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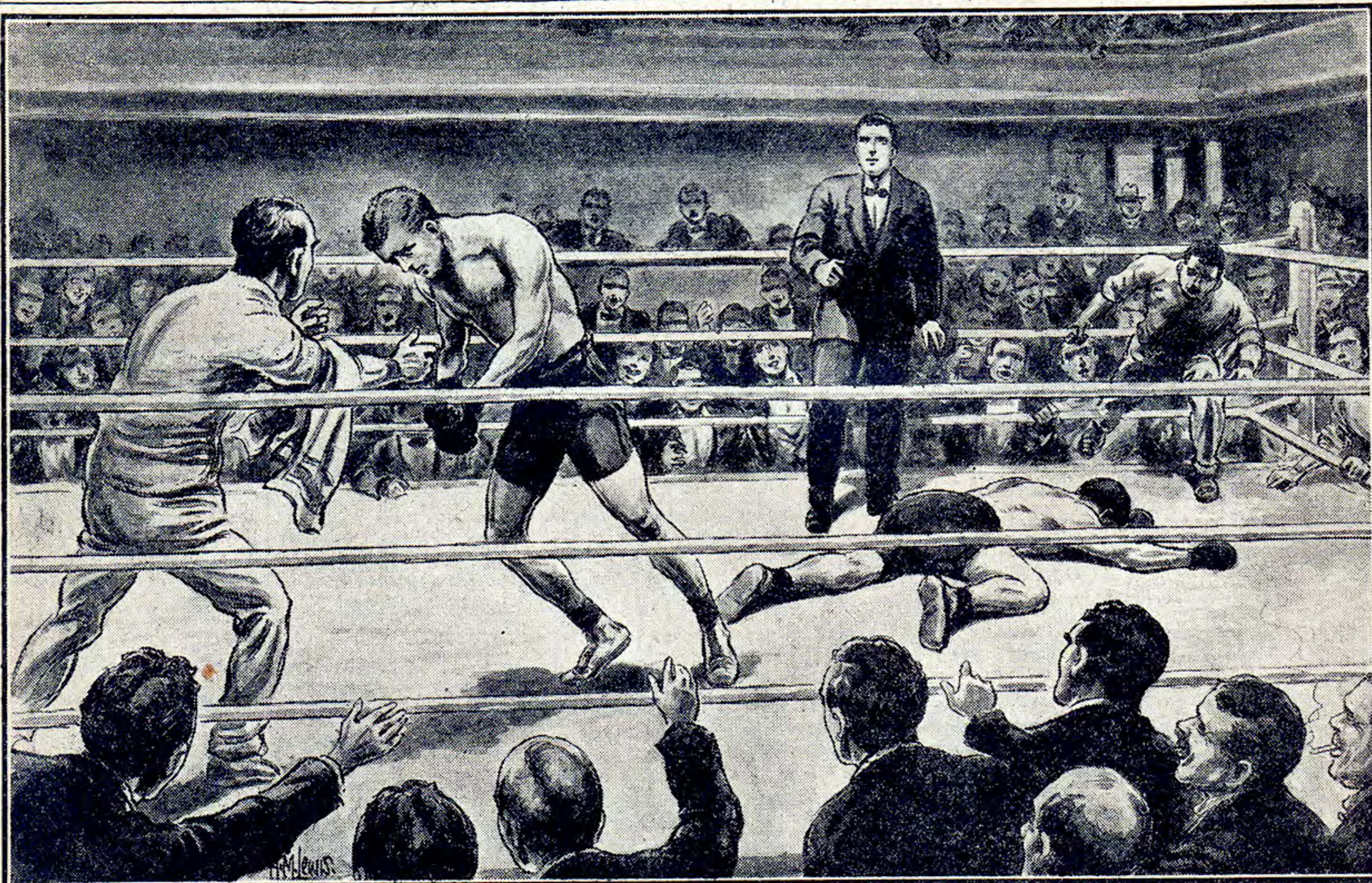
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PAPER!

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EVERY WEDNESDAY.

May 31st, 1924.



THE WHITE-WINGED BAT!

A Tremendous New Serial of the Turf and the Ring.

By JOHN GABRIEL.

(For synopsis of opening chapters see overleaf.)

Victory!

AT once Fred Tempest got down to business, true to his reputation of being a quick starter. But if the champion had any idea of winning the fight before it had properly started—as he had won many a fight before—he was soon disillusioned.

Jack stood off and boxed his man at long range, and in the thrill and excitement of that first minute he felt no pain at all in his left hand. It seemed that there was room for only the one thought in his brain—the thought of how to beat the champion. He boxed beautifully as Tempest tried to get to close quarters,

that long straight left of his shooting out time after time, and driving Tempest back.

The champion smiled in grim appreciation, and changed his tactics, taking on Jack at his own game of long-range boxing.

For a minute or so they stood off and sparred for an opening, and then, quick as thought, Jack leapt in to the attack. Tempest's head went rocking back from a jarring left, and then as he tried to recover, Jack brought over his right.

It was a clean, true punch, and if it had landed on the point the fight might have ended there and then, but the glove was an inch or so too high, and Tempest was shaken rather than hurt. He rushed into a clinch, and a moment later the gong signalled the end of the round.

There was such a shout as the staid and dignified Pantheon Club had not heard for many a long day as the men went to their corners. It had been a great opening round, and the honours had clearly gone to the "outsider."

Jack heard the cheering as in a dream, and as he lay back in the angle of the ropes he heard Matt Gibbons mutter:

"Good boy!"

In the same moment he became conscious, for the first time since the fight had begun, of the burning pain in his left arm—pain which was now darting right up to his elbow. He closed his eyes, feeling giddy.

The bell again, and as Jack stood up for the second round the agony in his arm was torturing him. Could he forget it as he had forgotten it in the first round?

Five seconds later he knew that he could not, for as he automatically led with his left and the glove landed on Tempest's arm he had to bite his lip to stop the cry of pain which would have come so easily.

Tempest's eyes narrowed. His boxer's brain had noticed something.

It seemed that Tempest left himself very open during the next few seconds, but the queer thing was that Jack would not lead. Chance after chance he had to shoot in that fine straight left of his, but it was an idle weapon, and the crowd who had watched his brilliant work in the opening round could not understand it at all.

Tempest again changed his tactics and began to attack. Jack had no option now but to "mix it" at close quarters, and he gave punch for

punch, despite the pain which was now almost unendurable. Tempest sprang back, and once again he left himself as "open as a barn door."

Jack saw the opening, and automatically his left shot out like a piston-rod. Tempest ducked, and the glove landed on the side of his head, and the jar of it sent Jack's face deathly white.

Tempest was unhurt, but the boxer who had delivered the punch reeled back, and his arms dropped limply to his sides. Tempest was after him like a flash, and upper-cut his man with that famous blow of his which had won him many a knock-out victory.

The impact of the glove rang out clear and distinct, and Jack dropped like a felled tree. There was a sudden shout, and then silence.

(Continued overleaf.)

HOW IT BEGAN.

FRANK DARRELL, sportsman and criminologist, is devoting his energies to solving the mystery of the White-Winged Bat, a secret organisation against sport. In view of his activities, he has been threatened with death if he does not give them up.

This, of course, he flatly refuses to do, and a murderous attack is made upon him, which is happily frustrated by the intervention of the brothers Barton. These two, though young, are already well known in sporting circles, for JACK BARTON is a promising light-weight, and his younger brother JIM is apprenticed as a jockey to MICHAEL CORRIGAN, of the Lacey Towers stables. Darrell takes the brothers into his confidence, and finds in them staunch allies.

Jim Barton, much to his delight, is told off to ride Mogul in the Murgrove Handicap at Kempton. It is his first big race, and much depends on his winning it. Mogul is first favourite, but as the race draws near his price shortens mysteriously, and Darrell discovers that the White-Winged Bat is taking a hand in the affair.

But the discovery is made too late, and Mogul is shot down from the air whilst running in the race.

Then, from information supplied by BOB TRUDGEON, a stable-boy at Lacey Towers, Darrell arrives at the theory that the White-Winged Bat is LORD JOHN GRAYSON, a prominent sporting peer.

Later, Darrell notices a likeness between Lord John Grayson and the Barton boys, and suspects that they are related. This suspicion is borne out by information supplied by an American visitor, who, however, is mysteriously murdered before he can be used as evidence.

But Darrell is compelled to pursue his investigations secretly, and meanwhile Jack Barton is matched against FRED TEMPEST, for the light-weight championship. An hour before the fight a vitriol attack on Darrell miscarries, and Jack's left hand is badly burned in saving his friend. But the youngster takes the ring, although he is suffering agonies.

(Now read what happens.)

The fatal seconds were being counted out, and at "4" there was not a man in the club who dreamed for a moment that Jack could get up before the "out." He lay there quite motionless.

But at the "5" there was a quiver in the inert figure, and at "6" Jack half-rolled over, his face contorted with pain, but with the light of consciousness in his eyes. He stayed like that for two seconds, swaying on one hand and knee, and then he tottered to his feet.

Fred Tempest was a good sportsman, but he had no sentiment when it came to boxing, and he went in to finish off his job. One punch, and it must be all over.

It looked all ten thousand to one against Jack in that moment, but there were just two things in his favour—a boxer's brain which told him to do the right thing instinctively, and an unconquerable spirit which would not strike its flag until battered into unconsciousness.

He reeled into a clinch and stayed there for those priceless seconds while his brain was clearing. Somehow—he never quite knew how, himself—he kept on his feet until the end of the round, and at the bell he was still an unbeaten man.

There was one thing which the Pantheon members admired even more than they admired boxing skill, and that was sheer pluck. They had seen it here, and they cheered Jack Barton to the echo as he flung himself wearily into his chair. But Jack never heard those cheers. He was too far gone for that.

Old Matt Gibbons had watched that last round with understanding eyes, and he had just one minute in which to work a miracle—for miracle it would assuredly be if he could get Jack "right" again. He glanced at the red, inflamed left arm, and then whipped from his pocket a greasy old bottle and poured some thick greenish liquid over the burning flesh. Jack opened his eyes and stared up at Matt; the pain had magically gone.

"Listen to me," Matt whispered. "Your arm's too bad for mending, lad, and I'd never have let ye fight if I'd known. But this stuff will stop the pain for a minute, mebbe two. 'Tis some auld gipsy remedy, and you'll no buy it in a chemist's shop. A minute you've got, two if you're lucky. Go in and fight like blazes. You hear me?"

Jack nodded his head, and the gong clanged out.

They still talk of that third round at the Pantheon Club—it has become a sort of boxing classic, every detail of which is discussed over and over again by men who love to dwell upon it.

Fred Tempest came from his corner supremely confident and with a look on his face which seemed to say that he was going to make short work of a bout which had already gone too far.



JACK GOES DOWN!

Jack advanced slowly to meet him, and close watchers noticed that he was steady on his legs; the signs of desperate weariness had gone. He made no effort to force the pace, and Fred Tempest found himself up against a baffling defence when he tried to cut loose and make a fight of it.

Old Matt Gibbons was watching that drama of the ring through eyes which had narrowed to tiny pin-points. Suddenly he shot out one word in a fiercer whisper:

"Now!"

Jack heard that whisper and acted on it in a flash. In a second he ceased to be a defensive boxer and became a hurricane of attack. Fred Tempest was a quick-thinking, quick-moving boxer, but before he had time to adjust his ideas he was being battered and hammered by an avalanche of blows which rained in on him from gloves which seemed to be will-o'-the-wisps.

Tempest gave ground before that furious attack, covering up to the best of his ability. But no defence in the world could have withstood the fierceness of Jack's hitting in that amazing half-minute, and Tempest reeled from a stinging left to the point. His guard dropped for a moment, and Jack's right flashed over to the chin. There was a gasp from Tempest, a sudden shout from the crowd, and then a queer silence as the champion crashed to the boards.

Fred Tempest never looked like beating the count. He lay as he fell, a huddled, inert heap, and he had not moved a muscle at the "8—9—out."

And then the crowd fairly let itself go, and such a clamour had not been heard in the Pantheon Club for many

a long day. Men who had been watching boxing for years shouted like excited schoolboys, carried out of themselves by the thrill of what they had just seen.

Jack Barton stood for a moment, a lonely figure in all that wild scene. He was trying to realise that it was all over and that he had won—won—won.

But he could not realise that—he could not realise anything except that he was desperately tired. His spirit had held out to the end, but he was done now, and vaguely he knew it.

He lurched towards his corner, and just as he reached it, he pitched forward and would have fallen but for the arms of Matt Gibbons, who had sprung into the ring.

"Good lad—good lad! Here, drink this," Gibbons said.

But Jack never heard the words. A curtain had come down over that poor tired brain, and he remembered nothing more.

Ten minutes later he opened his eyes in his dressing-room. A doctor was bending over him, and near him were Frank Darrell and Matt Gibbons. The doctor was staring in astonishment at Jack's inflamed left arm, and then he turned to Darrell and spoke.

"He must have been in terrible pain right through the fight," he said. "It is marvellous that he could last a round—I would not have believed it possible."

Darrell's face was very white. He was thinking that Jack had suffered all this for his sake, and he felt a rush of admiration for the boy's sheer pluck. He had seen something that night which he would never forget

while he lived. He had seen a dauntless spirit win through when the odds were all against.

He stooped down and took Jack's uninjured right hand.

"Jack," he said quietly, "you're a thoroughbred."

The Viking Mystery.

A WEEK later Jack Barton was almost fit again. The story of his fight with Tempest "when he ought to have been in hospital," as one newspaper put it, had rung through the country and, much to his confusion, Jack found himself feted like a hero wherever he went. He himself could not see that he had done anything out of the ordinary, but it seemed that other people did not take that point of view.

Bob Trudgeon was just about the proudest youngster in England during the days which followed the fight at the Pantheon. He returned to Lacey Towers with the reflected glory of having been in Jack Barton's corner, and he did not forget to dilate upon the fact.

"We pulled it off all right," he said; and that was the gist of his conversation.

To listen to him one would have thought that he had had just as much to do with the knocking-out of Fred Tempest as Jack Barton had. He duly collected the bet he had made with the sporting journalist at Jack's training quarters, and at once spent the money on the purchase of what he called a slap-bang new rig-out. And it certainly was "slap bang," the general colour scheme hitting one in the face from a considerable distance.

"A very fine performance on our part," he remarked to Jim Barton when discussing the fight, "but, mind you, it is only a start. We have won the English title and the belt, but we'll be flying at higher game than that before very long. It is the world's championship we want, Jim, my lad; and, take it from me, we are going to win it before you are very much older."

It really did seem that Jack Barton's career lay clearly defined before him. He had climbed several rungs of the boxing ladder, but there were still higher flights to scale. He himself was well content with that career, but there was one man, Frank Darrell, who was far from sure that boxing was going to claim Jack Barton.

Darrell was more than pleased to see Jack doing so well, but he could never forget the knowledge that had come to him from Simon Tarth. If that story was true—and Darrell never doubted its truth for a moment—Jack and Jim Barton ought to be in a very different station of life.

Darrell was a wonder at finding out things in a quiet, unostentatious way. He had created his own machine for getting information, and a very efficient machine it was. Scotland Yard would always help him, and be only too pleased to do so; but Darrell was not satisfied with that. He had agents here, there, and everywhere, and very queer customers some of them were. But the fact remained that they were invaluable to Darrell,

who always confessed that he could not have carried on his work without them.

It was from one of these agents that Darrell first received the hint which led to very interesting results. The hint was that Lord John Grayson, outwardly the most prosperous of men, was, in reality, very far from being that—that he was, in fact, decidedly hard up.

Darrell knew that Grayson had lost a huge amount when the Viking beat Sebastian in the Derby, but he had not thought that Grayson was really hard hit. Yet his information now was that Grayson hardly knew which way to turn for ready money.

There was a lot of hard work to do before Darrell really got down to the truth, but the labour was well worth while, for it revealed the fact that the Bat had one weak spot in his armour. He was an inveterate gambler, a man who could not resist the lure of playing for high stakes.

What a light that threw, Darrell reflected, upon his actions towards the Barton boys. He had betrayed his trust in order to build up his own fortunes; that was the theory which fitted in with the facts as Darrell knew them, and a very interesting theory it was.

It was Darrell's knowledge of this hitherto unsuspected phase of the Bat's character which made him so interested when Grayson made himself busy in a racing project which soon had the whole of the Turf world busily discussing it. The project was the matching of the Viking against the great Irish three-year-old filly, Sweet Colleen.

Right through the summer Sweet Colleen had been doing very big things in Ireland, and there had always been some good judges of racing who believed that the flying filly would prove too good for any of her English rivals of the same age.

It was Lord John Grayson who first put the discussions into a practical shape, and suggested that Sweet Colleen should be matched with The Viking. To Michael Corrigan, an Irishman himself, the proposal was always a pleasing one. He had the utmost belief in The Viking, but he knew just how good Sweet Colleen was, and his sporting instincts were aroused from the start.

There were a few preliminary "feelers," and then the parties concerned had a meeting in London, and the outcome of that meeting was that the match was formally agreed upon. With both sides eager for business, details were soon settled, and after a brief discussion the whole thing was put in order.

Sweet Colleen was owned by an Irishman, named Patrick Payne, but Darrell knew that the man behind the scenes was Lord John Grayson, and he felt vaguely uneasy at the fact that Grayson was concerned with a match which, on the face of it, was a very sporting affair.

He knew, for instance, that Grayson had found the greater part of the money which Patrick Payne had staked on his horse, for Payne was an open-hearted, impulsively generous Irishman, who spent his money as fast as he got it. At the moment it was well known that he was hard up, and that he could not have found the stake money himself.

The match was for one thousand pounds a-side, to be run over the mile and a half course at Kempton Park one month after the articles had been signed.

But Darrell soon learned that Lord John Grayson was committing himself to win or lose a far larger sum than one thousand pounds. Wherever Frank went in the sporting haunts of London he heard the same story—that Grayson was making heavy bets on Sweet Colleen to beat The Viking in this match, which already was the talk of the racing world.

And Darrell asked himself why. Grayson knew as well as anybody that The Viking was a smashing good horse, and yet here he was wagering a small fortune on Sweet Colleen to beat the Derby winner. When Darrell considered that fact in conjunction with the other fact that the Bat was pressed for money, he wondered just what was the meaning of it all.

He thought he was justified in giving Michael Corrigan a very plain hint to keep both his horse and his jockey under the closest of care, and Corrigan replied that he appreciated the tip, and was "taking no chances."

The Viking had one important engagement to fill before the match with Sweet Colleen. He was to run for the well-endowed Harrington Stakes, at Sandown Park, and there was no risk in him fulfilling the engagement, for the event was practically a "gift" for him.



SOME "OLD-STAGERS."

Shall I tell you what is one of the proudest moments of my life? Why, it is when I meet, or receive a letter from, a fellow like the cheery soul I met the other day. He was not exactly old, as age goes nowadays, but he was certainly an "Old Stager" in the sense I mean. For he told me that he had read the "Realm" ever since he was a boy.

"Of course," said he, "I didn't read it during the war, when it was stopped for a while. That's obvious, isn't it? And let me tell you," he added warmly, "I did miss it—and I expect lots of others like me did, too."

Lots of others like him! Yes, that's the nice part about it—we have lots of these "Old Stagers," who have read our jolly old paper for years and years. It's fine to be able to think that. You see, there is no greater compliment to a paper than the fact that it can boast of readers who have stuck to it through changing times and in spite of countless tasty dishes offered elsewhere.

FIRST-CLASS JUDGES.

And these "Old Stagers" are first-class judges of a paper, don't make any mis-

take about that. They must have read thousands of stories in their time, and they know a good one when they read it. They say to themselves, "Yes, that's not a bad yarn, but I don't reckon it's a patch on So-and-so." And sometimes, let us hope, they alter the phrasing to: "The best I've ever read, far better than So-and-so."

Oh, I value their criticism, I can tell you. When they speak or write to me and assure me that the "Realm" is better than ever it was—and they often do—I am chirpy as a young cock sparrow. They do me very nearly as much good as a day at the seaside!

I hope that those of them who read these lines will remember this. They can help me tremendously in improving our paper. Most of them are still young at heart, or they would not be enjoying yarns written primarily for sporting youngsters; and I know I can rely upon them not to voice out-of-date opinions, or clamour, as moth-eaten gentlemen will often do, for the old-fashioned tales of the past. Our "Old Stagers" are vigorous fellows, and they like vigorous modern stories. That is why I value their criticisms, and shall always welcome them to this office.

COMING SHORTLY.

I dropped a hint last week about a new serial by A. S. Hardy, and I may as well repeat that this yarn comes next on my serial list. That is to say, it will follow Walter Edwards' popular "Web of the Spider," which you will be sorry to hear is nearing its end.

Just a word or two, in passing, about

the last instalment of this great school tale, due next week. You will wonder, after reading this week's chapters, how on earth the story is going to end. I wondered, too—and I fondly imagine myself an expert on forecasting how stories will develop. But Mr. Edwards has got a big surprise in his last instalment. He introduces a startling situation of which none of you, I am sure, have dreamed. It is a fitting conclusion to a great story, which is packed with excitement to the end. You'll be put wise, as the Americans say, next week!

But I was talking about our coming new serial by that famous man, A. S. Hardy. This, I need hardly tell you, is a great yarn, full of what we editorial folk call "human interest." Sport, of course, is its keynote, and you will be specially pleased by its summer atmosphere. More I cannot tell you now; but watch out for details next week.

A MONSTER COMPLETE YARN.

Instead of two shorter complete yarns next week we shall have one extra long one. This is a great boxing tale, called "A Pal in a Thousand," and its author, Ernest S. Harris, has written it specially for our columns.

Jack Belsome, its hero, has a heap of thrilling adventures. He is a great chap, and one I know you will admire. Look out for him as soon as you open your next week's "Realm."

Oh, and by the way, I must tell you that J. McKail has done some extra-special sketches for this yarn. Mr. McKail is himself a youngster, and has only recently done any quantity of drawing for us. But he is a coming man, there is no doubt about that. You will agree with me when you see his vivid pictures next week!

YOUR EDITOR.

Darrell saw that Sandown race, and as he watched The Viking "come in alone," with Jim Barton sitting quite still on his back, he marvelled again at Grayson's nerve in plunging so heavily on Sweet Colleen. What was the secret of it all?

Three days later Darrell read an item in the sporting columns of his newspaper which interested him. It said:

"At Lacey Towers yesterday The Viking was sent a mile gallop at racing pace with Timely, His Lordship, and Castile. The Viking moved sluggishly, and did not please."

A trivial enough thing, and yet it interested Darrell, for he did not remember ever reading before a similar comment about The Viking. He was a good deal more interested when, two days later, Michael Corrigan phoned him early in the morning and asked him to come down to Lacey Towers that day if he could possibly manage it.

"Anything really urgent, Corrigan?" Darrell asked. "I am up to my eyes in work."

"Yes, it is urgent in a way, Darrell, and yet I don't know just how you can help me," Corrigan said. "But you know I always value your opinion. The trouble is about The Viking."

"What's wrong?"

"I'm hanged if I know, Darrell! I can't make head or tail of things, and that's the plain truth."

"I'll come along, Corrigan, right now!" Darrell decided.

"Good man!" Corrigan said. "Maybe you'll be able to see daylight where I can't."

Two hours later Frank Darrell was at Lacey Towers, and as soon as he saw Corrigan he knew that the trainer had not been exaggerating when he had said on the phone that he was worried. The Irishman's frank and open face carried a very anxious look, and at once he plunged into the subject which was so perturbing him.

"Darrell, I've been in stables boy and man for thirty-six years, and I've never been so puzzled before in my life. Honestly, the thing beats me."

"I'm listening, Corrigan," Darrell said quietly.

"This is how things stand," Corrigan explained. "Ever since that race at Sandown Park The Viking has not been like the same horse, and yet I'll stake my reputation he's fit. If he wasn't I'd believe he'd been got at, despite all my care. But he is fit, there's not a doubt of it. Well, ask yourself. There he is."

The Viking had been brought into the stable-yard by Fred Bates, the head lad, and Darrell thought, as he had so often thought before, that he had never seen a handsomer horse. The colt looked a real picture of the English thoroughbred.

Darrell knew nothing of training or of veterinary work, but he had his full share of common-sense, and that told him that there was precious little wrong with The Viking. The colt was "on his toes," and seemed full of life.

One thing struck Darrell, and he mentioned it to Corrigan.

"His temper seems to have improved, at any rate," he said. "He is as friendly towards Fred Bates as he is towards Jim Barton. Didn't you once tell me that he wouldn't let Bates go near him without trying to savage him?"

"I did, and it was true," Corrigan said. "Jim Barton was the only fellow at Lacey Towers who could really manage The Viking. Even I was no exception. But since that Sandown race he has been as quiet as an old pony with anybody who went near him. As a matter of fact, that is one of the things which I can't understand."

"And what are the other things which you can't understand?"

"The other things!" Corrigan exclaimed. "Well, there's only one other thing that matters. The Viking seems to have lost all his form. Up to a few days ago he was a great colt, if I know the meaning of the word 'great,' and I thought he was a certainty to beat Sweet Colleen. But the way he has been galloping lately is too bad to be true. In gallops he is finishing behind horses he was losing a week or two ago, and yet I tell you again I never had him fitter than he is to-day."

"Do you think he has gone stale?" Darrell ventured.

THE OLYMPIC GAMES

All about the most wonderful series of Sporting Contests in the World.

by MAJOR T.A. LOWE, D.S.O., M.C.
(Who has competed in them for Great Britain.)

The Marathon Race.

BECAUSE the Marathon Race is probably the greatest test of human endurance yet conceived, I propose to devote a complete article to it; and in order to give some idea of what the race means, and why it arouses more interest at the Olympic Games than any other event, I am quoting the few simple rules in full. There are ten, and they run as follows:

1. The Marathon Race of 40 kilometres (25 miles) will be run on a course marked out on public roads, and will finish on the running track in the Stadium, where the last 536 metres (one lap) will be run.

2. Each competitor must send with his entry a medical certificate of fitness to take part in the race, and must further undergo a medical examination previous to the start.

3. A competitor must at once retire from the race if ordered to do so by a member of the medical staff appointed by the Olympic Association.

4. No competitor either at the start or during the progress of the race may take or receive any drug. A breach of this rule will operate as an absolute disqualification.

5. The station of each competitor at the start will be determined by lot.

6. Each competitor shall be allowed two attendants, who shall wear on the arm the same distinctive number as the competitor.

7. The attendants shall during the progress of the race remain behind the competitor they are attending, or be sufficiently in front to prevent them giving pacing assistance. Non-observance of this rule will disqualify the competitor.

8. Attendants will not be permitted at the start of the contest, but must proceed to an appointed place about 8 kilometres (5 miles) from the start, and join their competitors as they pass. Upon arrival at the Stadium the attendants must leave the competitors, and enter by a different gate. No attendant will be allowed on the track.

9. Any competitor whose attendant or

The 3rd Article.

attendants obstruct another competitor will be disqualified.

10. Each competitor must provide his own attendants and required refreshments.

A Great Finish.

