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"Are you a referee? Do you suffer from shortness of breath? If so, try my Referee's Breath—6d. per large bottle! Also, here am a few patent goalposts left, made to fold and carry in de waistcoat pocket. Ebery home should hab one!"

The 1st Chapter.

Asking for Trouble!

SLAP-DASH! Slap-dash! Slap-dash!

The busy bill-poster looked like a famished undertaker with a load of care on his mind, and the fact that he was humming a mournful dirge to himself suggested that he was in an advanced stage of melancholia. It will be gathered, therefore, that he was not in the mood for playfulness, and neither did he brighten a drab world with a hearty guffaw when someone jabbed him violently in the ribs with the brass ferrule of a thick ash walking-stick.

"What the deuce do you think you're up to, you long streak of misery?" shouted the man who had jabbed—a thick-set, red-faced individual, with close-set little eyes. "What's the game, you fiddle-faced idiot?"

For answer, the solemn-looking bill-poster dipped his big brush deep into his bucket of paste, straightened himself up, and swung his long arm with an accuracy which proved disastrous to the husky-voiced stranger who had prodded him in the ribs.

Splosh!

The dripping brush smote the stranger full in his mottled countenance and smothered him with a sticky unwholesomeness, which filled his ears and mouth and sent him reeling blindly across the pavement, and the air became blue with ungentlemanly remarks as the big fellow slipped into the gutter, lost his balance, and sat down heavily upon a mound of mud that was piled neatly against the side of the kerb.

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete—the Seahaven Rovers' popular player manager—who happened to stroll up at that moment. "What's de big idea, my dear old Gumbail?"

Amos Gumbail, mayor of the town, was too enraged to say anything just then, but the manner in which he spluttered and grimaced suggested that he was put out about something. True, he tried to speak, but the effort was beyond him; rage and paste choked him.

Pete beamed down at the muddy mayor, while the bill-poster turned his back upon that gentleman and calmly went on with his job. Gumbail and Pete were well known to one another—very well known! In fact, they were bitter enemies, and had been so ever since Jack, Sam, and Pete had recently settled down in Seahaven.

The trouble had started when the dusky member of that famous trio had secured a controlling interest in the Seahaven Rovers Football Club. That had been Gumbail's own ambition, and, as Gumbail didn't like being thwarted in anything, he had since tried many dirty tricks on Pete. So far, however, the latter had always been too clever for the scoundrelly mayor.

As for the bill-poster, he turned his back upon the mayor and calmly went on with his job.

"You're a funny old hoss, you know!" declared Pete, smiling down at his enemy. "I hab heard of people paying money for mud-baths, but—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gummy's getting one for nothing, old man!"

A large crowd had collected by this time, for Fore Street was the chief shopping centre, and Gumbail's heavy features were purple with fury as he splashed about in the mud and made a mighty effort to scramble to his feet. He was not altogether successful, however, for suddenly his heels shot from under him, and he landed flat upon his broad back with a force which seemed to shake the whole street.

"Give me a hand, some one!" he shouted, as he wallowed in the roadway. "Help me up, you grinning maniacs! Come to the rescue, you dolts!"

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete, his hearty guffaw echoing along the broad thoroughfare. "Dere's nothing like being polite, old hoss!"

"Now, then, what's the matter here?" demanded a youthful police-



By GORDON MAXWELL.

This Week's Long Complete Story:

PETE'S BARGAIN SALE!

"Is it?" asked Mr. Quiller-Fancourt, a note of interest in his reedy voice.

"Of course it is!" shouted Amos, his little eyes blazing.

"Hm! I'm very glad you've pointed that out to me," said the bill-poster. "You see, guv'nor," he ran on confidentially, "I can't read!"

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete. "Dat accounts for de milk in de monkey-nut, Amos, old hoss!"

"B-but how are people going to read the poster if it's upside down?" snorted the mayor. "How—"

"Dey might stand on deir heads, old hoss!" suggested Pete brightly.

"This is monstrous—unheard of!" cried Gumbail, snatching a bill and the paste-brush from Ferdy. "I'll show you how to do your job, you lunatic! Watch me closely! This should be an education to you."

Emitting a contemptuous snort, he pushed Mr. Quiller-Fancourt aside and stepped up to the hoarding, and so intent was he upon the job in hand that he inadvertently plunged his foot into the depths of the bucket and sent a shower of paste spurring in all directions.

"Wow!" he yelled, as the bucket shot away across the pavement and carried him with it.

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete. "I hope you're watching him closely, Ferdy, old hoss! Dat's how de job should be done! M'yes!"

"Hi! Come back with that paste!" shouted the bill-poster, as Amos slithered off the kerb and landed upon his ear in the roadway.

"Paste costs money, paste does!"

"Do you think I want your filthy paste, you maniac?" roared Amos, scrambling up into a sitting position. "Take the poisonous muck!"

Then, wrenching his foot free, he

gripped the bucket and jerked its unsavoury contents full into the bill-poster's indignant countenance.

"Ooooh!" gasped Ferdy, as the enormous poultice blotted him out and sent him swaying backwards upon his heels. "Gug-gug-gug—"

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete. "I should regard dat as a deliberate insult, old hoss!"

Ferdy, it seemed, held a like view upon the matter, for he was making strange, gurgling noises as he dashed the paste out of his eyes and made a rush at Amos, who was in the act of getting to his feet. Snatching up the brush, he smote the mayor briskly upon his bald head and knocked him flat upon his back; then, still making gurgling noises, he did his best to stuff the brush down his victim's throat.

His efforts coming to naught, he gripped the bucket and rammed it over Gumbail's head; and Fore Street echoed with riotous laughter as the mayor scrambled up. Stifled yells came from the interior of the bucket, and cascades of paste flowed down his worship's neck in sluggish streams.

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete, adding his mighty guffaw to the shouts of merriment. "I know I shall smile in a minute, Gumbail, old hoss!"

Wrenching the bucket off his head, Amos Gumbail came to a sudden standstill and glared round at the sea of grinning faces, and a murderous light flashed into his little, close-set eyes as he muttered fiercely and stepped up to Pete.

"I know presactly what you're going to say, old hoss," said the Rovers' player manager. "You're going to say dat I'm res'ponsible for dis little bit ob fun! Ain't dat so?"

"You call it a bit of fun, you hound," shouted Gumbail, "when I've been almost suffocated?"

"M'yes!" nodded Pete. "And now I suggest dat you get almost fumigated, for dat paste ain't quite so fresh as it might be!"

"I've never been treated in such a disgraceful manner in my life!" fumed Amos, dabbing his streaming

REAL BARGAINS!

"Could you do wid a good second-hand linesman? I hab got one for sale—bery tame, only been used twice. We hab got some good part-worn penalty areas at a bery low price. Walk in and hab a look round, dere is bound to be something you want!"

features with a red silk handkerchief. "A common, half-witted labourer dares to—"

"You merely got what you asked for, my dear old Gumbail!" cut in Pete. "Ferdy was doing his job ob work nice and comfortable, when you buzzed up to him and poked him in de wishbone wid de end ob your walking-stick, and I tink he was quite right in turning round and biffing you in de optic wid his paste-brush. M'yes!"

"And haven't I every right to poke him in the ribs?" demanded Gumbail, working himself into another passion. "Isn't he working for me? Don't I employ the idiot? Do you tink I pay him for sticking my bills on upside down, you black-faced barbarian?"

"So dey are your bills, are dey, old hoss?" asked Pete, a glint of interest creeping into his dark eyes. "Now, I wonder what you're up to dis time, my dear old Gumbail? Out ob de way, please!"

Executing a neat backward hand-spring, he stood on his head and commenced to peruse the highly-coloured poster, and a deep-throated chuckle broke from him as he read the following announcement:

"GREAT SALE AT GUMBAIL'S GIGANTIC STORES!"

Startling Reductions!

Goods Almost Given Away!
Gumbail's is the Bargain House of Seahaven!

Sale Starts on Wednesday Morning at Nine o'clock!
Get it at Gumbail's!

COMPETITION DEFIED!

"M'yes!" murmured Pete, as he landed lightly upon his feet again and grinned across at Amos. "Dat's certainly a bery striking poster, old hoss!"

"I'm glad you tink so!" snapped Gumbail unpleasantly.

"And dere's one part ob it dat interests me quite a lot," added Pete, a mischievous light in his dark eyes.

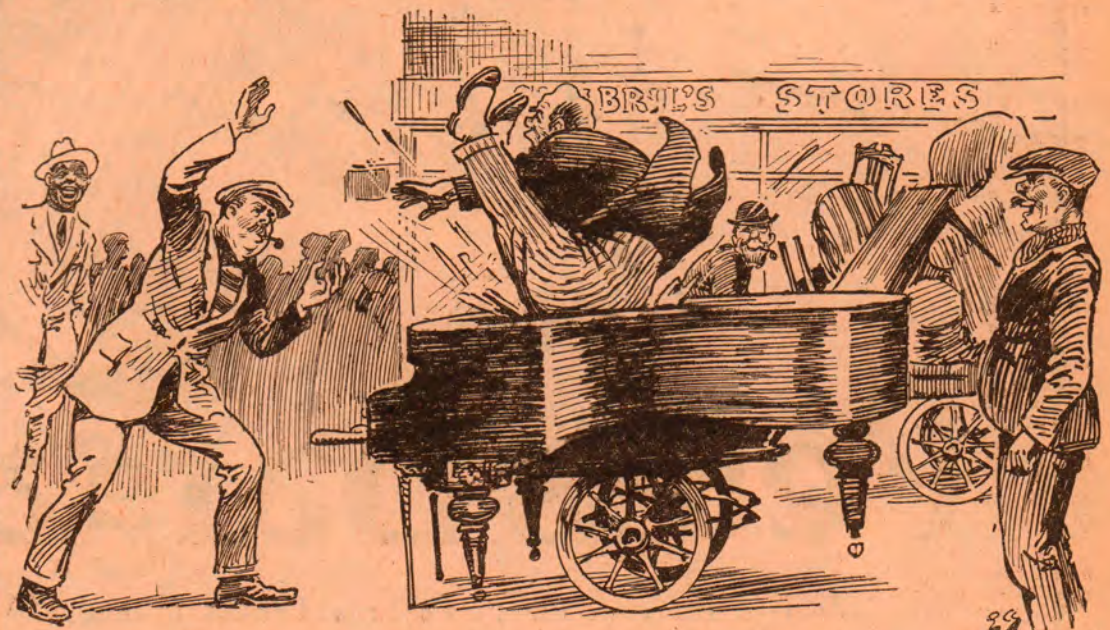
"Oh! And what's that?"

"De bit in which you say dat competition is defied," answered Pete.

"Well," barked Amos, going red about the ears, "what about it? Competition is defied; and I can assure you that a competitor couldn't live five minutes in the town! I shall sell off a lot of goods at less than cost price; and if any competitor can do more than that I'll eat my hat!"

Stooping down, Pete picked his worship's soiled topper out of the gutter.

"I shouldn't lose dis, old hoss!"



TER-RANG! PING!

Wires strummed and snapped as Gumbail landed on top of the grand piano and disappeared half-way into the interior. "I'll teach yer to set about me!" growled the savvy.

he said, handing the battered hat to Amos.

"Oh, and why not?" demanded the mayor, a sneer in his throaty voice.

"You'll probably need it in de near future, my dear old Gumboil," grinned Pete, a wealth of meaning in his tone. "You see, it's likely to figure in your menu!"

The 2nd Chapter. Too Cheap!

GUMBRIL'S gigantic stores occupied an imposing block of buildings in Fore Street, Seahaven, and Wednesday morning found its doors being besieged by a seething mass of men, women, and children.

Never before in the history of the town had a spring sale caused such a stir, and Amos was rubbing his podgy hands together as he stood outside the stores at three minutes to nine and ran his little eyes over the solid mass of bargain-hunters who were struggling for admittance.

The mayor had made a public boast to the effect that he was going to sell off certain goods at less than cost price; but such was not his intention, Amos not being that kind of man. Yet even had he been giving things away he could scarcely have attracted a greater crowd.

"The poor, short-sighted fools!" he muttered, as he waited for the doors to open. "They little know that there's no such thing as a genuine bargain at this sale! All they'll do is to pay through the nose for inferior goods—but that's their funeral! Take that special line of working-men's suits, for instance!" he mused, halting on the fringe of the crowd that was swarming and struggling outside the doors of the tailoring department. "Each suit's cost me a quid, and I charge thirty-one-and-elevenpence apiece for 'em, which gives me a clear profit of—"

His soliloquy came to an abrupt conclusion as he caught sight of a bold-faced showcard that was attached to one of his dummies. The card made the startling announcement:

**"SPECIAL LINE OF
WORKING-MEN'S SUITS
1/11."**

"It's a mistake!" shouted Amos, fighting his way through the crush of workmen, whose goggling eyes were fixed upon the "special line." "The card's wrong! Some fool has blundered! Those suits cost thirty-one-and-eleven each! Someone has pasted a bit of paper over the first figure—"

"Chuck it, ugly!" growled a hefty, bull-necked navvy, turning slowly and gripping Amos by the lapel of his immaculate morning-coat. "Don't try to come it with us, yer know, 'cause yer liable to get an enlarged listener! Them figures is as plain as the nose on yer face; and me and my mates ain't going to pay a farthing more than one-and-eleven for our suits! Not likely! Ain't that so, mates?"

A deep-throated rumble came from the mates as they glared into the mayor's distorted features.

"But I tell you it's all a mistake!" shouted Gumbriel, beads of perspiration breaking out upon his forehead. "Someone has pasted paper over the figure three on that card!"

"That's likely, ain't it?" scoffed the hefty navvy with the bull-neck. "You tell that yarn to the Mounted Marines, old sparrer! One-and-eleven is our price for a suit—"

"But it can't be done, you fool!" cried Amos, losing all control of himself.

"Who says it can't?" demanded the navvy, taking a scientific grip of the mayor's ample nose. "This looks like a bit of dirty work to me, so you want to be mighty careful! Now, then," he growled, doubling a massive leg-of-mutton fist, "what's the price o' them suits? Come on! Look nippy!"

"I'd—I'd already told you dat id's a mistake," mumbled Gumbriel, as the navvy hung on to his nose. "Id iddn't poddible—"

"What's the price o' them suits?" roared the navvy in a voice of thunder. "I give you two seconds to—"

"One-and-eledem!" cried Amos, giving way to panic. "Leggo by node!" And the man released him.

The doors had been thrown open for some minutes, but a struggling, heaving, pushing crowd was still pouring into the building. Amos heaved a sigh of relief when the navvy and his companions gave him a valedictory scowl and made a raid upon the tailoring department.

"Well, my dear old hoss!" cried



KNOCK HIS HEAD OFF, GUMBOIL! Blind with fury, Gumbriel brought over a vicious right hook which took his victim full on the point of the jaw. An instant later, and the mayor was staring in goggle-eyed amazement as his assailant's neck snapped with a sharp report, and the head went sailing away. "Yah, yah, yah! Now you've been and gone and done it, Gumboil!" roared Pete. "Dose dummies are expensive!"

Pete, arriving on the scene and giving Amos a hearty slap on the back. "How's business?"

"What the deuce has it got to do with you?" demanded Gumbriel, with a scowl. "I—I—I—!" His voice died away to a choking gurgle as he rushed across the pavement and peered into one of the plate-glass windows. "Look! Look!" he shouted, pointing with a shaking finger. "I shall be ruined—ruined!"

"I hope dere's nothing de matter, my dear old Gumboil!" grinned Pete, with ready sympathy. "Nothing the matter!" echoed the mayor. "Look at that notice!"

"Myes!" muttered Pete. "I must say dat it is very generous ob you, old hoss! 'Smatter ob fact, I don't know how you do it!"

"But I'm not doing it!" shouted Amos, tearing his silk hat from his head and jumping on it. "This is another mistake! Someone's gone mad! It's a conspiracy! Look at it!"

Pete looked again, and re-read the following notice:

NOTE THIS STUPENDOUS OFFER!

To Every Customer Who Purchases a Packet of Hairpins Gumbriel's Gigantic Stores Will Present One of the Following Articles—Free, Gratis, and For Nothing:

100 h.p. Motor Cycle.
Second-hand Steamroller.
Row of Houses.
Private Tramcar (with tram-lines).
Battleship.
Gasometer.
Coal Mine.
Sack of Radium.

FREE! FREE! FREE!

"Dat's what I call enterprise, old hoss," said Pete, with a sagacious shake of his woolly head. "I tink—My word, dat's cheap, my dear old Gumboil!" He broke off, and pointed to an expensive-looking motor-car which bore the ticket: "VERY SMART. 1s. 3d." "Dat's a real bargain, and no mistake!"

The catalogue price of the car was a thousand guineas, so Pete had good reason for making his statement.

Amos stood like a person petrified, his little eyes goggling from their sockets, his capacious mouth wide open, his bullet head thrust forward. Fully sixty seconds ticked away before he showed the faintest sign of life.

Then: "There's a foul conspiracy against me!" he shouted, a wild light in his eyes. "Everything was in order when I left the stores last evening; the tickets must have been meddled with during the night! Some brass-faced scoundrel—"

"P'raps it was a practical joke, old hoss," suggested Pete gravely.

"Practical joke!" roared Gumbriel, shaking his clenched fists above his head and jumping up and down as though suspended on invisible wires. "Where's the joke, you maniac? Where do I laugh? Is there anything funny in having to sell a thousand-guinea car for one-and-three-three?"

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete. "P'raps it ain't so funny, after all, old hoss! Let's see if dere's anything more going cheap!"

Muttering fiercely, Gumbriel fell in with the suggestion, and he had not gone four yards before he noticed that a suite of drawing-room furniture—including a grand piano—was marked up at five-and-ninapence!

"I told you! I told you!" he shouted, pointing with his walking-stick and plunging the ferrule through the plate-glass window. "There's dirty work here, and there'll be murder done when I find the scoundrel who's at the bottom of the business! I'll choke the life out of him, and then give him in charge—"

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete. "Dat's a good one, old hoss! By de way," he ran on, "I don't know how you manage to sell dose brass bedsteads at tuppence each! And look at dose mangles, old hoss! Three-hapence a pair! Why, kippers cost more dan dat, my dear old hoss! Myes! Dat's a very cheap line, as well!"

"What is?" asked Gumbriel in a weak kind of voice. He was like a man in a dream; there was a dazed expression in his little eyes. "Tell me the worst!"

"De notice says dat you're gibing gold watches away in exchange for six cigarette cards," said Pete. "I didn't know dat you were a keen collector ob cigarette cards, old hoss, or—"

"Cigarette cards!" The mayor's throaty voice rose to a scream. "Do you think—do you think—do you think that—"

Choking and gurgling, he dashed across the pavement, hurled himself against a swing door, and charged into the stores, and the first person he encountered was a tall, forbidding, angular female with a masculine cast of countenance. The lady, who wore a wart on her nose and a little Alpine hat upon her head, was of the type that despises Man and all his works; she certainly regarded Amos Gumbriel with marked disfavour when he bumped into her and scattered the twenty-odd parcels with which she was laden.

"Ye great clumsy gawk!" she shouted, giving Amos a hefty push which placed him flat upon his back. "What d'ye mean by treating a lady like that? What d'ye—"

Thwack, thwack, thwack!

Swinging her umbrella, she smote Gumbriel across his hairless dome and belaboured him until the gamp was a thing of broken ribs and tattered silk. Even then she did not seem to be satisfied with the salutary punishment she had meted out.

"How dare you treat a poor, weak woman in that way, ye ugly monster!" she cried, her shrill voice

echoing through the stores. "Just because I'm a frail woman, you think you can bully me, but I'll show you that you can't, you hulking brute! Little Brighteyes may be delicate—Ah! No you don't, you monster!"

The monster was in the act of scrambling to his feet, when Little Brighteyes thrust her delicate shoulder against a mountain of merchandise and buried the mayor beneath an avalanche of linen, twills, muslin, and calico, rolls and rolls of fabric descending upon him and crushing the breath out of his body.

"Ow! Ooo-er! Woosh! 'Elp!" Smothered, far-off cries came from beneath the towering pile that rocked and swayed as Amos tried to fight his way to freedom, and no sooner did his bald head appear than Little Brighteyes made a single leap at him, grabbed him by the ears, and dragged him half a dozen yards across the smooth flooring.

"I hope that will be a lesson to you, you big brute!" she cried, shaking a skinny finger at him, as he looked up at the Amazon with a dazed, scared expression in his little eyes. "I may be a poor, weak woman—"

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete, contributing a hearty guffaw to the peals of laughter that broke out from all parts of the shop. "It's a great pity he doesn't know how to treat de gentler sex, my dear! I—"

"What is it, my love?" put in a thin, piping voice. "Has anyone been unkind to my precious Bright-eyes?"

"Yah, yah, yah!" shouted Pete, as

a little man with a bald head and a straggling moustache trotted forward and glared down at Amos Gumbriel.

"Ah! My Augustus! My own protector!" cried the angular lady, falling down upon the little man's neck with a force which caused him to sit down hurriedly upon the floor. "This brute has insulted me, my love!"

Jumping to his feet, the little man breathed fire as he bore down upon the mayor, and he was quivering with fury and indignation as he stepped forward and flicked Amos upon the nose with his forefinger.

"Take that!" he cried in his piping voice.

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete, as Augustus backed away and joined Little Brighteyes. "Dis don't seem to be your lucky day, Amos, old hoss!"

Making no comment, Amos slithered off along the floor. On turning a corner, he made straight for the head of a steep flight of stairs. He was so scared that Brighteyes might be following him that he missed his footing and toppled backwards, and rolled over and over until he landed with a jarring bump in the bargain basement.

"Yessir! What can I do for you, sir?" cried an eager assistant, hurrying forward. "It's a lovely day, sir, for the time of the year, and—"

"Shut your mouth, you babbling gramophone!" roared his worship, as he sat up and examined himself for broken bones. "Don't you know that I might have snapped my neck, you imbecile?"

"It did strike me that you adopted an unusual method of—er—descending the staircase!" admitted the assistant, eager to please the great man. "Thank goodness, you didn't hurt yourself, sir!" he added tactfully.

"Grrrr!" snarled Amos, scrambling to his feet. "You're a fool!"

"Yes, sir!" Withering his assistant with a searing glare, Gumbriel turned slowly, and made his painful way up to the first floor, and no sooner did he reach the head of the staircase than sounds of uproar smote his ears.

The 3rd Chapter. More Trouble!

IT seemed to Amos that something very like a free fight was taking place in the furnishing department, and he was running towards the scene of strife when, on swinging round a corner, he collided violently with his friend the navvy, the hefty, bull-necked gentleman who, but a little while before, had taken liberties with his nose.

"Look where you're going to, ugly!" roared the navvy, who was staggering beneath a grand piano. "Git out o' the way!"

"Look here, my man," snorted Amos, his eyes upon the piano, "what are you doing with that Neiklestein?"

"Playing it, o' course!" grinned the other man. "Don't yer recognise (Continued on next page.)

ANOTHER SCREAMINGLY FUNNY YARN COMING NEXT WEEK!

JACK SAM and PETE!



"PETE IN SOCIETY!"

D'you know what a "catsomaniac" is? You don't? Well, Gumbriel is one—at least, Pete says he is!

Just to prove that Pete's right, every cat within about ten miles starts to follow Gumbriel. Black cats, brown cats, tabby cats, white cats; fat cats, skinny cats, little cats, big cats—they're all there!

Gumbriel has the day of his life with those moggies!

This side-splitting yarn is absolutely one of Gordon Maxwell's best.

COMING NEXT WEDNESDAY.



the 'Moonlight Tomato'? Now, 'op it!"

"I demand to know what you are going to do with that piano, my man!" shouted Gumbriel.

"I'm going to take it 'ome to the missus, if you must know!" answered the navy. "My young Alf can vamp lovely!" His good-natured grin gave way to a black scowl. "Now then, ugly, are you goin' to git out o' the way, or 'ave I got to drop this 'ere jews' arp and give you a punch in the ear? It's all the same to me—"

"But you've no right to take that instrument!" shouted Amos, his bloated face purple with rage. "You've not paid for it—"

"Course I 'ave!" snarled the navy. "I gave five-and-nine for a suite o' drawing-room furniture, and this joanna's part o' the doings! My mates are comin' along with the sofa and chairs and things! Five-and-nine I paid for this little lot, and—"

"But my assistant had no right to take that ridiculous sum—"

"That's what the bloke said," put in the navy, "and he wouldn't take it till I grabbed 'im by the 'air and shoved the money down 'is neck! Most obstinate, 'e was!"

