



Special Semi-Final Cup-Fighting Stories Inside!

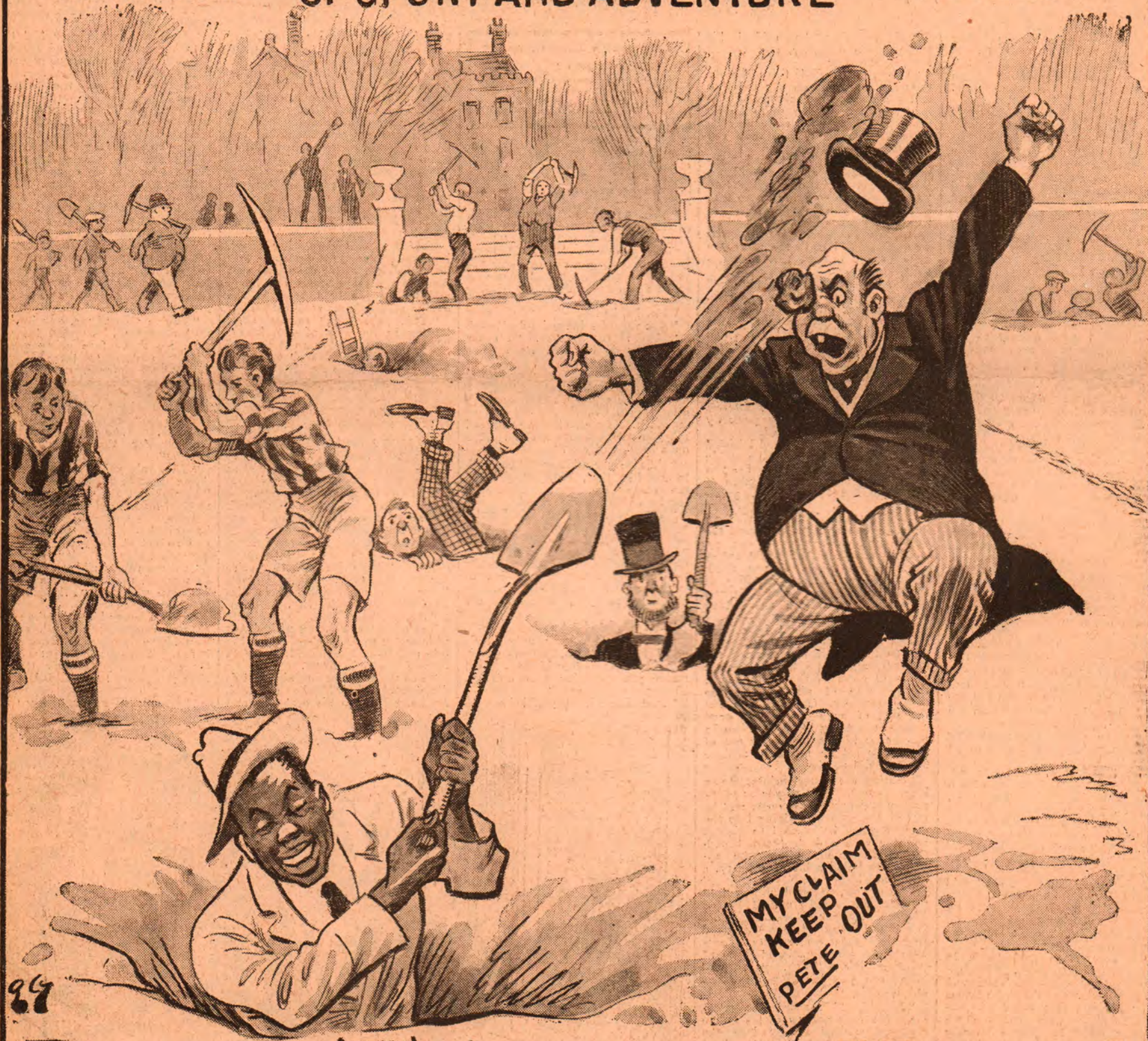


The Boys' ^{2d} REALM

No. 416. Vol. XVI. (New Series.)
EVERY WEDNESDAY.

OF SPORT AND ADVENTURE

March 26th, 1927.



PETE'S TREASURE HUNT!

The Treasure-Hunters are breaking their backs with digging. You'll split your sides with laughing over JACK, SAM, and PETE in this rollicking long yarn of football and fun!

Pete's a Jewel! So is This Rollicking Semi-Final Treasure Hunt Yarn!

"I SHOULD SMOLE!"

"If old Gumbail don't stop dese little games ob his, I know I shall smole out loud! Ain't it funny dat he neber seems to open his mouth widout puttin' his hoof in it!"

The 1st Chapter.

Gumbail in the Ink!

RICHARD TROLLOPE, the bearded manager of the Seahaven Printing Company, shrugged his broad shoulders in a manner which suggested that he was getting rather fed-up with things.

"We shall do our utmost to oblige a gentleman of your eminence," he declared, smiling into his visitor's close-set eyes, "but—"

"There are no 'buts' about it!" shouted Mr. Amos Gumbail, his throaty voice ringing out above the hum and clangour of the printing machines. "I've ordered twenty thousand of these leaflets, and I expect them to be delivered on Friday morning without fail! Without fail, mind! Got that?"

Amos Gumbail was the mayor of Seahaven. Also, he was at enmity with Jack, Sam, and Pete, who had recently settled in the town. Pete had secured the player managership of Seahaven Rovers—an appointment which Gumbail coveted, and that fact was at bottom of the bad feeling he bore towards Pete.

Just now, Gumbail was enjoying himself. He always enjoyed himself most when he was bullying someone.

"We shall do our best, of course," said Richard Trollope patiently; "but we can't promise anything definite. After all, you gave us very short notice, and you seem to forget that I have a duty to my other customers—my regular customers."

"And what if you have?" cut in Amos, with a picturesque malediction. "You can't afford to disappoint me in order to carry out one or two tin-pot orders for a few tuppenny-ha'penny tradesmen! You're dealing with the mayor of the town now, you know, so we won't have any further argument! Those twenty thousand leaflets must be at Gumbail Grange by ten o'clock on Friday morning!"

Gumbail Grange is my new residence, by the way," he ran on, with a characteristic change of manner. "I flatter myself that it is the most handsome mansion in this part of the country, and I don't mind telling you that it cost me a pretty penny! As you may know, I believe in doing a job well or else leaving it alone altogether, so you can be sure that Gumbail Grange will be one of the show places of Seahaven!"

Richard Trollope blinked through his old steel-framed glasses and nodded his head, but he did not appear to be greatly impressed by his worship's bragging statement.

"I heard that you'd taken another house," he said, polite interest in his tone.

"You heard that I'd taken another house?" echoed Amos, with a throaty chuckle. "It's not a house, man; it's a mansion—a magnificent country residence, that stands in its own park! Perhaps I'll show you over the place one of these days!" he promised, with an air of condescension.

"About these handbills, sir," said Richard Trollope, changing the conversation. "I'll do my best to let you have them by ten o'clock on Friday morning. I can't say more than that—"

"But I can!" snapped Amos, in his old bullying manner. "Let me down over these leaflets, Trollope," he threatened, "and I'll make things so hot for you that you'll be compelled to close these works down within a month! That's no idle threat, for there isn't a tradesman in the town who won't boycott you if I go out of my way to pull the strings."

Richard Trollope nodded his grey head.

"Quite so, Mr. Gumbail," he said, stemming the flood of hot words that rose to his lips. "As I said before, I will do my best to get the job finished by Friday morning."

"You bet you'll do your best!" said Gumbail, with a sly grin. "I thought you'd change your tone!"



Still grinning, he rubbed his pudgy hands together, and turned towards the door.

"I expect to find those twenty thousand handbills on my doorstep at ten o'clock to the minute!" Gumbail went on. "Let there be no mistake, Trollope, for there may be more behind this scheme than you understand!"

"Precisely, sir," returned the printer, shooting a shrewd glance through his steel-framed spectacles. "It has already occurred to me that it is unlike you to part with five hundred pounds without getting something in exchange for your money! Still, I can't see what you hope to get out of this treasure-hunt, sir!"

"No, and you're not likely to!" declared Amos, snorting fiercely. "Your job is to print the leaflets and keep your mouth shut, and I need hardly tell you that you'll find yourself in an unholy mess if my name leaks out in connection with the scheme! The utmost secrecy must be observed, you understand; even your own workmen must not know that I have got any interest in the matter. Is that perfectly clear to you?" he blustered.

"Perfectly, sir," answered Richard Trollope. "I will take all possible precautions, I assure you! Do you wish to see another rough proof of the handbill before I start printing?"

"No!" snapped Amos, with an impatient gesture. "I've passed the first proof, so now you can go straight ahead. And you'd better work day and night if you think there's the slightest possibility of letting me down. Don't forget, Trollope! Ten o'clock on Friday morning!"

Now, a treasure-hunt is a very simple affair. What had happened was that Gumbail had secreted the treasure, and these leaflets gave a series of clues to the hiding-place, the last clue of all locating the actual treasure. Gumbail was not the sort of man to spend good money on a thing like this unless he was going to get something out of it. Just what he hoped to achieve Trollope did not know.

Treating the master-printer to a black scowl, the mayor nodded shortly and opened the door, and he was on the point of striding into the passage when he came into violent collision with a dusky-faced, broad-shouldered young fellow who appeared to be in a bit of a hurry.

"Ooooh!"

"Dere now, fancy bumping into my dear old friend Gumbail!" cried Player Manager Pete, as Amos ripped out a roar of fury, staggered back into the office, and sat down heavily in a newly-opened drum of printing ink. "Yah, yah, yah! What are you laughing at, Amos old hoss?"

"Laughing!" shouted the great man, the rear portion of his ample anatomy wedged tightly into the mouth of the drum. "Do I look as though I'm laughing, you black-faced barbarian? Don't stand there like a fool, Trollope!" he roared, making frantic efforts to free himself. "Help me out, you maniac! Do something, you wire-whiskered old imbecile!"

"Yah, yah, yah!" laughed Pete, his mighty guffaw echoing through the whole building. "Dat's what I call a polite request for assistance, Gumbail, old hoss!"

"Give me a hand somebody!"

This Week's Long Complete Story: PETE'S TREASURE HUNT!

roared Amos, as the messy fluid percolated through the seat of his trousers and sent a chilly shiver through his massive body. "I shall catch cold—"

"Yah, yah, yah!" shouted Pete, as four or five grinning compositors swarmed into the room. "Dat's entirely your own fault, old hoss! Dere are two-free chairs here, yet you deliberately go out of your way to sit down in de drum of printing ink—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I've ruined a ten-guinea suit—"

"Myes!" cut in Pete. "I rader 'spect dat de ink will stain your raiment, old hoss!"

"Help me out, you grinning goats!" roared Amos, struggling like a man demented in his frenzied attempts to wrench himself out of the drum. "Do something, someone! Hi, you with the swivel chin! Give me a hand, will you?"

"I'll give you a big ear if you talk to me like that, Porky!" growled the compositor, who was rather touchy about his swivel chin.

"Yah, yah, yah!" laughed Pete, with that ready sympathy which he always showered upon his enemy. "Perhaps a charge ob dynamite would do de trick, old hoss! You'll look mighty funny if you hab to walk froug de streets wid dat drum attached to de street, Gumbail, old warrior!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go on, laugh your ugly heads off!" fumed Amos, renewing his frantic efforts to free himself. "I'll make you pay for this outrage, Trollope, you hound!"

"And I'm afraid you'll have to

pay for the ink, Mr. Gumbail!" declared the printer, with a quiet smile.

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete, as Amos emitted another wild yell of fury. "Dat's a good one, old hoss! Look here, Amos," he continued, "how many more times hab I got to tell you dat you should always keep cool and collected in a crisis? Keep cool and—"

"Keep cool!" yelled the mayor, his husky voice cracking beneath the strain. "How can a man keep cool when he's wedged into a flaming drum of blistered printing ink! Ah-h! Gotcher!"

Making a last despairing effort, he tugged to such good purpose that he broke clear of the drum and shot forward upon his hands and knees and buried his bald head in the depths of the brass coal-scuttle.

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete, joining in the general merriment. "Do you know any more tricks, old hoss? What's de idea ob trying to hide yourself in de coal-box?"

The 2nd Chapter. Energetic Egbert!

AMOS looked as amiable as a wild boar as he scrambled to his feet and glared round at the circle of grinning faces.

"This is no laughing matter, you—you witless hyenas!" he choked, his soiled features working in unpleasant fashion.

"Yah, yah, yah!" shouted Pete, dabbing his eyes with a silk handkerchief. "Dat's just where you're wrong, old hoss! Why, I ain't laughed so much since Uncle Jim set fire to his wooden leg!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The office was echoing with shouts of laughter as Amos clenched his big fists and fixed his smouldering eyes upon Richard Trollope.

"You'll hear more about this disgraceful affair!" he declared, fumbling beneath his coat-tails and

"EBER BODY'S DOING IT!"

"It am lubly to watch folks workin' hard an' diggin' up de ground. Old Gumbail likes to see folks doin' it, but de only trouble am dat dey don't dig where he wants dem to!"

trying to detach himself from his ink-soaked trousers.

"Why, what have I got to do with it?" asked the printer, in surprise. "I didn't push you into the drum, did I?"

"Perhaps you didn't," admitted Amos, rather reluctantly; "but there was no need for you to encourage this black scoundrel in his tomfoolery! No decent business man would allow the hooligan inside his office—"

"Mr. Pete happens to be a very good client of mine," interrupted Richard Trollope, "and I am always pleased to see him!"

"Then you're a bigger fool than I took you for!" snarled his worship, shooting a venomous glance at Pete's beaming countenance. "I hate the sight of the grinning hound!"

"Dere, now!" murmured Pete, looking mildly shocked. "And all because I happened to brush against him as I was coming into de office!"

"Silence, you maniacs!" roared Amos, as a chuckle came from the little group of compositors. "Don't you menials realise that you are in the presence of the mayor? Don't you understand that I should be treated with respect?"

"There's one thing we do realise," growled the young man with the swivel chin, "and that is that you'll jolly soon get a large ear if you go on like that, Porky! I've warned you once before—"

"You've warned me, you impertinent scoundrel!" shouted his worship, his fleshy face going purple. "Do you dare to threaten your mayor with violence, you hound?"

