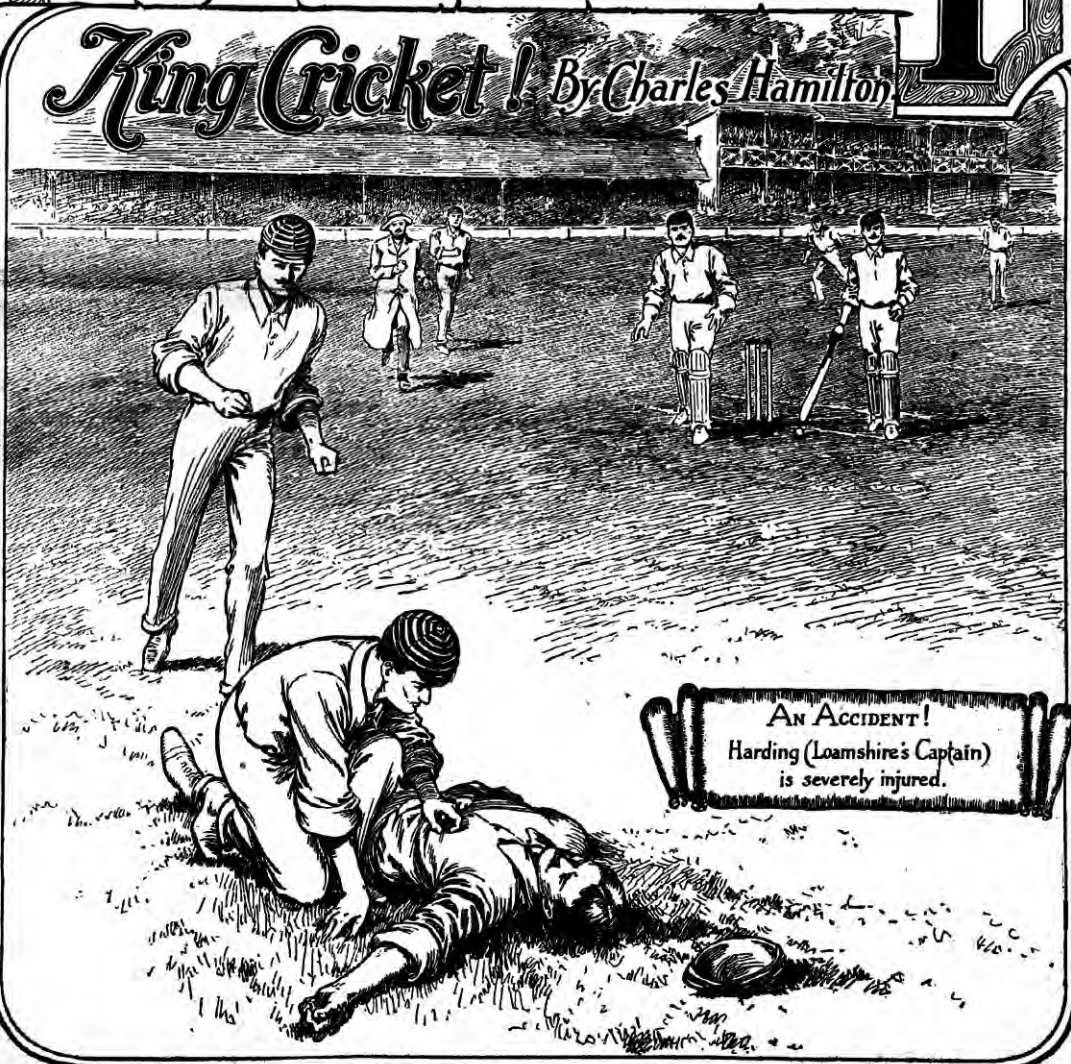
"M-O-N-E-Y"—ANSWERS' New Serial Story—Starts This Week!

The Boys' Realm

of Sport & Adventure.

1D

King Cricket! By Charles Hamilton.



AN ACCIDENT!
Harding (Loamshire's Captain) is severely injured.

No. 269. VOL. VI.] EVERY SATURDAY—ONE PENNY. [SATURDAY, JULY 27, 1907.

KING CRICKET.

A Fascinating New Story of County Cricket.

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

The Chief Characters in this Fine Story

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

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

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 bribes Len Valance to injure Arthur in such a manner as to make it impossible for him to play in the next match against Yorkshire.

Len makes a bad blunder, and strikes down Blane, the captain of Loamshire, with a foul blow in the dark, mistaking him for Arthur. Blane is unable to play in the coming match with Yorkshire, and Ponsonby is appointed in his place as captain. Ponsonby is not a success, and has to resign his captainship. 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.

Arthur refuses to have anything to do with him, and Len, in his rage, lets out that it was his hand that struck Blane down some weeks before. Arthur's anger overcomes him, and he is only prevented from doing Len serious injury by the arrival of Kit Valance. Arthur and Kit quarrel. Late the following day the South Africans are dismissed, and Loamshire are left in a practically hopeless position, requiring over three hundred runs to win. Can they do it?

(Now read this week's instalment.)

The South Africans' Day Out.

REGGIE SCHWARZ soon showed that he was in as fine form now as during the first innings of the Loamshire men. The fine South African bowler went to the crease with a businesslike air, and Harding, who was to receive the first over, prepared for squalls.

It was just as well that he was prepared, for he had to face them.

Schwarz sent down three slow to medium balls, and followed them up with a baffling googly, which Harding stopped more by luck than intention.

Then two more slow balls, which Harding flicked away, but did not venture to run for.

The first over was a maiden.

The field crossed, and the ball was tossed to Kotze.

"There you are, Kodgee!" said Sherwell, with a smile, which showed how much confidence he had in the fast bowler from the veldt.

And "Kodgee" nodded cheerfully.

Geoffrey Lagden was watching with all his eyes as he saw Kotze with the leather.

That over was something like a hailstorm to the batsman.

He lived through it, and kept his wicket up, but how, he hardly knew. He was not up to the form of the South African bowling, and he knew it. But he stood it out pluckily, without venturing to run, however.

Two maiden overs; and now Harding had the bowling again.

Vogler, erstwhile of Lord's, bowled the third over, and it proved fatal to the captain of Loamshire.

Harding had knocked up four off three balls, but the fourth curled round his willow, and laid his bails on the pitch.

The Loamshire captain carried out his bat for 4.

The spectators looked at one-another when the telegraph showed 4 for one. And that one the Loamshire captain!

Tunstall came in next to join Lagden. Harding was speaking in a low tone to Colonel Hilton.

"Lovell is not looking his best, sir," he said. "I wanted to send him in early, but the whole side look to him for a lead—even those who don't like him—and if he lost his wicket for next to nothing, it would have a disheartening effect."

Colonel Hilton nodded.

"I suppose you are right, Harding."

"Of course; a match isn't lost till it is won, sir," said the Loamshire skipper, reading the expression of the old cricketer's face. "But I must admit that the South African bowling is the most dangerous we have ever had to face. Not that they have a man who is up to Kit Valance's form when he's at his best," he added quickly. "Unluckily, he was not at his best this morning, for some reason."

The colonel did not reply. His eyes were fixed upon Tunstall, who was facing the bowling of the old Lord's groundsman; facing it well, but evidently without quite knowing how to handle it.

Clack!

It was the last ball of the over from Vogler. It lifted Tunstall's middle stump out of the ground, and laid it on the turf.

"How's that?" grinned the bowler from the veldt.

"Out!"

And Tunstall, with flushed cheeks, re-entered the pavilion.

Four for two; last man, 0! So ran the Loamshire score. It was not a very inspiriting commencement to the county's second innings, and did not promise much towards making up the home team's immense lee-way.

Tweedie replaced Tunstall at the wicket. The slow, cautious, Scottish professional was an excellent batsman of the stonewaller type, and could generally be relied upon to keep his end up pretty steadily, and for a good length of time. But he was not quite up to the bowling of Reggie Schwarz.

A puzzling googly came down and eluded his bat, and knocked over his wicket in the easiest way in the world, and Tweedie carried his bat for a big, round nought.

Three down for 4!

Harding, the Loamshire skipper, wore a worried look. He exchanged a glance with the colonel. There was one chance of stopping the "rot" which seemed to have set in in the Loamshire batting, and that was a doubtful one. But it was better than nothing. The crowd cheered with relief and welcome when they saw Arthur Lovell emerge from the pavilion with his bat under his arm, buttoning his glove.

The mere sight of Arthur Lovell, whom they knew of old, had the effect of cheering them and reawakening their hopes of seeing their county victorious.

"Bravo, Lovell!"

"Show them how to bat, Arthur!"

"Bravo!"

Lovell smiled slightly, like a ray of sunshine on the gloom of his face. He was not in a happy mood. Before he broke with Kit Valance he had never fully realised how much that friendship had meant to him. To see Kit pass him with averted face gave him a feeling he had never experienced before, and the quarrel with Valance hit him far harder than anything his enemies in the Loamshire Club had been able to do.

Arthur meant to do his best, and he was determined to play up for Loamshire. But good cricket is to a large extent a matter of mood. Physical fitness is the first requisite; then mental fitness. A man with a worry on his mind was not the man to face bowling like that of Schwarz, Vogler, and Kotze.

Lovell took middle, and faced the bowling of Reggie Schwarz. He remembered his experience in the first innings, when he had been clean bowled, and he was very watchful now for Schwarz's dangerous "googlies."

The result was that he stopped them, and the over left him safe at his wicket. Then Lagden batted, and a single brought Arthur Lovell to the batting end, to face fast balls from Kotze.

These he dealt with with something of his old dash. A 4, a 2, and then a boundary, seemed to hint that the Loamshire skipper had done well, after all, in sending Lovell on as a forlorn hope.

That over from Kotze gave Arthur Lovell, in all, 11, and left him at the batting end to face Schwarz again. Again Schwarz tried his best, but this time Lovell hit out to his bowling, and sent the South Africans on some leather hunting, which gave them plenty of exercise.

A 2, and another 2, and a 4, and then 2 more.

Loamshire's score had jumped to 26 already, and the cheers of the crowd showed how keenly they appreciated the revival of the home innings.

"Bravo, Lovell!"

"Hurrah!"

Loud cheering greeted every successful hit by Loamshire's champion bat, and something of the old look came back to Arthur Lovell's face, the old light to his eyes.

Down came the ball again. The twisting googly which had sent many a batsman home, and Arthur Lovell caught it just where he wanted it.

The clack of wood meeting leather was followed by the far flight of the ball. Where was the leather? A shout from the pavilion told. And a member of the Loamshire county club, whose high white hat had been turned into something like a concertina by that ball, tossed it back to a grinning fieldsman, grinning himself. Three runs had been taken.

Colonel Hilton's eyes sparkled.

"Lovell's shaping well, Harding," he remarked.

"Yes; by Jove," said the Loamshire skipper heartily; "if he keeps it up."

Lagden had the batting now. He put on 4, playing very cautiously; and then Kotze bowled to Arthur Lovell's wicket lightning balls, which Lovell cut away to the four quarters of the field.

A 4—and 4—and 4; and yet 4 more!

Another ball, and another swiping hit—and then a roar!

"Caught!"

Reggie Schwarz was grinning at mid-wicket, and the ball, hot from the bat, was safe in the hands of the fieldsman, who had leaped up to it, and caught it in full flight.

"Caught!"

"Well caught!"

"How's that, umpire?"

"Out!" said the umpire tersely.

Arthur Lovell nodded, and left the wicket. He was out, fairly and smartly caught at point by Schwarz; but he knew that if he had been in his best form that day he would never have been caught out so easily.

But it could not be helped. He had done his best, and no man could do more. He went out with 40 runs to his credit; the total for Loamshire now standing at 49 for four wickets. The interval for lunch followed.

Loamshire resumed the innings with Ponsonby as Lagden's partner at the wickets. But Lagden's time was coming now. He had 22 in all to his name, when a slow ball from Schwarz caught him napping, and his leg-stump went down like a ninepin.

He clicked his teeth as he carried out his bat. His was the score second best to Lovell's, and considering the quality of the bowling, it was a creditable one. But once again his hope of outshining his rival had been nipped in the bud. Wentworth came in to take Lagden's place. He did not stay long, the next ball from Reggie Schwarz whipping his middle stump clean out of the ground. Another batsman came in, to make an equally short stay at the wicket, Reggie Schwarz scattering his bails with the third ball of the over.

A loud cheer from the throng round the rails greeted Schwarz's performance of the "hat-trick."

But Reggie Schwarz was not done yet. With the last ball of the over he captured another wicket. Loamshire were eight down now, and the afternoon was yet young. All hope of victory was of course abandoned at this stage by the home county, and there was extremely little chance of playing for a draw. How little chance was apparent when, two minutes later, Fortescue was caught out in the slips by Sherwell, and from a ball by Sinclair, with the Loamshire score at 80.

Kit Valance was now in with Ponsonby, and Kit was doing his best. But there was still an hour and a half left to play; the light was good, and the weather ideal. The last two Loamshire batsmen were not likely to "stick" it out for the required space!

Colonel Hilton was tugging at his grey moustache. Molly's face was shadowed with disappointment. It was Loamshire's first defeat of the season—and that it was a defeat was soon evident. Kit Valance had put on 8, and was steadily defending his wicket. The bowling came to Ponsonby. Nourse was bowling, and the last ball of the over found Ponsonby wanting.

There was a click, and Ponsonby found himself looking down in dismay at a wrecked wicket! Kit Valance was "not out," and Loamshire were all down for 88.

Loud cheers followed the South Africans off the field. The Loamshire folk were disappointed, but they were good sportsmen. The visitors had defeated the home county after a fair and square tussle, and that was all there was to be said about it.

Arthur Lovell's face was gloomy as he went into the professional's room to change. He had done his best. But he felt that more had been expected of him; that he might have done more, and it was not a pleasant feeling.

Kit Valance was in the room. He did not glance towards Arthur, neither did he speak, and Lovell was also silent. The cricket chums, who had never met without a smile, or a cordial word, met now, and parted in grim silence, with averted looks.

The Match with Hampshire.

DRIP, drip, drip!

The rain was falling in a steady drizzle.

Gloomy faces looked out of the pavilion on the county ground at Southampton towards the drenched pitch.

Drip, drip, drip!

In the shelter of the pavilion the men of Hampshire and Loamshire were waiting for the rain to cease and the sky to clear.

They had waited all the morning already, but still there was hardly a sign of the rain ceasing to fall.

Loamshire were playing Hampshire on the latter's ground at Southampton, and the extremely bad weather bade fair to entirely spoil the match.

The 1907 season had opened very badly for cricketers generally, but hitherto Loamshire had been fortunate in the matter of weather. Their matches so far had been played under very good conditions; but their time was coming. When they arrived at the Hampshire county ground they found that it had come!

On the first of the three days devoted to the county match there had been but one hour's cricket. Loamshire had won the toss, and had opened their innings with Arthur Lovell and Geoffrey Lagden, who had knocked up 70 runs between them, 50 out of the 70 belonging to Arthur Lovell. Then the rain came down upon them, and play had to be abandoned without a wicket having fallen.

For the rest of that dreary day the cricketers had waited, hoping that the weather would clear, but instead of clearing it became worse, a regular rainstorm coming on with the night.

Then they hoped that the morning would see a change, but the morning dawned dull and wet. Later on there was a gleam of sunshine, which raised their hopes, and made the Loamshire men look forward to a continuation of their innings. But it was brief and deceptive. The sky clouded over again, and the rain came down once more.

Drip, drip, drip!

A few hundred spectators only had turned up for the second day's play, after their experience on the first, and only those who were under shelter had remained.

The cricketers looked out of the blurred windows upon a drenched field and deserted enclosures, and wondered glumly if the rain would ever cease.

Colonel Hilton sat in the reading-room, gnawing his moustache, and talking in a desultory way to Harding, the new Loamshire captain, and Sprot, the skipper of the home county.

Their faces were glum enough.

They wanted sunshine and a dry wicket, and it seemed that they were to have nothing but rain.

The members of the teams were equally gloomy.

It was extremely exasperating to waste time in the pavilion, listening to the drip of the rain, with the almost certain prospect of an unfinished match before them.

Loamshire had commenced the season so well that Colonel Hilton, and the other members of the county committee, already saw the glorious vision of the county championship come within the range of possibility.

Only one defeat, so far, had the Loamshire men experienced, and that was at the hands of the South Africans, and there was no disgrace in defeat at the hands of a team which had, as yet, beaten every side it had met on English soil.

Some of the greatest counties had fallen before the men from Loamshire, and Loamshire's place on the table was already a high one, only Notts and Middlesex being, at this juncture, ahead of her in the race.

In his own mind, as a matter of fact, Colonel Hilton had already sketched out the Loamshire side that was to meet the Rest of England, as Champion County, at the Oval in September.

This was certainly counting his chickens rather early, but the success of the Loamshire side hitherto justified the old county cricketer in the high hopes he entertained.

But an unfinished match was an abomination in the eyes of the colonel.

He was a sportsman to the finger-tips, and would rather have been beaten in a stout fight than have played for a draw; and an unfinished match, which, of course, does not count in the championship, was so much waste of time to him.

Many a time his eyes wandered to the blurred window, in the hope of detecting some improvement in the weather.

But the rain was still falling fast.

Luncheon-time came, and with it, at last, came a rift in the sky, a glimmer of sunshine from the masses of clouds.

It lightened up the face of the colonel, and many other faces that had been grim and gloomy all the weary morning.

"Looks like a change at last, Harding."

The Loamshire captain nodded hopefully.

"Looks like it, sir."

"Hope it will last," said Sprot. "Well, let's go and get some lunch, anyway, and the rain may have stopped by then."

Colonel Hilton was thinking more of cricket than of his lunch, and his eyes were on the windows most of the time.

The rain certainly seemed to be clearing off at last.

How long the interval of fine weather would last it was impossible to tell, but the cricketers hoped for the best.

"It's looking up, Pon," Geoffrey Lagden remarked, as he stood looking out at the drenched field. "It ain't coming down now."

"The pitch is as wet as a rag," said Ponsonby.

"Yes, confound it! But so long as it gets dry enough for play, I don't care. My batting, at any rate, is average good on a wet wicket."

Ponsonby grinned.

"Arthur Lovell is at his best on a dry one," he remarked.

"Which, of course, you're both awfully sorry for," remarked Fortescue, joining them. "Still, as it's pretty certain to be an unfinished match, it won't matter much."

"Oh, rats to you!" said Lagden, turning away.

To Arthur Lovell, and Kit Valance, too, the change in the weather brought hope and something of cheerfulness.

The two professionals were far more bored by the inactivity than the amateurs of the team.

For in the Loamshire Club, more than in any other, a sharp line was drawn between amateur and professional, and anything like

association between the two was next to impossible.

In the days when Arthur Lovell had played for his county as an amateur, he had been the friend of Kit Valance, the young professional bowler, but that was exceptional.

Now Arthur was a professional himself.

But it was not his exclusion in this sense that brought the shade to Arthur's face that it now wore.

In the midst of all the blows he had received from fickle fortune—and they had been many—his friendship with Kit had been firm and true.

Now a cloud had come between them.

They no longer spoke except when it was absolutely necessary in their work, and they met and parted in silence and with averted looks.

Len Valance, the scapegrace, was the cause of it; and with each day that passed the breach seemed to widen between the two who had been such close chums.

Arthur felt it very keenly, but he was too proud to let it be seen, and he became more reserved and quiet than ever, and some curious persons who had sought information on the subject had received rebuffs which made them wish they had not asked questions.

Arthur was a paid player in the service of the Loamshire County Cricket Club, but his private affairs were his own, and he had no intention of being questioned about them by anyone.

Arthur's face brightened up in response to the gleam of sunshine in the sky, and when the umpires went out to examine the ground, his glance followed them anxiously.

He saw the shaking of heads, and the doleful return to the pavilion.

The ground was not yet in a condition for play.

But quite a blaze of sunshine came out as the afternoon wore on, and after several goings to and fro between the pitch and the pavilion, the ground was announced to be dry enough for the resumption of play.

"Lovell!"

"Lagden!"

Gladly enough Arthur fastened on his pads and took up his bat.

Hitherto, before he went on for his innings, there had always been a cheery word from his comrade; now he went out in silence.

But Kit Valance's glance followed him, anxious to see Lovell figure well at the wicket, and win fresh renown for himself and his county.

For in both hearts the old friendship still lived, although now their ways were parted.

Arthur Lovell went down to the wicket, and Geoffrey Lagden came out with his bat under his arm.

The Hampshire team had gladly come out to field.

Llewellyn was bowling trial balls to the wicket-keeper, but he ceased as the batsmen came out, and prepared to deliver his over against Arthur Lovell.

Pensauny had remarked that Arthur was at his best on a dry wicket, and it was true, but the champion bat of Loamshire was dangerous on any sort of ground.

Llewellyn bowled well, but Arthur was quite a match for the best bowler that Hampshire could put into the field, and he sent the balls from Llewellyn far and wide.

A 2, a 4, and another 2, showed that the Loamshire batsman had not become rusty during his long wait for the resumption of play.

But fortune frowned upon Lagden when the bowling came from the other end.

Lagden hit away a 2 and a 4 from Newman, but he was not careful enough for the treacherous wicket, and Newman's third ball laid his bails on the ground.

Lagden stared at the wicket in dismay.

"How's that?" grinned Newman.

"Out!"

Lagden carried out his bat discontentedly. He had 28 runs in all to his credit, and he had hoped for better things, but the wicket had proved too much for him, as it proved too much for better batsmen to follow.

Fortescue was next man in, and he made 2 before he was dismissed by a "twister" from Newman, who took two wickets in the over.

Then Tunstall came out to join Lovell, only to meet disaster on the slippery wicket. He went out in the first over, bowled by Sprot against his wicket, with a big round 0 to his credit.

Arthur Lovell was still batting well.

Lovell could hit out like a Jessop when he chose, but he knew when to be slow and cautious, and he played a cautious game now.

He was gradually getting accustomed to the wicket, which was also getting drier as the time passed, and his score was going up.

But while Arthur's score was going up, the Loamshire wickets were going down.

The visiting batsmen were simply routed by the state of the wickets, and the Hampshire bowlers seemed to make hay of them.

Harding was dismissed by Sprot for 12, and Chichester was out next, leg-before, for a duck's egg.

Loamshire were now five down for 130, of which 90 belonged to Arthur Lovell.

Of his 90, 70 had been scored the previous day, before the rain had commenced, and on a rained wicket it had taken him as long to score the odd 20.

Kit Valance was next man in for Loamshire.

The young bowler could usually put up a fairly good show at the wicket, but the state of the ground was as fatal to him as to the rest.

He scored 16 before he was bowled by Llewellyn.

And now Arthur Lovell's time was coming.

He had increased his individual score to 99, and the next hit, had it materialised, would have gained the coveted century.

But it was not to be.

Smoker sent down a tricky ball, which Arthur stopped dead on the crease. Then came another, and Lovell was baffled. The ball slid from the pitch in a way he could hardly have calculated upon, and his bails were down.

The few spectators who had returned to see the resumption of play gave Lovell a cheer as he carried out his bat.

He was out, but he had knocked up a fine score for his side, and it was pretty certain that no other Loamshire batsman would approach the figure.

The Loamshire figures now read 155 for seven; last man, 99.

The fall of Arthur Lovell's wicket was the signal for the crushing finish of the Loamshire innings.

Wicket after wicket went down, but it was rather to the state of the ground than the sting of the bowling that the stumps fell.

Three more wickets fell for 3, and Loamshire were all down for 163, Maynard being not out for 50.

Luck was with Hampshire this time.

For the sun was coming out more brightly, and the ground was drying rapidly, and there were still two hours of play.

In the breast of Sprot, the Hampshire captain, a hope dawned that the match might be a finished one after all, with a victory for Hampshire.

At all events, it was his intention to make hay while the sun shone.

And the Hampshire innings opened with Sprot and Newman at the wickets, and the men from Loamshire went out to field.

Sprot cut away a tempting ball, and point was on the look-out.

A spring into the air—a cheer from the few hundreds of spectators, which sounded strangely thin over the great Southampton ground.

"Caught!"

"Well caught!"

The ball was in Lovell's hand, a smile of satisfaction upon his handsome face.

"How's that, umpire?"

"Out!"

Sprot had been fairly caught, and there was no doubt about it.

He carried out his bat for 32, and Badcock came out of the pavilion to take his place as Newman's partner.

Badcock and Newman proceeded to cut the bowling about between them, and the Hampshire score had gone up to a total of 80, when the latter was clean bowled by Kit Valance.

And now, to the dismay of the cricketers, an ominous gloom began to overspread the sky from the east.

It heralded a return of the rain, as all judges of the weather knew, but as yet none fell, and the cricketers still hoped that it would hold off until the time came for drawing the stumps.

Meanwhile, the batsmen were busily at work.

Badcock was out when the Hampshire score had just turned 100, and Llewellyn took his place, his partner being the Rev. W. P. Jephson.

Llewellyn and Jephson piled more runs on the score.

Jephson was hitting out well, sending the balls right into the deep field, and adding run after run.

Away went the leather once more from the reverend gentleman's bat, and there was a shout as cover-slip was seen running.

Harding, the Loamshire skipper, was after the ball like a shot.

Jephson and Llewellyn were running, and running hard, but they had not yet crossed, and the Loamshire captain was almost on the ball.

Would the throw-in come in time?

Every eye followed Harding as he ran.

He was almost on the ground, when he was seen to slip on the damp turf, and fall heavily to the ground.

There was another shout.

"You're all right, Hampshire!"

Hampshire were indeed all right.

Jephson and Llewellyn had reached their ends, and their bats were safely on the creases, and there was no longer danger from a throw-in.

But the next moment there was a buzz.

Harding was seen to raise himself from the ground, and then fall back again upon the turf.

For the first time cricketers and spectators realised that the Loamshire skipper had been hurt.

Slip and point both ran swiftly towards him. Harding raised himself into a sitting posture, and threw in the ball, and then sank down again. The Loamshire captain was evidently hurt, but he had managed to send in the ball, his thoughts being still with the game in spite of his injury.

Arthur Lovell was the first to reach him. The ball had come in to the wicket-keeper, and Kit Valance was ready to bowl again, but for the moment play had ceased. Lovell dropped on his knee quickly beside Harding.

"What is the matter, sir?"

Harding was as pale as death, and he was evidently only keeping back a groan of pain by a strong effort.

"I think I must have twisted my leg when I fell," he said faintly. "I can't get up, Lovell."

