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# THE BOYS' REALM

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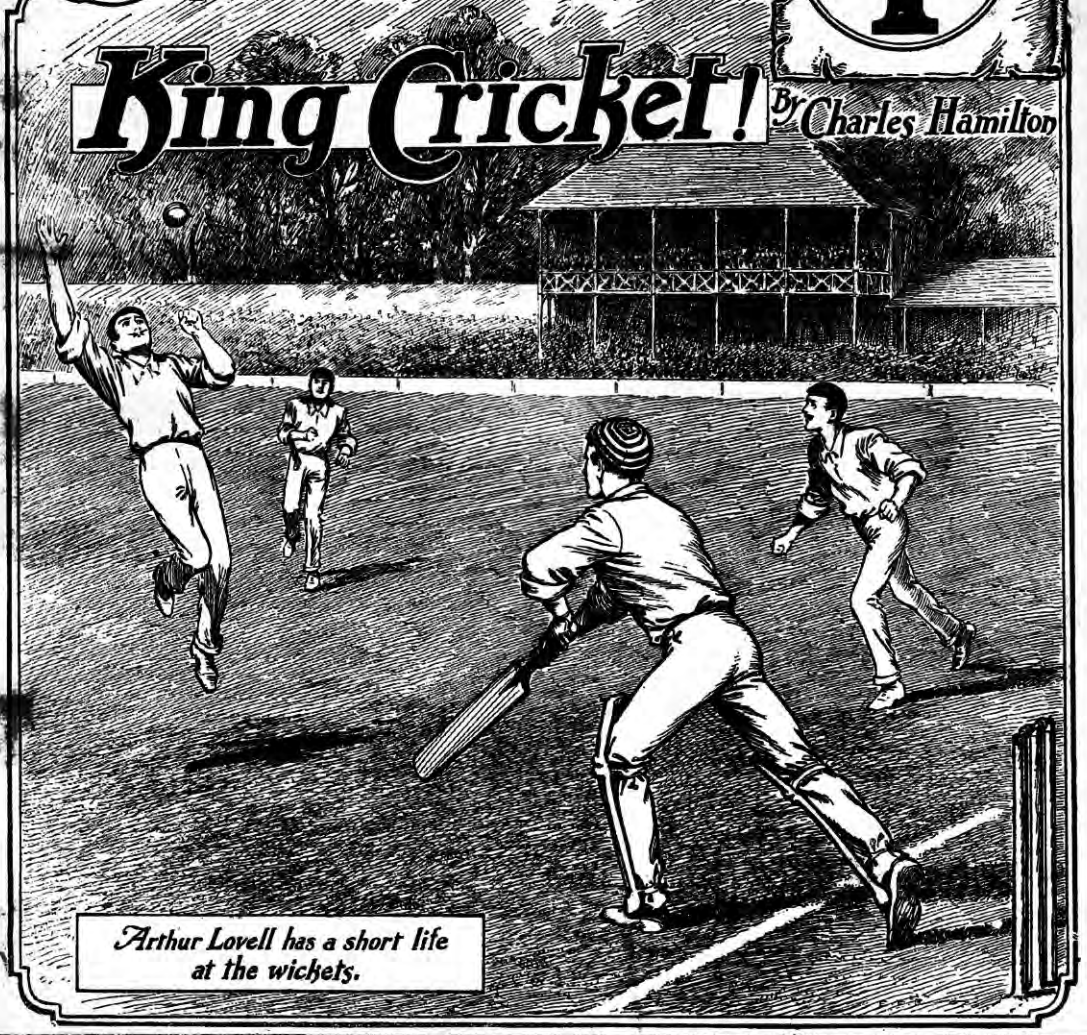
1D

## King Cricket!

By Charles Hamilton



*Arthur Lovell has a short life at the wickets.*

No. 268. Vol. VI.] EVERY SATURDAY—ONE PENNY. [Saturday, July 20, 1907.

New Readers May Start To-day!

# KING CRICKET!

## A Fascinating New Story of County Cricket.

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

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**The Chief Characters in this Fine Story.**

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

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

**LEN VALANCE**, Kit's twin brother.

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

**JAMES LAGDEN**, who has ruined Arthur's uncle.

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

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

The first instalment tells how Arthur Lovell distinguishes himself in the Colts' match, in spite of the efforts which Geoffrey Lagden puts forth to keep him in the shade. 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 not a credit to his family. Lagden induces 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 foul blunder, and strikes down Blane, the captain of Loamshire, with a foul blow in the dark, mistaking him for Arthur. Blane is unable to play in the match with Yorkshire, and Ponsonby is appointed in his place as captain. Ponsonby is not a success, and has to resign his captaincy. Arthur Lovell is offered the post, but refuses the honour much to Colonel Hilton's chagrin.

The next team to face Loamshire on the cricket-field are the South Africans, who get decidedly the better of the game, for at the end of the second day they lead by 272 runs, and still have three wickets to fall. Upon leaving the ground that evening at the close of play Arthur Lovell is stopped by Len Valance, who says he has a little matter to discuss with Loamshire's champion batsman.

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

### Lovell Loses His Temper.

ARTHUR LOVELL stood silent. He detested the man who stood before him as deeply as it was possible to detest anyone, but he tried to remember that the rascal was Kit's brother, and to control his rising temper.

Len Valance gave a glance out of the corners of his eyes at Lovell. He very seldom looked anyone straight in the face if he could help it.

"I want to speak to you," he suggested.

"Then the desire is entirely on your side," said Arthur Lovell coldly. "I have no desire to have anything whatever to say to you."

"It will be to your interest to listen."

"I suppose I am the best judge of that."

"Perhaps not, as you do not yet know the facts," said Len. "Did Kit give you the message I gave him for you the other day?"

"He told me you wished to see me."

"About the affair between your uncle and James Lagden, my present employer."

Lovell nodded.

"I called that evening," said Len, "and you would not see me."

"I did not wish to see you then, or to speak to you now. I want to have nothing whatever to do with you. Don't you understand plain English?"

Len shrugged his shoulders.

"You will do better to listen," he said. "There is a fortune at stake. I tell you I know for certain that James Lagden robbed your uncle of fifty thousand pounds."

Lovell was silent.

"I am in a position to find out all the facts and to bring it home to him, to make him disgorge, if not to show him up to the world as a swindler," said Len Valance eagerly. "Now, don't you see that it will be to your advantage to listen to what I have to say?"

"It might be," said Lovell slowly; "and if you are telling the truth, it is a great temptation. But I do not trust you, and I will have no dealings with you."

"Don't be a fool!" exclaimed Len irritably. "You are——"

He stopped hastily back, for Lovell's eyes were gleaming, and his right fist had clenched hard.

"You had better measure your words in speaking to me, Len Valance," said Arthur, between his teeth.

"Sorry," said Len laconically, "that slipped out. But it's a true word. It is the act of a fool to throw away a fortune for an idle scruple. Do you think James Lagden scrupled at anything in dealing with Mr. Lovell? Not much!"

"Probably not."

"He pretended to aid him, and to support him in his difficulties," continued Len. "He kept that up till the old gentleman was completely at his mercy, and then he showed the cloven foot, and ruined him."

Arthur did not reply. But the expression of his face showed that his feelings were stirred by the words of the scapegrace. Arthur was not the kind of fellow to bear malice as a rule, but he had felt convinced all along that his uncle had been robbed by James Lagden, and a keen resentment had never faded out of his heart.

It was the son of James Lagden who was his bitterest enemy in the Loamshire Cricket Club—it was Geoffrey Lagden to whom he owed a thousand slights and humiliations. If it were possible to right that old wrong—to compel James Lagden to disgorge his plunder—it would change many things for the young cricketer.

Instead of playing for his county as a paid professional, he would resume his old place as an amateur, and the slights that had been heaped upon him would be things of the past. Until he became poor, Arthur had not known how much depended upon the possession of wealth, but he had learned the lesson in a hard school.

And then his uncle—the old gentleman whose loss of a fortune had reduced him to feeble health, and who now was living on a small income on the coast. For his sake, if for no other reason, it was Arthur Lovell's duty to do anything he could to get justice done.

But the means proposed were too base; anything like a fight in the open Arthur would have welcomed; but hidden treachery was too repugnant to his nature.

Len Valance watched his face anxiously, trying to read in its varying expression whether his decision was changing.

"What does he deserve at your hands, Lovell?" said Len anxiously. "Just what he meted out to you and your uncle, and no more. What has he done for you? What is he, son, Geoffrey Lagden, now doing for you in the Loamshire Club?"

Lovell bit his lip.

"The father has ruined you," continued Len, "and the son is doing his best to drive you from the Loamshire Club, or to bring discredit upon you if you remain there. You owe them nothing. And I tell you the money is yours—James Lagden obtained it by swindling, and I can prove it."

Arthur made an impatient gesture.

"How could you prove it?"

"Easily enough, given a chance. I should want money—but little enough, and that need not frighten you. I am in a position now to find the records, and to bring them out into the daylight, too, if necessary."

"You mean that you can take advantage of the confidence Mr. Lagden places in you, in order to spy on him, and pry into his secrets, and betray him?" exclaimed Arthur, with a contemptuous curl of the lip.

"That is his own way of doing business," said Len coolly, "and I don't ask you to do it. What I do is my own affair, and I can settle it with my own conscience. I owe him nothing—he is as hard as granite with me."

"I suppose," said Arthur patiently, "that you are incapable of understanding an honourable man's scruples. It is useless for me to argue with you. I have only to say that I refuse your offer."

"You are fool enough to fling away a fortune for a childish scruple!" exclaimed Len Valance savagely.

"You can put it like that if you like."

"But I tell you——"

"You have told me quite enough. Let the subject drop. I refuse to take advantage of your offer. That is a plain answer."

"I suppose you mean that you don't trust me?" said Len sulkily.

"Well, as a matter of fact, I would just as soon trust an adder," said Arthur Lovell. "I believe you are telling the truth in this instance, certainly, because it is consistent with what I know already. But if I entered into any arrangement with you, I believe you would betray me as soon as you would betray your master if it suited your interests to do so. I want to have no dealings with you. I believe that James Lagden wronged my uncle, and I hope that some day justice will be done. But that is nothing to do with you. So far as you are concerned, I refuse to take the slightest step in the matter. Do you understand me, or do you want me to speak more plainly?"

Len Valance was gnawing his lips with savage chagrin.

In spite of Kit's warning, he had felt that, given a chance of persuading Lovell, the temptation to win a fortune would prove too strong for the young cricketer. He had been prepared for doubts as to the accuracy of his information, but not for a point-blank refusal to make any use of it.

"And now," said Arthur Lovell, as Len did not speak, "you had better go. I have seen more than enough of you."

Len Valance gritted his teeth.

"Yes, I know what that means," he snarled. "You have gained this information from me, and now you intend to work on it yourself, and avoid giving me my due. I suppose that's your little game!"

Every opportunity came of acting upon the information, I should certainly act upon it," said Arthur coldly. "I did not ask you to tell me anything. And, as a matter of fact, I knew beforehand as much as you have told me. But at present I see no chance of acting upon it. I hope that justice will be done, but I cannot see how."

"I can bring it about—I could——"

"I have already given you my answer to that."

"Fool! Thrice fool!"

Len Valance hissed out the words. He saw at last that it was no use; that Arthur Lovell was as firm as a rock, and that all his persuasions had no more effect upon him than a wave breaking upon a granite cliff.

Arthur's eyes flashed.

"I am trying hard to bear in mind that you are my chum's brother," he said, in a low voice. "If you stay here I shall forget that. You had better go."

Len Valance did not stir. He was in too great a rage, between anger and chagrin, to care for anything just then but for uttering the spite that was burning within him.

"I have offered to help you as a friend," he said. "Now I tell you that you have made an enemy of me, and you shall suffer for it."

Arthur smiled contemptuously.

"If your enmity is not likely to hurt me," he said; "I have enemies more dangerous than you, and I have survived it. But I do not care to listen to your threats. I have warned you to go."

"I shall go when I choose."

Arthur Lovell breathed hard. It was as much as he could do to keep his hands off this blackguard. The incident of the kidnapping by Tarzan was still fresh in his mind. The black trouble which this rascal had brought into Kit's life was not forgotten. But for the remembrance of Kit he would have struck the rascal to the earth before this. And his temper, long controlled with difficulty, was fast rising.

"You—you fool!" hissed Len, losing all prudence in his rage. "You shall see whether my enmity is not to be feared! You would know it now but for a mistake in the dark! The next time——"

He broke off. Enraged as he was, he realised that he was speaking rashly. But it was too late.

A look of sudden comprehension came over Arthur's face.

"So that was you!"

The young cricketer's eyes blazed as he sprang towards the scapegrace.

"So that was you! It was you who struck down poor Blane in the dark!"

Len Valance stepped back hastily, biting his lip.

"It was you! I wondered why anyone should seek to injure him—and I was only a little way behind him in the lane—yet it never struck me then that the blow was intended for me! You coward! You scoundrel!"

"Hands off!" shouted Len, as the young cricketer's grasp fell upon him like the grip of a vice.

He struggled desperately in Arthur's grasp. He realised now what Kit had warned him of, that he would be as a child in the hands of Loamshire's champion cricketer.

But he realised it too late! Arthur Lovell had forgotten Kit now. He had forgotten everything but the remembrance of the cowardly attack on his friend. Blane's poor Blane's cry as he was struck down—of the white face stained with blood.

The rage so long held in check swelled up at last, and burst all bounds. Len Valance struck desperately at the face of the young cricketer, but his blows passed unheeded. He was swung off his feet in the grip of Arthur Lovell—swung high into the air, and the bridge and the stream danced before his dizzy eyes.

"Mercy!" he shrieked. "I—I—mercy!"

But there was no mercy in Lovell's heart at that moment.

In a moment more, Len Valance would have been hurled from the bridge into the stream beneath! For Arthur Lovell was not himself at that moment, with the face of poor Blane—the red streaks on the pallid skin—before his mental vision, and the cry of the injured man ringing in his ears again as it had rung that night in Elmcroft Lane.

"Mercy—mercy!"

One moment more—

"Stop!"

It was Kit Valance's voice. The young bowler, with a face as white as death, was running towards the bridge, and his voice rang out in frantic entreaty.

"Stop! Lovell—Arthur—he is my brother! Stop!"

### The Breaking of a Friendship.

"ARTHUR, stop!"

Kit Valance cried out the words in a voice of agony as he raced towards the bridge.

"Stop!"

But for once Arthur Lovell was deaf to an appeal from his chum. In fact, he hardly heard Kit's frantic call as he swung the shrinking form of the rascal high in the air above the low stone parapet of the bridge.

The white face of poor Blane, with the red smear upon it, was before the eyes of Arthur Lovell at that moment, and for once he had lost control of himself.

Len had given himself up for lost. The bridge and the gleaming water below danced before his dazzled eyes. He could not struggle. He could not gasp out a cry for aid.

"Arthur, stop!"

Arthur Lovell hardly heard; he did not heed. But Kit Valance, putting on a desperate spurt, flung himself forward and grasped the shoulder of the young cricketer.

Arthur Lovell was dragged backwards in his frantic clutch. Down went Len with a crash to the ground, and he lay there, half stunned by the terrible shock.

"Arthur, are you mad?"

Lovell reeled in the grip of Kit Valance. He turned towards Kit with a blaze in his eyes, but he recollected himself the next moment. With an effort he recovered himself.

"Kit!"

Kit turned from him. He knelt quickly by the side of the scapegrace.

"He is my brother, and you would have killed him!"

That was all Kit said; and he did not look at Arthur Lovell again. He unloosed the neckcloth of the fallen scapegrace to give him room to breathe. Len Valance stared at him dazedly.

"Killed him!"

Lovell staggered against the parapet, white as death.

"I—I did not mean——"

He broke off. What had he intended in that moment of mad fury? He hardly knew. Not to kill the man, villain and dastard as he was. But what might have happened if Len Valance had been hurled into the river?

Lovell shuddered violently. He was himself again now, and pale and almost sick with the reaction. He stood leaning on the parapet, white and shaken, breathing heavily, watching Kit in silence. Kit did not look at him.

"Are you better, Len?"

There was an unusual gentleness in the young bowler's voice as he spoke to Len. He had almost forgotten much at the hands of his ne'er-do-well brother, but that peril he had seen Len in at that terrible moment had banished all thought of that from his mind.

For the time Len was no longer the scapegrace, the prize blackmail, the scheming sharper. He was only his brother.

Len Valance was gasping for breath. His eyes turned upon Lovell with a gleam of deadly hate in them.

"Yes, I am better," he said huskily. "He—he meant to murder me, Kit!"

Kit was silent. Arthur Lovell started forward, the colour flushing in his cheeks.

"Kit, it is false! I meant nothing of the kind. I forgot myself for a moment, I admit; but you know that that is not true."

"I suppose you did not mean it," said Kit coldly; "but you might have remembered that he was my brother."

"You do not know the provocation I had!" said Lovell fiercely. "You remember what happened to poor Blane, Kit—how he was struck down in the darkness by a coward's hand?"

"Why speak of that now?"

"Because I know the villain now; he lies there!"

Kit Valance started.

"What do you say?" he exclaimed quickly. "You accuse Len——"

"He was his hand that struck down poor Blane!"

"Why should he injure Blane?" said Kit coldly. "So far as I know, they were strangers to each other."

"He struck him down in mistake for me."

"Is that true, Len?"

Kit fixed his eyes upon his brother. Len Valance sneered.

"Arthur Lovell thinks so. You had better take his word for it."

"Is it true?" cried Kit fiercely.

"No, it isn't true!" said Len sullenly. "Let him prove it."

"I have his own word for it!" cried Lovell. "He gave himself away. I have the proof from his own lips. His was the hand that struck Blane down in the dark."

"It's a lie!" said Len savagely.

Kit's eyes searched his face. Was it true? Could he believe that of Len, bad as he knew him to be?

"You do not doubt me, Kit?" said Lovell, in a low voice.

Kit Valance was silent.

"Kit, is it possible that you doubt me?" cried Lovell; and now there was a note of anger in his voice.

"I don't doubt your word," said Kit at last. "You know that's impossible. But I believe you are mistaken. You have allowed your dis-

dislike of Len to hurry you into believing this without any proof."

"I have his own word."

"Yet he denies it now. You must have mistaken him. I cannot believe him guilty of such an act. You need not remind me that he is a wastrel and a blackguard!" said Kit bitterly. "I know that well enough without your telling me."

"I did not intend to remind you of it, Kit. Only—"

"Only you stick to your belief!"

"Yes. I know that Len Valance was the villain who struck down Blane in the dark. Nothing can alter that. That is why I lost control of my temper. I admit I should not have acted as I did. But that is my excuse."

"A poor excuse enough!" said Kit coldly. "I do not believe the charge for a moment. You would not believe it so easily if you were not blinded by dislike of Len. I know he deserves your dislike. I'm not denying that. But he did not do that cowardly deed. I would take his word for that against all the world."

Lovell bit his lip. It was natural, perhaps, that Kit should take the line he did. Blood is thicker than water. Len was his brother, and Kit was naturally the last person in the world who would believe him guilty of a cowardly crime.

But Lovell saw with clearer eyes. He knew that Len was capable of that or of any other rascality. Len had inadvertently allowed the secret to pass his lips, and Lovell could not now have any doubt upon the subject. Lovell stood silent.

He felt that a breach had opened between himself and his friend; that the long, true friendship, which had stood many a test, was breaking down at last.

Len Valance staggered to his feet. He was not a pleasant object to look at. Lovell had handled him roughly enough. He looked exhausted and dirty and disreputable.

Neither was his expression a pleasant one. All the spite and hatred of his weak, wayward nature seemed to be concentrated in the look he gave Arthur Lovell. He stood unsteadily, and Kit gave him his arm to support him.

"Come!" said the young Loamshire bowler. The brothers moved to leave the bridge. Arthur Lovell made a quick step towards them.

"Kit, you are not going to leave me like this!"

Kit did not look at him.

"Do you believe my brother guilty of that coward's deed, Arthur Lovell!"

"Yes."

"That is enough."

Kit threw up his head proudly.

"Do you mean to say—"

Lovell broke off. He understood clearly enough. More than once he had felt and feared that Len Valance might come between him and his chum. Now it had happened.

"Then you side with that cur against me!" said Lovell with an angry bitterness in his voice. "I did not expect that of you, Kit."

Kit's eyes flashed. But he made no reply.

Arthur Lovell stood with a gloomy brow watching them as Len Valance moved slowly away, leaning on his brother's arm. The dusk deepened over the fields and the river. Still Arthur Lovell stood there, lost in painful thought, his brows darkly contracted. He had had much to endure of late days. His promising career as a county cricketer had been shattered by the ruin of his uncle and guardian at the hands of James Lagden. His new life as a professional player in the Loamshire team had been endowed and rendered bearable by the jealousy and dislike of snobs and enemies. But Kit's friendship had been true through all.

Now that was gone too! The last blow had fallen, and Arthur Lovell felt himself alone—bitterly, grimly alone. At last, in the gloom of the evening, he strode away from the bridge, but it was not with his usual light, elastic step. He went like one who had a weight upon heart and mind, as indeed he had; a heavy weight of gloom and regret.

## Sherwell Declares.

"HAVE you noticed Lovell?"

Geoffrey Lagden asked the question in the pavilion of the Loamshire County Cricket Ground the following morning; the morning of the last day of the match with the South Africans.

Ponsonby, whom he addressed, stared at him.

"I am in the habit of taking any particular notice of Lovell or any other bounder," he replied. "What's the matter with him?"

Lagden smiled.

"There's something wrong with him, I believe."

"Off his form, do you mean? He played rottenly in our innings. Twenty-seven was what he let himself be bowled for, wasn't it?"

"I believe so. But he had a bowler to deal with who's pretty dangerous, and Lovell hadn't quite got on to his style," said Geoffrey. "Everybody expects him to do a lot better when we bat again."

Ponsonby gave a sniff.

"They always expect a lot of that bounder. He'll let the side down finely one of these times. You mark my words."

"I shouldn't wonder if the time had come, Pon."

"You don't mean it?" exclaimed Ponsonby eagerly.

Since the Yorkshire match, when Ponsonby had figured for a brief period as captain of Loamshire, and had been forced to play Arthur Lovell against his will, his dislike of Loamshire's brilliant but lad been as deep and as keen as Geoffrey Lagden's.

"Well, he's looking off-colour anyway, and he's got something on his chest," said Lagden, with a smile of satisfaction. "Something's gone wrong. I can see, though I haven't an idea of what it is."

"Perhaps the colonel has been calling him over the coals for his poor show in our first innings," suggested Tunstall.

Lagden shook his head.

"The colonel wouldn't do that. He knows that sort of thing puts a player off his form, and to do Lovell justice he always does his best."

"Hilton hasn't been the same to him since he refused the captaincy of the Loamshire team," said Ponsonby. "I'm not surprised at it. It would have been a fearful come-down for a county team to be captained by a professional, but fancy the beggar's check in refusing it! My word!"

"Hallo, here's Fortescue!" said Tunstall, as the young amateur came sauntering into the room, with his usual careless, insouciant air. "I say, Fortescue!"

Fortescue crossed over to them.

"You seem to have a lot to do with the professionals," said Tunstall. "Have you seen Lovell this morning?"

Fortescue nodded.

"And has he confided to you what's wrong?" said Lagden, with a grin.

"Are you awfully interested?" asked Fortescue, with a yawn.

"Of course we are! Isn't Lovell the champion bat of Loamshire, and doesn't he put all us small fry into the shade?" sneered Lagden.

"Quite true," said Fortescue easily; "he does."

Lagden scowled.

"Well, you say you have seen him. He looks rottenly off-colour, doesn't he?"

"He does, for a fact! You're all anxious, I suppose, in case he shouldn't play up well for Loamshire to-day," said Fortescue, with biting sarcasm.

"I don't care what he does," said Lagden, shrugging his shoulders. "I'm only curious, that's all. As you're so chummy with him, I thought he would naturally unbosom himself to you."

"I'm not chummy with him. He won't let me be."

"A professional!" sneered Ponsonby.

Fortescue looked at him coolly.

"Exactly, my dear Pon, and worth any three of us amateurs; and the finest fellow in the county to boot. I'd chum up with him cheerfully enough, but he won't have it. Remarkable as it may appear to you chaps, Lovell is as proud as you are, or prouder, and I must say he has a great deal more to be proud of."

"Oh, don't rot!" said Lagden.

Fortescue had a way of saying uncomfortable things that was never very gratifying to the self-satisfied set to which Lagden and Ponsonby belonged.

"As for confiding in me, he didn't," went on Fortescue. "I asked him if he wasn't well, and he said he was well. I asked him if anything was the matter, and he looked at me as if he considered me impertinent, as in fact I was. He was quite right. So that's all. I was shut up, and accepted it with becoming humility. That's all the tale."

"You stand more from that outsider than I would," said Ponsonby.

"My dear Pon, I find it easier to stand him than to stand you—I do, really!"

And Fortescue strolled away to a chair, and picked up a newspaper.

"I believe Fortescue knows more than he says," said Lagden; "but he's an obstinate brute, and there's no getting it out of him."

And the discussion ended.

But all three remained extremely curious. They looked keenly at Arthur Lovell when they saw him again, in conversation with Colonel Hilton. Lovell was certainly not looking in good form. His face was paler than usual, and his eyes looked as if he had slept badly the previous night. There was an unusual listlessness in his manner, which those accustomed to seeing him alert and keen were not slow to note.

"You don't look your best, Lovell," Colonel Hilton remarked. "I hope you have been taking care of yourself."

"I am all right, sir," said Lovell.

"Well, you don't look all right," the old cricketer replied crisply. "Is anything the matter with you, Lovell?"

"What should be the matter? I am all right."

Hilton looked at him sharply.

"I will speak out frankly," he said, after a pause. "Last evening, Lovell, you were seen in company with that blackguardly rascal who played us a treacherous trick at Taunton. You cannot have forgotten that."

Lovell started and coloured.

Colonel Hilton saw the red flush into his cheeks, and his brow grew sterner.

"I know that that scoundrel is the brother of a member of the Loamshire team, with whom you are on terms of intimate friendship," he said, "I know that that circumstance might lead you to overlook his rascally conduct, so far as punishing him goes. But nothing could excuse your getting on terms of intimacy with such a man, Lovell."

"Have you any reason to suppose that I am on terms of intimacy with him, sir?" asked Lovell quietly, but with a flash in his eyes.

"Only the fact that you were seen talking with him, apparently upon terms of intimate association," said Colonel Hilton. "This is a painful and an unpleasant subject, Lovell. I am far from wishing to pry into your own affairs. On the cricket-ground you are under the orders of your captain, and the supervision of the county committee. Off the ground, you are your own master, and at liberty to act entirely according to your own discretion. But you are aware that a certain amount is expected of a cricketer belonging to a team like the Loamshires."

Lovell said nothing.

"A Loamshire man is expected to be careful in choosing his friends," said Colonel Hilton. "I do not mean in a social way. There is nothing snobbish about me, I hope. I do not care whether a man is a baronet or a bricklayer, so long as he is a decent fellow and plays the game. But a man of rascally character is no fit associate for any decent man; besides the possibility of his leading a thoughtless fellow into bad ways."

"No one is likely to lead me into bad ways, sir," said Lovell coldly. "I believe I shall always know how to lead a clean and decent life. I do not know whom your informant was, but what he has told you is quite correct. I was talking with Len Valance last night. But if the individual who is so interested had watched my actions a little longer, he would have seen that the interview ended in a way far from amicable, and that the blackguard came to blows with me."

The colonel nodded.

"I am glad to hear it, Lovell. For your own sake, as well as for that of the team, I am glad. We depend upon you."

"I shall always do my best for the team, sir, and you have yourself said that I have done very well so far. But it is not pleasant to have my actions spied upon and reported to you," said Lovell bitterly. "I know I have enemies in the Loamshire Club, but I did not think that you would listen to them."

Colonel Hilton reddened a little under the tan of his sunburnt cheeks.

"It is not correct to say that you were spied upon!" he said quickly. "The gentleman who saw you with Len Valance happened to pass by a footpath near the bridge, and saw you quite by chance. He mentioned the circumstance to me solely from an interest in your welfare."

"I am very grateful to him!" said Lovell, biting his lips. "It is kind of him to take an interest in my welfare, especially as he has not been asked to do anything of the kind!"

"I don't think you have reason to be offended, Lovell. I should probably never have mentioned the matter, but for the fact that you are not looking yourself this morning."

"I did not spend the night drinking with that blackguard, if that is what you pictured to yourself, sir," said Lovell icily. "I do not feel quite as fit as usual to-day. After all, even a professional player may be allowed to have some private troubles, which are nobody's affair but his own."

And Lovell raised his cap, and walked away. He left Colonel Hilton tugging at his grey moustache.

"Is anything the matter with Mr. Lovell, dad?" asked Molly Hilton, as her father dropped into a chair beside her.

"Have you noticed it, too, Molly?"

