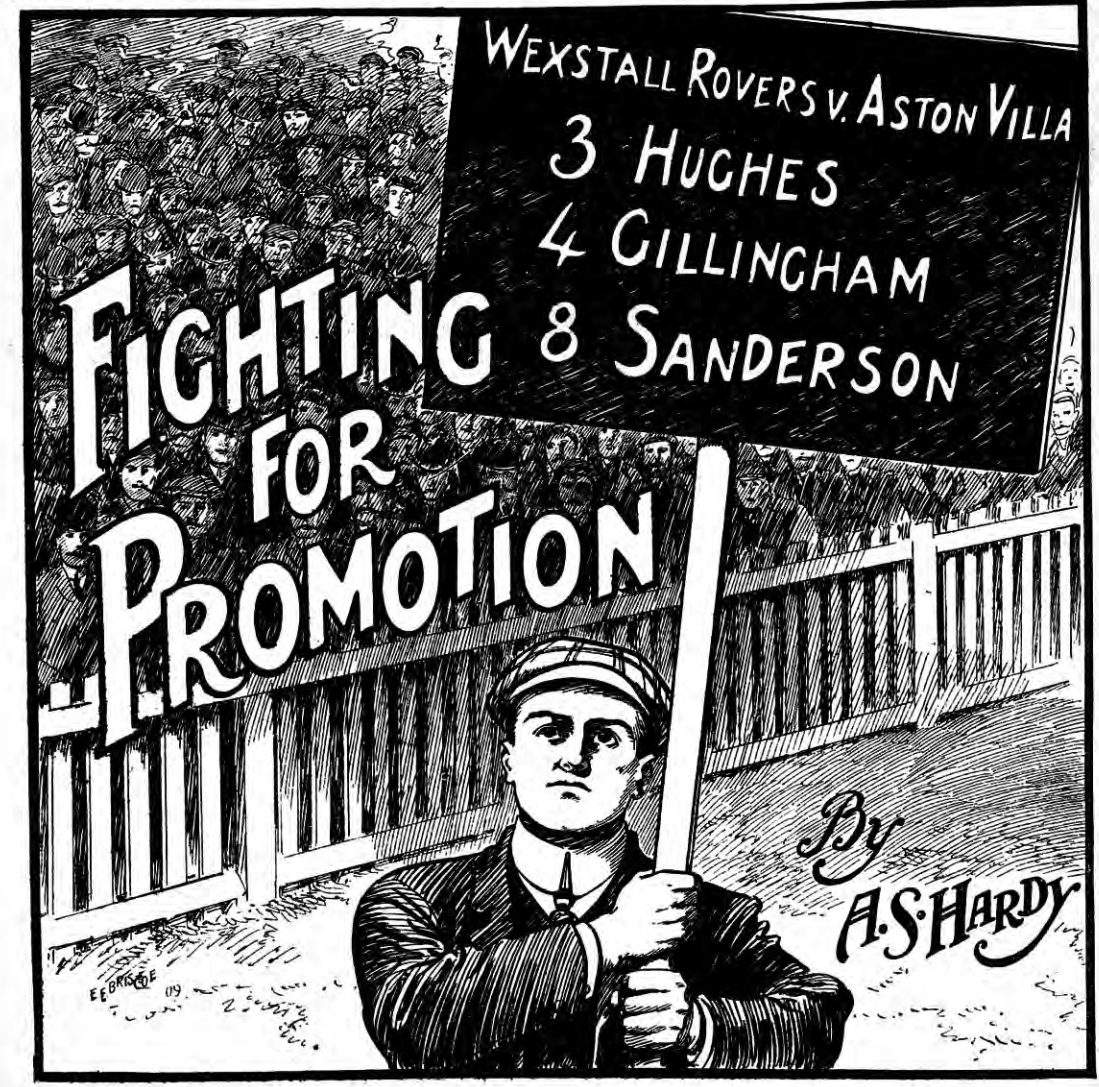
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No. 357. Vol. VII.] EVERY SATURDAY—ONE PENNY. [Saturday, April 3, 1909.





FIGHTING FOR PROMOTION

A. S. HARDY'S Powerful New Football Tale.

COMMENCE THE STORY HERE.

Wexstall Rovers have fallen on bad times. Once a prosperous First League team, they are now at the lowest ebb of ill-fortune. Disaster has followed disaster, and the opening of our story finds them slowly but surely sinking to the bottom of the Second League table. The players have lost heart, and but a small faction of stout-hearted members remain, putting heart and soul into one desperate attempt to place the old club on its legs again.

The most prominent amongst these are Jack Galway, the centre half-back; Frank Butler, the outside-right; and Lockett, the captain and goalkeeper. There is also a little crowd of players led by Maxwell, the right back, who, disgusted with the lowly position of Wexstall Rovers in the football world, have no thought for the club's welfare, but slack at every available opportunity. Their participation in the League fixtures does more harm to the club than good.

The club is deeply in debt to Mr. Dansie, a building contractor, who has constructed a grand stand for them. He has never been paid for his work, and upon making a final application, Mr. Hensall, the secretary-manager of Wexstall Rovers, gives Dansie a cheque for a hundred pounds. This cheque is, however, worthless, there being no money in the bank.

On the following Saturday great consternation is caused by the discovery that Mr. Hensall has absconded with all the club funds.

Meanwhile, Frank Butler has got on friendly terms with a wealthy young man named Sanderson, who has been injured in a motor accident on the outskirts of Wexstall. Sanderson takes an extraordinary interest in the club and its difficulties, and has an interview with Mr. Kelly, one of the directors. The outcome of this is that Sanderson offers to put up sufficient money to pay off the club's debts, and give it a fresh start. Needless to say, this offer is accepted, and a meeting of directors is held to put the proposition on a business basis.

The whole team is reorganised, and the mutinous members are stood down for the time being.

A series of victories over Seaton Dare and Tottenham Hotspur (League matches) regain the Rovers a great amount of their lost popularity with the Wexstall folk. Their next fixture is a Cup-tie with Aston Villa.

Baxter, one of the malcontents of the team, picks a quarrel with Sanderson, and the two fight it out with the gloves. The result is a decisive victory for Sanderson, and the humiliation of Baxter.

Sanderson declares his intention of playing for the Wexstall Rovers in their Cup-tie with Aston Villa, much to the surprise of all concerned.

(Now read this week's instalment.)

Sanderson's First Practice.

THE firm attitude adopted by William Sanderson, Manager Kelly, and the directors of the Wexstall Rovers' Football Club had a marked effect upon the players. When William Sanderson came down to the football-ground the following morning, after breakfast at the Three Feathers, he found most of the players there, and all of them cheery and eager for work.

Simmons, the trainer, was smiling. He had never found the lads so willing. What a difference the money makes!

Ford and Maxwell were not there, neither was Baxter. Baxter was sullen and defiant. He had expressed his intention of never kicking another football for the club, and had openly defied Simmons.

Turner, who used to be the first team's centre-forward, was also a bit moody, and didn't look too fit.

But, then, William Sanderson had expressed his intention of playing on the Saturday in the Cup-tie, and maybe he was a class enough, that settled the question of the position.

Sanderson found Jack Galway, Frank Butler, and Jim Lockett standing in a group in the dressing-room. He smiled at the big goalkeeper.

"How's your arm, Lockett?" he asked.

"Oh, mending fast, thank you, sir!" answered Jim Lockett, with a smile. "The doctor at the hospital tells me that I am making wonderful progress, and he says that I shall experience little inconvenience when the arm is sound again. It has set perfectly, he says."

"I am heartily glad to hear it!" said Sanderson.

Then he turned to Simmons, as the trainer came hurrying up with a beaming smile on his ruddy countenance.

"Well, Simmons," he said, "what exercise are you going to put me to? I want you to treat me just the same as the other lads when I am in training, and to bully me whenever I deserve it."

Jim Lockett looked Sanderson up and down.

"You seem pretty fit, sir," he said. "I shouldn't think you need to do a great deal of preparation."

"That he doesn't!" said Frank, with a grin. "Look at the way he set about Baxter yesterday. He is as fit as hands could make him."

"Just let me have some football things, will you, Simmons?" said Sanderson.

They were brought him by the trainer, and Sanderson sat down on a locker and changed, and when he had donned the football shirt, knickers, stockings and boots—his own boots, which he had brought with him, a dark brown pair, that were torn and worn and muddy—and stood erect with his shirt gaping just a little at the neck, he looked absolutely built to play the game.

Broad of shoulder, strong of limb, with a thick neck and a splendidly-shaped frame, Sanderson looked an ideal footballer.

The lads gathered together, and whispered to one another. They did not quite know what to make of this "swell," who, evidently blessed with plenty of money, had chosen for a mere whim to throw in his lot with a professional football club, and take over the uncongenial task of trying to raise the club once more to the proud position it had held in football years ago, when the League system was in its infancy, but which it had lost since then.

Some said, never to find again.

Frank nodded approvingly as he looked at Sanderson.

"If appearance goes for anything, Jack," he whispered in Galway's ear, "he ought to make an ideal centre-half."

"Ought to," growled Jack Galway, "and we are indebted for all he has done for us; but still, his friendship might be dearly bought if he was to thrust himself into the team and let his side down on Saturday."

"Excuse me, sir," said Jim Lockett, putting the question direct to the club's benefactor, "but have you any idea of the pace and determination you are required in first-class professional football?"

"I think I have," answered Sanderson quietly.

"And you are willing to take on the responsibilities of the centre-forward position?"

"Yes," answered Sanderson, not in the least discouraged by Jim's doubtful tone.

Then he swung round on Simmons.

"What is it to be, Simmons?" he asked. "I haven't played a good game of football for a year, and the last I played in was in the Argentine. What practice do you suggest?"

"A little ball practice, sir," answered Simmons, "a bit of sprinting, and some shooting at goal."

William Sanderson swung his arms.

"Right!" he cried. "I feel that I should like to loosen my limbs with a sprint or two, and I should like to thoroughly test the foot I injured in the collision at Oak Tree Crossing. Frank, you come down on the track and have a run with me."

"Very good, sir," answered Frank.

Sanderson had chosen the fleetest runner attached to the Wexstall Football Club, and Frank had never been so fast as he was in this season.

Frank went with Galway and Sanderson down to the football-ground, and the rest of the players followed them, taking a football with them for practice, but all in reality anxious to see how the "swell" shaped.

Not a few of the lads were inclined to look upon Sanderson as a boastful and useless footballer who was urged to take Baxter's place for the sake of the personal gratification and publicity it would afford him.

Along one side of the ground, close in by the railings, ran a cinder-path. Its surface was a little loose, but it gave the men a sure foothold. Along this Frank and Sanderson were to race.

Frank suggested that they should change their football boots for either spiked running-pumps or rubber-soled shoes. But Sanderson had neither the one nor the other, and wouldn't risk using another lad's pair. Therefore they prepared to run in their studded boots. Then Jack Galway stripped off his sweater.

"I'll come in, too," he said. "Frank is a yard or two faster than I am over the hundred; but he can give me a start, and make a match of it. Where will you start, sir?"

Jack looked inquiringly at Sanderson.

"Oh, I am fairly fleet of foot," answered the "swell." "I'll start with Frank."

"Like his cheek!" thought Galway; but without more ado they scratched holes in the surface of the narrow cinder-track, which was designed to reveal how fast Sanderson might be.

Frank noticed that the amateur was very careful with his preparation—as careful as if he were about to run in the deciding heat of a championship. There was something of the expert about the man, and Frank decided that he would watch William Sanderson very carefully in the sprint. He knew well enough that he could always give Jack Galway his two yards start and a beating.

Then the three set on the track, and Simmons, the trainer, prepared to start them.

"Are you ready?" he cried; and the runners strained on their marks.

Simmons's expert eye told him they were ready to be despatched, and he shouted to them to "Go!" They rose as one man, and set off along the track at a tremendous pace. Frank moved with the ease and grace of a professional pedestrian. His long, raking stride and easy swing of the arms carried him over the ground as if he were gliding over its surface, and not running at all.

Galway's running was far more strained. There was a sense of effort about it always, and yet he managed to move very quickly.

As for Sanderson, the style of the man was a revelation. Scarcely so pretty to watch as Frank, yet he moved with wonderful freedom, and it was soon evident that Frank would have nothing in hand at the finish.

At fifty yards, to Frank's unbounded astonishment, he saw William Sanderson loom alongside him, challenge him, and pass him, and it was only by a fierce and determined effort that he managed to hold his own, to plug in a dozen tremendous strides at the finish, and to beat his doughty opponent by a yard.

Galway this time was well beaten, being no less than three yards in the rear; and William Sanderson, swinging on to the grass, and pulling up very cleverly, turned and grasped Frank by the hand.

"Bravo, Frank!" he cried. "Well run! I had it in my mind that I should beat you, but you were too good for me. No wonder you do such wonders on the wing. Why, with a lad with the pace you possess to assist him, the Rovers' forwards should be ever deadly."

"And what about you, sir?" asked Frank, smiling. "What about your pace for a centre-forward? Why, you must be yards faster than either Baxter or Turner!"

"I dare say I am," answered Sanderson, with a smile. "I was always noted for my pace when I played amateur football abroad. But your League players will be ever so much harder to beat than the ones I have been in the habit of playing against."

Jack Galway, panting and well pleased with Sanderson's running, now kicked a ball towards him.

"There you are, sir!" he cried. "Just see what you can do with that."

Sanderson immediately trapped the ball as it fell, gave it a deft touch forward with his boot, and set off along the field at a good round pace.

Trainer Simmons saw him coming. Simmons in his day had been a magnificent wing half-back, and was an equally good tackler with either left or right foot. He purposely placed himself in Sanderson's way, and tackled him with all his old skill. But he found the amateur into him in a moment, he was shouldered aside, and the ball was taken cleverly onward.

Galway showed appreciation. He ran along with Sanderson, and tackled him once, twice, three times. It was not until his third tackle that the clever centre-half managed to get the ball away.

"He's got football in him, Jack," said Frank, smiling in delight at the way Sanderson was shaping.

"That's the style, sir!" shouted the trainer. "Let the rest of the boys tackle you, and try your best to beat them."

Sanderson obeyed the order. Football was like a lost art to him, and after his first great effort he found himself beaten time and again by the stalwart, well-trained, and practiced lads who were employed by the Wexstall League team.

Then, finding that Sanderson was scarcely receiving fair play, Frank and Jack Galway turned themselves for the nonce into forwards, and helped the amateur to make rapids upon the goal which Brewer was now protecting.

The thing turned of its own accord into a stiff trial, and Sanderson, not in the least dismayed, presently gained touch and confidence, and eagerly engaged in a bout of clever passing with Frank which carried the ball almost the entire length of the field, and then, with a low, rasping, first-time shot, which travelled at the pace a Corinthian usually manages to get on the ball, Sanderson flashed it past the helpless Brewer.

The goalkeeper, smiling, took it out of the net, and tossed it back to Sanderson.

"Try your hand as a penalty-kick, sir!" he cried.

Sanderson, smiling, put the ball on the penalty-spot, and the force with which he banged it into the net a moment later convinced every player who saw it that Sanderson was a good shot and a practical footballer.

Simmons, the trainer, Jack Galway, Jim Lockett, and Frank, who had watched the efforts of the amateur from mid-field, gathered round the panting and delighted Sanderson.

"You'll do, sir!" said the trainer, whose face was beaming like a setting sun. "You'll do! I had my doubts about you until you came out here and showed us what you could do. But I haven't any now. You ought to do very well at centre-forward on Saturday; and you are so fit that you require very little training. Does your injured foot hurt you, sir?"

"Not in the least," answered Sanderson, with a laugh. "I don't think it's going to trouble me at all."

The Rovers' New Mascot.

JUST at that moment an interruption of a most unusual kind drew the attention of the players away from Sanderson to the side of the field.

The screeching and screaming of a barrel-organ out of tune resounded on the air, and they saw an Italian, who had a barrel-organ strapped across his shoulders, advancing on to the playing-pitch, swinging the organ away from him with each step he took, so that the wooden leg that supported it when the thing was at rest might be raised from the ground.

He was a funny-looking fellow, dark skinned, wild eyed, and he showed his teeth in a ghastly grin, which seemed almost a grimace.

He had long, black, greasy-looking hair, which tumbled in a mass from beneath an ill-shapen cap to his very shoulders. His clothing was of the seediest and sorriest description. The top of his barrel-organ was protected by a piece of green-and-black cloth.

The man was bandy, and there was something absolutely comic about the way in which he lumbered on to the playing-field, playing his cracked barrel-organ all the time.

Frank Butler burst into a loud laugh.

"Simmons," he said, "we are in want of good players. Why not engage Italiano for the Wexstall Reserves?"

Simmons made no reply. He stared aghast at the Italian organ-grinder; and when he did speak, it was in a voice which trembled with rage.

"It's like his blooming cheek, coming here like this!" he cried. "How did he get in here? He must have pushed the gate open, and have been to some pains to do it, too. Hi, you! Mister Organ-grinder! Out of this! Out you go, or I shall have to put you out! We don't want that rotten music here! And you've no right to come cutting our playing-pitch up like this!"

The players gathered round the Italian, who doffed his dirty cap, and bowed.

"Will you please-a give-a me-a my-a monkey-a——"

"What's he say?" growled the irate trainer.

"He wants you to give him his monkey," bawled Frank, whilst the tears started to his eyes.

The Italian grinned, and nodded, and began to turn the handle of the barrel-organ once more.

The most unearthly sounds emanated from the cracked box, and a sort of volcanic eruption going on inside the musical-box; and so sharp and flat were the notes that Frank, who had a sound musical ear, held his hands to his head to stifle the noise.

"Don't! Don't!" he cried.

"Tell us what you want; but for goodness' sake stop that hideous row!" cried Sanderson.

But the Italian only turned the handle more quickly.

"My-a monkey-a climbed-a the gate-a," he explained, in harsh, guttural tones. "He-a escaped-a from-a the chain-a. I-a must-a play-a the music-a to-a calls my-a Caruso-a."

The expression on the man's face was irresistibly comic; and all save Simmons, the trainer, were by this time highly amused. As for Simmons, he could hardly contain himself.

"My lovely pitch cut up by this Italian-o ice-cream-o!" he cried indignantly. "Here, stop that row, and clear off sharp, or I'll give you in charge!"

The organ-grinder took no notice, and made the din the worse by commencing to whistle in a shrill monotone.

The strains of the cracked organ and the whistle merged into the most fiendish noise—a noise that evidently appealed to the missing monkey, Caruso, for it suddenly broke on to the playing-pitch ran a long-tailed monkey, with a blue forage-cap upon its head in which was stuck a feather, and a red skirt trimmed with gold upon its body.

The little beggar came hopping in the direction of its master with great bounds, and the players rocked as they saw it race towards them. The football lay within its path, and the animal charged it, rolling over and over with it, and then came to a stand within five yards of the organ-grinder, when it sat up and proceeded to make faces at him.

"Come-a here-a, my-a Caruso-a!" cried the organ-grinder coaxingly, playing his barrel-organ with one hand, and wagging the fingers of the other, and indulging in a whistle that was more shrill and fiendish than ever.

"Shut that row!" bawled the irate Simmons, who never could bear to listen to music out of tune.

Then Jack Galway was seized with a sudden inspiration. Subduing his laughter with some difficulty, he crept silently up behind the monkey.

"I've-a got-a you-a, Caruso-a!" he cried, imitating the Italian's cracked voice. And, so saying, he bent, and made a sudden grasp at the monkey.

The result was not exactly what he had expected. Like a flash the monkey turned, eluded his grasp as easily as you please, and darted between Jack Galway's legs. Then, turning again, it gave a sudden leap into the air, and fastened its front and hind paws

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fiercely into the seat of Galway's football-knickers.

Jack gave one fierce yell, and leapt a yard and a half into the air.

"Let go!" he screamed; and, after twisting round two or three times, he set off along the playing-field as hard as he could run, with the monkey hanging on, and the rest of the players, convulsed with laughter, running in pursuit.

Frank dashed swiftly after his chum. Simmons and the Italian brought up the rear. The organ-grinder swung his dandy legs over the soft surface of the playing-field at a rare bat, and jerked the barrel-organ with him stride by stride.

Simmons glanced at the man in disgust.

"Call that monkey off, you heathen!" he yelled.

Then along came Brewer from the other goal.

"You'll never win this Marathon, Dorando!" he cried, as he passed the Italian.

Meanwhile, Jack Galway rushed madly on. Occasionally he would stop, and try to wrench the monkey free. But the little beast scratched him and bit him to such good purpose that at last the captain of the Wexstall Rovers gave up the attempt to dislodge the animal in despair, and cut off in a straight line for one of the goals.

"He's biting me! He's biting me!" he yelled.

Hardly able to run for laughing, his comrades followed him; and then into the net Galway plunged, turning suddenly on the monkey, and wedging him against the strong of the netting.

The little beast gave a yell, and, leaping free, reined hold of the network of the goal, and ran swiftly along it.

The players and the Italian, who looked anxious and worried by this time, at once cut off all means of escape.

"Play that man again, you heathen!" cried Simmons fiercely. "Play it, and bring the little beggar down!"

The Italian, breathless from his running, recommenced his tuneless dirge, and the monkey, chattering and snarling, blinking its cunning little eyes, and showing its white teeth, hung from the top of the net.

Then Frank Butler cautiously moved forward until he was almost under the little wretch. Then, with one clean, upward spring, he managed to get both hands to the animal, and he wrenched it from its place, and brought it down with him.

In a moment, without the slightest cruelty, he had the tiny, mischievous creature safely tucked up in his arms; and, finding that it could not get free, the little beast cuddled, frightened, against Frank, doubtless thinking that its end had come.

Jack Galway came forward, rubbing the seat of his knickers.

"Where's the little brute?" he cried. "I'll wring its neck!"

The organ-grinder interposed, holding out his arms to Frank in appeal, with a world of concern shining in his dark eyes.

"Give-a me-a my-a Caruso-a!" he cried.

"Give it him, and kick him out!" growled Simmons.

At that moment William Sanderson stepped forward.

"No!" he cried. "I have an idea, Italiano, what will you take for your monkey?"

"What-a will-a take-a for him-a—my Caruso-a?" said the Italian, growing excited. "He-a is-a my-a bread-and-butter-a!"

"Well, bread-and-butter off!" cried Simmons, pointing towards the gate.

Sanderson held up his hand.

"One moment, Simmons!" he cried. "Here, I'll tell you what I'll do! I'll give you a couple of sovereigns for the beast."

"No-a, I would-a not-a take-a ten-a!" answered the Italian.

"Three!" cried Sanderson.

The organ-grinder shook his head.

"Four!" cried Sanderson. "Here, I'll tell you what! I'll give you five pounds for him. Five solid golden English sovereigns! You can easily buy another monkey for nothing like the price. I have taken a fancy to this one. Will you sell him?"

The organ-grinder's eyes flashed with cupidity. He ceased to turn the handle of his infernal organ, and he held his hand out greedily.

"Give-a me-a the-a money!" he cried. "Let-a me-a see it-a!"

"All right," said Sanderson; "come along this way!" And, telling Frank to follow him with the now shivering little animal, Sanderson set off at a rapid walk towards the dressing-room.

He had not all the money there; but he had some gold, and he quickly borrowed the rest, which he put into the dirty and greasy hand of the itinerant musician.

"There you are!" he cried. "And now Caruso belongs to me."

The Italian counted the coins, bit them one by one, weighed them in his hand, and then, with a smile, transferred them into an inner pocket of his coat. Then, doffing his cap, he bowed himself out backwards.

Simmons, only too glad to get rid of him, quickly connected him to the gates, and had him put outside.

Then he made his way back to the dressing-room, whilst the tuneless strains of the barrel-organ echoed from the street.

Jack Galway glared fiercely at the monkey.

"I can't abear the things!" he cried. "I'm blessed if I know what you bought him for, sir!"

"I can," said Frank, nodding his head, and handing over the monkey—which seemed to have forgotten its late master already, and who was now as docile as a pet—into Sanderson's arms.

"Well," said Sanderson, "I'll explain. The club's affairs are looking up. I'm to have a trial with the first team on Saturday, and it struck me that anything on the field at the moment it did, when I was taking my first practice, would bring us good luck. That's why I bought him, Galway. He is to be the Wexstall Rovers' mascot!"

The crowd of players laughed and cheered; but Galway did not seem to be too impressed.

"I don't believe in mascots," he growled, as he turned away. "Hi, Simmons! Let's have that embrocation bottle, will you?"

Cup-Tie Day in Wexstall.

IT was Cup-tie day! Saturday morning found a warm sun shining down upon the town of Wexstall, and the Rovers' colours, the red and white, were to be seen everywhere. Many of the larger business houses had white flags, with the Wexstall red star emblazoned upon them, hanging outside their premises.

The improvement in the play of the team, the fact that the management were making a splendid effort to re-establish the old club, and the added fact that the team was to play Aston Villa in the Football Association Cup-tie that afternoon, brought something like a revival of the old football fever in the town.

All the grand stand tickets had been sold. The price of the big, uncovered wooden stand seats had been raised, one-and-sixpence being charged for the first twelve rows, and a shilling for the remainder.

The Villa patrons had taken up half the seats in the covered stand.

Additional interest had been aroused in this famous Cup-tie by the fact that a new centre-forward of no mean ability had for the home club, and the local papers had made much of this, and the fact that a new mascot had been found in the person of a monkey, whose sensational first appearance upon the football field had been announced in the local papers with great gusto, much to the mortification of poor Jack Galway.