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete, who strolled up just in time to hear the remark. "I'm 'fraid dis old boss is quite widin his rights, Gumbriel, 'cause de goods were marked in plain figures!"

"You shut up, you black plague!" snorted Gumbriel. "The whole thing's a mistake, and you know it!"

"We are all called upon to pay for our mistakes in dis world, my dear Amos!" said Pete, in grave tones. "Isn't dat so, Aubrey?" he asked, turning to the glowering navy.

"My name's 'Arold, guv'nor!" announced the navy.

"M'yes!" murmured Pete. "And a very nice name, too! Well, 'Arold, old hoss, I really tink you hab struck a bargain dis journey. After all, you can't get a really good drawing-room suite under five-and-nine, can you? Ah, here's de rest ob de party!"

"Make way!" shouted 'Arold's mates. "Clear the road, there!"

"I'll do nothing of the sort!" shouted Amos. "I refuse to let that furniture leave these stores—Ooooooh!"

Acting swiftly, 'Arold raised his foot, placed the sole of his boot against the mayor's rotund waistcoat, and pushed to such good purpose that Amos went slithering helplessly across the polished flooring, and a roar of laughter echoed through the place when he crashed against a tailors' dummy, recoiled violently from the impact, and landed with nice precision upon the back of his neck, the dummy swaying forward and falling on top of him.

"Would you, you hound!" snorted his worship, gripping the dummy round the neck and punching away with a force which threatened to knock the stuffing out of his inanimate victim. "I don't know who you are, but you're going to get the hiding of your life!"

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete, as the mayor and the dummy rolled over and over across the floor. "Knock his head off, old hoss!"

"And so I will!" gasped his worship, bringing over a vicious right hook and catching his man full upon the point of the jaw.

Crack!

Such was the force of the blow that the neck snapped with a sharp report, and the head went clattering away across the floorboards.

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete, as Amos Gumbriel sat back upon his heels and stared in goggle-eyed amazement. "Now you hab been and gone and done it, old hoss!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You've won, Gummy!"

The verdict should have been as sweet music in the ears of Amos Gumbriel, yet he looked anything but elated as he roused himself and rose slowly to his feet. Truth to tell, Amos was beginning to feel the strain, and the fact that he was surrounded by scores of grinning faces did nothing to soothe him.

"Where—where are those thieving scoundrels?" he snorted, glaring round for 'Arold and his mates.

"I tink dey went out by de oder door, old hoss!" answered Pete.

"Do you mean that they've had nerve enough to leave these premises with my furniture?" fumed Amos.

"I'm 'fraid so, old hoss!" nodded Pete. "After all, dey paid for dat drawing-room suite—"

"Rot! Rubbish! Fiddlesticks!" shouted Amos, diving headlong into the dense crowd and scattering the shoppers to right and left. "I'll soon see about this! I'll put the police on their track!"

Rushing into Fore Street, he was just in time to see 'Arold and his companions loading the furniture on to a fleet of wheelbarrows, and he looked like a wild-eyed madman as he dashed across the pavement and grabbed the hefty navy by the shoulder.

"Allo, ugly!" grinned 'Arold, removing a short clay pipe from his mouth. "Ain't you dead yet?"

The remark was scarcely tactful, perhaps, and a hot flush overspread the mayor's moist countenance.

"Return my property at once, you infamous scoundrel!" shouted Amos, quivering like a giant jellyfish. "Attempt to take that furniture away, and I'll give you in charge!"

"Don't be silly, Cuthbert!" begged 'Arold, with a pitying smile. "I've got a signed receipt for five-and-nine in my sky-rocket—"

"In your what?" snorted Amos.

"In my sky-rocket, Herbert!" repeated the man patiently. "Sky-rocket is Greek for pocket!" he explained. "Don't you know that? Where was you dragged up, Godfrey? I'm goin' to take this furniture 'ome to the missus, so there's no more to be said in the matter!"

"But my assistant had no right to give you a signed receipt!"

"I'll admit that 'e didn't seem very eager!" grinned 'Arold. "But he either 'ad to give me the receipt or 'ave 'is blessed 'ead knocked off, and 'e chose the lesser evil, as the poet says!"

"The receipt isn't valid! I refuse to recognise it!" shouted the mayor.

"You shall not take a stick away!"

"Then you must get someone to

stop me!" grinned 'Arold, gripping the handles of the barrow and nodding a signal to his grinning mates. "Good-morning, Sidney!"

Consumed with fury, and indignant to a point of desperation, Amos ripped out a picturesque malediction and hurled himself upon the hefty navy; and such was his state of recklessness that he lashed out and caught the giant a vicious punch behind the ear.

"Hi! Who done that?" roared 'Arold, swinging round with an ugly light in his eyes. "Who—Ow!"

Having lost all control of himself, Amos struck again, and smote 'Arold flush upon the nose, but in essaying a third blow he came to grief.

Gripping the mayor as though he were a featherweight, 'Arold swung him off the ground and tossed him high into the air, and Amos emitted a yelp of fright as he turned a somersault and landed with a crash on top of the grand piano.

Smash! Splinter! Ter-rang! Ping!

The grand piano was not built for that sort of treatment, and there was

Had You Heard Dis One?



Dere ain't nothing like a funny story to bring a smole to your cherub features, old hoss! Here's a good one:

A friend called to see Sambo. Sambo was rocking himself backwards and forwards in a chair, and every little while he would gib himself a sort ob jerk sideways.

"What am de matter wid you?" asked his friend. "Am you sick?"

"No," says Sambo. "I'se not sick."

"Den what for do you rock yourself dat way?"

"Do you know 'Rastus'?" asked Sambo. "Well, I'se just bought a cheap watch off him, an' if I stops moving myself like dis, dat it'll watch don't go!"

Try dat one on your pals!

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a great splintering and tearing of wood as the rear portion of Gumbriel's anatomy disappeared from view and struck a jarring discord, and he was still struggling to free himself when 'Arold pushed the barrow forward and set off at a brisk pace for No. 6, Quayside Alley.

The 4th Chapter.

Pete's Emporium.

THURSDAY morning found Amos Gumbriel at his gigantic stores soon after dawn, for he meant to make sure that the second day of his spring sale should not turn out an expensive fiasco. Many of the previous day's customers had been willing to listen to reason, and had caused no trouble when the situation had been explained to them by the harassed assistants; but there were others who had scoffed at all explanations, and had insisted upon buying goods at the ridiculous prices marked on the tickets. The assistants had done their utmost to deal with the situation, but they had been forced to give way when indignant bargain-hunters had threatened to smash the place up and give Amos Gumbriel in charge.

However, things were not as bad as they might have been, although Amos was many hundreds of pounds out of pocket.

It was common knowledge that the mayor was the most tight-fisted man in the town, so it will be understood that he did not intend to take any chances on Thursday. Bad-tempered and scowling, he prowled about the stores from dawn until nine o'clock, and during those hours he manipulated his prices in such a manner that he had every hope of covering his loss of the previous day.

The doors were flung open at nine o'clock, but the only persons who entered were two unwashed urchins who strolled up to his worship and asked him if he'd got any empty boxes to give away.

"Get out of here, you cheeky little guttersnipes!" shouted Amos, his eyes blazing. "Clear off, or I'll give you a tanning!"

"Come orf it, guv'nor!" grinned one of the urchins, a snub-nosed child with flaming red hair. "I'll darn soon tell my farver if you come any o' that Jack Dempsey stuff wiv us!"

"To 'blazes with your father!" snarled Amos, bearing down upon the grinning youngsters. "Send him round here, you little rats, and I'll soon talk to him! Who is he, anyway?"

"His mates call him 'Arold."

"What name did you say?" put in Amos, a scared light in his little eyes.

"'Arold, guv'nor!"

"Oh, yes. Quite, quite!" said Amos, forcing a wintry kind of smile. He turned to one of the young ladies behind the counter. "Miss," he said, "you might give these bonnie little chaps as many boxes as they can carry, will you?"

He was thinking many harsh things about the bonnie little chaps as he swung round and strode away into another department, and he was still seething with rage and chagrin when nine-thirty arrived and still the gigantic stores were deserted.

"What's the matter, Potter?" he snorted, glaring at one of his shop-walkers. "Why aren't we packed out? Where are the people? It's amazing—extraordinary!"

The shop-walker, a fussy-looking little fat man, tugged nervously at his ragged moustache.

"It's amazing—extraordinary!" he began.

"I've just said that, you idiot!" snorted Amos. "I'm asking you for a reason! Where are our customers?" He glowered at his companion. "Don't stand there looking as intelligent as a cold suet pudding, man!"

"I suppose you know, sir," said Potter, "that we have—er—to contend with opposition this morning, sir?"

"What?"

Amos Gumbriel's bellow echoed through the gigantic stores as he caught the obese shop-walker by the lapel of his frock-coat.

"An opposition shop has opened up next door, sir," said Potter in a weak voice.

"What shop? Whose shop? What's it called? Who's running it?"

A stream of questions broke from Amos Gumbriel as he shook the breath out of his shop-walker.

"The concern is called Pete's Emporium, sir," answered Potter, "and—"

"Pete's Emporium!" roared the mayor, sending Mr. Potter reeling across the polished floor. "You're mad! I'll have you put away, you idiot! Pete's Emporium! Pete's—Pete's—"

Amos was babbling to himself as he rushed through the stores, scattering assistants to right and left, and he was breathless and wild-eyed as he reeled into Fore Street and gazed round for the rival concern.

He had not far to look.

Staring away to his left, his goggling eyes were confronted with the spectacle of a vast crowd that reached half-way across the broad thoroughfare, and plainly to his burning ears came the sound of merriment.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good old Pete!"

"This is something like a spring sale!"

Purple-faced and fuming, Amos strode off along the pavement and joined the seething mass of people. After wriggling and pushing for ten minutes or so he managed to get a glimpse of the well-stocked windows that were causing such a commotion.

The first thing that impressed itself upon Amos was the fact that much of Pete's stock was identical to his own, although his rival was selling goods at a cheaper rate.

Pete, of course, had opened his stores with the sole intention of giving Gumbriel "a smack in the eye." Not that he wished to do the mayor any actual harm, but nothing pleased him more than when he was having some fun at the expense of that important personage.

So when he had learned that Gumbriel intended to give a spring sale—and the fact had been extensively advertised for the past few weeks—he immediately saw an opportunity of having another go at his enemy.

With his characteristic thoroughness he had rented a shop near to Gumbriel's own store, and had it stocked on a lavish scale.

When he had visited the great man's sale the previous day he had immediately seen that Gumbriel, for all his apparent generosity, intended selling inferior goods at what was really a prohibitive price. So Pete had resolved to sell his own stock—

IF YOU WANT TO KNOW ANYTHING—ASK PETE!



Pete Replies!

Address your letters to
Pete, c/o The Editor, The
BOYS' REALM, Fleet-
way House, Farringdon
Street, London, E.C. 4.

"If any ob you old hosses hab any knotty points dat am puzzling you, drop me a line. Some ob de letters I hab already received are dealt wid below."
—PETE.

Jimmy Burkett (Dover).—What do you tink I am, Jimmy—a wireless uncle or something ob dat sort? You say: "My birthday is Wednesday, March 9th." Well, I hope dat you hab a nice day for it, and dat your cake am full ob hoss-shoes.

S. R. Swann (Swansea).—How can you make invisible ink? Anything to oblige a Swann from Swansea—funny your name should be dat, ain't it? I s'pose if it had been Sauce, you would hab libed at Worcester. Let's see, where was we at—ah, invisible ink. Easy! Get a large bottle ob de best black ink—it must be de best, mind. Den frow it ober your shoulder widout watching it, and de ink will immediately become invisible. De best place to make invisible ink am in de middle ob a large field. If you do it where people am about, you will hab to take de ink out ob de bottle before you frow it; otherwise de ink am likely to annoy somebody.

P. Young (Truro).—You want to know why Gumbriel hab got a bump on de top ob his head. Just a minute, old hoss. (Sammy, why hab Gumbriel got a bump on de top ob his head? I don't know, image, unless it's caused by excess ob brains.—I don't see what dey hab got to do wid it, Sammy; however, I'll tell him dat.) Hallo, old hoss; I hab just found out dat de bump on de top ob Gumbriel's head am caused by an' abscess ob de brain—in oder words, toothache in de mental department.

Sidney Woolmer (Fulham).—You play in goal; you let in two penalties in your last match; can I tell you de best way ob stopping penalty shots. Dere am seberal ways ob dealing wid dis sort ob ting, old hoss; one ob de

best am to dig up de goalposts and put dem in anudder part ob de field, so dat when de penalty kick am taken de goal ain't dere. Anudder good ting am to hang de net ober de front ob de goal instead ob at de back.

L. P. (Widnes).—What has happened to Fido; you habent heard much ob him lately. I ain't seen much ob him myself, old hoss. I s'pect he am somewhere about; we don't see much ob Fido, 'cept at meal-times—unless Gumbriel comes along. De last time dey met, Fido made a meal ob Gumbriel's coat-tails—dat's de worst ob pet lions, you can neber tell what dey will eat next.

Peter J. (Southend).—You hab got a tame rabbit dat fights. Dat's nothing, old hoss; I hab got two man-eating glow-worms!

Samuel Clincher (Bradford).—Hallo, Sam—how's tricks? Here am de answers to your questions: (1) Rub de boil wid a brick; dat ought to get rid ob it; (2) De best food for white mice am raw beef, it makes dem bery fierce; (3) Sometimes it depends on de weather. If de plants habent come up in two-free weeks, dig de seeds up and plant dem de oder way round; (4) Deep breathing exercises ebry morning will improbe your handwriting.

Adam K. Lyle (Manchester).—You hab invented a machine for cleaning folks' teeth; what do I tink ob it? Adam, I tink you am bery clever. As a matter ob fact, anudder inventor wrote to me a week back, and he hab invented something for parting people's hair. He sent drawings ob his instrument, but I couldn't quite make out wedder the ting was a hammer or an axe.

B. N. (Barrow).—You hab got an idea dat it would save money if you could get an old steamer dat nobody wanted, and lib in dat instead ob libbing in a house. Do I know where you can get an old steamer? Hab you got a private ocean to float de steamer in—otherwise, what am you going to do wid it? If you hab got an ocean, den I should tink you could get a part-worn steamer at any rag-and-bone merchants. If you can't get a steamer, would a railway engine suit you?

"Felix" (Norwich).—When you are out walking you hab great difficulty in going straight; can I tell you what am wrong? Dunno, old hoss; but I hab noticed dat if anything happens to hit old Gumbriel on de head, he sort ob wobbles in his walk. Find out if anybody keeps on hitting you on de head wid a mallet or something heavy like dat, den write to me again and I'll tell you what am wrong.

"Jack" (Beaconsfield).—How am de chickens fluffing now, Jack? Still laying big eggs? I dunno what you can do wid de big brown rooster dat you write about; funny dat it don't lay eggs, ain't it? Hab a look at him again! make sure dat it ain't a canary or a ladybird—ladybirds don't lay eggs; mebbe dat's what am wrong.

S. McLochly (Airdrie).—Will I send you a season ticket for the Seahabn Robers ground, and you will send the money for it when you get the ticket. Jock, I am sendin' you one ob our special season tickets, carbed on a block ob granite weighing two-free tons. De idea ob habing it in stone am so dat nobody can steal it from you. De ticket am coming Cash On Delivery.

which was of good quality—cheaper than his enemy. Pete, unlike Gumbriel, was not thinking of the profit that was likely to accrue as a result of the sale.

Gumbriel was still muttering fiercely when, pushing his way nearer the windows, he caught sight of certain notices which told him that Pete had gone one better than himself.

Pete, as a matter of fact, had opened a special department for sportsmen.

One notice read:

"Best Quality Touchlines,
1½d. Per Foot!"

Another said:

"Try Our Patent Goalposts! Can be Folded Up and Carried in the Waistcoat Pocket!"

Other notices ran:

"Are You a Referee? Do You Get Fagged Towards the End of the Game? Then Try a Bottle of Our Famous 'Referee's Breath'! 1½ a Bottle. Large size, 6½d."

"Second-Hand Penalty Areas are Cheap To-day! Don't Miss This Golden Opportunity of Owning a Penalty Area of Your Own!"

"To Football Managers!—Take Your Own Playing Pitch With You! Our Motor Vans Take Pitches to Any Part of the Country! Ask for a Price List!"

"To Goalkeepers!—Why Not Have Three Hands? Walk Inside and Inspect our Artificial Arms!"

"Second-Hand Linesmen For Sale! In Fairly Good Condition. No Reasonable Offer Refused! Only Been Used Twice!"

"You Must Use Our Pete's Special Football! Can't be Burst! Made of Best Quality Cast-Iron!"

"Don't Throw Your Old Goal-Nets Aside! We Make Them Into Ladies' Fringe-Nets at the Shortest Notice!"

"Try Our Free Laughs Counter! Miles of Smiles Given Away! Jokes Free to Everybody!"

Not so much as a flicker of a smile flitted across Amos Gumbriel's fleshy countenance as he ran his little eyes over the score of amusing notices, and he looked as ugly as a wild boar as he forced his way through the press of people and made his way into Pete's Emporium.

"Good-morning, my dear old Gumbriel!" cried Pete, striding forward with a broad smile and outstretched hand. "Dis is indeed an honour, old hoss!"

"I'm glad you think so!" snarled the mayor, his little eyes smouldering with venom. "Look here," he ran on, "what's the use of our cutting each other's throats?"

Pete's grin vanished as he ran his fingers through his woolly thatch.

"I don't know dat I hab even thought about cutting your froat, old hoss," he declared. "But if you contemplate cutting mine, I can sell you a very good razor!"

"Talk sense, man!" snarled his worship, rubbing a thick forefinger round the inside of his collar and glaring ferociously at the smiling faces which met him on all sides.

"This is what I'm driving at," he said, turning to Pete. "You've got a great many lines that are identical to my own in make and quality, yet you're selling them off at fivepence or sixpence cheaper than I am! What's the idea? You're doing me a lot of harm, as you can understand, and you're not doing yourself any good! Can't you see that it's a short-sighted policy?"

"No, I can't, my dear old Gumbriel," answered Pete, showing his white teeth in a beaming smile. "Small profits and quick returns is de motto ob dis emporium! What's more, I happen to hab a spring sale on at de moment!"

"You're a fool!" snorted Amos, in disgust. "You're no business man!"

"No, and I ain't likely to be, old hoss, if you're a fair sample ob one! Now, run away like a good little lad, cause der sight ob you is liable to gib me a severe pain in de neck! M'yes!"

"I'll stand no impertinence from you, you insolent hound!" shouted his worship, in a voice which rang through the packed emporium. "I come here with the intention of putting a sound proposition up to you—"

"And I hab got a sound proposition I can put up to you, my dear old Gumbriel!"

"What's that?"

"I can sell you a very good gramophone for twenty-five shillings!" grinned Pete.

"Trust old Pete for pulling Gummy's leg!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Smile, old man!"

Gumbriel was snarling as he clenched his fists and shot a murderous glance at the light-hearted

bargain-hunters; but it was Pete against whom he longed to vent his wrath. He hated Pete; he wanted to do him a physical injury, but bitter experience had taught him that Pete was a very difficult customer to handle.

"Do you mind showing me round your stores, old man?" he asked, in a friendly tone of voice—which put Pete on his guard at once.

"Most certingly, old hoss!" grinned the Rovers' player manager. "You shall hab a personally conducted tour ob de whole emporium! Step dis way, please! I tink I'll show you de Sports Department first ob all."

"Splendid—splendid!" declared



DOWN AMONG THE GOLDFISH! After Gumbriel had hit it, the punchball came back and caught him with terrific force between the eyes. "Look out—mind dose goldfish!" Pete yelled—but it was too late. Gumbriel, with a tremendous splash, joined the goldfish in the pond.

Amos, rubbing his podgy hands together. "I'm a bit of a sport myself, y'know!"

"M'yes!" murmured Pete, wondering what was in the wind.

Amos, as a matter of fact, had decided to cause a disturbance and so upset the smooth working of Pete's Emporium, for he felt perfectly certain that his enemy was wholly responsible for the fiasco of the previous day. And his suspicions were well founded, for Pete had spent one joyous night changing Gumbriel's tickets and writing the show-cards. The whole business was a practical joke, for he meant to make things right with Gumbriel at the end of the sale. Amos did not know this, of course, so he determined to get his own back.

The 5th Chapter.

Gumbriel Among the Goldfish!

"THERE is de Sports Department, old hoss!" cried Pete, striding into a spacious apartment about the size of a football field.

The place displayed sports paraphernalia of all descriptions, and the first thing that caught Gumbriel's roving eye was the life-size model of a golfer. The inanimate figure was in the act of addressing the ball, and there was something so natural about the stance that even Gumbriel had to stand and admire the remarkable piece of workmanship.

"That's one of the best dummies I've ever seen, old man," he said, turning to Pete. "I'll bet it cost a pretty penny!"

"They do run a bit expensive, my dear old Gumbriel," returned Pete evasively.

There was a malicious grin upon Gumbriel's fleshy countenance as he strolled over to the miniature putting-green for a closer inspection of the model, and it occurred to him that he would be getting a little of his own back if he could only manage to smash the thing—by accident, of course.

With this laudable idea in mind, he passed on to the green and walked towards the dummy.

"You might hand me a driver, will you, old man?" he asked.

"Cert'ly, old hoss!" answered Pete, taking the club out of a bag and handing it to Amos.

"I'm afraid I'm a bit out of practice," said Gumbriel, making two or

three wild swipes at an imaginary ball. "I haven't played very much lately."

"Now," he thought, "if I hit the head hard enough I shall smash it, and a dummy without a head won't be much good to friend Pete! This is where I smile!"

Gloating inwardly, he made two or three tentative swings before bracing himself for the blow that was to knock the dummy's head off.

Then—
"Fore!" he roared, making a terrific swipe; and the club hissed through the air as it described an arc and smote the motionless figure of the golfer flush on top of the head.

"What the blue brimstone blazes

last, "do you realise that you're insulting the mayor of Seahaven!"

"Yes, sir, I do!" snapped the warrior pointedly.

Fuming with fury, Amos followed Pete off the putting-green, and it was with the sole object of letting off steam that he rushed up to a punch-ball and smote it with all the power of his muscular arm.

Thud!
Resenting such rough treatment, the ball flashed back like a thing possessed, and struck his worship full between the eyes, and such was the terrific force behind the blow that Amos emitted a squeal of panic, and went tottering backwards upon his heels.

—have worked this thing together!" he stuttered, as a pool of water formed at his feet.

"You knew perfectly well that this person wasn't a dummy!" he declared, his little eyes upon Pete's beaming countenance.

"Ob course I did, my dear old Gumbriel," came the retort; "but how was I to know that you were going to biff de gallant warrior on de cranium?"

"Yes, sir, how did my friend know that you were going to biff me on the cranium?" barked the colonel, his hooked nose becoming red with anger. "For two pins I would shake the stuffing out of you, sir!"

"You'd do what?" shouted Amos, towering above the lean-limbed warrior. "You couldn't shake a ha'porth of sweets out of a paper bag, you mud-brained old dug-out! Now, what are you going to do?"

"I'm going to thrash you, sir!" announced the colonel, in a quiet voice. "Pete, my friend, would you be so kind as to fetch the boxing-gloves? This unsavoury, over-fed person needs a lesson!"

"Yes, fetch the gloves!" cried Amos, his thick lips twisted into an ugly grin. "And you might order a coffin while you're about it!" He fixed his close-set eyes upon Peppercorn. "I'm sorry for you!" he said.

"My only feelings with regard to you, sir, are those of abhorrence!" declared the colonel, with dignity.

"Here you are, old hosses!" cried Pete, tossing a pair of boxing gloves to each man. "I tink you'll find dat dey work all right! Shall I be timekeeper?"

"We sha'n't need a timekeeper!" grinned Amos Gumbriel, with a throaty chuckle. "This bit o' business won't last more than half a minute!"

"Ladies and gentlemen," cried Pete, as Amos and Peppercorn stood in their respective corners. "I beg to announce a fifty-round contest between Battling Bud Gumbriel, ob Seahaven, and Prodnose Peppercorn, ob Pekin. De lads weighed in at five o'clock dis morning, and both tipped de bean at five pounds two ounces!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Silence, please!" shouted Pete. "Dese two lads are fighting for a bowl ob goldfish, as dey are both keen anglers! M'yes! Seconds out! Time!"