"He looks much less fit than usual, dad. I hope he is not ill."

"He is well enough I believe." The colonel looked puzzled. "He is not in his usual mood, that is certain. Ha, there is Valance! Valance, come here a minute, will you?"

Kit Valance came towards them, and raised his cap to Molly, who nodded to the young bowler with a friendly smile.

He stood waiting for the colonel to speak.

"Do you know what is the matter with Lovell, Valance?" asked the colonel. "You are his most intimate friend, I believe."

Kit's face grew cold and hard.

"Indeed, I was not aware that anything was wrong with him," he said.

"He does not look fit."

"No!"

There was evidently nothing to be learned from the young bowler. The colonel nodded, and Kit Valance left them.

There was a shade of thoughtfulness upon Molly Hilton's brow.

"It is surely not possible that Mr. Lovell has quarrelled with Kit Valance, dad?" she exclaimed. "Mr. Valance looked almost like it."

"Oh, no," laughed the colonel; "they are firm chums! I dare say it is nothing. But I can't help bothering about it, for I know perfectly well that Arthur Lovell is the only man who can pull the game out of the fire for us to-day."

There was a look of concern on Molly's face as the colonel uttered the words.

But the hour for the commencement of the day's play was nigh, and all eyes were turned towards the field.

The ground was well attended by Loamshire folk for the last day of the great match.

The Loamshire crowd still hoped that the county would pull out ahead, and defeat the visitors; but the hope was not a strong one.

For South Africa were too far ahead to be easily overtaken; and it looked as if the best plan of the Loamshire cricketers would be to play for a draw.

That depended largely upon how long the tail-end of the South African innings lasted.

South Africa had scored 199 in their first innings, and in the second, so far, they had put up 220 for six wickets.

Loamshire's score in their innings had been well below the lower South African total, and so they had an enormous leeway to make up.

Could they do it?

The crowd looked on with keen interest from the start, when Tancred and Sibley Snooke went out to bat for South Africa.

Kit Valance bowled the first over. It was cut all over the field. Ten for the six balls showed that the South Africans were in as good form as ever.

But where was the sting of Kit Valance's bowling?

It seemed to be gone.

Was the best Loamshire bowler, as well as the county's best bat, off his form that morning? Truly, it seemed so.

Kit was doing his best; he always did that. But he was not in his best form, and his bowling was hardly ever dangerous.

Dangerous enough it would have been to average batsmen, certainly; but the batsmen from the veldt were something more than average.

Harding, the new Loamshire captain, changed the bowling continually.

Tweedie, the Scottish professional, Lagden, Fortescue, and Arthur Lovell varied the bowling among themselves.

For once in a while, few overs were given to Kit Valance.

No wicket fell till Tancred was caught out at point by Harding himself, and by that time the total for the South African second innings had reached 250.

Tancred was not replaced at the wicket.

Sherwell, the South African captain, declared, satisfied with the 250 runs for the second innings, and anxious to leave time for finishing the match.

Play had lasted half an hour when Sherwell declared, and the South African innings closed at 250 for seven wickets, the total for both innings totting up to 449.

Loamshire were left with over 300 to make.

And the faces of the Loamshire folk lengthened as they thought of it.

Yet Loamshire had more than once shown, late in a match, a wonderful power of recovery, and her backers by no means lost hope.

The crowd were silent and keenly interested as, the rolling over, Loamshire started their second innings.

In the pavilion enclosure there was a shade upon the face of Colonel Hilton.

Harding and Lagden went down to the wickets, and Schwars commenced to bowl from the pavilion end.

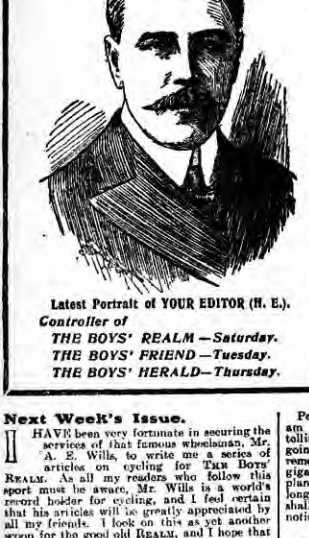
(To be continued in next week's BOYS' REALM.)

## CLUBS IN "THE BOYS' REALM" FOOTBALL LEAGUE.

A STRIKING GROUP PORTRAIT.—SWATCLIFFE F.C.

"Cycling," by A. E. Wills, Starts on Saturday Next.

# 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.**

## Next Week's Issue.

I HAVE been very fortunate in securing the services of that famous wheelsman, Mr. A. E. Wills, to write me a series of articles on cycling for THE BOYS' REALM. As all my readers who follow this sport must be aware, Mr. Wills is a world's record holder for cycling, and I feel certain that his articles will be greatly appreciated by all my friends. I look on this as yet another scoop for the good old REALM, and I hope that all my friends interested in cycling will make a point of reading Mr. Wills's fine new articles, the first of which appears next week. On another page will be found a brief record of the career of Mr. Wills, which will interest all who have read of his prowess on the cycle track during the past months.

Next week's issue of our paper will also contain two long complete stories. The first will be from the pen of Mr. Clement Hale, and will be entitled,

"THE CHALLENGE CUP FOURS."

It will deal with a subject dear to the heart of every British youth, and it is as fine a yarn as Mr. Hale has ever written for these pages. The other complete tale will be by Mr. Andrew Gray, and will be entitled,

"THE FORLORN HOPE."

It is a true-to-life boxing yarn, which cannot fail to enthral all who peruse it. No lover of fine complete tales of adventure should miss these grand stories.

## Our Football League.

I AM daily receiving letters from readers in all parts of the country, asking me if there will be a football league in connection with THE BOYS' REALM next season. In reply to my numerous correspondents who have written me on this subject, may I say: "Won't there just!" I am preparing a monstrous football programme for our paper, such as will make every young footballer rub his eyes in amazement when he reads about it. I am not going to do things by half measures; I am going to make things hum.

I know that my footballing chums were greatly pleased with the feast of good things I provided for them during last season: but I am going to do greater things still during the coming winter. It has been brought home to me fully that what junior footballers require is a paper which will meet their wants in every way—a paper which will help them to make their clubs and their leagues a success, and THE BOYS' REALM is going to be that paper.

Perhaps you may think, dear readers, that I am promising great things, and yet am not telling you anything definite about what I am going to do. That is quite true; but you must remember that it is early days yet, and the gigantic scheme I have in mind is not nearly planned out to my satisfaction. Just a little longer, please, and then we shall see what we shall see. Meanwhile, send along those club notices, and get your fixture-cards filled up.

## Thrift for Boys.

ONE of my readers, who will recognise his initials as J. M. D., has written me on a very interesting topic. He tells me in his letter that whenever he has any money it always seems to "burn a hole in his pocket," as the saying goes, and he is not happy until he has spent it all.

My reader is not alone in experiencing this desire to get rid of pocket-money as rapidly as possible, and in answering his inquiry I am no doubt replying to the question which many another lad might put to me on the same topic.

Let me say, straightway, that the boy who finds it difficult to keep money in his pocket should endeavour to control the habit of spending at once. I do not mean to suggest to my readers that they should become mean, but what I do wish to teach them is the moral of caution and restraint.

I know that in many cases I am addressing boys whose pocket-money is very limited; but to every boy who reads this paragraph I would like to say this—save something, no matter how small a sum, out of your pocket-money every week. If it only be just one penny, save it, because you are teaching yourself a lesson which will be of untold benefit to you as you grow up.

If every boy got into the habit of saving even a small percentage of his spending-money, he would find, as he grew older, and his money-earning capacity grew correspondingly, that this habit of saving, acquired early in life, would stand him in very good stead, and possibly lay the foundation of a competence in his old age, even if it did not, as is likely to be the case, lead to the making of a fortune.

Saving is one of the easiest possible habits to acquire, and all that a boy has to do is to make a start. The Government itself, knowing how essential the habit of thrift is to the masses, has instituted a system with which a

**Score, 1,000, And Still NOT OUT!**

**"ANSWERS,"**

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**DON'T MISS—**
***"ANSWERS" 1000th No.***
**NEXT TUESDAY.**

**PRICE 2d.**

good many of my boys are doubtless familiar—the Post Office Savings Bank.

Although the lowest deposit accepted by the Post Office is a shilling, yet they issue forms containing twelve spaces on which can be stuck penny stamps, and, when the twelve spaces are filled up with penny stamps, this form will be accepted as equivalent to one shilling by the Post Office authorities, and will be credited to the boy who sends in the form as a shilling towards his savings.

To the boy who has asked me how to get rid of this desire to spend his money I would say: If you find the itch for spending money coming very badly upon you, then take a stroll into the nearest post-office and buy one or two stamps, stick them on your form, and there you are! You will have spent your money, and, at the same time, you will have saved it.

There is one point about this putting by for a rainy day upon which I would like to dwell rather strongly, and that is that a boy with a few pounds very often meets with an opportunity by which his few pounds can be converted into hundreds of pounds.

Very often a lad employed in trade comes upon some chance of investing his sovereigns saved in earlier years in some little business or in some venture which will bring him in a competence for the rest of his life, rendering him independent of any master.

There is also another point which cannot be too strongly emphasised in connection with saving, and that is that the boy who has a little banking account acquires a new dignity—a sense of independence, which is good for him, which makes him a better citizen and a better man.

So I hope that every boy who reads this little lecture will lay its morals well to heart, and, as I have told him, try and save.

## Boys With Complaints.

JAMES D." tells me that he has a bad habit of speaking through his nose, and he wants me to tell him of a cure.

I do not know of any cure except that of will-power. My reader must keep a strict watch over himself, and the moment he finds himself speaking through his nose he must stop.

Perhaps, however, this habit of speaking may be due to some malformation at the back of his throat, in which case the only cure will be an operation; but about this I cannot tell him anything, save that he will have to go to a surgeon and let him examine him.

**Another boy who complains is K. J., who wants me to tell him if it is possible to cure a pug nose or not**

Surgical science in these days has made such wonderful advancement that it is even possible to alter the shape of a person's nose; and my reader, if he chooses, can undergo a surgical operation, can have his pug nose improved.

Personally, however, I do not think the advantage he would gain by having his nose altered in shape would be worth the trouble and expense he would be put to. I am sure his friends won't esteem him any the less because he has a pug nose, and, this being so, what object does he gain by altering its shape?

YOUR EDITOR (H. E.).

DAILY MAIL

# OUR LEAGUE CORNER.

### SECTION 1.

The following clubs in the Leagues mentioned have been awarded BOYS' REALM Cricket Bats for the best performances on Saturday, June 22nd:

BLACKBURN AND DISTRICT LEAGUE.

Y.M.C.A. C.C.—Sec., Mr. J. McCarthy, 18, Calder Street, Blackburn.

ST. CLARE CUP LEAGUE.

MANWEN C.C.—Sec., Mr. H. J. Scott, 3, Manston Street, Camnerwell, S.E.

PRIMROSE C.C.—Sec., Geo. F. Such, 34, Kempshead Road, Camberwell.

NORTH LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICT LEAGUE.

ST. LAWRENCE C.C.—Sec., Mr. A. E. Jones, 80, Newby Street, Walton, Liverpool.

ST. ALDAN'S ATHLETIC C.C.—Sec., Mr. C. W. Aldam, 1878, Vauxhall Road.

SOUTH LONDON CHURCH OF ENGLAND LEAGUE.

HANDEN C.C.—Sec., Mr. A. H. East, 54, Molesworth Street, Lewisham.

MERSEY CRICKET LEAGUE.

ST. CLEMENT'S CRUSADERS C.C.—Sec., Mr. Moore, 37, Tunstall Street, Liverpool.

EAST LONDON CHURCH LEAGUE.

ST. LUKE'S C.C.—Sec., Mr. L. W. London, 61, Studley Road, Forest Gate, E.

SOUTH LONDON SUNDAY SCHOOL LEAGUE.

IMPERIAL C.C.—Sec., Mr. G. A. Chapple, 5, Riley Street, Abbey Street, Bermondsey.

SUNDERLAND AND DISTRICT LEAGUE.

TRINITY GUILD C.C.—Sec., Mr. J. Crawford, 43, Hastings Street, Sunderland.

DUNDEE AND DISTRICT LEAGUE.

RICHMOND C.C.—Sec., Mr. W. M. Duncan, care of Miss Williamson, 38, Victoria Road, Dundee.

FERNHALL C.C.—Sec., Mr. G. Milne, 32, Seagate, Dundee.

SWINTON AND DISTRICT LEAGUE.

KILNHURST M.I.C.C.—Sec., Mr. T. Senior, 42, Hooten Road, Kilnhurst.

The following tables show how the various clubs in six of the leagues to which BOYS' REALM trophies will be presented are progressing:

HANLEY AND DISTRICT CRICKET LEAGUE.
(Table compiled up to Saturday, June 22nd.)

| | P. | W. | L. | D. | Pts. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| May Bank | 6 | 5 | 0 | 1 | 9 |
| Bottesliow | 5 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 7 |
| Berry Hill | 6 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 6 |
| Eastwood | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 5 |
| Clough Hall | 6 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 5 |
| Henry Richards Tile Co. | 5 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 3 |
| Butt Lane | 4 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 1 |

MERSEY CRICKET LEAGUE.
(Table up to June 15th.)
DIVISION 1.

| | P. | W. | L. | D. | Pts. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Eastwood | 5 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 8 |
| St. Faith's (Waterloo) | 5 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 8 |
| Parkfield | 5 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 6 |
| Bramley | 6 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 6 |
| Allan's | 3 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Avondale | 5 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 2 |
| St. Paul's (Seacombe) | 4 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 2 |
| Fazakerley | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

DIVISION 2.

| | P. | W. | L. | D. | Pts. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Helsby | 4 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 6 |
| St. Clement's | 5 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 6 |
| Claremont (Waterloo) | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Clovelly | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Macles' Juniors | 4 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 4 |
| Vale | 4 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 4 |
| York | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Central | 4 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 |

"ST. CLARE CUP" CRICKET LEAGUE.
(Table for June.)

| | P | W | L | D | Pts | For | Wts | Agt. | Wts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| St. Peter's United | 5 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 8 | 330 | 50 | 239 | 50 |
| St. Clare | 4 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 7 | 261 | 27 | 149 | 40 |
| Manwen | 5 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 314 | 50 | 300 | 41 |
| Primrose | 4 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 4 | 237 | 40 | 153 | 40 |
| Chourmert | 4 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 218 | 40 | 282 | 40 |
| Stockwell | 4 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 192 | 40 | 260 | 40 |
| Nile | 4 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 143 | 40 | 210 | 40 |

N.B.—Where any club has wilfully played short the full number of wickets are counted.

NORTH LIVERPOOL AMATEUR CRICKET LEAGUE.
(Positions up to and including June 20th.)
DIVISION 1.

| | P. | W. | L. | D. | Pts. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Electric Supply | 7 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 12 |
| St. Alban's Athletic | 7 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 10 |
| Walton St. Mary's | 6 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 8 |
| Thirlmere | 7 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 8 |
| St. Lawrence | 7 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 8 |
| St. Lawrence | 7 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 8 |
| Earle Road Guild | 4 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 4 |
| Brougham Mission | 6 | 1 | 5 | 0 | 2 |

DIVISION 2.

| | P. | W. | L. | D. | Pts. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| York | 4 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 6 |
| Belvidere | 4 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 6 |
| Queen's Road Mission | 4 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 6 |
| Hill o' Zion | 4 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 6 |
| Allanby | 6 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 6 |
| Brougham Mission | 5 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 2 |
| St. Silas (Toxteth) | 5 | 1 | 5 | 0 | 0 |

Swindon C.C. resigned.

DUNDEE AND DISTRICT LEAGUE.
(Table up to and including June 22nd.)

| | P. | W. | L. | D. | Pts. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Taybank XI. | 5 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 8 |
| Clifton Bank | 4 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 6 |
| Clydesdale XI. | 5 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 4 |
| Richmond | 5 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 4 |
| Belmont | 4 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 2 |
| Fernhall | 4 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 2 |

SUNDERLAND AND DISTRICT NON-CONFORMIST LEAGUE.
(Table up to and including June 15th.)

| | P. | W. | L. | D. | Pts. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| St. Bede's Adult School | 8 | 7 | 0 | 1 | 15 |
| Ryhall Hills | 9 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 11 |
| Newcastle Institute | 7 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 9 |
| Y.M.C.A. | 7 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 9 |
| Monkwearmouth P.C.I. | 6 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 9 |
| Trinity Guild | 8 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 7 |
| Wesley Hall | 5 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 6 |
| Ravensworth Street | 7 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 6 |
| St. George's Men's Own | 7 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 5 |
| Dock Street Institute | 8 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 4 |
| Cleveland Road | 8 | 1 | 6 | 1 | 3 |

### SECTION 2.

(League Table up to and including Sat., June 22nd.)
JUNIOR DIVISION.

| | P. | W. | L. | D. | For | Agst. | Pts. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rebecca Street C.C. | 7 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 502 | 204 | 14 |
| Garfield C.C. | 7 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 578 | 174 | 14 |
| Primitive Juniors C.C. | 7 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 524 | 267 | 12 |
| Wilton C.C. | 8 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 580 | 431 | 14 |
| St. Mark's C.C. | 7 | 6 | 0 | 1 | 385 | 156 | 13 |
| Malmesbury C.C. | 7 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 355 | 100 | 12 |
| The Realm A.C.C. | 8 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 413 | 178 | 12 |
| Heckmondwike C.C. | 6 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 332 | 175 | 12 |
| C.W.J.T. C.C. | 6 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 357 | 218 | 12 |
| Highbiles Sunday C.C. | 8 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 354 | 224 | 12 |
| R.G.A. C.C. | 8 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 457 | 291 | 12 |
| Sandon Road C.C. | 7 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 464 | 196 | 11 |
| Malden C.C. | 8 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 222 | 142 | 11 |

SENIOR DIVISION.

| | P. | W. | L. | D. | For | Agst. | Pts. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Camden C.C. | 8 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 620 | 283 | 16 |
| Sankey C.C. | 8 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 475 | 210 | 14 |
| Hulton C.C. | 8 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 418 | 403 | 12 |
| Lovely Lane C.C. | 6 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 577 | 187 | 12 |
| Northgate C.C. | 8 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 398 | 176 | 12 |

Your Editor has awarded prize bats to the following clubs, these having, in his opinion, put up the best show on Saturday, June 22nd.

SENIOR DIVISION.

SANKEY C.C.—Sec., 8, Bingham, Liverpool Road, Great Sankey, Warrington.

JUNIOR DIVISION.

MALMESBURY C.C.—Sec., C. Hase, 7, Havelock Terrace, Southampton, Hants.

### CLUB NOTICES.

Football club secretaries desirous of filling up their fixture lists for the coming season should send a notice to that effect for insertion in our columns. No charge is made for the publication of such challenges and announcements, but they should be as brief and concise as possible. Our paper is becoming more and more the official journal for young athletes, and by sending a notice concerning your club for publication in THE BOYS' REALM you will speedily fill up every vacant date.

*Marvellous New Serials by Star Authors Coming Shortly.*

# A Man's Ingratitude.

BY MARTIN SHAW

Magnificent Complete Tale of the Australian Bush.

### THE 1st CHAPTER.
### Rescued From Death

DOOMED—doomed beyond all hope of rescue! Surrounded by a frenzied mob of howling aborigines, fastened to a tree so that it was impossible to move so much as a finger, with the hot Australian sun beating down upon his unprotected head. Such was Vernon Denbigh's plight—one to fill the bravest heart with fear unspeakable.

It was for this that he had fought his way across the vast desert; for this that he had staked his all, lured into the heart of the Unknown by the fantastic story told him on the coast—how that there was gold to be won for the mere picking up; the lure that had drawn so many a man to his doom.

His horse had died under him. Parched with thirst, racked by the pangs of hunger, spent with his privations, he had at last staggered to this oasis at the edge of the desert, to the sandy foothills that were the forerunners of the mountains beyond. Then he had fallen into the grip of these bloodthirsty savages, had been bound to a tree, knew that death was to be his portion, though in what form he could only surmise.

Suddenly the horrible hullabalooing died away; the mad dancing ceased. The dusky, naked forms became motionless, as from the ring of natives there strode forth one who was somewhat taller than his fellows, though he would not have been accounted of any size amongst Europeans.

His face was daubed with paint. His only garment was a gossamer loin-cloth. In his hand he held a carved boomerang.

Vernon Denbigh gazed fearfully at the figure who now stood facing his own helpless form. Was this being to be his executioner? Was he to die by means of the boomerang; that weapon made familiar to us by many a tale, by many a skilful exponent in the art of throwing the same? It would appear that such was to be the case. For with a hideous grin upon his evil face the savage raised his hand, and his eyes seemed to blaze with concentrated hatred of his victim. Then the boomerang left his hand, and instinctively Vernon Denbigh closed his eyes.

The weapon flew towards him with incredible speed. He could hear it as it whistled through the air towards him. Another second, and something had grazed his nose, just cutting the flesh. A shout went up. He opened his eyes. The boomerang had just touched him. Then it had sped off at a tangent to whiz back towards the hand of its thrower as though endowed with life.

Three times the savage performed this act of diabolical cruelty, dwelling with fierce, unholy joy upon the misery that he knew must fill the mind of his helpless victim. Three times did Vernon Denbigh taste the horrors of death. On each occasion the boomerang did no more than just score the skin off his face.

Then the savage, evidently the leader of the band, shouted out some unintelligible order. Instantly his followers dashed forward, and with frenzied haste began to heap up brushwood all round the tree to which the prisoner had been bound. Instantly he saw that this play with the boomerang had been merely the prelude to the final act of the tragedy.

The fiends meant to burn him alive!

Then it was that his fortitude gave way. Cries of despair left his lips, appeals that only intensified the unholy joy of his savage captors. And at last he saw that further appeal would be useless. He was asking clemency of human beings who knew not the meaning of the word.

One of the savages retired apart, and began to kindle fire in the method used by savages in various parts of the world—with a pointed stake drilled rapidly into tindery wood. And presently the torch burst into flame. The leader of the natives ran forward, and plucked the fiery brand from his satellite. His was to be the hand that should fire the funeral pyre.

Waving the torch over his head he slowly advanced towards the spot where the hapless prisoner was bound, executing a peculiar dance the while, chanting a weird, unmusical paean at the same time. Vernon Denbigh shut his eyes. His imagination fed his misery. Already he seemed to feel the cruel flames curling up round his helpless limbs.

The savage stooped, to apply the blazing brand to the dried fuel. Even as he did so a rifle shot rang out, awaking the echoes far and wide.

The man with the torch uttered a dull groan. Then he leaped into the air, to roll over on the ground, dead. The burning stick slipped from his nerveless grasp, to lie smouldering beside him, only a few inches away from the edge of the pile of brushwood.

The effect of the unlooked for shot was remarkable indeed. For it must be remembered that these aborigines represented about the lowest type of human beings; beings of limited vocabulary, and the most rudimentary civilisation, who dwelt in the most wretched shelters imaginable—cowardly, debased, superstitious to a degree.

For a moment or so the whole mob stood motionless, staring wildly in the direction of the still form of their leader, who lay where he had dropped, in a huddled heap.

Then, with wild yells of terror, they broke like a flock of sheep, and dashed off into the obscurity of the scrub. Before you could have counted ten slowly, the only evidences of the tragedy were the dead man, the smouldering torch, and the helpless figure of the reprieved prisoner.

A second or so later, and there emerged from behind the shadow of a rock, where he had lain concealed, the lithe, travel-stained form of a young man, his rifle in his hand; a young man with blue eyes and tanned, weather-beaten face, who ran swiftly towards the spot where Vernon Denbigh was bound, to begin with quick, eager fingers to undo the cruel thongs that fastened him to the tree.

"You have saved my life," muttered Vernon Denbigh thickly. "Who are you? Where do you come from?"

"I was just in time," rejoined the young fellow coolly; "but they are a cowardly lot, these natives. My name is Arthur Gray. I am prospecting for gold. My horses, and the cart that conveyed me here, are near at hand. The poor brutes are at their last gasp. I left them by the waterhole. There was another man with me. He, alas, is dead! Who are you?"

"Vernon Denbigh," rejoined the other. "I too, am on the gold-hunt. I think we had better join forces."

"Certainly!" replied Gray.

Being Englishmen there was little suggestion of sentiment between them, small hint of the tremendous crisis through which both had passed. Had they been Frenchmen they would have fallen on one another's necks with the most extravagant expressions of demonstration. As it was, they betrayed their race and racial instincts by a complete avoidance of the reality of the situation that had thrown them together.

The first thing to be done was to guard against the possibility of a reopening of hostilities on the part of the natives. Arthur Gray had evidently left nothing to chance when he had set out on his long trek across the desert. His equipment, though slight as regards bulk, was complete in every essential. Round the camp-fire that night the men exchanged life stories.

Vernon Denbigh, it appeared, was the son of a man who had died, leaving his son practically penniless. There had been enough money to discharge the debts left by Denbigh senior, and to provide the son with passage-money to Australia.

"You had better not inquire too closely as to my mode of living here within the last years," Denbigh had wound up, with a mirthless laugh. "It's been a case of just keeping my head above water somehow. Let's hope we strike gold out here. If not—" An expressive gesture closed his sentence.

"You have been frank with me," replied Gray—neither did he notice the somewhat crafty smile that crossed the other's face as he said this—"I will be equally frank with you. I am the only son of Mr. Amos Gray, of Lavering, Berkshire. I quarrelled with my father; yet the quarrel was not of my seeking. But you must know that dad is a modern miser. He has money that he has hoarded up for years. I remonstrated with my father on the subject, pointing out to him that he was benefiting no one, and himself least of all, by his miserly habits. He only laughed at me. I flew into a passion. The upshot was that he gave me my passage-money to Australia, and a few hundreds over, and told me that he would never want to see my face again. So that you will understand that I am as eager as you to find gold."

Denbigh gave vent to a curious laugh.

"I think," he said slowly, "that if I had had a certain gold-mine in England, I would not have troubled to throw it away for a hypothetical one in Australia."

"You would if you had any feelings of right and wrong," replied Gray steadily.

"I suppose I should," answered the other, though the darkness hid the sneer that played round his lips.

### THE 2nd CHAPTER.
### Black Treachery.

ARTHUR GRAY'S eyes slowly opened. Where he was he did not know; neither could he for a few moments recall what had happened, or how it came that he lay motionless, with throbbing head and aching body, in the darkness.

Then it all came slowly back to him, the episodes of the past few weeks, the events that had transpired since the day when he had rescued Vernon Denbigh from death.

They had found gold, and turned their backs upon the wilderness, had set forth for civilisation once more. And then it was that Vernon Denbigh had come out under his true colours, had betrayed the blackness of the heart that was in him, had shown himself to be a man lost to all sense of honour, of gratitude; that it would have been better had Arthur left him to perish at the hands of the blacks from whom he had rescued him.

How the act of villainy had been accomplished Arthur could never rightly say. Denbigh must have taken the opportunity of stunning him in his sleep; had assuredly believed that he had murdered his comrade. Yet this crowning act of criminality, accomplished in will if not in deed, had failed of its intent. Otherwise, how could Arthur have come to his senses there in the darkness of the Australian night.

"Where am I?" he had hoarsely. Instantly a dark form bent over him, and a pannikin of water, from which he drank greedily, was placed to his lips.

"All right, boss," said a guttural voice; "it's Jackimalloo!"

Jackimalloo! Something like a smile came into Gray's face. Instantly the old words came through his mind. "Cast your bread upon the waters, and it shall come back to you after many days." Jackimalloo, the half-caste, it was then who had nursed him back to life; Jackimalloo, whom he had saved from death months ago, when the half-caste had been at the mercy of a band of native cannibals.

"You save um Jackimalloo," the man said cheerfully. "Jackimalloo, um save you now. Um find you in bush. Um bringee you here. You allee rights now." And the good-hearted fellow grinned all over his dusky face.

Gray's countenance darkened.

"Tit for tat—eh, Jacky?" he said softly. "I've been badly used. The fellow that tried to do for me robbed me of my all. I saved his life, Jacky. I found him unconscious. We found gold. And now he's got away. I suppose he thinks he has seen the last of Arthur Gray. But I'll not rest until I've run him down. Jacky, until I've made him pay for what he's done."

Jackimalloo scratched his curly head.

"Me kill um for you, boss," he said cheerfully. "You tell me where I find um."

But Gray shook his head.

"We'll leave murder to such carrion as he," he answered. "I'm not going to kill him. I only want to find him, to make him disgorge his ill-gotten gains, to thrash him within an inch of his life. I'll bet he'll make for Sydney, Jacky. We must get back there, I think. I know someone who'll lend me a little money in Sydney."

No white man could have tended Gray with more assiduity and care than did the half-caste. Gray had been badly knocked about. The blow that Denbigh had dealt him on the head had nearly proved fatal.

