SOUTH AFRICA v. ENGLAND AT THE OVAL. *(See Below.)*

GRAND INTERNATIONAL NUMBER

THE BOYS' REALM
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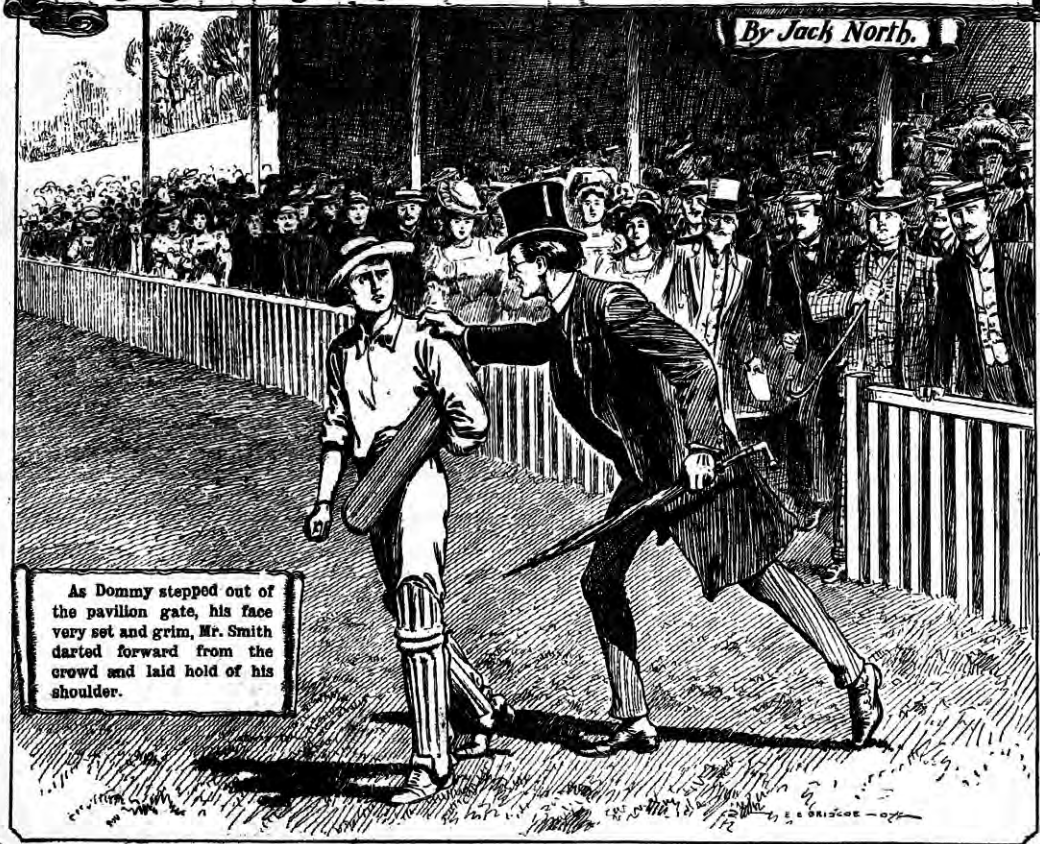
A Young Afrikander
A Tale of the Test Match.

By Jack North.



As Dommy stepped out of the pavilion gate, his face very set and grim, Mr. Smith darted forward from the crowd and laid hold of his shoulder.

No. 272. Vol. VI.] EVERY SATURDAY—ONE PENNY. [Saturday, August 17, 1907.

A Young Afrikander

A Tale of the Test Match. By Jack North.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.
The South African Selection Committee.

THEY sat in solemn conclave together at the Imperial Hotel, Mr. George Allsop, the capable and popular manager of the South African cricket team, Percy Sherwell, its captain, and giant Jim Sinclair.

It was the Friday evening before the third Test Match, which was due to begin at the Oval on the following Monday, and during the course of the game against Essex that play the Colonial side had suffered a great disaster. Not that they had been beaten; on the contrary, Essex would have to do something quite phenomenal on the morrow if victory was to be the county's. But Shalders, batting in his finest style, and well over the century, had had to retire hurt, with a small bone in his left hand broken by a ball from Buckenham, and there was little prospect of his being able to play again during the tour.

This would have been a grievous matter at any time; but circumstances made it far worse just now. For when the selection committee had met the evening before, their choice for the Test Match team had been made within five seconds, for the simple reason that they had only eleven men available. Stanley Snooke had been taken ill during the visit to Ireland, ten days earlier; Robinson, the reserve wicket-keeper, had a broken finger, and Aubrey Faulkner and Smith had both been badly hurt in the Notts match.

"You'll have to play yourself, George," said Sherwell to the manager.

"I can't quite see myself playing in a Test Match, my boy," was the reply. "If you happened to be playing Cornwall or Cumberland, say, and were a man short, I wouldn't mind turning out. But to play against England—no; you'd better even play a man short than carry an absolute passenger. What's the matter with asking Jim Hopley?"

"Crocked," replied Sherwell. "I found out where he was, and wired to him a couple of hours ago; but he can't possibly turn out."

Mr. F. J. V. Hopley, the old Cambridge heavy-weight boxer and cricket blue, is a South African.

"What of Charley Llewellyn?"

"Hampshire won't let him off—and you can't blame them. I felt pretty cheeky about asking. I can tell you."

"You've been doing some looking round already, Percy, I can see. There's Hoskin, the Rhodes boy, up at Oxford."

"Yes. If he was up at Oxford just now we might get hold of him. But it's the Long Vacation now, you know, and I can't begin to find out where he is."

"The only man I can think of is a boy," said Sinclair, who had remained silent and thoughtful while the other two talked. "Don't you remember that youngster who played for us at Sunderland when we were short, young Mayall?"

"What did he do?" asked Sherwell. "I wasn't there, you know; but I recollect some of you spealking well of him afterwards."

"Scored a couple of dozen or so in very good style, and fielded like a good one. But Hathorn knows more about him than I do. He saw the young 'un take a century in a game where he was playing for the other side. I'll call him in."

Hathorn came—a big, finely-built fellow, though standing beside Sinclair made him look less than his real height of well over six feet.

"You fellows fairly tucked up, and wanting somebody with brains to help you out!" he asked, with a smile.

"Don't you dare to grin, old man; this is serious! We're a man short for the big match, as you know."

"Delacour thinks he might turn out, at a pinch."

Delacour is Stanley Snooke's second name, and that by which he is generally known to his comrades.

"Why, he isn't fit for anything but bed! That's where he ought to be now; and George will come out and personally conduct him there if he's not careful. No, he's out of the question; and the rest of ours are even more so. And we can't get Llewellyn, and John Hopley's crocked, and nobody knows where Hoskin is. So Jim here has suggested that we ask young Mayall."

"He's only seventeen," answered Hathorn, "if he's as much as that; but if there's a schoolboy in England just now who's fit for Test Match cricket, Dominic Mayall's the lad!"

"Yes. Jim says he bats well, and is a grafter in the field; but what about his nerves?"

"Hasn't got any. I don't believe you can do better than play him."

"Wait a moment, Hathorn. If it's Long Vacation for Oxford, it's summer holidays for the schools. We'd forgotten that. How are we going to find this youngster?"

"Easily enough. He's had to stay at the school, poor young beggar. My word, I guess he'll catch at this chance!"

"What's the address?"

"Dominic Mayall, care of Sylvester Smith, Esquire, The College, Thirlestane. But I'll wire, if you like. I know the young 'un's father, and he and I got quite chummy up at Sunderland."

So it was that St. Dominic, as his schoolfellows called him, sitting moodily next morning alone in his den in Smith's House at Thirlestane, seeking comfort in a book, but finding none, received a wire which ran thus:

"Expect you're crocked. Will you play against England, Oval, Monday?—HATHORN."

Was ever schoolboy so honoured before?

THE 2nd CHAPTER.
Trouble with Mr. Sylvester Smith.

THE nickname by which Dominic Mayall was known at Thirlestane was, as perhaps it need hardly be said, used ironically. Dommy, as his particular chums called him, was anything but a saint. There was no vice in him; but there was a good deal of mischief, and his Colonial upbringing had made him rather a difficult youngster to manage. No fellow of his age and standing in the school was more frequently in hot water. Most fellows who had got their first eleven colours and attained to the dignity of the Fifth Form, chucked "rotting"; but Dommy seemed unable to keep out of mischief.

He attributed it largely to the fact that, as "Silly Smith" was bound to be down on him anyway, he thought he might as well earn what he got. And it was true that Mr. Sylvester Smith was inclined to be unnecessarily severe with the young Afrikander, whom he did not understand.

"I don't believe the beggar will let me go an' play," said the boy to himself, as he sat and looked at Hathorn's wire. "Now, if the Head was here it would be all right. He'd say 'Yes' like a shot. But the only way I can think of to get Silly to let me go would be to pretend that I'm not keen on it, an' I'm afraid I can't act well enough for that. Well, I'm goin' anyway, let him say what he jolly well likes!"

He took up the wire, and ran downstairs, forgetting that he had been ordered not to stir from his study until he had permission. Dommy was the only fellow in Mr. Smith's House staying at Thirlestane through the long holidays. And Mr. Smith made a grievance of that fact. He would not have gone away in any case; he was intensely miserable anywhere away from Thirlestane; but to hear him talk one might have thought that only young Mayall's presence kept him from enjoying repose at Bournemouth or Cromer or Windermere.

Dominic tapped smartly at the master's study door, and then marched in.

"What's the manner in which a room should be entered, Mayall?" said Mr. Smith, with a portentous frown.

"No, sir?"

The tone was innocent and inquiring. That tone always exasperated the housemaster.

"You know perfectly well what I mean, boy!"

"No, sir. I don't think so. I don't know any other way of coming into a room except by the door—unless it's through the window. An' I'm sure you mean that, sir."

"Don't be impudent! I thought I told you that you were not to leave your study without permission?"

"Yes, sir; but I had this wire, you see, an' I felt sure that under the circumstances you'd excuse me."

Mr. Smith abruptly took the flimsy paper from his hand. He frowned as he read it, and then he asked sarcastically:

"And do you imagine that I shall allow you to go, Mayall?"

The boy flung his head back defiantly. When he did that one noted how square and firm his chin was. He was square and firm-looking altogether, for he was wonderfully set and muscled in body for a lad of his age. It is so often with fellows from the Colonies. Dommy had never seen the white cliffs of old England till he was fourteen. Boyhood passed on the open veldt had knit his figure and strengthened his muscles.

He had a healthy, tanned face, a pair of very frank, blue eyes, and fair hair that made a strong contrast with the red-brown hue of his countenance.

"Yes, sir; the Head allowed me to go an' play at Sunderland, even though it was durin' term."

"I consider that the Head acted—but never mind that. Mr. Harford is not here now, and it is for me to decide; and I say unhesitatingly that I shall not allow you to go!"

"But that hardly seems fair, sir. Would you mind wirin' to the Head an' seein' what he says? I heard you say the other day you had his address; or, if you'd give it to me, I'd wire, an' save you the trouble."

"I will not give you the address, and you certainly will not go to London to play in this match. Your friend Mr. Hartshorn, or whatever his name may be, ought to have known better than to ask you! Go to your study at once!"

"I certainly will not play in this match, won't I? That's all you know about it, Silly Smith!" muttered Dommy to himself, as he returned to his study. "If you'd let me wire the Head, an' he'd refused, it would have been different; but you won't even give me his address, 'cause you know very well what he'd say. It's just your nasty, putrid, mean spite! Your friend Mr. Hartshorn.' Pretends he doesn't know old Hathorn's name, the bounder! P'raps he don't, though; a rotter like that wouldn't know anything about sport. 'Tisn't a month ago since he gave me three hundred lines for not knowin' who Hannibal was—some old heathen johnny that's been dead an' buried for centuries!"

Back in his den, he packed his cricket-bag, and then turned out his pockets.

"Didn't know I was quite so short as this!" he muttered. "Nine an' fourpence ha'penny, an' the fare to Euston's over ten bob. Will that means walkin' part of the way. Then there's a tanner to come out of it for a wire to Hathorn. I can't possibly borrow from any of the kids who are stayin' at the School House through the vac. It's a low game borrowin' from youngsters like that. Let's see how far I shall be able to get."

A careful reckoning showed him that his money would take him to Watford, whence he would have some thirteen or fourteen miles to walk before he reached the South Africans' quarters in London.

"Train at 10.13. I ought to be goin' most directly. If I go out by the door, I'll likely as not run against Silly. I must cut out by the window, an' across the playin'-fields."

Dominic's study was on the first floor. He carefully lowered his precious cricket-bag by a rope, and then, getting out of the window, let himself down until he hung full-length, with his hands clutching the sill, and lightly dropped, landing on his feet like a cat.

Then across the playing-fields he sped, and so to the station by a short cut. After due consideration, he took a ticket to Euston, twenty or thirty miles away, with the idea of throwing the housemaster off the scent should he make up his mind to follow.

To most town-bred and many public school-boys the money difficulty would have seemed a very small one. Dommy had a good watch, which he could easily have pawned in the first town he came to; but fortunately the boy's experience of life did not include pawnshops, and this never occurred to him.

In other respects he showed himself sagacious enough, though. He would not wire from the station, as he might have done, lest Mr. Smith should inquire there; he waited until he reached the junction. Then he telegraphed to Hathorn, not at the Imperial Hotel, but at the Essex County Cricket Ground, at Leyton.

"They'd be sure to have left the hotel before this," he thought.

He did not feel quite comfortable until the train had come in and carried him away. There was a place about half a mile outside the station where for a hundred yards or more the railway ran side by side with the road. The college stood just in the angle where the road turned away to the left.

Dommy chuckled as he saw the black-coated figure of Mr. Smith hurrying along the dusty road.

"So that little pig Wray did go an' sneak!" he thought. "I reckoned the young beast would when he called out to me to ask where I was going with the bag as I passed over the playing-fields."

He put his head out of the window, and Mr. Smith saw him at once.

"Stop, Mayall; I command you to stop!" he yelled wildly.

"Shall I pull the communication-cord, sir?" shouted back Dommy. "But I don't think I'd better. I haven't got enough money to pay the fine."

Then the train bore him out of sight of the gesticulating figure in the road, and he flung himself back in the seat and fairly roared with laughter.

"There'll be a row," he said, regaining seriousness. "But the old man won't expel me, anyway. I'm jolly sure he'd have let me go if he'd been here!"

THE 3rd CHAPTER.
Silly Smith" in Pursuit.

MR. SMITH may have, been a well-meaning man in general; but he had certainly never given Dominic Mayall fair play. He was well aware that the Rev. John Harford, Thirlestane's genial and respected headmaster, would have acceded to the boy's request without any demur. He told himself that that was merely because the Head was weak and foolish, and that, as he stood for the time being in Mr. Harford's place, it was for him to do as he thought best. But he knew at heart that this was mere juggling with his conscience, and now that Dommy had taken matters into his own hands, he was quite as much upset by the fear of what the Head would say as by the lad's defiance of his authority. He wished now that he had said yes; but, as he had said no, he was determined that the boy should not play, come what might.

The matter would be sure to come to the Head's knowledge, so that there would be trouble in any case. Since there was to be trouble, Mayall should not have the satisfaction of getting his own way.

He had to wait more than two hours before he could get a train, so he turned back to the school after he had seen that which bore Dommy past him. He packed a handbag, and then Mr. Smith, with a view to finding Afrikander was rather a favourite, for asking where Dominic was, and reached the station in good time, to find out that the boy had only booked to the junction.

Arrived at the junction, he could learn nothing more. The clerk who had issued Dommy's ticket to Watford had gone to his dinner; but Mr. Smith thought it did not matter much. He knew the boy had gone to join the South African team in London.

It did not occur to him until he reached Euston that he did not know where to find the Colonial cricketers. A porter whom he asked there informed him that the Australians put up at the Inns of Court Hotel, and that "he should fancy that these jokers did the same." So he drove there in a growler—Mr. Smith disliked and feared hansoms—and was referred by some facetious personage to the Savoy.

Mr. Smith's temper was unfortunate at the best of times; and now he was in such a condition of flurry that he could hardly speak to anyone without affronting them. The official whom he saw at the Savoy told him sarcastically that he'd better inquire at the General Post Office. He did not understand the sarcasm, but took the advice literally, and drove to St. Martin's-le-Grand. There, as it chanced, the first person whom he addressed was able to give him the information.

By this time it was getting well on in the afternoon. Dommy had caught an express, and had reached Watford before twelve. There he had tied a luggage-label to the handle of his bag, and had booked it to the Imperial Hotel, to be called for later on, or for delivery. Then, with just twopence-halfpenny in his pocket, but with a light heart, he had set out manfully on his hot, dusty tramp into town.

Leaving Watford, he bought some bread and cheese with his money, and with that, and a drink at a fountain, made a welcome, though frugal, meal. He had asked about the route, and had learned that his nearest way would be to take the train to Stanmore at Bushey Station. Walking quickly, he reached Stanmore by one o'clock, and kept on without a rest to Edgware. There a bit of luck befell him. A sudden gleam in the dust of the pavement caught his eye, and he stooped to pick up—a shilling!

He had never been so glad of a shilling in his life before. It did not seem likely that it had been recently dropped, as the dust was almost covering it, so that the chance of anyone near being the proper owner of it was a very small one. He had, at least, as good a right to it as the next person who noticed it could have. So, delighted with his luck, he had a good, long drink of ginger-beer, and then found his way to Hendon Station and caught a train.

Dommy was conscious that he did not cut a very respectable figure when he reached the Imperial Hotel, for his suit was an oldish one that he had used for the voyage, and he was very, very dusty. But all that mattered little when, having asked whether Mr. Hathorn was in, he was told, "No, but there are two of the other gentlemen here," and the next minute was shaking hands with Shalders and Stanley Snooke, with both of whom he had played at Sunderland.

"I say, young 'un," said one of them, "you're in luck! If you'd been here twenty minutes earlier you'd have walked straight into the arms of one of your pastors and masters, who had trekked hot-foot all the way from Thirlestane to capture you!"

"Silly ass with a long nose an' a white face!" asked Dommy disdainfully. "Yes, that's my housemaster, Sylvester Smith—Silly

Smith, we call him. What have you done with him?"

"Told him we'd no news of you, an' sent him off to Leyton to see Hathorn," answered Shalders.

"But we didn't mention that the match would probably be over an' our fellows off the ground before he got there," added Snooke.

"Well, Delacour, we couldn't know that for certain, could we? There was still a wicket to fall when we heard. An' Mead an' Mead might put on a hundred or so, you know."

The younger man and the boy both grinned. Dommy was as much at home with these fellows as if they were his brothers. It was good to be again with men who had seen the blue loom of the Drakenbergs on the far horizon, and knew the smell of the baked karoo, and had watched the Lion's Head till it faded from sight as the steamer left Table Bay and ploughed her way through the South Atlantic. He wouldn't have put it in those words; but somehow the sight of these good fellows reminded him of all those things.

"I say, are both of you out of the game on Monday?" he asked.

But before they could answer a stir was heard in the hall of the hotel, and a glance out of the window revealed the fact that three hansoms had just driven up together. The first had discharged its load. Hathorn and Gordon White were getting out of the second.

Dominic rushed out to greet his special friend among the Afrikanders. A very few words put Hathorn in possession of the facts; and he looked rather grave when he had heard.

"I didn't count on anything like this, Dommy, though I don't see that you're much to blame. No, we haven't seen Mr. Smith; but I expect he'll be back here before very long. Come up to my room and have a wash. Then I expect you'll be glad of something to eat. Meanwhile, I'll get Mr. Allsop an' Sherwell an' Jim Sinclair together, an' we'll hold a council of war. My voice won't be for giving you up, old chap, you may depend upon that; and if I'm not very much mistaken in all three of them, they won't agree to do so, either. But it's a pity we can't get at the address of your headmaster somehow."

The council of war had been ended some time when Mr. Smith again appeared on the scene. His temper had not improved; indeed, constant reflection on what his wanderings were costing him in train and cab fares had made him feel very bitter indeed. He became abusive: and Mr. Allsop, urbane and conciliatory at first, had at last to cut him off short.

"I'll hear no more from you, sir! A schoolmaster should be able to take his part in a controversy without descending to personal recrimination. No, you won't see Mr. Hathorn, and you won't see young Mayall. The best thing you can do is to give me Mr. Harford's address."

"I won't do that! I told you before that I would not be coerced!"

"I quite understand you. The Irishman's pig wouldn't be coerced, but Pat got him to market all the same. I am sorry that your simile is less effectual with you than with the other—than with the pig, I should say. Frankly, Mr. Smith, I don't believe you have been fair to the boy. He's an Afrikander, and we're all going to stand by him. I shall cable to his father to night. Mr. Mayall's authority ought to be sufficient."

"While the boy is at Thirlestane his father's authority does not—"

"But, you see, he isn't at Thirlestane just now. I'm afraid your cabman will be getting impatient, sir. Allow me to wish you good-afternoon!"

THE 4th CHAPTER.
The Last Test Match.

THE first test match at Lord's had been drawn in England's favour, rain preventing any play on the third day. At Leeds, South Africa had been in the ascendant, but again rain had prevented a finish; and it was left to the final match, at Kennington Oval, to decide the fate of the rubber. It could not be a case of a draw and honours easy, for this game was to be played to the end, even if it took a week. It was distinctly rough on the South Africans to have to take the field without Shalders, and so fine an all round player as Faulkner; but as Louis Tancred, who had been out of form in the first part of the season owing to his attack of enteric in the early months of the year, was now at his best, they could hardly be reckoned more than one man short of full strength.

No one expected that Dommy could do what Shalders or Faulkner might have done; but they all had confidence in him, and were not afraid that he would let them down by nervousness or lack of ability.

"I wonder whether Silly Smith will be there?" he said, as he drove off with Hathorn in a hansom to the Oval.

"Don't you let him get on your nerves, old man."

Dommy laughed.

"No fear of his doin' that. I don't care a bang about him—specially now Mr. Allsop's had that cable from dad. But, of course, my father's thousands of miles away, an' this beggar's close at hand; an' I shouldn't wonder if he had a good shot at makin' himself awkward. It'll probably take him some time to find out where the match is played, though. He's an ignorant beggar, really. Why, he didn't even know your name—called you 'Hartthorn.'"

"I dare say he isn't the only one in England by some millions that don't know my name," answered the famous batsman, smiling. "But I'm glad you're not nervous, anyway, Dommy."

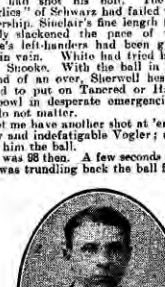
Reginald Foster won the toss, and the South Africans had to take the field. Kotze, the hurricane bowler, and Vogler, were the first pair of trundlers; and Dommy was told to field third man for the express bowler, and in the deep for the other man.

A wicket fell at 30, when Hayward, who had been manifestly uncomfortable with Vogler, was leg-before-wicket to a straight ball which he clearly miscalculated. The huge crowd cheered Tyldesley to the echo when he came in to partner Fry; but there was a glum silence when, with only another run scored, Kotze shouldered his off-stump.

But then R. E. Foster joined Fry; and with these two splendid batsmen together, South Africa's troubles began. They had not been parted at lunch, when the score stood at 150. Foster was still together when it reached 200. Kotze had shot his bolt. The mysterious "googlies" of Schwarz had failed to break the partnership. Sinclair's fine length bowling had scarcely slackened the pace of the scoring. Nourse's left-handers had been given a long trial, in vain. White had tried his luck, and Sibley Snooke. With the ball in his hand at the end of an over, Sherwell hesitated, half-minded to put on Tancred or Hathorn, who only bowl in desperate emergencies, or when runs do not matter.

"Let me have another shot at 'em!" said the plucky and indefatigable Vogler; and Sherwell threw him the ball.

Fry was 98 then. A few seconds later a spectator was trundling back the ball from a drive



Mr. A. E. PINK,
Secretary of the Sunderland and District Nonconformist Cricket League.

that had gone to the boundary like a cannon-shot, and the crowd of nearly thirty thousand rent the air with their shouting.

Dommy had run his hardest to stop that hit, but could not get within twenty yards of it. Vogler, with a hand behind his back, quietly motioned him to stay at the spot he had reached. Then he sent down another to C. B., and again it came speeding for the boundary, but lifted in the air this time, a distinct chance.

Straight for Dommy it sped. Would it be over his head? He could not back; already he was almost touching the feet of the people, who sat two deep inside the ropes.

"That's the schoolboy from Thirlestane!" he heard someone say.

"Who's he playin' for the 'Boks for, then?"

"Oh, five or six of their men are crocked, an' he comes from South Africa."

"Rot to play a kid in a match like this! He'll miss it, sure as eggs is!"

"Would he?" Dommy clenched his teeth and waited.

The flight was very difficult to judge, though the direction was easy enough to see. At the last moment he realised that it would be a yard above his head, and jumped and got his hand to it somehow, and felt his fingers close over it, and knew that he had made the catch, and that the great war-chief of Sussex was out!