Lovell's face became very serious. He knew that his skipper was not the man to give in if he could possibly help it, and so he felt that Harding was badly hurt.

"Shall I look at it, sir?"

"Yes—yes!"

Arthur ripped the leg of the captain's white flannel trousers, and exposed the injured limb to view. Harding gave a gasp of pain as he lightly touched it.

"You've sprained it badly, sir," said Arthur quietly. "We shall have to carry you back to the pavilion."

Harding groaned.

"Lend a hand here, Lagden."

Lagden, who had been fielding at slip, was now on the spot. He bent down beside Harding.

"Can't you walk, Harding?"

"I think I could toddle on one leg if you two fellows helped me," said Harding, with a faint smile, in spite of his pain. "I don't want to be carried if it can be helped."

"Better let us carry you, sir," said Lovell.

Lagden looked at him angrily.

"You can do as you're told," he said. "Take his left arm."

Arthur's eyes blazed for a moment. But it was no time to dispute with Lagden, with Harding lying white, and almost fainting with pain, on the wet turf. He caught Harding by the left arm, and the captain of Loamshire was raised upon his sound leg, the other dragging helplessly.

The pain of the movement almost deprived him of consciousness, and a faint moan left his lips. His weight hung heavily upon the two fieldsmen, and it became apparent that he could not move from the spot without being carried bodily.

"We shall have to carry him," said Lovell.

"I suppose so," Lagden snapped out the reply.

They lifted Harding bodily, and bore him across the field towards the pavilion, which was fortunately not very far distant. The glances of the other cricketers followed the unfortunate Loamshire captain with sympathy.

"Not bad, I hope?" said Sprot, the Hampshire captain, joining them.

"A bad sprain!" said Lagden. "I'm afraid he's laid up for some time, Sprot."

The Hampshire skipper looked very concerned.

"I'm sorry!"

"Yes; it is hard cheese!"

But there was a glitter in Lagden's eyes which might have told a close observer that he was far from displeased inwardly at the mishap that had befallen the leader of the Loamshire cricketers.

There was no love lost between Geoffrey Lagden and Harding, who was a quiet, plain fellow, and is nowise inclined to favour the "smart set" in Loamshire county cricket; the set of which Geoffrey Lagden was the shining light.

And now, it was pretty certain, Loamshire would be without a captain once more, and a secret ambition that Lagden had long cherished might be realised at last!

Harding was carried into the pavilion, and a doctor instantly sent for. Colonel Hilton's brow was very grave and anxious. But he was thinking chiefly of Harding, not of the game to which the services of the captain had now been lost.

For the game was doomed. Hardly had the Loamshire captain been carried in by Lagden and Lovell, when the first drops of rain began to fall.

Drip, drip, drip!

The old familiar sound of the falling rain was heard once more, and the unlucky cricketers were driven to the pavilion for shelter.

The Hampshire score stood at 120, and for that day, at least, it was certain not to be added to. For the rain was soon coming down in sheets, and it was still pouring when the time came, which would, in any case, have marked the close of play.

Once more the pitch was drenched, and, judging by the black clouds that were banking overhead, there was not likely to be much fine weather on the morrow. As for that, there were few regrets. All chance of finishing and deciding the match being gone, no one was anxious for a desultory and useless attendance at the wickets on the morrow. It was not long before the result was known. His friend was anxiously awaited by the Loamshire cricketers.

Harding had never been a brilliant captain, but he was a fine fellow, and a good cricketer, and he was well liked in the club, except by Geoffrey Lagden and a few of his set. And faces grew very serious when it was made known that Harding's sprain was of a serious nature, and that it would be impossible for him to walk on a wicket-field again for some time; probably many weeks.

The vacancy in the team it would be easy to fill, for Loamshire had quite a number of promising young colts to draw upon in case of necessity.

But who was the new captain to be? Harding's captaincy had been something in the nature of a stopgap. He was not the leader to steer the team through the difficulties of a season and the long fight for the county championship.

But it had been expected that his captainship would last until Blanc, the colonel's nephew, and the former captain of Loamshire, was well enough to take the field again. His injury put an end to that idea. Blanc was still laid up, and now Harding was on the sick list. The post of captain was vacant once more. How was it to be filled?

Loamshire's next fixture was with Kent, the champion county; from whom, by the time the

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 correct 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. 4," 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 ..... Football Club." All letters must reach this office by Saturday, August 3rd. Another six portraits will appear next week.


No. 19.


No. 20.


No. 21.


No. 22.


No. 23.


No. 24.

An Unfinished Match.

SPROT took his place at the wicket, and waited for the ball

Kit Valance took the first over against Hampshire.

Arthur Lovell was fielding at point, his favourite position, and Harding, the captain of Loamshire, was at slip.

Kit Valance had sent down a few trials to Tunstall, who was keeping wicket, but he prepared for stern business when the Hampshire captain came down to the wicket.

Sprot was a foeman worthy of his steel, and he knew it.

The state of the ground was not favourable to Kit's style of bowling, but he was always dangerous, and he meant to do his best.

Sprot played the first over very cautiously.

The ground was far more favourable for good batting than it had been during the Loamshire innings, but it was far from perfect.

And the Hampshire captain knew something of Kit Valance's bowling.

Kit's fame had preceded him, and the home players on the Southampton ground knew that they had to do their level best with the willow, and no keep their eyes wide open, when the young Loamshire colt was bowling.

The over gave Sprot only 2, and then Tweedie, Loamshire's Scottish professional, bowled from the other end to Newman.

Newman was also in a careful mood, and he stopped two balls, and played the third for a single run.

This brought Sprot opposite Tweedie.

The Hampshire captain proceeded to cut the rest of the over across the field.

The Hampshire score was going up steadily, and with every over it increased, and ere a quarter of an hour had elapsed, Sprot and Newman had put on 40 between them, and they were still batting.

But Sprot's hour had now come.

Arthur Lovell at point was watchful for

MAGNIFICENT WATCHES FREE! See "The Boys' Herald," 1d. Every Thursday.

cricket season ended, Colonel Hilton hoped to wrest their laurels.

On the eve of their match with the champions, Loamshire were left without a captain! And so the question was an anxious one among Loamshire cricketers, both in the team and out of it.

Who was to be the new captain of Loamshire?

To Meet the Champion County.

As all anticipated, the Loamshire v. Hampshire match had to be counted as "unfinished"; and the Loamshire cricketers returned home without having added to, or lost any of the points they were piling up for the championship.

Better weather awaited the team at home in Loamshire. There was no first-class fixture for the rest of the week, and the Loamshire cricketers had an easy time of it, and the question of the captaincy against Kent was still open.

It was a difficult question to settle. Blane had made a splendid captain, and Harding a passable one. Both were now on the sick list for weeks to come.

There was one man in the Loamshire team who would have made an ideal leader, and his name was Arthur Lovell. But Lovell was a professional player!

Colonel Hilton had proposed Lovell as the new captain, and the county committee had reluctantly allowed him to have his way, on the occasion when Ponsonby had retired from the post under pressure. For a player's social standing the colonel cared not one rap, so long as he was a good cricketer, and played a clean game.

He wanted Loamshire to win the championship, and so long as that was accomplished he cared absolutely nothing whether the captain was professional or amateur.

Then had come an unexpected check. Lovell had declined the honour. His reasons were good, and quite satisfactory to himself, for he did not believe that if he accepted the captaincy he would have a loyal support on the cricket-field. But the colonel had not fully understood his reasons, and he had never been quite so cordial to Lovell since his refusal of the captaincy.

Now once more the thought of Arthur Lovell came into the mind of the colonel.

That there was a snobbish element in the club, and some jealousy among the amateurs of the success which had attended Arthur Lovell during the season, Colonel Hilton knew.

But he did not know how deep those feelings were in the breasts of a certain set in the Loamshire Club—the set of which Lagden and Ponsonby were the moving spirits.

It was soon known that the idea of Arthur Lovell's captaincy had been mooted again in the committee-room, and Lagden and Ponsonby were hostile at once.

"They're never tired of making a fuss of that outsider," Lagden remarked, in the reading-room in the county pavilion one afternoon. "Fancy a professional captain of Loamshire! Well, last time it was mooted I made up my mind what I would do."

"So did I," said Ponsonby. "I'm not going to play under the orders of a paid player."

"You'll have to," said Fortescue, looking up from his newspaper, with a yawn. "You'll have to obey the orders of your captain, Pon., or be kicked out of the team."

"There are ways and means of spoiling Lovell's little game without kicking over the traces too openly," Tunstall remarked.

"We shall have to talk it over," said Lagden, with a warning glance in the direction of Fortescue.

The latter's lip curled.

"Oh, yes, talk it over among yourselves," he exclaimed. "I won't tell you my opinion of you fellows when you get on the subject of Arthur Lovell."

"Don't," said Lagden, yawning. "We don't want to hear it, old fellow."

"It would hurt your feelings if you did."

"My dear fellow, we know you only stand up for that bounder out of sheer cussedness, because you're an obstinate ass," said Lagden. "You know we don't want a professional for county captain. The idea is absurd."

"I don't know about that; but I know the idea of getting the county championship without Arthur Lovell's help is absurd."

"We shall see."

"Yes, we shall see," said Fortescue. "I hope Lovell will be induced to take what's offered him. But he refused it once, and I expect he will again, if it's offered."

"It will be offered," said Lagden. "I have it from my pater, and you know he's on the committee."

"Then it would be only the decent thing for all of us to go in a body and ask him to accept it," said Fortescue.

There was a general laugh of mockery.

"Yes, I can see us doing that," exclaimed Lagden. "If he has the awful cheek to become captain we'll see that he has a high old time of it. That's what we'll do for him."

"Well, I shall stand by him for one. It wouldn't do you any good if this kind of talk of yours came to the ears of the committee."

And Fortescue walked out of the room.

Lagden and the others looked at each other rather uneasily.

"I don't know about failing to back up a captain on the field," Tunstall remarked slowly. "That would be coming it rather strong, wouldn't it?"

"We may have no choice," said Lagden. "I suppose we're not going to let the fellow put on airs to us, are we? Blane used to drive us rather hard, but then, Blane was one of ourselves, and we could stand it."

"That's just it," said Ponsonby. "It's the fact that he's a professional, of course, that makes all the difference."

"Still, I hope he'll have sense enough to refuse," said Tunstall. "He refused once, and I don't see how the colonel can ask him again. There's a very good captain to be found in the ranks of the Loamshire amateurs, and that's you, Lagden."

Lagden's eyes sparkled.

"I believe I have a chance," he said. "But if that outsider accepts, of course I sha'n't have a look-in. Hang it! I wish we could get him kicked out of the Loamshire Club!"

From where they sat in the reading-room they could see Arthur Lovell at practice at the wicket, facing the bowling of Kit Valance, his erstwhile chum. Arthur was in fine form, and his batting was uniformly good.

Presently he left the wicket, which Kit Valance had been unable to touch, and his place was taken by another batsman.

Arthur Lovell walked towards the pavilion, a flush from the exercise on his handsome face.

"I want to speak to you, Lovell."

It was Colonel Hilton who spoke.

"Yes, sir," said Arthur quietly.

"Come and sit down here. I have something important to say."

"When Ponsonby resigned the captaincy after the Yorkshire match, Lovell, it was offered to you," said Colonel Hilton abruptly.

Lovell nodded.

"You refused it."

"I had my reasons, sir. It was not that I did not feel the honour keenly."

"Now," said Colonel Hilton, without heeding Lovell's reply, "Harding is, as you know, on the sick list. Loamshire has as yet no captain to lead her in the hardest match so far of the season—that with the champions at Tonbridge next Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. If I consulted only my own feelings, Lovell, I should allow your refusal to end the matter. What you have refused once would not be offered to you again. But I am compelled to think of the county."

Arthur was silent, and a troubled look came over his face.

He knew what was coming now.

"I ask you, therefore, to reconsider your decision," said Colonel Hilton quietly. "It has been agreed almost unanimously that the chance shall be given you again. I am asking you for the sake of Loamshire."

Lovell did not speak.

"If it does not work so well as I anticipate," went on Colonel Hilton, "it will be easy for you to throw it up again."

"I had better speak out plainly, sir. If I captain Loamshire, I cannot be sure that I shall have loyal support on the field."

"You have too low an opinion of your fellow-players, I think," said the colonel stiffly. "I know there is jealousy and dissension in the club, but I am absolutely certain that it does not extend so far as that."

Again Arthur was silent.

"Come, now," said Hilton, more kindly. "I am an old county cricketer, and old enough to be your father, Lovell. Cannot you rely upon the advice I give you?"

"You advise me to accept?"

"Decidedly."

"Then I will do so, sir, but I want it to be plainly understood that I do so from no self-seeking on my own part, but simply because you desire me to do so."

"Everyone who knows you will understand that, Lovell," said the colonel cordially. "I am glad I have been able to make you see reason."

He shook hands with the young professional, and Arthur was left to his thoughts.

Captain of Loamshire!

At one time the mere thought would have made his heart bound.

But now it seemed merely the presage to a new sea of difficulties—to jealousy, envy, backbiting, treachery! All these things the new captain of Loamshire had to look for in the side he was to lead against the champion county on Monday.

Yet—if he could win through the difficulties—if he could make the team like and respect him—if he could lead Loamshire to victory—it would be glorious!

After all, perhaps, he had judged them too harshly.

Lovell's face lighted up a little.

"Hallo!"

It was Geoffrey Lagden's voice. He had come out of the pavilion, and now he stopped in front of Lovell.

"Colonel Hilton was speaking to you just now, I think, Lovell?"

"Yes," said Arthur briefly.

"I hear they are thinking of offering you the captaincy again?"

"They have offered it."

"Really? You have refused, of course?"

"No," said Lovell quietly; "I have accepted."

"So you are going to be our captain after all?"

"Yes."

"Well," said Lagden, drawing a deep breath, "I can promise you that you won't enjoy the position. You can make up your mind to that."

And he walked away, leaving the new captain of Loamshire to think over his words, and all that they implied.

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

CLUB NOTICES.

NOTICES AND CHALLENGES FROM READERS' OWN CLUBS. THESE ARE INSERTED FREE OF CHARGE.

HENEAGE STAR F.C. (1st team, average age, 17-18; 2nd team, average age, 16-17) want matches for next season, within 4 miles of Birmingham.—Apply to Mr. A. Baldwin, Secretary, 7Bk., 172, Heneage Street, Ashted, Birmingham.

ALBION INVICTA F.C. (average age, 17) have several dates open for coming season, home and away. Ground, Blackheath. Also reserves (average age, 15-16), home and away. Ground, Southwark Park.—Apply to F. Pescud, 11, Clack Street, Rotherhithe, S.E.

ERDINGTON MELROSE JUNIORS F.C. (average age, 15; weak) want matches, home and away; all dates open; within 5 miles' radius of Erdington.—Apply to Mr. A. Kettle, Secretary, 67, Orphanage Road, Erdington, near Birmingham.

RODING ATHLETIC (average age, 18; medium) require a few matches, home and away. Reserve team (average age, 16; medium) also have a few dates open.—Apply to W. Goodchild, Treasurer, 65, Sibley Grove, East Ham.

GOOD CHURCH TEAM (average age, 17) require matches with clubs for the coming season. Good ground and dressing accommodation required. Return date, if desired. Radius, 20 miles.—Apply to C. Hellawell, Hon. Secretary, Old Trafford St. John's A.F.C., 7 Peel Terrace, Old Trafford, Manchester.

ST. BARNABAS F.C. (average age, 15; medium) have all dates open for away matches with respectable clubs. Also a few good players required; small subscription (6d.).—Write, stating position, to V. Taylor, Hon. Secretary, Glenmore, 57, Elsenham Street, Southfields, S.W.

ALL SAINTS' F.C. (average age, 14; weak) have all dates open, home and away.—Apply to H. Boyce, 72, Hampstead Road, London, N.W.

WHITE STAR F.C. (average age, 17) require matches, home and away. Ground, Hackney. All dates open.—Apply at once to J. Kemp, 7a, Charles Street, Liverpool Road, Islington, N.

HARROW CRUSADERS (average age, 17; weak) require matches, home and away, for the coming football season.—Apply to C. H. Hallett, 29, Nelson Road, West Street, Harrow.

TRINITY F.C. have open following dates: October 5th and 12th, December 7th and 21st, January 25th, February 8th, March 7th and 21st, away; December 14th, January 4th, March 14th and 28th, home.—Write to W. Clark, Secretary, 6, Valentine Place, Bermondsey, S.E.

THE CHARTERHOUSE SWIFTS F.C. (average age, 16; weak) require a few matches, home and away. Also a few players for the coming season.—Apply to G. Turner, 5, Viaduct Buildings, Charterhouse Street, Holborn, E.C.

TOWER UNITED F.C. (average age, 14; medium) require home and away matches for next season.—Apply to H. E. Dubbins, School House, Church Street, Wapping, E.

DARWEN ATHLETIC F.C. (average age, 15-17) want fixtures for 1907-8, within 40 miles radius of Darwen. Also good right-back wanted. Small sub.—Apply to V. Carnforth, Runstock Farm, Darwen, Lancs.

WELLFIELD F.C. (average age, 16) require dates within a radius of 18 miles of Warrington.—Apply to E. Kendrick, 58, Lovely Lane, Warrington.

LEDGEMORE RANGERS A.F.C. (average age, 16; medium) want matches, home and away, for season 1907-8. All dates open. Also, would like a few good forwards.—Apply to W. Bogg, 14, Princes Road, Ledgemore, Wiltshire.

WAVE UNITED F.C. (average age, 15; weak) want matches. All dates open for next season. Home and away.—Apply to W. J. Davis, 17, Richard Street, Canning Town, E.

SILVER UNITED F.C. want matches for next season with teams of about 14-17. Home and away.—Apply to H. Harris, 29, Silver Street, Stepney.

SALEM ATHLETIC (MANNINGHAM) F.C. (average age, 17) require matches for the coming season, 1907-8.—Apply to L. Turner, 39, Springcliffe Street, Manningham, Bradford, Yorks.

HAMILTON CENTRAL F.C. (average age, 18½) want matches for next season within 10 mile radius of Chorley.—Apply to Secretary, Hamilton Central F.C., 164, Pall Mall, Chorley.

J. BURN 2nd XI. F.C. (average age, 14½ years) require matches, home and away, for the coming season.—Apply to J. Lysaght, 34, Sturgeon Road, West Newington, S.E.

GAINSBORO' ST. JOHN'S INSTITUTE F.C. (average age, 19) require match at Sheffield on Boxing Day.—Apply to H. Jackson, 22, Balfour Street, Gainsboro'.

HINDLEY ATHLETIC A.F.C. (average age, 14-16) want fixtures within 5 miles of Hindley station. Nearly all dates open.—Apply to Fred Whittle, Secretary, 4, Railway Street, Hindley, near Wigan, Lancs.

LYNTON UNITED F.C. (average age, 16; medium) desire fixtures for next season within 5 miles radius. Also players wanted, all positions.—Applications should be made to G. H. Franks, 33, Latimer Street, Stepney, E.

KING'S SWIFTS F.C. (average age, 15; weak) want matches, home and away, for season 1907-8, near Tottenham and district.—Apply to H. Bocking, Hon. Secretary, 1, King's Road, Tottenham, N.

GLENVILLE F.C. (average age, 15½) have most dates open, home and away.—Apply to W. Ferdinand, 97, Arcadia Street, Poplar, E.

GRANGE AMATEURS A.F.C. want away matches for 1907-8, within 5 miles' radius of Birkenhead Town Hall. Also a few respectable players for all positions.—Apply to John Williams, 124, Oliver Street, Birkenhead.

ALL HALLOWS' JUNIORS F.C. (average age, 15; strong) want home and away matches for 1907-8.—Apply to F. S. Collier, 734, High Road, Tottenham, N.

TOWER UNITED F.C. (average age, 14; medium) want home and away matches next season, 1907-8.—Apply to H. C. Dubbins, Secretary, School House, Church Street, Wapping, E.

CHURWELL CORINTHIANS A.F.C. (average age, 16) require dates for 1907-8. All dates open. Distance, 5 miles' radius of Leeds.—Apply by post to W. Swift, 5, Union Street, Churwell, near Leeds.

PONDERS END RED STAR F.C. (average age, 15; weak) have most dates open.—Apply to H. Lawrence, 41, Falcon Road, Ponders End, Middlesex.

FINCHLEY RANGERS F.C. (average age, 17; medium) require matches for Thursdays, home and away. All dates open.—Apply to A. Collis, Secretary, 3, Stanhope Road, N. Finchley.

LAD (age, 17) wishes to join a football club in London. Monday team preferred.—Apply to C. J. Hirst, 116, Malcolm Road, Leytonstone.

TWO LADS wish to join football club in Forest Gate. Will pay small subscription.—Apply to H. Cove, 33, Albert Road, Forest Lane, Stratford, E.

TWO LADS (age, 16-17) wish to join a football club for season 1907-8. Right back and inside right forward. Willing to pay small sub.—Apply to E. Eady, 8, Holywell Lane, Shoreditch, E.C.

J. B. would like to play for a good gentlemanly club next season as goalkeeper. Height, 6 feet 2 inches; weight, 11 stone 7 pounds.—Apply to 77, Leyton Park Road, Leyton.

TWO LADS (ages, 17) would like to join a good football club for the coming season. Clubs applying must be within 2 miles' radius of St. Ann's Square, Manchester.—Apply to W. Craig, 11, Cliff Avenue, Lower Broughton, Manchester.

LIVERPOOL YOUTH (age, 16½) wishes to join a respectable football club this coming season. Can play in almost any position (goal preferred).—Communicate with A. Edwards, 21, Kremlin Drive, Stoneycroft, Liverpool.

TWO YOUTHS (age, 19) would like to join football club in Liverpool for the coming season.—Apply to G. Tudor, 15, Brooke Street, Liverpool.

A FEW GOOD PLAYERS (average age, 14-16) wanted for next season. Also matches wanted for the coming season, at home and away.—Apply to J. Riley, 6, Slater's Yard, Canal Street, Derby.

WANTED by a North London football club, right-back and right half-back (age, about 16). Fixtures also wanted in North London, with teams average age, 16. All dates open.—Apply to S. Nadel, 171, Navarino Mansions, Dalston Lane, N.E.

MOAT ROAD SUNDAY SCHOOL F.C.—Respectable members required for above team (age, about 18). Third Division Mutual S.S. League, Leicester.—Apply to H. Eato, 56, Osborne Road, North Evington, Leicester.

TEAMS (average age, 14-15½) wishing to join the Second Division of the Fulham Junior Football League should immediately apply to A. Wilson, 20, Racton Road, Fulham, S.W.

FEW GOOD PLAYERS (average age, 17-18) required for a football team in or about Mile End.—Apply to J. T. Smith, 26, Mossford Road, Mile End, E.

A FEW LADS (average age, 14-16) wanted to join football club for season 1907-8. All positions.—Apply to H. S. Lowry, 58, Englefield Road, Islington, N.

A FEW PLAYERS (average age, 15-17) wanted for a respectable football club in West Kensington. Also matches, all dates.—Apply to A. C. Beckett, Vernon Athletic F.C., 10, Worlidge Street, Hammersmith.

BOYS (average age, 15-17) wishing to join a first-class football club in a league should immediately apply to A. Wilson, 20, Racton Road, Fulham, S.W.

ADVERTISER wants to join a gentlemanly football team for season 1907-8, in the Leeds or Bradford districts. Has played as right wing in an Airedale and Wharfdale League team.—Apply to C. G. P., Dial House, Rawdon, near Leeds.

GOLDNEY UNITED F.C. require a few good players. Moderate sub. Also fixtures, home and away.—Apply to P. J. Bell, Secretary, 1, Goldney Road, Paddington, W.

A RESPECTABLE Merton Football Club (average age, 16-17) require a few members to make up a team for the coming season. Subscription, 2s. 6d. Also, a few away matches required.—Apply to O. C. G., Haslemere, Park Road, Colliers Wood, Merton.

NORLAND UNITED F.C. (average age, 16; medium) require a good right-back for the next football season. Have all dates open for 1907-8, home and away.—Apply to I. Billings, 26, Boundary Road, Notting Hill, W.

BLUE CRUSADERS F.C., Bognor.—Bognor Juniors having changed their name to above, also require to change their colours, and as new jerseys were bought last year (costing 6s. each, and of very best make), it seems a pity same should be discarded. Eighteen to twenty of these jerseys will be sacrificed for best offer. They will fit boys from 15 to 20 years of age. Colour: blue, and white 2-inch stripes. A photo of Bognor Juniors in jerseys in question appeared in the BOYS' REALM on March 23rd, 1907.—Further particulars from C. H. West, 3, Albert Terrace, High Street, Bognor, Sussex.

BOYS wishing to join the Branch No. 4 of the Boys' Friendly League should write to Frank Belcher, Secretary, 16, Fairbrother Street, Hyde, Cheshire, enclosing two penny stamps, one for membership card, and the other one for a reply. The league has already a magazine, which can be had for one penny. The league is progressing favourably, and has already twenty-seven branches.

AN ASSOCIATION FOOTBALL, goal posts, and six flags (blue and white) for sale. Only used for about three months last year.—Apply to F. Churchyard, 5, Union Street, Islington, N.

ST PAUL'S JUNIORS C.C. (average age, 13½; weak) have August 3rd and 24th and September 7th and 21st open for home matches. Ground, Highgate Woods. There are also vacancies for one or two respectable boys as players, whose age must not exceed 15.—Apply to L. Melliss, Hon. Secretary, 84, River Road, Holloway, N.

CLOVELLY C.C. (average age, 13-14) require matches, at home.—Apply to J. Green, 10, Gloucester Road, Ealing.

MIDA C.C. (average age, 15; weak) require away matches, all dates, Saturdays, within a 5 mile radius of Stoke Newington Station, N.—Apply to Secretary, Mida C.C., 53, Cazenove Road, Stoke Newington, N.

ST. CUTHBERTS C.C. (average age, 13; weak) want matches, home and away.—Apply to A. Harvey, 109, Lyndhurst Road, Bowes Park, N.

ROVER ATHLETIC C.C. (average age, 14-16) want matches, home and away.—Apply to W. Cockroft, 4, York House, College Place, Camden Town.

ST. JAMES'S CHOIR C.C. (average age, 14) want home and away matches at Acton on August Bank Holiday.—Apply to F. W. Tukliffe, 4, Marlborough Gate Stables, Lancaster Gate.