But for Jack's care and knowledge of bush surgery, Gray must have succumbed. As it was, a few days' nursing in Jackimalloo's rough abode worked wonders; that and the overpowering desire that now filled Gray's mind to get even with his false friend.

False indeed! Gray was of a trusting, sunny nature. He had opened his soul to Denbigh—had told him all his life's story, for Denbigh was a good actor, and had evinced interest and sympathy in his companion's story. Yet of his own past, Denbigh had said but little. The reason for this we shall discover in due time.

The situation was indeed a black one. For not only had Denbigh decamped with the whole of the gold that the two prospectors had obtained after such labour, but he had also annexed the whole of Gray's outfit. Wigh the exception of a miserable pittance of ready money, Arthur was a pauper.

He had no doubt in his own mind as to what Denbigh would do. He would probably return to Sydney, would cut a bold dash there for a while, and then return to England with his ill-gotten gains. Time was therefore of the utmost importance. As soon as he was sufficiently convalescent, Arthur, with Jackimalloo's aid, turned his back on the bush and made towards Sydney with what haste he could.

"Where am I?" Arthur said hoarsely. Instantly a dark form bent over him, and a pannikin of water, from which he drank greedily, was placed to his lips.

ANSWERS
ONE PENNY.
Every Tuesday.

## A MAN'S INGRATITUDE.

*(Continued from the previous page.)*

THE 3rd CHAPTER.
The Price of the Past.

THE man stole forward and laid a dirty hand on Vernon Denbigh's immaculate coat-sleeve. The contrast between the two men, as they faced one another in the principal street of Sydney, was, to say the least, startling, for Vernon was dressed in the height of the fashion, the other was a typical lobs, clad in clothes that proclaimed him a penniless vagabond.

A fleeting expression of fear crossed Vernon's face. Then he replied out haughtily:

"Who are you, fellow? What do you want with me?"

The man leered up impudently into his countenance.

"You've got mighty haughty all of a sudden, Mr. Denbigh," he said, in a low voice. "Tain't wise, is it?"

"I don't know you," came the firm response. "My name is not Denbigh, it is Wilfred Henderson. You must have made some mistake."

The mysterious stranger jerked a dirty thumb in the direction of a policeman standing at a neighbouring street corner.

"S'posin'," he said, with an evil grin, "that you and me was to go to that there bobby and say as how we knowed where Slippery Sam was—Slippery Sam the bushranger, alias Vernon Denbigh—what d'yer think he'd say? Ah, that touches you on the raw—don't it? Now, hadn't you better be sensible? You didn't think to meet me, did yer? Yer looks prosperous. S'pose as how yer comes with me to my little shanty in William Street. We might have a quiet talk together. An' I'm broke, as yer see. Don't yer think as there's somethin' in the idea?"

For a moment Denbigh hesitated. Then he seemed to think better of his attempt at concealment of his identity.

"Very well, on," he said, in a low voice; "I'll follow you. And if you'll keep your mouth shut, I'll see that you don't suffer."

The other winked.

"That's all right," he said softly. "I ain't a-goin' to give you away. You follow me there, and mind, none o' yer games, or I'll blow the gaff straight!"

So intent were the two scoundrels upon taking stock of one another that they had no eyes for a third person who had stolen towards them—the figure of a young man, clad in shabby enough garments, the lower part of whose face was concealed by a silky, pointed beard, a slouch hat being pulled down well over his eyes, and the collar of his coat turned up, as though he was indeed desirous of hiding as much of his features as possible.

Yet, as the stranger moved off, with Vernon at his heels, the third actor followed behind them at a respectful distance. Little did Vernon guess that the man whom he had left for dead out in the bush, Arthur Gray, was at that moment dogging him with relentless persistency. For the man with the silky beard was Gray himself.

The story of his quest for the man who had wronged him so deeply can be told in a few words. He had come to Sydney, as we know, and luck had favoured him from the first. Within a few hours of his arrival in the city he had run across his quarry.

Yet his task was by no means accomplished. For he was practically penniless, while it was evident that Vernon had established himself as a man of property. And it is the same in the Colonies as in other parts of the world. A man of wealth and substance must always have the pull over a poor man. How could Gray come forward and denounce his enemy? Were he to go to a policeman and say: "Arrest that man, he is a would-be murderer and a swindler," he, in his rage and obvious poverty, would only be laughed at for his efforts. No, he would have to go about his task with subtlety and caution.

He tracked the two to the miserable shanty in William Street, one of the poorest streets of the city, and saw them enter, the door being carefully closed behind them, his keen eyes taking in every phase of the situation.

The hovel next to the one occupied by the mysterious stranger—the whole street was built of wooden houses, some with iron roofs—was empty and dilapidated. Arthur looked swiftly around him. A man and a woman at the far end of the thoroughfare and a few children were the only occupants of the alley. Like a flash, he ran forward and slipped inside the deserted house, for the crazy street door swung inward before his thrust. An instant later, he was standing inside a chamber, as bare, as neglected as it would be possible to imagine.

The partition wall between the house and the one next to it—the one in which he had seen the two men disappear—was of wood. So that if they were in the chamber immediately adjoining him, he ought assuredly to have heard some sound to indicate their presence. He listened with the utmost intentness. Then a faint sound, as though a chair had been pushed back along boards, fell on his ears. The noise seemed to come from somewhere overhead.

A rickety wooden stairway in one corner of the apartment led to the upper portion of the house. Dare he trust himself to the crazy woodwork of the stair?

"Needs must where—nothing win," he muttered to himself, as he cautiously made his way up the steps.

Somewhat to his surprise and infinite relief, the staircase failed to break beneath his weight, though it creaked ominously once or twice. He crawled through a square aperture into the room above. His pulses thrilled. For now he could hear the faint murmur of voices coming from the other side of the apartment.

He crawled across the sloping, rotten floor. What were the authorities of the city about that they could allow such a crazy, dangerous structure as this to stand above ground? Yet he reached the side without incident. A gleam of light—the window of the chamber had been boarded up, rendering the room practically as dark as night—filtered through a chink in the partition-wall against which he now found himself, applying his eye to a crack, he was able to see into the next apartment. His lips tightened. He could see Vernon and his companion sitting side by side at a dirty table, a bottle and two glasses of spirit on the top of it.

The stranger was speaking, and Arthur could hear what he said with distinctness:

"I ain't a-goin' to blow the gaff if you does what is proper," the man was saying. "There ain't no reason why anybody knows as Vernon Denbigh, Esquire, and Slippery Sam the bushranger are the same. You pay me sufficient and I'll keep my mouth shut."

There was a silence for a while. Then said Vernon:

"See here, Mat, I've got a proposition. Why don't you come to England with me on the Pacific to-night? I'll pay your passage. You can come as my man. I've a job in the old country that I'm sure both will suit. Listen to me." And there came from his lips a proposition so dreadful—dreadful, at least, to the silent listener—that Arthur's blood curdled within him, and it was all that he could do to prevent himself crying out aloud with mad fury.

So that was Vernon Denbigh's hideous game! Arthur had heard enough. Turning, he began to crawl on his hands to the head of the stairway. What he was to do he did not know. Yet something must be done. Somehow Vernon must be checkmated. With tingling pulses, he began the descent of the rickety staircase.

Half-way down, he knew, trouble happened. The rotten woodwork gave beneath him. There was a slight crack. Then he thudded down to the ground, striking his head sharply as he did so. And where he fell, there he lay stunned.

And Arthur Gray was to sail that night with Denbigh and the ruffian Mat aboard her, homeward bound on an errand of villainy, the key to which Arthur Gray alone held.

THE 4th CHAPTER.
The Miser.

AMOS GRAY sat up nervously.

"Hallo!" he muttered. "What's that?"

The sound was indeed out of keeping with the spirit of the old room in which he sat. It was the throb of a motor-engine, as an automobile came to a halt in front of the weather-beaten door of Lavering House.

At one time Lavering must have been a fine place. But now the hand of neglect and decay lay heavy everywhere. The room in which Amos Gray sat was of noble proportions, measuring from floor to ceiling some the splendid old oak, the walls hung with fine old pictures in mouldering frames, the furniture shabby, yet massive, while the occupant of the chamber himself looked as though it was long since a decent square meal had passed his lips.

Lavering was situated in one of the remotest parts of the county of Berkshire, eight miles from a railway-station in a forgotten by-way of the rolling downs that stretched away on either side; the presence of the house marked by an oasis of trees, many of which bore the same traces of neglect and decay as the house itself.

No one believed that Amos had any money. The story that held general credence was, that years ago, his son Arthur had run away to foreign parts; that before his departure he had depleted the coffers of the house of Gray to such an extent that Amos had been left with the merest pittance to keep body and soul together. That story Amos had fostered with assuidity. And now he lived alone in the old house, with only one old servant as decrepit as himself, never going out, never entertaining; spoken of with scorn and pity by the few neighbours that lived in those remote regions.

It was long since the weed-grown drive had been dinted by any carriage-wheels. Never had a motor desecrated the precincts of the place. And now a big red Panhard had drawn up in front of the house, from the conveyance of which two men, closely muffled in big coats, in motor-caps and goggles, descended. One of them pealed at the rusty bell-pull that depended from the side of the stone doorway.

It was Amos Gray himself who opened the door to them.

"What do you want?" he croaked forth sourly. "Ye must have come to the wrong house. I have nothing for ye here."

"Pardon me, sir," responded the taller of the two strangers suavely; "but are you Mr. Amos Gray?"

"I am. Who are you?" The question was curt, almost to rudeness.

"My name is Wilfrid Henderson," came the smooth retort. "This gentleman here is Mr. Matthew Darley. We want a word with you in private."

And before the old man could do anything to prevent him, the stranger had thrust the door open and strode inside the hall, followed by his comrade.

Amos Gray gave vent to an angry exclamation.

"I am only a poor, old broken man," he said testily. "My house is as poor as I am. There is an inn two miles away. I beg of you to go there."

Henderson gripped him unceremoniously by the arm.

"Lead the way into your sitting-room," he commanded. "If you don't, it will be the worse for you."

A sudden feeling of alarm rose up in the old man's heart.

"What do you mean by your roughness?" he said. "I know you not. Who are you?"

He was drawn irresistibly forward into the room he had vacated. Darley closed the door, and stood with his back against it. Then Henderson whipped out a pistol.

"Resistance is useless," he said, in a low, tense voice. "I know all about you. I know that you have money here. I know the secrets of your house. I heard it all from your son Arthur, who is dead. I know that you have gold stored away in this house. Have it, I must. I shall kill you if you do not give it me!"

"You are mad!" replied Amos stoutly. "I have no money here!"

"I made the acquaintance of your son Arthur in Australia," returned Denbigh—we may as well call him by the name he is most familiar to us by—"and he told me all about you. He was rather foolishly communicative. It is a mistake to tell too much to strangers, and I think he was a fool to go and tell the country that he was both well. Listen to me." And there came from his lips a proposition so dreadful—dreadful, at least, to the silent listener—that Arthur's blood curdled within him, and it was all that he could do to prevent himself crying out aloud with mad fury.

So that was Vernon Denbigh's hideous game! Arthur had heard enough. Turning, he began to crawl on his hands to the head of the stairway. What he was to do he did not know. Yet something must be done. Somehow Vernon must be checkmated. With tingling pulses, he began the descent of the rickety staircase.

Half-way down, as

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

BY POPULAR

## MAXWELL SCOTT.

### THE OPENING CHAPTERS IN BRIEF.

**CHOTA LAL NATH CHANDRA DAS**, an Indian prince, and a new boy at St. Ninian's School, who is placed in the Fifth Form. He is in possession of a certain gold locket, around which centres a mystery.

**OTTO HEINRICH**, a mysterious German, who strives by foul means to obtain possession of the gold locket.

**ROBERT HAMILTON (Nipper)**, Nelson Lee's wards.
**DICK STARLING**,

**GARDNER, PROCTER, RUSSELL, ARKLE**, pupils at St. Ninian's School.

Gardner is in difficulties with a bookmaker, and the mysterious German, knowing that the boy is aware of the place where Lal has concealed his locket, offers to pay the lad's debts on condition that he obtains it for him. Gardner, in desperation, agrees to do so. That night Nipper and his friends plan a raid on the inmates of a rival house at St. Ninian's. On their way Nipper hears a noise in his study, and throwing the door open discovers Gardner removing the locket from its hiding-place. Gardner explains why he took the locket, and Nipper very generously lends him a five-pound note, first extracting a promise from him that he will do no more gambling.

Otto Heinrich, the mysterious German, becomes associated with Franlein Hoffmann, a mistress of a girls' school in the village. Being of the same nationality she wins their confidence, and introduces herself as an old friend of Franlein Hoffmann as her uncle. He decides to take her into his confidence, and relates to her the mystery surrounding the gold locket which is in Lal's possession.

Lal discovers that his locket has disappeared from its hiding-place, which is known only by Mr. Hunt and himself.

Shortly afterwards Mr. Pascoe, the chemistry master, and Mr. Stuart-Cowin, the arithmetic school master, are rivals for the position of Head Master when Dr. Stuart-Cowin retires. Mr. Pascoe, Nipper and Dick do all they can to assist Mr. Russell by fetching voters from the neighbouring villages in a motor-car. They manage to prevent Mr. Watson, a stout upholder of Dr. Stuart-Cowin, from reaching the poll with his last wagonload of voters, by getting ahead of him on a narrow strip of road and pretending that their car has broken down. Mr. Watson smells a rat, and gets greatly enraged.

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

### A Small Majority.

"PUP-PUP-PLOT!" howled Mr. Watson. "A vile pup-plot to delay us, and pup-prevent these ladies and gentlemen reaching the pup-polling-booth in time to record their votes!"

Dick pointed to the two men in the car.

"Those gentlemen also wish to record their votes before eight o'clock," he said. "Is it likely we should keep them here, four miles from the polling-booth, if the motor hadn't broken down?"

"If the mum-mum motor's bub-bub broken down," roared Mr. Watson, growing more and more excited every minute as the precious moments passed, "pup-pup-push it to the side of the road, and let us pup-pup——"

"Puppy again!" sighed Nipper. "Dear me; you seem to have puppies on the brain! There is no puppy here, my dear sir, unless you include yourself in that category; or rather, doggerel. Ah, would you?"

Mr. Watson had struck at him with the whip, but Nipper was too quick for him, and dodged round to the other side of the car.

"I'm surprised at you, Mr. Watson!" he said, in reproachful accents. "I thought you had more common-sense! You say you want to get on to the polling-booth; but you can't get on until this car is out of the way, and how can we get it out of the way if you keep on interrupting us like this? And it's half-past seven now, you know!"

Half-crazy with rage and dispair, Mr. Watson turned to the occupants of the waggonette.

"These scoundrels evidently do not mean to let us pup-pass," he said. "Is there any other road by which we can reach Cue-Cue-Clevedon?"

"There be only one way, maister," said one of the old men. "That be raound by Otterdene, an' past the Grange, an' daown the Tunbridge Road. An' that be good ten miles, or more!"

"Then get out and help me to push this cue-cue-car to the side of the road!" said Mr. Watson. "If these young ruffians resist——"

"Resist, my dear sir!" said Nipper, as he quietly slipped on the brakes. "We wouldn't dream of resisting. On the contrary, we'll help you! Get out, you fellows!"

The two men descended from the car, and they and Nipper and Dick, together with Mr. Watson and his three male passengers, pushed the car for close upon five minutes. At the end of that time they had moved it, perhaps, ten inches! Then Nipper stealthily took off the brakes, reversed the engine, and started the car at a snail's pace.

Slowly, but irresistibly, the heavy car moved backwards, tumbling Mr. Watson off his feet, and causing the three old men to huddle together in the ditch with cries of alarm. Then Nipper quietly stopped the car, and called announced that he thought it was all right now!

"If the cue-cue-car is all right," bellowed Mr. Watson, "steer it to the side of the road, and let us pup-pup-pass!"

"No, much!" said Nipper, signing to Dick and the two yokels to get in. "We'll just go on ahead, and race you to the polling-booth."

As he uttered these words he sprang into the car, blew a kiss to Mr. Watson, and dung the starting-lever forward. With a whir and a rush the car shot down the road, and a moment later was out of sight!

"Go in—go in!" yelled Mr. Watson to his three male passengers. "Quick, it's twenty minutes to eight! I don't think I can pup-pup-possibly do it, but I'll tut-tut try!"

The three men having resumed their seats, Mr. Watson climbed on to the box, and struck the horse a stinging cut between the ears. Shooting with a jerk, the horse leaped forward with such suddenness that Mr. Watson was jerked backwards off the box and fell sprawling amongst his passengers. Luckily nobody was injured in the scramble, and a moment later the waggonette was rumbling down the road in the wake of the vanished car.

But the task was hopeless from the first. The horse did its best, and so did the groom-grower; but eight o'clock was striking as they passed Fraulein Hoffmann's cottage on the Hillfoot Road, and by the time they reached the polling-booth the doors had been closed a quarter of an hour!

In the meantime Nipper and Dick had landed their two passengers at the booth in ample time for them to register their votes. They then conveyed the two men back to Otterdene, drove round to the Grange, left the car there, and walked back to the village.

It was ten minutes past ten when they reached the crowded street in front of the Mechanics' Institute, where the votes were being counted. They were only just in time, for even as they pushed their way into the street, an upper window of the institute was suddenly thrown open, and the returning-officer thrust out his head and shoulders.

"I have to announce that the result of the poll is as follows!" he shouted, when something like silence had been obtained: "Napoleon Bonaparte Boswell, 329; Marmaduke Stuart-Unwin, 322. Majority for Boswell, 4!"

"And we did it!" chortled Nipper, as he and Dick elbowed their way through the cheering, booing, jostling crowd, and sprinted off in the direction of St. Ninian's. "Alone we did it! For that waggonette had reached the booth before eight o'clock, Stewed Onions would have had five more votes, and Boswell would have been beaten by one!"

### Karl Hoffmann.

WHILST these events were taking place in Cleveden, Fraulein Hoffmann was spending her Saturday afternoon in shopping at Eastbourne. She completed her purchases about six o'clock, and a quarter of an hour later she walked up to the station with the intention of catching the 6.25 back to Cleveden.

The train was somewhat late, and whilst she was standing on the platform awaiting its arrival, somebody touched her on the shoulder. On turning round, she found herself confronted by a sturdy, thick-set young fellow, rather shabbily dressed, whose face was more or less hidden from view by the peak of his cap and the turned-up collar of his coat.

"Sir, was you mean by——" she began; then a startled look came into her eyes, and she broke off with a sharp intaking of the breath.

She took a quick step forward, and peered into the young fellow's face. Then a low cry of infinite amazement burst from her lips.

"Karl," she gasped—"Karl—You here!"

It was her brother! The brother of whom she had spoken to Heinrich; the brother who had formerly been a clerk in the Foreign Office at Berlin, but who had been sentenced, only a few weeks ago, to twenty years' detention in a fortress for selling official secrets to a foreign Power!

"Yes, it's me!" he growled, in German, of course. "But for Heaven's sake don't make a scene. As you will understand, I don't want to attract too much attention to myself."

"But how—why—how come you to be here?" she asked, trembling with excitement. "I—I thought—I thought——"

"You thought I was in prison in Germany—eh? Well, I'm not, you see. I'm in England, and I was on my way to Cleveden, to give you a little surprise, when I saw and recognised you on the platform here."

"You have been pardoned, then?" she asked, a glad look in her eyes.

"Pardoned!" he repeated, with a grim laugh. "When did you ever know the Kaiser pardon a traitor?"

"Then it was true!" she faltered. "You were guilty of the crime with which you were charged. You did sell secrets to another Power!"

"I did," he answered coolly. "And I was found out, as you have doubtless heard, and sentenced to twenty years' imprisonment in a fortress. But a fire broke out in the fortress a few days ago, and in the confusion I managed to make my escape and get across the frontier into France.

"I'll tell you all about it later," he continued. "Meanwhile, it is enough to say that I found a Good Samaritan in France who gave me this suit of clothes and lent me sufficient money to pay my passage to England. I landed at Newhaven this morning, and I was on my way to Cleveden when—— But what's the matter? Why are you trembling so? I thought you would be pleased to see me, instead of which you seem frightened to death! What's wrong?"

"Karl," she said, in a low, agitated voice, "if you're an escaped prisoner, you can't come to Cleveden!"

"But I must," he said. "Where else can I go? I can't go back to Germany, of course, and you're my only relative, it's only natural I should come to you for shelter. Besides, I've another reason for wishing to come to Cleveden—a most important reason, of which I'll tell you later."

"But it is impossible!" she said earnestly. "It would be madness. You can't—you mustn't come to Cleveden!"

"Why not?" he demanded fiercely.

She lowered her voice.

"Because Otto Heinrich is there," she whispered.

"Otto Heinrich!" he exclaimed, with a start. "The famous secret service agent?"

"Yes."

He shrugged his shoulders.

"What of that?" he said. "We aren't in Germany now. We're in free England, where selling political secrets is not an extraditable offence. Otto Heinrich cannot harm me—cannot have me arrested and sent back to Germany. I have nothing to fear from him. In fact, I shall rather enjoy swaggering about under his very nose. Where's he staying?"

"At my house!"

"At your house!" he gasped. "In Heaven's name, why?"

"He has come to England on a secret mission, and he asked me——" she began. But ere she could say more her brother broke in with an agitated exclamation.

"Thunder and lightning! I see everything!" he said excitedly. "He's after the locket!"

"The locket!" she exclaimed. "You—you know about the locket?"

Before he could reply the Cleveden train steamed into the station.

"Yes; I'm coming with you to Cleveden," he said, in answer to her glance of mute inquiry. "Of course. I can't stay at your house, if Heinrich is there. In fact, he must not know any secrets that you have met me, or even that I am in England."

"But I thought you said——"

"That I should enjoy swaggering about under his nose? So I did. But that was before I knew he was after the locket. Now I know he's after the locket, it's more important than ever that I should come to Cleveden, and it's equally important that he shouldn't know that I am there."

By this time the train had drawn up alongside the platform. He opened the door of an empty first-class compartment, and signed to her to enter.

"We can talk in here without fear of being interrupted," he said. "I've only a third-class ticket, and so have you, I expect, but we can pay at Cleveden."

They took their seats in the carriage, and a moment later the train resumed its journey.

"Now, tell me all about Heinrich's secret mission, and why he's staying at your house," said Karl.

Briefly yet succinctly she told him all that Heinrich had told her: of John Oxley's clever ruse in obtaining a photograph of the secret treaty: of his pursuit, escape, and ultimate death by drowning: of how the locket had been given to Lal, and of Heinrich's unsuccessful attempts to steal it. She also told him how she and Heinrich had become acquainted at the cottage in Padley Wood: how Heinrich had told her the story of the locket: how he had appealed to her patriotism: and how she had consented to help him to secure the locket on condition that he promised to procure a free pardon for Karl.

"And did you believe him when he promised to get me a free pardon?" asked Karl.

"Of course, or I shouldn't have helped him."

"Then you were a fool!" said her brother bluntly. "Heinrich has deceived you. Some of the things he told you were true, others were false, and others he suppressed. For instance, did he tell you the name of John Oxley's German confederate?"

"No. He only said he was one of the secretaries in the Chancellor's office."

"And he told you that Oxley's confederate was arrested with remorse, and went to the Chancellor and confessed everything, and then blew his brains out?"

"Yes."

"A pack of lies, my dear sister. Oxley's confederate was not a secretary in the Chancellor's office; he was a clerk in the Foreign Office. He didn't confess because he was seized with remorse; he was arrested on suspicion, and only confessed in the hope of mitigating his punishment. He didn't blow his brains out, but was tried and sentenced to twenty years' imprisonment."

"How do you know all this?" she demanded.

"Because I was John Oxley's confederate!" he answered coolly. "It was I who helped him to secure that photograph of the secret treaty, and I have come to England for the same purpose as Otto Heinrich—to secure that locket!"

"In order to return the photograph to the German Government, and so make amends for your treachery?" she asked.

"No," he said calmly. "In order to sell the photograph to the British Government!"

**Love v. Patriotism.**

FRAULEIN HOFFMANN, as already stated, was intensely patriotic, and although she loved her rascally brother more than all else in the world—though she was prepared to make almost any sacrifice to help him—a feeling of revulsion swept over her as she listened to this calm avowal of his contemplated treachery.

"Karl," she said, gazing at him with reproachful eyes, "you don't mean that! You don't really intend to sell the photograph of the secret treaty to the British Government, if you secure it?"

## OUR NEW COMPETITION.

# WHO IS IT?

**That's all we want to know.**

Below are the portraits of six enthusiastic footballing readers of THE BOYS' REALM. Do you know them? To the reader who identifies any one of them, and whose letter is the first received opened, a prize of five shillings will be awarded. There are no other conditions. Perhaps your own portrait appears here this week, or that of your bosom friend. Anyway, if you recognise one of the faces, write at once to "Portrait No. 3," BOYS' REALM Office, Carmelite House, Carmelite Street, London, E.C., stating whom you think it to be. Word your letter thus: "I think that No. —— (here give number as under portrait) is (here give name of the person you think it to be.) He is a member of the ..... Football Club." All letters must reach this office by Saturday, July 27th.

Another six portraits will appear next week.

No. 13.

No. 14.

No. 15.

No. 16.

No. 17.

No. 18.

## THE FIGHTING FIFTH.

*(Continued from the previous page.)*

"Indeed I do!" he said, with a coarse laugh. "And you're going to help me to secure it! Oh, you needn't shrieks your head. You simply must help me, or there'll be nothing left for me to do but to blow out my brains!"

"Hush! Don't talk like that!" she said, with a shudder. "It frightens me. Tell me how you know about the locket."

"I've already told you," he said. "I was John Oxley's confederate. I had known him for some time before this happened, and had occasionally supplied him with scraps of official information. It was I who told him that a secret treaty had been signed by Germany and Russia, but I didn't tell him what it was about, for the simple reason that I didn't know. But I knew where the copy of the treaty was kept, and when Oxley offered me a thousand marks to let him see it for half a minute I agreed to do so.

"I needn't tell you how I managed it, but I did. As Heinrich has told you, Oxley took a snapshot of the treaty by means of a detective-camera in the handle of his walking-stick, after which he and I walked to his rooms, where he developed his film, concealed it in the locket, paid me my thousand marks, and left Berlin by the next train.

"In the meantime, it appears, suspicion had been aroused at the Foreign Office, and half an hour after Oxley had left Berlin I was arrested and taken before the Chancellor. I was subjected to a long and searching cross-examination, and in the end, to make a long story short, I made a clean breast of the whole affair, and told them all about the locket.

"I was then removed to the cells to await my trial, and the cops were set to work for the purpose of arresting Oxley before he had time to cross the frontier. A few days later I heard that he had given his pursuers the slip, and had left the country on board a British cargo-steamer. Later still I learned that the ship in which he had sailed had been wrecked in the English Channel, and had foundered with all hands; and on the same day that I heard this I was sentenced by secret court-martial, and sentenced to twenty years' imprisonment."

"Then you didn't know at that time," said Fraulein Hoffmann, "that Oxley wasn't drowned when the vessel went down?"

"No. Like everybody else, I concluded that he and his locket were at the bottom of the sea."

"And when did you hear that the locket had reappeared?"

"After I escaped. As I've already told you, a fire broke out in the fortress a few days ago, and in the confusion I managed to escape and get across the frontier. The Good Samaritan to whom I have alluded, and who gave me those clothes and lent me money to come to England, was an Englishman who had settled in France. He had a heap of old English newspapers in his house, and, when glancing over them, I came across a copy of the 'Daily Mail' for the twenty-second of last January."

"Ah! Now I understand," said Fraulein Hoffmann. "That was the paper that contained the account relating how the locket had been given to a young Hindoo at St. Ninian's School."

"It was. There was a picture of the locket, which I recognised at once, even before I read the description. And that's how I came to know that Oxley's locket was in the possession of a schoolboy at St. Ninian's."

"So you decided to come to Cleveden?"

"I had already decided to come to Cleveden to beg you to give me shelter; but, of course, after I had read that account, I was more than ever eager to come. For I knew that if I could recover the locket, and secure the photograph of the secret treaty, the British Government would be willing to give me any price I liked to ask for it.

"Strange to say," he continued, "it never occurred to me that, of course, the German Government would have seen that account in the 'Daily Mail,' and would also have recognised the locket as the one I had described to them. But as soon as you told me that Otto Heinrich—the most famous Secret Service agent in the pay of the German Government—had come to Cleveden on a secret mission, I guessed at once that he had come to recover the locket.

"Now you know everything," he concluded. "I have spent my last sixpence on my railway fare, and everything I possess in the world is in this portmanteau. My career in Germany is ended, of course, and I am unfitted for earning my living in a foreign country. If you refuse to help me, there is nothing but starvation or death in store for me. On the other hand, if you help me to secure the locket, there will be wealth and luxury for both of us for the rest of our lives. It is for you to decide which it shall be."

Tears rose to Fraulein Hoffmann's eyes.