He tossed up the ball, smiling, but a little shaken, while the ring roared applause, and Foster, at the wicket, and Fry himself, before he started back to the pavilion, clapped their hands for that fine, plucky catch.

Foster was next to go, with 115 to his credit. Jessop hit a merry 44 in half as many minutes, and both Arnold and Rhodes did well. At a quarter to six the innings closed for 390.

The South Africans were left with about half an hour to bat at the end of a fagging day —the sort of thing that often spells disaster to a side. Sherwell, their captain, did not remove the pads he had worn while wicket-keeping.

"I'm going in first for one!" he said. "But we can't afford to risk Louis. Perhaps Kotze had better come in with me."

The thick-set bowler smiled his willingness. He is no great talker, this stout Boer, who fought for England when the South African miners ran blood.

"But there's very little chance of Kotze's staying!" objected Sinclair.

And Kotze smiled again. He had no delusions as to his defensive powers.

"Take young Mayall in," suggested Hathorn. "You don't mind, do you, Dommy?"

"Not a bit!" replied the youngster pluckily. He had worked as hard in the field as anyone on the side; but, though tired, he was not worn out, and he was only too eager to do anything that would help the chances of South Africa.

So it was that Dominic Mayall, schoolboy, aged sixteen years and ten months, went in first for his side in a test match, a record that will need some beating! The crowd yelled applause at him.

And he played his part manfully, too. He saw Sherwell leave with only ten up, and the willing, stalwart Kotze five runs later; and then Vogler came in, and at last time was called. Dommy had only made five; but he had helped to tide over what might easily have been a very bad period.

Nor was that the end of his usefulness, for he stayed for half an hour next morning, seeing Vogler leave and Hathorn get set, and when Arnold bowled him he had 23 to his credit.

Hathorn and Sinclair and Snooke and Nourse all did well, and the total fell little short of that of England, though no one reached three figures, as Fry and Foster had done. They hardly scored at the same pace as the Englishman either, and when Sinclair, the last to leave, was out, it lacked only a quarter of an hour of time, so that there was no more play that day.

"I saw your friend Smith on the ground to-day, Dominic," said Mr. Allsop at dinner that night. "He gave me a most ungracious scowl."

Dommy nodded, for his mouth was full. A minute later he said:

"I saw him too, sir. An' I can tell you I kept pretty close to the pavilion after that."

"You don't think he means trying to give further trouble, after that cable from your governor, do you, Mayall?" asked Sherwell.

"Well, you see, he don't know anything about that, an' I'm not as all sure that he'd take much stock in it if he did."

"What can the ass do?" asked someone contemptuously. "He can't carry off Mayall by force of arms."

They looked at the sturdy youngster, and there was a general laugh.

"No; but he could make an unpleasant scene at a critical time," remarked Hathorn quietly. "I happen to know that he twice tried to get into the pavilion to-day, but was turned back."

"Is he in the habit of bottling up his wrath like this, Dominic?" asked Stanley Snooke. "You'd have thought he'd have got over it by now."

"We don't have to bottle it," answered Dommy. "It's like one of those fountains that never dry up—there's always a supply on hand."

The beginning of the third day's play found the teams pretty much where they had started, for the difference of five runs was a mere bagatelle. But the conditions were very different. There had been a tremendous thunderstorm during the night, and now the sun was shining out again powerfully. The pitch would inevitably be baked and difficult, growing worse as

Mr. J. A. ROBSON,
Chairman of the Sunderland and District Nonconformist Cricket League.

the hours moved on, and wickets would be cheap.

And so it proved. Fry stayed a while and scored 22; but one by one the flower of England's batsmen departed, finding Jim Sinclair and Vogler quite unplayable. Foster, Jessop, Hayward, Braund, and Hirst shared eleven runs among them, and the score was only 48 when the eighth wicket fell. Then Arnold and Lilley hit out desperately, and eventually the total reached 73, which left the Afrikanders 54 to get for victory.

"The odds are against us," said Sherwell. "It's a wicked pitch—sheer wicked! Arnold will be every bit as troublesome as Jim was, and Rhodes worse than Ernie. Still, it's up to us to do our best."

And right manfully he did it. Tancred left with only three up; but then Sherwell, hitting out, and Hathorn, putting up a fine defence, the second wicket took the score to 40, and some of the knowing ones said that the game was as good as ever.

Was it, though? The effect of the roller had worn off now. A yell of applause proclaimed the fact that the plucky captain was out, his middle stump shot down by Arnold. Rhodes got Hathorn caught at point in the next over; and then the Worcester man did the hat-trick at the expense of Gordon White, Sibley Snooke, and Reginald Schwarz. Five wickets had fallen without a run having been added, and six were now down for 40!

Big Jim Sinclair joined Nourse, and drove the first ball he had to the pavilion rails. A single took him to the other end, and he proceeded to punish Rhodes. It was such a game as only a man with a big heart and mighty muscles could play. Sixteen came from that over; but the last ball of it proved fatal, for as it sped through the air Fry ran across the line of flight and took it one-handed—a glorious catch!

Seven for 61! Vogler joined Nourse. The left-hander from Natal hit a three to the on, and then Arnold clean bowled Vogler.

Eight for 64! And only the schoolboy and Kotze left to help Nourse!

As Dommy stepped out of the pavilion gate, his face very set and grim, someone darted forward from the crowd and laid hold of his shoulder.

"Come with me at once! I have not been able to get to you before; but I declare that I will not allow you to bat now! You shall not defy me thus!"

Shaking off the one person in the pavilion, and a storm of hisses swept round the ground. Few knew the cause of the interference, but all could gather at least that a schoolboy going in to bat at a most critical time in a great match was being treated in a manner highly calculated to spoil all chance of his doing any good for his side.

Mr. Allsop and Hathorn, Sherwell and Sinclair, came hurrying out of the pavilion. Fry strode hastily across from his place in the field, and Foster and Jessop had started from theirs.

"This boy has run away from school! He shall not bat! He shall go back with me at once!"

"That he certainly shall not!" declared the South African manager. "He has his father's permission to play, and he sha'n't be interfered with!"

"This is unreasonable, sir," said Fry quietly. "Whatever cause of——"

"Mr. Smith!"

The name, sharply spoken in familiar tones, brought Silly to heel at once. For it was the Rev. John Harford, Headmaster of Thirlestane, who spoke!

"This is scandalously unsportsmanlike!" said the Head. "I really would not have believed it of you! I cannot understand why you should have put any difficulty in the way of this boy playing! Mayall, you mustn't do this upset you, lad! Go on, and do your best. I want England to win, but I would rather she should lose than win through this!"

Sinclair led off a cheer, and the ground rang as Mr. Harford went back to his place. And Dommy walked on to the wicket, resolute as ever, and warm with gratitude to the Head.

He scored two off Arnold's third ball, and got the last of the over through the slips for four. Fourteen to win!

Nourse hit four, two, and two off Rhodes, and then had his leg stump lowered by a ball that came across a foot or more.

Six to win, and only Kotze to come!

But now it was Dommy's turn to face the bowling again.

Arnold sent down one that broke several inches, and came off the pitch like lightning. How Dommy stopped it he never knew, or how he dealt with the next, for the tall, slim Worcester pro. was bowling like a demon!

Then one hung a little after pitching, and somehow Dommy tapped it hard past point for two. The last ball of the over was a little short and a little wide of the off stump, and he pulled it round viciously for two more. One to tie, two to win, and Kotze to face the bowling.

One hitch the fast bowler gave to his flannels, grasped the bat high up, and slammed at Rhodes with all his strength. The ball sped into the long field. Fry rushed to intercept it.

They ran one, and the defeat was averted. "Come again!" yelled Kotze, and Dommy rushed up the pitch. Rhodes had stepped to the side of the wicket to take the ball as it came in. But he had no need to handle it. Straight and true it sped, and Dommy realised, with a sinking heart, that unless it dismissed the wicket he was doomed. And, while still a yard away, he saw the wicket struck and the bails flying!

And so the great final test match of 1907 ended in a tie! But the Afrikanders, one and all, agreed that for their failure to win Dominic Mayall was not to blame.

THE END.

THE COUNTIES AT CRICKET.

By LINESMAN.

See the Splendid Series of Articles IN THE

PENNY PICTORIAL.

OF ALL NEWSAGENTS.

FROM YOUR EDITOR'S CHAIR.

Latest Portrait of YOUR EDITOR (H. E.), Controller of THE BOYS' REALM—Saturday. THE BOYS' FRIEND—Tuesday. THE BOYS' HERALD—Wednesday.

Your Editor is always glad to hear from you about yourself or your favourite paper. He will answer you by post if you enclose a stamped addressed postcard or envelope. Write to him if you are in trouble, if you want information, or if you have any ideas for our paper. All letters to be addressed to the Editor of THE BOYS' REALM, 2, Carmelite House, Carmelite Street, London, E.C. If your letter is not replied to here, it may be answered in "The Boys' Friend" next Tuesday, or "The Boys' Herald" next Wednesday. 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.

I hope that all my readers are telling their friends about our football league. I want every junior footballer in the United Kingdom to know about it, and I want every junior football club to become affiliated to it. I think that it is the duty of every reader of this paper to call his footballing friends' attention to it, because if they do not see this announcement they will miss something which will be decidedly to their advantage. It will be doing them a good turn if you will tell them about it; indeed, under the circumstances, it is your duty. I know that I can rely on my friends, when I appeal to them thus, to do their best for their old Editor.

Our New School Story.

AS I have previously announced to my many loyal supporters, the opening chapters of our great new tale of Slapton School will positively appear next week. Mr. Finnemore's stories have always proved popular with my readers, and "Teddy Lester's Chums," which is the title he has given to his new school tale, will be no exception. I am certain that it is the very best tale of Slapton School Mr. Finnemore has ever written.

I hope that my chums will tell all their friends about this new school story; or, better still, let them read the opening chapters which appear next week for themselves. By doing this they will help the good old REALM along, and will gain for it quite a host of new supporters.

In addition to the first instalment of the new school story, I am publishing in next week's issue of our paper two long, complete athletic tales. The first is by Mr. A. S. Hardy, and deals with the famous Brooklands Motor Track, which has caused so much attention and criticism of late. It will be entitled

"A SPEED TEST,"

and will in every way maintain the reputation of Mr. Hardy as one of the best writers of boys' athletic fiction living.

Our other complete yarn for next week will be a cricket story by Mr. L. J. Beeston. Its title is

"THE EVERSLEY ELEVEN,"

and I can assure all my friends that it will be a rattling good tale.

Our Football Programme.

VERY soon I hope to make a definite announcement concerning the date when the opening chapters of our new football serial will appear. Mr. Hardy is exceeding his highest hopes, and is making it really a stunning story. He has let me have the first chapters to read, and, really, I have no fault to find with them. In every way they are excellent reading, and I am certain that if he continues as he has begun, and I am sure he will do so, the story will enthral all my friends from the opening chapter to the last. Look out for further announcements shortly.

Where Our Cricket Counties Play.

"INQUIRER," Horsley, has written to compliment me upon the success of our story "King Cricket," and he adds that he would like to know where our first-class county cricket clubs play their matches.

Well, then, Yorkshire has grounds at Bradford, Sheffield, Leeds, Dewsbury, Hull, Harrogate, and Huddersfield; Lancashire plays at Manchester and Liverpool, and occasionally at Blackpool; Sussex plays at Brighton, Eastbourne, and Hastings; Surrey plays only at the Oval; Middlesex only at Lord's; Gloucestershire at Gloucester, Cheltenham, and Bristol; Worcester at Worcester and Stourbridge; Warwickshire at Birmingham, Leamington, and Coventry; Derby at Derby and Chesterfield; Kent at Tonbridge, Blackheath, Tunbridge Wells, Gravesend, Catford, Beckenham, Maidstone, and Canterbury; Notts at Nottingham; Northampton at Northampton; Somerset at Taunton and Bath; Hampshire at Southampton, Aldershot, Portsmouth, and Bournemouth; and Essex at Leyton.

It sounds an interesting list of names, but possibly many enthusiasts will read the particulars with satisfaction.

A Boy Who Wants Good-Shaped Legs.

"CONSTANT READER" wants me to tell him how to get really good-shaped calves. He says he is always being teased about his legs by the other boys at his school. They call him "Spindle-shanks," and this makes him very angry.

There are two good ways of developing the calves. One way is to go in for cycling; the other is to go in for running.

If my reader does not care for either of these forms of sport, let him take some simple exercises at home. Such as the following: Stand with his heels together, and then, holding his body erect, bend his knees until he is sitting on his heels; then let him gradually raise himself. Repeat this exercise about ten or twenty times.

Another exercise is to stand at attention with the body erect, and raising one foot from the floor, bend the other leg until the heel can be touched. Next rise to a standing position without placing the other leg on the ground. Change the foot and repeat the exercise.

Should he Leave his Parents to Take up a Good Situation?

NE of my hundreds of friends who work deep down in the coal-pit has appealed to me for advice on a matter very greatly concerns his future. He has signed his letter "Troubled Conscience," and he resides near Ruabon.

After saying most kind things about our stories, "With Pick and Lamp" and "King Cricket," he tells me that he has been offered work by a friend in a very large engineering works in a certain Lancashire town. He is to commence work on arriving there at 16s. a week until he is proficient, when his wages will be increased to about 34s. per week. Now, my cham feels that he would like to go to this engineering work, and his parents are willing that he should go; but, somehow, his conscience troubles him, and he thinks that he ought to stay at home with his parents. Not knowing how to decide, "Troubled Conscience" has written to me.

I think I can help my chum out of his perplexity. If he can find satisfactory answers to these questions he should make the suggested change. If he cannot, he had better remain where he is.

Well, then, has the new post better wages and better prospects than the old? Will the new work be more healthy than his present work in the pit?

My friend tells me that he has been ill on and off for a long time, so I gather that he is not of robust constitution, and that a change of occupation would be beneficial to him, provided the conditions were no worse than they are in his present occupation. But I believe my friend's chief difficulty is as to whether it is worth while leaving his home and his parents. That is a natural feeling to occur to every lad who loves his home and his parents. It is a credit to him, but sentiments of this kind must not be considered too deeply by those who have their future to make.

My friend's parents are willing that he should leave them and make his way in the world. That is very sensible of them, for I have no doubt that they will miss their son as much as he will miss his parents. But, though it is a son's duty to respect and love his parents, it is a duty to himself that he should strive to his utmost to promote his own future welfare. If "Troubled Conscience" gives up a good opportunity for rising in the world in order to be constantly near his parents, what will he do when these are taken from him? No, my friend, if prospects are brighter in this situation offered to you in Lancashire, take it, and may good luck and good health attend you.

NOW ON SALE!

THE GREAT UNKNOWN.

A Tale of Nelson Lee, By Maxwell Scott.

PETE'S SCHOOLDAYS.

An absolutely New Story By S. Clarke Hook.

Worth 3/6. ☞ 3d. Only!

"THE BOYS' FRIEND" 3d. LIBRARY.

Fastest Swimming Stroke.

"A WELL WISHER" of Walthamstow has sent me a postcard bearing the following inquiry:

"Do you think that if I practised the breast-stroke in swimming I could become a faster swimmer than if I practised the side or overarm stroke?"

My friend is led to make me this inquiry because he can do the breast-stroke much better than the other strokes. Now, it has been clearly proved amongst amateur and professional swimmers that both the side and the overarm strokes are faster than the breast-stroke. For long distance racing the breast-stroke is, of course, the best to practise, for the swimmer can travel for a good time at a steady pace without feeling the tiring effects of the rapid movements of the limbs necessary in the styles of swimming just mentioned.

But for short distances, where speed is the thing desired, the breast-stroke has to give way. Faster even than the side and the overarm stroke, however, is the trudgeon-stroke, which is adopted now by every racing man of note.

In case my Walthamstow friend is not acquainted with this stroke, I give him particulars of it herewith.

In order to acquire the trudgeon-stroke, a novice should lie in the water on his chest, bring his left arm in front of him in the water straight in front of his head, his right arm being behind, and then bring the left arm down through the water back to the hips. The right arm is then carried out of the water to the same position as that occupied by the left arm before it commenced the stroke, and brought through the water in the same way. This arm-stroke is accomplished alternately, first the left arm being brought through the water, and then the right.

Endeavour to keep the palms of the hands turned away from the body as much as possible, and also bear in mind that the stroke is a kind of double overarm movement.

With regard to the leg-stroke, my friend will find it very easy to accomplish, for the simple reason that it is very much the same stroke as that used in the overarm and side-stroke.

While dealing with the question of swimming, I may say in answer to A. T., of Leeds, that going to the baths three times a week is not harmful provided the swimmer does not stay in the water longer than a quarter of an hour each time. The principal thing to avoid is loitering about the sides of the bath. Undress quickly, get into the water at once, have your swim, and dress quickly again. Always leave the water when you feel very cold, and restore warmth to the body when dressed by exercise without delay, and no ill effects can possibly result.

YOUR EDITOR (H. E.).

DAILY MAIL

OUR LEAGUE CORNER.

The announcement concerning our football league is already causing great excitement amongst the junior football clubs of the country, and it is obvious that we are filling a much-needed want by organising these competitions. We are glad to think that our scheme has met with the approval of our many friends, and that they are lending it their hearty support. There may, however, still be some footballing young men who do not know about what THE REALM is doing on their behalf, and our president (your Editor) would be extremely grateful if his readers would make a point of letting every young footballer see the announcement concerning our league.

Below are the names of some of the clubs which have already made application for admittance to our gigantic organisation:

Dungannon United F.C., Newton Britt. A.F.C. (Leeds), St. Paul's Junior F.C. (Smethwick), Southport Crescent F.C., West Smethwick E.M.S.F.C., Victoria Road Institute A.F.C. (Northampton), Luton Highfields F.C., Mayfield F.C. (Glasgow), Crescent Rovers Y.C. (Bethnal Green), Edmonton Melrose F.C., St. Michaels F.C. (Maida Vale), Princes Field Nonconformist Church F.C. (Leeds), Portland Albion F.C. (Portland Road), St. Saviours F.C. (Everton), Pear Tree Avenue F.C. (Itchen), Silverdale F.C. (Upper Tooting), Grosvenor F.C. (Stepney), Windsor United F.C. (Langham Place), Malden F.C. (Kentish Town), Nelson Villa F.C. (Sheffield), Bitterne Park Argyle F.C. (Southampton), Loughton Ferndale F.C., Norwood Argyle F.C. (Dulwich), Norland United (Shepherd's Bush), Longwood Church Juniors (Huddersfield).

We hope to be able to publish another long list next week.

May I impress on club secretaries the fact that if they will write to me concerning any points they do not quite understand, enclosing a stamped addressed envelope for reply, I shall be glad to tell them what they want to know. All communications should be addressed to "The Secretary, THE BOYS' REALM Football League, 2, Carmelite House, Carmelite Street, London, E.C."

If you have not yet sent in your list of fixtures, please do so at the earliest possible moment. Don't forget to enclose the name and address of the secretary of each opposing club.

OUR CRICKET LEAGUE.

The interest in our cricket league remains unabated, and we are constantly receiving letters of thanks from those clubs which have been awarded prize bats. Here are two grateful epistles which are well worth publishing:

"Meadow Road,
"Quinton, near Birmingham.

"Dear Sir,—I beg to acknowledge with thanks, on behalf of our cricket club (Quinton C.C.), the bat which we received yesterday morning, and with which we are very much pleased. With many, many thanks for your excellent prize,

"I remain, yours faithfully,
"E. DARBY."

"Camden Cricket Club,
"3, Bepham Street,
"Camden Town, N.W.
"July 25th, 1907.

"Dear Sir,—I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your splendid bat, which I received quite safely. On behalf of our club, I thank you sincerely for your kind gift. I can assure you that we, one and all, prize it, and trust it is going to assist us in all our successes. Again thanking you,

"I am, sir, yours faithfully,
"WALTER A. BEARD,
Hon. Sec."

The following clubs in the leagues mentioned have been awarded bats for Saturday, July 20th.

SECTION I.

SUNDERLAND AND DISTRICT CRICKET LEAGUE.

ST. GEORGE'S C.C.—Secretary, Mr. J. Jefferson, 20, Corporation Street, Sunderland.

RAVENSWORTH C.C.—Secretary, Mr. T. W. Brown, 20, Wash Cut, Gledish Road, Sunderland.

SOUTH LONDON SUNDAY SCHOOL LEAGUE.

LANSDOWNE C.C.—Secretary, Mr. T. Vincent, 24, Westcott Street, Bermondsey.

HANLEY AND DISTRICT CRICKET LEAGUE.

EASTWOOD C.C.—Secretary, Mr. J. Hancock, 144, Bottesford Street, Hanley, Staffs.

LEWISHAM AND DISTRICT CRICKET LEAGUE.

LEWISHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL C.C.—Secretary of the League, H. L. Richardson, 29, Radford Road, Lewisham, S.E.

SECTION II.

JUNIOR DIVISION.

GARFIELD C.C.—Secretary, F. C. Harcourt, 124, Cunningham Road, Shepherds Bush, W.

SENIOR DIVISION.

Your Editor does not deem any performance in this division worthy of a prize this week.

Great New Story of Slapton School Starts Next Week!

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** } Nelson Lee's wards.

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

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 disguises 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.

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 airship which he intends selling to the British Government.

He breaks into St. Ninian's the same night, and endeavours to steal the locket, but is prevented in the nick of time by the appearance of Nipper and Dick. Dr. Shuttleworth now places the locket in the school safe, which has a combination lock-the key of which is only known to himself and his two assistant masters.

By unlocking for Dick Fraulein Hoffmann manages to get hold of the key-word which opens the safe, and immediately sends the information to her brother.

Lal sees Karl Hoffmann in the village, and recognises him as the man who made the attempt to steal the locket from the school a few days previously. He shadows him, but the German notices that he is being followed, and by a stratagit movement catches Lal unawares, and sums him with a blow of his fist.

(Now read this week's instalment.)

The Theft of the Locket.

WHILST Hoffmann was examining Lal he heard the sound of approaching wheels coming down the road. Quivering with excitement, he snatched up Lal's cap, clutched the unconscious boy by the collar of his coat, and hastily dragged him down the passage into the yard at the rear of the cottages.

Scarcely had he done so ere a dogcart rattled past the cottages and vanished round the turn in the road. There were two men in the trap, one was the governor of Greystones Prison and the other was Nelson Lee.

When the dogcart had gone past, Karl Hoffmann heaved a sigh of relief; then he gazed at the huddled heap at his feet and ruefully scratched his head.

"I wish this hadn't happened," he growled. "Of course, I was bound to stop him following me; but I didn't want to do him any serious harm. I wonder how much he knows, and how long he has been shadowing me. If I were sure that he hadn't discovered who I am, and where I'm lodging, I'd carry him into the middle of the road, and leave him there for the first passer-by to find."

He pondered for a moment or two; then he shook his head.

"I can't afford to take any risks," he muttered. "It would ruin all my plans if he were found, and recovered consciousness, and told his story to the police before I had time to secure the locket. I should have been better pleased if he had left me alone; but, since he has chosen to cross my path, I'm bound to take steps to prevent his interfering with me any more. The only question is, what shall I do with him?"

He glanced round the dark, deserted yard, and as he did so his eyes fell on the mouth of an old well which had formerly supplied the cottages with drinking water.

"It's the very thing!" he exclaimed. "He'll be quite safe there, and it's a hundred to one there isn't enough water in the well to drown him. He'll probably recover consciousness some time to-morrow morning; but by that time I shall have secured the locket, and shall be on my way to London. He won't be able to climb out of the well when he recovers consciousness, of course, but as soon as I reach London I'll send an anonymous letter to the headmaster of St. Ninian's, telling him where the youngster is. In that way I shall prevent him interfering with my plans without laying myself open to a charge of murder."

Musing thus, he dragged the unconscious boy across the yard, raised him in his arms, and dropped him into the dark mouth of the disused well. Then, after picking up Lal's cap and throwing it down the well, he left the yard, and resumed his journey to Hampton Wingrave.

It was seven o'clock when he reached his lodgings, and ten o'clock he went to bed, but not to sleep.

At midnight he rose and silently dressed. Having assured himself that the rest of the household were asleep, he stole downstairs and let himself out.

By two o'clock he was standing in the fives-court at St. Ninian's, examining the catch of one of the windows of the big dining-hall by the light of a dark lantern. Two minutes later he had forced back the catch, had raised the sash, and stood in the oak-panelled room.

Flashing his lantern round the hall, he quickly perceived the door of the safe in which were kept the famous St. Ninian's plate, and the ancient records relating to the foundation of the school. On the outside of the door, in place of a keyhole, was a small brass cylinder, divided into a number of revolving discs, each of which was engraved with certain letters of the alphabet.

With trembling fingers he turned the first disc round till the letter D appeared, the second until U appeared, the third until S appeared, and the fourth until T appeared. Then he grasped the handle of the safe and pulled it towards him, and even as he did so the big steel door swung noiselessly open, and the contents of the safe were at his mercy.