Then, too, the local public knew that the players had been paid up all their arrears of wages by the management of the club; and they knew that all the club's outstanding debts had been paid up in full by the club, too.

For the first time for many, many weary months the Wexstall Rovers had a clean record, and people began to speak well of the old club once more, and to believe that a revival was at hand.

Frank Butler could not rest at home that Cup-tie morning. He scarcely had the appetite to eat. His nerves were all ajar. He was thinking of the great fight that lay before the team, and wondering whether they stood the slightest chance of securing a victory.

After he had eaten a snack of food, and drank a cup of coffee, he sat in the window of the little cottage at Feaweld, and read the morning newspaper, in which the chances of the various teams engaged in the Cup were weighed up by an expert, and he discovered that the Rovers were given to lose, or, at the most, to draw at home, that day, and to fall before the Villa in the replay at Aston during the following week.

His reading done, Frank could stand it no longer; and, taking his cap, he kissed his mother, and wished her good-bye, and then set off along the country road on his walk to Wexstall, feeling easier in his mind that he was doing something.

He called on Jack Galway on the way, and the two went along together discussing the prospects of the match, and planning out a scheme of play which they went a scheme of play which seemed to depend largely for its success upon Sanderson proving equal to the task of worrying the Villa defence at centre-forward.

When they arrived in Wexstall Town, they found the streets thronged, although it still wanted some hours to the kick-off. Foreign invaders, wearing the Villa colours, marched along the streets, cheering whenever they saw the opposition colours displayed, and exchanging mercy jests with Wexstall folk whenever they came upon anyone bold enough to stand up for the Rovers.

And as Frank and Jack walked past the station a train steamed in. At every carriage window a number of faces appeared. It was a special from Birmingham, and out of the station doors the excursionists trooped a moment later, some of them carrying blue-and-red flags, and all of them bedecked with Villa favours.

Frank counted a dozen of them there were, to be sure! It seemed to Frank and Jack, as they stood on the pavement and watched the crowd go by, that the end of the stream would never come.

"By George, Jack," cried Frank, "it's going to be a big gate to-day!"

"Ay," answered Jack Galway, "that it is, Frank. Hallo! Here's Jim Lockett. Morning, Jim! You look well."

"I feel well," answered the big goalkeeper. "I've left the missus smiling and laughing at home for the first time for a week or two, because the little mite—our little girl—is out of danger; and there's only one thing I regret, and that is that I can't keep goal for the Rovers to-day."

Jim turned and walked along by their side. They bent their steps towards the Three Feathers, where William Sanderson was staying.

"I feel a bit anxious about the amateur, said Jim Lockett, with a shake of the head. "He showed that he knew something about football the other day. But you know what it is, this Cup-tie football. I'm afraid he may crumple up this afternoon, just when we don't want it."

Some minutes later they reached the Three Feathers, and Frank, entering, was just about to ask for Mr. Sanderson, when a cheery voice hailed them, and they saw him standing at the foot of the stairs, holding a paper bag in his hand.

"Good-morning, Frank! Good-morning, Jack! Morning, Jim!" he cried, smiling and nodding at them. "How do you feel?"

"Nervous!" answered Frank.

"Nor over grand!" growled Jack Galway, who was over-awed by the thought of the approaching Cup-tie. "But you look all right, sir."

"I feel all right," was the cheerful reply. "I was up at a quarter to eight, and ate a hearty breakfast. You three will have to stay and have lunch with me. Yes, you will. I'll have no refusal. Guess where I've been?"

"Not to the paper bag," said Frank.

"I don't know," answered Frank, with a smile.

"I've been to buy some nuts for our mascot," laughed William Sanderson. "Come upstairs and see him fed."

They followed him up to his rooms, and, on entering, they discovered Caruso climbing up the sides of a huge iron-barred cage, and grinning at them.

Sanderson approached the cage, took a handful of the nuts out of the bag, and thrust them through. The monkey, taking no further notice of them, swooped to the floor of the cage after the nuts, and indulged in a feed which, for a quarter of an hour or more, was only interrupted by the cracking of the shells.

"He's comfortable enough, sir," laughed Frank.

"Comfortable! I should say so," answered Sanderson, smiling. "I had this cage got specially for him, and he is set near the hot-water pipes in the bath-room during the night,

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so that he sha'n't catch cold. He and I are great friends already."

"Well, sir," said Jack Galway grimly, "let us hope he'll bring us luck."

They remained in Sanderson's rooms, chatting, for some time. Then they relapsed into silence, all save Sanderson, who did not seem to give the approaching game a single thought. The others were preoccupied, long-faced, pale, nervous.

To cheer them up, Sanderson proposed an adjournment to the billiard-room. But this they found filled with Birmingham excursionists wearing the Villa colours, and they fled to the street, and walked about until Frank deemed it advisable for them to eat, if eat they meant to do before the game.

Sanderson ordered a plain grill for the lot of them, followed by a milk-pudding. But the lads had no appetites. Sanderson and Jim Lockett were the only two who could do justice to the food at all.

And then they sat talking in a desultory way until it was time for them to go to the ground.

Behind Caruso's cage stood Jack Galway cap, and, slipping the club's new mascot beneath the folds of his overcoat, he walked with him to the football-ground.

Outside the enclosure the sight was a wonderful one. The people were simply fighting to get to and some of them were even crying at the big wooden exit gates. The queues, kept in order by the police with some difficulty, extended right down the street in which the entrance to the ground was situated, and even round the corner.

The lads were struggling and pushing more fiercely than the men. Cabs were whirling up, and depositing their occupants at the entrance to the stand. Every cab in and around Wexstall had seemingly been pressed into the service that day.

Jack Galway and Frank forgot their nervousness.

"What a gate it will be!" cried Frank enthusiastically.

And then a rousing cheer came echoing along the street. It swelled louder and louder, until the roar was deafening, and then they saw a brake driving up with the Villa players aboard.

What a reception they had, to be sure! Right until the moment the last of their number disappeared, big in hand, through the gate, the cheers rang out. It was evident they had a strong following in Wexstall that day.

Frank, Jack, and William Sanderson now made their way to the dressing-room, and commenced to change at once. The rest of the lads were there already, and they had much to say to one another, and most of them were pale and nervous. Caruso, attached to a chain, was put in a corner of the room.

They could hear the murmuring of the crowd outside, and the shouts of the rival partisans rang clear upon the air. Then an age seemed to pass away—a fearfully trying time—during which the players, ready to take the field, awaited for the summons of the referee. And then, at last, the summons came, and they trooped out on to the field of play, to be greeted by a deafening roar such as no Wexstall Rovers' team had received on that ground since their unfortunate relegation to the Second Division of the League.

Sanderson carried Caruso, whose appearance was greeted with a yell of good-natured laughter. The mascot, wearing a frock of the home team's colours, seemed frightened by the noise, and clung wildly to his new master.

Then the Villa trooped on to the ground to receive an ovation, which was louder, and sounded more genuine, than that which had greeted the home eleven.

Frank looked around at the sea of faces. Every possible space of ground seemed to be occupied. It was an enormous gate. The funds of both clubs would be appreciably swelled by the proceeds.

The forwards tried goal practice, but found they could not put the ball anywhere near to Brewer; they were as nervous, and they at last gave it up. On the other hand, the marksmanship of the Villans' seemed to be deadly in its accuracy. And at last the referee, having inspected the nets, and seen that everything was in order, blew his whistle, and ran towards the centre of the field.

"Take Caruso with you for the toss, Galway," cried Sanderson, holding the monkey out to the Wexstall captain.

Jack Galway's face assumed a scared expression.

"No," he cried: "I'm blessed if I do! I've had enough of that joker."

William Sanderson, laughing and unconcerned, therefore walked to the centre of the field with the monkey, letting him run at the end of his chain. Galway shook hands with the Villa captain, and the coin was tossed into the air.

"Heads!" cried Jack.

It was. Jack had won, and amidst a shout of delight from the home team's partisans the Wexstall captain pointed towards that end of the ground from which the wind was blowing.

"We'll take that goal," he cried.

And then a terrific roar of laughter went up, for of a sudden Caruso, who saw a coin lying gleaming upon the short grass, made a dart forward, which jerked the end of the chain from Sanderson's grasp, and, seizing the piece of money which the referee had taken out of his pocket, and he had handed to the Villa captain for the latter to toss with, he turned and bolted like mad for the side of the field.

The crowd roared. The attitude of the referee was something to see. He stood there with his mouth wide open, and his eyes staring.

"Stop the monkey!" he cried. "He's got it. It's a sovereign!"

Galway gave the official a glance of withering scorn. Fancy a referee being stupid enough to hand a player a sovereign to toss with! But if it were the truth it was time to stop the Wexstall mascot.

Two or three of the players of either team went in pursuit of the monkey, but, twisting and turning, Caruso eluded them, darted through a gap in the palings, and disappeared amongst the feet of the crowd.

People looked for the little beast in vain. They were so tightly wedged that they could not tell that the monkey was coming until it was wriggling past their legs, and in this way Caruso reached the iron supports to the roof of the grand stand, swarmed up them, and, amidst deafening shrieks of delight, he sat himself on the top of the stand, where a shaft of sunlight fell upon him, and amused himself by testing the worth of the referee's golden coin with his teeth.

Then, at length, growing tired of this amusement, he hurled the coin from him into the midst of the crowd.

The referee was scarlet with annoyance.

"It is ridiculous bringing a monkey on to a football-field!" he cried.

"Not more ridiculous, I'm thinking, than you giving us a gold coin to toss with!" retorted Sanderson. "But the monkey belongs to me, and I'll see that you get your money back."

This somewhat mollified the referee.

"Oh, very well!" he said, glancing at the face of his watch. "It's time the game was started. Get ready."

The players lined up. The teams were as follows:

Wexstall Rovers: Brewer, goal; Gillingham and Hughes, backs; Brown, Galway, and Ainsworth, half-backs; Frank Butler, Taylor, William Sanderson, Freeman, and Simpson, forwards.

(Continued on the next page.)

Great New Story of Nelson Lee, Detective, Starts Shortly!

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, 23, Bouverie Street, Fleet Street, London, E.C. Back numbers of THE BOYS' REALM may be had by any reader for distribution amongst his chums on receipt of a postcard. 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 to British stamps. Postal Orders or Money Orders to be sent to the Publisher, 23, Bouverie Street, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

New Stories Coming.

I AM now able to tell my friends a little concerning our great new programme for the coming months. First of all there will shortly commence in our paper a fine new boxing story, from the pen of Andrew Gray, whose yarns are always very popular with my friends. Then there will shortly appear the opening instalment of a fine new cricket serial by one of our most popular authors. I am not at present going to reveal the name of the gentleman who is writing this yarn, but I know that when I do tell my friends who he is they will be hugely delighted.

A fine new series of cricket articles by a famous Surrey cricketer, will also commence in a week or two's time. This, together with a number of other grand new features, and our big distribution of silver cups and medals and cricket bats to junior cricket leagues and clubs, will convince my chums that I am looking after their interests very carefully, and that I am going to leave no stone unturned to keep THE BOYS' REALM ahead of all its rivals. In return I shall be grateful if my loyal readers will tell their friends about our paper, and pass their copies along to those who do not take the REALM, when they have finished with them.

About Our Competition.

L. F. and E. F. are two brothers living at Leicester who want to know whether they may both compete in our great picture story competition, and whether, providing their efforts are successful, they would both be entitled to a prize. I have much pleasure in informing them that they may both enter this contest, and that if their efforts merit it they will both receive prizes.

What my friends have to bear in mind is that no more than one prize can be awarded to any competitor, and that every lad entering must send in a separate set of puzzle pictures and solutions.

Boys With Complaints.

MY chums know that it is my sincere desire to help them in every way possible, and that I am always anxious to solve for them any little difficulties which may crop up in their lives. And I am also in a small way a medical adviser to my readers. Lads suffering from chilblains, warts, corns, bunions, and toe like, or troubled with toothaches, with sprains, scratches, and bruises, with the thousand and one little ailments to which every youth is a victim at some time or other, may be sure of obtaining my practical sympathy and help if they let me know their troubles.

But, apart from these minor ailments, I cannot undertake to advise lads with all sorts of complaints. My position as Editor of this and other boys' papers would be seriously abused if I were to attempt to do so. For one thing, I have not had a medical training, and, apart from this, I am not able to tell what the trouble is caused by, even though my readers tell me all the symptoms. I may hazard a guess, and this guess may be a correct one, but, on the other hand, it may not. Besides, the treatment which will suit one lad will not suit another differently constituted, and therefore may be positively harmful to the latter.

For those reasons I want this week to say to my friend, W. N., of Glasgow, who suffers great pain from a bent toe, and whose mother has a peculiar abscess on her cheek, that he and his parent ought to go to a doctor about these. The same applies to F. B. (Portsmouth), who has pains in his stomach, and has suffered in the same way for years; and also to A. P. (New Cross), who has a lump in his throat, though I am inclined to think that my New Cross chum's ailment is more imaginary than real.

Anyway, all these young friends of mine will be taking the best possible course if they consult a properly qualified medical man, who will be able to judge from experience and knowledge exactly where the cause of the trouble lies, and how it may best be removed.

His Brother is Round-shouldered.

JAMES C., of Oldham, Lancashire, in a cheery and complimentary letter, which I have read with much interest, writes to ask my advice with reference to his brother, who is getting round-shouldered, and he wants me to tell him some remedy which will help his brother to straighten himself.

James C.'s brother can do all he needs to do by way of a cure at home with the aid of a couple of two-pound dumb-bells.

Every night and morning before he goes to bed and directly he jumps out of bed—let him get hold of these dumb-bells and go in for a bit of vigorous swinging with them for from five to ten minutes, increasing the amount of exercise until he can put in at least twenty minutes' smart work. After a very few days he will begin to notice a difference in himself, and when a fortnight or so has passed he will find that his round shoulders are disappearing, that his body is more upright, and that the improvement for which he has been longing is coming about.

But this is not all. He must be careful to avoid all bad habits. Smoking particularly gives many a lad a slouching gait and round shoulders. If he wants to walk upright, if he wants to carry his body properly, wants to have good broad shoulders and a well-expanded chest, he must have nothing to do with the fatal cigarette.

Employment in the Post Office.

I HAVE three letters in my posthag today from readers who want to obtain employment in the Post Office. Two of them are from lads who desire to become sorters, and the third seeks a post as learner.

Let me tell my young friends, J. R. P. (Glasgow), and "Old Reader" (Manor Park), that the limits of age for male sorters are eighteen and twenty-one, the commencing salary being eighteen shillings per week. Candidates must be at least 5ft. 4in. in height, and have to pass a special competitive examination before they can be appointed. Forms and all particulars may be obtained from the Civil Service Commission, Burlington Gardens, London, W. The fee for the examination is four shillings.

The hours of attendance are eight daily, and may commence very early in the morning, or as late as midnight. Sorters who are called upon to work a longer period than eight hours in any one day are allowed a corresponding reduction of time on another day. Sunday work must be performed if necessary, special rates being paid for the time put in on this day.

My other friend, whose initials are G. E. J., and who lives at Burton-on-Trent, will be interested to know that male learners are employed by the Post Office authorities, the limits of age being fifteen to eighteen. The commencing salary is eight shillings per week, and the fee for the examination which candidates must pass is four shillings. The subjects of the examination are: English composition (including writing and spelling), arithmetic (first four simple rules, simple and compound, including English weights and measures, reduction, vulgar fractions and decimals), and geography. Candidates must be at least 5ft. in height (without boots).

A Short-winded Boy.

AN enthusiastic Belvedere reader, whose initials are H. M., asks me to give him some remedy for short-windedness. Short-windedness comes from want of condition. There is only one remedy for it, and that is to get oneself into a stronger physical state. Careful, steady training is the one thing needed. My reader should also pay great attention to improving his lung capacity, and this can be done by practising breathing exercises night and morning. Let my young friend, when he gets up, stand at an open window, and, shutting his mouth, take a good deep breath, so deep that he finds his stomach pushed out by the force of the air which is being taken into his lungs. Then let him expire that breath very slowly, after holding it for a second or two, as he does so drawing in his stomach, and tightening the muscles of the abdomen.

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

My chum should be careful not to eat stodgy food, especially before taking exercise. If he is going for a run he should have only a light meal, and let at least an hour and a half elapse before he starts out.

"The Boy Smoker."

FOR ten years and more, ever since the first of my boys' papers appeared, I have continually written about the evils of smoking by lads under the age of twenty-one. Because I know that it was for their own good. I have not hesitated to speak my mind freely and fully upon this subject; and I claim that no one has done more than myself to bring home to the minds of unthinking lads the dangers of the poisonous cigarette. I may say, without boasting, that thousands of young men at the present time owe their health and vigour to following my advice.

And now, at last, the law has stepped in, and has determined to use its powerful influence to stop boys smoking; to prevent them any longer weakening their hearts, destroying their lungs, and otherwise making physical wrecks of themselves.

Naturally, I am delighted that Parliament has passed an Act suppressing smoking by young lads, because I have advocated for years that some law should be enforced with this object in view.

Not only does a lad wreck his health and strength by smoking; not only does he ruin all his chances of becoming any good as an athlete, but the habit is also a waste of good money. If a boy were to save the money he is in the habit of wasting upon packets of cigarettes, he would be doing something really good for himself, while he would always have sufficient pence to purchase the sound and healthy reading such as is to be found in my boys' papers.

Those of my friends who are members of the League of Boy Friends, and the League of Health and Strength, should use their best endeavours to persuade those lads amongst their acquaintances who smoke tobacco in any shape or form to give up this pernicious habit, and to become members of our great and popular leagues.

Now that Parliament has forbidden boys to smoke, those lads who have been in the habit of wasting pennies on cigarettes, should be advised to spend their money in the regular purchase of one or all of the following boys' papers: THE BOYS' REALM, "The Boys' Herald," and "The Boys' Friend." Our clean, healthy, vigorous stories and articles will do them a world of good, for they will be nothing but grateful to the reader who recommended our papers to them.

YOUR EDITOR (H. E.).

NOW ON SALE.

Three More New Additions to—

"THE BOYS' FRIEND" 3D. COMPLETE LIBRARY.

No. 79—
PETE'S STRANGE EXPEDITION.
A New and Original Long, Complete Tale of Jack, Sam, and Pete.
By S. CLARKE HOOK.

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No. 81—
GORDON FOX, DETECTIVE.
A Thrilling, Complete Story, Dealing with this Famous Character.
By MURRAY GRAYDON.

Fighting for Promotion.

(Continued from the previous page.)

Aston Villa: George, goal; Kearns and Miles, backs; Tranter, Logan, and Cornan, half-backs; Wallace, Reeves, Hampton, Bache, and Hall, forwards.

There was a moment of breathless suspense, and then the teams were whistled away, and Hampton, struggling with the ball, beat the nervous Jack Galway, dribbled on almost into the danger zone, where he was tackled by Hughes, and then slipped the ball to Wallace. Hughes, playing on to Hampton, left an opening, and with perfect precision Wallace got in his centre, whilst Reeves and Hampton, rushing onward, attempted to get to the ball before either Brewer or Billingham cleared.

It was an exciting moment, and the back and Reeves met together. The back managed to boot the ball, but his clearance was smothered by the active Hampton, who seemed in no wise disturbed by the leather hitting him with fearful force. The ball rebounded off him into Brewer's arms, and the goalkeeper was at once charged by Reeves. So lusty was the charge that Brower, as he stumbled down full length, was forced to let the ball go, and Hampton, dashing onward, lunged it with all his force into the netted haven of the goal.

Consternation was depicted on the faces of the home players. Never would they have believed that they could be a goal behind in the first minute of the game. But such was the solid fact, and as the referee pointed to the centre of the field, the Villans present gave tongue.

Hats and sticks and caps were flung aloft, and the air simply cracked with the din.

"Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!" yelled the crowd, frantic with delight.

The home spectators hadn't a cheer to ring out in response. There were thousands of long faces to be seen, and Jack Galway, as he ruefully kicked the ball to the centre as it came to him from a throw of the disconsolate Brewer, glared at the monkey, which he saw running along the roof of the iron stand.

"If I get half a chance," he growled, "I'll kill that mascot!"

And some others in the crowd had evidently a grudge against the monkey, too, saving perhaps he who had picked up the referee's sovereign, and a perfect fusillade of cinders from below sent Caruso rushing behind the shelter of an advertisement board for safety.

As for Sanderson, he was as glum as the rest. Certainly his new mascot had not brought the Wexstall Rovers any luck, so far as the game had gone.

The scoring of the Villa goal had been blessed with a bit of luck, and the question which now faced the Rovers was—could they equalise, or even win? There was a long time to go ere the match ended. Still, even looking at the situation through optimistic glasses, the odds seemed a hundred to one against, and the match seemed as good as lost.

(Another rattling long instalment next week.)

Look Out for THE BOYS' REALM Cricket Book. On Sale in a Fortnight's Time. 1d.



A Long Instalment of John Finnemore's Rollicking New School Story.

THE PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS ARE:

TEDDY LESTER, a bright, fun-loving pupil at Slapton School, who needs no introduction to readers of THE BOYS' REALM.

ITO NAGAO (a little Jap), FOULKES, and JIMMY WEST, Teddy's chums at Slapton.

TOM SANDYS, the captain of the school, and a great favourite with everyone.

CHERITON, an Upper Form Boy, who has founded, and is president of, the Bedlington Club at Slapton, which is a very poor imitation of a famous Varsity club.

TURTON, Cheriton's bosom friend.

On the first day of the new term, Teddy and his chums plan a jape at the expense of the Bedlington Club, which is holding a meeting in Cheriton's study. They succeed in completely disorganising the meeting, much to the chagrin of Cheriton and his fellow-members.

The following day Teddy finds a gold medal in one of the school passages. It is engraved with the initials P. B. C., and is Cheriton's badge of office as President of the Bedlington Club. The rule at Slapton is that all articles found on the premises are to be handed back to the head prefect, but Teddy puts the medal in his pocket, and promptly forgets all about it.

Turton, however, has seen Teddy pick up the medal, and telling Cheriton, the two concoct a scheme whereby they may get Lester into trouble.

Dr. Belshaw, the Head-master, receives an anonymous letter a few days later, which accuses Teddy of having stolen a gold cycling medal from a box in Turton's study. Teddy and Turton are sent for by the Head, and closely questioned. The latter admits having a gold medal, which he had won at some sports at Pembridge. He says that it is engraved with the initials P. B. C., which Turton declares stand for Pembridge Bicycling Club. This is however, of course, not the case.

Teddy suddenly remembers the medal he had found in the corridor, and produces it. Turton vows it his medal, and Dr. Belshaw firmly believes Teddy to be a thief, and the lad is put in solitary confinement.

Ito and Teddy's other chums know Turton's tale to be false from beginning to end, and Ito avows his intention of going to Pembridge to get proofs that Turton had not won a cycling medal there.

This he does, meeting with complete success.

Cheriton and Turton learn that Ito has gone to Pembridge, and this knowledge makes them very uneasy. They decide to get Jimmy West in a quiet corner and wring further particulars of Ito's journey from him.

A fictitious message takes the Bat to the shrubbery behind the school chapel, where he is pounced upon by Cheriton and his cronies.

(Now read this week's instalment.)

The Shindy in the Shrubbery.

THE Bat struck out and yelled, but his cries were cut short by a hand laid on his mouth; for he had been spread-eagled instantly, and at the next instant his arms were pinned down by a heavy fellow, who dropped upon him with both knees and knelt on his arms, while the others sat on his body and legs.

"Shut up," said the assailant who had his hand on the Bat's mouth "shut up, and keep quiet, or it will be jolly well the worse for you!"

As the unfortunate Bat could neither move nor speak, it was quite easy to obey this advice, and he lay quite still, trying to pierce the dusk and discover who it was that had attacked him.

But he had been lured into a very thick patch of brushwood, and could only see the forms of his assailants dimly, and when they spoke they disguised their voices as much as possible.

"Now, you cock-eyed beast," growled the big, heavy fellow who knelt on him, "just you answer me one word at a time as I take my hand from your mouth! And take care you answer me straight, or you'll know of it! Tell me to what place has Nagao gone?"

He lifted his hand from the Bat's mouth, and the prisoner, instead of speaking, let out a terrific yell, which echoed and re-echoed through the shrubbery. It was instantly choked by the heavy hand and his captor's muttered vengeance against him.

"So you will have it, will you?" said the first speaker viciously. "Just give him beans, No. 2, and let him know we're not going to be trifled with!"

No. 2 had been sitting on the Bat's body. He now seized the prisoner's right arm, twisted it round, and hit it with all his might with his clenched fist.

No. 2 was Calvert, and into those brutal punches he put all the malicious anger he felt at losing his place in the first fifteen to the Bat.

The pain was frightful—was agonising—but the Bat shut his teeth under the torture and defied them in his mind, for speak he could not.

"That'll do," said the leader. And No. 2 put all his strength into one last, vicious blow, then dropped the Bat's arm and sat down again on his body.

"Now do you begin to see that we are not to be trifled with?" muttered the leader. "That's nothing to what you'll get if you try any more games on us! Where has Nagao gone?"

He released the Bat's mouth very cautiously, ready to throttle upon the instant another yell. But the Bat did not yell this time; he muttered:

"F-f-f-find out!"