"Karl dearest, I—I cannot help you in the way you ask!" she sobbed. "I will give you all my money—I will do anything else you ask—but I cannot help you to get the locket."

"Why not?" he snarled. "You were ready enough to help Otto Heinrich to steal the locket."

"Ah, but that was different!" she pleaded. "In the first place, I promised to help Heinrich for your sake—because he said he would secure a free pardon for you. And, in the second place, I promised to help him for the sake of the Fatherland—to prevent the photograph of the treaty falling into the hands of the British Government. But you want to sell the photograph to the British. You want me to help you to play the part of—of a traitor! And I can't, Karl—I can't!"

"Very well, then," he said, thrusting his hand into his pocket and pulling out a revolver. "Then there is nothing left for me but this!"

She sprang to her feet with a stifled scream, and wildly clutched his arm.

"Let me go!" he said fiercely. "You refuse to help me, and I decline to starve. I prefer to die! Go and help Otto Heinrich, and leave me to my fate!"

He made a feeble attempt to shake her off, but she clung to his arm in an ecstasy of terror. She believed that he meant, as he had threatened, to blow his brains out; but, as a matter of fact, he had not the remotest intention of doing anything so rash. He was simply trading on her love for him, as he had traded on it a hundred times before. He merely wished to frighten her, to bend her to his will. And he succeeded.

"Don't—don't, Karl!" she implored. "Anything but that—anything but that!"

"Will you help me, then?" he demanded, pushing her away and melodramatically clapping the muzzle of the revolver to his temple.

For an instant, but only for an instant, she hesitated. Then—

"Yes," she said, in a low, husky voice.

"I knew you would," he muttered to himself.

"Now, tell me the latest news about the locket," he said, when he had kissed her and overwhelmed her with protestations of undying gratitude. "Where is it, and what steps is Heinrich taking to secure it?"

In a few sentences she told him how Heinrich had advised her to pretend to be in love with Mr. Trigg, in order to pave the way for an introduction to Lal. She narrated how Heinrich had instructed her how to open the locket and take out the film; and then she told him of her visit to St. Ninian's on the previous Sunday afternoon. She described how she had won Lal's confidence, how he had consented to show her the locket, how he had left the room to fetch it, and how he had returned with the news that it had mysteriously disappeared.

"Heinrich said it was a lie," she continued. "He said the boy had evidently been advised not to show me the locket. He says he is absolutely certain the locket is still at St. Ninian's."

"And I agree with him," said Karl. "The boy was lying, probably, as Heinrich says, by Mr. Rant's instructions. The locket is still at St. Ninian's, without a doubt, and both Mr. Rant and the boy know where it is. Has Heinrich made any inquiries since?"

"Yes; but the only result is to confirm Lal's story. That is to say, Heinrich has ascertained that the locket had been hidden in a secret place in Mr. Rant's study, known only to Lal and Mr. Rant; and when Lal went for it last night it wasn't there."

"Does Heinrich believe it wasn't there?"

"No."

"Neither do I. What is Heinrich going to do?"

"I don't know. He hasn't taken me into his confidence."

"Well, I know what I shall do. I shall begin by exploring Mr. Rant's study."

"But you don't know where it is."

"I shall make it my business during the next few days to become as well acquainted with St. Ninian's as I am with the Foreign Office at Berlin. In the meantime, as I cannot come to stay with you, where can I find lodgings in the village?"

She gave him the names and addresses of several people in the village who took in lodgers.

"I will write to you to-morrow, and tell you at which of these places I am staying," he said, when he had made a note of the names. "I will address my letter to the school, of course, for fear of Heinrich seeing it. If I wish to see you at any time, I will write and make an appointment with you. If you wish to see me, or if you have anything to communicate, write to me, but don't on any account come to see me; for it must not be known in the village that we are acquainted with each other. I speak fairly good English, as you know, and I shall give out that I'm a Londoner, named Baxter, who has come down here for a holiday."

By this time the train was nearing Cleveden, and was already beginning to slow down.

"You'll want some money, I suppose?" said Fraulein Hoffmann, opening her purse.

"Of course!" he said. "I shall be able to pay it back before long, I hope, with compound interest."

She handed him the contents of her purse, and promised to send him more on Monday. Almost before he had time to thank her, the train drew up in Cleveden station, and five minutes later she was on her way to the cottage on the Hillfoot road, whilst he was trudging down to the village in search of lodgings.

### Revenge is Sweet!

THERE was great jubilation at St. Ninian's over the result of the County Council election. As already stated, Mr. Boswell was a prime favourite with the boys, but even if he had been unpopular as he was popular, the fact that he had vanquished the headmaster of the Grammar School would still have filled the Ninianites with unalloyed delight. As it was, their cup of joy was full to overflowing.

Far different, as the reader may surmise, were the feelings of the Grammarians. Never for a moment had they doubted that their champion would head the poll. The sanguine among them had predicted a majority of over a hundred. None of them had dreamed of anything less than fifty.

And Dr. Stuart-Unwin had been beaten! Beaten by four votes! Beaten by a village schoolmaster! Worst of all, beaten by the man whom their rivals at St. Ninian's had favoured and supported! It was a bitter pill; and on the Sunday after the declaration of the poll, which was declared, it will be remembered, on Saturday night—the gloom which reigned within the precincts of the Grammar School can only be described as funereal.

On Monday, however, gloom gave place to fury—fierce, white-hot, vengeance-seeking fury. For on Monday a rumour reached the Grammarians that Nipper and Dick, by blocking up the road with a motor-car, had prevented five of Dr. Stuart-Unwin's supporters reaching the poll in time to record their votes.

"Yes; it's quite tut-tut-true!" said Mr. Watson, when appealed to for confirmation of the rumour. "It was in that motor-car that part of the road between Cleveden and the Hillfoot. They pop-pop-pooped it, and had bub-bub-broken down; but it was all a fuf-fuf-fake! They just stayed there quietly till there wasn't time for any of the poor pop-passengers to get to the poll before eight o'clock. If it hadn't been for that, we should have won by one!"

If the reader can imagine what the feelings of the Grammarians were when they heard the news, he will also be able to imagine the savage joy, the gloating triumph, with which, on the following Wednesday afternoon, a party of Grammarians, whilst strolling along the cliffs, suddenly caught sight of Nipper and Dick crawling in their direction, and utterly oblivious of their presence.

Arnold was the first to see them; just as he was about to open a gate leading from one field to the next. With the swiftness of a panther, he sprang back from the gate, grabbed Fleming with one hand and Crosby with the other, and dragged them down on their hands and knees.

"Here! Hold on! What the dickens—" began two indignant chums.

"Sh! Sh!" whispered Arnold excitedly. "Take cover, you idiots! Don't you see 'em—Hamilton and Starling—coming down the brickyard? They haven't seen us yet. Down on your knees, behind this hedge, and we'll ambush the bounders!"

Like one man the rest of the party flopped down on their hands and knees, each boy with a face positively triumph in his eyes.

"Those bounders are always showing off," said Arnold. "They're sure to leap the gate instead of opening it. You six fellows hide behind the hedge on that side of the gate, and we'll do the same on this side. If they open the gate, we'll let 'em pass as soon as they walk through! If they leap it, jump on 'em as soon as they touch the ground!"

Arnold scarcely finished speaking ere a sound of voices and laughter was heard.

"I told you so!" said Arnold, with a wink. "They're going to leap!"

He was right, for a second or two later Nipper and Dick dashed up to the other side of the gate and rose into the air like a brace of pheasants.

"Now!" cried Nipper. "Over we——"

But the third word died away in an inarticulate gasp of dismay, for whilst he was still in the air, Arnold and his chums leapt to the gate, his eyes gleaming Grammarianwise.

It was more than too late, either to pull up or to turn back. Almost before his feet touched the ground six of the Grammarians rushed at him, and the other six flung themselves on Dick.

Needless to say, the two chums did not yield without a struggle, but it was a hopeless struggle from the first; and in little more than half a minute from the gate, his eyes gleaming Grammarianwise, Nipper was sitting astride Dick's chest.

"Hem-ha! Over we——" What were you going to say?" inquired Arnold, who was sitting on Nipper's head. "Sorry we interrupted you, but please continue. Don't mind us! There, my beauty! Sit on his legs, somebody! He's a wee bit frisky this afternoon!"

"Pax, I! How d'you like my new motor-car?" cried Crosby, who had seated himself astride Dick's chest. "Isn't she a daisy? This is the starting-lever, I think!" He seized Dick's nose and gave it a vigorous tweak. "My mistake!" he cooed. Crosby, as Dick let out an agonised yell. "I thought it was the starting-lever, but I find it's the handle of the pneumatic hooter! Like to hear it hoot again?"

Again he tweaked Dick's nose, and again Dick's anguished howl awoke the echoes of the cliffs and startled all the seagulls within a radius of half a mile!

"Who's at the top of the poll now?" asked Fleming, screwing his bony knuckles into Nipper's ribs. "How many votes was it you robbed us of? Five, wasn't it? One, two, three, four, five!"

He emphasised each numeral by screwing his knuckles a little deeper into Nipper's ribs, thereby evoking a series of stifled groans, that appeared to give the Grammarians intense delight.

"Now, what shall we do with the bounders?" said Arnold, when this sort of thing had gone on for several minutes. "It was they who lost the doctor the election, so it's our bounden duty to make it as hot for 'em as we know how. We've all the afternoon before us, so we needn't hurry matters, but, all the same, we mustn't waste any valuable time!"

"Let's frog's-march 'em to the brickyard and duck 'em in the pond, by way of a beginning!" suggested Tattersall.

"I second that!" said Fleming.

"Any amendment?" asked Arnold. "No? Carried unanimously! Open that gate, Crosby! Now, up with 'em!"

It should here be explained that the "brickyard" was the name of the fields near the edge of the cliff, in which a deposit of clay had been found suitable for making bricks. The deposit excavated in two separate places, but as soon as each all the clay had been extracted some time ago, leaving a shallow depression in the ground about fifteen yards in diameter. This depression had subsequently filled with water, and was the "pond" to which Tattersall had referred.

On the edge of the pond was a stack of sand-moulds bricks, on the other was a roughly-constructed office of wood and corrugated-iron. Being Saturday afternoon, both the office and the brickyard were deserted. Outside the office were a few three or four wooden trestles, half a dozen planks, and a litter of ropes and empty sacks.

"Half a sec!" cried Fleming, when his eyes came to rest on the sacks. "Before we duck 'em, let's tie 'em up in two of these sacks, then there'll be no fear of 'em giving us the slip and bolting."

The idea seemed good to his companions, and, without any further ado, Nipper was thrust into one sack and Dick into another, the mouths of the sacks being tied round their necks, leaving only their heads protruding.

No sooner had this been done than Arnold was seized with a brilliant inspiration.

*(Another long instalment of this splendid school yarn will appear in next week's BOYS' REALM.)*

**Amid shrieks of laughter from the Grammarians, Nipper and Dick were rolled to the edge of the plank and fell with a splash into the pond, to be deposited in the water on the other side of the trestle.**

"I'm done!" Green gasped; and at once sank out of sight. A moment later a black body descended over the side of a boat.

# THE SALT WATER CHAMPIONSHIP.

## A Tale of the Roxby and Vampire Swimming Clubs. By A. S. HARDY.

**THE 1st CHAPTER.**
**A Trial Swim—The Squall.**

As far as the eye could reach stretched the undulating surface of a sea as blue as ever painter put on canvas.

Overhead blazed a brilliant sun. Behind the little boat, in which four persons were seated, if either of them had cared to turn his head to see, lay the harbour with its protecting breakwater, and the seaport town of Roxby, whilst to the westward a grey smoke-haze, and a compact and nestling group of houses told of the whereabouts of Sinclworth.

The four occupants of the boat were William Green, a well-known member of the Vampire Swimming Club, and one time captain of Roxby; Herbert Druce, secretary of the Vampires; Ben Cutwater, a seaman; and a youngster named Hyde Jepson, who had recently arrived in Roxby from Australia, and who had the reputation of being one of the finest swimmers who ever entered a bath, or dived into salt water.

He was quite young. He was little older, in fact, than Sidney Hallowes, who had recently achieved such a reputation in the Roxby colours at water polo, and who, many said, was a second Billington, a lad destined to win championships, and make a great name for himself.

Jepson was a well-built lad. He was on the fleshy side perhaps for his age, but this, as Green and Druce knew well, was no disadvantage in swimming. How lucky they had been they thought to get hold of young Jepson on his coming to Roxby, and induce him to join their ranks instead of going to Roxby.

"You won every championship you went in for in Australia, didn't you, Jepson?" asked Herbert Druce, as Ben Cutwater laid his back into his work and propelled the little boat onward.

"Excepting the hundred yards," answered Jepson. "I wasn't very fit all through the season though, or I should have won that and put up records for every event I participated in. Victor Rencll beat me in the hundred by a touch. The time was 58 1-5 seconds. I've done over a second faster since than that, and you can tell I wasn't altogether fit."

"Well," put in Green, with a laugh, as he unlaced his boots preparatory to undressing and getting into his swimming attire, "as you haven't any Billington to meet, and Jack Jepson, Sidney Hallowes, of the Roxby Club, and myself, represent, perhaps, the best of the entrants for the 1,000 Yards Northern Counties Salt Water Championship, I reckon you'll win at Blackpool easily enough. I'm mighty glad we got hold of you Jepson, for we have a long-standing feud against the Roxby Club, and if we can only rob them of the championship it will be one to us."

"They beat you in the Northern Counties Water Polo Championship and the Roxby and District Championship, didn't they?" asked Jepson, with a grin.

Green coloured, and his eyes flashed.

He was not likely to forget that final for the championship when Roxby and the Vampires had met in the sea beside the breakwater to decide who should hold the Challenge trophy for the year; nor could he ever erase from his memory the recollection of the grit and pluck of young Sidney Hallowes, nor his own discomfiture in that game in which Hallowes had saved him from suspension by a personal appeal to the referee.

"Yes," he admitted. "They beat us in both. But we were off colour. They didn't catch us at our best. If they had done so, they wouldn't have won."

"I suppose not," said young Jepson thoughtfully. "What sort of a chap did you say young Hallowes was?"

"Oh, he's not a bad sort," said Green, in that tone of voice which condemns far more than a virulent and vindictive attack. "He's a bit common, ungentlemanly, and all that sort of thing. He's not too scrupulous, either. But he's rather a generous opponent, I must say."

"If he has that virtue," said young Jepson, stripping, "it covers a multitude of sins."

In his swimming costume he stood revealed the very picture of an athlete. Those fine, well-rounded limbs and pliable muscles were made for swimming. His rolling chest and well shaped arms indicated strength and suppleness. Herbert Druce and William Green looked at him in admiration.

"He looks like swimming, I must say," said Druce.

Green was, of course, older, stouter in build, harder, more muscular, and certainly looked the more powerful man of the two.

"Jepson," he said, "since I resigned from Roxby and joined the Vampires I have been in strict training, gradually getting myself into the form of some years ago. As a matter of fact, I was timed a half-mile in the baths the other night, and I did a few seconds only over record. I don't think I was ever so fit in my life. I am perhaps best in the sea, too, so that I can pace you in fine fashion. If you can beat me this afternoon you will be good enough for anything."

"I'm not so sure I can," smiled the young Australian, looking at Green's fine and vigorous frame in approval. "You see, I never had a chance to swim during the voyage, and with the exception of a few lengths of the baths since I've been living in Roxby, I haven't entered the water at all. I can't say what my form is just now."

"I thought," put in secretary Druce, "you said that you could always do within a few seconds of record, whether fit or unfit."

"If I said so it was an exaggeration. I shouldn't like to write it down as a fact," smiled the Australian.

"Modest. It's a good trait," said Druce, with an appreciative nod of the head. "Well, you chaps, over you go. By the look of that cloud fast coming up there we may have a blow when we least expect it. You'd better get your swim over."

The Vampires' secretary took one of the sculls from Ben Cutwater's hand, and seating himself upon the other thwart, slipped it into the rowlock. The next moment Hyde Jepson and William Green had dived overboard, and one coming along on one side of the boat, and the other the other, they raced past the little craft like a flash.

"Row, Ben—row like the deuce!" said the Vampires' secretary, putting his back into his work. "If you don't we shall never be able to keep up with them."

The two men pulled like mad, for the boat was heavy, but do what they would they could not get on terms with the swimmers, and when they had been hard at it for a couple of minutes, Druce eased, and glancing over his shoulder, watched the two as they swam ahead, their white right forearms flashing regularly above the blue waters, their heads scarcely ever being seen.

There was not more than a yard in it yet, but Jepson held that slight lead, and the two were swimming very finely.

"Pull, Ben," shouted the Vampires' secretary; and to it they applied themselves again, working now with an added will.

By means of a big effort they got level with, and then past, the swimmers.

Jepson was now leading by five yards, and Green, with his eyes fixed on the body of his rival whenever they showed above the water, with grim-set teeth was straining himself to the uttermost to get on terms.

Herbert Druce was in ecstasies.

He had never seen anyone swim in more perfect style than Hyde Jepson showed. Green, too, was swimming in champion form, and the Vampires secretary could see his club wresting the 1,000 Yards Salt Water Championship from Roxby. If Green were scarcely good enough to beat Sidney Hallowes, and that remained to be seen, considering that Green had improved so much of late, Jepson, as the better man, was almost sure to defeat him.

"Brass Jepson!" cried Druce, in his joy.

The young Australian, fearing the secretary's praise, swam with greater effort, and like a flash Green was left behind. He struggled hard, but in vain, and after covering perhaps another hundred yards, he stopped swimming with a gasp, and letting his head come up glanced at Druce.

"I'm done," he panted. "The youngster is a marvel."

"Do you mean to say you were all out, Green?" asked Druce.

"Every ounce. I did my level best," "I could do no more. How far had we swum do you think when he left me?"

"I should say about 600 yards."

"Great Scott!" gasped Green. "And he's got another 700 yards to go. The boy is a marvel, Druce. The championship is as good as won. It will be our turn to triumph now."

"And by fair means," said the Vampires' secretary, giving Green a significant glance, for he had not forgotten how Green had tried to disable young Sidney Hallowes in the match for the Roxby and District Polo Championship.

Green coloured.

"Shut up!" he said, knowing full well what his secretary alluded to. "I did that in a fit of temper. I wouldn't do it again. Hallowes has forgiven me, and forgotten all about it."

By this time, young Hyde Jepson, swimming with consummate ease, and continuing to show the same extraordinary pace, had got right ahead of the boat, for Ben Cutwater and Druce had ceased to row whilst they talked to Green. The young Australian showed no signs of fatigue, and looked as if he could go on for ever. Glancing in the swimmer's direction, Druce saw that a sailing-boat, a small fisherman's boat, was bearing down upon him, coming up from the east had, and he noticed also that the wind was freshening and that the surface of the sea was slightly ruffled.

"You'd better get into the boat, Green," he said, "and then we'll pick young Jepson up. He's safe. There's no fear of him drowning. I should think he must have been born in the water. Come along. Hurry up, now!"

Ben Cutwater went to the stern of the boat and helped Green in, and while the Vampire man was towelling himself dry, the two strained at the sculls and went in pursuit of Jepson.

They had been rowing hard for a couple of minutes when, of a sudden, a squall of wind struck the boat, sending the spray dancing over it.

At the same moment, Green, as he held on to the gunwale, looked ahead and uttered a cry of fright.

"Good heavens!" he said. "Are they mad on board that sailing-boat? They'll run young Jepson down sure."

Startled, Druce looked round, and beheld the little fishing-boat, heeled right over by the force of the wind, rushing madly upon Jepson, who was but a few yards ahead.

He dropped the handle of his scull, put his hands to his mouth so as to form a natural trumpet with them, and shouted with all his might.

"Look out!" he yelled. "Look out for the swimmer there!"

But the three aboard the sailing boat had all their work cut out to manage their craft. One of them was holding on to the tiller for dear life, straining to keep the boat's nose right ahead, and the other two were busying themselves with the ropes, prior to letting down the sails.

The swimmer's head was bobbing about right in front of the little vessel. Hyde Jepson had ceased to swim, for the waves were rising now in the beat of the wind. The next moment, to Druce's horror, the bows of the sailing-boat seemed to strike the swimmer down.

The rowing-boat was almost up with the swimmer now, and as soon as the sailing-boat had passed by, her sails now being let down with a run, Green and Druce looked for Jepson. He was not to be seen. With a feeling of intense horror they thought him drowned; but a moment later, to their intense relief, his head appeared above water again. He held up his right hand.

"Quick!" he cried. "The boat struck me!"

He was plainly in difficulties, and Green had dived over the side of the rowing-boat in a moment, and with a few quick strokes had reached the boy, whom he supported until Ben Cutwater and Herbert Druce were able to get the boat alongside and haul the injured boy aboard.

Green was then hauled over the stern, and the nose of the boat brought round. Jepson was very pale. His body was bruised and grazed, and his left arm hung limply from its socket. A moan of agony came from between his parted lips.

## The Salt Water Championship.

*(Continued from the previous page.)*

"Are you badly hurt, Jepson?" asked Druce anxiously.

"I think so," he said, compressing his lips. "I dived to escape the sailing-boat just as she came down on me, but was too late. I'm afraid I shan't be able to win the championship for the Vampires after all, Druce."

The secretary turned his angry eyes on the sailing-boat. They had lowered her sails now, and had brought her round. She had sufficient way on her to make progress against the wind until she had almost come up with the rowing-boat.

Then Green uttered an exclamation of anger. He saw two seamen aboard, well-known fishermen of Kirby; but it was not they who had caused him to give vent to his angry cry. The third figure was that of a good-looking lad, and Green was amazed to see that it was Sidney Hallowes who held the tiller. It was the young Roxby swimmer who had been responsible for the accident, Green, knowing how unscrupulous he was with regard to such matters himself, and aware that the fame of Jepson had already been spread all through the Roxby district, decided at once that Sidney Hallowes had run Jepson down on purpose.

The sailing-boat was steered alongside, and young Hallowes now gave the tiller into the hands of one of the fishermen, and approached the side. Leaning over he looked at the occupants of the rowing-boat.

"I'm awfully sorry," he said. "Is the swimmer hurt?"

"Hurt!" cried Herbert Druce angrily. "It's a mercy he's not drowned! The boat struck him. I think his arm is broken."

Young Hallowes uttered an exclamation of dismay.

"I'm awfully sorry!" he said, distressed. "It was scarcely my fault. I couldn't help myself. We saw you swimming, and I wanted to see what Jepson was like—it is Jepson who is hurt, isn't it?"—breaking off short.

"Yes," replied Druce.

"And so I bore down on you. Then the squall came. I had to take the tiller, because I don't know enough about sailing to risk tampering with the ropes. I had to keep running before the wind. To go about would have been fatal. It was blowing so hard I had to hang on to the tiller for dear life. Do you believe that it was an accident, Druce?"

"Yes," said Druce, "I suppose I must."

"I'm certain it was," said young Jepson, writhing in agony. "He didn't mean to run me down."

"And I'm as certain it wasn't!" growled Green. "He ran you down on purpose, Jepson, and he ought to be made to suffer for it."

### THE 2nd CHAPTER.
### A Brutal Attack—Roxby to the Rescue.

IT was Friday evening, the day before the 1,000 Yards Northern Counties Salt Water Swimming Championship was to be decided at Blackpool, and great excitement reigned in Roxby and Stedworth.

Jack Simson, captain of the Roxby Swimming Club, Maidment, who had come on as a distance-swimmer since last year, Sayers, and Sidney Hallowes were representing their club in the big event at Blackpool; whilst Green, a new recruit, Ben Jones, and Hyde Butterfield, a man who had done well at distances up to a quarter of a mile, were starting in the name of the Vampires.

Hyde Jepson, whose sensational swimming had set about the event that the championship was at his mercy, had been so badly hurt by the accident at sea that he would not be able to swim again for a month. No limbs had been broken, but he had been very badly bruised, and it was pretty certain that had he not dived the moment before the bows of the sailing-boat struck him, he would have been instantly killed. His escape was looked upon as something little short of marvellous.

Stedworth people said ugly things about young Hallowes. Swimming in Roxby and Stedworth was not regarded with the apathetic indifference that usually obtains down South. Roxby and the Vampires had established a rivalry as keen as that of Catford and the Polytechnic in the old cycling days when the pneumatic tyre had just been introduced; and as there was very little cricket worth the name in the Stedworth district, and no other sports, unless it were whippet racing—to appeal to the crowd until football came along in the autumn, the interest shown by the inhabitants of Roxby and Stedworth in the welfare of their swimming clubs, and the doings of the members thereof was of the keenest description.

When the big factories and works turned their employees out in the evening, groups of men and boys gathered in the streets to discuss the situation.

In Stedworth the opinion was unanimous that Sidney Hallowes, fearing that Jepson would beat him in the 1,000 Yards Championship, had deliberately and of malice aforethought put Jepson out of the race.

If it had not been an intentional accident, how came it that Hallowes went to sea in the sailing-boat owned by the two Roxby fishermen?

Sidney Hallowes's own explanation was simple enough. He had heard that Green and Jepson were going to swim a trial in the sea that afternoon, and he had taken the opportunity to ask for leave of absence, and had put out in the sailing-boat for the express purpose of watching Jepson at practice. Naturally enough, he had driven the sailing-boat near. The squall was an act of Providence. He could neither dispel or prevent it. For the rest, he would far rather have taken Jepson's injury upon himself, than have people say the ugly things of him they did.

Sidney Hallowes was almost broken-hearted. He could scarcely work on the Friday as he sat at his desk in the counting-house of Messrs. Brookes & Smith, wholesale fish contractors, for thinking of poor Jepson and the unkind things that were said of him.

"Buck up, Hallowes!" cried Jones; a good-looking fellow-clerk, who was going to Blackpool on the morrow to see the race. "You mustn't give way to moping, my lad, or you'll never win. What have you got to worry about?"

"The ugly things they say of me," said Hallowes bitterly. "I never did anyone a bad turn yet—and they say I tried to injure Jepson purposely. I have had no less than three threatening letters this morning, Jones."

The clerk nodded his head.

"I know," he said. "And Watson, the Roxby secretary, has had several addressed to him. I met him on the way to the office this morning. The Stedworth fellows say that they mean to lay you out. They don't intend that you shall start in the championship, Hallowes, if they can prevent it. All the same, I don't see how they are to stop you. They'd hardly attack you in the street, would they?"

"I don't know what they would do," muttered young Hallowes gloomily. "I would resign from the race, only if I did they would accuse me of being afraid. I can't do that. You remember the Roxby and District 100 Championship, Jones? Well, Leek Green, Green that day, when he had wilfully attacked me! That ought to be sufficient proof that I wouldn't do such a dastardly thing as wilfully injure Jepson. Why, there is nothing I should have liked better than to have received against him. He was worth beating; which is more, perhaps, than can be said of the others."

"I don't know," mused Jones. "Green is very much in earnest, they say. He has been taking great care of himself, and has trained systematically. I believe he is swimming better than he ever did. He will want some beating."

They went on with their work, and the afternoon began to draw towards a close. During the lunch-interval Sidney Hallowes showed himself outside in the street; but, during his walk to the tea-shop and back again, he saw no sign of any of the Vampires' followers.

Then office hours for the young Hallowes worked closed at seven o'clock. The place is situated near the harbour, and not far away is an immense range of pent-roofed sheds, where the fish is landed from the trawlers, which range up alongside as they come in to the moorings.

By seven o'clock the business of the day is done; the sheds are almost deserted. Here and there a fisherman may be seen leaning against a wall, sitting upon a bollard, smoking his pipe as he dreams his day-dreams. But for the rest there is scarcely anyone to be seen, and the police patrol the place but seldom.

Visitors to Roxby—and beyond the harbour there is much in the great fishing centre to admire—never come to the fish market, except in the mornings when the market is in full swing; and so, although it was yet quite light, though there was an unusual stillness in the air, the neighbourhood of the harbour and the docks was as silent as at midnight, when Sidney Hallowes and Jones left the offices of Messrs. Brookes & Smith.

Jones cast a quick glance at his friend.

"It's all right," he said, with a sigh of relief. "After all their talk, I don't think any of the Vampires' followers will attempt to injure you, Sid. It won't take you a minute to walk into the town, and you'll be quite safe then."

Sidney Hallowes smiled. He was not in the least afraid. No threat had the power to frighten him, boy though he was.

"Maidment, Watson, and Jack Simson said they would call for me to-night," he said, as they walked quickly onward side by side. "I wonder why they haven't turned up?"

"Don't know," said Jones. "But we'll find them at the Roxby club-house later on, Hallowes. Hurry up and have your grub, and get down there as soon as you can."

They parted at the next corner, where their ways divided, and Sidney Hallowes, full of thought, walked swiftly onward, looking neither to the right nor left.