There was no need to search for the coveted locket. It was the first thing he saw when he directed the light of his lantern into the safe. It was lying on one of the upper shelves, at the foot of a massive silver cup which had been presented to the school by Cardinal Beaufort in the reign of Henry VI.

"Victory at last!" he muttered, in a low, exultant voice.

He picked up the locket and transferred it to his waistcoat pocket. Then, having silently closed the door of the safe, and turned the discs back to their former position, he extinguished his lantern, glided across the hall, and climbed out through the open window.

The Arrival of Nelson Lee.

NELSON LEE had come to Greystones in connection with the Tudor personation case, on which he had been engaged ever since the conclusion of his labours on behalf of the Newport Revere Football Club.

Some day, perhaps, the details of this famous personation case may be published to the world. For our present purpose it is enough to say that the great detective's investigations had led him to the conclusion that the key to the mystery he was trying to solve was in the possession of a certain convict at Greystones Prison.

He was at Hastings when he came to this conclusion, and from there he wired to the governor of Greystones who was an old and intimate friend of his, asking if he might come to the prison and interview the aforesaid convict.

In reply he received a telegram from the governor, stating that the convict in question had been seriously injured the day before by an accident in the quarries, and was in a dying state. "So if you wish to see him alive," the governor added, "you had better come by the first available train."

It is needless to say that Nelson Lee adopted the governor's suggestion. He wired that he would arrive at Bexham, a mile or two from Hampton Wingrave, at 6.30. The governor drove out to meet him; and when the dogcart rattled past the empty cottages on the Hampton Wingrave road, as already described, the detective was on his way to Greystones Prison.

What happened at the prison does not call for detailed description here. It will suffice to say that the convict whom the detective wished to interview was unconscious when Nelson Lee arrived, and remained unconscious until after midnight.

At that time the detective and the governor, together with the prison doctor, sat by the man's bedside, hoping against hope that he would recover consciousness before he died. As events turned out, their hopes were realised, for shortly after midnight the convict rallied; and by half-past twelve the detective had obtained all the information he desired, and the Tudor personation case was finished.

A few minutes after making his confession, the convict breathed his last in the doctor's arms. The detective remained with him till the end; then he and the governor adjourned to the latter's house, and were discussing the circumstances in which they had just listened, when a rather excited warder knocked at the door and entered the room.

"Beggin' your pardon for disturbin' you, sir," he said, addressing the governor, "but the civil guard on duty at the gates thought I'd better come and tell you that a young gentleman from St. Ninian's has just arrived, and seems to be in a pretty bad way."

"A young gentleman from St. Ninian's?" repeated the governor, in a puzzled voice. "How and when did he arrive?"

"The civil guard saw him comin' down the road from the direction of Hampton Wingrave," replied the warder. "He was limpin' badly, and seemed to be in great pain. Just as he reached the gates, he stumbled and sort o' fainted; and when the civil guard went to him, he found it was that Indian boy who came to lunch with you a week or two ago."

The governor sprang to his feet with a startled exclamation.

"It's a young Hindoo named Chota Lal Nath Chandra Das, who is studying at St. Ninian's," he said, turning to Nelson Lee. "He's the son of the late Rajah of Tanjore, whom I met when I was in India many years ago."

The detective nodded.

"I know," he said. "He's the boy who found that unknown man in the drifting boat last January, and who received from him a small gold locket."

"That's the boy," said the governor. "Do you know him?"

"No," said Nelson Lee. "But I read about the locket in the papers, of course, and both Nipper and Dick have frequently mentioned him in their letters. As a matter of fact, the headmaster of St. Ninian's wrote to me a little time ago, and asked me to run down to St. Ninian's at the first opportunity, and examine the locket. It appears that several attempts have been made to steal the locket, and nobody can imagine why. I haven't had time to accept Dr. Shuttleworth's invitation up to the present, but now I am in this neighbourhood, and have finished my work on the Tudor case, I shall probably do so to-morrow. In the meantime, what is Lal, as Nipper calls him, doing here at this hour of the morning?"

"I can't imagine," said the governor. "I must see him at once."

He turned to the warder.

"Where is the boy?" he asked.

"In the porter's lodge, sir," said the warder. "He wanted to walk back to the school as soon as he had recovered from his faint, but the civil guard insisted on strippin' him until he'd sent you word that the boy was here."

"Quite right," said the governor. "You'll come with me?" he said to Nelson Lee.

"Of course," replied the detective.

Five minutes later the two men entered the porter's lodge, which was just inside the prison gates. Lal was sitting in a wooden armchair, looking very white and shaky, and plastered with mud from tip to toe.

"Now tell us what's happened," said the governor, when he had introduced Nelson Lee.

In a few words Lal told them of the affair in Mr. Rant's study, after which he described how he had recognised the unknown burglar in the village; how he had shadowed him; how the man had outwitted him; and how he had lost consciousness.

"When I came round," he continued, "I found I was lying in a disused well, which was three parts full of mud and slime. I tried to climb out, and again I stumbled back about a dozen times, I managed it at last. I then set out for Ninian's, but just as I was passing these gates, I—well, I don't exactly know what happened, but I think I must have fainted. However, I'm all right now," he added cheerfully, "and if you don't mind, I think I'd better be getting back to the school."

The governor laughed.

"And how are you going to get back to St. Ninian's?" he asked.

"Walk, of course!" said Lal.

Again the governor laughed.

"I think not!" he said. "You're not fit to walk as far as the gates, much less to St. Ninian's. If you insist on going back to-night, I'll drive you there, of course; but if you take my advice, you'll stay here until to-morrow morning. What do you think, Mr. Lee?"

"I agree with Lal that he ought to return to St. Ninian's as soon as possible," he said. "They're sure to be very anxious and alarmed about him at the school, and it's hardly fair to keep them in suspense until to-morrow morning."

"Then you think I'd bettor take him back now?"

"Yes; and I'll come with you," said Nelson Lee.

Again Lal protested that he was quite able to walk back to the school, but the two men merely laughed at him; and a quarter of an hour later the governor's dogcart rattled through the prison gates with the governor on the front seat, and Nelson Lee and Lal behind him.

It was ten minutes past two when the dogcart turned in at the gates of St. Ninian's. A moment or two later it pulled up at the gateway of the quad.

And even as the governor reined in the horse, a startled cry rang out from the fives-court, followed by the crack of a revolver.

"Set a Thief to Catch a Thief!"

IT has already been described how Otto Heinrich, by examining Fraulein Hoffmann's blotter, discovered that she had written to her brother Karl telling him what the key-word of the safe was, and urging him to act at once, as the word would be changed on Saturday.

As the letter was written on Wednesday night, and would not be received by Karl until Thursday morning, this meant that he must make the attempt to secure the locket either on Thursday night or Friday night. As the reader knows, he decided to make the attempt on Thursday night.

When Heinrich had spelled out the words on the blotter, and realised how Fraulein Hoffmann had omitted, with a spasm of malignant fury distorted his face. Presently, however, his features relaxed, and his thin and cruel lips half parted in a grim smile of triumph.

"So I've only to keep watch on St. Ninian's to-morrow night and Friday night!" he muttered to himself. "I've only to wait until Herr Karl has broken into the big dining-hall, and opened the safe, and secured the locket! And then—"

He chuckled softly to himself, and replaced the blotter on the desk. Then he put on his hat, went for a stroll, and did not return until bedtime.

From half-past eight next morning until seven in the evening Fraulein Hoffmann was engaged at the girls' school where she acted as assistant German mistress. When she returned to her cottage, she was surprised to find Heinrich packing his portmanteau.

"I've just received a telegram from the German ambassador in London," he explained. "He wishes to see me at once, as some important despatches have been stolen from the embassy. I am leaving Cleveden by the 7.45, which will land me in London about a quarter to eleven to-night. I don't know how long I shall be away, but, of course, as soon as my work in London is finished, I shall come back here and resume my quest for the locket."

Needless to say, there was not a word of truth in this story. Heinrich certainly left Cleveden by the 7.45, but he did not go to London. Having secured a compartment to himself, he rapidly changed his disguise; and when the train reached Exbourne he deposited his portmanteau in the left-luggage office at the station, sauntered round the town for an hour, and returned to the station in time to catch the last train back to Cleveden.

It was dark when he arrived, quite dark, when he stepped out of the train at Cleveden. Walking across to the Station Hotel, he remained in the bar until closing-time; then he strolled at a leisurely pace towards St. Ninian's.

The whole school, of course, were all in darkness when he reached the big iron gates, and the only lights were those in the masters' private quarters. Glancing around, to make sure that he was unobserved, he walked quickly through the gates, glided up the long, deserted drive, and lay down at the edge of the football-field opposite the big dining-hall.

By midnight most of the lights had been extinguished, and half an hour later not a light was visible. But still there was no sign of Karl.

The school clock struck one, and chimed half-past. And then, just when Heinrich was expecting to hear it strike two, he perceived a shadowy figure stealing up the drive.

It was Karl Hoffmann.

Heinrich waited until Karl had vanished into the fives-court, then he rose to his feet, and stealthily glided after him. Crouching in the shadow of the gym., he saw Karl examine one of the windows of the dining-hall by the light of a dark lantern. A moment later he saw him force the catch, raise the sash, and climb into the room.

Scarcely daring to breathe, Heinrich crept to the open window and peered through. Karl was standing in front of the safe turning the revolving discs of the letter-lock. Presently the big steel door swung open, and Heinrich saw Karl thrust his hand into the safe, draw out the locket, and slip it into his waistcoat-pocket. Then, whipping out his revolver, Heinrich stepped to the side of the window, and waited for his unsuspecting victim to emerge.

As already described, when Karl had secured the locket, he closed the safe door, and turned the discs back to their former position. Having extinguished his dark lantern, he thrust it into his pocket and buttoned up his coat. Then he stole back to the open window and climbed out into the fives-court.

"I'd better shut the window, so as to postpone the discovery of the theft as long as possible," he muttered to himself.

He turned to close the window, and, even as he did so, a hand fell on his shoulder! With a startled cry of terror, which burst from his lips ere he could restrain it, he spun round on his heel, and found himself face to face with Otto Heinrich.

"Give me the locket, quickly, or I fire!" hissed Heinrich, thrusting the muzzle of his revolver into Karl's face.

Scarcely knowing what he was doing, Karl lashed out with his fist and knocked up the revolver. The sudden jerk caused Heinrich's finger to press the trigger. A loud report rang through the fives-court, and a bullet soared upwards into the air. Then, with the swiftness of a lightning flash, Karl dodged past Heinrich and took to his heels.

Now, Heinrich had not meant to fire his revolver, knowing that the report would arouse the inmates of the school. He had expected that the sight of the weapon would be enough

for Karl, and that the latter would give up the locket without compelling him to fire. Seeing that Karl's blow had caused the revolver to explode, however, the mischief had been done; and there was nothing to be gained, therefore, by refraining from firing again.

It must not be supposed that Heinrich argued all this out in the deliberate fashion in which it is here set down. But that was the conclusion at which he instantly arrived at; and as Karl dodged past him and took to his heels, Heinrich swung round on his heel and fired a second time.

The bullet struck Karl between the shoulders. With an ear-splitting shriek he leaped into the air, and fell, writhing, to the ground. Quivering with excitement, Heinrich darted towards him and fell on his knees by his side. With trembling hands he unbuttoned Karl's coat; but ere he could plunge his fingers into the waistcoat-pocket where the locket lay, Nelson Lee dashed into the fives-court, with the governor of Greystones at his heels, and Lal a little way behind.

With a hoarse cry of mingled fear and baffled rage, Heinrich sprang to his feet. Scarcely had he done so ere Nelson Lee's hands were at his throat. For one brief instant the two men struggled in a desperate combat; then, with a herculean effort, born of the strength which comes from despair, Heinrich hurled the detective aside, eluded the governor's outstretched hands, and dashed out of the fives-court with the fleetness of a hunted hare.

The Truth at Last.

"YOU stay and attend to this fellow!" cried the governor excitedly. "We'll go after the other chap!"

Without waiting for Nelson Lee's reply, the governor and Lal dashed off in pursuit of Heinrich, whilst Nelson Lee knelt down beside Karl, who had fainted from loss of blood, and set to work to examine him.

In the meantime the reports of the two revolver-shots had awakened everybody in the school, and whilst Nelson Lee was endeavouring to staunch the bleeding from the wound between Karl's shoulders, two half-dressed schoolboys rushed into the fives-court in a state of seething excitement. One was Nipper, and the other was Dick; and their bewildered amazement when they saw Nelson Lee may be imagined but cannot be described.

"The guv'nor!" gasped Nipper. "You here! When did you come? What's happened? Who is this? Great Scott! It's that fellow who broke into Mr. Rant's study a fortnight ago! Has he been having another try to steal the locket?"

Nelson Lee began to explain what had happened, so far as he knew what had happened, but before he had spoken a dozen words Dr. Shuttleworth and Mr. Rant arrived, and were quickly followed by an excited crowd of masters and boys, most of whom were in their shirts and trousers only.

Dr. Shuttleworth, as the reader may imagine, was quite as astounded to see Nelson Lee as Nipper and Dick had been. He bombarded the detective with agitated questions, and whilst Nelson Lee was trying his best to answer them and to attend to the wounded man at the same time, the governor and Lal returned with the news that the fugitive had escaped.

"I wonder who he was?" said the Head.

"He was Otto Heinrich, sir," said Lal promptly.

"Otto Heinrich!" cried twenty excited voices in the same breath.

"Yes," said Lal. "I spotted him as soon as I saw him; and this chap"—pointing to Karl—"is the fellow who broke into Mr. Rant's study the other week."

"So Hamilton says," said the Head.

"There's no doubt about it, sir," said Lal.

"Not a bit!" chorused Dick and Jack Blunter. "This is the fellow, right enough."

"I spotted him first in the village," said Lal. And he briefly described how he had shadowed Karl, how the latter had outwitted him and stunned him, and how he had escaped and met his friends from Greystones.

"What do you make of the affair?" asked the Head, turning to Nelson Lee at the conclusion of Lal's story. "What do you think has happened? We have known for some time that Heinrich was desperately anxious to secure the locket, and when this young fellow broke into Mr. Rant's study a fortnight ago and tried to steal the locket, we naturally concluded that he was a confederate of Heinrich's. But if the two men were in league, why did Heinrich shoot him?"

"We can discuss those questions afterwards," said Nelson Lee, who by this time had succeeded in staunching the bleeding from Karl's wound. "At the moment, the first thing to be done is to carry this young fellow indoors, and send for the doctor as quickly as possible."

"Is he seriously injured, do you think?" asked the Head, when Karl had been laid on the couch in Mr. Rant's study and a messenger had been despatched for the village doctor.

The detective nodded.

"He's done for, I'm afraid!" he said. "In fact, I shall be very surprised if he lives till daybreak."

While they were waiting for the doctor, the Head told Nelson Lee of the various attempts which had been made to steal the locket, and of the mystery that surrounded it.

"I am very anxious for you to examine it, and see if you can find out why anybody should desire to steal it," he said. "It is now in the big safe in the dining-hall. May I fetch it and show it you while we're waiting for the doctor?"

The detective assented, and the Head departed. Five minutes later he came back with a white, scared face.

"It has gone!" he said, in an agitated voice. "The safe does not appear to have been tampered with; but one of the windows is open, and the locket has disappeared."

Before Nelson Lee could offer any comment on this startling announcement, the doctor arrived. He examined Karl, and confirmed the detective's opinion.

"Nothing can be done for him," he said. "He is sinking fast."

"Do you think he will recover consciousness before he dies?" asked the Head.

The doctor had no need to express an opinion on this point, for at that moment Karl heaved a long-drawn, fluttering sigh, and opened his eyes. In a feeble voice, speaking in German, he asked for water; and when he had moistened his lips from the glass which Nelson Lee handed him he turned to the doctor, and, still speaking in German, asked:

"Is there any hope for me?"

"Whilst there's life there's always hope, you know," said the doctor evasively.

Karl knew what that meant. He closed his eyes, and two big tears trickled down his cheeks. Presently he raised his eyes, and looked up into the doctor's face again.

"Send for my sister," he said, in a low voice—"Fraulein Hoffmann. You know where she lives?"

"Your sister?" exclaimed the astonished doctor. "Are you Fraulein Hoffmann's brother?"

"Yes," said Karl. "And—and I should like to see her once more before I die."

When a messenger had been despatched to the little cottage on the Hillfoot Road, Nelson Lee sat down beside the couch and took the dying man's hand in his own.

"I am a detective," he said. "My name is Nelson Lee. You are the only person who can throw any light on this tragic affair, and you can also probably throw considerable light on the events of the last few weeks. You are dying. Secrecy can avail you nothing now. Will you help us to solve the mystery of the locket?"

"What do you want to know?" asked Karl.

"In the first place, was it Otto Heinrich who shot you?" asked Nelson Lee.

Karl nodded.

"Why?"

"Because I wouldn't give him the locket."

The detective started.

"Then the locket must have been in your possession at the time," he said. "Now I begin to understand. It was you who opened the window in the dining-hall? It was you who stole the locket from the safe?"

Again Karl nodded.

"Heinrich was lying in wait for you outside, and when you climbed out of the window he asked you for the locket? When you refused to give it up, he shot you?"

For the third time Karl nodded.

"Did he get the locket after he had shot you?"

"I don't know. I remember nothing after hearing the crack of his revolver until I opened my eyes and found myself here. I put the locket in my waistcoat-pocket when I took it from the safe. If he didn't get it, it will still be there. My arms are paralysed; I cannot move them. Feel in my pocket, and see if it is still there."

The detective deftly inserted a finger and thumb into the pocket.

"Yes, here it is," he said; and he drew the locket out.

"Thank Heaven he didn't get it, after all!" sighed Karl. "Now, examine the locket, and tell me what you make of it."

The detective opened the locket, removed the two glass discs, the photographs, and the lock of hair. He turned the locket over, and examined the front, and then the back.

"Ah! What's this?" the detective suddenly exclaimed. "A secret spring—eh? This grows interesting."

He pressed the secret spring, the false back of the locket snapped open, and he drew out a small, round, gelatine film.

"Wonderful man," murmured Karl admiringly — "wonderful man! There's no baffling you, I see. What a pity they didn't send for you before!"

The detective was not listening to these compliments. He was examining the gelatine film with the profoundest interest.

"This is a micro-photograph, isn't it?" he asked.

"Yes," said Karl.

"What of?"

For a moment longer—but only for a moment—Karl hesitated.

"Ah, well," he said at last, "seeing that you have discovered so much, I may as well tell you all. It is a photograph, taken by a detective camera, of a secret treaty between Germany and Russia, which was signed last January."

And so at last the truth was out. And five minutes after he had concluded, the door opened, and Fraulein Hoffmann tottered into the room, flung herself on her knees beside the couch with a heart-rending cry, and threw her arms around her dying brother's neck.

And now we will leave them, for such scenes are too sacred for the prying eyes of strangers. It is enough to say that half an hour later Karl Hoffmann's spirit had winged its flight, and his heart-broken sister was sobbing in the arms of the headmaster's wife.

(The concluding chapter of this splendid story will appear in next week's BOYS' REALM.)

THE BOYS' REALM FOOTBALL LEAGUE.

All About our STARTLING NEW PROGRAMME for 1907-8.

SOLID SILVER CUPS, SILVER MEDALS, AND HUNDREDS OF MATCH FOOTBALLS TO BE GIVEN AWAY!

Your Editor is prepared to present a Large Number of Solid Silver Challenge Cups to Certain Bona-fide Football Leagues throughout the country. Secretaries of Leagues desirous to possess one of these handsome Trophies should make application now. Form of application will be found below.

The following are the Conditions under which the Cups will be given:

I. The Leagues must play the game according to the Rules laid down by the Football Association.

II. Each League must be a properly constituted League in which the clubs engage in a genuine competition.

III. Each form of entry must be accompanied by full particulars of the competition, which must be of one season's standing, or if formed this season must be accompanied by proof that it is a genuine competition.

LEAGUE RESULTS.

In connection with these great League Competitions for THE BOYS' REALM Challenge Cups we intend to publish records of the positions of the clubs in the various Leagues as the season progresses, and to award weekly prizes of footballs for good performances.

Football Club Secretaries are requested to draw the attention of their League Secretaries to this announcement of your Editor's splendid offer.

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.

The following Leagues are being formed for the benefit of Unattached Clubs throughout the country—

Section 1. "THE BOYS' REALM" LONDON LEAGUE.

TWO HANDSOME SILVER TROPHIES (Senior and Junior) for open competition.

DIVISION ONE—NORTH. DIVISION TWO—SOUTH.

Finalists (Senior and Junior) in each Division to play each other at Close of Season for the Cups. The losing teams in the Finals to receive Solid Silver Medals.

Average age of teams in Junior Division not to exceed fifteen. Average age of teams in Senior Division not to exceed eighteen.

Section 2. "THE BOYS' REALM" SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

Open to any football club in the South of England, excluding Greater London.

TWO HANDSOME SOLID SILVER TROPHIES (Senior and Junior) for open competition.

Average age of teams in Junior Division not to exceed fifteen. Average age of teams in Senior Division not to exceed eighteen.

Section 3. "THE BOYS' REALM" NORTHERN LEAGUE.

Open to any football club in the North of England.

TWO HANDSOME SOLID SILVER CUPS (Senior and Junior) for open competition.

Average age of teams in Junior Division not to exceed fifteen. Average age of teams in Senior Division not to exceed eighteen.

Section 4. "THE BOYS' REALM" SCOTS LEAGUE.

Open to any football club in Scotland.

TWO HANDSOME SOLID SILVER TROPHIES (Senior and Junior) for open competition.

Average age of teams in Junior Division not to exceed fifteen. Average age of teams in Senior Division not to exceed eighteen.

Section 5. "THE BOYS' REALM" IRISH LEAGUE.

Open to any football club in Ireland.

TWO HANDSOME SILVER TROPHIES (Senior and Junior) for open competition.

Average age of teams in Junior Division not to exceed fifteen. Average age of teams in Senior Division not to exceed eighteen.

N.B.—These Trophies are only to be put up for competition on condition that a certain number of clubs make application to compete for them, such number to be decided by Your Editor at an early date.

RULES AND CONDITIONS.

(a) Only clubs which have been established at least one season (exclusive of 1907-8) are eligible for entry, and the respectability and standing of each club must be vouched for by some responsible person.

(b) Clubs desirous of entering one of the above contests must fill in the form below, and send it, together with a list of their engagements, with the average age of members of the opposing clubs, and a letter from the responsible head of the club, to the Secretary, BOYS' REALM Football League, 2, Carmelite House, Carmelite Street, London, E.C., as soon as possible.

(c) The cups will be presented at the end of the football season to the clubs in each section which Your Editor, the Secretary, and another referee, consider to hold the best records in the first twenty-four matches actually played. It does not matter on what date the first match is played. Wednesday and Thursday clubs may compete. Points to be awarded as follows: Two for a win, one for a draw; the points to be counted as in the First and Second Divisions of the Football League. If two or more clubs finish with an equal number of points, the goal average shall decide the winners. The decision of the referees (Your Editor, the Secretary, and another) on any question of dispute in this competition shall be final.

(d) After the contest has started we shall, from time to time, publish tables showing the positions of the clubs at the time of going to press. Secretaries must, therefore, send in each week the full result of their matches. Each result must also be accompanied by a notification from the Captain of the opposing team signifying that the report is quite correct. These results must reach the Secretary of THE BOYS' REALM League at the above address not later than the Tuesday morning following the match.

(e) Strict investigation will be made by the controllers of the League into the bona-fides of the entering clubs and their fixtures.

(f) All matches to be played under the Rules of the Football Association.

(g) Cup to be won outright. No club which has previously won a Cup will be allowed to compete again for a period of three years, although they may send in their reports in order to participate in our weekly award of Prize Footballs.

(h) Opposing teams must, in every case, be of the same average age.

THIS FORM FOR SINGLE UNATTACHED CLUBS ONLY.

Date..... Club.....

Playing Ground .....

Average Age of Members .....

Colours .....

The above club is desirous of entering THE BOYS' REALM League (Section .....), 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 .....

New Readers May Start To-day!

KING CRICKET!

A Fascinating New Story of County Cricket.

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

*****

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 the Loamshire team, with a foul blow in the ribs, quite within reach of Arthur. Blane is unable to play in the next match against Yorkshire, and Ponsonby is appointed in his place as captain. Ponsonby is not a success, and has to resign his captaincy. Arthur Lovell is offered the post, but refuses the honour, much to Colonel Hilton's chagrin.

Loamshire play the South Africans, and the latter get decidedly the better of the game, defeating the home county by a large majority. Arthur and Kit break friendship through the agency of Len Valance. During the next match with Hampshire, Ponsonby, the Loamshire captain, falls and badly sprains his leg, making it impossible for him to play for some time. The match is abandoned owing to rain. The following day Colonel Hilton again offers the captaincy of Loamshire to Arthur Lovell suit prevails on him to accept. On hearing of his acceptance, Lagden hints to Arthur that his orders will not be obeyed.

