer was not there, however, when they arrived; but a cooking-pot full of savoury stew was keeping warm by the fire, and Tom and Roddy attacked it vigorously. They were tremendously hungry after their walk. They had nearly finished when Dafydd turned up.

"Hallo, old cockbird! Been prowlin' over the moor, like a wolf after prey?" said Tom.

"No," returned Dafydd. "I was keeping watch down by the shafts since you left. With Gripe not there, and both of you called away, it was seem to me a fine chance for somebody to pay it a visit."

"Good for you, Dafydd," said Roddy. "We never thought of that, like asses. It might have been a put-up job. See anyone?"

"No. Nobody came."

"You're a brick, anyhow, to 'sot out' and keep the grub hot for us as well."

"I was reckon you would want it, for I knew you would not accept to eat anything in Kenyon Price's house, if he offered it to you."

"You seem to hit on a good many things that are right," said Roddy. "He did offer us grub, but we drew the line."

He told Dafydd briefly what had happened at Plas Rhyll, and how the colliery owner had turned them out.

"You was not gain anything by going there, then," said Dafydd, "as I told you."

"We're quite satisfied, old cock," replied Roddy, rolling himself up in his blanket. "We gained experience, and learned a thing or two we didn't know before. An' now we can tell exactly how we stand. Good-night!"

Five o'clock found the two young hewers tramping into Aberford as usual, their picks and baskets over their shoulders. It was a fine, bright morning, showing up the black patch made by the Coed Coch Collieries upon the green of the landscape, and the sets of metals stretching away from them, on which the coal-trucks ran. It was these that put a doubt into Tom's head.

"I say," he remarked, "if K. P. has grabbed the land all round our little show, how shall we be able to get the coal away over his property so as to bring it to the railway? Won't he stop our passage?"

(Continued on the next page.)

INDIGESTION

Indigestion attacks old and young, rich and poor, and terrible are the consequences of neglect. The disease that robs you of the power to digest your food, robs you of the very source of life itself. Slowly your strength ebbs away; you are tortured with pain, and life becomes a misery. Be warned! Take Mother Seigel's Syrup, the real cure.

BILIOUSNESS

To cure Biliousness you must strengthen your liver, so that the flow of bile may be regular and even. Too much bile is as bad as too little, and both cause untold suffering. Mother Seigel's Syrup tones and cleanses the liver; it quickly restores healthy action, and cures your biliousness.

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Constipation should never be neglected; it fills your blood with impurities, and sows the seeds of dangerous diseases. Mother Seigel's Syrup regulates your bowels, cleanses your blood, ensures good digestion, and thus absolutely cures constipation.

ARE ALL CURED BY

MOTHER SEIGEL'S SYRUP

The 2/6 Bottle contains Three Times as much as the 1/1½ size.

"It ain't as bad as that," Roddy replied. "There's a right of way straight through to Bryn y Garth, and on to the moors beyond. Nobody can stop a right of way. We can cart the coal at first, an' when it comes to buildin' truck-lines we shall pretty surely be able to get an order by law, givin' us the right to run them through."

"You think it's all right, then?"

"As far as that goes. It ain't allowed to bottle people up that way. What we have to fear is quite different—Kenyon Price may play all sorts of tricks, bein' so near us."

"There go some of his precious employees now," said Tom, as the five Belgians were seen emerging from a drinking-den near the top of the town. "Bountiful Drink a gin-crawl before six in the mornin'! Why, there ain't many o' the worst of ours do that."

"No," agreed Roddy. "Smokin' cigars, too!" he added, in surprise, for each of the Belgian hewers, who were jabbering loudly among themselves, and looked flushed and vicious, had a long, black cigar in his mouth, which did not suit his appearance at all.

"Reminds you of monkeys chewin' tobacco, doesn't it?" commented Tom.

"That means they've had some extra money out of Sully," said Rodwell thoughtfully, "or their leader has, an' they've been spendin' it. None o' those gin-shops keep cigars, an' the beggars wouldn't buy 'em at a tobacconist's out of their pay."

"Quite likely. But what should Sully give 'em money for? To keep in with 'em, I suppose. Queer game for a head-viewer."

"Sully ain't proud," said Roddy, with a sour laugh. "Tom, we'll be more careful o' that lot than ever."

"What d'you mean, though? You said yourself Sully'd never dare pay 'em to interfere."