MAURICE-HOSTEL C.C. 2nd (average age, 17; weak) have open August 17th away and September 7th home.—Write to Secretary, A. Cummins, 57, Gt. Chart Street, East Road, Hoxton, N.

SILVERDALE C.C. (average age, 17; weak) want matches away.—Apply to W. Curtis, 20, Noyna Road, Upper Tooting, S.W.

A FEW BOYS wish to join a respectable cricket club in the district of Ecclesall, via Sheffield. Two bowlers, a wicket-keeper, also five batsmen.—Apply by post to J. E. Ball, 118, Napier Street, Sheffield.

BOYS wanted between the ages of 14-16 for a cricket club. Small sub.—Apply to H. Kirley, 158, Great College Street, Camden Town.

LAD (age, 16) would like to join a swimming club in Bethnal Green.—Write to S. T. Barnicott, 39, Old Ford Road, Bethnal Green, London, N.E.

Look Out for a Great New Tale of Slapton School Very Shortly.

FROM YOUR EDITOR'S CHAIR.



Latest Portrait of YOUR EDITOR (H. E.).

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THE BOYS' FRIEND—Tuesday.
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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.

New Stories Coming.

I AM making arrangements for some marvellous new serials to commence in our paper very shortly—tales which I am certain will please all my friends. As has always been my policy, I am sparing no pains or expense to give my readers the very best stories procurable, and that I have succeeded in the past, I am sure all my friends will readily admit. But THE BOYS' REALM is not going to stand still; it is going to press forward. Very shortly I shall have the pleasure of presenting to my loyal supporters the opening chapters of an enthralling new tale of Slapton School, by popular John Finnemore. I know that there is not a single Realmite but wants to read about the further adventures of that plucky little Jap, Ito Nagao, and his boom chums, Teddy Lester, Arthur Digby, and Tom Sandys. In this new story, the first instalment of which will appear very shortly, all these old favourites will be reintroduced, as well as a great many new characters, who will speedily win a warm place for themselves in the hearts of my readers. I hope to make a definite announcement concerning this new tale next week.

Meanwhile, let me tell my friends that the issue of our paper published next Saturday will contain a long, complete camping-out story by that popular writer Mr. A. S. Hardy, and a magnificent, complete, humorous story of Dannie and Ginger, in which another laughable adventure of these mirth-provoking characters is detailed.

Our Football Programme.

I HAVE received quite a number of letters from my friends asking me if Mr. A. S. Hardy will write a football serial for THE REALM this winter. I think I may as well tell my friends straight away that Mr. Hardy is even now busy on a new football yarn for our paper on quite novel lines; and that he is going to make this story the very best he has ever written. I hope, too, that we shall not lose sight of our old friends Dick Green, Thomas Silward, and all the other prominent characters that figured in that wonderful story, "For League and Cup," which proved so remarkable a success during the past winter. I am trying to persuade Mr. Hardy to write me some complete stories dealing with these popular characters, but he tells me that for the present it is quite impossible, as he is far too busy writing our new football serial. Perhaps a little later on, however, I may be able to get him to accede to my desire. My friends may be sure that I shall do my very best.

May I, before I turn to other matters, ask all my football chums to glance at the notice at the foot of this page. All club and league secretaries interested should carefully perrise the particulars which will be found below.

How to Become a First-class County Cricket Groundsman

NO. J., of Devon, wants me to tell him how he can put his whole time into cricket, with the hope of becoming in a few years a professional cricketer. He further tells me that he is seventeen years of age, is a decent, right-hand fast bowler, and a fair left-hand batsman; and that he would prefer to get an appointment as a groundsman in a county ground such as is owned by Yorkshire.

I dare say that there are a large number of cricket enthusiasts who think that it would be delightful to become a professional cricketer; but there is a vast difference between playing cricket for the pleasure one can get out of it, and playing for one's bread-and-butter, so to speak. Under the latter conditions it loses a great deal of its charm.

Now, positions as groundsmen in county cricket grounds are very much sought after, and—I suppose many of my chums will read this with surprise—they are very poorly-paid ones. This is not because our county clubs are mean in the matter of salaries for their staffs, but because the cost of upkeep of their grounds and the travelling expenses of the teams are so very heavy that the vast majority of them, instead of getting a profit out of the money they take at the gates, are really in debt each season, and depend upon their members and wealthy patrons to help them out of their difficulties.

N. C. J. tells me that he is a decent bowler and a fair bat. I am sorry to have to say it, but I am afraid on that recommendation he would stand little chance of getting into a first-class ground.

The would-be professional must be something very much better than an average cricketer before a single secretary or chief groundsman would consent to see him bowl or bat. As a rule, the young player has achieved such fame in his neighbourhood as a batsman or bowler that he finds little difficulty in getting a note of recommendation to one of the county officials from some influential cricketer who knows him.

To obtain a letter of introduction to some official of a county cricket club is the best way to secure a position as groundsman; but, failing that, the would-be professional cricketer should write to the secretary of the club, stating his abilities and his willingness to put himself to the test with a view to consideration for a place as groundsman, should one be vacant at any future time.

LOOK OUT FOR—

Nos. 23 & 24
of
"The Boys' Friend"
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(TWO NEW ADDITIONS.)

No. 23—
"PETE'S SCHOOLDAYS."
A Splendid NEW and Original Tale of School Life. By S. CLARKE HOOK and MAURICE MERRIMAN.

No. 24—
"THE GREAT UNKNOWN."
A Marvellous Tale of NELSON LEE, Detective. By MAXWELL SCOTT.

ORDER YOUR COPIES TO-DAY.
PRICE 3D. EACH.
ON SALE FRIDAY, AUGUST 2.

Watches and Cameras Free!

YES; free for the asking—not to one, not to a dozen—but to every reader of this paper. Watches and cameras—new, magnificent articles—which you could not buy in any other shop in the United Kingdom for less than seven shillings and sixpence apiece, are to be had free for the asking.

My friends will find full particulars about this offer—the most stupendous ever made by an editor to his readers, in this week's issue of "The Boys' Herald."

The object of this novel and generous scheme is to make "The Boys' Herald"—our Thursday companion paper—better known amongst boys. For this reason I have decided not to spend hundreds of pounds in advertising it, but to divide the money amongst the readers of my three boys' papers—providing, of course, they care to take advantage of the exceptional opportunity I have placed before them of gaining a new camera, or a new watch.

How to Join the Army.

FROM the Infantry Barracks, Waterford, one of my chums, a young trumpeter, has sent me a most interesting letter, in which he gives some information concerning the joining of the Army.

"A boy who wishes to become a soldier," writes my chum, "should be between the age of fourteen and seventeen. He should then register his name at the nearest depot, or recruiting office, for whatever regiment he thinks he would like. This is, by far, the easier and surer method, than trusting to a recruiting sergeant, on the off-chance of getting in, as vacancies occur almost daily, and are filled by boys, providing they pass the doctor's examination, whose names have been registered. Preference is always given to boys whose fathers are soldiers, or who have been soldiers. After a few months, perhaps only a few weeks, the applicant will receive a paper requesting him, if still available and willing, to attend the nearest depot to be examined by the doctor. He should take with him the following documents, viz.: parents' consent, character from employer (if employed), and a character from a clergyman or schoolmaster. His birth certificate should also be taken."

In conclusion, I thank "Trumpeter" for his interesting letter, and inform him that if he will send his name and address to the Secretary of the League of Health and Strength, 2, Carmelite House, Carmelite Street, London, E.C., that gentleman will be pleased to send him a badge at the first opportunity.

YOUR EDITOR (H. E.).

DAILY MAIL.

OUR LEAGUE CORNER.

FOOTBALL SEASON, 1907-8.

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO SECRETARIES OF LEAGUES AND UNATTACHED FOOTBALL CLUBS.

Register Your Club or League at Once!

During the coming football season a very large number of Solid Silver Cups, Silver Medals, and Real Match Footballs will be presented free of charge to Football Leagues and Unattached Clubs throughout the country. Therefore, League and Club Secretaries are requested to send at once full particulars of the League or Club to which they are attached to the Secretary of THE BOYS' REALM Football League, 2, Carmelite House, Carmelite Street, London, E.C., when full particulars will shortly be sent to their private address.

Full details will also be published in the course of a week or two in the pages of THE BOYS' REALM, and readers are requested to draw the attention of their football friends to this paper.

THE BOYS' REALM Football League was the talk of the land last season, and every young footballer who knew anything about it—and few did not—was surprised at the amazing generosity which Your Editor displayed in presenting Solid Silver Cups, Silver Medals, and Magnificent Match Footballs broadcast. But during the season which will shortly be upon us Your Editor means to inaugurate a more daring and munificent scheme than ever. He is even now carefully working out his plans, and he is certain that every footballing reader of our paper will be struck dumb with astonishment when he has particulars before him of the great football programme of THE BOYS' REALM for the coming season.

Meanwhile, League Secretaries desirous of obtaining BOYS' REALM Trophies for season 1907-8 should fill up the form herewith, and send it to the Secretary of THE BOYS' REALM League. Single clubs desirous of joining should also apply at once.

SECTION 1.

The following clubs in the Leagues mentioned have been awarded BOYS' REALM Cricket Bats for the best performance on Saturday, June 29nd:

SUNDERLAND AND DISTRICT LEAGUE.

TRINITY GUILD C.C.—Sec., Mr. J. Crawford, 45, Hastings Street, Sunderland.

NORTH LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICT LEAGUE.

EARLE ROAD GUILD C.C.—Sec., Mr. W. Mills, 96, Earle Road, Liverpool.

THE SOUTH LONDON CHURCH LEAGUE.

OLD CHARLTON CHURCH C.C.—Sec., Mr. F. Lewin, 79, Ellicombe Road, Old Charlton.

DUNDEE AND DISTRICT LEAGUE.

BELMONT C.C.—Sec., Mr. G. A. Reed, 12, Bell-field Avenue, Dundee.

SECTION 2.

The following clubs have been awarded BOYS' REALM Cricket Bats for the best performances on Saturday, June 29th:

SENIOR DIVISION.

LILY C.C.—Sec., Mr. W. Richardson, 23, Jennings Street, Swindon, Wilts.

JUNIOR DIVISION.

PRIMITIVE JUNIORS C.C.—Sec., Mr. G. Daniels, 45, Taylor Street, Middleton.

THIS FORM FOR FOOTBALL LEAGUES ONLY.

Name of League .....

.....

Year of Formation .....

Number of Clubs in League .....

Secretary's Name and address .....

.....

.....

This form, together with full particulars of the League, to be addressed to The Secretary, THE BOYS' REALM League, 2, Carmelite House, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.

THIS FORM FOR SINGLE UNATTACHED CLUBS ONLY.

Date .....

Club .....

Playing Ground .....

Average Age of Members .....

Colours .....

The above club is desirous of competing for one of THE BOYS' REALM Challenge Cups, and the members agree to conform to the conditions governing the contest, and to abide by the decision of Your Editor, the Secretary, and a referee in any case of dispute.

Secretary's Name .....

Address .....

.....

MAGNIFICENT WATCHES FREE! See "The Boys' Herald," 1d. Every Thursday.

CYCLING:

Mr. A. E. WILLS, the holder of a world's record for cycling, tells readers how to excel at this magnificent sport.

CYCLING owes much of its success to the "speed merchant," as the racing cyclist is sometimes termed. The constant desire for greater speed, with comfort, is responsible for practically all the improvements embodied in the modern bicycle. Motor racing is benefiting the motor in a precisely similar manner.

The young rider who has passed his novitiate in the art of cycling, and is able to cover a fair distance without undue fatigue, may be desirous of improving his pace and staying power, or he may wish to go a step further and take up road and path racing. Let us analyse the qualities requisite for the making of a speedy cyclist. They may be enumerated as follows:—strength, a fast wheel, efficient training, clever headwork, good nerve.

Without strength nothing remarkable in athletics may be accomplished. Therefore it behoves all who would excel in cycling to be possessed, or to become possessors of, bodily strength and robust physique. Auxiliary exercises, such as club-swinging, light dumb-bell work, deep breathing, regularly performed, will aid in this, and will serve to

strengthen the muscles

all round.

It is not absolutely necessary to be of large physique to attain success in cycling. Michael,



Fig. 1.—The best method for one who struggles violently, and whose arms are difficult to hold.

the phenomenal Welsh rider, was but a pocket-edition, yet he was strong and wiry. My own height and weight are but five feet one inch, and eight stone, respectively. Strength is the first quality, no matter what the height and weight. Without it all other accomplishments go for little in fast riding.

Skipping is one of the finest exercises to use in conjunction with cycling. Ellegaard, Poulain, Mayer, Van den Born, Major Taylor, and, in fact, all the leading cracks now make it a rule to indulge in skipping. This is their regular morning exercise. I myself do a thousand skips every morning when in training, but this is rather more than the beginner should attempt. I have carefully watched the effect that this exercise has had on my riding, and have no hesitation in saying that my speed and staying power is greatly improved thereby. When for a short period I left off

the skipping exercise,

I found that my riding deteriorated. To take skipping exercise regularly is a tip I would recommend to all classes of riders.

The possession of a good mount is, of course, a great factor in fast cycling. In selecting your wheel, see that you get one that is in accordance with your height and weight. The first consideration is the height of the frame. I ride a Rover, with a 20 inch frame, and 25 inch wheels. For a taller and heavier rider an increase in the height of frame would be necessary.

The gearing is the next item of importance. Learn to ride a low gear, and you can always ride a high gear. For three years the gear I rode in races was 78. The highest I have ever ridden—except in motor-paced races, when I use a 125 gear—is an 87 gear. Mayer, the Continental sprinter, uses a gear of from 78 to 80. In the sprint-home it is much easier for the rider with a low gear to "jump," and a useful load can be opened out before the competitor with the high gear can get his machine going.

To know

how to train properly,

so as to get the greatest improvement, and at the same time to increase strength and stamina, is an art. In preparing for path or road-racing, a good deal of preliminary road-riding is necessary. For a period of several weeks before any track work is done plenty of riding over country roads must be undertaken. The main thing in this preliminary work is to map out all the details beforehand, as the riding must be taken more seriously than when on an ordinary jaunt. Long distances must be mixed up with shorter ones, so that speed is maintained whilst staying power is being acquired.

On the art of riding much may be said, but suffice it at present to lay down two rules: First, let all the visible work come from below the hips; the trunk of the body should appear to be motionless; there should be no lateral motion whatever, of any part of the body, save for the slight deflections of the wrists in steering; secondly, the aim of the rider should be to keep the top of the chain always taut.

(To be continued on Saturday next.)

LIFE SAVING:

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

[EDITOR'S NOTE.—We are indebted to the Royal Life-Saving Society for the drawings from which the diagrams illustrating these articles have been taken.]

Releasing from the Clutch.

IN the event of the drowning person being difficult to manage, and because of his violent struggling his arms are not easy to hold, it will then be necessary to slip your hands under his armpits and place them round his arms, holding them firmly by drawing them upwards at right angles to the body, as well as towards yourself.

In this way you will place the struggling, drowning person completely in your power, and be able to manage him by preventing his clutching you. Of course, the above hold is made from the back of the drowning man, and the position of the two in the water is as shown in Fig. I.

Should it happen that the rescuer be clutched, he must, of course, free himself as soon as possible. It may be that he will be caught first by the hand or wrists, and by avoiding to

take proper precautions

allow the drowning person to turn round upon him and clutch him round the body.

When this happens no time should be lost in applying the proper method of release, and no effort should be spared in order to get free. Therefore, when clutched round the body, the rescuer must lean well over the person clutching him, take a breath of fresh air, and either withdraw both arms in an upward direction in front of his body, or, as I have previously directed, place one hand on his shoulder and the other on his chin. At the same time bring the knee up against the drowning man's abdomen, and then by means of a sudden, powerful push, stretch the arms and legs straight out, throwing the whole weight of body backwards. This sudden action will have the effect of breaking the clutch, and the rescuer will be free to take a fresh hold, according to one of the methods of rescue previously described, by using his judgment, which he will employ whether there be any struggling or whether the patient will be quiet and allow himself to be taken to

a place of safety

without impeding his rescuer.

The position of the bodies in the water when the release is being made is shown in Fig. II.

The various methods of rescue I have described are those which are taught by the Royal Life-saving Society in all the classes of instruction promoted by that well-known body. When the pupil has attained a thorough knowledge of the subject, and is able to perform them all with ease, he may enter for examination, and if passed by the examiners, previously appointed by the Central Executive, he may be awarded a certificate or medallion, according to the ability shown by him.



Mr. A. E. Wills, the world-famed wheelman, whose articles on "Cycling" start this week.

These awards are much coveted by those able to swim, as in many centres various bathing advantages are given to those who obtain them. In many cases

the local council

award free season tickets, and at the schools the boys and girls who take the trouble to obtain them have various advantages granted them by the authorities, which also includes the right to freedom in the pleasures of boating and bathing. The Royal Life-saving Society has granted nearly 40,000 of these awards, and I believe that quite 15,000 have been taken by boys under 16 years of age, some of whom have put their knowledge to a practical test by performing some very meritorious rescues, for which the Royal Humane Society have also rewarded them.

(This splendid series of articles will be continued in next week's BOYS' REALM.)

A FOOTBALL LEAGUE:

Mr. G. L. B. COVERDALE, the energetic Secretary of the East Riding of Yorks Football Association, gives Practical Hints on How to Form One.

Rules *(continued).*

HERE are the remainder of the rules necessary for the proper working of a football league:

21.—All clubs must have their grounds properly marked out, or be fined (say, 1s.), and be further dealt with as the committee may determine.

22.—In the case of any club, player, or other person being dissatisfied with the decision of the committee, they or he shall have power to apply to the board of appeal for a rehearing.

23.—Should any club or clubs be desirous of having a special meeting called, the secretary of the league shall, upon being requested (in writing) by the secretaries of not less than three clubs, convene such meeting as early as possible.

24.—In the event of a referee appointed by the committee or secretary not attending the match, and the two clubs agree to one on the ground, such referee shall be considered a league referee for the time being.

25.—The referee must send to the secretary of the league the result of every match, and the names, including the initials, of the players taking part in it within three days of the date of the match.

26.—In the event of the funds of the league requiring it, the committee may order a match to be played in aid thereof, or may call upon each club to contribute equally such sum as they may require.

27.—At the annual general meeting, a majority of the representatives of the clubs present shall have power to exclude from the following season's competition any of the clubs whose conduct has, in their opinion, been objectionable.

28.—All communications must be addressed to the secretary, who shall conduct the correspondence of the league.

29.—All fines and payments imposed upon clubs must be paid to the secretary within seven days after application, or the clubs will be otherwise liable to suspension.

30.—When the winners of the league shall have been ascertained, the secretary of the league shall hand the cup to their representatives on receiving a document to the following effect, and inscribed by them: "We, A. B., president of the X. Club, and C. D. and E. F., members of and representing the said club, which has now been declared to be the winners of the League, and the championship trophy having been delivered to us by G. H., the secretary of the said league, do hereby, on behalf of the said club and individually and collectively, engage to return the same to the same G. H., or the secretary of the league for the time being, on or before February 1st, 19—, in like order and condition, and in accordance with the rules of this league.

31.—No alteration shall be made in the rules except at the annual general meeting. Notice of all such proposed alterations shall be forwarded to the secretary of the league not later than April 30th, and shall appear on the notice convening the annual general meeting.

Form D.

The draft rules as set forth in the last two articles should now be submitted to a meeting of all the club representatives, and if approved by them, two copies of the rules, together with Form D of the English Football Association, must be forwarded to the County Association to which the league is situated.

It will be as well to explain what Form D really is. Rule 22 of the English Football Association says: "All associations, leagues, or other combinations of clubs shall not be formed without the consent of the Association. All applications for formation shall be made on the form marked D in the schedule annexed to these rules."

I have prepared a facsimile of Form D, which will appear next week.

(To be continued on Saturday next.)

CRICKET:

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

The Deceptions of Slow Bowling.

WHEN the batsman comes in, it is wise to bowl the first two or three overs an ordinary straighs ball without any spin, and he will think that the wicket is of such a state the bowler cannot make the ball turn, and the first that breaks back will probably get his wicket. Slow bowling is not practised enough by boys; nine out of ten simply want to bat, and, having had their turn, slouch about, and take no more interest in the game. Do not become too slow, but try to get in more of twists and spin of the ball on the way. If in its flight it is so slow that the hitter can judge of it before it pitches, then the value of the gift will be rendered useless. A slow ball must pitch further up than a fast one. Three or four yards from the wicket represents a good length. The slow bowler must be sure of one thing—do not have a different style at practice to what you have in a match.

Some men will take a run of twelve yards in a match, while at practice they do not take half the distance. This leads to an uncertain habit, which is a barrier to successful work. Again: do not fail to field as well as you can, as this is a great point, for one cannot be successful as a slow bowler unless he can depend upon his friends fielding. For every-



Fig. 2.—How to release from the clutch of the drowning when he is found very clutched round the body.

one knows how annoying it is to have catches missed, and it wants a very big heart to put up with it.

It is very galling to gently, ball by ball, entice the batsman to make that fatal stroke, and just as you think your plans have succeeded, you see the ball drop out of the fieldsman's hands.

It will often be found very useful to change over, and also to learn to bowl from either side of the wicket. You cannot, however, change your end without the approval of the captain; but whenever the bowling is mastered, you should try, before you give up the other side of the wicket, more especially when one is getting too much break on, as by going round the wicket you are very likely to get your man out l.b.w.

I have said very little about making the ball break, but nearly every bowler that I meet has his favourite idea of making the ball turn. One right-hand slow bowler that used to take my fancy was Mr. C. L. Townsend, and he was able to disguise his break, and when he was in form you could not tell which way the ball was going to turn. Left-handers, of course, find it much easier to bowl against a right-hand batsman, because they have the ability to make the ball go with the arm naturally. However, you must remember that there are ten men in the field, and you must rely upon these to get the men out. Some few slow bowlers have the power to deliver a hanging ball, and nearly all slow bowlers prefer bowling with the wind against them, as it helps them to keep their deliveries from over pitching, and very often with the wind slightly across, a ball is caused to swerve, very much after the style of a baseball pitcher, and this will often lead one to make a miss-hit.

Above all, and lastly, it will pay to cultivate a scrupulously fair delivery, free from all taint and suspicion of throwing. The arm is almost straight, and swings with the ball, and then there can be no doubt that it is fair; but if the arm is bent at the elbow, and the elbow, instead of following the swing of the arm, stops with a jerk, the stepping and the jerk will very often cause throwing. However, what seems like a throw to one umpire looks perfectly fair to another. Better from the first get the reputation of being a fair bowler.

Medium-pace Bowling.

Who are the medium-to-fast-pace bowlers of England? Well, when I speak of the medium-to-fast, I refer to J. N. Crawford, G. W. Beldham, of Middlesex, Alec Hearne, of Kent, S. Haigh, of Yorkshire, Walter Mead, of Essex, J. Gunn and A. Hallam, of Notts, G. Cox, J. Vine, E. H. Killick, and A. E. Relf, of Sussex; while in Australia H. Trumble stands out as the best example of the type. Probably the majority of boys will make better medium-pace bowlers than fast or slow ones; but I would remind them that each one must decide for himself whether Nature intended him to be medium or not, and having decided, he must stick to his choice.

My experience of boys is that they have a great inclination to be fast bowlers, and the reason is pretty evident. Strong, healthy, and lusty at fourteen, they think that a school or club eleven want a good fast bowler, and, with an eye on future triumphs and popularity, they entirely make up their minds to go in for the popular style.

(To be continued on Saturday next.)

The Fighting Fifth



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), **DICK STARLING**, **GARDNER, PROCTER, RUSSELL, ARKLE**, pupils at St. Ninian's School. } Nelson Lee's wards.

Otto Heinrich, the mysterious German, becomes acquainted with Fraulein Hoffmann, a mistress at a girls' school in the village. Being of the same nationality she sides with him. Heinrich discusses himself as an old man, and stays with Fraulein 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. Rant and himself.

Fraulein Hoffmann is astonished beyond measure to meet her brother Karl, whom she thought to be captive in a German prison on a charge of treachery to his country. He also is in search of the gold locket, which contains a minute plan of a German fortress which he intends selling to the British Government.

Nipper and Dick Starling are captured by a crowd of Grammarians. Arnold, one of the latter, is suddenly seized with a brilliant inspiration.

(Now read this week's instalment.)

The End of the Feud.

"HOLD on, you chaps!" he cried, as Fleming and Crosby proceeded to drag their victims to the edge of the pond. "I've got a ripping idea! I've invented a new game—a combination of see-saw and Aunt Sally. Oh, it's great! A hundred times better than ducking 'em in the ordinary way!"

"What's the idea?" chorussed the others.

"I'll show you," said Arnold, sitting down and beginning to unlace his boots. "I shall want five of you to help me. Flem, Tatters, Crosby, Hyde, Martin, pull off your boots and socks and roll up your breeks above your knees!"

"What for?" they demanded.

"Because we've got to wade into the pond," said Arnold. "Hurry up! Now then, catch hold of this trestle and help me to stick it up in the middle of the pond!" he said, when the five boys had obeyed his instructions.

Somewhat mystified, they assisted him to carry one of the big wooden trestles and place it in the centre of the shallow pond. Then Arnold turned to Crosby and Fleming.

"You've got the planks," he said—"the longest you can find!"

Crosby and Fleming fetched the plank, and, by Arnold's orders, balanced it on the top of the trestle in such a way that half the plank was on one side of the trestle and half on the other.

"That's a see-saw!" said Arnold, with a grin. "The next thing to be done is to stick Hamilton on one end of the plank and Starling on the other. Come along!"

This proved no easy task, but at last it was accomplished; and Nipper, enveloped in his sack, was made to stand on one end of the plank and Dick on the other.

"Now, do you twig the idea?" chuckled Arnold, when he and his five companions had waded ashore. "There's heaps of clay about. We roll it into balls, and take turns at shying at the chaps on the see-saw. When we knock one fellow off, the moment he drops off, the other end of the plank tips up, and the other chap drops off, too! Then we set 'em up again, and start the game afresh!"

A roar of appreciative laughter greeted these remarks, and half a minute later the twelve Grammarians were standing in a line on the edge of the pond, each with a ball of clay in his hand.

"Alphabetical order," said Arnold.

"Of course," growled Tattersall. "Because your name begins with A!"