The following day the match with Kent starts, and Lagden, by his insubordination and faulty play, causes Lovell's anger. Lovell orders him off the field. At Colonel Hilton's behest Lagden is allowed to return and bat during the Loamshire innings, when the amateur shows his entire lack of gratitude for his reprieve by deliberately slipping whilst crossing the turf, and causing the downfall of Lovell's wicket.

(How read this week's instalment.)

All Down for 190.

ARTHUR LOVELL strode into the pavilion on the Tonbridge ground, his face pale and set. He did not speak a word. It was useless to speak. The mischief was done now, and he felt that he had only himself to blame.

For the second time he had yielded against his better judgment, and for the second time he had had to suffer for it.

For the colonel's sake he had departed from his resolution. He had played Geoffrey Lagden, and Lagden had repaid him by direct treachery. He had been weak, weaker than a cricket captain should ever allow himself to be, and the result was what he might have expected. Many a curious glance was thrown at Lovell as he came in. Everyone, of course, had seen and noted the incident on the pitch, and wondered at Geoffrey Lagden's extreme clumsiness. Few suspected that it was anything worse than that.

There were no surprised by the expression upon the Loamshire captain's face as he brought in his bat after a splendid innings, which had been cut short by the action of his partner at the wickets.

There was no reason why Lovell should not have batted on to the end and been not out at the close of the Loamshire innings, and a second century might very possibly have rewarded him, but for Geoffrey Lagden.

But it could not be helped now. Lagden was out at the wickets, and Arthur Lovell was out for 143.

Kit Valance was next man in. He glanced curiously at Arthur as he passed him. His glance showed that he, at least, knew the truth, that Lagden's action had been no accident, but was planned to cause the fall of the Loamshire captain's wicket.

The Kent bowlers resumed their attack, while the enclosures were in a buzz of comment upon the action of Lagden.

It was observed, and remarked upon, that Kit Valance gave the amateur a very wide berth in making his first run.

"Extremely clumsy of Lagden," Colonel Hilton remarked to Molly. "I should never have expected anything of the kind of him."

Molly nodded, without speaking. She did not believe that it was an accident, but that Lagden had purposely sent his captain out, and the girl's heart was full of indignation.

Fortescue was another who guessed the truth, and in his plain-spoken way he said as much to the Loamshire captain.

"That was no accident, Lovell," the young amateur remarked. "If I were in your place, by Jove, there would be a row about it."

Lovell smiled grimly.

"There will be a row," he replied briefly.

"All the better. It was as deliberate a thing as I ever saw," said Fortescue. "The wonder is that the whole crowd didn't see it. I can't see what's the matter with Lagden to-day. He's on the warpath, and no mistake!"

Arthur nodded, and passed on. He did not want to discuss the matter with members of the team. It would be time enough to talk about it when it came before the county committee.

Lagden was facing the bowling of Frank Woolley now, but he did not stand long against it. He had effected his purpose, and sent the Loamshire captain back to the pavilion, and, to his relief, he saw that the incident had passed without suspicion.

But he knew that Lovell knew the truth; he knew that some others, at least, would guess it, and he was not easy in his mind. He could not help thinking of the reckoning to come, for it was too much to expect that Lovell would be silent after such an occurrence. And a batsman needed his whole attention to face the bowling of the young Kent colt.

Lagden was very soon caught napping. Frank Woolley sent down a ball which Arthur Lovell would have stopped with ease, but which curled under Lagden's bat and knocked his leg-stump out of the ground.

"How's that?" called out Woolley, with a smile.

"Out!"

Geoffrey Lagden turned towards the pavilion and walked away. He was out; his hopes had not been realised. But he felt a spiteful satisfaction in the knowledge that Lovell's wicket was down. In his present bitter mood he would gladly have sacrificed the match to prevent his rival from making a big score.

Chichester joined Kit Valance at the wickets. He did not stay there long. A lightning ball from Fielder whipped his middle stump out of the ground, and he departed from the wicket without having broken his duck.

The last man in came out of the pavilion with his bat.

It was close upon time now for the stumps to be drawn, but there was time for Fielder to take another wicket, as it proved.

Wentworth, who was last man in, faced Fielder's bowling for a single over, and the last ball went off his bat fairly into the hands of Marsden, the Kent captain.

The Loamshire score now totalled 190.

They were six runs behind Kent on the first innings, the champions having knocked up 196.

With the fall of the last Loamshire wicket play ended for the day.

The hopes of the Kent cricketers were high for the following day, but doubt and discord were present in the Loamshire camp.

Kit Valance Makes a Discovery.

COLONEL HILTON tugged at his grey moustache.

"I cannot credit it, Lovell! 'A Loamshire cricketer—a gentleman player—deliberately send out his captain! Absurd!"

The colonel's manner and tone were very decided.

The Oval Cricket Ground, the home of the Surrey C.C., where the great Test Match against the South Africans will be played on Monday.

"Then you have made up your mind, Lovell?" said the colonel stiffly.

"Yes, sir."

"And you have decided——"

"That Lagden does not play in the team again while I am captain."

"You are aware that your action may be misconstrued——"

"I am quite aware of that," said Arthur, with a slight curl of the lip that added to the irritation of the county magnate.

"And you are prepared to face adverse criticism of the bitterest kind?" said the colonel tartly.

"I have no other choice."

"You have the choice of playing Lagden."

"I have my duty to do to the county and to myself. I gave him a second chance, and he has taken a foul advantage of it. But I am quite in your hands. I know your position is a difficult one, sir, especially considering James Lagden's influence in the club. I am quite ready to resign."

"That is impossible—for the present, at least."

"Then it is a question of choosing Lagden or me, sir, and you must decide for yourself," said Arthur Lovell. "I have been patient—so patient that those who dislike me have taken advantage of it, and never expected me to resist. If I am to be captain of Loamshire, I must be obeyed by the team. Otherwise the captaincy is only a farce. But there is one point you may remember. We may not need Lagden. I think it quite possible that we shall win in the last innings without all our wickets falling, and the general public, at least, may then be left to imagine that Lagden would have been played if we had wanted him."

"On the other hand, we may need every man at the finish."

"In that case, I can only say that it is wiser to play a man short than to play a proved traitor."

The colonel made an irritable gesture.

"I tell you I cannot believe that of him!"

"Unfortunately, there is no doubt in my mind. The cricket world is already buzzing with the incident of Lagden being ordered off the field. I suppose you do not want a repetition of something of that sort? There has been scandal enough, I should think!"

"Quite enough," said Colonel Hilton. "In fact, too much. You may not be aware of it, Lovell, but Lagden and his friends have not been without complaints to make."

"Indeed!" said Arthur indifferently.

"Yes, indeed! It is being muttered in the pavilion that you, Lovell, have determined to pass over the amateurs as far as possible, and make it a professional's game—the reverse, in fact, of what Ponsonby did when he captained the team against Yorkshire."

Arthur Lovell shrugged his shoulders.

"And do you believe that?" he asked.

"No, sir," said the colonel, raising his tones a little, "I do not believe it, Lovell; but I mention it to show you that there are complaints on both sides."

Lovell was silent for a moment or two.

"Well, sir," he said at last, "I can say no more than I have already said. As captain of Loamshire, I cannot play Lagden. You must choose between him and me. I don't want to stand upon my rights, and I place myself in your hands entirely. I am only too willing to go back to my former place as a mere ordinary player in the team." And, raising his cap, the young cricketer walked away.

He left the colonel wearing a decidedly worried look. The colonel, as manager and general providence of a county cricket club at a difficult point in its career was not a sinecure, as the colonel knew only too well.

Geoffrey Lagden's father was one of the wealthiest and most influential backers of the club, and was said to be unduly fond, in fact, had not the slightest intention of being ignored.

The difficulties in the team, added to the difficulties in the committee-room, were enough to exasperate a less cricketing manager than the colonel, and he only desired all concerned to pull together, as they should have done, for the honour of the county.

Arthur Lovell knew exactly how the colonel stood, and he had been very careful not to add to his difficulties more than he could help.

But Lagden's conduct had left him no choice but to act as he had now done. And, if his captaincy of Loamshire was to be anything more than a farce, if the county was to have any chance of beating the champions in this match, it was necessary for him to be firm.

Lovell had changed his clothes after the match, and after the talk with the colonel he left the Tonbridge ground for a stroll in the country. It was yet early in the evening, and the light, if not good enough for cricket, was ample for the purpose of seeing something of the beautiful Kentish countryside.

Near the pavilion he passed Kit Valance. The latter was standing, bowler nodded distantly as he caught Arthur's eye, but did not speak. The breach between the two champion cricketers of Loamshire seemed to have grown wider than ever, and it seemed unlikely now that it would ever be bridged.

Kit could not forgive his erstwhile chum for his belief that Len Valance, the scapegrace, had made that cowardly attack in the Loamshire lane upon Blane, the former county captain.

Arthur knew it to be the truth.

But Kit could not be blamed for refusing to believe it of his twin brother, rascal as he knew Len to be.

And so the coldness had fallen between them, and with every day that it lasted it grew more fixed. It had taken the Loamshire team by surprise at first, for the two young professionals had always been deemed inseparable. But they had become used to it soon enough, and Geoffrey Lagden, at least, was glad enough to see the breach between the once firm friends.

Kit Valance, like Arthur, intended to spend what remained of the daylight in a stroll, but he waited till Arthur was gone. The young bowler was in a depressed mood. In spite of the quarrel, the old friendship was strong and true in his heart; he could not have torn it out had he tried to do so. And at this juncture Arthur Lovell was more than ever in need of a friend.

With the team against him, in the new and trying position of captain, and with at least part of the committee hostile, Arthur's lines were not cast in pleasant places. At such a time he would have been comforted and strengthened by the advice and sympathy of a true chum. Kit felt it, and yet he could say nothing—could do nothing—because of this unhappy breach Len the scapegrace had brought about between him and his friend.

And for this reason, more than any other, the breaking of the old ties weighed heavily upon the heart of the young bowler.

He strolled away through the pleasant, shady lanes in the growing dusk of the sweet summer evening. The bulk of the work had fallen to Kit that day, and he was more tired than usual

after a day's cricket. He wanted to think, too, about Arthur and his difficulties. A sloping, grassy bank in the shade of a mass of flowering bushes tempted him, and he threw himself down to rest.

In the drowsy dusk, with the monotonous buzz of insects in his ears, it was not long before Kit Valance dropped into slumber. He awoke with the sound of voices in his ears.

For some moments his dreams still lingered, and he did not realise where he was; but a voice he knew well recalled him to himself. It was the voice of his brother Len.

"All in good time, Mr. Lagden."

Kit started in surprise. What was Len Valance doing down there at Tonbridge, and in company with Lagden—evidently a secret meeting, too, for no man is a solitary one?

"You have done nothing, so far," came the sharp, irritable tones of Geoffrey Lagden; "you are all talk, and nothing else. What have you done, except the idiotic blunder about Blane?"

"That was a bad mistake, but it could not be helped. It was dark, and——"

"Oh, confound your excuses; they don't alter the case! The fact remains that you struck down Blane, and that Arthur Lovell is still as well as ever; and Captain of Loamshire, hang him!"

And an oath followed the words.

Kit Valance remained motionless. Had he wished to move he could not have done so then, for what he heard had almost stunned him for the moment. It was a revelation, with a vengeance!

Lovell was right. Here was proof—as much as he could want. It had indeed been Len's hand that struck that cowardly blow and laid the Loamshire skipper on a bed of sickness from which he had not yet risen. Kit knew that now, and he knew more—that Geoffrey Lagden, the Loamshire amateur, had been the instigator of the deed.

The young bowler lay still, his face very white, breathing hard.

His brother was guilty. Arthur Lovell had been right. That was the thought that was whirling in his brain.

"He need not remain captain of Loamshire long," said Len, in his silky, insinuating voice. "I don't like him any more than you do. I know I made a mistake once; but one swallow does not make a summer."

"I cannot trust you."

"Then you intend to take what happened to-day lying down?"

Lagden started.

"What do you mean?"

The scapegrace gave a chuckle.

He was on the ground, and I saw it all. Lovell ordered you off the field in the sight of thousands of people. It will be in all the papers to-morrow."

Lagden uttered a curse.

"All the world will know it," resumed Len, with evident relish. "Loamshire has been attracting a lot of attention lately, and such a sensational incident is not likely to be missed by cricket reporters, who seldom have such an item to put into their columns. Is it true that you are left out for the rest of the match?"

"Mind your own business!"

"Oh, I heard some fellows saying so, that's all! I shall be able to see—and so will everybody else, for that matter," said Len coolly.

Lagden gritted his teeth.

"Listen to me! If you can put a spoke in Lovell's wheel for me, you can name your own price. I will speak frankly to you. I am left out of the team. Lovell will play a man short against a team like the Kent lot, rather than play me."

"No wonder, after the trick you served him to-day!"

"That was an accident, of course."

Len Valance grinned.

"You can tell that to Colonel Hilton," he remarked. "It is a little too thin for me."

"Well, I'm not here to discuss that, anyhow!" snapped Lagden. "It's no business of yours, confound your cheek! As I said, Lovell is determined not to play me, either to bowl against Kent to-morrow or to bat in our second innings. I am wiped clean off the list! You know, of course, what that means! He will give his reasons to the committee—that I played the side false. Whatever comes of it, something of the suspicion will always stick to me. I have enemies in the club. Listen! It must not come to that! Arthur Lovell must not captain Loamshire a day longer—not for the finish of this match."

"That was what I——"

"Listen to me! If he has to drop out of the eleven because of an—an accident, there will be no question of dropping me. The case against me rests entirely upon Arthur Lovell. If he were out of the team, it is extremely likely that I should be given the captaincy to see Loamshire through this match, at all events."

"And you might keep it afterwards?"

"I might—with luck. But it is the immediate present that I am concerned about. I have done a great deal for you, Len Valance. At a word from me my father would kick you out of his employ, as you have deserved a dozen times. You have blundered like a fool once. Fail me this time, and I am done with you. But——"

"If I succeed, what is it worth to you?"

"A hundred pounds."

Len Valance drew a deep breath.

"Then count upon my success."

"That's easy enough for you to say!" sneered Lagden suspiciously. "But I want something a little more definite."

"You shall have it! What you wish done can be done to-night. Give me your I.O.U. for the hundred pounds, and I will tell you what I have planned—which cannot fail."

Lagden hesitated for a moment, and then wrote the required I.O.U. on a leaf of his pocket-book, which he tore out and gave to Len Valance.

On the other side of the bush, scarce six paces distant, but his presence utterly unsuspected, Kit Valance lay silent—motionless.

The thought of revealing his presence had passed from his mind for a moment.

And now not like a fellow to play the listener if he could help it.

But the knowledge that Arthur Lovell's safety—perhaps his life—depended upon his learning the details of this cowardly plot kept him silent there.

He must save Lovell!

Len Valance glanced at the paper Lagden handed him, folded it, and put it into his pocket. Lagden eyed him impatiently.

"And now for the plan!" he exclaimed.

"It is already carried out!" said the scapegrace coolly.

Geoffrey Lagden started.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that I saw my opportunity and seized it a short time before the hour fixed for this appointment," said Len Valance. "It is all one to you, I suppose. So long as the work is done, you need not care how or when."

"No," said Lagden, drawing a deep breath. "But—but you do not mean to say that it is done already?"

"I cannot exactly say; but, if it is not done, it may come about any moment, for Lovell cannot fail to fall into the trap."

"Explain yourself, and don't beat about the bush!" said Lagden savagely. "What have you done?"

"I was coming here, to be early for our meeting, when I caught sight of Lovell," said Len, his voice sinking low—so low that Kit had to strain his ears to follow the words. "I was taking a short-cut through the Highbank Wood, on the north of the town. Do you know it?"

"I have heard of it. Go on!"

"In the wood there is a deep cutting—part of an ancient chalk-pit, disused now for centuries, I believe. In the narrowest place it is crossed by a plank, and under the plank it is twenty feet deep."

Lagden's eyes blazed with growing excitement.

"Lovell crossed that plank to get to the upper wood?" said Len, in a whisper now, his face white. "There was no other way to return to the town. I knew he must cross the plank again. He did not see me. And I——"

"What did you do? Fool! Speak out!"

"I loosened the plank on the near side when he was gone; and, when he crosses it again, when his weight is upon it, it will slip down, and Lovell——"

"Go back! Go back!" But it was too late. Before Kit's warning fairly reached Lovell's ears, before he could realise his peril, the weight of his step had told upon the plank, and the further end of it had slipped from its slight support.

"Heavens, man! He will be killed!" stammered Lagden.

"I—I did not——"

Len laughed nervously—scoffingly.

"He is not likely to be killed. But he will not, I expect, play in cricket again this season, and that is what you want and what I want."

"But—but suppose someone else should pass the plank——"

"That is very unlikely. The spot is a lonely one, and always avoided after dark. Lovell is the only one likely to pass the plank, and probably he has already done so."

Lagden drew a deep, quivering breath.

"In that case, you have well earned your reward. I did not think of his death; but better anything than the humiliation he has planned to inflict upon me. I—— Great Heaven! What is that?"

It was the sound of a running form tearing rapidly through the thickets.

Kit Valance had only waited to hear enough—to learn what was the nature of the peril that shadowed his old chum's life.

He waited for no more.

Len's declaration that the "accident" had probably already occurred struck a chill to the young bowler's heart.

If there was yet time, he must save Lovell!

Dearly he would have liked to confront the two scoundrels—to hurl at them the fierce words of scorn and contempt that surged up from his heart.

But there was no time.

Arthur Lovell was in danger!

And, having learned what the danger was, Kit sprang to his feet and darted away. He must save Lovell! It would be time to reckon with the plotters afterwards.

It was only for a moment that the startled scoundrels heard him brushing through the thickets.

Then he was gone!

Silence fell again; and Len Valance and Lagden looked at each other with pallid faces.

Someone—they did not know whom—had overheard the cowardly plot. Their guilty secret was no longer in their own keeping!

"My hat!" muttered the scapegrace.

Lagden did not speak.

Without a word he turned and strode away.

Too Late!

KIT VALANCE ran as he had never run before in his life.

When Kit was fielding for Loamshire, he could put on the pace of a Fry, and many a time the spectators had marvelled to see him crossing the green turf like a flash of white.

But never on the cricket field had he run as he ran now!

His chum was in danger!

The knowledge of that was more than enough to make the young cricketer put forth his best efforts.

He knew the way, for he had been over the ground before. A mile of lane and field and wood lay between him and the spot where the death-trap was laid for Arthur Lovell.

A mile that flew under his feet—and yet seemed to be endless!

He took the shortest cuts he knew, and ere many minutes had fled he was within the Highbank Wood, and racing on desperately towards the cutting.

Well he knew the cutting crossed by the plank under the shadows of the old trees.

He broke through the thickets, panting, scarlet with exertion in the warm, summer weather, and came in sight of the cutting.

The dusk was deepening in the wood, and objects were growing blurred and indistinct to the view.

But clearly enough the young bowler saw the deep cutting, and the single plank that crossed it in the narrowest part.

And he saw more than that!

He saw an athletic form he knew well on the other side of the chasm—the form of Arthur Lovell, known to him at once in spite of the dusk.

He put on a spurt and raced forward.

Lovell had come out of the trees on the other side, and was stepping upon the plank, to cross the cutting on his way back to Tonbridge.

He had not the slightest suspicion that all was not well.

The plank, with the ends of it resting in the tufts of grass on either side of the cutting, looked exactly as when he had left it an hour before.

There was nothing to indicate that one end had been shifted from its firm support, and now rested lightly, held by a fragment of jutting chalk.

There was nothing to arouse Arthur's suspicion.

He set his foot upon the plank.

At the same moment Kit came tearing down towards the cutting, waving his hand and shouting hoarsely.

Lovell looked up in surprise.

"Stop!"

Lovell stopped.

But his weight was already on the plank.

"Stop, on your life! Go back, go back!"

Kit shrieked out the words in an agony of fear.

"Go back! Go back!"

But it was too late. Before the warning fairly reached Lovell's ears, before he could realise his peril, the weight of his step had told upon the plank, and the further end of it had slipped from its slight support.

Lovell made a desperate attempt to spring back to the side he had left, but in vain. His feet slid along the plank as it sloped, and he was shot forward into the depths of the cutting. Kit halted, sick with horror and despair.

Too late! Too late!

He stood still, his hands clenched, a groan upon his lips, as the plank slipped down, and Arthur Lovell disappeared into the gap.

A sharp cry floated up from the depths, and the jarring clump of the falling plank.

"Oh, Heaven!" stammered Kit. "Oh, Heaven!"

He listened with sickening horror for the thud of the falling form on the rough earth twenty feet below.

Another cry. A sound—but not the sound of a falling body. Kit raced madly forward. He threw himself upon his knees by the side of the chasm, and peered down into the gloomy depth.

"Arthur! Arthur!"

A faint cry answered him.

"Help!"

Kit strained his eyes to see. There was a sound of tearing and crackling roots below him. He saw what had happened the next moment.

Arthur Lovell had slid along the falling plank as he fell, and had been shot across the narrow cutting, and into a mass of brambles growing on a ledge on the opposite side, a few feet under the verge. His convulsive grasp had closed upon the bush, and there he hung—but it was only for a moment.

His weight dragged the frail roots from their hold in the chalky soil, and Arthur Lovell dropped to the bottom of the cutting. Kit gave a cry.

"Arthur! Oh, Heaven, if he should be killed!"

A faint call came back from the dusky cutting:

"Kit! Kit!"

"He lives!"

Kit did not hesitate for a moment. Careless of danger, he swung himself down the rough side of the cutting. Down he went swiftly, catching at roots and projections for a hold, until, two-thirds of the way down, he missed hold and rolled to the bottom. But in a moment he was upon his feet again.

"Arthur!"

"Here I am!"

The gloom was thick at the bottom of the deep cutting. But Kit made out the form of his friend, and sprang towards him. Arthur Lovell lay upon his side, in the midst of the roots and crumbled earth that had fallen with him.

Kit dropped on his knees by his side.

"Arthur! Thank Heaven you were not killed! Oh, what I felt when I saw you going!" The tears were hot in the eyes of the young bowler. "But you are hurt!"

"It is—little." But Lovell winced as he spoke. "Did you know the plank was loose, Kit?"

"Yes—it was a plot—I heard them—I came to save you. But you are hurt. Where is it?" said Kit hastily.

"My leg," said Lovell quietly. "I think I must have twisted it. If I had not caught that bush and broken my fall, it might have been the finish of me. As it is——"

He broke off. The groan, long suppressed by his iron will, welled from his throat as he tried to move his injured leg.

"Don't move," said Kit hurriedly. "Keep still, Lovell. Let me see what is the matter."

"It's a bad twist, I'm afraid," said Lovell, white to the lips. "I shall have to be carried away from here, Kit, old fellow. Oh, how maddening—just now—when I am wanted in the match! Kent will beat us hollow now!"

"Never mind the match," said Kit. "If Loamshire lose, they will owe it to Geoffrey Lagden—this is his work."

His fingers were moving quickly, and the injured limb was exposed to view.

"No bones broken, I believe," said Kit, "but—but it is a bad twist, as you say. You will not play in the Kent match to-morrow, old fellow, I'm afraid."

"I shall be out of action for some time to come," said Lovell, smiling faintly. "Never mind; I hope I am sportsman enough to take my gruel without complaining. I'm afraid you will have to get help to carry me from here, Kit."

"I will be back in a trice."

"They shall pay for this," he said, between his teeth. "The infernal scoundrels! They shall rue this! I have stood between Len Valance and justice for the last time."

Arthur gave a start. The movement, slight, as it was, sent a thrill of agony through his injured limb, but he kept back the groan.

"Kit! What did you say? Is this Len's work!"

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

AN ATHLETIC STORY
By A. S. HARDY.

A SPLENDID TEST

At each cry the Raynes team jerked steadily, Mason worked like a Trojan. They got back a yard—two yards. The tape was over the centre-mark again! Then it went past it! A foot—two feet—a yard—two yards!

THE 1st CHAPTER.
A Cricket Match—After the Tea-Fight a School-Fight.

APPARENTLY it was no earthly good. Do what they might, Raynes School could never defeat Basinghouse College in any sort of field sport, and Charlie Mason, who had captained the Raynes cricket team, and had, incidentally, scored the highest innings of the afternoon, set his lips grimly as he saw Barnes and Fielding retiring from the wickets, where the umpires were pulling up the stumps, whilst the Basinghouse boys who surrounded the field cheered like mad at the splendid victory the college had scored over their neighbouring rivals.

Williams, captain of the Basinghouse team, was a big, brawny Hercules of a lad, conceited, and somewhat ill-natured. He approached Mason in the tent, where the Raynes captain was busy packing away his things, and laughed.

"How do you like your licking?" he asked.

"Badly beaten, weren't you? You want some good, red blood at your school, not a lot of pamby-pambys who ought to be at home helping mother. I never saw such a chicken-hearted lot! You're the worst side we've met for a whole year. I'll swear we didn't meet anybody last season as bad!"

Charlie Mason's cheeks flushed. The Raynes' fellows were standing round, and, as Williams spoke in a loud voice, they were bound to hear what he said.