The compositor nodded his tousled head.

"That's about what it amounts to!" he said, fixing Gumbail with a cold eye. "Take my tip and buy a padlock for that little rosebud mouth!"

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete, as Amos began to grimace and splutter. "To tink dat I'd neber noticed dat rosebud mouth, old hoss!"

Amos was quivering with rage as he raised his heavy walking-stick and rushed at the young man with the swivel chin.

"I'll cut you to ribbons for that!" he shouted, making a vicious swipe with the weapon. "I'll teach you, you hound!"

It was a heavy blow that he aimed at the compositor's head, and it would have done serious damage had it found its mark; but no sooner did the stick whistle through the air than the young man dodged nimbly

(Continued on next page.)



TEA FOR TWO! There was a terrific clatter as Gumbail barged into Egbert. The mayor's head struck the cans of hot tea, and he yelped as he was deluged with the scalding liquid. "De printers won't be pleased wid you for upsettin' dere tea in dat careless manner, Gumbail!" exclaimed Pete reprovingly.

aside and managed to get out of harm's way.

Swinging off his balance, Amos tottered blindly across the floor, tripped over a pile of printed matter, and plunged head-first through the open doorway into the composing-room; and it so happened that he was just in time to collide with an inky-faced printer's devil who at that moment arrived with the compositors' morning tea. Balanced upon the youngster's shoulder was a long stick, and dangling from the stick were a dozen cans of boiling tea, so it will be readily understood that no sooner did Gumbriel barge into the boy than something catastrophic happened.

There was a terrific clatter as the boy and Gumbriel went down in a heap, and the mayor's wild yells must have been heard in Fore Street as a deluge of scalding tea splashed over his head and neck and soaked him to the skin.

"De printers won't be pleased wid you for upsettin' deir tea in dat careless manner, Gumbriel, old hoss!" exclaimed Pete reprovingly.

As to the lad, he was lost to sight somewhere beneath the mayor's writhing bulk, and the shrill cries for help that echoed through the room suggested that he was being reduced to a species of pancake.

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete, as Amos rolled over on to his broad back and stared up at the ceiling. "Penny for your thoughts, old hoss!"

It was at that precise moment that Amos began to put his thoughts into words, and the things he said about the printer's devil were pungent—so pungent, in fact, that the diminutive youngster flushed with indignation, reached out for a pail of dirty water, and very deliberately poured the unsavoury liquid over the upturned face of his worship the mayor.

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete, as Gumbriel spluttered violently and sat up just in time to be crowned with the empty pail. "Dis don't seem to be your lucky day, old hoss! Run for it, Egbert!"

The advice was excellent in every way, for there was a nasty red glint in the mayoral eye as Mr. Gumbriel scrambled to his feet and went in hot pursuit.

"Come here, you little rat!" he shouted, as the scared-looking youngster tore away down the composing-room and dodged round the printing machines. "Just let me get my hands on you—"

"Not likely, guv'nor!" panted the little fellow, keeping a big press between himself and the glowering Amos.

"Come here, you maggot!" roared Gumbriel, with a fierce malediction. "Give your face another coat of varnish!" came the rude retort.

This was adding insult to injury, and Amos was past speech as he came to a standstill and glared across at his diminutive tormentor. Gumbriel was never a thing of beauty at any time, but at that moment he looked like a peculiarly repulsive type of ogre.

"What are you making dose funny faces for, Gumbriel, old hoss?" asked Pete tactfully. "Tank goodness dat tea was only lukewarm!"

"Lukewarm!" thundered Amos, swinging round and glowering at his enemy. "The filthy stuff was boiling! I'm in agony, you black idiot—positive agony! But there'll be a reckoning when I get my hands on that snivelling little rat over there!"

His words ended in a throaty gurgle as he saw the youngster disappear through the doorway at the far end of the room.

"Come back, you snipe!" he roared, charging across the floor like an angry bull. "I'll skin you alive when I get hold of you!"

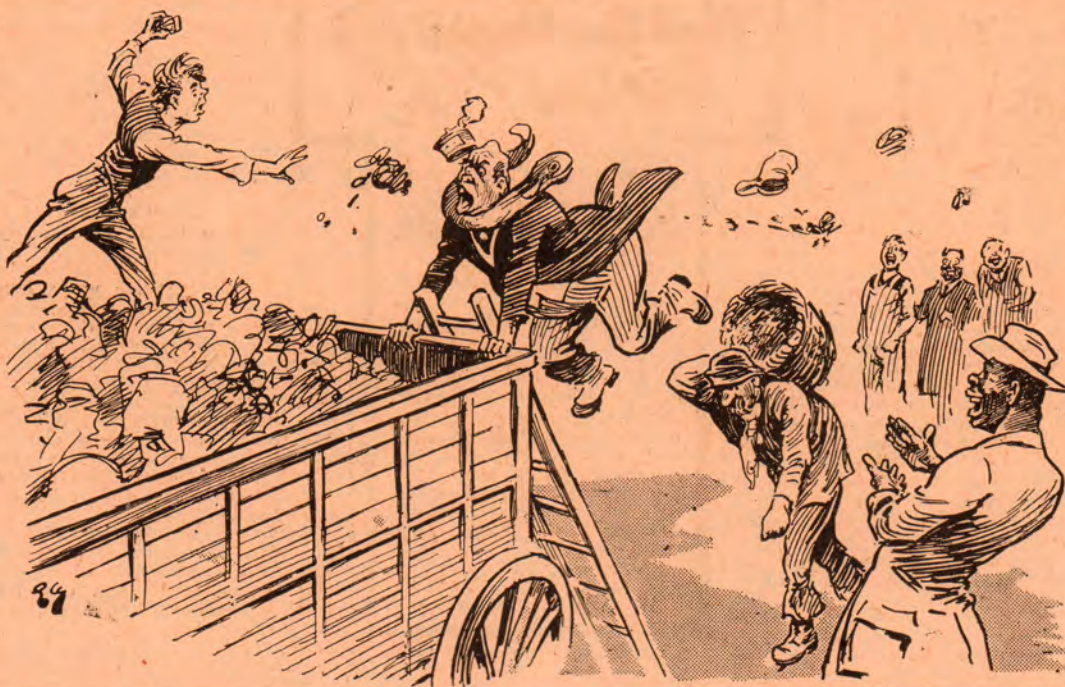
There was a note in his husky voice which suggested that he really meant to fulfil that promise, so it is not surprising, perhaps, that the youngster crammed on his last ounce of speed and tore down the back staircase in a breakneck hurry, taking the stairs six at a time.

Thoroughly roused by this time, and making noises like a fire-breathing dragon, Amos leapt down the narrow staircase with an agility remarkable for a man of his bulk, and on emerging into a littered courtyard he pulled up abruptly and gazed round with bulging eyes.

His one idea at that moment was to destroy a certain under-sized, inky-faced printer's devil, but of his intended victim there was no sign.

"What hab you done wid Egbert, old hoss?" asked Pete, as he and the others joined Gumbriel in the courtyard.

"What do you think I've done



EGBERT GETS EXCITED! "Go on, Egbert, you'll win!" roared Pete, as the boy bombarded Gumbriel with the contents of the dustcart. "Dis am as good as a pantomime!" Pete yelled, when an aged conger eel wound itself lovingly round the mayor's neck. "Dat looks fine as a necktie, old hoss!"

with the little beast?" snarled the mayor. "Swallowed him?" He showed his big teeth in an ugly grin as he addressed Richard Trollope. "I'm going to find the young scoundrel!" he vowed. "And after that there's going to be a vacancy on your staff!"

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete. "I shall hab to tell Egbert dat one, old hoss! By de way," he ran on, as the door on the far side of the courtyard opened and a burly dustman appeared, "I tink your carriage has arrived!"

"Hold your tongue, you insulting hound!" snarled his worship, as the dustman grinned across at Pete. "Don't you understand that I am a most important person in the eyes of the municipal employees? What do you want, my man?" he snapped, fixing his little eyes upon the newcomer.

"What do you think I want?" asked the dustman, who could be forgiven for failing to recognise the great man. "You don't think I've come in 'ere to admire you, do you? Excusey, monseer!" he grinned, giving Amos a playful shove in the chest. "This is my busy day!"

Still grinning, he gripped the big dustbin and hoisted it on to his shoulder, but he seemed to find life less amusing as he took the full weight of the load and staggered off across the courtyard. Passing through the doorway, he swayed across the pavement and heaved the big bin over the side of the dustcart, and he was in the act of removing some beads of moisture from his damp forehead when a wild yell went up from his mate in the cart.

"What's the idea o' this, 'Arold?" demanded the latter gentleman, groping about in the load of rubbish and producing Egbert, the printer's devil. "What the—"

"Hi! Give me that young scoundrel!" shouted Amos Gumbriel, rushing out of the courtyard and shaking his fist up at Egbert, who was peering over the side of the cart. "Come out of it, you little weevil!" "No, thanks!" grinned Egbert. "I'd rather stay with my friend, the dook!" He winked at the pop-eyed dustman. "Don't let this big bully get at me, guv'nor!" he begged. "He's my cruel stepfather, and—"

"You lying little hound!" roared Amos, making a dive for the ladder that trailed behind the cart. "I'll soon have you out of that!"

Breathing bloodthirsty threats, he gripped the sides of the ladder and started to make his ascent, but he had not accomplished more than half the journey when Egbert popped up and smote his worship on the nose with an old boot. Then, making the most of his momentary advantage, he backed away towards the front of the dustcart and proceeded to pelt the enemy with anything that happened to come to hand.

Plop! Thwack! Smack! "Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete, as Amos ducked and dodged and made ineffectual attempts to scramble over the side of the cart. "Stick it, Egbert! You're winning, son!"

Fish, fowl, and fruit that had outlived the first flush of youth figured

prominently in that intensive bombardment, and there was something splendid and Spartan in the way Amos Gumbriel stood up to the attack. Yet even he was forced to retire precipitately when an aged conger eel whizzed through the air and wound itself round his thick neck.

"Ow!" he yelped, clawing at the affectionate conger and taking a backward leap through space. "Wow!"

It so happened that Harold, the burly dustman, was in the line of flight, and he let out a mighty roar of alarm as Amos landed full upon his chest and knocked him down like a ninepin.

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete, as the dustman and his worship rolled over and over in the roadway. "Dis is as good as a pantomime!"

The dustman, however, did not share this point of view, and he was saying many harsh things as he gripped Gumbriel by the ears and proceeded to bang his bald head against the cobblestones.

"Leggo! Stop it!" shouted Amos, wriggling violently in a frantic effort to dislodge the man who was sitting on his waistcoat. "I'll have the law on— Ow! Leggo!"

"Go easy, old hoss!" cried Pete anxiously. "Dose cobblestones cost money, you know!"

Making a superhuman effort, Amos rolled over and sent the dustman plunging forward upon his nose, and the next moment he leapt to his feet and went off down the road with the grace of a baby elephant.

He did not leave without a rousing send off, however, for Egbert and the dustman pelted him briskly until he was out of range, the final shot being a ripe tomato that smote him immediately behind the left ear—and stayed there.

The 3rd Chapter. Pete's Extra Clue.

"DAT'S what I call a bery amusing interlude," observed Player Manager Pete, as he followed Richard Trollope back to the office.

"It seems to me, old hoss, dat Mister Amos Gumbriel has a genius for finding trouble, M'yes!"

"I agree with you, Mr. Pete," returned the master printer, "and it won't surprise me if he gets into some very real trouble one of these days. He's a bully and a blusterer, and I've good reason for knowing that he won't stop at anything in order to get his own way. The man's a scoundrel, Mr. Pete!" concluded Richard Trollope, with an unusual display of heat.

"Quite so, old hoss!" nodded Pete, glancing down at a rough proof that was lying upon the top of the desk. "Smatter ob fact, I don't s'pose dere's a person in de town who would trust him as far— Hallo! What's dis, old hoss?"

"What's what?" asked Trollope, a tinge of colour creeping into his lined cheeks. "Oh, that's a special job I've got on hand, Mr. Pete! I'm afraid I can't tell you any more about it, as I am sworn to secrecy. This particular customer doesn't wish his name to be associated with the treasure-hunt!"

"Presactly!" murmured Pete, running his eyes over the handbill. "And is dis same modest gent putting up de five hundred pounds, old hoss?"

"I suppose I—er—ought not to discuss the affair with you; but—"

"Quite so, old hoss!" cut in Pete quietly. "Now, de question is, what does Amos Gumbriel hope to get out of dis latest stunt?"

"That's the very question I put to him—"

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete. "I'm 'fraid you hab giben yourself away dis time, old hoss. But dere's nothing to worry about. I guessed at once dat Gumbriel was at the bottom ob dis business, so you needn't let your conscience worry you! Nunno! Now, den," he ran on, still studying the leaflet, "we will bring our first-class intellects to bear upon the situation. M'yes! In de first place, an unknown philanthropist is organising a 'stupendous treasure-hunt' on Saturday next. In de second place, de said unknown

philanthropist is burying de sum ob five hundred pounds within a three-miles' radius ob de town. Quite so! In de third place, de same unknown philanthropist is going to publish a long list ob clues dat will be ob de greatest assistance to de people who take part in de treasure-hunt. M'yes!"

"And I shall be very surprised if every man, woman, and child in Seahaven doesn't take part in the affair, Mr. Pete," declared Richard Trollope.

"So shall I, old hoss," said Pete, very quietly. "And dat means dat dere won't be more dan a handful ob our supporters at Stanbridge on Saturday!"

"Why, of course!" cried Trollope. "The Rovers are meeting Stocktown in the Semi-final, aren't they?"

"Presactly!" nodded Pete, a thoughtful expression creeping into his dark eyes. "M'yes! Quite so! I tink," he observed, after a short pause, "dat I begin to see daylight! But to get back to de actual treasure-hunt," he said, studying the long list of clues. "De whole ting looks a lot too easy to me, Trollope, old hoss!"

"Then you ought to know exactly where to place your hands upon the treasure!" said the master-printer, with a broad smile.