"All right!" said Arnold cheerfully. "I don't want to be greedy! We'll begin at the other end, then! Young, you take first shot, then Walker, then Tatters, and so on till it comes to me."

Young took careful aim at Nipper and let fly with his ball of clay. Nipper ducked, and the ball skimmed harmlessly over his head.

Walker had slightly better luck, for his ball hit Dick on the outside of his elbow. Dick made a desperate effort to save himself from falling, and succeeded in doing so; but the plank swayed up and down, and the two boys wobbled and tottered in a manner that sent their tormentors into convulsions of hilarity.

"Now, Tatters, it's your turn," said Arnold. "Which of the giddy dolls are you going to aim at?"

Tattersall's reply was a cunning wink. Raising his hand, he made as if he were going to shy at Dick. Dick bobbed, and at the same instant Tattersall let fly at Nipper!

Taken off his guard, Nipper received the ball of clay on the side of his head. He made a wild attempt to preserve his balance, and for one brief instant it appeared as if he were going to succeed. But it was not to be. Amid shrieks of laughter from the Grammarians, he reeled over the edge of the plank and fell with a splash into the pond, whilst at the same instant the plank tipped up and deposited Dick in the water on the other side of the trestle!

Shouting and laughing, Arnold and his five bare-legged assistants waded into the pond, and were in the act of rearranging their see-saw, when a shout from Young recalled them.

"Here's another of the bounders!" shouted Young. "Come—quick! Let's collar him, too!"

Leaving Dick and Nipper standing in the middle of the pond, the six boys hurriedly waded ashore.

"Good business! It's the darkie-detective!" chuckled Arnold, as he recognised Lal, who was running towards the brickyard at top-speed. "He seems in a mighty hurry, but we'll soon—— Hallo! He's spotted us! And, by Jove, he's actually waving to us! What's up, I wonder?"

A moment later Lal dashed into the brickyard, his dusky face twitching with intense excitement.

"One of your fellows—caught by the tide—foot of that cliff!" he panted, pointing to a lofty cliff about two hundred yards away. "A little, pasty-faced chap, with reddish hair and spectacles!"

"It's Conway!" cried Arnold, thrusting his feet into his boots without troubling about his socks. "I've told you he was going for a walk along the beach to Saltwick this afternoon, and I warned him not to let the tide cut him off! Come along, you chaps!"

Forgetting all about Nipper and Dick, the Grammarians rushed off in the direction of the cliff which Lal had indicated. Lal was about to follow their example, when a shout from Nipper arrested him.

"Great Scott! I never saw you chaps before!" gasped Lal, staring in dumbfounded amazement at the two comical-looking figures in the centre of the pond. "What——"

"Never mind what!" said Nipper impatiently. "Get us out of this and tell us what's happened."

Rolling up his trousers, Lal waded into the pond; and whilst he was untying the mouths of the sacks, he told his two chums what he had seen.

"I was coming to meet you, as we arranged," he said, "when I heard a feeble cry for help. On peering over the edge of the cliff, I saw one of the Grammar School boys—they say his name is Conway. He'd apparently been caught by the tide, and crouching at the foot of the cliff, half-dead with fright. It's impossible for him to climb up the cliff, and it's just as impossible for anybody to climb down to him. I was on my way to the village, to alarm the fishermen, when I saw a crowd of fellows in this field; but I don't think there's time for a boat to rescue him, for he's up to his knees already!"

By this time he had set his two chums free, and a moment later the three Nininites had joined the twelve Grammarians on the summit of the cliff.

"He'll be drowned before our very eyes!" groaned Arnold, whose face was now as white as death.

"And we can do nothing—just nothing!" said Crosby, wringing his hands.

It did indeed appear as if nothing could be done to save the unfortunate youth at the foot of the cliff. As Lal had said, the tide was already up to his knees, and was rising higher every moment. The cliff above him was as sheer and precipitous as the wall of a house. Not a house was in sight, and the village was more than a mile away; so that long before a boat could reach the scene, all would be over.

"Lowell—Tattersall—help me! Help me!" screamed the terror-stricken boy, who was little more than a child, and a puny, delicate child at that. "Don't let me drown! Oh, do help me! Do help me!"

Arnold turned away and burst into tears.

"What can we do? Is there anything we can do!" he sobbed, turning instinctively—as all boys did in time of danger—to "Nelson Lee's Pupil."

"If we had a rope——" began Nipper; then a rapturous cry burst from his lips. "The brickyard!" he cried. "There's plenty of rope there!"

Almost before his companions had divined his meaning, he was racing back to the brickyard, where he selected three of the stoutest and longest coils of rope and knotted them together.

"What's the idea?" asked Arnold, as they followed him back to the summit of the cliff.

By way of reply, Nipper gave the rope a couple of turns round the trunk of an adjacent tree, tossed one end over the edge of the cliff, and handed the other to Dick.

"Lower me down, slowly and steadily," he said. "Haul up when I whistle."

"But what are you going to do?" gasped Arnold, catching him by the arm.

"Fetch him up," replied Nipper briefly.

"It—it's impossible!" said Arnold. "Suppose the rope breaks?"

Nipper shrugged his shoulders.

"Then we shall both be killed," he said.

"Lowell—Tattersall—help me!" shrieked. "Why not lower the rope, and tell Conway to catch hold of it, and haul him up in that way?"

"He couldn't do it, by the look of him," said Nipper. "In the first place, he isn't strong enough; and in the second place, he's too frightened. But we're wasting precious time. Out of the way! I'm going down for him!"

Amid breathless silence he sat down on the edge of the cliff, grasped the rope with both hands, and swung himself off.

"Lower away!" he yelled out.

Slowly and steadily they lowered him down, he using his feet to keep himself clear of the face of the cliff. By the time he came within reach of Conway, the water was up to the latter's waist; and just as Nipper stretched out his hand to help him up, a big wave broke at the foot of the cliff and swept the screaming Grammarian off his feet.

"Lal—Arnold—for now!" moaned Arnold, as Conway's struggling form was swept away by the backwash of the receding wave. "He can't swim, and——"

The sentence ended in a ringing shout of admiration and surprise, for at that moment, loosing his hold on the rope, Nipper plunged into the sea. What happened next was never forgotten by those who were privileged to witness it.

With half a dozen sturdy strokes, Nipper overtook the struggling Grammarian, slipped one arm around his waist, and swam back to the foot of the cliff.

"He's fainted!" he shouted. "Lower the rope again! Quick—or two!"

Standing waist-deep in the sea, and supporting his unconscious burden on one arm, he fashioned a loop in the end of the rope. Then, placing his foot in the loop, and still supporting Conway with his arm, he gave the signal to haul away.

In some respects this was the most dangerous part of the whole proceeding. But fortune favours the brave, we are told; and fortune favoured Nipper. Willing hands grasped Nipper and his burden by the collars of their coats and hauled them over the edge of the cliff.

How the boys cheered! How they crowded round Nipper and all but wrung his hands off! How they cheered again, and yet again, when Conway presently opened his eyes and declared he felt able to walk back to the school!

And then Arnold made the speech of his life.

"Fellow-Grammarians," he said "never since last Saturday week have we been into the Nininites, and have swotted them whenever we had the chance. To-day they've taken a noble revenge. One of them at the risk of his life has saved one of our fellows from certain death. I don't know how you chaps feel about it, but I—well——"

He held out his hand to Nipper.

"So far as I'm concerned, the quarrel is ended," he said. "And I apologise for all the things we've done to 'em."

"No, no; you needn't apologise!" said Nipper, grasping Arnold's hand with unaffected cordiality. "On the whole, I think we gave as much as we received. There have been faults on both sides, no doubt, and if you're willing to bury the hatchet, and smoke the pipe of peace at Pye's this evening, I'm game."

And so it came about that that evening the good folk of Clevedon went about rubbing their eyes, and asking each other if the millennium had arrived, for the Fifth Form from the Grammar School and the Fighting Fifth from St. Ninian's were consuming sausage-rolls and tarts at Pye's, and toasting each other in ginger-beer!

The Reappearance of the Locket.

TWO days and a half elapsed. It was three o'clock on Friday night—or, rather, on Saturday morning. St. Ninian's was wrapped in slumberous repose, and the only sound that disturbed the brooding stillness was the murmur of the wind as it rustled the leaves of the trees in Mr. Rant's garden.

Presently, however, another sound stole through the inky darkness—the creaking of the garden gate; and if one had had the eyes of a cat one might have seen a solitary figure steal through the gate and glide across the lawn towards the study window.

It was Karl Hoffmann. True to his word, he had spent the last few days in making himself acquainted with the geography of St. Ninian's, and now he had come to carry out his avowed intention of searching Mr. Rant's study in quest of the coveted locket.

Halting outside the study window, he examined the catch by the light of a small dark-lantern. Then a smile of satisfaction stole over his face.

"I'm not an expert in these matters," he muttered under his breath, "but I think I can manage this little job!"

Taking out his pocket-knife and opening the biggest blade, he slipped the blade between the upper and the lower sash and gently forced back the catch. Two minutes later he had silently raised the lower sash, and stood in the housemaster's study.

"So far—so good!" he mused, as he flashed his lantern round the room, and observed that the door was slightly ajar. "I suppose I'd better shut the door before I begin my search, and either lock it, if there's a key, or barricade it with some of the furniture."

He glided towards the door, but ere he could lay his hand on the handle he was horrified to hear a patter of feet in the passage outside.

Quivering with excitement, he hastily drew back from the door and screened his dark-lantern, whilst at the same time his hand stole to his pocket in search of his revolver.

"I don't suppose they're coming in here," he mused. "But if they are——"

Ere he could complete the sentence, the door swung softly open and somebody walked into the room. It was too dark for Karl Hoffmann to see who it was; but he judged, by the softness of the footfalls, it was somebody in bare feet.

Scarcely daring to breathe, with his finger on the trigger of his revolver, he waited to see what would happen. He had not long to wait. The unseen figure passed just inside the door, pressed the switch of the electric light, and —click!—a blaze of light illumined the room, revealing the intruder as a dusky-faced boy in pyjamas and bare feet.

It was Lal, and he was walking in his sleep again.

Hoffmann realised both these facts in less time even than it has taken to write them down. At the moment when the switch had clicked he had levelled his revolver, and the words of a blood-curdling threat had risen to his lips. But they had never crossed his lips. At one and the same glance he recognised who the new arrival was, and saw that he was walking in his sleep.

"It's the Hindoo!" he gasped. "He must be a somnambulist! Perhaps"—his heart gave a great bound at the thought—"he has come to look at the locket!"

With fascinated eyes he watched Lal glide across the room and press his thumb on a certain spot on the wall. As the reader has doubtless guessed, it was the spring of the sliding panel which Lal pressed, and the German had need of all his self-control to suppress a cry of triumph when he saw the panel fly open and disclose the secret recess.

"Ah, that's where the locket is hidden, is it?" he chuckled.

But he was wrong. As the reader knows, it was where the locket had been hidden originally, but it was not there now.

"I'll let him take the locket out, and then I'll pounce on him and collar it," decided Hoffmann.

But Lal, of course, did not take the locket out, for the simple reason that it was not there. For a second or two he stood staring at the empty recess, as though he were trying to remember something; then he slowly turned on his heel and walked across to the fireplace.

On the mantelpiece was a marble clock, flanked by tall bronze vases. To Hoffmann's bewildered surprise, Lal lifted one of these vases down and turned it upside-down. Something bright and glittering dropped out of the vase and fell on the floor. It was the locket!

Lal replaced the vase on the mantelpiece and stooped to pick the locket up. But by that time Hoffmann's self-control could stand the strain no longer. Thrusting his revolver into his pocket, he darted across the room, elbowed Lal aside, and snatched the locket up.

"Victory!" he exclaimed, in a low, triumphant voice. "Victory at the first attempt!"

(Continued on the next page.)

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THE FIGHTING FIFTH.

(Continued from the previous page.)

Sipper and Dick to the Rescue.

IN the meantime certain events had happened of which Karl Hoffmann was ignorant; otherwise he might not have been quite so confident of success.

In order to describe these events it is necessary to go back to the time when the occupants of the Fifth-Form dormitory went to bed. And, by way of preface, it may be as well to mention that the ten boys who slept in this dormitory were Nipper, Dick, Bob, Wagstaffe, and Lal; and five other boys, named Langley, Crookes, Gray, Seymour, and Stuart, the last-named being the brother of the well-known aeronaut, who afterwards invented the famous Stuart Airship.

Now, on this particular night Stuart had a bad attack of that familiar schoolboys' complaint, toothache. It came on just after he got into bed, and kept him awake until after half-past two. The pain then grew a little easier, and he was on the point of falling into a doze, when he was surprised to see Lal get out of bed and light a candle.

"What's up?" asked Stuart, sitting up in bed.

Lal made no reply. Staring straight in front of him with wide-open eyes, he walked to the door, and opened it.

"He's walking in his sleep again!" gasped Stuart, who, of course, like all the other boys, was aware that Lal was a somnambulist.

He sprang out of bed, and wakened Nipper.

"Das is walking in his sleep again," he said. "He has just gone out of the dormitory. What shall I do—follow him, and wake him?"

"No!" said Nipper, jumping out of bed. "It's dangerous to wake a sleep-walker suddenly, I believe. We'll follow him, and see that he doesn't come to any harm; and if we see a chance of waking him quietly, we'll do so."

He dragged Dick's pillow from under his head, and smote him in the face with it.

"Here — what the — hallo! What's the fun?" demanded Dick.

"Lal's got 'em again!" said Nipper. "He's somnambulising! Come on!"

By the time the three bare-footed boys—Nipper, Dick, and Stuart—reached the head of the stairs, Lal had disappeared.

"He's gone to our study, I'll bet!" said Nipper. "That's where he went last time he somnambulised, you know. Let's see!"

Nipper's surmise proved correct. When the three boys arrived at the study door, which was open, they saw Lal kneeling on the floor behind Nipper's desk. He had turned up the end of the rug, and had prised up the end of the loose flooring-board.

"That's where he used to keep the locket," whispered Nipper to Stuart by way of explanation. "He's evidently dreaming of the locket—if dreaming is the proper word! He's forgotten that it—sshh! He's coming out!"

Leaving the candle on the floor, Lal rose to his feet, and walked towards the door.

"I say, Lal, old chap, hadn't you better come back to bed?" said Nipper, in a low, gentle voice.

Lal paid no heed. Still staring straight ahead, he walked down the passage, turned to the right, and then to the left, opened the door of Mr. Rant's study, and switched on the electric light.

It was at this moment, as the reader knows, that Karl Hoffmann swiftly screened his dark lantern and recoiled into the farthest corner of the study. Needless to say that Nipper, Dick, and Stuart—who had noiselessly followed Lal, and had halted outside the door—were in absolute ignorance of this fact.

Now Lal, it will be remembered, had promised Mr. Rant, and had faithfully kept his promise, to tell nobody about the secret recess in the study-wall. Consequently, Nipper, Dick, and Stuart were as ignorant of the existence of the secret recess as they were of the existence of Karl Hoffmann. Great was their surprise, therefore, when they saw Lal press the hidden spring which caused the panel to fly open.

Greater still was their surprise when, after Lal had walked across to the mantelpiece, and had taken down one of the bronze vases, and had turned it upside-down, they saw the missing locket drop out of the vase and fall on the floor!

But all their previous surprise was as nothing compared with their stupefied amazement when they saw an unknown man, with a lantern in his hand, dart across the room, elbow Lal aside, and pick the locket up!

For two seconds—no longer—the three boys stood rooted to the spot in petrifying bewilderment. Then Nipper and Dick dashed into the room, with Stuart at their heels, and sprang at Hoffmann like a couple of deerhounds leaping on their prey!

So swift and unexpected was their charge, so vigorous their onslaught, that Hoffmann was swept off his feet and hurled to the ground. As he fell, the locket flew out of his hand; and almost before he had realised what was happening, Stuart had secured the locket, and Nipper and Dick were kneeling on the German's chest, pinning him down, and rending the air with vociferous yells of "Help! Police! Thieves!"

By that time, of course, the uproar had awakened Lal; but ere he could ask the meaning of the strange scene which confronted him, the German put forth all his strength in a herculean effort, hurled his youthful captors aside, leaped to his feet, and whipped out his revolver.

"Keep back, or by Heaven I'll shoot you!" he snarled, as Nipper and Dick rushed at him a second time.

The two boys drew back, for they saw the German was in earnest, and the latter then turned to Stuart.

"Give me that locket!" he demanded hoarsely. "Quick, or I—"

The sentence ended in a vicious imprecation; for at that moment, with the swiftness of a lightning flash, Stuart spun round on his heel, and leaped through the door, with the locket still in his hand. The next instant he was racing down the passage, yelling "Thieves!" and "Murder!" at the top of his voice.



Holding each other's hand, Mr. Trigg and Mr. Wimple waded into the glistening surf. "Into the valley of death!" said Mr. Trigg, shutting his eyes. "Courage, comrade! Falter not. The eyes of England are upon us!"

This, of course, put an end to any hopes which Hoffmann might still have entertained of securing the locket.

Brandishing his revolver in the faces of Nipper, Dick, and Lal, the German backed towards the window; on reaching which he swiftly wheeled round and vaulted through, and by the time Mr. Rant rushed into the study, with Dr. Shuttleworth and a crowd of masters and boys at his heels, the German had gained the garden-gate, and had vanished in the darkness.

When pursuit had been given up as hopeless, Mr. Rant turned to Nipper and Dick, and requested an explanation of what had happened.

"So the mysterious disappearance of the locket is now explained!" said Mr. Rant, when the two boys had told their tale. "We surmised that it must have been stolen, and we were right. It was stolen by Das!"

"By me, sir!" exclaimed Lal indignantly.

"Of course!" said Mr. Rant. "You and I were the only persons who knew that the locket was in that secret recess. Some time between the day when we concealed it in the recess, and the day when we discovered it had disappeared, you must have had another attack of sleep-walking! Nobody appears to have seen you on that occasion, but it is quite evident that you came down to this study—like you did to-night—removed the locket from the recess, and hid it in that vase.

"Of course, you wouldn't remember what you had done when you woke next morning," he continued. "But you remembered to-night, when you had another fit of somnambulism; and if that fellow hadn't interrupted you, I have little doubt that you would have hidden the locket somewhere else."

Everybody agreed that the housemaster's theory was undoubtedly the right one; and after some further discussion the Head made a suggestion which met with instant approval.

"It is quite evident," he said, "that the man who broke into this room to-night was an emissary of that scoundrel Otto Heinrich." In this, as the reader knows, the Head was quite mistaken. "It is equally evident that Heinrich must have some very strong reason for wishing to secure the locket. What that reason is, we cannot even guess at but—" He turned to Nipper. "I suppose you know," he said, "that your guardian, Mr. Nelson Lee, has completed his investigations at Newport, and returned to London last Tuesday, after an absence of several months?"

"Yes, sir," said Nipper. "But I fancy he has gone away again."

"I hope not!" said the Head. "Anyhow, I will write to him to-morrow, and tell him about the lockets, and ask him to come down, when he can make it convenient, and have a look at it, and see if he can find out anything about it which has escaped our observation."

"An excellent suggestion!" said Mr. Rant. "And in the meantime, where shall we keep the locket?"

"Where we ought to have kept it from the first," replied the Head. "In the big safe in the hall."

The "big safe" was really a small, strong room built into the wall of the dining-hall.

The door of the safe was provided with what is known as a "combination letter lock."

"As you know," continued the Head, "the word which opens the safe is changed every week, and is only known to myself and the two housemasters; so that, although Das will know that the locket is in the safe, he will not be able—if he has another attack of somnambulism—to remove the locket, or play any more tricks with it!"

A chorus of approval greeted Dr. Shuttleworth's suggestion; and ten minutes later the locket was in the safe, and boys and masters were trooping back to bed.

The Great Reconciliation.

TRUE to his word, Dr. Shuttleworth wrote to Nelson Lee on Sunday morning. He looked for a reply on Tuesday, but when Wednesday arrived, and there was still no answer, he wired to the great detective's landlady, asking if he were at home. The answer came back, short, and to the point,

"Away. Address unknown.—JONES."

"So we can do nothing more for the present," said the Head, showing the telegram to Mr. Rant. "We shall have to wait until Mr. Lee returns. After all, there's no immediate hurry; for the locket is quite safe now, and there's no fear if its being stolen again."

Whilst this conversation was taking place in the doctor's study, Mr. Trigg was interviewing the doctor's wife in the drawing-room.

"My knowledge of etiquette is somewhat limited," he was saying. "I understand that Miss Hoffmann, for whom I have a sincere regard, came here whilst I was ill in bed to inquire how I was progressing; and I—er—wondered—that is, I thought—er—that perhaps the rules of etiquette require that I should call on her, and thank her for her kind inquiries. Would that be the—er—proper thing to do?"

"Certainly!" said Mrs. Shuttleworth, with a merry twinkle in her eyes.

Three-quarters of an hour later, arrayed in his "Sunday best," and armed with an enormous bouquet, Mr. Trigg was on his way to Fraulein Hoffmann's cottage on the Hillfoot Road.

In the meantime, unknown to Mr. Trigg, of course, Mr. Wimple had also decided to call on Fraulein Hoffmann; and almost at the same moment as Mr. Trigg left St. Ninian's, Mr. Wimple, who also carried a monstrous bouquet, knocked at the door of Fraulein's cottage.

The door was opened by Otto Heinrich, disguised, of course, as "Uncle Fritz."

"Is Miss Hoffmann at home?" inquired Mr. Wimple, in a nervous voice.

"No!" said Heinrich curtly.

"Can you tell me what time she will be in?" asked Mr. Wimple.

"No!" said Heinrich again; and he shut the door on the science-master's face.

"Rude old man!" growled Mr. Wimple, as he turned away from the door. "He might have answered me civilly, at any rate. Now, what had I better do?"

After some cogitation he decided to stroll up and down the road, in front of the cottage, on the off-chance of seeing Fraulein Hoffmann return. And he was engaged in this somewhat unprofitable occupation when he saw Mr. Trigg turn into the road.

"Ha, ha! that is where I score!" chuckled Mr. Trigg, on catching sight of his hated rival. "The worm is loafing outside the dear lady's house, intending to waylay her when she comes out. How the wily squirm when he sees me enter the house as a welcome guest!"

After withering Mr. Wimple with a glance of mingled contempt and triumph, he strode through the garden gate, and boldly knocked at the door.

Now, Heinrich, as the reader knows, had instructed Fraulein Hoffmann to pretend to be in love with Mr. Trigg, in order to furnish her with an excuse for visiting St. Ninian's, and making inquiries about the locket. Consequently, when Heinrich opened the door in response to Mr. Trigg's knock, his manner was altogether different to that which he had assumed with Mr. Wimple.

"No; I regret to say that my niece is out," he said. "She went out about half an hour ago. She said she was going for a stroll on the Heath, but she didn't say in which direction she was going. However, if you care to follow her—and I am sure she would be delighted to have your company—I can provide you with the means of finding her."

He disappeared for a moment, and returned, leading by a light steel chain, an intelligent-looking Airedale terrier.

"This is my niece's dog," he said. "He has a most amazing power of scent, and if you allow him, he will lead you straight to his mistress, I have no doubt."

Words fail to describe Mr. Wimple's astonishment when he saw Mr. Trigg come down the garden path, leading Fraulein Hoffman's dog! And when he saw his rival cross the road, and pass through the wicket gate that gave admittance to Hampton Heath, a look of fierce determination crossed his face.

"That rude old man has told him that she is on the Heath!" he muttered to himself. "He has lent him her dog, to guide him to her! I will follow him!"

"Hallo, sir! Where are you going?" demanded Mr. Trigg presently, turning round and perceiving Mr. Wimple.

"I opine that is no affair of yours, sir!" retorted Mr. Wimple.

"You are following me!" said Mr. Trigg.

"I have yet to learn that that is contrary to the law!" said Mr. Wimple.

Mr. Trigg scowled, but as he could not think of an effective retort, he silently resumed his walk, his course being decided by the terrier, who was impatiently straining at the leash.

At the end of a quarter of an hour, Mr. Trigg turned round, and saw that Mr. Wimple was still following him.

"This is unbearable!" he exclaimed, growing purple in the face. "This is intolerable! I insist, sir, that you desist from proceeding any farther in this direction!"

"Are you the proprietor of the Heath?" demanded Mr. Wimple.

"That has nothing to do with the case!" said Mr. Trigg hotly.

"Pardon me; it has everything to do with the case!" said Mr. Wimple. "As a free-born Englishman, I claim the right to——"

But the right was never claimed, for at that moment the dog broke away from Mr. Trigg's grasp, bounded over a low, joyous bark, and disappeared into a clump of trees on the edge of a neighbouring ravine.

Hurling an anathema at Mr. Wimple, Mr. Trigg dashed after the dog; but no sooner had he reached the head of the ravine than he staggered back as if he had received a blow in the face. For this is what he saw:

Fraulein Hoffmann was standing at the foot of the bank, with her back towards him. She was patting the dog, and scolding him for having followed her—little dreaming who else had followed her—when a young man suddenly appeared at the end of the ravine. And, to Mr. Trigg's stupefied astonishment, Fraulein Hoffmann ran to meet this young man, flung her arms around his neck, and kissed him!

(To be continued on Saturday next.)

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* How this airship was stolen by a powerful secret society, and how Nipper and Stuart were kidnapped by the same society, is related in a thrilling story, entitled, "The Iron Hand," now appearing in our companion paper, "The Boys' Herald."—Ed.

The CHALLENGE CUP FOURS

By . . Clement Hale.



Bruce's crew had ceased to row, being unable to finish, and the men had collapsed in various ways over their oars. The boat with the black flag had won the race.

THE 1st CHAPTER.
The Cousins—A Scratch Pour—Nugent of Cambridge.

"H, Charlie!"

"Yes, father?" And Charles Nugent paused as he was about to leave the house, bag in hand, and turning, faced his father.

William Charles Nugent, M.P., proprietor of many newspapers and periodicals, was a hale and hearty man of about fifty, well dressed, handsome of face and figure, a well-known member of society, and one of the most generous of men.

His son Charles bore a striking resemblance to him. He was tall, broad-shouldered, well-set, and decidedly good-looking. He had just come down from Cambridge after a distinguished career. He had three times stroked his crew to victory in the University Boatrace, had won the Diamond Sculls at Henley, and as a member of the Leander Rowing Club was likely to win many another big event before his rowing days were over.