Amos Gumbriel ambled out of his corner, and brought round a terrific right swing that might have knocked the gallant warrior clean out of the building. But Peppercorn was very agile, and he had no difficulty in dodging out of danger.

Such was the force behind that mighty blow that Amos was swung slightly off his balance, and he emitted a wheezing grunt as the colonel nipped in and planted a quick one—two to his body.

Gumbriel's tongue popped out of his mouth as he gasped wheezily and staggered across the putting-green, and a flood of tears burst from his eyes as his opponent swung a snappy hook that connected with his large assortment of chins.

Amos was still on the retreat, and it was not until he was within four feet of the goldfish-pool that Colonel FitzHugh Peppercorn darted forward and smote his man flush upon his ample nose.

Smack!
That scientific, straight-arm punch put an abrupt end to the contest, for Amos Gumbriel described a graceful arc, and dived head-first into the cooling waters of the pool.

"De purse is yours, my dear old hoss!" beamed Pete, presenting a bowl of goldfish to the gallant warrior.

Gumbriel eventually left Pete's Emporium, and he spent the remainder of the day watching the crowds that besieged his rival's establishment.

Back of Pete's humorous notices were many genuine bargains, and thousands flocked to buy.

"I hab an idea dat dis li'l emporium ob mine will make old Gumbriel see de difference between a genuine sale and one dat ain't!" Pete commented. "It hab cost a tidy bit to get eberyting going, but I tink it is worth it. M'yes! It would be worth it all ober again just to see Gumbriel swimming about among de goldfish. Yah, yah, yah!"

THE END.

(Good old Pete! He's the lad to keep you smiling! There'll be another corking yarn in next Wednesday's REALM: "PETE IN SOCIETY!")

are you doing, sir?" shouted Colonel FitzHugh Peppercorn, twirling round and making a fierce lunge at the mayor's well-filled waistcoat.

"What's the matter with you, you bulging monstrosity? Where's your keeper? What the deuce do they mean by letting you out, sir? What lunatic asylum have you escaped from, you nasty bit of work?"

"I—I thought you were a dummy, sir!" stammered Amos, his little eyes goggling from their sockets.

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete.

"Me a dummy!" snorted the soldier, his grey moustache bristling. "Do I look like a dummy? Do I talk like a dummy? Could a dummy do that?" he demanded, giving his worship another vicious prod in the waistcoat.

"I'm—I'm sorry—"

"Sorry, sorry!" snarled Peppercorn fiercely. "You've raised a bump as big as a water-melon, confound your ugly face! Take it away, sir! Tread on it! Have it destroyed! Put it under a bus!"

"I hab got an idea dat de colonel is somewhat annoyed wid you, old hoss," grinned Pete, taking Amos by the arm. "Let's get on wid our tour ob inspection!"

"Thank you, Pete!" said Peppercorn. "Take it away and lose it!"

"Sir," shouted Gumbriel, roused at



Here's Anudder!

Dis am anudder li'l story about old Sambo.

De odder day Sambo was walking along de street, when he saw a big drayman struggling wid a huge trunk in a doorway.

"Lemme gib you a hand, sah!" says Sambo.

"Thanks," said de drayman, and for fife minutes de two ob dem worked on opposite sides ob de trunk; dey pulled and hauled and wheezed and puffed, but de box neber moved an inch.

"I don't tink you will eber get dis trunk in," said Sambo. "It seems very heavy!"

"Get it in!" roared de drayman. "You big black idiot, I'm trying to get it OUT!"

Yah, yah, yah! Dat's just like old Sambo, ain't it!

"Look out, old hoss!" roared Pete, as his worship clutched frantically at the air in a wild effort to save himself. "Put de brake on! Mind dose goldfish!"

The warning came too late, however, for Amos wavered on the edge of the miniature goldfish pool for a breathless moment, and then plunged backwards into its icy depths, sending up showers of moisture in all directions.

"What the purple mists are you up to, you bulbous-nosed baboon!" roared Colonel FitzHugh Peppercorn, rushing across the putting-green, and aiming a vicious blow at his worship's hairless dome. "What do you think you are—a seal or a sea-lion? What do you mean by splashing me with your bath-water, sir? What's the matter with the feller?" he asked, turning to Pete.

"Couldn't say, old hoss," answered the Rovers' player manager, with a grin. "He's certainly been behaving kind ob strange dis morning. He tried to bite a lump out ob de punch-ball!"

"I quite believe it!" snorted the colonel, giving Amos a playful tap on the head with the business end of his iron. "I think we ought to ring up the asylum and find out if one of their patients is missing! Confound you, sir!" he ran on, glaring down at Amos. "Don't you make faces at me, sir!"

"Let me get out, you half-baked old idiot!" shouted his worship, who was immersed up to his neck. "Do you think I'm going to stay in here all day? I'll catch my death of cold—"

"And a very good thing, too, sir!" snapped Colonel FitzHugh Peppercorn emphatically. "Try to get out, sir, and I'll brain you with this golf-stick! I've killed better men than you, sir, and I didn't get my nickname of 'Kill-'em-all' Peppercorn for nothing, sir!"

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete, as a flow of picturesque vituperation came from Amos. "Don't destroy him, old hoss, 'cause he happens to be de one bright spot in my life!"

"In that case," said the old fire-eater, "he shall live! Come ashore!" he ordered, giving Amos another playful tap on the head.

The mayor looked somewhat damp and depressed as he clambered over the edge of the bath and scrambled to his feet.

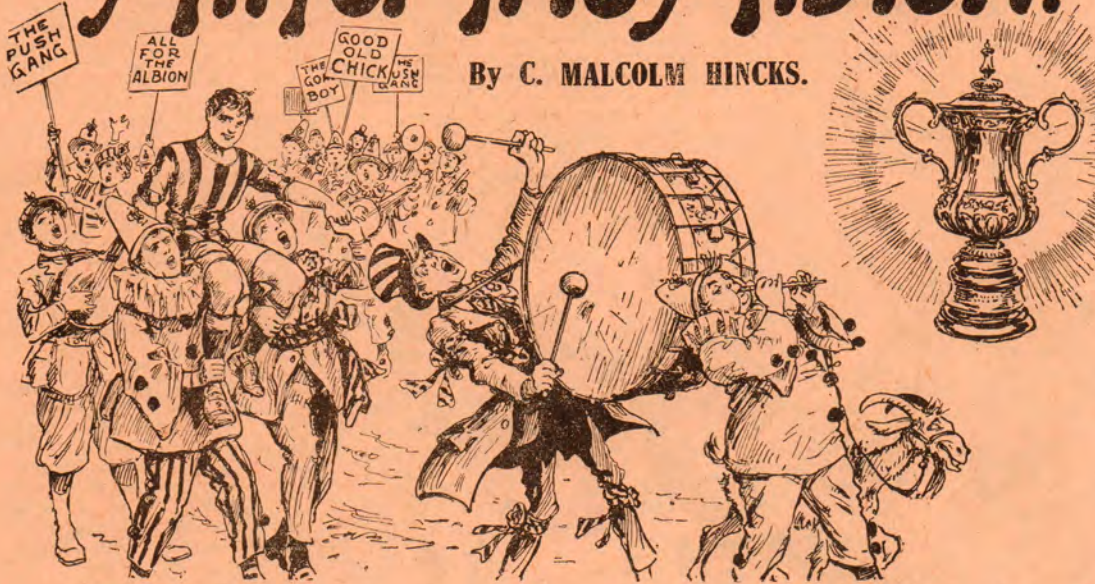
"I—I believe you two hounds have

SCOUTING FOR
A SCOT!

The Albion are a man short for the Semi-final—and Chick's got to get him. Chick's off to Bonnie Scotland for a crack player, but there are others after him as well. Go it, Chick—you'll win!

All For The Albion!

By C. MALCOLM HINCKS.



GET TO KNOW—

Chick Chandler, a clever young footballer and manager of Oldford Albion. Chick makes an enemy in

Fred Tomlin, whom he has deposed from the centre-forward position. The young manager forms the "Push Gang"—which consists of all the young footer enthusiasts in Oldford—whose aim is to stimulate enthusiasm in the town for the Albion. Their mascot is a goat named Buster. Chick's three chief lieutenants are Sam Snodger, Bones—commonly known as Bones—and pretty

Marjorie Mainland. Marjorie, unknown to herself, is heiress to £10,000. The only person, other than a lawyer, who does know this is Fred Tomlin.

The Albion beat Birventry City, away from home, in the Sixth Round of the Cup. Just as Sam and Bones are leading Buster—the "Push Gang's" mascot—to the station, the goat charges a drum. Buster becomes fixed in it, and the drum, toppling over, rolls down a hill which leads into a busy street!

(Now get down to this week's stunning chapters!)

Buster in Disgrace.

FOR a second or so portly Sam Snodger and his long, thin chum, Bones, stood literally rooted to the spot, dazed at the sight of the big drum rolling down towards the busy street below, with two wicked-looking horns protruding on one side, and two wildly waving white legs, with blackened hoofs, on the other.

Poor old Buster was heading straight for Birventry's busiest street, and, great though their faith was in the toughness of the goat mascot of the Push Gang, they were not backing him against trams and motor-buses, especially when severely handicapped by the casing into which he had so recklessly plunged.

"He'll want all his luck for himself now!" gasped Bones, as he saw Buster and the drum hurtling towards the front part of a rumbling motor-lorry.

"Stop him!"

Buster missed the lorry by about a foot, and rolled on.

The lawful owner of the big drum had recovered his presence of mind before either of the leaders of the Push Gang. He was not in the least interested in the venerable one, whose hatred for big drums had landed him in such an awkward position, but he was greatly interested in his drum, and was off in pursuit of it at once, with about as much chance of catching it as a cart-horse catching a Derby winner.

At the sight of the drummer in hot pursuit, Sam and Bones pulled themselves together, and started off after him.

"That giddy goat's done it!" panted Sam.

"Blessed if this is bright and breezy!" murmured his lanky chum, and began to forge ahead.

Bones was very fond of Buster; the goat was in his care, and was his special pet. He cared little what happened to the drum, but was terribly concerned about the fate of his faithful, if pugnacious, friend inside it. The wildly excited drummer, waving his drumsticks, slipped and fell.

A festive gentleman about to cross the road saw the horns and hoofs emerging from a rapidly moving drum, and gave an unearthly yell.

His yell had attracted the attention of a smart young policeman on the pavement, who sprang into the road, and, with up-flung hands, stopped the traffic in both directions.

Electric trams came to an abrupt stop, buses and taxis skidded, drivers said things, and in the narrow lane left between the jam of traffic, rolled the drum containing the indignant and bewildered Buster.

Bump! The drum had mounted the pavement, an elderly lady jumped back just in time, and the drum containing the struggling goat crashed into the open front of a greengrocer's shop.

The drum made for the portly proprietor, and Buster shot out among bunches of bananas.

"Lummy!" gasped the staggered shop-boy, as he watched the goat's struggles to regain his feet. "We'll see some straight bananas now!"

Bones dashed up and grabbed the distracted goat as he was about to make another charge at the drum, which now had the portly greengrocer underneath it.

And then the angry drummer, with Sam Snodger just behind him, dashed into the shop.

"Does that wild beast belong to you?" he roared, glaring at the venerable one, who was ruminatively munching a carrot as a pick-me-up after his cyclonic adventure.

"He's our mascot!"

"Mascot!" snorted the angry man, taking the drum from the dazed greengrocer. "Mascot! Look what he's done to this drum! If you reckon this is going to bring you luck, you're mistaken, young feller! Where's a policeman?"

Sam Snodger groaned. Unless this angry man could be squared it meant not only missing the train to Oldford, but it meant publicity and disgrace, a set-back to the good name of the Push Gang—of which Gregson would be swift to take advantage.

"Look here," he said hastily, "we'll pay for the damage the goat has done. Haven't the money on us, but we're with the Oldford Albion team, and if you'll come round to the station with us, our manager will put things right."

Bones thought that speech was a mistake. He did not think the fact that they were connected with the club that had just knocked Birventry out in the Sixth Round of the Cup would tend to increase their popularity with the angry local musician; and had that gentleman been an enthusiast there might have been something in his theory, but the drummer cared little or nothing about football. He felt, however, that a big football club that had reached the semi-final in the famous competition would have money, and that it would be much better to deal with the manager of a prosperous club than these bright youths, whose age and appearance did not suggest any probability of claiming heavy damages.

"I'll come along and see the manager," he said.

"So will I!" gasped the aggrieved greengrocer.

The venerable one was hauled away from his sixth carrot before he had got really busy with it, and, leaving the damaged drum in the shop, the little procession made for the station, followed by an interested procession.

Chick Pays Up!

THEY reached the station five minutes before the dining-car express for Oldford was due to leave. The Albion players were standing talking and smoking outside their reserved carriages, revelling in relaxation after strict training. Sam saw Chick standing with Marjorie Mainland and little Miskin. They were a triumphant-looking trio.

Heads were leaning out of other carriages.

"Here's old Bones and Buster!"

"What cheer, Sam?"

"Buck up, boys! Garage that giddy goat or he'll be left behind!"

The members of the Push Gang had been wondering what had happened to their two lieutenants and their white goat mascot, and there was general rejoicing at their appearance. The drummer's wrath had cooled by now. So long as he was paid for the damage done he bore no animosity; but the greengrocer, with visions of rooking a wealthy club, had worked himself up to a state of fury.

"Disgraceful rowdyism! Have to pay for this, or I'll have the law on you!"

Gregson, the florid publican, who

had been seated gloomily in his carriage, furious at his failure to defeat Chick by playing the reserve—and still more furious that his expensive scheme for the toughs with the whistle should have been ruined by the Push Gang—was out on the platform like a shot when he heard the bellowing shout.

"There you are, Miskin!" he cried. "Those young hooligans in trouble again! Disgracing our name in a strange town!"

"What's the trouble?" asked Chick Chandler quietly, and Sam described what had happened, with an anxious eye on the powerful chairman.

Little Miskin broke into a roar of laughter.

"Pure accident! Can't blame anyone for that. Settle up with these fellows, Chandler. Wish I'd been there to see it. Dash that goat! He's a bit of a nuisance, though!"

Sam and Bones, greatly relieved, hurried off to put the venerable one in the guard's van. Chick paid the drummer's claim—which was not excessive—and gave him an extra ten shillings. Then he turned to the greengrocer.

"What about you?"

"Five pounds I want!" said the portly man truculently. "And five pounds I'm going to have!"

People were taking their seats in the train, now; Chick gazed with disfavour at the bloated face and the pig-like eyes of the profiteer. Approached decently, Chick would have paid the man a couple of pounds to avoid any unpleasantness, but Chick was not the sort of chap to stick that sort of thing.

"If you took a bit more exercise, you'd be more nimble in getting out of the way," he said, stepping into the carriage and continuing the conversation from the window. "I want you to remember that the goat is not the property of the club. His nominal owner is Mr. Bonsor, who, I believe, earns fifteen shillings a week. You must make your claim for five pounds against him, but I'm afraid you'll be rather unlucky! Meanwhile, on behalf of the club, I will pay for the actual damage."

The piggy eyes glinted.

A whistle shrilled out. Chick placed a coin in the greengrocer's hand.

"What's this?" demanded the angry tradesman, glaring at the small coin in the palm of his hand.

"Sixpence!" said Chick. "Six carrots at a penny each, and a jolly good price, too!"

He jerked up the window as the train began to glide away, leaving a portly man dancing wildly on the platform.

Old Miskin chuckled. He was in high good humour, and he stood the team an excellent dinner on the train.

There was a huge crowd at the Oldford station to greet them; the jazz-band of the Push Gang played them from the station, and Chick was flushed with delight.

But Marjorie caught an expression upon the face of Gregson, Chick's powerful enemy, that quite spoiled her own joy in the triumphant reception of the victorious team now booked for the Semi-final of the Cup.

News for Tomlin!

FRED TOMLIN was skipping round the cinder track of the Albion's ground, under the eye of his father, and not taking the least interest in his task. It was the Tuesday morning following the triumph at Birventry, and most of the other players looked very cheerful.

At the draw on the previous day, the Albion had been matched with Maston Villa, and the Semi-final was to be played on Liverpool's ground a fortnight on Saturday. It would be a big task, and Chick Chandler did not belittle it, but his air of quiet confidence had infected the whole team.

"Put some heart into it, Tomlin!"

The deposed centre-forward gave quite a start; it was his father—who was the Albion's trainer—snapping at him. He could scarcely believe the evidence of his own ears, and several players sniggered. It seemed such a short time ago since Fred had swanked about as though he owned the club, and was the one real centre-forward in the country, while his father had bossed the weak-willed manager, and been the real ruler of Oldford Albion.

But what a change now. The new manager, the youngster people had sneered about as a glorified office-boy, had promptly stood down Fred Tomlin, and taken his place as leader of the attack. The daring experiment had worked, had got the Albion through to the Semi-final, replenished their coffers, and, with luck, looked like securing the double—winning the Cup, and taking the Albion up into the First Division!

And now he had the trainer, who had sullenly opposed him at first, jumping to it, terrified of losing his job if he attempted any disloyalty to his young chief.

Glaring at his father, Fred put a little more energy into his work; but then, as soon as his hour was up, he made for the dressing-room, and, as he left the ground, was joined by the clever and highly expensive left winger, who had also tried to play tricks with Chick Chandler and been relegated to the reserves. Huddleston looked rather a wreck, his face was pale and unshaven, his eyes suggested dissipation the previous night.

"What was the meaning of your guv'nor going for you like that?" he asked uncomfortably. Up till now, as a friend of the trainer's son, he had had many privileges.

"He's got cold feet! He's chucked our game, Huddy! He says Chandler is a winner, and he's backing him. We can wash him out as being any use, but Gregson is still with us!"

"A fat lot of use he seems to be! He ought to have rushed the team out on the field before Chandler could arrive; then again, the whistling that was to have put him off his game was a wash-out!"

"Our office-boy manager has had all the luck up till now, but it can't last for ever!"

"If it lasts till the end of April, I reckon he'll be so firmly established that nothing will shift him. But I've got another matter to discuss with you. I had a thick night with



FOUL!

The Albion's clever centre-half went flying as his opponent tackled him viciously. He crumpled up and slumped to the ground—out of the match, and crippled for the Semi-final of the Cup! This meant that the Albion were up against it again!

Hobbs down in the "rabbit warren," and he won't stop there much longer."

"Hang Hobbs!" growled young Tomlin. He was fed-up with the crook he had employed in his plans against Chick, and who—now badly wanted by the police—was hiding in the slums, and living at Tomlin's expense.

"We talked over an idea. It will cost you a bit, but it'll be cheap in the end. The hue and cry has died down, the police aren't keeping such a careful watch. Hobbs and one of the men have grown beards, and the chap who had a moustache, has shaved it off."

"But what's the idea?" asked Tomlin irritably.

Huddleston explained. He was thick with the skipper of a tramp steamer that plied between Liverpool and the Argentine. The steamer was at sea now, but was due in next week, and would be sailing towards the end of the month. The skipper was a man who always found difficulty in getting a crew; one of the wanted men was a seaman, the other two could make themselves useful. For a ten-pound note, Huddleston thought it could be arranged to smuggle the three men whose presence in Oldford was so embarrassing, out to the Argentine, to which country they were perfectly prepared to go.

"More money!" groaned Tomlin. "This business is making me poor! Still, once Hobbs and his two cut-throats are out of the country, I shan't have that hanging over me. Better fix it, but, for pity's sake, see that they don't take any risks!"

At the corner of Bank Street he left his friend and walked on to the offices of Messrs. Henley & Henson, the lawyers, where he was employed as a clerk. In the old days, when he had played for the League team, he had been a person of some importance there. The junior partner had condescended to talk football with him, many privileges had come his way; but now they regarded him as small fry. In fact, a hint had been thrown out that, now he was only playing in unimportant matches, there was no need for so much absence from the office.

It increased Tomlin's hatred of the young man who had stopped the rot in the Albion, and defeated his attempts to break him.

"Mr. Henley's just rung for you," said the girl clerk coldly. There was a time when she had a smile for him. Now, even the office-boys whom he had used to bully had little respect for him.

The senior partner was irritable. "Confounded nuisance, this football, Tomlin! I won't go back on my word, the arrangement may continue for the remainder of this season, but then it must end. You must choose between this office and the football club. I want you to file away those papers. I have to go out to attend an important meeting."

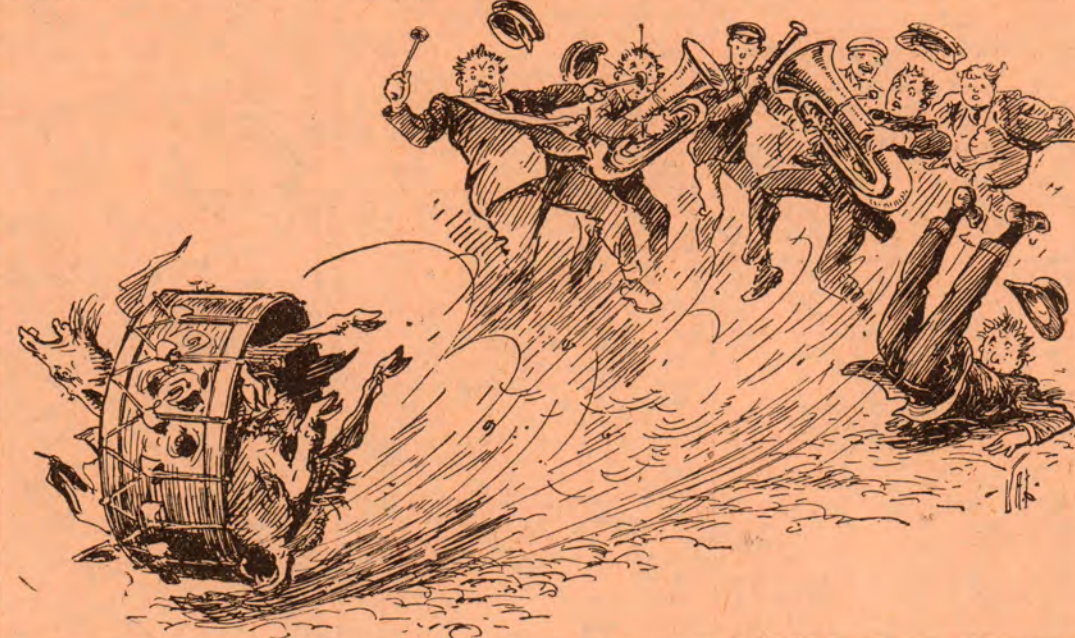
Although Tomlin could cheerfully have stabbed his chief in the back, he muttered apologies, helped him on with his overcoat with a servile air, and handed him his hat. Then, when his employer had gone out, he walked leisurely to the desk and began to file away the confidential papers in a big case used for that purpose.

And then he saw the letter. It was nothing to do with the papers he had been instructed to file, for it lay on another part of the desk. There was a picture of a big white hotel at the top of the note—paper—an hotel with terraces and palm trees that seemed to rise up from the sea—and at the head of the paper were the words: "Hotel Splendide, Cannes, France," and at the foot, a rather shaky signature: "Robert Grover."

Fred Tomlin's heart beat quickly. He and the old lawyer were the only people in Oldford who knew that Robert Grover was a very rich man, and that when he died Marjorie Mainland, the niece whom he had ignored, would receive ten thousand pounds. It was hearing that confidential conversation in the room in which he now stood that had made Tomlin determined to win Marjorie; and that made him, apart from football, hate his successful rival.

Rapidly he read through the letter. It was giving the lawyer some instructions with regard to property and the investment of some money, but it was a sentence towards the end that brought the excited, greedy gleam into Fred Tomlin's dark eyes:

"My stay here does not seem to have done me any good; in fact, I feel weaker, and very much doubt if I shall see England again. I am glad



BUSTER AMONGST THE BAND! The drum went rolling down the street—with the Albion's mascot sticking out on either side. The Push Gang and the band could hear him bleating wildly. "He'll want all his luck for himself now!" gasped Bones, as he saw Buster and the drum hurtling towards the front part of a rumbling motor-lorry.

I made that new will leaving my niece Marjorie provided for. Whatever the state of my body, I certainly feel easier in my mind."

Tomlin replaced the letter. "Pegging out!" he said, as he moved to the door.

He could not settle down to his work in the general office. It was awful to think that Chick Chandler was winning the girl who, in a few weeks, might come into ten thousand pounds. Even though Tomlin could injure Chick, rob him of his job at the end of the season, Marjorie might stick to him.