"I do, old hoss," returned Pete, conviction in his mellow voice. "Dat is, I know where dat five hundred pounds ought to be, according to de clues on dis leaflet!"

"And where is the treasure buried, Mr. Pete?" asked Trollope, his eyes glinting with excitement.

"I'm perfectly certain dat dere isn't any treasure, old hoss," returned Pete, so it stands to reason dat I can't tell you where it is buried, doesn't it? But one ting I can do—I can tell you where dese clues lead to!"

"Go on, sir!"

"Dey lead to de Robers' football ground, in Parker Lane," smiled Pete.

"To your football ground, Mr. Pete?" echoed Richard Trollope, surprise in his tone. "But—well, I'm afraid I don't understand!"

"Den you ought to," declared Pete, "for de whole dirty scheme is as clear as mud! M'yes! You can bet your best Sunday boots dat Amos doesn't want us to win de Semi-final game against Stocktown United, and he probably tink's dat it will put de boys off deir stroke if he can keep our supporters away from de match!"

"I'd not thought of that," said Trollope. "But I must admit that it's a very tricky move on Gumbriel's part."

"Presactly!" nodded Pete. "But dere's more in his scheme dan dat. M'yes! De trail, as I hab said, leads to our playing pitch; de five hundred pounds is supposed to be buried somewhere beneath de turf. So what do you tink's going to happen when twenty-tirty tousand treasure-hunters appear on de scene?"

"I'm afraid they are likely to make a mess of the pitch, Mr. Pete," answered Trollope, with a dry smile.

"Presactly!" agreed the Rovers' player manager. "Dey will set to work wid shovels and picks and anything else dat can be used for digging down into de turf, and de whole pitch would look like a ploughed field in 'bout ten minutes or so! M'yes!"

"But—but there would be someone about to prevent this outrage!" stammered the master-printer, his lined face flushing with indignation.

"Dat's just where you're wrong, (Continued on next page.)

Another Screamingly-Funny Topical Long Complete Yarn!

JACK SAM AND PETE!

Gumbriel builds his own boat for the race. It's some boat—and it's some race!



Pete's at his best in this corking yarn. Don't miss his latest rollicking adventure!

"PETE'S BOAT RACE!"

It is Boat Race week next week; Pete thinks that he ought to have a boat race of his own. He has one—against Gumbriel! You'll find a long string of laughs in next Wednesday's mirthmaking yarn!

ORDER YOUR "REALM" TO-DAY!



(Continued from previous page.)

old boss," returned Pete. "De reserves are playing away as well, and de first team are meeting Stocktown on neutral ground! Amos Gumbil knows all about dat, ob course, and dat's why he's arranged de treasure-hunt for Saturday!"

"Now I understand why he insisted upon having his handbills by ten o'clock on Friday morning!" exclaimed Trollope. "He threatens to smash my business if the bills aren't delivered at Gumbil Grange to the minute!"

"Quite so, old boss," said Pete quietly. "He'll organise eberything on Friday, and on Saturday morning he'll flood de town wid leaflets! It's a clever scheme, and it might hab come off if I hadn't dropped in to see you dis morning!"

"What are you going to do about it, Mr. Pete?" asked the printer. "It stands to reason that you won't allow the treasure-hunters to ruin your football ground; but you must understand that I have my own position to think about. Amos Gumbil is the most powerful and influential man in Seahaven, and I—"

"M'yes!" out in Pete. "But you needn't worry your pretty head about dat, old boss. I'll see dat you don't suffer, if you'll do me a favour!"

"I've no love for Gumbil, Mr. Pete, and I'm quite willing to do anything in my power—"

"Dat's settled, den," declared the player manager. "Hab a cigar, old boss! I know dey're good, 'cause I stole dem specially out of Sam's special box!" They both lit up, and then Pete ran on: "As you say, it's not likely dat I'm going to twirl my thumbs and allow de mob to plough up de Robers' football pitch, so what I hab got to do is to alter de last few clues, and put de treasure-seekers on a different trail. Dat's going to be an easy matter, and I shall arrange for dem to finish up at Gumbil Grange!"

"Gumbil's new mansion?" gasped Trollope, his eyes glinting behind the steel-rimmed spectacles.

"Presactly!" answered Pete, without a smile. "Why not, my dear old boss?"

The printer began to chuckle, and it was not long before the chuckle became a roar of laughter that rang through the works.

"Ha, ha, ha!" he shouted, swaying back in his swivel-chair. "I should like to see his face when—!" His imagination got the better of him, and he went off into another yell of mirth. "Ha, ha, ha! This is too rich, Mr. Pete!"

"I must admit dat it's not a bad idea," smiled Pete modestly. "But it's only tit for tat. Dere ain't much dat de average man won't do for five hundred pounds, so I shouldn't be surprised if de treasure-seekers make a mess of Gumbil's magnificent residence."

Richard Trollope had his laugh out, and then became comparatively serious.

"I'm afraid there's one thing you've forgotten, Mr. Pete," he said. "What's dat, old boss?"

"Don't you think it's more than likely that Gumbil will spot the alteration in the clues?" asked the printer.

"No, I don't," answered Pete, "for de simple reason dat you're going to phone him on Friday morning and tell him dat you can't possibly let him hab de handbills until ten o'clock on Saturday morning. You'll hab to say dat de presses hab gone phut, or dat your compositors ain't feeling very well. Tell him anything you like, but make it perfectly clear dat he can't hab de leaflets until Saturday. What's more, you had better mention dat he'll hab to call for de goods."

The master-printer looked suddenly grave as he ran his fingers through his few wisps of hair.

"You're asking a great deal of me—" he began, shaking his head.

"I know I am, old boss," grinned Pete. "But habn't I told you dat you won't lose a penny ober doing me dis favour? I'll let you have a cheque now, if you like," he ran on, feeling for his cheque-book.

"No, no! I wouldn't think of taking it, Mr. Pete!" declared Trollope hurriedly. "As you know, Gumbil is a dangerous enemy, and I'm afraid I'm losing my nerve in

my old age. But I'll go through with your scheme, of course. I know you'll see that I don't suffer."

"Presactly, old boss!" grinned the Rovers' player manager, taking a hundred-pound note out of his pocket-book. "I tink you'd better keep dat—just to make you feel more comfortable, you know. Now den," he continued, waving the printer's protests aside, "you quite understand what you hab got to do?"

"Yes, Mr. Pete," answered Trollope, a tinge of colour in his cheeks. "I'm to phone him on Friday, and tell him that he can't have the leaflets until Saturday morning; also, that he's got to send for them."

"Quite so, old boss," grinned Pete. "It's a tinsand to one dat he'll send his hirelings for de bills, habing giben dem instructions to start distributing dem without waste ob time. In dat case, he won't hab a chance of spotting de alteration in de clues."

"You're right, Mr. Pete!" cried the printer, his face alight with enthusiasm. "You've thought of eberything! All that remains to be done is to give me the new clues that will lead the treasure-hunters to Gumbil Grange."

"Presactly, old boss!" grinned Pete, seating himself on the edge of the desk. "Would you mind passing my tinkin-cap?"

The 4th Chapter.

Gumbil Makes a Little Wager.

THE Stanbridge ground is one of the finest in the country, but the game between Seahaven Rovers and Stocktown United in the Semi-Final Round of the F.A. Cup Competition would have attracted an enormous crowd even had the venue been a ploughed field.

At least forty thousand fans passed through the turnstiles before the gates were closed in the face of a vast multitude of would-be spectators, and of that forty thousand no person looked more satisfied with himself and the world in general than Mr. Amos Gumbil, Mayor of Seahaven. Dressed in a well-cut morning suit, white spats, and a glossy silk topper, he was positively beaming upon his fellow-men as he gazed round from his seat at one end of the grand stand, and pulled luxuriously at his enormous cigar.

A deep-throated chuckle shook his well-nourished form as he turned ponderously and addressed his neighbour.

"There don't seem to be many Seahaven supporters here to-day," he said, still chuckling. "As a matter of fact, I can't see a black-and-white favour anywhere!"

"That's so," agreed his neighbour, who was sporting a red-and-blue rosette about the size of a soup-plate. "I'm told that the

If anything am worryin' you, old boss, drop me a line. De latest batch ob letters am answered below.

F. Pinsent (Nottingham).—It am berry seldom dat I feel hungry, old boss. I always guard against dat by habing a lot to eat so dat I ain't more dan ordinarily ravenous by de time de next meal comes round. Don't you bodder about me mistaking Gumbil for a plum-pudden; de only ting I am likely to mistake him for am a barrel dat hab sprouted legs.

CATCHING KIPPERS!

Jack N. Harris (Leigh).—Dere am nothin' dat I like better dan a day's fishing, Jack. Seem dat I am an expert angler, I am berry pleased to pass on a little bit ob advice 'bout catchin' kippers. M'yes! Hab you tried baitin' your hook wid a rolling-pin? Dat am a berry good ting for kippers; as dey swim about, dey bump deir heads on de rolling-pin and stun demselves, den dey float to de surface and all you hab to do am to pick dem out ob de ocean.

A BIGGER BUMP!

Dan Kaplan (W. Hampstead).—Many tanks for de Valentine dat you didn't send, Danny. Glad to know dat you come from good old Jo'burg; how was Market Square and Pritchard Street lookin' de last time you was dere? If you send me a mallet, mebbe I'll try to increase de size ob dat bump on de top ob Gumbil's head for you. If Gumbil has anything to say about it, I'll mention your name.

Has You Heard Dis One?



I tought dat you would like to hear anudder li' story about our old pal Sambo. Here it am, and if you hab got a cracked lip den you'd better not read it, because it am sure to make you smole!

Sambo had a friend named Rastus. One day Rastus was reading de paper, and he said: "Dere am a lot about de fightin' in China in dis, Sambo. It keeps on usin' de word strategy. What does dat mean?"

"Don't you know what strategy am, black feller?" says Sambo. "It means dis: Suppose dat you was a soldier in a battle an' you run out ob ammunition, and you didn't want de enemy to know it. Well, it am strategy to keep on firing!"

Yah, yah, yah! Mind dat cracked lip!

excursion trains from Seahaven came in practically empty!"

"Practically empty?" echoed Amos, looking incredulous. "Why, the excursion trains are usually packed!"

"I know they are," returned his companion, "especially for an important match like this. Someone told me there's a big treasure-hunt in Seahaven to-day, but I don't know how true it is."

"By Jove, I think you're right, sir!" cried Amos, with a fat chuckle. "I also heard something about a treasure-hunt!"

"Then you come from Seahaven?"

"Oh, yes!" answered Amos, inflating himself like a big puff-adder. "My name is Gumbil, and I happen to be mayor of the town!"

This was a startling piece of news, and his neighbour was obviously impressed.

"Of course, I have heard of you, sir!" he said.

"Of course!" agreed Amos, smirking. "By the way, what do you think about Stocktown's chance in to-day's match?"

"I think they stand a sporting chance of winning," came the ready answer, "for four of the Rovers' regular team are down with flu."

WRITE TO PETE ABOUT IT!

Pete Replies!



Furthermore, I'm prepared to back my opinion with hard cash!"

The statement was a challenge, and Amos was in the mood to accept it. What was more, the idea of backing Pete's side rather appealed to his distorted sense of humour.

"I don't mind having a fiver on the result," he said.

"Why not make it a tenner, sir?"

"What's the matter with twenty-five?"

"Done!"

The bet having been made, they clinched the deal with a handshake, and a moment later a thunderous roar of cheering reverberated upon the crisp air as "Pony" Bamforth, Stocktown's captain, led his men on to the smooth stretch of turf. Rattles, bells, trumpets, and squeakers made their contribution to the din, and the packed enclosure was still in a state of uproar when Player Manager Pete trotted on to the field with the Rovers at his heels.

There was no question of bad sportsmanship, but the fact remains that the roar of cheering died down to what amounted to a complete silence. Certainly there were a few half-hearted cries of "Up, the Rovers!" and "Good old Pete!" but these isolated shouts merely accentuated the fact that no more than a handful of Seahaven supporters had troubled to make the short journey to Stanbridge.

However, this state of affairs did not appear to worry Player Manager Pete, for he was showing his white teeth in a broad grin as he ran across to the vacant goal and took up his position between the sticks.

Wipple, the usual skipper, being down with flu, Pete stepped into his shoes and tossed for choice of ends, and another sky-splitting shout went up when Pony Bamforth won the toss and elected to take advantage of the slight breeze that was blowing straight down the field.

The teams lined up as follows:

Seahaven Rovers:
Goal, Pete; backs, Sam, Dyer; half-backs, Grosvenor, Jack, Horton; forwards, Mackay, Joicey, Upson, Crayle, Piper.

Stocktown United:
Goal, Green; backs, Morton, Blayde; half-backs, Penny, Fisher, Thane; forwards, Lyle, Kelly, Hoare, Bamforth, Webber.

Upson, who was making his initial appearance with the first eleven, opened the game by touching the ball to Crayle, who promptly passed out to Piper on being tackled by Mick Kelly; and Piper, an ex-amateur, was quickly robbed by Lyle, who shouldered him off the ball and went down the line at a rattling pace.

Horton lost no time in tackling the fleet-footed winger; but his luck was dead out, and a wild yell went up from the Stocktown fans as he slipped on the

treacherous turf and allowed Lyle to get through and make a bee-line for the corner flag.

"Set 'em alight, Town!"

"In with it, Jimmy!"

Dyer, the Rovers' left back, did not look altogether happy as he bore down upon the winger, and he was even less joyous when his spirited tackle came to naught and the other man swerved in towards the goal-mouth.

The uproar was deafening.

"Shoot, Jimmy!"

"Don't muck about, man!"

"Bang it in!"

Boomph!

Taking his shot from a tricky angle, Lyle sent the ball tearing towards the goalmouth, and Pete was in the act of getting his safe hands to the leather when his left leg shot away from under him on a slippery patch, and he crashed to the ground with a thud.

"G-O-A-L!"

That long-drawn-out cataclysm of barbaric noise must have been heard for miles round, and for the moment it looked as though there was not a single person in that vast crowd who was not qualifying for immediate admission to the nearest lunatic asylum. Hats, caps, and programmes were flung high into the air, and complete strangers turned to each other and slapped backs and shook hands in a paroxysm of frenzied excitement.