Rules so simple for such a great event cannot fail to be interesting. What they really boil down to is that every man who enters for the race is expected to run 25 miles without assistance of any kind, except in the nature of food and drink—which, of course, are necessary to sustain him. The writer saw H. Kolehmainen, a Fin, finish his Marathon at Antwerp, an easy winner by at least half an hour. He completed the last lap in the Stadium looking as fresh as if the race had been five miles instead of twenty-five.

It was a most impressive sight. For hours before the finish of the race was expected every seat in the Stadium was occupied, and the approaches leading to it had to be kept clear by mounted policemen. The crowd inside was, of course, kept interested, for there were many other events in progress, but as the news was received by telephone of the progress of the Marathon and that the leading runners were approaching, a great hush of excitement and expectancy seemed to settle on the Stadium.

For the last half-hour the arena in the centre was quite empty, with no other competitions in progress, yet the crowd waited silently and eagerly. Then a roar of cheering like that which greets a goal at a Cup Final, could be heard in the distance, only, instead of dying away, it was maintained and came nearer and nearer.

All eyes were glued to the great gate of the Stadium which was swung open to greet the winner, and I remember feeling that if he turned out to be a Britisher it would be the proudest moment of my life.

But it was not, unfortunately. The honour of winning that great test fell to a Finlander, and never did a man deserve it more. He ran round that last lap, fresh and smiling, amid the roars of the throng, and when he had passed the winning post stood to receive the congratulations of his friends, scarcely breathing hard at all. It was a magnificent performance.

National Tribute.

And there was a singularly impressive ceremony to follow. The Finlanders had left nothing to chance. Apparently they knew Kolehmainen's capabilities for this event, and were quite certain beforehand that he was going to win it. The victor was met by a statesman from his own country, and publicly crowned with a wreath of some national flower. A procession of small girls dressed in white appeared from nowhere, and, marching in front of Kolehmainen, sang the Finnish National Anthem.

Once round the Stadium they marched, and every man, woman, and child in the audience stood with bared head while the flag of Finland was run up to the top of the great flagstaff in the centre of the arena.

It was a great triumph for a small nation, and the fact that it was regarded as a national triumph and not as an individual one is the point which I wish to impress upon British fellows, because this was as it should be.

I do not suggest that any of our athletes would appreciate choirs of little girls singing triumphal songs about them in public, but I do want to emphasise the fact that other countries take the Olympic Games much more seriously than England does. Quite rightly so, for the test of ability and skill in every single competition is far higher than it could be in any of our own championships at home. And as the years go on, and Olympiad after Olympiad is held, the standard of excellence will become what it was in the days of the Greeks—nothing short of physical perfection.

(Another article in this splendid new series next week.)

In the Presence of Death.

THE little belt of trees known as Lacey Spinney was half a mile or so away. As Corrigan and Darrell reached the spot they waited for a few moments while Bob Trudgeon came up with them, and then Bob took the lead to take them to the spot where a tragedy had been enacted on that bright sunny afternoon.

In a small clearing they found the body of Harry Horsley, and, at the first glance, Darrell knew that he was in the presence of death. He knelt at the side of the still figure which sprawled with outflung arms on the mossy ground.

A revolver was in the right hand, and Darrell made a close examination of it without attempting to take it away. And then Corrigan heard him give a startled exclamation, and saw

a look of intent interest come to Darrell's face.

Darrell stayed on his hands and knees for several minutes, making a very precise examination, and then he rose and looked direct at Corrigan.

"I do not think," he said quietly, "that this is a case of suicide; I think it is a case of murder!"

"Murder!" Corrigan echoed. "What on earth makes you think that, Darrell?"

"One fact and one fact only. The revolver was placed in this man's right hand, I believe, after death. The fact is impossible of absolute proof, but there is a strong probability that such was the case. The grip of the fingers on the revolver would have been altogether different if Horsley had fired the shot himself and then collapsed. I am quite sure of that, Corrigan."



BOB TRUDGEON'S DISCOVERY.

Bob Trudgeon had been standing silent while Darrell made his examination, but now he spoke in a voice of strong excitement.

"Horsley was left-handed, Mr. Darrell," he said. "He could use his right when he liked, but he was really a left-handed man."

"Is that so, Corrigan?" Darrell asked, with eager interest.

"Why, of course!" the trainer replied. "It was stupid of me not to remember that. But I feel too upset by this terrible thing to remember anything. Yes, Harry Horsley was certainly left-handed."

"Then that is final!" Darrell said, with an air of decision. "No, this poor fellow did not take his own life. We can treat that fact as the beginning of our investigation."

A further examination revealed nothing of importance. There were no papers in the dead man's pockets which supplied anything in the nature of a clue, nor could Bob Trudgeon supply anything in the way of helpful information. He had been coming through the wood, and had found Harry Horsley there at the point of death. That was all he could tell.

An hour later the local police had the grim affair in hand, but Frank Darrell was quietly pursuing his own line of investigation.

Harry Horsley's room had been searched, and a letter had been found which might turn out to be a very important factor in the case. The envelope bore the London West postmark, and had been despatched on the previous evening. Inside was a single sheet of paper, carrying neither address nor signature.

The message was:

"Final settlement to-morrow. Same place as before."

Darrell looked at that sheet of paper for a long time, as though, by sheer concentration, he would tear the meaning out of it. The word "settlement" interested him greatly.

He turned at last to Corrigan and said:

"Tell me, just what sort of a man was this Harry Horsley?"

"A decent enough fellow and a hard worker, who was good at his job," answered the trainer. "But a bit weak and impulsive, Darrell, and several times I have had to reprove him. I don't mind my employees, who do not ride, having an occasional flutter on their fancy, but I strongly object to serious betting. And I am afraid that poor Horsley was addicted to that. I had reason to believe that he gambled out of all proportion to his income, and I had to warn him more than once."

"Did he win or lose?" queried Darrell.

"He had his successes, of course, but in the main he lost," said Corrigan. "As a matter of fact, I believe he had been having a bad time lately."

One other thing of interest was found out. A little stable-lad, who had shared the same bed-room with Harry Horsley, said that during the past week or two Horsley had seemed to be worried.

"I saw him start up in his sleep and cry out," he said, "and he never used to do that."

"Was he worried about money, do you think?" Darrell asked.

The boy hesitated, and then blurted out:

"I don't think so, sir, because a week or so ago I came upon him counting out a lot of notes. There must have been nearly a hundred pounds, I think."

Corrigan's eyebrows went up.

"A hundred pounds!" he exclaimed. "Why, Horsley never had as much as that in his life!"

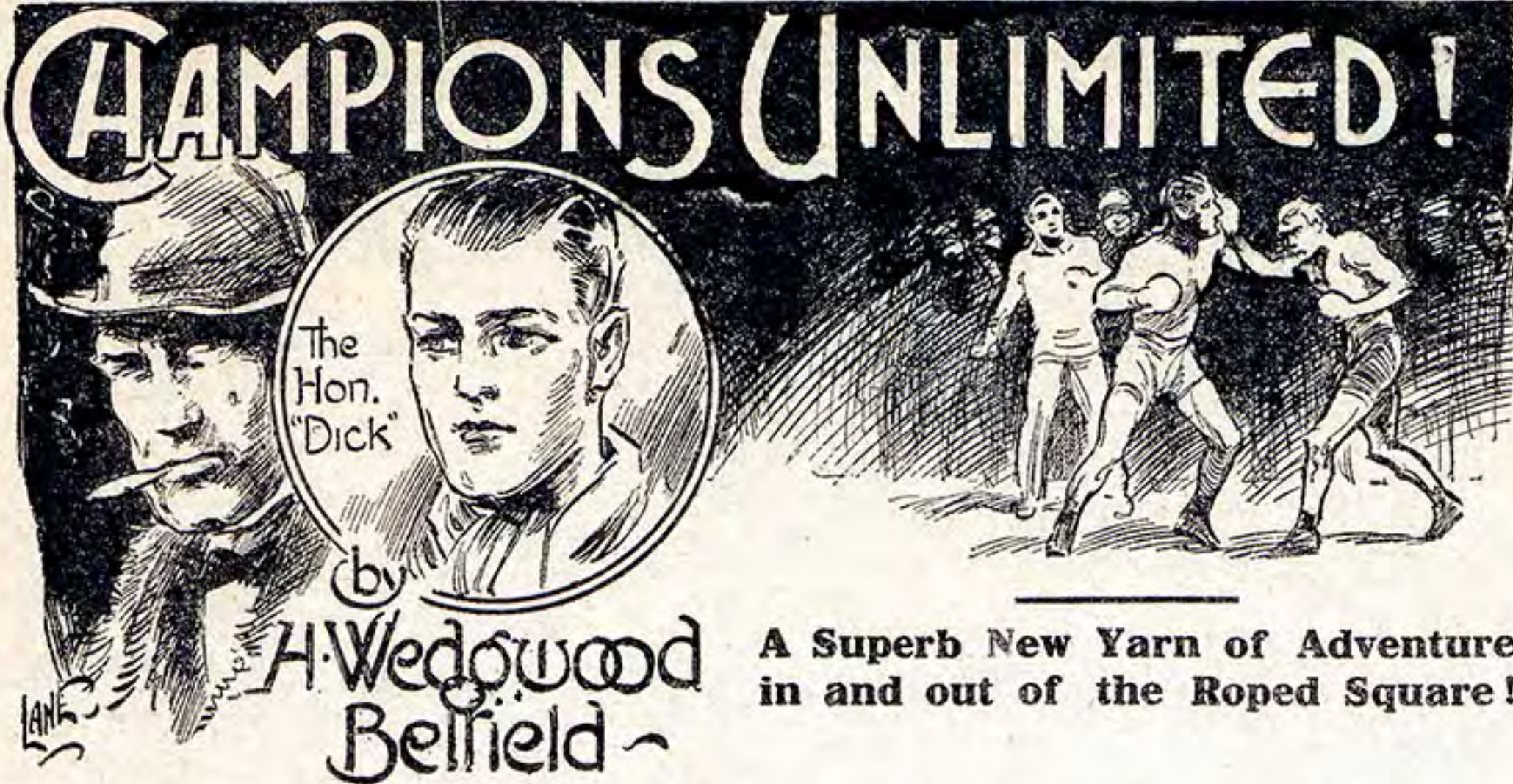
"I'm sure he had it that afternoon, sir," the boy said. "He seemed angry when I came in unexpectedly and saw him, and he put the money away at once. I—I don't want to say anything against him, sir. He was always very good to me."

"That's all right, my boy," Corrigan said kindly. "You are not saying anything against him. You must not say a word about this to anybody else."

That was all that Darrell could glean at Lacey Towers. The tragedy of Horsley's death had made everybody forget that other trouble which had brought Darrell down from London—the strange loss of form by The Viking. And yet in Darrell's mind was the persistent thought that the two things were connected.

(Is Darrell right? Is there some connection between the Viking's loss of form and Harry Horsley's death? Has the Bat anything to do with both? Next week you will find the solution of this mystery in another absorbing long instalment!)

What mystery surrounds Hammerfist Quinn? Dick is baffled, but determined to get to the bottom of it. Read what happens in the Raney-Thistle fight.



A Superb New Yarn of Adventure
in and out of the Roped Square!

FOR NEW READERS.

DICK LAWRENCE, cut adrift by his wealthy UNCLE SILAS, is reduced to exchanging his swell clothes for a little hard cash, and at the pawnshop he comes into conflict with an ex-pugilist, BATTLING BOWSER, of Stepney.

Leaving the establishment, Dick finds in the pocket of a second-hand suit he has bought a scrap of newspaper, which refers to a SCHOOL FOR CHAMPIONS, recently started at Twin Dingles by an American boxing promoter. The idea of the school is to train promising youngsters into champions.

Dick finds out from a journalist friend that the school is run by a man named QUINN, whose reputation is very doubtful. Nevertheless, he decides to go to Twin Dingles in quest of a job as chopping-block.

On his way thither he bivouacs for the night in a wood, and very late on is disturbed by a pitiful cry. Heading in the direction whence it came, he is arrested by the sight of an old man in the clutches of three ruffians. And the old man is his own Uncle Silas!

An attempt to rescue him proves futile, and later on Dick again meets Battling Bowser, who is also going to Twin Dingles in search of work. They journey on together.

Then they run up against RED RANEY, one of Quinn's crowd, and Dick thrashes him. Afterwards, at Twin Dingles, they make Quinn's acquaintance, and find him a doubtful customer. He takes them on his staff.

That night Dick finds a newspaper cutting, which says that his Uncle Silas has been burned to death in a fire at his home. Obviously there is some mystery, for Dick is sure he saw his uncle in the clutches of Quinn's men the evening of the fire.

Bent on investigation, Dick disguises himself and searches Quinn's room, and finds a pendant from his uncle's watch-chain. His search is cut short by the appearance of Red Raney, but he gets away unrecognised.

Later on, though, Raney seeks him out, and, producing the spectacles and false moustache he used as disguises, says: "What about these?"

(Now read what happens.)

Red Raney Dictates Terms.

THE Hon. Dick took the beard and spectacles that Raney extended towards him, and turned them in his hands.

"I don't get you, old sport!" His blue eyes, registering blank bewilderment, lifted to the other's leering face. "If you'd put it plainly, don't you know, instead of speaking in riddles—well, we might get somewhere. What's the stunt?"

Birdlike, Raney jerked his head forward, thrusting it near to Dick's.

"Bluff doesn't cut any ice, young fellow," he said. "I hooked those things out of the pocket o' the coat you wore last night, an' that's saying they're yours, isn't it? And the guy who broke into the boss' library wore them, see? I happen to know."

A smile flickered across Dick's face. He remembered the furtive way in which Red Raney had also shuffled into the library, and he was ready to bet up to any amount that Raney's business was not above suspicion. He wondered how Raney had managed to account to Hammerfist Quinn for his presence there.

With his next words the red-haired one proffered the explanation.

"I happened to be passin' the library, an' I heard someone movin' inside. I knew it weren't Quinn, 'cos I'd met him 'way back towards the gym. So I hopped inside, quiet-like, an' I saw—those." He pointed to the objects in Dick's hand. "An' the bloke who was wearin' them was just about your size, Pug Preston." He paused for a noticeable fraction of time, and added, "What are yo' goin' ter do about it?"

Dick considered. It was a plausible tale that Raney had told, and there were no obvious flaws in it. It was a tale that Hammerfist Quinn would believe—just as he would believe, when Raney showed him the beard and spectacles, that the Hon. Dick, or Pug Preston, as he knew him, was the burglar.

Whatever angle Dick looked at it, he found the situation bristling with difficulties. A word from Red Raney, whispered in Quinn's ear, would imperil his whole project.

"I'm not admitting anything, mind you," he said. "But, supposing it was I you saw in the boss' library—what then?"

The cunning leer spread over Raney's face.

"I'd go to the boss straight away an' I'd tell him what I know," he said. "An' you'd be fired right off, even if he didn't hand you over to the police. That's what I'd do, Pug Preston. But I ain't a man as wants to ruin another guy."

"No?" said Dick, wondering what was coming next.

"I'll keep my mouth shut for a price," went on Red Raney. "You an' me can work together, Pug Preston. I'm not above treatin' a man handsome when he's down on his luck. I'll forget I ever dropped eyes on that beard—for a price."

"And the price?"

Dick's tone was curious, as if he merely wished to gauge the lengths to which Red Raney was prepared to go.

For a few seconds Raney made no answer, staring, with the odd, triumphant leer twisting the corners of his mouth, into Dick's face.

"The boss is matchin' you against Lascar Lal, down at the Olympic, Limehouse, ain't he? Lal's a Chink an' he's as wily as they make 'em. What he don't know about fouts ain't worth knowing, an' he's that wily that there ain't a ref spotted him yet. Mebbe he'd give ye a lickin' if—"

"If what?" asked young Lawrence, as Raney paused.

"If Hammerfist Quinn weren't backin' you," said Raney. "The boss c'n fix you to win if he likes."

Raney made the statement as an established fact, with an unconcern that spoke of his absolute confidence in the power of Quinn to make a champion. It caused Dick furiously to think, forging as it did another link in the chain of mysteries which surrounded Hammerfist Quinn. He was almost tempted to ask Raney to explain the man's uncanny power.

"My price," went on Red Raney. "You've got to lose to Lascar Lal. Get me? You can lose how you like—scratch the fight or go round askin' for the k.o. But Lascar Lal's got to be the winner spite of anything the boss says or does."

"And if I refuse?"

"Then I go straight to Quinn an' tell him what I know," said Raney. "That'll make you sit up, eh? An', young man, I tell yo' you're lucky to get off so light. Is it a deal?"

Dick Lawrence was bewildered. He would have found it less hard to understand had Raney named a price in cash, for blackmail was entirely in keeping with the man's character. But, to find him pitting his brains against those of Hammerfist Quinn, the man who was prepared to make him a champion, was, to put it mildly, puzzling. More, he showed an obvious eagerness for Dick to clinch the bargain.

"Is it a deal?" he repeated.

Dick shook his head.

"I'll have to think it over, Raney."

That fight means a lot to me, you see." He played for time. "It's the first step on the ladder that reaches up to a championship, as you might say."

Raney scowled for no apparent reason.

"I'll give you till to-morrow mornin'," he snarled. "One way or another it's all the same to me. If I tell Quinn what I know, there won't be any fight, you c'n lay your last dollar on that."

He snatched the false beard and spectacles from Dick's lap and stuffed them back into his pocket; then, hunching his great shoulders, he rose to his feet.

"Comin' up to Twin Dingles?" he asked; and, struck by a sudden suspicion, he stared hard at Dick. "Where've you been?" he demanded, wrinkling his brows. "Yo' sure look mighty spruce."

Dick grinned, and there was a certain hardness in the grin.

"Out for a stroll! Nice mornin', isn't it? I say, Raney, aren't you going a bit too fast with that stunt of yours? I mean—sort of counting your chickens before they're hatched. To begin with, you've got to prove that the beard belongs to me."

Raney laughed raucously.

"Quinn won't want no proof," he said.

"And, supposing I went to Mr. Quinn and told him that you had offered me a bribe to lose. How's that, old sport?"

Raney swallowed hard. His face flushed crimson.

"You daren't. If you did there's me to reckon with." A noticeable pause, and then: "And Lascar Lal, who's as wily as any Chink on the face o' this earth. No, you daren't, Pug Preston, and you know it. I'll give you till to-morrow mornin'."

They walked for half a mile in silence. Dick was trying to arrange the bewildering array of events in something like ordered sequence.

Uncle Silas—Hammerfist Quinn—Red Raney—and Lascar Lal—woven together into an intrigue from which he failed to unravel a single thread. Every day he seemed to find himself more hopelessly entangled.

He needed time—time to sift the thing to its foundation, and Red Raney had set him a time limit. In twenty-four hours he could hope to do nothing except acknowledge his failure.

He turned to Raney as they began the descent towards Twin Dingles.

"It's on," he said, "if—"

"If what?" snapped Raney, spinning round on him.

"If you'll put me wise to one thing," Dick said. "Quinn reck'ns he can make me a champion. How's he going to do it?"

Raney strode on for a dozen yards. Then he said:

"It ain't Quinn who'll do it. It's the Doc. You'll meet him some day, mebbe. He was with the boss last night."

Dick remembered the thin man who had paced the library while he had hidden among the bushes. Tall and thin and saturnine he had been, a sinister figure who went by the name of the Doc and was behind Quinn's schemes. And, of course, he was the Dr. X referred to in the correspondence upon Hammerfist's desk. It was the first light upon the mystery of the school for champions.

But the Hon. Dick did not delude himself with any false hopes. His position at Twin Dingles was like that of a man standing upon the edge of a volcano. At any moment the

ground under his feet might crumble away and plunge him into an abyss of destruction.

His future rested with Red Raney, and he knew it.

"Mind you," said Raney, as they parted at the gym, "you hand the palm to Lascar Lal. You've got that?"

Dick nodded.

"Sure!" he said; but mentally he added the qualification that whether he did or not depended entirely upon circumstances.

He found Battling Bowser hammering a bag in the gym, and he drew him aside into a corner.

"Towser," he said, to his strange chum. "Have you ever heard of a gentleman named Lascar Lal, of Limehouse?"

The pugilist drew his brows together, and it was plain from the slight gesture he made that he knew the man and thought little of him.

"That I have, matey," he said. "He's a Chink an' he's like the rest o' the breed. They ain't to be trusted, they ain't."

"As wily as an old fox, eh?" said Dick. "So you know him. Where does he hang out?"

"He's a cellar rat as haunts the riverside," snapped Bowser, his eyes showing hard. "His dad owns one o' the vilest dens down Limehouse way, an' Lal takes after him. Master Dick"—the pugilist laid a hand on Dick's arm and spoke earnestly—"don't you never go nigh them quarters, if ye put a value on y'r life. They'd as soon knife ye as look at ye."

"Then there's a pleasant prospect in front of me!" grinned the Hon. Dick. "I'm matched against Lascar Lal at the Olympic Academy, Limehouse."

Battling Bowser looked at him aghast, with something like indignation blazing in his deep-sunken eyes. Indignation was succeeded by a sort of half-pity, and he said, as if voicing a piteous entreaty:

"It ain't fair! Lascar Lal ain't a man o' your class. Why"—and he added in an undertone—"I'd sooner fight the devil, I would!"

An Old Excuse.

RED RANEY'S fight with "Scot" Thistle was fixed for a certain Wednesday evening at the Mammoth Boxing Hall. It aroused little public interest, either in the Press or elsewhere, for Raney was an unknown man, and had no fighting record to speak of; and, as far as the public was concerned, the fact that Hammerfist Quinn, with a notoriety on the other side of the Atlantic and a super-cuteness for smelling out a fighter, was his manager, created no excitement whatever.

But that was before the fight. Afterwards—well, Hammerfist Quinn could afford to bide his time. It was the first open move in a big game.



A RUSE TO GET AWAY!

Like a bird of prey the man who had been driven from his profession looked at that moment—his head out-thrust, with the light from the electric arcs finding a gleaming reflection in his domed forehead, a cynical smile playing around his thin lips, and long, talon-like fingers gripping the leather case on his knees. His gaze rested on Scot Thistle.

"I don't like it, hanged if I do!" muttered Dick.

He heard and saw nothing of the preliminaries. The sinister Da Silva fascinated him. He was no ordinary opponent; he was not even an opponent against which the youngster liked to match himself. Crookedness allied with science is a combination against which ordinary honest strength fights at a disadvantage.

"Seconds out!"

The crisp command recalled the Hon. Dick's wandering thoughts. He smiled grimly, screwed his monocle in his eye, and looked back at the ring—and, incidentally, across it, to Hammerfist Quinn.

Quinn was as cool as any man in the hall.

"Time!"

Scot Thistle took the offensive from the beginning, moving across the ring with an agility that made Raney's ponderous shuffle look like the tardy advance of a steam-roller. He drove a beautifully-timed right swing for the point of Red's jaw, and followed it with a left that streaked out like a panther's paw.

Raney smothered the first, but fell to the second, shuffling back with a redder patch on his red body. Thistle's glove whipped across to his chin.

It staggered Raney badly. The confident smile faded from his thick lips. He was flurried by the swiftness of the Scot's attack, and dropped back still further, covering up with the awkwardness of an amateur. The would-be heavy-weight champion looked anything but a champion then.

Thistle was quick to follow up his advantage. A pile-driving right, landing dead over Raney's heart, evoked a startled gasp that could be heard from one end of the hall to the other. Red side-stepped with panicky haste, and regained the centre of the ring, only to lose another point as the Scot's glove curled past his defence.

"Splendid!" said Hendriks rapturously.

That first round went unquestionably in favour of Thistle. He piled up points with a regularity that fetched a murmur of applause from the spectators and caused Hammerfist Quinn to gnaw his underlip. Raney went back to his corner with a bleeding lip, and his body blotched with bruises; it was only his immense capacity for taking punishment that had enabled him to see the round through.

"Splendid!" declared Hendriks again.

The Hon. Dick said nothing. He shot a glance at Da Silva. The man was still watching Scot Thistle, who lay back in his corner with a smile on his rugged face.

The second round was very much like the first, with all the advantage on the Scotchman's side. In the third, Raney resorted to whirlwind tactics, landing a couple of heavy blows to his opponent's body. The two men dropped into a clinch and broke away, Raney scoring with another body-punch on the parting.

They were hard blows, but they had no apparent effect upon the Scot's perfectly-trained body. He skipped back lightly, measured his distance, and moved in again. A straight left from one of his long arms jumped to the point of Raney's jaw, connecting with the staccato crack of a pistol-shot.

Raney swayed and staggered drunkenly, as Thistle's right, following close upon that other punch, found a tender spot on his body. He shuffled back. Thistle leapt after him and landed a left hook to his jaw. It was a punch that had behind it all the tremendous driving power of the Scot's rugged body, and it thudded home with a crack that could be heard plainly above the pad of moving feet.

Raney staggered into the ropes, looking a very sick man. His jaw—which Thistle had already battered until it was as sore as an open wound—was exposed. The Scot saw it, and a hard, triumphant smile curved his lips. His left went menacingly.

"It's over!" murmured Hendriks, with a hissing intake of breath. "Raney can't stand up to another!"

And, at that instant, Dick shot a

(Continued at foot of next column.)

A century at Lord's! That is every cricketer's ambition, and Jack Darbyshire achieves it. You'll find some great cricket below!



A SON OF SOUTH AFRICA

A THRILLING NEW MYSTERY STORY OF FIRST-CLASS CRICKET.

By RICHARD RANDOLPH.

(Author of "Smith of Rocklandshire," "Carden of Cardenshire," "The Footer School," etc., etc.)

THE STORY BEGINS WITH:

JACK DARBYSHIRE'S return to the cities, after some months in the wilds with JUDE WALMSLEY, the man who has always acted as his guardian.

Jack is just in time to assist the Border side in their last match in the Currie Cup Cricket Tournament, and bowls so finely that he is chosen to go with the South African team to England. Though only seventeen, he is a man in stature and strength, and big things are hoped of him.

Walmsley objects violently to Jack's going to England, and they come to blows. The man has been drinking heavily. He uses a revolver, and gets arrested and sentenced to a brief term of imprisonment.

While he is in prison, Jack receives a number of anonymous letters, warning him that he will be in danger if he goes to England. Jude cannot have written these. There is a mystery, which deepens when an unsuccessful assault is made upon the boy one night by a tall white man and a Kafir.

The white man, IVOR BAIGENT, and the Kafir cross to England on the same boat as Jack; and an attempt to kill him one night induces him to tell the other members of the team all that has happened previously. They promise to stand by him in any emergency.

Later, at the Oval, Jack does well against Surrey. At the close of play on the first day there is a strange disturbance, in which Baigent and the Kafir take part. With the assistance of J. A. FERRARS, the well-known cricketer, and COLORADO, the famous cowboy, Jack captures the Kafir, but releases him with a warning as to his future behaviour.

Jack goes on to do great things against Gloucestershire, and is included in the team to meet the M.C.C. at Lord's. There he notices an old man, CHINESE ALLARDINE, a member of the M.C.C., who bears a marked facial likeness to Ivor Baigent. Ferrars tells Jack, too, that Baigent's real name is Carthew Allardine, and that he is not on speaking terms with his great-uncle, Chinese. The mystery of "Baigent's" antagonism is deepening!