"I wish to goodness I could get him out of the way like I'm going to get rid of that fellow Hobbs!" he said savagely.

And then he whistled softly. "Liverpool!"

It was from Liverpool that Hobbs and his two companions were to be shipped to the Argentine.

It was at Liverpool that Oldford Albion were to meet Maston Villa in the Semi-final of the Cup, to decide which of them should go to Wembley in April.

There was a cunning light in Tomlin's dark eyes now. Huddleston must see this unscrupulous sailor friend of his, and then—then there would be an unwilling passenger for the Argentine!

Man Wanted.

THE short, thick-set young fellow with the dark curly hair was going through on his own. The supporters of the home team watched him with joy; the excursionists who had accompanied the visitors eyed his movement with apprehension.

Cleverly dribbling the ball and going at amazing speed, the figure in black and orange swerved round a man in blue and white. Suddenly his foot flashed, a man was sprawling in the goalmouth, and the ball was in the net.

"Goal!" The band of the Push Gang blared out in triumph, and their rousing chorus rang out on the ground of Oldford Albion:

"Chick, Chick, Chick, Chick, Chick, Chick, Has scored another goal for me!"

Chick had done it again! This was his second goal in the postponed League match on the Wednesday following the Cuptie with Birventry; with the goal that Darkie Green had headed late in the first half, the Albion now led by two goals to one, and there was little more than ten minutes to play.

This meant victory, it meant strengthening their position in the Second Division table, and if the team above them failed to win or draw, it meant taking third place from top. And with two goals in hand and only ten minutes to play, victory was practically assured.

But ten minutes is time enough for a tragedy!

The visiting centre-forward—a big man with a wonderful turn of speed for a man of his build—had been held in check by the Albion's clever centre-half, and had shown a little temper at times. With five minutes still to go, he looked like breaking through, but was foiled again. A

minute or so later he collided heavily with the man who had beaten him throughout the game, and the Albion man fell awkwardly. Phceeeep!

The centre-half was groaning, his right leg was doubled up.

The referee beckoned to the trainer, while the visiting centre-forward was waving his hands and making some voluble explanation.

The Albion trainer made his examination, and then motioned to some ambulance men, who immediately came hurrying out with a stretcher.

"Foul! Foul!" screamed the angry crowd.

But the referee seemed to accept the offender's explanation.

"Accident, but don't do it again!" said a man in the crowd grimly.

There were many glum faces as the stretcher was borne away to the dressing-room.

"This is nice, and bright and breezy!" said Bones gloomily.

And Sam Snodger groaned.

Chick Chandler's face was grim; he was not going to believe the worst until he had heard the doctor's report. In the meantime they had got to keep their opponents out. With all combination upset by the absence of their clever centre-half, so invaluable both in attack and defence, the minutes seemed very long before the long-drawn blast of the whistle sounded. But Chick had dropped back into the middle line, and he held the man who had dealt such a blow to the club which was out for the Cup and promotion.

As the players came off the field the injured man was just about to be carried to a motor ambulance.

"Compound fracture," said the doctor. "Hard luck, Mr. Chandler!"

"You mean there's no chance of him playing at Liverpool?"

"It's extremely doubtful if he'll play again this season!"

Chick did not tear his dark curly hair, bemoan his luck, or luridly express his feelings, but turned to Tomlin, the trainer.

"Go and ask Mr. Miskin and any other director present to go to my office, as I have an important suggestion to make. Tell them what the doctor says."

"Very good, sir!" said the once sullen trainer briskly, and hurried out.

The change in Tomlin senior had dated from a short interview he had had with the very young man he now respected. Chick had calmly told him that he knew he was up against him, that no club could thrive with the manager and trainer at loggerheads, that unless things changed one of them would have to go, and that he had not the least intention of throwing up his job!

Chick had been quite pleasant about it; he had not even told Marjorie of his interview. He was giving the trainer a sporting chance, and Tomlin, principally through self-interest, but partly because he was beginning to respect the young man who was making the Albion, had taken it, and become as loyal to the new manager as anyone.

Chick tubbed and changed, and then coolly went to his office. Pretty Marjorie was there, looking very worried. Miskin was pacing up and down like a caged lion; the genial director, with an evening paper in his hand, sat on a corner of the desk, and floundered Mr. Gregson sat in a comfortable armchair, trying hard to conceal his delight at the turn things had taken.

"Well, gentlemen," said Chick, closing the door behind him, "this is something of a lick! Even if Jones is fit to play again this season, it's a dead cert he'll not play at Liver-

pool on Saturday fortnight, and that's the match that principally concerns us now. It means securing a new man by Friday, or it will be too late!"

"Rubbish!" snapped Gregson rudely. "You've plenty of reserves; you must play one of them. It would be dashed bad business to accept further financial responsibility with less than two months of the season to come!"

"The two months that mean everything to the Albion!" flashed Marjorie, cheeks flushed, eyes very bright.

"Right," jerked little Mr. Miskin—"quite right! You think it necessary to secure a new man, Chandler?"

"Absolutely necessary! Our reserve centre-half, who would have been a more or less useful understudy, is dead out of form just now. The amateur who rolls up when it suits his convenience is too soft for words, and can't be relied upon to train. If we're to bring off our double we've got to get a good man."

"You ought to have foreseen this and strengthened your reserves!" growled Gregson.

"I'd love to hear how you thought I was to do it on the wages bill you allow me!" flashed Chick.

The genial director thought things were getting a little sultry.

"There's one thing, Chandler," he said, with a cheery attempt to ease the situation, "Maston Villa are much in the same boat as ourselves. Their left-half caught a chill driving home from Saturday's Cuptie. He neglected it, and I see in the paper this evening that he's down with pneumonia, and it's practically certain that he won't be able to play at Liverpool. That seems to me to pretty well square things!"

"You must remember that the Villa are in the First Division, and have plenty of money to play with. If they haven't got a man good enough—and they've a much bigger choice than we have—they'll spare no money to get one. We can't rely on that, and even if things were equal in our Cup match, there's still the fight for promotion."

Miskin wheeled round.

"Then you'd better get someone. I was talking to one of the Birventry directors on Saturday, and he said they would not be retaining their centre-half who played against us, so perhaps you could get him and—What are you laughing at, Gregson?"

"You, Mr. Miskin! That's good enough to print! Didn't you know that a player who has once played for a club in the Cup can't play for another?"

Chick's face was expressionless, but inwardly he was rejoicing. He knew that the florid publican, in not being able to resist that crow over the chairman—who knew so little about the great game—had played into his hands.

Miskin flushed angrily.

"That's absurd! If that's so, how on earth are we to get a man? All the best players will have played in some round of the Cup! There is not a club of any importance at all that does not figure in it!"

(Continued on next page.)

ON SALE TO-DAY!

If you haven't yet met the famous Boys of St. Frank's, get to know them in the "Nelson Lee Library." To-day's issue of this stunning weekly contains a rollicking long complete story of school-life and adventure—

'THE MAROONED SCHOOL!'

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PRICE TWOPENCE.



WHAT MAKE
IS YOUR
CAR?

THE BINGO BOYS.

CORPORATION!

TRAVELLING TO THE MATCH BY ROAD!





(Continued from previous page.)

"There are those on the other side of the Border," said Chick quietly. "You mean in Scotland?"

"And don't they know that?" said the genial director, with a grimace. "You won't find any bargain basements up there!"

"I think I know of one!"

Gregson blinked and gazed at the young manager from half-closed, puffy eyes. The other two men and Marjorie turned eagerly to Chick.

"What do you mean?" jerked Miskin.

"Why, last week I had a letter from a sporting journalist telling me about a man named McCraill, who plays for Pitstruther—a small town south of Dundee—and which distinguished itself in the early stages of the Scottish Cup. He's a man whose judgment can be relied upon, and he says that not only is McCraill one of the best men in any position in the half-back line to-day, but the directors will have to put him on the transfer list, as they are in financial

straits and have a tough wages bill to meet."

"Well, if the discovery was so wonderful, why didn't you act on the information before?"

"Because I knew the board would not sanction a big transfer fee, and at the time there was no need for me to ask you to do so, but as soon as Jones was crooked, it became a different matter. Now we must have McCraill!"

"If he'll come!"

"Oh, he'll come all right! He wants to get South with a big club where he'll have a better chance of making a name. With Pitstruther wanting money, there should be no difficulty in fixing up the transfer, but it's got to be fixed by Friday if he is to be of any use to us at Liverpool."

"And what do you reckon he will cost us?" asked the genial director.

"A thousand, at least," replied Chick bluntly.

"Absurd!" snapped Gregson. "I should never dream of paying such a sum for—"

"I would remind you, Gregson, that while my lack of technical knowledge of the game causes you amusement, I happen to hold a controlling interest in the club," Mr. Miskin cut in. "I agree with Chandler that we must have someone really good to take the place of Jones. I know this transfer business is a gamble, that the man who has done well with his former club may not settle down here, but we've a

mighty big thing at stake, and I propose that Chandler goes North with power to spend up to a thousand pounds to get his man."

"I agree!" said the genial director.

"I protest!" said Gregson hotly. "A matter involving such an expenditure should be considered by the board at its next meeting."

"Which is next Monday, and too late for us to sign on a man for the Cup Semi-final!" exclaimed Chick, impatient at the quibbling. "In any case, Mr. Miskin's word would go, so I can't see that it makes a ha'porth of difference!"

Gregson's face and fat neck purpled, but the chairman chuckled softly. He had not forgiven his fellow-director for laughing at his slip before the young manager and his pretty girl secretary, and it was partly the thought of taking that bumptious person down that made him far more generous than usual in the matter of expense.

"That's that!" said Chick to Marjorie, as they were left alone in the office. "Let's go and have some tea; I'm off to Bonnie Scotland in the wee sma' hours!"

His light-hearted speech did not deceive the girl who cared for him.

"Chick dear, you're worried!"

"Well, it's a bit of a lick!" admitted the boy who was making the Albion. "Unless I can get McCraill I'm done!"

(Continued at top of next page.)

SEND IN YOUR ENTRIES!

THIS WEEK'S PRIZEWINNERS!

PRIZE FOOTBALLS.

Each week the Editor awards three Full-size Match Balls for the most interesting paragraphs concerning readers' football clubs. ALL CLUBS MENTIONED IN THIS FEATURE, other than those winning footballs, WILL RECEIVE A TABLE FOOTBALL GAME! All letters should be addressed to the BOYS' REALM, "Prize Footballs," Gough House, Gough Square, London, E.C. 4.

Cheer Up, W. & W.!

WELDON & WILKINSON F.C. (NOTTINGHAM) lament the bitter pill they had to swallow when they were defeated at home by a second division team in the first round of the Cup by 2-0. But they are true sports, and wish best luck to the victors.

W. & W. are going all out for the Championship now, though they know jolly well it will be a stiff, uphill fight. That's all in the game, and won't deter them. Take a *Football Game* this week, Wilkinson's. Write again.

The Ever-Presents!

LOWER HOUSES NATIONAL F.C. (HUDDERSFIELD) boast eight players who are "ever-presents" this season so far, and may these champions keep up this splendid continuity. Lower Houses' colours are blue and white stripes with white knickers. They are known as the "Villagers." Look out for the *Football Game* I am sending you this week, Villagers.

The Mersey Matchmakers.

SHEIL JUNIORS F.C. (LIVERPOOL) possess a noteworthy centre-forward who has popped home nothing short of 21 goals in six matches. Thanks largely to the efforts of this nailer, the team has won all its matches so far—38 goals for, 2 against. The team won the Shield last year, and they look like repeating the feat. More good fortune, Juniors. Write again. (*Football Game*.)

A Rattling Rise.

CLAYTON ROVERS (LIVERPOOL) are at present not too well off, and so far a practicable money-raising scheme has not yet shown over the horizon. Cobridge (mentioned below) might give the Rovers the right wheeze. They can do with some luck, but they are getting on, and in their last match showed a jump of the best kind. They had one bad licking, but what's the matter with this? Played 27—won 23. Take a *PRIZE FOOTBALL*, Clayton, and send me word again.

Clubbing Together.

CORINTHIANS (BELFAST) show once again that mutual work is the only way. They had no jerseys or knickers and, because of this, failed to get matches. So the Corinthians put their heads together and their subs, and got a rig-out, since when they have boomed this club. Take a *Football Game*, Corinthians, and let's have another batch of news.

What's In a Name?

COBRIDGE ATHLETIC (BURSLEM). Cobridge are called the Terriers; three seasons running they have been on top. They mean to be there again this year; they are as yet unbeaten and have a lead of 10 points. They have won a cup and a shield and to raise extra funds, other than a 3d. per week sub., they have a good little concert each month. That's the style, Terriers! Take a *Football Game*.

A Remarkable Recovery.

PORTLAND CELTIC (KILMARNOCK). had one of the most amazing recoveries ever set down to the credit of a junior team when they played Hurlford United. At half time they were down 3-1, but after a fast and furious second half with heaps of ginger and pep in it, they pulled the game out of the fire, winning by 6-3. The

whole forward line had a share in the scoring. Good luck, Celtic! (*Football Game*.)

Downs and Ups.

ABERDEEN ROVERS (SHEFFIELD). These players in the cutlery town are keen as razors, and despite some bad luck at the start, managed to snatch a win when they played Havelock Juniors. They pay a penny a week. They have not got their jerseys yet; but these togs, when they materialise, will be red and white stripes with blue knickers. And jolly fine, too! Play up and pay up, Rovers—and write again. (*Football Game*.)

Champions All.

BLAKE ROVERS (CARLISLE) weighed in like good 'uns against a crack team, and were soundly thrashed. But are they downhearted—not much! They have no jerseys, so play in white cricket shirts. It was a stroke of bad luck when another club bagged their star centre-half, but they are just carrying on, fighting and smiling. That's the stuff, Rovers. (*Football Game*.)

The Invincibles.

WHAPLODE UNITED F.C. (HOLBEACH) never lost a match last season. They joined the Spalding and District League, and though last year's ripping luck deserted them, the club has put in some thumping fine work. They get up whist drives to raise the necessary wind—and there has been quite a gale blowing. Glad to hear it, United. Write again. (*Football Game*.)

Team Spirit.

BIRCHWOOD ST. MARY'S (HEYWOOD). Things are swinging along nicely with this team, which is in the Heywood and District League. Last season they got into the finals of the Leech Challenge Cup and the Junior Cup, and won the Championship of the League without having been defeated. This season Birchwood has been licked only once. Their team spirit is A1. They have fourteen players all told—a small pack to select from, but all good men. Write again, Birchwood, and take a *Football Game* this week.

All In A Night!

WIGAN CELTIC (WIGAN) keep up the first-class traditions of this Lancashire centre. They joined the REALM League, got a ground, dressing-room, posts—all in

CRICKET PARS.

In three weeks' time the awards for "Prize Footballs" will be changed to one prize of 10s., while *Football Games* will continue to be awarded as at present. At the end of May, "PRIZE BATS AND BALLS" will take the place of this feature and will continue throughout the cricket season. Paragraphs concerning cricket clubs are now invited; they will be dealt with in the same way as the notes of footer clubs above. Entries should be addressed to "Prize Bats and Balls," Gough House, Gough Square, London, E.C. 4.

a night! But jerseys and leather were missing. Celtic had some bad luck at the start, but the right spirit was there, and the shirts turned up later. There will be a *Football Game* bumping into the Wigan Celtic camp this week. Write again.

Young but Hefty!

ATTERCLIFFE BOYS F.C. (SHEFFIELD) got plenty of injuries in their early days; but now, with a very powerful forward line, they have scored 100 goals in league and friendlies. All the best, Attercliffe! Glad to get your news. (*Football Game*.)

The Victorious Ten.

RANLEIGH F.C. (ROTHERHAM) is young, but has already got the idea of combination. It got going as a cricket team, and, of course, it has waded through dull times at the start, but there is plenty to be said in praise of a team which takes the field in an away game with only ten men, and wins 12-1! Take a *PRIZE FOOTBALL* this week, Ranleigh, and let's hear from you another time.

Good Going!

WHETLEY LANE F.C. (BRADFORD) crept up to the final in the "Daily Dispatch" and the Bradford Park Avenue's Supporters Club Cup, and also the League. In all these finals they were met by Wapping, but the Wapping whopping they received was only an odd goal every time. They have in their team two County players, the brothers A. and N. Geldard. A promising record, Whetley! Pleased to hear from you. (*Football Game*.)

What About It?

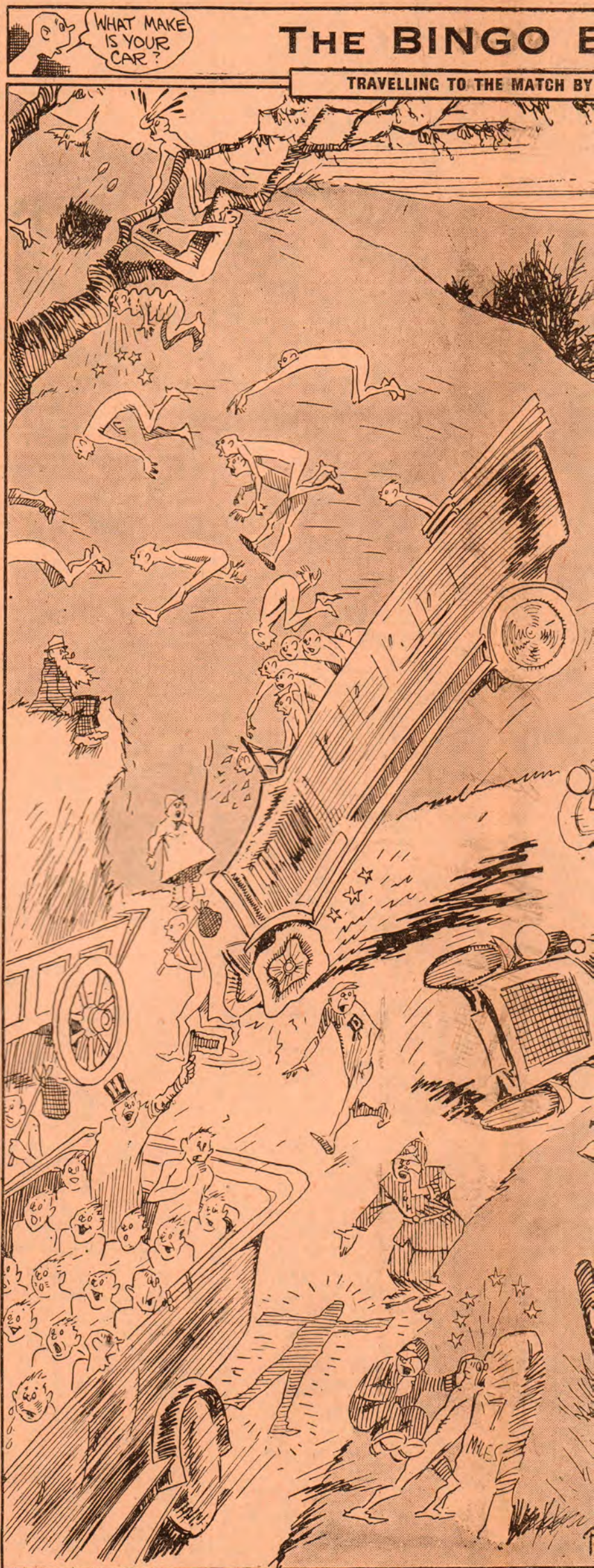
ALVESTON SPORTS (BRISTOL). This team came into being thanks to a chat between three fellows. One of them said: "What about forming a team?" A house-to-house collection was made. People gave very freely, and they soon had 10s. A ball was bought in Bristol and the first match was against Tytherton Council Schools, resulting in a victory 9-3. They got footer togs—red and black striped jerseys—and felt bucked ever so. Take a *Football Game* this week, Alveston, and more good luck to you.

All Triers.

SPRINGFIELD VILLA F.C. (WEST BROMWICH). Congratulations go to this team, and the spirit of wise leadership which managed to overcome certain problems at the beginning. They wear white shirts and knickers, and their league table of friendly matches is conspicuous for good work. I quite agree that this record is "not so bad," and feel sure this club will have plenty of luck for they play excellent football, and are triers to a man. They know how to take defeat, and that is one of the testing things in all sports. (*PRIZE FOOTBALL*.)

Richards in the Field.

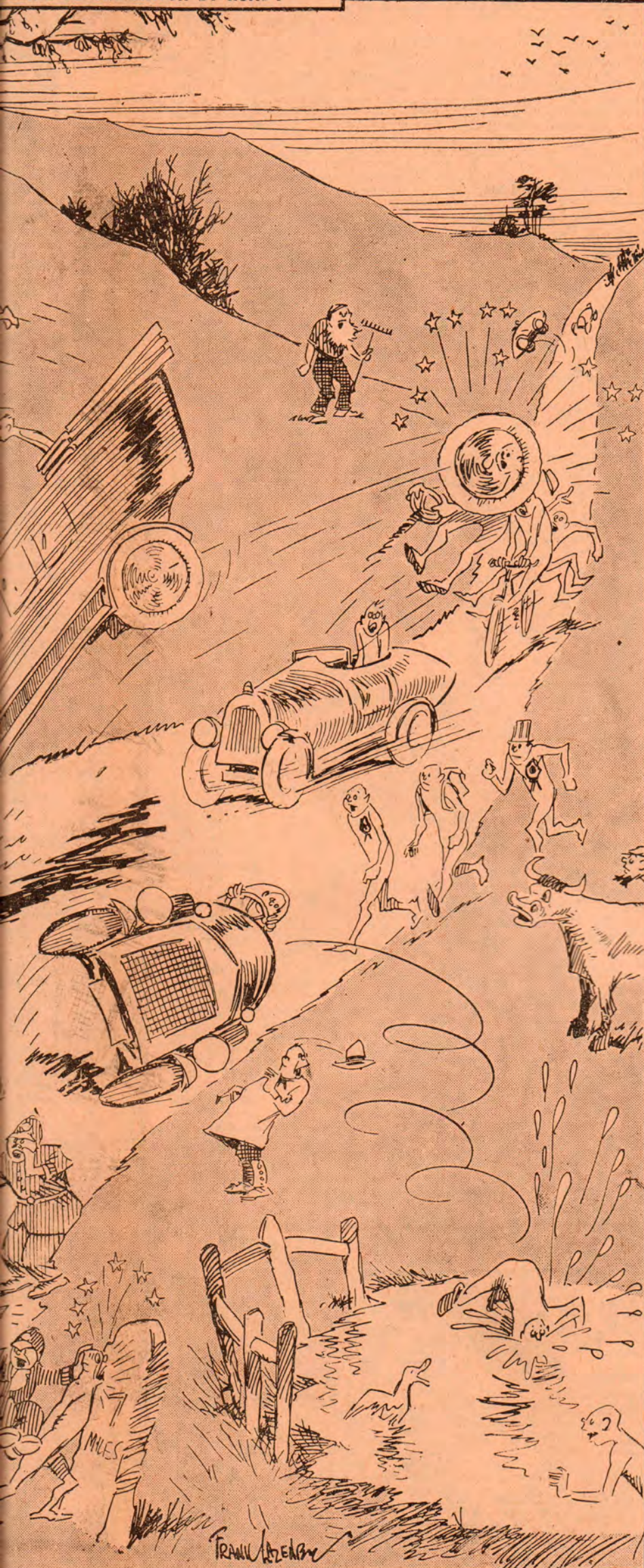
RICHARD RANGERS (RENFREW) are a stalwart little crowd, and were spurred on to a smashing victory by the thought of the splendid free model trophies in the BOYS' REALM. Their opponents are nearly always tougher and heavier, but there is no defying the Richard Rangers, who usually get home to a merry tune. Take a *Football Game* this week, Rangers and all the best to you.



BINGO BOYS.

SELLING TO THE MATCH BY ROAD!

CORPORATION!



(Continued from previous page.)

Chick Finds a Rival!

CHICK CHANDLER was walking through the deserted streets of Oldford just before three o'clock in the morning, the hour when life is judged to be at its lowest ebb. Certainly no one would have thought he was off to Scotland. Save that he had changed his usual trench-coat for a heavy belted overcoat, with the collar turned up against the chill March wind, and wore a cap instead of his usual bowler hat, he might have been strolling down to his office.

Nearing Oldford Central Station there was a little sign of life. A newspaper cart rattled up the approach. Farther on a big red mail-van was being unloaded.

"First-class return Pitstruther," said Chick at the booking-office window.