"Well done, Jimmy!"

"Hoo-ra-a-a-a-y!"

Standing up in the front row of the grand stand was Mr. Amos Gumbil, and his bloated face was purple as he waved his glossy silk hat and shouted until his hoarse voice cracked beneath the strain.

"That's the style, my lads!" he roared, quivering like a giant jelly-fish. "You're all over 'em!"

He was chuckling throatily as he dropped back into his seat and fixed his close-set little eyes upon Player Manager Pete.

"It looks as though this is going to be your unlucky day, you black-faced barbarian!" he muttered audibly. "I knew your luck couldn't last for ever, you hound!"

"I can't see that you've got anything to be pleased about, sir!" remarked his companion, a puzzled light in his eyes.

"Eh—what's that?" asked Amos, turning to his neighbour. "You say I've nothing to be pleased about, you idiot? Why, I've been waiting for this day, and now—" His husky voice trailed away as he realised that he had already said too much. "I'm a sportsman to the core, sir," he said, "and I'm always ready to give credit where credit is due!"

"But you mustn't forget that you stand to lose twenty-five quid if—" "Tut, tut!" grinned Amos, snapping his fingers. "What's twenty-five quid to me? May the best team win, sir! That's my motto where sport is concerned!"

He turned away, and, grinning unpleasantly, stared fixedly at the field of play, where a tough tussle was taking place in the Stocktown goalmouth; but he stared with unseeing eyes, and his thoughts were many miles away. Having a vivid imagination, he was able to picture what was taking place at Seahaven Rovers' Football Ground at Parker Lane—thousands of eager-eyed treasure-seekers with picks and shovels; the green stretch of turf hacked, mutilated, and ruined for the rest of the season; the fury of the crowd when it discovered that it had been duped; the mob element getting out of hand and wrecking the grand stands and office buildings! They were pleasant thoughts that flashed through Gumbil's throbbing brain, and he threw his bullet head back and roared with raucous laughter.

"Haw, haw, haw!" he shouted, his sudden outburst bringing hundreds of curious eyes in his direction, while his neighbour looked at him suspiciously.

Gumbil's full-bodied guffaw echoed round the ground and reached the ears of Player Manager Pete, and that dusky-faced young man showed his white teeth in a grin as he looked towards the grand stand.

"What's de joke, Gumbil, old boss?" he shouted, waving his hand to the mayor.

"You'll know before you're much older, Mr. Player Manager Pete!" bellowed Amos, his words ending in another outburst of throaty laughter. "It's a prime joke, and you're going to have the laugh of your life! Haw, haw, haw!"

"Presactly, old boss! Yah, yah, yah!"

(Continued on next page.)



COLLAR HIM LOW!

The spectacled youth went for Gumbriel in a flying tackle and brought him down with a thud that seemed to shake the ground. "M'yes, I tought dey would catch him!" grinned Pete, as the treasure-hunters piled on top of the mayor. "All I hope am dat Gumbriel hab got de treasure on him. If he ain't, dem folke am going to be bery annoyed—bery annoyed indeed!"

A rumble of deep-throated laughter travelled round the enclosure as Pete's mighty guffaw rang out, but the amusing incident was quickly forgotten.

The United did most of the pressing for the next quarter of an hour or so, but never once did the Rovers' goal appear to be in any real danger. Both Sam and Dyer were playing a sound game, and as for Pete—well, Pete was Pete! Smiling, cool, and unhurried, he dealt with shot after shot in that clean-cut, effortless manner which had made his name known throughout the country. Barring accidents, he appeared to be unbeatable.

"Things still look rosy for me, sir!" said Gumbriel's neighbour, as the whistle shrilled for half-time and the players trotted off towards the dressing-rooms.

Amos, who was wondering how the treasure-hunt was progressing, turned his head and regarded the speaker with the wide-eyed gaze of a ruminating ox.

"Eh—what?" he grunted. "It looks as though I've got a good chance of winning that twenty-five quid, Mr. Gumbriel!" said the man from Stocktown.

"Oh, quite!" chuckled Amos, with an expansive grin. "And, taking things all round, it looks like being a red-letter day for Seahaven Rovers!"

"What do you mean, sir?" "Nothing, nothing!" chuckled Amos, rubbing his fleshy hands together.

The second half started in brisk fashion, Stocktown United sweeping down the field and carrying everything before them, and during the next two minutes Pete was called upon to face the most intensive bombardment he had ever experienced. The pressure was finally relieved when Pete with a terrific right-hand punch sent the ball sailing well over the half-way line.

It was at this period of the game that Jack Owen stepped up into the centre-forward position, and Upon became the pivot, and from that moment a complete change came over the hard-fought tussle. Taking the forward line in hand, Jack organised raid after raid into the enemy territory, but always—at the last moment—something would go wrong. There was not a fan in that vast crowd who was not ready to admit that the Rovers deserved to score, for they pressed in a manner which drove the Stocktown backs to a point of panic; they did everything humanly possible but find the net.

And they were still fighting hard when the long whistle brought the game to a close. The Rovers were out of the Cup!

"Hoor-a-a-a-a-y!" roared Amos Gumbriel, leaping to his feet and throwing his glossy silk hat into the air. "Well done, Stocktown! Tip—hip—"

"Hoor-a-a-a-a-y!" Certain it is that there was at least one hysterically happy man amongst those forty thousand fans, and his little eyes were glinting with evil glee as his companion tugged at his coat-tails and pulled him down into his seat.

"May I trouble you for that twenty-five quid, Mr. Gumbriel?" grinned the Stocktown supporter.

"Certainly, my boy, certainly!"

cried Amos, producing a bulging note case. "I'm so happy that I almost wish that I'd got to pay you fifty. This is going to be one in the eye for that black hooligan, by heck! First of all, his mangy crowd's knocked out of the Cup, and when he gets back to Seahaven he'll find that—Haw, haw, haw! It's too rich—altogether too rich! Thoroughly indigestible, in fact! Haw, haw, haw!"

The 5th Chapter. The Last Laugh!

MR. AMOS GUMBRIEL was still chuckling throatily as he climbed into his thousand-guinea car and made himself comfortable amongst its yellow-satin cushions.

"Home, sir?" the uniformed chauffeur asked, closing the door with a flourish.

"Home?" echoed Amos, his fleshy features twisted into an evil grin. "Not on your sweet life, Suggar! I want you to get back to Seahaven in record time and drive straight to the Rovers' football ground."

"Very good, sir!" said the chauffeur, wondering why the great man was in such a good humour.

It was a twenty-mile run from Stanbridge to Seahaven, and they did the journey in a shade under thirty minutes, which wasn't bad going, seeing that there was so much traffic on the road. But Amos Gumbriel was purple-faced with impatience as the car shot across Market Square, and turned into Fore Street, the broad thoroughfare that led straight down to Parker Lane.

Gazing from side to side, he noticed that the roadway and pavements were littered with his coloured handbills, and he had regained his good humour by the time the car crossed Haven Road and dipped down into Parker Lane.

"The place seems to be deserted," he muttered, with a chuckle. "I suppose there isn't a man, woman, or child who isn't busy digging up that black hound's football pitch!"

He rubbed his pudgy hands together and gloated with satisfaction. "I'll bet the ground is a sight for weak eyes!" He became thoughtful as the car came to a standstill outside the door marked, "Officials and Players Only." "They don't seem to be making much noise over the business," he mused, vertical lines appearing between his bushy eyebrows. "Of course, it's quite on the cards that they've wrecked the whole place and made themselves scarce. Well, I don't blame 'em, for there's bound to be the very deuce of a row when Pete discovers what's happened! He'll become a raving madman when he knows that the Rovers are without a ground."

He was still grinning as he stepped out of the car and crossed the pavement, and he gave a perceptible start when the private door opened and he found himself looking into the lugubrious countenance of Mr. Charles Tibbles, the Rovers' diminutive trainer. Tibbles would have gone with the Rovers to Stanbridge but for the fact that, like some of the players, he was recovering from a nasty dose of the flu.

"Hallo, ugly!" grunted Charles, with that marked deference which he reserved exclusively for Amos and his kind. "What do you want?"

It was a simple question, yet it seemed to take the wind out of the great man's sails.

"What's that got to do with you, you impudent hound?" blustered Amos, angry blood flooding his flabby cheeks. "How dare you speak to your betters in that disrespectful manner, you menial?"

"Not knowing, can't say," answered the little trainer, tilting his bowler hat at an aggressive angle. "I expect it's a gift. But you've not told me what you want, sweet summer breeze!"

"As a matter of fact," said Gumbriel, running a stumpy finger round the inside of his collar, "I've just heard that there's been some sort of trouble down here during the day. My informant says that a big crowd stormed your ground and did all

such a state that it will take months and months to put it right again!" Tibbles nodded.

"Then what I suggest," he said, "is that you go back to your informant and tell him that he's a bigger liar than you are, my dear old Ananias! Good-afternoon!"

Amos Gumbriel was quivering with white-hot fury as the little fellow lifted his bowler hat and strolled away up the hill; and slowly but surely it dawned upon Gumbriel that something had gone wrong with his scheme.

He stood perfectly still for three minutes, his brain whirling, his staring eyes smouldering with a red light, and he looked scarcely sane when he leapt into the car and flung himself down amongst the cushions. "Home, you fool!" he roared, shaking his walking-stick at the pop-eyed chauffeur. "And get a move on!"

Gumbriel Grange, his palatial new residence, stood in its own park upon the outskirts of the town, and only a matter of four minutes ticked away before the car was purring along the broad gravel drive that wound its way to the ornamental terrace that was one of the principal features of the mansion.

Amos looked like a man in a daze as he sat back amongst the cushions and stared fixedly into space, and he started violently when the chauffeur wrenched the door open and waited for him to alight.

"It seems, sir," announced the driver respectfully, "that the housebreakers are at work!"

"Eh? What's that?" snorted the great man, with a savage oath. "What are you talking about, you idiot? What housebreakers?"

"The housebreakers who are—or—breaking the house, sir," answered the chauffeur brightly. "That is, sir, the workmen who are pulling the house down. I didn't know that you'd given orders for the Grange to be—or—demolished, sir?"

"Of course I haven't given any such orders, you big goop!" Gumbriel snarled, jumping out of his car and pushing the driver roughly aside. "Have you gone raving mad, or—or—What the blazes is happening here?" he roared in a voice of thunder. "Am I going daft, or am I seeing things? Look, Suggar! Look, man! Is it really happening?"

"I fear that it is, sir," answered the chauffeur quietly. "If you remember, I called your attention to the fact a few seconds ago, but you—"

"Oh, shut up, confound you!" snorted Amos, shaking his big fists above his head, and jumping up and down. "Hi! What are you scoundrels doing up there?" he yelled, addressing his question to a score of men who were busily

engaged in wrenching tiles off the roof of the Grange.

"Looking for the 'idden treasure, sir!" shouted a dock labourer, who was in the act of removing one of the chimney-pots. "What's more, me and my mates mean to find it! Not 'arf!"

"Treasure! Treasure!" roared Amos. "There's no treasure in my house, you scoundrels!"

"You'd better tell that yarn to the others, guv'nor!" shouted the dock labourer.

"What others, you scoundrel?"

"Why, the crowd wot's inside the 'ouse!" came the answer. "There's fousands and fousands of 'em, guv'nor! And they ain't 'arf made a mess o' things. I can tell yer!"

In front of the house, Gumbriel observed that Pete was busily digging, like the rest. Near him were members of the Seahaven Rovers' team, and it was plain that they must have come straight from Stanbridge after the game in order to be present in the treasure-hunt. As a matter of fact, Pete wanted to be on hand to see what Gumbriel thought of the way things were turning out.

Gumbriel leaped forward. Pete had dug deep into the gravel of the drive, and he was still digging industriously.

"What is the meaning of this?" bellowed the mayor. "What—"

He gasped as he took the contents of Pete's shovel full in the face, and that effectively gagged him.

"Dis is my claim!" Pete informed him. "Keep away! Hab you got some dirt in your eye, Gumbriel?"

The mayor did not answer. He looked like a homicidal maniac as he ripped out a wild hoot and tore up the broad stone steps that led to the main entrance of the mansion, and certain it is that there was murder in his heart as he hurled his massive bulk against the door and stumbled into the spacious, oak-panelled hall.

And then he stood and gasped.

Wreckage, chaos, destruction, and vandalism met his gaze on all sides, and another fierce hoot broke from him when he saw that at least a couple of hundred people were engaged in tearing up his valuable oak flooring with picks, chisels, and any other tools that would answer the purpose. Pictures had been taken from the walls, and the walls themselves had been scarred and mutilated, whilst padded chairs and sofas had been ruthlessly ripped open and deprived of their stuffing. Such was the state of indescribable chaos that it looked as though a particularly bad-tempered earthquake had passed that way, and Gumbriel's little eyes were protruding from their sockets as he gazed round at his treasure-hunters' handiwork.

"We 'ain't 'ad any luck so far, guv'nor!" announced a bright-looking youngster, as he hacked away at the flooring with a pick-axe. "But the five 'undred quid must be 'ere somewhere, 'cause the clues lead to the Grange!"

"The—the what little rat?" snarled Amos, grabbing the youth by the neck and shaking him until he rattled like a bag of nails. "Say that again, you young hound!"

"Leggo!" shouted the treasure-seeker, wriggling out of Gumbriel's grip. "Ere, 'ave a look at this bill if you don't believe me! Don't them clues lead to this 'ouse?" he

(Continued on page 410.)

FAMOUS FOOTBALLERS WHO READ THE "REALM."



This photograph shows Fred Moore, Bancroft, and Charlie Moore, of Bradford City. Fred and Charlie are brothers, and the REALM is an old favourite with them.

sorts of damage. Of course, I hope it isn't true, but as mayor of the town I consider it my duty to investigate the matter. Such a thing is scandalous, an outrage, and I shall leave no stone unturned in an effort to bring the culprits to book!"

Charlie Tibbles blinked slowly and rubbed his lean chin.

"I'm sure that's most kind of you, sir," he said, appearing to be deeply touched by the mayor's concern in the matter; "and I know that Mr. Pete will be the first to thank you from the bottom of his heart!"