He had been rowing at Cambridge on the Saturday, whither he had gone to give instruction to a younger brother of his, who had just entered Trinity Hall; and he had his rowing kit in his bag now, for he was just going down to the Leander boathouse at Putney for practice. He wore the well-known pink flannel Leander tie, and altogether looked the fine athlete he was.

"What is it, sir?" he asked.

"Oh, your mother had a letter from a married sister of hers, of whom she had lost sight for years, the other day," said Charlie's father, "and she found her in distressing poverty. She wouldn't think of coming to live with us. She is a widow, and so proud that she would look upon any gift of money as charity, and refuse it. It appears that she lives with her son, who looks after her. Apparently, from what she says, Charles is a most devoted lad; but, of course, with such poor family connections, he hasn't been able to get a good start in life, and it seems he is employed in the art department of William Staring & Co., of Regent Street, the famous house furnishers. He can't get anything like a salary there. You know how such employees are paid, my lad. Long hours, hard work, and starvation wages. The employees sacrificed to make big dividends for the shareholders. Well, my boy, if you would go along there, and ask to see your cousin, and form your own opinion of his worth, I should be greatly obliged. For if he were in any way suitable I would find him a job myself. There are so many openings for a clever lad in my establishment."

"Which cousin is it?" laughed Charlie Nugent. "Is it Edgar Darrell or Guy Christopherson? Oh, it can't be Christopherson; for they are very well off."

"It is young Darrell. Maud Darrell was your mother's favourite sister. She contracted a very unhappy marriage."

"All right, dad," said the old 'Varsity Blue, "I'll go down to Staring's at once. I may as well do that on my way, as there is no need for me to get to the Leander before seven o'clock."

"What a boy you are for acting on impulse, Charles," said the father, giving his son an admiring glance.

"Impulse has always served me well, sir," answered young Nugent, with a smile.

When he arrived at Staring's, he found the famous establishment closed. Of course, he had forgotten the firm always closed the establishment at 2.30 on Wednesdays.

It was a nuisance, and Charles Nugent felt annoyed.

Just as he was about to go away, however, a well-dressed, smart-looking man came out of the door in the iron shutter.

The man looked at Nugent keenly.

"Did you wish to see anyone, sir?" he asked.

"I wanted to see Mr. Edgar Darrell," answered Charlie, quickly.

"Did you wish to see him for anything in particular?" was the next query.

"I did rather," was the quick reply. "But it doesn't matter."

The man looked Nugent over, and came to the conclusion that a young man who wore such perfectly-fitting clothes, such good boots, and had such an air of distinction about him, must be somebody. He was Mr. Gregson, manager of the art department at Staring's, and Edgar Darrell worked under him.

"Is it a business affair, sir?" he asked, puzzled.

"Well, not exactly," answered Charles Nugent. "I am a cousin of his, and I wish to make his acquaintance, that is all."

Mr. Gregson looked Nugent over, and noted the quality of the small leather bag which he carried. Darrell's relations, then, were very well off. Mr. Gregson thought it a desirable thing to have wealthy relations, and was all affability as he spoke again.

"We have attached to the house," he said, in his pedantic, pompous way, "a rowing club. The members are busy practising for the house fours and eights, and they get down to the clubhouse at Hammersmith whenever they can. I think, nay, I am sure, you will find Mr. Darrell there."

"He rows, then?" asked Charles Nugent, surprised.

"Oh, yes. He is quite a good man with his sculls and the oar. In fact, so much so, that Dyson, who used to be captain of the club, is jealous of him. You only want to exhibit promise or talent in any one direction, sir, to have a whole lot of nobodies jealous of you, and envious of your powers."

"I believe that is so," said Nugent, with a smile, anxious to cut the conversation short.

"Then I will find my cousin at the clubhouse at Hammersmith? It is the usual group near Biffen's boathouse, I suppose?"

"Yes," said Mr. Gregson, raising his hat; "I wish you good-day, sir."

"Good-day," returned the old 'Varsity Blue; and they parted.

The tube train from Piccadilly Circus soon carried Nugent to Hammersmith, and having arrived there, he set off down the Bridge Road towards the boathouses.

He had no difficulty in finding the headquarters of the Staring Boat Club, and; without scruple, he made his way up the spiral iron staircase that led upwards from the interior of the boathouse, where the racing shells were stored to the clubhouse on the first floor.

As he neared the entrance of the club-room his ears were deafened by the noise of a fierce argument which was being carried on in anything but a minor key by several members of the rowing club.

"I say I won't row in the boat if Darrell is going to be put in it," Nugent heard a man crying in a shrill, loud voice. "Darrell is no good. What's the use of arguing, Bertram? Don't facts speak for themselves? He's been rowing now for two seasons, and has never been in a winning boat, or shown that he possesses any particular sculling ability. I'm not going to have him thrust in on me."

"You're wrong," answered the man who had been addressed as Bertram. "I know we haven't got a better man with the oar than Darrell. And Phillips, the Dogget's Coat and Badge winner, who looks after our boats. He knows a good man when he sees one. He says that if Darrell were taken in hand properly he has the making of a champion in him."

"Phillips! Bah! What's Phillips' opinion worth?"

"More than yours, Dyson," put in a younger of about eighteen, named Bruce. "I think it's beastly hard lines because Darrell has been left out of the draw for boat crews by sheer luck, so that he is one of three that have to stand down, that when Bertram says he will stand out of your boat so that Darrell, a better man may go into it, you should put your back up against him like this."

"I don't believe in him," shouted Dyson. "The draw was perfectly fair, and we ought to abide by it. Bertram will have to row. As for Darrell, if he's such a mighty good man, why doesn't he make up another four, and coach that wood of a Brown into something like form? Then we'd have five fours in the race, and a jolly sight better it would be for all of us."

Charles Nugent had gained the club-room long before this, and he surveyed the group of excited lads with amused and critical eyes. He wasn't particularly impressed with what he saw. Dyson, who was making all the fuss, was a big-built, bullying looking man of about twenty-four. He had a bad-tempered face, and was evidently very conceited.

Bertram seemed a decent sort of the mild, good-natured kind.

Bruce was a tall, slim, good-looking lad of the ordinary commercial type of youth.

In fact, there was nothing distinguished in appearance about any of them, and as he cast his eyes around Charles Nugent could but hope that a tall, broad-shouldered youngster, with fair hair, blue eyes, and well-shaped features, and a refined, though masterful expression of countenance, might be his cousin.

This youth now made a step forward.

"Really, you chaps," he said, "all this bickering is very bad for the club. There is no dignity about it. If Sams, our captain, were not altogether weak, he wouldn't put up with it. The draw has been made, and of course must stand. As for me, don't you worry. I had hoped I might get a chance of rowing in the fours, but I wouldn't dream of taking a seat in Dyson's boat to the exclusion of Bertram, though it is very kind of Bertram to make the offer."

"Bravo! Well spoken, Darrell!" said a good-humoured, thick-set youth from a corner where he was getting into the boots he wore for rowing. "I've got to stand down with you, another good man. So's Godfrey. Pity we can't make up a four between us. Godfrey, Darrell, Monson, and A. N. Other would make a four that would take a bit of beating, I can tell you."

There was a laugh at this, and Dyson, having carried his point, moved away.

"After all this rot," he cried, "perhaps some of you chaps won't mind getting into your rowing shorts, and coming out for practice."

A move was made to the lockers, and in a few minutes the lads were ready, and clattered down the spiral staircase, laughing and joking, leaving Darrell, Monson, Godfrey, and a weedy, frail-looking youth behind.

The last was a boy of about seventeen, big-boned, but very tall, and very thin, and having the appearance of having outgrown his strength.

Nugent during this time had quietly seated himself upon a chair from which the back had been broken off. In the rush, excitement, and bustle he had not been noticed, excepting by Monson, and the latter had taken it for granted that he had come up to the club-room as the friend of one of the members.

Monson now turned an inquiring glance in Nugent's direction.

"Are you wanting anybody" he said, at the same time noting the Leander colours, and smiling to think of the cheek of this youth daring to wear the select pink.

"Yes," said Nugent, rising and coming forward. "I called at Staring's this afternoon to see my cousin, and heard that Darrell had come along here. I'm sorry I had to listen to the squabble just now. How are you, Darrell. My name is Nugent, and my father asked me as a favour to look you up. I'm glad to meet you."

The members of the Staring Boat Club looked at Nugent in surprise, and Darrell, seizing the extended hand of his cousin mastvelled more than any of them. He knew nothing of the Nugents, excepting that his mother had always told him they were very rich.

He liked the look of Charlie.

"And so," Nugent went on, "they've turned you out of their boat-sheh, Darrell?"

"There were three odd members," answered Darrell, with a smile, and Nugent felt gratified

at the polished and good style of his cousin, "and so, of course, as we were all keen on rowing, we drew lots. Godfrey, Monson here, and myself had to stand down."

"Has the club as many as five sets of fours?" asked Nugent.

"Oh, yes, we've boats enough. Mr. Staring always sees to that. The pity is that Brown here always thinks he's not good enough or strong enough to row an oar in a race."

Nugent looked the frail, weedy lad over.

"I'm not so sure about that," he said. "I think if I had him under my care for a week or two, and he gave strict attention to my coaching, I could shape him into as good a man as some of those who went downstairs just now."

Monson stared. The stranger, Darrell's cousin, spoke as if he knew a good deal about rowing. Or was it merely side?

"And I suppose none of you are going out now?" said Nugent. "That seems a shame, Darrell, as you are so keen on rowing."

"I suppose you won't come out, Brown?" asked Darrell, looking at the frail youth doubtfully.

"You know I would like to," answered Brown; "but I should only upset the rhythm of the boat, Darrell. I'll try and practise up if you like. But I know I am not good enough to race with the others."

Nugent thought for a moment.

"Look here," he said, "I tell you what. I was just going out for a spin in a sculling skiff. I don't mind rowing an oar with you if you care about it. And then you and I can have a chat afterwards, Darrell. What do you say?"

"Are you used to a four?" asked Godfrey, coming forward, and eyeing Nugent with a glance of mistrust.

"Oh, yes! I think I may say without exaggeration that I have rowed in every kind of boat there is," answered Nugent, with a smile.

"You're not any relation of the Charles Nugent who stroked Cambridge and won the Diamonds last year, are you?" asked Monson.

"Yes," was the smiling reply; and the 'Varsity Blue's eyes twinkled merrily. "I know him very well indeed."

"Then you are the man for us," was the prompt reply. "Come along, you chaps, get into your things. We'll have a good spin after all; and won't Dyson be sick!"

Nugent was given a peg and a locker, on which to hang up and put in his things, and he proceeded rapidly to strip. As his magnificently-developed frame, fine rounded forearms, and stomach muscles, as hard as iron and standing out in ridges, were revealed, the members of Staring's Boat Club felt a decided respect for him.

"If you can only pull an oar at all," said Monson, "you ought to be a good man, Nugent."

And then he looked puzzled, for Nugent's vest was trimmed with the Leander pink.

They went down, and Phillips, the waterman, helped them to get the boat out.

"Where will you row, Nugent?" asked Darrell of his cousin.

"If you don't mind," was the quick reply, "I'll take the stroke seat. It suits me best."

Monson rowed stroke usually; but he felt that he could not be rude to a visitor, and he gave way. They took their seats, and then Nugent sent them away at a pace that made Phillips, the waterman, open his eyes wide. He took a second look at Nugent, and slapped his thigh.

"Well, I'm blowed!" he said.

They swept out midstream, and presently as they came up with Dyson's boat, which had swung round, Nugent prepared his four for a burst.

"Get ready, you chaps," he said, "to lay on."

He waited until Dyson sent his boat away, and then struck the water crisply and keenly at the beginning, and set such a stroke that the other three could not help but get the best out of it. They were soon up with the Dyson four, and past them. Dyson gritted his teeth hard, and put in all he knew, but the despised three, helped by Nugent, got away, and at Chiswick Eyot were leading by four lengths, when they stopped rowing.

"Great Scott!" gasped Monson, out of breath. "Where did you learn your rowing, Nugent?"

"At Eton and Cambridge," was the puzzling reply.

But when twenty minutes later they pulled in to the side of the raft at Biffen's, and Phillips, the waterman, seized hold of the boat, the mystery was explained.

"I never expected to see you down here, Mr. Nugent," said the winner of Doggett's Coat and Badge.

"I hardly expected it myself, Phillips," was the smiling reply. And when Nugent had lightly sprung up the spiral staircase, Monson turned to the waterman.

"For goodness sake," he said, "who is he, and why does he wear the Leander colours, Phillips?"

"Why, he's a Leander man," was the reply. "Didn't you know that? I thought every river man knew Charles Nugent, the Cambridge stroke, and winner of the Diamond Sculls."

"ANSWERS" 1000th No.

NOW ON SALE.

THE 2nd CHAPTER.

At Practice—Phillips Ventures an Opinion—Only One Crew In It.

DYSON was employed in the silks department at Staring & Co.'s, and on the day when the Ascot Gold Cup was run, it was noticed by Monson, who was under him, that Dyson wore a preoccupied air.

On two or three occasions, when appealed to with regard to some trivial business detail, he returned an incoherent reply; and when the newsboys rushed past the shop shouting "Gold Cup Winner," Dyson walked to the door, scarcely able to contain himself. He dearly wished he could go out and buy a paper. But his dignity had to be preserved, and so he possessed himself in patience, hoping that some loquacious customer would come and reveal the name of the winner.

Behind a counter, Brown, the frail youth who had now taken No. 2 in the four that Monson was to stroke in the house race, was busying himself rolling up silks, and putting away silken materials that had been shown to customers.

Brown looked stouter, and far healthier than he had done a few weeks before when Nugent had made his sensational appearance at the Staring Boat Club. Monson, seizing a favourable opportunity, crossed to Brown.

"I say, Brown," he said, "have you been noticing Dyson? It strikes me he's been betting again."

"I know he has," answered Brown. "I believe he stands to lose £20 on to-day's race!"

Monson whistled.

"You don't say so!" he cried. "By George, he can't afford to lose such a sum as that, Brown!"

"I know he can't," was the quick reply.

"What's he backed?"

"Wet Sail, I think."

"By George! It doesn't stand a chance! I know that much, Brown," said Monson earnestly. "My pater always backs horses a bit, though he never makes a big gamble of it. He gets information from the stables, and he was telling me before I came away from home this morning that he had had a wire saying that Wet Sail, the favourite, had broken down."

At that moment Bertram, who was carrying some accounts through to the counting-house, came hurrying through the department.

"Heard who's won the Gold Cup, boys?" he asked, with a cheery smile.

"No," said Monson. And Dyson, pricking up his ears, came a stride or two nearer.

"Grey Lady first; Fortunatus second; and Western Pride third. They say a lot of money has been dropped. I believe Dyson has lost a bit, too."

And Bertram hurried on, with a grin stretching from ear to ear, for he was one of those who did not like Dyson, and he had purposely given the foreman of the silk department this home thrust.

Dyson's face paled a little, and he was very thoughtful for the rest of that day.

As soon as the establishment was shut and a hurried meal partaken of, the members of the rowing club hurried by tube to Hammersmith, anxious for practice. The club-room was soon ringing with a babel of sound as the men chaffed and joked with one another at the top of their voices.

Darrell, Monson, Brown, and Godfrey were the quietest of the lot of them.

But, then, they had earnest work to do, and under the instruction of Charles Nugent they reckoned they had more than an outside chance of winning the race for the fours.

They were the first quartette ready to leave the club-room.

Bertram gave them a quick glance.

"You're mighty shy, you beggars!" he said. "Upon my word, by the way you set about it, anyone would think you seriously imagined you had a chance of winning the race."

Neither of the four made any reply.

"I must say Brown is wonderfully improved," put in Bruce, who was stroking the second boat. "I never should have thought he would have been able to master the oar in the way he has. He backs you up well enough at two, doesn't he, Darrell?"

"Oh, yes," was the quiet reply, and Darrell followed his comrades down the staircase.

Bruce got his crew together and a lad to steer, and they were the second lot ready to go out.

"Phillips," said Bruce, addressing the waterman, as the latter held the boat into the side of the raft, while they took their seats on the slides, "what's all this mystery about Monson's crew? They're marvellously improved. They were perfectly together when I saw them last. Who's coaching them?"

The waterman's eyes twinkled.

"Well, sir," he said "I don't think there is any secret about it. Mr. Darrell's cousin is coaching them. He's done a bit of regatta rowing in his time, and he is doing his best to get them fit. It's been hard work, because Mr. Brown was so backward. But he's the most improved oar in the club, now, sir."

Bruce looked puzzled. He turned his eyes to below Hammersmith Bridge, where he saw the Monson four going along at a strong paddle.

The beginning was crisp, the stroke was well rowed through. It seemed to him that the four were using their slides well, and that the body-swing was well nigh perfect. He couldn't understand it.

"Upon my soul," he said, "for style they beat any of us. I can't make it out. Do you think they have any pace, Phillips?"

"Do you want to know exactly what I do think, gentlemen?" asked the waterman, watching the Monson four out of sight.

"Of course we do."

"Then, sir, I think that Monson's four will walk home."

Such an opinion from a man like Phillips had to be respected, and Bruce whistled his surprise.

"Give way!" he cried, and set his men off at a strong paddle against the stream, following in the wake of Monson's four.

He came up with them at the mile post above Craven Steps, and here he found the four, with the nose of their boat turned round, stripped for a fast row, and leaning on their oars whilst they listened to the advice of a handsome, finely-built youth who sat in a canvas racing shell.

This was Darrell's cousin, Charles Nugent.

"I have very little fault to find with your work now," Nugent was saying, as Bruce brought his boat about, determined to have a tussle with the Monson four for a bit, just to test their speed. "You want to get the hands to the chest a little smarter as the stroke is pulled through, and let the body swing back a little more. The recovery is very good, and you get the oar away with the forward movement of the body well. You catch a very good beginning, and there is no bucketing now. I think you will do."

Monson smiled.

"Get ready!" said Nugent.

They set for the stroke.

"Go!"

Away they went at a hot burst, and Bruce, plunging his oar into the water, called upon his men for a spurt. He knew he was stroking about thirty-six strokes for the first minute. He could see, for he had half a length start, that Monson was doing a slightly slower rate, but, to his amazement, he found the other four come up and go past him with ease. Having covered three hundred yards, Bruce easied.

"That's good enough, boys," he said. "We haven't got a chance."

"And the sculler is keeping up with them," said a lad named Green, turning his head to watch the progress of the rival boat. "Is it fair that Monson's crew should have advice from a man who may be a professional sculler for all we know?"

"I don't see why it isn't, since that chap likes to take the trouble," answered Bruce. "Even the men who enter for the Diamond Sculls at Henley are coached by professional scullers. I don't see that we can reasonably object to that, Green."

"Then," said Green, "I tell you what, I'm going to back Monson's crew for the fours."

"You'll get no takers," said Bruce.

"Oh, yes, I shall," was the smiling answer. "Dyson reckons he is going to win, and he's bet against them up to any amount."

At that moment the Dyson four came paddling by. Dyson was stroke, and the four were well together. But there was an absence of that life and dash that characterised the rowing of the Monson four, and Bruce voted the race as good as over.

Then the Mildred four came along, and a little later they passed the Wybart lot.

The Staring Boat Club members were training in earnest for the big event, but Bruce was convinced that Phillips was right. There was only one crew that stood a chance.

THE 3rd CHAPTER.

Darrell's Crew Pull Off the Race—Dyson's Anger and Threats.

THE afternoon on which the race for the Staring fours was to be rowed opened fine. The clouds of the morning dispersed before the magic rays of the sun. There was a strong flood-tide running, and the wind that was blowing from the South was scarcely strong enough to do more than ruffle the surface of the river.

The race for the Staring fours had to be rowed from Putney to Hammersmith. It was a long row, and the men needed to be in good condition to stand the strain.

Dyson early put in an appearance. He was looking very fit. His face was wreathed in smiles.

"Phillips," he said, addressing the winner of the Doggett's Coat and Badge, "I'm on velvet. I'm going to make a pile of money to-day."

"Oh, sir!" said the waterman, regarding Dyson with a smile. "Which horse have you backed for the big race?"

It was a Wednesday afternoon, and an important handicap was being run at Newmarket that day.

"None at all," answered Dyson, with a grin. "I've given up backing horses since I was so hard hit over the Gold Cup. I've got something better than that. It's a dead cert. I've been backing against Monson's crew for to-day's race, and backing my own boat to win."

Phillips's face lengthened.

"Well, sir," he said doubtfully, "you've got a good lot, and won't be far away at the finish, I suppose. But if I had my choice I should take Monson's crew myself."

Dyson opened his eyes wide.

"I know they're improved and all that sort of thing, Phillips," he said. "But as for winning, they don't stand a dog's chance. Would you like to have a bit on?"

"I'll back Monson's crew for a sovereign, sir," said the waterman, with a smile. "But I warn you I'd rather not, as it's just picking up money."

Dyson heard, but would not heed. He was positive that his boat must win. He knew what rowing was. Just as if he would have refused Darrell admission into his crew if he had thought Darrell was any good at all!

"I know they've had a good deal of coaching, and have improved a bit," he said; "but they can't win. What! A crew win over that distance with a weed like Brown in it? Brown would kill any boat."

"Their coach is a crack man, sir," Phillips reminded him.

"Oh, a beggar named Nugent," said Dyson easily. "It is a good name, but it doesn't frighten me. If Darrell's cousin were Nugent the Cambridge stroke, and winner of the Diamonds himself, I shouldn't be a bit afraid."

"Well, sir, you know best," answered Phillips, busying himself about the boats, and wondering whether he ought to tell the truth about Nugent, for up till now the secret had been kept. "Only I give you the straight tip, I should hedge if I were you. I don't believe in betting. It never did anybody any good. You've given the other members of the club the betting craze. There isn't one of them would have wanted to wager if it hadn't been for you, and I tell you straight, Mr. Dyson, I would hedge if I were you."

"Not me," said Dyson contemptuously. "Why should I? It is picking up money, and I must get back what I lost over the Gold Cup."

"How much have you at stake, sir?" asked Phillips.

"Oh, I stand to lose £25," was the answer; and Dyson ran up to the club-room.

Here he found a number of the members crowding round a pedestal on which stood a magnificent silver challenge cup. This had been presented to the club by Mr. Staring himself, and it was to be raced for for the first time that day. It was the trophy for the challenge fours, and handsome gold and silver medals were to be given for the members of the crews of the first and second boats.

Bertram, Miles, and Grainger, the other members of Dyson's four, were there. Dyson seized hold of the trophy and whirled it about his head.

"Hurrah, boys!" he cried. "This is ours!"

Then he turned to Bruce, who was looking on with an amused expression on his face.

"Bruce," he said, "you don't happen to have brought your camera with you, I suppose?"

"Yes," replied Bruce. "I brought it right enough."

"Then get into your racing things, Dyson's crew," shouted Dyson, "and we'll be photographed with the cup!"

They hailed the suggestion with glee, and began to undress at once. In a quarter of an hour they were clad in their vests, rowing shorts, and boots.

Dyson seized the cup and made his way down the spiral staircase.

"Just group yourselves outside the boathouse, boys," he said. "Now then, Bruce, get the snapshot quick."

They formed a group, Dyson sitting cross-legged in the centre, nursing the cup, and Bruce was just about to take the snapshot when Mr. Staring himself appeared.

The managing-director of the big business firm frowned as he saw what was happening.

"What is this, Dyson?" he asked.

"Being photographed with the cup, sir," answered Dyson, with a laugh.

"H'm! Don't you think you had better win it first?" asked the managing director.

"Sure to do that, sir. And after the race perhaps the light won't be so good."

Bruce pressed the bulb of the apparatus, the shutter rose and fell, and the photograph was registered on the film. Dyson, full of glee, and as confident of winning as man could be, then took the cup upstairs again.

Phillips, the waterman, who had seen all that had passed, shook his head as he looked at Bruce.

"That young Mr. Dyson is riding for a fall, sir," he said. "But it's just as well now as later on in life. He needs a lesson badly."

"And he'll have it to-day," answered Bruce, "for Monson's boat will win easily enough. I haven't any doubt about it. My lot are trained as fit as any crew can be, and the other day we couldn't hold 'em even for three hundred yards."

Employees of the firm of Staring & Co. were now turning up by the dozen and half-dozen at a time, and already a goodly crowd had collected below. A fringe of spectators, too, had gathered on Hammersmith Bridge, ready to give the crews a cheer as they went down for the start.

At a quarter to three the first crew embarked. They were flying a red pennon.

They set off amidst cheers. Wybart's four, flying a green pennon; and Mildred's four, with a white pennon, were the next crews to embark.

Then Bruce set out, with a blue pennon to the fore. His crew took the eye as a nice, level combination.

Then Dyson's lot went off, flying a pink pennon.

Dyson stroked the boat as if he meant to win the race at once.

He indulged in a lot of what is called showing off, and if good opinion of himself could have won the race, then it was as good as over.

Monson, Darrell, Brown, and Godfrey were the last four to set out.

Phillips, the waterman, who knew very well what a lot of ill-natured bickering and criticism Darrell had had to put up with from the other members of the club, simply because in manner, style, and nature he was a cut above the rest, shook the No. 3 by the hand.

"Good luck, sir," he said. "You're going to win right enough."

In the front of the boat flew a black pennon, and whether this sinister colour was regarded as an evil omen by the crowd or not, they scarcely raised a cheer. Dyson's boat was evidently first favourite with the men from Staring's.

Monson unostentatiously paddled his boat down to the starting-post.

At the creek they met Nugent, who was seated in his favourite sculling-boat in which he had won the Diamond Sculls. Monson ceased for a moment to enable Nugent to address a few remarks to his cousin.

"Edgar," said the old 'Varsity Blue, "my dad was delighted with you the other night, and he wants you to come to dinner on Sunday. I think he has a good billet to offer you with his firm if you care to take it. Besides, he's given your mother a house to live in in the country. It is necessary for her health's sake, and it will relieve you of a burden. How are you feeling?"

"Pretty fit, thank you," answered Darrell, with a smile. "It is awfully good of you to bother so much about me, Nugent."

The four paddled on again, and Nugent, resting on his skulls, waited for the race to start.

It seemed an age to him ere the boats got into line at their moored skiffs. But at last he saw the crab-like arms of the oars move, and flash in the sunlight as they turned on the feather, and a few seconds later the report of the starter's pistol reached him. Starings had a launch out, in which the directors and the heads of departments followed the race.