That night Jack is attacked while asleep by the Kafir. The coloured man has a grip on his throat, and he awakes to struggle feebly, with his strength failing fast.

(Now read what happens.)

Colorado.

TAKEN in his sleep, Jack had been at a disadvantage. But he had far greater muscular strength than the Kafir, and, though his head sang and he was almost choking, he forced Jobey off.

The black rascal smote the floor with a thud. Jack threw the bed-clothes off him, and was on his feet, pyjama-clad, before Jobey could rise. Only a moment before, however, like a monkey for activity, the Kafir scrambled up. And now his right hand gripped the hilt of a knife.

Jack had brought his revolver to England, but for the life of him he could not remember then where it

was. In his luggage somewhere, no doubt. But Jobey was not likely to wait while he searched for it.

He snatched up a pillow, and met with that the slash the Kafir made at him. It was not a very efficient shield, but it served. The point of the knife drew blood from Jack's arm, but his wound was little more than a scratch. Feathers circled slowly downwards, and Jack dropped the pillow.

Jobey, crouching apeline, retreated towards the open window. Jack seized a chair and followed.

It was pretty plain that the Kafir, having failed to kill Jack in his sleep, lacked resolution for a decided attempt to kill him awake, and was now intent upon getting away.

But it did not suit Jack that he should get away thus. Jack was out to capture him, to get him locked up for this midnight attack, and possibly to force from him, once imprisoned, the truth about his connection with the man who called himself "Ivor Baigent," but was known to Ferrars as Carthew Allardine.

The Kafir moved backwards towards the window, holding the gleaming knife before him. Jack pressed upon him, the chair upraised to strike.

But the chair was as poor a weapon as the pillow had been a shield. It was altogether too light. One might have splintered it upon the head of a Kafir without getting anything more than a grunt from him.

There was nothing else ready to hand, however. Jack made up his mind that if hard smiting could atone for deficiency in weight and toughness of weapon that deficiency should be atoned for.

Ceasing suddenly to retreat, Jobey made a dart forward, and the long knife thrust.

But Jack was quick to meet the movement. The chair came down, and the keen weapon slashed the cane of its seat. Above it Jack's left shot out, to take Jobey under the chin, and send him reeling backwards.

And even as he reeled the chair smashed upon his head. After that it was no more a chair. It did not leave a remnant stout or heavy enough to serve Jack as a weapon.

To Jobey it had done little damage. But Jobey felt that punch all right. That went far towards dazing him. He snatched at a wardrobe hard by to keep himself from falling, and the wardrobe lurched over forwards and came down upon the combatants.

For the moment both were stunned, but only for the moment in Jack's case. He jumped up, bruised and giddy, and fairly tore on trousers and jacket over his pyjamas. Thus

habited, he could go anywhere and face anyone.

He swung round to find that Jobey had wriggled out from under the wardrobe, with the knife still in his hand. The Kafir got to his feet. The hand holding the knife went back, and Jack realised that he meant to throw the weapon.

To the switch went Jack's hand, and the glow of light in the room was changed in an instant to what seemed darkness, though outside there was no real darkness.

Jack ducked and heard the knife whiz past. He switched on the light again. Jobey had gained the window.

It was touch and go as Jack hurled himself at Jobey, and Jobey squirmed out of the window. Through the boy's mind flashed the thought that it was a pity his room was on the first floor. Had it been on, say, the fifth there would have been quite a chance of a broken neck for Jobey, which, all things considered, would have been fortunate.

No such luck! Jobey dropped on his feet like a monkey, and made off at once.

Jack wasted no time. He was game to take any risk Jobey took. For the moment he quite forgot that he was an International cricketer, engaged in a big match. All that he thought of was that the only chance of catching the Kafir was to follow by the way he had gone.

He came down more heavily than Jobey, but more lightly than he might have done, for, though he staggered and fell, he was up again and in pursuit before the Kafir was out of sight.

The window was at the back of the hotel, and looked upon a quiet street running down to the Embankment. No one else showed as Jobey turned the corner and Jack raced after him.

A taxi waited just round the corner. For this the Kafir made. Jack put on a spurt, and all but reached it before the Kafir scrambled in.

All but—not quite! The taxi sped away, swung round, headed westwards, left him standing.

"Waal, pard, what's been eventuating?" asked a cool, quiet voice with a touch of sarcasm in it, so it seemed to Jack.

The boy faced round upon a man taller than himself, a man he had met before—Colorado Charley.

"Did you see that chap?"

"Yep. He sure looked like the same galoot you were chasing at the Oval Cricket Field a little while back."

"That's it! I woke up a few minutes ago, to find him trying to throttle me. He'd have brought it off if he'd been a bit stronger. But

when I woke up I chucked him off the bed, and after that there was a bit of a mix-up. A wardrobe fell on us, and that bouncer chucked the knife at me. But I switched off the electric light and dodged, and it didn't hit me."

"It would sure seem, pard, that he don't cotton to you," drawled Colorado.

Jack laughed. Colorado took it all so coolly. His was the attitude of the man to whom the facing of sudden death was nothing out of the way, because he had faced it so many times, and was still alive. And somehow that attitude appealed to Jack far more than the way in which men who had never been used to anything more than the ordinary risks of civilised life took things.

"I don't see what I can do now," Jack said.

"Nope. Except washing your feet," replied the cowboy.

When Jack had rushed on trousers and jacket he had felt clothed for any issue. Now he realised that his feet were bare, and, as Colorado had hinted, dirty from the pavements.

All he could do was to get back to the hotel, visit a bath-room, and go to bed again. It was not worth while to rouse any of his comrades. His peril was past. Jobey would not return that night, would hardly try the same trick again.

"Hotel Northumberland?" asked Colorado.

"Yes. You don't mean you're putting up there?" returned Jack.

"That's so. I'm abroad later than usual to-night. Ran against an old-timer from out West, and stayed at his location yarning. But time counts for nothing much in this yer London, with a man on duty to let you in at any hour. The man may look at your feet, pard. Say nothing. It's no concern of his if you choose to fake a little pascar in your sleeping suit and without boots."

"What's a pascar?" Jack asked, grinning.

The light of an electric standard fell full upon the face which wore that cheery grin, and the heart of Colorado warmed to this youngster from South Africa who could take deadly danger so lightly.

"Waal, call it a walk abroad. That's near enough. Let's git, pard."

The night porter did cast a glance at Jack's bare feet, but he said nothing.

"What's your floor, pard?" inquired Colorado.

"First. What's yours?"

"Fourth. But it's not mine that matters. I'll see you safe in bed, and go to my repose after that."

One of the lifts was still running, and in a moment they were on the first floor, and Jack's feet found welcome the change to the thick, soft carpets of the corridor.

"Here we are! There's a bath-room just round the corner. Sit down and we'll have a yarn after I've got clean," said Jack.

When he came back he found that the wardrobe had been set on end again. Unaided, Colorado had done what would have required two of the hotel staff at least to accomplish. But for the smashed chair there was no sign in the room of the struggle that had taken place. Colorado, a long cigar between his teeth, sat on the bed.

"I ain't trusting those chairs much, pard," he said.

"They're all right to sit on," replied Jack. "But you can't break a Kafir's head with them."

"And you sure never know when

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"HOW'S THAT?"

that may be necessary," said Colorado. "The folks that build furniture oughta have more imagination."

Jack looked round. Colorado had piled the remains of the chair into a neat little heap. He had not tried to gather up the feathers. He sat smoking now as though prepared to stay till morning. And he was not in the very least excited—sympathetic, helpful, thoroughly interested, but completely cool.

What a man to have at one's back in a tight place! That was Jack's thought. Many a man had proved Charles Crockett Houlston in tight places, and none had ever found him wanting.

"Git into bed, son!" he said now. "Tell me all about it if you want to. I'd sure like to be put wise. But don't say more than you feel inclined. I may be plumb curious; but I've seen enough of civilised life to know that a man's being hungry don't mean that it's anybody's affair to feed him. It ain't quite a good sim-i-lee; but I reckon you git me."

Jack did get him. Moreover, there was something in what Colorado had said that appealed to him, though it might have gone unnoticed by most fellows. Where there was less civilisation there was less starvation, for in the wilds the right to a meal by a camp-fire was hardly ever questioned.

This man was his own sort. Pretty nearly old enough to be his father, he supposed, but yet curiously young in some ways. He would tell Colorado the whole story, and bank far more surely on his advice than on that of any of his comrades, good fellows though they were.

"I'm going to put you wise," he said, as he scrambled into bed. "I'll tell you the whole yarn; but don't you blame me if you can't make head or tail of it. I can't myself. There's a regular maze of mystery, and so far very little clue, though I do seem to catch at something here and there."

"Pro-ceed, pard," said Colorado gravely.

Jack told his story as clearly as he could.

It began with Jude Walmsley, of course—it went on to the threatening letters—the attack in Johannesburg—the man who called himself Baigent on the Brancepeth Castle—Jobey there, too—the snake in the bunk—Jobey and Baigent together at the docks at Southampton—together again at the Oval—Jobey's behaviour on the ground later, which had caused him to be expelled (but of that Colorado knew already)—Baigent's visit to Jack at Clifton—the sight of Jude Walmsley getting on a bus near the Marble Arch—Lord's and Chinese Allardine—Ferrars' revelation of the fact that Ivor Baigent was really Carthew Allardine, grandson of the old man's brother—and now this attack by Jobey, full of mystery because it was difficult to think how the Kafir could have located Jack's bed-room in that big hotel.

"Don't you git to worrying your head about that," said Colorado. "I reckon there's heaps of ways the number of your room might be discovered, and, given the number, anyone who knows the place well might locate it from the outside. This

Baigent, who is sure one bad hombre, is at the bottom of that, you bet. But the alias don't amount to much, pard. The galoot wrote a book under the name of Ivor Baigent, and if the name don't belong to anyone else, he might argue he'd a right to use it. These writing folks are sure vain of their pen-names, I understand."

"Wrote a book, did he?" returned Jack. "Now he was talking about doing one about the South African natives; but I thought it was just his bounce. What sort of book was it, and what about?"

Colorado sniffed disdainfully. "It pur-ported to be about cattle ranches out West," he answered, in his most drawing tones. "And it was sure one bad book, rotten from cover to cover. The galoot didn't savvy the West or the puncher one little bit. I on'y read it because it laid out to be about us cattle-folk; and I on'y remember it and its author's name because it was so all-fired tad. But I'm telling you because you can't make much out of his calling himself Baigent instead of Allardine. Which is no great odds, for he'll tumble over himself some other way before he's much older, I reckon."

"What do you think about Jude?" asked Jack.

"Now that's a con-un-drum, it sure is. I'd say he was more friend than enemy to you, and yet I wouldn't be too certain that he'd made the voyage out of pure friendship. I don't reckon he and this Baigent—or Allardine—are in cahoots. If you could meet up with Walmsley and git him to talk free, pard, you might drive in pretty close to the heart of the mystery. But don't go fixing up an interview with him all alone and in his own ground. You oughta have a pard close handy in case Jude isn't a white man—and he ain't white all through, I reckon, anyway!"

Jack sighed heavily. "I meant to try and see him," he said. "But what I'm afraid of all the time is being a deadweight to the team. They're fine fellows, and all pals of mine, and, of course, they know something about all this. But I can't be asking any of them to come along with me and take the risk of being shot or knifed. And Jude might shoot if he got mad, any time."

"Don't ask them," answered Colorado. "Let me know, and count on me to see you through. I haven't much on hand just now, and, though I'm free to admit that your cricket game is a humdinger of a sport, still watching it don't fill my days brimming over. There's Jack Ferrars, too—he'd be glad to help. But he's mostly playing cricket, besides which he's a married man. Two more we could count on if they were in England, and Habby will be here in a week or two now; but we're not reckoning to see Gil Yardley this summer."

"But I couldn't ask you—" "You didn't, son. I butted in and offered. Don't argue now!"

"I won't. I'm ever so grateful, and I'll count on you, Colorado," Jack stretched out a hand, and they gripped. "I say, I know who Yardley is—you mean the Australian

cricketer, don't you? But who is Habby?"

Colorado smiled his most whimsical smile.

"The All-America cricketer that would have been if he'd taken to the game thirty years or so earlier, pard," he answered. "He was converted too late, and he's given up the notion of putting the United States on the test match map because he sees that even before a millionaire could raise the right sort of team in the States, the millionaire, being fifty or so when he started in, would be a trifle too aged to play for it. Habbakuk Asshurbanipal Grill is his full name, and he and Jack Ferrars and Gilbert Yardley and I are sworn brothers. Habby's the eldest brother, and Gil's the youngest—until you come in, as I reckon you sure will when Habby has heard about you, for Jack cottoned to you at once, and Gil, though absent, won't stand in the way. So good-night, son, and count on me and Ferrars, and on Habby when he breezes in!"

The Match at Lord's.

IN spite of the feeling he had that to tell his story to the elders of the team next day would be an unpleasant experience, Jack slept well, and got up with more cheerfulness than he would have felt without the knowledge that Colorado was under the same roof.

They met at breakfast, and Taylor and a few of the other players heard something of what had happened then. But the full story was left till later, when George Ailsop, Taylor, Hands, Susskind, and Commaile gathered in a private room to hear it from Jack, who had the moral support of his new friend.

"There is little that can be done, except to put the police on the track of that Kafir, and the chances are against their rounding him up," said the manager. "At present we have no evidence against this fellow Baigent or Allardine. As Mr. Houlston says, the fact that he has gone under two names is discounted as a suspicious circumstance by his having some sort of right to the one by which we first knew him. I will do my best to find out whether any inquiries were made for Darbyshire at the hotel yesterday. But the probability is that the scoundrel who sent Jobey got his information in some less direct way than by asking the booking clerk."

Colorado did not express his intention of watching over Jack. That sort of demonstration was not in his line. But somehow those present understood that he was to be relied upon for help. He had been organising the rodeo spectacles at Wembley; but now his hard work there was practically over, and he had plenty of spare time on his hands.

He turned up with Ferrars at Lord's on the Monday; but they did not arrive till the South African innings was over, and Jack and his comrades were in the field.

Not very many runs were added. Ward and Nupen both left almost at once, but Meintjes batted really well, and might have made many more than his 22 if Carter had not succumbed to an off-break sent down by Evans after keeping up an end for half an hour. The total was 379.

Frank Mann must have had some thinking to do while drawing up his order of going in. He had on his side only one man who regularly goes in first, and only one belonging indisputably to the tail. He sent George Brown in with Russell, allotted to Hearne and Hendren their usual places at Nos. 3 and 4, followed with two left-handers in Mead and A. P. F. Chapman, and gave Evans No. 7, Fender No. 8, and himself No. 9. With Allen at No. 10 there was strength almost all through, and the presence of so many forcing batsmen meant fast scoring almost certainly.

The fast scoring did not begin at once. Brown was in one of his stubborn defensive moods, when no one can persuade him to hit; and Russell was quiet. But they stayed; and, though the first hour's play only yielded 57, no chance had been offered, and Taylor had had on all five of his bowlers.

Meintjes bothered Brown, and Russell seemed to find plenty to think about when opposed to Nupen. But Jack could do no good at the outset, and the pitch did not help Carter. It was George Hearne who got Russell with a googly when the total was 85 and the tall Essex man's score 55.

J. W. Hearne batted beautifully, a model of style, as always, while Brown pursued his stolid way. They added 62 before Taylor caught Hearne off Nupen for 41.

A hearty cheer greeted the advent of Patsy Hendren. So far there had been no fireworks; but the crowd looked to the sturdy little man to provide them.

The bowling was not yet worn out, but it was getting worn down somewhat. Blanckenberg, Dixon, Bissett, and Nourse were missed. But the fielding was first-rate. Hardly a run had been given away, and the only chance had been taken.

Hendren took a few minutes to play himself in, and then proceeded to hit hard. As if inspired by his partner's example, Brown suddenly woke up. He had made only 44 of the first 150; but while the next 100 were scored at a rare speed he kept pace with Hendren. To neither the big man nor the little one did it seem to matter in the least who bowled. They added 107 in under an hour, and then Brown, nearing his century, turned stonewaller again, let pass half a dozen chances of scoring, monopolised the bowling, and in the event was beaten by a fizzing off-break from Jack with his score 95.

Three for 254, with Philip Mead, than whom there is no more difficult man in England to get out, joining Hendren, did not look good for the South Africans.

But they stuck to their job gamely, and the crowd frequently applauded the work of Catterall and Commaile in the deep, Susskind, and Darbyshire in the slips, and Taylor and Meintjes on the off. Ward was at his best behind the stumps, too.

Those who understood the game—and nowhere are more competent critics to be found than in the pavilion at Lord's—told one another that here was a captain, and here was a team. Matters were not going too well for South Africa; but Taylor was cool, and his men were not rattled. The best time to judge a team is not when it is easily on top, but when it has to fight hard. The Afrikanders had had to fight hard against Surrey and Lancashire, and had triumphed. They might not triumph at Lord's; but they were earning golden opinions.

Mead looked to have taken root, though he had not made many runs yet. Hendren was gathering them fast again, hooking everything at all short, and scoring off really good balls, as a first-class batsman will when well set, with the ball looking big.

Jack and Meintjes were taken off. Nupen and George Hearne went on again.

"How's that?"

Mead had covered his wicket to one from Hearne. Coming straight through, it had taken him by surprise. His bat missed it by the

fraction of an inch, and it smote his right pad hard.

"Out!" said Harry Butts, the umpire.

Mead lumbered off, a stiff, almost ungainly figure, but a great bat in his own dour way.

Four wickets for 304. And now came in A. P. F. Chapman, one of the hopes of England, tall, handsome, broad-shouldered, with a smile on his fresh-coloured face, looking all over the cricket hero, as so many fine cricketers do not look it.

That was the last ball of George Hearne's over, and Hendren greeted Chapman by hitting four, two, four, and three off Nupen, who had worked very hard, and was now tiring.

Chapman started with a four, but the last ball of Nupen's over all but bowled him. In spite of that Taylor took the Rand youngster off. He had done pretty nearly enough for one day. Jack Darbyshire, of stronger build, though younger, was better fit to carry on than he.

A bowler new to big cricket has not had his baptism of fire till he has seen the best balls he can send down carted all over the field by two batsmen well set and at the top of their form.

Jack had that experience now. He did not guess how critically he was being watched. A hundred men in the pavilion, Taylor and three or four more of the team in the field, and Ferrars looking on with Colorado from one of the stands, were as interested in him as in either of the batsmen.

Taylor kept him on, though he was hit hard. Pace bowling there must be at one end, and Nupen must not be worn out. It did not look possible to wear out Jack.

He was bowling well even when hit hardest, and, though his young face showed grim resolution at times, it never showed sulkeness. He took his place in the slips at the end of each of his overs smiling. It was rather a puzzle to him why Taylor kept him on so long, especially after the nursing in the match at Bristol. But he was content to believe that the skipper knew best, and he was learning things from the manner in which Hendren and Chapman dealt with balls that would have been good for wickets in inferior company.

"That boy's the right sort, Colorado," said Ferrars. "He can stand punishment."

"He's sure getting it," replied the cowboy. "Now would you say, pard, that he was pitching well?"

"Bowling well, you mean, old duffer. Yes, it's good stuff all the time. But there's something better than the quality of the bowling, and



JACK GETS A SURPRISE!

that's his pluck and cheerfulness. You've done right to adopt him, Colorado! I hereby agree to consider Jack Darbyshire a younger brother."

"This cricket game sure beats me, Jack. You see so much in it that I can't. But I've seen that boy up against things, and I reckon he measured man-high all right."

Chinese Allardine, in the pavilion enclosure, sat humped up with his chin on the handle of his umbrella, and watched intently. As a boy he had seen the mighty Alfred Mynn, so aged a man he was. He had watched the famous fast bowlers of old, men of the days when W. G. Grace was young, such men as George Freeman and Tarrant, of Cambridgeshire, and the great John Jackson. Then there had been a long period when, absent in China, he had known the great speed merchants of the day by name only. He had never seen Richardson, Lockwood, or Mold. When he came back he had found nothing equal to the heroes of his youth till he saw Jack Gregory and McDonald. Now, in this son of South Africa, he thought he discerned one worthy to be ranked with them. And the old man's judgment was worth something.

The end of the partnership came at length. The crowd had roared with applause at Hendren's century, for the crowd loves Patsy. The 400 had been posted and recognised by cheers, the 450 had gone up; 500 was very near.

Then, nearing 200, Hendren made a mistake about a slow that Jack had slipped in, put it up in front of him, and was caught by Tom Ward running round from behind the wicket. Taylor had called to Carter at short leg to hold back, and Ward made no mistake about the catch.

Evans came in, and Jack sent down one of his fastest. It beat the old Oxonian completely, coming in from the off, and his middle peg somersaulted.

Cheers rang in Jack's ears; but he hardly understood that it was he whom the spectators cheered. Suddenly he had become dead tired. When he sent down that slow to Hendren his faculties had been fully alert; but the fast one which had disposed of Evans was almost mechanical, and now the young bowler felt that if he was not taken off soon he would have to ask for a rest—and to ask seemed to him almost disgraceful.

But Taylor, wise and sympathetic captain, had seen and understood. Fender, the new batsman, hit one four off Jack's last ball—the worst he had sent down—but got no chance of hitting more, for Meintjes was on at Jack's end next over.

Chapman's century and the 500 came off the same stroke. Fender made 45 in less than twenty minutes. Then he and Chapman were both out in the same over to Carter, who seemed suddenly to have developed deadliness. The total was then 570 for eight. Mann and Allen quickly took it past 600; but Meintjes disposed of both Mann and Durston, and the innings closed for 605.

It was obvious that the South Africans had nothing but a draw to play for, and to avoid defeat they must bat the greater part of the last day, being in a minority of 226. But Taylor seemed very cheerful about it, very well satisfied with the day's play.

"We were up against a stiff proposition," he said; "but no one let us down. Even Pam here fielded well, for all they've said about him, and everyone stuck to his work. But no one did better than you, Jack!"

Chang Lo Soo.

AT Jack's age fatigue is easily shaken off. Jack went to bed early that night, sharing a room with George Bissett again, and was asleep as soon as his head touched the pillow. He did not stir for nine hours; but he awoke fit for anything, and was one of the first at the breakfast-table.

The meal over, he wandered out alone, and soon found himself on the Embankment, which always had an attraction for him.

The river sparkled in the bright sunlight, and a breeze rippled its surface. He watched a Thames Police boat come in with something concealed by a tarpaulin in it, and turned away with a shudder, for he could guess that the covering concealed the body of some unlucky man or woman who had met death by drowning, and it seemed horrible to think of upon this cheerful morning, when London looked its best.

"Excuse me, honourable sir," spoke a soft voice by his side, "but

I am strange in this great city, and there is much I do not know of which I should uncommonly like to be informed. The bridge to the right—is not that Waterloo Bridge? And that to our left—is it not Blackfriars? And that must surely be the monument brought from Egypt, which is called Cleopatra's Needle?"

Jack turned. Though the man who spoke had no accent, he was certainly not English. The turn of his sentences showed that, and no Englishman addresses anyone as "honourable sir."

The fellow who had spoken was quite young—not so very much older than Jack, perhaps. He wore correct morning dress and a shining silk hat. But underneath that hat showed a face that belonged to the Far East.

Japanese, Jack thought at first glance; then he corrected his impression. Chinese, rather. No pigtail—but, then, comparatively few Chinese wear pigtails nowadays, and those who do are not found in Europe.

Somehow Jack, though his South African upbringing had naturally made him less ready to be friendly with any member of the yellow or black races than the average enlightened Englishman is, liked the face.

intently might be akin to him—that made him more ready to talk with this youth from the Far East than he would otherwise have been.

"I haven't a card," he said. "But my name's Jack Darbyshire."

"Then you veritably and truly are the South African cricketer?" exclaimed Chang Lo Soo.

"Yes. Did you guess that before you spoke to me?"

"Honourable sir, I did not. But I was at the ground of the Lord's yesterday, and when you turned it was for a moment as though you must be the bowler who so bravely held on. But to myself I said, 'It cannot be so, for this is a very English young man. The likeness must be a chance.'"

"Are you interested in cricket?" asked Jack.

"Most greatly. But not merely and solely as a spectator. I have played the game—likewise footer under the Soccer code, and lawn-tennis, and golf."

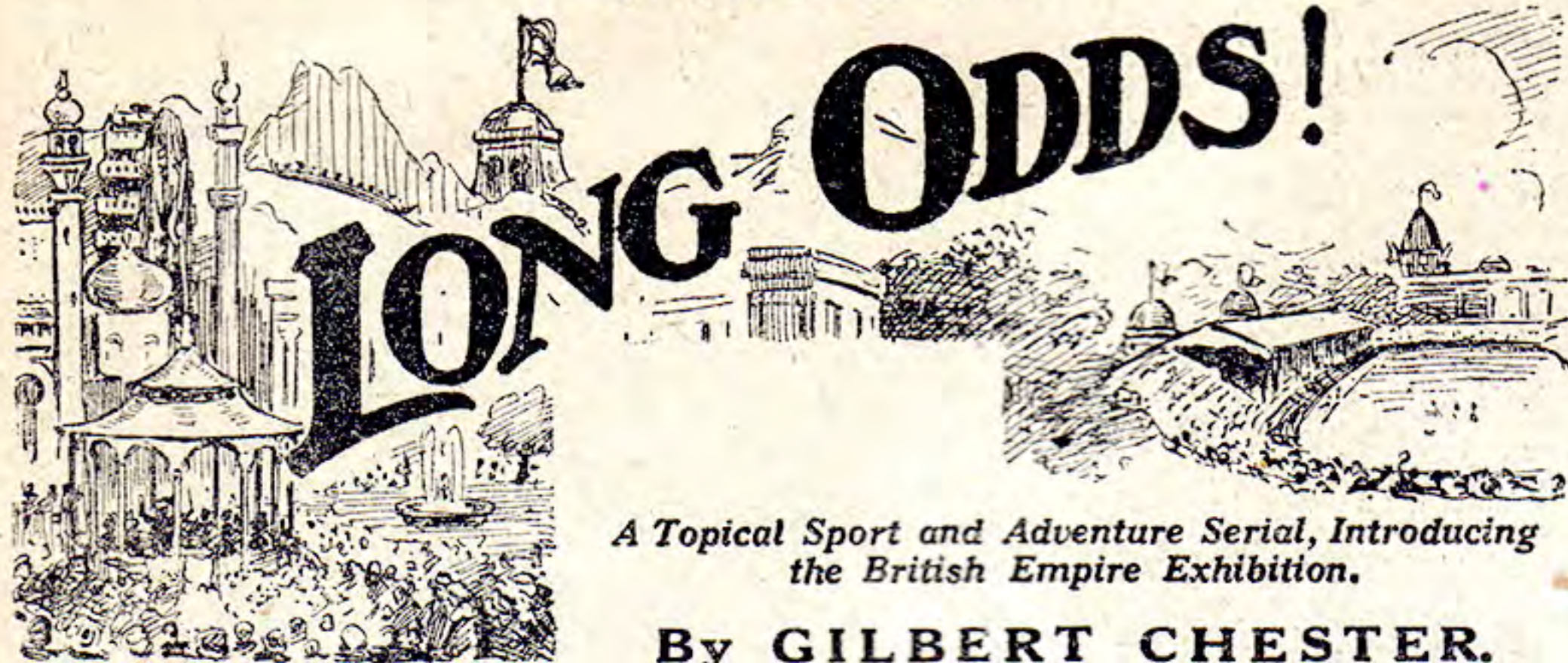
Through Jack's mind flashed a line of one of the few poems he had read—the only poem he had ever learned by heart—Kipling's "Ballad of East and West."