The words made Gumbriel's heart thump against his ribs; there was an exultant light in his little eyes as he ran on:

"My informant tells me that the mob dug up every inch of the pitch and did other wilful damage. Indeed, he says that the ground is in

A RED-HOT
SPORT!

That's Ginger Terry—he's real grit all the way through. He's up against a bunch of rotters, but our red-haired lad will take a lot of licking!

GINGER—FOR PLUCK!

BY
**ROBERT
MURRAY.**

A smashing, true-to-life story of fun and football. If you haven't met Ginger Terry yet, get to know him now!



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.

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

One night a fire breaks out at Raggs' Rents and Ginger attempts to rescue Sally Norris and her crippled brother by walking along a narrow ledge.

(Now read on.)

After the Fire!

AT times the stone ledge seemed as though it was about to crumble beneath the combined weight of Ginger Terry and his two companions. Once his heart leaped into his mouth as a piece did give way, and he had never experienced such a moment of overwhelming relief as when he found himself facing the open window of a tenement that was beyond the zone of the fiercely raging fire.

Still retaining his tenacious hold on Sally Norris' hand, he clambered over the sill into the room beyond, and a moment later had drawn the girl to safety beside him.

For several minutes they stood there, overcome by the natural reaction of their narrow escape; then Sally suddenly craned up and printed a grateful kiss on Ginger Terry's cheek.

"You saved our lives!" she whispered. "I shall never be able to thank you enough. You—you always seem to be doing something for Johnny and I."

It was the cripple boy's voice that broke the silence that followed.

"I say, can I open my eyes now?" he asked plaintively, and uttered a cry of surprise and relief as Ginger gave his consent.

The tenement they had entered was temporarily unoccupied, and still carrying Johnny on his back, Ginger made his way down the stairs with Sally close on his heels.

Almost as soon as they appeared in the courtyard there was a wild shout of delight, and Sid Yates and Huggins came rushing towards them through the haze of smoke.

"By gosh, Ginger, we were wondering what had become of you," gulped the Ramblers' captain. "I've been searching all over the place. Mrs. Boyd said that you'd lowered her and her husband out of the window, and then suddenly disappeared."

"He turned back to save us," informed Sally Norris, much to Ginger's discomfiture. "We were cut off by the flames, and if it hadn't been for Ginger, both Johnny and I would have been burned to death."

"Hurrah! That's just the sort of thing Ginger would do," applauded Huggins. "Ginger for pluck, eh? My hat! What a dickens of a time the fire brigade is coming!"

Ginger Terry gazed around and suddenly realised that the block of tenements was afire in two separate and distinct places, and both on the ground floor. Sergeant Boom had taken it upon himself to form a volunteer fire brigade. There was a pump in the centre of the courtyard, and he had commanded all

the pails and buckets he could find; as fast as these were filled they were passed along a line of men, emptied on to the flames, and passed back again.

"Here they come! Here come the fire-engines!"

With a fierce clanging of bells an escape and an engine came tearing down the street, and drew up outside Raggs' Rents. The entrance was not wide enough for either of them to enter the courtyard, and half a dozen firemen, their brass helmets and buttons gleaming like gold, came dashing on the scene, dragging a length of hose between them.

The crowd scattered to right and left as a second hose followed the first, and in a few minutes two powerful jets of water were playing upon the two separate conflagrations.

"Second call we've had to-night; we were out when your alarm came through," explained the captain of the brigade. "It's fortunate you fellows set to work with the buckets of water and kept the flames in check. This old place would have burned like a torch once it was properly alight. How did the fire start?"

"Dunno at all, captain," replied Sergeant Boom, removing his tin-hat and mopping his bald head. "It strikes me that it's a rum thing it should have broken out in two separate places on opposite sides of the courtyard."

"And both fires seem to have started in the entrance hall on the ground floor," added Huggins.

"I have already noticed that," said the captain of the fire brigade meaningly. "Everyone is out of the tenements concerned, I take it? There is no one missing?"

The query was passed from lip to lip, and it was soon ascertained that every single occupant of Raggs' Rents was present—all safe and sound—with the exception of one.

"William Boyd—where's William Boyd?" demanded Sergeant Boom in a voice of thunder. "Anyone seen William Boyd?"

"Don't you worry about my 'usband," retorted Mrs. Boyd, stepping forward with an aggrieved look on her face, and the battered remains of a parrot-cage in one hand. "Look what the clumsy varmint's done! Smashed this cage, and let my Polly escape. I've warned 'im not to dare show his face near here again until he finds the bird and brings it back!"

A ripple of laughter greeted this statement. It was well known that William Boyd was a most henpecked man, and Ginger Terry could not help chuckling at the thought of the little man tramping all over Steelvale, searching for his wife's missing parrot.

Once on the scene, the fire brigade made short work of the outbreaks. In less than twenty minutes, the last spark had been extinguished, and the people commenced to trickle back to their respective homes.

The several families whose rooms had been rendered untenable were willingly offered accommodation with kindly neighbours, and it was Nobby Bowker's aunt who took Sally Norris and her crippled brother under her wing.

"You can stay as long as you like," she declared. "I've plenty of room now I've got rid of that rascally, good-for-nothing nephew of mine!"

Ginger Terry's case was definitely decided by Sergeant Boom.

"You're going to stay with me, my lad," he commanded, rather than suggested. "There's a spare room in

my place, and if you don't take it I'll clap you in the guard-room for insubordination! Besides, I want somebody to light the fire, and boil the kettle in the morning!"

"I dunno about boiling the kettle," grinned Ginger, "but I'm willing to have a shot at boiling the water in it if that's what you mean."

The young footballer found the bag containing his clothes and other belongings just where he had thrown it out of the window on to the football ground. He picked it up, and was just about to make his way back to the porter's lodge, when he was startled by the sound of a human voice that seemed to come from somewhere overhead.

"Pretty Polly! Come along, pretty Polly! Scratch-a-poll! Drat ye, ye brute! I'll pluck you as bare as a billiard-ball if I get my 'ands on you! Come 'ere, bust you!"

It was all that Ginger could do to stifle his laughter as he glanced in the direction of the voice. Perched high above him, on top of the wooden hoarding that bounded three sides of the football ground, was the diminutive figure of Mr. William Boyd, clearly silhouetted against the sky. A couple of yards in front of him was perched the missing parrot, with its head cocked quizzically on one side.

"Pretty Polly—come along, Polly," said Mr. Boyd in a wheedling voice, then made a sudden clutch at the parrot, which promptly rose in the air, and settled on an adjacent telegraph-wire. Mr. Boyd swayed precariously for a moment, then, losing his balance, disappeared on the other side of the hoarding, landing on the roof of a chicken-house belonging to a next-door neighbour.

There was a crash, a tremendous squawking, screeching and fluttering, and then a volley of fiery language that caused Ginger Terry to retire as speedily as he could.

"Thunder and lightning! Blazes and brimstone, who's that out there?" suddenly roared the irate voice of the owner of the fowl-house. "Who's that disturbing my fowls?"

"It's all right," replied the plaintive voice of William Boyd. "It's only me—Boyd, from the Rents."

"Oh, it's you, is it? And what the suffering centipedes are you doing in my fowl-house at this time o' night?"

"I'm looking for my wife's parrot," replied Mr. Boyd apologetically.

"What!" thundered the voice of the indignant poultry-keeper. "You must be crazy! Don't you know the difference between a chicken and a parrot?"

Terry did not wait to hear any more. Already his sides were aching with laughter as he hurried back to rejoin Sergeant Boom, and to resume his interrupted night's sleep.

He felt sorry for Mr. Boyd as he slipped into the bed Sergeant Boom had prepared for him. It was very unlikely that he would get much rest that night!

More Trouble!

AT about the same time as Ginger Terry was dropping off to sleep, in an entirely different part of the town Mr. Henry Crocker was suddenly aroused from his noisy slumbers by the jarring ringing of the telephone that stood on a table beside his bed. "Hallo!" he growled, as, rubbing his eyes, he took the receiver from

its hook. "What infernal idiot is ringing me up at this time of night?"

"Is that Mr. Henry Crocker?" queried a vaguely familiar voice.

"It is! Who the dickens are you, and what do you want?"

"I want to give you a piece of news, Mr. Crocker. You will be interested to hear that Raggs' Rents was destroyed by fire to-night."

"What?" Henry Crocker's jaw sagged bewilderedly, and then a glint of excitement leaped into his dull eyes as he recollected the conversation he had had with Lem Rawson and Jake Coon the previous evening.

"Is that you, Rawson?" he queried huskily. "You're fooling me, man!"

"Well, ring up the fire-station if you don't believe me," replied the rascally rent-collector aggrievedly. "I tell you Raggs' Rents was blazing away like a torch to-night."

Crocker sucked in his cheeks ecstatically. He had been late in going to bed that night, and he remembered now that he had heard the faint clang of fire-bells as the engines had sped through the town, though he had not paid much attention at the time.

"Shall I call for that five hundred in the morning?" asked Lem Rawson greedily. "Jake Coon is anxious to handle his share of the—er—wager."

"No, you needn't call in the morning!" retorted Henry Crocker promptly. "Do you take me for a sucker? I'm not paying you a penny until I've been along to Raggs' Rents, and seen with my own eyes whether you are telling the truth or not!"

And, with a growl of disappointment ringing in his ears, Henry Crocker slammed back the receiver, then settled himself for sleep again.

He hoped that he had not been misinformed. If Lem Rawson had been speaking the truth he was quite willing to present him with five hundred pounds. If Raggs' Rents had been destroyed by fire, he knew that he would have no further difficulty in purchasing the freehold, and thus staving off the ruin that threatened him.

Despite what he had said overnight, Sergeant Boom was up first the following morning, and it was the thump, thump! of his wooden peg as he moved about the lodge that first roused Ginger.

He was soon out of bed, and, after washing and dressing, joined Sergeant Boom, to find that a cheery fire was burning, the kettle was singing on the hob, and the old sergeant was juggling dexterously

with a frying-pan and some gammon rashers of bacon.

"It's a busy day I'll be having to-day, I'm thinking," grunted the old soldier, as he cracked an egg on the point of his steel hook and flopped it into the pan. "There'll be the salvage corps along here, the insurance assessors, a hundred-and-one gaping idiots, and the landlord as well, perhaps."

There were plenty of people already gathered in the courtyard by the time Ginger had finished his breakfast, for he was not the only one who was curious to ascertain exactly what damage had been done by the fire.

The salvage corps had been there for some time, raking over the charred, water-sodden wreckage. Later, the chief of the fire brigade himself put in an appearance, and entered into a consultation with his subordinates.

The two tenements on the ground floor had been completely burned out, and the staircases were nothing but a heap of scorched and blackened woodwork.

Ginger noticed with a shudder that the floor of the room from which he had aided Sally Norris and her crippled brother to escape, had collapsed just about where they had been standing. It could not have happened many minutes after they had taken their departure and braved the perilous journey along the narrow ledge!

Also, he noted, ruefully, that a great deal of the repairs that the workmen had been engaged upon during the past week would have to be done all over again.

"I suppose the place is insured against fire?" mused Terry gloomily. "I shall have to see Mr. Catchpole and ask him all about it. My gosh, it's mighty lucky the whole Rents wasn't burnt down."

He wandered across to where the chief of the fire-brigade and several of the salvage men were standing talking together. Their faces were grave, and the chief was tugging thoughtfully at his moustache.

"I thought as much from what I saw last night," he said. "It strikes me it's up to the police to carry on where we leave off!"

Terry started and stared wonderingly at the man. At the same instant a car drew up outside the Rents; two businesslike-looking men, wearing dark overcoats and bowler hats, alighted and came strutting into the courtyard.

"Morning, Captain Dallow!" greeted one. "You know me? I'm Bradley, the chief assessor of the Salamander Insurance Company."

(Continued on next page.)



FUN AMONG THE FOWLS! There was a tremendous crash as the man fell headlong on to the top of the chicken run. There followed a terrific squawking and fluttering—fowls flapped out in all directions! Ginger stood looking over the fence, shaking with laughter.

These premises are insured with us, and I've just heard there was a fire here last night. Is there much damage done? How did it happen?"

Ginger drew a trifle nearer as Captain Dallow commenced to reply.

"I don't think it'll make much difference to your company how much damage has been done, Mr. Bradley!" said the chief meaningly. "My men are quite satisfied that these premises were deliberately set on fire last night. The fire broke out in two separate places at once. It was not accident, but arson, and I shall have to put the matter in the hands of the police!"

Ginger Terry's cheeks paled, and a low gasp of dismay and consternation escaped his lips. Somehow he sensed that this staggering, incredible news meant further trouble for Raggs' Rents—and himself!

Crocker's Cunning.

GINGER was not the only person who happened to overhear the sensational statement made by Captain Dallow to the two insurance men.

"Yes, gentlemen, this is a case for the police!" Dallow repeated emphatically. "There was nothing of an accident about the fire. It was caused deliberately. It was started simultaneously in two places, amongst some pots of varnish and other inflammable materials that the builder's workmen had tucked away under the stairs when they knocked off last evening."

"Great Scott! What's that he's saying?" exclaimed Sid Yates, in an awed voice. "That the place was deliberately set afire? I don't believe it! As Huggins was saying, no one but a lunatic would think of committing such a foul crime."

Terry shook his head bewilderedly. He, too, could scarcely credit that anyone save a cold-blooded scoundrel or a mental deficient would dream of setting alight to the Rents, knowing that he would be endangering the lives of the scores of women and children who lived there.

Not even Sloan would think of committing such a vile action. His enmity did not extend any further than Terry and his chums of the Ramblers.

"Arson—eh?" growled Sergeant Boom, with a grave shake of his head. "Bust my buttons! I'd like to get my hook into the dirty spalpeen who'd do a thing like that! I thought there was something fishy about them two fires occurring in different parts of the buildings."

Bradley, the representative of the Salamander Insurance Company—who evidently had issued a policy for insurance against fire in respect to Raggs' Rents—tapped a pencil against his teeth and glanced sharply at his companion.

"Of course, if it can be proved that the fire was caused deliberately, my company will refuse to accept any liability," he said, in business-like tones. "Not that the place is insured for any great amount. You have good grounds for your assumption, captain?"

"Good enough to satisfy the police, I fancy," replied Dallow.