"Pay 'em! No. But you see the sort they are. They hate us as it is, an' if they're given plenty of money to get drunk on they'll be quite likely to become pretty dangerous if they run across us. You know how it was they lost their ship, an' got a month in limbo at Cardiff. We're supposed to have got 'em sacked from here."

"It must ha' given Sully a headache thinkin' all that out," said Tom.

"I'm judgin' him by what I know of him."

"I stand to it that the Aberford pitmen'll keep those chaps in their place if they get too fresh. Let's go an' get a hot potato apiece from Mother Bunch."

Hot potatoes were always acceptable, except in the height of summer, at the Aberford Pits; and the boys, after calling for Rhys Evans and finding he was out, went down to the stall of the old dame who vended the baked wares. They found that the five Belgians were before them, and were having an altercation with Mother Bunch.

The Old Ninety-foot Shaft.

THOUGH they apparently had money now, they did not believe in parting with it if there was a chance of getting things for nothing. Three of the men were haggling over the price of the potatoes, and jabbering at the old lady till she was quite bewildered, while the other made a grab at a potato in the open oven and stuffed it into his coat-pocket.

Mother Bunch was sharp enough, however, and saw the move.

"Here, give that up, or pay for it, you runagate!" she cried indignantly. "You ought to be ashamed o' yourselves!"

Shove the old hag over, and her stall as well, if she makes any noise," said the big Belgian, whose name was Leroy, in his own tongue.

The other ruffians crowded round, and it looked as though the old lady were going to be hustled. At once all Roddy's resolves of caution was thrown to the winds. Mother Bunch was an old friend of the boys, and they both hurried forward.

"Let her alone, you cads!" cried Roddy angrily. "Keep your hands off that stall! Do you hear?"

Tom clapped two fingers to his mouth and gave a shrill whistle, beckoning to a gang of pitmen whom he saw coming down the road, and among them was Terry Lloyd.

The big Belgian turned savagely upon Roddy. There would have been serious trouble in another moment, but Terry Lloyd and the hewers came striding up, seeing what the matter was, and the Belgians drew back, muttering angrily.

Bathing an old woman was good sport enough, but they had no appetite for a conflict with the brawny Welsh pitmen.

"I thought that'd settle you!" said Roddy indignantly. "Just understand this, you hulking cads, Mother Bunch is a friend of all of us, an' if I see you troublin' her again, I've only to say the word, an' you'll be chucked into the canal!"

"Quicker than two shakes of a duck's tail!" added Tom. "And besides, I've got a little dog up at home who's never tasted a foreign leg yet. I'll bring him down to interview you if I hear any complaints, an' when he gets hold he takes a long time to let go."

"Petit cretin d'Anglais!" snarled Leroy, clenching his fist, but drawing away as he saw Terry Lloyd coming to the front. "Only wait a little; you will get paid in full before very long!"

"What's up? More foreign sauce!" said Terry, as the Belgians departed.

"It's all right now, Terry," said Tom. "Thanks for comin' up. They were gettin' too fresh, that's all."

"There'll be some Belgian teeth lyin' about the yard if there's any more of it, bedad!" growled Terry. "'Tis a mistake the union made, lettin' 'em stay on at all, at all."

"You're proper friends to have, you two nippers!" said Mother Bunch gratefully. "Ay, an' all the rest o' ye, too!"

They stayed chatting with the old lady till the whistle blew, and then made for the yard, got their lamps, and went down into the pit. Tom and Roddy set off together along the level road, where no trams were running, and just beyond the point where they turned off to their stalls they saw four or five roadsmen fixing a low wicket-fence across the road.

"What's this for?" said Roddy, walking up to it.

"No thoroughfare along here," said the chief of the gang, laughing. "Want to do a dive, young Owen? Take a jump over the wicket, an' see how deep it is."

"Why, it's a new shaft!" exclaimed Tom.

"Nay, a mighty old 'un. It's been boarded up an' sealed over till now."

A gaping chasm, some twelve feet across, opened right in the middle of the road. It was an experimental shaft that had been sunk some years before to reach a coal-seam that was still deeper in the earth.

The working had not been a success, however, and the enterprise was soon abandoned, the shaft's mouth stopped with timberwork and girders, and the road and trams-lines ran over it as before. Many of the pitmen who passed over it daily had no idea there was any shaft there at all.

Now, the platform and girders had been taken up, and to prevent accidents the low iron wicket-fence was fixed across the road in front of it to stop anyone passing that way.