He went into the waiting-room until a gong sounded on the plat-

form, warning him that the Scottish mail was approaching.

The long train with its darkened sleeping cars glided alongside the platform, and Chick made for an empty first-class smoker.

As the train pulled slowly out of the station on its long journey northward, Chick leant comfortably back, put his feet on the opposite cushion, and went to sleep. He awoke at Newcastle, where he joined the rush of passengers to the refreshment-room to get an early cup of tea, for the breakfast car would not be put on until they reached Edinburgh.

Chick, early in the rush, and with something about him that compelled attention, got his tea early, but seeing a tired-looking woman trying in vain to get near the bar, he shouldered his way to her.

"Here, you have my cup; I'll get another!"

The tired-looking woman thanked him gratefully, and Chick set about getting a cup of tea for himself.

He had to wait some time, and the place was emptying when he got his cup of tea. Whew! It was hot!

"You'll have to hurry if you're going on, sir!" said a barmaid.

Chick gulped some hot tea.

"Don't they—Great Scott! She's off!"

He dashed out of the refreshment-room and across the platform as the train began to move. He did not

trouble about finding his own carriage, but opened the nearest door and swung himself into the corridor, while a sleepy porter turned the handle behind him. Chick sank down on the blue-cushioned seat of a non-smoking first-class carriage where a man lay asleep at the other end—a podgy man, who snored loudly, his fat hands folded on his lap.

And Chick stared at the sleeper.

There was something familiar about this prosperous-looking man with the neatly clipped whiskers and clean-shaven, rather hard-looking mouth. Chick knew his face.

And then it flashed upon him. It was Mr. Briscoe, the chairman of Maston Villa!

And, with the recognition, two other things flashed to Chick's brain. The powerful club they had to meet at Liverpool was also after the young Scottish player; that meant that someone must have given their rivals information. Gregson hated Chick; Gregson might be capable of letting his own club down to settle a grudge! Briscoe would certainly outbid the Albion.

"It's a lieker!" murmured Chick.

"What on earth am I to do now?"

(Here's a go! Chick's right up against it now! How can he beat the rich First Division club in the bidding for the Scottish player? Look out for startling developments in next week's grand chapters!)

SPECIAL NEWS FOR DUMBARTON, OLDHAM, AND ISLINGTON!



The Boys' Realm Football League



Any reader interested in the League should write to the Football Editor (enclosing a stamped and addressed envelope), who will send the fullest possible information by return of post. His address is: THE FOOTBALL EDITOR, THE BOYS' REALM, Gough House, Gough Square, London, E.C. 4. A FULL LIST OF SECTIONS AND SECTION SECRETARIES appeared in the BOYS' REALM No. 401.

Bootle Section.

Bootle is going strong. Mr. H. R. Pickering (the Section secretary, his address is: 271, Bedford Road, Bootle, Lancs) tells me that he is convinced any number of clubs would come in in response to an advertisement in the local press. That is quite O.K. I applaud the notion.

Dunaskin.

Dunaskin Section is not downhearted, and it would be a rare strange thing if it were. Their league table shows place of honour to Craigmark; two wins and a draw in three games; goal average, 16; Benwhit Rising Star, Burnfoot Hill R., and Lethanhill R. have one game each. Vale of Doon XI., 33rd Ayrshire, and Dunaskin V. still want a dash of luck—and may they speedily get it!

The Town of the Rock!

Otherwise Dumbarton! I have received an extremely interesting letter from Edward McLaughlin, secretary of the local Celtic A.F.C. "At present," he writes, "we have no league in Dumbarton. We just play friendly games until a REALM Section is formed in the Town of the Rock. We will readily travel within sixteen miles of Dumbarton to play an away match." Mr. McLaughlin asks for particulars of the BOYS' REALM Football League, and these have been sent to him. In case any local teams would care to challenge the Celtic, Mr. McLaughlin's address is: 33, Leven Street, Dumbarton.

A Smart Team.

Celtic A.F.C. manages uncommonly well, and I shall be extremely surprised if we do not find this club figuring as the nucleus of a new Section before the start of the 1927-8 season, for Dumbarton is a centre which should hold a prominent place in the REALM League.

Good Finances.

Glancing through the particulars Mr. McLaughlin sends me, I could not help being struck by the businesslike methods of this team north of the Tweed. Every player subscribes 6d. for jerseys and knickers. They are a small and young team, average age 15½, but they will play "anything under 18 years." They believe that brain beats brawn every time. Well done, Celtic A.F.C., and good luck! I shall look forward to seeing the photograph of the full committee and team, which will be taken as soon as the complete outfit has been obtained.

Tyneside News.

Everything is bowling along very nicely at Willington-on-Tyne. There is talk of an inter-Section match between Wallsend and Jarrow, to be played at Easter. The Jarrow lads can be relied upon to give Wallsend a good game.

The Wallsend League table shows Wallsend Hawthorn Villa at the top, with Rosehill Juniors and Willington Park Villa only a point behind. Dene Villa could do with a bit more luck.

Dublin Doings.

Things are proceeding very smoothly at Dublin. Ardilaun, Leinster Athletic, and Summerville are well up. Mr. William Morgan, the energetic Dublin secretary, has forwarded a challenge to Belfast.

Dublin has in view a series of inter-Section matches, and there is an idea that Manchester might come over. If so, there would be a very interesting event. Of course, the question of travelling expenses looms up here, for the playing of inter-Section matches implies distance, but

where and when it is possible to bring off such meetings it is all to the good.

It is a real pleasure to see the progressive spirit animating the Dublin Section. They are a sporting crowd. At a recent match a new referee said he had never seen any players respond so readily to a ref's ruling.

"Owdham."

I have had an inquiry from Mr. F. Wild, 289, Featherstall Road, Oldham, which indicates the possibility of a new Section being started in this famous Lancashire centre. Oldham clubs should get into touch with him right away.

Team Photos.

There is bound to be some little delay in the publication of club photographs. I always advise clubs of the appearance of the pictures. In some cases names of those figuring have been omitted when the photograph was first sent, and this increases the delay. One wants to know who's who, of course.

Bloxwich Scouts F.C.

Walsall has a new recruit in this club, to whom a certificate of registration has just been sent.

Wednesbury.

Wednesbury is going strong, and wants an inter-League match with Walsall. They are going to have a dance in the Wednesbury and District Section for the purpose of raising funds. I am much interested in the businesslike manner in which the committee at Wednesbury have handled the whole question of finance. They show a lead worth following.

Hard Going.

Leicester has some reason to be proud of the valiant efforts of Belgrave United F.C. This club has suffered a great amount of hard going, but thanks to the true sporting instincts of its leaders, of whom A. Preston is chief, it has come through stormy weather in fine style.

Merry Islington!

I am glad to see that there is a prospect of an Islington Section. Mr. Robert G. Rutty, of the Vivian Rovers F.C., 29, Midway Street, N. 1, has this project in hand. North London contains plenty of sport lovers, and I haven't a doubt but that Islington will do well. Local clubs should drop a line to Mr. Rutty immediately.

Sheffield.

Sheffield is wisely holding over the question of inter-Section matches for the present. They have their hands pretty full at this busy centre. They started the season with thirty-four clubs, and have only had four withdrawals—this because of the shortage of players. It has to be

OUR CRICKET LEAGUE!

Are you interested in a "REALM" CRICKET LEAGUE? Preliminary arrangements are now being made, and the new formation will be run on exactly the same lines as the FOOTBALL LEAGUE. Inquiries from clubs are invited, and, for the time being, letters should be addressed to the Football Editor. Full particulars will be sent in return for a stamped and addressed envelope.

remembered that things have been fairly rough this season owing to the industrial depression; but Sheffield was game all through, and has earned the congratulations of everybody.

The Sheffield Section headquarters are right in the centre of the city. No team has to travel more than a couple of miles to its ground. This is good, considering the big areas of the vast home of the cutlery trade.

Brockley For Ever!

I sympathise very strongly with the wishes of five Brockley teams—namely, Hildaine, the "Nines," Ellwell, Myrtle, and Hillcrest F.C.'s—in their natural wish to have the Championship Cup exhibited in Brockley. This matter seems capable of arrangement. The Lewisham and District League, in which Brockley figures so prominently, is fortunate in possessing a secretary and a committee thoroughly imbued with the sportsmanlike spirit. There are certain rules to be observed, of course, as regards the display of Championship Cups; but rules are all the better when interpreted with discrimination and with due regard to the circumstances prevailing in individual cases.

The Section secretary is responsible for the safety of the Cup, and in giving his ruling as to where, when, and under what conditions a Cup is to be exhibited, he has to be guided by inside knowledge and his own feeling of what is suitable. His word is final.

Crowding In.

Mr. J. F. Cordock, the Manchester Section secretary, continues to be bombarded with applications from teams in his big area who want to link up with his magnificent formation. There are many important developments ahead for the Cottonopolis Section. Manchester has done splendidly. It will do better yet.

The Portadown Section.

All best wishes go to the Portadown Section. This Section is out for big things, and all credit must go to the energetic measures taken by the secretary, Mr. Norman Cully. Eight new clubs have just been registered with Portadown.

These are Edgar Swifts, Everton, St. Mary's F.C., Athletic Rangers, Edenderry School, Clan-na-Gaels, Hillview Albion, and Mourneview Swifts. I have just sent certificates of registration to these clubs. Mr. Cully tells me he has four fresh entrants coming in at once.

We are all of us delighted to see good old Ireland figuring so prominently in the League.

Committee Work.

In answer to many queries as to the due and proper settlement of protests, these matters should be dealt with by a committee—preferably a committee consisting of five members who have no definite connection with any team in the Section. These members are in a better position than anybody to render a considered and an absolutely unbiased decision on the affair in dispute.

General Section Business.

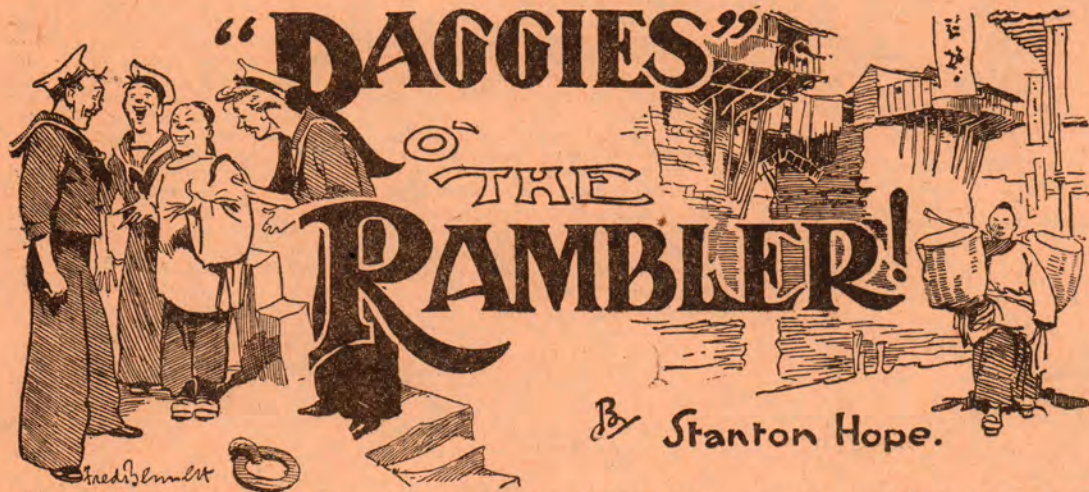
Questions under this head should come before a Section committee formed of the club secretaries concerned.

Lewisham.

The invincible "Nines" are well on top, but Glen Athletic and Bellingham have little of which to complain. Ellwell, First Southend, and Myrtle have also good places in the League table to date.

TICH TURNS
CHIMPANZEE!

The Chinese pirates shove him in a cage and exhibit him. Tich gets the wind up—and Corny goes mad! The raggies have a very lively time in this mirth-making yarn!



A ROLICKING LONG STORY OF FUN AND ADVENTURE AMONG CHINESE PIRATES!

The 1st Chapter.
A Shore Job.

"MY boys, I have a most difficult and dangerous job for you!"

Commander Dill, of H.M.S. Buzzfly, the gunboat moored in the upper reaches of the Canton River, fidgeted with the sword which lay before him on his cabin table. On the other side of the table Boys "Shiner" Bright, "Dusty" Rhodes, and little Tich Bailey—detailed for duty from the cruiser Rambler—stood to attention. All wondered what this difficult and dangerous job might be.

"We're game to tackle anything, sir!" spoke up Shiner. "And if it's anything to do with old Wonky, the pirate, it'll be a pleasure as well as a dooty!"

"The job is very much to do with Wong Kiang, the pirate," answered the skipper. "You boys and your young Chinese friend, Woo Sam, have helped to rope in numerous members of the pirate gang. Wong himself has slipped through our fingers, and I have every reason to believe that he is even now engaged in enlisting fresh ruffians to his cause. He has threatened to make a deal of trouble for British interests, and I am extremely anxious to discover two things. Firstly, where Wong Kiang is. Secondly, by what fresh scheme he is enrolling more scoundrels to take the place of those we have captured and sent down to Canton. Now, my idea is that I shall give you three days' leave—"

"A-a-ah!" chorused the raggies.

The skipper smiled.

"But the leave will be for the purpose of duty," he added. "There is a rumour that Wong was last seen in the city of Hoochow, on the Lee-moon Lake, which is not far from here. The Buzzfly is to proceed to this river, in the course of a day or so. You boys will go on foot in advance, and institute what inquiries you deem advisable about this man Wong, whom you have come to know better than anyone else on board this ship. Mind, however, that you exercise discretion, for Wong is reputed to have devised a very unpleasant entertainment for you if you fall into his hands again."

"Dusty, the pessimist of the ship, shook his head.

"We're very unlucky blokes, sir," he moaned, "and, knowing how misfortunate we are, we shall be sure to keep our weather-eye open!"

"And may I suggest, sir," piped Tich, "that we are allowed to take young Woo Sam. As he can talk the lingo, he'll come in jolly useful for nosing out things."

"I was going to suggest that," said the commander. "You may inform Woo to get his kitbag ready and accompany you ashore. At Hoochow you will report at Navy House, where bedding will be issued to you. I shall send a signal, though, in advance, making it clear that you are to be free agents until the Buzzfly arrives."

"Thank you, sir!"

Thinking the interview in the skipper's cabin was over, the trio of chums saluted and turned to leave.

"Oh, by the way," added the commander, "there is one thing in connection with Wong Kiang that I don't think you know! When recently he came aboard this ship in disguise with his pirates to attend our entertainment he knocked rather heavily against me going down the

This Week's Story:

WONKY'S
MENAGERIE!

companion-ladder to the mess deck. It was only after Wong had made his getaway that I discovered that my gold presentation watch was missing. Although I can't be certain, that Wong himself got it, I know that he is an adept pickpocket, as well as a cunning and dangerous scoundrel in other ways. It occurred to me that, if by any chance you run across Wong again, you might try to ascertain whether my watch is in his possession. I would give a great deal to get it back."

"Leave it to us, sir!" cried Shiner confidently. "If old Wonky's got that ticker, and we noggle him again, we'll make him cough it up! Good-bye, sir!"

"Good-bye, my boys! And good luck to you!"

In great excitement, the raggies tumbled up on deck, and, ignoring the stern look of Petty Officer Gurney, hurried forward. Quickly they found Woo Sam, the cheery little Chink messboy, and hustled him below to the sleeping-flat. Woo was pleased at the idea of going on to Hoochow with his English pals, and, like the others, he quickly got his gear together.

The 2nd Chapter.
On Wonky's Track!

THE chums were the envy of all their shipmates, especially Bodger Lees and Horace Stoop, when they went up on deck for a brief inspection by Gurney. It was the sort of stunt that any bluejacket would have liked—to be detached from his ship and be free to do practically what he jolly well liked for a day or two.

Not even the criticisms of Gurney could damp the raggies' own spirits. They briskly obeyed all his orders—adjusted their cap-ribbons, retied their lanyards, gave their boots another rub, and their necks an extra "lick and a promise." Then, carrying their kitbags on their shoulders they went down the gangway and tramped into the village of Moy Fan.

There was no difficulty in finding the route to Hoochow. They would have only to march along the bank of the Canton River until they came to the tributary; then follow this to Hoochow, on the edge of the Lee-moon Lake. The whole distance was not more than sixteen miles—an ordinary day's route march under normal conditions.

Within the village of Moy Fan was a bamboo compound, and a loud squeal attracted the chums' attention towards it.

"There's old Corny!" cried Shiner. "We ought to have asked the skipper about him."

He referred to Corny the camel, that weird and wonderful mascot of the Buzzfly, who, by strange circumstances, had long before come into the hands of Shiner & Co.

"Well, what are we going to do about him?" demanded Dusty. "If we're going to Hoochow, and the Buzzfly is a-going to follow us, we can't leave Corny here, and that's a cert!"

"Then let's take him with us," suggested Tich. "He'll come in useful for giving us a lift."

"You can have a lift, if you like, young Tich!" grunted Dusty. "I ain't got over the last blessed lift I had aboard him! Even now, when I sit down on anything hard, I sort of feel them blisters!"

"Anyway, old Corny could carry the kitbags," remarked Shiner. "I'm all in favour of taking him to Hoochow."

"Me likee take nicee ole Corny, too," added Woo Sam. "He velly good camel, and sometimes no wantee eat or dlinkee for two or t'lee weeks!"

To-day, however, Corny evidently felt in need of a feed, for directly the raggies went into the compound he started chewing up Dusty's best sailor collar.

"Hi, cut it out, you humped freak!" hooted Dusty. "That's about the thirtieth collar o' mine you've chewed up! Don't you know I have to pay for all the collars I have issued to me now?"

Apart from his habit of chewing up Dusty's collars as a morning tonic, Corny had been behaving himself extremely well of late. To-day, except for the inconvenient habit mentioned, he was in a grateful mood, and allowed the boys to strap their kitbags on him, two on either side of his hump. Then, when Shiner had given the Chinese who had been in charge of the camel a few coins, the raggies and their mascot moved off into the dusty street.

Overhead the sun was shining brightly, but a keen north wind was blowing down the river. In England it might have been accounted a warm day; but here, in Southern China, after a spell of sultry weather, that breeze put a chill into the raggies' bones. Moreover, it sent the red dust swirling into their faces in a way that made marching beside Corny most unpleasant.

"I say, Shiny," remarked Woo, "me got stluck with velly blight idea! You see over there that Chineman, old Sing Ho, who washee clothes for nicee kind kipper of Buzzfly?"

"I see him, matey," answered Shiner. "The bloke with the comic one-wheeled cart—eh?"

Woo nodded.

"Me askee ole Sing Ho to lendee cart," he announced. "Then Woo and Jaggies have nicee lide to Hoochow."

Dusty frowned at the queer vehicle on which Sing Ho had his bundles of washing.

"I wish they ran a decent service of motor-buses in this blessed country!" he mumbled. "Personally, I never liked gravel-whacking, and I don't suppose I shall like riding on a blessed one-wheeled barrow like that!"

"You're too particular, old coffin-face!" retorted Shiner. "Woo's notion is a jolly good one! But maybe old Sing Ho won't want to part with his property."

They were agreeably surprised to find that the old washerman was perfectly willing to lend the cart. It had very little value, and he had two or three others at his riverside home. Also, Sing Ho was terrified of Wong Kiang, and he was willing to help in any way in his power to bring this notorious rogue to book.

There was some old rope attached to the cart; after some difficulty the tars managed to hitch the vehicle to Corny.

"Would English boys kindly do honourable favour for Sing Ho?"

murmured the old Chink, when all was ready for the start. "Me allee same got little bundle of old clothes to send to Hoochow as plesent for my blother. If English boys would condescend to take them—"

"Sure, we'll take 'em, old top!" cried Shiner heartily. "Trot out the little bundle and chuck it to me, and give me your brother's address."

While Sing Ho toddled back to his home, which was near by, Shiner and Tich perched themselves on one side of the crazy, one-wheeled vehicle, while Dusty and Woo Sam sat on the other with their backs toward their two raggies.

Soon Sing Ho reappeared, staggering under a huge bundle, done up in a kind of sheet.

"Crumbs!" gulped Shiner. "Have I got to nurse that lot?"

"Please catchee," panted Sing Ho. With a mighty heave, for so old a man, he tossed the bundle to Shiner, who caught it in his lap.

Whoosh!

Down went the side of the one-wheeled vehicle on which Shiner and Tich were sitting; Dusty and Woo Sam were flung up into the air, and landed with a thud in the dusty roadway.

"Spike me!" gasped Dusty, sitting up. "What's the giddy game?"

"Me t'inkee giddy gamee allee same shuttlecock," remarked Woo Sam, rubbing his principal bruise. "Whaffor you do that, Shiny?"

"Don't be a chump!" retorted Shiner, who had got off with the bundle. "How the dickens could I help the giddy craft taking a list to starboard? If I knew as much Chinese as you do, I'd tell old Sing Ho what I thought about him!"

"Me velly solly!" murmured the old washerman.

The matter was adjusted by Shiner fixing the bundle securely in the nape of Corny's neck, and then, after one or two attempts, in which the one-wheeled cart swayed like a boat in a heavy sea, the raggies took their places again.

"I should think old Sing Ho must have got this when they held that auction sale in the Amusement Park at Wembley," mumbled Dusty, clinging on grimly. "I hope he ain't trying to swing it on us. I see a funny sort of laugh at the corner of his slant eyes."

"Sing Ho velly good man," returned Woo Sam. "He velly honest man, too. If you lend him money, ole Sing Ho surely pay back evelly farthing, even if he has to steal from kind Chinee fiends to do it!"

Chatting together, the raggies drove through Moy Fan perched on their strange, one-wheeled cart, drawn by Corny the camel. It really wasn't at all bad; much better than walking. The cold north wind and the lack of exercise, however, made them shiver during their progress along the bank of the Canton River.

"Br-r-rh!" shivered Tich. "It ain't half a biting wind!"

"Naturally, mate," replied Shiner. "We're going right in the teeth of it."

"He, he, he!" tittered Woo Sam. "Me t'inkee that velly good joke, old Shiny. It makee me laugh more than Dusty's honourable chivvy."

"Oh, does it?" grunted Dusty; "and me fist will have the opposite effect. Queer sort of things what make a Chink laugh," he added musingly. "It must be 'cause of their uneducated minds. But then I read somewhere in me geography book, as a school-kid, that the population o' China was very dense!"

The 3rd Chapter.
The Lost Lizard!

"THIS is a bit of all right!"

That was the general opinion of Shiner & Co. and Woo Sam, as they wandered about the streets of Hoochow on the following day. They had reported at Navy House, found temporary stabling for Corny, and had delivered Sing Ho's present of clothes to the washerman's brother. Now they strolled about the teeming bazaars of Hoochow, a city which reminded them of the life and bustle of Canton, at the mouth of the river.

All of them had got some pay in their pockets. They bought some sickly sweetmeats and a few curios, and then were attracted to a stall where various livestock was for sale. There were bul-buls and other singing birds of all kinds, tortoises, goldfish, rabbits, tree-frogs, a few chow-chow dogs, and a number of lizards.

To the surprise of Shiner & Co., those Chinese who purchased birds immediately opened the doors of the little cages to allow the songsters to wing their way to the freedom of the skies. Woo Sam explained this to them—that it is considered very lucky for any Chinaman to release a captive bird. And so some Chinamen spend their time catching birds that others may pay to release them.

"Me t'inkee it velly lucky for Shiny to catchee flog," added Woo Sam.

"Not with split bamboos, I hope," remarked Shiner, "the same as old Bodger Lees and Horace Stoop got one day through poking their noses into the joss-house in Moy Fan!"

"Not that kind of flog," replied Woo, shaking his head. "Me talkee 'bout flog that swim—so."

He made circular movements with his arms, and did a curious kind of bending exercise with his legs, throwing out his knees sideways.

"Oh, a frog!" exclaimed Dusty. "Tar me, I'll buy one of those little fellows. There's no one needs good luck more'n meself!"

While Dusty was buying his tree-frog, Shiner secured a singing cricket in a tiny bamboo cage. Tich, who shared the average sailor's love of a pet—and had collected a good few in his time—bought a lively little green lizard.

By this time they were almost due back at Navy House for dinner; as the crowd was dense, they climbed into a public vehicle. This was a kind of cart drawn by bullocks, and several Chinese were already perched on either side of this curious bus, which had a gay, tasselled awning spread over it on bamboo uprights.

"Mates," murmured Shiner, "there's getting an awful crush in here. I think we'd better get out and walk."