No one had noticed the arrival of another person who had come striding into the Rents, and who was now pushing his way through the crowd of sightseers.

It was Henry Crocker. There was a venomous look of chagrin and mortification on his red face as he stood swinging his umbrella and chewing savagely on the butt of his cigar.

He had been a bitterly disappointed man when he had arrived at Raggs' Rents to find that, though there obviously had been a fire, it had not been of such a nature to cause any serious damage.

"Curse that lying dog Rawson! He told me the whole building had been destroyed!" he muttered under his breath. "A fine chance he has of getting five hundred pounds out of me, let alone five hundred pounds! He and Jake Coon certainly seemed to have tried to earn the money, but they bungled the job. That's not my look-out. I pay on results!"

Crocker's eyes narrowed viciously as he suddenly caught sight of Ginger standing in the midst of the crowd in company with Sergeant Boom and his chums of the Ramblers' team, and he drew nearer in order to hear what the chief of the fire brigade was saying.

"Think of that now!" one woman whispered to another. "E do say as the fire weren't no accident, but was caused a-purpose. Arsenic, 'e calls it, though I don't see wot that's got to do with it, and 'e's going to call in the police."



THE GAME'S UP!

"That fellow—there!" roared the enraged Crocker, as he pointed with his umbrella. "He's the one I mean—Ginger Tyrill! He's the landlord of these tenements!" Terry paled as the man glared at him; he knew that the game was up now.

"Humph! Rawson does seem to have made a mess of things," thought Crocker uneasily. "If the police get on his trail and rope him in, he'd be the first one to crumple up and try and make out that I'd bribed him to set fire to the Rents. Not that he has an atom of proof, though it wouldn't do me any good to have my name drawn into it."

"Whoever's responsible for such a dastardly crime deserves to get twenty years' penal servitude," Captain Dallow was saying.

"The point is," said Bradley, the insurance assessor, "why should anyone seek to destroy this property by fire? Who would have a motive for doing such a thing?"

Captain Dallow shrugged his shoulders and shook his head. But Henry Crocker, struck with a sudden idea that had flashed into his cunning brain, jammed his hat farther down on his head, and barged his way unceremoniously to the front of the crowd.

"You know who I am. Perhaps I may be allowed to make a suggestion?" he said loudly. "Do I understand you to say that some scoundrel deliberately started a fire on these premises last night?"

Ginger Terry swung round sharply at the sound of Crocker's familiar voice, and a wave of dismay and uneasiness swept over him as he stared at the man who was one of the few who knew that he was the landlord of Raggs' Rents.

What was the man doing here? What was the meaning of the cunning smirk of triumph and satisfaction that disfigured his wide face as he confronted the captain of the fire brigade?

"Good-morning, Mr. Crocker!" greeted Captain Dallow politely. "Yes, there was a fire here last night, and the salvage men are convinced that it was a deliberate case of arson. Mr. Bradley was just speculating as to who could possibly have any motive for setting the Rents ablaze."

Henry Crocker leaned heavily on his umbrella, and cocked his head knowingly on one side.

"Perhaps I could tell you," he said suggestively. "It is pretty well known that this property is practically valueless. It ought to have been pulled down years ago, and it is in such a state of disrepair that the council are doing everything in their power to get it condemned. Half the tenants don't pay any rent—not that I blame them for that—and the revenue from the Rents must be next to nothing."

"You mind your own business!" growled someone in the crowd. "You'd like to buy the Rents, wouldn't you?"

Henry Crocker tactfully ignored this interruption.

"As I have said, this property is practically valueless," he went on. "But it is insured against fire."

"Not for any great sum," interrupted Bradley, the insurance man. "We charge too high a premium on old structures like this."

"I don't blame you," smirked Crocker. "I wouldn't insure the place at a hundred per cent. Under the circumstances, it seems to me that there is only one person who would have any motive for desiring to see the Rents razed to the ground."

"And who is that?" queried Captain Dallow.

"The owner, of course. The individual to whom this disgraceful, dilapidated, squalid slum belongs," replied Henry Crocker meaningly.

Ginger drew a deep breath of dismay, and he could feel the blood ebbing from his cheeks.

He knew what was coming next, and he suppressed a wild longing to creep away through the crowd and take to his heels.

Ginger's Secret Revealed.

PEOPLE stared bewilderedly at one another, and Captain Dallow tugged thoughtfully at his moustache. It was easy to see that Henry Crocker had put forward a point of view that had not occurred to him before.

"You are making a very serious allegation, Mr. Crocker," he said at length.

"I am making no allegation at all," corrected Crocker. "I am merely pointing out that there is only one individual who could have any motive for being gratified to see the Rents destroyed by fire, and that is the owner."

Ginger Terry's heart seemed to leap up into his mouth as Captain Dallow put his next question.

"And who is the owner? What is his position?" he asked, turning towards Bradley.

"The insurance policy is issued in the name of Mr. Solomon Catchpole, the lawyer, of High Street, Steel-vale," he informed. "He has paid the premiums for years past."

"I am not referring to Catchpole," declared Crocker, raising his voice. "He is not the legal owner of this property. He is only the trustee."

"That's quite possible," agreed Bradley. "And, if so, I haven't the vaguest idea who the real owner is. Perhaps you can inform us, Mr. Crocker?"

"I can," replied the football director, a gloating note of triumph creeping into his voice. He turned slowly on his heel and pointed his umbrella straight at Ginger. "There, that fellow, Ginger Tyrill! He's the new owner of this property!"

It was the most disconcerting moment of Ginger Terry's young life. He could feel himself going red and white by turns. Hundreds of thousands of wondering eyes seemed to be fixed upon him, and he heartily wished that the ground would open and swallow him up.

But the dumbfounded occupants of the tenements did not believe that Crocker was speaking the truth, and a derisive laugh greeted his amazing statement.

"He's potty—don't know wot he's talking about!"

"Trying to pull our legs. Why didn't he pick out Sergeant Boom while he was about it?"

"Surely you can't mean that that mere boy there is the owner of Raggs' Rents?" exclaimed Captain Dallow incredulously.

"That's what I said, and that's what I mean!" bellowed Crocker, with another flourish of his umbrella. "Ask him for yourself if you don't believe me. Challenge him to his face! He won't dare deny it!"

"Suffering snakes, it ain't true is it, Ginger?" gasped Sid Yates, in an awed voice.

Ginger was saved the necessity of replying.

"Yes, it is perfectly true," said a quiet voice. "Terry Tyrill is the

rightful owner of Raggs' Rents, subject to my trusteeship!"

And old Solomon Catchpole slid his way through the crowd. Planting himself by Terry's side, he laid an encouraging hand on the lad's shoulder.

Had a waterspout suddenly appeared in the centre of the courtyard, it could not have created a greater sensation. People stared blankly at one another, and gasps of amazement and bewilderment burst from every lip.

Terry sensed a change in the atmosphere at once. Glances of growing suspicion were directed at him by those who had previously treated him as one of themselves, while Sid Yates and his companions edged away, shaking their heads, and whispering excitedly to one another.

"Well, Crocker, and what else have you to say?" suddenly asked Solomon Catchpole in a clear, cold voice. "Are you prepared to substantiate the statement you have just made? You know that there is such a thing as a law of libel. You have as good as accused my client of having deliberately set fire to his own property for the purpose of collecting the insurance money."

Henry Crocker glared, then gulped uneasily.

"I did nothing of the kind," he hastened to deny. "I merely pointed out that there was no one else who could have any motive for wishing to see the Rents destroyed. And, taking it all round, Tyrill's behaviour has been mighty suspicious to my way of thinking. Why didn't he want anyone to know that he was the new owner of the Rents? Why did he come sneaking along here and take lodgings, and worm his way in, and make out that he was just a mere penniless nobody?"

A faint murmur of agreement greeted these words, and there was now no friendliness in the glances that were thrown at Ginger.

"Possibly Tyrill had his reasons for acting in the manner he has done," retorted the old solicitor.

"No doubt!" sneered Crocker recklessly. "If he was living on the premises under the circumstances I have mentioned, he would find it much easier to set fire to the place if he wanted to, and no one would dream of suspecting him!"

The tenants of the Rents stared aghast at one another. Crocker's plausible, poisonous insinuations had fallen on fallow ground, and had put all sorts of ideas into the heads of the people.

"Sounds fishy, don't it?"

"Why should the blessed landlord come and live 'ere?"

"Don't sound right to me! P'r'aps he did set fire to the place!"

"The fire broke out just under the place where he was lodging, and he was one of the first to save his own skin!"

"Wouldn't 'ave believed it of 'im! He certainly don't seem to 'ave acted straight towards us, coming 'ere like a blessed spy and making pals with everyone!"

These remarks spread from corner to corner of the courtyard, and Ginger Terry drew a deep gasp of dismay as he realised the invidious position he had been placed in. He glanced appealingly at Sid Yates, but the latter dropped his eyes and shuffled his feet uneasily. Then Ginger turned to Sergeant Boom.

"Sergeant, you don't believe this of me, do you?" he appealed huskily.

The old soldier drew himself up to attention, and brought his hand smartly to the salute.

(Continued on next page.)

CROSS WORDS OFTEN LEAD TO PUNCHES!

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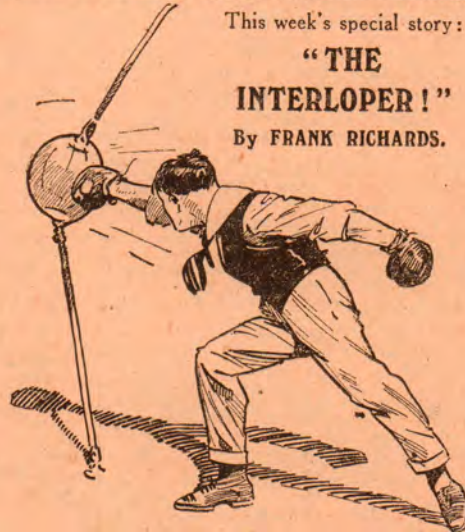
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GINGER-FOR PLUCK!



(Continued from previous page.)

"No, sir!" he roared promptly. "Proud to be in your employ, Mr. Tyrill. Anyone who says a word against you'll get a taste of this hook of mine!"

Ginger swallowed a big lump that rose in his throat, and glanced gratefully at Sergeant Boom. Then there was a sudden swift patter of foot-steps, and the slender figure of a girl with a tangled mop of golden hair came rushing through the crowd and ranged herself by Ginger's side. It was Sally Norris, her lips tightly compressed, her blue eyes blazing with indignation.

"How dare anyone say anything against Ginger Terry Tyrill!" she challenged, stamping one tiny foot and directing a scornful look at Henry Crocker. "He is one of the bravest boys who ever lived. If it hadn't been for him my brother and I would have been burned to death last night. He risked his life to save ours, and someone has dared to suggest that he set the Rents on fire himself, and was the first to leave the place. No one but a beastly coward would dare to say such a thing!"

Henry Crocker started back before the girl's vehement outburst, and pursed his thick lips in an ugly sneer.

"I'm making no direct accusation against anyone!" he snapped. "All I want to know is why has young Tyrill been at such pains to conceal the fact that he is the real owner of Raggs' Rents? And why did he come and take a room here and chum up with everybody, and pretend that he was no better off than

anyone else living in the tenements? Probably he didn't want these poor folks to know that he was drawing a nice little income from the rent that his agent screwed out of them every week."

Again a low murmur ran round the courtyard, and people shrugged their shoulders and stared doubtfully at one another. It was old Solomon Catchpole who stepped into the breach again.

"There is not a word of truth in your suggestion, Crocker," he denied. "Tyrill had his own reasons for coming to live in the Rents, and they are no concern of yours. He has acted in a most generous and unselfish manner. His one desire has been to benefit his tenants. Rather than sell the place to you—as he could have done and netted himself a large sum of money—he instructed me to utilise every penny he possessed for the purpose of putting the Rents in a proper state of repair, and saving them from being condemned by the local authorities."

"Bah! He's only holding out, thinking that I'll offer him a higher price for this disgusting slum!" snarled Crocker spitefully.

Terry took a quick step forward as he realised that he had scarcely spoken a word in his own defence.

"You'll never be able to purchase Raggs' Rents so long as I've a say in the matter, Crocker," he said grimly. "You're the last man in the world I'd sell the tenements to; no, not for forty times the price you've offered me. I'd rather live on a few pounds a week for the rest of my life than see people turned out of their homes in order to enable you to keep your contract with the council!"

Sally Norris stared admiringly at the young footballer, while Sergeant Boom nodded his grizzled head approvingly, and combed his bristling moustache with his steel hook.

Henry Crocker glowered sourly at Ginger for several moments. Once

again his hopes had been dashed to the ground. Besides finding that the damage to Raggs' Rents was purely superficial, he had not been over successful in his attempt to throw suspicion on Ginger Terry.

"Well, don't forget what I have said, Dallow," he said, turning towards the chief of the fire brigade. "You have satisfied yourself that these premises were deliberately set on fire, and it is your duty to place the affair in the hands of the police."

"I think you can depend upon me to do my duty," replied Captain Dallow, a trifle coldly. "Of course, the matter will be reported to the police, and they will know what steps to take."

Captain Dallow and the salvage men went striding away out of the courtyard, and once again Ginger was the cynosure of all eyes as he and old Solomon Catchpole joined Bradley, the representative of the Salamander Insurance Company.

"Well, Mr. Catchpole, I suppose you realise that my company will have to contest any claim for damages that you may put forward?" the latter said meaningly. "If this is a case of arson, it will have to be thoroughly investigated."

"Naturally; but that does not affect your company's liability," replied the old lawyer. "Your claim lies against the dastardly scoundrel or scoundrels who attempted to set fire to the Rents."

Bradley shrugged his shoulders again, and there was suspicion in the glance he directed at Ginger Terry. It was easy to see that he had been influenced by the sly insinuations Henry Crocker had made, and was half inclined to agree that the new landlord of Raggs' Rents might have been concerned in the previous night's occurrence.

Terry bit his lip, and tears of anger and indignation crept into his eyes. He sensed that he was under a

(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.

A Steady Rise.