Of a sudden, when he was passing an immense warehouse where all kinds of foreign grain and the imports of a similar kind were stored, the loneliest part of that lonely and gloomy spot, with the brick wall of the dock-sheds on the one side, and the rearing sides of the red-brick building on the other, there came a sudden cry of "Here he is!" And, looking quickly up, Sidney Hallowes saw a dozen men coming towards him. They had surrounded him in a moment.

"Now then, Hallowes!" said one of them, a big bulking brute, advancing with a beard grin on his face. "We'll give you injuring young Jepson! We've just come over from Stedworth, and we're going to put it out of your power to win the championship to-morrow."

Young Hallowes turned pale. Not that he was a coward. But in such a situation, with a dozen vicious-looking, brutal men surrounding him, anyone would be justified in feeling a trifle disconcerted.

The Roxby lad thought he saw a chance of escape, and leapt for it. He was a swift runner, full of pluck, but quickly though he moved, one of the men was just as quick, and an outstretched foot brought the boy heavily to the ground.

He was on his feet again in a moment, bruised and shaken, and as one of the ruffians attempted to seize hold of him, he planted a vicious blow on the fellow's mouth which sent him staggering backwards. But the odds were more than twelve to one against, for these were big, strong men, and Sidney Hallowes had not a chance. He knew it, too, and raised a cry for help.

"Help, help, help!" he shrieked.

"Stow that row," said one of the men, striking him, "or it will be the worse for you!"

The boy sprang to the wall, and set his back against it, and as one of the men ran in to seize him, he knocked him off his feet with a blow straight on the mouth.

"Brave! He's got some pluck!" said one of the others. "Better let him go!"

"No fear!" said the man who had been knocked down. "What? Let him go after he put Jepson out of the race? No fear; not much!"

They were swarming all round Sidney Hallowes now, and one of them got hold of the boy.

It was all over; he could struggle and fight no more.

But at that moment there came a welcome shout of "Roxby—Roxby!" and as the startled men looked round they saw five stalwart lads running as fast as they could towards them.

They were so astonished that they forgot to treat their prisoner securely, and with a wrench Sidney Hallowes set himself free, and once more adopted a fighting attitude against the wall.

"All right, Hallowes!" screamed Jack Simson, the captain of the Roxby Swimming Club, as he came rushing to the rescue.

The other four were Watson, the secretary, Maidment, Sayers, and Hall, all well-known swimmers and members of the champion polo team.

They were six to twelve now, but the Stedworth men had still a long way the better of the argument.

There was a glaring disparity of physique, however. Each of the six swimmers had a well-developed frame, was well-fed and nourished, and capable of enduring any amount of fatigue. They were athletes, every one of them.

On the other hand, the Stedworth men, as may be imagined, were ruffians of the loafing type, in no way connected with the Vampire Swimming Club, but adherents of that club because they were inhabitants of Stedworth. They were of the morbid type of club follower that hangs on to every club of the popular type, who imagine and magnify club grievances, and are only too willing and ready on such an occasion as this to take the law into their own hands.

Such ruffians as these get a club into ill repute. It was not the fault of the Vampires that those street loafers had journeyed over to Roxby with the avowed intention of disabling young Hallowes; it was their misfortune that they found the lad set about young Roxbyers to their banner. They could very well afford to do without them. It was from this gang that the threatening letters that Hallowes and the Roxby Club secretary had received had come.

Scared they watched the advance of the Roxby five. Then, looking at the somewhat diminutive stature of the lads, they imagined that they were quite capable of beating them off, and, spoiling for a fight, they ranged up, whilst a few of them set about young Hallowes, one of them lunging kicks at the boy, trying to disable him that way.

A moment later, with a rush, the Roxby men, led by Jack Simson, burst in upon the astounded ruffians, bowling them over like ninepins, and Maidment, with a terrific blow, knocked the brute who was kicking at Hallowes off his feet.

Two or three of them showed fight, but they were soon well beaten, and with a rush the rest took to flight.

Maidment, opponent picked himself up, holding the side of his jaw, and looking at the big, broad-shouldered Roxby lad, he began to cry.

"Get out," said Maidment, shaking his fists. "I'll half kill some of you!"

"Are you hurt, Sid?" asked Simson, putting his arm round the boy.

Hallowes was rubbing his chin ruefully. It was numbed, and pained terribly from the kick he had received.

"I don't think so," he said. "That brute kicked me badly, but I don't think much damage has been done."

"I hope you haven't," said Simson gravely; "because I reckon you are our only hope. You are the only bloke in the club stands any chance of beating Green to-morrow's race."

Sidney Hallowes looked round, and, despite the pain his wounded and bruised chin gave him, he had to laugh, for the fugitives from Stedworth were running this way and in every direction, and two were trying to dodge a policeman, who had come upon the scene from afar, and borne down upon the enemy with that leisurely approach for which all policemen are famous.

The Stedworth men were put to utter rout.

### THE 3rd CHAPTER.
### The Swimming Championship — How Young Hallowes Won.

ALL sorts of rumours prevailed in Blackpool on the following Saturday afternoon, when the 1,000 Yards' Northern Counties Salt Water Swimming Championship was to be decided.

Green was bound to win, everybody said, for young Hallowes had been badly hurt the night before by some Stedworth ruffians, who had set upon him. He hadn't even come to Blackpool, and didn't intend to start, rumour said.

Others declared as emphatically that the young swimmer was in Blackpool, having come over with the rest of the Roxby men, and was looking as fit as a fiddle, though he had a nasty bruise on the face, where he had been hit, and limped a bit.

These, too, plumped for Green to win, for they reckoned that the injury to the Roxby lad was sufficient to spoil his chances.

It was a dastardly shame that a boy should be set upon in the public streets; but there were many who remembered the incident of the injuring of the young Australian, Jepson, who said it served the Roxby swimmer right. It was but fit for him.

The race was to start at three o'clock, and by that time the pier was crowded, especially along the lower gallery, where the spectators could be so much nearer the swimmers. Boats were at a premium for hire.

Lady passengers came down to the sands in scores, and were carried aboard the waiting boats by strong-limbed boatmen. Men followed, and crowded rowing-boats made their way to the marked-out course, which was fifty yards long, with a diving board on the shore end, and a pole to touch for the turn.

Alongside this course the boats ranged up. The sea was as still as a sheet of glass. A brilliant sun shone overhead. The crowd was a record one, even for a championship at Blackpool.

Precisely to time the swimmers turned out. There was Mordaunt, of the Vespis; William Hallam, of the Manchester Swimming Club; Agnew, from Rochdale; Belmont and Hughes, from Liverpool; Green, Ben Jones, and Butterfield, of the Vampires; and Sayers, Hall, Maidment, and Jack Simson, of the Roxby Club, all looking remarkably smart in their light blue-and-white costumes.

As the twelve starters lined up on the diving-board a shout arose:

"Hallowes is a non-starter!"

Green smiled.

The race looked to be a certainty for him. But the smile came too soon, for there was a movement amongst the men lined up behind the starters on the platform, and a figure clad in light blue-and-white came forward and took his place in the line.

A great shout went up, and the ladies clapped their hands in delight.

It was Sidney Hallowes!

The boy looked as fit as a fiddle, but the bruise on his face could be plainly seen, and his chin was badly cut and bruised for inches round the spot where the ruffian had kicked him.

They were all ready, and the starter was about to give the word, when a youthful figure stepped forward, and Hyde Jepson could be seen grasping Willie Green by the hand.

"Good luck, Green!" said the young Australian. "Hope you win!"

"Thanks," said Green. "I mean to do my best!"

The boy now looked round.

"Which is Hallowes?" he asked.

"Here I am!" answered the young Roxby swimmer.

Jepson looked at him with a smile.

"I'm sorry that—that—that I pushed you yesterday, Hallowes," he said. "I've never heard of anything more blackguardly! I know perfectly well you had nothing to do with that boat running me down. It couldn't possibly have been helped. It was the squall that did it."

"Thanks!" said Sidney Hallowes, seizing the Australian's extended hand. "You know I wouldn't do anything unfair, Jepson. There's nothing I should like better than to swim you a match!"

"We'll fix up one when I am better," was the answer. "Meanwhile, you've got something to beat in Green. He's improved out of all recognition. How does your leg feel?"

"Pretty useless," answered the boy; "but I hope I shall be better when I get in the water."

There was no time for further parley. The

*(Continued on the next page.)*


## SPORTING LIFE.

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# The Salt Water Championship:

*(Continued from the previous page.)*

starter had called the "Get ready!" and the next moment the word was given, and into the water the thirteen swimmers plunged, the water being churned to foam as their thrusting arms dashed the spray up, and away they went in a somewhat uneven line to the turn.

Green touched here first, with Simson, Ben Jones, Mordaunt, of the Pespis, Balham, Agnew, and Hallowes a yard or so behind. The rest were close up, and so far it would have taken a clever man to have picked the winner. Green was swimming in wonderfully improved style, and shaped like a champion. Hallowes had adopted the trudgeon style, and was moving freely, though as yet he seemed somewhat hampered by his injured leg.

Green led at the second turn, with Mordaunt second.

He led at the third, the fourth, and the fifth. The rest of the positions were unchanged.

Jepson, from the pier, watched the race critically.

When half the distance had been covered, the positions being Green, Simson, Mordaunt, Butterfield, and Hallowes, with the rest tailing off, he cried:

"Green will win!"

When two-thirds of the race had been covered Green still led, Simson being five yards behind, Hallowes a yard further in the rear, and swimming strongly, and Butterfield, Mordaunt, who had been seized with the cramp in his right thigh, Maidment, and Hall the best of the rest.

Then Sidney Hallowes, whose leg was troubling him much less than when he had started, suddenly began to spurt, and passed his club mate and captain. Simson stopped swimming.

"Go it, young 'un!" he cried.

And with wonderful pluck, the boy got on even terms with Green. The spectators cheered themselves hoarse.

It was no end of a race. Green, seeing Hallowes had caught him, set to work in grim earnest to get away, but he could not. They touched at the turn together. Hallowes was, if anything, quicker, and got away a yard, but Green, with wonderful determination, won it back.

"Hallowes will win!" said Jepson admiringly. "And he deserves to; it's the pluckiest thing I ever saw!"

Neck and neck they raced, and turned again together. There was not an inch in it when the other end was reached, and now they were swimming to the finish. Hallowes put in all he knew. He gained a foot, two feet, a yard. Green was desperate. He lashed the water up like a madman, but when half the length had been swam, he suddenly stopped and threw up his arms.

"I'm done!" he gasped; and at once sank out of sight.

A cry of horror arose, but a moment later a black body descended over the side of a boat, and the next instant Secretary Watson, of the Roxby, reappeared, holding the almost unconscious swimmer in his arms.

"Help me, somebody!" he cried.

And willing hands got them into a boat. It was some minutes ere Green could speak. When he did there were teardrops standing in his eyes.

"Watson," he said, "I've been a beast. When I deserted the Roxby and joined the Vampires, I did it out of purely selfish motives. I was jealous of Simson, of young Hallowes, and all of you. I wanted to be cock of the walk. Hallowes taught me a useful lesson in the water-polo championship. Now you've taught me another. Will you shake hands?"

Watson gave him a hearty grasp.

"That's all right, Green!" he said. "You're really a very good sort at heart. Let us see whether we can't be friends as well as rivals for the future."

"We will!" said Green.

And then, as he was rowed to the starting-place and helped out on to the diving-board, the first person he saw was young Hallowes, who had just won the championship. The boy was talking to Jepson.

"Hallowes," said Green, with a smile, "I congratulate you! You are in every way the better man! Shake hands!"

Hallowes smiled.

"Thanks, Green!" he said. "You're a good chap, after all, and I almost wish you'd won!"

"No very nearly did!" laughed Jepson. "The time was good, Green. He did it in exactly 51 secs., and he and I have arranged a match."

"Oh!" said Green. "When's it to come off, Jepson?"

"Some day," answered Jepson, with a laugh; "when Hallowes and I are better."

"Well, I'm backing you, Jepson!" said Green.

"I wouldn't!" laughed Jepson. "Hallowes is a lot better man than any of you think. I think I shall have all my work cut out to beat him. But you chaps will catch cold. Get in to your dressing-rooms!"

They went in, laughing and chatting together, the best of friends, and so the Salt Water Championship ended. As for the match between Jepson and Hallowes—well, that is another story.

THE END.

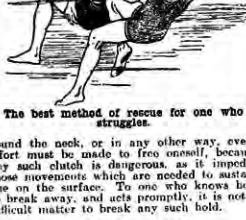
# LIFE SAVING:

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

**Methods of Rescue.**

My lesson last week was "on how to carry a person on the surface of the water when he was lying quiet," which is done as follows: Take hold of the drowning person by placing both hands on the sides of the face, and, covering his ears with the palms of the hands, turn him sharply on to his back, and swim with the back-stroke. Care should be taken to keep his legs well up to the surface, with the body as horizontal as possible, as in this position it will be much easier to move along; a perpendicular position causes a drag. The legs of the drowning person can be kept from sinking by occasionally giving them a kick and pressing them upwards. If care is taken to keep the legs up, much unnecessary labour will be saved. This week I propose to explain how to manage a person who may happen to struggle, and attempt to turn round upon his rescuer, and clutch him round the neck.

In the first place, a rescuer who knows his work will take every possible care not to be clutched, but accidents may happen, and if the drowning person does make the clutch, he will not quit his hold without being forced; he may also make an effort to climb on to the rescuer, and so make his work not only more difficult but also greatly endanger his life, therefore, when one happens to be clutched



**The best method of rescue for one who struggles.**

round the neck, or in any other way, every effort must be made to free oneself, because any such clutch is dangerous, as it impedes those movements which are needed to sustain one on the surface. To one who knows how to break away, and acts promptly, it is not a difficult matter to break any such hold.

**To break a clutch.**

If, for instance, one should happen to be clutched round the neck, the two bodies will be drawn together, and when this happens the rescuer who knows the correct method of release, will at once take a deep breath, lean well over the person clutching him, place one hand in the small of his back, holding him firmly, then raise the other arm in line with the shoulder, and pass it smartly over the drowning man's arms, hitting him with force on his chin, and at the same time pinch his nostrils and push him away with all possible force. The fact that the nose is pinched, and because of the push, the head is thus turned backwards as far as possible, will make the drowning man open his mouth for breathing. The actions described above will cause the drowning man's face to go under water, and when he opens his mouth the water will enter in place of air, and choking will follow, with the result that the rescuer will thus obtain complete control, and the clutch will be broken.

The position of the two bodies in the water at the moment the release is being made is shown in the accompanying diagram. Every reader must remember that he will not be an expert at freeing himself from such a clutch unless he takes care to practice; for this release to be done well, every movement must be regularly practised, so that it becomes part of oneself, and thus always ready to be employed when needed.

**To prevent struggling.**

Having made the release and become free to act as rescuer, one must note whether there be still some struggling, and if such be the case, at once proceed to turn the drowning person on his back, or take hold of him from behind firmly by the arms, just above the elbows. After taking a firm hold, be sure to draw his arms upward at right angles to his body, and, swimming by use of the back stroke, carry him to land, taking care to see that his face is always on the surface of the water, and so allowing him to breathe freely. The position of the bodies in the water is as shown in accompanying diagram; but should the rescuer find that the drowning person is attempting to turn round, he will prevent his doing so by holding him firmly, and if he turns to the right or left, always push in the opposite direction by slacking one arm and straightening the other, at the same time continuing to swim to land.

*(To be continued on Saturday next.)*

# A World's Champion:

*A brief record of the career of Mr. A. E. Wills, the holder of a world's record for cycling, whose articles on that sport commence in THE BOYS' REALM next week.*

**Wills' Favourite Role.**

In A. E. WILLS England has one of the fastest racing cyclists of modern times. Since he has been breaking records there has been a paucity of really first-class riders in this country, and as a consequence Continental and American cyclists have of late years captured most of the honours.

Wills's favourite role at the present time is that of pace following. Behind a 10-h.p. De Dion motor-cycle, driven by G. Barnes, the famous motor-cyclist, at Canning Town, on June 8th last, Wills essayed to beat the One Mile standing-start record held by A. A. Chase, time 1min. 38secs., made at the Crystal Palace, 1901. The pick-up at the start was not too fortunate, and a somewhat slow first quarter-mile resulted. It is therefore all the more to the credit of Wills that he reeled off half a mile in 51 3-5secs., and three-quarters of a mile in 1min. 13secs., or 2secs. faster than world's record. Going on, he completed the full mile in 1min. 35 1-5secs., or 2 4-5secs. faster than A. A. Chase's British professional record, which has stood since 1901. By this performance Wills gave proof that he can lower any British record on a favourable day.

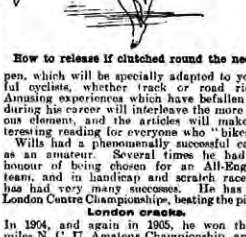
It was in Kennington that Wills first saw the light of day, in the year 1880. He stands but 5ft. 11in. in height, and is of light weight, only 8st. From his schooldays Wills has followed sport. On two occasions he played in

**the annual football match**

between London Schools and Sheffield Schools. He was also fond of cricket, and at one time had the free run of Kennington Oval. In connection with this he is fond of relating an adventure he once had with the giant Tom Richardson, of Surrey fame. Richardson Wills was at the wicket, taking all and sundry bowling, when Richardson sent up a stinger, which caught Wills on the pads, and actually lifted him yards away. When he came to, he decided that Tom's bowling was rather too fortissimo, and cricket lost him. Cycling is the gainer.

Though but a pocket edition in stature, Wills is **very powerful of limb,**

and is sturdily built. He has made himself the great cyclist he is by careful attention to all the details of track-riding, profiting by his own and other people's experience. He was noted for being the quickest off the mark in a sprint race, and his tactics in this class of event and in the longer distances left nothing to be desired. His methods will be fully expounded in the forthcoming series of articles from his



**How to release if clutched round the neck.**

pen, which will be specially adapted to youthful cyclists, whether track or road riders. Amusing experiences which have befallen him during his career will interleave the more serious element, and the articles will make interesting reading for everyone who "bikes."

Wills had a phenomenally successful career as an amateur. Several times he had the honour of being chosen for an All-England team, and in handicap and scratch races he has had very many successes. He has won London Centre Championships, beating the pick of

**London cracks.**

In 1904, and again in 1905, he won the 25 miles N. C. U. Amateur Championship, and he has still to his credit the Amateur Standing-start (paced) record at 1 mile (28 2-5secs), which he made at Herne Hill on July 6th, 1905. He had many doughty struggles with A. L. Reed, the Polytechnic crack, the little flier often beating his lengthy opponent.

Wills was touring on the Continent some time during the cycling cycle acts, in which he careered round a miniature track, paced by a motor-cycle going at a 40-mile bat, and early this season he was busy gaining experience on Continental tracks. In Paris and Madrid, in the spring of this year, he was enthusiastically received by large crowds.

His first match in England as a professional rider was at Canning Town track on May 18th, in a 100 kilometre paced race. His opponents on this occasion were Casey, the ex-holder of the One Mile London Centre Championship, and Germain, a coloured rider from America. These two cracks were never in the hunt with Wills, who won anyhow. On Whit Monday he won a 5-mile paced race at Ton-y-pandy, in Wales, beating track record.

*(Look out for the first of the Wills' articles next week.)*

# CRICKET:

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

**Slow Bowling.**

The very prince of slow bowlers was of course, Mr. A. G. Steel, who, in the "Badminton" Series, writes thus:

"The spin, or rotary motion, from right to left is gained by grasping the ball chiefly with the thumb and first and second fingers, the third and fourth fingers being placed together round the other side of the ball. The moment the ball leaves the hand, the latter is turned quickly over from right to left, and at the same time the first and second fingers and thumb coming over with the hand, impart a powerful twist to the ball, which leaves the hand when the latter is turned palm downwards. There is also at the time of delivery an outward and upward movement of the elbow, which gives the arm the shape of a curve, or almost a semi-circle. The ball goes on its way spinning rapidly from right to left, and the moment it touches the ground twists very sharply toward the off-side of the batsman. "The ball—termed in cricket parlance, the 'leg-break'—when well bowled is perhaps one of the most deadly of all balls, but it is also the most difficult of all balls for a bowler to master. It is always a slow ball, as to bowl it fast with any accuracy of pitch is more or less an impossibility. At any rate, it may be assumed that he who no bowler has ever yet approached who could bowl it otherwise than slow. . . . There are some slow bowlers who have become fairly proficient at it, and who have enjoyed at various times, especially against batsmen they have never met before, a certain amount of success. But it is a style of bowling which should be encouraged only to the extent of enabling every bowler to use it occasionally."

**Distinctive Slow Bowlers.**

The distinctive slow bowlers are L. C. Braund, L. G. Hayes, W. H. Trace, C. L. Townsend, A. E. Stoddart, C. McGahey, B. Cranfield, and G. Dennett. Braund is good on sticky wickets, and C. B. Fry has described him as an extremely good bowler, and in this respect is quite unique among leg-break bowlers. The leg-break bowler, as a rule, is apt to change bowler on fast wickets, and as such is very useful. On slow wickets, or difficult wickets of any kind, it is usually impolitic to use a leg-break bowler, because, even though he may get wickets, he is liable to be very expensive compared with the ordinary type of good left or right-hand bowler. It is quite safe, however, to use Braund on a sticky wicket, since he can maintain a perfect length and keep down a good lot of runs as well as bowl a ball which, if anything, is more difficult to play than the sharpest breakaway from a left-handed bowler. In fact, both on good and bad wickets he is a stock bowler, suitable to go on first, and to keep up his end as long as he is required to do so.

Braund delivers the ball with his hand precisely over the line between wicket and wicket, throwing his left leg well across to his right front. He brings his arm over very quickly, and the slow flight of the ball as it leaves his hand is rather deceptive. He puts on a tremendous amount of finger-spin, dropping his hand towards his forearm as he turns his hand after in front of the ball. He makes the ball come from the pitch very quickly compared with his pace in the air. This is a great point in his favour, as leg-break bowlers, as a rule, are rather dotect. He occasionally bowls a good length ball, which makes a good variation, even though he changes his action in a way that the batsman can scarcely fail to detect.

He bowls almost entirely at the wicket, pitching the ball on, or just outside, the leg-stump, and only as a variation tries for catches at long-leg and square-leg.

Dennett is a fine left-hand bowler, and he pitches the ball well up to the batsman, and is not in the least afraid of being hit; but owing to the way his break acts, with a kind of little kick from the pitch, he is hard to hit, and to be sure not to miss it. He has a very good ball, which swings across the wicket with his arm, and which comes very quickly from the pitch. But the great secret of the slow bowler is length, and after practising the ball, time day after day over the ball in this way, then one may try to vary the break and the flight of the ball. A slow bowler will often be one of varied pace—by that is, who mixes them, and who never bowls two balls alike. He must study as well the weak spots in the defence of the batsman, and he will soon notice that a particular delivery, the style of it and the pace of it very suit the batsman, and then he should give him that ball at least once and over, preceding it by a delivery of altogether another kind, either faster or slower; but the alteration in speed must be hidden as far as possible at the moment of delivery.

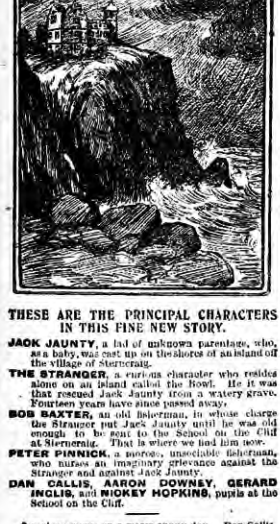
A slow ball may be delivered with varying pace by drawing back the arm at the instant before it leaves the hand, and a faster ball by swinging the arm further back. If you are the happy possessor of the ability to make the ball spin both from the off and from the on, employ this at different times.

*(To be continued on Saturday next.)*

# 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 shore of an island off the village of Sternerale.

**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 Sternerale. 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 incapable. From this perilous position he is rescued by Jack Jaunty.

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

Soon after a new boy arrives at the school. His name is Mark Ricketts, and he makes a bad impression on the other boys.

Jack Jaunty and his chums play a joke on Peter Pinnick, who swears revenge. Jack makes friends with some new arrivals at Sternerale, Mr. Belton and his two daughters. He takes them for a tour of inspection around the cliffs.

Mr. Terrapin and Mr. Braddock, two under-masters at the School on the Cliff, are rivals for the affections of Miss Harrison, the governess of Mr. Belton's two daughters.

There is the cause of much bad feeling between them. Mr. Belton's two daughters attempt to swim to the Bowl Island, and when in danger of drowning are rescued by Peter Pinnick, who is greatly elated, and taunts Jack Jaunty about his bravery.

Rickey Hopkins suddenly declares to Will Raddle that he greatly admires him for a certain person. Will is much surprised, and hazards a guess that it is either Jennie the school housemaid, or the cook who is fat and hotty, much to Rickey's indignation.

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

### THE 18th CHAPTER (*continued*).
### A Rough Wooer.

"I'LL give you something," said Nickey, "if you go on insulting me like that! What sort of a girl would you be spoons on?"

"Well," said Will, after a few moments' reflection, "I think Laura Belton is about my style."

"And she's mine," said Nickey complacently.

Will doubled up and went through a variety of contortions expressive of uncontrollable laughter. Nickey drew himself upright, and glanced at him with a burning eye.

"What are you laughing at?" he asked, with a hiss.

"Laura Belton and you sweethearts! Oh, my sides!" gasped Will. "Why, it would be a case of a bird of paradise being courted by a tomtit."

Nickey tossed off his cap and began to roll up the cuffs of his jacket. Will rolled about with laughter.

"I can't help it," he said, "if you kill me! Nickey, old boy, you have no chance. I'm on there."

"Yah! Bosh!" exclaimed Nickey.

"Fact!" said Will. "There, you come up and see if they are hanging round the house. You will see her blush as soon as she sets eyes on me and that's evidence enough for a dozen unbelievers."

"Come on," said Nickey; "we can get up here."

He began to scramble up an accessible part of the cliff, and after a few false steps and a tumble or two, succeeded in getting to the top. By that time Will's laughter had all gone out of him, and he was looking exceedingly grave.

"I don't think we will go on to-day," he said. "The fact is, Nickey, we are obliged to keep our engagement a secret, as her father objects."

"Oh, you are an ass!" said Nickey ferociously. "Look here, I mean to see this business through. There's the Folly, and—bang it, there's Peter Pinnick at the gate speechifying! Come on, let's hear what he is saying."

They ran on, and when within easy distance of the Folly stopped short, for the demeanour of Peter Pinnick was very threatening. He was shaking his fist at somebody inside the garden, and roaring out something about his rights. A moment later and Mr. Belton was at the gate, pale, but with a very determined look upon his face.

"Understand me, Pinnick," the boys heard him say, "I will endure no more of this. You shall not levy blackmail on me, or refer to my daughter in the insulting way you have done."

"I saved the gal's life," roared Peter, "and mighty little you've done for me by way of payment."

"I gave you what I consider to be enough," said Mr. Belton: "and not another farthing shall you have! Had you behaved better I might have done something more for you. Go away!"

"I'll go when I like," said Peter defiantly; "and I'll come back when I like—this evening, perhaps."

"If you do," said Mr. Belton, "it will be the worse for you."

"If you tackle me," replied Peter, with an insulting leer, "you'll find you've got hold of a man. Mind this—I'm coming back to-night, and if the gal's here, I mean to have a little friendly chat with her."

Mr. Belton moved forward a pace as if to strike him, but as Peter had already begun to slouch away he let him go. The ruffian went reeling by the boys without so much as looking at them, and they could hear him mutter:

"Mighty cool, after all I've done! Shirking me, I calls it, when I've a right to be taken up as a friend for life, like them 'ere humble chaps we read on. If he'd asked me to have a drink I wouldn't ha' said no, but to order me off—me, Peter Pinnick, as did a hero's deed, and——"

The rest was lost in the distance as he slouched along the cliff. Mr. Belton, who also had now appeared to perceive the boys, returned to his garden.

"Well," said Nickey, "I think you are right. We won't go to the Folly to-day. Let's go up to the Birch's Wood and see if any rabbits are running about. I've got a catapult in my pocket, and perhaps I can bowl one over."

### THE 19th CHAPTER.
### Who Did It?

JACK had been out with a strange companion during the afternoon. It was no other than Mark Ricketts.

He did not thrust himself upon the boy, but circumstances played into his hands. It was Mark who suggested that they should go out together.

"I want you to be a friend to me," Mark said.

"I will try to," replied Jack laconically; "but you must go straight."

Jack made no reference to his writing to anyone, and whither their feet went, or what they said and did, was not known. But Jack was very thoughtful all that evening, and said little to anyone. It appeared that there was a vacant bed in Jack's dormitory, and to the surprise of the other Mark was that night shifted into it. Nickey was intensely disgusted.

"It's as good as having a spy upon us," he said to Jack in a whisper. "We ought to swear him in."

"Let him alone," was all Jack said.

There was no fun that night before going to sleep. Mark's presence was like a wet blanket on them all. In a quarter of an hour the place was quiet, and all but Jack asleep.