"There's no occasion to rub it in, is there?" asked the Raynes captain. "I admit you were far and away the better team, even if you did get a bit of luck, and if everything had come off for us, I don't think we could have beaten you. But I was always brought up to be modest over my accomplishments, Williams, and I think you would have shown better taste to have left your crowing until after we had gone."

Williams looked Mason up and down. The Raynes lad was a finely-built fellow, although his muscles did not bulk so large as those of the rival captain. He had a clean, healthy-looking skin; his eyes were bright; there was a stern, determined set of the lips, and a squareness of the jaw, too, about him which commanded respect, and Williams felt pleased.

Cock-a-hoop at Basinghouse, where he had fought himself into supremacy, and where he was both hated and feared, he was always looking about for fresh fields to conquer. He had already fought two bouts in the village—men big enough to eat him in appearance—and had licked them handsomely; and as he regarded Raynes he felt that he could wish nothing better than to have a rare stand-up and knock-down with him.

The fighting instinct is born in some lads. Williams, perhaps, could not help wanting to lay his hands on others. His pugnacious disposition was always getting him into trouble, from which his fists got him out. The lad always felt and thought that, if he could get a man to master him—to give him a good, sound thrashing in fair fight, it would sober him down, and that he would be a good deal the better for it. But he had not met that man yet, and, as far as he knew, he never would meet him—for, as time went on, so did Williams improve in the use of his fists, the quickness of his movements, and the alertness of his brain.

And now, as he glanced furtively at Charlie Mason, he felt that he would love to try the lad's pluck. Somehow, Williams guessed that it would not be such easy work for him.

Meanwhile, the Basinghouse captain's words had gone home. Charlie Mason was annoyed. There was a keen flash in his eyes as he stood erect and regarded Williams with a contemptuous stare.

"I'm afraid," he said, speaking slowly and with emphasis that his words might sink home, "that you are not a gentleman!"

Williams started. He took a step nearer.

"You've got to dine with us up at the school," he whispered. "You don't go back until the quarter to nine train from Basinghouse. You shall answer for that before you go."

"I'm quite ready!" answered Charlie carelessly, caring nothing for the rival captain's threats. "And, remember, we may meet in the Midland Grammar Schools' Championships, which are to be decided at the Clinton Harriers' Meeting to be held at Wolverhampton in the middle of August."

The Basinghouse captain's lips curled.

"Who the deuce do you think you're going to send that is worthy of contesting a championship?" he asked. "You haven't got an athlete worth the name in the school!"

By this time the members of both teams had gathered round, and they listened intently to the wordy warfare of the two captains.

"How many times have you won the Grammar Schools' Tug-o'-War Championship?" asked Charlie Mason, it seemed irrelevantly. "Three years, isn't it?"

Williams nodded.

"Yes," he cried; "and we're going to win again. We've got the best-balanced side that ever represented the school this year. Catch-weights won't frighten us! There's hardly likely to be a ten brought against us that will be heavier than we are. Why, do you think you can put up a team capable of making a fight with us?"

"I don't know," said Mason, with a smile; "I'll soon find out. Anyway, I'm ready to make a bet of two to one we beat you if we meet you at the Clinton Sports."

"You'll never get as far as that," sneered Williams. "You'd be whacked first round! Don't be silly!"

Charlie Mason did not reply, but, pushing his way through the crowd of boys, he seized his blazer and put it on. Then he linked arms with Patrick Murphy, his chum at Raynes, a good all-round athlete, without the ability to shine particularly in any one event, a strong, good-natured, good-tempered youth.

"Let's get away from this, Pat," he said. "I make myself look small arguing with a chap like Williams. He's got no breeding, and no nice feeling. I shall be glad when the 'feed' is over, and we can get back to Raynes. It hasn't been a very enjoyable day, with these Basinghouse fellows on the crow all the time, has it?"

"Hardly," assented Pat. "I say, Charlie, did you mean what yez were saying about the tug-o'-war?"

"Why not?" asked Mason. "Look here, take you, Hodson, Barnes, Fielding, Crompton, Bassett, Porter, Brown, Barrow, and myself, don't you think we'd make a decent ten? We're all pretty strong, and a good weight. I think we might make a very good team. I'm going to try and get the chaps keen on it. We can practice like the very deuce until we can get all there is out of the pull and in competition, for we should have to fight our way into the final if we wanted to meet Basinghouse, for I don't suppose we'd have the luck to be drawn against them in the preliminary rounds. By that time we should be fit to pull for a kingdom."

Pat Murphy looked at the Raynes captain with eyes beaming with admiration.

"Shure, Charlie," he said, "but you're the best captain the school ever had! If we could only beat Basinghouse in the tug-o'-war! If we could only beat 'em!"

On arriving at the School House they adjourned to the lavatory, where there was much laughter, as they washed themselves after the hot work of the day, put their ties straight, and combed and brushed their hair, so as to appear smart at the set tea that the college had provided for them.

It was a feast such as schoolboys love, and Basinghouse hospitality was of the best. Under the influence of the good eatables and drinkables, any resentment Raynes School might have felt at their defeat vanished, and the greatest good fellowship reigned. Pat Murphy noticed, however, that his chum, Charlie Mason, scarcely ate anything, and some of the Basinghouse boys were quick to remark that their skipper, Williams, was not doing himself very well, either. Williams kept looking over at Mason with a covert and meaning smile.

When the high tea had been disposed of there yet wanted an hour before the train for Raynes was due at the Basinghouse Station, and the boys began to wander about the extensive school grounds in twos and threes and fours. It was a beautiful, quiet evening, and the sun was just setting in a heat haze that promised a hot day on the morrow.

Two or three of the older boys at Basinghouse were seen to enter the wood that abuts on the school playing-fields. These woods at Basinghouse are very thick and secluded. One might easily get lost there for a time. Patrick Murphy hunted high and low for his chum Charlie Mason. Where the deuce had the Raynes captain got to? It was really most mysterious. Nobody had seen him since tea excepting Barnes, and Barnes declared that he had seen Williams and Charlie talking earnestly together.

"Charlie seemed to be protesting," Barnes declared. "I don't know what it was all about, but it seemed mighty mysterious. I wonder what was up?"

Pat Murphy wandered on in perplexity, and of a sudden, as he neared the confines of the wood, a boy rushed out. He recognised Murphy in an instant as one of the visiting team from Raynes, and he caught him by the arm.

"I say," he cried, "that captain of yours can fight. He and Williams have just been having a rare set to in the woods. I thought something was up, so I followed one or two of the big Form boys, and I was just in time to see the mill. Williams got the best of it at first; but, my eye, didn't that chap Charlie Mason hit! He'd got him all abroad by the third round, and I came away just now, because I didn't like to see our captain licked."

"In the wood here?" asked Murphy, pointing.

"Yes," answered the boy.

Pat wanted no further urging. He ran into the wood at once, vaulting the fence that protected it with a fine leap. Presently he heard shouts a few yards in front, and then, as he burst into a clearing in which perhaps a dozen or twenty boys stood, their forms being scarcely visible in the half light, he saw Charlie Mason knock Williams clean off his feet.

The captain of Basinghouse lay where he had fallen, groaning slightly, and turning from side to side, with his eyes half closed. Two of his chums ran to him and picked him up; but he had no fight left in him. Charlie Mason had knocked him silly. He groaned presently when Murphy, having looked to his chum and found him all right save a scratch and a bruise or two, had time to look round, and opened his eyes. His cheeks were pale, and one eye was almost closed. He grinned a half smile through his swelling lips, and, getting up from the knee of the lad who supported him, he walked across to Charlie.

"Mason," he said, "you've done what nobody else I've ever known could do—you've licked me in fair fight. Here's my hand. Let us be friends, and I take back something of what I said about you Raynes School boys; still, you haven't any real athletes amongst you, say what you will!"

THE 2nd CHAPTER.
Practising the Tug-o'-War—Reds Beat the Rest—A Trial Mile.

IN the school grounds at Raynes there was the greatest excitement one Wednesday afternoon, for the final of the school tug-o'-war was to be pulled for. Charlie Mason, his broad chest showing through his thin, red vest he was wearing, and which fitted him skin-tight, made an early appearance. He looked the very picture of an athlete. Patrick Murphy soon joined him.

"Say, Pat!" cried the captain of Raynes, "Tell the rest of our side to hurry up. We must put in that final bit of practice ere meeting the Rest. We shall win easily enough, I think, but we don't want to leave anything to chance. It is chaps who leave things to chance who never do good at anything."

Patrick Murphy hurried away into the dressing-room.

"Come along, the school!" he said. "Captain wants us for practice. Do hurry up, there's good chaps! We want a rest before we tackle the 'whites,' you know!"

Rallying to the call, ten lads in red turned out. These were Hodson, Barnes, Fielding, Crompton, Bassett, Porter, Brown, Barrow, Murphy, and Mason.

They represented the school, and were the picked team. Coached by Mason, they had beaten all the separate houses of Raynes hollow, and they were about to be pitted against the Rest, a team of ten big lads picked from the various houses of the school, and some of the strongest lads in it.

The Reds lined up. Charlie Mason had a rope ready for them, and this he knotted in a double-reeved knot that no amount of pulling could undo, round a stout iron post in the school-grounds.

"Now, lads!" said Charlie. "Remember what you have to do. You've got to hang back steadily, with all your dead weight on the rope. That will be the position until you are told to go. Then as soon as the word is given you get a steady strain on the rope, and wait for the command.

"Well, get Mallinson to watch us, and give us the word when to pull. Hi, Mallinson, come along, my lad! We're all ready!"

A Raynes schoolboy, with a keen, intelligent face, but lean and hungry of frame, having outgrown his strength, came up.

"Now, lay hold, boys!" cried Charlie Mason, and his team, having taken up their positions, grasped the rope firmly with the fingers and thumbs of both hands.

"Strain at the rope!" cried Mason. "Get all your weight on it, boys!"

They leaned back, and the rope attached to the iron post became as taut as rope could be.

"Pull!" cried Mallinson, and they gave a

jerk. He waited a second or two. "Hey! Pull!" he cried, and they jerked again. "Pull, pull, pull! Hey, hey, hey! Pull! That's the way, boys! You've got 'em beat! You've got 'em beat! Pull, my hearties! Pull, my hearties! Pull, pull! Another yard more! That's the way! You've got 'em! Another foot! Hurrah, hurrah! Well done, lads! You've beat 'em all to pieces!"

The straining lads let go of the rope, and it was time. Some of them were purple in the face from the strain, for it was any odds on the post, and some were pale. Their muscles had seemed about to crack when Mallinson gave them the word to ease.

"That was something like," said Pat Murphy, as he mopped his brow. "If we can only pull against the Rest as we pulled against the post, I don't think we shall be beaten—eh, Charlie?"

"I think not," laughed the Raynes captain, as he sat on the ground to rest a bit.

Presently, Deacock, who was to captain the Rest, came up. His good-humoured face wore a smile.

"It's enough to beat you, he said; "you chaps don't seem to mind what you pull at. If you're ready we are. My side is waiting. They've had a practice with the best team of the juniors, and licked 'em anyhow."

Charlie Mason gave the word, and the Reds trooped to the centre of the cricket-pitch, where the line was to be held. The Whites were seated on the ground, with the rope running between them. The rope, which was about four and three-quarters of an inch in circumference, had a tape tied in the centre, and other bits of tape six feet away from this on either side. The grass had been marked in chalk for the centre-line, with the two side-lines six feet away on either side, and parallel to it.

The Reds took up their positions on either side of the rope alternately, and four feet apart, and everything was in readiness.

"Ready, Deacock?" asked Mallinson. "Ready, Mason?"

"Yes!"

"Then go!"

The boys on either side had already put their dead weight on the rope, and they strained now with all their might. The piece of tape in the centre of the rope was dead over the centre-line, and there, for forty seconds or more, it remained immovable. Each team was trying its utmost to pull the other over, but for a time neither side budged an inch. Mallinson, on the one side watching the Whites for the Reds, and Layton on the other watching the Reds for the Whites, and each with a handkerchief in his hand, showed rare craft in signalling their teams to pull.

"Hey! Pull, pull!" shouted Mallinson.

"Pull, pull, pull!" bellowed Layton. "Lay on to the rope, boys! Now, now!"

It seemed as if there was nothing to choose between the sides, but of a sudden, seeing a weakness in the White pull, Mallinson gave the word, and the Reds hauled them over six feet before a stop came. Then the Whites gained back a foot. Then the Reds, with another heave, and another heave, and another heave, got the White right over, and with three of the Rest team lying full length on their backs, and the others looking more or less as if they had had enough of it, the Reds won the trial in the end with the utmost ease.

"I think that's pretty conclusive," panted Mason. "I say, Murphy; do you feel fresh enough to give me a lead over a practice mile? I mean to challenge Williams, of Basinghouse, at the Clinton Sports, for the mile, if I can show any sort of form over the distance."

"I don't see why you shouldn't" cried Murphy. "And why not turn out with me in any case, Charlie? You see, if you can't do anything else, you can make the pace for me, for, as winner of the Raynes mile last year, I think I ought to turn out, and you can run the race according to the way I want, don't you see?"

Charlie smiled.

"To tell you the truth," he said, "I have half an idea I can beat you, Pat. I was really very seedy at the time of the sports last year, and so couldn't turn out. I don't know how I am running now. I know I am fast, but whether I can stay a mile is what I want to discover."

"Well, come along!" laughed Pat Murphy.

"Begorra, I don't mind being licked if it's by you, Charlie, and if you can defend the honour of Raynes better than I can, and you did defend it by licking Williams after the cricket-match, we think a lot better of you."

The cinder-path at Raynes was hard by the cricket-ground, and it was usually in excellent condition, being well sheltered from the rain, and carefully rolled and tended by Jenkins, the odd man.

Murphy and Charlie Mason got into their running things, and their spiked shoes, and with Mallinson, who loved to officiate in any capacity, to take the time, there was every prospect of an interesting race—that is, if Charlie Mason was as good at running as he was at cricket, feats of strength, swimming, football, and a half-dozen other sports that he went in for.

Mallinson set them at the mark, and then, having stopped his watch and put the centre-seconds' hand at the minute, he called go, and set the chronograph in motion.

A half a hundred schoolboys, hearing what was on, had come down to the cinder-track, and they gazed with admiring eyes at Pat Murphy, as the young Irishman strode round the track with the ease and grace of a practised runner. He had a short, natural stride, and no end of style, though he was not so taking to look at as Charlie Mason, who used a long, raking stride, picking his knees up well, and doing his first lap without easing, keeping well on Pat's heels. At half a mile the two were going like clockwork, and the time was two minutes, thirty-one seconds; not so bad, for neither runner had shown his best pace yet.

With a lap to go, Pat seemed the fresher, and yet he could not shake Charlie off his heels.

"Go it, Pat!" yelled the schoolboys. "Well run, Charlie! Stick to him! Don't let him beat you in the sprint for home!"

So yelled the sports. At the beginning of the last circuit, Charlie went to the front, slightly quickening his pace, but Pat held on. Neither was doing his best yet. They could not hope to sprint home at once from there. With half a lap to go, Pat challenged his chum, and neck and neck they ran, until the home stretch was reached. Then Pat drew away a couple of yards.

"Pat wins!" Pat wins!" yelled the boys.

But no! Charlie was not done with yet. He made his effort, got on terms, and the two ran a desperate race, fighting out every inch, until, utterly exhausted and unable to run another yard, Pat Murphy stopped fifteen yards before the finish and rolled on the grass, incapable of uttering a word. Charlie Mason, with his teeth clenched, and his hands sawing the air in the last efforts of nature, shot past the winning-post on to and into the arms of Mallinson.

The big, raw-boned schoolboy held him, patting his back, and calling him all sorts of endearing names; and presently Charlie was well enough to join his chum. Then, who had got up last, got up looking deathly pale.

"I just did it, Pat!" gasped Charlie. "But you were out of condition, you know. You weren't doing your best."

"I don't know about that," answered Pat ruefully; "I reckon I'm in jolly sight better trim than you are, and I couldn't last. You beat me fair, Charlie. What was the time, Mallinson? It ought to have been hot, for I've never run a faster mile in my life—that I'll swear to."

Mallinson looked sorry for himself.

"I'm blessed if I can tell you the time," he said. "It was inside the five minutes, I know that. It would have been about four minutes, forty-five seconds, I think, but Charlie barged into me at the finish, and I couldn't record it."

"And I won the school championship last year in five minutes, ten seconds. That will show what we were doing, Charlie. I tell you what, we'll both enter for the Grammar Schools' Mile, and I reckon between us we ought to lower Williams's colours. My stars, wouldn't that be fun! Especially as we never have beaten Basinghouse in a school championship. I can see their faces if we pulled it off, Charlie!"

"Well," said Charlie, "I mean to try. Train your best, Pat, and we'll see if we can't manage to win the mile between us."

THE 3rd CHAPTER.
The Sports at Wolverhampton — Mason Wins the Grammar Schools' Mile—The Tug-o'-War.

As everybody knows, the Clinton Harriers' Sports is the most popular athletic meeting of its kind in the Midlands. It has, in its day, drawn gates twice the size of those with which the Midlands have greeted the decision of the Athletic Association Championships, and the success of the meeting has been doubly assured since they have set down the Grammar Schools' Championship of the Midlands for decision at the meeting.

Curious to relate, though Raynes had often sent good men to compete, the names of their representatives had never, up to the time of the meeting in which Pat Murphy and Charlie Mason turned out for the mile, been enrolled amongst those of the champions.

On the other hand, Basinghouse held a proud record. There was not a year passed by without that redoubtable school carrying off the majority of the events, and their victory in the tug-of-war was looked upon as a foregone conclusion. As holders of the championship, they had made easy progress through the preliminary rounds, and they came to Wolverhampton on the day of the sports as certain of victory as any team could be.

Williams, the Basinghouse captain, was also captain of their team, and a right good captain, too, for if any man knew what he was about Williams did. There was a school party from Basinghouse, and another from the Raynes. Eldsleigh, Moreton, and Ribsdale were other schools sending representatives.

Most of the boys were on the ground early. Proceedings opened with the heats of the hundred yards handicap, in which Moreton, the champion of England, figured at scratch, and Tremeer and Daingler, the American crack, also ran.

It was while these heats were being run off that Williams met Greenhough, one of his rug-of-war team. Greenhough smiled grimly at his schoolmate.

"Has it ever struck you as extraordinary, Williams," he said, "that Charlie Mason, the Raynes captain, should have kept his word, and have got his tug-o'-war team into the final to battle against us to-day?"

Williams nodded.

"Yes," he said. "And, to tell you the honest truth, Greenhough, that man makes me a little afraid. He's so self-reliant—so cool. And, after all, to captain a team and bring it through into the final as he has done, to improve his school's athletics, and to receive thanks from the authorities, in which Moreton, the champion of England, figured at scratch, and Tremeer and Daingler, the American crack, also ran."

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THE REFEREE:

By Mr. G. L. B. COVERDALE, Hon. Sec. East Riding of Yorkshire F.A., and a member of the East Yorks Referees' Examination Committee.

An Important Test.

LAST week I referred to testing a candidate for refereeing for colour blindness. This important test, up to the end of last season, was not imposed by many county associations, but the Football Association now recommend that the test should be universally adopted. Personally, I consider the test to be of the highest importance. The examiners should have either pieces of cloth or sheets of cardboard, about one foot square, and the colours should be red, green, blue, white, pink, yellow, and mauve. If a candidate is unable to distinguish these colours, he should most certainly be disqualified. Sometimes it is extremely difficult for a referee with excellent sight to discover the transgressor, owing to the players' shirts being of somewhat similar colour, and for a referee who is colour-blind the task would be absolutely hopeless.

Short-sightedness may easily be tested by asking the candidate to read letters say two inches in diameter at about thirty feet. If he can do this easily it may be assumed that his sight in this direction is good for

practical refereeing purposes.

Anyone who is affected with deafness to a marked degree should be asked to stand down and play the part of spectator only, because when appeals are made to him he will not be able to hear them, and thus trouble might ensue in the game in which he is officiating.

A candidate who has successfully passed these medical tests, will then undergo a rigorous cross-questioning on the laws of the game from the three or four gentlemen on the examining committee, each of which gentlemen will fire questions at him as quickly as the future "tootler" can reply. The candidate will be asked the size of the ball (twenty-seven to twenty-eight inches circumference), the weight of the ball (thirteen to fifteen ounces), the dimensions of the field of play, how the touch and goal-lines are to be marked out. He will be required to point out on the model board, which constitutes to the examiners the field of play, what are the various dimensions—i.e., penalty area, distance betwixt the uprights, etc. Can the corner flag be removed for the purpose of taking a corner-kick? No.

When the candidate has had

a good gruelling

of questions of a similar character to the above, the examiners will proceed, by means of dummy men on the model board, to test him on the offside rule. Too much stress cannot be laid on this all-important rule. The candidate will be tested on this rule in all manner of ways and positions. The great point to notice by the referee is not where a player is when he plays the ball, but where he is at the moment it is played by a player of the same side. In the rush of a game a referee is apt to lose sight of the positions of the field at every kick, yet he ought to educate himself to intuitively fix each change in his mind.

An alteration has been made to Rule 6 by the International Board at their meeting at Oban on 8th of June this year, whereby a player, when he himself is within his own half of the field of play at the moment the ball is played or thrown in from touch by any player of the same side, is not off-side. This alteration, from a player or spectator's point of view, is a great advantage, but to the referee it will mean that he must be more watchful than ever.

When a candidate has safely survived all these numerous theoretical tests, the examiners will give him plenty of useful advice as to his conduct both on and off the field of play.

The candidate should now be qualified to take charge of a match, but his examination is by no means finished. A would-be referee may pass the theoretical part with flying colours, but when he gets on to a field in charge of twenty-two players, he is apt to be an abject failure. This being so, the examining committee will, unknown to the candidate, probably be spectators at his first two or three ably be spectators at his first two or three matches, thus being able to form an opinion as to how he shapes in practice, and if their opinion is favourable, the candidate will be duly registered with the English Football Association as a qualified referee. It will now depend on the referee's ability as to the class of match he receives to officiate at. For the first season or two he will only receive appointments in junior matches, but as his knowledge and experience of the game widens, so will the importance and the class of the matches to which he will be allocated. It is a well known fact that a good referee is the means of making a good match, and good matches means the success of Association Football.

(Next week "How to Found a Charity Cup Competition.")

THE SOUTH AFRICAN CRICKETERS:

A Chat about our Colonial Visitors, by ROBERT ABEL.

TWICE before South African cricketers have visited England, but now, for the first time, they are measuring their strength against that of the Mother Country. The following are the names of the Springbok team:

From the Transvaal—G. A. Faulkner, C. E. Floquet, E. A. Halliwell, M. Hathorn, R. O. Schwarz, W. A. Shalders, P. W. Sherwell, J. H. Sinclair, L. J. Tancred, A. E. Vogler, G. C. White. From the Western Province—J. J. Kotze, S. J. Snooke. From Natal—A. D. Nourse, H. Smith.

It will be seen that eleven of the players come from the newly-acquired territories of the British Empire, but among them are four fresh faces, who will be familiar by their names only to the great majority of Englishmen.

J. H. Sinclair is well known to us, and has long been one of the pillars of the game in Johannesburg. He is the giant of the side, and for the last ten years has been the greatest all-round player that South Africa has produced, and fit for any side in the world. He bats in fine, free style, and, standing nearly six feet four inches in height, possesses an enormous reach; while, so far as his batting goes, he employs

a powerful back stroke,

which brings him many a run. As a bowler he makes the most of his reach, and varies his pace cleverly, while getting little work on the ball both ways.

The next player who is attracting a great deal of notice is E. A. Halliwell, by far the best wicket-keeper of the day. His career must now be drawing to a close, but there are a large number of cricketers who think that he is just about the finest exponent of stumping they have ever seen.

Mr. Hathorn is a batsman of a useful character, and has played many a good innings against English teams, and scored nearly 1,200 runs in a tour of three years ago. He has also an excellent record as far as the present season is concerned.

A. E. Vogler is another very good all-round man. He originally became known to us as a capable performer with the bat in Natal, and came to England with the idea of qualifying for the county of Middlesex, and was given a place on the M.C.C. staff. His abilities were very apparent, and he at once did well in the best company. Mr. A. Bailey, M.P., that generous patron of Cape cricket, induced him to return to Johannesburg, and he has accepted a position which will enable him to play as an amateur.

W. A. Shalders, L. J. Tancred, and R. O. Schwarz have all been here before. R. O. Schwarz is a very useful bat indeed. The new men to us are C. E. Floquet and G. A. Faulkner. The latter only came into prominence about a year ago, but he has improved as a batsman out of all knowledge, and finished last season third in the averages. Floquet is a utility man, whom many think one of the best of the younger men.

He is never depressed

by adverse circumstances, and just the sort of player to cheer up a side when things are going against them.

G. C. White did only fairly well when here before, though his bowling proved very useful on several occasions. P. Sherwell is an excellent wicket-keeper, and his admirers proclaim him the equal of Halliwell. He can also make runs.