"What for?" inquired Dusty. "We ain't in a hurry. It's nice to sit down and rest. And, who knows," he added darkly, "that ole Woo might be able to overhear a few remarks as would put us on the track o' the chap we're after?"

Hitherto, in the short time they had been in Hoochow, they had heard nothing of Wong, the pirate. Already they had qualms that their coming up ahead of the Buzzfly might prove a wash-out and they were genuinely eager to get some news to convey to Commander Dill on his arrival at the lake-side port.

"I wish that fat bloke with the dragon embroidered on his chest would keep his bundle of sugar-canes out of my eye," murmured Shiner. "Here, Tich, here's a lady getting

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in. Hop up, and give her your seat, matey."

The Chinese lady was wearing the loose coat and black trousers which are common in the Flowery Kingdom. Tich rose, and, politely saluting, allowed her to sit down.

"Crumbs! 'er thing reminds me of the tramcars in Pompey!" remarked Dusty. "Though I don't exactly know why, unless it's 'cause blokes keep tramping all over me feet. Hi, look out, you fathead!"

That last warning remark was addressed to Tich, who had dropped his lizard into Dusty's lap. Promptly Tich whipped off his sailor's cap and dropped it over the lively little reptile. The lizard was out from under it in a flash, and, darting up the arm of a stout Chinaman sitting next to Dusty, vanished down his broad back.

"Yooh! Sub gum yok moo!" bellowed the outraged Chink, in the dialect of the country.

"Sorry, sir!" piped Tich. "Keep your giddy old figurehead still a minute. I'll have Lizzie in next to no time!"

With that he thrust one of his arms violently down the back of the fat Chinaman's neck, and while the whole vehicle got in a fearful uproar, succeeded in grabbing the wriggly lizard by its tail.

"Got the beauty!" cried Tich triumphantly. "Oops! You did that, Woo, you chump!"

Woo, with the best intention in the world, had tried to obtain a more secure hold on the lizard. In his eagerness he had been a bit too sudden, and knocked the little reptile on to the floor of the vehicle, whence it suddenly darted out of sight.

At once the Chinese passengers began yelling and squirming. None of them were fond of lizards, and they had loose robes and sleeves in which a reptile of that sort could easily find a lair. They bounced up and down on their seats, and one or two violently pushed the raggies out of the way to get down. Suddenly Tich gave a loud whoop of triumph.

"There she is!" he cried. "There's Lizzie!"

To the astonishment of his pals, who were trying to pacify the excited Chinks, he took a flying leap out of the back of the rickety vehicle and went in pursuit of a burly Chinese with long black moustaches, tortoiseshell spectacles, and pale blue robe. For on the lower part of the Chink's pale blue robe was a small green lizard!

This Chinaman, who had been watching the raggies in the vehicle through his slant eyes with the greatest possible interest, had just alighted into the teeming street. Tich darted out, and went in pursuit of him, heedless of a shout from Woo Sam.

It was not easy to follow the burly Chink in the crowd that thronged the narrow street. Avoiding bullock-carts, rickshaws, and sedan-chairs, Tich managed to get a glimpse of his quarry turning down an even narrower street overhung by red-and-black banners bearing strange Chinese characters.

He breathed a sigh of relief. The little green lizard was still on the lower part of the Chink's back, and had not moved from its original position. Evidently, thought Tich, Lizzie, the lizard, was asleep, and he had only to creep up behind the burly Celestial and bag the newly acquired pet with a sudden sweep of his hand.

Weaving his way among the Chinese pedestrians, some of whom cast unpleasant looks at him, he came within striking distance. For a couple of steps he followed quietly in the wake of the man in the blue robe, then he made a sweeping stroke with his hand on the lower portion of the Chink's anatomy. "Oooh!" gulped the startled Celestial.

But if he was surprised, Tich was ten times more so. For although he had firmly grabbed the green lizard, no cold, lively little body of a reptile wriggled between his fingers. The lizard was embroidered in green silk on the pale-blue robe!

Swinging round, the outraged Chinese grasped Tich by the throat. "Whaffor you pinchee me?" he demanded fiercely. "Whaffor you

defile Chineeman's robe with dirty fingers, eh?"

"Sorry!" gulped Tich, struggling to get that powerful grip from his throat. "M-my mistake, old sport! But it's nothing to go off the deep end about. I wasn't trying to pick your pocket."

The Chinaman refused to accept the apology. In guttural Chinese he addressed the crowd who swiftly gathered about himself and little Tich. What he said, the little 'un could not fathom, but he knew from the faces of the mob that his character was rapidly being taken away by his captor.

Several villainous-looking Asiatics of the coolie type barged through

Chinaman's hand emerge with a Webley-Scott automatic pistol in its grip, and the black muzzle, capable of spurring thirteen sudden deaths in less than that number of seconds, was levelled at the little 'un's chest!

"Please make no further step forward, sailee-boy," said the oily voice of the Chinaman. "It would give me mucchee pain if accident happened to you. Me wantee for you to stay long time. Savvy?"

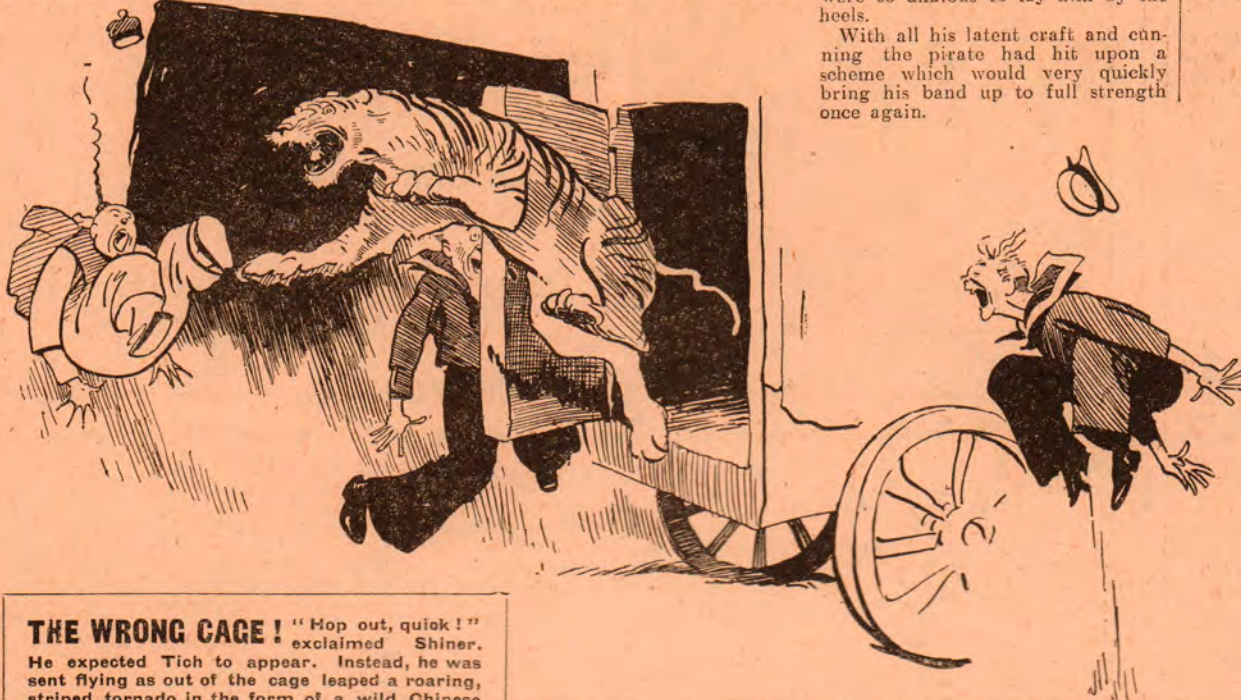
Then while Tich stood with his hands aloft and trying to place that voice, the burly Chinese slowly removed his tortoiseshell spectacles with his left hand, and afterwards tugged off his long black moustaches. And there, seated in the chair, Tich

fifteen minutes Tich was able to consider the situation in silence, for the pirate chief did not address another word to him.

By misadventure he had stumbled upon Wong's latest stunt. It was clear to the astute Navy boy that the cunning pirate had bought this menagerie as a blind.

The gaol at Canton housed all the old pirates of Wong's gang, but here was the outlaw again enlisting cut-throats under his banner within half a mile of the city of Hoochow itself. And his method of enlisting them was supremely easy, and calculated not to arouse the suspicions of the British and Chinese authorities, who were so anxious to lay him by the heels.

With all his latent craft and cunning the pirate had hit upon a scheme which would very quickly bring his band up to full strength once again.



THE WRONG CAGE! "Hop out, quick!" exclaimed Shiner. He expected Tich to appear. Instead, he was sent flying as out of the cage leaped a roaring, striped tornado in the form of a wild Chinese tiger. Woo Sam let out a yell of sheer terror as he pitched backwards, while Dusty leaped a couple of feet off the ground as he gasped needlessly: "That ain't Tich! You've opened the wrong cage!"

the crowd and helped the blue-robed Chinese to hustle Tich along the narrow street.

"Crumbs!" mumbled Tich to himself. "It strikes me I've been handed a packet o' Dusty's luck in mistake. Me pals will soon have to bail me out of the cooler."

The 4th Chapter. Wonky!

IN spite of Tich's loud protests, he was shoved along through the streets to the outskirts of Hoochow and beyond. The majority of the crowd had gone, but there were still a couple of dozen willing hands to assist the man in the blue robe. Clearly they were not taking Tich to the lock-up. Where, then, were they taking him?

"The mystery was solved by their arrival within a palisaded area occupied by a small travelling menagerie of the kind sometimes seen in the bigger cities of China. There were some vehicles not unlike gipsy caravans, except that they were considerably more gaudy. Instead of horses, they were drawn by oxen, and these were grazing on the short yellow grass near the vans. A number of cages with stout bars of bamboo were ranged near the other vans, and Tich obtained glimpses of monkeys, a Chinese tiger, some pole-cats, and jackals.

The rough hands of his yellow captors forced Tich into one of the vans. The door shut with a bang behind him, and he found himself alone with the man in the blue robe and the little green lizard embroidered aft.

"Look here, Mr. Wu," cried Tich hotly, "what the dickens do you mean by bringing me here? I apologise for that little mistake of mine in the town, and the Consul will kick up a thunderin' shindy if I tell him how you laid your grubby paws on a British subject and dragged him out here to this beastly menagerie! Now, open that door—and look lively! I've got to get back to me raggies, and there's my chicken curry and rice all gettin' cold at Navy House."

The burly Chinese seated himself on a wicker chair between Tich and the door, and fumbled up one of his wide blue sleeves. Tich took a step forward, half expecting that he was going to draw forth a knife. Instead, to his amazement, he saw the

recognised the biggest ruffian in Southern China and the sworn enemy of the British Navy—Wong Kiang, the pirate!

So utterly flabbergasted was Tich at finding himself in the hands of the very man he and his raggies had been hunting, that he could only stare at the impassive and sinister figure in the chair.

Suddenly he shut his sagging jaw with a snap, and his chin jutted forward a trifle.

"So we've met again, Wonky!" he said, more cheerily than he felt. "The last time, if I remember, was aboard the Buzzfly; and, afore that, in the joss-house in Moy Fan."

"My memoly is velly good, too," murmured the Chinese. "Wong well remember that you and your fiends catchee plenty pirates. Soon now you pay for it."

"Then you're going to take a pot at me with that giddy shooting-iron after all?" suggested Tich.

Wong Kiang shook his head.

"No," he drawled; "me takee you back to mountains. Pistol allee same too quick. You live long time yet, and me t'inkee that in two tlee weeks you allee same velly glad to kickee bucket!"

So slowly and ominously were the guttural words spoken that Tich shivered. Since his arrival in China with the Navy he had heard a good deal of the sort of punishments meted out by pirates of the kidney of Wong Kiang. They were too unpleasant to contemplate.

Wonk tapped sharply with his foot on the floor. The door opened; two of the villainous-looking Chinese who had come to Wong's aid in the town entered the van. By the light filtering through the paper screens of the windows, Tich saw the gloating looks on their evil faces and their obvious disappointment as Wong informed them in Chinese that the white boy was not to be slain forthwith.

Although it seemed useless to try to attract attention to his plight, Tich gave a loud yell. The only result was that he was firmly grasped by one of Wong's men, while the other thrust an unpleasant ball of coconut-fibre into his mouth and tied it in position with a strip of dirty calico. Henceforth Tich could only mumble, and what words he was able to pronounce were spoken in a choking undertone.

While Wong remained on guard with the automatic pistol the other two ruffians left the van. For nearly

All he had to do was to engage a cut-throat as an animal keeper, or in some more menial position. There was no doubt that already most of the men employed about the menagerie, if not all, were dangerous characters who formed Wong's new crew of pirates. No doubt it would not be long before they were up to the old game of attacking and robbing ships, either on the river or the lake.

At the end of a quarter of an hour the two Chinese underlings returned, bearing with them the skin of a big monkey and the excellent mask of an ape. Then Wong deigned to speak again.

"You allee same look pretty much like monkey now," he remarked pleasantly to the indignant Tich. "Now we dless you up and put you in nice bamboo cage. He t'inkee no one recognise sailee-boy, and soon we go 'way from Hoochow to mountains, where bimeby you kickee bucket!"

"Glub-glub!" choked Tich through the gag. "Gun or no gun, I'll knock seven bells out o' you!"

But the nipper of the Buzzfly was no match for the powerful Chinese. With a sinister smile Wong slipped the automatic pistol in the secret hiding-place within his wide sleeve,

and helped the other two to dress Tich in the monkey-hide and mask.

The disguise would have brought roars of applause in any theatre in England, and it seemed to tickle Wong's warped sense of humour immensely. The idea of exhibiting the captive in his menagerie, which he conceived a great insult to the Navy boy, made him squirm with satisfaction.

He had a cage brought close to his bizarre van, and Tich was shoved violently into it. Heavy reed screens were draped over the bamboo bars, the cage was wheeled back among the others, and luckless little Tich was left to ruminate on the hard fate of a menagerie ape!

The 5th Chapter. The Bamboo Cage.

"THE silly little chump must be lost!"

It was the middle of the afternoon, and long after the dinner provided for the raggies in Navy House. And even now it was with considerable reluctance that Shiner came to that opinion regarding the absence of young Tich Bailey.

"Hoochow velly big place," remarked Woo Sam, shaking his head. "Me t'inkee ole Tich find his way back bimeby. If you likee we go out and take look-see for nicee kind pal."

Dusty, who was gazing through the window of the room allotted to them at Navy House, dolefully shook his head.

"I've heard of chaps being set about and robbed in this place," he remarked dismally. "I feel that something nasty has happened to young Tich. Queer he should go hopping off, when all the time his blessed lizard was nesting in the basket of eggs carried by that old Chinese woman. I think, though, we ought to go out and have a hunt for him. After all, it would be some consolation to his next-

o'-kin to know exactly how he got it in the neck."

"Good old coffin-face!" cried Shiner. "Always looking on the bright side—I don't think! My own idea is that Tich has wandered down in the native quarters, and can't find his way back to the British Concession."

He rose from the kitbag which he had been using as a seat, and put on his sailor's hat with a determined gesture. Actually Shiner was almost as worried as Dusty about the little 'un of the Buzzfly, and he was anxious to get some news of him as soon as possible.

The two English boys and Woo left the Navy House, and went back to the quarter of the city where they had last seen little Tich in chase of the bespectacled Chinese in the blue robe. Woo made inquiries of various shopkeepers, and learned in which direction Tich had been taken.

The news that Tich had got himself into trouble with the populace made the raggies even more anxious. But further inquiries by Woo had no result, and the searchers wandered on through the outskirts of Hoochow without any definite idea of what next to do.

Borne on the breeze came the odours and sounds of various

(Continued on next page.)

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animals, and Woo's yellow face relapsed into a smile.

"Me t'inksee nicee menagerie out there," he said, pointing ahead. "You likee go looksee?"

Shiner brightened at once. "Spike me!" he ejaculated. "That's where the little shrimp's gone, I'll wager. Old Tich could never resist a menagerie; it's ten to one you'll find the joker feeding the monkeys with tiger-nuts!"

Dusty shook his head. "It was too near dinner-time for Tich to go to a menagerie," he said. "Old Tich wouldn't miss his chow for any giddy caged monkeys in the world!"

"I'm not so sure," retorted Shiner hopefully. "Don't you remember when that menagerie came to Pompey, old coffin-face? It was the time when your chivvy annoyed the baboon, and the bloke in charge told you to go and boil it."

"Well?" demanded Dusty coldly.

"Well, little Tich was so taken up with the giddy animals that he missed his tea and was late getting back aboard ship for supper. We all got in the rattle, you remember, and Gurney took upon himself to make some nasty remarks about menageries and about your face bein' cruel to animals."

"Look here," hooted Dusty, "you leave my face alone! See?"

"All right, keep your wool on, matey. I ain't touchin' it—and if I did it wouldn't make no difference. The harm's done now."

As Dusty couldn't think of anything else to say, he kept silence during the rest of that walk to the menagerie. A number of Chinese were wandering among the cages, and a villainous-looking young Chink approached the Buzzfly boys and collected a few cash coins from them before allowing them to get near enough to view the animals.

A couple of dirty and stolid water-buffaloes caught their notice, but failed to arouse their interest. The jackals had gone to sleep in their cage, and the Chinese tiger was growling but faintly to the teasing of some young Chinks, who were prodding him with a long thin bamboo.

A cage full of small monkeys proved amusing, and there were half a dozen big apes in another cage, playing a heavy game of "touch" round a mushroom-shaped piece of wood in the middle.

To liven them up a bit, Dusty picked up a piece of coconut which was lying near his feet, and threw it into the cage.

Next instant something caught him a resounding sock on the ear. Squoosh!

"Wops!" yelled Dusty, as his hat flew off. "Who chucked that melon?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Shiner. "It wasn't a melon, old sport—it was an apricot, and a good ripe 'un, too!"

"He, he, he!" giggled Woo. "Monkey makee velly good shot!"

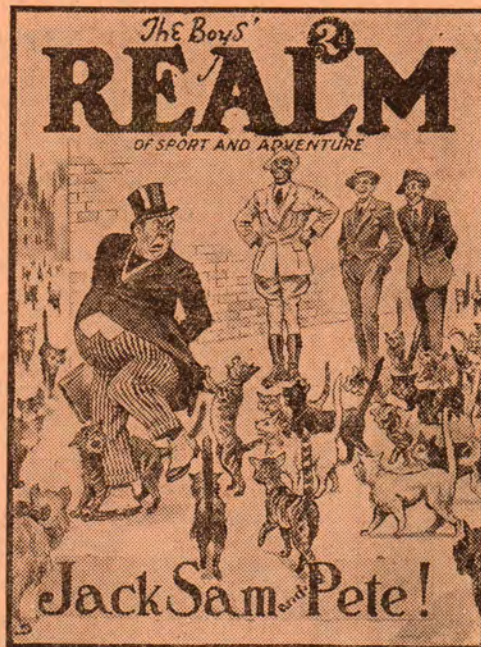
"There's nothing funny in it, you grinning jackanapes!" he hooted. "Who did you say socked me, Woo?"

The Chinese mess-boy pointed towards a cage among some at right-angles.

"Big monkey over there," he replied, with a guffaw. "Me t'inksee he no like your honourable chivvy."

Dusty glared at the strange big ape, and at the remnants of the

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apricot at his feet. Then, to his astonishment, he noticed a bit of discoloured paper sticking out from the centre of the fruit.

It didn't need much thought to realise that it was a queer kind of apricot to have a piece of paper in its core instead of the orthodox stone.

"Here's a rummy go, mates!" muttered the doleful raggie.

He picked up the paper, examined it, and gave an exclamation of amazement. For on it was written:

"Caught by Wonky. Rescue!
"TICH."

Shiner and Woo also gazed at the paper, and then from the paper to the gesticulating ape in the bamboo cage.

"Jumpin' jellyfishes!" mumbled Shiner. "You've got a clue, Dusty."

"I've got a sock on the ear," answered Dusty feelingly. "Now, what I want to know is, how did this message get inside the apricot chucked by that ape?"

"P'laps better askee ape," suggested Woo.

Although they took no stock of the mess-boy's half-joking remark, Shiner and Dusty moved involuntarily towards the cage whence came the well-aimed missile. They paused a couple of yards away, and to their amazement, the captive within the bamboo cage distinctly beckoned to them.

"C'mon nearer, you chumps!" gurgled a familiar voice.

"Tich!" gasped Shiner.

"Sh'ish!" gurgled the ape, and, speaking in a quick, choking undertone, the luckless captive explained.

"Listen! Old Wonky himself is the boss of this menagerie. He copped me proper, and he's going to

take me to the mountains. At present Wonky's down in Hoochow, but he's coming back to-night, and the menagerie is going to move off up-country somewhere. If you don't want your old pal boiled in oil, for Heaven's sake come and rescue me. You'll know this bamboo cage by the design o' the snake on the bottom part of it."

"Trust us, Tich," whispered Shiner. "But—but what's the matter wi' your speaking-tube? Sounds a bit choked to me."

"Blessed ball o' coconut fibre in me mouf," gurgled Tich. "I'll slaughter old Wonky once I get free. To think of me sitting here acting the giddy monkey for the amusement of a lot o' blessed Chinks!"

"Well, anyway, you've acted the goat many a time afore, Tich," responded Shiner consolingly. "And, besides, them togs fit you to a 'T', if I may say so."

"Real natural he looks!" muttered Dusty.

Explosive noises came from behind the ape-like mask.

"Fatheads! Now push off. It'll be all up if any o' the menagerie men—Wong's pirates—spot you having a palaver wi' me. Tootle-oo, and mind you come back to-night."

Already a number of Chinks were beginning to approach the cage, attracted by the uncannily human movements of the "ape's" arms. None, however, had heard that quickly muttered conversation: Shiner, Dusty, and Woo faded away, while Tich went and buried his head in straw in the corner of his cage.

"This," breathed Shiner, as they got out of the menagerie, "is a fair knock-out, mates. Strikes me that the best thing to do would be to inform the commodore at Navy

House and the British Consul. Between 'em, they could raise a rescue party, and bag the whole menagerie, including Wonky and this new precious gang of his."

Little Woo shook his head, and Dusty was also pessimistic.

"We've got to go mighty careful, Shiner!" muttered Dusty. "There aren't many white people here, and the Navy is scarcely represented at all. If a party attacked Wong the pirates might find a good many natives who'd take their part. Moreover, Wong or one of his men would certainly put a bullet into poor old Tich afore we could get him out of his cage."

"Too true!" admitted Shiner.

"Let's rescue Tich first," Dusty advised. "If we come here to-night, as he suggested, we might be able to get him away without much fuss or bother. It wants a deal o' thinking about, though, I'll admit. Afterwards, when the Buzzfly arrives off Hoochow, we can get the skipper to land a party to bag the whole pirate gang."

The decision to rescue Tich first was made. There was still the means of doing this to be worked out, but finally a plan with all its details was agreed to. It was a desperate scheme and fraught with danger, but with the life of little Tich at stake, Shiner, Dusty, and Woo were determined to carry it out at all costs.

The 6th Chapter.

Tearing Tigers.

"HARD a-starboard! Steady! Leggo the anchor!"

In this nautical fashion Shiner Bright instructed Woo to bring Corny the camel to a halt in a field behind a big hedge.

The night was dark and favourable for the carefully-worked out

plan to rescue the luckless Tich. Corny had been enlisted for the great adventure, and on the way from Hoochow, led by little Woo Sam, he had behaved himself in a manner at once surprising and gratifying.

Directly the camel had come to anchor Shiner, who had been acting as skipper from the curve of Corny's thick neck, vaulted down to the ground. Dusty, who had been drowsing on the camel's hump, also descended—on to the back of his own neck!

"Ass!" grunted Dusty, picking himself up. "What do you mean by coming to anchor so sudden-like, you yellow freak?"

"Solly, ole coffee-face," replied Woo meekly. "Me only takee order from good ole Shiny."

"Oh, cut the cackle!" muttered Shiner. "Gimme that halter, Woo, and I'll hitch it round this small tree-stump. That's the ticket. Now Corny can graze here while we get on with the job."

In single file the boys made their way along a wide path between the mimosa hedge, and emerged into the menagerie area. From some of the vans there came the sound of guttural Chinese voices, singing, and the clacking of lacquer goblets. The carousal of Wong and his pirates were all in favour of the daring rescue, and, with more confidence, Shiner led the way among the cages.