ST. PAUL'S LADS' CLUB (Barking). They started by holding their meetings in a fowl-house—but there was no fowl play, for the chickens were turned out while the palaver was on. Then the father of a member fixed the club up in his own house. After that a clergyman found them a large club-room—and all goes very well now. The first season they won 17 matches out of 24. (Football Game.)

Happy Old Hildaine!

HILDAINE A.C. (Crofton Park). This club was formed from members of the choir of St. Hilda's, Crofton Park, and they have never sung small. In their first match Myrtle whopped them to the tune of 8-1, but their good luck was in evidence later on, when wins began to accumulate. In one match wherein they were victors by 7-3, Hildaine's dashing centre-forward, H. Fuller, scored five goals. (PRIZE FOOTBALL.)

Reading Reads the "Realm."

WEST END UNITED F.C. (Reading). The REALM is much read in this club, which is a unit of the Reading Section. It was a hard struggle to get a team together, and equip it, but a two shilling sub. worked the oracle and supplied football jerseys. Though beaten 11-1 in its first match, they have picked up a triumph or two since. (Football Game.)

Pegging Away.

ST. BOTOLPH'S SCHOOL F.C. (Lincoln) cannot boast a startling record; they have won 7, lost 7, and drawn 2. But when they do go down, they do so with their colours flying! (Football Game.)

Lucky Leith!

HOLBROOK'S ATHLETIC (Leith) knows all about the stuff to give 'em. They pay a penny per week subscription and they manage to keep going, though they pay four shillings for a park, five shillings for a ref., and three shillings for a small hall for committee meetings. Anyhow, Holbrook's mean business. (Football Game.)

Two Players Short.

STRANDTOWN F.C. (Belfast). Although one critic said, "You haven't a good team, and you can't play for butter!" Strandtown has nothing to be ashamed about. They turn out in blue jerseys and white knickers—which are home-made!—and many a club has discovered that these Belfast boys can get goals, even if their knickers are a bit baggy! (Football Game.)

Filling the Bill.

CENTRAL UNITED (Collyhurst) have

lost only two games in fourteen encounters and have scored over 50 goals against bigger and older opponents. Their centre-forward, John Moran, has succeeded where others have failed; he keeps the game open—close, cramped play which tends to become dull has no appeal to him. The club has an excellent forward line. (PRIZE FOOTBALL.)

A "Friendly" Team.

HOLLY LODGE F.C. (Smethwick). This club is in its third season and has an average age of 17½. Its members used to watch the doings of a big professional team, but came to the sage conclusion that it was better to play than look on. They therefore pooled their shilling entrance fees to form a club. They are styled locally "Smethwick's leading amateurs," and the local paper takes due note of their engagements. The best tribute lies in the circumstance that senior clubs are on the prowl to capture some of the Holly Lodgers. (Football Game.)

Topping.

NORTH END F.C. (Gainsborough) stands top of its League table, and its finest achievement was a victory of 22 goals to nil. In their first six matches they hadn't a goal notched against them. (Football Game.)

Splendid Fellows.

WINGFIELD F.C. (Headington) is a team started by Wingfield Hospital, and it has done uncommonly well, though at first they had no colours and suffered many other handicaps. They have played plenty of teams in the district, and have done well, all things considered. They have had about a 100 goals scored against them and have themselves notched 70—and that with a cripple in goal! Bravo,

Wingfield! Take a Football Game this week.

Pack Up, or Go On!

STRATTON VILLA F.C. (Swindon). This team suffered defeat in its initial game by 20-0, but despite some advice to pack up they did nothing of the kind. They fought on and luck began to come their way. They now hold third place in the Swindon Borough League. Moreover, they have organised successfully four annual "six-a-side" tournaments and have won two themselves. This is the most popular junior tournament in North Wilts. Stratton Villa has never cancelled a League match through inability to raise a team. (PRIZE FOOTBALL.)

Cork Draws One.

CORK CITY JUNIORS (Cork). This club got going the third day of March last year, and six months later they entered the Minor League. After shocking bad luck during their first season, they have now turned the tables. So far they have only been beaten once. Their best win was when they pulled off the victory against Greenmount, 11-0. (Football Game.)

Little But Good.

SUMMERVILLE A.F.C. (Dublin) have the honour of being the smallest team in size in the League. They have so little avoirdupois to carry round that they get there most times with a vengeance. They play the game in true sporting fashion, and they have lost only one match so far. (Football Game.)

Gingered Up.

CERTH A.F.C. (Blackpool) joined the Blackpool and District League (Wednesday Afternoon Section) and did not win a match until quite recently, when they defeated the Imperial Hydro F.C. on the Hydro's ground, 5-3. The lads had been getting downhearted, but this victory tuned them up to concert pitch again; their present mood bodes ill for their next opponents, St. Anne's Taxi-Drivers! (Football Game.)

All That Was Left of 'Em.

YOUNG DEFENDERS F.C. (Belfast). When they started first there were about sixteen players, but eleven faded out as times were rather bad just then. However, the rest kept together, they paid their subs., bought a ball—and collected six more players. Dummurly beat them 12-1, but after finding a new back the Y.D.'s pulled off a victory 4-2. Defenders have got a dartboard in their club-room; now they will have a Football Game to keep it company,

CRICKET PARS!

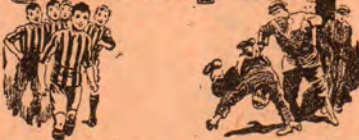
Next week the awards for "Prize Footballs" will be changed to one prize of 10s., while Football Games will continue to be awarded as at present. At the end of May, "PRIZE BATS AND BALLS" will take the place of this feature. Paragraphs concerning cricket clubs are now invited. Entries should be addressed to "Prize Bats and Balls," Gough House, Gough Square, London, E.C. 4.



GO BOYS OWN "GRAND NATIONAL"



GINGER - FOR PLUCK!



(Continued from previous page.)

cloud of suspicion, not only so far as the insurance agent was concerned, but a suspicion which extended to the majority of the people who dwelt in the tenements.

He was not sorry when Bradley had taken his departure, after which he and Solomon Catchpole walked towards the exits from the Rents.

"This is a most extraordinary happening, Tyrill," said the old lawyer gravely. "There is not the slightest doubt that the tenements were deliberately set on fire. Have you any idea who could be responsible for such a dastardly action?"

Terry hesitated, and shook his head slowly. He couldn't bring himself to believe that Sloan and his Doolan Street gang would dare to go to such lengths. And he couldn't think of anyone else who owed him a grudge, saving, of course, Henry Crocker.

"No, I can't possibly suspect Crocker," thought the lad to himself. "He's a bit of a cad and a bully, but I can't imagine him taking the risk of committing arson!"

"Let's hope the police will be able to discover the identity of the miscreant," remarked Catchpole, as he shook hands with the young footballer. "Things might have been a great deal worse, my lad. If the flames had got a proper hold the Rents would have been razed to the ground. It is a very old property, and it is a great pity that you haven't sufficient capital to entirely rebuild the tenements."

Ginger glanced queerly at the old lawyer.

"Are you suggesting now that perhaps it would be better for all concerned if I were to sell the pro-

perty to Henry Crocker?" he asked bluntly.

"I don't know what to suggest," replied Catchpole, with a vague shake of his head. "It would mean that dozens of families would be rendered homeless; but that might have occurred last night. On the other hand, if the Salamander Insurance Company intend to contest our claim they will probably win the day, and we will be unable to insure these premises again in future. It's a very awkward position to be in, Tyrill. I shall have to think things over before I give you any definite advice."

Ginger Explains!

GINGER stood for several minutes watching Solomon Catchpole walking briskly away down the street; then, setting his chin firmly and jamming his hands into his pockets, he turned back into the Rents.

His appearance was greeted by an awkward silence. People eyed him evasively from windows and doorways, and the whole atmosphere of the place was strained to breaking-point.

Sid Yates and his chums of the Ramblers' team were clustered outside the porter's lodge; Sergeant Boom stood in their midst, puffing at his pipe and burnishing his steel hook nervously on the sleeve of his coat.

Ginger did not beat about the bush, but came straight to the point at once.

"If you fellows have got anything against me you might just as well tell me what it is," he said bluntly. "I don't see that it should make any difference to our friendship because I happen to be the new owner of the Rents."

"But why did you come and live here, and give us to understand that you were just one of us?" asked Huggins. "It wasn't necessary, was it?"

"Yes, it was necessary!" cried Terry passionately. "And if you'll listen to me for a moment I'll ex-

plain everything. Do you know that it's only a few weeks ago that I was selling programmes on the Steelvale United ground?" said the young footballer, standing up boldly in the midst of the throng that surrounded him. "I wasn't earning more than ten or twelve shillings a week, and I gave practically all of that to my uncle for my keep. I thought he was as poor as I was, and hadn't much more to live on than his old age pension."

"When suddenly he died I didn't think there would be enough money to bury him with, and I never had such a surprise in all my life as when Solomon Catchpole, the lawyer, told me that my uncle was the owner of Raggs' Rents, and that he had willed the whole property to me."

"That was a stroke of luck for you," agreed Huggins. "But it doesn't explain why you came to live at the Rents."

"That was my own idea," replied Terry quietly. "Mr. Catchpole told me that the tenements were in a terrible state of dilapidation, and that for years he had been trying to persuade my uncle to spend what capital he had on the necessary repairs. He suggested the same thing to me, and I determined to see for myself exactly what was wrong with the Rents, and if the tenants were justified in complaining and refusing to pay their rent. That is why I came to live here."

Sergeant Boom nodded his head approvingly.

"You did the right thing there, Mister Terry," he jerked. "By James, it didn't take you long to get busy putting things straight! I reckon it was really you who sacked Jake Coon and gave me his job, and you who made Lem Rawson sing small, and stop bullying the folks who were behind with their rent."

Ginger Terry flushed as he nodded his head.

"I decided to do everything I could for the benefit of the tenants here," he admitted. "I wouldn't touch a penny of my uncle's capital; (Continued in column 4 next page.)

FULL DETAILS OF THE CRICKET LEAGUE COMING SOON!



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.

All arrangements in regard to the BOYS' REALM Cricket League have now been completed, and next week's issue will contain full particulars.

Most football clubs run a cricket team—and those that do not will find in this new formation an incentive to turn to the great summer game when the chrome boots are doffed and the striped shirts are folded and put away.

Special Articles.

In order to assist as much as possible in the forming of a cricket team, it has been arranged that a series of special articles shall commence in the REALM next week.

These articles will tell you how to get a team together, how to raise funds for it, how to keep it going smoothly, how to get your kit, etc. These are practical chats, which, I feel convinced, will be greatly appreciated.

Write Now.

If you don't want to wait until next week for information about the Cricket League, you are at liberty to write now.

The East London Section.

Having pinched a certain amount of space for the new Cricket League, I had better get on with this week's footer notes. First, a few words about the East London Section—formerly the Dalston Section.

These London lads are going great guns, with Foreland United right at the top, although Berger Road, who are second, look like pinching the premier position with a little luck. The latter team have a very fine defence and have conceded less than a dozen goals throughout the season. There isn't much to choose between St. Michael's, Hornets F.C., and Trehurst Wanderers, who come next in the table. Further down we get Lansdowne A.C. and Hackney Calveys—both these teams would be improved if their forwards could only get in a little more practice, and develop an understanding with their halves.

Brownlow United have been consistently unlucky; yet, while they can't score, they don't give much away. This team is either a very light one, or else its forwards lack dash. Maybe this isn't your season, United; we shall hear a lot of you later on, I think.

The East London Section have some real goal-getters, and William Marsh, of Foreland United, still heads the list. That's the style, Billy! A. Hudson is only one goal behind him, then come A. Lang and C. Lovett—all of Berger Road.

Change of Name.

By the way, Hackney Caledonians want to change their name to Weymouth

Argyle. If any other club is thinking of doing this, I should like to take this opportunity of pointing out that names cannot be changed officially until the end of the present season.

Hackney Calveys can change themselves to anything they like so far as I am concerned, but it does make a lot of work in the office here when this sort of thing happens in mid-season. I am letting the Calveys get away with it this time—but other clubs please note.

Stroud.

Good work has been done in the Stroud and District Section. The league table to hand shows Kingscourt Juniors A.F.C. at top, with Chalford Hill Rovers A.F.C. second best. Bedford Street F.C. has to pick up a bit.

I hope to publish a photograph of the leading team in this Section at an early date.

Leigh.

Notes from the Leigh Section show steady progress, though one has heard little of late owing to the hardworking secretary being on the shelf with 'flu. They have decided to have a medal competition among the clubs in the Leigh Section, and this will be run on the knock-out principle.

Govanhill and Springburn Section.

They had atrociously bad weather in Scotland during January and February, which has upset the Section's affairs. But they are now busy picking up fixtures postponed by bad weather.

Mr. Moran tells me that the fixtures for 1927-8 are coming in thick and fast. It looks as though the keen secretary of Govanhill will have to form a second division. The league table shows Albert H.G.F.P. at top.

The Manchester Area.

Mr. J. F. Cordock, of the Manchester Section, has almost more on his hands than he can manage. This difficulty can, however, soon be set right by a system of

delegation. Inquiries from clubs in the Manchester area are continually coming in; the Section now consists of four Divisions, and I don't see how it can accommodate all the newcomers. I have just received a suggestion for a new formation to be called the City and Collyhurst Section, and I have passed it on to Mr. Cordock.

Now, in a vast area like that of Manchester, it may be that a new Section might come in well; personally, I have my doubts as to the advisability of starting anew when you have a splendid organisation like that of the Manchester Section from which to build.

Manchester has, from the first, carried through in grand manner, and as I see matters, there are still bigger developments ahead. Anyhow, this is a matter for Manchester to settle.

Lewisham.

Lewisham's league table shows Glen Athletic well away. Myrtle and Southend have still some work to put in. The Brockley teams now have the Championship Cup on view in their district—as is most fitting, for Brockley plays a big part in the Lewisham Section.

Widnesbury and District.

I have received some highly interesting details of how things are running in this Section, and am delighted to see that all financial difficulties have been swept aside. Everything is very smooth here. They ran a ballot, which produced an estimated profit of £10; while a dance which was well supported brought more grist to the mill. The Widnesbury "hop" was at St. Paul's Institute.