From the Western Province, S. J. Snooke is again with us. He is a steady player who has had a great season at home, and scored a couple of centuries for his colony in the leading matches. With him is J. J. Kotze, the best bowler of the year, while the two Natal representatives are A. D. Nourse and H. Smith. As regards the former, his fame preceded him, for last season he stood at the head of the batting averages with 98.16, and he made 212 for Natal in one match, and scored a century on two other occasions. Three times out of seven that he went to the wickets he scored a hundred—a really remarkable record. He is a Surrey man by birth, and came into fame against the M.C.C. team. He was second in the list of batsmen, and, although left-handed, did some beautiful work in every way. Smith has done some useful work.

As regards the bowling, there will be plenty of variety, and the team are distinctly stronger in this department than they were when last here. Kotze, Sinclair, and Schwarz form a first-class combination, and are quite dissimilar in pace and method. The first-named is faster than any other English bowler except N. A. Knox. Sinclair has all the qualities of a high-class bowler of medium pace, and combines variety of spred with a deceptive flight of the ball and plenty of spin, but has his "off days."

Schwarz was the surprise of the team. He was not regarded as a bowler until he came over here, and his invaluable slow leg-breaks make many men very unhappy, and he has got a lot of victims. Then there is Vogler, whom we know something about. He gets better every season. Nourse is also very useful in this line, and forms a first-rate change. Mr. A. Faulkner is another man who has taken a lot of wickets, and Mr. P. F. Warner considered him on many occasions more difficult than any other.

S. J. Snooke, G. C. White, and C. E. Floquet can also bowl, and there is no lack of variety. Looking over the composition of the side, they are certainly much stronger in every way than any previous team who have visited here, and it is not surprising that they have done so well since their arrival on these shores.

On Monday next the last of the great test matches will be played, and there is considerable excitement as to the issue. Many have predicted the downfall of the Mother Country, but personally I think that these are wrong. However, time will show whether my opinion is correct. I am looking forward to England's scoring a notable victory in the last great match.

(Among the numerous attractions which next week's BOYS' REALM will contain are the opening chapters of a splendid new school serial, entitled "Teddy Lester's Chums." Owing to this fact, I foresee a great rush on the issue for next week, and would advise all my readers to order their copy in advance, and thereby avoid all chance of disappointment.)

THE SOUTH AFRICAN CRICKETERS

Photo by] [Hawkins (Brighton).

Back Row—A. D. Nourse, H. Smith, W. A. Shalders, M. Hathorn, G. A. Faulkner, G. Allsop.
Second Row—J. H. Sinclair, R. O. Schwarz, Rev. Robinson, P. W. Sherwell, L. J. Tancred, A. E. Vogler, J. J. Kotze.
Front Row—S. J. Snooke, G. C. White, S. D. Snooke.

THE OVAL:

A brief history of the historic ground on which the Great International Test-Match will be played next Monday.

The County Ground of the Surrey C.C.

IT is generally supposed that Hambledon is the birthplace of cricket, and that Hambledon C.C. was the first ever formed. Records are in existence, however, which prove this idea to be a fallacy, for there were organised elevens of Surrey, Sussex, Middlesex, and Kent long before the Hambledon Club was heard of. It is with the home of the first-named club that we are dealing to-day—that famous cricket-ground known as Kennington Oval, whereon many a historic match has been fought in the past, and on which, on Monday next, the South Africans will face England in the third great Test match.

The Oval belongs to the Duchy of Cornwall, and is, therefore, the property of the Prince of Wales. It was originally a market-garden, but it was turned into a cricket-ground away back in the year 1845. Previous to this, Kennington Common now the Park was almost the only place where the game could be played, and it is safe to say that most of the cricket indulged in thereon was extremely primitive.

In 1845,

the Montpelier Cricket Club,

which had been in existence since 1796, and which until then had been playing on the ground adjoining the Inn—known as the Beehive and Cricketers—held a meeting, with the object of forming a county cricket club, and acquiring the Oval as a playing-pitch. The treasurer, Mr. W. Baker, entered into negotiations, and succeeded in obtaining the ground as the club's headquarters, whereat there were great rejoicings. No time was wasted in transforming the Oval from a market-garden into a cricket-ground. At that time it was bounded by light hedges, and it was not until the early fifties that it was properly fenced in. Our present King has always been very interested in Kennington Oval; and how much the Surrey Cricket Club owes to him can only be known to those who have been engaged for a number of years in its management.

The Oval soon became a recognised institution, and its popularity made it essential that a commodious pavilion should be built. The credit for this enterprising departure must be given to Mr. William Burrup, the honorary secretary. Mr. Richard Roberts, one of the oldest members of the club, was responsible for

the erection of the pavilion,

which fulfilled its purpose admirably for quite a long time.

During the seventies, Surrey cricket declined terribly, but there was always an appreciative and enthusiastic following to be seen at the Oval, even during the darkest page of its history. The balance-sheet, however, began to look very bad, and the club could hardly make ends meet. Things were gradually approaching a crisis, when help came from a quite unexpected quarter. At that time football was just beginning to take the public fancy, and its advent at the Oval saved the situation. International matches, under the Association and Rugby codes, were played there, and Cup-ties were also fought out on the ground. In fact, the Oval soon became to be looked on as the headquarters for football players of both schools.

Later on, the Australian cricketers came over, and played their Test matches at the Oval, in the same way as the South Africans are doing now, and thus the historic ground became still more popular with the public. It was about this time that the first few rows of seats were erected in.

In the summer of 1896 it was decided that the Oval should be

reserved for cricket

only, and that no football should be played thereon during the coming winter. Since that time there has never been a footer match played there at all, and, so far as one can see, there is no likelihood of such a thing taking place.

The Surrey C.C. has made great progress of late years, and they now possess a pavilion second to none in the country. A picture of it appears on another page. There can be little doubt that the ground will be packed with eager sightseers on Monday next, when England faces South Africa for the last time this season. Many historic matches have been fought at the Oval, but none have created more interest than the one now about to take place. What will the result be, we wonder?

("The Bewley Eleven," and "A Speed Test," are the titles of the two special long, complete tales which will appear in next week's issue of THE BOYS' REALM. Order your copy now.)

CLUB NOTICES.

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

THORNHILL UNITED 2ND XI (average 16). All dates open.—Apply to H. Husk, 5, Canal Terrace, York Road, Kings Cross, N.

VICTORIA ATHLETIC F.C. (average 17) require matches for the coming season, home and away. Ground, Tottenham Marshes.—Apply to W. Conway, 7, Scales Road, Tottenham.

ST. JOSEPH'S F.C. (average age 14½) require matches home and away all through the season.—Apply to W. Kelly, 49, Newall Street, Bradford, Yorks.

CHELSEA ALBIONS F.C. (14-16) want home and away matches, in and about Bristol, all dates open.—Apply to E. Iles, jun., 2, Kilburn Street, Bristol.

NORWOOD JUNIORS F.C. (average age 17, strong) require home and away matches for coming season. Also have a reserve team (14-15); nearly all dates open.—Apply to F. Winter, 1, Berkley Terrace, Norwood Road, Southall, Middlesex.

SUTTON CRUSADERS F.C. (Wednesday team) want matches home and away for next season. Nearly all dates open. Prefer to play clubs at Balham, Mitcham, Tooting, Clapham, Epsom, Ashtead.—Apply to H. Cooper, Secretary, 140, Alfred Terrace, Collingwood Road, Sutton.

WANTED, matches for coming season for Hammersmith District Alliance, Division 1, club. Private ground at Acton. Also good centre-forward and back. Subscription.—Write to Hammond, 17, Dorville Road, Hammersmith.

CLARENCE A.F.C. (age 14-16) require dates for the coming season with good Leeds clubs.—Apply to Secretary, H. Brown, 3A, Upper Accommodation Road, Leeds.

TROY TOWN ATHLETIC F.C. (average 17, medium) require matches with respectable clubs in Rochester and district (16-17-8). Apply to W. Bennett, 7, Onslow Road, Delce, Rochester.

THE SWALLOW F.C. (14-15) require matches home and away.—Apply, by post, to W. Groves, 12, Portland Street, Soho, London.

LYNDEN ROVERS F.C. (17, medium). All dates open home and away; private ground preferred.—Apply to H. Hon, Secretary, Cemetery, 26, Park Flats, Lower Cross Road, Hampstead, N.W.

IVY A.F.C. (average 16, weak) want away matches. All dates vacant.—Write to P. Milan, 27, Shirley Grove, Lavender Hill, Battersea.

ALL SAINTS F.C. (average 14, weak) have a few dates open (owned) the end of the season.—Apply to F. Newman, 249, Huntley Street, W.C.

ST. LUKE'S JUNIORS A.F.C. require fixtures for the coming season within a radius of ten miles of Cardiff.—Apply, giving dates, etc., to Charles Thelwall, Secretary, 13, Kingsland Road, Pontcon, Cardiff.

MAURICE ROSTREL F.C. 5TH TEAM (average 16, weak) want matches for coming season; the following dates open. Home: November 9th, January 11th, March 28th. Away: November 23rd, December 28th, February 22nd.—Write to H. Bigsby, 80, Fenton Place, Kings Cross Road.

FOLLY RANGERS F.C. (17, medium) want matches away from home, within five miles radius of Walthamstow; all dates open.—Apply to Hon. Secretary, W. Blyth, 21, Tower Hamlets Road, Hoe Street, Walthamstow.

ST. BARNABAS F.C. (15, medium) require matches for the coming season 1907-8, home and away; only respectable clubs need apply. Also a few players required.—Write, stating position, to V. Taylor, Hon. Secretary, "Glenmore," 57, Elsenham Street, Southfields, S.W.

ST. MICHAEL'S F.C. (average age 17 weak) require matches home and away for season 1907-8.—Apply to F. A. Neville, 62, North Street, Maida Vale.

LLECHID SWIFTS F.C. want home and away matches with junior teams in Carnarvonshire for next season; also five minutes' walk from Rhiwedd Station.—Apply to W. J. Jones, 7, Rackmb, Llanllechid, near Bangor, North Wales.

2ND HIBBERNIANS F.C. (Perth) (winners of Perthshire Boys' Association Cup, 1906-7) (age 11-14) are open for dates except August 28th, September 7th, October 19th and January 1st (home or away) for any light, third juveniles in Perth and district (radius four miles). Also would like a match with any Dundee school team, third or fourth standard for January 2nd (home).—Apply to David Young Brown, 46, Meal Vennel, Perth, Scotland.

GLADSTONE VILLA F.C. (average age 14, weak) require matches for the coming season within a seven mile radius of Barry Dock.—Apply to W. M. Harris, 137, Gladstone Road, Barry.

MARLBORO F.C. require matches home and away, Ground Blackheath; also a few players between 14 and 17 years of age.—Apply to A. E. M., 62, Ossory Road, Old Kent Road, S.E.

VICTOR ROVERS F.C. (18) wish to fix a match with a team a little way out on Boxing Day; also several other dates open with teams of same average.—Apply to W. Griffiths, 34, Sedgewick Street, Homerton, N.E.

WINSON GREEN ATHLETIC (15-16) require home and away matches for teams of same average.—For particulars, write to Mr. W. Matthews, 57, Aberdeen Street, Winson Green, Birmingham.

UNIVERSAL F.C. (15, weak) require matches after October 19th, home and away. Home ground, Worswood Scrubbs.—Apply to Secretary, F. Waghorne, 49, Barnsdale Road, Maida Hill, London.

WANTED, dates for coming season (average age 15). Teams to be in Leeds and district. All dates open.—Apply to Harry Rodgson, 8, Willoughby Grove, Holbeck, Leeds.

ROSLAND UNITED F.C. (18, medium). Clubs requiring fixtures please note change of Secretary.—L. Jordan, 16, Loftus Road, Shepherd's Bush. One or two good players wanted.

ST. ANDREWS F.C. (age 16-17) wish to share private ground, and have all dates open for coming season; also few vacancies for players.—Apply to Secretary, A. W. Smith, 149, St. Andrew's Road, Small Heath, Birmingham.

TWO LADS wish to join a junior football club for season 1907-8 (ages 13 and 13½). Must be in North London.—Apply to George the Fourth, Copenhagen Street, Barnsbury.

ASHINGTON UNITED F.C. (average age, 16-18) wants players for all positions next season. Also have all dates vacant.—Apply, by letter, to William Robinson, 38, Fifth Row, Ashington Colliery, near Morpeth, Northumberland.

LAD (16) wishes to join football club within three miles radius of Edmonton. Can play inside or outside right or right half; willing to pay sub.—Apply to R. T. W., 43, Sheldon Road, Silver Street, Edmonton.

GARFIELD F.C. want good players for their football club, season 1907-8. Also a good bat for their cricket team. Also fixtures for football.—Write to F. C. Harcourt, Hon. Secretary, 124, Coningham Road, Shepherd's Bush, London. W.

TWO FRIENDS would like to join a football club in Liverpool.—For further particulars apply by letter to G. Price, 40, Clarendon Street, Birkenhead.

A FEW respectable lads (15-16) wanted to form a football club in the parish of Walthamstow.—Apply, by letter, to Harry Eastaugh, 23, Martin Road, Chingford Road, Walthamstow.

LAD (16) would like to join a respectable football club in North London on Thursday afternoons. Can play half-back and back, and can shoot goal.—Address, Edwin R. Howard, 758, Holloway Road, N.

WANTED, a few, young men to join a football club for the coming season (age from 17 to 19). Also want a few dates at home and away.—Write to E. Sewell, 1, Union Street, Pimlico.

LAD (17) would like to join a respectable football club in the neighbourhood. Fair player, any position. Would pay a small sub.—Apply, letters only, to C. B., 210, Albion Road, Stoke Newington, N.

LAD (17) would like to join a football club near Kingsland. Can play any position except goal. Will pay sub; is five feet four inches in height.—Apply to W. W., 19, Crookell Street, Holbeck, Leeds.

A FOOTBALL CLUB would like to join a league in Newcastle, average age not exceeding 15½. Send full particulars to F. W. Embleton, Glenariff, Heaton Road, N.

A FOOTBALL LEAGUE will be formed in Newcastle and district. All teams wishing to join can have full particulars from G. Capstaff, 16, Howard Street, Newcastle.

THE FLORENCE ALBION F.C. are desirous of selling their last season's shirts. Colours: claret and blue halves; all in splendid condition. Clubs wishing to buy same should write to the Hon. Secretary, J. Robinson, 69, Isaac Street, Liverpool. REALM readers given preference.

ST. LUKE'S V. ST. NICHOLAS.

SOUTH LONDON CHURCH OF ENGLAND CRICKET LEAGUE.

This match was played at Witham Park on Saturday, July 20th, and ended in a splendid win for St. Luke's by 16 runs. St. Nicholas batted first, and made 74, of which Buchan made 46. The fielding of St. Luke's was not up to that shown at previous matches. Wade and Hassel opened the batting for St. Luke's and batting steadily, made 11 before Wade was caught by Williams off Buchan. When Palmer joined Hassel some fine cricket was seen, both hitting brilliantly all round the wicket, and before Buchan caught Palmer the score had reached 80, of which he had made 47. Hassel was fourth out for a good 34, and eventually the match was won by 16 runs. The result of the match put the two teams and Old Charlton practically on a level, each of the teams having lost two matches, and there should be an exciting finish between these teams for the championship of the League.

STAMFORD HILL SWIMMING CLUB (age 12-15) require a few more members. Only respectable fellows need apply. Swimming taught to members; small subscription.—For particulars, apply to C. Loxton, 121, Stamford Hill.

TELEGRAPH MESSENGERS CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION. In the second round for the London Branches Championship Swim at Lavington Street Baths, on Tuesday, July 16th, the Battersea Branch beat Mitre Court (G.P.O. Messengers) by three yards after a splendid race. Team A: Riddett (capt.), W. Wise, H. Palmer, and S. Barlow. Time, 1 minute 46 4-5ths seconds for the four lengths.

PROGRESSIVE PHYSICAL CULTURE CLUB, DOVER. Wanted, a few lads, (age 14-18) Sandow's system, wrestling and boxing classes.—Apply to W. J. Lemao, Hon. Secretary, 110, Snargate Street, Dover.

PORTRAIT NO. 3.

Five shillings has been awarded to the following readers who sent solutions laid down in connection with the above competition:

J. H. Whitham, 23, Station Road, Chapeltown, near Sheffield; G. Rayner, 245, Park Road, Bearwood, near Birmingham; James Denning, 107, Firgrove Road, Southampton; John Fenwick, 3, Grosvenor Terrace, Trimdon Colliery; W. Harrison, 51, Quarry Road, Cheltenham.

No competitor succeeded in identifying No. 14. The readers whose photos were published were members of the following clubs:

No. 13. Heckmondwike Juniors.
" 14. Russell F.C.
" 15. Dead Hill Juniors.
" 16. St. Mary's Excelsiors.
" 17. Kinsley United Reserves.
" 18. Mafeking United.

THE SCHOOL ON THE CLIFF.

A Magnificent New Story of Stirring Adventure.

By E. HARCOURT BURRAGE.

THESE ARE THE PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS IN THIS FINE NEW STORY.

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

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

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 Sterncraig, a Mr. Belton and his two daughters, Ivonne and Laura.

Later, Mr. Belton's two daughters attempt to swim to the Bowl Cliff, and when in danger of drowning are rescued by Peter Pinnick, who is greatly elated, and taunts Jack Jaunty about his bravery.

Peter Pinnick and two strangers make an unsuccessful attempt on Jack Jaunty's life. The police are set on their track, but they only succeed in capturing Pinnick.

Mr. Redditch, a master at the School on the Cliff, falls asleep on the sands, and is spied by Nickey Hopkins and a few of his chums. They adorn his head with a dunce's cap, and surround him with empty bottles. Mrs. Baxter is seen approaching the recumbent form of the master, and the boys retire to their hiding-place to watch events.

(You read this week's instalment.)

IT is possible that Mrs. Baxter might have proved an adopted and full-sized tutor without seeing him, had he not made a noise in his throat like the outpourings of a too festive bottle of soda-water.

Mrs. Baxter stopped and glared at the curious-looking object, rubbed her eyes, and glared again.

"This," she said, "is the most disgraceful thing that has ever come under my notice. Mr. Redditch, a tutor, a teacher of the young, in a state of intoxication. Oh, horrible!"

At that moment, Mr. Redditch, having parted from the antediluvian monster, only to fall over the brink of a frightful precipice, started violently and opened one eye.

"Irene," he murmured softly, "my life, my love, my darling! Irene, will you not hear me?"

"Irene, indeed!" cried Mrs. Baxter. "What a narrow escape she has had! Oh, you brute!"

"Brute!" said the tutor, opening the other eye, but still half asleep. "Where is it? Which way did it go? Oh, it was but a dream! Thank goodness! I am awake again! Good-afternoon, Mrs. Baxter!"

"How dare you speak to me!" the lady returned, with all the indignation she could summon into her voice. "You—you monster!"

"Eh—what's that?" Mr. Redditch gasped. "Surely I must still be asleep!"

"You ought to be, sir. Go home, sir, and hide your shameful head from the respectable world. If you have a spark of manhood in you, you will quit this place without delay!"

"It's all right, old girl," the tutor, smiling feebly. "I am dreaming again!"

"Dreaming," repeated Mrs. Baxter, pointing to the empty stout bottles. "Are those things dreams?"

Mr. Redditch now beheld the overwhelming evidence against him, and shot out his legs, upsetting the bottles.

"Mrs. Baxter," he began, "permit me to assure you—"

"Oh, don't talk to me, wretch!" she interposed. "You are still in such a horribly muddled state that you do not know somebody has fixed a fool's cap on your head!"

"What!" Mr. Redditch shrieked, with an upward movement of his hands. "It is true—alas! it is only too true!"

"As true as you brought half a dozen bottles of stout down here and drank yourself into a state of insensibility!" Mrs. Baxter responded. "Mr. Redditch, I assure you that I shall not spare you!"

Mr. Redditch hurled the dunce's cap to the earth, as if it were a serpent and had stung him, and performed a kind of frenzied dance upon it.

"Some wretch, or wretches in human form, have played me this trick!" he cried wildly and despairingly.

"It could never have happened if you had been in your sober senses," Mrs. Baxter retorted.

In the excess of his agony, Mr. Redditch went down upon his knees and clasped his hands on the top of his head.

"Mrs. Baxter," he gasped, "I implore you, here in this attitude of supplication, not to breathe a word of this affair to any living soul in Sterncraig—not even to your husband!"

"I am proud to say that I have no secrets from my husband, and I consider it my duty to consult Bob."

"Then I am a doomed man!" Mr. Redditch moaned.

He sprang to his feet, and, dashing down to the edge of the water, waded in over his boots. Mrs. Baxter looked on with apparent calmness, but was ready to scream for help in the event of the tutor's really trying to commit suicide, and quite as ready to follow and haul him out by the scruff of his neck.

Mr. Redditch found the water a little too cool for him; besides, his boots were new ones, and salt water has the knack of destroying the best of leather.

Observing a settled look of infinite scorn on the face of Bob Baxter's wife, he suddenly turned and fled to the school. Mr. Bonnington was standing in the doorway, and was nearly floored by Redditch, for grief and rage had afflicted him with temporary blindness.

"What is the matter? Cannot you see where you are going? Where is your hat?" demanded Mr. Bonnington, in a breath.

"Hat, sir, hat!" Redditch cried, with the paper one in his mind. "It lies crushed and battered where I dashed it down. If I knew who was the perpetrator of the outrage, he should be punished with the utmost rigour of the law!"

Mr. Bonnington took a step backwards, and surveyed the tutor from head to foot in amazement.

"Mr. Redditch," he said, "your boots are wet, your hair is on end, your face is haggard, and—"

"And I think I must be going mad!" interposed the unhappy tutor, with a hollow groan. "Some evil destiny follows me whichever way I turn. Oh, sir, bear with me, I have been made the victim of a ghastly joke!"

Before there was time for even a brief explanation, Jack Jaunty and his chums appeared strolling leisurely along, and looking the pictures of innocence.

"Don't let the boys see you in this state," Mr. Bonnington said. "The school-room is quite empty; go there, and I will come to you presently."

"I strongly suspect that these very boys are the cause of all my misery," Mr. Redditch returned.

"What proof have you?"

"None!"

"Then, to say the least, your suspicions must be as cruel as they are unfounded! Go away, sir! The boys are looking at us, and evidently wondering why you are hatless, and more like an imbecile than a sane being."

"An imbecile!" Mr. Redditch moaned, as he fled.

"The night of my life lies heavily on my soul! Ah, woe is me! Farewell, a long farewell to my fondest dreams!"

The boys passed into the house in the usual manner, and Mr. Bonnington went to the school-room. He found Redditch seated at his desk, almost doubled up, his hands clutching some papers, and his face streaming with crimson fluid.

"Great Heaven!" cried Mr. Bonnington, recoiling towards the door. "The unhappy man has committed suicide under my roof!"

"No, sir—no," Mr. Redditch replied; "in a paroxysm brought on by the agony I am suffering, I chanced to upset a bottle of red ink."

"Well," said Mr. Bonnington, breathing more freely, "tell me your story. Be calm, sir, and do not handle that ruler as if you intended to hurl it at the head of somebody."

Mr. Redditch narrated his sad experience, Mr. Bonnington drumming his fingers upon his knee the while.

"Perhaps you will tell me where you think that the boys could have procured the stout bottles?" he said. "The dunce's cap I can understand, as it might have been fixed upon the head of any person overcome with——"

"Merciful powers!" Redditch interrupted. "And do you, too, imagine that I went down to the beach for the purpose of sinking below the level of the beasts of the field?"

Mr. Bonnington rubbed the tip of his nose, and remained silent for some moments.

"Mr. Redditch," he said, "if I were you I would make myself presentable, or go to bed."

If anything was calculated to add to the heavy burden, and completely crush the tutor, this was the last straw. Nay, it was a barbed

shaft that went direct to his heart, and completely floored him. Clutching his ears, he rocked himself to and fro upon the high stool, and nearly lost his balance.

"Come, sir—come!" said Mr. Bonnington soothingly, but firmly. "I must insist that you absent yourself from—er—public life, if even for only a few hours."

Mr. Redditch said no more. Words failed him to express what he felt, and bestowing a reproachful glare upon Mr. Bonnington, he stalked with all the dignity of the ghost of Hamlet's father across the floor.

But even in this performance, which he intended to be at once natural and imposing, his unlucky planet was in the ascendant, and asserted its baneful influence upon him. He trod upon a marble, dropped by one of the youngest of the pupils, and staggered heavily against the wall. Mr. Bonnington closed his eyes, the scene being too painful for his nerves to bear. When he opened them again Mr. Redditch had vanished, and the learned gentleman breathed a deep sigh of relief.

"I am afraid that Mr. Redditch and I will have to part company at no distant date," he said sadly, as he went to his study. "He is the last man whom I should expect to see in such a state; but my faith in human nature is almost destroyed."

Those Bottles Again.