He, for a wonder, was very watchful, and lay watching the beams of a waning moon shining through the window—the blind having, as usual, been drawn up so as to let in the first light in the morning.

Mark Ricketts lay in a bed that stood foot to foot with his own—with an intervening space, of course. There was light enough for him to see the boy's face, and he thought how much better it looked in repose than when he was awake.

"He hardly looks like the same," he said softly to himself.

As the thought flashed through his brain, Mark's face changed, and the familiar, everyday look was upon it—a compound of anxiety and secret watchfulness. He moved about restlessly and moaned.

"Dreaming," thought Jack; and then there rang out from the boy's lips a short, sharp cry. It did not rouse the sleepers, but it startled Jack, and he sprang into a sitting position.

"Ricketts," he exclaimed, "what is the matter with you?"

No answer was given him. The boy was still asleep, and Jack was sinking back again, when Mark lifted himself up and raised his two hands clasped together.

"Don't send me there!" he gasped. "I can't do it! They will find me out, and then——"

The rest of the sentence was simply incoherent muttering as he fell back on his pillow. After that he was quiet, and Jack listened in vain for anything that might give him a clue to the dream that tortured the boy.

At length sleep came to him, and he heard nothing more until the morning, when the call-bell roused him from a dreamless sleep. To dress and to hurry down was the first thought of the boys. Summer mornings were things to be made the most of. By-and-by the cold winter would come, and then the early run upon the cliff would be a thing of the past.

As Jack and half a dozen others emerged from the house they saw a knot of men gathered on the summit of the cliff looking down upon something in their midst. Curiosity is a part of the nature of old and young, and the boys ran towards the group, but were perceived and stopped by Baylis, who came out to meet them.

"Don't come here, young gentlemen," he said. "It isn't a purty sight."

"What is the matter?" asked Jack.

"A man's body—Peter Pinnick," said Baylis.

"Merciful Heaven!" thought Jack. "This is Jim Baxter's work." But he said nothing aloud, and close behind him were Nickey and Will, both as white as ghosts.

"He was found an hour ago," said Baylis; "and we sent for the doctor. He may be here any minute."

"Why don't you take him home?" asked Jack.

"We got him as far as here," said Baylis, "and he seemed to be going, so we stopped for the doctor. Whatever he may be, he is a man in form, and we want him to have a chance of living."

"Where did you find him?"

"Just outside the Folly, close to the gate."

On exclamations from Nickey, soft yet expressive of alarm, fell upon Jack's ear. Baylis had turned back, and the other boys, save Will, gone a little forward. Jack looked at Nickey, and was amazed by the expression on his face.

"It's upset you, Nickey," he said. "You had better go in; I'll go with you."

"Let us go to some quiet place," said Nickey. "I've something to tell you. Will knows what it is."

"Sit down here," said Jack, pointing to some gorse bushes. "Nobody will notice us. Now, Nickey, what is it?"

"Jack, can't you guess who's been beating him?"

"Perhaps I can," replied Jack; "but it is no affair of mine, as I can only guess at it."

"You've heard him threaten Pinnick, perhaps. He's been annoying Mr. Belton."

"What has Mr. Belton to do with it?"

"Why, everything," said Nickey. "He did it."

"Oh, you are a little duffer!" said Jack. "What has put that into your head?"

"Just intuition," said Nickey.

And then he told Jack all about the scene he and Will had witnessed yesterday, and what they had heard Daddy say—a most amazing story.

"Why, the fellow must be mad!" said Jack. "As for Mr. Belton's attacking him, I can hardly think it true. He would most likely lock him up, and yet—confound the blackguard!—it was enough to make Mr. Belton do anything."

The colloquy was cut short by the arrival of the doctor in his gig. Bidding his friends wait where they were, Jack ran forward and joined the group around the injured man. Having scanned the faces of the men, he saw that Bob Baxter was not there, but Jim was, just on the other side of the crowd, looking about him in a casual, indifferent way, oblivious, to all appearance, of what was going on.

"He has nothing to do with it," thought Jack; "but that Mr. Belton should——"

The crowd parted. The men had lifted Peter Pinnick up again on a broad plank, and were bearing him, attended by the doctor.

He had received several blows about the head, and was a *fearful* sight. Jack looked upon him as a dead man. It was a terrible trouble to him; for, whoever did it, a friend of his would suffer. The first idea—that it was Jim Baxter—was against the circumstantial evidence.

Peter had been very rude to Mr. Belton, and promised to give him any amount of annoyance unless he satisfied his unjustifiable demands. Mr. Belton had threatened him with violence, and there he was. The idiotic assumption and insulting remarks of Peter Pinnick would have exasperated any father, especially one of so refined a nature as the owner of the Folly. The conduct of the ruffian was enough to madden him.

Horrible as the punishment was, Jack could hardly sympathise with him; for he felt that he deserved death for the incomprehensibly insolent way he had spoken of Ivonne. But Peter Pinnick was known to be a man of cranks. He read books of the most romantic order, and formed his ideas of life from them.

As we know, he always insisted that Jack was washed ashore, with some jewellery about his neck, like the babes of romance of a hundred years ago; and now he had got it into his head that, having saved Ivonne's life, she ought to become his betrothed. It was most ridiculous, but it was none the less aggravating on that account.

"He won't get such things into his head any more," said Jack, with a sad smile, turning away.

Ere he had gone a hand was laid lightly upon his shoulder, and, looking around, he saw Mark Ricketts, whom he had not observed before.

"Have you any idea who did it?" he asked.

"Why do you ask me that question?" demanded Jack.

"Because I have been watching your face, and I thought you did," Mark answered.

"Now, Ricketts," said Jack sternly, "I will give you a bit of advice. Just you attend to your own affairs, and let others alone. You had better not take to prying, or others may play Paul Pry with you!"

The boy shrank back, just like a snail that has been touched with a stick, so thought Jack, and a curious leaden colour spread over his face. It was so marked that it was exactly like a film, and it was anything but pleasant to the eye.

"I speak plainly to you," continued Jack, "because I am certain that you have a secret to keep, and that you are not exactly what you seem."

"I—I have never pretended to be anything," stammered Ricketts.

"No; but let me ask you one question," said Jack. "Is your name really Ricketts?"

Why Jack put the question he did not know at the time, nor could he afterwards assign any reason for it; but it was uttered, and the effect was very marked. Mark shrank further back, and a cold perspiration broke out upon his face. He trembled in every limb.

"As I live," thought Jack, "I have hit him in a tender place."

"Somebody's been telling you something," said Ricketts hoarsely.

"No," replied Jack; "and I don't know that it is any business of mine, but I have lately been convinced that you have been sent here for a purpose. You are a ward in Chancery, you say?"

"I—I don't know what I am. Mr. Terrapin sent me here."

"Who?" exclaimed Jack.

Mark Ricketts bit his lip, and made no further answer.

"Then it is the fellow who was here some time ago," thought Jack. "Then I have made a good guess; there is a mystery."

"Ricketts," he said, kindly enough, "don't you be made a tool of by any man. If you want a friend, come to me, and perhaps I may find somebody to help you."

"I don't want any help, and I have nothing to confide to anybody," muttered Ricketts, as he turned away.

Jack let him go, for he saw that no good would come by questioning him further. After all, he was not certain he was in any way concerned in the matter, and he had a strong objection to interfering needlessly in other people's business.

Peter Pinnick was taken to his home, where an aged female relative acted as his housekeeper, and the police, of necessity, began to inquire into the affair.

Inquiries at the Folly elicited assertions from the whole household that no sounds of quarrelling or struggling had been heard. Mr. Belton was particularly emphatic in denying that he heard the slightest sound.

### THE 20th CHAPTER.
### Excursionists at Sternerale.

THERE had been no rain for a week, and the cliff being dry and hard, no footmarks would be found to give the least clue to the assailant. The authorities were obliged to confess themselves at fault. The Stranger came over the next day, and from Jack's lips heard the story. To Jack's surprise, his friend said it weighed on Patrick's mind.

"An intrusive, prying fellow," he said. "I knew that he had been a frequent visitor to the Bowl, and I only wish that I had caught him!"

Then he asked if anyone had arrived at the village, and when Jack replied in the negative, he looked disappointed. He wrote a letter to Mr. Bonnington, which he gave to Jack with one of his usual tips, and then parted.

Bob, who had taken our hero on board the Seamew, rowed him ashore again, of course. On the way there he said:

"That 'ere poor boy of mine, Master Jack, gets stranger than ever. Now he's taken to frequenting the beasts out without any notice and regular roars, as if he'd got hold of a good joke. That's a sight worse than his glum way."

Jack sympathised with him, but could not say why Jim's malady had taken this turn. On returning to the school he sought Mr. Bonnington, and delivered his letter, which that gentleman opened in his presence. One glance at it raised on the schoolmaster's face a look of overwhelming surprise.

"Dear me," he cried, "this is astonishing!

Would you kindly tell Grueiton to find Mrs. Bonnington, and ask her to be good enough to come to me at once?"

Gradually there settled on Sternerraig—or, rather the people of it—the opinion that Mr. Belton was responsible for the injuries inflicted on Peter Pinnick. But it was not a matter of public talk. In the quietude of their homes the fishermen discussed it with their wives, and without sympathy for the injured.

"Peter drove him to it," they said, "with that 'ere talk of his about not being paid in full for that job of saving the young ladies."

The police were of the same opinion as the people, and, as in duty bound, they tried to get evidence together to bring it home to him. But they utterly failed. It seemed that it was the custom of Miss Harrison, who acted as housekeeper as well as governess, to take the keys of the back and front doors, and the leading rooms to bed with her, and she declared that nobody could have got out of the house or into it without her knowing it.

Mr. Belton knew by the inquiries made that suspicions were directed towards him, and he was very indignant.

"As if I would soil my hands by fighting with such a brute," he said. He declared that he would never rest until he found out who was the real offender, nor visit anyone until his good name was entirely cleared from the shadow that rested on it.

The weapon wherewith the assault had been committed could not be found. Search was made for it in every direction without avail. Mr. Belton freely threw up his premises to the police for examination.

To Jack Jaunty the whole thing was a nightmare. He could not quite convince himself of Mr. Belton's innocence, and this got him into trouble with Ivonne. He met the girls and their governess one morning on the beach, and they all sat down on the beach together. Peter Pinnick had been lying four days hovering between life and death, and as yet unable to give any account of the affair.

"It's a shame—a bitter, burning shame," said Ivonne, breaking suddenly into the subject, "for people to suspect papa."

She was looking at Jack as she spoke, and saw a change come over his face. Quick as the gentle sex generally are in interpreting emotions, she saw what that change meant.

"You suspect him!" she said, with flashing eyes.

"I do not wish to suspect anyone," replied Jack, "but I am very much troubled. There is a possibility of someone else having attacked the man."

"A possibility!" said Ivonne bitterly. "And who is the other possible person?"

"I would rather not say," returned Jack wearily. "Don't let us talk about it, please."

"I see what it is," said Ivonne, rising. "You are as bad as the rest. Please go away! Don't speak to me any more!"

"Ivonne!" exclaimed her sister.

"What have I told you about being hasty?" said Miss Harrison.

"If it is a hasty thing to defend my father," replied Ivonne, "then I am guilty. I won't speak to anyone who suspects him for a moment."

"I do not want to suspect him," said Jack. "I fight against the feeling, but it will come over me. I can't help it. I have felt as if I could kill the fellow myself."

"When?" curtly asked Ivonne.

Jack dare not tell her.

He judged rightly that the idiotic manner Pinnick talked about Ivonne was kept from her. Nobody with any decency, or a spark of sense, would have so much as whispered it in her ear.

"Oh, so many times!" was all he could say.

"That is one way of getting out of it," said Ivonne. "I don't want to hear any more. Go away!"

Jack rose up, raised his cap, and strode away hot, angry, bitterly pained. Miss Harrison called to him to stop, but he did not heed her.

"I won't be sat upon in that way!" muttered Jack. "She is just like other girls. I can see—uppish as she can be, and thinks that a fellow can be trodden on like dirt."

He was so angry that he said to himself a great deal more than this; but as he really did not breathe these things from his heart, we won't set them down here. It was time for him to get back to breakfast, though he felt he had but little appetite for it. Anger is a very destructive power to the gastronomical organs. As he climbed up the cliff the sound of a brass band fell upon his ears—a most amazing experience at Sternerraig. He could not call to mind having heard such a thing before; but the mystery of it was soon explained.

A party of excursionists from an adjacent town had arrived on various vehicles, with flags and banners, and were dismounting as Jack came into view of them. On a big banner, with two poles held by four men, were the words in large capitals, "The Friendly Few." Underneath this, in a scroll and in smaller letters, was the motto, "We help ourselves, and ask help from nobody."

The Friendly Few seemed to Jack to be rather numerous, especially as they had brought their wives and families with them. They outnumbered the population by three to one, and their brass band was enough to stun all mortal ears within a quarter of a mile of it.

"This won't do for a sick man," thought Jack; and, although he had no sympathy for Peter as a man, he was generous enough to consider him as an invalid. So he went up to a man, who wore an enormous sash, and was giving sundry directions to those around him, believing him to be "boss of the show."

"You will excuse me," said Jack, "but we have a man very ill in the village, and he won't be able to stand that brass band."

He had to shout to make himself heard, thanks to the band. The boss stared at him.

"What are we to do?" he asked. "We can't get along without music. The women will be sure to want to dance by-and-by."

"You have brought your food with you," said Jack, looking at sundry hampers and stone bottles. "Go higher up. It is a far prettier view from yonder point."

"Oh, blow the view!" said the leader. "But, as we don't come out to kill a man, we'll move a bit."

He stopped the band at once, and told the party the reason for some slight alteration in their arrangements.

"Get in again, you women," he said; "the men can walk."

The women and children scrambled into the vehicles again, and the whole party set out in the direction of the Folly.

"I hope the Beltons will like it," said Jack grimly. "I don't care. Ivonne should not be so beastly unpleasant. She will have, with the band blowing near her, to put wool into her pretty ears."

Even in his anger he could not help doing justice to Ivonne. Her ears were very pretty.

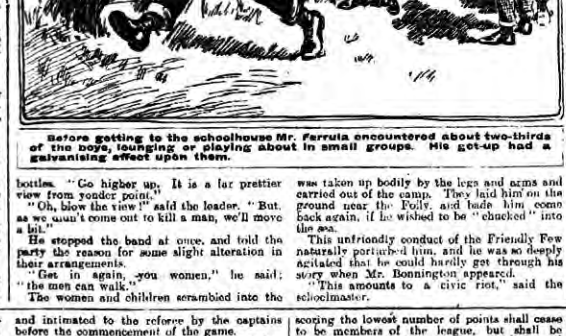
### THE 21st CHAPTER.
### In the Cleft.

"EXCURSIONISTS here!" exclaimed Mr. Bonnington, aghast. "What new form of sacrilege is this?" Mr. Ferrula, you must go and tell them that wandering persons are not permitted to stay here."

Mr. Ferrula would rather have been without the commission; but as the performance of it would enable him to escape from a portion of his morning's labours, he set out. After an hour's absence he returned; but, instead of going into the school-room, he summoned Gruelton, and bade him ask Mr. Bonnington to step out a minute. He gave this message from a dark corner of the hall, and as soon as Gruelton was gone he slipped into the study, and there awaited the coming of his principal.

Absolute and complete success had not attained his mission. Instead of moving on as desired, the Friendly Few declared they would spend the day where they were—on a spot on the other side of the cleft.

Mr. Ferrula was contumaciously asked if he wanted them to go on moving all round the British Isles; and, when he became imperative, somebody standing behind him knocked his hat over his eyes. While in a state of darkness a squirt fountain was applied to his neck, and the contents discharged down his back. Then he



Before getting to the schoolhouse Mr. Ferrula encountered about two-thirds of the boys, lounging or playing about in small groups. His get-up had a galvanising effect upon them.

was taken up bodily by the legs and arms and carried out of the camp. They laid him on the ground near the Folly, and bade him come back again, if he wished to be "chucked" into the sea.

This unfriendly conduct of the Friendly Few naturally perturbed him, and he was so deeply agitated that he could hardly get through his story when Mr. Bonnington appeared.

"This amounts to a civic riot," said the schoolmaster.

"They are all drinking as hard as they can," said Mr. Ferrula, "and by-and-by they will go mad and run amok."

"The inhabitants of Sternerraig must be warned," said Mr. Bonnington, "so that they may arm and be ready to defend themselves."

He decided to send Jack Jaunty on this errand, and Jack took it on himself with pleasure. But he found it difficult to accomplish, as nearly all the houses were empty. The inhabitants had gone off to fraternise with the Friendly Few. Such a chance of having a lively day was very rare. Even Mrs. Baxter had gone, and had taken Annie with her; but Bob was at home, and Jack found him turning the furniture about in search of something.

"What have you lost, Bob?" Jack asked as he entered the doorway.

"It ain't much!" muttered Bob; "but I should like to find it. I'd be easier in my mind."

"Can I help you? What is it?"

"No, Master Jack. It doesn't matter."

He tilted his hat and scratched his forehead in a way he had when puzzled or vexed. Jack did not like to ask him any more questions about his loss, and they went out together.

"How's Pinnick this morning?" Jack inquired. "Have you heard?"

Bob's face turned very pale, despite the sunburn on his skin, and his voice quivered as he replied:

"The doctor says he's like to die, and then it will be a case of murder. It's bound to be got at the bottom of. Murder is a thing they won't let rest."

"No, indeed," replied Jack, in a low tone of voice. "Ah, Bob, it's a horrible affair, anyway!"

"So it is," replied Bob; "and goodness knows what'll be the end to it."

Jack went back to the school, and further staggered Mr. Bonnington with the news that the village was practically deserted.

"Bob Baxter says no great harm will come of it," said Jack. "The Friendly Few have only come here to enjoy themselves."

Bob had said as much just before Jack left him, and no doubt he was right; but Mr. Bonnington was still doubtful.

"I don't understand this invasion at all."

He prohibited the boys going near them, and at noon, when they turned out for recreation, they had to stand afar off and watch. The brass band was still going, and apparently had never stopped. Indeed, it seemed quite as powerful as at first.

"I can see them dancing!" cried Nickey.

"Right on the edge of the cliff," one of the others added.

"It only seems so from here," growled Dan Callis. "They are not such fools as to caper about on the edge of the precipice."

"Oh, how I wish we could go nearer!" sighed Nickey.

Mr. Bonnington at that moment passed by. He was accompanied by Mrs. Bonnington, and they were going to inspect the strangers, and judge for themselves what sort of people they had been invaded by. In an hour they returned, and, in the sentiments of Mr. Bonnington, a complete revolution had taken place.

"The scene is quite pastoral," he said to Mr. Redditch; "a simple people enjoying themselves in a most commendable manner. I shall give the boys a half-holiday. We will join the gathering."

Mrs. Bonnington declined to be of the party. She thought the exhibition was somewhat vulgar, but she did not object to the holiday idea.

"An extra day of quiet is always agreeable," she said.

The glad tidings came to the boys like some sweet boon. Any form of holiday would have been welcome, but with a brass band and a prospect of fun it was delirious joy. Mr. Bonnington decided to go with them, and, with the teachers, "advanced in friendly force" upon the strangers. To put it otherwise, he adopted the procession form so familiar to schoolboys.

"It will make an impression on these strangers," he said, "and make them understand that our sentiments towards them are really of a friendly nature."

At two o'clock the school set out—an imposing array of instructors and instructed—the

*(Continued on the next page.)*

## How to Form an Association Football League.

*By O. L. B. COVERDALE, Hon. Sec., East Riding of Yorkshire F.A., etc., etc.*

**Rules** *(continued).*

THIS week I give another portion of the rules, which will be followed by hints and methods of working the proposed League, and how the official sanction is to be obtained. Continuing the rules from the previous week, we start with No. 11.

11.—All matches must be arranged at least one clear month before the 1st of September at a meeting of club secretaries. If possible, dates shall be arranged by mutual consent, but otherwise by ballot. Clubs must arrange for the last league match to be played off not later than the end of March.

12.—All matches shall be played under the rules of the Football Association, and shall be of ninety minutes' duration, unless otherwise agreed by the captains of the competing teams, and intimated to the referee by the captains before the commencement of the game.

13.—Any amateur player shall be qualified to play who has been registered with the secretary of the league not less than seven days before playing, and resides within (say six) miles of the headquarters of the club. In the event of a player having played for one club and wishing to play for another club in the same league during the same season, the transfer of such player must be sanctioned by the committee for by the secretary, as provided below) seven days before he can play. He must in addition have been duly registered (as provided above) as a player by the club to which he is being transferred.

14.—The secretary shall have power to transfer a player from one club to another without calling a meeting of the committee, if the secretaries of the two clubs notify to him their agreement to such transfer, and also that the player is clear on the club's books in every respect, but no player shall on any account be transferred after the 1st of January in each season.

15.—At the end of the season the club scoring the highest number of points shall be declared winners of the league, and the two clubs scoring the lowest number of points shall cease to be members of the league, but shall be eligible for re-election at the annual general meeting.

16.—A win shall count two points, and a draw one point. In the event of two or more clubs being equal in points they shall play off on a neutral ground selected by the committee, and the net proceeds shall be apportioned to the funds of the league, who shall pay all expenses.

17.—In all cases when matches are stopped on account of darkness or other unavoidable cause, the game shall be replayed, unless the opposing team have contributed to the match not finishing by reason of being late.

18.—All referees shall be appointed by the committee, and the fee for all references shall be (say 2s.) which fee shall be paid by the home team. Third-class railway fare shall also be allowed where necessary, and shall be paid by the home team.

19.—Each club shall take its own gate receipts for the original official fixture. In the event of any matches not being played, or any matches being ordered to be replayed, a fresh date shall be mutually arranged within seven days, and the receipts of such match shall be divided as the committee may determine; but if the visiting team do not attend, then the home team shall be entitled to the whole of the receipts (as though the adjourned date was the original one). If a fresh date shall not be so arranged the committee shall fix the date.

20.—All protests must be lodged with the secretary in writing (in duplicate) within seven days of the date of the match, and must be accompanied by a fee of (say 2s. 6d.). All other complaints against clubs, players, or officials must be lodged with the secretary in writing (in duplicate) within seven days of the date when the cause of complaint arose, and must also be accompanied by a fee of 2s. 6d. Such fees may be forfeited in the event of such protests or complaints not being sustained. All protests and complaints must contain full particulars in duplicate of the charges alleged, and the secretary shall, within three days of the receipt of the same, send a copy to the club, player, or other persons against whom such protest or complaint is laid; but no objection relative to the ground, goal-posts, bars, &c., shall be entertained unless a protest is lodged with the referee before the commencement of the match by the protesting captain in the presence of the captain of the opposing team.

*(To be continued next Saturday.)*

## The School on the Cliff.

*(Continued from the previous page.)*

tallest boys first, and a gradual dwindling down to the smallest. Jack and Dan Callis were at the head, a tutor marched on either side, and Mr. Bonnington brought up the rear.

"There are a lot of girls with them, are there not?" asked Dan.

"Yes," replied Jack; "but they seem to all have sweethearts with them."

"I shall have a bit of fun with some of them," said Dan.

"I advise you to let them alone," returned Jack.

"Oh, go and advise your paternal grandmother!" muttered Dan.

"If you give me any of your impudence," said Jack, "I shall be obliged to knock you down."

"Here?" sneered Dan.

"Here!" said Jack, with quiet emphasis.

And then Dan caved in.

The Friendly Few had fully fraternised with the natives, and hilarity was the order of the day when the school, making a detour to avoid the Cleft, arrived upon the scene.

A vast amount of vigorous dancing of a crude, and, in some cases, impromptu order was going on. The wild attempts of some of the young fishermen to waltz with the lady visitors was worth half-a-crown to see. As for the brass band, it did not seem to have reached the zenith of its powers, for it was increasing in strength with every tune, and its ear-splitting properties were, without doubt, of a very high order.

The male portion of the Friendly Few were also very hospitable, dispensing liquid refreshments to their guests with a liberal hand. Each stone jar seemed to be conjurer's inexhaustible bottle. The more they poured out the more there appeared to be left in it.

"What a charming scene!" said Mr. Bonnington, gazing around him with a beaming face. "Quite a seaside arcadia!"

As he spoke the big drums ceased, and the beater thereof, with a gait none too certain, wended his way to the nearest stone bottle, and craved some portion of its contents. The man in possession objected, so he hit him over the head with a drumstick, and sent him staggering back. Ere he recovered, the man had helped himself, and was staggering back to the band. The way he belaboured the parchment was something terrific, and was even too much for the blowers of brass. They left off one by one to expostulate with him, but his only answer was a defiant flourish of the sticks and increased banging on the drum.

Meanwhile, Dan and some of the other boys had asked for and obtained leave to dance. They chose scenes who were not too gracious, and this excited the anger of their regular swains. Jack, who did not dance, saw that there was the possibility of a row, and he bade Gerard Inglis, Nickey, and some of the little ones to keep out of the crowd.

Mr. Bonnington and the tutors walked about, delighted with the scene, and they even condescended to taste the contents of a stone jar, which had a mellowing effect upon them. Suddenly the music ceased, and in its place arose the most discordant sounds of brass ever heard. Every eye was turned in the direction of the band, and beheld the performer on the big drum fighting all his musical brethren single-handed. They were going down like skittles under blows dealt by his powerful arm.

With their instruments they fought well, but without avail, for a time. At last, as if by a concerted movement, they got up together and went for him. His courage failed him then, and, turning, he fled.

"Stop him!" cried Jack. "He will fall into the Cleft!"

He was making straight for the narrow part of that dangerous place, and there the tall grass hid the rent in the earth until he was close upon it.

"Stop him!" shrieked Mr. Bonnington.

"Stop him!" yelled the tutors.

"Stop him!" cried everybody.

But there was nobody ahead to stop him. He had got a fair start, and, having tossed his drum upon his shoulders, was spinning along at a wonderful rate.

Jack tore ahead, yelling to him to pull up, but a wild frenzy had laid hold of the man.

On he went, reached the Cleft, and—disappeared.

He went from sight as suddenly as if some tremendous force of Nature had wiped him out of existence. Away he went, drum and all. A scene of tremendous excitement ensued. The men mouned, the women cried. Some hid their faces, sobbing aloud, others fainted away. Mr. Bonnington, in alarm, began to call his boys together, and the sturdy fishermen, making their way to the front, bade the strangers stand back.

"You can't do any good," they said. "It's we who's got to get him up. If you go crowding up some of you will topple over."

Some of the fishermen and Jack pow went on to the edge of the Cleft and peered over.

About three-quarters of the way down was the drummer, wedged into his drum, still, and apparently lifeless. His drum had fallen first, and he had fallen upon the parchment in a sitting position. The head of the drum gave way, and he was fixed, knees and nose together.

"He isn't hurt much," said one of the fishermen; "but he looks skeered. We must go below and drag him down; he can't be lifted up."

Jack was literally the first to get down the cliff and enter the Cleft. Leaping nimbly from rock to rock, he soon reached the narrow part, until he was nearly under the drum.

He looked up, and saw the drummer's legs working convulsively.

"Keep still," cried Jack, "or you will turn the drum over and empty yourself out!"

"Save me!" gasped the drummer. "I'm a dead man!"

Jack stepped back, and to pick his way dropped his eyes upon the ground. There he saw something which checked the beating of his heart—or seemed to do so.

A roughly-fashioned club. Stained, and with two or three hairs sticking to it! The last time he saw that club it was in Bob's cottage, being shaped by the boy Jim.

Jack saw the whole thing then. The mystery of the attack on Pinnick was at an end. Jim was the assailant, and if the man died he would be a murderer. Like lightning all sorts of possibilities flashed up before Jack. Behind him the heavy-booted fishermen were picking their way.

In a few minutes they would be on the spot and see it, too. But Jack dare not let them do that.

He kicked it aside into a dark hole in the side of the Cleft. It was little larger than a rabbit burrow. But it was a good hiding-place. The moss closed over it, and overcome with excitement, he sank into a sitting position on a big stone, covering his face with his hands.

*(To be continued in next week's BOYS' REALM.)*

# CLUB NOTICES.

NOTICES AND CHALLENCES FROM READERS' OWN CLUBS. THESE ARE INSERTED FREE OF CHARGE.

ST. ANDREW'S C.C. (average age, 13; weak) require fixtures with club in East London.—Apply, Secretary, 39, Poplars Road, Pinhurst, E.

ST. MICHAEL'S C.C. (average age, 17) want match August Bank Holiday, away, six to eight miles out.—Apply, F. Wilson, 62, North Street, Maida Vale.

HUDDERSFIELD ST. JOSEPH'S C.C. want matches this season home and away.—Apply, T. Moran, 2, Broad Tenter, King Street, Huddersfield.

WHITE STAR C.C. (average age, 16) require away matches.—Apply, Frank Harding, 23, Garner Street, Hackney Road, London.