Essex at the Oval. —By C. SHAW BAKER.

(WARWICKSHIRE C.C.O.)



Dick makes good on the track. Now he has to meet Rexman in the water.
What will be the outcome?



THE EARLY CHAPTERS.

DICK BRAND, an adventurous youngster, goes out to Australia to take a clerkship with the shipping firm of Callahan & Co., of Brisbane. On arrival, he finds the boss, SILAS CALLAHAN, and his dissipated son, LOUIS, very much to his distaste, and he is glad when they tell him that he is to go with CAPTAIN GASKETT on a cruise after copra.

But, as he soon finds, there is something fishy about this trip; and in the streets of Brisbane a mysterious stranger warns him against the Callahans, and offers him a job elsewhere. Suspecting that the stranger is an enemy of the Callahans, Dick, loyal to his new firm, indignantly refuses the offer, and goes off with Gaskett to join the schooner.

Following a scuffle on the quay with unseen assailants, Dick is shanghaied, and, in the charge of MAXIM MARR, taken to Goya, a volcanic island. Goya is ruled by a rajah, an Englishman, who suddenly reveals himself as Dick's uncle!

Here comes in the green god, a hideous idol, of which Dick is given the custody. CHO, a Goyan chief, wants to get hold of it. To escape with it, Dick makes a tremendous dive into the sea.

Afterwards he reaches London with his precious charge, which is destined for the British Empire Exhibition. At Wembley he makes a discovery. Cho is in England; Louis Callahan, too. His enemies are after him!

MARMADUKE TOWERS, an actor whom Dick did a small service in Brisbane, turns up at Wembley, where he is engaged in connection with the Exhibition. He is unfortunately of a boastful disposition, and his boasting of Dick's sporting prowess lets the youngster in for a series of contests with a professional named REXMAN.

The stake is supposed to be a sum of money, but Callahan has so wangled things that the real stake is the precious idol of Goya!

In the first contest, a four mile race, Dick is "done in" at the end of the third mile. He feels that he cannot hold out a moment longer.

(Now read what happens.)

The Finish of the Race.

REXMAN was running—running faster—faster, and still faster. The gap between him and Dick seemed to widen every second.

It was hopeless—useless!

With a supreme effort Dick shook his stupor from him, and, with another equally forceful, fought down the fatigue, stitch, and the torture of his shoes.

He would not give in. Somehow, some way, he would close that gap, would outpace Rexman, would reach the finish!

Rexman ran. Was he made of iron, of steel, that he could run thus without a sign of strain?

Still swaying, Dick regained control, and, to free himself of the deadly fascination of Rexman's back, glanced upwards at the crowded benches.

And as he did so from out of the white-faced blur, flecked amongst a sea of brown and black, one face, framed like a portrait amidst a ring of vague beings, looked down at him.

It was that of Moya, white and tense.

As his eyes met hers the tenseness vanished, and her lips parted in a smile of encouragement.

No more than a momentary glimpse, then he was past her, and she vanished. But the message of encouragement remained, and in a flash he won out of his stumbling, swaying, stupor, settling down to a new and steady stride that grew stronger each moment.

Yes, Rexman was running—running as though fired with inexhaustible energy. But Dick was running, too—running with renewed confidence and hope.

His wind had returned, and though

his feet ached with the tortures of the damned, he held on. With that smile of encouragement from the girl on the crowded stand there had come to him a strange indifference alike to pain and exhaustion.

Gritting his teeth, he made after Rexman, and, though he did not decrease the gap between himself and his rival, had the satisfaction of noting that it did not increase.

Another lap ended. Only half a mile to go!

Steeling himself, Dick faced the last frightful, gruelling tussle.

How cool his brain seemed! And yet how numbed was his body!

And Rexman?

A hundred feet ahead at least, but the gap steady.

Well? Steady, but—

With brutal disregard of his tortured frame, Dick forced himself into a quicker, longer stride, forced himself by sheer will-power to a superlative effort.

And as he drove his numbed limbs forward the gap between him and Rexman narrowed—narrowed even as the lap drew to an end, and the last dread circuit began.

Again Rexman flashed a swift glance behind him, but this time he did not grin in mockery. His features showed white and pallid, his staring eyes agleam with some strange, wild fire.

With a perceptible stumble he opened out, struggling ferociously to forge ahead once more, and when he did so Dick forced himself to yet greater speed.

Again and again Rexman turned, and every time he did so Dick found himself closer to the strained, tense face of his rival.

Rexman was straining every nerve now, was suffering as Dick had suffered in the earlier stages of the race. He ran like a drunken man, a man who could steer a straight course, yet who ran in a maze, a trance, such as in which a sleep-walker might cross a knife-edge girder.

But Rexman was moving faster, his last desperate spurt as the race drew to a close. And Dick, following upon the heels of his rival, told himself that he must spurt also, spurt though he had nothing left in him but the will that drove him on.

His heart thudded against his ribs. How it thudded! His breath came in short, hot gasps till it almost suffocated him.

The ache in his limbs, the pain in his feet—these returned, but he did not heed them.

His uncle, Goya, the jade god, and Moya, with her smile of encouragement.

What was it they all said—strength, endurance?

He laughed, and, laughing, shook all feeling from him.

Rexman, the challenger! Rexman, the instrument of John Brand's enemies! Rexman, the setter of snares, the layer of traps for the unwary, the camouflaged professional, who—

By Heaven, the gap was narrowing again, and half a lap to go! And Rexman was swaying—swaying as Dick himself had swayed but a few minutes—was it only minutes?—before.

One last effort! One last desperate thrust!

Was that the finish ahead?

No, there were miles, countless miles yet to go. That endless infinity of ashes, that frightful span of cruel, sunbaked track! The Stadium was a thousand miles round, and Rexman was—

Rexman was only just ahead.

With another determined thrust Dick won to his rival's side.

The American turned as he came up, and for a brief second Dick looked into his rival's eyes.

Rexman's face was ghastly. The light of madness seemed to blaze in his staring orbs, and a weird, senseless grin wreathed his livid lips.

Then, on a sudden, the grin vanished, and the lips hardened in a long, vicious, straight line.

And with the hardening came action.

Out and further out the American came towards Dick and the outer rim of the track.

Now his elbow almost touched Dick's ribs, and the youngster felt himself driven over against the arena side.

Rexman was boring—boring to stave off a pass ere the finish.

A dull murmur, like the roar of distant waves pounding upon the shore, stirred in Dick's ears, the drone of a conch-shell held to the head, murmur of the wind in a chimney.

It was the crowd voicing their anger at the foul tactics, though of this Dick was scarcely conscious. He only knew that Rexman's elbow touched him, that the American was staggering, and that a "cannon" meant falling, a fall from which he could never rise.

In sheer desperation he spurted, calling all his strength of body and will to his aid.

Then Rexman vanished suddenly—dropped behind.

A few more stumbling steps, mist, the blinding sun.

His feet. What was happening to them?

His side, his heart! Surely it must be breaking through his ribs?

Where was Rexman?

Well, what did it matter? He had stopped running. He had fallen.

No!

Something touched his chest and he lowered his hands upon it.

A long thin thread.

What was it?

The tape!

Dick fell forward across the finishing line, to collapse heavily on the ground as Rexman, stumbling blindly with the frenzied power of a master-

less steam-engine, staggered over the fourth mile mark, to crash stupidly on top of him.

The American was beaten—by a couple of yards.

And as they pulled Rexman from off the fallen victor the vast concourse of spectators rose as one man, and the huge arena rocked to the thunder of their shout.

But of this Dick knew nothing. He had returned to his dreams in the mist of phantasy, dreams in which perhaps the winsome smile of Moya Mainwaring flitted across the film screen of his tired, unconscious brain.

The Green God of Goya, in all seeming, had stood by the Brands, even as one Brand had stood by another.

On the wings of the ether that was the message flashed within half an hour to Goya, set in a distant sea beneath its crest of everlasting fire.

And amidst the confusion about the finishing line as the race ended, no one saw Perkins bend over the track some little distance from the tape, and, picking something up, put it in his pocket.

Moya Provides a Sensation.

"REXMAN made his next move."

As he leaned on the parapet of the steep, high-humped bridge, Dick glanced thoughtfully at Moya, who stood beside him, looking down into the long stretch of ornamental water that ran between the Stadium and the two immense Palaces of Machinery and Industry.

"Um!" She caught her red lip between her white teeth, and looked up inquiringly from under her dark, silken lashes. "Hasn't he had enough, then?"

Dick shook his head.

The American athlete was still on the warpath, apparently undaunted by the unexpected licking he had received a few days previously on the cinder-track behind the towering concrete walls of the great oval which crowned the hill above them.

"No; the other day was just a start, the opening of the ball, so to speak. They'll keep on till they get me, which won't be long, I'm afraid," he added, with modest glumness.

"I'm not so sure," Moya replied, still gazing down into the water.

"What's it this time?"

"Swimming."

Dick went through a pantomime with his hands.

"Oh!"

His companion's eyes still focused on the placid waters beneath the bridge.

"I wonder if Marmaduke's ever swum the Channel?" Dick went on, with a grin, for want of anything better to say. "I gather he's appointed himself my manager in this contest."

"For the love of Mike don't dare to suggest such a thing to him!"

Moya exclaimed, in mock horror. "His repertoire of fairy-tales is quite big enough already. I don't want any further ones added to it. He can't swim a blessed stroke, and someone might throw him into the water if he got bragging about swim-

ming the Atlantic. And he's rather a dear for all his boasting, so I don't want him drowned, you know," she added with a smile.

Dick smiled in his turn.

"Sure! You bet we can't afford to lose dear, priceless old Marmaduke," he agreed.

It was rather typical, he thought, that a man such as Marmaduke, who acted extensively in water shows, should be unable to swim. Still, the mention of this brought him back to reality and the question of Rexman's latest challenge.

A first-class swimmer himself, Dick had no fear of trying his luck in the water, but he badly needed a friend to pace him in the practice that would have to be put in—someone, in fact, who would act as a sort of equivalent to a boxer's sparring-partner.

Perkins, by his own confession, was no aquatic artist, and now it seemed that the actor was also out of the question, though, to go by certain remarks Dick had heard him let fall, Marmaduke laid claim to considerable nautical prowess.

Yet practice, and hard practice, there must be, since it was pretty certain that Rexman would never have selected a swimming match if he were not confident of his own ability in the water.

The victory in the Stadium had been a surprise—a surprise to no one more than to Dick himself. How he had managed to beat Rexman he did not know even now, and although the result of his opening encounter with the American athlete had given him confidence, he did not feel inclined to underestimate the task that still lay before him.

The triumph he had so narrowly snatched from his rival at the conclusion of the four-mile race had, in a way, increased his difficulties. Coupled with the garbled newspaper reports—for which he had to thank Marmaduke—a considerable amount of public interest had been focused upon his duel with Rexman, and the next stage of the game would be closely watched.

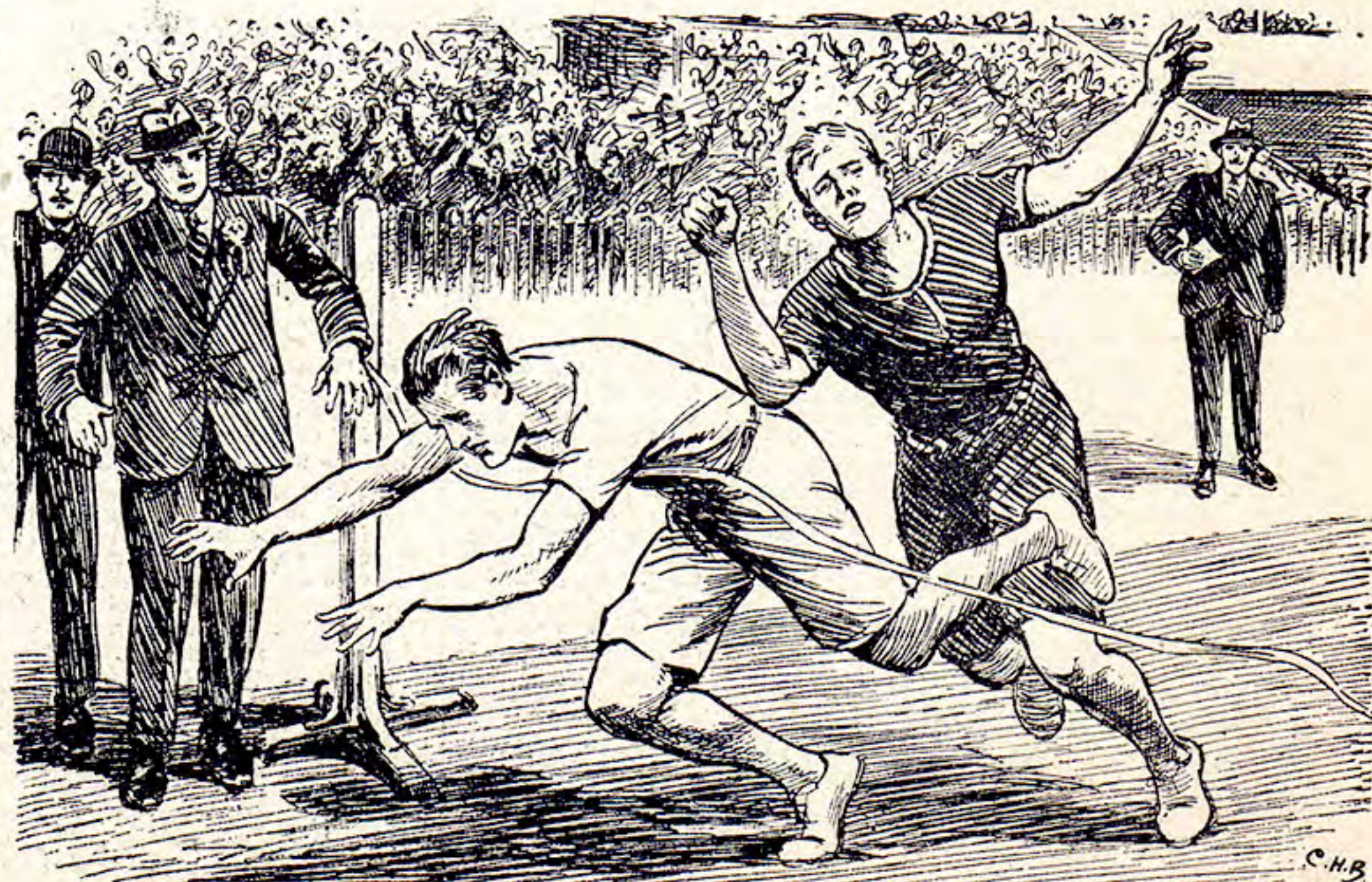
Well, he did not mind that, though he had no wish for the limelight of publicity. The cheering crowds in the Stadium, the kindly praise of the Press reports, the admiring glance of the exhibition goers—all these meant little to him.

He would gladly have exchanged them all for the look Moya had given him when she rushed to congratulate him after the race—a look that said so much without need of words.

But now that the attention of the public was riveted upon his duel with Rexman he feared the effect upon the Goyans. The more earnestly the white men of Britain followed the contests between Rexman and himself, the greater the importance that would attach to them in the eyes of his native assistants.

Consequently, the greater would be the impression left by a defeat at Rexman's hands. In the forthcoming swimming race, to be held in the river, nothing must be left to chance. He must have a first-class practice-partner; yet where could he find one?

Of course, the Goyans sent by his uncle to the Exhibition were all



BOTH DONE TO THE WIDE!

that's his pluck and cheerfulness. You've done right to adopt him, Colorado! I hereby agree to consider Jack Darbyshire a younger brother."

"This cricket game sure beats me, Jack. You see so much in it that I can't. But I've seen that boy up against things, and I reckon he measured man-high all right."

Chinese Allardine, in the pavilion enclosure, sat humped up with his chin on the handle of his umbrella, and watched intently. As a boy he had seen the mighty Alfred Mynn, so aged a man he was. He had watched the famous fast bowlers of old, men of the days when W. G. Grace was young, such men as George Freeman and Tarrant, of Cambridgeshire, and the great John Jackson. Then there had been a long period when, absent in China, he had known the great speed merchants of the day by name only. He had never seen Richardson, Lockwood, or Mold. When he came back he had found nothing equal to the heroes of his youth till he saw Jack Gregory and McDonald. Now, in this son of South Africa, he thought he discerned one worthy to be ranked with them. And the old man's judgment was worth something.

The end of the partnership came at length. The crowd had roared with applause at Hendren's century, for the crowd loves Patsy. The 400 had been posted and recognised by cheers, the 450 had gone up; 500 was very near.

Then, nearing 200, Hendren made a mistake about a slow that Jack had slipped in, put it up in front of him, and was caught by Tom Ward running round from behind the wicket. Taylor had called to Carter at short leg to hold back, and Ward made no mistake about the catch.

Evans came in, and Jack sent down one of his fastest. It beat the old Oxonian completely, coming in from the off, and his middle peg somewhat.

Cheers rang in Jack's ears; but he hardly understood that it was he whom the spectators cheered. Suddenly he had become dead tired. When he sent down that slow to Hendren his faculties had been fully alert; but the fast one which had disposed of Evans was almost mechanical, and now the young bowler felt that if he was not taken off soon he would have to ask for a rest—and to ask seemed to him almost disgraceful.

But Taylor, wise and sympathetic captain, had seen and understood. Fender, the new batsman, hit one four off Jack's last ball—the worst he had sent down—but got no chance of hitting more, for Meintjes was on at Jack's end next over.

Chapman's century and the 500 came off the same stroke. Fender made 45 in less than twenty minutes. Then he and Chapman were both out in the same over to Carter, who seemed suddenly to have developed deadliness. The total was then 570 for eight. Mann and Allen quickly took it past 600; but Meintjes disposed of both Mann and Durston, and the innings closed for 605.

It was obvious that the South Africans had nothing but a draw to play for, and to avoid defeat they must bat the greater part of the last day, being in a minority of 226. But Taylor seemed very cheerful about it, very well satisfied with the day's play.

"We were up against a stiff proposition," he said; "but no one let us down. Even Pam here fielded well, for all they've said about him, and everyone stuck to his work. But no one did better than you, Jack!"

Chang Lo Soo.

AT Jack's age fatigue is easily shaken off. Jack went to bed early that night, sharing a room with George Bissett again, and was asleep as soon as his head touched the pillow. He did not stir for nine hours; but he awoke fit for anything, and was one of the first at the breakfast-table.

The meal over, he wandered out alone, and soon found himself on the Embankment, which always had an attraction for him.

The river sparkled in the bright sunlight, and a breeze rippled its surface. He watched a Thames Police boat come in with something concealed by a tarpaulin in it, and turned away with a shudder; for he could guess that the covering concealed the body of some unlucky man or woman who had met death by drowning, and it seemed horrible to think of upon this cheerful morning, when London looked its best.

"Excuse me, honourable sir," spoke a soft voice by his side, "but

I am strange in this great city, and there is much I do not know of which I should uncommonly like to be informed. The bridge to the right—is not that Waterloo Bridge? And that to our left—is it not Blackfriars? And that must surely be the monument brought from Egypt, which is called Cleopatra's Needle?"

Jack turned. Though the man who spoke had no accent, he was certainly not English. The turn of his sentences showed that, and no Englishman addresses anyone as "honourable sir."

The fellow who had spoken was quite young—not so very much older than Jack, perhaps. He wore correct morning dress and a shining silk hat. But underneath that hat showed a face that belonged to the Far East.

Japanese, Jack thought at first glance; then he corrected his impression. Chinese, rather. No pigtail—but, then, comparatively few Chinese wear pigtails nowadays, and those who do are not found in Europe.

Somehow Jack, though his South African upbringing had naturally made him less ready to be friendly with any member of the yellow or black races than the average enlightened Englishman is, liked the face.

intently might be akin to him—that made him more ready to talk with this youth from the Far East than he would otherwise have been.

"I haven't a card," he said. "But my name's Jack Darbyshire."

"Then you veritably and truly are the South African cricketer?" exclaimed Chang Lo Soo.

"Yes. Did you guess that before you spoke to me?"

"Honourable sir, I did not. But I was at the ground of the Lord's yesterday, and when you turned it was for a moment as though you must be the bowler who so bravely held on. But to myself I said, 'It cannot be so, for this is a very English young man. The likeness must be a chance.'"

"Are you interested in cricket?" asked Jack.

"Most greatly. But not merely and solely as a spectator. I have played the game—likewise footer under the Soccer code, and lawn-tennis, and golf."

Through Jack's mind flashed a line of one of the few poems he had read—the only poem he had ever learned by heart—Kipling's "Ballad of East and West."

to-day; but it's up to us to do our best not to lose. I might stay in for a bit; I shall try to, anyway."

And he felt that the fact of his new friend's being there, eager to see him do well, would help him; but he did not guess, any more than Chang Lo Soo did, how closely their fortunes were to be interwoven.

Again Commaile and Catterall gave their side a good start. The older man was the right sort for the game to be played that day; his defence is very strong, and to get him out when he feels that his side needs him to stay is a hard task.

Catterall, on the other hand, was not playing the game that suited him best. But he showed that he knew how to resist temptation; and Durston, Hearne, Fender, Evans, and the rest found him no easy proposition.

The score was 85—Catterall 49—when the two were parted.

Taylor joined Commaile, and they added 67. Though few risks were taken and few big hits made, the scoring was never really slow; and at the fall of the second wicket—Taylor, 43—the Afrikanders looked safe. The deficit was reduced to 114, and eight men had still to be disposed of before M.C.C. could think of victory.

dramatic change in a game that was full of surprises.

29 runs were still needed to put the Afrikanders ahead, when Jack, who had only made 10 in forty minutes, began to hit.

Jack Hearne and Durston, who had wrought the damage earlier, had gone off. Allen and Evans had been tried, Russell and Mead. Fender and Chapman were on when the hitting began.

Chapman makes no pretensions to being a first-class bowler; but he is quite a fair change. But it was something better than a fair change bowler that was needed to get rid of Jack Darbyshire after he had been in forty minutes.

He hit a loose one to the on boundary, and sent the next into the pavilion. He banged one all but to the rails; it was saved there, and only 2 resulted. He got a 3 by an audacious stroke to the on, and found himself facing Fender.

Before the Surrey skipper's over had finished the Afrikanders were saved from any possibility of an innings defeat.

But the hitting did not end there. Commaile caught the infection, and showed that he knew how to smite and spare not. He had passed the century; he had done much to save the innings defeat; and now, well set, seeing the ball three times its normal size, he gave himself a little treat. Between them he and Jack gave the spectators quite a big treat.

They slammed everything. Every bowler put on was hit, and some of the field showed signs of demoralisation. Hendren in the deep, Fender in the slips, one or two more, escaped the contagion; but most of them had it. Jack was missed twice, Commaile twice; and, though none of the four catches was quite easy, certainly they should not all have gone begging.

In half an hour 95 runs were added; in another twenty minutes the score had jumped to 400, and Jack was 100, while Commaile was well over the 150 mark. Then Taylor came down the pavilion steps, and Mann answered his signal, and flushed batsmen and weary fieldsmen trooped in, while the crowd roared approbation.

There did not seem much point in the declaration, for only about an hour remained for play. But the South African skipper did the right thing. It was hardly possible his side should win; but they were on top at the finish, for the wickets of the men who had put in a hard day's leather-hunting were rattled down so fast that at the close M.C.C. had lost six for 42. Jack had three for 14 as his share—Hendren, Mead, and Evans, a fine bag.

A great day's play, and Jack had come out of it with high honour.

He found himself wondering as he made his way to the pavilion what Chang Lo Soo thought of him now.

Going out, he ran against Colorado; and they made the journey to the Hotel Northumberland together.

It was with Colorado that he went out after dinner. They spent a couple of hours at a picture show, watching Charlie Chaplin and Tom Mix, and came back by way of the Embankment.

Trams clanged along, with their bright lights. Taxis whizzed past. It was not really late. For the night-bird it was quite early. The Embankment seemed a most unlikely place for any attempt at a deed of violence. But few places are absolutely safe where cunning men prepared to take desperate risks are concerned.

"Why, I do believe that's the Chinese chap I told you about—the one I met this morning!" said Jack, noting a short, top-hatted figure that looked un-English ahead.

Jack and Colorado were in the shadows. For a moment the tide of tram traffic had paused, and only one taxi showed.

That one came up alongside the figure ahead. Out of it jumped two men.

"I reckon this is up to us, son!" snapped Colorado, without a trace of his usual drawl.

For the two men had seized the short figure, and one was pressing a cloth over his face, and the other had gripped him round the legs. His hands moved frantically, but unaided he had no chance.

Colorado and Jack dashed to the rescue. But they were just too late.

The taxi was off, with Jack's Chinese pal and his two assailants inside.

In the very nick of time there came up another taxi, with the flag up.

"Here we are!" said Colorado. "Driver, follow that automobile ahead! Go wherever it goes! Don't lose sight of it. There may be life or death hanging on it!"

(What will they find at the end of their journey? You'll know next week!)

Essex at the Oval. —By C. SHAW BAKER. (WARWICKSHIRE C.C.O.)



The smile was pleasant, the almond eyes had a kindly gleam in them.

"You're right about them all," Jack said. "It wouldn't be a safe bet if I gave you evens that you couldn't tell me more than I could you. I'm not much more than a stranger here myself."

"You surprise me exceedingly, honourable sir, for you look so entirely English."

"I'm from South Africa."

"I am from China, as you may with likelihood perceive," said the young Chinese. "Here is my card, if you will have the condescension to accept it. We may be but as 'ships that pass in the night.' But there is no harm accomplished by our learning the names each of the other."

He brought out a card—a much larger one than is generally used here. Upon it was inscribed, "Chang Lo Soo"—that and no more, for no address was given.

Jack put it in his pocket. Perhaps it was the interest he felt in Chinese Allardine—the feeling he had that the ancient man who watched cricket so

"Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet."

It was not right. But then Kipling had gone on to show that it was no invariable rule. For had not the colonel's son and the son of Kamal, the outlaw, become sworn pals? And there was nothing about this Chinese youth that seemed to place him apart from Jack, while there was much that drew them together.

They talked in comradely fashion for close on an hour, about all sorts of things—the Houses of Parliament and Westminster Abbey, Boadicea and the Great War, the Oval and Lord's, Oxford and Cambridge, Chang Lo Soo's English education in faraway Hong Kong, Jack's boyhood in South Africa; and they parted friends, hoping to meet again.

Chang Lo Soo would be at Lord's again that day, he said. He trusted to have the exceeding pleasure of seeing his honourable friend make a century.

Jack shook his head at that. "A pair, more likely," he said. "But I hope not. We can't win

But within an hour the whole aspect of the game had changed.

Five more wickets had fallen, and only 45 runs had been scored.

With three to go, South Africa needed 69 to avert defeat by an innings.