IN the meantime, Mr. Redditch was on his way to his sleeping apartment, not because he required rest, as that was out of the question, but because he was afraid of offending Mr. Bonnington. Little dreaming that there were any further shocks in store for him, he walked in, wiping away the beads of perspiration which had gathered upon his brow. As he removed his handkerchief he started as if confronted by some appalling apparition.

On the dressing-table were the six empty stout-bottles, and perched on a chair was the dunce's cap, neatly repaired, but still bearing traces of ill-usage. And above this, stuck in the neck of one bottle was a ticket, upon which was inscribed in printed characters: "A wise man is moderate in all things. Beware of the snake that lurks in the glass."

There is a limit to human endurance. Even the mildest and most inoffensive man will deal a heavy blow to an enemy when put to the pinch; and Mr. Redditch, with a face foaming with wrath, grasped a walking-stick that stood in a corner, and swept the bottles from the table in one fell swoop. The crash was terrific, and heard all over the house.

Some of the boys stared in astonishment at each other, some giggled, and Mr. Bonnington, who was in the study, slipped from his chair and sat down upon the floor with unnecessary violence. Like Ajax defying the lightning, Mr. Redditch stood, paying no attention to the sound of uplifted voices, or to the hurrying of footsteps towards his room. Mr. Bonnington, with a troupe of lads at his heels, appeared on the scene; but departed from it quickly, slipping the key out of the door and locking it on the outside.

"Jaunty and all of you," he said, turning in a distracted manner to one hero, "I regret that you have been witnesses to so painful a sight. I do not like to send for medical assistance, but I fear that I must do so. Have you," he asked with emotion, "noticed anything strange or peculiar latterly in the conduct of Mr. Redditch?"

Before any reply could be made to this question, Mr. Redditch tried the handle of the door, and then knocked loudly at it.

"Let me out!" Redditch cried, breathing like a grampus through the keyhole. "I will not be treated like a child, neither will I be made a prisoner. Mr. Bonnington, the liberty of the British subject is held sacred by the law. Remember that, so do not be surprised if the affair ends in litigation."

"My dear sir," Mr. Bonnington replied, "once again permit me to implore you to go to bed. Your conduct is so extraordinary that——"

"Extraordinary!" Mr. Redditch echoed. "Perhaps you will find somebody who can explain how these confounded bottles and fool's-cap came into my bed-room."

"How can I, unless you conveyed them hither yourself?"

Mr. Redditch laughed in a maniacal style, and tugged away at the handle.

"If you do not liberate me instantly," he cried, "I will escape by the window. This is too much for the meanest creature with a will of his own to bear."

He kicked violently at one of the lower panels, and Mr. Bonnington turned pale and cold.

"Retire boys," he said, "and keep this sad affair within these walls. I will speak to this unhappy man, and should he attempt any violence I have sufficient strength to master him."

Some of the boys were inclined to linger, in spite of the injunction given them; but Jack, who was dying to have a laugh, set the example by leading the way downstairs.

"Mr. Redditch."

"Yes, Mr. Bonnington."

"I beg to inform you that I am about to open the door, and also that I intend to stand no nonsense. I will not have my house turned into a bear garden."

"Heaven knows that I am innocent of all the things which have been heaped upon my head," Mr. Redditch replied. "Tears come idly from a man, but I could weep."

"I wish you would," Mr. Bonnington thought. "A sudden flow would do you good."

He unlocked the door, and, keeping a firm hand on it, peered in. Mr. Redditch was sitting on the edge of his bed, a pitiable object to behold.

"There," he said, pointing to the wreck of glass, "are the very bottles that were placed near my sleeping form on the beach. Can you not see that I am perfectly sober? And do you not further see that I have been made the victim of an unpardonable hoax?"

"But who could have done it? How am I to act?"

"Put the boys on their honour, and you will soon find out. Think, sir, what this may lead to if my character is not cleared without delay. I shall be the most despised of all men in Sterncraig, and every respectable human being will avoid me and point at me."

"It certainly is a most unpleasant situation," Mr. Bonnington replied. "Well, I will do as you request, and I hope that the result may be satisfactory."

"I am convinced of it."

"Very well. Remove the traces of red ink, and come down to my study. In the meanwhile I will make preparations for the investigation."

"Oh, sir," said Mr. Redditch, holding out his hands, "I have suffered much in my time, but this day will remain as the darkest page of the history of my life."

Mr. Bonnington left the distressed tutor, and went downstairs in a thoughtful mood. From the playground came the sound of laughter, and the headmaster asked himself whether it was possible that those mirthful boys could have played such a joke on Mr. Redditch.

Straight back to the school Mr. Redditch went, and startled Mr. Bonnington by tumbling over the door-mat into the study. "It is over," he cried, as he cannoned wildly against the table.

"Jaunty will tell me the truth," he said. "I will call him to me."

Jack answered promptly to his name; and when Mr. Bonnington put the important question to him point-blank, Jack raised his face, and confessed outright that he had been the ringleader in the affair, and hoped that his chums would be exonerated. Mr. Bonnington was so overcome that it seemed likely he would sit down without the assistance of a chair.

"I must think over this," he said. "At the present moment I do not know how to deal with such an offence against discipline, or what punishment to inflict."

In utter despair, he fell back upon Mrs. Bonnington, who pooh-poohed the affair.

"In the first place," she said, "Mr. Redditch had no right to hide himself away in quiet places, and certainly not to go to sleep. The rock might have fallen upon him and killed him, thus giving us the unpleasant experience of an inquest."

"That is hardly probable, my dear," Mr. Bonnington observed mildly.

"But I say it is," she persisted. "Rocks have fallen in different parts of the world and killed all sorts of people."

"Well, granting that as a fact, what am I to do in the present instance?"

"Scold the boys, and tell Mr. Redditch that if he wishes to stay at this establishment he had better exercise more discretion."

Mr. Bonnington indulged in a slight groan.

"Those boys must have brought those stout bottles in with them," he said.

"It requires no wise head to guess that."

Mr. Bonnington said no more, but, repairing to his study, sent for Jack, and read him a lecture which lasted until he nearly went to sleep, and the sun began to grow red in the west. Mr. Redditch did not look particularly dignified the next morning, but the incident blew over, as all such incidents in school life are apt to do.

Sundry chuckles were heard emanating from Nickey Hopkins and Will Ruddles, which brought down the wrath of Mr. Bonnington upon their heads. The learned gentleman went so far as to hint at corporal punishment and locked rooms, with a diet of bread and water, which so excited Nickey's risible nerves that in trying not to laugh he choked, and was told to walk about outside until he could behave himself.

After lessons the lads came trooping out as usual. Jack went alone to Baxter's cottage and told the housewife not to say anything with regard to the painful state she had discovered Mr. Redditch in.

"I do not think he will be with us long," he said. "Indeed, I fear that a great change is coming."

"It is time," Mrs. Baxter replied. "What with Dimick in prison, and that lawyer fellow hanging about, nobody knows for what Sterncraig is getting a very unhappy place."

"Brighter days are coming," Jack said encouragingly. "As for Terrapin, I mean to have a few words with that gentleman the very first time that I meet him."

The opportunity came sooner than he expected. Not far away Jack came face to face with the lawyer, who was carrying under his arm an old shot-gun, such as natives shoot wild birds with.

"Mr. Terrapin," Jack said, "I was saying only just now that I wished to have a few words with you."

"Well, here I am," Terrapin replied, affecting a careless air. "What is it, my lad?"

"My lad!" Jack repeated scornfully. "I will take it as a kindness if you keep your terms of affection for those who care for them."

"I have no affection for you," the lawyer responded, knitting his eyebrows. "You never made such a mistake in your life!"

"Familiarity, then."

"Hoy-day," Terrapin exclaimed, "things are coming to a pretty pass when a man of my age is compelled to stand quiet and be addressed in such style by a boy!"

"I will speak to you as I think fit!" Jack retorted. "Mr. Terrapin, I have discovered something that will not come very pleasant to your ears."

"What is it?" the lawyer demanded, moving the shot-gun and holding it across his arms.

"You sent your son here under the name of Mark Ricketts to spy upon my actions."

"It's a lie!" Terrapin cried hoarsely.

"But I say it is the truth!" Jack said. "You son has acquired the habit of talking to himself and talking in his sleep. He is most miserable, and it requires but little to make him betray his own father."

Terrapin took one step backwards, and then advanced so close to Jack that he felt the man's hot breath upon his face.

"Listen to me, you beggarly brat!" he said. "Why should I put a watch upon you—you who are doubtless the obscure child of some common sailor? If you ever accuse me of such a thing again, or utter one word to me, I will break every bone in your body."

"You would find some difficulty in breaking one!" Jack responded, as the hot blood rushed into his face and suffused it with a crimson glow. "You may be a lawyer—you are styled a gentleman by the Act of Parliament—but you are a scoundrel!"

Terrapin clutched the gun and aimed a blow at Jack, perhaps with the idea of striking him with the barrel. Jack Jaunty closed with him, and seemed fair to wrest the weapon away from him, but Terrapin got the mastery. With a savage oath on his lips he stepped back, and at the same moment the gun exploded.

Jack fell, bleeding from a wound in his leg, but contrived to regain his feet as a number of boys and fishermen ran up, Bob Baxter being among the latter.

Terrapin took to flight, losing the gun as he ran.

"After him!" Bob Baxter roared. "Bring the murderous dog down!"

It is quite probable in the excitement of the moment that Jack Jaunty might have been left with no other assistance than Gerard Inglis could afford, Mr. Bonnington and Mr. Redditch were away from the school, but Mr. Belton was drawn to the scene by the report and sudden commotion.

"My lad—my poor lad," he said, as he lifted Jack in his arms, "it would seem that trouble dogs your footsteps!"

"If I have no worse trouble than this," Jack replied, smiling faintly, "I shall get over it easy enough. There are a few shots in my leg, but I dare say somebody will be able to pick them out."

"What a boy!" Mr. Belton ejaculated, in admiration. "Oh, here is Mrs. Bonnington! Madam, please send somebody over to Dandy Bridge for Dr. Bird. Jack Jaunty is badly hurt, though he makes light of it."

"Will you go, Inglis?" Mrs. Bonnington asked.

Would he go? Gerard was off almost as quickly as any shot that sped from Terrapin's gun, and beat the record of any school chum doing a service for another.

"Mind this," said Jack, as Mr. Belton placed him on the couch, and examined the wound, while Mrs. Bonnington hastened to prepare temporary bandages, "I cannot say that Terrapin shot me purposely. We had a struggle, and I could not give my word on oath how the gun went off."

"Humph! That is like you, Jack," Mr. Belton replied. "But for my own part the shot does not appear to have been an accidental one. But our duty is to attend to you now, and talk the matter over afterwards."

The wound was a lacerated one, happily, above the knee, and no danger was apprehended.

"When I heard the explosion," said Mrs. Bonnington, as she came into the room, "I nearly fainted. I thought that that unhappy Mr. Redditch had blown out his brains. Jaunty, my boy, you must keep still. If you exert yourself we may have the wretchedness of seeing you walking about Sterncraig on crutches or a wooden leg."

Jack laughed heartily, although he was enduring great pain, but he would not acknowledge it by word or expression.

In the meantime, Terrapin the fugitive, was flying from his pursuers. All Sterncraig was up, but many of the men, misled by rumours and wild gesticulations, took the wrong way, and the chase was taken up by a comparatively small but determined band.

The boys led the way, and the heavily-booted fishermen had great difficulty in keeping up with them; but there was not one present but who would have rather dropped on the roadside than allow the lawyer to escape.

With streaming faces, glaring eyes, and shouting hoarsely, they tore over the ground, raising clouds of dust, and startling every living creature for miles round. Each vengeful cry ran in Terrapin's ear like a death-knell.

He had seen with his own eyes what a favourite Jack Jaunty was with the people of Sterncraig, and he knew that if he fell into their hands they would handle him very severely.

How he ran! It is said that fear lends wings to the heels of a guilty man for a time, and, indeed, he seemed to be so in this case. Onward he went, ramming home the charge into the gun.

"I will never be taken alive!" he cried. "The man who attempts to stop me dies!"

If these words reached the ears of his pursuers, nobody paid the slightest attention to them.

Terrapin now began to alter his tactics. He had run in a straight line, but suddenly he began to double like a hare up the lane, down the road, until he reached an open road. Here, breathless, scratched by brambles, his thin boots cut through by sharp stones, he stood at bay.

"Back, all of you!" he shrieked, presenting the gun. "I swear that if there is one of you who has no love of life, let him attempt to touch me!"

His finger was on the trigger of the weapon.

"Give yourself up, villain!" Bob Baxter roared. "Your race is run!"

"Not yet!" Terrapin hissed. "Keep back, I say! I am desperate!"

Glancing for a moment to the right, he saw that if he could throw the men and boys into

The School on the Cliff.

(Continued from the previous page.)

confusion, he might dash through a hedge and reach a wild track of land

"Will you put down that gun?" Bob Baxter said. "For myself I care nothing, but youngsters are present."

"Let them take care of themselves," Terrapin replied.

As he spoke he fired, the charge flying over the heads of Baxter and the rest. Then, hurling the gun into their midst, Terrapin dashed away, and before the smoke cleared he had disappeared.

For some moments the men and boys stood transfixed, staring at each other, and wondering how they had escaped without a wound. Bob Baxter was the first to speak.

"Forrard, lads, all!" he cried. "He can't be far away! He's got no gun now, and we can run him to earth easy enough!"

But for once the honest fisherman was out of his reckoning. Terrapin had vanished as mysteriously as if the earth had swallowed him up.

Pinnick Sends for Mr. Bolton—The Interview—Return of the Stranger.

WHEN Mr. Bonnington returned, he found his establishment in a state of commotion that almost distracted him.

Dr. Bird had just arrived, and pronounced Jack's wound a trivial one; the land of men and boys had come back, and the unsuccessful search for Terrapin; and everybody was cheering like mad for Jack Jaunty, except Dan Callis and Aaron Downey, who stood apart, biting their finger-nails out of sheer envy.

"If I had been shot in the leg," Dan said, "there would not have been half this fuss."

"You are right," Aaron replied. "Some people get plenty of luck, and others none at all."

"Luck!" cried Nickee Hopkins, who overheard the remark. "You will know what luck is by-and-by. I shouldn't wonder if you were told to go and search for it outside the school."

At any other time such a remark as this would have brought Dan's brutality into full play, but there were too many people about. He bit his under-lip and turned away, Aaron Downey following him.

The police had been sent for, and arrived in hot haste. Dandy Bridge, they said, was getting a lively place for their style of business, but they liked it, for even country policemen get tired of doing nothing, and a little waking up comes as a pleasant change.

While Mr. Bonnington was going about like a man in a dream, and Mr. Redditch was falling over everybody, and hundreds of inquiries for Jack were pouring into the house, the irrepressible Dandy Bridge came hustling in. He was a little late, but he made up for that by informing his men sharply that they ought to have been a little earlier.

"What are you hanging about here for?" he demanded.

"We were waiting for you to take charge of this case, sir," replied one of the constables.

The inspector looked up as if he could have swallowed the man, buttons and all.

"Waiting for me?" he rejoined, in a terrible tone of voice. "Waiting for me, when there is a man who has committed a crime little short of murder abroad? Great Cæsar! What is the force coming to?"

"Nobody has charged him, sir."

"That is all nonsense!" Mr. Belton put in. "Of course, he is charged with firing a gun and doing grievous bodily injury!"

"Away with you," said the inspector, waving his arm loftily, "and don't let me see you again until you have caught him! Mr. Belton, I have a message for you."

"For me?"

"Yes, sir. Pinnick desires to see you in the lock-up, when you have the time to step over."

"I will go at once," Mr. Belton replied; "and I hope I shall have the pleasure of seeing Terrapin placed under lock and key before I come away."

"I hope so, too, sir; but he's a knowing one, and as cunning as a fox. I have had my eye on him for a long time."

Just then Mr. Bonnington scanned the faces of those around him.

"Where is Mark Ricketts?" he demanded.

Nobody answered.

"He must be found," Mr. Bonnington continued, "and I will break the news as gently to him as possible."

This remark called for little comment, as the majority thought that Jack Jaunty, and not Terrapin, was alluded to. But Mark was nowhere to be found, though, had everybody gone down to the beach, they would have found there, moaning and wringing his hands.

"And this is the end of the miserable part I have played," he said. "When the truth is known—as it must be—I shall be despised forevermore. My father hunted like a wild beast, and I—I—— Oh, what shall I do?"

Clasping his hands before his eyes, he fell upon his knees and shed tears, drawn from the very bitterness of his heart.

"Go back and confess all!" a voice seemed to say in his ear. "It is your only chance. Your unhappy father is ruined for ever, but the truth will save you."

"I cannot do it!" he cried, springing to his feet.

"Cannot do what, my poor lad?" said a voice.

Mark Ricketts shrieked with terror as he found himself face to face with the Stranger. He had appeared so suddenly that Mark could scarcely believe the evidence of his eyes.

"What cannot you do?" the Stranger continued. "At all events, I am not your enemy, and you can trust me."

"No, no!" Mark screamed, thrusting out his arms. "Don't come near me. Don't attempt to touch me, as I may do something desperate. I think I am going mad!"

The Stranger folded his arms and gazed steadily at the wretched boy.

"Mark Terrapin—I am calling you by your right name," he said—"I know what has happened—not only to-day, but for a long time past. Will you come over to the Bowl with me?"

Instead of replying, Mark turned and ran away as fast as his legs could carry him. The Stranger called to him once; but Mark, instead of turning, increased the distance. The Stranger's eyes moistened, as if some strange emotion had taken possession of him.

"Poor boy!" he murmured. "He has been trained in the way his father intended he should go, but I will save him—save him, in spite of himself."

How or when he returned to Sternecraig none could tell, and his appearance created astonishment, almost amounting to consternation, when he suddenly walked into the midst of the loiterers hanging about Mr. Bonnington's establishment. He listened calmly to all the rumours—some of them being of the wildest description—that were poured into his ears, and then quietly silenced all by saying:

"I saw the affair with my own eyes, but I was just too late to avert it. I am going to speak to Jack Jaunty now. Please stand aside!"

They obeyed him in silence, some of them looking rather sheepish, especially such as had enlarged upon the adventure.

Before going him for a time, we will follow Mr. Belton and the inspector to Dandy Bridge. The inspector had driven over in his trap, and it did not take long to reach the lock-up. A deputy was in charge. He saluted Mr. Belton, and then gave his head a knowing roll, as much as to say, "Pinnick hasn't sent for you for nothing, I am sure."

The inspector took down a bunch of keys from the wall, and bade Mr. Belton follow him down the long, dismal passage. The inspector stopped before a door, but before unlocking it opened a small wicket and peeped through an iron grating.

(Another enthralling long instalment of this popular serial will appear in next Saturday's issue of THE BOYS' REALM. Order your copy in advance to avoid disappointment.)

(To be continued on Saturday next.)

CYCLING:

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

THE pistol has cracked, a capital push-off has been effected in the manner already described last week, and now the young rider settles down to a pace which is just as much as can be managed in view of the distance to travel.

He makes for the nearest competitor, presuming him to have one in front of him, and having the advantage of a good start, will probably be up to him before his opponent is well under way. Now, our young friend must exercise his judgment as to pace. In half-mile handicaps, one has to pedal hard the whole way. In longer distances, different tactics have to be brought into play.

If the competitor he has caught does not ride fast enough to take him along at a speed he knows he can maintain, the young rider must give him the go-by, or he will have the men behind him—the middle and the back-markers—coming up with him before he has been able to take full advantage of the handicap allowance he has received.

Strong, regular work is now the order, the idea being to maintain position, and to force the other riders to ride all out to get on terms. If our young friend should be caught, he must not despair, but go on pedalling, as it is quite possible that his big effort put forth by the rest of the field to come up with him has taken a great deal out of them, and a final hard sprint may yet land the novice in a winner.

How many times, especially in short distance handicaps, does the back-marker catch his field some distance from home, only to be beaten in the sprint home by a competitor to whom he has given a liberal start.

Of tactics in cycle-racing much can be said. However, a necessity to successful riding. To secure advantage over opponents one must use judgment. A clever rider will force his opponents to set the pace for three-fourths of the race, while he lays back behind the bunch well sheltered from the wind. He will watch the bunch carefully for a rider about to make a "jump," and when this takes place, will tack himself on to the rear wheel of his flying opponent. Or from the rear, it is he himself who will make a "break-away," during which the fallen competitors with a sudden rush, before they are aware of his intentions.

He will take care to avoid being pocketed, or shut in at the crucial moment; will watch constantly for openings, and take due advantage of them.

The young competitor in cycle races will learn much by watching other cyclists race. Let him imagine himself to be one of the riders in a handicap heat. Carefully noting each move on the part of the competitor he has singled out, he should watch how it pans out. This competitor may elect to set up a strong pace at the outset, catch the leaders, and stay with them, nursing himself for the final burst, always keeping a watchful eye on the limit men, to see whether they are coming back to him or not.

There is probably no sport in which judgment of pace is so essential as in cycle-racing, and nothing so exciting, perhaps, as when 200 or so yards from the post the field suddenly becomes animated, and splits up into struggling units, as with head bent down a couple of inches lower, each rider sprints for home. At a terrific rate the last corner is rounded, and the final straight entered upon. A ding-dong race now ensues between the leading competitors, the whir of swiftly-revolving wheels, the loud shouts of the crowd, the strain of fast pedalling, all tend to make a close finish a period of highly-strung excitement.

The plaudits of the spectators, the congratulations of friends, amply repay the rider first past the post for the little sacrifices he may have had to undergo in his preparation for the race.

CRICKET:

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

A. Warren is always a fine bowler, as are Wass and Lees. Tolley is a strong man; he has a fine swing; but if you watch him closely, he seems to check himself just before he delivers the ball. It should be a free and very correct one, and well worth watching. Bestwick has a peculiar style, and when he is on the run his arms work up and down like a windmill. Lockwood is very good, with a perfect rotary action, swinging the body from the shoulder; he takes a long, springy run and delivers the ball with a jerk.

Keep the Arm Up.

If you are a fast bowler be very careful that in attempting to alter pace you do not avoid altering your style of delivery. The whole object of the move is to deceive the batsman, for if he has the slightest suspicion that something else is coming, he is on the alert and ready to meet it. If you can do this you will deceive him with a slow ball, and you will most likely make the same mistake as he did to the last ball that you bowled him with, and you will have his wicket in the long run.

Keep your arm up. W. G. Grace was captain of Gloucestershire when I used to sing out to Roberts, "Keep your arm up," and the reason was that the ball would come from a high elevation, and would have more life in its flight. Nearly all the best fast bowlers have had high, free actions.

Fast bowlers depend more on their pace to get wickets. They cannot expect to get the ball break much when they have to lessen the pace they put on it.

Varying Pace.

A fast bowler may vary the pace, but not too frequently, otherwise he will become a medium-pace bowler instead of what he ought to be, and become an occasional slow one. His great idea should be to bowl fast, but with plenty of pace. He will not send down the ball and vary the pace, but will be more deadly he will be. Pace does not always mean very much difference in delivering the ball.

This is the present year a good many fast bowlers, because fast bowlers are deadly in very dry seasons. A fast bowler should be careful not to waste his strength. By bowling fast he does not get up his speed much, and is apt to become stale and worn out before the cricket time.

The Ball.

A fast bowler should hold the ball well over the ball as to "pitch" it. A fast "yorker" wherever it may be is another desirable thing to be used to bowl it.

The ball comes from as high as the arm will allow, and seems to fly like a shot. A high action "yorker" is more difficult for the batsman to play than a low action one. In the former case the starting-point of the ball is above the line of vision, and it is difficult to get on a line with or below it. In the latter case the course and pace of the ball is easy for the eye to judge, and the batsman knows exactly which good, fast "yorker" he has to play. He is not being content with trying to keep the ball down to a batsman, and when he is bowling, or when they first go on, he is trying to break down his guard with a "yorker," which is evidently quite at home with, and which presents no terrors to him.

A good length, just outside the off stump and between the off and middle stumps is the direction that may be recommended to the bowler who bowls for the wicket and does not get a little off-spin on the ball.

(This instructive series of cricket articles will be continued on Saturday next.)

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With Pick and Lamp.

A Magnificent Tale of Colliery Life.

By DAVID GOODWIN.

THE FIRST CHAPTERS IN BRIEF.

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

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

At last, after many thrilling adventures and numerous narrow escapes from death at the hands of Kenyon Price, the lads consider that they have accumulated sufficient capital to commence operations upon their own seam of coal, which they accordingly do.

Work now starts in earnest at the Bryn y Garth Pit, hewers being procured from the village. During the second week Roddy is considerably annoyed to discover ominous signs of dampness in the pit, and the next day, whilst they are all working below, a dull roar is suddenly heard, and a huge flood of water sweeps down the gallery, carrying all before it.

(Now read this week's instalment.)

Disaster.

RODDY'S shout was drowned in the roar of the water that overwhelmed him. He was only conscious of being struck as if by a great cushion. Then the water closed over him and thundered in his ears, and he felt himself being swept onwards like a straw.