As it was near the end of the workings, and there was no chance of anybody's coming to it from the opposite way, the farther side was left unfenced.

"What's it opened for?" said Roddy.

"To put new girders an' planking over," said one of the men. "'Twouldn't be healthy to let 'em get rotten, with loaded trams goin' over all day; an' it'll be open three days at least."

"Looks a cheery sort o' place to fall into. How deep is it?" said Tom, tossing a lump of coal over the wicket. Nothing was heard for a while, and then a hollow, whispering splash echoed up the shaft.

"Master of ninety feet or more," said the roadsman. "It cost a tidy bit to sink, an' they never made much out of it, for the workin's got flooded out by underground springs."

"Now, then, hewers, get to your stalls!" said Mr. Glass, appearing on the scene; and the boys moved off to their appointed places.

"One thing, a chap couldn't bunk that way if he wanted to," observed Tom, "supposin' a flood came along the road, or something. The shaft and fence'd pull him up pretty quick."

"How could a flood come up the road from the main shaft, you chump?" said Roddy. "Besides, there's never been any sort in the Aberford, except down those old workin's where you chucked the piece of coal."

(Continued on the next page.)

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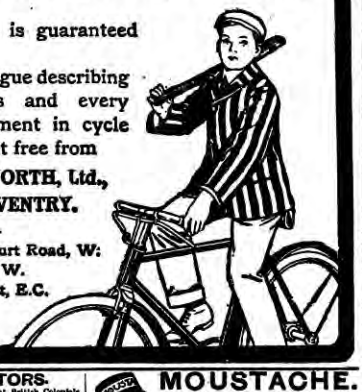

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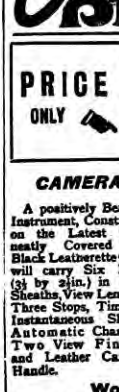

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WITH PICK & LAMP.

(Continued from the previous page.)

"No; but I mean, if a chap had to run, he couldn't run that way."

"Who wants to run? This ain't the Grade. Besides, if one did run it'd be the other way, towards the main shaft," said Roddy scornfully. "What's eatin' you this mornin'?"

"All right; keep your hair on! I was only makin' polite conversation," replied Tom.

Rodwell grunted, and they separated and started work in their respective stalls, which were next door to each other.

All through the shift they worked steadily, not once leaving the stalls, and when it was over they gathered up their belongings and started together towards the shaft.

A surprise met them on the way, and not a particularly pleasant one. They had to pass through a long, narrow stall, called in the Aberford a "bord," on their way to the road.

Such a stall was generally worked by half a dozen men, and in it were the five Belgians, just getting ready to leave.

A matter went round among them as the boys appeared, and Leroy scowled sulkily at Roddy. The two young hewers walked straight through, and no further attention was paid to the lads.

"That's pleasin', ain't it?" said Tom discontentedly to his chum as they reached the road. "Confound the fellows! I wish we'd got anybody else for neighbours."

"They've been shifted since yesterday," said Roddy. "It's not to my likin', certainly; but we've only to steer clear of 'em all we can, an' no harm can very well come."

"They're sure to try an' make themselves disagreeable."

"Then we've got to sit tight, an' not be drawn, that's all. Don't be tempted to as much as look at 'em, whatever they do. We don't want to interfere with our work by scrubbin' with a lot of toughs like that. Let 'em do what they please."

Roddy's resolution was soon put to the test, for the Belgians showed they had not forgotten the enmity they bore towards the boys.

Next day, when Rodwell passed through their bord, they jeered at him in their own Flemish tongue, which, fortunately, Roddy did not understand.

An insulting laugh followed him out of the bord; but he was not foolish enough to take any notice of it, and went straight on to his stall.

Tom, who arrived a little later, had much the same experience. He was inclined to take a gloomier view of their presence than was Roddy.

"It looks fishy to me, their bein' shifted here," he said; "and if ever I saw mischief in any fellow's face, it's in that swab Leroy's."

"I thought you were so sure they wouldn't dare make any ructions, for fear of the pitmen," said Roddy.

"Yes, outside the pit; but down here it's different, somehow."

"Well, I consider it's only outside we've anything to fear, when they're half-full of bad liquor an' ripe for anything. Attend to business while you're in the pit, an' don't answer 'em back, an' we're all right."

Roddy little guessed how quickly his own advice—which was very good—was to be put to the proof. The next day, after having passed by a very insulting demonstration by the Belgians, he was in the middle of his work, when his pick became so blunt he could hardly "hole out" with it at all.