It was obvious that the menagerie was almost ready for getting on the move. The bamboo bars of the cages were covered with reed matting which hung from the roofs of the vehicles, and none of the animals could be seen.

"Here you are, mateys!" whispered Shiner, stopping before one cage. "See this painting of a snake on the woodwork at the bottom? That's what Tich told us to look out for."

He gently lifted the bottom corner of the tough reed matting, and hissed in a stage whisper:

"Wotcher, Tarzan! We've come for you, old top!"

Something chattered angrily within the cage, and a small hand suddenly gripped him by the nose.

"Sufferin' whelks!" gulped Shiner. "Leggo! Cut out those silly games! We ain't got much time."

His nose was red and sore as he lifted the reed matting higher. Inside the cage were six apes!

Both Shiner and Dusty lifted their sailor's hats and scratched their heads as they looked from one to the other in bewilderment.

"Crums, which is Tich?" muttered Dusty.

"Ask me another," responded Shiner. "That's just the sort of rotten trick old Wonky would do—shove a lot more blessed monkeys in wi' our pal."

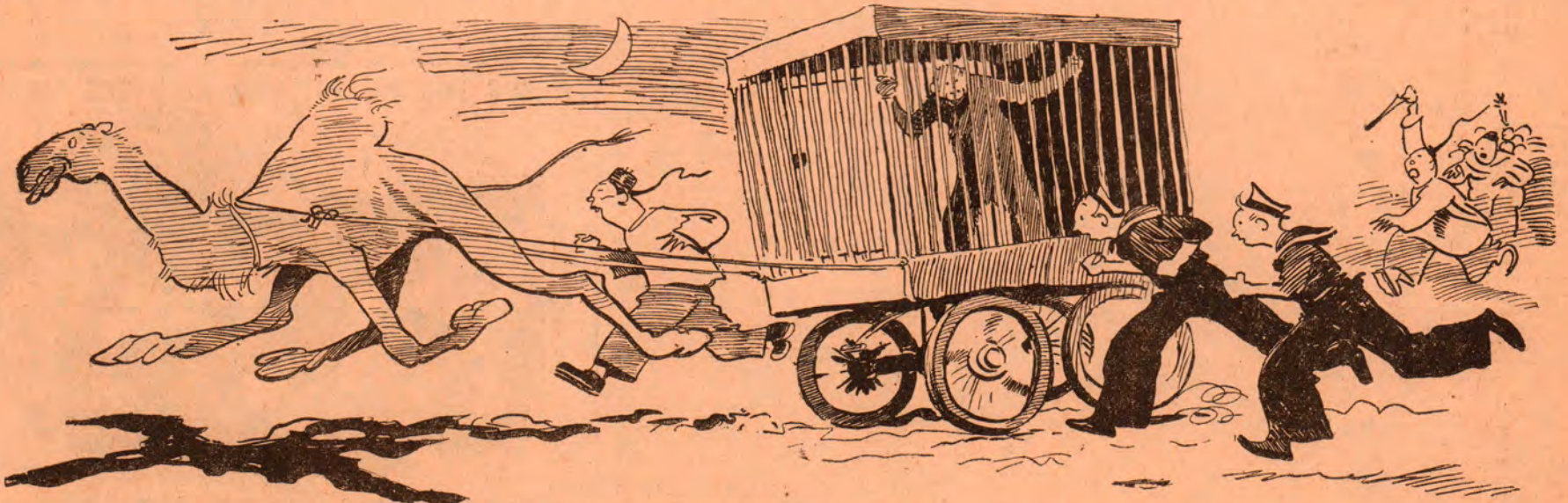
"Me t'inksee nicee ole Tich that monkey who makee scratchee-scratch there," opined Woo Sam, pointing to the right. "Me t'inksee I leoginise honourable chivvy."

Some creature in a cage not far away was obviously getting excited, for it was thumping through the bars on the reed matting which covered them.

"Hi! Hi!" came a muffled voice from behind the matting. "Hang it, what are you a-doin' of? I'm here, fatheads!"

Shiner dropped the reed matting of the ape cage with a sigh of relief. "We've made a bloomer, chums,"

(Continued on page 384.)



MAD CAMEL!

With a squeal Corny bounded forward dragging the light cage, with Tich in it, after him. Behind them charged the pirates, yelling and shouting and brandishing their knives. "Stop Corny!" Tich yelled. "The splayfooted freak has gone potty—he's bolting with me!"

THEY CAN'T KID
GINGER!They want him to sign on for Steelvale United—but Ginger isn't
having any! He's standing by the good old Ramblers!

GINGER—FOR PLUCK!

BY
ROBERT
MURRAY.Ginger is "all there"
—he's the real goods,
and a lot too smart
for the rotters who're
trying to trap him.
This vivid footer
yarn is a winner!

How This Rousing Story Started.

UPON the death of his uncle, Terry Tyrill—popularly known as Ginger—finds that he is now the owner of Raggs' Rents, a block of tenements in the poor district of Steelvale; he also inherits the sum of five hundred pounds.

Raggs' Rents are in a shocking condition of disrepair, and Terry decides to spend the five hundred pounds in renovating them. He also decides to live there himself.

Terry makes friends with Sergeant Boom—an old soldier who has a steel hook in place of his right arm and a wooden stump for his left leg.

Ginger joins Raggs Ramblers, a team composed of boys from the Rents, and makes an enemy in Nobby Bowker, whom he deposes from the centre-forward position.

Henry Crocker—managing director of Steelvale United—wants to buy the Rents, but Terry—through his lawyer—refuses.

Ginger anonymously buys the Ramblers some football kit, but it is stolen. The players are thus forced to turn out in their everyday clothes. During the match Terry notices a well-dressed man looking on, and wonders who he is. Meanwhile, the Ramblers are two goals down, and look like being defeated.

(Now read on.)

"Come on, Ramblers!"

FOR the first time for many weeks Raggs Ramblers were faced with defeat on their own ground!

They had not lost a match since Ginger Terry had joined the team, and they had scarcely expected that they would be forced to lower their colours to Bates Road Athletic; but on this day all the fates seemed to have conspired to bring about their defeat.

In the first place, their clubhouse had been broken into overnight, and they had been robbed of every article of kit they possessed. As a result they had been forced to take the field attired in shirtsleeves and trousers, and such everyday boots and shoes as they happened to be wearing.

This would not have proved such a serious handicap had it not been for the state of the ground. Rain had fallen, and the surface of the pitch was almost as slippery as a skating-rink. The Athletic were able to adapt themselves to these conditions, but Ginger and his companions found it almost impossible to keep their feet owing to the absence of studs and bars from their boots.

They had struggled valiantly in the first half, and had been lucky to be only one goal in arrears when the teams had crossed over. But within a minute of the kick-off Bates Road Athletic succeeded in adding to their score, and things were looking pretty black for the tenement team.

Sid Yates' fretted face was a picture of disappointment as he picked himself up from out of the mud and lashed the ball up the field. The shot which had scored had been one that he could easily have repelled in the ordinary way, and would have done then had he not slipped on the treacherous surface.

"Hard luck, Sid!" shouted Tom Carter sympathetically. "Gosh, what wouldn't I give to be wearing my old football boots! This is like playing on skates!"

But Sergeant Boom had not been idle during the brief interval. He now came stumping along the line laden with a big box full of sawdust, which he sprinkled liberally in the goalmouth.

"Never say die, boys!" he said encouragingly. "A battle's never lost till it's won, and we're not beaten by a long way yet. What's two goals, arter all, when we've a centre-forward like Ginger playing

for us? And he's had nothing but bad luck up to now! Suffering snakes! Where am I going to now? Danged if I haven't stuck in a shell-hole!"

A roar of laughter pealed from the spectators as it was seen that Sergeant Boom had suddenly landed in difficulties. Turning to march away, he had struck an extra-soft patch of earth, and the entire length of his wooden stump that served him in lieu of a leg had sunk out of sight into the ground.

The old soldier's language was more forcible than polite as he was brought to his knees, and it required Sid Yates and several other willing helpers to lay hold of him and extricate him from his undignified position and assist him to firmer ground.

Meanwhile, the ball had been set moving again, and Sid Yates resumed his place between the sticks just in time to deal with a long, dropping shot that had been fired in by one of the Athletic's half-backs. He made no mistake this time, and his clearance enabled the Ramblers' left wing to come into the picture. Ginger Terry set them in motion with a deft pass, and the Athletic's defence soon realised that they were not dealing with a spent force.

As Sergeant Boom had remarked, "No game was won until it was lost." Two goals were not sufficient to deter the tenement lads, though they had experienced enough misfortune that day to dishearten anybody.

"Now then, the Ramblers!" "Up and at 'em, boys!" "Come along, Ginger!"

Ginger Terry responded nobly to the call. The muddy surface no longer troubled him, and he was gradually working up to his best form. As the ball came back to the centre he trapped it neatly, and showed a clean pair of heels to everyone else on the field.

He had slipped between the backs before they had time to fall into position, and sped on amid an ever-increasing roar of excitement.

His final shot, from the verge of the penalty area, was a regular pile-driver, and was delivered in a manner which completely deceived the goalie as to the flight of the ball. Taken with the left foot, it spun sharply away to the right, and just missed the juncture of crossbar and upright as it slapped into the top of the net.

Then the Ramblers' supporters let themselves go with a vengeance. They gave vent to their pent-up feelings with a mighty howl of delight that seemed far in excess of their numbers.

"Goal! Good old Terry!" "Now the boys are off! Come on, the Ramblers!"

"Bravo, Ginger! My hat, I believe he could play Soccer in a bathing-costume!"

The strange, well-dressed man, whom Huggins had observed standing in a quiet corner of the field before half-time, flicked the ash from his cigar, and nodded his head approvingly.

"A great goal, that!" he muttered, half-aloud. "I certainly never expected to see anything like it when I came to this mudheap! It's easy to see that Crocker doesn't know what he's talking about. I sha'n't have to spin any yarn on his behalf!"

The Athletic looked somewhat surprised as they lined up again. They had made the mistake of under-estimating their opponents once they had secured a two goals lead; it now occurred to them that they were not going to have matters all their

own way in the second half. The visitors had rather lost sight of the fact that they were playing the conquerors of Dutton Defiance, the leaders of the local league.

Tons of Money!

THE Ramblers had now forgotten all about their personal appearance, inasmuch that Tom Carter wouldn't have cared a rap had he been playing in a poke-bonnet and elastic-sided boots. His pink socks and the remarks of the spectators worried him no longer, and he soon showed that he was the most capable back on the field, barring only his partner on the right, who was equally as good.

The Athletic attacked desperately. But somehow their short, snappy passes now seemed to go astray; their forwards never had a chance to get anywhere near the goal, where Sid Yates stood calmly surveying the varying phases of the game.

Huggins, too, was playing as he had not played during the opening half. He was a tower of defence, despite the fact that he was wearing light shoes and had slightly wrenched one ankle.

Again and again the Athletic attacked desperately, but they were up against a defence which never wavered, and one which gradually wore down the strength of the opposition.

Like a sullen sea grown tired of battering itself against a rocky cliff, the Athletic suddenly receded, and for quite twenty minutes a stubborn battle was waged in midfield.

"Keep 'em out, boys! You've got 'em beat!" shouted the visitors' supporters. "Only another ten minutes to go!"

"Play up, Ramblers! Just two more goals!"

"Let's hear from you, Ginger!"

Inch by inch the Athletic were forced to give ground, and with one swift rush Hayes and Dines carried the ball down the field. It was the latter who sent in a beautiful swerving shot almost from the corner-flag, and it was just as much as the custodian could do to tip the ball over the bar for a corner.

Hayes himself took the kick, placing it well wide for Huggins to lob it back into the goalmouth.

There was a stirring scrimmage, during which the goalie sprang out and seized the ball; but Dines sent him staggering with a fair and square charge, and the despairing custodian flung the leather wildly from him, only to see Terry meet it with his head and nod it neatly into the untenanted net!

Only a few minutes to go, and the Ramblers had succeeded in getting on level terms! It was the most thrilling game that had been played on Raggs' Rents that season. The crowd had shouted itself hoarse with excitement, and it was almost in dead silence that the ball was carried back to the centre mark, and the only note of protest came from those who fancied the Athletic were a trifle over-long in kicking off.

The visiting team were flustered and all at sea. The ball was headed across to Huggins, who tricked a couple of opponents before he slipped it forward to Ginger Terry.

The referee paid no attention to appeals for off-side; and, leaving the centre-half floundering in the mud, after having dribbled clean round him, Ginger gave a hitch to his trousers and sailed away down the field as though he was indulging in a hundred yards sprint.

The left-back deliberately slid

himself feet first in his path, but Terry was past him with inches to spare. The second back wavered, and tackled the Ramblers' flying centre-forward just an instant too late. His charging figure met nothing more substantial than the empty air, and he staggered yards before he was able to recover his lost balance.

Terry did not slacken his speed for an instant. The goalkeeper had run out, and everyone uttered a gasp of apprehension as the two lads were seen hurtling towards one another.

They seemed certain to collide with stunning force, but in some miraculous manner Terry Tyrill managed to screw himself past the custodian and drive the ball into the net, pulling himself up so suddenly that his heels dug deep ruts in the muddy ground until he found himself sitting right under the crossbar, blinking dazedly at the delighted spectators congregated behind the goal.

There was just time for the ball to be re-spotted. Even as Bates Road kicked off again the referee sounded his whistle, and a pandemonium of cheering greeted the Rangers' thrilling last-moment victory over Bates Road Athletic.

"Hooray! Good old Ginger!"

"He's done the hat-trick again!"

"They couldn't stop him if they tied his feet together and blindfolded him!"

"Three cheers for Ginger Terry!"

A rush was made for the Ramblers' red-headed centre-forward; but Terry made one dive through the crowd and hurled himself into the clubhouse, leaving Sergeant Boom to keep his elated admirers at bay.

One by one the rest of the team came filing in, breathless and muddy, but smiling hugely with delight.

"By gosh, that was a corking finish!" panted Syd Yates, stamping the mud and sawdust from his boots. "It's a good job I haven't a weak heart, or I'd have been carried off on a stretcher!"

"Poor old Athletic! I almost feel sorry for them!" declared Huggins. "They thought they had us beat to a frazzle when they scored their second goal."

"Huh! I wouldn't like to guess what our score would have been if we'd had our proper kit and boots," said Tom Carter. "We might have beaten 'em by a dozen clear goals. Hallo! What the dickens does old Boom think he's doing right out there in the centre of the field with the crowd all round him? Hasn't gone and got stuck in the mud again, has he?"

Something of interest certainly seemed to be taking place in the centre of the ground; but it was not until several minutes later that the old soldier came stumping into the dressing-room, puffing and blowing, and smiling all over his face.

He carried something heavy, wrapped in a piece of cloth, in one hand, and as he dumped it down on the floor there was a metallic, clinking noise. A shower of pennies and

halfpennies and silver coins rolled tinkling in all directions.

"Suffering cats! Have you been robbing a bank, sergeant?" gasped Sid Yates and his chums, as they stared wonderingly at the heap of coins that was contained in the stout cloth. "Where on earth did you get all that from?"

"It wasn't anything to do with me," chuckled Sergeant Boom. "I didn't make the suggestion, but the crowd insisted on making a collection and handing it over to me!"

"A collection! What the pink ink for?" yelled Huggins amazedly.

"To replace the things we had stolen last night," informed the old soldier. "I wouldn't hear of it at first; but the folks just insisted. And if there's not enough there, they're going to make another collection next week."

The Rangers stared incredulously at one another.

"Gosh, I didn't know we had such a heap of friends!" blurted Sid Yates a trifle huskily. "I certainly don't like taking the money, but I suppose it's impossible to give it back now."

"But supposing the police recover our stolen kit for us?" queried Huggins.

"Not much chance of that. I'm afraid!" grunted Sergeant Boom. "But if they do, this money's to be used for the benefit of Raggs Ramblers Football Club. And we can do with it; our goalposts are getting a bit rickety."

"Well, what a bit of luck!" muttered Tom Carter. "Great beetles, just look at my Sunday socks! And I've got an appointment with a lady friend to-morrow!"

A Surprise for Ginger.

ALL the footballers were liberally plastered with mud, and it was fortunate that most of them had been wearing their ordinary working clothes when they had appeared on the ground that afternoon. None of them had a particularly extensive wardrobe, and many threats of revenge on the burglars who had robbed them of their kit were uttered as the Ramblers departed in order to change into dry boots and clothing.

With the exception of Sergeant Boom—who was busy counting the money that had been collected—Ginger Terry was one of the last to leave the clubhouse. He glanced curiously at a small boy who was waiting outside and who stepped up to him as he came through the door. "You—you're Terry Tyrill, ain't you?" queried the youth. "I was asked to give this 'ere to you."

A grubby envelope was thrust into Terry's hand. It certainly bore his name, written in pencil; and a sudden wave of suspicion impelled him to clutch the small boy firmly by the arm as he was in the act of walking away.

Terry had vivid recollections of a previous mysterious letter that had been delivered to him, and which had lured him into an unpleasant meeting with Nobby Bowker and the Doolan Street gang.



RED HOT! Ginger Terry stood grinning cheerfully as Crocker leaped out of his chair, and raged around the room like a maniac. A hefty blob of hot ash had found a resting-place at the back of his neck, and Crocker was trying to get rid of it!

"Here, steady on, young 'un!" he said grimly. "Don't be in such a hurry. I want to know where you got this, and where you come from."

"Why, I live 'ere in the Rents. Ask the sargeant—he knows me!" declared the boy. "A toff gave me that note, and a bob as well, and told me to 'and it to you when the match was over. Ain't nothing wrong about it, is there?"

"I don't know; that's what I'm trying to find out," said Ginger Terry, as he tore the envelope open and drew out a slip of pasteboard, which was all that it contained. It was a visiting-card, and Terry's eyes widened with surprise as he read the words printed upon it:

"Wallis McKee.

Manager, Steelvale United F.C."

Terry turned the card over and proceeded to peruse the words which were pencilled on the reverse side.

"Please come up to the United ground and see me in my office as soon as your football match is over."

Terry Tyrill stood for several minutes turning the card puzzledly over in his hand. Mr. Wallis McKee was evidently the new manager of Steelvale United; he had been engaged in place of John Jackson, the good fellow who had been summarily dismissed by Henry Crocker.

"Now what the dickens can the new manager of the United want to see me about?" muttered the young footballer with a bewildered shake of his head. "And how did he know that such a person as myself actually existed? Perhaps Mr. Jackson knows McKee, and put a good word in for me. Not that it would do me any good, considering that Henry Crocker is the real boss of the United."

Terry was half-inclined to destroy the card and pay no further attention to it. But natural curiosity conquered this impulse, and slipping the card in his pocket, he hurried up to his room and changed his muddy clothes for a pair of old flannel trousers and a sports-jacket.

The usual note from Sally Norris and her crippled brother, who viewed the Ramblers' home matches from his window, had been left on the table.

"Thanks, awfully. It was a lovely game. We almost cried when we heard of the robbery. I shouldn't be surprised if Nobby Bowker knew something about it."

"Nor would I," agreed Terry to himself as he put on his cap and left the tenements. "I only wish I knew for certain. I'd find some way of getting the things back, if I had to tackle the whole Doolan Street gang single-handed!"

Steelvale United had been playing at home against Stockport that afternoon, and as the match had started considerably later than the clash between Raggs Ramblers and Bates Road Athletic, the former game had not long been over as Terry made his way through the town. People were still straggling down from the United's enclosure, and Terry could not help overhearing a conversation between a shopkeeper and a passer-by.

"How did the United get on? Same old story, I suppose?"

"Worse'n ever. Stockport beat 'em six-nil."

"Losh, what a team! What sort of a crowd?"

"Crowd! You couldn't call it a crowd. I reckon there wasn't three thousand folk there. The United's finished. They'll go bankrupt afore many weeks."

"And a dashed shame, too," thought Ginger regretfully. "And it's all Henry Crocker's fault. He's ruined the club because he wouldn't risk any more of his own money. If he'd taken John Jackson's advice, and bought a few new players, the United would be doing well and showing a good profit."

It was with mingled feelings that the lad halted outside the headquarters of the local Third Division club. He had not visited the place since the day he had been ordered off the ground by Henry Crocker, and had been told not to show his face there again.

He wondered what sort of a reception he would get were he to run into the football director, especially in view of their subsequent meetings at Raggs' Rents. He was still half-inclined to turn back and ignore the card he had received from Mr. Wallis McKee.

Finally he decided otherwise, and, entering the hall, he addressed himself to a man who appeared to be some sort of official.

"I want to see Mr. McKee," he requested, and showed him the manager's card. To his surprise he was immediately conducted down a passage and shown into a comfortably



TONS OF MONEY!

Sergeant Boom dumped the cloth on the floor and a shower of coins rolled in all directions. The crowd had made a collection to replace the footer kit which had been stolen from the Ramblers!

furnished office, where a man was bent busily over a big, roll-topped desk.

The latter threw himself back in his chair as Terry entered, and the young footballer gave a violent start of surprise and recognition. The man was not absolutely unknown to him. Wallis McKee, the new manager of Steelvale United, was none other than the well-dressed, dark-moustached stranger who had been present at the match between Raggs Ramblers and Bates Road Athletic!

Crocker's Offer.

GINGER TERRY made no attempt to conceal his surprise, and Wallis McKee was the first to speak as he jumped to his feet and stepped forward.

"Ah, you are young Tyrill?" he said, with a friendly smile. "So you got my card all right? I'm glad you didn't waste any time in coming along. Take a seat, my lad."

Terry grasped the hand that was extended towards him, and sank dumbly into the chair that was pushed in his direction.

"Yes, I'm glad you've come along to see me," repeated McKee, resuming his own seat, and picking up his cigar from an ash-tray. "I take it you remember seeing me at Raggs' Rents this afternoon?"

"Well, we don't often get people like yourself there," admitted Terry slowly. "And, of course, I didn't know who you were."

"Well, you do now," smiled the

football manager. "As a matter of fact, I went to Raggs' Rents for a special purpose, Tyrill. I went there solely to see you play!"

Terry did not reply. He was quite content to await further explanations.

"As a football manager, it is my duty to keep my eyes and ears open," went on McKee. "And though you may not credit it, I have heard quite a lot about your ability as a player."

"From Mr. Jackson, the late manager?" suggested Terry eagerly.

"No; I have never met Jackson. It doesn't matter about the source of my information. The point is that I was not misinformed. I was told that there was a very promising young centre-forward playing for a tenement club in the slums of Steelvale, and I have verified this fact with my own eyes. You have the making of a first-class professional footballer, Tyrill."

Terry's cheeks flushed. "It is very good of you to say so," he said lamely. "I am afraid you saw the Ramblers at a disadvantage this afternoon. We had all our kit stolen last night, and—"

"I saw all I wanted to see," interrupted the manager. "And that is why I asked you to come along and have a chat with me. I am looking for new blood for this club. How would you like to sign a professional form for the United?"

Terry Tyrill gripped tightly at the arms of his chair, and a thrill of excitement flashed through his veins. His old ambition to become a professional footballer, as his father had

been before him, was whipped into flame again. Raggs' Rents and all connected with it was temporarily forgotten. To sign on for the United would be the first step in the right direction, and might lead to the career of which he had only dreamed.

Then the eager light suddenly died out of his eyes, and he shook his head ruefully.

"I'll never be able to play for the United so long as Mr. Henry Crocker is connected with the club!" he said bluntly. "He wouldn't allow it. He turned me down only a few weeks ago, and threatened to have me kicked off the premises."

"Had he ever seen you play?"

"No; he wouldn't even give me a trial."

Wallis McKee smiled mysteriously. "Perhaps I can persuade Mr. Crocker to change his mind," he said loudly, and at the same instant—as though at a pre-arranged signal—the door of an inner room was pushed open, and Henry Crocker himself came stalking into the office, cigar in mouth and hat on the back of his head.

And at that very instant a vague suspicion commenced to stir in Terry Tyrill's mind—a suspicion that gained strength with every passing moment. He steeled himself to await a terrible outburst from the football director, but it never came, a queer thing in itself.

"I'm going home now, McKee," Crocker commenced, and then stopped short as he caught sight of the lad seated in the chair by the side of the manager's desk. His

eyes narrowed and his cheeks began to swell; but Terry found himself thinking that Crocker's expression of surprise and rising indignation was somewhat forced, and he was on his guard at once.