"That's what we're going to do before we've finished! No. 2, you're a duffer—you don't hit hard enough! Give him something to remember this time!"

"All right, No. 1," growled No. 2; "I'll make the beast wriggle this time!"

"No, no, my turn," grumed No. 3, who was Turton, and was also very anxious to lend a hand at any piece of bullying; "my go at him! Let me have a try! I'll baste him!"

In his eagerness to forestall No. 2 in basting the prisoner, No. 3 jumped up from the Bat's legs. No. 2 rose at the same time, and, for the moment the Bat was free from the shoulders. He made noble use of the freedom.

Drawing his long, thin, but very strong legs up under him, he launched out his feet with all his might in a terrific upward kick. He landed both heels in the stomach of No. 3, now standing over him, and Turton went flying, end over end, howling dismally as he went.

"Hold him, you confounded idiots!" growled No. 1. "What do you mean by letting him loose? And stop that bellowing, you double-eyed ass! Do you want the Old Man out on us? Ow! Ah! G-r-r!"

An exclamation and a grunt were now forced from his own lips, for, turning to rate his followers, he slightly raised the knee which pressed down the Bat's left arm. At once the tough and agile Bat whipped his arm out of hold, clenched the big, bony fist at the end of it, and let out with all his might at No. 1.

The blow landed with a soft thud somewhere in No. 1's face, and he replied with a fierce stroke at the Bat, lying beneath him. The Bat dimly saw the descending hand, and jerked his head aside. The fist grazed his ear, and came full upon a big stone which had been lying beside the prisoner's head, and No. 1's knuckles were barked frightfully. He jumped with the pain, and the Bat gave a tremendous heave upwards and threw him aside. In a second the Bat was on his feet and striking out with tremendous force among his foes.

"R-r-r-rag me, w-w-will you?" he bellowed. "T-t-t-take that!"

"That" was a left-hander, which got home on No. 2's jaw and sent him reeling.

No. 3 was still groaning.

"Shut up, will you?" snarled No. 1—the only member of the attacking party to keep his wits a little. "Now, then, run in on him altogether, and pin him down! We'll take it out of his hide for this!"

"I can't," wailed No. 3, the unhappy Turton; "the beast has nearly kicked the inside out of me! I'm sure I'm badly hurt!"

"Look out," cried No. 2; "I see a light! Someone's coming! Come on—come on!"

At this instant Jimmy West charged home, and sent No. 1 rolling on the grass with another terrific left-hander. But now his spectacles, which had hitherto kept their place admirably, became unshipped. One of the wires which curved about his ears broke short off, and the glasses fell to the ground. As he stooped in search of them, his assailants fled through the shrubs and down the flagged path.

The Bat made the utmost haste to follow them. He groped furiously with both hands, for signs and sounds of danger were very near. Then his fingers fell on the smoothness of glass, and his spectacles were in his hands again, and, as he could tell by the sense of touch, with the glasses luckily unbroken.

Now he leapt out and ran for the gate as fast as he could pelt; but with his first stride an ominous clang fell on his ears. He flew down the path, and found the gate shut. The last of his retreating enemies had unhooked the gate at the point where it was fastened back, and slammed it to after them. The Bat was a prisoner.

He was a prisoner because the gate closed with a spring lock, of which only Dr. Belshaw held the key. By day the gate stood open and gave the Head a short way to the quad. and the main buildings. An hour or so after dark it was closed by Benson, and remained closed until the doctor unlocked it the next morning.

To climb the railings was impossible. They were very tall, and at the top a double row of sharp spikes stood out on either side. To attempt to cross them in this light would mean that a rash climber would impale himself; and the Bat knew it, and had too cool and level a head to make any such mad attempt.

One thing, and one thing only, he could do—hide in the shrubbery. And he slipped aside from the path, worked his way under a great laurel-bush, and lay without moving a finger.

As he crouched down, footsteps and voices came to his ear, and he knew that he was in a dangerous fix, for the doctor himself was present.



Dr. Belshaw held the lamp up, and beheld the Bat dangling from the top of the gate, gazing down at him placidly.

The Search in the Shrubbery.

"BENSON," said a harsh, sour voice, "why was the gate left open after locking, thus affording an opportunity for ill-mannered boys to intrude upon the privacy of my shrubbery?"

"I'm sorry, sir," said Benson meekly; "but I have not been in the habit of closing it until you came in to dinner, sir. I have left it open until you came in for the evening for fear you should return that way, and, not having your key in your pocket, should be forced to go all the way round to the main entrance, sir."

"In future," commanded the Head, "let it be closed at dusk."

"Very good, sir."

"Did you not hear a voice as we entered the shrubbery, Benson?"

"Yes, sir. It was someone stuttering, or stammering. He shouted: 'Rag me, will you?' At any rate, I think those were the words."

"Ah," said Dr. Belshaw, "that was it, was it? One of those odious and detestable practical jokes which are schoolboy slang, are denominated 'rags,' I understand, was being perpetrated in the solitude of my own privacy. Very well—very well, indeed! I shall deal with the culprits in his severest manner! And one of them stuttered? A clue—a valuable clue, Benson! Throw the light of the lantern on the gate, Benson!"

Benson did so, for they were now at the end of the path.

"The gate is closed, sir. I heard someone slam it to."

"Ah, one of the fugitives, Benson—one of the fugitives! But we have a clue, which I shall follow up with the closest pertinacity—the boy who stuttered, Benson; the boy who stuttered. Every stutterer in the school will have to give very clear evidence of his whereabouts at this hour!"

"It seemed to me, sir, to sound very much like the voice of a boy in Mr. Jayne's House, sir—a boy who stutters very badly."

"Ah, yes; a boy named West!" said Dr. Belshaw. "Yes, a boy named West! He does stutter very badly!"

"Oh, my happy aunt!" groaned the Bat, as he lay under the laurel. "They've rung the bell first shot! Here's a blue look-out for yours truly!"

And the next moment he heard worse.

"Benson," said the doctor, "I will unlock the gate, and you shall go at once across to Mr. Jayne's, and make instant inquiry where is this boy who stutters, and where has he been during the last half-hour. Then bring word to me at once."

"Beg your pardon, sir," said Benson, "but might I suggest it would be a good plan to look round the shrubbery and see if anyone's hidden away? If one or two didn't happen to get through the gate before it was shut, they couldn't do it after."

"Quite right, Benson; very true, Benson," said the doctor. "Proceed upon your quest, Benson."

Benson proceeded upon his quest at once, throwing the light of the lantern he held in every direction, while the Bat curled himself into the smallest ball he could roll into, and lay tight under the laurel, hoping against hope that he would be overlooked.

Twice Benson passed within a yard of the spot where the Bat lay concealed, and so close and quiet lay the boy under the bushy boughs that Benson had no idea that he was almost treading upon one of the intruders.

Then the butler crossed the path, and began to beat the bushes on the further side. And now Jimmy West made a blunder.

"Old Benson's beaten over every inch of the corner behind me," thought Jimmy, "so I'll slide into it, for he'll never come back there. Then, when they've gone, perhaps I can clear out of the place yet. I've had enormous luck in being missed up to the present, but this spot is rather too near to the path."

So Jimmy waited until the light of the lamp was obscured by a great holly-bush, then away he crept, on hands and knees, for the cover which had been searched already.

Unluckily, just as he entered it, Benson came round the further side of the holly-bush, and the light of his lamp fell for an instant on the path which the Bat was following.

Dr. Belshaw jumped, and pointed with the walking-stick he held in his hand.

"Look there, Benson," he cried—"look there! Did you see that?"

"No, sir, I didn't see anything, sir," answered Benson. "What was it, sir?"

"A dog—a large black dog!" cried the doctor, taking off his spectacles, and rubbing them, and popping them on his nose again—"a large

black dog, Benson, and it ran behind that large lilac-bush in the corner that you have just searched."

"A dog, sir," murmured Benson, in deep surprise—"a dog! But how could a dog slip in here, sir?"

"Those evilly-disposed boys brought it in, Benson. Yes, those ill-conditioned boys have not only dared to introduce a dog into the precincts of the school, but also to bring it into my own private shrubbery. But a condign punishment awaits them. This affair shall be probed to the bottom, Benson!"

"Yes, sir," said Benson. "But was it a big dog, sir?"

"It was, Benson—a large black dog, but not moving at so great a speed as I have seen dogs employ."

"Well, sir," said Benson hesitatingly, "would you mind, sir, if I called Williams, the coachman, to deal with it? I'm a bit timid of dogs, sir. I always have been. I can't help it."

"Benson—Benson!" said the doctor, in his deepest tones of reproof. "What is this, Benson—what is this? Are you so unmanly as to express fear of a stray cur? Nay, Benson, summon up your courage, and drive it out of the shrubbery."

"I'm sorry, sir," wailed Benson, "but I can't—I can't, I really can't. I can't abide a dog, sir, I never could."

In the meantime, the "dog" was doubled up behind the lilac-bush, cramming his cap into his mouth to choke back his laughter. The Bat would have howled with delight if he had dared. The Old Man thought he was a dog scurrying about, and Benson would not face a bow-wow. What a lark it was! Then the doctor began to speak again.

"Hold the lamp, Benson," he said. "Hold it so that the light falls upon the bush. If you are so craven as to decline to face a wretched cur, I myself will advance, and drive it from its retreat with my stick!"

Benson threw the light on the bush, and Dr. Belshaw stepped forward, with his stick held out at arm's length. He was about to drive it into the bush, and was already crying, "Come out, there! Get out with you!" when the Bat blew off a terrific growl—a deep, snarling g-r-r-r!—from the very bottom of his throat.

It was so well done that Dr. Belshaw felt persuaded that a very savage dog was hidden behind the bush, and he went back a couple of yards so quickly that an enemy would have said that he was running away.

He covered his retreat by slashing furiously into the leaves with his stick, and, with much difficulty, he turned a cry of alarm into a sort of cough, or grunt, as if he was considering what should be his next step.

"Oh, take care, sir—do take care!" cried Benson. "That was a very savage growl—a very ferocious growl, sir. I think it's a very dangerous brute, sir. It might do you a mischief, sir. Perhaps it's mad!"

"Ah, yes, Benson; yes, yes, Benson, my man," said the doctor, still continuing to draw back, "there may indeed be something in what you say. I must confess that in advancing to attack the creature the possibility of that had not crossed my mind. As you say, it may be in a state of rabies, when it is very unwise—it is exceedingly unwise—for the boldest to draw near."

At this moment the Bat let off another terrific and blood-curdling growl, and the doctor and Benson went a dozen yards at the double-quick.

"I—I—er—really think we must obtain more assistance to secure this savage beast, Benson," said the doctor.

"Yes, sir; to be sure, sir," replied Benson. "Shall I fetch William, sir?"

"Do so," said his master; "and I will secure the farther gate, so that the creature cannot escape."

Master and man turned to go, and the Bat could not resist an impulse which came over him; the fun was too great and splendid. He made a fierce, savage rush right into the shrubs, and gave a growl like a charging tiger. Crash went the lamp to the ground as Benson dropped it in his fright, and he took to his heels, shouting, "It's coming! Oh, oh, it's coming!" and ran as fast as he could pelt for the inner gate. Fear is contagious, and soon the doctor was running as fast as his man. Clang went the farther gate as the fugitives slammed it behind them, and the Bat dropped down and laughed till he hurt himself.

"What a lark!" he chuckled. "What a splendiferous lark! I thought they'd got me for a certainty, and I've bluffed 'em off in style. Now, is there a chance of hooking it while they are gone?"

Checkmate.

HE sprang to his feet, ran to the gate leading into the quad., and began to swarm up its railings. He meant, after all, to try his luck at worming a way over the spikes; and he must be quick, for he knew it would be a slow job, and there was not much time to spare.

Up he went easily enough until he came to the network of spikes which crowned the palisade, and here he had to move slowly and warily. He drew himself up cautiously, and placed a knee on the side of the first row of spikes, and swung himself up a little higher. As he did so, a tall figure came along the stone-flagged causeway leading from the quad. to the shrubbery. So lightly was the new-comer stepping that the Bat, intent upon his perilous climb, saw nothing of the stranger's advance, saw nothing of him as he paused in astonishment at the gate, and looked up to see a boy's form, clear against the sky, climbing over the chevaux-de-frise.

The new-comer took a match-box from his pocket, struck a match, and held the flaming vesta high above his head. The splutter and flame were the first signs that the Bat received to notify him of the presence of anyone in the dusk below. The Bat grunted and jumped in surprise, then slipped, and a spike went clean through his jacket. He grunted again, and his grunt was almost a groan. Horror of horrors! Mr. Jayne stood there, looking up at him by the light of the match, which flared steadily in the quiet, windless night.

"West!" cried the House-master, in surprise. "What on earth are you doing there? Go back at once, and do not attempt to come further—you are essaying a most dangerous and foolhardy feat."

"May as well go back," thought the Bat. "I'm bagged, anyhow. What confounded luck!"

He twisted himself, and then found that a strong spike had gone clean through his clothes, and that he was a prisoner.

"Come down this moment, West!" said Mr. Jayne. "You are in a most dangerous position!"

"I—I—I—I can't, sir," replied the Bat, in his gentlest tones. "I'm p-p-p pinned!"

"Then keep quite still until you are released!" called Mr. Jayne.

At this moment a voice hailed them from the other end of the shrubbery.

"Who speaks there?" it called. And the Bat knew that the enemy had returned.

"It is I, Dr. Belshaw," replied the House-master. "Mr. Jayne."

There was a clatter of footsteps on the flagged path and a cluster of lights came through the bushes. The doctor had returned reinforced by William and the stable-boy, the two latter armed with pitchforks, and carrying lanterns.

"Take care, Mr. Jayne; do not enter the shrubbery without precaution!" cried the Head. "There is a most ferocious dog concealed among the bushes."

"Ah!" said Mr. Jayne. "And is that why you are climbing up the railings, West?"

Jimmy made no reply.

"May I ask, Mr. Jayne, to whom you are speaking?" demanded the Head.

"To a boy on the railings," replied Mr. Jayne.

"A boy on the railings!" cried Dr. Belshaw, in the greatest surprise, bustling forward to look into this strange turn of affairs—"a boy on the railings! And pray, what may he be doing there?"

He held his lamp up, and beheld the Bat glancing placidly down upon him.

"Eh, all the strange things!" cried the Head. "Why, this is the very boy whose presence Benson suspected in the enclosure. Has he explained to you how he comes here, Mr. Jayne?"

"Not yet, Dr. Belshaw. I think it would be best to get him down first from the awkward position he occupies. Then we can examine him."

"A most improper position! A most scandalous position!" cried the Head. "The idea of a boy's coming to this place at this time! The thing is simply outrageous!"

"The old man is blowing in great style," thought the Bat to himself. Then he essayed to pour oil on the troubled waters.

"There's no need to hurry, s-s-sir," he murmured. "I c-c-can hang here h-h-h-half an hour, easy."

"Do not hang there for a moment!" thundered the doctor. "Come to earth at once, unscathed or scathed!"

"I c-c-can't sir," said the Bat cheerfully. "I'm p-p-p-pinned through the j-j-j jacket and the s-s-seat of my t-t-trousers."

"Did you by there to escape the attack of the dog?" demanded the Head. But Jimmy was silent once more.

Now, William, the coachman, was a very dry, blunt sort of man, who always spoke his mind; the very opposite of the obsequious Benson. He now broke in:

"Beggin' your pardon, sir," he said to the doctor, "but the ere dog as we're s-supposed to be after seems uncommon quiet. It looks to me as wot there ain't no dog, 'cept he's up on the railings there. It might be as he was behind the bushes there a-growlin' at yer. Some o' these boys'll imitate a growlin' dog as like as never was, sir."

No sooner was this suspicion planted in the doctor's mind than it grew with the strength and rapidity of a jack's beanstalk. He became purple with wrath, and snapped out instantly:

"You boy up there, attend to me this moment!"

"Yes, s-s-sir," said the Bat meekly.

"Were you in this shrubbery a short time since?"

"Y-y-y-yes, sir!"

"Oh, you were? And did you scramble along the ground on all fours like a dog, hoping to escape detection?"

"Y-y-y-yes, sir!"

"And did you creep behind the bush, and there growl in order to carry on this deception?"

"Y-y-y-yes, sir!"

From the other side of the gate came a little gurgle of laughter. Mr. Jayne could not help it. He had seen a great deal of boys, and was accustomed to the boy who whimpered, and the boy who fled when in a scrape; but anything quite so calm, so cool, and so truthful as the Bat up on the spikes there was rather a new thing, and distinctly amusing.

But the doctor boiled over with fury.

"Base and unworthy boy!" he bellowed. "Not content with playing those practical jokes termed 'rags,' in the vile slang you use, you must then attempt to play them upon me, it seems. But I will take order with you. Time and again have I punished privately for these senseless tricks; but this time I will make a public example of you flagrant as evildoer. To-morrow I will flog you openly, sir, that all the school may know and dread the severity which is rightly exercised towards such offenders. Take him down, William, and let him depart instantly to his House. To-morrow will I square all accounts with so insolent a youth!"

The Bat said nothing, but he thought it was jolly hard to be soundly flogged before the school for ragging when it was he who was being ragged. But honour forbade that he should grouse and whine, and he said nothing about the trap which had been laid for him.

"After all," he said to himself, "I'd been going to explain how I got there I ought to have come out at first. I dodged behind the bush, and had my fun—and jolly good fun it was, scaring the Old Man and Benson—so now I must pay the piper. It's only a whopping, anyhow."

So when William and the stable-boy, both grinning with all their might—for the doctor and Mr. Jayne had gone away—brought a short ladder, and the Bat was unhooked from the spikes, he went away to his House quite contented with his evening's entertainment.

The Barbarians.

AS he entered the door of Jayne's he met Foulkes, to whom he related the surprising adventures which had happened to him since he went out.

Foulkes was immensely entertained with Jimmy's row of the doctor and Benson, and shook a sympathetic head when he heard what was in front of the Bat.

"You'll get it hot, old chap," he said frankly; "and it's no good saying anything else. The Old Man will be only too glad to get a bit of his own back. He'll give you beans!"

"I don't c-c-care!" chuckled the Bat. "It was awfully screaming and good fun, that I'd d-d-do it again if I h-h-h-had the chance."

They were going along the studies' passage as they were talking, and now they paused for a moment. Round the corner came Turton, bustling along to Cheriton's study.

"There's one of 'em!" said Foulkes. "See me draw him in!"

He shot softly along until he was close behind Turton, whom the Bat strongly suspected of being No. 3.

"I say, No. 3—No. 3!" whispered Foulkes, in an eager, excited voice.

"Yes? What is it?" whispered Turton in return, wheeling round on his heel, and expecting the new one of his confederates. But he only noticed Foulkes' grinning face, and heard Foulkes' mocking laugh.

"What is it?" jeered Foulkes. "Why, this is it. That you've given yourself away for a grinning ass—that's what's one, and that's one noticed to a spot where you could hammer him quietly. What a low beast you are, Turton!"

"I don't know what you mean!" snarled Turton, with an ugly look in his face.

"Of course you don't," jeered Foulkes. "Though it was jolly odd how quickly you turned and answered. You're a cheerful innocent, you are! But there is one thing I'd like to know. How does your poor inside feel? Has it settled down again after the old Bat digging his heels into it?"

Turton made no reply, only shot a malevolent glance at his questioner. Then he turned to go on his way, and Foulkes, who was not one of the quickest on his feet by nothing, helped him forward with a kick which nearly sent him on his nose.

"Confound you, Foulkes!" bellowed the victim. "What did you do that for?"

"Because you're a beast and a sneak!" replied Foulkes. "The order of the boot is the only thing fitting for a fellow like you. I wouldn't dirty my hands by punching your mean head!"

"Sorry to interrupt your merry pastimes, Foulkes, old boy," said a voice behind them; "but the word is being passed for the first fifteen to assemble in the skipper's den. You and West will make up the party."

"Right, Archer," said Foulkes, turning to receive a forward and a good man in the pack. "Anything special up?"

"Something very special, I believe," returned Archer. "Come on, you two; the rest are there."

Not another thought or glance was wasted on Turton. Away ran the three boys as hard as they could pelt for Tom Sandys' study.

They entered, and found that the study was filled with the first fifteen, and that near the fire stood the captain and Mr. Blair, the master who had charge of football, deep in conversation.

Now, Mr. Blair had charge of football by good rights, not merely as a famous player of old, but by reason of his great influence in the Rugger world. He had been one week at Oxford Blue, but the captain of his year, and had led one of the most famous 'Varsity packs to a splendid victory. Then for seven years he had gained an International cap, playing every year against Scotland, and five times against Wales.

He had also been a famous member of a famous club, the Barbarians, a Rugby club which had much the same standing as the Corinthians in the Soccer game, or I. Zingari on the cricket-field.

Now, it had been the desire of Mr. Blair's heart for years to bring his grand old club down to Slapton to play the school fifteen. A great friend of his was the secretary of the Barbarians, and before the opening of this season, Mr. Blair had tried to get a date. But it had proved impossible. The famous combination was so much sought after as opponents that there could be no question of assigning a date to a mere school fifteen, and Mr. Blair had been disappointed once more.

But to-night his face was bright and eager as he flourished a letter he held in his hand; and Tom's face, too, was eager yet thoughtful. The great leader and mighty three-quarter had his eyes fixed on the blaze of his fire as the master talked, and his brow was knitted, and his nod was short and decisive as he listened to Mr. Blair's arguments.

"Yes, sir," said he at last, "we'll have a good shot at them, and a thousand thanks to you for the chance. Now, I'll talk to the fifteen."

He raised his voice slightly as he spoke the last words, and they were caught by his fellowers. There was instant silence as the captain turned and faced his men.

"I have asked you to come up here to-night," said Tom, looking round the deeply interested faces, "because Mr. Blair has a great piece of news for us. You know that he takes a very deep and kindly interest in the fortunes of the fifteen, and is always very keen on picking up a good match for us. He has tried for years to get one to date with the Barbarians, but they have always been too full. But, by a very uncommon turn of affairs, a game has fallen through, and they have a vacant date. This they have given to Mr. Blair, and I may say that, had we not had Mr. Blair's great influence working on our behalf, we should never have been able to secure the game. As it is, thanks to him, on next Saturday afternoon, Slapton will be matched against the Barbarians."

Next Saturday! The fifteen looked at each other in surprise for a second in time for special preparation. Straight into the field they must go against the tremendous wearers of the blue and white—the world-famous Barbarian colours. Then their hearts rose with a bound as the thought of the mighty battle before them, and a cheer burst from every lip, three times three for Mr. Blair, and again three times three for their captain. Then Tom began to speak again:

"I think we're all pretty fit," he said. "The fifteen has done a great deal of hard work lately, and we're all fairly seasoned. But we'll turn out on Big Field at 2.45 every afternoon and limber ourselves up. We shall want all we've got in the way of wind and speed and science to tackle the Barbarians!"

Tom stopped speaking, and there were cries for Mr. Blair. The master stepped forward, smiling at the eager faces before him.

"Well, boys," he said, "it has been my wish, as your captain has said, to bring my old club down here to test your mettle thoroughly. You know that I should never have dreamed of such a thing had I not had the greatest confidence in Slapton football. It would have been more foolishness to bring down a team to beat a mere school fifteen, but Slapton is not an ordinary fifteen. Sandys has pulled the school football up to a pitch which gives me confidence in asking even the Barbarians for a game.

"But there was one thought in every mind, though no one uttered it. What of the half-back line? The Barbarians were coming, and one line of defence and attack was as the present moment completely torn out of the team.

"Slapton, at its biggest, could find the Barbarians a very tough nut to crack. But how if they went into the field without Teddy Lester and Ito Nagao?

"There could only be one result—hopeless, ignominious failure. The two second fifteen half-backs were good, honest, hard-working players. But against the Barbarians it was useless to expect them to do great things. Neither of them had one-tenth of the skill, the speed, the genius for the game displayed by the renowned couple who worked with each other and to each other in so marvellous a fashion.

Foulkes and the Bat left the study together as they had entered together, and, under the spell of this wonderful news, they walked to Foulkes's study without speaking. They went into the room, and Foulkes broke the silence.

"The Barbarians!" he said, in a low, awe-struck voice. "The Barbarians on Saturday afternoon! And Teddy Lester in quod and Ito cleared out, and those second fifteen johnnies behind the scrum! Oh, my aunt! This is a cheerful mess!"

And when the school learnt the great news the feelings of Foulkes found similar expression on all sides.

(Another rattling, long instalment next week.)

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OPENING CHAPTERS IN BRIEF.

Sentenced for Life.

Sir Richard Easterbrook is found murdered in the grounds of his estate in Suffolk. Suspicion falls upon his nephew, Frank Easterbrook, who is known to have quarrelled with his uncle that very afternoon, and was the last person in company with Sir Richard. Mainly through the false evidence of Bernard Oates, Frank's cousin, the innocent lad is found guilty of taking his uncle's life. He is sentenced to imprisonment for life.

On his way to Blackland Prison with several other convicts, Frank comes face to face with Bernard Oates, the cause of all his troubles, on the station platform. Enraged by Oates' sneers and insults, Frank springs at his tormentor, but is pulled away by Principal-Warder Rossiter, a harsh tyrant, who has no pity for the convicts under his charge.

The Punishment-cell.