Long before the end of the concrete wall was reached, Nugent could see that one crew was well ahead. A moment later his lips parted in a shout, for he had little difficulty in making it out to be Monson's boat, in which his cousin Darrell was rowing No. 5.

Two lengths behind a boat was hanging on grimly; whilst a length further away was another four. These were Dyson's crew, and Bruce's crew respectively.

Nugent's critical eyes surveyed the boats as they approached. Monson was setting a fine stroke, and the three behind him were responding beautifully. The boat with the black flag was winning anyhow, and the way in which Brown, once the weakest member of the club, stuck to his work, was an eloquent tribute to the value of proper training.

As they almost came abreast, Nugent set himself rocking, timing with the easy rhythm and grace of a professional. To the astonishment of those on the launch he held the pace of the four easily. He was not in the least put out, and sculling comfortably to the finish he held up his hand just as the winning four reached the bridge, shouting:

"Well rowed, Darrell!"

A mighty cheer greeted the winners of the Staring Challenge Trophy.

It was followed by a silence of consternation, for Bruce's crew, which was second, had ceased to row, being unable to finish, and the men had collapsed in various ways over their oars.

Dyson and his four were beaten off. They had made a fight for a quarter of a mile only, and the rage of Dyson passed all bounds.

"It's a swindle—a confounded swindle!" he raved, when he had gained the club-room. "Darrell has done this! He got that confounded professional to coach his crew."

"The coach was my cousin, Charles Nugent, of Leander," said Peter Darrell quietly.

"What!" said Dyson, starting. "Do you mean to say he is the Cambridge stroke, and winner of the Diamonds?"

"Yes," answered Darrell. "A fact that you could easily have verified if you'd taken the trouble to inquire."

"All this comes," said Bertram, with a smile, for he didn't mind being beaten, "of you not letting me resign my seat in your boat, Dyson, and having Darrell in my place. Look how Brown has come on. It serves you right you were beaten."

Dyson's face went red with anger and disappointment.

That he had cause for his ill-humour must be admitted, for he had lost £25 over this race owing to his propensity for betting, and he was heavily in debt. He didn't see how he was going to manage at all. But manage he did, for one day, three weeks later, he did not turn up at business in the morning. He had vanished, and upon inquiry being made, it was discovered that some of the firm's money and goods had vanished, too.

As for Darrell, Mr. Staring would have kept him on at a largely increased salary if he could. But the boy's mind was made up. A further interview with his uncle convinced him that he would have a far better career before him in the Nugent Newspapers, Limited.

He therefore resigned his position in the firm, and also his membership of the Staring Rowing Club. But his name will always be remembered by them with pride and pleasure, for he presented them with another challenge trophy next year, which is called the Darrell Cup. It is raced for by the junior members in best boats over a mile and a half.

Darrell made rapid strides in his new profession, and was able, three years later, to make an appearance at Henley, being fully entitled to row as an amateur, and he astonished the world there by winning the Diamonds, as his cousin had twice done before him.

THE END.

(Two long, complete tales next week.)



THESE ARE THE PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS IN THIS FINE NEW STORY.

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

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 Sternerslag. 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 **NICKEY 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 chatting amicably to Gerard Inglis by name, to descend the Seagull's Cliff. Jack warns him not to do so, but a little later the lad is discovered on a ledge half-way down the face of the cliff, insensible. From this perilous position he is rescued by Jack Jaunty.

A stranger arrives at Sternerslag that afternoon, and picking up an acquaintanceship with Peter Pinnick, a surly fisherman, questions him about Jack Jaunty. Peter is cognisant of 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 Sternerslag, a Mr. Belton and his two daughters. He takes them for a tour of inspection around the cliffs.

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.

Later, Peter Pinnick is discovered half dead, having been struck on the head with some blunt instrument. Suspicion falls upon Mr. Belton. Some excursionists arrive at Sternerslag, accompanied by a brass band. The drummer of the latter falls down the cleft, a deep hole in the cliffs. Jack Jaunty descends to rescue the band at the bottom discovers a stout club clotted with blood, which he recognises as being the property of Bob Baxter's son Jim. The mystery surrounding the attack on Peter Pinnick is now made clear to him, and he is overcome with horror at his discovery.

(You read this week's instalment.)

THE COMPLETE CHAPTER.

A Troublesome Secret.

THE drummer and his drum were rescued from their perilous position by a very simple expedient. A fisherman hoisted one of his brethren, and in trying to pull the drummer out of his drum he dragged them both down.

Was that parchment-beater grateful to his rescuers? Not he! Instead of thanking them heartily and expressing his regret at being unable to adequately reward them, he showed fight. However, nothing serious came of it.

One of the men coolly tucked him under his arm and carried him out of the Cleft. Placing him on his back upon the sands, he said:

"Lie there and cool off a bit!"

"I will," replied the drummer cheerfully; and composed himself to sleep.

Jack walked slowly away from the gathering, the members of which were cheering on the summit of the cliff. All the mirth was gone out of the boy, for now he had not mere suspicion to haunt him, but a sure and certain knowledge of the authorship of the crime.

"I can't go and tell," he said, "although I ought to do so."

Then he thought of a loophole for escape. Would it not be wise of him to entrust Mr. Belton with his secret, and ask him to generously bear the undeserved suspicion resting upon him a little longer?

Why not go at once to the Folly and sound him on the subject?

Jack did not give himself time to think, or perhaps he might not have taken this risky step; but the fact is, he was urged on by the excitement of the moment and the weight of the awful knowledge he had acquired. So to the Folly went Jack, and, on entering the garden gate, he saw the two girls sauntering about.

Ivonne immediately walked away, but Laura came up and sheok hands with him. He would not mention Ivonne, for Jack could be very proud at a pinch, so he simply asked if Mr. Belton was at home.

"He is always at home now," replied Laura sadly.

It cut Jack to the quick to hear her speak in that way. There was no need for her to be more explicit.

"You will find him in the breakfast-room, reading," she said.

Jack knew the room, and, entering the house, passed through the hall and halted a moment before the door. The faintest possible whisper within urged him to stop there. But he cast aside the monitor and entered.

Mr. Belton was sitting in a low easy-chair with a book in his hand. He looked up, and Jack saw how wan and worn his face was.

"Oh, it's you, Jaunty!" he said. "How do you do? Sit down. What's all this row that is going on outside?"

Jack took a chair facing Mr. Belton, as he said:

"It's a party of excursionists come down to enjoy themselves for the day."

"If we get much of that sort of thing," said Mr. Belton, "I am afraid I must leave the Folly. I came here for quietude."

"Mr. Belmont," said Jack, with an effort, "I have come to talk to you on a very serious subject. It is the attack made on Pinnick."

"Jaunty——"

"Believe me, Mr. Belton, I do not wish to be impertinent. I know that you are suspected——"

"Jaunty," said Mr. Belton, rising quickly, "I won't hear another word on the subject. Let them suspect me as much as they choose, and I will treat the suspicions with contempt!"

He spoke hotly, almost violently, and it was clear that he was stirred to his inmost heart.

Jack ought to have said no more just then, but he rashly went on.

"Mr. Belton," he said, "I know who is the real offender——"

"You do?" cried Mr. Belton eagerly, seizing his hand. "And you can prove it?"

"Yes."

"Jaunty," said Mr. Belton, "you place upon me a load of debt I can never repay. Believe me, I have suffered tortures. To be suspected of the smallest crime would be bitter indeed; but to be credited with a murderous attack upon a man is unbearable!"

And yet, sir," said Jack, "I must ask you to bear it a little longer."

"Eh? What is that?" exclaimed Mr. Belton.

"Oh, forgive me, Mr. Belton, but I cannot clear your good name just yet—until I have had time to think!"

"Pshaw!" cried Mr. Belton, with a bitter smile. "So, after all, it is only a piece of boyish bombast."

"No, indeed!" said Jack, slightly irritated. "I could absolutely clear you, but it would be at the cost of the ruin of a friend."

"And am I not a friend?"

"Mr. Belton, they can only suspect you; but in his case, if I speak out, it will be a certainty."

"And why should I bear another moment's suspicion for the murderous villain, who ever he may be?"

"If you knew the whole story, I think you would cheerfully do so," said Jack.

"Tell me the whole story, then!"

"I will, if you will give me your word not to reveal to anybody what I tell you."

"I will not do that—I could not!"

"Then, sir," said Jack, rising, "I have nothing more to say."

They stood for a moment or two looking at each other, Mr. Belton with a thundercloud gathering in his face, Jack pained and troubled.

"Do you mean to say," said Mr. Belton sternly, "that you have the power to remove this horrible suspicion from me, and will not do it?"

"I cannot—yet," replied Jack drearily; "but if you will wait a little while——"

"I will wait as long as I am obliged to, and no longer!" said Mr. Belton angrily. "Get out of my house, and never enter it again!"

He pointed to the door, and Jack, with a sickly feeling at his heart, moved towards it.

Ah, how gladly would he have explained everything! But the thought of what it meant to Deb and his wife, such good and true friends to him, held him back.

"Mr. Belton," he said, "one day you may be sorry for this!"

"Get out of my house!" was all the reply he received.

Jack, on nearing the door, saw that it was ajar. On entering, he had failed to shut it. Passing into the passage, he came face to face with Ivonne. She signalled to him to close the door, and he did so.

"I have heard all," she said; "I could not help it. Oh, you mean, pitiful thing!"

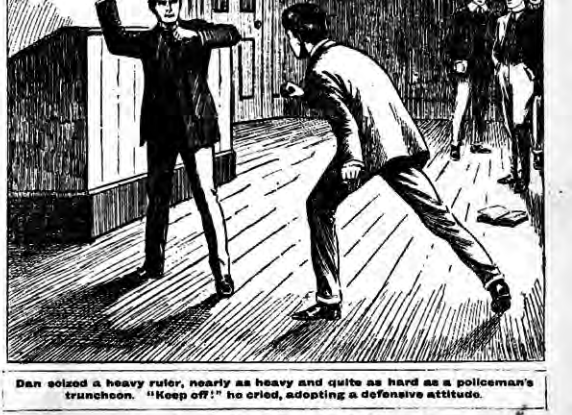
"I am not mean," replied Jack. "If I were, I should act differently to the way I am now doing. You do not understand the case at all."

"You say that you know who the villain is?" said Ivonne, with blazing eyes, which showed the fiery disposition she inherited from her father.

"I do know who he is," replied Jack.

"Your friend!" returned Ivonne. "A would-be murderer, your friend! Jack Jaunty, it

(Continued on the next page.)



Dan seized a heavy ruler, nearly as heavy and quite as hard as a policeman's truncheon. "Keep off!" he cried, adopting a defensive attitude.

The School on the Cliff.

(Continued from the previous page.)

strikes me that you keep very strange company!"

"I did not say he was my friend!" said Jack, now getting fairly warm himself.

"If he is not, why do you conceal his identity?"

"I—I can't explain," said Jack; "and yet I will, if you promise to say nothing."

"What!" exclaimed Ivonne. "You wish me to be your accomplice in concealing a would-be murderer from justice at the expense of my father's honour? Jack Jaunty, you are altogether on the wrong tack. Please do not stop here another moment. I wash—wash my hands of you!"

The intensity of utterance, accompanied by appropriate action of the hands, was literally annihilating to poor Jack. Torn this way and that way by his emotions, he fairly lost his head for a moment, and when he recovered it Ivonne was gone.

Walking like one weary to the point of exhaustion, he left the house, and on the cliff saw the boys on ahead being convoyed home by Mr. Bonnington, who had found the company of the Friendly Few getting too lurid. To put the matter clearly, they had pressed him to partake of liquid refreshment until he had partaken of a sufficient quantity.

He was not by any means intoxicated, for he was an abstemious man; but he knew that if he had any more he would probably be getting into the condition of the excursionists.

Jack was in no humour for the society of his chums, so he kept well in the rear until they reached home. There he pleaded a headache, and was allowed to retire to the dormitory.

THE 23rd CHAPTER.

A Heavy Fall.

THERE was some lively talk that night about the Friendly Few, and it was not altogether complimentary. Dan Callis returned with a black eye administered to him by one of the unfriendly friends, who objected to Dan's dancing twice with one of the ladies, to whom he was attached.

The drummer had been carried in a dead sleep to one of the vans and laid down among the empty jars. Asleep they bore him away, but the majority were very wide awake and unusually noisy.

The quieter part of Sterncraig was not desirous of an early return of the Friendly Few.

Jack had a somewhat troubled night, waking several times, and thinking of the discovery he had made in the Cleft.

It was terrible to think over his position. As a matter of duty to an innocent man, he ought to have gone to the police and told all, but for good, honest Bob's sake he could not do it.

The picture of the fisherman's home, with young Jim charged with attempted murder, which might be turned by-and-by into murder, held him back.

"I can't do it," he thought. "I must make up my mind to lose my friends."

His restlessness led him away in the morning alone. Instead of accompanying his chums for a dip in the sea, he went down to Bob's cottage. There he found Mrs. Baxter, alone, and in tears.

"Jim's been away all night," she said. "Not so much as slept in his bed. Bob's gone to find him. Oh, my poor boy!"

Jack offered such assistance as he could, and asked which way Bob had gone. It seemed that he had been as far as the Cleft, and not finding his son, came back, and went away in the opposite direction. He had only been gone a few minutes, and could not be far away.

Jack went after him, with a heavy heart, for he felt a conviction that something had gone wrong with the unfortunate, misguided Jim.

The coast was very rugged up that way, and the shore was strewn with fragments of the cliff, which had fallen by means of the undermining action of the sea. He soon espied Bob, carefully picking his way, and examining every hollow big enough to hide a human being.

Jack hurried after him, and when near, called to him by name.

Bob turned, and seeing who it was, beckoned for him to come on.

"I've been to your cottage," Jack said, as he drew near.

"Then I've nothing to tell you," replied Bob. "It's hard to bear; but I'm bound to think it's all over with him now."

"But why do you come here?" asked Jack.

"Because he's often been this way at night, waiting on the top of the cliff," returned Bob; "and I think he's fallen over."

In this thought poor Bob was, for once in a way, a prophet. Five minutes later they found Jim. Without doubt he had fallen over the cliff, and there he lay, apparently dead. Bob uttered a loud cry, threw himself upon his knees, and held his clasped hands aloft.

"Oh, Father of Heaven," he cried, "how shall I bear it? My boy—my boy!"

"Don't give way, Bob," said Jack, in a choking voice. "He may not be dead."

"See for me, Master Jack," sobbed Bob. "I durşn't do it."

He feared, as many would have done, to have his worst fears confirmed. Until that is done, we all, when in trouble, cling to hope. Jack knelt down beside the boy, and placed his ear to his mouth, at the same time laying a hand upon his heart.

"Bob," he cried, "he is not dead!"

Bob leaped up, murmured a few words of thanks, and then became suddenly calm and cool.

"Master Jack," he said, "he must be got home. Go and get help, and bring summat to carry him on. See if Jake be at home, and if he is, ask him to fetch the doctor."

Jack hastened back, bounding from rock to rock like a chamois, and for the time, as surefooted.

On reaching the village he roused some of the fishermen, who had slept heavier than usual, after their little outburst with the Friendly Few. He told them what had happened, and despatched them with an old door, recently removed from its hinges at one of the cottages. It would serve as a stretcher for the occasion.

Then he found Jake, and, on learning that he did not go on duty till ten o'clock, despatched him for the doctor. Then Jack went to Mrs. Baxter to break the news as lightly as possible.

Entering the cottage with an assumed cheerful air, he said:

"Jim's found!"

"Tell me the truth," said Mrs. Baxter, as she sank into a chair. "He's dead!"

"No," replied Jack; "he's had a bit of a fall, and hurt himself; but he's not dead. They're helping him home."

Thus by degrees he prepared her for the sad home-coming of her wayward son, so that when the cortege appeared, she did not give way so much as Jack feared she would.

But she was not fit to help in any way, and the men feared they might hurt him if they attempted to take off his clothes; so, lying insensible on the stretcher, Jim awaited the coming of the doctor.

Before he appeared, the ringing of the breakfast-bell summoned Jack back to school, when he took the opportunity of letting Mr. Bonnington know what had happened.

Everybody respected Bob, and much sympathy was felt for him in his trouble. Before the morning was over the doctor's report was known to all in the school. Jim had broken an arm, and was suffering also from concussion of the brain.

In the doctor's opinion, confided to Mr. Bonnington, Jim would either die, or recover from his late affliction.

The report on Pinnick was not at all satisfactory. He was better in some respects, but was suffering from depression of spirits—a tremendous stumbling-block in the way of the doctor.

"It seems to me," said Dr. Bird, "that he's got something on his mind."

"I should say there was a great deal upon it," said Mr. Bonnington. "He has ever been the worthless character of Sterncraig; often away, nobody knew where, and seldom doing a bit of honest work."

"If Jim dies," thought Jack, "I can speak out to Mr. Belton. Then, perhaps, he will think better of me than he does now; not that I want to curry favour with him."

Among the boys there was the inevitable excitement which startling events are sure to give rise to, and in kindness to Bob they went right away from the village to play.

Absolute quiet was necessary for Jim's sake, and everybody did their best to let him have it. For two days he lay in a state of alternate semi-consciousness and complete oblivion, and then Dr. Bird said the crisis was at hand. In the intervals, when he recognised his mother and father, he offered no statement, nor referred to his lying helpless in bed. He seemed to accept it as a matter of course, and they, on their part, acting under the instructions of the doctor, asked him no questions.

It was in the evening of the second day that the doctor said he would be able to give a more definite opinion of the case.

He was there, and Jack, who was in no humour for the ordinary amusements of a schoolboy's leisure, was there, too.

Jim lay in a small chamber adjoining the ordinary living-room. It was his usual sleeping-place, and there was not much space for people to gather round his bed. The doctor, Bob, and Mrs. Baxter were there, and Jack sat in a chair in the other room, in a position to see all that transpired through the open door.

Jim was peacefully sleeping, and in the awakening, momentarily expected, lay the hope of those who, with all his faults as a son, loved him dearly. His broken limb had been set, of course, and carefully fixed in the orthodox manner.

It was a silent time, the only sounds heard being the voices of the boys faintly floating down from the far-off points on the cliff, and the gentle murmuring of a scarcely-ruffled sea.

Suddenly the doctor raised his hand, and Jack saw that Jim's eyes were open. The boy gazed with wonderment round the room, with as much intelligence as he had ever exhibited in his life. His mind had recovered its balance, and so far he was himself again.

"How did I come here?" he asked. "What be the matter with me?"

"You have not been quite well," replied the doctor. "You have had a fall."

"A fall!" interposed the boy. "Who says so?" Then, before anyone could say anything by way of answer, he went on: "Of course, it was Peter Pinnick, the liar! But I'll out with everything now. He's not going to knock me about any more. Have the boys come back from the Bowl?"

That question was to Jack an immense source of relief. It showed that his mind was a blank with respect to all that had happened between the memorable visit to the island and that hour. Mrs. Baxter bent down and kissed her boy.

"You mustn't talk now," she said. "The doctor thinks you are not strong enough."

"All I want to know is that young Jack Jaunty has come back safe," said Jim.

"He's here, Jim," replied his father, pointing to the door.

Jim turned to the door, and a glad smile—the pleasantest that Jack had ever noticed there—lighted up his face.

"Then he didn't get at you any more?" said Jim. "I'm glad of that. But he got at me, and he's to be punished for it. I'll tell everything—everything!"

"So you shall," replied the doctor; "but not now. Pinnick's all right one way; he can't leave the place. Now, let me give you something to soothe you. A little more sleep is just the thing you want, and to-morrow you shall talk as much as you please."

Bob, brushing a tear from his eye with his hand, patted Jim on the head, and then came out of the room. He and Jack went outside and stood there together, looking seaward.

"He don't seem to remember nothing lately," Bob said, after a pause.

"Of course he doesn't!" replied Jack.

"And what he's done in that time he isn't accountable for?"

"Not in any way, I am sure," said Jack.

"Oh, Master Jack," said Bob, with emotion, "you've been a good friend to us! You've known, I'm sure."

"No—not until three days ago," replied Jack; "but mind this, Bob, whatever happens, he's not accountable."

"I hope not!" groaned Bob. "And I pray that Pinnick won't die! If he doesn't, I shall only think he's got his deserts."

"And there's another thing, too, you must bear in mind and be happy over," said Jack—"Jim's better."

"In course he is. He's come round."

"But I mean better in his mind. He's changed. Should he be spared to you, he won't be a trouble to you any more."

"I got a thought of that," said Bob, clasping Jack's arm with both hands, "but I durşn't so much as whisper it. I'll be a blessed and a happy man if it is so, Master Jack. You really think it?"

"I feel quite sure of it," replied Jack. "He's another boy."

"Good-bye, Master Jack!" said Bob. "I've got to go away to some lone place and think this over. The joy of it has come over me a [illegible]."

Bob and Jack shook hands, and the latter wended his way up the cliff. [illegible] past the Mermaid, he caught sight of a familiar face at the parlour window. It was that of Terrapin, the lawyer.

"How do you do?" he said, with a nod and a smile.

Jack hardly knew how to take the salute, but he responded with a bow, and was going on, when the lawyer called upon him to stop.

"You are going back to the school," he said. "I'll go with you. I've just arrived. Mr. Bonnington expects me. I've the son of an old client here—a ward in Chancery—Master Ricketts."

Instead of going round by the door, he stepped through the window, just as if he feared to lose sight of Jack.

"How's Mark going on?" he asked, as they moved on together. "To me he has always appeared to be rather a dull boy."

"I don't think he is dull," replied Jack; "but I am sure he is not very happy."

"Not happy? How is that?"

"Oh, I mentioned it, hoping you could tell me why."

Jack spoke in a cool, offhand way, and gave no indication of having observed the sharp glance the lawyer cast at him.

"I suppose you are close friends," said Terrapin.

"No," replied Jack; "not at all. I do not think we have taken to each other. We are not chums."

"Perhaps you are foes," suggested the lawyer.

"Why should we be so?" asked Jack. "But, excuse me, I don't like being in the witness-box. Mark, I've no doubt, will give you all the information about the school you may require."

Raising his cap, Jack trotted on, and disappeared into the house by the side door. The lawyer cast a quick, angry glance at him.

"You are a keen lad, but you don't know quite so much as you think. I wonder whether Mark has been talking to you? If he has, I must stop it."

. . . .

Mr. Terrapin stayed two days at Sterncraig, and during that time spent much of his time with Mark Ricketts. He showed a great interest in Peter Pinnick, who had taken a turn for the better, and was able to make a communication to the authorities. It was not of a very important nature.

Who attacked him he professed not to know, but, according to his account, his assailant had attacked him behind, and, as he put it, "knocked him silly."

"I couldn't swear to him," he said, "except that I believe it to have been a man."

Mr. Terrapin was not permitted to visit Pinnick, not being able or willing to explain why he wished to see him.

"The man must be kept quiet another week, at least," the doctor said.

And Mr. Terrapin, having, for reasons of his own, a very particular desire to talk to Pinnick, took up his quarters at the Mermaid. It was on the fourth evening of his stay when Jack, being alone and in a very unhappy frame of mind about Ivonne, strolled into the chine to think over the whole matter.

Now that Jim Baxter had come round, and by his complete lapse of memory shown that he was not accountable for the attack on Peter Pinnick, would it not be as well to confide fully in Mr. Belton, at any risk?

That was what Jack wished to weigh in his mind, and having chosen a retired corner of the chine, he lay down to think it out.

He had been there about ten minutes, when he heard footsteps on his right, and the voice of Mark Ricketts speaking to somebody who was with him. It soon proved to be Mr. Terrapin.

"I can't do it. It wears me to death to be always playing this part," the boy said.

"You won't have to play it much longer," replied the lawyer, whose voice Jack recognised.

"I am glad of that, father!" said Mark.

THE 24th CHAPTER.

What is the Secret?—Mr. Ferrula in Trouble.

"MARK," said Mr. Terrapin angrily, "you will never make a lawyer. You have no discretion. Somebody might have been near us and heard you."

They moved away, and Jack lay still for awhile, pondering on what he had heard. What did it mean?

Terrapin the father of Mark, and the fact concealed! Such a thing would not be done without some object: but what could it be? Jack could make neither head nor tail of it, and there was nobody whom he could ask to assist him towards a solution, unless it was the Stranger, who had not been over from the Bowl for some days.

"I can't do anything myself," thought Jack, as he rose to his feet and walked slowly away. "If I speak of what I have heard I may do a lot of harm and no good."

And then his thoughts went back to Ivonne. Since his last interview with Mr. Belton he had not seen her, nor any of the family. He tried to think that he did not care a straw about it, but he found the estrangement had an embittering effect on his whole life.

These temporary spells are very common to boys who are sensitive, and at the time they are fully convinced that life is a blank, or thereabouts. Jack felt as utterly miserable as a healthy lad could possibly be, and being at a loss to know what to do with himself, strolled off inland. He took the road to Danby Bridge and walked at a great rate. Presently he saw lounging ahead one of his schoolfellows.

As he drew nearer to him he made out that it was Mark Rickett, who was sauntering along with his hand in his pockets, and possibly as moody and dejected as Jack himself. To overtake him was the work of a very few minutes. Placing a hand upon the boy's shoulder, Jack said:

"I want to speak to you, Mark."

The boy shrank away from him with a wild look in his eyes. Through his parted lips there came a panting sound, as if he had been running.

"Come, don't be afraid!" said Jack. "I am not going to hurt you!"

"Let me alone for mercy's sake!" gasped Mark. "I am miserable enough, without your interfering with me!"

"But I wish to be your friend," urged Jack.

"I don't want a friend," returned Mark, and then he burst into tears.

Jack put his hand through the boy's arm, and led him on a little way without speaking. Presently he became quieter.

"Now, Mark," said Jack, "you are supposed to be an orphan and a ward in Chancery, but I've an idea that you are neither one nor the other."

"How dare you talk to me in that way?" feebly demanded Mark.

"Because I know who and what you are," said Jack; "and I tell you that the game you are playing is a dangerous one."

"I am not playing a game."

"But your father is, Mark. Ah, you see I know something! Now let me give you a bit of advice—give up the game!"

"I can't give it up if I don't know what it is."

Jack looked keenly at Mark. Apparently he had spoken nothing but the truth. For once in a way there was a frank expression in his face.

"What I may suspect or fear," he went on, "is one thing, but what I know is another. I, indeed, know nothing!"

"But you are a party to an imposition," said Jack.