It was at this juncture that Jack joined Commaile.

The steady man of the team was still in possession. He had then scored an invaluable 71, and had never given anything approaching a chance.

Jack's course was plain before him—so it seemed. Marcus could stay; his business was to stay with Marcus.

For fully forty minutes the boy, a born hitter, liberally endowed with all the hitter's qualifications—keen eyes, strong muscles, quickness of movement—played the goose game. He risked nothing at all, and Commaile scored 3 runs to his 1, and passed the century amid generous applause. During that time it was Jack, not the Western Province man, who stonewalled.

But now came a sudden and

strong swimmers, used to a man to the thrills and dangers of surf bathing, and among them was sure to be found someone willing to act as pace-maker during practice.

But Dick doubted the wisdom of calling one of the natives to his aid. Familiarity, as he knew, was apt to breed contempt, and he did not want the Goyans to find out his weak points as a swimmer.

"Rexman will choose the Thames," he remarked at length, breaking the long silence. "I've got to find someone—someone who will drive me hard in the water."

The girl turned from her inspection of the lake, and rested her big eyes on Dick.

"How about me?" she queried.

"You? But—"

He stared at her in surprise.

Moya pouted.

"Oh, you needn't look so superior, young man! You haven't condescended to look in at our show. If you had, you'd know by this time that I'm quite at home in the water. I make my living that way—diving stunts, and that sort of thing, you know. You won't find it quite so easy to get away from me as you fancy."

"I'll bet you'd make rings round me!" Dick exclaimed enthusiastically. "And please don't think I felt superior—I—why, I just didn't know, that was all!"

"Then we'd better go down to Richmond and have a dip one morning," she said. "And Marmaduke can hold the towels, and shout orders from the bank. He'll be all right at that part of the business, anyway. Is it a bet?"

"Sure!" Dick responded gratefully, and held out his hand.

For a moment Moya's small fingers rested in his, held in a warm clasp of good-fellowship. Then, with a sudden movement, she pulled her hand away, and stepped down off the bridge.

"Let's be going," she murmured, and, wondering at his girl comrade's sudden whim, Dick followed.

It was close on time for the evening performance of the show to which Marmaduke and Moya were attached, and Dick escorted the girl to the Amusement Park and as far as the theatre.

As they reached the stage door Dick noticed a flashily dressed young man hanging about, eyeing the artistes entering the building.

It was Louis Callahan, and at sight of Dick he turned awkwardly away. Evidently he found it embarrassing to meet his cousin face to face.

After a moment Callahan looked round again, and, seeing that Dick's attention was taken up with bidding Moya good-bye, glanced curiously at her. Then, before Dick could turn, he strolled off casually, whistling between his teeth as he went.

Next morning, in company with Marmaduke and his sister, Dick went down to Richmond, where they hired a boat.

Dick changed into his bathing-dress, and, throwing an overcoat over his swimming attire, went down to the boat, where the actor sat waiting. Presently Moya emerged from the boathouse where they had secured change-rooms, and, a cloak drawn about her slim form, seated herself in the stern of the boat.

Dick and Marmaduke took the sculls and pulled out into midstream. Choosing a quiet stretch, Dick handed over the boat to the actor.

"Ready?" he queried, rising, and pulling off his coat.

Moya nodded. She slipped out of the cloak and, stood, lithe and glowing in her trim bathing-suit, her bobbed curls waving in the slight breeze—a slim young goddess in stockinette.

"Now, mind you don't drop an oar overboard, Marmaduke," she said, turning admonishingly to her brother. "And don't go over the weir, either."

"You shut up, you saucy monkey!" Marmaduke replied, jabbing at her playfully with the scull.

But she dodged the prod easily, and, with a swift dive, slid gracefully into the water. There was barely a ripple upon the surface to mark her going.

The next instant a slight splash followed as Dick took to the water, and struck out lustily after the girl, whose dark head had meanwhile emerged lower down-stream.

"Get busy!" she called, with a swift backward glance over her shoulder, and Dick shot after her as she made off down-stream.

He was almost as much at home in the water as on land, a fact that he had already demonstrated in the lagoons at Goya, and he made light of the current as he set out after the girl.

He had seen her neat entrance into the water from the boat, and had been prepared in a measure for a brilliant dust-up with her, for it was obvious that the little actress could swim like a fish.

But he was not prepared for what actually followed.

Moya scarcely seemed to move; she slid rather than swam through the water, her dark head alone marking her progress.

After a few hefty side-strokes that seemed to bring him no nearer, Dick changed to a rapid trudge, and when this, too, failed to lessen the lead she had obtained, he found himself forced to change tactics and take to the Australian crawl—the fastest swimming stroke known.

But still Moya's bobbed head kept steadily before him, and he had the chagrin of seeing his little sprinting partner slowly but surely forge ahead, despite all his efforts to overtake her.

On and on they went while Marmaduke followed with the boat puffing and wheezing as he strained on the sculls. And still the girl kept her lead while Dick ploughed after her for all he was worth.

Moya's had been no idle boast; indeed, far from being an exaggeration, her estimate had amounted to an understatement, as Dick now realised. Marmaduke's sister proved

think about. It takes us all our time to pull down a few Bradburys—with-out bothering about cups."

"But the cups would be jolly useful to you!" Dick declared. "And, by Jove, you wouldn't have to go far to win some!" he added, with conviction.

But she shook her damp curls, while Marmaduke grunted.

"Cups?" that worthy observed sagely. "What's the use of cups? You can't hock the blooming things, laddie—they palm electro-plated stuff on to you half the time. And you can't travel 'em conveniently, either. What do we want going about the country with a whole lot of useless junk? I could have had a few truck-loads of the darn things myself, as you know, if I'd bothered to go after 'em."

"What! Were they throwing 'em away—the night that you sang in 'Maritana'?" Dick asked innocently.

As he spoke his eyes rested on Moya's pretty face, and while Marmaduke relapsed into an injured silence, her cloaked figure shook in a paroxysm of silent laughter. Her dimpled chin resting in the cup of her hand, she winked.

Dick went back to Wembley with his friends after a great morning—one of many such, for, in the days that followed they went regularly to the

some yards before she threw a glance behind her to see what he was doing. But even then she did not appear to lose pace, and, though he ultimately won by about the same margin as on the previous day, he could detect no signs of deliberate stalling on the girl's part.

All the same, his suspicions remained, and he had a kind of inner feeling that if Moya had liked she could have forced the pace even harder than she had hitherto done.

"Yes, young lady—I fancy you're not only a darn sight stronger and faster, but a blooming sight cleverer as well, than you let on to be," he murmured to himself, as, the day before his meeting with Rexman, he walked back to the change-room at Richmond. "I believe you've got the heels of me all the time, only you're a jolly sight too clever to show it. Takes a bit of doing, though—faking a margin, morning after morning. But I've a shrewd suspicion that's what you're doing, all the same. And I take my hat off to you, jiggered if I don't!"

But Moya, flushed with her exertions in the water, appeared as cool and demure as ever, when she emerged from her change-room, and, accompanied by Dick and Marmaduke, went back to Wembley.

If she had, as Dick suspected, anything up her sleeve, she managed to conceal it as splendidly on dry land as when crawling swiftly but gracefully through the rapidly flowing Thames.

The Non-Stop Railway.

"HALLO! If that isn't Moya I'll eat my hat!" On his way to the Goyan Pavilion Dick caught sight of a slim form ahead, and, increasing his pace, hurried after the girl whom he believed to be Marmaduke's sister.

It was late evening at the exhibition, and the big, globe-shaped lamps, set on their concrete pylons, were ablaze with light along the borders of the never-ending pathways. Across in the Stadium, a galaxy of fireworks thundered skywards, and the deep blue night sky was ablaze with bursting rockets, the glare of which vied with the dazzling radiance of the focus lamps, throwing their blinding light from one building to another.

But though Dick quickened his step, the girl ahead was too fast for him. She seemed in a hurry, and, as she wound her way through the thronged pathway, Dick had great difficulty in keeping up with her.

Uncertain as to whether she were really Moya or not, he did not like openly to run after her, and when presently she darted into "London Bridge"—a foreshortened replica of the ancient structure that once spanned the broad bosom of the Thames—he lost sight of her altogether.

"London Bridge" was crowded. A good many sightseers were collected about the stalls lining its sides, and Dick had great difficulty in worming his way through the press of people. But though he lost track of Moya—if it were Moya—he caught sight of another familiar figure, though one that he was by no means so anxious to see.

"If that's not Louis Callahan I'm a Dutchman!" he muttered, as he spotted a fleshy, loudly-dressed fellow dodging through the throng ahead of him. "That blighter must be a god-send to the Exhibition, the way he haunts it day and night."

But he was not particularly interested in Louis just now, and as he reached the farther shore, he glanced quickly about him once again for the object of his chase.

Under the bridge ran the railway line that entered the Exhibition grounds, and just at this point was the Exhibition Station, where passengers were put down inside the grounds. Not only did the main line finish here, but also a railway of quite another description had its terminus.

This railway—a novelty well worth seeing—was the Yorath-Lewis line, a non-stop affair running across the Exhibition grounds, and needing no train staff to operate its busy cars.

Worked by an endless spiral, the pitch of which varied at intervals, the driverless coaches automatically dropped to a mile and a half per hour when they came to the stations, and speeded up, owing to the coarsening pitch of the spiral, to twenty miles per hour on quitting the platform.

Pausing at the bridgehead, Dick looked rapidly about him, spied the girl he had been following, and darted after her. She was making for the Yorath-Lewis station, and hard on her heels went Louis Callahan.

Frowning, Dick followed, in time to see his quarry enter the station,

Louis still close behind her. Almost positive now that the girl was Moya, Dick dashed after her, and got on to the platform just as a train was coming in.

At the station the driving spiral of the railway assumed a finer pitch, as a consequence of which the cars of the train drew together till they seemed to form one continuous chain. There was hardly anyone on the platform, and owing to the lateness of the hour, the cars themselves were practically empty, so Dick had no difficulty in following the girl with his eyes as she made for the front car, Louis still hanging on her heels.

The train kept moving—it never stopped, though its speed fell to something under walking pace when passing the platform, and it was quite as simple to step aboard it as to get on to a Tube escalator.

The girl sprang into the front car, and at once Callahan jumped aboard after her. But at this moment the car left the platform, and Dick, failing to reach it, had to content himself with boarding the next carriage.

The train was ablaze with light, and he could see into the front coach quite clearly.

The girl was Moya. That Callahan annoyed her was plain from the gesture of protest that she made when the fellow followed her to her seat.

The water show had finished, and for some reason Marmaduke had failed to accompany his sister home, as was generally his custom. Callahan must have trailed her, and—

Through the front window of the coach Dick saw his cousin stoop over the girl, who struggled furiously in his clasp, as the cars ran out of the station on their way through the deep cutting that led to an abrupt ascent and a subsequent viaduct across the grounds.

"You dirty swab!"

With a cry of fury, Dick sprang forward, climbed out on to the step-board, and scrambled for the front of the car.

But just as he gained it he saw with horror that the spiral concealed beneath the track was coarsening, for the car in front forged ahead, the slight gap between it and the coach in which Dick was travelling widening with every second.

And there in front, powerless in the clutches of that cad, was Moya, her car whirled farther and farther away with every yard.

Dick's blood was up, and he did not hesitate. Sealing out to the car front, he clung, poised to spring, and measuring the widening gap with his keen young eyes.

A miss meant death, for he must fall beneath the wheels if he tried a jump and failed. But he thought nothing of the risk; all his thought was of Moya, struggling in the clutches of that beastly over-dressed waster ahead.

Six—seven feet! Eight—

With a panther-like bound, Dick flung himself into the air, clutched wildly at the edge of the farther car, slipped, got a hold, lost it, then grabbed again for a grip on the rail, and with a fierce lurch, swung himself aboard.

By a miracle he had made the leap! The next instant he went dashing down the car, the light of Berserk rage in his honest eyes.

"You hound!"

His strong fingers closed about Louis' coat collar, and young Callahan gave a choking gurgle as, under the relentless pressure of Dick's hands, he felt himself dragged backwards from behind.

"Course you!" he shrieked, letting go of Moya, and beating the air wildly with frenzied hands.

But Dick jerked him to his feet, and, swinging him round, squared his broad shoulders belligerently.

"Put 'em up, you dirty cad!" he thundered, and clenched his fists as he glared into Louis' terror-stricken face.

"How—how d-dare you!" Callahan whimpered, paling before Dick's wrath. "Go away, you bully! I—I'll call the police! I'll give you in charge! I'll—"

"Then, if you won't fight—take that, you cur!"

As he spoke Dick let drive with all his force full into the wastrel's pasty face.

With a howl of pain, Louis reeled backwards, crashed through the doorway, and, clutching wildly at the carriage side, tried to save himself. But his foot slipped, and in his panic he lost his hold. As the car mounted the viaduct, high above the ground level, he swayed frenziedly outwards, about to fall from the vehicle.

Horrified, for he had not meant to hit so hard, Dick leapt after the fellow, and just as Callahan was fall-

(Continued on page 160)



OVER THE VIADUCT!

a champion swimmer, whose photograph should by rights have appeared, not outside the doors of an Exhibition theatre, but in the pages of a sporting pictorial.

Still, though the girl had style and speed, she lacked Dick's strength and endurance. At any short distance event she would have left him "standing," but, against the heavy current of the stream, she soon began to tire, while Dick, swinging a powerful and monotonously regular stroke, kept on unflinchingly in her wake.

Slowly but surely he narrowed the gap between them, and at last drew in upon her. But it was not until over half a mile had been covered that he reached her side, and, even then, took some time to forge ahead of her.

"Pshaw! It seems to me it's you that ought to be meeting Rexman, not me!" he panted, as, putting out a hand, he helped her into the boat. "Why, Moya, you're the fastest thing on wheels, when it comes to pace in the water! You ought to pull down about a ton of pots with your turn of speed! Gee! But you can get a wriggle on!"

And he glanced at her admiringly. Moya drew her cloak about her, and smiled as she settled down in the stern of the boat.

"You see, I've had a lot of practice," she answered quietly. "Heaps and heaps of it. As I told you, I have to earn my living that way. But it costs time and money going in for championships, Dick, and Marmaduke and I have more serious things to

river for practice. Every day Dick measured himself against Marmaduke's sister; but, try as he would, could never keep up with her during the opening furlongs of their sprints together in the water.

It seemed to him, too, that as the days went by Moya grew stronger. He found it increasingly hard to overtake her, and, though invariably he got the lead before the mile stretch they had marked out was covered, he found himself winning by an ever-narrowing margin as time went on.

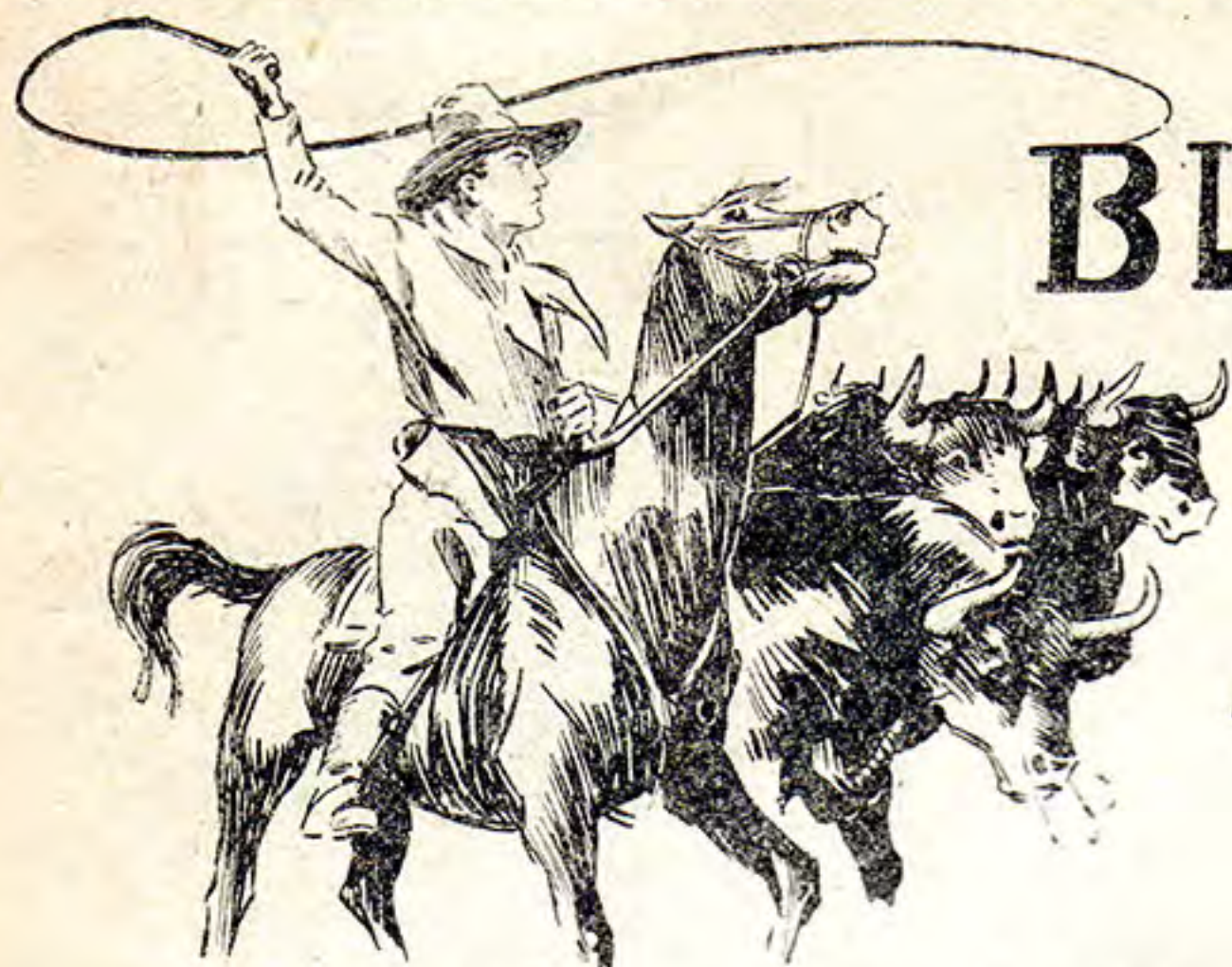
But this discovery only put Dick on his mettle. Unlike many fellows, who would have become extremely disgruntled at being beaten by a slip of a girl, he felt no resentment, but instead thoroughly enjoyed the races they had together, rejoicing in the fact that Fate had found him so redoubtable a sprinting partner.

The harder Moya pushed him in the practice races, the better it was for him. Unless he were greatly mistaken, Rexman was going to prove a tough opponent, and the bigger the pasting he received in practice the more ready to meet the American on something like equal terms he was likely to prove when the time came.

Sometimes he even wondered whether the girl were not keeping something up her sleeve, and once, with a suspicion in his mind that she was accommodating her form to his, he abated his efforts to overtake her, and watched the result.

As he slackened speed, Moya went ahead as rapidly as ever, and it was

HERE'S A RATTLING GOOD COMPLETE YARN ABOUT COWBOYS!



BLACK BUCK

BY
ALAN MITCHELL

The 1st Chapter. A Coward's Resort.

BUCK KERRIGAN, known all the district round among the cowboys as Black Buck, or just Buck, stood on the veranda of the "Smoker."

For more than two years now, ever since he had come from nowhere and dumped himself down at Settler's End, Buck Kerrigan had been the terror of the place.

Standing well over six feet in height, with massive shoulders and chest, thick, black brows that ran, unbroken, across both eyes, and a thin-lipped, merciless mouth, he was a figure to inspire fear in the average man.

But it was not his appearance that had made him notorious in the district. He was just that shade quicker on the draw that made the difference between life and death. He had just that flick of the wrist that denoted the man feared of men as against one of the "common herd."

Many men, it had been rumoured, had practised the draw day after day in some secluded spot up amongst the Pecos Mountains, with the one intention of putting an end to the too successful career of Black Buck Kerrigan. Having worked themselves into what they imagined a state of perfection, they had descended jauntily into the little town, ascertained which of the many saloons Buck was to be found at, and gone along to hunt up trouble.

And not one of these smart gentlemen had ever been known to hunt in vain, and the notches on Buck Kerrigan's gun grew more and more numerous.

He lived in the days when a man who knew how to fan a gun fastest and most accurately, when revolvers were spitting at him, dominated his fellows and strode among them their acknowledged chief. He was cool, alert, and utterly fearless, and had no peer in his handling of the deadly Colt in the whole of the surrounding country.

If spoken to civilly he was the last man to ask for trouble, but, on the other hand, if it was hinted by some misguided person that Buck wasn't dealing straight at cards, that person played cards no more—even if Buck was cheating, which was quite possible.

Most men went in fear and trembling of the big man, and when he was discussed, usually to his detriment, the speakers' voices involuntarily dropped to whispers.

After a while, Buck Kerrigan, thoughtful for once in his life, stirred, then straightened himself and began to pace up and down the low veranda.

Two or three loungers in the entrance of the saloon eyed him askance, and vanished from sight. None of them were anxious to meet him in his present restless mood.

"Say, Buck seems a bit queer like," said one of the men in an undertone. "Must have been goin' it pretty good last night, I guess."

"Nope, I don't think so," whispered another. "I seed him down at McKinnon's last night, an' he was as sober as a country judge."

"Perhaps he's in love," smiled Mickey Walker, a bright, alert-faced young fellow who had just exchanged the lights and glitter of Chicago for the smell of cattle and the taste of alkali dust.

There was a general but half-hearted snigger, the sound of Buck's feet as he tramped up and down on the boards outside the door having a slightly dampening effect on their enthusiasm.

Buck's word was Law and his gun Order in the little township of Settler's End.

"There ain't much in this yere burg to fall in love with," said Deep Shelley, "unless it's old Mother Martha down at Unwin's."

Again there was a subdued titter.

"I should think it's more than likely that he's thinkin' out some fresh under-hand business," commented Matt Stollard.

"Rustlin'?" whispered Mickey. Matt nodded emphatically.

"Yep!"

Suddenly the door opened with a bang, and Black Buck stepped into the bar.

"Say, what are yer standin' around whisperin', yer bunch o' dough-faced mutts?" he cried in a voice of thunder.

"Like a lot o' durned old wimmin!"

There was a dead silence.

"Yer didn't happen to be talkin' about

me, I suppose? No, I guess not!" he laughed harshly. "Yer've learned, no doubt, that it ain't healthy to!"

"Cut that bounce out!" exclaimed Micky, stepping forward, his chin jutted out defiantly. "Cut it right out!"

For an instant Buck stepped back, astounded by the unparalleled audacity of the youngster; then a cold, hard glint came into his eyes, his hand shot to his holster, and the Colt was half withdrawn.

Then, to the surprise of the assembled cowboys, who had fully expected to see the newest arrival at Settler's End stretched dead on the floor, he thrust it back again, and a sneer spread over his sinister face.

"Guess yore new about these yere parts an' don't quite know how near yer was to collectin' a pair of wings a second ago," he remarked. "Ask them guys behind yer what they knows about Black Buck Kerrigan on the draw."

"I don't care a cuss how slick you are on the draw," said Micky. "I guess it's about the only thing you are slick at. That's why you've sort of got the upper hand in this settlement. It's fists that count where I come from—which is a man's way of settling things that don't pan out right!" answered Micky hotly.

Black Buck, whose face had worn a murderous look while the boy had been speaking, suddenly straightened himself. "Mitts!" he exclaimed in a harsh voice. "Guess I kin use my mitts with the next guy!"

"Better try, then!" cried Micky doggedly. "I'll just show you how slick you—aren't!"

The boys, into whose faces a look of panic had crept, backed away towards the bar. It was the first time since Buck had arrived in Settler's End that anyone had dared to defy him.

The boys were astounded, but not more so than Black Buck himself.

For answer, the bully tore off his belt and double holster and threw them on the bar, closely followed by his thick tunic and Stetson hat.

"Come on!" he yelled, striking a crouching attitude. "I'm jest goin' for to knock the outside cover off'n yer!"

Micky, who had also divested himself, smiled grimly as he stepped into the middle of the floor.

"Better keep time for us, Deep!" he called in a calm voice over his shoulder.

"I won't take much of yer time up," added Black Buck sarcastically. "Jest a few seconds, that's all."

"Ready?" said Deep, looking up at the battered clock that hung behind the bar counter. "'Cos if yer are—Time!"

Avoiding Micky's outstretched hand, Black Buck rushed in, delivering a perfect hurricane of ferocious blows.

"We ain't got no time fer shakin' in these yere parts!" he hissed through his teeth.

So quick had been the onslaught that Micky was caught in two minds. A smashing blow, that just missed his face, caught him heavily on the side of the neck, sending him staggering back. Like a flash, however, he collected himself, and was giving blow for blow.

These first few seconds had been enough to tell him that he was up against a man whose knowledge of fist-cuffs was practically nil, but who relied on brute strength to pull him through.

But Micky, who had done a great deal of fighting, and who had at one time the full intention of taking boxing up as a profession, was able to avoid all the mad rushes and whirlwind onslaughts his opponent cared to try.

Time and again he sent his fist smashing into the bully's face without, apparently, the slightest effect. Still Buck advanced, his arms waving wildly, his chin squared, and his eyes gleaming with fury and hate.

Suddenly a swinging half-arm jolt from Micky sent Black Buck heavily to the floor. There was a breathless pause among the onlookers as he leapt to his feet again, his face purple with rage, his eyes blazing.

"I'll—!" he said thickly.

"Time!" called Deep Shelley, glancing at the clock.

Micky's arms dropped to his side, and he was about to turn to his corner, when Buck, putting his head down, rushed full-tilt at him.

"Come on!" he yelled at the top of his voice. "We ain't got no time fer restin' round these yere parts!"

He punctuated his remark by sending

a smashing blow to the body of the unprepared Micky.

Like a tiger the youth turned. Boxing against such a man as Black Buck, he could see, was of but little use. He must fight, and fight hard, to wear down his bull-like adversary.

For some minutes the two swayed hither and thither in the middle of the floor, battering at one another like two wild beasts.

Buck's weight in the rough-and-tumble method of fighting was beginning to tell, and Micky found himself being forced back towards the door. An evil smile began to spread over the bully's face as he realised that his strength was once more bringing him through a battle. He would teach young boobies from the big cities to come down and challenge him—Black Buck Kerrigan—at anything!

Suddenly, seeing that the bully was leaving himself more and more open as he advanced, Micky saw his opportunity.

Flashing a lightning feint at the body, which had the desired effect of making the big man drop his guard for an instant, Micky sprang in with a crashing right hook to the jaw, which sent Black Buck staggering back with terrific violence against the bar counter. Here, clutching at the rail which ran round the bar, he stood swaying from side to side, his head hanging limply on his massive chest.

"Had enough?" cried Micky. Buck's head wagged slowly from side to side, but he did not move.

Thinking the man had met with some injury from the force with which he had crashed against the woodwork of the bar, the young man crossed the floor, and was about to lay his hand on his opponent's shoulder, when, with a fierce snarl, Black Buck turned on him, and before he could move out of the way—so totally unexpected was the attack—a stinging blow caught the boy full in the face, sending him to the boards like a log.