He came to the surface, gasping, and flung out an arm. It knocked against the coaly wall, and showed him the part at which he was being borne along, though all was dark as pitch. He struck out with both arms to keep himself afloat, and heard the roar of the front of the flood rolling along ahead.

Of his companions he could see nothing. Somebody was gurgling and spluttering close by, and he thought he heard Terry's voice. Then a hand clutched him in a wild, convulsive grip, and Roddy, having no mind to be pulled down and drowned by anybody, struggled and struck with all his might, and only just managed to free himself.

"Tom, Tom!" he shouted. "Where are you?"

There was no answer.

"We're done!" he thought wretchedly—"the mine and us, too! The water'll jam us against the roof of the road in a minute, and we shall be drowned like rats!"

To Roddy, and to the others, they seemed to have been struggling for life in the darkness for an age, so little can the brain judge how time passes in moments of great stress. In truth, it was not more than thirty seconds since the water first came down upon them, and even as Roddy was giving up hope—for the water was deadly cold and numbing—he saw a gleam of light ahead. The shaft was near.

Tom's voice was heard calling out eagerly somewhere in front, and Roddy's heart gave a bound of joy, for he had almost feared Tom had succumbed. The "long road," after all, was no great length, and soon the light showed him Terry Lloyd and Fluellen close by him, floundering as the flood swept them along; while in front Tom was already whirled into the open shaft-bottom. A moment or two later the others followed.

The shaft was an extraordinary sight. It was filled with bubbling, swirling water up to within a foot of the road's roof, and it was full of hewers and putters—nearly a score of them. They were clinging to a couple of ropes hanging from the top, and to each other. The basket was being wound up at frantic speed with a couple of men in it, and Jenkyns—one of the hewers—stretched out a hand and caught hold of Tom as soon as he appeared.

"Catch on here!" he cried. "Heavens, lad, but I was glad to see you! We could not get up for long road against ter flood, but we thought it would wash you down. There comes ter other young boss!"

"Who's here? Are there many lost?" was Roddy's first cry, as one of the pitmen reached a hand to him and drew him to his side. In a few moments all those who had been in the upper stall with the boys were safe. The water was still swirling roughly round the shaft, but was scarcely rising there, for it was running away fast down the opposite road, which sloped downwards, and had been shored and partly blocked with struts and timbering, for it was not considered safe to work it.

"There was nobody down there!" cried Roddy.

"Nay, sir; not a soul!" replied Jenkyns. "The rest of us all came out from ter roads when we heard ter wattor, and being close to ter shaft, we were in no danger. We reached it quick, but Haynes an one of ter putters was knocked down and stunned as the wattor drove them against ter shaft side. So we kept them up, and ropes was let down at once from above, and we sent ter two hurt men up in ter basket. There ise nobody missing."

"Thank Heaven for that!" said Roddy fervently. "Here comes the basket down again. Swing it in, an' send up a couple of the younger putters first—the poor little beggars look perished. How bitter the water is!"

"Nay, you an' Tom Hughes go up first. You baf had ter worst of it, sir."

"Obey orders, an' send up those putters!" cried Roddy sharply. "Are you boss here, or am I? We don't leave till we see all the hands out! Look alive, there!"

Two of the putters, whom Roddy saw to be blue with cold, were quickly wound aloft, and after them went Pat Lloyd and the young hewer Fluellen, who had had an exhausting time of it in the "long road," being poor swimmers.

The "horse-gin" was a blessing that day—it worked much quicker than the crane had done. Two by two the pitmen were sent up to the top, and when anyone suggested that the boys should go, Roddy "snapped his head off." The young partners remained below, getting some sort of foothold on the sides of the shaft, and keeping hold of the rope. It was surprising how cold and chilly was the water-logged shaft, while a blazing summer sun was scorching the outside world.

"There goes our colliery!" muttered Roddy, his teeth chattering as he looked at the seething water, which now swamped all traces of their work.

"We can thank Kenyon Price for it," said Tom gloomily. "If we're beaten, it's he who's beaten us. I'll bet anything that shaft of his up the hillside has tapped this water and sent it down to flood us!"

"That's the cause of it, for a thousand, though I wouldn't believe it before! If it's done on purpose—which is likely enough—they must ha' managed to spy on our mine somehow. Else how would they know about that fissure in the seam?"

"They've learned about it, no doubt. 'Spect they struck an end of it when they sunk their own shaft, an' guessed it ran right along the seam into ours."

"There's no guesswork about a thing like this. They must have got a blessed clever engineer or expert!"

"Swing out," said Tom; "here's the basket. "They climbed into it, very cold and stiff.

"As to the engineer," added Tom, as the ascent began, "Dafydd's seen him there, an' knows his name. He told it me before we came down to-day—Ellerby, I think it was; but I never heard of him."

"That chap!" exclaimed Roddy. "Well, he is a clever engineer—none more so; or, at least, he has been. But he's a drunken scaramouch as well, an' never can keep a job, though he's had the best. The Wynyard Collieries sacked him."

"Well, then, it's clear enough Kenyon Price has bought him to do the job," said Tom wearily, "an' he's done it. Still, don't let's despair. We may get the better of this yet."

Roddy made no reply, but his thoughts were gloomy enough. Water, the one thing that ruins so many promising coal-mines, was a big foe to fight in any circumstances. But the Bryn y Garth Pit, absolutely flooded out from end to end, looked utterly hopeless.

The basket was swung in at the shaft's top, and the boys were both relieved to be in the open sunshine again, though their hearts were like lead in them.

"This is a bad business, Roddy," said Terry Lloyd, even his Irish cheerliness damped and put out, "an' 'tis mortal sorry for you we all are!"

"Ay," said Roddy, squaring his shoulders, "but it might have been far worse, Terry. Have you called over the roll?"

"We have, an' there's every man here. The two that was knocked on the head ha' got over it—they was only stunned a bit."

"Come forward, mates," said Roddy to the men. "It's no time to talk o' little things like goods an' money lost. Let's go on our knees here by the shaft, an' give thanks that we're alive!"

They knelt at the word, all that rough assembly, dripping and exhausted after the struggle with death, and heartfelt was the prayer of gratitude they offered, bare-headed and on their knees, at the mouth of the pit.

"And now," said Roddy, as they rose, "you're all wet an' tired out, an' there's no more to be done to-day. Home you go home, mates, an' get dry clothes an' a meal. You can't help us. I'll bring you word to-morrow whether there'll ever be work in the Bryn y Garth again, which I doubt. But we'll see you don't lose."

The pitmen departed, after they had expressed their sympathy for the boys. Dafydd was a wise comforter, and said nothing, but walked with them in silence to the cottage.

How Hope Came Back.

TOM and Roddy doffed their wet clothes and towelled themselves till their skins glowed and the numbness was dispelled. Then, slipping into dry things, they made their way back to the shaft again. They lay down at the edge and discussed the situation.

"We might have known those brutes on the hill were up to mischief," said Tom. "There must be some way to undo it, though."

Roddy shook his head.

"I've seen rich pits not a quarter as badly flooded as this abandoned for good," he said; "an' by wealthy companies, who could spend any amount of money gettin' the best machinery for pumpin'. It's only throwin' your cash down a well. An' you can't bow coal in a divin'-suit!"

Tom lay with his head over the shaft's rim, and peered down into the gloom. It was a small, most discouraging, came up from below.

"Water's the one thing that beats you in coal-minin'," added Roddy. "You see——"

"Beats us? Yes, but is this water going to beat us? It seems to me it's a lot lower than when we left!" exclaimed Tom eagerly. "Look down."

Roddy did so. The bright sun could not light up the whole shaft, but a slight glimmer was reflected from the bottom, evidently by water.

"By George, I believe you're right!" he said. "I expected a slight drop, but that looks like a good one. Let's go down."

Dafydd joined them both down the shaft, and Roddy, who had for once been really despondent, was now trembling with eagerness. They called up their directions to Dafydd, and he let them right down.

There was no flow of water at all. The flood had ceased entirely, and the glimmer they had seen was caused only by the puddle that remained in the hollow of the shaft's floor.

"How's that, umpire?" cried Tom. "Why, the flood's drained itself dry!"

"Let's explore the roads!" exclaimed Roddy; and he took a couple of candle-ends from his pocket and lit them.

There was never any fire-damp in the mine, and they did not use safety-lamps. Regardless of any danger that might spring up, the boys hastened up the "long road."

The big fissure at the top had been greatly widened by the pressure, and another had opened on the other side of the seam. It was easy to see how great a volume of water must have been forced through, but now there was barely the merest trickle.

"She'll do!" cried Roddy. "The mine's alive yet. I tell you what, it must have been just a reservoir of water they tapped an' turned loose on us—like there are in the Coed Coch, only bigger. It made a dickens of a flood for twenty minutes, an' then exhausted itself."

"That's it!" exclaimed Tom. "Come to think of it, it'd take a regular river, as big as our trout-stream outside, to keep up a flow like that for good. But how has it drained away so fast?"

"Down the lower road that we don't use, it's all honeycombed with fissures, an' leads downhill. By Jove, Tom, I believe no water could stay long in this mine, after all! The slope it's on is too good, and the drainage. The ground's hard above here, but holey. As a honeycomb down beyond the far workins."

"Here, let's get out an' dance a giddy fandango," said Tom; "an' half an hour ago we thought we were beaten for good and all. I say," he added, as they started back towards the shaft in great jubilation, "d'you think Kenyon Price, or his beastly engineer, could do it again, though?"

"I don't know; but we'll take good care they don't have the chance. It's a safe bet there's law to stop this sort o' thing. We'll go right off an' see Mr. Williams."

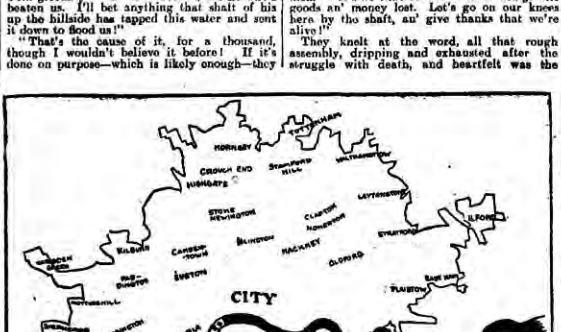
It was Roddy who was deputed to go and interview the lawyer, however, and Tom preferred to stay behind and look after the mine. He devoted himself first to hunting for all the tools and gear that had been swept away, and found a good many of the heavier things.

Meanwhile, Roddy made the best of his way to Mr. Williams's office, and found that personage at once. The lawyer put aside his other business as soon as he heard what the trouble was, and in a private room Roddy quickly gave him the whole story.

"The infernal scoundrel!" exclaimed the lawyer, startled out of his usual caution. "I always distrusted Price, but I never thought him capable of such a thing."

"We've had more than one taste of his quality, sir," said Roddy. "Then you think there's no doubt he did manage it—or, rather, his engineer for him?"

"Not a doubt in the world, I should say, Owen. I know a good deal about colliery engineering, and—well, it's been done before now, that trick. Luck must have favoured him, though, and he must have got a very



"THE BOYS' REALM" FOOTBALL MAP.

Showing how London will be divided into two sections—North and South.

WITH PICK AND LAMP.

(Continued from the previous page.)

clever engineer. What, Ellerby, is it? Why, that alone is enough to make it look fishy! I wonder Kenyon Price dares. Well, you've got to stop it at once, of course."

"By law, sir?"

"Of course. Fight, I say! I'll take the case on for you. I've advised you to keep clear of lawsuits so far, but this is a different matter. I'll put an expert on for proof, and I'll get an injunction—that's what they call it in the courts—at once, ordering him to close that shaft until the case comes on. The affair is so serious, and the risks run by your men so great, that I can promise you that much. Afterwards we'll go for Price, and make him pay full damages. This case will make a stir."

"Unless he can wriggle out of it," said Roddy. "He is a clever beast."

"He'll have to be if he wriggles out of this!" said the lawyer grimly.

"I don't think he'll fancy havin' to answer questions in a law court," said Roddy, grinning. "You'll call me as a witness—eh, sir? What about the mortgage now?"

"That still holds, and you can't alter it. It's lucky for you that your mine's drained so quickly. But I think we can play off these damages against the mortgage," chuckled the lawyer.

"Then I'll clear out, sir, for there's a lot to do. Thank you very much."

Roddy went straight from Mr. Williams's office to Terry Lloyd's cottage, and told him how things had turned out. Terry was delighted.

"I believe there's no more danger from flood, Terry," said Redwell; "but still, it's possible. The question is, d'you think the hands would consent to come back and work to-morrow? We'll leave the long road, and get our coal only near the shaft, and keep a good look-out. Only, I don't want to ask any man if he don't fancy it."

"I'll swear for them, Roddy—every man Jack av them!" said the big Irishman: "Sure, a chokid'd be ashamed to fear such a risk, after what you've told us. An' av there was fifty risks we'd come, rather than be boat by that spalpeen Kenyon Price! I'll bring the whole gang in the morning, niver fear!"

Fortified by this assurance, Roddy returned to Bryn y Garth, for he knew Terry was to be relied upon. He told Tom and Dafydd the result of his mission, and, before turning in for the night, satisfied himself by another descent into the pit. All was well there, and no more water was to be seen.

They only took meals at the cottage now, and slept in wooden cots-beds at the shed which had been put up by the shaft's mouth. Gripe mounted guard outside, as usual.

When morning came, Terry proved himself a true prophet, for with him came the entire little crew of the Bryn y Garth pitmen, to the last man and boy. They gave Roddy a cheer, and he called them together, and pointed out what the circumstances were, and the possible risk they ran.

"I thought there was any more real danger I wouldn't let you go down the shaft," he said; "but I don't believe there's much chance of it."

"Danger the douce!" said Jenkyns, the hewer. "Welsh pitmen was brought up on danger, and they like a spice of it. We'll work for you two boys, if we have to swim to ter stalls!"

The shift began merrily, and soon the shaft was turning out coal as busily as ever, and the great wagons rumbling off with it to Aberford. Roddy kept all the hewing as near to the shaft as possible, cutting new pillar-and-stall work in the new roads. When the day ended, a capital output was the result, and not a sign of water or any other trouble had come to disturb them.

The second day passed just as smoothly, and at the end of it, after the hands had gone home, a messenger brought up a note from Mr. Williams. Tom read it out.

"I have already started the case, retaining a good barrister, and have applied for the injunction," ran the note. "The disaster at your little pit has got into all the newspapers, and so has your opening of the new suit. You are quite famous. Kenyon Price is finding himself much more talked about than he likes, and you can be very sure he won't dare try any more tricks of that kidney. Things look all round for you. Peg away and raise the money for that mortgage if you can. That's our only weak spot. Yours, R. WYNNE WILLIAMS."

Sully Takes a Bath.

"IN the newspapers! by Jove!" said Roddy, the messenger having departed.

"I'd like to see one of 'em! What a lark! How did they get hold of it?"

"Oh, I forget to tell you," said Dafydd, picking his teeth, "there was a man in a bowler hat came here yesterday, asking for you all ofer the place. You were busy underground, so I told him I was a partner in ter firm, and he asked me all sorts of questions apout it, and apout ter flood."

"Did he, though! What did you say?"

"I was talk to him like a Dutch uncle!" said Dafydd, grinning. "I forget now what I told him, but oh, a great many things! He was fery surprised—so would you hal been—and he took them all down in a notebook."

"Gee-whiz!" said Roddy, laughing. "I'd like to see the article he wrote out of 'em!"

"It will pe a fery funny article, I think," said Dafydd. "By the way, I suppose you know Sully is sneaking round here a coot deal, especially at night?"

"Sully!" exclaimed Roddy. "Is he, though!"

"I didn't know you knew him even!" said Tom. "You were never in the Coed Coch pits."

"Not know your worst enemy!" said Dafydd scornfully. "What wass you taking me for? Well, perhaps he iss not worse than Kenyon Price. But I am not sure of that, either."

"Price sacked him out of the Coed Coch, though. He had to."

"Yes, and Sully has peen up here at the shaft Kenyon Price has sunk efer since," said Dafydd calmly. "He has charge of that work. I think, with ter other fellow, Ellerby, but it iss Sully who bosses ter show. I nefer dreamed that you did not know."

"What asses we've been!" said Roddy, looking across at Tom. "This is Sully's new job, of course! I wonder if he's eluded us an' got down our shaft, for somebody must have found out about that fissure it's certain."

"More likely we've got somebody among our hands who's been givin' us away," said Tom, "either on purpose or through foolishness. It looks like spyin' work, though I don't like to believe that about any of our chaps. I'd ha' sworn by 'em."

"Weefer," said Dafydd, with a shrug of his shoulders. "Sully has been spying round ter farm here more than two nights. He was stalking ter colliery, and I was stalking him. He did not know that. But he did not come near ter shaft or ter cottage for fear of Gripe."

"What's he after, then?"

"You should know petter than me. He iss keeping a watch on ter place. He spends most of his time on ter moor. Even by day he iss often watching us with a pair of glasses from Price's land."

"By gum! An' I never knew he'd been to Bryn y Garth even!" said Roddy. "I should ha' thought he was too careful of his skin to come."

"He needs a lesson," said Tom.

"We're too busy to waste time givin' him one, unless he obliges us. I don't see he can do much harm now."

Tom made no reply, and they turned in, except Roddy, who took the first of the night watch. Next day work began as usual, and all went well. When the hands were about to leave, however, Roddy made ready to go with them.

"There's an important matter to be settled in Aberford, Tom," he said. "I shall go down with Terry Lloyd for company. No need for both of us to leave the place, but if I'm not back by half-past seven, you might come an' meet me, by about eight, at the old cairn on the Plas Rhyll road, not far from Kenyon Price's. There may be work for us to do."

"All right," said Tom, who never asked any questions when Roddy was preparing a plan of campaign. "I'll be there if you're not back."

Tom found Bryn y Garth rather lonely for the next hour, Dafydd being away. The sun was sinking behind the hills—and a very warm, close evening it was—when the young mountaineer returned to the cottage.

"Phew! Isn't it sweltorin', Dafydd?" said Tom, as he entered the cottage.

"Sully finds it so," said Dafydd, with a grin. "He iss bathing in ter big stream."

"Sully! Bathing! I'd never ha' believed the creature ever washed himself!"

"Oh, yes, he bathes often in ter pools. I haf seen him. Perhaps it iss to refresh him after a dar's spying," grinned Dafydd.

"But where?" cried Tom wrathfully. "D'you mean in our big pool?"

"No, in ter upper one, up ter valley, on Price's land."

"By Jove, though, it's the same river! An' he's above us. He'll kill all the fish!" Tom paused and thought for a moment, and a grin spread over his face. "I say, Dafydd, is there any cover near him? Take me to the place, will you?"

Dafydd did so, and after five minutes sharp walk he cautioned Tom to go carefully, and coming over the slope of a small hill, they stopped behind a boulder, and had a fine view both of Sully and the river.

The stream widened out into a deep, amber-coloured pool with a little water-fall at its head. The pool was ten feet across, with sides and bottom of rock as smooth as a basin. It made a perfect swimming-bath, and looked very tempting on such a hot evening.

Sully was turning lazily over and over in the pool, paddling to keep himself up, and enjoying the coolness. His clothes were on a rock about twenty yards away, and on these Tom's greedy gaze fixed itself.

"I must have those clothes!" he murmured. "I must cherish them. I believe I can stalk up to that rock without seeing me."

"Better let me go," said Dafydd, chuckling. "I can make a certainty of it."

"No; that ain't fair. I want those clothes for a partic'lar purpose, and I ought to get 'em myself. I can't stalk like you can, but I'll have a try."

Tom set out at once, full of zest, for his unholy errand. He did very well, taking every advantage of the broken ground, and the last fifty yards or so he crawled flat on his stomach among the heather till nearly in reach of the rock.

Sully, having had enough of it, began to emerge from his bath. Tom started up, and, sweeping the clothes off the rock, tucked them under his arm, and turned to flee.

"Hi!" yelled the startled bather. "Leave those clothes alone! Oh, you young demon!" he screamed, as he recognised Tom. "It's you, is it? Come back!"

Tom ran for it up the hillside, yelling with laughter, and waving the trousers over his head like a captured flag. Sully made a frantic attempt to chase him, but the heather was too rough for his bare legs. He tried to pull on, and, while Tom was sprinting for the horizon with the clothes, Sully danced and shrieked like some nude and frantic nymph of the stream, shaking his fists in the air, and swearing till the echoes rolled along the hills.

Tom threw himself down in the heather as soon as he was out of sight of the anguished Sully, and roared with laughter. Dafydd, who had kept up with him, grinned facetiously.

"Why wass you running though, whatever?" he said. "You wass not afraid of Sully?"

"Not any; I was runnin' to save time," said Tom, rising to his feet again, weak with laughter. "We mustn't dawdle here; let's push on as quick as we can. I wanted to make sure of leavin' him by the stream. It's nearly time I met Roddy. You might carry half these duds, Dafydd."

They shared the burden between them, and hastened along to Bryn y Garth and the cottage, where Tom threw the clothes down.

"Now, then," he said, "it'll take that beauty a good while to get to his own house, an' I don't see how he's to do it till it's dark——"

"Unless he has some clothes at the buildings at Price's shaft," put in Dafydd.

"Oh, yes; I forgot that! It ain't likely, though, and he's a good way even from there. I want the beggar to have a real good run over the moor, just as Nature made him, in the garb of our father Adam. It'll do him good!"

Redwell coughed on him, whatefer.

"If a fellow had done his best more than once to send you out of this wicked world, I fancy you wouldn't think it much of a revenge to make him go without his clothes for an hour or two. I'd like a look at 'em," said Tom.

He overhauled the garments, among which was a long, light rainproof overcoat with a large collar.

"Here's the top-coat the fellow always wears, even in summer," said Tom. "It looks as if there'd been a shower or two, so the coat'll seem quite natural. Here the soft French felt hat Sully always looks such a fool in, too. I'll put both these on."

"Why, for?"

"To play it up on Roddy. I bet you he takes me for Sully in the dark. How do I look with these on?" said Tom, donning the long coat and hat.

"Yes, indeet, you might fery well pass for him in ter dark, if you pull ter hat a little lower ofer your face. Sully iss not fery tall."

"Roddy knows this hat like a blessed danger-signal. He'll be a rare bait, an' I'll rot him, too!" chuckled Tom. "I say, if Sully comes here askin' for clothes, don't you give him any. Shove the others away; we'll post 'em back to his house later."

"All right; but you haf plenty of time. It iss not so late as you thought."

So Tom found when he consulted his watch, and he took it very easily on the way to the meeting-place. Indeed, he halted for a time on the road, not wishing to be there first, when he was in sight of the cross-roads, and not far from Plas Rhyll. He stood by a cattle-gate, where he could command a view of the road, and waited for Roddy to leave in sight.

Tom was watching the direction from which he expected his partner to appear, and wondering what Roddy's intention was, when he heard a heavy step on the road behind him, and saw somebody passing along in the darkness at a brisk pace. The wayfarer turned his head as he caught sight of Tom's motionless figure, stared for a moment, and then strode towards him.

"So it's you, is it?" he exclaimed. "What are you doing here? Confound you! Didn't I tell you not to come near Plas Rhyll again?"

The speaker was Kenyon Price. His bulky figure and harsh voice were unmistakable, though his face could hardly be seen in the gloom. Tom was so surprised that he remained motionless.

"Don't deny it!" said the mine-owner angrily. "You were coming to my house. You know well that it's far too dangerous, after what's happened! Do you think I want these infernal pitmen coming to Plas Rhyll again? Why don't you stop at the moor shafts, sir? You were coming to see me, and lie again," added Price, in a low, angry voice, "and I warned you what you'd get if you tried it! Have a care how you push me too far, Sully!"

"Have you lost your tongue?" said Price fiercely. "Curse you, here, my man, this is the last straw! I'll stop your visits here! I'm a match for you, and blackmail is a thing I won't stand!"

"Blackmail!" thought Tom. "What's he drivin' at?"

"I've given you every chance to put those cubs out of the way, and you've bungled it each time. And you've played me false, you rascal! I know you've got those papers of Matt Mathews, proving his claim on the Coed Coch. They're in your possession! I'll have those papers out of you, and with no more delay!"

Still Tom said no word, but his heart beat fast.

"You don't answer!" said Kenyon Price furiously. "You think you'll hold that secret over me still! But don't forget that, if you can show me up, I can hang you! You'll give me those—— Why, hallo, what the deuce——"

He broke off and came a step nearer, peering hard at Tom.

"You are not Sully!" he exclaimed. "What have I done? What does this mean?"

"Mr. Price—Mr. Price," cried a well-known voice—Sully's own—and out of the darkness came the very man himself, running and panting. "What's the matter?"

"Here—quick!" cried the mine-owner. And with a cry of fear and anger, he sprang at Tom and pinned him against the gate.

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

They knelt at the word, all that rough assembly, dripping and exhausted after the struggle with death, and heartfelt was the prayer of gratitude they offered, bareheaded and on their knees at the mouth of the pit.

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