On his arrival at Blackland, Frank is taken before the governor, Major Grimtree, and sentenced to three days' punishment-cells for his assault on Bernard Oates.

Frank finds a friend in Assistant-Warder Dibble, who has heard the story of Frank's conviction, and whose soft heart is touched by the lad's misfortune.

While crossing the prison-yard on his way to the punishment-cells, Frank passes another convict, a poor half-witted lad named Billy Simpson, who breaks away from the warders and makes towards the new arrival. He is only kept from speaking to the lad by a brute named Warder Soper.

In the Quarries.

One of the convicts at Blackland, whose name is Captain Pentwhistle, has a certain hold over the governor, Major Grimtree, which ensures him some little leniency in regard to prison rules.

Frank is attached to one of the quarry gangs. While at work, a convict named Punch Milkins opens a surreptitious conversation with him. Principal-Warder Rossiter accuses Frank of talking. Milkins protests that he is to blame, but Rossiter pays no attention to him, and strikes Frank on the ear. Punch Milkins, enraged, attacks the warder, and a fearful fracas, in which Frank is also drawn, in a moment the quarry is in a state of confusion, the convicts throw down their tools, and a desperate fight takes place between prisoners and warders.

(You can read this week's instalment.)

THE 7th CHAPTER.
The Prison Chaplain.

HOARSE shouts and bitter curses rent the air, turning to snarls as warders and convicts came to grips. Each seemed to pick his man, and in less than a minute a score of savage duels were in progress. It was truncheon against spade or pickaxe here and there, but fist against fist for the most part.

Whistles blew here, there, and everywhere. Reinforcing warders raced up, while civil guards, unable to fire upon the fighting medley of men, stood upon the quarry walls with gripped rifles, awaiting orders what to do.

Someone got an idea. It was Chief-Warder Payton, whom the whistles brought up. He hurried down the bank to where the civil guards were lined up.

"Fire in the air," he whispered. "You can't fire at them. You'd be as likely to hit warders as convicts. Fire in the air—a volley. Now then, ready, present!"

A moment after, and a dozen rifles spoke. Not quite in a volley, but in that more terrorising ragged crackle of musketry that always suggests a machine-gun.

Chief-Warder Payton was correct. The effect of the fire was instantaneous. Convicts stopped in their mutinous work, and turned their terrified eyes to the quarry bank.

Nearly a score of bronze barrels pointed down to them like warning fingers of death. With quaking hearts and shivering limbs, the convicts turned as one man, and hurried to take cover.

And now the heat was out of their blood. The danger of a general mutiny was no longer present. That crackle of musketry fire had effectually checked the rebellion. Except in one quarter. That quarter the one where the fight had originated.

Frank Easterbrook still lay upon the ground with a bullet-wound in his shoulder. Punch Milkins, thirsting for vengeance, had rushed upon Principal-Warder Rossiter. Even as Tommy Atkins will sometimes drop his rifle in battle, and use his fists, so Milkins now discarded his pickaxe, and, obeying the Britisher's fighting instinct, went for his foe with the "raw 'uns."

Milkins—as his nickname of Punch suggested —had been, among other things, something of a fighting-man in the past.

It looked, then, for a moment, as if Rossiter was in for a rough time. But the convict's first blow caught him full upon the nose with such force as to send him staggering back, and to cause a copious stream of claret to flow.

So far from being satisfied with what he had done, Punch Milkins prepared for a second rush. But by this time other warders had dashed up to the scene.

At a rush three of them threw themselves upon Milkins. That was big enough odds, but it was insufficient. The convict proved his prodigious strength by shaking the three warders off, one after the other. Not until half a dozen officers had fastened themselves upon him did he at last give in, and collapse in an exhausted state upon the rocky ground.

In a trice a pair of handcuffs were slipped upon his wrists, and leg-irons about his ankles.

As he lay helpless upon the stones, and bleeding from a wound he had received on the mouth, up came Rossiter. His nose was powdered with blood, he had received a bad turn rather than pain had put that vengeful light in his cruel eyes. One look he took around to assure himself that only warders were present, then, raising his heavy boot, he brought it with a thud against Punch Milkins' ribs two or three times in quick succession.

At this display of brutality, even the warders shuddered. But in the presence of their superior officer they said nothing.

It was left to Frank Easterbrook to check this ruffianly display.

As Rossiter's foot was raised for a fourth kick, the boy scrambled to his feet. The pain in his shoulder was intense. He conquered that, however, and blundered forward.

"You cowardly brute!" he cried out.

Rossiter stopped his foot in amazement.

"What! You'll interfere again, you whelp, will you? I'll teach you to mind your own business!"

He made a grab at the boy's wounded arm, gripping it and pinching it till the pain was excruciating.

Frank yelled; he could not help it. He struggled to free himself; but the more he struggled, the more cruelly Rossiter pinched. He swung the boy round and round, grinding his teeth savagely, and uttering curses beneath his breath.

How long this scene of torture might have proceeded, we cannot say. But, attracted, like others, by the unaccustomed din, a new arrival came upon the scene.

"Stop that!" he cried out.

Everybody turned at the voice of authority. The man they beheld was tall and broad-shouldered. He was dressed in black, and wore a clerical collar.

It was the Rev. Paul Fairlight, the prison chaplain.

All stared at him. Even the furious Rossiter paused in his work, though he did not loosen his grip on Frank's arm.

"What is the meaning of this?" asked Mr. Fairlight, advancing.

Rossiter looked up.

"The meaning, sir, is," he returned sullenly, "that I'm checking the mutiny."

"But it's all over," returned the chaplain drily. "The men are being marched back to prison. In any case, you've no right to treat a boy like that."

"I think I have, sir, in self-defence. Look at my face!"

"What! You mean to say this boy did that?"

"Yes; he did!"

"Don't talk at 'im, sir!" came in the voice of Punch Milkins. "E's a li—beg pardon, I means a perwaricator of the truth. It was me as landed 'im on the boko. I'm sorry for it now—sorry as I left off where I did. I oughter 'ave bunged up 'is eye as well!"

"Silence!" said the chaplain, not very unkindly, however. "Don't make your offence worse by talking. Still," he added, turning to Rossiter, "it appears that 77 assaulted you, so this boy is not responsible. Let go his arm. Don't you see what pain he is in?"

"So am I in pain!" said Rossiter doggedly.

"Why, good heavens, the lad's shoulder is bleeding! He's been wounded! Let go of his arm, will you?"

"No, won't I!"

"Then, by jingo, I'll make you!"

With one stride forward the chaplain seized Rossiter. At Oxford Mr. Fairlight had been a distinguished athlete. His grip now suggested his prowess at "throwing the hammer and throwing the weight," at which feats he had been University champion. With one deft twist he swung Rossiter round, and dropped him to the ground as if he had been a feather-weight.

Chief-Warder Payton came hurrying up.

"Why, sir, what's all the row about?" he asked.

The chaplain smiled grimly, and smoothed out a ruffled wristband.

"Well, Mr. Payton," said he, "you'd better ask Rossiter, here. I'm going off. This lad has been shot in the shoulder. I'm going to take him to Dr. Sears." And, without more ado, he hurried off, with Frank by his side.

Chief-Warder Payton turned to Rossiter.

"What have you been doing?" he asked, in a whisper.

"Only paying out that young whelp for refractory conduct. I was just twisting his wounded arm a bit when up came that interfering sky-pilot."

"H'm! You'd best be careful, Mr. Fairlight's a determined man. If you rub him the wrong way, you'll be finding trouble."

"Trouble!" repeated Rossiter, with a scowl. "I guess I'll make trouble for some of these curs before I've done with 'em. I'll thank you not to take sides against me."

Chief-Warder Payton winced. He was Rossiter's superior officer, yet he said nothing. As before, there was a suggestion in his manner of fear of the cruel brutality of Rossiter, who now stood scowling in front of him.

The chief warder turned aside, and caught sight of Punch Milkins lying upon the ground. He waved his hand to a group of warders.

"Get that man back to the prison," said he. "Everybody else is shut up by this time."

And, indeed, the quarry had been nearly empty for some minutes. All the convicts, as is usual in a mutiny, had run, but had been marched back to the prison.

Chief-Warder Payton climbed out of the quarry on to the high bank, with Rossiter beside him. Suddenly the prison bell clanged out in quick, loud, alarming fashion.

"Why, what's up, I wonder?" asked Payton. "Hi, Soper!"—this to a warder who was racing across the level ground—"what's the matter? What's the bell going for?"

"It's the alarm!" panted Soper. "There's been an escape! No. 51 is missing, and we're all for search-duty!"

THE 8th CHAPTER.
An Unexpected Visitor.

CHIEF-WARDER PAYTON raced over towards the prison gates.

Here, on the square of asphalt, the convicts had been paraded after being brought from the quarry. Here they had been searched and counted, with the result that one of their number was found to be missing.

No. 51 it was. He was the man who, only a few mornings ago, had been bullied by Rossiter for not having washed himself. The charge, it will be recalled, was false. The blue mark upon the man's neck being nothing more or less than a bruise inflicted by Warder Soper.

For a long time past, Roots (which was No. 51's name), had put up with the many bullyings and persecutions to which he had been subjected. For long he had brooded upon the hardness of his lot, and had schemed for a way to escape from it.

And now he had at last found a way. In the midst of the confusion in the quarry, he had snapped on or other got clear away. Not until the convicts had been marched back to the prison gates had his escape been detected.

Then at last the alarm was given, and the bell clanged out.

The various convict parties were still ranged up in double rank as Chief-Warder Payton approached. Amid the confusion rigid discipline was forgotten, and the convicts were talking among themselves.

"It's a guy (escape)," they were saying. "No. 51's made a dash for it. But precious little chance the poor chap'll have. Every screw (warder) will be after him in a minute. They'll hunt him down. Nobody ever gets away from Blackland. He'll be back here again before night, poor chap!"

"Silence!" cried Chief-Warder Payton. Then he called to the warders in charge of the various parties: "All your men right?"

"Yes, sir!"

"And yours?"

"Yes, sir!"

"Only No. 51 missing, then? Right turn! Close up! Quick march!"

In a trice the convicts were marching through the great gates into the prison.

Clang, clang, clang, clang, clang! From the tower in the centre, the alarm-bell was ringing out its message of alarm. From various directions other warders, who had been off duty, came running up, buckling on swords, while the civil guards turned forward in threes and fours, armed with rifles. Half a dozen prison officers on bicycles scurried off in various directions.

Clang, clang, clang, clang! continued the bell, with never a pause in its brassy notes.

Chief-Warder Payton was shouting new directions, while half a dozen dogs added to the general excitement by their furious barking.

Quickly the assembled warders and the civil guards were split up into several parties. Then off they went at the double, some party to the quarries, two others along the broken coastline, the remainder to the wood lying to the north of the prison, and to the moors beyond.

Within ten minutes the search had begun.

Meantime, the Rev. Paul Fairlight had taken Frank straight to the infirmary.

Here they found the doctor.

The latter was a shortish, thick-set man, with nerves like steel. His compulsory dealing with so many rough, criminal natures, many of whom were ready to skulk at any time, had infused a good deal of suspition into his nature. His manner, too, was brusque, but in spite of that he had a good, soft spot in his heart for any case genuinely deserving of pity.

(Continued on the next page.)

A JUNIOR FOOTBALL LEAGUE

ITS WORK, DIFFICULTIES, AND SUCCESS.

By G. L. B. COVERDALE, Hon. Sec. East Riding County F.A.

A FOOTBALL league cannot be run successfully without a large amount of work devolving upon the secretary of the league, who must have the unstinted support and help of an enthusiastic committee if the league is to have any great degree of success.

Many league clubs little imagine the amount of time that must necessarily be spent by the league officials in looking after their interests. A league having a membership of, say, thirty clubs divided into two divisions, will most probably have a management committee of about ten or twelve, including the officials—i.e., president, treasurer, and secretary. In smaller leagues, where perhaps there are only about ten clubs, there we find a representative from each club in the league.

This, however, is a course I do not recommend, as when each club is represented you get too much "club feeling" and "club interest," and towards the end of the season the representatives of the bottom clubs fail to turn up at the meetings.

In a larger league, where the committeemen are elected at the annual meeting, and where there is competition for seats on the committee, a much better representation is invariably obtained.

We will take a league composed of thirty clubs as stated above, and I will endeavour to show some of the work that is entailed in

its successful management.

A committee meeting must necessarily be held at the very least once a month, and more probably once a fortnight, if the league does not appoint an emergency sub-committee from its general committee. Where possible, I always recommend the full committee to meet, and so let them be cognisant of all the doings of the league, and, consequently, take a more live interest in their work.

I consider the keynote of success in the running of a junior football league is to subdivide the work as much as possible, and make all the members of the league committee responsible for some portion of its management.

Some people get a very wrong impression about a league's success, and think a good secretary is everything—it certainly goes a long way—but he must receive hearty support from his fellow-committeemen. The work, that in many cases wholly devolves on the secretary and which may easily be delegated to a willing committeeman, is the following:

(a) At the first meeting of the year let a minute secretary be appointed; I know from experience how difficult it is to explain the business to the meeting, and then take down

the committee's decision,

then to prepare for the next item on the agenda—your committee having to wait whilst this is being done, it loses time.

The appointment of a minute secretary will get over this difficulty, as he will have heaps of time to take down all resolutions, etc., and, what is more, will relieve the secretary of the league of a great amount of work by entering the minutes in the minute-book.

(b) A registration secretary should be appointed. This individual will receive all the registration forms and deal with them. Naturally, this official's busiest time will be at the commencement of the season.

Registrations, however, will take place right up to the close of the season, and this important official will never have much peace. In a league composed of thirty clubs, it is highly probable that any number, from six hundred to one thousand players, may be registered.

Clubs, as a rule, register all and sundry "players," many, perhaps, who never have any intension of playing. I have known one club register as many as ninety men—this, certainly, is an exceptional case; still, however, it is quite common for a club to register enough players for four teams instead of only one.

(c) Each league should have a Press secretary. It should be the duty of this committeeman to insert every possible thing relating to the league's doings in

the local Press.

The Press will be only too willing to insert the matter, whilst players playing in the league appreciate and delight in seeing items of news about their league.

The Press secretary should also see to the league tables being kept up to date, and inserted in the local newspapers each week. Nothing encourages a club to greater efforts more than seeing how they stand in the league. Clubs will be spurred on, and will do their utmost to secure a creditable position in the table.

Readers will probably think this subdivision of the work will leave nothing for the league secretary to do. In my next week's article I will show that there is still plenty left.

"Hallo, Fairlight!" said he. "Another protege? What's the matter with him?"

"He's been shot, Sears. There's been a row at the quarries, as you probably know, and this boy's got a bullet in his shoulder."

The doctor's manner changed instantly. He was the quiet, iron-nerved surgeon in a moment.

"Let me see you, lad. No, don't try and take off your coat. I can see it's giving you jip. I'll manage it."

With a sharp pair of surgical scissors which he took from his pocket, he ripped up the bloodstained sleeve in a moment. Then, having cut away the flannel shirt also, he examined the wound carefully.

"H'm!" said he, after a minute. "Not so bad as it might be. We'll get you to bed, and have that bullet out in no time. Then you'll lay up here for a week or so, and you'll be as right as ninepence."

"Ay, what's that? What's all this about?" Doctor and chaplain both turned to behold Major Grimtree, the governor.

"This boy's been shot, major," said the doctor.

"Well, he brought it on himself. He's not going to make that an excuse for skulking in hospital for a whole week. It's ridiculous!"

"Is it?" returned the doctor, rather nettled.

"Of course it is! He'll be all right by to-morrow. To suggest a week is absurd!"

"This is the infirmary," retorted the doctor, "and I am responsible for everything that occurs here. Be so good, Major Grimtree, as to conduct yourself properly. Noise is not good for some of my patients."

The governor went purple with rage.

"Patients!" he sneered. "A lot of dogs!"

"Maybe," said the doctor, with a shrug of his shoulders; "but they're sick dogs, and they can't stand hearing others barking."

Major Grimtree gnashed his teeth.

"This is gross insubordination!" he fumed. "You shall hear more of this later."

"Very good! But please leave me; I have work to do."

"You'll regret this, Dr. Sears!"

"What? Looking after my patients? I don't think I shall."

"Fairlight," said the governor, turning to the chaplain, "you have heard all that has taken place. Be so good as to remember it. It may be necessary."

"Necessary or not," returned the chaplain, looking fixedly at the governor, "I am not likely to forget conduct which I so heartily approve."

"What, you approve it? Have a care, sir, or you may find yourself in the wrong box!"

"We're in the wrong place now, at all events," answered the chaplain, in an even tone. "Dr. Sears is anxious to get to work. I, for one, will interrupt him no longer!" And the chaplain walked out.

The astounded Major Grimtree gazed after him. Then he turned to where Dr. Sears had been standing; but he had moved further along the ward, leading Frank Easterbrook to a vacant bed.

For a moment the governor stood where he was, biting his lips. Then, thinking it better to provoke no further discussion, he gave vent to a low curse, and, turning on his heel, left the place.

He was in a very angry frame of mind as he made his way back to his own house, which was situated some little distance from the prison.

He was a hard, ill-natured man at the best of times. Now, the events of the day, the row at the quarries, and the escape of one of the prisoners, filled him with fierce resentment. He had heard the details of the outbreak from Principal-Warder Rossiter, who had given him a highly-coloured version of the part played in it by Frank Easterbrook and Punch Millins.

The latter had already been up for judgment, and had been awarded fourteen days in the solitary cells, with bread-and-water diet, and twelve strokes with the cat-o'-nine-tails. In addition he would in future wear the parti-coloured dress.

In all penal prisons this parti-coloured dress is black and drab for a convict who has committed a violent assault on a warder, and yellow and drab for a convict who has attempted to escape.

Had Major Grimtree been allowed to do it he would have inflicted a similar punishment upon Frank Easterbrook. But, as we have seen, Dr. Sears had interfered to prevent him.

As he entered his own house one of the convict orderlies, who was temporarily acting as a private servant, approached him, holding a small tray in his hand. Upon the tray was a card. The governor took it up with a slight start.

"When did this gentleman call?" he asked.

"Ten minutes ago, sir."

"Did he say he was coming back again, Berridge?"

"Yes, sir; in a quarter of an hour."

"H'm! Very well. Show him into the study when he calls."

About five minutes later there came a tap at the study door.

"Come in!" said the governor.

The door was opened by Berridge, the convict-orderly. Past him, with hand outstretched, and a leer in his narrow, shifty eyes, walked a youth, dressed in the height of fashion.

It was no other than Bernard Oates.

"My dear major!" he burst out. "You didn't expect me—eh?"

"Well, hardly so soon."

"No, I suppose not. You see, I wanted a few days rest at the seaside, so I came down to Portsmouth, which, of course, is only a few miles from here. But you don't seem overpleased to see me? You don't offer me a chair, or a cigar."

"Oh, I beg your pardon! Help yourself to both. If I'm forgetful, Mr. Oates, please excuse me. I'm rather worried to-day."

"Sorry to hear that. And so we've got the bird caged at last?"

Bernard Oates rubbed his hands, and gave a broad grin.

Major Grimtree fidgeted in his chair, and looked anything but happy.

"You mean, of course——"

"Now, who should I mean, except that good-for-nothing young cousin of mine, Easterbrook? Bright beauty he's turned out. How's he going on in his new home, major? How's he conducting himself in this over-grown cottage by the sea—eh?"

The governor's brows knit in a frown.

"Very badly," he answered. "He created a disturbance the very first night he was here, and to-day he's been partly responsible for an outbreak in one of the quarries."

Bernard Oates's eyes glittered evilly.

"Why, that's all the better, isn't it, major?"

"How do you mean?"

"Why, it gives you an opportunity of doing what I asked you in my letter, and making it as warm as you can for him."

The governor shifted in his chair again.

"I received that letter, of course," he answered a little irritably. "It seems to me that you don't quite understand my position. Prisons are not what they were in the old days. The powers of officials are strictly limited. The State is like a grandmother to convicts nowadays. If I inflict a punishment, any dog of a convict has the right to complain to the visiting justices, or to petition the Home Secretary. Consequently, even if I were disposed to carry out your wishes in regard to young Easterbrook, I should find it difficult. I tell you my powers are very limited."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Bernard Oates. "That's very good, major. By Jove, what an actor you'd have made! But it's no use acting in front of me. Remember, I've heard too much about you and your methods, major, to be taken in by what you've just said. I know that a convict has the right of appeal to the visiting justices and to the Home Office. But what happens if he does complain? Ninety-nine times out of a hundred the Home Secretary replies that he sees 'no grounds' for interfering with the ordinary prison discipline. As to the visiting justices, what attention do they ever pay to a convict's complaint? He may swear that a thing is black, but he stands no earthly chance of being believed when the governor and the other officials say that same thing is white. No, major, you can make it just as hot as you like for this murderous young cousin of mine."

The governor turned his eyes suddenly upon the speaker.

"You're quite sure, I suppose, that the word 'murderous' is justified?"

"What on earth do you mean by that?" he asked, turning pale. "Of course, I'm sure."

"H'm! I read the case, and it struck me that the evidence was purely circumstantial."

"Why, of course it was. It always is circumstantial in murder cases. Nobody except a madman would kill another in the presence of witnesses."

"I remember the prosecuting counsel said as much," returned Major Grimtree drily; "but I must say that if I'd been on the jury I should have—— Oh, well, never mind! There seems to be precious little love lost between you and your cousin."

"Love!" repeated Oates, with his face all working. "I hate him! Do you hear me? I hate and detest this Easterbrook!"

"Yet you oughtn't to, considering that he paved your way to a fortune. Had this thing not happened, had Sir Richard Easterbrook not died as he did, young Frank Easterbrook would have stood to-day in the position of heir to his estates."

"He would have been nothing of the kind!" hissed Oates. "Sir Richard made a new will in my favour before he died."

"Did he really? That was nice of him, wasn't it?"

"Why do you say it like that, major? Sarcasm seems to me a bit out of place."

Major Grimtree smiled.

"You seem to forget," said he, "that when your father was alive he and I were very close friends. We had known one another a great number of years, and there were many confidences between us."

"Yes, yes, I know that. It is because of your old friendship with my father that I asked you to do me the favour of making things as uncomfortable as you could for Frank Easterbrook."

"Yes, I know; and it is because of the confidences that existed between your father and me that I now say that, but for Sir Richard's sudden death, Frank Easterbrook would have been his heir."

Bernard Oates went ghastly white.

"I don't see what you mean," he muttered—"I don't really!" said he.

"Ah, it's you who are acting now! Come, Bernard Oates, let's be plain with one another. Quite a long time ago your father, at a moment when he was under the influence of that particular drug which was afterwards responsible for his death, told me that he would stop at nothing to oust Frank Easterbrook from the affections of his uncle, and to secure for you the inheritance of Sir Richard's estates."

"What! He told you that—my father told you that?"

"Yes, and more. He told me that Stephen Whittle, Sir Richard's solicitor, was completely under his thumb, that Sir Richard trusted Whittle completely and implicitly, and that it would not be a very difficult matter for Whittle to draft a will and get Sir Richard to sign it that would make you the heir, and——"

"Hush, major—hush! Not another word, for Heaven's sake!"

"Ah, you don't like my reminiscences, Bernard? The memories of your dead father are too touching, eh? Well, well, well! I won't go further into the whole details now; but everything turned out well, eh, Bernard? Everything that Sir Richard had is yours—money, property, land, estates?"

"Yes, everything."

"H'm! A nice fat fortune for a young fellow of your age. Enough and to spare, I should imagine. Sufficient to warrant you in expending a round sum, say, of ten thousand pounds, to safeguard the estate, eh?"

The jaw of Bernard Oates dropped. Only with an effort did he move it.

"What do you mean, major? For goodness' sake, tell me! Why should the property need safeguarding?"

"Do you really need to be told that?"

"Yes."

"Very well, then. Listen! Your cousin, Frank Easterbrook, has been sentenced to penal servitude for life. That means twenty years, or possibly, if he gain all the remission marks, fifteen years. But Frank Easterbrook will come out of prison while he is still a young man. When he comes out of prison he may set about proving his innocence. He may even work on the feelings of Stephen Whittle, and then—and then——"

"Well, what then?"

"Sir Richard Easterbrook's will may be proved a forgery!"

Bernard Oates collapsed in his chair.

"Great Scott!" he gasped out. "I have never thought of that. What can I do, major—what can I do?"

"You can do nothing without my aid."

"But with your aid, major?"

The governor got up and paced the room.

"With my aid," he said slowly and deliberately, "much might be done. With my aid it might be that Frank Easterbrook might never come out of prison."

"You mean that——"

"I mean that he might die! Why not? Brought up as he has been, what more natural than that, deprived of his liberty, broken in heart and spirit, doomed to the dreary round of prison life, condemned to suffer harsh discipline, and to be fed on the coarsest fare—what more natural than that he should gradually pine away and die?"

"Major—major, you say all this could be done with your aid?"

"Yes, I do say so."

"And you—you will lend me your aid?"

"An blunt question, Bernard. I will be equally blunt in my reply. I will assist you at a price."

"What is the price?"

"I have mentioned it already. Ten thousand pounds."

"It is a lot of money."

"Pah! It is nothing to you who are so rich. Do you agree, or not?"

"Yes, I agree."

"Very well, then. I will draw up a paper which you shall sign."

Major Grimtree went to his desk, and began to write. He wrote three or four lines; then he suddenly threw himself back in his chair.