"You filthy hound!" he yelled, jumping to his feet, and flinging himself at Buck. "I'll smash you!"

The look of determination in the younger man's eye decided Black Buck to adopt more cautious methods. He realised quickly that the newcomer knew far more about the game than he ever would. Back, back he went towards the bar under a perfect hail of blows.

Micky's eyes were blazing. He was not going to stop now until he had the bully insensible at his feet.

Then, like a flash, a thing happened which drew a gasp from the assembled men.

The two fighters were less than a yard from the bar counter, when Black Buck suddenly fell back a pace, half turned, and clutched a heavy glass bottle which stood on the polished bar. An instant later he had brought it down with terrific force on Micky's head.

As the bottle burst, sending a stream of liquid and a shower of glass in all directions, the boy sank with a muffled groan to the floor, where he lay still.

There was dead silence in the room. Everyone was appalled at the thing that had happened.

Swiftly Black Buck wiped the perspiration from his forehead, then, turning, he drew on his tunic and buckled his belt and holsters about his waist.

"That's what happens to people as talks behind me back!" he exclaimed, as he perched his Stetson on at a jaunty angle. "I don't stand fer talkin' about me! D'yer git me?"

"We wasn't talking about yer," said Deep Shelley sullenly. "We was jest havin' a word about that whole pile o' cattle that's missin' from Double W range, that's all. It seems mighty mysterious to most of us."

Buck gave a slight, almost imperceptible start, which was not, however, lost on the keen-eyed Deep, who made a mental note of the fact.

"Ain't they never heard nothin' about 'em?" Buck inquired in suave tones.

"Nope," answered Deep. "We was out on the trail all last night, and thought as we'd rounded 'em up all right, but when we closed in, like, there wasn't a single sign to be seen. An' we know fer a fact that they ain't crossed the border." He paused. "Leastways, not the Mexican border, which is the only one that matters. Cattle goin' the other way ain't much good to no one."

A slight smile played about the corners of Black Buck's hard mouth.

"I guess yer wasn't slick enough," he said slowly. "They'll have gone over

the border while yer was loadin' yer guns an' sayin' what you'd do when yer laid hands on them dirty low lot o' rustlers!"

"Yer wrong there," persisted Deep. "We got on their durned trail less'n three hours after they was stole, an' nary a glimpse o' cattle, although we rode all through the night across the Pecos Plain. We follered the straggling hoof-track fer a while, but lost it altogether on the alkali plain. There was a high wind, an' the dust'd been blowed all ways."

"Yer was shore havin' bad luck, boys, like the kid on the floor," said Buck, with mock sympathy. "How many was took?"

"'Bout five hundred head," answered Deep. "Boss Kelly's tearin' his hair all round the place since they vanished from Double W."

"That all?" said the bully, making a slight movement towards the door as Micky showed signs of returning consciousness. "Hardly worth takin', to my way o' thinkin'."

Just then Micky Walker opened his eyes and stared glassily round the bar. As they landed on Black Buck his teeth gritted together, and he struggled into a sitting position.

"I—I—I'll get you for this, Buck!" he cried. "I'll—"

"Git him a drink, boys," said Buck in a careless voice. "He's havin' trouble with the talk!"

Then, turning on his heel, he left the saloon.

"Queer business," muttered Deep, as he bent down and helped Micky to his feet. "Reckon he knows more than's good for him."

"What's queer, Deep?" asked Micky in a shaky voice.

"The way Buck's been talkin' about the missin' cattle. At a rough guess, I should say that he had a hand in things up at the range last night," said Deep. Micky shook his bloodstained head.

"He was in this yere saloon when we set off after the cattle last night, so the bar-tender told me. He also says he stopped here the whole time we were away." He paused. "If he did have anything to do with it, I'm going to make it my life's work to git him."

He fingered the wound on his head. "An' I'll git him, boys, sooner or later!" he muttered. "I'll git him!"

The 2nd Chapter.

The Herd That Vanished.

HI, boys, we're wanted up at Double W right now!" Deep dashed into the "Smoker," where most of the boys were gathered for their evening drink and game of cards. "D'ye hear me? We're wanted right now!"

"What's the trouble, Deep?" chorused two or three of them, looking up from their game. "What's bitten yer?"

"More rustlin'," said Deep laconically. "Boss Kelly says we're all on twenty dollars ahead if we bring back either the cattle or news of 'em. They ain't been gone long, so it looks like easy money. Come on!"

In a moment there was a stampede for the door and the cowboys were untying their horses from the outside rail. Then, headed by Deep, they started off at full gallop for Double W range, which lay about two miles from Settler's End.

On arrival there they found Boss Kelly, already mounted on a powerful mustang.

He had been one of the most unlucky ranch owners in the district of late, the rustlers having made a dead set for his vast herd of cattle. None of the other ranges near him had suffered to the same extent.

"Boys," he said, as the knot of men came to an abrupt halt in a cloud of dust, "one of my men has just come in from one of the line houses, an' he says another five hundred head has been stole, an' two of my boys left dead on the ground."



WHEN HE KNEW HE WAS A BEATEN MAN!

There was an angry outburst from the assembled cowboys.

"Who have they plugged, boss?" called one of the men.

"Spike an' Wall."

Again there was a yell of indignation. The two men had been greatly liked in the district.

"The rustlin' skunks!"

"The murderin' devils!"

"We gotta git 'em!"

"How long have they been stole, Boss?" came Deep's voice above the tumult.

"'Bout a couple of hours," answered Boss Kelly. "We'd better git a move on right away. They won't git along any too quick drivin' the beasts. Which," he added, "will give us a durned good chance of overhaulin' 'em."

And, wheeling his mustang round, the ranch owner headed off down the valley towards the outer line-houses which surrounded his estate.

In grim silence the crowd of cowboys followed, a steely glint in every eye.

The moon was just rising, and low, fleeting clouds were scurrying across the sapphire sky, while away to the south the alkali plain showed up white and ghostly in contrast to the grass land of the valley through which they were riding.

"Ought to spot 'em pretty easy in this yere moonshine," muttered Deep, turning in his saddle and looking at Micky, who rode by his side.

The younger man nodded.

"Maybe," he said; "but I've got a kind of a hunch as we're going to draw a blank after the other night, Deep. We had a durned long ride for nothing then."

Deep pursed his lips.

"Dunno," he muttered. "We're off the startin' mark a bit quicker to-night, an' should catch 'em, all bein' well, inside o' four hours at the most. What makes yer think we'll draw a blank, anyway, kid?"

"What Buck said to you after he laid me out the other night," answered Micky, "when you told him that the cattle had completely vanished, and how sure you was that they hadn't crossed over the Mexican border. I didn't like his smile a bit, Deep."

For some seconds the two men rode on, Deep's brows wrinkled in thought. At last he broke the silence.

"How d'ye account fer him bein' in the saloon all night while we was out on the job, kid?"

"A blind, Deep, just to put us off suspectin' him," Micky said. "You mark my words, he's blacker—a durned sight blacker—than his name!"

Deep Shelley nodded.

"I shouldn't be surprised if yer wasn't near it, Micky. If he is in this yere dirty business he'll shore git all he wants one o' these days, and perhaps a bit more. He's slicker than me by a lot, but I'd lay for him in his sleep if I knew for certain that he was in it."

Lapsing once again into silence, the two men raced forward to catch up the remainder of the party, who had gained on them slightly while they were talking.

On through the valley they thundered, each with his chin squared and a merciless look in his eye. Woe betide the rustlers when they were overhauled by this desperate gang of men!

After some hours' riding they reached the last line house, and the grazing valley of Boss Kelly's cattle was soon left miles behind.

Emerging on to the open prairie, the Boss at once picked up the trail of the cattle on the hard, dust-covered surface of the alkali plain.

"Now, we got 'em, shore!" he shouted back over his shoulder to his followers. "Loosen yer guns, boys. We'll want 'em mighty soon now."

He smiled grimly, and crouched further forward over his mustang's neck. But shortly afterwards he slowed up.

They had now reached the upper Pecos plain, across which the winds from the mountains swept incessantly.

"Well, I'm durned!" muttered the Boss through clenched teeth. "The trail's fizzled out so as yer can't see it. It's this infernal wind!"

The eddying wind-caught masses of dust had entirely obliterated all trace on the trail.

"Better push on, Boss," urged Deep Shelley. "It ain't no good hangin' around lamentin'. Better take a rough line an' keep on it till mornin'. Then, if we don't see nothin', we can give it up as a bad job an' git back to the End. I got an idea we'll git 'em yet."

Boss Kelly nodded doubtful assent. Micky also shook his head doubtfully, but Deep did not see the movement.

"Right yer are, boy," said the ranch owner. "What you say goes. Come along!"

Again they pushed forward, but slower, and keeping a careful look-out for any sign or sound which would betray the whereabouts of the rustlers.

An hour had passed in this way when Micky, who had forged his way to the front, suddenly held up his hand and came to a dead halt.

"What's the trouble?" inquired the ranch owner, galloping up.

"Listen!"

In the silence that followed a faint rumble came to their ears.

"The wind's blowing hard towards us," explained Micky. "That's your cattle we can hear, Boss. I'll lay all the money I've got on that!"

A glint of excitement came into the eyes of the owner of Double W.

"Guess yo're right, boy," he said. "I heard nothing with the row we was kickin' up. Good job yer was in front!"

A moment later the direction of the distant sound.

"There they are!" cried one of the boys, as they breasted the hill in front.

"Guess they ain't more'n five miles ahead, if that."

Following the line of his outstretched finger, the others saw a small dark speck surrounded by a cloud of dust away in the distance, crossing the ridge on the skyline.

"Forward, boys!" yelled Boss Kelly. "We got 'em!"

He flung his Colt lovingly as he urged his mount forward on the trail of the rustlers.

Bounding forward with a wild yell, which the wind must have carried back to Settler's End, the cowboys again took up the chase in real earnest.

As they gathered speed they saw the dark mass ahead cross over the skyline. A quarter of an hour later they reached the top of the ridge and scanned the plain in front.

Before them stretched the wide alkali prairie as far as the eye could see, freckled here and there with cacti and undergrowth. But the herd of cattle and the rustlers had entirely disappeared!

"Waal, if this don't beat all!" cried Boss Kelly, removing his Stetson and scratching the back of his close-cropped head. "This yere stretch is ten mile wide, an' they couldn't git across it in a quarter of an hour, that's a cert!"

"An' we couldn't have thought as we saw 'em," commented Deep. "One might see a vision, but it's durned certain the whole bunch of us ain't. That there speck and the ring o' dust was real. There ain't no doubt about that, is there, boys?"

"Might have gone out of sight in a dip in the ground," said Micky. "It's a shore thing they ain't here, anyhow."

Boss Kelly smiled wanly.

"You don't know this country well yet, kid," he said. "This yere stretch o' plain is as flat as a durned billiard-table. There ain't a part of it where a gang like that could hide for more'n a minit."

"Mightn't they have got into a small depression and decided to stop there?" asked Micky.

"I doubt it," said the ranch owner, shaking his head. "Still, there ain't no kind of sense hangin' around yere. We'd better git on an' scour the whole durned place. They may be tryin' to hide, although we ought ter spot the steam from five hundred head o' cattle. Come on, boys!"

The next moment they were pounding across the plain, spreading out into a wide, fan-shaped formation as they went, puzzled and angry at the mystery of the sudden disappearance of both cattle and rustlers.

Hour after hour they galloped in great circles across the prairie, but not a clue could they find as to the whereabouts of the herd from Double W range.

It was a disappointed party of men who rode slowly back on their tired horses to Settler's End as the dawn was breaking.

The 3rd Chapter.

The Hiding Place.

"DEEP, how do you fancy a night's scouting?" inquired Micky Walker, looking across at his friend.

It was a week after their futile chase across the plain, and the two men were seated at a table in the small room at the back of the Smoker saloon.

"What are yer gittin' at, kid?" returned Deep Shelley, shifting his cigar from one side of his mouth to the other. "What's the big idea?"

Micky leaned across the table and spoke in a whisper.

"There's more in that vanishing business than meets the eye, Deep," he said. "There shore is," smiled his companion. "Things that vanish don't meet the eye."

"Apart from being funny," said Micky seriously, "they must hide somewhere

on that plain; that stands to reason; and I'm going to find out all about it."

"Hopeless!" muttered Deep. "Ain't yer never heard that old sayin' about findin' a needle in a haystack?"

"Well, I'm going to find the needle. There's bound to be another do here shortly," went on Micky. "When the guys that are running this business find out how easy it is to get the cattle away they'll make a habit of it, and I want to have a look round before they come again."

"An' you'd feel all the happier if I was with yer?" murmured Deep.

The younger man nodded.

"Then I'm ready jest as soon as you are," said Deep, blowing a blue cloud of cigar smoke ceilingwards. "Jest shout the word 'Go!' and I'm on the startin' line."

"Good for you!" cried Micky. "We've got a slack day up at the Range to-morrow, so I guess we'd better get along on the trail to-night. All right?"

"Yep," answered Deep. "We'll slip off as soon as the boys have settled down to hand over their spare dollars to Black Buck. If they ask yer where you're makin' for, jest tell 'em as yo're goin' down to Dooley's."

Micky smiled, and the two men went out into the bar-room, where the boys were already gathering for the evening.

Gradually the place filled up, but, to the evident astonishment of most of the boys, Black Buck had not as yet put in an appearance.

"Strange!" muttered Micky, as they leaned against the long polished bar. "Buck hasn't shown up yet!"

"Perhaps he ain't on the thiev'n' stakes to-night, kid. Perhaps he's turned over a new leaf," smiled Deep.

"Perhaps he's riding out towards the Pecos Plain," murmured Micky meaningly. "Guess we'll be wise to get a move on right now."

Nodding to two or three of the boys

'em out before they plug us. Are yer feelin' fit?"

"Fit as a fiddle, Deep," answered Micky grimly. "I'll hand them out a few lead rattions before they get me, you bet!"

"Good kid!" muttered Deep. "Pity there ain't a bit o' shelter we could sorta hold. It'd give us more of a chance, like."

"Let's get on and have a look round," cried Micky, setting spurs to his horse.

The rumble had grown in volume behind them, and it was obvious that the herd of stolen cattle—it could be nothing else but that—would reach the top of the Pecos ridge in a very short time.

"We'd better hide behind one o' these bunches of cactus," said Deep, as they raced across the plain. "They'll be yere in a minit. We don't want to git sort o' game they're up to. Some o' the boys from the End'll be after 'em. I expect, an' if we're left alive we may be able to explain the mystery to 'em, kid."

Micky nodded.

A few moments later a patch of cacti and high undergrowth came into view a little to their left.

"There's the place for us, Deep," Micky said. "Looks as if there might be room to hide the horses as well."

The two riders swerved off to the left, and a few seconds later came to a halt beside the undergrowth, which proved quite tall enough to hide their mounts from view.

They only just reached the cover in time, for as they secured their horses and dropped down behind the cacti, the heads of the leading cattle appeared over the ridge, less than two miles away.

"They're movin' some," muttered Deep. "Look at the dust they're raisin', kid."

Keeping well down, the two men focused their eyes on the advancing

out, penetrated the cacti arm, and ploughed a groove in the hard ground between the two men.

"Too warm!" muttered Deep, beating a rapid retreat. "Don't fire, kid," he added, as Micky raised his Colt. "It'll let the devils know where we are if yer do. One of 'em must have heard a noise an' fired at random into the cactus."

This statement was quickly contradicted, however, as a fusillade of bullets began to splutter into the ground all round them.

"Come on, kid," whispered Deep, "into the tall stuff, an' we'll give 'em a few pellets!"

Keeping well under cover, they regained the long undergrowth to the right of where the horses stood. Hardly had they settled down when Deep's Colt spoke. There was a wild cry as a man sprang to his feet, turned in the air, and pitched forward in the dust.

"Number one!" muttered Deep grimly. "They're goin' to try an' round us up. Keep yer pecker up, kid."

Bullets were now coming into the undergrowth from all around them.

Twice more Deep's revolver spoke, and each time it was answered by a cry of pain.

Meanwhile, Micky, who had kept his eyes glued on a small patch of cacti just in front of him, suddenly became rigid where he lay, and gripped his Colt firmly. Slowly, very slowly, a head appeared round the patch of cacti, accompanied by a hand holding the gleaming barrel of a revolver.

Crack!

The man behind the cacti coughed and rolled over on his side.

"I've got him, Deep. I've plugged the rustling, thieving devil!" hissed Micky through his teeth.

"Who's that, kid?" exclaimed Deep, still continuing to fire steadily at a small patch of undergrowth to his left.

"Who's yer plugged, kid?"

"Black Buck Kerrigan!"

"Bully for you, boy!" returned his companion simply.

Suddenly there was a loud cry, but it was not one of pain. It was a cry of warning.

Immediately the firing ceased, and there was a sound of scurrying feet amongst the undergrowth. A moment later eight men were riding for their lives towards the Mexican border.

The boys of Settler's End had just crossed the Pecos ridge.

Springing to their feet, Deep and Micky crossed over to the tall undergrowth, where they found their horses lying flat on the ground, evidently frightened by the firing, but absolutely unharmed.

"Much sense as a man," muttered Deep, as he sprang into the saddle. "They'd 'a' been plugged, shore, if they'd stuck up on their legs!"

As they rode out from the undergrowth two or three bullets zipped into the ground beside them.

"Durned if the boys ain't firin' at us!" cried Deep, and, rising in his stirrups, he waved his punctured Stetson.

The firing ceased, and a moment later they were surrounded by the boys from Settler's End, headed by Boss Kelly.

For some seconds the ranchowner looked puzzled, his eyes roving from Micky's face to Deep's and back again.

Bursting into a loud laugh at the Boss' comical expression, Deep Shelley entered into a thorough explanation.

"An' my cattle?" exclaimed Boss Kelly, when he had finished. "What's happened to my cattle?"

"Guess they're safe an' sound less'n twenty yards from yere," answered Deep. "Come on; we'll have a look."

Dismounting, the party crossed over to the patch of undergrowth. Here, behind a thick mass of cacti, a great hole in the ground yawned before them.

"What the—?" commenced Boss Kelly. "It looks like one of those Indian catacombs. They reckon there's still one or two in this district," said Micky, grinning.

This proved to be so. The hole led gradually down to a vast cavern under the earth, where the latest capture of the rustlers stood snorting and stamping their feet impatiently.

"Pretty cute hide place," muttered the owner of Double W, as the cattle were driven out again one by one into the open. "They jest drove 'em in here, waited till we'd given up all hope, an' then, as soon as we'd cleared, out came the cattle an' away to Mexico without any bother. Durned smart!"

He turned his eyes to where eight specks were still visible against the distant horizon.

"I wonder if them devils'll come back again? It ain't no good us tryin' to catch 'em now," he muttered.

Micky, who was standing a little to one side, shook his head, and, with an outstretched foot, turned over an ugly-looking mass that lay curled up under a large cactus arm.

"Not now he's dead!"

Turning, the boys of Settler's End looked down at the distorted face of Black Buck Kerrigan.

THE END.

(Look out in next week's "Realm" for another great long complete yarn, "A Pal in a Thousand!" by Ernest S. Harris.)

COMING SOON!

Another rattling new
Sporting Serial by
your favourite author,

A. S. HARDY!

TEST MATCHES.

ENGLAND v. SOUTH AFRICA.

Some interesting facts about them.

THE first of the five 1924 Test matches will begin at Edgbaston in a little more than a fortnight from now. It will be the thirty-fifth between the two countries. Of the thirty-four so far played South Africa has won eight—all at home—and England twenty-one. Five have been drawn.

Early Tests.

It is a curious fact that none of the three Test series so far inaugurated has started with a big flourish of trumpets. Only the keenest followers of the game attached any great importance to the two matches between Australia and the visiting English team in 1876-77, though now we look back at them as the beginning of Test cricket. In 1888-89, when the English team organised by Major Warton and captained by "Round-the-Corner" Smith, of Sussex—now Aubrey Smith, the famous actor—twice met and defeated the chosen of South Africa, there was no excitement here about the games, though in South Africa they were taken very seriously. Australia probably saw little in the three matches between the Australian team of 1902 and South Africa, too. But these three matches were the beginning of the third Test series.

Not much needs to be said here about the eight Tests played by English teams in South Africa prior to the Boer War. They were all won by England, and it was not until 1898-99 that South Africa ever looked like coming out on top in a game. There were two games in 1888-89. There was only one in 1891-92. In 1895-96 three were played, and in 1898-99 two.

Robert Abel, the little "Guv'nor," father of William Abel of to-day, Harry Wood, the Surrey stumper, who never reached the century in any other big match, A. J. L. Hill, of Hampshire, Tom Hayward, P. F. Warner, and John Tyldesley made a century each in one or another of these eight games. The only three-figure score by a South African was the 106 of that mighty hitter, J. H. Sinclair, at Cape Town, in 1898-99.

South African Teams in England.

South African teams visited England in 1894, 1901, and 1904, but none of these played Test matches. The 1907 side, a very powerful one, had three such games, losing one and drawing two. But before that had been fought out in South Africa a rubber of Tests which established the fame of the Afrikaners and their right to be counted a third with England and Australia among the great cricket countries. To make the tale of South African teams in this country complete, one may mention here the side of 1912, which in the Triangular Tournament lost all three matches with England and failed to win any of the three with Australia.

South Africa Wins Two Rubbers.

In 1905-6 the greatest side South Africa ever had won four out of five Tests with a strong team led by P. F. Warner. Not a single change was made in the South African side. P. W. Sherwell (captain), J. H. Sinclair, A. D. Nourse, A. E. E. Vogler, S. J. Snook, M. Hathorn, G. C. White, R. O. Schwarz, W. A. Shalders, L. J. Tancred, and G. A. Faulkner played right through. Every man could bat, and the side had seven good bowlers and one of the best wicket-keepers of any day in their skipper.

The first match, at Johannesburg, was won by a single wicket, thanks mainly to a great innings of 93 not out by Dave Nourse, an 81 by Gordon White, and Sherwell's pluck and coolness when he came in last man. The second and third were easy victories for the home side. England won the fourth, at Cape Town, by four wickets, but they went under in an innings in the fifth.

Four years later a team under H. D. G. Leveson-Gower lost three and won two of five matches, which were far less one-sided. In 1913-14, with a side from which nearly all the cracks of old had dropped out, the English team, under J. W. H. T. Douglas, won four games and drew the fifth. Nine years later, with the War coming between, F. T. Mann's side won two of the three fought to a finish, but had to battle desperately to win.

Centuries in the Tests.

Sherwell's splendid uphill innings of 115 at Lord's in 1907 is the only century yet recorded for South Africa v. England in this country. In South Africa, besides the 106 of Sinclair, already mentioned, hundreds have been made by G. C. White (two), Hathorn, Faulkner, and Herbert Taylor (four, three during the last rubber).

The English centuries in South Africa in the early games have already been noted. During the last four tours Mead has scored three, Russell two (made in the same match, and at a time when he was anything but well), and David Denton, J. W. H. T. Douglas, F. L. Fane (his was the only one made in 1905-6), John Hobbs, Wilfred Rhodes, and Frank Woolley (one each).

The only men who have made hundreds against South Africa for England in England have been Leonard Braund, C. B. Fry, and R. H. Spooner.

J. N. P.



BUCK'S FAREWELL APPEARANCE!

who were just entering, they made their way out, and, untying their horses from the rail, set off in the direction of Boss Kelly's range.

"No need for speed," said Deep, as his younger companion pressed forward. "We got all night fer to scout round."

"But a mighty big place to scout over," returned Micky, slowing up a bit and taking his place by Deep's side.

"Still, there's no sense in tiring ourselves or wearing the horses down to the bone."

It was long past midnight when they left the wide valley behind and ascended to the upper prairie leading to the Pecos Plain. Both men were riding with their eyes and ears well open to catch the slightest sound or movement.

The moon was high in the heavens, and the wide plain lay before them like a giant outspread sheet, white and startling in the moonlight.

"Bit eerie out here when there isn't a crowd of us," muttered Micky, with a slight shiver.

Deep nodded, but said nothing. His head was inclined slightly to one side, and he was listening intently.

"Can yer hear anything?" he inquired suddenly.

The two men slowed up and listened.

"Yes," answered Micky, in a whisper. "There's cattle on the move, and not so far away, either."

Deep nodded.

"I thought I wasn't mistook, kid. They're comin' along behind us. Looks to me like as another bunch was bein' skinned off poor old Boss Kelly."

"Buck wasn't in the saloon when we set off," said Micky meaningly. "Looks to me as if things might be happenin' pretty soon, Deep."

The older man looked a bit dubious.

"There'll be a mighty tough crowd, I'm thinkin', with the cattle." He paused. "Still, we can fight while we last, kid. I guess we'll lay a few of

cattle, which, they saw, were guarded by about fifteen horsemen.

"Can't be goin' far at that speed," went on Deep. "The whole durned bunch'd drop dead before they'd covered ten miles of this plain."

As they watched, the herd, which had started off in a south-easterly direction, suddenly swerved round, and appeared to be heading straight for the place where the two men lay hidden in the patch of undergrowth.

Nearer and nearer they came, and at last the voices of the rustlers, swearing as they hustled the animals forward, could be plainly heard.

"Better git yer gun out, kid," whispered Deep. "There's gonna be a bit o' bother around this yere garden before many minits is past."

Swiftly the two men drew their Colts and awaited the advancing rustlers.

The leading animals were less than ten yards off from where they lay, when the first of them, a great, wide-horned steer, suddenly disappeared from view. Then, one by one, the others vanished from sight.

"If this don't beat all," whispered Deep, turning and gazing into his companion's eyes. "What do yer know, kid?"

Micky shook his head and looked out again on to the plain.

The fifteen rustlers had also disappeared!

"It's me fer findin' out things," muttered Deep, drawing his knees up. "Comin'?"

Micky's answer was to commence crawling forward in the direction of the spot where the cattle had disappeared. In an instant Deep was level with him, and the two pals crept cautiously forward.

Suddenly, as Deep raised his head above one of the spreading cacti arms, a shot rang out, and the cowboy's Stetson whirled off into the dust by his side.

Almost immediately another shot rang

OUR EXTRA-SPECIAL COMPLETE STORY OF COLLIERY CRICKET!



CAUGHT OUT!

BY
HOWARD GRANT.

The 1st Chapter.

Kept Out of the Match!

It was common talk at Mandover Main Pit that Rawson, the under-manager, would "see you all right" if you were any use at cricket. All you had to do, if you wanted to make big money with a pick, so they said, was to prove to him that you were worth a place in the colliery team.

That Rawson was keen on the game nobody thought of denying; but, for all that, young Joe Jessop had never quite liked the man. Joe was keen on cricket, too—as keen as could be—but he could never get over the feeling that it wasn't right for an under-manager to give chaps the best jobs in the pit simply because they were useful with the bat or ball.

Still, there it was; and young Joe himself had no cause to grumble, for in any case he was too young to work on the coal face. Also, he knew that Seth Robbins, who bowled for the team, could send down a far faster and straighter ball than he could.

He didn't care for Robbins, either. Perhaps that was natural, for the terror of all the colliery batsmen in the district was a sour-tempered fellow, full of grumbles.