GARFIELD C.C. (average age, 15; medium) want an all day match on August 5th (Bank Holiday), away (private only).—Write, F. C. Harcourt, 124, Coningham Road, Shepherd's Bush, London, W.

HESLEDEN C.C. want home and away matches for the coming Saturdays within eight miles of Hesleden.—Apply, J. Dunham, Secretary, Bardon Street, Hesleden, Ferryhill.

SOUTH STREET JUNIORS C.C. (average age, 15; weak) want matches home and away this season for Thursdays.—Apply, C. Harrison, 84, Asline Road, Heeley, Sheffield.

WYCLIFFE C.C. (average age, 13; weak) desire matches at home and away.—Apply, E. Richmond, 36, Leslie Road, Leytonstone, N.E.

OWLERTON CHURCH C.C. (average age, 13; weak) have all dates open this season.—Apply, C. Bretnall, Secretary, 36, Thanning Street, Sheffield.

PARLIAMENT HILL or TOTTENHAM.—Good fieldsman and medium bowler and batter would pay small subscription.—Apply, by letter, to Edwin H. Howard, 736, Holloway Road, London, N.

AN EFFORT is being made to form a junior cricket club (under 16) in Bow.—Write, 61, Ada Road, per week. Matches wanted for the coming season. Mr. T. Wiles, M.P., is the president. Advertiser would like to form a league in the neighbourhood. The name of the club is "Barnsbury Orient"; ground, Hackney Downs—permit from L.C.C.—Apply H. Lery, 40, Copenhagen Street, Barnsbury.

AVENDALE F.C. want home and away matches for the coming football season.—Apply, Charles Wetherell, Secretary, 11, Wardley Road, Lavender Hill, Battersea, S.W.

WOOD GREEN UNITED F.C. (average age, 17; medium) require fixtures for the coming season. Also a few players to complete second eleven.—Write, J. Burke, 237, Mossville Avenue, Wood Green.

WARDLEY UNITED RESERVES A.F.C. (average age, 15; medium) have all dates open for season 1907-8.—Apply, J. Pollitt, hon. Secretary, 189, Wardley Lane, Swinton, Manchester.

GLENTHORNE A.F.C. (average age, 15; weak) require matches home and away.—Apply, E. Tanner, hon. Secretary, 194, Kenton Road, Bristol.

HEREFORD UNITED F.C. (age, 16) require home and away matches.—Apply, H. Stannard, 26, Hereford Street, Hereford.

HOVER ATHLETIC F.C. (average age, 14-16) want matches at home and away. Also wish to join a league.—Apply, Jack Jones, Secretary, 30, Cannon Street, Camden Town, N.W.

RIVERSDALE UNITED F.C. (average age, 16; strong) want dates for home and away matches for next season.—Apply, H. Glasscock, Secretary, 49, Durban Road, Tottenham, N.

GREEN ROVERS F.C. (age, 17; weak) want home and away matches within four miles radius of Tottenham. All dates open.—Apply, T. Rickard, hon. Secretary, 197, St. Ann's Road, Tottenham, N.

THE NEW ATHERTON F.C. would like to arrange matches for the coming season.—Apply, M. Cole, Secretary, 10, Bethania Street, Glyn Neath, Glam.

CLARENCE UNITED F.C. (average age, 17; strong) require matches for coming season, all away.—Apply, H. Cole, Assistant Secretary, 17, Percy Road, Canning Town, E.

MIDDLEMORE ATHLETIC F.C. (average age, 17) require matches for coming season, home and away.—Apply, C. Leighton, 33, Mornington Road, Smethwick.

ALBION SWIFTS F.C. (14; weak) require matches home and away for season 1907-8.—Apply, A. Kersten, 150, City Road, London, E.C.

MAURICE HOSTEL 2nd XI. F.C. (17; weak) want matches home and away. All dates open.—Write, J. Palmer, 39, Rockins Buildings, Peerless Street, City Road, E.C.

ALL SAINTS F.C. (14; weak) have all dates open for next season.—Apply, H. Boyce, 72, Hamstead Road.

THORNSETT JUNIORS F.C. (average age, 17) want matches for season 1907-8, home and away, about fourteen miles radius from New Mills, which is near Stockport.—Apply, Jos. Rogers, 79, Bate Mill Row, Birch Vale, near Stockport.

FLASHAT ALBION F.C. (age, 15; medium) require home and away matches for the following season.—Apply, W. Wade, 22, Hilda Road, East Ham.

CAXTON JUNIOR A.F.C. (age, 15; weak) want matches for coming season for first and second teams —Apply, W. Smith, Secretary, Caxton Junior A.F.C., William Clowes & Sons, Duke Streets, Stamford Street, London.

OAKFIELDS F.C. require matches home and away for the coming season. Also few players in district. Small subscription.—Apply, J. Richardson, 79, Rendezvous Road, Hammersmith.

ALBION F.C. (average age, 16) require matches for the coming season, 20 miles radius. All dates vacant.—Apply, Geo. Thain, 48, Ninth Row, Ashington Colliery, near Morpeth, Northumberland.

GOALKEEPER wants position in junior league team for next season.—Write, C. V. D., 159, Sandringham Road, Dalston, N.E.

GOALKEEPER (age, 16-18) required to join a respectable team.—Write, E. Lock, hon. Assistant Secretary, 26, Sidney Place, Edge Hill, Liverpool.

JOHN HALEY, 8, Gloucester Street, Hanley, Staffordshire (age, 17) wishes to join a football club for the coming season (goalkeeper). Height, 5 feet 6 inches.

PLAYERS wanted to join newly-formed football club in Leyton. Good fixtures.—Write, G. Rogers, 24, Tabor Road, Hammersmith.

A FEW RESPECTABLE LADS (16-17) wanted to form a football club in Kentish Town.—Write, Apply, by letter, to Alexander Barton, 61, Cathcart Road, N.W.

RESPECTABLE BOYS (age, 13-15) who are desirous of joining junior football club should apply to G. Rice, 7, Sparrowe Terrace, Hackney, N.E., any evening between 7 and 8.30. Some matches wanted for next season within five miles of Hackney.

WASSBECK JUNIOR F.C. want for coming season a few players (age, 14 to 15 years).—Apply, William Hall, 36, Wansbeck Street, Battlefield, Sheffield.

GARFIELD F.C. (average age, 15-18) want a few members for their football club, season 1907-8. Also fixtures.—Write, F. C. Harcourt, 124, Coningham Road, Shepherd's Bush, London, W.

WALKDEN F.C. (average age, 17) to form an athletic football club in Mountain Ash and district for next season.—Apply, R. M. J., Secretary, pro tem, "Glenwood," Aberford Road, Mountain Ash, South Wales.

A LAD (16) would like to join a football club in Tottenham.—Apply, by note only, to H. V., 272, Hermitage Road, Tottenham, N.

WHITE ROSE F.C. want players for all positions.—Apply, F. Ambrose, Secretary, 85, Buckland Street, Hoxton, E.

SOUTH LEEDS F.C. (average age, 14-15) are in need of a few players to complete the coming match. Entrance fee, 3d.; subscription, 1d. weekly.—Apply, F. T. England, 7, Upper Woodview Place, Dewsbury Road, Leeds.

PLAISTOW IRIS F.C. (members of the Barking and District League for next season) require a few players to complete first and second teams. Also wish to fix dates.—W. J. Cook, 36, Shirley Street, Plaistow, E.

YOUTH (age, 18) wishing to join respectable Thursday F.C. within three miles of Fulham. Centre-half or right back preferred.—Write, A. Tallourd, 10, Eustace Road, Fulham, S.W.

LEICESTER ELMDALE UNITED F.C. require several promising players for next season. Entrance fee and weekly subscription required. Leicester Town League, Division 1. Also ground, Belgrave or district desirable. Deposit can be sent.—Apply, J. Newton, Secretary, 201, Dorset Street, Leicester.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## THE FIRST CHAPTERS IN BRIEF.

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

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

Whilst exploring their property they come across an old mine-shaft, and this they demand. 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 raised by them each day. In the evenings they return to Starve-Crow Farm.

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 proposes 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.

A few days later they discover that Kenyon Price has barred up the road to Bryn y Garth with a line of sheep-hurdles. This is to prevent the two lads from transporting their coal from the mine when they start operations. The barrier he lads pull down, but the next day they find that a tremendous fence of barbed wire and posts has been erected. Roddy and Tom seek the aid of their friends in the pit, who are wild with rage when they hear of Kenyon Price's atrocious act, and making their way to the moor they tear down and burn the obstruction. Then Kenyon Price himself appears on the scene, and is evidently ill at ease as the pitmen advance towards him with threats and cries of rage.

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

### The Feast at Bryn y Garth.

THE colliery-owner reined back out of reach without delay, but his anger got the better of his fear, and he shouted out again:

"Who started this outrage? I'll have the lot of you in gaol; but show me the man who's responsible!"

"I am!" said Roddy, stepping forward. "The others needn't count. I'll stand for it, an' gladly, so put it down to me!"

"An' me!" cried Tom.

"Sorra a bit, 'tis meself that did it!" cried Terry Lloyd. "An' I'm ready to answer for it, any time ye like."

"No more palaver! Pull him off his horse, whateffer!" shouted Luke Jones, making a swift rush. "Stop him—get hold o' the bridle!"

Kenyon Price waited no longer. The hot-blooded pitmen were in no mood for argument, and he feared not face them. What would have happened had they caught him at that moment it is hard to say—perhaps the least said the better. He jerked his horse round only just in time, and, clapping his spurs home, galloped away across the moor.

"Ye road-stealin' robber!" shouted Luke Jones after him. "Set another fence across here to bar free man from the moors, an' next time we'll come an' burn Plas Rhyll!"

The colliery-owner vanished over the slope of the hill, and the man gave another cheer. They set to work again, and collected all the fencing and gear that had been overlooked, and piled it on the roaring blaze.

"That's all right," said Roddy, with some relief, as he saw Kenyon Price disappear. "I'm glad he's got away, for I thought for a moment they'd got hold of him. That'd have been an awkward business, considerin' the mood they're in!"

"Yes, there'd ha' been rather more trouble than we wanted," said Tom. "But, by gum, things have gone grandly now! There's an end of any barrier across the Bryn y Garth road, for he'll never dare put up another."

"Not he—this'll be all over the district to-morrow, an' he'd have all Aberford here if he tried it again. You can't ride over Welshmen like that, once the feelin's roused."

"Pile it on! Give her ginger!" shouted Luke Jones. "Don't leave a splinter unburnt! Chuck all the gear and ironwork on the fire!"

"Roddy," said Terry Lloyd, coming up to him joyously, "'tis the very jewel of a bhoy ye are, an' it's mesilf thanks you for givin' us the chance of such a plasin' ruction. I used wish the gaugers had shown a bit more fight, bad luck to 'em," he added regretfully. "An' if those navvies had the pluck av a blunderbuss 'tis the jewel av a scrap we'd have seen. But niver mind, I've enjoyed mesilf amazin'! And to see Kenyon Price ridin' for his life—the spalpeen! To thry an' rob the warruld of a public pathway, just because he's some dirrty money!"

"I wish that hadn't happened, Terry, all the same. We never counted on K. P. turnin' up in person, an' our mates are all in his pits. It'll be pretty rotten if we're the cause of gettin' any of them into trouble."

"Och, niver moind! They'd ha' done it wi'out us, and from you, if they'd found out what he was after doin'. Besides, what happens o' Saturday niver makes any difference to the pits, an' I'll bet ye we're all friendly enough if we meet him o' Monday at Coed Coch."

"Hope so," said Tom doubtfully.

"Don't you haf any fears apout us, whateffer," said Luke Jones, overhearing. "It iss a matter of right and liberty, indeed. I would not let her Prince of Wales bimself bar a road which all men haf a right to pass along. See, we haf made a clean sweep of it all, and your way iss clear to Bryn y Garth."

"Then let's get along then," cried Roddy cheerfully. "I thank you all, mates. You've been bricks! If there's any trouble I'll do my best to straighten it, an' we've a nailin' good lawyer, anyway. Now for a jolly afternoon, some good sport, an' a thumpin' blow-out!"

The pitmen cheered lustily, and all their anger having burnt out with the bonfire, they marched on to Bryn y Garth and were made free of the boys' domain. All of them were hugely pleased with it, and a wee news to many of them that Roddy and Tom owned such a place at all. The boys went up higher than ever in their mates' esteem.

The preparations for the outing roused enthusiasm in all quarters. Dafydd had done his duty nobly. There was a great wood fire in the open, with three long iron struts out of the barn forming a tripod over it. A fine fat sheep was hanging in the outhouse, ready dressed, and the pitmen shouted at the sight of it.

They bore it out to the fire, and Dafydd instructed them how to hang it on the hooks from the tripod. He was tremendously particular to get it exactly right, and the sheep was arranged most scientifically.

"Now you all go away and leaf me to ter kitchen," said Dafydd. "If I want any more help to shift ter sheep I will call for it. I was quite happy here."

He had a big cauldron boiling on another fire, and a small mountain of potatoes ready washed, which he was going to boil in their jackets. Dafydd was so thoroughly in his element that they left him to-himself, telling off an assistant-cook, who was equally keen on the work, to help him. Dafydd did not want to be bothered with any other amusement while the credit of the feast was in his hands.

"Come on, you chaps," said Roddy. "He'll only bite you if you worry him now. Who's for a bathe in the pools before dinner? Who says a wrestling match?"

The pitmen were thoroughly ready for both. They were as happy as a school on an extra holiday, and soon half of them were splashing and swimming in the big amber-coloured pools below the waterfalls.

When this was over a ring was formed, and the smartest wrestlers in the company gave an exhibition. Four couples competed, working off the ties till they got to the finals, and the rest made an audience that appreciated every move and throw, and all enjoyed themselves hugely.

Some very fine Welsh wrestling was seen, and Tom himself, young though he was, proved himself skilful enough to throw his first opponent, though half as heavy again as himself, and, after a hard struggle, managed also to lay the winner of the other heat upon his back, amid loud cheers from the pitmen.

His stocky build and uncommon skill at the game served him well. Tom could not pretend to stand against such champions as Luke Jones, however, who very soon laid the young hewer's shoulders to the ground.

Luke, in his turn, to everybody's surprise, was defeated in the last heat by a young pitman of about twenty-four, named Fluellen, after a long, determined conflict, and Fluellen stood out as the top winner.

The levellest part of the farm was then chosen for some sprint races, on which the pitmen were particularly keen. They ran stripped to the buff, Terry Lloyd being time-keeper and referee. Roddy, who was very fleet of foot and in great condition, looked like coming out champion in this, for he won his first two heats easily, but was just defeated in the final by a bare foot, a long-legged youth named Rice, with an amazing turn of speed, managing to cut him down. The two shook hands afterwards with great zest, and Roddy was not sorry that his guest had the best of it. He wanted the visitors to enjoy themselves thoroughly.

A wild yell from Dafydd announced that the meal was ready. The exercise had given the pitmen a raging hunger, and an eager move was made towards the feast.

The sheep was done to a turn.

It had been wound round and basted with great watchfulness, and Dafydd, perspiring at every pore, and beaming with delight, pointed out its excellence.

"Did you ofer see a petter colour?" he exclaimed, showing the rich brown of the meat's surface. "She was done exactly right. And ter spuds are ready."

"Dafydd, you're a trump!" said Roddy. "My eye, don't she smell good! Here, mates, bear a hand to hoist down the mutton, an' knock over ter head o' that cask o' ale. Steam off the 'taters, Tom."

By means of meat-hooks they brought the sheep away, and its fragrance spread over the moor as they laid it on a bed of freshly-pulled fern, on a flat rock. Dafydd seized a pair of huge meat carvers he had borrowed and attacked it at once. An array of tin mugs was set next the beer barrel, and the visitors sat round in a circle and began the feast with huge zest.

The mutton was done to a turn, as Dafydd had said. The potatoes were perfect. Every man had his knife, and they ate with an appetite that only the moors can give. Praises were showered on Dafydd's cooking from all sides, and he was prouder than a peacock. The mutton melted in the mouths of the guests, and the crusty new bread was excellent.

Great draughts of ale washed the feast down, and the pitmen pronounced it the best they had drunk for many a day. There was abundance of it for everybody, and they did it justice; but not a man drank more than was good for him.

Roddy and Tom had not yet acquired much of a taste for ale, luckily, and preferred the brook water, alleging that it kept them more fit than any beer. Which was true. The pitmen, however, were old enough to judge for themselves, and they preferred beer.

"Glory be!" sighed Terry Lloyd, loosening his waist-belt and stretching himself out in the heather as he filled his pipe. "'Tis a great day entoirely. A march in good company, a spice of divilment, plenty of shpoort to follow, an' a male fit for kings to top all. Bhoys, may ye live till your coat-tails knock your brains out!"

Luke Jones, full of Celtic eloquence, got up and made a speech, in which he thanked the two young hosts in the most flowery terms on behalf of his comrades, and declared that not a man there would ever stand by and see any harm come to the boys. He was backed by all the rest. Tom replied in a few words, and, being inclined for speechmaking, and after the gratified miners had smoked another pipe apiece they began to look round for more diversion.

Wrestling and running not being very suited to the hour following dinner, everybody wandered off in twos and threes and did as they liked. Some borrowed the rough fly-rods from the cottage and went fishing up the brook. Others explored the hill-sides and hunted for young curlews, many of which had lately hatched out, and Dafydd led several of the visitors up the crags of Pen-Mawr, where he showed them a fox-earth among the rocks, inhabited by a vixen and several cubs.

Dafydd, to the amazement of the others, wormed his way in among the rocks and reached one of the cubs out. How he managed to avoid being bitten by the mother was a mystery to everybody, but he did it in safety, and after the cub had been inspected it was allowed to scuttle home again, being voted too snappy and snarly to be worth keeping as a pet.

In the meantime, the others were exploring Bryn y Garth itself, and the two Lloyds and Luke Jones were greatly tickled at all the arrangements the boys had made for their own comfort. They went through the cottage, and were surprised at Roddy's library of second-hand engineering and colliery books.

"Sure, bhoys, 'tis mighty snug ye are up here," said Pat, "and an illigant situation intoirely. But isn't it a rare business bringin' supplies all this way from the town?"

"It would be, but we don't bring many," said Roddy.

"Phwat a glory do ye live on then?" asked Terry, looking round over the beautiful but rather barren estate. "Ye don't keep any sheep or cattle."

"No; can't afford livestock, exceptin' Gripe," said Tom, with a wink at his partner, for they did not intend to give away Dafydd's unique foraging methods. "It's wonderful how nourishing heather-shoots are if you boil 'em long enough though, and after a flood the brook water's so thick it's more like food than drink."

"Holy Moses! Have ye lived all this time on boiled heather an' water!" said Pat, staring.

"Arrah, don't ye see 'tis humbuggin' us they are!" put in Terry. "I remember seein' 'em eating some foine big pots o' stewed hare down in the pits at midday," he added, with a wink, "an' a few other things that I'll say nothin' about. That gossoon wi' the red head who's just gone up the crags c'u'd enloighten us av he chose. I dare say!"

"'Tis the 'cute man ye are intoirely, Terence Lloyd," said Roddy, with a grin, "but don't get too clever. The fewest questions asked, the less lies ye'll be told, Terry, avic."

"Yis, we won't be probin' into your secrits, Roddy lad," said Terry, laughing. "Ye're a dark little hand up here, an' sorra a wonder at it aither what I've seen wi' ye down in the pits. Let's be goin' out in the open again."

The party moved about the farm, laughing and talking, Luke and the Lloyds together, and presently Roddy heard Terry's voice calling to him, and the deep growls of Gripe. The boys guessed what had happened, and going down to their shaft they found the three hewers had come upon it by accident, much to the indignation of Gripe, who was tied up to the heather-roots by a short chain, and had left his mutton bones to raise the alarm. He was making no more efforts to get at the three hewers, who stood out of his reach.

"Bhoys," said Terry in surprise, "what the mischief have ye got here—an ould coal-shaft?"

"There's been plenty of fresh work about it since you were here," said Luke Jones, looking round at the trampled ground and the rope-grooves at the edge. "I should say there was a coot seam down there yet," he added, lying down and peering into the shaft, which was some ten feet deep now that the boys had cut all the bushes away.

"Is there, Roddy?" said Pat eagerly.

"I don't mind tellin' you there is," replied Roddy, "for it's no secret now, since the only people that matter have learned about it. There's coal down there, and it belongs to us."

"My eye!" said Terry. "Then phwat for are ye workin' as hewers in the Aberford Pit?"

The boys glanced at each other.

"To get the money to start this colliery with," said Roddy.

"Phew! Ain't there no other way?"

"None, if we want to keep the thing in our own hands. But we're ready there now."

"Begor, are you though! An' is this ould pit that you've discovered goin' to be a big thing for money?"

"Time alone can show that. We think it will."

"Does Kenyon Price know of it, whateffer?" said Luke Jones keenly. "Wass that why he barred the road?"

"You've exactly hit it, Luke."

The pitmen looked at each other in astonishment.

"By the holy poker, but you lads are a caution!" said Terry. "Is that a secret o' yours that we've poked our noses into?"

"Oh, no; not efforts to get at the same, don't go spreadin' it around everywhere, for choice. We don't want too much talk made about it," said Tom.

"Then three are sound, so we don't mind you're knowing," said Roddy. "The reason I've told you is because, supposin' we got our mates into any sort o' trouble over that affair to-day, we hope to put things right by givin' 'em good work ourselves here before long. Only it might be some little time first."

"Ay, we'll stay in at the Coed Coch till we're wanted," Terry replied. "But there's not a man av us wouldn't be proud an' pleased to work for you, Roddy, when you can do wit' us. An' the besht av luck to ye right through!"

"And so say I," added Luke Jones enthusiastically. "I would rather see you boys make a fortune than add more to Kenyon Price's, ter greedy pig! It was mean," he said, with a sudden keen look at the boys, "that you haf had so many narrow escapes in his pit."

"Yes, isn't it?" said Roddy, with a grim

'smile. "However, we hope to be out of the place very soon."

"We'd better get away from here before the others come an' ax too many questions," said Pat. "Bhoys, we've had a glorious day av it, an' this is the most interestin' bit of all. An' now I reckon we'd best be futtin' homewards."

The evening shades were already deepening as they left the shaft, and the pitmen gathered at the cottage and cheered as the boys returned. There was enough ale still in the barrel to give them all a good draught apiece as a stirrup-cup. Then the pitmen swung the three boys up, chaired them on their shoulders, and marched in a body down the Old Meadow, to the tune of "Hey are Jolly Good Fellows."

Past the smouldering remains of Kenyon Price's fence they went, and then, after a hearty leave-taking at the bottom of the field, the pitmen marched away homewards through the dusk, singing as they went.

### How the Aberford Cage was Wrecked.

"GOOD chaps, all!" said Roddy, with feeling, as he watched the departing miners out of sight, and then turned back for the cottage. "Nothin' could have gone off better."

"They enjoyed the row an' the sports an' the feast," agreed Tom. "It was a success, but I do hope we sha'n't have got any of 'em into a bad scrape. They're all workin' men like ourselves, an' depend on the Coed Coch for their livin'."

"That's just what I'm troubled about. If Kenyon Price hadn't turned up, which none of us dreamed he'd do, it'd ha' been all right, an' we should have had the trouble to face ourselves, if any. But now, of course, he's recognised some of 'em. An' though he's in the wrong, he has it in his power to make things hot for 'em. He can sack 'em from his colliery."

"We ought to see if something can't be done to smooth that over."

"To-morrow's Sunday, an' it's awkward dealin' with such a matter then. But we must do it—we owe it to the men. I'll go an' see Luke in the morning."

The boys did so, and they had a long talk with the hewer, who was something of a leader among his mates. It was he who had first moved in the affair of the Belgian hewers.

"I will tell you this," he said. "We thought at first there would be no trouble, but it is known that Kenyon Price has already been making inquiries down here. And that may mean that he will sack some of us. We will not stand it, for we wass all within our rights. Now, I and Terry and two others will go at once and see Inis Powell, ter secretary of ter union."

"But what good'll that do?" said Tom.

"A lot of good, because I think he will help us. You had better not come. Wait for me here, and I will tell you what happens."

The boys waited for nearly two hours, and Luke Jones returned at last with a look of rather vicious satisfaction on his face.

"We shall do fery well, and I think Price wass better let us alone," he said quietly. "Come to ter pits half an hour earlier to-morrow, and all of us who were with you at Bryn y Garth will pe there."

The boys promised, and Luke said he could not tell them any more, because it was not his own affair. He got them to stay to dinner with him, and gave them a very good one. They went to his chapel with him afterwards, for Luke was a strict attendant on Sundays. In the evening the boys returned home.

"What does he suppose Inis Powell can do for him?" said Tom. "It ain't a union matter."

"Our branch of the union does pretty much as it likes down here. All the men hang together, too. We shall see in the morning."

They were at the yard at the appointed time next day, and found all their former friends of Bryn y Garth mustered outside. The pitmen greeted the boys heartily. There was a stormy look of determination about the faces of the men, all the same.

"All present?" said Luke Jones. "Fery coot! Let us go to ter tally-office, and start for ter day's shift. We shall pe down ter shaft early for once."

In they went, and straight up to the offices where it was the Coed Coch custom for the miners to give in their checks. As soon as the timekeeper saw them, however, he ran his eye over each one carefully, and then telephoned to Mr. Sully's office.

"Now then, what are we waitin' for?" said Luke Jones.

"For me," said Mr. Sully, appearing suddenly behind them. He pointed dramatically to the yard gates. "Go!" he said. "We have no use here for you. Get out of this!" With the exception of those two boys, Owen and Hughes. They may stay."

"Was we sacked?" said Luke Jones, striding forward.

"You are!" said Mr. Sully, with relish. He enjoyed "sacking" people, as a rule.

"What for?" said Luke, his eyes flashing.

"I have no reasons to give you your services are not required. I may add," he continued viciously, "that bad characters are not wanted here."

"You mean," said Luke slowly, "that we wass sacked for pulling up ter fence that Kenyon Price made on ter Bryn y Garth road."

"I have nothing to say to you," the headviewer repeated. "Get out!"

"Fery coot," said Luke quietly; and he led his comrades out of the yard without another word.

The boys went with them, somewhat to Sully's dismay. He called out to them that they could stop, but they took no notice.

"Luke," said Roddy miserably, as they reached the gates, "I never thought of leavin' you all in for this. We've some money saved, and we'll divvy it up among you to last till you get work again, an' we'll start afresh. You see——"

"Hould your wisht, lad!" said Terry Lloyd. "The game's but beginnin' now. You'll see in a minute."

The colliers, in their hundreds, were fast gathering for the day's work. Roddy and Tom wondered what Luke expected to do, for they supposed that the union secretary had failed to smooth the matter over, since the men were dismissed.

They soon learned what was in the wind, however. Inis Powell, the secretary, appeared, and conversed aside with Luke. Like lightning the news of the dismissals was spread among the other pitmen, most of whom had evidently been warned what to expect beforehand. They all came into the yard, till the whole staff was there. But they did not go to the timekeeper's offices. They hung back, and the great yard became choked with them.

"Now, lads," said Terry to his little band, "'tis toime we took a stroll in again."

They did so, and took their places by the crane in front of Sully's office. The second whistle blew, but not a pitman of the whole assembly moved towards the shafts. Sully came out to see what the delay meant.

"Now then," he cried sharply, "what are you dawdling for, men? Get to the cages!"

Inis Powell suddenly stepped out.

"Are those men sacked, Mr. Sully?" he said, pointing to the Bryn y Garth visitors.

Sully's face grew crimson with anger as he saw the gang had returned.

"They are!" he cried loudly. "Do you want telling twice?"

There was a movement right through the great crowd that filled the yard, and every man, swinging his pick or basket over his shoulder, moved quietly towards the yard gates, through which they all streamed in a body.

"What does this mean?" shouted Mr. Sully, in amazement and rage.

"It means," said Inis Powell, "that there'll be no work done in the Coed Coch. If those men are to be dismissed for breaking Kenyon Price's fence, the pitmen strike. They are already going home.

Sully was beside himself. Such a result he had never dreamed of. He threatened, he shouted, he appealed to Inis Powell, and finally striding up to the boys, who still stood with the rest of the fence-wreckers by the crane, he shook his fist frantically under Roddy's nose.

"This is more of your work, you cursed brat!" he cried. "You're at the bottom of it!"

"Now, then, viewer, don't make a fool av yersilf," said Terry Lloyd, stepping forward menacingly, "the gossoons ha' got nothin' to do wi' it—'tis the affair o' the whole pits, an' ivery hand in 'em."

Sully became nearly frantic. Strikes he understood, after long disputes and consultations with the union officials, though they steered clear of strikes, as a rule, at Aberford. But for the colliery staff to clear out at an hour's notice, was beyond him. And he knew how serious it would be for the colliery.

In half an hour, Kenyon Price himself arrived, posthaste, in his motor. He strode into the office and had a brief consultation with Sully. Then Inis Powell was sent for. The colliery magnate presently came out, looking very black.