"It's awkward," he murmured, "very awkward, to frame a document of this sort. I'll try again."

He took up another sheet of paper, and again began to write. But once more he failed to satisfy himself. A third attempt and a fourth were equally unsuccessful.

At last, however, the draft was to his liking. He finished it, and held out a pen to Bernard Oates.

"Read that," said he, "and then sign."

With ashen face and set lips, Oates read the paper. Then with a hand that shook he signed his name at the foot.

Major Grimtree doubled the paper, and thrust it into his pocket. As he did so, there came a sudden noise from without—a noise as of the tramping of many feet, and the sound of voices. Major Grimtree sprang up.

"What's that, I wonder?" he exclaimed, and dashed to the bell.

The door opened. Convict-orderly Berridge appeared, and stood at attention.

"What's all that row outside?" demanded the governor.

"The search-parties have returned, sir."

"Ah, have they captured the man who escaped?"

"I don't know, sir, but there seems to be no end of excitement outside. Shall I go and see, sir?"

"Yes," cried the governor, hurrying towards the door, "I'll go myself. Come on, Bernard!"

But Oates caught him by the sleeve.

"One moment!" he gasped out. "Those papers!"

"Great Heaven! I'd nearly forgotten!" exclaimed the governor, and darted to the desk.

Quickly he gathered up the four or five spoilt sheets of paper. Crumpling them into a ball, he stepped towards the fireplace, and threw the papers into the flame. Then he hurried from the room, with Bernard Oates at his heels.

Convict-orderly Berridge stood in the passage outside. He watched Major Grimtree hurry from the house.

Then, as if possessed with a sudden purpose, he dashed straight to the fireplace, stooped, and with his naked hands snatched from the flames the half-burnt papers.

Crushing the fire out of them, he thrust them into the breast of his convict-coat!

(Another powerful, long instalment next week).



The door was opened by Berridge, the convict-orderly. Past him, with hand outstretched, walked a youth dressed in the height of fashion. It was Bernard Oates!



A Fine Story of the 'Varsity Boatrace.

By DOUGLAS COX.

Suddenly a fork of fire was seen to shoot out as though from Burgoyne's oar. This was followed by a loud explosion, and Burgoyne was seen to fall back in the boat, and in a moment the rest of the crew were in confusion.

THE 1st CHAPTER.
The Oxford Stroke.

"GIVE him another chance, uncle. Paul can't be altogether bad." And Harry Burgoyne waited anxiously for his uncle, Sir Arthur Burgoyne, to reply.

"No, Harry, I will not," replied Sir Arthur emphatically, bringing his hand down sharply on the table as though to give weight to his words. "He's had too many chances already, but instead of improving he grows steadily worse and worse. And this is the climax, and I'll have no more of it. I'll pay his passage to one of the Colonies, and give him a start with a couple of hundred pounds, but I'll do no more. He's a disgrace—a perfect——"

"But, uncle——" Harry began. But he was cut short by the now irate elderly gentleman.

"I know what you would urge, Harry," he broke in; "but I cannot, and will not, in fairness to you, do anything more for your cousin, Paul Destern, and so I told him less than an hour ago. He has had the same chances as yourself, and what has he done with them? He was 'sent down' from Oxford for drunkenness, riotous conduct, and an unprovoked, brutal assault on the authorities. As you know, he was heavily in debt, and those debts I paid. Three times since then have I cleared off his debts, because he is my sister's son, and to do this has cost a considerable sum of money. I have offered him a handsome allowance if he will take up a profession. But no, he seems to prefer the company of cardsharpers, racing-touts, and such like. A man who will choose such companions, in spite of everything, will come to no good, and I have firmly made up my mind that I will do nothing for him so long as he persists in his present way of living, except pay his passage out to some country where he will have to work, and work hard, to live. Thank Heaven it is you who will inherit the title and property, and not he!" added Sir Arthur fervently.

"Don't talk like that, uncle," said Harry, with a smile. "You are just in the prime of life, and have, I hope, many, many years to live. I am young and strong, and have a fair amount of brains, and look forward to making a name for myself in the world. Besides, you ought to get married, and then perhaps you would have a son of your own."

"No, Harry lad, I shall never marry," said Sir Arthur softly. "The only woman I ever cared to ask become my wife preferred my brother, and your father, to me, and when he met his death in the hunting-field—you were a little toddler of two years—I registered a vow that you should be like a son to me, and your mother a dearly beloved sister, nor have I had cause to regret my choice. But enough of this," he added briskly. "Tell me something of yourself. How are your crew shaping now they are at Henley?"

"Oh, we're going great guns, uncle!" replied Harry enthusiastically. "You wouldn't believe the improvement shown in the last few days, and I already begin to feel quite sanguine about the result, barring accidents, of course, and good as the Cambridge crew are reputed to be this year."

"That's good news indeed, Harry lad," replied Sir Arthur, as he allowed his eyes to wander over Harry's six feet of sturdy manhood. "I'm just about as anxious as you are that you should win; but don't hurry your men to get fit too soon, or you'll have them getting stale, and that would be a bit worse than not being tuned quite up to concert pitch."

"Never fear, uncle," replied Harry, with a laugh. "I don't believe in working my men too hard at this time of day. It's when we get to Putney that the real 'tuning up' will come, and I don't feel a bit nervous about any man in the boat. By Jove, though," he added, as he glanced at his watch, "I must be getting along, or I shall be late for the afternoon practice!"

"Ah, you mustn't be late for that," said Sir Arthur smilingly. "Well, good-bye, Harry, and good luck! I'll come over and see the practice to-morrow."

"Do, uncle," replied Harry; "and I think you'll agree with me that our crew this year will take a lot of beating. And—and, uncle, will you, to please me, give Paul another chance to retrieve himself?"

"We won't talk about that subject any more, please," said Sir Arthur, somewhat coldly. "My mind is thoroughly made up with regard to him, and nothing will alter it. And now good-bye!"

In a few moments Harry Burgoyne, the Oxford stroke, seated in a fast motor-car, was being borne away from Kingsmuir, his uncle's country residence, in the direction of Henley.

THE 2nd CHAPTER.
Anthony Conyler's Cunning Plan.

"IT'S no good, Conyers," said Paul Destern, striding up and down his friend's room with uneven steps. "My uncle absolutely and entirely refuses to give me any more money, and here am I very near stranded. Can you advise me what to do?"

Conyers shrugged his shoulders.

"Why not try your cousin?" he asked laconically.

Destern stopped his walk, and looked at Conyers.

"And do you think I'd go and cringe to that prig?" he demanded. "I—I thought perhaps you would lend me a little to go on with until I can pull round a bit."

"My dear chap," replied Conyers languidly, "I'm as badly hit as you are, although I don't make a fuss about it, so it's no good expecting anything from me."

On hearing this Destern's face lengthened. His one great hope was gone.

"If you'll take my advice," Conyers continued, in the same languid fashion, "you'll take advantage of your uncle's offer; let him pay your passage out somewhere, then collar the two hundred quid, and do as you like about going."

"No good," said Destern dismally. "He'd take jolly good care I didn't touch the money until I reached Australia, or Timbuctoo, or wherever it is he wants me to go. I wish I were dead!" he added, in a burst of childish passion.

"If you talk like that I shall begin to think you are a kid of sixteen instead of about six-and-twenty," remarked Conyers. "It would be a deal better to wish your cousin was dead. That would be a little more useful!"

"Hang him; so I——"

He caught Conyers's eye fixed on him in a curious fashion, and stopped abruptly.

"What do you mean?" he demanded shortly.

"I was thinking," was the reply, "that if anything was to happen to Burgoyne, your cousin, it would mean a great difference to you; but there, it was only a thought, and——" He shrugged his shoulders without finishing.

"And such a thing is not at all likely to happen," said Destern irritably; "so try and think of something sensible, if you can. It seems to me that my luck is dead out."

Conyers stretched himself lazily in his chair, and surveyed his companion thoughtfully for a few moments.

"It seems to me," he at length remarked, in a casual voice, "that you have about as much initiative as you have pluck."

"I've got as much pluck as you, anyway!" was the heated reply.

Conyers smiled indulgently, irritating Destern more and more.

"I tell you, Conyers," Destern went on, and fast losing his temper—"I tell you I'm in desperate straits, and have enough 'pluck,' as you call it, to carry out anything that you can suggest that would put money in my pocket."

"Even to murder," whispered Conyers harshly, suddenly leaning forward in his chair.

Destern started, and shuddered, then fell back again in his chair, pale and frightened.

Conyers gave vent to a low, chuckling laugh.

"So I was right," he said sneeringly. "You haven't the pluck to——"

"Tell me your plan," said Destern, in a whisper, recovering himself, and moistening his lips with his tongue. "I'm not afraid of that, if—if it is safe."

For a time Conyers did not speak, but gazed earnestly at his companion as though he would read his very soul. But Destern would not meet his eye, and looked straight at the fire in front of him. He was startled and frightened at the word "murder," and his nerves were in a state of panic. Still, as he had said, he was desperate, and the sneering taunt from Conyers that he was deficient in pluck, nerved him to go on with whatever was proposed, always providing the chances of detection being very remote.

While such thoughts as these were flashing through his brain, which seemed to be near to bursting, Conyers had made up his mind that Destern had sufficient resolution to carry out the scheme that had entered his head, whereby he could not only help the man in front of him, but in time help himself liberally as well.

"Listen to me, Destern," he said, suddenly plunging into the subject without any preamble. "Here are you, down on your luck, with a rich, old, titled, and, best of all, unmarried uncle, but unfortunately this cousin of yours—Harry Burgoyne—stands between you and your hopes of inheriting."

Having got thus far, Conyers crossed over to where Destern was sitting, and, drawing a chair close to his side, continued in a low, concentrated voice, as though the very walls had ears, though he knew perfectly well they were, with the exception of his deaf old housekeeper, alone in the house.

"With Burgoyne out of the way—dead—you would be your uncle's heir; and with such expectations, could easily raise a loan to tide you over whatever difficulties you are now in."

"And who do you think would lend me money on such expectations? For my uncle is not too old to get married. And he would do, for I tell you he hates me. He never really forgave his sister for marrying my father, who was much her inferior socially, and though he gave me a home when they both died, he has always hated me as much as I hate him. If he thought I was likely to come into his title and money, the one thing he would do would be to get married just to spite me. Who do you think would lend me money on that?"

"I would arrange that for you," said Conyers quietly. "And as my security would be that Sir Arthur Burgoyne died unmarried. I think you may leave that matter in my hands," he added grimly.

Destern did not pursue the subject, being apparently satisfied to leave this in Conyers's hands. As a matter of fact, the cold-blooded atrocity of his companion sickened him somewhat. But his scheme had its attractions, and he felt more and more inclined to go on with it, the more so as it promised him a revenge of a sort as well as a means of providing himself with money necessary for his mode of life.

"And how do you intend to—er—to deal with my cousin?" he asked, in a low, undertone.

"He'll be difficult to get at just now. For I suppose you know he is to stroke the Oxford boat this year? Which means that we shall have a difficulty in finding him alone for some little time to come; and I hardly suppose you mean to break into his room in the night like some common burglar."

"It's just as well for the best in the boat which has given me an idea, which I believe we shall be able to carry out, and not a soul suspect either of us? Listen."

He lowered his voice still more, until he spoke in little more than a whisper:

"As you know, I dabble a good bit in chemistry, and some time ago I hit upon a new form of explosive—an explosive which is so powerful that almost enough can be carried in a thimble to blow a battleship to smithereens. My plan is to blow young Burgoyne up when the 'Varsity Boatrace is actually being rowed. Anarchists, as you know, have been busy of late, and, in addition, have been bowling threats to the four corners of the globe. No one in the world will associ you with being mixed up in the matter, but will immediately jump to the conclusion that these Anarchists have put one of their threats into execution."

"But how are you going to get the stuff into the boat? And if you have it there, how are you going to explode it? Besides, it is almost bound to be found," said Destern, not at all convinced.

"Look here," said Conyers, crossing the room and unlocking his desk, from which he produced a small glass phial, no thicker than a pencil, and about three inches long. "The explosive I speak of is formed by two liquids—harmless in themselves, but when thrown together, their power is terrific. This little glass phial here is what we might call the bomb. It is, you will notice, divided in the centre by a wax partition. On this substance one of the liquids has no effect whatever, but the other will eat its way through a sixteenth of an inch of wax in exactly twelve hours. That is to say, if the two ends of this tube are filled with the different substances—with that thickness of wax between them—it will go

off with absolute certainty in exactly twelve hours."

Destern nodded, but said nothing.

"Now," resumed Conyiers, "you will see that by an exact system of measurement in the wax, it is possible to time the thing to explode at any given moment. You must find out the precise time at which the race will start, and manufacture the bomb accordingly, leaving a margin of about a quarter of an hour.

"The next thing will be to discover where the crew place their oars; and the night before the race, we must enter the boathouse, get hold of Burgoyne's oar, bore a small hole down the centre of the handle—about four inches deep—place our weapon therein, and then, after carefully filling the hole up with soap, we can sit down and wait in comfort for the news without one pang of fear."

"But supposing you put it in the oar of some other man?" objected Destern.

"Impossible!" replied Conyiers. "Each man in the boat has his oar made specially for him. Besides, they are all numbered, so we cannot make a mistake."

For a time Destern was silent, busy turning the matter over in his mind.

"I'll do it!" he suddenly muttered between his clenched teeth, as he rose and paced the room backward and forward. "I'll do it!" he repeated. "The prize is worth going for, and—— But why are you doing all this for me?" he demanded suspiciously, as he suddenly stopped and faced his companion.

"Well," answered Conyiers slowly and distinctly, a slight, cynical smile playing for a moment over his face, "there is an old saying that 'One good turn deserves another,' and I haven't forgotten that you helped me out of a tight corner a couple of years ago. So, out of common gratitude, I——"

"What I know of you, you're not the sort of man to do anything out of pure gratitude," interrupted Destern, with an almost imperceptible sneer. "What do you expect to get out of the job?" he asked, with brutal frankness.

"My dear Paul," murmured Anthony Conyiers quietly, and making a careful study of his finger-nails, of which he was somewhat proud, "your language is, to say the least of it, somewhat crude. You have, however, asked me a question with engaging frankness, and I will endeavour to reply in the same strain. To be brief, I want £20,000."

"A very moderate request," commented Destern drily. "Perhaps—if I'm not asking too much—you wouldn't mind letting me know where you expect to pick up a little pocketful of hard cash like that?" he added sarcastically.

Conyiers threw a keen and searching glance at his companion, but appeared in no wise disconcerted.

"I rather fancied I should get it from you," he replied smilingly.

"My dear fellow," cried Destern impatiently, "you're talking nonsense!"

"Not so much nonsense as you imagine," replied Conyiers carelessly, as he pulled out his case of cigarettes, one of which he selected with due deliberation—"not so much nonsense as you imagine," he repeated, after he had lit his cigarette, and had blown a cloud of smoke into the air. "If you will just sit down quietly and listen, I will try and explain myself more fully."

After a moment's hesitation Destern resumed his seat, and, lighting a cigarette, prepared himself to listen to what Conyiers had to say; for a second thought had persuaded him that the man in front of him rarely talked, as the saying is, "out of his hat."

"I have proposed a way, and have guaranteed the means, by which you can get rid of the man who stands in the way of your unjustifiable, of a big fortune," he began, speaking in a low voice, as he leaned over towards Destern, so that his lips were quite close to his listener's ear, "and it is my intention, when I have filled up that little glass phial with the two liquids, to come with you and help you fix it in Burgoyne's oar; and I can assure you, when that is done, you will have nothing more to fear from that gentleman. Next comes your need. I have told you that he will die unmarried; and since you have known me, I think you will admit that I never make an assertion of anything like that, without its coming into effect. I might almost promise—you, at any rate, will not misunderstand me—that you will be an exceedingly rich man in less than six months after the coming boatrace; how rich, you only will know. But this much I have ascertained—that it will be well over £10,000 a year. And what do I ask? A paltry £20,000—less than two years of your income. That is not exorbitant, is it?"

"But what—" commenced Destern.

"Wait a minute," said Conyiers, cutting him short. "I think I can guess what you want to say. You want to know how you are going to live for those six months? As you say, your uncle hates you so, it is quite possible that he will not allow you anything although you are his heir. If this turns out to be the case, I will myself raise a loan to help you on to the time you come into your own, and you can give me a note of hand for the amount with interest."

"£20,000 is a lot of money," objected Destern. "What if I refuse?"

"You won't be such a fool," replied Conyiers calmly and with conviction, "as to throw away a certainty like this. Come," he added coaxingly, as he hastily scribbled a few lines on a sheet of paper, "just put your name on this promissory-note, and I'll guarantee that in six months you will have so much money that you'll not know how to spend it."

"And how do I know that you'll keep faith with me?" grumbled Destern.

"If I don't keep faith with you, I don't get my money, that's all," replied Conyiers, shrugging his shoulders. "And I'm not the sort of man to let much stand in my way when there's money in it."

He handed Destern his fountain-pen.

Destern took the pen, and then hesitated.

"But I've got no money; and I shall want some right now," he said.

"Didn't I say just now I'd supply you with money?" replied Conyiers, with a touch of impatience. "Sign——"

"A few minutes ago you hadn't any!" said Destern viciously.

"Nor have I, no chuck away!" replied Conyiers calmly. "Sign this paper, and you are a man with expectations; and it is on that security that I lend you money. Besides, my lending to you is like a guarantee of my good faith in the matter. Still, if you don't want to carry it through, say so at once; but understand that I shan't offer to help you again. I don't think you'll find anyone else offering to do as much for you."

Destern picked the pen on his fingers, thinking hard. He knew Conyiers was right, for his credit had long ago been exhausted; but it was not only of this he was thinking. Even now he was thinking—so hardened had he become through having to do evil thoughts, and the companions he mixed with—of a means of getting possession of the paper again, if he signed it, after Conyiers had carried out his side of the bargain. The thought that his cousin and uncle were to be done to death did not trouble him in the least in his present frame of mind—that is, so long as there was no danger to himself of discovery.

"Come!" said Conyiers impatiently.

Destern had apparently made up his mind. Reaching forward, he took the paper from Conyiers and signed it. It was the death-warrant of Sir Arthur Burgoyne and Harry Burgoyne, his nephew.

Conyiers took the paper back with a smile. Drying Destern's signature with a piece of blotting-paper, he next carefully folded it and placed it in his pocket-case.

"That's all right," he muttered to himself. "Now, then, what do you want to go on with, Destern?" he asked.

"Can you let me have £500?"

"All right," said Conyiers; "and I'll take your note for £750."

To this Destern made no objection, for he was so hard up that he would have paid any price to have raised a loan of a hundred or two.

"Now you'd better find out all you can as to the arrangements in the boathouse, so that we can lay our hands on young Burgoyne's oar in the dark, if necessary," said Conyiers, as soon as the transaction was finished; "whilst I will go on with making the explosive and case—for the one I showed you is a trifle too large, and, of course, is not loaded. Come and let me know all the particulars you can gather, and then you and I will pay a visit to the boathouse the night before the race. Only be careful, and don't attract attention if you can help it."

"Trust me for that," replied Destern, with a grin, as he picked up his hat and gloves; "I'll take good care that suspicion does not fall my way! Well, so-long!" And he swaggered out of the room and into the street with the air of a man who is conscious of his own importance.

THE 3rd CHAPTER.

Won by inches.

THE morning of the race broke fair and bright. A gentle breeze from the north-east brought with it an invigorating freshness, which stirred the blood and made one almost wish that they were taking part in the race itself. As the morning wore on, and the sun gained strength, it turned to an ideal day—from the spectators' point of view, anyhow—for that great outing for sports-loving Londoners, the inter-Varsity Boatrace.

Early in the morning people began to assemble on the towing-path, and, though the race was not timed to start until eleven o'clock, before the clock struck ten the course was lined on both the eight-oers, and the river itself was dotted with all sorts of craft—from the humble and somewhat dirty barge-dinghy, to the elaborately fitted motor-boat, which rushed up and down the river with incredible speed.

That it would be a great race there could be no possible doubt, for though Cambridge—six of the men were "Old Blues," and had helped to give Oxford a sound trouncing the year before—had captured in the earlier practices the eye of the riverside critics, who, almost to a man, declared that this year's crew were the finest seen on the river for some years, yet those same critics showed a tendency to alter their opinions barely a week after the Oxford crew came down from Henley, only to have, ten days later than their opponents had put in an appearance on the championship waters.

"BOYS' REALM" FOOTBALL LEAGUE.

(Special Notice to Affiliated Clubs.)

By the kind permission of the Editors of the papers mentioned below, our up-to-date League Tables will in future be published therein each week.

"FOOTBALL EVENING NEWS," Results Edition, Saturday Night—½d.

(London League Tables.)

"FOOTBALL CHAT," Wednesday—1d.

(London and Southern League Tables.)

"SCOTTISH REFEREE" (Glasgow), Monday Edition—½d. **(Scottish League Tables.)**

Oxford's first appearance on tidal waters had come somewhat as an eye-opener to those watching the work of the rival crews, and experts soon saw that the wearers of the light blue would certainly not have the easy victory which, even at this stage, was on all hands anticipated. And now, the morning of the race, riverside watermen—the best of all critics—declared themselves unable to name the winner; although they all agreed that it would be a great race between two of the finest sets of men who had ever dipped a blade in water.

The Dark Blues, as challengers, got afloat first, and punctually at five minutes to the hour, amid a perfect salvo of cheers from the terrific crowd lining the banks, and the hoarse barking of the surrounding steamers' foghorns, they were seen to push off from their landing-stage, and make their way to the stake-boats.

Meanwhile, the fussy little police-boats had made their way up-river, clearing the course energetically.

Cambridge followed almost immediately, and a mighty shout from the onlookers gave them welcome.

The Light Blues had evidently won the toss for choice of stations, for it was seen that they took up their position for the start from the Middlesex side, and in a moment or two Oxford had also taken up their position, and both crews were eagerly waiting for the signal to start on their journey.

"Get ready!" came the caution from the starter.

The next moment they were off.

Up rose a mighty shout from the crowd, and the two experts had their watches locked to their eyes. A good start meant much to such apparently evenly-matched crews.

Both crews started off at forty-two to the minute, and for the first half-minute they kept dead level. Body-swing, leg-drive, and recovery in both boats were super-excellent, but it was quickly noticed that Oxford got a cleaner grip of the water at the commencement of the stroke.

This was more apparent in the second half of the first minute, when the forward canvas of the Dark Blues was seen to be pushing slowly but surely to the front. At the London Rowing Club, Oxford could claim the advantage of a quarter of a length, and here Burgoyne reduced the rate of striking to forty, and then to thirty-eight; while Cambridge maintained a stroke of forty as far as Craven Steps, when they also dropped to thirty-eight.

Burgoyne quickened his stroke a little, in an endeavour to shake off their opponents, and was so far successful that at the Soap Works clear daylight showed between the boats.

"Oxford—Oxford wins!" came a deep, thrilling roar from the crowd.

But the Light Blues were not so easily shaken off, and, spurting in splendid style, they pulled up hand-over-hand, showing what sort of stuff they had in the boat; and as they shot Hammersmith Bridge they were racing neck and neck.

Another great shout from the crowd greeted the fact. And so they swept on, past the Doves, neither crew being able to claim an advantage.

Passing the Water-works, and on to Corney Reach, the winding of the river rather favours the Surrey Station, and this fact Burgoyne intended to make the fullest use of.

Knowing the men behind him could be depended upon, he quickened, and jumped the a spurt. Rowing grandly, with perfect rhythm, and beginning and finishing each stroke well and strongly, they again gained the lead, and at Thorneyeroft's were a clear couple of lengths to the good on the Surrey side of the boat, though the rate of striking dropped a little, they managed to gain a still further advantage. Cambridge spurted again and again, but the advantage was with the leaders, for Burgoyne was able to see every time they were a length at every spurt by the Light Blues he called on his men for an answer—nor did they fail him.

Just before reaching the Pumping Station, the Dark Blue cox—the Hon. Patrick Corrigan, better known amongst his friends as "Thunder," a diminutive bantam-weight with a voice on him like the roar of a bull—crossed over and took the Middlesex side, letting the Cambridge eight in for their back-wash.

This seemed to check them not a little, for the Light Blue No. 3 was beginning to cry "bellows to mend," and it was also noticed that No. 5 was beginning to wag his head from side to side—a sure sign that he had nearly had enough.

Burgoyne noticed what was up, and dropped into a long, steady, swinging stroke, which put plenty of way on the boat, and as they shot Barnes Railway Bridge they held a winning lead of three lengths.

Keeping the same long, regular stroke, the lead was increased to nearly six lengths when opposite the White Hart Hotel, and it looked all over but shouting.

Suddenly a look of fire was seen to shoot out as though from Burgoyne's oar. This was followed by a loud explosion, and Burgoyne was seen to fall back in the boat, and in a moment the rest of the crew were in confusion.

(Continued at the foot of the next page.)

DEFENDERS OF THE REALM.

By ALAN R. HAIG-BROWN.

AND now, my good Realmites, I am going to talk to you seriously. I have done so before on the matter of football, but the subject which I now desire to bring before your notice is more serious still. The question which I would put to each and all of you is: "Are you a member of a rifle club?" and if not, "Why not?"