"Though what he has to shout about, I'm blowed if I know," thought Joe more than once. "He picks up more money than anybody else, and he's got a reg'lar place in the team. What more's he want?"

If Joe was just a wee bit envious it was nothing against him. No fellow with cricket in him likes to have to go and watch every Saturday. It made Joe impatient, and he began to wonder if ever they would give him a chance to show what he could do.

The weeks slipped by, and that chance did not come, though often enough he put down some grand balls at the nets, and on one occasion, at least, caught the eye of big Bill Summers, the captain of the team.

"You're comin' on, kid," Bill said. "If you keep it up, Seth must watch out for his place!" he added, with a grin.

Joe treasured those words of praise. It seemed to him sometimes that the team could have done very well with two fast bowlers. But there, he supposed Bill knew best. He had great faith in Bill.

So he stuck it manfully, refusing to give up hope, and the first match with Calderby Pit drew near.

The main shafts of Calderby and Mandover Main were within a mile of each other, and the two collieries were deadly rivals in sport. Their meeting, always staged at Mandover in June, was looked upon as the greatest local event of the cricket season.

By Tuesday of that week the Mandover team had been finally picked, and Joe stopped to look wistfully at the list as he came up from the first shift on Wednesday afternoon.

Seth Robbins slouched up while he was standing there, and peered over his shoulder.

"Oh, you're down a'right, Seth!" somebody in the group remarked. "An' they'll need you an' all. Calderby's got the strongest side out they've had since before the war, so they say."

"They've not been beaten this season," Joe put in, glancing round.

Robbins looked at him, and for a moment their eyes met. Then, with a grunt and a nod, the big fellow sheered off. He did not seem the least bit pleased at the flattery.

Joe went home, puzzled. He was thinking that if anybody had spoken of him as indispensable to the team his eyes would have shone and his heart beat a little faster with pride.

"Seth's a curious chap," he said. "But he can bowl!"

That night he went out on an errand for his father. He had to take a whippet pup which had been sold to a man who lived on the Calderby road, just beyond the town.

He set off down the main street with the pup in his arms, and, keeping a good pace, soon left the busiest part behind. A few minutes later, although there were houses on either side, he seemed to have the pavement to himself.

Then a strange thing happened. When, as it seemed, they were quite alone, the pup wriggled in Joe's arms and gave a low growl. The youngster turned quickly, and was startled to find Mr. Rawson, the under-manager, striding at his heels.

Rawson laughed as the youngster gave a grunt of surprise.

"It's you, Jessop, is it?" he said. "What have you got there—a pup—eh?"

He inspected the animal, nodded pleasantly, and walked on, his rubber-soled boots making scarcely any sound. Joe found himself watching those boots, and chuckled because their silence had made him jump at the under-manager's nearness.

Then the incident passed from his mind.

Later on, returning by the same route, he overtook Seth Robbins, with another man whom he did not recognise and whose face he could not see clearly in the twilight. But it did not strike him that there was anything to be surprised at in that, and so once more the incident passed from his mind.

The following afternoon he was late in reaching the shaft bottom. He stood for a while close to the under-manager's office, and whilst waiting there overheard something that dumbfounded him.

Rawson was speaking inside the office:

"You hear what I say, Robbins? You're down for the shift on Saturday afternoon."

Then Robbins:

"An' I tell you, Mister Rawson, that I'm playin' cricket, an' to blazes with your special shifts!"

"Very well, Robbins," came the under-manager's voice again. "Those are my orders. I'm not going to argue with you. I want you for that work on the haulage, and either you come, or—"

"You'll sack me—eh?" sneered the fast bowler. "An' what'll the Union say to that? It's a voluntary shift, don't forget that, mister!"

"No, I shouldn't be such a fool as to sack you," came Rawson's smooth answer. "But there are other ways, aren't there?"

Joe heard no more, for the cage came just then to take him up, but he could pretty well guess the rest. If Robbins didn't do as he was told he would find another man in his place in the stall on Monday. That could easily be arranged by the under-manager, and Robbins would lose a quid a week, perhaps two, by the transaction.

"The cad!" muttered Joe, as the cage bore him aloft. "The dirty cad!"

His hands clenched as he thought of under-manager Rawson. He had always been a bit suspicious of him. And now—well, wasn't it only too obvious what had happened? That cad Rawson had some money on the game, and meant to make sure the team he had backed would win.

"I'd like to bash his face in!" Joe told himself viciously. "Oh, the dirty rotter! To bet against his own team, too!"

And when he got above ground he went out of his way to spread the news. He felt that somehow he was paying Rawson out by letting everybody know.

Everywhere he went they gasped

at his story. They were furious and despondent in turn. They knew—or said they knew—that if Seth Robbins didn't play it meant disaster for the team.

That night a wave of anger passed through Mandover. In the pubs and at the street corners Rawson was cursed, for by now many of them had seen Robbins himself, and knew that it was true. Of course, he had given in. Rawson, he said, had forced his hand.

And young Joe, hearing their wrath, felt somehow that he had done his duty in exposing the business. There was even wild talk of a lightning strike, and he, in his reckless indignation, gloried in it.

It was characteristic of Joe that never once during that memorable evening did it occur to him that this very business which he so much disliked might have given him the chance for which he had long been waiting.

The 2nd Chapter.

Joe's Big Chance.

BY morning Joe Jessop, and Mandover with him, had cooled down. True, there was bitter talk up at the pit, and there were scowls in the direction of Rawson's office, but the fever heat of the night before had passed; and in some quarters it was suspected that there was more behind this business than they knew.

It was queer, these people argued, that a man like Rawson, who had always been so keen on cricket, should suddenly act like this. There must be some reason for it. But young Joe, and many with him, would not have it that way. They argued that the under-manager had always been a hypocrite, working the cricket stunt in some mysterious way for his own ends.

Then when "snap" time came round, and young Joe happened to be up by the coal face with his train, big Bill Summers, unusually grave beneath his coal-grimed "complexion," beckoned the youngster to him.

"Look 'ere, kid," he said, "seein' what's happened about Seth, I'm shovin' you down for to-morrer. That all right?"

Joe's heart gave a leap. Here was the chance he had always been looking for. But then his face fell and he nodded soberly.

"Yes, it's all right, Bill," he said. "Only—it's soft of me, p'raps—but I don't like comin' off well out of what's happened to Seth."

Bill considered, then smiled and beckoned the youngster closer.

"Tell you what," he whispered, "if it's true 'bout Rawson bettin', an' you was to win us the game by your bowlin', it'd be a clinkin' 'slap in the eye for 'im, wouldn't it, now?"

Instantly Joe's face lit up again.

"Gosh, you're right!" he cried. "I never thought of it like that! What a stunnin' idea! I'll bowl to-morrer as I never bowled in my life, Bill," he promised, and went singing on his way.

So the way was clear. He would show Mr. Rawson, wouldn't he just!

And for the remainder of that day there was no happier being in all Mandover than young Joe Jessop. His chance had come at last, as the revision on the team-list showed, and to-morrer he was going to play the greatest game of his life.

To-morrer came, and with it, to Joe's delight, a blue sky such as was but seldom seen above the smoke-grimed housetops of Mandover. There was every prospect of the weather holding, for the barometer was high and the sun not too strong in the early morning.

Down at the Rectory Field, where the turf, if not verdant green, was smooth and well rolled, all was bustle and preparation. Joe and one or two more went down early to lend a hand with the boundary-ropes, and to help erect the small marquee where Bill Summers' wife, among others, would dole out tea and rock-cakes later on.

And at half-past ten the Calderby charabanc swung in through the gate, with a crowd of folks pursuing it; and the players were soon scrambling out, bags in hand, all eager to get into the fray.

The match was due to begin at eleven-thirty, but long before then people were sitting or standing almost all round the field; and, with the sun still shining in a cloudless sky, and the red-and-yellow flag just fluttering from the pavilion in the breeze, there was every prospect of a really good day's cricket.

Why not? This was the best batting side Calderby had ever sent over, and everybody knew that the Mandover lads were no duffers. It was bad luck their being without their best bowler, but rumour said that this young chap they'd got, Joe Jessop, "couldn't half send 'em down."

Then, at eleven-twenty-five by the pavilion clock, Bill Summers and the Calderby captain came out in full view of them all and tossed.

A shout went up when it was seen that Bill had won.

"We'll bat," he said, with a grin. "Not 'alf we won't!" he added to himself.

They retired, and the umpires came out. They wore clean white coats, white canvas shoes, and panama hats; and from their air of deliberation you might easily have thought them to be the officials at a great county match.

Soon afterwards came the Calderby

eleven, a fine, hefty lot. A great cheer greeted them, coming specially from one side of the ground where a host of their supporters had gathered.

Last of all, the two batsmen, one long and lanky, the other small and tubby.

"The long an' short of it!" as somebody humorously remarked.

The short one, Alf Yates, took the bowling. He was evidently a fussy fellow, for he seemed an age taking middle and marking his block.

But once in action he was decidedly the goods. The first ball, a very loose one, he pulled for four, and set the crowd howling with delight; and the second he treated as drastically, though it was saved short of the ropes.

The lanky youth at the other end was steadier. Off the last ball of the second over he helped himself leisurely to a single, and then evidently thought he had done enough, for he did not score again for fully fifteen minutes.

By this time Yates had left with a sparkling twenty-seven to his credit, and his successor had been bowled second ball. Bill Summers, coming in second wicket down, played with caution; and for the next quarter of an hour the rate of scoring left a great deal to be desired.

"Let's 'ave one!" roared a hefty miner in the crowd; and Bill promptly replied with a whacking on-drive that cleared the ropes for six.

That seemed to start him, for off the next over he bagged a couple of fours and a two, whilst his lanky partner so far forgot himself in the succeeding over as to cut one through the slips for four, thus bringing his total up to six!

"Steady!" bawled a wag from the ropes.

The jibe appeared to hurt the batsman, for he hit out at the next ball, a superb length, and was bowled middle stump.

Two more wickets fell before the lunch interval, when the score was 79 for five.

"Nothin' to shout about," as a Mandover man said; "but Bill's not out yet, an' that's somethin'."

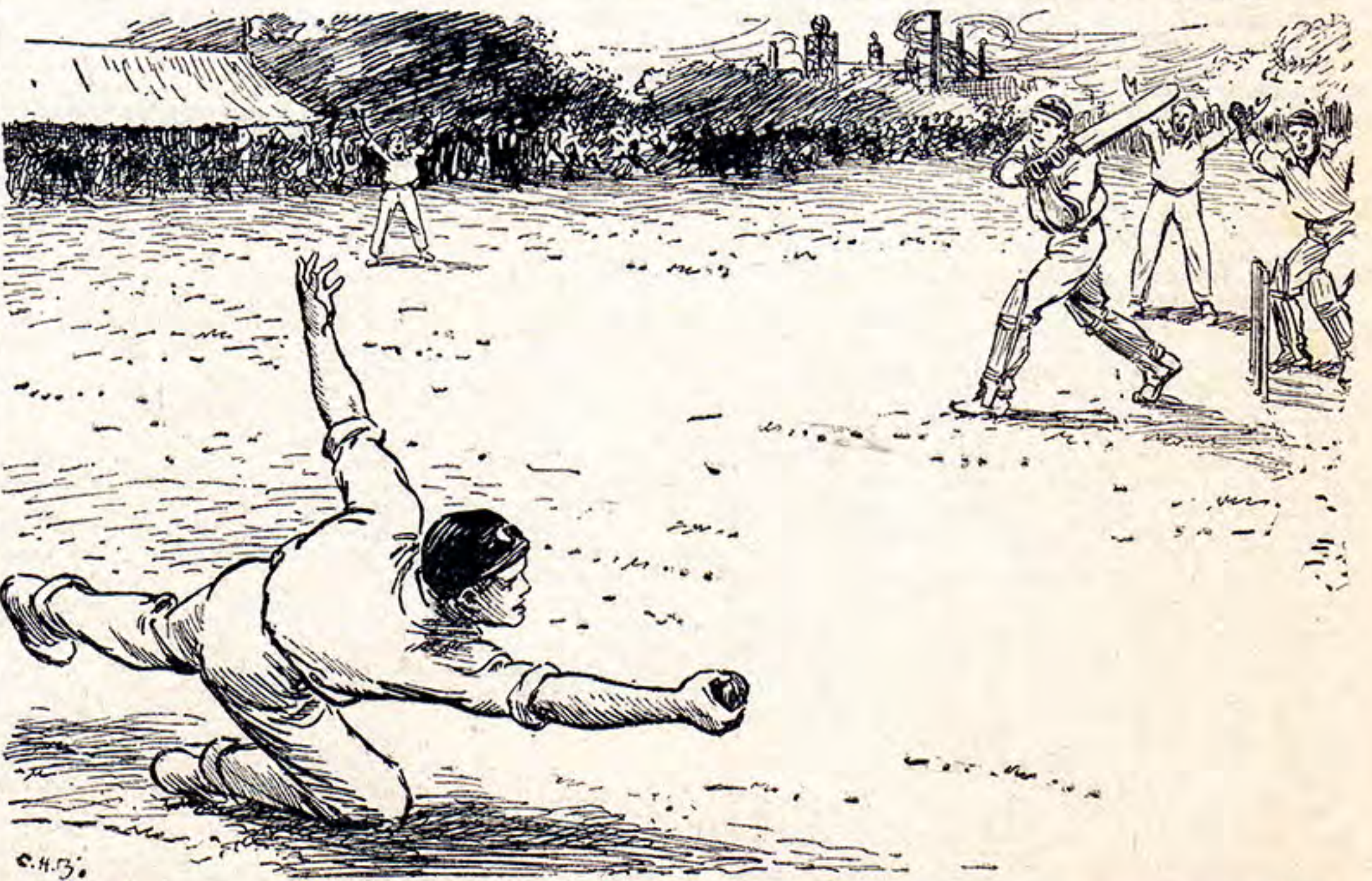
But Bill did not stay long after lunch. Whether the liquid part of his meal had affected him or not was a matter of speculation among his admirers, but he certainly lashed out indiscriminately at everything that first over. The first ball went well above cover for 4; the second dropped in the pavilion for 6; the third came off the edge of his bat for a lucky 4 through slips; and the fourth, badly mistimed, dropped clean into the safe hands of long-on.

There was a groan, and then a roar, which rose in volume as big Bill, using his bat as a walking-stick, trotted into the pavilion. His had been a glorious 49.

Young Joe came out then, doing his best not to look nervous; but he could not help his arms shaking the tiniest bit as he faced the bowler.

He was unlucky. A slight unevenness caused his second ball to jump off the pitch, and, hitting the shoulder of his raised bat, fly off just within reach of fine slip. The fielder leapt up at the ball, bringing off one of the best catches of the match.

(Concluded overleaf.)



"THE CATCH THAT WON THE MATCH!"

Joe retired crestfallen, amid a sympathetic silence, for a duck!

Ninety-three for seven!

The tail made a poor show. When two more wickets had fallen and only 96 showed on the board, it looked as though they would not top the hundred. But a blind swipe did the trick, yielding 6 amid deafening excitement, and they were all out for 102.

It was a small total on so good a wicket, and the general opinion was that, with the Mandover attack handicapped by the absence of Robbins, the visitors would beat it comfortably.

And a fine partnership by the opening pair, yielding 55 ere young Joe finally broke it up, confirmed the impression. But why had not this youngster been put on earlier than second change? folks were asking. He ought to have opened the bowling. Fifty-five for one looked bad, but 57 for three seemed hopeful; and that was what the score-board showed after Joe's next over.

"That's the stuff!" roared a hefty miner. "Keep it up, lad!"

And the youngster did keep it up, dismissing another batsman in his next over, and yet another in the one after that.

Sixty-two for five. And all five wickets to the account of young Joe. No wonder the crowd shouted and clapped!

And in the midst of all the din, it was no wonder, either, that Seth Robbins, washed clean after his irksome shift, came on to the field unnoticed; or that, soon afterwards, Rawson followed him in, bent on seeing the finish of this great game.

Now a couple of stonewallers gave trouble. Slowly the score mounted, and the visitors' supporters became more and more jubilant.

Eighty for five. That was something like! Only 23 to win, and five wickets to fall.

Big Bill Summers tried a change at both ends, and finally, at his wits' end to know what to do for the best, went on himself. He was nothing great, but he knew that often a moderate bowler might break up a partnership like this.

He succeeded, too. He tempted the batsman with soft-looking balls until the player could resist the temptation no longer, and lammed out at one with all his might. It came round to leg at a terrific speed, but Joe, fielding close in, threw himself down at it, and his right hand clutched and held it.

The crowd gasped, and roared. It was an amazing catch. And afterwards it was spoken of as "the catch that won the match."

For after the breaking up of that partnership, as so often happens, a rot set in. Joe went on again, and narrowly missed doing the hat trick. He came off the field with the fine figures of eight for 47.

Calderby were all out for 95.

When the cheering had died down, and Joe had shaken himself free of his enthusiastic admirers, he hurried over to the corner of the field where a crowd was rapidly collecting.

Pushing his way through, he saw two men in the centre of the ring—Rawson and Seth Robbins—and the latter was red in the face with cursing and shouting. That he had been drinking was obvious.

"It was you—you—" he raved incoherently at Rawson.

"Listen to me!" commanded the under manager abruptly, and held up his hand for silence, which was slowly accorded to him. "Now, Robbins, you've slandered me right and left, and forced me to speak out, and I am going to see that these men know the truth. I put you on that shift because—I knew that you had arranged to sell the match."

"You lie!" shouted Robbins, livid in the face. "You lie, you—"

"Do I? Well, let the others judge when they've heard me out. This man"—pointing to Robbins—"arranged to bowl off the wicket and let you down to suit his own pocket. I came up behind him and overheard him fixing it up on the Calderby road on Wednesday night. As some of you know, perhaps, I wear rubber-soled shoes, which make no noise—"

"Yes, that's right!" burst out Joe, carried away by his eagerness to right the wrong he had done the sporting under manager by denouncing him as a scoundrel. "He does—I know, because he came up quietly, just like that, behind me on the Calderby road on Wednesday night!"

There is no more to be said, except that Seth Robbins, who had confidently imagined that without him his side could not win, was lucky to get out of Manderby with a whole skin!

THE END.

The Spider's Web is far reaching and strong. The head of St. Jude's has not escaped yet. Read below of a heartrending discovery!



The WEB of the SPIDER

A Tremendous New Story of
Sport and Adventure among
the Seniors at a Public School.

By WALTER EDWARDS.

HOW IT BEGAN.

PERCIVAL STEWART, familiarly known as "Perce," is the objectionable son of a wealthy moneylender, MAURICE STEWART, the Spider. DR. CAUTION-LOWE, the Head of St. Jude's, gets into financial difficulties through the escapades of a scapegrace brother, and borrows money from Stewart, who cunningly wangles the sporting Head into his power and forces him to accept Perce at St. Jude's.

Perce arrives in flashy attire, and instantly creates a bad impression. He makes himself objectionable to TONY MASSINGHAM, a popular senior, and comes off second-best in the encounter. He and his father demand that the Head should expel Massingham; but, of course, their demand is vain. Massingham and his chum, BRUCE WINBOURNE, quite by accident, learn how matters stand.

Then Perce creates a sensation by beating LEAN BACON, the sports skipper of St. Jude's, in the roped square. But Bacon bears him no ill-will, and, congratulating him upon his skill, asks him publicly to represent the school in the West Country Championship. Perce bluntly refuses to do this, and gets a ducking for his pains.

Once more he writes a whining letter to his father, who tells his son to accept the offer to fight for the school, and then, at the last moment, to let them down!

But when the time comes, Percival's better nature forces him to do his best for the school. Yet, despite this, he loses the fight—and the St. Jude's fellows have every reason to think he has let them down.

Therefore he is an outcast, and, humbled by his misdeeds, seeks out Bacon and the others. Then he tells them his story, and gains their sympathy. Together they decide secretly to repay the Head's debt to Maurice Stewart with money borrowed from Massingham's father.

Getting the money, Perce goes up to London to see the moneylender. Maurice is furious at the youngster's change of front, and refuses to accept the money. But Perce seizes the packet of papers his father flaunts under his nose, and he gets away with it and takes it to the Head.

(Now read what happens.)

The Knock-out Blow.

REFERENCE and a curious note were in Percival's tone, and the Head shot a quick glance at his tanned features. Embittered by his experience of the Stewarts—both father and son—he was inclined to be suspicious of that respectful mode of address, yet it occurred to him that the senior looked absolutely sincere.

Also, he noticed that Percival was no longer unhealthy-looking and bloated; indeed, he seemed to be very fit, surprisingly so.

And there was another point that he had overlooked. The young man no longer wore clothes which he, Dr. Cauton-Lowe, had once referred to as "festive garments." He wore a neat serge suit, whilst the black silk tie was innocent of a diamond pin.

Percival remained quite still during this rumination, and he made no attempt to take a cigarette from his gold case and light up. This was another point that struck the Head as curious, and he wondered what exactly was the meaning of the visit.

"What is it, Stewart?" he asked, indicating a chair with his slim right hand.

"I—I wish to apologise to you, sir," said the senior, walking across the carpet and standing before the old scholar. "I did some pretty low-

down things when I first came to school, and I want you to know that I am heartily ashamed of myself. I behaved like a cad and a coward, sir, and I would do anything to get into your good books. I don't want you to think that I'm bad all the way through. I don't think I am. I hope not!"

Speaking in halting phrases, the penitent said all this and much more, and his voice was husky and his eyes moist when the Head rose from his chair and placed a kindly hand upon the broad shoulder.

The old man was obviously greatly affected.

"My boy," he said, his mellow voice vibrant with feeling, "you make me very happy, and I admire you tremendously for having come to me in this manner. To have come forward voluntarily has been no easy task for you, and it is a deed well worthy of a St. Jude's fellow."

"Stewart, my boy," he went on, "I feel proud of you, and I forgive you—forgive you readily for all those indiscretions which were the result of ignorance. You did not understand us, and we failed to understand you. There is not the slightest doubt that we shall pull together in—"

He was going to say "in future," and then it struck him that the future amounted to a matter of days, and a somewhat bitter smile twisted his sensitive lips at the thought.

Percival Stewart guessed what was passing through the Head's mind, but it did not help him in his delicate mission.

"There's—there's one other thing, sir," he said.

"And what is that?"

"It's—it's about your—er—business deal with my father, sir," said Percival, flushing slightly.

"I have already heard from your father, Stewart, so I do not think we need discuss the matter at the moment!"

The Head's tone was curt.

"That letter means nothing, sir," said Percival eagerly. "It should never have been written. It's—it's my father's idea of a joke."

"Then I have no sense of humour, for I fail to appreciate the point," said the Head.

"But listen to me, sir!" put in the senior, speaking very quickly. "My father isn't half so bad as you imagine; and he wants you to do him a great favour—a very great favour. He—he knows that you are short of ready money at the moment, and all that sort of thing, you know, and he—he wondered whether you would take the papers back—the papers you signed. That will wipe out the debt, you see; and you—you'll be doing him a kindness if you'll accept them."

It was a rambling statement, but the sight of the foolscap envelope which Percival produced from his inside pocket made everything quite clear to the Head.

He could not believe his ears and his eyes for the moment, and he took the envelope as in a dream.

"Your—your father wishes that, Stewart?" he asked at length, a spot of colour upon each cheek.

"Yes, sir," said Percival, feeling that he would be forgiven the white lie.

Clasping the envelope in his shaking hand, Dr. Cauton-Lowe lowered himself into the depths of his chair, and such was his emotion that he could say nothing for some minutes.

"And—and it was to fetch these papers that you went to London, Stewart?" he asked at length, his moist eyes fixed upon the flushed senior.

"Yes, sir," returned Percival, his voice low. "I—I am glad to have been able to do you a service; it may help to even up accounts."

"My boy," said the old scholar almost brokenly, "I don't know what

pay. Stewart had behaved like a gentleman in the matter, for he had made the transaction a debt of honour.

The Head, who had a good deal of the schoolboy in his make-up, could have shouted aloud at the thought, and his clear eyes were bright and dancing as he took an ivory paper-knife from the blotting-pad.

Legal documents always had a curious fascination for him, and he decided to glance at the contents of the envelope before he put them away in the safe.

Slipping the thin blade along the flap, he extracted a sheaf of important-looking papers, which he spread out upon the top of the desk.

A swift glance at the first sheet caused a puzzled frown to corrugate his smooth brow; but a feverish examination of the remainder brought a hoarse gasp to his lips. It was the cry of a soul in torment.

Dazed, as though he had received a physical blow, he swayed upon the hearthrug, and then he pitched forward in a huddled heap and remained ominously still.

The envelope contained nothing more precious than blank sheets of paper!

Threats.

IT was Jupp, the butler, who found the still form of Dr. Cauton-Lowe upon the hearth-rug, for he entered the room within a minute or so of Percival Stewart's departure; and the sight of the bloodless features, standing out in vivid relief against the dark background, brought a gasp of horror from the old retainer, but he did not lose his head.

Kneeling beside the body, he felt for the heart, and a sigh of relief broke from his quivering lips when he found that the vital organ was beating almost normally.

"A fainting fit," was his immediate diagnosis; and he unfastened the Head's collar.

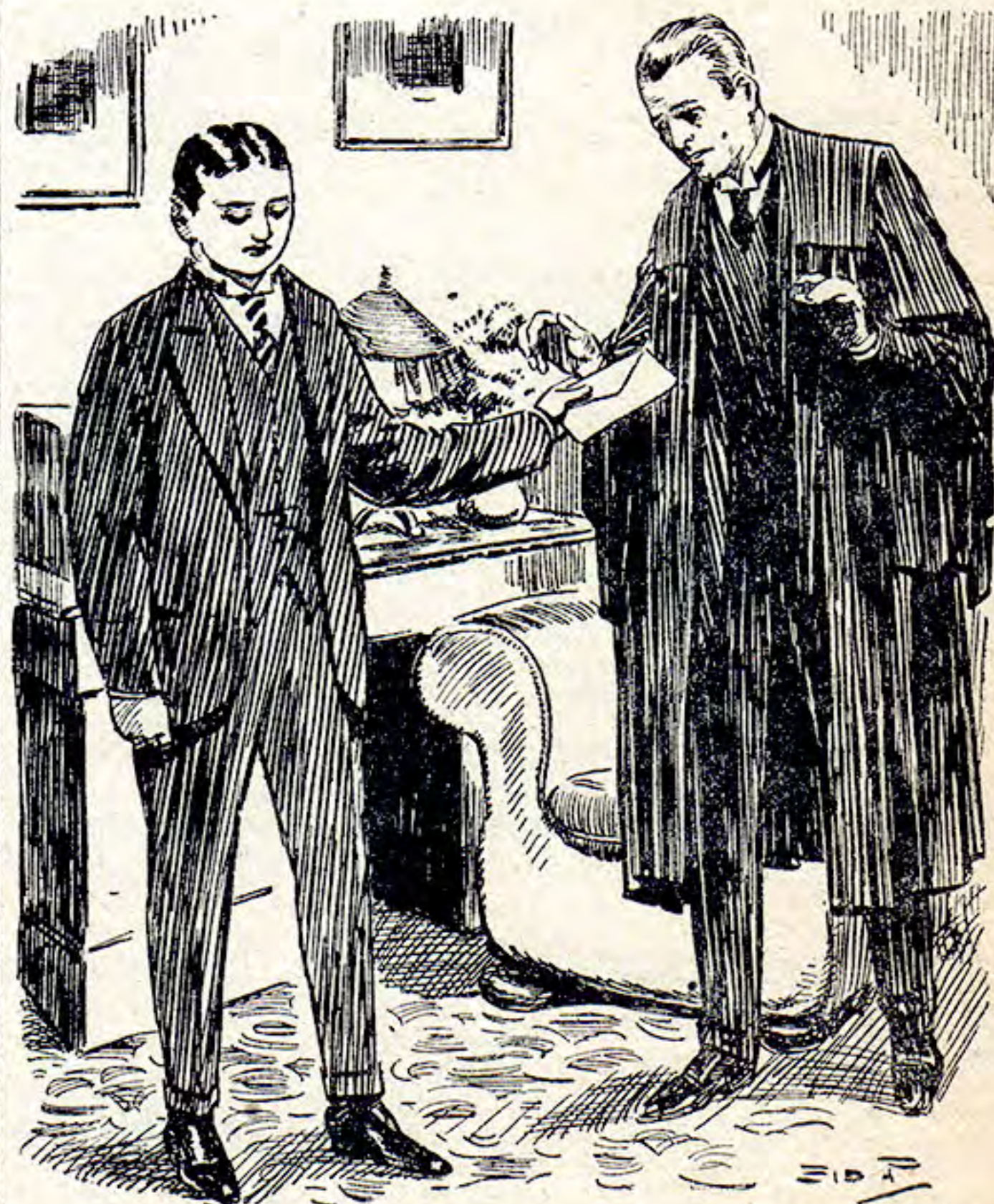
He was somewhat at a loss after this, but he brightened when he heard voices outside the open window. Getting to his feet, he walked across the thick carpet and looked down into the garden, to find that Massingham and Percival Stewart were just about to pass round the angle of the House.