"What! You here?" Henry Crocker drew hard at his cigar, and blew out a tremendous cloud of smoke. "What does this mean, McKee? What is this lad doing here?"

"He's here at my invitation, Mr. Crocker," replied the manager. "He's the promising young centre-forward I was telling you I'd heard so much about. I went to see him play this afternoon, and, if you'll be guided by me, you'll sign him on for the United as quick as you can."

Henry Crocker was a poor actor. He shrugged his shoulders and tilted his hat farther on the back of his head.

"Well, I'll be hanged!" he grunted sourly. "So you were referring to young Tyrill, were you? That's deuced queer! And you mean to tell me you consider that he's a good enough footballer to play for the United?"

"He's just the centre-forward we're looking for!" declared McKee; and there was a genuine, emphatic ring in his voice that caused Henry Crocker to glance queerly at his manager. The glance did not escape Terry's attention, and his bewilderment and suspicion increased.

Something seemed to tell him that this scene had been staged for his special benefit, and he was totally at a loss to find a reason for it. He sat tight, waiting to see what would happen next, hoping for something that would give him the key to the situation.

"I wouldn't hesitate to sign on Tyrill at once," repeated McKee. "He's just the type of player we have been looking for. You said you'd give me a free hand, Mr. Crocker."

"So I did—so I did," muttered the director, pacing up and down the room and glancing strangely at Terry Tyrill out of the corners of his eyes. "This places me in an awkward predicament; but I suppose I've got to study the best interests of the club."

Terry almost gasped aloud as he heard this hypocritical utterance.

"Young Tyrill and I had a slight disagreement some weeks ago," said Crocker, suddenly halting and endeavouring to look magnanimous. "I am afraid there was a lack of control on both sides, and perhaps I have done him an injustice, and I am quite willing to say no more about the matter. It was my lack of confidence in my late manager that was responsible for the whole affair."

Terry wondered if the world was coming to an end. Crocker was actually making friendly overtures! What on earth could it mean?

"So I suggest we don't say anything more about our past differences, Tyrill," jerked the football director. "If Mr. McKee thinks that you should be signed on for the United, I won't stand in his way; and it doesn't do for players and directors to be on bad terms. Harmony is the key-note of success in running a professional football club."

"Exactly," agreed McKee.

Terry merely nodded. He was not to be drawn just yet awhile. His vague suspicions were increasing by leaps and bounds. He was convinced that Henry Crocker had some personal motive for his sudden change of attitude; it seemed that it was being taken for granted that he was going to jump at the chance of signing a professional form for the United. It was as though the offer was being held out as a bait that he would gobble up at once.

Crocker suddenly drew another armchair forward and plumped his big form into it.

"As a matter of fact, it's a most extraordinary coincidence, finding you here, Tyrill," he said, blinking his eyes rapidly. "You are the very person I had intended to get into touch with. And it seems more peculiar still that we should be in a position to be of mutual benefit."

Terry was on the alert at once. McKee assumed an air of mild curiosity, thought it was obvious that he knew what was coming next.

"Mutual benefit? I don't quite understand," hazarded Terry.

"One good turn deserves another," said Henry Crocker, with a would-be genial smile. "I am quite willing to sign you on for the United, and put you on the threshold of a brilliant career as a professional footballer. That is a chance which does not often come the way of a lad of your age."

(Continued on next page.)

Gosh, fancy getting into a mess like this!

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(Continued from previous page.)

"And you want me to do something for you in return?" persisted Terry bluntly.

"Well, I shall really be doing you another good turn," replied Crocker. "I am willing to take a certain encumbrance off your hands, and thereby put a considerable sum of money in your pocket. I refer to Raggs' Rents—the slum property left you by your uncle, the late Noah Raggs!"

Right in the Neck.

HAD a thunderbolt dropped at Terry Tyrill's feet he could not have been more surprised. His jaw dropped in dismay, and he could only sit staring foolishly at the football director. His secret had fallen to the knowledge of the one man he would not have wished to know it!

How on earth had Henry Crocker come to learn that he—Terry Tyrill—was the new landlord of Raggs' Rents? Surely old Solomon Catchpole could not have committed such a breach of confidence?

"How—how do you know that I've any interest in Raggs' Rents?" he managed to gasp at length.

"The knowledge came to me

quite by accident," evaded Crocker. "Your trustee—Solomon Catchpole—may be quite an able lawyer, but he is not acting in your best interests, Tyrill. He knows that Raggs' Rents is practically an insolvent property, and one that is doomed to be demolished; but he draws certain fees from the estate, and he does not wish it to pass out of his hands. He is advising you wrongly. He is spending what little money you have on repairs which will never be passed. The borough council is determined that the Rents shall be pulled down and entirely rebuilt in the form of model dwellings. It intends to sweep Steelvale clear of all such slums."

Terry Tyrill was beginning to see daylight.

"Go on!" he said stiffly.

"I happen to hold the contract for erecting the suggested new dwellings," proceeded Crocker. "Therefore, I am in a position to make you a handsome offer for the freehold of Raggs' Rents. You will be well rid of a place that has always been a disgrace and an eyesore to Steelvale. You will be able to place a nice sum of money in the bank, and, by signing on for the United, proceed to make a big name for yourself as a professional footballer. What a prospect for a lad of your age!"

Terry was silent for several minutes, but it required a big effort on his part.

"I see," he said at length. "It's like this—you're willing to sign me on for the United, and in return you want me to sell you the freehold of Raggs' Rents?"

"Well, they are really two

separate matters altogether, but we could combine them to our mutual satisfaction," parried Crocker cunningly.

Everything was now clear to Terry Tyrill, and he realised exactly why he had been invited to visit the United ground. Henry Crocker was making a last desperate fling in an attempt to gain possession of the whole block of tenements that stood between him and the fulfilment of his contract with the local council. Somehow he had learned that Terry was the legal owner of the property, and his offer to sign him on for the United was just a sprat designed to catch a whale. Evidently Wallis McKee had been in the plot as well, and his visit to the Ramblers match had been all a blind!

"Well, what about it, my lad?" said Henry Crocker impatiently, after several minutes had ticked past. "You have heard my proposal. What is your answer?"

"My answer is 'No!'" replied Terry coldly and deliberately. "I won't sign on for the United or any other club with which you are concerned, and I won't sell you the freehold of Raggs' Rents!"

Henry Crocker, stared aghast, his eyes bulging in their sockets, and his cheeks swelling like purple

Free Football Competition!

£250

Waiting For You!

(All about it on the next page.)

Football in India and Egypt.

My Footballing Boyhood!

By JESSE WHATLEY,

Bristol Rovers' Famous Goalkeeper.

I was born at Trowbridge, in Wiltshire, in the year 1897. I attended the local elementary school, and was very keen on football. Wherever a ball was, there Jesse Whatley had to be, if at all possible. At that time I was anxious to score goals in the school playground—not try and stop others from scoring them—which is my lot to-day.

When our school played against another school, I usually occupied the inside forward position, and frequently managed to figure in the scoring lists.

Leaving school I became keener than ever on the game, but, unfortunately, I got very little opportunity of developing any ability I may have possessed.

I started work at a cloth mill in my native Trowbridge. The firm for whom I worked had a piece of waste ground at one side of their business, and some right royal games at footer did we have on this particular plot during our dinner-hour.

Our "Touchline!"

We used to put some "pep" into it, too, and the fun we got out of it all was boundless, the nature of the playing pitch being responsible for some of the most hearty laughs we had. I'll tell you what the pitch was like. On one side the boundary was marked by railings, and on the other by the River Biss. As this strip of ground was rather narrow, we played right across to the boundaries, with the result that when two of us ran for the ball, it sometimes meant a ducking in the river for one or the other!

On Saturday afternoons it was my custom to watch Trowbridge Town F.C., but I felt I would rather play myself than simply watch others. Soon came my chance to play for a Junior team. In my district a new club was started called Trowbridge United.

This club played in the Trowbridge and District League, Division II. Our ground was situated in Victoria Road, in the suburbs of Trowbridge, and we rented it from a farmer for the season at £2.

When I joined the club we commenced with a practice match, and at once we were in a bit of a quandary—we had plenty of forwards, but were not so well served in other positions, one of which was goal. I wanted to play outside or inside left, but having just joined the club, and seeing there were players for these positions, I was prevailed upon to go into goal. Being a lanky youth, I suppose they thought I should look better between the sticks. During the game I managed to do very well, and, consequently, was not altogether surprised to find myself chosen for Trowbridge United Reserves. The Reserves played simply friendly games.

After a few games with this second string, I was promoted to the first team. I well remember how nervous I felt having to play for the first eleven and in a game with two points at stake! However, I did my utmost, and during this very match a penalty was awarded against us which I managed to save and we won the game.

I played for the first eleven the remainder of that season—1913-14—but, with the end of that season, came also the end of the United, for owing to lack of funds

we were unable to pay the farmer his rent. We tried hard to find another ground, but being unsuccessful we were thus forced to wind up what had been, from a playing and social point of view, a successful and jolly club. Without the slightest hesitation I tell you readers of the REALM that my playing days with Trowbridge United were the happiest of my whole career as a player.

The journeys to local clubs in the district were brimming over with fun. We always made these journeys in two-horse brakes, and although such journeys took much longer than those made by the present-day charabanc, somehow or other I think there was more fun in them. The trips were an outing in themselves.

I remember on one occasion we were playing at Neston, and our usual driver—quite a celebrity in his way—was upon the box half asleep. We boys were in the brake enjoying the journey and singing away to the accompaniment of a melodeon. All of a sudden the brake gave a dip, and we were shot in a heap towards the front of it. There we were all horribly mixed up. As soon as we had sorted ourselves out a bit we asked the driver why this thudiness; when, greatly to our surprise, we saw that one of the horses had dropped down dead. The most unconcerned of all was the driver himself, who, looking at us calmly enough and referring to the horse, said: "That's the first time he's ever done that!"

India and Egypt.

As you all know, the following August, War was declared, and being a Territorial at that time I found myself in India in the following November with the 4th Wiltshire Regiment. We soon found we had to make our own amusements in India, but we realised that this country possessed wonderful facilities for sport, and the Army gave us every encouragement.

In India, I quickly found a place in the battalion footer team. We got a good side together and entered for All India Football Tournament, which took place in Calcutta. We had a capital run in the competition, but were beaten 1-0 by the 7th Hussars.

Afterwards, a team was chosen from the visiting sides to Calcutta to play against the Calcutta F.C., and I was picked to keep goal. The game was in aid of charity, and drew a large crowd. We won that game 2-1. The medals were given by Prince Victor of Cooch Behar, an Indian Prince. Whilst in India I won the battalion cross-country race (5 miles) which carried with it a gold medal. I also did well in the battalion sports. From India we moved to Egypt, and here we found time to indulge in football. As in India we played against native football teams, the natives playing without boots



JESSE WHATLEY.

and barefooted. It is remarkable the force the natives can get behind a ball with their bare feet.

We were not allowed to stay long in Egypt, as we were sent there only for the purpose of being equipped to fight Johnny Turk in Palestine. After the Turks had thrown up the sponge we moved back to Port Said. The war over, we found ample time for sport while waiting to be demobilised. All sorts of sports were indulged in, and at this time a Football Competition was started in every theatre of war, it being on the knock-out principle, that in Egypt being won by the 22nd London. Each theatre of war was allowed to strengthen its side by including a member of any other regiment if it so wished. While lying in my tent at Port Said and wishing how it were my turn to be demobilised, a telegram arrived saying I was to embark for England next day with the Egyptian football team. Hardly believing the good news, I soon packed my kitbag and arrived in England about the middle of April, 1919. We had to play off with Salonica, B.E.F. France, Italy Home Forces, and India at Aldershot. The final, played on Chelsea F.C. ground, was between our team from Egypt and B.E.F. France. France, composed of professionals, beat us 1-0 after a good game. After the game we received medals from the Prince of Wales, who congratulated both teams on the display.

At the conclusion of this match an eleven was chosen from the whole of the teams taking part in the competition to represent the British Army, to play against Armies of France and Belgium. We beat France 2-1, but were beaten by Belgium 3-2. I had the honour of representing the Army in India, the Army in Egypt, and the British Army.

Then I returned to civil life, and after half a dozen games for Trowbridge Town, I threw in my lot with Bristol Rovers, and although we have experienced more downs than ups, it is a step I have never regretted. I started for the Rovers in November, 1919, and have made between 200 and 300 consecutive appearances for the club. From a professional point of view I am thus a one-club man.

Coming Shortly!

"THE TIN-CAN FOOTBALLERS!"

In which George Brown, Huddersfield Town's International forward, tells how he got into big football.

Jesse H. Whatley.

balloons. He could scarcely believe that he had heard aright.

"I said no!" repeated Ginger, rising from his seat, his face pale, and his eyes blazing with scorn. "You swindling, blustering, bloated blackguard! Do you think I can't see through your game? You know dashed well that Raggs' Rents aren't condemned! You want me to sell you the property so that you can turn the tenants out into the streets, pull the tenements down, and put thousands of pounds into your pockets by building cheap dwellings!"

Henry Crocker was too dumb-founded to reply for the moment, and Wallis McKee shifted uneasily in his seat.

"You've bitten off more than you can chew this time, Mr. Crocker!" continued Terry contemptuously. "You've tried every dirty trick you can to get hold of the Rents, but you've failed all along the line. Do you think that I didn't realise you were up to some underhanded business the moment you stepped into this office, and pretended to be surprised to find me here? You've ruined this club, and you'll ruin your other business as well when you're compelled to pay a forfeit to the council for failing to keep your contract."

"You cursed young fool! You don't know what you're talking about!" gulped Crocker. "I'm trying to do you a good turn, and you can't see it! Raggs' Rents is doomed! I'll have every brick of the place levelled to the ground within the next month, and you'll be glad to accept a few hundred pounds for the property."

"Then why offer me thousands now, when you've only to wait another month to get it for as many hundreds?" asked Terry calmly. "I tell you again, I wouldn't sell you the Rents for all the money in Steelvale, and I've instructed Mr. Catchpole to expend every penny I possess on the necessary repairs that the council require."

Henry Crocker realised that the battle was lost, and that once again his cunning trickery had been of no avail. Ginger had got the better of him again, despite all his wiles and persuasive powers.

Gibbering and foaming with fury, he leaped to his feet, and made a backwards clutch at his hat as it was dislodged from his head. He had forgotten that he held the glowing stump of his cigar between his podgy fingers, and by some strange freak of fate the smouldering weed fell from his grasp and slipped down the back of his neck, where his collar bulged loosely.

The next instant Mr. Crocker was transformed into a raging, capering, screeching lunatic, as the red-hot ash found a resting-place on the small of his back.

"Help, help! I'm on fire!" roared the bulky director, flinging himself to the floor, and rolling over and over in a futile attempt to dislodge the cause of all the trouble. Fetch some water! Ring for the fire brigade—I'm burning to death!"

(Crocker's unlucky in lots of ways, but he is going to prove a nasty handful for Ginger! Look out for more exciting developments in next Wednesday's long instalment, and don't forget to order your REALM in advance!)

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(Continued from page 380.)

he said. "Old Tich is over there. 'Sh'sh! Quit making all those spluttering noises, you silly shrimp, or you'll rouse the whole blessed menagerie!"

Tich piped down, and Shiner led the way to the cage whence he imagined Tich had spoken. There was a snake-like mark on this cage, too, and without further preamble he, Dusty, and Woo pushed the matting-covered cage silently from among its fellows and out of the clearing to that wide pathway through the mimosa hedge.

A series of loud thumps and grunts from inside the cage intensely annoyed the perspiring rescuers.

"Shurrup, you mouldy midget!" hooted Dusty in a hoarse whisper. "Why the dickens can't you be patient? We're a-getting you away as quick as we can, ain't we?"

Still the thumping and the grunting went on, and all three boys were glad to get the cage beyond the hedge, whence they hauled it close to the spot where Corny was tied.

"All right, you freak!" cried Shiner in response to another hefty thump from within the cage. "Even if you have got your mouth stuffed full of matting, or whatever it is, you needn't get so shirty wi' your pals. You're a jolly sight more impatient than old Corny, who's going to give us a lift into the port. Anyway, you can come out now."

He withdrew the heavy bolt from the door at the end of the cage and drew it a trifle ajar.

"Hop out, quick!" he commanded. Crash!

Something that appeared to weigh about a ton hit the door with a force of a pile-driver. The door flung backwards, catching Shiner full in the face and bowling him about a dozen yards backwards. And out of the cage leaped a roaring, striped tornado in the form of the wild Chinese tiger!

"Ow!"

"Whoops!"

Dusty and Woo flung themselves sideways in the nick of time.

Br-r-r-umph! Br-r-r-umph! The tiger's coughing roar burst out upon the night. It was followed by a babel which might have been heard at the far end of Hoochow.

Corny the camel had never seen a Chinese tiger before, but he had seen African lions in his time, and had heard their roar. Instinct told him that it was time for him to be packing up and pushing off.

Emitting a resounding squeal above the howls of the excited boys, he broke the rope that tethered him and went off at a mad lope. In his haste he failed to see the cage, and crashed full into it. The tiger suddenly crouched, quivering all over like a great cat, for camel steak was a dainty he had not tasted since the days of his freedom in the North-West Provinces.

"Whoops! Look out, Corny!"

Shiner's yell was useless, but with commendable presence of mind the gallant tar snatched Dusty's cap from his head and sent it skimming at the crouching beast of prey.

The tiger leaped, but gave a twist in the air as the hat hit him, and one of Corny's big splay feet caught him a beauty right behind the ear. "Br-r-r-umph!"

Now there was a note of pain in the tiger's roaring.

Suddenly a fresh racket burst out. Wong and some of his pirates came rushing along the wide pathway between the prickly mimosa hedge.

"Crumps!" cried Dusty. "It's all up now, mates!"

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HULL CITY	v. SWANSEA T.
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I enter FOOTBALL COMPETITION No. 15 in accordance with the Rules and Conditions as announced, and agree to accept the Editor's decision as final and legally binding.

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15

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3. In the event of postponement, or abandonment before full time on March 19th, of any of the first six matches on this coupon, 5s. will be awarded to each of the readers who correctly forecast the results of the first six completed games on the coupon.
4. In the event of ties between competitors, the prizes may be divided at the Editor's discretion, but no competitor will be awarded more than one prize or share of a prize.
5. No correspondence will be allowed, nor interviews granted.
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7. The prize of 5s. for every correct forecast of the first six matches will be paid up to a maximum of £1,000—an equal division of that sum being made if the successful entrants in this section exceeds four thousand.
8. It is a distinct condition of entry that the Editor's decision shall be accepted as final and legally binding in all matters concerning this competition.
9. All entries must be sent through the post, and any received after THURSDAY, MARCH 17th, will be disqualified. No responsibility can be accepted for any effort, or efforts, lost, mislaid, or delayed. Proof of posting will not be accepted as proof of delivery. Unstamped or insufficiently stamped efforts will be refused.

Coupons from "Answers," "Family Journal," "Home Companion," "Woman's World," "Pictorial Weekly," "Sports Budget," "Football and Sports Favourite," "Union Jack," "Chums," and "All Sports Weekly," may also be used. Employees of the proprietors of these journals are not eligible to compete.

He turned and faced Wong, who, like most of the Chinks, was armed with a big, flat-bladed sword. Another yell from Shiner—"Look out, you chump!"—caused the doleful raggie to jump round in alarm, just in time to see the Chinese tiger creeping up behind him.

Dusty ducked as the tiger leaped, and the animal shot over him.

Plonk! The tiger's forepaws struck Wong, who had rushed up, full in the chest, sending the pirate hurtling backwards into a small clump of spiked cactus.

Wong's frightened howl was taken

up by the rest of the pirates, and thoroughly bewildered and scared himself by this time, the tiger suddenly turned away from his victim and bounded back for the sanctuary of his cage. Thereupon little Woo slammed the door and dropped the heavy wooden bars into place.

"Skiddoo! Beat it for your lives!"

Shiner set the example himself by making a dash for the mimosa hedge. Leaping up, the pirate chieftain, who had been only badly bruised, tried to grab him.

Shiner jumped at him, tearing at the outlaw's loose garments. His

roving fingers felt a round flat object, and it took the astute tar but another moment to discover that this was tucked in a secret pocket in Wong's wide left sleeve.

"Got it, mates," cheered Shiner, dragging the object out. "The skipper's watch!"

He yanked himself away from Wong, who was squirming with pain among the prickly cactus, and dived into the hedge. Dusty and Woo at once broke off the furious fistie engagement they had entered upon with the couple of the pirates, and scudded hot-foot after him.

"Tich! Tich! Tich!" yelled Shiner wildly. "Where the dickens are you, matey?"

A frantic thumping on the reed of a cage announced the real location of the little 'un.

"No time to hack down those bars!" panted Shiner. "Corny had better take the cage in tow!"

The obliging Corny, who had loped up after them, did the latest kind of flatfooted Charleston, while Shiner and Dusty hitched the rope from him to the cage. Woo, in response to Tich's excited mumbblings from behind the bars, tore off the reed matting so that the midget could see out.

"Full steam ahead!" bellowed Shiner.

With a squeal, the camel bounded forward, dragging the light bamboo cage after him. Behind, charged the pirates, while bullets, sticks, and stones flew thickly through the air.

The moon came out, and Corny got a glimpse of Leemooon Lake away to the left at the foot of the hill, and possibly he thought it time to take aboard another tankful of water. In spite of the raggies' frantic shouts, he went streaking down the hill, while the cage rolled and bumped wildly after him.

By some means, Tich managed to evict the fibre gag from his mouth.

"Stop the brute, you crazy galoots!" he howled to his pals. "The splayfooted freak has gone potty, and is running away wi' me!"

Already Shiner, Dusty, and Woo were being left in the rear, and the pirates were a good deal farther behind. Suddenly, a wheel of the cage hit against a small tree-stump sticking out of the ground. There was a crack like the discharge of a shot-gun as the rope broke; next instant, Corny, relieved of the weight of the cage, went shooting ungracefully on his long neck, while the vehicle itself swung round and ran backwards down the hillside.

Tich clung madly to the bars; the cage shot down toward the lake—like the boat of a water-chute.

Splash! It struck the water, sending up a great shower of spray and drenching Tich to the skin.

"My aunt!" gasped Dusty. "The little 'un will be drowned!"

"Not a b-bit of it!" puffed Shiner. "That wooden cage will float."

In that, he was right, for only the wheels and the lower part of the cage were submerged.

The pirates came on in pursuit when, on the sudden, a searchlight shot out from the direction of the tributary that joined the Canton River with the lake.

"The Buzzfly!" hooted Shiner.

The dazzling white light shone full into the pirates' eyes, blinding them completely to the movements of the raggies and the cage floating farther out on the lake. They all knew as well as the bluejackets themselves, that it was the British gunboat, and as Wong himself was not present to egg them on, they turned and hoofed it back for the menagerie.

While Corny loped into Hoochow, Shiner, Dusty, and Woo went in search of a boat. They found one at last, and towed Tich, still in his cage, to the Buzzfly directly she dropped anchor. Tich protested violently that he should be taken elsewhere, and he got madder than ever when the Buzzfly's rails became lined with his laughing shipmates.

When Commander Dill heard the full story, he hurriedly sent a landing party ashore, but Wonky's menagerie was already beating it for the backblocks. Though the pirates were not caught, the skipper gave Shiner & Co. much commendation, and promised each of them ten shillings in gratitude for the return of his gold presentation watch.

Tich was released from the bamboo cage, and he came down on the mess-deck still wearing his wet monkey garments, but with the mask drawn back over his head.

At the sight of Shiner, Dusty, and Woo, he again went off the deep end.

"Why the thump didn't you bring a blessed chopper with you?" he demanded, hopping around and making wet marks all over the deck. "You could easy enough have chopped down a couple o' bars instead of leaving me to be shaken silly by old Corny, and afterwards nearly drowned. Thought you'd have a giddy jape over the affair—I know! Somethin' in me very bones tells me you did it a-purpose."

Rather wearily, Shiner turned to little Woo Sam, who was making for the pantry.

"Sammy," he cried, "if you've got any monkey-nuts in there, trot 'em out and hand 'em to young Tarzan here. Cracking 'em will give him something better to do than yapping at his pals."

And, with a final hoot of indignation, little Tich bounced away to the sleeping-flat and a welcome change of attire.

THE END.

"THE MYSTERY JUNK!" is the title of next Wednesday's long complete yarn of the Raggies o' the Rambler. Your newspaper will be pleased to put the REALM aside for you if you ask him. Mention it to him to-day!

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