Should any of you answer, "There is no rifle club anywhere near me," then, I admit, your answer is a good one. But there are not now many towns or villages in this country without their rifle clubs, so I do not think many of you will be able to give me that answer. Your only course will then be to say to me, "Why should I join one?" And I will tell you.

The reason is this: At a rifle club you will learn to shoot, and shooting is the most important duty of a soldier next to discipline. "But," you will say, "I am not a soldier"; and I shall straightaway reply, "then you ought to be one." I do not say, mind you, a member of the regular Army, nor even yet a member of the Territorials; but certainly you ought already to have the heart of a patriot, and to be thinking that, as soon as you are old enough, you will join the Defenders of the Home—the

Territorial Army of the King.

And the best preparation a boy can undergo for this good end is contained in becoming a member of a local rifle club.

I am not going to frighten you by any startling suggestions of how to-morrow morning at breakfast-time you may see the forces of an invading army appearing at the window. That may just be possible, but it is hardly probable. At the same time, you must always realise that, however friendly may be our relations with all the other countries in the world, there is always a chance of war breaking out at any moment. In the event of our being at war with any nation that had a strong navy, the probabilities are that they would attempt to invade our island.

It is the policy of an enemy to strike, when possible, at the most vital part of an antagonist. Great Britain is

the heart of the British Empire,

and, at present, a heart that is none too well-guarded. It might be that our powerful Navy would prevent any landing of foreign troops at all; it might be that they would prevent all but a small force from ever reaching our shores; or, again, it might be that our Navy had become so weakened by a series of fights that it would be unable to stop even a strong alien army from coming to attack us at home.

All these things are possible, and you, my reader of THE BOYS' REALM, have to realise them. You have to understand what a terrible, an awful thing war is at any time, and at any place; you have to consider how far more awful it would be if brought to our very doors. And you have, moreover, to realise what a ghastly wreckage of our towns, villages, and homes could be accomplished by even small numbers of trained and determined troops until they were annihilated. How, then, are we to avoid these horrible happenings? How are we to make ourselves feel assured that they will never come to pass?

There is only one way, and that is, by every able-bodied boy and man determining to be

a practical patriot,

and to fit himself to bear arms for his country's sake.

If Britain is to show herself ready to repel foreign invasion, she must have sufficient trained soldiers, good shots, and well-disciplined men, to allow of the departure of her regulars and many of her present Territorials to the scene of active action. She must have such a force ready, that its mere existence will make any nation think twice before attempting a raid upon our homes. For this purpose she requires the help of all her sons.

And, therefore, I say to you, "Join a rifle club"; there you will learn to shoot under skilled and careful guidance, there you will learn some of the first duties of a patriot. The rifle club is a step towards higher things, for it will lead you on towards the Territorial Army, and, once in that, you can safely say, "I am, at least, trying to do my duty to serve to the best of my ability my country, and my King."

Look Out for THE BOYS' REALM Cricket Book. On Sale in a Fortnight's Time. 1d.



A Clever and Interesting Article About the 'Varsity Boatrace.

NOT a single Boatrace Day is here, and the sports-loving youths and men throughout the country are anxiously awaiting the time when the great rowing event shall have taken place, and the winner be declared. For some weeks past the more juvenile section of our boys have been snorting the colours of the "eight" they favour, and have been demanding of their schoolmates, in menacing tones:

"Oo yer for?"

And should the answer accord with his own views, the young sportsman will condescendingly inform his schoolfellow that he may:

"Keep it on!"

On the other hand, if the boy questioned gives the name of the other crew, he is imperiously commanded, in tones amounting to a threat, to:

"Take it orf!"

The peculiar part of the affair, however, is that should a youth do the bidding of such a mate, and "take it orf," replacing it with a favour of the opposite side, he is immediately dubbed "turncoat," a name which sticks to him for many days to come. So what is he to do?

That is practically as far as the interest of the schoolboy goes; although, if he lives in London, and is very keen on the race, he may persuade his parents to take him, or let him go by himself, to see the event. Big much prefers the latter, because then he can have some "sport"—especially if he can pick up one or two chums on the way to the course.

The older lads, and the adult portion of the male population, take a very deep interest in the great rowing event—always provided that they have sporting instincts. Many ladies, too, make a rule never to miss seeing the Boatrace. The result is that every year the banks of the river on either side of the course are thronged with a huge crowd of eager sightseers, who do not fail to give their favourites a rousing cheer as they shoot by.

Seeing the Race.

"The best view of the race for a tanner!" cries a gentleman, who is fortunate enough to be in possession of a raft or a large moored at the side of the river. You plank down your sixpence, and take a seat on one of the dirty forms provided for the accommodation of visitors. Then comes a long and rather tedious wait, during which other eager sightseers crowd on the raft, and you are almost afraid it will sink. You stand up and crane your neck to get a better view of the long sweep of river, which ends abruptly where Father Thames winds half a mile upstream. You can see nothing, just because there's nothing to see.

Still more visitors crowd on to the raft, and you can hear it creaking and groaning under the strain. You are about to protest to the proprietor against letting any more on, but you are stopped by the sudden cry of:

"Here they come!"

Instantly you stand up and stretch your neck again, and, if you are lucky, you can just discern the flash of the oars in the distance. A few moments later the rival eights come near enough to be easily seen. Yes, yes; your favourite is in front!

"Buck up, Oxford!" you yell excitedly. "Show 'em how to row!"

But Cambridge is creeping up, and it seems, as the boats come abreast of you, that Oxford will be left behind.

"They're on you!" you cry frantically. "Pull—pull harder!"

The excitement of the moment has you in its grip. You forget that the crew cannot dis-



A College Four Hard at Work.

tinguish your voice amidst the huge roar of cheering and yelling that is going up from thousands of lusty throats.

But you are recalled to your senses by the cry of the proprietor of the raft.

"Mind the wash, there, ladies!" he says.

The warning comes too late. A wave breaks over the edge of the staging, and the front rank of sightseers beats a precipitate retreat—not before their feet and ankles are drenched, however. And when you look again, the crews have shot under the bridge and are out of sight.

But you are satisfied, for you have seen the Boatrace.

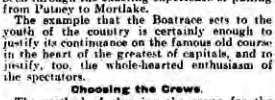
No Prize but Honour.

Some may ask: Is all this excitement over the Boatrace a healthy sight? Would it not be better for some of the sightseers to be themselves engaged in athletics? Well, it must be remembered that the Boatrace is the most sporting event of the year. There is no prize but honour. Money, which unfortunately takes such an important part in most of our athletic contests, does not appear in this. All the training and the labours of the race itself are gone through for the joy of victory only. There is not, and never has been, a suggestion of unfairness. It provides nearly always a good and hard-fought tussle, and a most remarkable feature of the reports of the race is the fact that they always have to devote attention to the pluck of the losers. An Oxford and Cambridge Boatrace is never lost until it is won, and some of the most magnificent instances of men rising to the occasion and contending against odds have been witnessed in this series of great struggles.

Probably most of those who go and watch the race are themselves athletes, and are, by thus witnessing the battle of the Blues, learning the importance of pluck and determination when competing against odds. They are also taught the great lesson that honour is more to be coveted than reward, and that if one is to win success at anything in this world, one must never admit defeat.

That the men who row in the race are benefited by their athletic training is proved beyond a shadow of doubt by the number of old Blues who to-day occupy prominent positions in the life of this country.

Some of the most important posts held by Britons are in charge of those whose physical



All Ready for the Great Race.

powers and wills were developed by training for and rowing in the University Boatrace. Judges, soldiers, statesmen, members of the great Indian Government—many of them have been through the exacting experience of pulling from Putney to Mortlake.

The example that the Boatrace sets to the youth of the country is certainly enough to justify its continuance on the famous old course in the heart of the greatest of capitals, and to justify, too, the whole-hearted enthusiasm of the spectators.

Choosing the Crews.

The method of choosing the crews for the Boatrace is slow and exhaustive. In the first place, the novice, on joining the University, becomes a member of the boat-club. If he knows nothing of rowing he is handed over to an experienced oarsman for the first stage. This is termed "tubbing," and means careful instruction in the art of rowing by an experienced college oar, in a pair, familiarly called a "tub." Should he shape well, the novice is next put into a "four." Then, some weeks later, the by then fair rower is put into an eight, and locked into shape.

Towards the end of October the eights appear on the river; and then, in the Lent term, the teams are selected to represent their colleges in the races in boats with fixed seats. These races are known as the "Torpids" at Oxford, and the "Lents" at Cambridge. The best of the men who row in these races are then chosen for the more important races at the end of the summer term known as the Oxford "Eights" and the Cambridge "Mays." It is from these that the University eight are selected.

In October, when the term begins, the captains of the various colleges send in a list of those men whom they think worthy of a trial, with the object of filling the vacancies in the eight for the big race.

From amongst these a sufficient number are selected to form two trial eights—each as near as possible of equal merit. In December three eights meet in trial races, and about half of the men taking part in them are selected for further consideration.

Testing the Crews.

Early in January one or two "old Blues"—men who have already taken part in the great race—are put into the crew, and the remainder of the seats are occupied by the new men.

The boat is rowed up and down the river day after day, the new men constantly changing places in the boat until at last each man's exact capacity and value is discovered. Thus the very best of the men are selected to fill the vacancies in the big eight, and as soon as a final decision has been arrived at, the University boat is to be seen out on the water every day, crowds of enthusiastic collegians watching their work with the keenest interest.

By this time it will be February. A light racing-boat, probably the one used in the previous year's race, is brought into use, and practice in this is indulged in. The men are over and over again shifted from place to place in the boat, until at last the position which each man shall occupy is definitely settled.

On Ash Wednesday the crews enter into strict training, both at Oxford and Cambridge. Each man is required to pass a strict medical examination, to see whether his constitution is sound enough to enable him to stand the strain of the next six weeks.

Some three or four weeks before the race both crews leave the home waters. The boats are carefully packed and sent to one of the higher reaches of the Thames. Here a week or so is spent. It is here, also, that the new boats—for each crew has a new boat every year—are tried.

By the time the crews come to Putney, which is usually about a fortnight before the race is to take place, most of the very hard work is over. Each man is in the pink of condition, and every care is taken to avoid "staleness"—i.e., overtraining. The Putney period is a very important time. Amidst the eager gaze of thousands of sightseers the crews are matched with picked Thames scratch crews, and much time is also given up to practising starts. The reserve man is also kept well trained, in case one of the crew cracks up at the last moment.

At last the eventful day of the race arrives, and, amidst the plaudits of thousands of spectators gathered along the banks of the river, the greatest boatrace of the year is rowed. Each member of the winning crew is entitled to keep as a trophy the oar he has used in the race. The coxswain is entitled to keep the rudder.

THE END.

FIRST PAST THE POST.

(Continued from the previous page.)

What had happened?

None could tell, and for a moment a dead silence fell on the vast crowd lining the banks.

The next moment a roar of execration burst out as someone shouted the word "Anarchists!"

The Cambridge cox, seeing that something was wrong with the Dark Blue boat, urged his men on by word and action, to which they responded gamely, and settled themselves down to row right away.

But little "Thunder" was devoid of nerves, and though the boat had quivered from stem to stern, he had not lost his head.

"Easy all!" he shouted, his voice sounding like the boom of a gun.

The sound of his voice seemed to restore the rest of the crew to their senses, and No. 7, the man immediately behind Burgoyne, leaned over to give him a helping hand, as he was now seen struggling to get up into his seat again.

"Hurt!" inquired Corrigan abruptly.

"Left hand. Badly, I think," answered Burgoyne, who was in an agony of pain, making a mighty effort to keep himself from showing it, as he lifted up his left hand to show Corrigan.

Corrigan gave vent to a low whistle of horror, for Burgoyne's hand hung limp, black and bleeding. Before he could say anything, however, Burgoyne had caught sight of the Cambridge boat, now almost abreast of them.

He glanced down at the handle of his oar swiftly. Best part of it had been blown away, but there was still enough left to get a grip with his sound right hand. His mind was made up in a moment.

"Set us going quickly, Thunder," he cried, "by all you hold dear! We'll win this race yet if it kills us!"

Corrigan gave him a short, sharp, penetrating glance, and the next moment his voice boomed out:

"Forward all! Paddle!"

They were off again; but whereas before they had a commanding lead, their opponents now had the advantage of about half a length.

Was it possible for them to win, handicapped as they were?

Burgoyne's oar was but little use as far as helping the boat along went, for he could not do much more than dip it in the water and pull it out again. Nevertheless, he set the stroke at a smart gait, and the men on the stroke side, seeing that something was wrong, though they had no idea what it was, infused a bit more energy into their stroke than they had done previously.

Grim determination was written on the face of every man, and Corrigan, whom nothing escaped, felt, as he noticed it, that if muscle and grit could pull the race out of the fire, the men in front of him would do it.

But was it possible?

The dead silence which had fallen on the crowd immediately after the explosion was broken by a terrific cheer when it was seen that the Oxford boat was again on the move, but a greater cheer of admiration rose when they observed Burgoyne's plucky effort to finish with one hand.

Corrigan stole a glance at their opponents, and his heart leapt for joy. He could swear his boat was gaining, slowly, it was true, but still, gaining, and a second hasty glance added confirmation, and at the same time revealed to his experienced eye, two—if not three—of the Light Blues who looked like cracking up at any moment, for they were straining hard to keep the lead they had now gained.

He looked at Burgoyne, and noticed the look of grim determination on his dead-white face, and a prayer rose in his brain that he would last.

Burgoyne himself kept his eyes fixed straight in front of him, seeing nothing—hearing nothing. His mind was fixed entirely on the race in hand, and he swore to himself that they would yet win it, even if he killed himself in the effort.

The pain from his shattered hand was horrible, causing great beads of sweat to stand out on his forehead, but still he kept going.

Gradually but surely the ship of the Light Blues had come back to them, and now, with barely fifty yards to go, they were racing neck and neck, and Corrigan, looking at Burgoyne's face, drawn as it was with pain, shuddered inwardly, for it was not a good sight to look upon.

Simultaneously both crews made their effort. Harry felt himself growing weaker and weaker, feeling that every stroke would be his last.

"Would they never reach the winning-post?" he wondered. His teeth were set in grim determination as he fought hard against his growing weakness. His mind was now almost a blank, yet he automatically dipped his oar in and out of the water, and kept the men behind him in their swing.

Boom! The sound of the finishing-gun pierced the constant roar from the crowded banks, and it flashed dimly into Harry's brain that the race was done. Then he fell forward over his oar—insensible.

They had won—after one of the finest finishes ever seen in inter-'Varsity rowing—by inches.

* * * * *

"Yes," remarked the Harley Street doctor a few days later, when paying Harry a visit; "you perhaps owe your life to an oversight on the part of the perpetrators of that dastardly act, for an examination of the oar you used shows that, had they hermetically sealed the hole they bored in the handle, after they had inserted the bomb, the explosion would have been ten times more powerful, and, of course, more dangerous.

"As it happened, the full force was expended more or less in the air, the explosive gases, brushing through the soft substance they had used for stopping, were vomited forth into the air as though expelled from the barrel of a gun. Yes; it was a lucky escape for you," he added thoughtfully; "but I sincerely hope that, the miscreants will be brought to justice."

Harry and his uncle exchanged a meaning glance, but did not think it worth while to tell the doctor that they already knew by whom it had been done, and that the perpetrator would never, as far as they were concerned, fall into the hands of justice.

For Paul Destern, overcome with remorse, had made a full confession of his share in the crime, and it was only on the earnest pleadings from Harry that Sir Arthur Burgoyne was induced to forgo his natural inclinations and hand him over to the police.

Sir Arthur, however, gave way at last, and when he saw that Paul's remorse was sincere, gave him every help to start a new life in the Colonies, where he, in after years, repaid this generosity by giving up his life to save Harry. But that is another story.

Anthony Conyers received a very strong hint that London would not prove very beneficial to his health. This hint he took, and disappeared from his haunts, nor could it be found that he ever returned, to trade on, and live by, the imagined misfortunes of misguided youth.

THE END.



THE CUP WINNER

A Fine Complete Football Yarn.

By CHARLES HAMILTON.

THE 1st CHAPTER.
The Lord-Lieutenant's Cup.

"LATTER, clatter!

"Stop, there!"

Harry Lowther stopped. He was about to turn from the high-road into the lane that led down to Fernbrook Athletic football-ground, when the swift, staccato hoof-beats came to his ears, and the words were shouted in a tone of command.

The young footballer turned his head curiously. A mounted policeman was riding rapidly towards him, and Harry waited for him to come up. The man drew his almost foaming steed to a halt.

"Anything wrong?" asked Lowther.

"Yes." The man was breathless and panting. "Haven't you seen the warders? Didn't you hear the gun?"

The constable waved his hand towards a huge, square building that just showed on the sky-line in the clear March afternoon. Harry Lowther understood. There had been an escape from the convict prison; and he remembered now that he had faintly heard the report of the signal-gun as he left Fernbrook to walk down to the football-ground.

"Have you seen anything of him—a convict?" the man went on rapidly. "He must have come this way—in this direction, anyway."

Harry shook his head.

"No. I haven't seen him. I've just come from Fernbrook, and I've passed nobody on the way. He'd be more likely to make for the hills, I should think, than to come near a football-ground."

"I suppose so. Thanks!"

And the mounted policeman dragged his horse round and left the road, following a path that led through furzy moors towards the distant downs.

Harry Lowther looked after him with a thoughtful brow. The young man's spirits had been high a moment before. Now a curious depression had settled upon him.

Lowther was captain of Fernbrook Athletic. In half an hour the Athletic team were meeting Oldbury United in a stiff tussle, and Harry had been looking forward to it all the week.

He had left his office in Fernbrook feeling very hopeful about the game. He was in fine form himself, and his team were very fit—with one exception. Lawrence, the inside-right, had been crocked in last Saturday's match, and though he was to play to-day, he had frankly told his skipper that he could not depend upon his ankle. If it failed him, as he feared, Athletic would have to finish the match a man short.

That was the only cloud. There was no one anything like Lawrence's form to replace him, and so Harry had to risk it, and hope against hope that he would not fail. Otherwise, the team were in excellent form, and had every hope of success.

And success meant a great deal to them, for the match was an important one. It was the final for the Lord-Lieutenant's Cup. The cup was a valuable trophy in itself, but that was nothing to the competitors. It was the honour of the winning that they valued.

The lord-lieutenant of the county, himself an old Blue, had offered the cup, to be won outright by the top club in the competition, and every team of any strength in the county had entered for it.

The rounds had been fought out with unusual keenness, and Fernbrook Athletic and Oldbury United were the teams left in the final. This Saturday afternoon was to prove which of the two amateur teams would capture the cup, and Harry hoped and believed that it would come to Fernbrook. If only Lawrence remained sound!

But for the moment, now, even the cup was gone from Harry's thoughts. He could not help thinking as he watched the mounted man disappearing in the furze, of the wretched fugitive who had escaped from Hillbank Convict Prison.

On that glorious spring day how much freedom must mean to the poor wretch who had thrown off the trammels for a few short hours! Of course, it could only be for a few hours.

The countryside would be alive with mounted police and warders, and every man's hand would be against the wretch branded with the broad-arrow.

Of course, he was doubtless a guilty wretch—a danger to society if he escaped. Yet Harry thought of one he had known in the past, one who had stood in the dock and heard the terrible sentence passed—five years' penal servitude! Five years of horror! And had Gilbert Clare been guilty?

The proofs had seemed clear enough, yet Harry had always had his doubts. As he looked after the mounted man, lost in the furze now, Harry found himself hoping that the convict, whoever he was, would make good his escape.

"Harry!"

The young man started. It was his own name, whispered, but clear in the quiet lane.

"Harry!"

He swung round. A face was looking at him from the hedge—a face white and haggard, with wild, gleaming eyes. The head was bare, the hair close-cropped.

"Good heavens!" muttered Lowther.

A glimpse of the hideous broad-arrow was enough for him. It was the escaped convict who was hidden in the thick hedge, and must have heard his talk with the mounted officer.

And that was not all, for, in spite of the changes wrought by two terrible years, the face was still easily recognised, and Harry knew his old friend.

"Clare!"

THE 2nd CHAPTER.
A Daring Idea.

THE convict looked up and down the road with quick, hunted eyes. The place was lonely; only from the direction of the football-ground at the end of the lane came a murmur of sound.

"Harry, I could hardly believe it when I heard your voice! I should never have dared to show myself otherwise. It's really you, Harry?"

"Yes, Clare."

"Will you help me?"

"Help you?"

"Yes, yes. But—" Clare broke off abruptly. "Of course, I have no right to ask you. It would be dangerous for you——"

"Tell me one thing," said Harry quietly. "Were you guilty?"

"Would you believe me if I said no?"

"I do not think you would lie to me."

The convict's eyes met his steadily.

"I was innocent," he said. "The truth will be known some day. But now—I could not endure it longer. I have staked all upon a bid for freedom. If I go back there it will be worse for me. But I will not go back. Death rather!"

"You shall not go back if I can help it," said Harry. "I will take the risk. But—but I am due on the match-ground."

The convict smiled faintly. In the old days, when Harry had known him well, Gilbert Clare had been a keen amateur footballer, and one of the finest wingers in the team he played for. Harry had been with him in Manchester then, and had played for the same side. To the hunted man, what was a football match in comparison with escape? But he understood the young football captain's predicament.

"It's the Lord-Lieutenant's Cup, and the final, explained Harry. "I am captain of Fernbrook."

"You shall not fail them," said Clare—"not on my account. Can you get me a coat, something to cover up these hideous things, and I will chance it. I don't want to drag you into it further than that, Harry."

Lowther wrinkled his brows thoughtfully. The convict, watchful as a cat, seemed to keep his eyes on every point of the landscape at once.

"Look here," said Harry at last, "you can take my coat and cap; I can manage. Could you dodge into the pavilion while we're playing the first half, and get a change of clothes there? You can take mine in the dressing-room. I'll contrive for the place to be empty, and the lane runs up just behind the building. I should think you could manage it. And I'll leave all the money I can get in my pockets to help you along. What do you say?"

"God bless you!" said Clare, with a break in his voice.

"That's all right, then." Harry stripped off coat and cap, and threw them to the convict. "Give us your fist, old man, and good-bye! If I don't buzz off, they'll be coming to look for me, and that's about the worst thing that could happen for you. Good-bye!"

He gripped the convict's hand hard, and strode up the lane. There was a shout from a dozen fellows as he entered the ground. Lawrence, the winger, clapped him on the back.

"You're late, Harry. Where on earth's your cap? Have you joined the hatless brigade? And fancy walking down here on a day like this without your coat!"

"Oh, that's all right," said Harry, eluding explanations; "I'm anxious about your ankle! How are you feeling?"

Lawrence's face lengthened.

"I'm sorry to have to give you bad news, Harry, but——"

The football captain's face fell.

"It's worse?"

"Yes."

"Can you play?"

"I'll play if you like, and do my best," said Lawrence; "but I'm afraid it's no good. You might as well play a man short. What about a substitute?"

Harry Lowther made a hopeless gesture.

"You know we haven't one. There's nobody who's a patch on you. What absolutely rotten ill-luck! The final, too."

"Yes, it's rotten, Harry, and I'm sorry. It's no good my playing and getting crocked in the first five minutes and leaving you a man short. You'd better pick a substitute, and make the best of it."

Harry Lowther nodded gloomily. That would be the only weak spot in the Fernbrook line, but it would be a terrible one. He knew the form the Oldbury team were in. Where was he to get a winger to take Lawrence's place?

A sudden thought—strange, whimsical—darted into his mind. There was a winger, he knew, as much better than Lawrence as Lawrence was better than any substitute he could find, and it was Gilbert Clare.

Clare, the convict skulking in the hedges, hiding from the police, was the man he wanted. Of course, that was impossible, but—yet was it impossible? As the thought came more clearly to his mind, an outline for a plan of escape for his old friend came to Harry Lowther. His eyes gleamed with excitement, and Lawrence watched him curiously.

"Have you thought of somebody, Harry?"

"Yes."

"Who is it?"

"Come here, quick!"

The Fernbrook captain led his chum aside. Lawrence was curious and eager. They were old friends, and Harry knew that he could trust him with the secret.

"Lawrence, you remember I've told you about Gilbert Clare?"

Lawrence nodded.

"Yes, he came a cropper! I've never seen him—he belonged to Manchester, I think."

"That's it! I used to play in the same team with him, and he was a wonderful forward. He went to prison, but I know he was innocent. You know there's a convict escaped from Hillbank?"

"Yes, I heard the gun."

"It was Gilbert Clare."

Lawrence whistled.

"I gave him my coat and cap." Lawrence whistled again, and his face became very grave. "I've promised to help him off. I know he's innocent, Lawrence. Look here, will you help me—and the team?"

"How?"

"Suppose Clare played in your place?"

"What!"

"He's a ripping winger! He can't have lost his form in two years—not all of it. The warders will come hunting round here for him, but they'll never think of looking for him among the players on the football-ground."

"My hat, I should say not!"

"He will be safe, and we shall be saved! We can play any substitute we like, and Clare is the only one who can help us to win."

"By Jove!"

"What do you think?"

"I think it's unheard-of—idiotic—but I'll help you."

Lowther laughed.

"Good! Help me; that's all I ask. We can't manage it in time for the first half, so I shall explain to the Oldbury skipper about your ankle, and play a man short in the first half. You can find Clare out there—he's going to dodge into the pavilion—and help him. Fix him up in footer things—your own will be about right—and mind that he wears the Fernbrook cap. What do you say?"