"Mr. Massingham! Mr. Massingham, sir!" cried the old fellow; and the two seniors paused and looked back.

That something was wrong was obvious, for the pontifical Jupp looked flustered and wild-eyed.

"What is it?" asked the captain of the school, strolling towards the window. "Fire? Murder?"

"I—I thought it was the latter, sir!" said the butler, regaining some of his lost dignity. "I shall be obliged if you will come into the Head's study and investigate, sir!"



THE PACKET THAT MEANT SO MUCH!

"Like a shot!" cried Massingham, darting away towards the door. "Come on, old man!"

Following close upon the other fellow's heels, Percival Stewart bounded up the broad stone steps, and through the lofty hall; but he was not prepared for the sight which met his gaze in the study.

Jupp, kneeling before the fire, had placed his arm round the Head's shoulders and raised the ashen features; and a little strangled cry broke from Stewart when he saw the trickle of blood that was flowing from a wound at the side of the head.

"Slip along and get some hot water and bandages, old man," commanded Massingham briskly; and the other fellow vanished without a word.

He was back in less than two minutes, bringing the matron with him; and then the Head was lifted on to the settee, and his wound was dressed.

Working quickly and skilfully, the matron did her job with deft fingers; and a quarter of an hour passed without Dr. Cauton-Lowe showing the slightest signs of consciousness. He remained like a log, and but for his steady breathing, one would have imagined that he had closed his eyes for all time.

Dr. Mellish—gruff, snappy, and a great sportsman—was quickly upon the scene, and a swift examination brought from him a brief diagnosis. "Concussion!" he snapped, glancing up at the matron. "We must get him to bed!"

Lifting the still form very gently, the doctor and the seniors carried it upstairs to the bed-room; and in a matter of minutes, the injured Head was between the sheets.

"I will stay with him for an hour or so, doctor," said the matron. And the look she shot at the two seniors was eloquent of dismissal.

"Is there anything we can do, sir?" asked Tony Massingham. And the doctor shook his head.

"Nothing," he said, in his usual gruff manner. "Just clear out!"

Stewart and Massingham nodded and walked towards the door.

"Er—Massingham!"

The captain of St. Jude's paused and looked round.

"Perhaps it will be as well if you don't shout this business from the housetops!" said the doctor. "It is a queer affair altogether."

"He's right, old man!" said Massingham, as he and Percival passed down the stairs and reached the hall. "Why, you were with the Head a minute or so before Jupp called us."

"That's so!" agreed Stewart thoughtfully. "He was in the best of spirits when I left him."

"Perhaps the shock of getting those papers proved too much for him," suggested the captain of the school.

"He was certainly a bit worked up," admitted Percival Stewart. And they were about to go down the steps when a thought struck him. "Ought we to leave those documents lying about?" he asked. "Anybody might go into the study—servants, or some of the fellows—"

"I get you, old man," said Massingham, swinging round upon his heel. "Of course, nobody would look at them deliberately—but you never know. 'You'd better keep the things until the Head is about again.'"

Reaching the study, Massingham opened the door and passed inside, and a quick glance showed him the sheaf of official-looking paper upon the blotting-pad.

"Here we are, old man!" he said, gathering up the sheets; and then it was his turn to gasp.

He examined one sheet after another, and found them all blank. And in that moment he understood the meaning of the Head's sudden swoon.

He swung round upon Percival Stewart, his blue eyes blazing, his fists clenched.

"Do you know anything about this dirty trick, Stewart?" he breathed, looking very dangerous.

The next moment he could have cut his tongue out for having made the remark, for there was an expression of pain upon the other fellow's features, a sudden tightening of the lips. That he was innocent of any complicity was obvious, and the look of pain in his dark eyes made Massingham feel thoroughly ashamed of himself.

"I'm sorry, old man," said the skipper of St. Jude's. "I forgot myself. I think so much of the Head—"

"And so do I," put in Stewart, speaking very quietly. "I would not have had this happen for a fortune!"

He studied the sheets of paper as

he spoke, and his heavy jaw jutted forward.

"The rotter! The unsportsman-like rotter!" he muttered, a sob of rage or disgust or disappointment in his tone. And for a moment he forgot that he was speaking of his own father.

"Of course you didn't think to examine the envelope—" began Massingham.

"I didn't give it a thought," confessed Percival Stewart, looking thoroughly wretched. "But who would have thought that—that my father could have been capable of such a heartless deception? These are the papers he produced at Charminster, when he made the scene in the drill-hall, and he was bluffing all the time! I'll bet that the genuine documents are safely under lock and key! The rotter! The cad! I—I think I hate him, Massingham!"

"Go easy, old man," said the skipper of St. Jude's soothingly. "I know that you must feel it a bit, but you mustn't carry on like that."

"But—but think of it!" cried the other fellow. "It's heartless! It's wicked! And what will happen to the Head now?"

"Goodness knows, old man," said Tony Massingham, looking very grave. "Come on, let's get out of here. I can't breathe!"

Stewart became known throughout the school, and it was whilst Dr. Mellish was considering the question of moving the patient to a nursing-home that the period of unconsciousness came to an end.

A week passed, and the Head seemed little the worse for his experience. He was looking rather frail, perhaps, and seemed a little more reserved, but that was all. He still had a kindly, understanding smile for everybody who came in contact with him.

He was a very unhappy man, though, for he had received a further communication from Cockspur Street, and his fine face was haggard, when, ten days after his collapse, a knock came at the door of his study and Percival Stewart walked into the room.

The two had not met since the fatal night, and the senior was nervous as he advanced towards the flat-topped desk. He went straight to the point.

"You—you don't think I had anything to do with that dirty business, do you, sir?" he asked, looking straight into the Head's wide-set eyes. "You don't believe—"

"No, my boy, I merely believe that you acted in good faith," put in Dr. Cauton-Lowe. "I was not certain upon the point until a moment ago, but now I can read the truth in

then they pass, and I am myself again. It is all very strange—very strange."

Again his voice trailed away, and Percival Stewart wondered what he meant by those toneless words, for they could have meant anything.

"Still, I think I would see him were I you, sir," he advised, "and I will tell you where you can touch him upon a weak spot."

Hope dawned in the wide-set eyes, but it was gone in a flash.

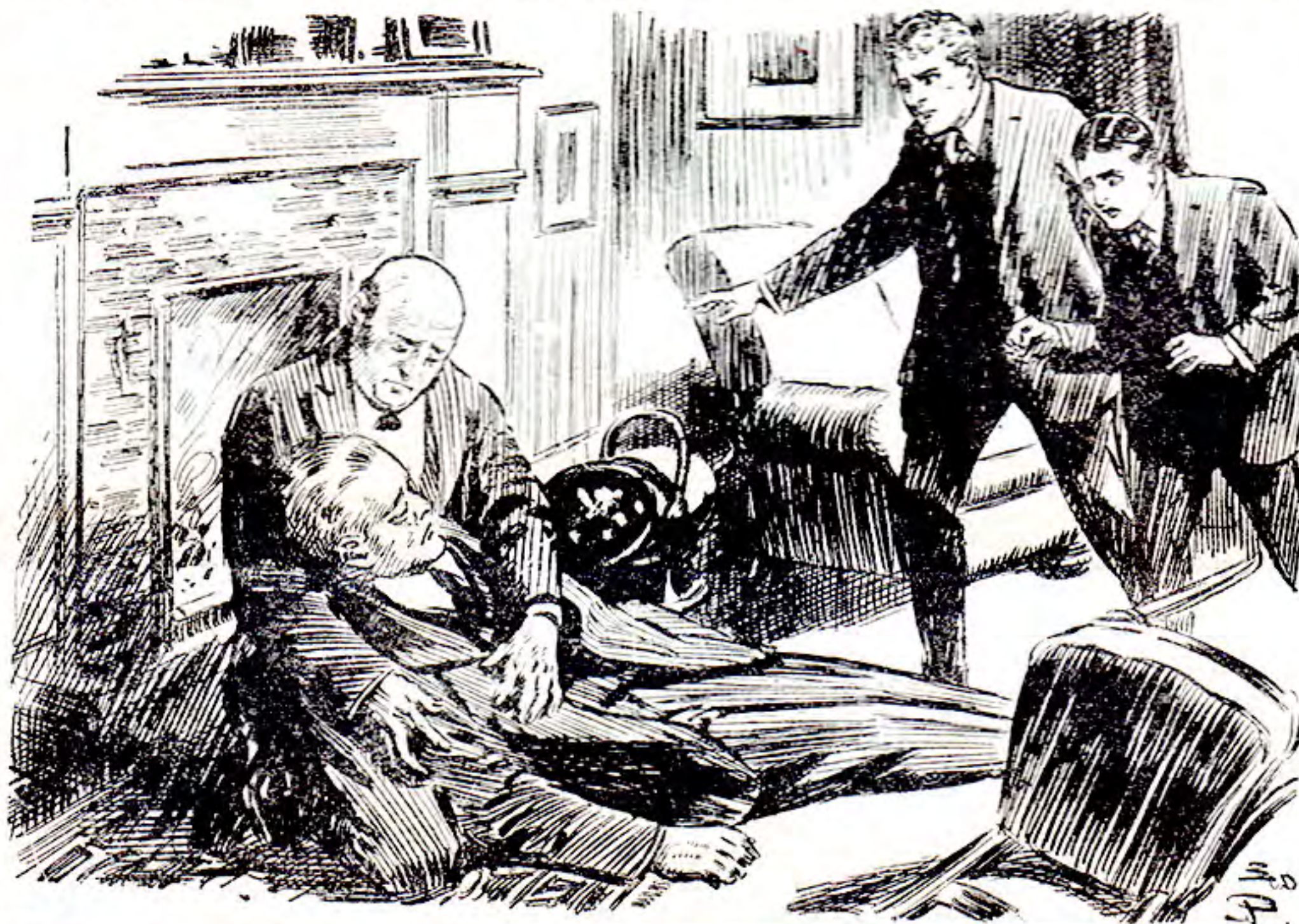
"Go on," bade the Head.

"My father thinks a great deal of me, sir," said Percival, "and it would be a blow to him should I be compelled to leave St. Jude's; and it is because he wishes me to stay on that he is threatening you. I don't think he means to carry out those threats for one moment—at least, not yet—so you can see what line of argument you can employ in dealing with him. Tell him that you either have further time in which to pay, or else you fire me out of St. Jude's. That will pull him up, sir."

The Head nodded.

"There is certainly something in what you say, my boy," he confessed, "but I'm afraid—afraid. But I may go, all the same; it can do no harm. Perhaps I'll go to-morrow—and plead with him—"

He gave a little crooked smile as



THE VICTIM OF A CALLOUS TRICK!

They crossed to the door and passed into the corridor, and at that moment a shrill voice echoed through the silent building.

"I'll kill him! He shall die! Stewart, you blackmailing scoundrel, you shall die! And I will kill you! Kill you! Kill—"

Massingham turned a rather scared-looking face towards his companion.

"It's the Head," he said, his voice a husky whisper. "He's delirious!"

The Tragedy.

THE Head remained unconscious for forty-eight hours, and he was in a state of delirium for the greater part of the time. He had quiet spells, of course, but these were largely the direct result of complete exhaustion.

The name of Maurice Stewart was ever upon his lips, and often his shrill threat to kill the notorious moneylender of Cockspur Street would echo eerily upon the still night air, and come to the ears of the fellows in the other houses; and many a wide-eyed junior would slip down beneath the bedclothes.

Dr. Mellish and the matron were frankly puzzled by the case, although they paid small attention to the Head's raving. People in the throes of delirium are the victims of a disordered brain, and they are capable of saying anything, of threatening anybody.

Why the old scholar should imagine that he had a terrible grievance against Maurice Stewart neither the doctor nor the matron could understand; but they did not waste any thought over the problem. Certain it is that they did not associate his fall and the attendant concussion with the moneylender.

The fact that Dr. Cauton-Lowe had vowed to take the life of Maurice

your face, in the sound of your voice. I am glad, Stewart, very glad."

He looked like a broken man as he stood leaning upon his desk, and tenderness and compassion dawned in the eyes of Percival Stewart. The Head saw that look, and he placed a kindly hand upon the senior's shoulder.

"You are in no way to blame, Stewart," he said very quietly, "and everything will come right in the end. I fear that the worry and suspense is getting too much for me, and anything may happen—anything. There are times when I feel so desperate that—"

His voice trailed away before he completed the sentence, and the moneylender's son regarded him with narrowed eyes.

"What do you mean, sir?" he asked.

"I don't quite know, my boy," returned the old scholar a trifle wearily. "I don't quite know!"

It was obvious to Percival Stewart that the Head was not himself that evening. He seemed to be wandering, and occasionally there was a strange, rather wild light in his eyes.

"Why not go to London and see my father, sir?" suggested the senior. "Perhaps you will be able to come to some other arrangement."

Standing quite still, Dr. Cauton-Lowe appeared to consider the point, for he made no reply for fully a minute.

"I have thought of that, my boy," he said at last, choosing his words with great deliberation, "and I fear to trust myself with him. I am afraid of myself. He has done me a wrong, a very great wrong, and I sometimes feel desperate. A kind of red mist floats before my eyes, and I am not myself, and thoughts—terrible thoughts—come into my mind. And

he had a mental vision of the bloated moneylender, the spider in the web in Cockspur Street. The hackneyed simile intrigued him for the moment.

"But even spiders die," he mused; and Percival Stewart could not understand the strange, red light that glinted in the wide-set eyes—and was gone!

The Spider at Home.

DR. CAUTION-LOWE took Percival Stewart's advice, and arranged a meeting with the moneylender of Cockspur Street; and the answer to his letter was a gem of refined mockery.

"I shall be truly charmed to have the company of so distinguished a scholar," wrote Maurice Stewart, "and I suggest that you come to my place at Highgate and have a bit of dinner with me. As you can understand, I have very little time for a heart-to-heart chat during office hours, so I shall consider myself highly honoured if you will so far forget your exalted status as to break bread with a low moneylender."

"I am hoping," he went on, "that your desire to see me for a private conversation is actuated by that spirit of good fellowship which has always been your outstanding characteristic, and again I tell you that I am deeply touched by the honour which you are bestowing upon one so unworthy as your humble creditor, Maurice Stewart."

There was a great deal more in a similar strain, and the Head's eyes glowed as the insults cut into his heart. He would not be put off, however, and left for London the following morning.

Reaching Paddington just after five, he drove to the Royalty Hotel and

booked a room, after which he ordered some tea and whiled away an hour in the lounge. But he was blind to everything that went on about him; he neither heard the low hum of voices nor saw the well-groomed men and the perfectly-gowned women.

He could think of nothing but the spider of Cockspur Street.

Maurice Stewart had mentioned that he would order dinner for seven-thirty, and about an hour before that time the Head of St. Jude's rose from his chair and went into his bed-room to dress.

He looked a fine and scholarly figure as, a little later, he passed beneath the lofty portico and entered his taxi; and nobody glancing into the finely-chiselled features, would have suspected the shadow that dimmed the Head's life.

Maurice Stewart lived alone—but for an old housekeeper—in a mansion which stood in its own grounds well back from the road; but the taxi-driver had no difficulty in finding Midas Lodge. He pulled up outside the massive wrought-iron gates, and his fare alighted, and a grin overspread his soiled features as he peered towards the block of inky darkness that was Maurice Stewart's house.

"Looks a cheerful sort of place, sir," he said, looking at the Head. "A very cheerful place—I don't think!"

"I am inclined to agree with you," smiled Dr. Cauton-Lowe. "Still, one must not judge by appearances, you know."

"That's so, sir," agreed the driver, pocketing his fare and a tip. "Good-night, sir!"

The car shot forward and was lost in the gloom of a November night, and the Head pushed open the heavy gate and passed into the grounds. There was no moon, and great banks of black cloud were scudding across an angry sky. No sign of light came from the direction of Midas Lodge.

Following the gravel path, the Head eventually found himself at the foot of a flight of stone steps; and at that moment he felt that he was out of touch with the world. Midas Lodge was like a house of the dead, for not a light winked in the inky darkness, not a sound broke the uncanny stillness.

"I hope that fellow hasn't made a mistake," mused the old scholar, stepping back and glancing up at the heavily-curtained windows. At least, I can make inquiries!"

Mounting the steps, he fumbled until he found an old-fashioned bell-rope, and this he pulled with quite unnecessary vigour. Truth to tell, the silence and darkness were beginning to tell upon the old scholar's nerves, and he heaved something very like a sigh of relief when he heard the sound of movement inside the hall.

Slow, shuffling footsteps approached, but a long period of time seemed to pass before there came a rattling of chains and the noise of a bolt being withdrawn from its socket.

Then the door opened an inch—two inches, perhaps—and an old and wrinkled face was illuminated by the light of a flickering candle. There was something positively horrible about the old crone, whose skin looked like parchment. Her features were sharp, and her nose beaklike, whilst her little eyes glittered in a way that made the Head shudder.

"Does Mr. Maurice Stewart live here, my good woman?" he asked, hoping in the depths of his heart that such was not the case.

"Yes, sir; he is expecting you, sir," returned the old woman; and the smile that distorted her face was horrible to see.

"Then take me to him," said the Head, rather testily. "Haven't you got a proper light? Is there no gas, no electric light?"

"Light costs money, sir," quavered the old housekeeper, "but you'll find it bright enough in the master's room!"

"Well, hurry!" snapped the Head.

Opening the door, the woman shuffled aside to enable the visitor to pass into the musty hall; then she locked up again and moved off across the bare boards, the flickering candle throwing eerie shadows as she walked.

She led the way up a short flight of stairs, and the Head's footsteps made a hollow sound upon the bare boards.

"This way, sir," chuckled the old crone, turning to the left and shuffling off along a musty corridor.

If Maurice Stewart had set out to put the Head's nerves on edge, he must have felt thoroughly satisfied with his efforts, for little beads of cold perspiration were standing out upon his guest's broad forehead as

he followed his guide along the echoing passage.
 "You'll find the master in the end room, sir," said the disreputable-looking woman, pointing a skinny finger. "Go straight in, sir!"

"Thank you!" said the Head shortly; and he was only too pleased to increase his pace and leave his unlovely escort behind.

Reaching the door, he rapped upon the panels, but no voice bade him enter.

"Very curious," he muttered, frowning into the shadows. "Most curious!"

He rapped again, and with irritable vigour, but still no sound came from inside the apartment. Only the echo of his own knocking came to his ears. He waited for a few seconds, and nothing happened; so he opened the door and crossed the threshold, and an unexpected flood of white light dazzled his eyes and blinded him for the moment.

A somewhat ornate chandelier was suspended from a richly-carved ceiling, and it was the white radiance of a score of electric bulbs which had struck the visitor with almost physical force and brought him to an abrupt standstill. Many seconds passed before he could take in his surroundings, but when he did so his mouth opened in an involuntary gasp.

The room was furnished with excellent taste. A thick Oriental carpet covered the floor, and on the walls were genuine old masters, whilst the round table in the centre of the apartment was a picture of snowy napery and gleaming silver. Covers had been laid for two—Maurice Stewart and his guest.

But the Head had no more than a quick glance for these things; his eyes were staring fixedly at a still figure in the armchair—the figure of the moneylender of Cockspur Street.

Maurice Stewart was obviously dead!

The Accusation!

MAURICE STEWART'S face was repulsive even in death. The bloated features wore an evil mask, and the thick lips were twisted into a grin so diabolical that a shudder of repugnance ran through Dr. Cauton-Lowe.

Death did not purify the moneylender of Cockspur Street; there was neither serenity nor peace about the huddled figure in the chair.

The Head of St. Jude's stood like a person petrified; he remained perfectly still for fully two minutes, paralysed with horror. The journey through the echoing old mansion had been eerie enough in all truth, and to stumble upon this scene of tragedy was to complete the nightmare experience.

There was something strangely incongruous about the whole affair—the rich Oriental carpet, the ornate chandelier, the priceless paintings, the mellow oak panelling, and the still figure of his host.

No sound broke the tragic silence, not even the ticking of a clock; but the Head's heart was thumping against his ribs, each beat booming in his ears like a thunderclap.

He was absolutely incapable of movement as he stared fixedly at the lifeless form of Maurice Stewart, and neither was he able to think clearly. He was stunned for the time being, yet he realised in a vague kind of manner that he was in the presence of either murder or suicide.



DEAD IN HIS CHAIR!

A sudden crash rang through the room, shattering the tense silence, and a sharp cry escaped the Head's bloodless lips; and then he made a determined effort to take himself in hand, for the crash was caused by the logs in the open grate huddling together, as though for greater warmth. The sound would have passed unnoticed in the ordinary way, but to Dr. Cauton-Lowe it seemed like the report of giant artillery. He started violently and glared almost fiercely at the glowing embers.

"My nerves are out of order," he told himself, moving across the room. "Something must be done for this poor fellow."

He spoke as though there were still hope for Maurice Stewart, even though it was plain that the moneylender had breathed his last. The position of the body, so eloquently inanimate, told its own story.

"Extraordinary—most extraordinary!" murmured the old scholar, halting before the chair.

He was still somewhat dazed—as well he might be, for to find oneself in the company of a dead man is an experience likely to test the strongest nerve. Leaning forward, the Head saw, for the first time, that Maurice Stewart was still bleeding from above the right ear. The rich silk cushion was stained with his blood. A closer examination disclosed the wound—a scorched aperture that marked the passage of a small-calibre bullet.

The gruesome discovery seemed to pull the Head together, and his clear eyes peered round for the weapon that had taken a man's life. He

knew not on what he based his opinion, but he felt quite convinced that the moneylender had been murdered in cold blood, and he gave a little sigh as he stooped and picked up a tiny, ivory-handled automatic. It was just possible that the sinister-looking little weapon might have dropped from the dead man's fingers, but the Head of St. Jude's did not believe such to be the case.

The spider of Cockspur Street was not the type of man to commit suicide; he loved life too well for that. He had power and wealth, the two things he had lived for.

Gazing down into the unlovely face, he could not believe that the man in whose power he had been for the past few months had really breathed his last, and he felt no elation over the circumstance when he convinced himself that Stewart was undoubtedly dead. Neither did he have any sense of relief at his unexpected deliverance. Only a great wave of compassion surged through him, especially when he thought of the shock that awaited Percival Stewart.

The fact that the moneylender had been cruel and merciless was forgotten; that he had gloated over the fly that had walked so unsuspectingly into his parlour was no more than a dim memory, something to be forgiven in the presence of death.

The Head of St. Jude's felt that indignation common to all men in the case of cold-blooded murder. He prayed that the person responsible for the terrible crime might be caught and brought to justice. That Maurice Stewart might have deserved his

fate did not occur to the old scholar; he was appalled at the idea of one human being killing another.

That the usurer had been the victim of foul play, that he had been given no opportunity to defend himself, was obvious from the position of the body. There was no doubt that the assassin had crept up behind the chair and fired the fatal shot with a cold precision that made Dr. Cauton-Lowe shudder.

Glancing down, he suddenly realised that he was holding the weapon that was responsible for the tragedy, and the tiny, sinister-looking affair fascinated him. It was the first time he had ever handled a revolver, and he turned it over and over in his palm, much as a child inspects a new toy.

His ignorance of the working of the thing can be gauged by the fact that he touched the trail trigger, ever so lightly; but the pressure was enough to send a shot into the far wall of the room.

The staccato noise of the report split the tragic silence, and the most startled man in the world at that moment was undoubtedly Dr. Cauton-Lowe. And it was whilst he was gazing dazedly at the smoking weapon that the door burst open, and two policemen entered the room.

Behind them came the ragged crone who had let Cauton-Lowe into the mansion, and she it was who pointed a skinny finger at the amazed scholar.

"That's him! He did it! I saw him!" she croaked, with a horrible leer; and the tight-lipped police-officers advanced stealthily upon the Head of St. Jude's.

(Dr. Cauton Lowe accused of murder! Of course it is absurd—impossible! But the circumstances are damning. Everything points against the innocent Head. What will happen? You will be surprised at the unexpected turn of events in the last instalment of this great story next week!)

LONG ODDS!

By Gilbert Chester.

(Continued from page 154.)

ing, caught his arm and tried to drag him back into the car.

But the frenzied Louis, thinking in his panic that the rescuer was about to attack him again, slashed out madly to ward off the blow he believed was coming, and with a violent jerk fell clean off the step, dragging Dick after him.

With a thud the pair rolled on to the narrow rim beside the track, their legs across the rail, with the next car thundering up behind, while Louis fought with the desperation of a maniac.

With but a second to decide, Dick saw the only alternative to throwing his evil cousin off, and leaving him to be run over by the oncoming car—saw it, and took it without thought for his own safety.

With a superhuman jerk, he rolled right over, tearing the struggling Louis by main force with him from under the very wheels of the swiftly-moving car, and flung by the force of his mighty wrench, slewed clean over the unguarded brink of the viaduct, locked in the crazy embrace of his frenzied cousin.

And as they vanished into the shadow of the ferro-concrete bridge-way, the strung-out line of cars rattled still onward, with a wild-eyed girl, her white face pressed to the front coach window, staring in glassy, horror out into the night!

(It seems that they are going to certain death—but can anything intervene to save them? Can anything break their fall? Look out for another long instalment of this brilliant yarn next week! Look out, too, for Ernest Harris' ripping long complete boxing story, "A Pal in a Thousand!" It's great!)

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