The coal was hard and stubborn in that part of the seam, and Roddy soon found he would have to get another pick, and send his own to the smith to be sharpened.

He called up the putter—the same dull and listless one they had had since Jerry Crail's departure—and told him to go and get a new pick.

The youth seemed so slow to understand and so dull, however, that Roddy impatiently decided it would waste less time if he went and got what he wanted himself. So he started out briskly for the road.

How Roddy Leaped For His Life.

THE Belgians were all at work stirring the coal when he entered their bord, and he strode through as briskly as he could.

But before he was half-way through he stumbled heavily over something, and nearly fell.

It was Leroy's can and basket, containing his dinner, and seemed to have been placed in the handiest spot for anybody to fall over. It was a pure accident on Roddy's part, but his foot sent the things flying.

Instantly Leroy was on his feet, and, clenching his fist, abused Roddy savagely. A torrent of foreign epithets escaped him, none of which the boy understood, though he felt he was more or less in the wrong.

"I'm sorry if I've upset your dinner," he said. "It was an accident, an' you'll own the light's bad. If I've spoilt it you can have mine."

Whether Leroy comprehended or not, there is no saying; but his rage only redoubled as Rodwell spoke, and, screaming out an oath, he spat full in the boy's face.

It was more than Roddy could stand. His Welsh blood was ablaze in a moment, and he hit out with all his force, straight from the shoulder. It was a clean, driving, upper-cut, straight for the barrier that guarded the open shaft.

A thrill of horror shot through him as he saw what it meant. There was no turning back, for the Belgians were in full pursuit ten yards behind him, and in front the road was impassable. Nor was there an atom of doubt that the enraged crew behind would kill him if they caught him. Leroy had aimed a murderous blow with his pick, which only just missed its mark, when Roddy first ran from the bord.

"We've got him!" shouted the savage Flemish voices. "Down with him!"

He leapt the barrier, and the yawning shaft beyond seemed the affluent of a madman. Yet it was either that, or death from the picks of the Belgians close at his back. Roddy steeled his nerves to try it, and putting all his speed into the last few yards, he launched himself through the air, grazing his head against the coal roof as he cleared the wicket-fence, and shot out over the black gulf of the shaft.

The graze against the roof cut Roddy's temple, and laid it open; but he did not even feel it. For that brief fraction of a second, during which he passed over the shaft, only one thought filled his brain—would he land safely, or would he go hurtling down to his death?

Roddy steeled his nerves to try it, and putting all his speed into the last few yards, launched himself through the air, over the wicket-gate, and out over the yawning black gulf of the shaft.

He landed safely, but with such force that with the weight of the muscular young hewer's body behind it. Landing under the angle of the man's jaw, and big as the Belgian was, it threw him off his balance, and fairly laid him on his back.

A shout of rage arose from all the others, and they rushed forward to the attack. Leroy scrambled up in a moment, grasped his pick, speechless with fury, and sprang at Roddy.

The young hewer did the only thing that could save him—he turned, and ran for it. One, or even two, he would have faced, but there was murder in the big Belgian's eyes, and the others were not less enraged. To stand up to five infuriated men, armed with picks, would have been hopeless.

"Kill the British pig! Down with him!" they yelled, darting in pursuit.

One man was in the way as Roddy dashed out of the bord, and barred the boy's path in the main road. He grabbed at Roddy, who wrenched himself free, and, spinning round, ran at full speed down the road between the tram-lines, with the whole pack behind him.

A yell of triumph arose behind him, which Roddy did not understand at the moment, for he was outdistancing his pursuers. But he realised what it meant a few seconds later, when he saw two lamps gleaming on the wall, one on either side, not far ahead.

He was running in the wrong direction.

He had jumped short. The toes of his boots barely grazed the opposite edge. He felt himself dropping, and flinging out his arms desperately, managed to catch them over the shaft's rim. The jerk that followed nearly tore him from his hold, but he clung on, and hung there for a moment, the savage shouts of the Belgians ringing in his ears. It seemed to him, too, that he heard Tom's voice calling his name wildly.

"He's done!" cried one of the pursuers in Flemish. "Heave something at his hands, and he'll drop!"

The Belgians were raging on the other side of the pit, and they could not reach the young hewer. Pulling himself together, Roddy began to scramble out, digging his toes into the side. A pick was hurled at him, striking the shaft's edge close to his head, and then plunging down into the dark depths amid a chorus of execrations from the assailants.