"So is Mr. Bonnington," said Mark [illegible]. "He knows who I am now. [illegible] my father to send me here as [illegible] is very eccentric—and [illegible] of anybody else's."

"All right," said Jack [illegible] you do not intend [illegible] you may be sorry for it."

He turned [illegible] back in the [illegible] Mark [illegible] him [illegible]

[illegible]

WITH PICK AND LAMP.

A Magnificent Tale of Colliery Life.

By DAVID GOODWIN.



Terry and his mates ceased their onslaught for a moment in order to get a better purchase for their picks, when suddenly the doors flew wide open, and Kenyon Price appeared in the entrance—alone.

THE FIRST CHAPTERS IN BRIEF.

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

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

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

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

Kenyon Price bars up the road to Bryn y Garth with a line of sheep-hurdles. This barrier the 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.

He takes to flight, and the following day all the men concerned in the disturbance discover, on arriving at the pits, that they are sacked. However, through the intervention of Inis Powell, the secretary of the Pitmen's Union, they are taken back. That evening, as Roddy and Tom ascend in the cage to the pit-mouth, the engine overwinds, and the cage flies to the top and crashes against the staging. One side is shattered, and Roddy is shot out. He clutches an iron bar as he falls, and finds himself swinging over the yawning mouth of the black pit which stretches six hundred feet below him.

(Now read this week's instalment.)

The Revolution at the Aberford Pit.

THE shaft-staging was still shaking with the shock of the collision, and a cry of horror rose from all those working in the yard as they heard the smash and looked round.

The "King" safety clutches at the sides should have stopped the cage directly it started to overrun. But they did not. They failed utterly. There was not a man who saw the accident that did not expect the cage to go crashing down again into the shaft, and for an instant they waited with their hearts in their throats.

What freak of the machinery it was that jammed the cage sideways in the staging there was no means of telling. But there it stuck, right at the top. Its light iron bars had been burst right out on one side, as has been said; through the gap, the jerk that followed sent the young hewer Fluellen flying bodily out. He went straight through the open shaft-staging, and fell heavily on the truck-rails of the yard.

Roddy, who had been flung over one of the bars, and found himself swinging by the hands outside the cage, felt the structure groaning and creaking as its bent ironwork bit deeper against the staging-girders.

"Cling on, lad! Don't slacken your hold, for Heaven's sake!" cried a dozen voices, as the men in the yard rushed to the shaft; for Roddy seemed dazed by the shock, as well he might. But he pulled himself together, passed hand over hand along the bar, and with an effort swung into the staging itself.

A gasp of relief escaped him, and he clung there to get his breath.

There was a rush below to try and pass some iron rails across the shaft's mouth; to try and stop the cage in case it gave way and fell. Three pitmen came clambering up the staging, amid a cheer from the crowd that was fast gathering.

Roddy's first thought, when he had got his wits about him, was for those remaining in the cage. They had been flung violently in a heap in one corner, and were only just beginning to extricate themselves.

"Come out as quick as you can!" cried Roddy, clambering up level with the opening. "Climb into the staging! Tom, are you hurt?"

"Not badly, I think," said Tom thickly. "One or two teeth knocked out."

"Hurry out of it! Get hold of my hand!" said Roddy, reaching out. "She may drop at any moment!"

He need not have feared for the cage just then as it happened. It had jammed so heavily that there was no chance of its falling, and the inmates, shaken and bruised—Terry Lloyd with a bad cut over one temple, and the blood running over his face—climbed shakily into the staging, helping each other as they went.

Willing hands were ready on all sides to aid them. It was a long climb to the ground, and a couple of active young putters had made their way up with a coil of rope, which was then fastened to a girder, and reached to the ground, for the victims of the accident to slide down by. But for the moment they did not look as if they would be able, so white and shaken were they.

"Thank Heaven we're out o' that!" panted Tom huskily. "I don't understand how any of us are alive."

"There's a many things to be cleared up before this is over," muttered Terry Lloyd, mopping the blood from his face. "Are any of ye fit to go down that rope?"

The crowd in the yard during the first few moments had been too full of anxiety and horror to think of anything else. But now that the immediate danger was over, a hoarse roar of anger began to rise. There were loud cries to know who was responsible.

Roddy went first down the rope, and was greeted with cheers. The others were soon able to follow; and Terry Lloyd, with Luke Jones behind him, both looking black as thunder, reached the ground.

"Mates," shouted Terry fiercely, as soon as they were down, "isn't it as we said? The divil an accident there is about this! 'Tis just attempted murder!"

The crowd pressed round excitedly, the passions of the pitmen rising hotly at what they had seen.

"Hear Terry Lloyd!" they cried. "Speak up, Terry! Who answers for this?"

"Wasn't the cage held back for us?" cried Terry, in a voice like a bull's—and a grim figure he made with the blood upon his coal-grimed face. "Weren't we all the lot that Sully put his spite on; ay, an' Kenyon Price, too? Ain't these boys the same pair that ha' barely escaped with their skins whole time an' again; an' weren't they with us? 'Twas a put-up job to get rid av us, an' nothin' else!"

"He's right!" shouted the crowd, surging to and fro fiercely, as still greater numbers pressed behind. "It's the truth!"

"Men, men!" cried the agitated voices of the yard officials in the rear. "No rioting! Keep your heads, and let us through!"

"Stand back, ye swabs!" cried the pitmen nearest them. "We want none o' you!"

"Make way—don't press on Fluellen there!" exclaimed Roddy, struggling towards the prostrate hewer, who had fallen when the cage struck. "Lift him carefully! Is he badly hurt?"

The young pitman's arm was broken, and he was in great pain. Those next him tended him gently.

"Hear now, mates!" shouted Luke Jones, his fist clenched and his black eyes flashing. "I say that cage wass meant to overrun! It could nefer haf done it if ter double cage had been on and ter clutches in right order! We know what Sully iss, and we haf watched him! But for a miracle we should now be dead men, six hundred feet down ter shaft! Shall they kill us as they please?"

"The engineer must ha' known!" yelled a voice. "It's his work!"

"Down with him! Down wi' Sully an' Kenyon Price! Smash up the engine-sheds!" clamoured fifty voices savagely.

"Lift young Fluellen out o' harm's way, poor chap! Let him be tended to! Then come on an' teach ter plackguards to try their tricks on Welshmen!" cried Luke Jones, in tones of thunder.

The hot-headed pitmen were wound up to the highest pitch of wrath. The terrible accident they had so nearly witnessed; their injured mate Fluellen; the fiery accusations of Luke and Terry inflamed them beyond control. They made a break for the shed of the winding-engine.

"Get 'owd o' that engineer! He must ha' done the work! Make him tell who bribed him!"

"Ay; an' heave him down the shaft!"

The crowd burst into the engine-shed, shouting for the engineer to show himself. He was not there. Whether from a guilty conscience, or frightened by the dangerous mood of the crowd, he had made himself scarce sometime before, and got clear away. There was nobody in the shed but a scared fireman.

"Where's John Groyan, ter head engineer, you rat?" cried a huge pitman, seizing the man and pinioning him against the wall.

"I dunno! I never see 'im go!" gasped the fireman, shrinking, as others crowded round.

"Nay; leave him be, 'twas not his doin'!" exclaimed Terry, as they realised that Groyan had flown. "Our bird's gone, an' we'll catch him later. 'Twas Sully who worked this job—never mind his underlings, but make the spalpeen himself answer for it!"

"Sully! Where's Sully?" roared the crowd, surging towards the offices. "Have him out of it! Get hold o' Sully! Shut the gates, mates, an' see nobody leaves!"

"My word! The storm's burst now!" said Roddy, almost aghast at the rage of the miners as they made for the main office. "The fat's fairly in the fire!"

He did not wonder at the outbreak, none the less. His blood was hot enough, and he had felt an almost irresistible impulse at the first moment to throw himself into the riot with the others and seek for vengeance. The rush towards the engine-sheds had swept the boys aside, however. It gave Roddy time to think, and his good sense came to the rescue.

"What shall we do?" said Tom, still bewildered, and not yet fully recovered from his shaking in the cage.

"We'd better keep out of it. There'll be bloodshed if this goes on, an' nothing gained, either. Nothing'll stop 'em now! Terry, Terry!" he shouted, as the big Irishman dashed by with fifty enraged pitmen behind him. "Hold up, for goodness' sake, an' let's see what's to be done!"

"There's been talk enough!" cried Terry thickly. "No man thries such a thrick on me but he suffers for it! Come on!"

The wrecked cage, still sticking aloft, a grim witness of the tragedy that had so narrowly been averted, seemed to be looking down upon the scene as the miners swept up to and round Sully's office like a resistless tide.

"Out wi' him! Bring him out, an' we'll hang him from the stagin'! Lynch him!" roared the mob.

The door was shut and locked. A few blows from a hewing-pick soon burst it open, and the men, plucking the door bodily off its hinges, rushed into the building.

Once more they were disappointed. Not a soul was in the place. When the managing-staff and clerks had seen the roaring multitude of pitmen rush for the engine-shed, they made all haste to clear out themselves. Sully had gone long ago—as soon as he saw that his work had failed.

A big riot in a Welsh colliery is not a common thing; but when it does happen, it happens in earnest, and the staff knew it. Sully being out of it, and the manager absent, nobody felt inclined to play the hero and defend the offices. The cashier locked his safes, and hurried out of the yard in double-quick time; and the time-keepers, clerks, overmen, and all the rest followed suit with remarkable swiftness. They did not know against whom the pitmen's wrath might be turned next, and they meant to take no chances. The colliers had the entire place to themselves.

"He wass not here!" cried Luke Jones, his fierce face appearing at the office window as he shouted to those outside. "There iss no sign of him!"

"The spalpeen's skedaddled!" shouted Pat Lloyd.

"Ay; he knew 'twas his work, an' he's 'feared for his skin! He's hidin' somewhere! Root him out, mates!"

The angry mob ransacked every corner of the yard, and every building. The screens, the patent fuel sheds, the lamphouses, and smithies, all were searched through and through, considerable damage being done. But, of course, there was no trace of Sully. Their failure only exasperated the pitmen more.

"They've cleared out, lads! They're all laughin' at us!" shouted scores of voices. "Break the offices up! Smash the whole outfit!"

The crowd was bound to vent its fury on something, and the cry was acted upon at once. A terrific scene of destruction followed. The pitmen surged over Sully's office, and set to work to wreck it.

"Hurroo!" yelled Terry Lloyd, swinging his pick. "Here's a piece o' right work at last! This suits me! Down wi' the lot av it!"

Crashings and rendings were heard on every side. The lust for destruction had free rein; and with their picks the hewers dashed out the window-frames, tore down whole walls of match-boarding, splintered furniture into fragments, and made havoc of everything. In every direction, at other buildings, the same thing was going on. Only the pay-offices, which were of solid stone, and had iron doors that had been locked, and defied the picks, escaped.

"My aunt," said Tom, breaking into a chuckle despite the seriousness of the situation; "but the Coed Coch is fairly meltin' away!"

"I'm almost glad they didn't catch Sully though," said Roddy, with some relief. "It might ha' taken too ugly a turn altogether, considerin' the mood they're in now."

"Wise man, to get out in time. He saw he'd gone too far. But he'd ha' deserved all he got."

"I don't want to see a man lynched, an' that's about what'd happen," returned Roddy. "What a day we're havin'!"

"D'you think it's sure that Sully arranged that overrunnin'?" said Tom.

"I should say it's about as certain as anything can be," replied Roddy drily.

By this time—and it did not take more than five or six minutes—Sully's office looked like a house that has been shelled by artillery, and several of the other buildings were in nearly as bad case. But the crowd soon tired of wreaking their anger on wood and glass.

"Enow o' this!" cried several voices. "It's the man we want! The man that tried to murder our mates!"

"He may be half across ter county by now!" growled Luke Jones. "We'll get him sooner or later!"

"Let's go for the pay-offices!" shouted somebody else. But no attention was given to this idea. The men were not thieves—it was justice they wanted, not loot.

"You be all after Sully!" cried a deep voice in the middle of the crowd. "But who's Sully, arter all? Does he own the Coed Coch? D'ye reckon he thought o' that over-windin' plant for himself? Who's the boss here, at the back o' everything? Ain't it Kenyon Price?"

There was a moment's pause, for the suggestion found ready listeners.

"Ay, he owns t' place!" cried Luke. "How do we know but what it's his doin'? He shall answer to it!"

"Ay, Kenyon Price! Who's comin' to Plas Rhyll?" shouted Terry, jumping on a truck and looking round over the crowd.

"Come on!" roared the pitmen. "We'll wreck his house, an' burn it over his head unless he owns to it!"

"Come, you two lads!" cried Terry, pulling the boys into the thick of the crowd as it started. "You've a crow to pick wi' Kenyon Price, same as us! An' sorra a feather will we leave him!"

With fierce shouts the great mob of pitmen surged towards the gates, sweeping the boys along with them, and set out on the road for Plas Rhyll at a rapid pace.

How Tom and Roddy Left the Coed Coch.

"WHAT'S goin' to be the end o' this?" said Tom in considerable excitement, as the throng of men, covering a quarter of a mile of the road, pushed forward in the direction of Kenyon Price's house and estate. "It seems to me we've dropped the spark into the gunpowder this time, an' there'll be a rare blow-up!"

"There's no sayin' what the men'll do," said Roddy. "Whatever they choose, that's a sure thing!"

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"Somebody said the police had been called out."

"Police? Pooh! What on earth can they do? There wouldn't be one of 'em to every fifty pitmen. I never thought we were goin' for Kenyon Price's house, though; an' I can't say I like it much."

"My eye! I wouldn't miss it for anything!" said Tom enthusiastically. "If Terry Lloyd ain't happy to-day, he never will be. There's ructions enough for a lifetime!"

Roddy did not answer. There was plenty of excitement about the affair, certainly, and he was not the last to appreciate that. But his common-sense made him very doubtful if the riot would do any real good. In fact, there was every chance of some very ugly trouble.

"We'll see the thing out," he said; "and anyhow, we two might as well tell the tide to go back before its time as try to stop the pitmen. It's out of our hands, an' their blood's up!"

"D'you wonder at it?" said Tom. "Gosh! That smashin' up of the cage was the beastliest business I ever saw or felt. I say that nothin's too bad for the man who arranged it. The Coed Coch isn't fit for a decent pitman to work in!"

"We've done wi' the Coed Coch!" said Roddy grimly.

"D'you mean that?"

"Mean it; yes! They've tried their last trick on us! I'll never swing a pick in the dirty hole again. We've got what we need, and on Saturday we were goin' to leave. But we'll call it finished now. No more Coed Coch!"

"You're right, Roddy! Hurrah! It's the best news yet!"

"It ain't that we're afraid—they can't say that of us. We've faced the music often enough there. But a piece of attempted wholesale murder like that is too much for my stomach! Yes," he added, his anger rising again; "an' I'll be glad to see Kenyon Price brought to answer for it! But he won't be though."

"Why not?"

"He'll skedaddle, like the rest of 'em! Like Sully did!" replied Roddy scornfully. "They'll never find him in his shell."

"What'll they do then?"

"Wreck his house. An' I've no taste for that. I don't see the fun of it, nor what good it's going to do."

The front ranks of the marching pitmen broke out into a wild, stirring Welsh song in native Cymric, that made the feet move quicker and stirred the blood. It spread right through the great company, till nearly every man was singing it in excellent time, and it rolled out into the night in threatening tones.

"The boss'll get plenty of notice of our comin'!" said Tom. "It's enough to wake the dead!"

"He's most likely scuttled away in his motor-car long ago," said Roddy. "Trust him!"

The boys themselves joined in the song, and soon were trolling it out as lustily as any one.

"There's the place!" said Tom suddenly, breaking off.

The big, white walls of Plas Rhyll came into sight, where the mansion stood among its trees across the park, and as the pitmen saw it their song suddenly stopped, and they tramped on in silence.

The march had not cooled down their wrath, but rather inflamed it. The sight of the sumptuous mansion, sheltering so peacefully in its own grounds, after the grimy toil, and the peril of death they had lately witnessed, was not at all soothing to the colliers, and fierce threats were muttered afresh.

A frightened and astonished lodge-keeper appeared behind the park gates, and refused to open them. Not a moment's delay was caused, for Luke Jones shattered the lock with his pick, and gate, lodge-keeper, and all were swept back as the men tramped through. On they went through the park, and soon they were gathering, hundreds strong, round the big mansion itself.

There were lights in several of the windows, and some scared menservants were seen peering out at the mob. Two or three grooms had bolted for the stables as soon as the pitmen approached, and all the outer doors of the house were shut, and the lower windows shuttered.

"Kenyon Price!" roared the mob, "come out o' that, an' show yourself! Come an' answer to it, ye skulker! Who got the cage overwound?"

The fierce outcries redoubled, and not a sound came from the house.

"Bring him out!" shouted the crowd, surging up to the main entrance. "Let's get our fists on him!"

Somebody tugged at the great bell-pull, and a heavy clanging was heard inside. But the crowd were in no mood for waiting.

Crash! came Luke's pick against the tall doors, and a great splinter of oak was torn away. The lock was demolished at the next blow, but though several men flung themselves at the doors, they were not budged.

"You're wastin' time!" cried Roddy. "He ain't likely to be here! You didn't think he'd wait our comin', did you?"

"Nay, he'll ha' hooked it!" shouted Howarth.

"Let's wreck his house, then!" roared the mob. "Down wi' that door, mates!"

While the blows were echoing on the doors, three or four pitmen made their way forward with lighted torches of half-picked oakum, flaming and smoking, while others brought big sheafs of straw on their shoulders from the stables.

"That's it! Smoke the badger out!" yelled the crowd. "Pile it agen the woodwork! Set the house a-blazin'!"

"Confound it all!" said Roddy in agitation.



BREAKING UP.

All interest in their work has gone,
The boys are restless; ill at ease;
And, to their great surprise, for once
The master is not hard to please.

Little they care for Euclid now,
Or whether two triangles small
Are equal, and it can be proved
That one will on the other fall.

Impatient, at the clock they gaze,
And wait the clanging of the bell.
Then all pretence of work they'll cease,
And from the door they'll rush pell-mell.

The last day of the term has come—
That's why their hearts are full of glee.
They're "Breaking Up"!—"Farewell to school!"
For six glad weeks they'll happy be!

[illegible]

"This ain't cricket! Let's try to get 'em off the burnin' business, or there'll be awful trouble! Terry, Luke!"

They struggled forward in an attempt to reach the ringleaders, but it is very unlikely the enraged mob would have listened to the boys. Before the straw could be lit against the woodwork, however, a surprise occurred.

Terry and his mates had ceased their onslaught for a moment in order to get a better purchase with their picks, when suddenly the doors flew wide open and Kenyon Price appeared in the entrance—alone.

There was a pause of astonishment among the assembled pitmen, and for a moment not a sound was heard. The colliery magnate, who was in evening dress, faced the crowd with a perfectly cool demeanour.

Next moment a shout of execration went up on every side, and Luke Jones cried fiercely:

"So you haf come at last! Now we will haf the truth! It wass by your orders that ter cage over-wound? Speak up!"

"Murderer!" yelled a hoarse voice back in the crowd.

"Get hold o' him afore he dodges back! Hang him from one o' his own trees!"

An ugly rush was just about to be made towards Kenyon Price, but instead of drawing back, he held up one white hand warningly, as if about to speak.

"I was wrong," murmured Roddy. "I oughtn't to ha' said he'd bolt. He's got pluck, too."

"Men, men!" cried Kenyon Price, in a voice that carried right over the crowd. "What are you about? Why are you before my doors?"

"You wass know well enough!" exclaimed Luke Jones fiercely, pressing forward.

"I know nothing! What is it that's roused you? Don't rave and rant, but speak up, if you are men!"

The pitmen, though ripe for any violence, paused for a few seconds at the colliery-owner's coolness. Scoundrel though he might be, Kenyon Price at that moment faced the music without flinching.

"You shall have it straight, an' we'll see you answer for it!" said Luke. "You wass know more than any man apout ter over-winding accident at ter shaft to-day!"

"Over-winding accident! At my pits?" exclaimed Price, in apparent amazement.

"Yes, when six of us that you sacked last week, and took on again because of ter strike, nearly met their death in your cage to-day!" cried Luke hotly.

"Good heavens, man, what do you mean? I've heard nothing of this. I've only just returned from Cardiff."

"It's a lie! You know it well enough, an' you fixed it up, to be rid of 'em!" roared the crowd. "Get a hold of him, there in front!"

"Hear me peaceably, before you resort to violence!" said Price sharply, holding up his hand.

"Ay, hear him!" said Luke grimly. "That's what we're here for! But make it short!"

"Tell me first what has happened," cried the colliery-owner, "for, on my honour, I know nothing of it."

"He does it well," muttered Roddy sourly. "He does it uncommon well. He's good at this."

There was silence among the crowd while Luke as briefly as possible gave the history of the accident.

The mine-owner listened attentively.

"It's the first I've heard of this sad affair," he replied, in a voice that the farthest man heard, "and I am grieved and surprised that it could happen in my pits. But, good heavens, men, you are not mad enough to suppose I wanted it! Are you out of your senses? You haven't come here to tell me I deliberately wrecked my own property and disgraced my colliery for a mere whim?"

Silence followed his words. They carried weight with them, and the men were impressed. They had not expected him to face them in this fearless way.

"You'd a spite against us six, sir, who were in the cage," said Luke. The "sir" slipped out of his mouth in spite of himself.

Kenyon Price laughed aloud, quite frankly and cheerfully.

"Come, Jones, you're not such a fool as to believe that," he said. "I have everything I want in the world. Do you think I should choose to bring myself under the gallows by killing six of my pitmen, even if I'd a grudge against them—which I haven't? Don't be absurd!"

There came a momentary change over Kenyon Price's face just then as he caught sight of the boys, and it was an evil glance, despite himself, that flashed from his eye. But the next instant he was smiling at Luke again, as if the fiery pitman were a child who had been caught doing something silly. And Luke, to tell the truth, looked very like one for the moment.

"He's the king of hypocrites!" muttered Roddy darkly, his eyes fixed on Price's face. "If they knew all we know—Tom, I can't stand this!"

"Better keep quiet," counselled Tom. "Enemy though he is, we don't want to be mixed up in a lynching."

Kenyon Price had convinced the miners. Hot-headed as they might be, they were easily swayed. He was a strong man, a man of great character, and there was no doubt he had got round them for the time.

"Let ter boss be! It wass not his work!" cried a host of voices.

"Ay; but it was foul play none the less, an' we've got to be sure!" cried Terry Lloyd loudly. "If he didn't do it, 'twas Sully did it on his own!"

"That is nonsense!" began the colliery-owner.

"Ay; you wass trying to shield him!" the roar broke out again angrily.

"Not for a moment!" said Price hastily. "If this accident has occurred, those whose fault it is shall be punished severely! I do not for an instant believe there was foul play—the idea is foolish—but, if it is due to neglect, every one connected with it shall be dismissed, and never set foot in my collieries again."

"Sully!" roared the pitmen.

"Mr. Sully is responsible before anyone else! If the disaster happened as you say, he shall go, and that instantly! Now, men, I make you an offer. Return to the pits, and I will go there at once in my car. I will see for myself where the blame lies, and every man responsible for it, though he were my own brother, shall pay the penalty! Your lives are in my charge while you draw my pay, and I will keep my trust!"

"Ay; come to the pits!" cried the crowd.

"Great Cæsar! Is he going to throw Sully over?" muttered Tom in astonishment.

"He knows what a tight place he's in, an' how near he is to bein' the victim o' the crowd," said Roddy. "He sees it's his only way out."

"You will find ter yard wrecked, I warn you, sir," called out Luke, as the men turned abruptly to go. "We wass broken eferything up, looking for Sully."

"That was stupid and riotous behaviour," responded the mine-owner reprovingly, "and ought to be punished. Yet I understand your indignation and anger at that shocking accident, and I shall not be hard on you on that account. Perhaps we may pass it over——"

"Perhaps you'd better, for your own sake," growled the same deep voice in the crowd that had used the word "murderer."

Kenyon Price took no notice, but turned away, and, calling a trembling manservant, ordered his motor-car.

He had hardly done so, when the crowd, who were starting on the return journey, were startled by a wild shout from Terry Lloyd.

"Hould on, mates! By the Lord Harry, we're fooled! Sully's here, in the house! I saw his face at that top window!"

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A FORLORN HOPE

A FINE COMPLETE TRUE-TO-LIFE BOXING STORY,

BY

ANDREW GRAY.

THE 1st CHAPTER
In Dire Straits

A STUFFY, sultry summer afternoon. Not a breath of air seemed to have strayed into Linnet Court since day-break, and that was a long time ago. Spike tried not to think how long, because he had had only two crusts for breakfast, and his belt buckle was in the last hole of all.

A cracked plate, and a jug minus its handle, stood on the table; a chair without a back against the crumbling wall, and in the corner on the floor lay a mattress.

A coil of yellow hair on the sack pillow, and an occasional restless stirring of a small heap beneath the tattered coverlet, showed that the bed was occupied.

Polly was ill—very ill, and Polly was Spike's little sister.

Spike watched the thin, flushed face, and his lip quivered.

His mother was dead. Spike had only just buried her, and now little Polly was hovering on the border line which divides life and death. If Polly went, too, Spike's heart would break altogether. He rubbed his nose again at the thought of this, and got up.

"When she wakes you must give her beef-tea and jelly and grapes, if you can manage it," the doctor had said, just before leaving. "And if you can't, the little lass had better go to the workhouse infirmary at once. She'll die as she is."

At the word "workhouse" the dots on Spike's grey eyes had narrowed to a pin-point. Little Polly to go to the workhouse! He could have punched the doctor's head for the very suggestion.

And Spike could punch, too. Ask any of Smiley's gang, and they will tell you.

Spike was never a member of Smiley's gang. He owed it, perhaps, to his poor, threadbare little mother that he had never sunk to that. Still, if he was never their friend exactly, he was not their foe, and he came to be classed in the public mind with the hooligans of that select district, embracing Linnet Court, Anchor Court, Victory Lane, and Pitt's Alley.

Dr. McMurdo, the broad-shouldered young medico of those parts, was one of the few who knew that Spike drew a hard and fast line between right and wrong.

"Beef tea an' jelly an' grapes!" groaned Spike, and paused. He was going to add "or else the work'us'," but he thought too much of his little ten-year-old sister to couple her name with that hated institution.