"It's madness, but I'll do it."

"Good! Mind, it may mean the winning of the Lord-Lieutenant's Cup for us."

"I'd do a great deal for that. And if I manage it—when he's ready——"

"Let him come on the field at the first chance."

"Good!"

"I'll tell the Oldbury skipper your substitute is coming on as soon as he arrives. That's the truth, and enough for him to know."

"Right you are."

"Hallo, there they are! Buzz off as soon as we're on the field—and Heaven help you to bring it through all right!"

THE 3rd CHAPTER.
Three Goals Down.

THE Oldbury team had arrived. Bright and smart they looked, and Harry Lowther could not help feeling that Fernbrook had their work cut out to beat them in the cup final.

"We've been delayed on the road," the Oldbury skipper explained. "The brake was stopped by a posse of warders from Hillbank. There's a fellow from the convict escaped, and they're assured that he's hanging about this part somewhere. They searched the brake. Ha, ha!"

Lowther laughed too. Lennox, the Oldbury captain, had little idea of how near the escaped convict of Hillbank was as he spoke—within sound, at all events, of the murmur of many voices from the crowded football-ground.

The ground was filling rapidly. The lane by which Lowther had come led to the private entrance—the public entrance was crammed with eager spectators. The Lord-Lieutenant's Cup competition excited great interest in the county, and people had come from near and far to see the final. The lord-lieutenant himself—a handsome, white-whiskered old gentleman—was to be there, and that alone was enough to bring crowds. His lordship was to present the trophy to the winning team with his own hands.

The Fernbrook ground was a large and well-appointed one for an amateur club. There was comfortable accommodation for two thousand spectators, and more than that number had crowded in at the turnstiles.

(Continued on the next page.)

CLUB NOTICES.

Challenges from Readers' Own Clubs. These are inserted free of charge.

WHITEHALL AMATEURS F.C. (average age 14, weak) require matches at home and away within four miles of Leeds.—All April open; only Nelsemanly clubs need apply.—Apply to Hon. Secretary, F. Rider, 2, Bruce Street, New Wortley, Leeds, Yorkshire.

LIMEHOUSE ST. DEVICTS require home match for Easter Monday with a strong club in East Counties district.—Send full particulars, stating best guarantee, etc., to Hon. Secretary, Selmer Smith, 28, Copenhagen Place, Limehouse, London, E.

CLARENCE A.F.C. (average age 16) require away matches for all April.—Address to Hon. Secretary, E. Lewis, 9, Edred Street, Clarence Road, Bristol.

LEICESTER CLARENCE VICTORIA F.C. (average age 16) require an away match for Easter Monday within twelve miles' radius of Leicester.—Apply to Hon. Secretary, H. Brooks, 13, Rathbone Place, Leicester.

WEST SMITHFIELD F.C. (average age 17, weak) require an away match for Easter Monday, about twenty miles out of London. Dressing required, if possible.—Apply to Hon. Secretary, H. Howard, 22, Albion Place, Red Lion Street, Clerkenwell, E.C.

IXVICTA F.C. (average age 15, weak) require away matches for two days of season.—Apply to Hon. Secretary, T. E. Gibbs, 10, Roman Road, Ilford Lane, Ilford.

CRONTETH F.C. (average age 17) would like to arrange a friendly fixture for Easter Monday with football team in either of the following towns: Manchester, Bolton, Leeds, Blackpool, Southport.—Secretaries should communicate with the Hon. Secretary, W. E. Harris, 153, Windsor Street, Liverpool.

DEEDALE A.F.C. (average age 16) require matches home and away within a six mile radius of Reddish, Stockport, or rest of season.—Apply to Hon. Secretary, W. Tomkinson, 12, Belfield Road, Reddish, Stockport.

FINSBURY IMPERIAL F.C. (average age 16, weak) requires matches at home or away on April 9th, 10th, 24th. North London essential.—Apply to Hon. Secretary, S. Young, 161, Isledon Road, Finsbury Park, N.

EMERALD F.C. (average age 16, medium) have all dates open for April. Away matches only.—Apply to Hon. Secretary, R. Herbert, 37, Tavistock Road, Westbourne Park, W.

WEST HILL A.F.C. (average age 16-17, weak) require matches at home on April 9th, 10th, 12th; afternoon preferred. 15s. guarantee. Colours, all white.—Apply to Hon. Secretary, S. D. Osborne, 60, Vicarage Road, West Hill, Hastings.

CAMBRIDGE AMATEURS F.C. (2nd) (average age 15) require matches at home or away with respectable clubs near Belfast.—Apply to Hon. Secretary, W. McClimy, 152, Ormeau Road, Belfast.

WIMBLEDON PARK JUNIORS (average age 15½, weak) require home or away matches within easy distance.—Apply by post to Hon. Secretary, C. Johnson, 51, Southlea Gardens, Wimbledon Park, Wimbledon.

LYRIC JUNIORS F.C. (average age 16) want matches for April (away) within a mile or so of West London.—Apply to Hon. Secretary, G. H. Flower, 43, Iffley Road, Hammersmith, W.



URGENT.

A Special Message from

LOTTIE LOOKSHARP,

THE MERRY-MESSENGER GIRL:

"On no account miss my merry adventures in THE JESTER."

THE JESTER.

ONE PENNY.

Now on Sale.

Whatever the result of the match, the gate would be a good one; but the footballers were thinking much more of the cup than of the gate.

Lennox was sympathetic about Lawrence. He would have been better pleased to fight the match with equal numbers from the start, but his expression showed that he considered the result a foregone conclusion now.

"The substitute may arrive at any time," Lowther reminded him; "and we're expecting a goal."

"Good!" said Lennox.

It was time for the visitors to change. They went into their quarters, and came out into the field shortly arrayed in red and white. Fernbrook were already on the ground, in blue knickers and shirts, punting a ball about.

The two captains tossed for choice of goal. There was a keen wind blowing, and the point was an important one. Lowther won the toss, and chose, of course, the goal from which the March wind was blowing. It would be a little to set off his loss of a forward.

But there was unbounded confidence in the looks of the Oldbury men as they lined up for the kick-off. They felt themselves every bit as good as the home team, if not better—and with only four men in the home front line, they expected quite a walk-over.

The lord-lieutenant—a keen sportsman, though his playing days were over—had taken his seat in the grand stand, and the enclosures were crammed as full as they would hold. The referee blew his whistle, and Lennox kicked off.

The wind was against Oldbury, and a determined run were against them, but Lennox's anticipations seemed to be on the way to being realised.

The man short was a fatal handicap to Fernbrook. The very start showed that Oldbury, man for man, were quite up to their form, and with a winger gone, what could they expect?

What they might have expected, happened. In spite of the stubborn fight put up by the home team, the Oldburians broke through them again and again.

In the first ten minutes a goal came to Lennox, and five minutes later the ball was headed into the net by his inside-right.

Two up for the visitors—nil for the home team. The chances of the cup seemed to fade away into nothingness, and the faces of the Fernbrook men on the ground grew long and downcast, while the partisans of Oldbury cheered and cheered again.

Lowther did the only thing that was left to him. He packed his goal to fight a purely defensive game till the wanted man should arrive to fill up his ranks.

But Fernbrook were a fighting team, better in attack than in defence, and their new role did not seem to suit them.

The defence, stubborn as it was, was broken through by the red shirts, and again the leather whizzed into the net.

Three up for Oldbury!

It was a relief to Fernbrook when the whistle went for the interval. The footballers trooped off the field for the brief rest, and thunderous cheers from their backers followed Oldbury off. But the Fernbrook crowd were silent.

THE 4th CHAPTER.
The Man from Manchester.

HARRY LOWTHER uttered a sharp exclamation as he entered the home dressing-room. There was a stranger there—a stranger, at all events, to the rest—and for the moment hardly recognisable by Lowther.

A wash and a change of clothes had wrought wonders for Gilbert Clare. He was partly dressed in Harry's clothes, and partly in other garments found for him by Lawrence. They fitted him pretty well, and his athletic figure showed to advantage. He had a border hat on, which concealed the fact that his hair had been cropped close.

There was an eager light in his eyes, a flush in his cheeks. He looked handsome, and very fit.

Harry stared at him for the moment. Clare, with superb coolness, stepped forward and shook hands with him.

"Hallo, Lowther!"

"Hallo!" said Lowther mechanically.

"Sorry I'm late," said the other calmly. "I was rather late in hearing that Lawrence that he couldn't play. Still, I shall be in time for the second half, and I'll do my best to help you pull up."

"I'm sorry I couldn't get 'Mr. Jones' here before," said Lawrence, with a quick look at Lowther; "but better late than never."

"I'm jolly glad to see you, Jones," said Harry, taking his cue. "I say, chaps, this is an old friend of mine—Mr. Jones, from Manchester. He's going to play substitute for Lawrence in the second half."

"Good!" said half a dozen voices. "If he's anything like Lorry's form, we may pull up yet."

"I don't know about that, gentlemen," said Mr. Jones; "I haven't seen Lawrence play. But I've played in some good games, and I'll put my beef into it."

"If you play as I have seen you play at Manchester, we've got a good chance yet," said Harry Lowther. "Here, let me help you change!"

And the escaped convict of Hillbank donned the football-garb. Harry contrived that the Fernbrook cap should be placed upon his head in time to conceal the cropped hair as the hat was removed. Nobody was watching him—nobody had the slightest suspicion. Why should they have? To the Fernbrook footballers he was the substitute who was playing instead of Lawrence, and they could not be suspicious that he had any connection with Hillbank Prison.

Harry Lowther was eager for half-time to end. Now that Clare was there, he was in momentary fear of a visit from the warders. Clare would be safer in the football-field if they came.

He could hear—his hearing unusually acute in his desperate state—the sound of horses' hoofs in the lane that ran behind the enclosures.

The club secretary looked into the room.

"Half a minute, chaps! By the way, there's trouble going on outside—warders looking for an escaped convict."

"By Jove," said Mr. Jones, "an escaped convict! Is there a convict prison near here?"

"Oh, yes; it's a well-known landmark hereabouts!" said the secretary. "A convict escaped about a couple of hours ago, judging by the time the gun was fired. I've spoken to a policeman, who says they're certain the fellow came this way."

"I wanted to see the football-match, perhaps," suggested Mr. Jones humorously.

There was a general laugh in the dressing-room.

"Yes, perhaps," grinned the secretary. "Anyway, they're sure he's about here, and there's an idea, you know, that he may have been able to get some clothes, and has shoved himself into the crowd to escape notice."

"That might be done, too."

So there are wardens mingling in the crowd, and all the gates are guarded by police. There are over a dozen mounted police riding round the walls, too, so as to cut him off. I have been asked to see if there's any sign of him here."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Mr. Jones, who was really a wonderful actor.

"The police are going to search the pavilion to make sure. Hallo, time for you fellows to be on the field!"

"High time, I should think!" murmured Lowther, thinking of the disguised convict.

The players poured out into the ground, and a minute later the warders were searching the dressing-rooms.

The crowd were eagerly awaiting the commencement of the second half. There was some excitement apart from the cup match. The news had spread that an escaped convict was supposed to be lurking in disguise in the crowd, and naturally it caused excitement.

That the news was correct was proved by the presence of the warders, and by the anxious ground-scan who were moving about with them, keen to get on the track of the hapless intruder. To mix in a large football crowd, and escape with them when they poured in a huge stream from the gates after the match. It was a clever idea for the fugitive if he had procured a change of clothes.

But it would not be carried into effect if the warders and police could help it. There seemed to be warders everywhere, and police too; and the hoof-beats could be heard of mounted men riding outside the enclosures.

If the convict was there, there was no avenue of escape left for him. And if he was not run down before the match was over, he was certain to be captured when every person going out was examined at the gates.

But the whistle for the second half drove the escaped convict from the minds of all except the hunters.

The teams were in the field again, lined up for the second half of the struggle for the Lord-Lieutenant's Cup.

And the home ranks were full now. Eagerly the spectators scanned the new recruit. They knew nothing of him but that his name was Jones, and that he had arrived in time to take Lawrence's place in the second half.

They only hoped that he was a good player, and that his coming might mean equal score, if not a win, for the Fernbrook men. And as Harry Lowther kicked off against the wind, every eye was keenly bent on the opposing blue-and-red shirts.

THE 5th CHAPTER.
A Splendid Victory.

"GOAL!"

"Goal! Hurrah!"

It was a tremendous shout that rang far and wide over the enclosures of the Fernbrook Athletic ground. The crowd could scarcely believe their eyes.

They rubbed them, and looked again—and yelled. It was true! The second half of that eventful game was exactly three minutes old—and the ball was in the Oldbury goal. And the new winger had placed it there!

"Goal!"

"Bravo, Jones!"

"Hurrah!"

The Fernbrook crowd roared themselves hoarse over it. Three to nil had been the score when the second half started, and it had taken the new winger three minutes to alter it. High rose the hopes of the Fernbrookers. There was a chance of the cup, after all! Lawrence—why, this change was worth a dozen Lawrences! He had streaked through the Oldbury men and taken that goal almost unaided, with a run up the field all on his lonesome, that reminded one of a three-quarter in the Rugger game.

Who was he—where was he from? Jones—Manchester! No one had ever heard of that particular Jones of Manchester. But whoever and whatever he was, there was no doubt that he was the finest forward that had ever worn the Fernbrook colours.

The Oldbury men hoped that it was a fluke. They kicked off in that hope; but they soon found that it was fallacious.

It was no fluke: it was splendid play—the play of a man who had made football a study in the old days, and who had not lost his skill, and who was in splendid physical condition. For more of the same play followed.

The next goal, it is true, was not taken by Mr. Jones. It came to Lowther, but it was from a centre by Jones—a centre made under great difficulties, which left Harry an easy goal to kick.

Two for Fernbrook in a quarter of an hour!

No wonder the crowd roared. There was a chance of the cup yet. The very warders who were mixing in the crowd in search of the fugitive convict suspended their search to watch the game.

Mr. Jones was playing up well, apparently unconscious of warders and of spectators equally, thinking only of the play. His face had a curious look, smeared with mud from a fall at the very commencement of play—but no one dreamed that the fall was on purpose—the muddy smear arranged to hide as much as possible of his features.

"Play up, Jonesy!"

"Go it, Manchester!"

"Give us another goal!"

But now the Oldbury men were fighting their hardest. They were not going to let the home team equalise if they could help it. The change of ends had brought the wind in their favour, and their previous successes encouraged them. They put up a splendid game. But the home defence was too hard a nut to crack now.

The new forward had changed the whole aspect of the game.

Every man in line seemed to be inspired by new energy in emulation of Mr. Jones, and the way that new forward played was wonderful. He seemed to go through the best defence like a knife through cheese. His kicking was accurate, unfailing, his dribbling masterly, his passing like clockwork. He always seemed to be on the ball, to know just when and to whom to pass—to do the very thing that most baffled his adversaries.

Again a roar rang over the football-field.

"Goal!"

Beating the backs and the goalie, the new winger had sent in a difficult shot, but difficult shots to him seemed easier than easy ones to anybody else. The ball was in the net.

"Goal!"

"Hurrah!"

Harry Lowther's eyes blazed.

The score was equal now, and there was yet a quarter of an hour to play. Oldbury had not scored once in the second half.

Harder now and faster was the play. There was a great deal of kick and rush, but at the same time plenty of sound football. The lord-lieutenant had his eyes glued on the field. The warders were watching as keenly as the crowd, and mounted policemen were looking over the fence.

Oldbury were putting their beef into that last struggle. Both sides felt that one more goal would settle the matter.

Was it to come?

Slowly but surely the Fernbrook men won ground; more and more the visitors were pent in their own half. The tussle was soon wholly in the visitors' half, and all the Oldbury men's desperate attempts to clear and get away were futile.

The referee looked at his watch.

Men were on their feet now, shouting or breathlessly silent. How was it to end? And there were yells to the new winger.

"Play up, Jones!"

"Give us another!"

The ball came out of the press like a pip from a squeezed orange. An Oldbury back cleared, the press broke up, but then there was a shout. The new winger was on the ball.

"Kick!"

It was almost a shriek from the Fernbrook folk.

But the new winger did not need telling; he was kicking, while three foes close upon him were rushing down.

The leather flew, and then the winger was bowled over by a charge, and rolled on the ground, gasping.

But no one had eyes for that.

For the leather was in the net. It had baffled the frantic clutch of the Oldbury goalie, and was reposing safe and sound, and the air was rent with cheering.

"Goal! Hurrah! Hurrah!"

The whistle rang out.

The final was over, and Fernbrook had won—four goals to three. No wonder the crowd cheered and yelled and stamped, and threw their hats into the air, careless whether they ever found them again. No wonder the Fernbrook team raised the new winger off the ground upon their shoulders, and marched him away to the pavilion in a veritable triumph.

Right under the noses of warders and police they marched him—warders and police, who were cheering as loudly as anybody. In the dressing-room they set him down gasping, shaking him by the hand and slapping him on the back till he had not an ounce of breath left in his body.

* * * * *

And when the Fernbrook men left the ground winners of the Lord-Lieutenant's Cup—presented to the blushing captain by the lord-lieutenant himself, with a very handsome speech—the new winger went with them. He went muffled up in a big coat, with his cap pulled down over his brows, and the elated Fernbrook footballers round him. They walked out without a single glance of suspicion from the police, and an hour later Gilbert Clare, in an effective disguise, and with a solid sum of money in his pocket, was speeding in the express for Dover, and a telegram from France apprised Harry Lowther that he was safe abroad, there to wait till his name should be cleared.

But it was not till long afterwards—when a dying man's confession revealed the truth, and Gilbert Clare's name stood cleared before the world—that the Fernbrook footballers knew the real identity of the new winger, and learned that the escaped convict from Hillbank Prison had been the cup winner.

THE END.

(More thrilling, long, complete yarns will appear in next week's BOYS' REALM.)



Harry stripped off his coat and cap, and threw them to the convict. Clare seized them with alacrity, and hurriedly donned them, glancing around him furtively.

Great New Story of Nelson Lee, Detective, Starts Shortly!

OUR LEAGUE CORNER.

Tables Showing the Positions of the Top Clubs in connection with THE BOYS' REALM Football League.

"THE BOYS' REALM" NORTHERN LEAGUE.

Tables to March 6th.

JUNIOR SECTION.

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	Pts.
Wellfield	24	23	0	1	166	15	47
Marlow Athletic	24	22	0	2	157	21	46
Birstall W.R.	24	23	0	0	174	27	46
St. Jude's S.S.	24	21	0	3	166	25	45
Other Rovers	24	21	1	2	142	24	44
Smethwick	24	20	2	2	119	24	41

SENIOR SECTION.

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	Pts.
Lynwood	24	24	0	0	107	3	48
Bowling St. Albans ..	22	22	0	0	121	9	44
Sparkhill St. Elmo ..	21	20	0	1	114	20	40
City Old Boys	20	18	2	0	81	16	36
Northgate	19	16	3	0	94	42	32

"THE BOYS' REALM" SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

Tables to March 6th.

JUNIOR SECTION.

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	Pts.
St. Giles' Crescent	24	22	1	1	100	13	45
Palmerston Guild	23	22	0	1	107	13	45
Elmhurst	20	15	0	1	116	15	30
Wolverton Albions	16	16	0	0	110	10	32
Luton Crescent Rangers ..	16	15	1	0	71	14	30

SENIOR SECTION.

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	Pts.
St. Martin's Juniors ..	24	22	1	1	156	27	45
Malmesbury	21	21	0	0	124	20	42
Hampton Park United ..	23	19	2	2	94	16	40
Wilton	19	19	0	0	74	9	38
Chapel-in-le-Frith	19	17	1	1	84	20	35
Mitcham Athletic	20	16	2	2	86	31	34

"THE BOYS' REALM" NORTH LONDON LEAGUE.

Tables to March 6th.

JUNIOR SECTION.

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	Pts.
Hanewood	24	23	0	1	135	14	46
Gifford United	23	21	0	2	94	10	44
Barnsbury Orient	21	20	0	1	112	10	41
Lyric Juniors	21	19	0	2	116	10	40
Glendale	20	19	1	0	152	15	38

SENIOR SECTION.

	P.	W.	D.	L.	F.	A.	Pts.
Fulham Carlyle	22	21	1	0	150	15	42
Granville	23	19	1	3	111	14	41
Fitzroy Rovers	20	20	0	0	67	15	40
Redfern	20	19	0	1	117	10	38
Clapton Park Wes. ..	18	17	0	1	97	19	35

"THE BOYS' REALM" SOUTH LONDON LEAGUE.

Tables to March 6th.

JUNIOR SECTION.

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	Pts.
Marlborough	21	19	1	1	101	19	39
Woolwich Celtic	21	19	1	1	97	21	39
Albany United	22	19	2	1	97	23	39
West Greenwich Juniors ..	21	18	1	2	94	33	38
St. Anne's	20	17	1	2	115	30	36

SENIOR SECTION.

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	Pts.
Elmwood	24	21	1	2	107	27	44
Pimlico Crusaders	19	19	0	0	104	13	38
Lyric Athletic	21	19	1	1	108	26	39
Limehouse Invicta	19	17	2	0	96	8	34
Albany Invicta	15	11	0	4	68	10	26

"THE BOYS' REALM" SCOTS' LEAGUE.

Tables to March 6th.

JUNIOR SECTION.

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	Pts.
Dennistoun	23	22	0	1	105	30	45
Eastwood	23	21	1	1	103	20	43
Lochend Celtic	21	20	0	1	108	26	41
Waverley	19	19	0	0	84	15	38
Glenfield	19	17	0	2	80	27	36

SENIOR SECTION.

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	Pts.
Pearlies	24	23	0	1	118	24	47
Albion Vics	24	22	0	2	120	20	44
Leith Thistle	23	21	1	1	109	17	43
Partick Y.O.	20	16	1	3	62	21	35
Waverley	17	14	3	0	84	21	28

"THE BOYS' REALM" IRISH LEAGUE.

Table to March 6th.

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	Pts.
Avondale	12	12	0	0	44	11	24
Bushfield	12	11	1	0	38	13	22
Victoria Swifts	12	9	1	2	32	16	20

MANCHESTER UNION LEAGUE.

Table to March 6th.

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	Pts.
Deyne	28	22	3	3	101	37	47
Southern & Nephews ..	29	21	7	1	85	48	43
Langley Mills	27	19	4	4	87	31	42
H. Openshaw U.M. ..	28	17	7	4	71	39	38
Hulme Athletic	26	17	6	3	59	27	37
Redgate	30	17	10	3	96	65	37
Ruskolme Juniors	25	16	5	4	62	23	36
Openshaw Wesleyans ..	26	15	6	5	71	59	35
Chatham	27	12	11	4	61	79	28
Clyde Juniors	23	10	9	4	41	45	24
Victoria Hall	29	9	11	9	33	42	24
Hulme Hall	26	10	13	3	26	40	23
Regent Juniors	31	10	16	3	46	74	23
Bradford United	25	9	12	4	40	39	22
Sacred Trinity	27	7	14	5	54	77	19
Seedley	26	8	14	4	41	80	20
St. Clement's	28	8	16	4	49	92	18
Bradford Amateurs	29	6	22	1	35	78	13
Longsight United	27	5	19	3	33	67	9
Manchester Clarence ..	27	3	22	2	17	83	8

FENTON AND DISTRICT LEAGUE.

Table to March 6th.

SECOND DIVISION.

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	Pts.
Fenton Amateurs	18	16	2	1	53	16	33
Boothen Victoria	13	10	2	1	54	13	21
East Vale Wesleyans ..	14	9	4	1	34	26	19
Cobridge Civs	14	9	5	0	36	24	17
Bucknall Villa	15	7	6	2	37	27	16
Wolstanton Villa	15	7	8	0	26	23	14
Penkhull Juniors	15	6	7	2	18	35	11
Fenton United Reserve ..	15	3	11	1	19	57	7
Trentham Villa	10	2	8	0	18	32	4
Fenton Villa	13	1	8	2	12	27	4

CAMBERWELL AND DISTRICT LEAGUE.

Table to March 6th.

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	Pts.
Centenary Inst.	6	3	0	3	27	22	13
Newlands R.	6	2	2	2	20	12	12
Basking Park	7	2	3	2	18	28	12
Dulwich Willow	8	3	4	1	31	28	10
Clifton Reserves	2	0	2	0	0	23	0
Rodney Cadets	5	4	0	1	21	5	0

EDGE HILL AND DISTRICT ALLIANCE (LIVERPOOL).

Fixtures for Saturday next, April 10th.

Division II.

St. Thomas's v. L. & N. W. Per. Way.
Stanley Reserves v. Liverpool Grosvenor.
Ellis Athletic v. St. Augustine's Reserves.

Division III.

St. Andrew's v. Clovelly.

EDGE HILL AND DISTRICT COMBINATION (LIVERPOOL).

Fixtures for Saturday next, April 10th.

Nash Grove Combination v. Norwood Juniors.
Millwood v. Wavertree Conservatives.
Bassett Reserves v. Lodge Lane Wesleyans.

Prize Football Winners for Week Ending March 6th.

"THE BOYS' REALM" NORTHERN LEAGUE. St. Saviour's B.S.P.—Hon. Secretary, T. Helsby, 148, Friar Street, Everton.