"Send for the men!" he ordered. "I will hear what they have to say."

The pitmen were summoned, and returned, taking their time over it leisurely enough. Mr. Kenyon Price mounted on his motor, and looked round over the sea of faces.

"Now then!" he said, in his loudest tones. "What is all this about?"

With one voice the crowd answered in a swelling roar:

"Take back Luke Jones an' the men that Sully sacked! Else not a man'll put foot into ter Aberford Pit seame! Dang me!"

Kenyon Price's face worked with passion. He was all he could do to control himself. He knew too well—and Inis Powell knew—that at that moment he was in the power of the men. He had great contracts on hand for the government and others, and if he did not fulfil them the loss would be enormous. Moreover, he would have to pay many thousands of pounds to the Rich and powerful as he was, he could not risk a sudden strike just then.

"The men you speak of," he said in a voice that carried all round the yard, "have been reported to me for riotous conduct and wilful breaking of the law. Still, I am willing to forget my quarrel with my hands on account of my recent bereavement. They shall stay on their work instead, I will proceed against them for breaking the law. They will regret the choice. Now, men, to your work, men, and get to your places!"

"Are they taken back?" shouted Inis Powell.

"They are!"

Like one man, the great assembly of colliers gave a cheer and went towards the shafts, assured of their victory. Luke Jones gave a howl of triumph, and a voice from some unseen spokesman made the only comment that was heard:

"Thry 'em by the law, say we, wullskin, Kenyon Price! Maybe 'tis a bellyful av law ye'll get before ye've done!"

The colliery-owner turned away without a word, and left the yard.

"'Tis a mortial ugly look that feller Sully has whin he takes a glance our way," said Terry, as he joined the boys three days later on the way to the pits.

"I ain't noticed it especially lately," said Tom; "it's his usual way of lookin' at us, an' we're accustomed to it. It never breaks any bones."

"Luke Jones noticed it, too, an' he said yesterday, he shouldn't wonder if [illegible] broke your shoulder, all the same," Terry replied.

"Ho said that, did he?" remarked Roddy. "You fellows are gettin' near the truth o' things."

"How the dickens could Sully's head [illegible] my shoulder, you moke?" said Tom. "It was put out, not broken!"

"One thing leads to another, you see," Roddy replied. "Luke is getting more [illegible] than's good for him. But Mr. Sully is [illegible] sour at you too now, is he, Terry?"

"Sorra a bit I care," said the Irishman, "though he's long borne me a grudge av [illegible] to Luke as well. Only it's been [illegible] the breakin' o' K. P.'s fence an' [illegible]. He's not put his spite on me in any [illegible] lately, though. But he's a [illegible] at the best!"

"Are you speakin' of Sully, viewer?" said Luke Jones, joining them [illegible]. Yes, half ter pits haf noticed it."

"The pits notice a lot [illegible] seems to me," said Roddy, [illegible] to the lamp-room with [illegible] be glad when the end [illegible] cheap, and we can [illegible] in our last lap. Things are [illegible] in the pits. Luke's right [illegible] to it that Sully means [illegible]."

"An' the man's too [illegible] believe," said Roddy; [illegible] for us if they are on [illegible]."

"Not so sure of that [illegible] single cages in the [illegible] storied ones!" remarked [illegible] for!"

"For safety, maybe [illegible] got his lamp and [illegible] ye hear av that [illegible] yard Pits last week [illegible] wound!"

Tom shuddered. Of all [illegible] colliery, "overwinding" [illegible] every victim is [illegible] engine which [illegible] shaft, instead of [illegible] cage [illegible] strikes the [illegible] rail is that the cage is [illegible] of the shaft entirely [illegible] the top [illegible] of the shaft [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

# DICK DASHER'S LUCK

BY REGINALD WRAY

## A New Story of a Great Treasure Hunt. - - - By the Author of "Right Away," etc., etc.

### THE OPENING CHAPTERS IN BRIEF.

Dick Dasher, a clerk in the employ of a lawyer named Dannel, whilst celebrating his eighteenth birthday with two of his office friends, is startled by the sudden appearance on the scene of Sim Dannel, the lawyer's son, and a negro, Boss-eddies by name, named Jack Slack. Slack has brought news of the death of Dick's father, whilst on his way back from South America. As a token to Dick a leather belt is parcel from the lad's dead parent.

After recovering to a certain extent from the terrible grief which the news gives him, Dick opens the belt. It contains astounding information. Before leaving South America, Mr. Dasher had found the hiding place of a secret treasure. In their possession is the letter by which the hoard may be discovered, and also a map of the locality. The parcel contains some recent diamonds—part of the treasure which Dick is to purchase a yacht, and restore the secret hoard.

Dick decides to carry out his father's directions, and after the gems are sold he journeys to Gravesend to go down to Vestnor to select a yacht. Sim Dannel learns something of the contents of the letter, and informs his father. The two plot to get their hands on it, and plot to steal the plan and get the treasure for themselves.

While on his way down to Vestnor to inspect Jack Slack's choice of a yacht, Dick is thrown from the train by a hireling of the Dannels, but escapes with his life. Up in London he discovers that the two younger Dannel has stolen the treasure map. Luckily Dick has made a copy of it.

At once the necessary preparations are made, Dasher starts for South America. He takes with him his two chums, Tod Appleby and Joe Terry, and the old sailor Jack Slack, who occupies the post of captain. Sim Dannel also starts to find the hidden treasure, a fact which makes Dick Dasher all the more anxious to arrive at his destination. At length, the party reach the mouth of the Orinoco River. During the journey up-stream, they meet with many thrilling adventures, and see many strange sights.

At last the heroes leave the yacht and continue their journey in a launch and canoes. After losing their way and taking the wrong route, which entails the loss of a whole day, they at length discover the treasure cave, but before they can redeem its contents they are attacked by Sim Dannel and a band of natives. Dick and his band put their enemies to flight, and take Dannel prisoner. The treasure is then removed to their boats, and they start on their return journey. On the way Dannel manages to make his escape. Tod and Terry are [illegible] and have to leave behind a [illegible] of provisions, and have to make return to [illegible] some hours [illegible] and return to the camp.

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

### THE 16th CHAPTER.
### A Friend in Need.

THE expedition was awakened early the following morning by Itza, who brought the unwelcome news that Dannel, Ned Dow, and the Waiteas, accompanied by a few boatmen, were encamped a few hours' journey up the river, and from their conversation Itza gathered that the bush negroes had refused to accompany them so far from their usual haunts.

Rendered uneasy by the proximity of their foes, daylight had scarcely dawned before our party were once more afoot.

Eager to put as much distance as possible between himself and his pursuers, Dick had resolved not to call at any of the many towns which now dotted the banks of the river; but as they drew near St. Rosa, they found one of their canoes badly leaking, and were obliged to stop and patch it up.

The weight of the gold was a severe strain upon the canvas, and, having come to a halt, they determined to repair their other craft ere resuming their journey, although so doing necessitated their remaining where they were during the rest of the day.

The day's work done, Tod set out for a stroll before turning in.

Lost in thought, he wandered further from the camp than he intended, until suddenly the light of a fire twinkling through the trees caught his eyes.

Thinking it an encampment of Indians, he advanced fearlessly, for the tribes on the banks of the Negro and Amazon Rivers are for the most part a harmless and inoffensive race.

Presently a bend in the forest which bordered the stretch of dry sand along the riverside hid the fire from view; but curious to see an Indian encampment, Tod walked onward.

Suddenly an exclamation of dismay burst from his lips as he found himself confronted by a group of Indians and white men, and realised that he had stumbled into the camp of their enemies.

Taken by surprise though he was, Tod was not yet captured. Retreat was hopeless; but setting his teeth hard, he dashed straight at his foes, bowling them over like ninepins; then, before they could recover from their astonishment, dashed at right-angles, and ran for dear life along a rough track which led deep into the bosom of the forest.

On he fled, with the yelling Indians and the two white men thundering a hundred yards in his rear.

Presently, some distance ahead, he came to a clearing, in the midst of which was a roughly-built log hut. Bracing himself for a final spurt, he pressed his elbows close to his sides, and darted forward.

Would he reach the hut in time? His foes were but twenty paces in his rear; and, straining every nerve, he gained its friendly shelter.

Hurrah! His foot on the threshold, and the next moment he tumbled head over heels into the interior.

"Howly Patrick, an' who may you be?" asked an old woman who was stirring the contents of a large saucepan which stood upon the iron stove in the centre of the hut.

"Save me! I am pursued by murderers!" cried Tod.

"Oi will that, young man! Ah, these be the spalpeens I expect!" returned the woman, as, seizing her saucepan from the fire, she blocked up the doorway with her tall, gaunt form. "An' what may ye be wanting?" she continued, as Dannel, breathless with running, dashed up to the door.

"Out of the way, woman, or it'll be the worse for you!" he cried, trying to shove past her.

"Now, Oi shouldn't wonder if ye were the President o' Brazil in disguise," she hazarded; "but by Saint Pathrick, if so be as ye are, ye ain't a-goin' to order Bridget O'Brien about as ye loike!"

Mad with rage at being defied by a woman, Dannel tried to brush the woman roughly aside; but Mrs. O'Brien brought her inverted saucepan down on Dannel's head, sending the contents—some particularly tasty Irish stew—trickling down either side of his face; then with a loud laugh she slammed the door in the astonished pursuers' faces.

"Shure, an' Oi think they will go home now they have had their supper," she said, turning to Tod with a grim smile.

"By Jove, you are a plucky one!" ejaculated Tod Appleby, smiling as he remembered the queer figure Dannel made with the iron pot encircling his brow like a helmet, and the gravy running down his cheeks. "Nine women out of ten would have fainted."

Ere the woman could reply, there came a loud rapping at the door.

"Be [illegible] darthink, it'll take ye all [illegible] to get [illegible] door, and Pat with [illegible]

"Is Tod Appleby in here?" asked a voice [illegible]

Mrs. O'Brien was about to return a bantering answer, when Tod, rushing to the door, flung it open, and admitted Dick and Joe, followed by four sailors.

"However did you know I was here?" asked Tod, as he shook his friend's hand.

"Oh, as soon as we heard some shots fired in the direction you had gone, and, fearing lest you were in danger, came to look for you. We saw some Indians and white men running in this direction, and followed them here. But they made off as soon as they saw us. One white man had a kind of helmet on his head. What was it?"

"Ask this good lady, for to her prompt action I owe my life," answered Tod, turning gratefully towards the Irish woman.

Shrieks of laughter arose from her hearers as Mrs. O'Brien related the particulars of her encounter with Sim Dannel, concluding with:

"An' shure now, the spalpeen has taken my best saucepan away with him! A good job the liquor wasn't on the boil, or he wouldn't have got off."

Despite everything the comrades could say, the kindhearted old Irishwoman would not take a penny in payment for what she had done; but before they started for their journey on the morrow, they took care to send her a brand-new saucepan, together with a Winchester rifle and a good supply of cartridges for her husband.

### THE 17th CHAPTER.
### A River of Fire.

IT was an anxious time for the expedition as they paddled down-stream but two days elapsed after they had left St. Rosa ere a large canoe paddled by eight Indians gradually overhauled them. In the stern of the canoe sat two white men, and, as it was improbable that these would be any other than their foes, Dick, Slack, Tod, and Dunn boarded the canoe, and slowed down to give the others an opportunity of getting well ahead.

Barely was this done ere they saw Sim Dannel, a rifle in his hand, clamber to the bows of his canoe.

"Keep back!" shouted Dick, thrusting his head over the breastwork in the stern of his craft. "You have got to keep behind us this journey!"

"Who said so?" sneered Dannel.

"I do; and you will come closer at your peril!"

"I have as much right here as you have, and I'll pass you or not as I choose. Open fire on them, lads!" roared Dannel, fuming with rage.

The next moment Dick sank back behind the breastwork, as a dozen bullets clattered upon the woodwork, or whizzed harmlessly overhead.

"Now, lads, let them have it back!" cried Tod. "Be careful you don't hit the rowers, they are most likely Brazilian subjects, and we might get into trouble."

Three rifles roared simultaneously from the stern of the canoe, and one of the Wairau Indians rolled and fell into the water; whilst Doss clasped his hand to his arm and sank into the bottom of the boat.

The Indian rowers, seeing that as matters stood they were more likely to be paid in lead than in money, dived into the water, leaving the canoe to drift down-stream as best it might.

The desertion of his rowers threw Dannel into a perfect fury of rage, and standing up in the bows, he sent bullet after bullet whistling after the canoe. But his shots flew wide of the mark, and unwilling to shed blood save in self-defence, our expedition did not reply to his fire, knowing well that until his rowers returned to duty their foe could not follow them.

In vain the two Wairaus struggled up the paddles and continued the pursuit for a little while, but presently the fugitives saw one of their number turn to Dannel, and gesticulating violently, point to the right bank, whither the head of the canoe was shortly afterwards turned.

"What are they up to now, I wonder?" queried Captain Slack thoughtfully.

"Perhaps they are going to try and head us off by land," hazarded Tod.

"I only hope they may, we can easily beat them at that game," laughed Dick. "Here, Itza!" he added, hailing the Indian, who was slowing down to allow the canoe to overtake him. "Drop behind and see what the beggars are up to."

Itza nodded, and whirling round his canoe with a few strokes of his paddle, turned up-stream. Suddenly Dick, who was watching him over the caique's stern, saw him pause, then come more the light canoe flew round, and he saw Itza paddling after them for all he was worth.

Quick, for your lives! They have set fire to the forest on both sides of the river!" he cried, as soon as he had got within earshot of the larger boat.

The boys cast one terrified glance behind them, then bent to their paddles with a will.

The banks of the river, as Itza had said, were on fire, and the wind was bringing the terrible fire down with a fearful rate. To go back was impossible; the only chance was to keep on and try to outsail the fiery demon behind them.

On they went, each arm straining to the utmost. The river here was comparatively narrow at this point—a fact which was probably doubtless calculated upon when he put his devilish scheme into execution.

On came the roaring flames, drawing nearer and nearer every moment. Snakes, alligators, and small animals flinging themselves into the water, swarmed upon the surface of the river; whilst the trees on either side were filled with crowds of fleeing monkeys, their shrill, terrified chatter sounding loud above the roar of the flames.

The air was full of pieces of burning grass and leaves, threatening each moment to set fire to the canoe and boats. Thick columns of smoke swept the surface of the river, choking the fugitives and making them gasp for breath.

Urged on by the strong arms of the sailors, the caique soon overtook the smaller craft. Dick would fain have stopped and shared their fate, but as it would be impossible to render them assistance he reluctantly gave the order for his crew to press on.

Still the flames roared and shrieked above their heads, whilst a thin cloud of steam arose from the surface of the water, and tiny branches of trees, carried forward by fitful gusts of wind, dropped hissing into the water around them.

At last, when it seemed as though nothing could save them, for the river was studded with islands—which had already caught fire—and they could scarcely see their way through the thick smoke, the river suddenly turned southward, and as the easterly wind carried the flames away they breathed more freely. But fearing lest the fearful, devouring flames should sweep down upon them again, they continued paddling, until, at last, they had left the burning river far behind them.

Then, and not till then, did they row to an open spot on the bank, and, jumping ashore, flung themselves down on the soft grass, thoroughly exhausted.

For a time they were very anxious about the fate of the boats, but one by one, terribly scorched and worn with fatigue, but otherwise uninjured, their crews and missing craft came up.

As soon as ever they were a little rested they embarked once more, and, after continuing on a southerly course for some time, a gentle bend in the river brought their heads once more in an easterly direction, then, on a straight, ever-widening stream in front of them, they continued their journey more leisurely; for when Dannel had set fire to the river to destroy them he had also blocked his own passage eastward.

### THE 18th CHAPTER.
### Joe's Adventure.

HAVING passed the town of Barcellos during the night—for they did not deem it wise to invite more attention to their expedition than they could help, lest their hidden treasure should be discovered—they began to hope that they had at last thrown off the pursuit of their inveterate foe. For some days now nothing had been seen of Itza, who had fallen behind, as usual, to keep a watch on Dannel and his gang of scoundrels.

With no reason to think themselves in immediate danger, the leaders of the expedition began to take things more easily, and as they were getting tired of an exclusive fish and maize-bread diet, Joe entered his canoe one day and paddled slowly by the side of the river on the look-out for game.

Presently he saw a small herd of deer drinking on the left bank. Running his canoe ashore, he forced his way through the thick foliage until within easy range, then, taking [illegible] careful aim, fired, and a graceful buck, springing into the air, staggered a few steps forward and fell to the ground.

Eager to secure his game, Joe dashed forward, when, to his intense chagrin, the animal scrambled to its feet and staggered into the wood, whither the rest of the herd had already flown.

"He's too hard hit to go far, I'll soon have him," thought Joe, as he ran towards the spot where the deer had disappeared.

Large clots of blood showed where the wounded animal had gone; and hot upon its trail, Joe dashed after it. Presently he was stopped by a yawning chasm, on the other side of which he saw his quarry lying dead.

The banks were too steep to climb, and the

(*Continued on the next page.*)

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## DICK DASHER'S LUCK.

(Continued from the previous page.)

cham almost too wide to jump, but not quite, and bunting round until he found a level piece of grass opposite on which to alight, and taking as long a run as the close undergrowth would admit, he rose in the air.

But even as he did so he tripped over a piece of vine, and he was thrown headforemost down the gully, and he remembered no more.

When he recovered consciousness soft hands were chafing his limbs and water being sprinkled on his forehead. Opening his eyes he found himself the centre of a group of women, and, realising that they had no hostile or hostile intention towards him, he closed his eyes with a grateful sigh and dropped off once more.

It was nearly evening when he again awoke, feeling much better, but very weak. He looked around in astonishment. Before an opening in the rough hut of palm-leaves which shielded him from the rays of the setting sun, he could see about a dozen women, some of whom were busy cooking an evening meal.

As he struggled to a sitting position a movement at his side caused him to look round, and he saw an Indian girl of about his own age regarding him with pitying eyes.

He spoke to her, but she shook her head, and springing to her feet, ran out. Barely had Joe time to wonder at her sudden disappearance ere she returned leading by the hand a young woman, whose light complexion showed that she was a half-caste.

"Swita, daughter of our chief, Waru, has brought me to talk your language, sir," she said, as Joe struggled to his feet.

"Ah, that is the young lady who has just left me, I suppose! Well, I would be much obliged if you would tell me where I am, who are you, and how I came here?"

"We found you this morning on our way back from the Sun Mountain, where we have been to worship. Finding that you still lived, we carried you hither. We are now within a short distance of our tribe, who will be pleased to welcome the white man. It was well for you that we had been to pray to our God the Sun, or you might have laid where you fell until a wandering jaguar found you, for seldom indeed is it that anyone treads that path."

"Then I owe you my life, and am grateful," said Joe, turning to Swita, who, blushing, took his hand and rubbed it on her forehead—the usual salutation of the Amazon Indians.

Shortly afterwards the little party, with where all women who had gone to the Sun Mountain to pray for husbands, resumed their journey; Joe, who resolutely refused to be carried any further, walking by Swita's side, until presently they reached a large village, where he was received by an old grey-headed chief with every mark of kindness and respect.

Indians were sent off to inform his comrades of his whereabouts, but they returned declaring they could see nothing of them; and also with the astonishing information that Joe's canoe—which two Indians had been sent to bring round to a small creek about half a mile from the village—had also disappeared.

That night Joe slept in a hammock slung between two posts in the chief's house. About four o'clock the following morning he was awakened by someone breathing heavily close to his ear, and looking up he saw by the dim light that obtained around that a man had climbed an adjacent post, and was gazing into his face with a countenance distorted with the deadliest hatred.

With a cry of alarm he sprang from his hammock, but ere he reached the ground Dannel, for it was he, slipped down the post and fled into the jungle.

Joe's cry brought the old chief and several Indians to his side. To him he related what had happened.

"Did you say this bad white man has a large following?" asked Waru, after Joe had given him a brief account of who Dannel was.

"Not above a dozen; but he has plenty of money, and will hire more if he can," replied Joe.

Waru looked grave.

"There is a tribe of bad Indians a short distance from here. I will send my young men to watch the woods. Your enemy shall hire them to attack us," he said.

Obedient to the chief's orders, half a dozen Indians plunged into the forest. About half an hour later they returned, saying that no enemy was upon them.

Fortunately, the chief had forbidden the men of his tribe to leave the village, which was soon all excitement, preparing for the expected attack.

They had not long to wait. A shower of arrows from the jungle around the village warned them that the foe was at hand; then, with blood-curdling yells, as hideous a set of scoundrels as Joe had ever seen charged down upon them.

But Waru, far too wily an old warrior to be caught napping, had formed his men into a hollow square, with the women in the middle, and the first charge was easily repulsed, thanks principally to Joe, whose bandolier was full of cartridges, so that he was able to render a good account of himself.

But though the attacked had the advantage of his rifle, it was more than counterbalanced by the two weapons of Dannel and his companions. It is true Doss carried one arm in a sling; but, stretching himself behind a fallen tree, he was able to fire over it with deadly effect.

The attack of the enemy having been repulsed, both sides contented themselves for a time with firing volleys of arrows at each other; whilst Joe, confining his attention principally to his old enemies, picked off five of the Wairaus one after the other in fine style.

He then turned his attention to the whites; but, after the first shot, Dannel took care to retire out of range. Doss tried to follow his example, but a bullet in the leg effectually put him out of action.

But, alas! the Waru Indians were outnumbered, and were dropping fast before the deadly shower of arrows and spears which were poured in upon them, until at last, with a fearful yell, the foe once more advanced to the attack, and, although at Waru's cry the Indians rallied around him, they were gradually driven back.

Now came the final stand. The friendlies had fought nobly; few had fled, but many had died around their chief, who, bleeding from several wounds, encouraged his followers like the game old warrior he was.

Presently Joe found himself cut off from his friends and surrounded by a dozen of the foe. There was no time now to load or fire, and, clubbing his rifle, he kept them off for some time. One man went down under a tremendous blow from his clubbed rifle; then an Indian

**As her sharp bows struck the advancing flood, the boat reared like a frightened horse, trembled from stem to stern, and the next moment was being carried along by the irresistible current.**

aimed a vicious blow with a heavy war-club at his head; he dodged, lost his footing, and, falling to the ground, found the broad blade of a spear glistening before his eyes.

For a moment the spear remained poised in air, but ere it could fall its wielder turned swiftly round as a loud British cheer rang high above the triumphant yells of the attackers and the defiant shouts of the attacked.

The next moment the savage who had been about to deal him his death-blow turned and fled, a volley after volley was poured into the closely packed ranks of the attackers, who, after a moment's hesitation, broke and fled, pursued by the remnant of the gallant old chief's tribe; whilst Dick hastened to Joe and pulled him to his feet.

"By Jove, old chap, I thought we would have been too late!" he cried, in agitated tones.

"You have run it rather close. Another half minute and I would have ceased to take an interest in anything on earth," replied Joe. "But how is it you are here at all?"

"We have been searching for you all over the place," interposed Captain Slack. "We struck your trail easily enough from the canoe, and found the canoe you had shot, but could see nothing of you, and were casting round on a blind hunt, when the sound of firing brought us here at the double, and a half-caste woman, who spoke English, told us that you and the tribe who had sheltered you were being attacked."

Derwent Dunn was already busy amongst the wounded; and after the first eager questions had been asked and answered, the members of the expedition separated to assist him in his good work, Joe turning his attention principally to the brave old chief, who, wounded in a score of different places, was bleeding slowly to death.

In vain Joe, touched by Swita's tears, begged Dunn to save the gallant old man; but human assistance was of no avail, and a few minutes later Waru, the chief, breathed his last.

### THE 19th CHAPTER.
### The Pororoca.

HAVING made sure that the village was in no further danger of attack, the members of the expedition bade their gallant friends adieu, and accompanied by several Indians who had volunteered to paddle them down the river, returned to their boats, and were soon speeding downstream as fast as the swift current and the strong arms of their experienced paddlers could force them through the water.

So far they had only seen the Amazon in peace, but shortly after starting they felt its fury in a storm. It was as bad as being in an inland sea, for the wind blew immediately up the river, and, meeting the current, lashed it into huge waves.

The Indians, however, stuck gamely to their paddles; but, though going with the current, they were unable to make little headway against the terrific gale. But dangerous though the waters of the storm-lashed Amazon was, they were safer in the centre of that enormous river than on shore, for from the boats they could see huge trees being torn up by their roots and cast into the stream.

Fiercer and more fiercely blew the gale. A darkness as that of night hid the broad bosom of the maddened stream, and now, to add to their many discomforts, it commenced to rain.

It seemed to Dick and his adventurous party as though the very flood-gates of the darkened heavens were loosened upon them, the wind-driving drops, which stung their faces and hands, making it almost impossible for them to breathe.

Suddenly Dick, who with Slack was in the bows, each armed with a long pole to thrust aside the floating trunks and boughs of trees which had been blown into the river and dashed madly past them, uttered a cry of horror.

Advancing towards them at a fearful rate was a moving wall of water, heralded by a sloping zone of foam-capped waves.

"The *Pororoca*—the *pororoca*!" cried Iza, his voice shrill with terror as he pointed towards the liquid avalanche.

Captain Slack cast one glance towards the canvas boats, whose occupants had already seen their danger, and were straining every nerve to keep their boats' bows on to the terrible flood which is cast up by the wind meeting the swift current and literally blowing it back; then, placing his hands to his mouth, he shouted in a voice that rose high above the storm:

"Steady, men! If she swerves one point we are lost!"

There was no need to warn the hardy natives. They had lived on the treacherous Amazon all their lives, and knew—none better—how to meet the fearful danger which menaced them.

Straining every nerve, her crew kept the canoe head on to the threatening danger; then, as her sharp bows struck the advancing flood, she reared like a frightened horse, trembled from stem to stern, and the next moment was being carried along by the irresistible current, but fortunately on the top of the large bore, or *pororoca*, as the Amazon Indians call the phenomenon.

"Where are the boats?" asked Dick, in a hoarse voice, as soon as the worst was over.

Eagerly Dunn and Ted peered through the hissing rain. The woods were dotted here and there with floating logs and carcases of animals, but not a sign of the boats, with their valuable cargo of gold, and their still more valuable human lives, could be seen.

When Joe Terry, who was in command of one of the canvas boats, first saw the huge wall of water advancing upon him, he gave himself up for lost; but, determined to fight to the last, he grasped the tiller with both hands, and ordered his two sailors to pull for their lives.

It was useless. Where the quick, short strokes of the paddles had prevailed the longer sweep of the oars were useless. Despite their most strenuous efforts, the light craft whirled round and round like a chip in a mill-dam.

It seemed as though the frail boat must collapse; but, despite the many hundreds of miles it had travelled, and the rough usage it had received, she held together in an almost miraculous manner, although all efforts to steer her were futile, and they were whirled each moment nearer and nearer the banks.

As they approached the flooded forests the noise of the waters rushing through the trees struck terror to their hearts. Suddenly Joe, half rose from his place in the stern.

"Bill, your bow, for your lives! Lose a channel branching off at right angles from the river. If we can reach that we may yet save our lives."

Rowing as only men row who are conscious that their very existence depends upon their own united efforts, the sailors dug their oars deeply into the water, and by dint of ceaseless pulling managed to gain the entrance to a narrow glade through the forest.

Here the current was as strong as ever, but the waters were not so storm-tossed, the tall thickly-planted trees keeping off the full force of the tempest.

For some miles the resistless current carried them forward. On either side were tall trees, whose tops were waving and shaking as though with anger in the mighty storm. Even above the howling of the wind could be heard the affrighted screams of the countless monkeys who had taken refuge in the tops of the trees.

Presently the passage down which they were being carried became so narrow that they were compelled to use their oars; but the current gave them sufficient headway to enable Joe, grasping the bandolier oars in both hands, the young Britisher guided his craft towards where two tall ironwood-trees, like the posts of some enormous gate, stood on either side of the channel.

For a moment Joe's heart almost ceased to beat as he measured the distance between the trees with his eye. A terrible fear lest there was not room for his boat to pass chilled Joe's frame; indeed, so narrow was the opening that for a moment the boat was caught as in a vice, but the next it shot forward, and a few minutes later the three men found themselves floating over a small flooded plain, completely enclosed with trees, in the centre of which was a small hill, rising like a tiny island from the water.

Steering towards this hill, Joe ran the bow of his boat aground, and the next moment they were on terra firma.

Fortunately they had a small tent with them, which, as the wind seemed to have gone down, they succeeded in pitching; and then all three crowded into it, to await the end of the rain-storm, which seemed to hold the whole country in its grasp. Once the storm was over they knew that the waters would return to the river, and that they would have little difficulty in finding their way back.

Joe's sole anxiety now was for the occupants of the other boat and the canoe.

Towards evening the storm abated; but, not caring to risk the passage through the trees in the dark, he decided to wait until morning before venturing upon his return journey.

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