"Lummee! What a good-for-nothin' 'ound I am!" he muttered to himself between his clenched teeth. "Suthing's got to be done, though. I want money—I must 'ave money—for Polly's sake. She'll die as she is. Those was his words; and then——"

Spike's sleeve came into use, but left his eyes still watery.

"Wot am I to do?" he demanded fiercely. "Work—and get paid on Sat'dy? A fat lot of good that! Wot about Polly meantime? Parcels! 'Oo'd trust me wiv a parcel round 'ere?"

Spike moved up and down the bare floor noiselessly as a tiger. At last he came to a dead halt beside the bed, and stooped down. Little Polly was lying in a feverish sleep.

He turned, and reaching down the jug, put it beside the mattress. Then he picked up his boots and cap and moved to the door.

He looked in at Mrs. Higgins's room on the second floor, and came out, muttering something about "being back sometime." Then, having donned his boots at the foot of the stairs, he pushed his way through the mob of dirty children outside till he got clear of Linnet Court and found himself in Victory Lane.

A hoarding at the end was slathered from sky to pavement with theatrical advertisements, and, among these, one in red and yellow caught his eye. It was headed:

PLEASURELAND.
THE PALACE OF SPORT.
GRAND BOXING CARNIVAL.

And underneath the programme, showing competitions for featherweights, bantams, lights, middles, and heavies, and the names of several pugulistic "stars" who were to figure later in the evening in multi-round contests.

It was the competition for novices, under 9 stone, however, that was filling Spike's mind at that moment. Spike was under 9 stone, and he was likewise a novice.

Not by his own wish, for Spike was one of the best youngsters with the gloves that ever the great Bat Cockran took in hand. Under Bat's tuition he might have boxed his way high in the noble art, but when Spike's mother heard of his intended debut at Pleasureland six months before, she "took on so" about it, and the disgrace of it, that he had yielded to her at last, and Bat, after many curses and hard words, looked out for fresh material to win him fame.

"I wonder what muvver would 'ave said now, if she knew 'bout Polly," he asked himself again. "'Arf-a-crown 'ud buy them grapes an' beef-tea an' all, and save the little 'un's life. An' I can 'ave it, safe and fast in my fist, if I only stand up in the ring for two rounds an' a 'alf, and then get licked.

"That'll be the 'ard part of it—getting licked," he added bitterly. "Me that cud 'ammer the lot of 'em—and they know it—to get outed in the third round. It's crool 'ard, but it's got to be a lickin' or it's no use. If I win, they'll shove me in the next round to fight for 'arf-a-suv. in a week's time, an' what's the use of that to Polly?"

"'Ere, out of this! You've loafed here long enough," said a rough voice, and he found himself shoved off the pavement into the gutter.

He turned to see a bull-necked policeman scowling down at him, and he scrambled away without a word.

The shove had awakened him to the fact that he was not as strong on his pins as he would need to be if he were entering the contest to win. Perhaps it was just as well, though, under the circumstances. It would help to make his defeat look more natural.

During the last fortnight Spike, to put it frankly, had had a thin time of it where food was concerned. Yesterday he had managed to borrow the top half of a stale loaf for supper, but that day he had scarcely touched a bite.

However, there was no use in bemoaning that fact. The important thing now was to get his name entered for the contest.

From Victory Lane to Whitechapel Road is but a stone's throw, and in a few minutes Spike was standing outside Pleasureland, the Palace of Sport.

As a palace, perhaps, it was disappointing to look at, but if it had been a lethal chamber baited with half-a-crown at the end of it, Spike would have made a scramble for the coin.

A mob of lads, ill-washed and seedy-looking like himself, blocked the entrance to the manager's office, and they greeted Spike with good-natured chaff.

"'Allo, Spikey. Goin' to chance yer luck at last, now the old woman's gone?" hailed one low-browed youth.

Spike would have felled him for the insult to his dead mother's name, only one or two others were pushed into him and hustled him back.

"Come on, Spike. Don't mind 'Ookey; 'e don't mean nothing. Shove your name in afore the list closes, or you'll be too late," said one, with kindly good nature.

Spike was escorted into a tiny office, and found a Jew, in a tall hat and shiny black coat, seated on one side of a table and himself standing, cap in hand, on the other.

This was Mr. Amos Guildstein, the assistant-manager of Pleasureland, and he was just totting up the list of entries for the 9-stone novices. There were only thirteen so far, and, therefore, Spike was not unwelcome.

"That'th all right, then. Just thee your 'ere at theven o'clock sharp, an' ready for the thcales," said Mr. Guildstein, entering his name, and taking another pull at a fat cigar, and then added, as Spike seemed to linger: "Go on! Thove off now, m'lad. There ain't nuthing you can pinch 'ere!"

As a matter of fact, Spike was only trying to summon up courage to ask and make sure that the loser in a bout actually got half-a-crown cash down for his pains.

His blood boiled at the base insinuation of theft, and he was on the verge of letting drive at the fat, greasy face, when a broad-shouldered bruiser reached in through the door and dragged him out.

In less than five seconds he was on the pavement on his back, amid his jeering pals, and the door shut against him.

The next thing was a rig-out fit for a public appearance in the ring. He would have to borrow that, and quickly, too, for it was nearly six now.

He thought of Bat Corkran, and resolved to "chance his arm." Bat had cursed him for a coward the last time he had parted with him, and Spike, under other circumstances, would have bitten out his own tongue rather than ask a favour of him. But now! All the pride died out of him as he thought of that fever-flushed little face and the coil of yellow hair on the pillow.

Bat was in. Bat called him every name he could lay his tongue to, but he fished out a pair of faded blue knickers and a grimy pair of sand-shoes, nevertheless, and Spike went away, humble and satisfied.

He stole back then to the attic in Linnet Court, and sat down to wait in case Polly should wake. The clock struck the quarter past. He would have to leave at the half-hour. The thin little bundle under the patched coverlet stirred.

"Jack," cried a weak voice—"Jack!"

"What is it, little 'un?" answered Spike, for Jack Griffiths was his real name. He put the cracked jug of water and condensed milk to the burning lips, and his sister drank, and moaned her thanks.

"Are you all alone? Where's muvver?" asked Polly fretfully.

There was a catch in Spike's throat as he uttered the oft-repeated lie so necessary to help Polly back from the edge of the Beyond where she had strayed.

"Muvver's out," he said grimly. "She'll be back soon, though. You lie quiet an' sleep, there's a good 'un!"

"She never comes to see me now!" moaned Polly fretfully.

"Oh, yes, she does, little 'un—always!"

The eyes closed again, and the head sank back. The wasted fingers tightened on Spike's grimy paw, then relaxed little by little as the girl dropped away into slumber. The half-hour struck, and Spike released his hand inch by inch, and crept out on tiptoe.

At eight o'clock his turn had come. He mounted the stairs to the eighteen-foot ring, and, climbing through the ropes, crossed to his corner and sat down.

Overhead were the blazing arc lamps, and all around a bank of faces looming through the stuffy atmosphere.

Yells and cat-calls from his pals greeted his appearance, but they only sounded like the faint echo of distant waves to Spike's ears.

Opposite him was the lout who had uttered the cruel sneer at the door of the manager's office that afternoon. Spike could have thrashed him black and blue for that, and now, for Polly's sake, he must suffer defeat at his hands.

"'Ere, wot's your game?" demanded the broken-nosed second, who, having tied on his boxing-gloves, was now giving his arms a rub down to limber the muscles.

Spike looked at him fiercely.

"Wot's wot?" he demanded.

"You're as soft as putty, and there ain't an ounce of muscle in yer!"

"You wait an' see, old boy!" retorted Spike darkly.

The voice of the referee interrupted further conversation. He was a fat man in evening-dress, with an enormous paste diamond glittering on his greasy shirt-front.

"Third pair, under 9-stone novithes," he announced, in a voice rather thicker even than his fleshy nose. "Thpike Griffiths, of Vitechapel!" He waved his programme at Spike by way of introduction. "'Ookey Thmith, of 'Oxton. Theconds out of the ring!"

"Blinkin' waste of time, I calls it! Comin' 'ere like a bladder er lard!" grumbled the broken-nosed one, as he climbed through the ropes and grabbed Spike's chair, ready to swing it out of the ring.

"Time!"

"Go it, 'Ookey! Go it, Spike!" yelled a hundred supporters among the "gods" frantically, as the two lads faced one another.

THE 2nd CHAPTER.
The Battle

HOOKEY SMITH, if he lacked skill, was one of the dogged, determined sort who never know when they are beaten.

As a boxer he was not really in the same street as Spike Griffiths, and if the latter had only been as fit as when Bat Corkran had him in hand, there would have been no doubt as to the issue.

There was to be no doubt now, of course. If Spike was to walk out of the Palace of Sport that night with any money in his pocket, it must be the bitter fruit of defeat.

To be defeated by Hookey Smith spelt also disgrace; but Spike tried to school himself to swallow that. He thought of the "little 'un" in that bare attic, and of all that he might buy with that half-crown which would be his when Hookey had felled him to the boards and the referee had counted him out.

If Hookey could not fell him unaided, he must fall himself, and trust that nobody would detect the sham. Thus dire necessity may drive the best to dirty work!

Biff! While all this had been running in Spike's mind, Hookey had taken advantage and landed flush on his opponent's mouth.

The blow drove Spike back on to the ropes, and a brutal yell of delight went up as Hookey closed in and swung left and right. But Spike rallied, and broke ground as lightly as a cat. The smart of his bruised lips stung him to action, and even seemed to lend strength to his weary limbs.

He put in a straight left on Hookey's nose, and followed it up with another on his jaw and one on his ribs.

This time the roar of applause was for Spike, and the sound set the blood dancing in his veins.

Hookey came in with a rush, but Spike ducked. The pair clenched for a second, and then, as they broke away, he scored again with a heavy left, which made sparks shoot before Hookey's vision

Spike was enjoying it now. It was like old times to him, this brisk rally of blows, the musical thud of soft-shod feet, the twanging of the ropes as the boxers were driven on to them and recoiled again.

Hookey came weaving in, head down, and right hand hovering ready for a knock-out blow, but Spike staved him off, rattling on the points, playing with his man until the gong went and he retired to his corner.

"Look 'ere, youngster, I takes back all I said. You ought to have been up here long ago makin' yer fortin," said the broken-nosed second, as he sponged Spike's lips with vinegar, and sprayed a refreshing shower of water over his face. "You're the pick of 'em so far, if you can only stand up, but yer don't look right, yer know."

The broken-nosed one shook his head doubtfully as he flapped a dirty towel within an inch of Spike's nose. Spike certainly did not look right, but a growing lad can't cut his diet as fine as he had had to do for the past two weeks, without showing some signs of wear.

"Theconds out of the ring! Time!" shouted the referee. And Spike circled round his opponent and came on guard. While enjoying his minute's repose, it had occurred to him that he was there not to win, but to lose. In the exhilaration of the first round he had overlooked this, and had scored points fast and furiously. He must either ease up now and let Hookey draw level, or else carry on and fall to a knock-out.

The latter appealed to him most, as being less galling to his pride. Moreover, Hookey betrayed small anxiety to do anything more than wait his chance to swing that lurking right glove of his.

"Now then! Buthle up, you two, and cut it lively. What do you think you're 'ere for?" demanded the referee indignantly. "D'yer want me ter thtick pinth in yer?"

A hoarse guffaw greeted this scathing sally, and a chorus of cat-calls and jeers broke from the gods.

"Go on, Spikey. Don't be afraid. I'll see 'e don't bite yer!" screamed a diminutive youth in the sixpenny seats; and the shout which followed, sent a flush of shame into Spike's pale cheeks.

There was nothing for it but to go on. Somewhere in the third and last round he would drop groaning, and trust that no one would detect the shameful trick. After all, he was doing it for Polly's sake.

Galvanised by the sneers of the spectators into desperate energy, he darted in at his opponent, and landed left and right on head and ribs.

Hookey staggered under the onslaught, but pulled himself together. He drove Spike back with two smashing bits which bore down his guard, and with another punch hurled him on to the ropes.

Now was Spike's chance if he could only remember to take it. Hookey seemed to have him at his mercy, and any one of his blows now showering upon him would have served Spike's purpose.

But his blood was up, and before he knew what he had done, he had slipped like an eel under his opponent's left, and with a straight upward drive sent Hookey to the boards.

This unexpected turning of the tables sent the packed audience into ecstasies, which vollied afresh as Hookey rose to his feet slowly, to the measured counting of the referee.

"Into him, Spikey!" yelled his backers. "Go for 'im! Now's your chance!"

But Spike seemed reluctant. He hung back for a second, and then the golden opportunity was lost. His backers groaned. Was Spike afraid?

They did not know that Spike was fighting, not Hookey Smith of Hoxton, but an opponent far more grim and terrible; and that to win he must lose.

"Time and latht round!"

Spike went out from his corner like a lion. Something that he had overheard from a gentleman-patron of the "noble art" in the front row of the half-guinea seats, just under the ring ropes had set his blood boiling.

"Oh, yes," the swell had said to his companion. "I grant you he shapes well; but, if you ask me, I should say he lacked heart."

Lacked heart! That ever anyone should like to say that Spike Griffiths lacked "heart"! Weak as he was, starved and untrained, he could still show them that pluck was not wanting in his composition.

(Continued on the next page.)

MAGNIFICENT WATCHES FREE! See "The Boys' Herald," 1d. Every Thursday.

A FORLORN HOPE.

(Continued from the previous page.)

In the helpless fury of his heart he forgot the pallet bed, and the "little 'un" tossing there in the darkness of that wretched attic.

Left and right; straight lead and stinging jabs he landed on Hookey, until that individual grunted and gave ground foot by foot, making vicious swings which only beat the air, and paying penalty for each until he could scarcely see out of his swimming eyes.

The clamour of applause now was like a roaring surf.

Hookey was down, driven half through the ropes; then Hookey was up again, breathless and dazed, and still Spike clung to him, giving him no rest.

The arc-lights overhead seemed to Spike to be whirling in some weird witch dance; his breath came in sobs, and his limbs had grown soft as putty and as heavy as lead. But he pegged away, and at every blow he seemed to grunt: "Heart! Heart! Heart!"

Then suddenly he smote, and striking nothing, reeled. The din around him was like a boiler-shed; the floor heaved under him like a ship's deck, and there at his feet lay Hookey, on his side, his arm flung out limp upon the boards.

Somebody scrambled through the ropes into the ring behind him, just in time, and catching him in his arms, carried him like a baby to his chair.

"Bravo, young 'un!" said a voice, apparently a mile away. "Bravo; you licked 'im 'andsome!"

"What!" gasped Spike in dismay.

So he had won, after all! And the half-crown—and Polly!

His head fell back in a dead faint, and the broken-nosed one lowered him out of the ring, and hustled him into the grimy dressing-room.

In five minutes Spike was back in his senses again, dragging himself weakly into his clothes. His head ached, and he felt sick and stifled by the foul atmosphere of the room. Men thumped him on the back—famous "pro.'s" some of them—and congratulated him on his victory, but he seemed to hear nothing.

All he could remember was the "little 'un" and the half-crown he had come to win and flung away. Now the day was wasted, the beef-tea and jelly were as far from his grasp as ever, and there was but one thing left—the hated workhouse infirmary.

Miserably he left the building.

Outside he lingered, unwilling to leave the one place on earth where there was a ghost of a chance of anything turning up.

Before the broad steps leading up to the Palace of Sport, under the glare of the electric lamps, a few loungers lingered.

Spike knew most of them by sight. Some of them were hangers-on of the "fancy," who could not raise the few coppers necessary to admit them to Pleasureland, some were pick-pockets lurking for a chance, and all were of the hooligan type, ready to profit by any turn of Fortune's wheel, fair or foul.

A few of the better-class patrons of the stalls were drifting out, and hailing cabs to drive them westwards.

Spike eyed them dully, too heartsick even to struggle for a copper at a cab door.

He noticed one man—a bronzed, well-knit figure of medium height—pause on the edge of the pavement as if studying the scene around him. He noticed, too, Slippery Bill, a notorious pickpocket, slouch towards the stranger, as if to pass in front of him, while three others closed in behind.

Suddenly Slippery Bill darted forward and grabbed at the man's watch. He seemed to catch the guard, but the stranger, swinging round to avoid the butt of his antagonist's head, tripped him and sent him flying.

At the same moment the three confederates struck at their victim from behind, but jostling one another in their haste the blows crashed harmlessly on his shoulders.

The next instant, however, he was down, swept off his feet by sheer weight of numbers.

Slippery Bill, furious at having bungled his share so badly, had picked himself up from the pavement, and his heavy boot was just descending on the defenceless head, when Spike's fist caught him under the jaw and sent him reeling into the road.

"You dirty 'ound!" gasped Spike, staggering under the force of his own blow. The exertions of the fight and exhaustion from lack of food had over-sapped his strength.

THE 3rd CHAPTER
A Close Thing.

In a blind desire to save the stranger from the savages, now pounding him into insensibility, and ripping his pockets wide to get at his valuables, he flung himself on top of them, using fist and elbow with despairing strength.

Such sudden attacks on wayfarers, desperate in their swiftness, and often deadly in their results, are not uncommon happenings in East End streets. It was the signal for a rush of eager onlookers, ready to gape at the savage battle, but standing carefully aloof.

Already a police-whistle was buzzing in triple blasts, and the crowd swayed as a helmeted head bobbed its way forward in determined lunges.

"Copper!" yelled Slippery Bill, bursting his way recklessly in the opposite direction, and at the cry his confederates tore themselves free of Spike's clutches and fled.

Spike was left on his knees, panting and dazed, beside the man he had tried to save. The helmeted head was only a few feet from him now, and the whistles buzzing more furiously than ever.

"Run, matey, run!" shouted one well-wisher, seeing how near he was to capture.

Spike's breath seemed to choke him suddenly, as he realised all that that cry might mean.

"Hold him! 'E done it; I saw 'im!" yelled another.

A hand grabbed at his collar, but he was awake to his danger now. He tore himself free, and plunged for the crowd. Fighting tooth and nail he battered his way through, and, darting down a side alley, ran for his life.

"Stop, thief!" yelled a score of voices, and footsteps thudded behind him, but he flew on—up Hart Alley, down Paradise Court, through Blind Jack the cobbler's shop, over a back wall, through a tenement house, and back into Victory Lane.

The sounds of pursuit had ceased altogether now, and he dropped into a walk. But his heart was beating like a steam-engine.

Suppose the police came and took him? What chance would he—Spike Griffiths—have to clear his name of this foul charge? None; and Spike knew it. And then what would become of the little 'un?

Spike crept up the rickety tenement stairs and let himself into the attic. A glimmer of moonlight showed Polly still sleeping where she lay.

She seemed strangely still, and the moon-beam on her face made her look transparently white.

Spike stole forward, his heart filled with a nameless horror.

Was she dead, after all? He knelt and watched the thin face with burning eyes, until he saw the eyelids utter and the lips part in a long-drawn sigh.

The hand beside his reached out and caught his thumb.

It had been "knocked up" during the struggle, and was swollen. The grasp made him wince with pain, but he did not disengage it.

"Jack!" said the little 'un dreamily, and then, as if secure in the knowledge that her big brother was by her side, she drifted away into sleep.

Spike's heart was full. He realised that the fever had gone, and that the little 'un had turned back from the gates of death.

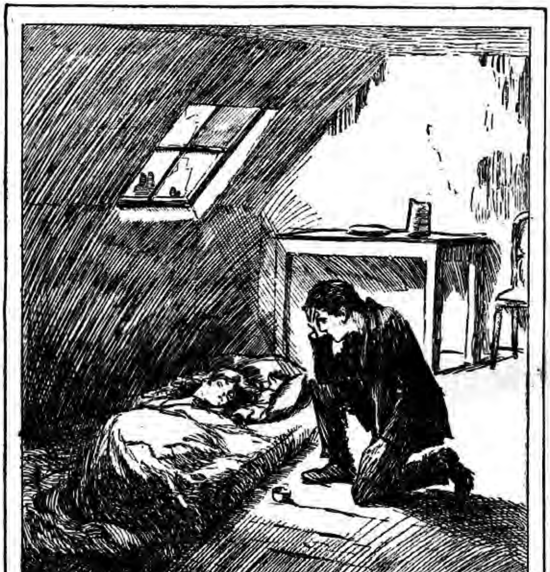
If the "coppers" took him now, he did not so much care.

From the reeking court below came the shrill yells of the children still scrambling in and out of the dilapidated doorways—doors which never closed night or day.

Suddenly a cry went up from Victory Lane, and Spike's heart stood still.

"Splits!"

The hubbub in Linnet Court ceased on the instant.



A white face lying on the sack-pillow and an occasional restless stirring of a small heap beneath the coverlet were the only signs that the bed was occupied. Polly was ill—very ill, and Polly was Spike's little sister.

Still Spike never moved. The pressure of those tiny fingers on his swollen thumb were nothing to the stifling grip at his heart. He knew that the moment had come.

The din in the court beneath had broken out afresh, but to it had been added the shrill clamour of women's tongues and the clatter of eager feet. The alley seethed with humanity—anxious, sullen, and savage at this invasion of their haunts.

Then heavy footsteps sounded on the ramshackle staircase. Spike could hear gruff inquiries, oaths, and threats as the police forced their way upwards.

The door was flung open, and three men appeared, and hung back, baffled by the gloom.

"Now then, Spike Griffiths, come out of that, we want you!" said a voice gruffly; and then added: "Strike a light there, Jim, and let's see where he's hiding."

"Hush! Don't strike a light for 'Eaven's sake!" said Spike hoarsely. "If you do you'll wake the little 'un, and if she sees you she'll die! She was just about a goner, but she's better now—only to-night, though."

The words came trembling between Spike's lips in a husky whisper.

"I'll go with yer quiet enough," he went on, seeing that Jim had stayed his hand. "I'm innocent, but I'll go with yer. I never touched the gentleman. I only tried to keep the others off. But I'll go quiet. Only don't wake 'er for the love of 'Eaven!"

"Come on out of that, then, to where we can see you!" commanded the figure in the shadow, perhaps a shade less gruffly.

"Right! I'm comin'. She's 'olding my 'and, though. There you are, little 'un. It's all right; Jack's 'ere," as Polly moved restlessly.

There was dead silence in the room for a space, then Spike rose and tiptoed to the door. A finger and thumb caught his cuff as he passed out, and then the door was shut behind them.

"I'm much obliged," he said, with a catch in his throat. "That was all I was afraid of—just 'er wakin' up and seein' me like this."

They were passing Mrs. Higgins's door now, and that bedraggled dame was gazing at the spectacle of Spike Griffiths's arrest with terrified amazement.

"One minute, officer," said a voice suddenly, and Spike realised that it was the third man who was speaking. "I don't quite like this. Just bring that lad in here, if this good woman will allow us. I want to have a look at him."

"As you please, sir," responded the sergeant. "Only this chap was identified as one of those who set on to you, and from what we know of him I should say it's quite likely!"

"It's a lie!" cried Spike, and found himself face to face with the man he had so pluckily attempted to rescue. "Neither the p'lice nor nobody never 'ad anything against me, say wot they like. I saw this gentleman standin' just outside Pleasureland to-night, an'—an' somebody go sneakin' by 'im and make a grab at 'is watch. There were three other coves set on 'im at the same time, and seein' it was four to one, I started in to give 'im a 'and."

"Them, or him—which?" asked the sergeant sarcastically.

"Him!" cried Spike, with flashing eyes.

"Then how about your being identified by witnesses, who say you was one of those after this gentleman's pockets?"

"I say they lie!"

"And so do I!" said a quiet voice. And, swinging round, Spike saw Dr. McMurdo standing in the doorway. "May I come in, Mrs. Higgins?" asked the broad-shouldered young Irishman politely. "Thanks! I think, perhaps, that as an eye-witness of the assault from the commencement, I may be able to give you sufficient evidence to clear this lad's name. I have known him for three years now as a shuckless ne'er-do-weel"—Spike winced, but he knew it was deserved—"but I know that, penniless and foodless even as he is now, and with a little sister almost at the point of death, he would rather cut off his right hand than steal."

"May I ask who you are?" inquired the gentleman Spike had done his best to save.

"I'm Dr. McMurdo, a medical practitioner in these parts, as these officers know. I was passing Pleasureland on the top of a 'bus when this assault on you took place. I saw the man grab at your watch, while his confederates attacked you from behind. Then I saw the lad they call Spike here, rush to your rescue, fell the first assailant, and then fling himself on the three who had you down on the ground. I climbed off the 'bus posthaste to lend a hand," continued the young Irishman; "but when I got through the crowd the thieves had flown. I joined in pursuit, little thinking it was Spike here who was being chased. When I got back you had gone."

The stranger turned his bronzed face to Spike, leaning dizzily against the little table.

"Young man, shake!" he said, and caught his grimy fist in his. "My name's Eustace Cargill, of Ballaroo, Queensland, and I owe you more perhaps than I know. I'm tough as raw hide"—he squared his broad shoulders as he spoke—"but I confess I found those larrikins more than enough for my weight.

"Now, when all the rest were standing round watching me being kicked to a jelly, you came to my aid. I didn't know that till now that this gentleman told me, and I don't mind saying now I came round with these officers, to make as sure of your getting two years' hard labour as I knew how. You did me a good turn, and I was pretty near doing you a bad one, so I'm going to make amends as far as is in my power. Here are banknotes here——"

"'Ere, old up, youngster: the gentleman's talkin' to you!" said the policeman, for Spike's knees had given way under him suddenly, and he had slipped down on the floor.

But Spike couldn't hold up. The day's work on an empty stomach had been too much for him, and he had caved in at last.

While he lay back in a swoon, with his head on poor Mrs. Higgins's lap, Mr. Eustace Cargill, millionaire, returned with the doctor to the room above.

"And she'll live, you say?" said the Colonial at last, as he stood beside the ragged bed where the "little 'un" still lay sleeping.

"If she can be got out of this pestilential spot, not unless!" answered the young Irishman quietly.

"You can leave that to me. We'll get them both away to-night, if you only say the word, and when she's well enough again I know a little place 'down under' where folks have room to breathe, and where we wouldn't keep pigs in a stye like this slumland of London. Pfaugh! What a hole! Still, I'm glad I came—real glad!"

And so were Spike and the "little 'un." They left Linnet Court that night for ever, and if Smiley's gang could see happy-go-lucky Jack Griffiths now, cracking a stock-whip on Cargill's cattle ranches, they would not recognise him.

THE END.

(Two splendid long, complete tales will appear in next week's BOYS' REALM.)

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