"THE BOYS' REALM" SOUTHERN LEAGUE. Luton Invicta F.C.—Hon. Secretary, F. W. Clark, 14, Union Street, Luton.

"THE BOYS' REALM" NORTH LONDON LEAGUE.
Chesham Juniors F.C.—Hon. Secretary, J. Glendenning, 136, High Street, Waltham Cross.

MANCHESTER UNION LEAGUE.
Longsight United F.C.—Hon. Secretary, A. Young, 62, Junction Road, Cheetham, Manchester.

MERSEY FOOTBALL LEAGUE.
Wynfield F.C.—Hon. Secretary, T. S. Roberts, 28, Clint Road, Edge Hill, Liverpool.

CLUB NOTICES.

(Continued from page 736.)

CRUSADERS F.C. (average age 19) require a match in Southampton, or just inside Portsmouth for Easter Monday. Small guarantee, if possible.—Apply to Hon. Secretary, A. T. Suter, 197, Somers Road, Southsea.

BRUNSWICK ROVERS F.C. (average age 17-18, medium) require away matches in Southend, or district within twenty miles of London, on Easter Monday. Guarantee required.—Apply to Hon. Secretary, C. Barone, 31, Alpha Square, Walworth, S.E.

SLIP END F.C. (average age 18) require match for Easter Monday within twenty miles' radius of Luton. Small guarantee required.—Apply to Hon. Secretary, H. Toyer, Slip End, Luton, Beds.

WANTED, for season 1909-10, a few gentlemanly lads to form an F.C. in Cardiff (Canton district preferred). Ages, 16 to 18 years.—Reply, with full particulars, to Wm. B. Barcom, 3, South Morgan Street, Canton.

DERBY VILLA RESERVES F.C. (average age 16) require a few players; left kickers preferred.—Apply to Hon. Secretary, G. Fairhurst, 61, Drama Street, Boothe, Liverpool.

WANTED, five or six lads from 15 to 17 years of age, for football team for coming season. Willing to play small half-backs in Metropolitan League.—Reply to Francis Burns, 5, Rock Street, Old Swan, Liverpool.

CHORLTON-CUM-HARDY DISTRICT FOOTBALL LEAGUE season, 1909-10. President, W. Meredith, Esq., Welsh International. Division I., open ages; entrance fee, 7s. 6d. Division II, average age 20. Division III., average age 17. Division IV., average age 15. Division V., average age 13; entrance fee for the above four Divisions, 6s. 6d. Entries now taken for next season's competitions (with stamped envelope for particulars) to Secretary, T. Lord, 8, Swain Street, C.-on-M., Manchester.

BOY NOVICE (age 16) would like to join a football club in or near Marylebone.—Apply to F. Martin, Clifton Hotel, Welbeck Street, London, W.

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S	O	K	E	R



THE WAIF OF THE WAVES.

A BRIGHT BREEZY TALE OF THE SEA.

Deveril Again Eludes the Law.

CONRAD saw that the light was carried by a woman.

It was the housekeeper.

In a few seconds he contrived to turn himself round.

Then he saw that the man who had thus seized him was the man who acted as doorkeeper, the same that had refused him and Mr. King admission.

A tremendous struggle ensued, and the man, finding that he was certain to be overpowered, yelled to the housekeeper to brain Conrad with the lamp.

The woman, however, was too much alarmed to come close.

At last the Waif got the man by the throat. Then, contriving to get his right hand free, he dealt him such a tremendous blow on the head with the butt of his pistol, that the weapon was broken in two.

The man fell senseless to the floor.

The struggle between Mr. King and Cosmo still continued; but Conrad, seeing that the former had the upper hand, and required no help, rushed up the stairs.

Room after room he burst open, but without success. To the very top of the house he went, but no, nothing was to be seen of Deveril.

Throwing up one of the front windows, he looked below. Distinctly he saw half a dozen men. They were the detectives.

Certain it was, then, that Deveril had not made his way out of the front.

As he ran from the room a loud shout came from the back. Conrad immediately dashed into one of the back rooms and tore open the shutters. Not being able to open the window, he smashed it to atoms with a heavy stool.

As he looked out the shouts were repeated, and he saw a number of men running towards the river. It at once struck him that Deveril had managed to get out of one of the windows, and make his way in that direction.

Without a moment's pause, Conrad leapt from the window and dashed across the grounds.

"A thousand pounds to whoever captures him!" he shouted again and again.

The detectives, who were led by Mr. Hunt, redoubled their energies. But they were too late.

Deveril, in the first place, had got an excellent start, and he maintained it. He reached the edge of the river, leapt into the boat, severed the rope with a knife, and pushed off.

When Conrad reached the river he was a couple of hundred yards away. He drew another pistol, and, taking aim, fired.

Whether the ball had struck Deveril or not was not ascertained. At any rate, he did not fall. Then his voice was heard.

"Good-bye for the present, Conrad," he said derisively; "we shall meet again soon!"

"I would to Heaven I had a boat," said Conrad, "for he should not escape me. The coward—the brutal coward! But I will never rest, day or night, until I have him."

Conrad re-entered the house, and found Cosmo lying insensible upon the floor.

"Have you killed him?" asked Conrad.

"Not quite; though the scoundrel deserved death."

"You recognised him?"

"Easily."

"As Captain Rosso?"

"Yes; though he is much altered. And what of Captain Deveril?"

"I am again unlucky. He managed to reach our boat and has got away."

"Truly sorry am I to hear it."

"You are badly injured, I am afraid."

"No; it is nothing."

"Come, follow me, for we must secure the child."

Down the stairs both went, and they were met by the housekeeper.

"The child," said Conrad. "Quick!"

"The child? What child?"

"The child you have here."

"You are mistaken; there is no child here."

"Woman, why do you stand there and tell such a deliberate, barefaced lie? The child is here, and if you do not produce it we will secure it ourselves!"

As he spoke Conrad advanced nearer to the door. The woman at once placed herself before it.

"No, you don't!" she said. "You don't pass me."

"We have no time to waste," said Conrad.

"I again tell you to produce the child."

"And I again defy you to pass me."

Conrad, with the rage of lightning, seized her by the waist, lifted her from her feet, thrust her into an opposite coal-cellar, and locked the door upon her, where her shrieks and yells were almost lost.

Mr. King walked into the opposite apartment, and there, fast asleep upon the bed, lay the child. Certainly it looked none the worse for its extraordinary adventures. Mr. King was overjoyed.

Again and again he seized Conrad's hands, and, with tears running down his cheeks, thanked him with all his heart and soul for being the means of replacing his firstborn in his arms.

"Do not disturb it yet," said the Waif. "Presently we will secure a carriage of some sort. The principal thing to be done is to see that this Captain Rosso is secured."

"The detectives are in the house; I can hear them."

Ascending, they found Cosmo in charge of Mr. Hunt and his men. He had recovered his senses, and was looking about in what seemed like a dazed fashion. But Conrad's experience of such men had been extensive.

"Be careful of him," he said, "and at once secure his hands behind his back."

Mr. Hunt and a couple of men at once seized his arms. Then his arms were tied behind his back, and he was led into one of the rooms. As he entered he caught sight of his reflection in an opposite mirror, and a deep groan escaped his lips. Never before—though he had been in many a fight—had he presented so terrible a spectacle.

"Mr. Hunt," said Mr. King, "I give this rogue into your charge—firstly, for child-stealing; secondly, for forgery."

"Forgery!" gasped Cosmo, now trembling violently, for he was well aware what heavy punishments were awarded in this country for forgery.

"Ay—a forgery committed four years ago on a certain bank not a hundred miles from the City of London, Captain Rosso. You must remember the whole of the details, and you must be well aware of the fact that I shall be one of the prosecutors.

"At your trial I will take care that the whole of your history, and your connection with the notorious pirate, Captain Deveril, is placed before the jury. I can assure you that I will show you no mercy whatever."

"No," said Mr. Hunt, "nor will the jury. You can reckon yourself booked for twenty years at least."

"No," said Cosmo, "I will never enter an English prison."

"Not of your own free will, of course not; it is not likely."

"Am I to be taken to the police-office in this condition?"

"You are. I only wish it were daylight, so that you could be seen."

"I am dangerously wounded."

"I hope not. I should be sorry to see you slip through the fingers of the law. At the police-office I will see that you are attended to by a doctor. Now, my men, away with him!"

So, just as he was, with his clothing torn to shreds, Cosmo was escorted from the house.

Then it was found that the shots had attracted the attention of the neighbours. Quite a crowd of persons of both sexes were assembled in front of the house. Mr. Hunt undertook to take charge of the premises.

After some consultation the doorkeeper was allowed to go, while the woman was detained.

"She will make an excellent witness against this Rosso," said Mr. Hunt; "for if we threaten her, she is safe to offer to give evidence. She, of course, is the one to prove that Rosso placed the child in her arms. Well, upon my soul, I am sorry Captain Deveril has escaped, but he is bound to be taken soon."

Mr. Hunt now left the house in search of a carriage.

He managed to secure one despite the hour, and Mr. King, with his child in his arms, was the first to enter it.

"In a few hours, Mr. Hunt," said Conrad, "I will return."

The coachman was then directed to drive to the hotel at Guildford Street, Russell Square.

The Escape to Greenwich—Deveril Tries to Secure a Crew, and Fails.

THE reader, during the course of this story, has seen that Captain Deveril was in heart a coward. But he has had the best proof of his cowardice in the last chapter, for he has seen that, when danger was nigh, he totally ignored his companion.

His chief thought was for his own safety. But he also thought where could he go if he escaped without money?

His valuables were upstairs in a leathern case. More—Cosmo's money, including a sum of no less than two thousand pounds, which he had won of Dickey, was in the same room.

He speedily pounced upon it, crammed notes and gold into the case, and into his pockets, and then fastened the door. He then stripped the best of its sheets, and his experienced fingers soon manufactured a rope, which was strong enough to descend from the window by.

In but a few minutes he reached the ground. But not until he commenced to run was he overheard. And then, as we have seen, it was too late.

Yet, had the detectives obeyed to the letter the orders of Mr. Hunt, Deveril must have been captured.

Safely in the centre of the river, Deveril seated himself, and, seizing the oars, pulled with all his might. Nor did he stop until he had placed two or three miles between himself and the Lodge.

Then he rested, and considered what he was to do. He quickly arrived at a conclusion.

"Since detectives are employed," he thought, "the best thing I can do is to remain in hiding for a few days, and the safest place I can go to is Greenwich.

"Greenwich, yes, that is my destination. But what will Nancy say? Hem! Well, I must risk it. After all, she may be dead—or married. I hope it may be one or the other."

Having waited some minutes, and attentively scanned the river, he again took the oars, and went on.

Arrived, after two hours, at Greenwich, he landed unobserved, and made his way to what, at the period of our story, was a well-known tavern—namely, the Anchor.

Of course, it was closed, but noticing a light moving about in one of the upper rooms, he knocked upon the door. No answer being returned, he repeated the knock. Still receiving no reply, he picked up a number of stones, and hurled them at the window.

It was at once thrown up, and a woman's voice asked:

"Well, well, who is it? What do you want?"

"By thunder!" muttered Deveril. "It is Nancy herself! Well, well, I flatter myself that I can throw dust in her eyes again. Ah, I could recognise her voice anywhere! What a difference between hers and Lucinda's!"

Aloud he said:

"It is Walter."

"What Walter? What Walter?"

"Walter Deveril. Is it possible that you can have forgotten my voice?"

"Ha, now I recognise you! I will be down in a minute."

She was in much less than a minute.

As she threw open the door and raised her candle aloft, she revealed a very pretty face and figure.

Nancy Turner, the daughter and only child of the landlord of the Anchor, was about five-and-twenty, of about the medium height, dark, and blessed with a most magnificent head of hair.

But there was a deathly paleness in her cheeks, and a wild, terrified look in her eyes, which seemed to show that, day after day, she saw more trouble than usually falls to a woman's lot. The reader will presently see that this was indeed the case.

"Walter!" she said—"Walter Deveril! Is it possible? And you have returned after all this time?"

Captain Deveril's notion of sweet tones must have been somewhat eccentric, for Nancy's voice was decidedly a sweet one.

"Yes," said Deveril, "I have returned, Nancy. And it is my intention never to sail again, until—until—well, until you consent to accompany me."

"I could never accompany a pirate who has killed——"

"A pirate!" said Deveril, forcing a laugh. "Why, what do you mean?"

"I mean that I am well aware that Captain Walter Deveril is a pirate leader of the worst type."

"Upon my soul you wrong me. I know that for a long time past a notorious pirate of the same name as myself has made himself the terror of the seas."

"You, then, are not the man?"

"Certainly not. What, Nancy, do you not know better than that? You must be well

(Continued on next page.)

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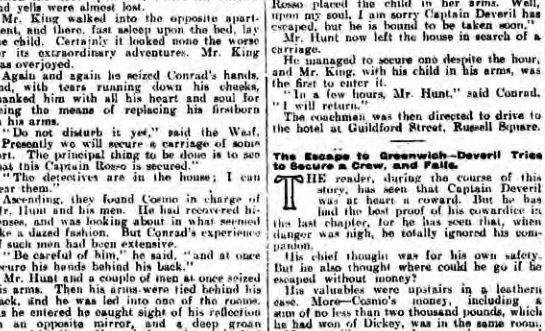
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aware of the fact that I should never engage in so desperate a game. No, no. I was always an honest man. I may be a wild and erratic customer, but never as pirate—no, no. Believe me, what I say is true. Nay, Nancy, since I last saw you I have suffered deeply."

"In what way?"

"I have been a prisoner in a French prison. It was only six days ago that, assisted by another prisoner, I contrived to escape."

"Indeed!"

"Ay, you believe me, Nancy? Did I ever tell you a lie?"

"Never," was the reply.

Then she thought:

"Infamous liar that he is. But let me control myself, and I may discover the reason he is here."

Aloud she said:

"Enter, for you look weary."

"Weary! That is scarcely the word for it. I beg of you to bring me some brandy."

This was quickly supplied, and Deveril swallowed two measures of it, as if it were no stronger than water.

"You, then," said Nancy, "are penniless?"

"To tell the truth, I am not far off it. A few pounds, which I borrowed from a sailor, is all I have."

"And that ca-se?"

"That? Oh, that contains what little linen I am possessed of, and that, like the money, is not much."

"Let me take it. I will see that——"

"No, no," interrupted Deveril hastily, "not for the world. You see—it—there is blood upon some of it, Nancy, where I injured myself while getting out of prison. But tell me—how is it that you are up at this hour?"

"My father is very ill."

"Indeed? How long has that been?"

"Some few days now. It is the last illness he will ever have."

"It is a sad business," replied Deveril. "But if he dies, Nancy, see what will fall to you. Your father, during the twenty years he has been here, must have amassed an immense sum?"

Nancy smiled bitterly as she replied:

"You are correct. He did amass a fortune. Unknown to me, he kept his gold buried in a cellar! But a few days ago the secret was discovered. Half a dozen men made an attack, and my father got his wounds in endeavouring to defend his property."

"And the gold?"

"Every piece was taken."

"By Davy Jones, it was indeed a misfortune!"

"A morited misfortune."

"How?"

"He obtained it from thieves, and by thieves it was taken."

"He would be sorry to hear you speak thus."

"He has often heard me speak in this way."

"Well, we will talk of this to-morrow. I hope you have a spare bed-room."

"Yes; you will find one on the second landing."

"Many guests here?"

"Nay, one only. He is on the second floor."

"A sailor?"

"Ay, he calls himself a sailor, but he should add, 'and smuggler.'"

"His name?"

"Seth Beckton. If you look out of the bed-room window, you will see his vessel. It is lying right opposite to the house."

Deveril rose and made as if he would kiss Nancy ere he retired. But she shrank back.

"I cannot bear the smell of brandy!" she said, forcing a laugh.

"Ha, ha!" chuckled Deveril, as he ascended the stairs. "I thought I should have a hard job with her, but it has been the easiest thing in the world. If there is any man who can throw dust in a girl's eyes, it is Walter Deveril."

He was utterly mistaken as to Nancy Turner, however.

Deveril ascended to the bed-room, and opening the window, looked out. In the distance, to the right and left, was a mass of shipping, but in, as it seemed, the very centre of all was the outline of a smart brig.

"Seth Beckton's, eh?" muttered Deveril. "I wonder if he would remember me? He must have got on wonderfully well to be in command of that vessel. Can be be the owner? I will tackle him in the morning. By Jove, she's a pretty little craft! I wonder whether she'd be trim enough to make the first of a second set of Firebrands? I'll overhaul her to-morrow."

In the morning Deveril had a private interview with Seth Beckton, and the result was that both set off on a visit to the brig. They remained aboard of her some hours; in fact, it was dark before they returned to the inn.

By that time Seth Beckton had received two thousand pounds deposit on the sale of his vessel. So once again Deveril was captain and part owner of a vessel.

"Another and a last cruise," he thought, "and then, when I am rolling in riches, and can pay right and left, and with a liberal hand, my vengeance is certain. To-night I will get a crew from the Rut."

* * * * * *

"At the back"

Nancy meant a great deal when she muttered these words. At the back of the inn ran a good lane, with dozen narrow turnings on the left, leading to the river. The lane was called the "Rut," though why was not exactly known.

On either side were a number of low wooden houses, the majority of them not larger than a fair-sized cowshed. These rotten shanties had been owned for twenty years by James Turner, the landlord of the Anchor.

When he took them over from an impoverished landlord, to whom he paid only one-third their value, they were what we may call the work-rooms of respectable boat-menders and net-makers.

But James Turner, who, "on the other side of the water," had had an extensive and lucrative connection among the smugglers, turned them all out, and let the places to his former "friends," upon many of whom the law would have given something to have laid its hands.

As may be supposed, these precious "tenants" turned the whole place into a dangerous quarter. But neighbours were too far off to hear the fearful quarrels or to witness the many murderous fights among the ruffians, and so no complaint was made.

What cared James Turner for their noise or fights? Nothing at all. The smugglers made plenty of money, and he compelled them to pay him double the value for articles with which he supplied them; in fact, he coined money.

If in consequence of stress of weather the men could not proceed on their dangerous expeditions, he advanced them money at outrageous interest, and the several men he employed took precious good care that it was repaid. It was to their advantage to collect it, for James gave them a certain commission out of what was returned him.

Occasionally, when the smugglers had been more successful than usual, James entertained them in a huge wooden shed at the back of the house, and which communicated with the inn by a covered passage. This rude building, fitted with rough trestle-table placed in the centre, and several rough sidebboards, he called the "banqueting-room."

For several days previous to Deveril's arrival the smugglers had been very successful. They had received a rich harvest of spirits, tobacco, and silks.

Having disposed of the property to a few of the hawks who were ever ready to prey upon their ignorance, they decided to have a "banquet." Therefore, they consulted, not their leader exactly, but a man they usually consulted on such matters. That was Seth Beckton, the man who had disposed of the brig to Deveril.

Despite the fact that James Turner was sick unto death, it was decided that a banquet should be given—not at Turner's expense, since he was ill, but that each should contribute.

Poor Nancy, worn out with her constant attendance upon her father, and with having the whole responsibility of the inn thrown upon her shoulders, could not refuse to order the servants to prepare it. So it was got ready.

Soon after his return to the inn, Deveril was joined by Beckton, a huge, ungainly specimen of what we may call the "sailor shark."

"What's all this row?" Deveril asked.

"Row?"

"The shouting."



Deveril picked up a number of stones and hurled them at the window. It was at once thrown up, and a woman's head was pushed out.

"Did I not tell you that the men are about to have a banquet?"

"Ay, so you did."

"And you said that you had joined them more than once?"

"True. But that was a few years ago."

"Well, if you want a crew, the time will be two hours from when the banquet commences. But I warn you as to what you say. The majority of the men you knew a few years ago have met their deaths, and those who remain, like me, will not know you.

"You will have to pitch some yarn—say something about a buried treasure, and say you are going to weigh anchor with the first streak of dawn. But utter one word of piracy, and it is all over."

"I am not likely to prove myself such a fool."

"Very good, for you are well aware that these men, though they risk their lives on the sea, would not care to risk them under a pirate's flag. And if by any chance they found they were being deceived—well, you may guess the result."

"Leave it to me. But will you not support me if I pay you well?"

"Ay, I will support you right enough. In fact, if you agree—and sign to that effect—that I shall have a fair half, I would join you myself."

"You would?"

"I would—here's my hand on it. I know that you have captured many a thousand pounds' worth of cargo, and I know that you are good for more. But not a word, for I alone know that you are Captain Deveril, the pirate."

"But you would not have known it had I not revealed myself."

"I have already said so. Now, order what you require. I must join the men, who are now arriving. I will send for you when the time comes. Meanwhile, I will send for the landlord, so that the men you manage to secure can be sent to the brig the instant they agree to join."

Two long hours did Deveril wait in his room. He thought Nancy would pay him a visit. But no, she came not near him. However, he did not think much of this; he concluded that she was too busy.

Little did he dream that, while he was conversing with Seth Beckton, Nancy had been very close to him.

At the top of the partition on the left was a small hole. This communicated with the other apartment, and, at one time, it had been used to place a thin rod with the old-fashioned "workable," or movable lamps. These used to be hung by means of a chain from the rod, and could be pulled from one side to the other as required.

By means of this hole, then, Nancy had been enabled to hear all that had been said. That Deveril was the notorious pirate was now fully confirmed.

But her astonishment at Deveril's impudence in making use of her and the inn for such dastardly purposes was great indeed. Her face betrayed neither astonishment nor agitation, however, as she left the room, and descended to see how the "banquet" was going forward.

She very calmly issued her orders to the servants, as they were called, and then said that she would visit her father.

The doctor had just arrived, and she met him on the stairs. He was a clever, honest, and straightforward man, but the want of money and friends had compelled him to accept a practice in this miserable hole.

"Dr. Hutt," whispered Nancy, "go at once to Will's for me, will you?"

"Anything in the world I would do for you, my dear."

"Say that I have something of importance to tell him, and that he must come here without delay."

"He won't need much urging," smiled the doctor, as he left the house.

In less than a quarter of an hour he returned, accompanied by a young fellow of about five-and-twenty. This was Will Wright, a boat-builder, and one of the best scullers Greenwich had known. He was a fine, tall, powerful man, and liked everywhere. Even the smugglers respected him—ay, and feared him, too.

He at once made his way straight to the parlour, where he was joined by Nancy. The conversation which ensued was a brief one, but it was thoroughly understood on both sides.

Will left the house again, and his last whispered words were: "Do not fear, I will be there."

Eleven o'clock came round, and by that time the mighty load of provisions which had been placed on the long table had been disposed of.

It was then "cleared for action"—in other words, for a drinking bout. Wines, spirits, tobacco and so on, were placed upon the table in plenty. Not only were bottles set before the men, but also small casks, ready tapped.

If there was one man in that room—or, rather, shed—there were sixty. One glance would have been sufficient to have convinced anyone that the men here assembled were of the very lowest class. Not one of them was under thirty, while more than one was so aged as to be past all "work."

There were also three or four blacks Savage brutes they looked—men who might have just leapt from a pirate cutter.

At the head of the table sat Seth Beckton. He had proposed all manner of toasts, which had been drunk with enthusiasm, though the principal—"Confusion to the Coastguardsmen!" had been drunk with "three times three." When he saw that the men were well on, he got up, and stood upon his chair.

"Boys," he said, "listen to me. What I have to say is little, but you will be pleased with it."

"Silence! Silence!" was the hoarse cry on all sides.

Seth continued:

"The fact of it is, I have sold my smart little brig, the Will-o'-the-Wisp."

"No!" was the thundering cry.

"Fact," smiled Seth, "and I will tell you to whom—a man who is honest to the backbone. His name is Richard Overton, one of the greatest travellers living. Now, what do you think he has bought it for?"

The men shook their heads, while one yelled: "To find the North Pole!"

"My friends," continued Seth, now in serious tones, "I will tell you. Two years ago, while exploring on a certain desolate coast on the—well, I must not tell you where it was—he came across a buried treasure."

At those words the men became breathless with excitement.

"A buried treasure!"

"It was the constant dream of the sailor, the smuggler, ay, and the landsman.

"The gentleman, Richard Overton," continued Seth, "is in the inn at this moment, and he—— But here he is."

As he spoke, Deveril passed through the doorway. He was instantaneously greeted with a ringing cheer.

The discoverer of a buried treasure was a god among such men.

The cheers having subsided, Beckton handed Deveril a glass of spirits. He raised it on high.

"Success to all of you!" he said, a toast which, of course, was much approved.

"My friend here," said Deveril, speaking so that all had no difficulty in hearing him, "has told you a little about a buried treasure. Well, my men, let me assure you that it is no myth. The treasure is still there where I found it."

"Your pardon, your honour," said an old man, rising, "how was it you didn't clear it?"

Deveril smiled.

"A very natural question," he said, "and I will answer it. I was alone when I made the discovery—entirely alone on the island."

"But the vessel—the ship you sailed in?"

"Was wrecked. I was the only survivor. A month after the discovery, I was picked up by the crew of a vessel which had put off in search of water. Was it likely that I should say anything of my discovery to them?"

The men were apparently perfectly satisfied with this explanation.

Deveril continued:

"I have purchased the Will-o'-the-Wisp from Beckton, and I will sail with me."

At this the men opened their eyes very wide indeed.

There must be something in it, or Seth Beckton would never have agreed to sail.

(Another thrilling instalment next week.)

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