Before another could be thrown, Roddy hoisted himself over the edge with a great effort, rolled away from it on to the road, and scrambled to his feet. He had to dodge a second pick immediately, but he turned and faced his baffled foes with a whoop of triumph.

"You fools," shrieked Leroy to his companions, who had been before him in the hunt, "you have let the brat get away! Jump for it, one of you, and get round by the side-road before he escapes!"

"This way—this way!" Tom's voice echoed down the road, together with Terry's, amid the sound of running feet—"they're after Roddy!"

There was no need of any urging on. Terry, and several other hewers, roused out by Tom, had seen the young hewer's leap for life as they turned the corner, and on every side the news spread like lightning. From all the stalls the hewers and roadsmen poured out, and came rushing along in the track of the Belgians with a fierce, swelling roar of rage.

Once on the far-side Roddy had no more fear of his adversaries. He saw them turn in alarm as the Welsh pitmen approached.

The Belgians were hemmed in. Unless they followed Roddy's example, and leaped the shaft—which none of them had the stomach to attempt—they could not get away. One rushed towards the oncoming Welshmen, and tried to escape up a side road before they reached it; but he was too late, and, turning, fled back to his companions.

"They tried to kill young Roddy!" roared Terry Lloyd; and the rest echoed him:

"Down with 'em!"

"Keep off!" shouted Leroy, with a Flemish oath. "I'll split the skull of any English pig who comes near me! Give it them with the iron, all of you!"

The Belgians gripped their picks in great trepidation, and prepared to strike, but they were thoroughly scared by the turning of the tables, and so fiercely did the pitmen rush at them that all resistance was overcome. Their picks were caught and wrestled from them, and they went down right and left, within the space of a few seconds, before the smashing blows from the hewers' fists.

"Give it them! Make hay of 'em!" cried Tom from the rear, trying to push his way through. "Roddy, are you hurt?"

Rodwell made no reply, but he was fairly astonished by the sudden and complete victory of Terry and his followers.

"We've stood you long enough, ye dhirty dogs!" cried Terry fiercely. "An' now ye've tried to out the best little hewer in the pits, we'll do the same for you! Ah, would ye!"

Three of the Belgians, maddened by the blows that had sent them sprawling, struggled to their feet again, each plucking a knife from some recess in his clothes. They followed the instinct of their kind, which is always to use a knife in a fight.

The move did them no good. The Welshmen and English hewers had no knives, but their fists were quicker than any steel, and not one of them received as much as a scratch. Two of the Belgians had the blades knocked out of their hands instantly, and were felled to the ground; while Terry Lloyd flung his huge arms round Leroy, hugging him in a grip like a bear's, and forced him backwards to the shaft.

"Ye'd ha' sent Roddy Owen down there!" grunted the big Irishman. "Bedad, ye shall go yourself!"

Leroy shrieked out as he felt himself forced back, and the other pitmen cried out in fierce approval:

"Ay, down the shaft with 'em! They deserve it whatever!"

"Great Scott! Don't do that, Terry!" cried Roddy in alarm. "Here—stop!"

Seeing there was no use in shouting, and greatly fearing a tragedy would happen, Roddy ran down the road, and started to go round by the workings and reach the farther side, which he had just left, sprinting at his best pace. In the meantime the road was filling up swiftly with pitmen, all crying angrily for the banishment of the Belgians.

So thoroughly roused was the blood of the fiery Welshmen that they were on the point of actually carrying out their threats, and Terry was heaving Leroy so violently against the wicket-fence that the frail structure buckled and sprung under the weight, Leroy shrieking with fright and struggling like a madman. The others were doing the same, but a moment later Terry fairly picked up the big Belgian and prepared to be about to fling him over. At that moment Mr. Glass burst his way through the crowd and seized Terry by the arm.

"Hold back there, I say!" he cried. "Are you mad? Are you bent on manslaughter? Let go of the man!"

"Terry, for goodness' sake stop!" shouted Roddy, who had made the circuit and was trying to force his way through. There was an instant's pause.

"Ay; he's right, mates," said Terry, plucking the knife from Leroy's hand and flinging it down the shaft. "Bring your together here, an' I'll find ye a better thing to do wi' 'em; I'll show ye a thrick worth two o' that! Wheel a tram up along the rails here, an' bring young Roddy Owen forward!"

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