Widnesbury has inter-Section matches in prospect with Willenhall and with Walsall. One of their league team players, namely, Harris, of Springfield Villa, had a trial with Willenhall F.C. in the Birmingham and District League at outside-right; he played a rattling good game.

A newcomer here is Walsall United! Good luck to 'em!

Swansea.

Mr. Alan G. Lee informs me that all is well down at Swansea, where new clubs are registering for the 1927-8 season. This Section has a big season ahead of it, without a doubt.

Doubling Dublin.

From the latest news to hand from the city on the Liffey, progress is the order of the day. Mr. William Morgan informs me that he is receiving a great number of applications, and I am passing on a good few to him myself. The Dublin Section is doing well, and looks like more than doubling its number of registrations next season.

OUR CRICKET LEAGUE!

Are you interested in a "BOYS' REALM" CRICKET LEAGUE? Arrangements have now been made, and the new formation will be run on exactly the same lines as the FOOTBALL LEAGUE. Full particulars will be published in next week's issue.



(Continued from page 405.)

demanded, as he saw the light of utter incredulity dawn in the mayor's close-set eyes. "Don't them clues prove that we've come to the right place, guv'nor? The five 'undred quid is 'idden in this 'ouse, and—"

"There's not a brass farthing hidden here, you fools!" roared Amos, in a state of frenzy. "There's a mistake somewhere! There's a deep-laid plot to ruin me! There's a—"

Crash! Bang! Splinter! Smash! "Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete, stepping through the doorway with Jack and Sam at his heels. "It sounds as dough some one is breaking something, Gumboil, old hoss!"

"So you're at the bottom of this outrage, are you, you black barbarian?" shouted the mayor, showing his ugly teeth in a snarl. "So you're the—"

Crash! Bang! Smash! Thud! "Stop it, you crazy fools!" yelled Amos, rushing wildly through the wreckage and tearing up the staircase. "Stop it, I say! You'll smash the place to bits, you madmen!"

The comrades were just behind him as he dashed into a lofty apartment that had once been a magnificent, tastefully furnished drawing-room. But no longer was it magnificent nor tastefully furnished, for the Oriental carpets had been ripped up, chairs and chesterfields had been gutted, the grand piano was a wreck, cabinets had been broken open, drawers were scattered about in disorder, and even the walls had been stripped of their paper; and now Gumbriel's enthusiastic treasure-hunters were ripping up the floorboards in the hope of coming across the elusive five hundred pounds.

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete, as Amos stood perfectly still and stared round with goggling eyes. "It's a bit early for spring cleaning, ain't it, old hoss?"

"Silence, you maniac!" bellowed his worship, with a fierce malediction. "By what right are you three scoundrels here, anyway?"

"Smatter ob fact, Gumboil, old hoss, I hab got a letter for you!" grinned Pete, producing an envelope and handing it to Amos.

"Who's it from?" snarled his worship, regarding the grubby envelope with suspicion in his little eyes. "What is it?"

"It's an account from Mr. Richard Trollope, old hoss," answered Pete, with a broad grin.

"An—an account?" stuttered Amos, a wave of angry blood over-spreading his bloated countenance.

"Yes, old hoss," nodded Pete; "an account for twenty thousand 'Stupendous Treasure-Hunt' leaflets! As a matter ob fact, I met our old pal Mr. Richard Trollope on de way here, and he asked me to collect de money. So I advise you to look pleasant and pay up, so—so—so—"

Pete's voice died away as he stared at the crowd which was creeping slowly and stealthily through the doorway of the big room. There were eager-eyed men, armed with shovels and picks and crowbars, and they were led by a long, thin youth who wore horn-rimmed spectacles.

In one hand this youth carried one of Gumbriel's Treasure-Hunt handbills, and he appeared to be reading the final clue.

"This is what it says," Pete heard him mutter. "This is the last bit: 'When to the house you have come, dig like fury and dig like fun. And then the treasure will be found, on something fat and something round!'"

He moved his gaze from the bill to the fat and round figure of Amos Gumbriel, and the youth's eyes glittered.

"That's him! Look at him—'something fat and something round!' We've searched the house from roof to cellars, and he's the only fat and round thing in the place. He's got the treasure—he's got the five hundred quid!"

With the words he led the crowd in a mad rush down the room.

"He's got the money!"

Crowbars and pickaxes menaced Gumbriel as the wild-eyed throng thundered down on him. Gumbriel didn't stop to ask questions. He turned and ran. The french windows were open at the other end of the room, and he shot out to the lawn beyond with the crowd—growing every moment—streaming after him. Navvies dropped down from the

IN THE RUNNING FOR THE WALSHALL SECTION CHAMPIONSHIP.

Back row :

H. Bradley.
E. Perry.
R. Phillips.
J. Horsley.
C. Grainger.
H. Rounds.

This club plays in the Walsall Section of the BOYS' REALM Football League.



B.P.M.I.F.C.

BIRCHILLS PRIMERS F.C.

This club is challenging for the championship of the Walsall Section. They are a very sturdy team, with an excellent defence; they opened the present season by licking their local rivals—Stafford St. Primers F.C.—by 4-3 after a ding-dong game. This was a fine start for a successful season.

Front row :

E. Brown
(Secretary).
A. Webster.
P. Salt.
G. Cope.
W. Perry.

The initials at the foot of the photo. stand for the club's full name: Birchills Primitive Methodist Institute F.C.

roof and men came up from the cellars; others ceased digging up the flower-beds and the lawns, in order to join in the chase.

Gumbriel's short legs twinkled over the turf. His eyes were starting from their sockets and perspiration dripped from his forehead.

"Somehow, I tink dey will catch him up," murmured Pete, and he and his two chums stepped out of the room in the wake of the yelling crowd. "Gumboil ain't what I would call a greyhound, and— Got him!"

The youth in the horn-rimmed spectacles went for Gumbriel in a flying tackle, gripped him by the ankles, and brought him down with a thud that seemed to shake the ground.

An instant later and the rest of the crowd piled in.

"M'yes, dey hab caught him up," said Pete, as a yell of anguish came from the bottom of the pile, and, as newcomers threw themselves into the conflict, the heap of humanity surging above Gumbriel became an indeterminate mass of boots and fists. "I hope Gumboil hab got five hundred pounds wid him," murmured Pete anxiously. "If he ain't, I'm afraid those merry li'l treasure-hunters will be very annoyed!"

Fifteen minutes later, a wreck that had been Gumbriel crawled slowly over the grass towards the Grange. The place looked as though a tornado had swept over it, and Gumbriel looked as though he had been in the thick of the tornado.

Failing to find any treasure on him, the crowd had dropped him in a fountain: but they had searched him very thoroughly first.

Jack, Sam, and Pete were standing on the steps of the Grange when Gumbriel crawled up them.

"Are you still here, you black— you black—black—"

He stuttered as he tried to find something which would express his feelings.

"Yes, we am still here, old hoss," said Pete cheerfully. "As a matter ob fact, I didn't want to go until you had giben me de money for de treasure-hunt leaflets."

"Money! You'll get no money from me!" howled Gumbriel. "I've seen enough of you! This is your doing. Look at my house—look at the wreckage! Look at what those hooligans have done!"

"M'yes, dey do seem to hab made de place a bit untidy," agreed Pete mildly. "Dat's de worst ob dese treasure-hunters! It's a bit ob luck for de Robbers dat dey didn't tink de treasure was on de football ground, ain't it? Being a sportsman, you wouldn't hab liked to hab seen dem make our ground untidy, would you? Nunno, certainly you wouldn't, old hoss! Mebbe you had better send a cheque for dose leaflets, since you habn't got any money on you at de moment."

Gumbriel was almost choking with rage. He clenched his fists and shook them at the comrades.

"I'll pay no money, confound you!" he raved. "Not a penny! Not a farthing!"

"Den you am cheating Mr. Richard Trollope, old hoss!" Pete said. "You hab giben him all de trouble ob printing dose leaflets and now you refuse to pay him!"

"He made a mess of printing them!" hooted Gumbriel. "It's you, you black beast! You've landed me into this mess!"

But the mayor got no sympathy from Pete and his comrades.

"You will hab to pay, old hoss," Pete said. "And, after all, it was worth it. Any odder time you're tinkin ob gibin anudder treasure-hunt, don't forget to let me know! Yah, yah, yah!"

(Another side-splitting long complete yarn of good old Pete next Wednesday—"Pete's Boat Race!" This story is a real winner. Order your REALM in advance and make SURE of it!)



(Continued from previous page.)

I instructed Mr. Catchpole to expend the whole lot of it on having the Rents put in a decent state of repair.

"That was mighty good of you!" said Sid Yates impulsively, amid a general murmur of agreement. "But—but you might have told us the truth then. Surely you didn't want to keep on living here?"

"And why not?" challenged Terry. "I'm a jolly sight happier here than I was with my uncle. I have no friends in Steelvale, and I was jolly pleased when I met you fellows, and you allowed me to play for the Ramblers. I didn't know what it was to have pals before, and I thought if I told you the truth you might turn against me, as—as you seem to have done now. I wasn't trying to deceive you; I thought I was acting for the best. I can't afford to live any differently from the way I'm living now."

Sid Yates and his companions stared sheepishly at one another. They were just beginning to realise the full extent of the sacrifices Terry had made. It was hard to believe that anyone could have acted in such an unselfish manner.

"But you could have sold all this property to Henry Crocker, couldn't you?" blurted Tom Carter.

"Yes; but I refused his offer," replied Terry reluctantly. "I knew that it was his intention to have the whole place condemned and pulled down, and that would have meant that everyone living here would have been evicted. I wasn't going to allow that at any price if I could help

it. It was up to me to make amends for the way my uncle neglected his tenants during past years. I couldn't touch a penny of his money, otherwise."

There was a moment's tense silence, and then a sudden hearty cheer burst from all those who had listened to the explanation Ginger Terry had made.

"Three cheers for the new landlord!"

A rush was made for the young footballer, and Terry was dazed and overwhelmed by the sudden demonstration in his favour. Dozens of hands strove to grasp his own, and he literally staggered beneath the shower of slaps that descended on his broad back.

"He's one of us, he is!"

"Ay, a real sportsman, and no error!"

"Summat like a landlord!"

Sid Yates' eyes were suspiciously moist when he at length managed to grip Ginger warmly by the palm. "Ginger, old boy, I'm mighty sorry for ever having doubted you," he said huskily. "I ought to be kicked from here to China and back!"

"Hear, hear! We've been a lot of danged idiots!" agreed Huggins. "A nice way to repay Ginger after all he's done for us!"

"Yes, you all ought to be thoroughly ashamed of yourselves!" said the clear voice of Sally Norris. "Ginger's the bravest boy in the world, and you ought to be jolly proud to know him and have him living here!"

Terry was too overcome to speak as he shook hands with all his chums. He did not blame them for the attitude they had adopted. It was foolish of him not to have taken them into his confidence soon after he had decided on his plan of action and made up his mind to prolong his stay at the Rents.

"There's nothing more to be said, boys; it's all over and done with now," he declared happily. "I can't help being your landlord, but it's not going to make any difference to our friendship. And the first person who calls me 'sir,' or 'Mr. Tyrill,' is going to get a hefty clip under the ear!"

"And you're going to stay on here and play for the Ramblers?" queried Sid Yates eagerly.

"You bet I am!" declared Terry. "I came here to do a job, and I'm going to see it through."

Another cheer went up, and it was some minutes before the crowd dispersed and Ginger and his chums were able to repair to their clubhouse on the football ground at the back of the tenements.

"I've another bone to pick with you, Ginger my lad!" said Sid Yates, with mock severity. "You're a good old leg-puller, if ever there was one. I take it that it was really you who paid for the new footballs, new boots, and kit for the team?"

"Yes, I am afraid I must plead guilty to that as well," acknowledged Ginger, with a smile. "You wrote and asked me to become president of the club, and I had a perfect right to make the Ramblers a present if I chose. Mr. Catchpole arranged it all for me."

"It was mighty decent of you, old son!" said Tom Carter fervently. "But it's pretty rotten to think that the whole bunch of stuff was stolen before we had a chance to make use of it. Gosh, but I'd like to get hold of the rotters who did it!"

He had scarcely spoken when there came a knock on the door. A diminutive, freckle-faced youngster entered the clubhouse and stood panting for breath, twiddling his cap excitedly.

"Hallo! It's young Bert," said Huggins, as he recognised his younger brother. "What's the matter, nipper? What do you want here?"

Little Bert Huggins drew a deep breath and assumed an air of great importance.

"I—I've found out where the Doonan Street gang hold their meetings!" he blurted eagerly. "I know where their headquarters is!"

"Well, what about it?" jerked Huggins. "We've had quite enough to do with Sloan and his gang lately."

"But they've got all your football kit there!" declared the freckle-faced youngster, his voice shrill with excitement. "All the stuff that you had stolen the other night. I heard Sloan say so. And they're going to take it away to-night and sell it!"

(Ginger will be right after Sloan and his gang now! Look out for some excitement in next Wednesday's long instalment. Do you order your REALM in advance?)

BUY A COPY TO-DAY!

Imagine a whole school stranded by widespread floods—completely cut off from the rest of the world, and left with no grub to speak of! Sounds as though things would be pretty lively when the lads started trying to get away, doesn't it? The famous Boys of St. Frank's find themselves in this plight, and you can read what happens in—

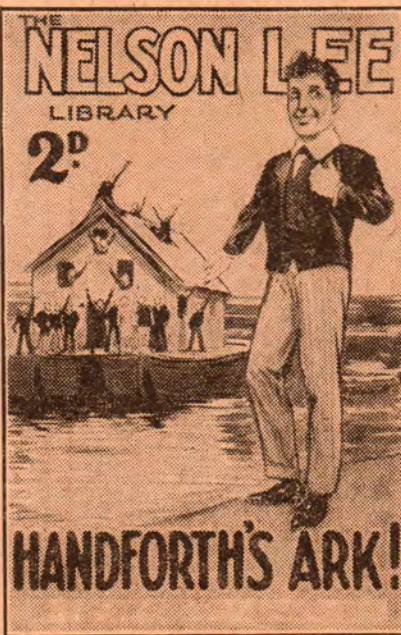
"HANDFORTH'S ARK!"

This is the title of a rollicking, full-of-thrills story of school life. One of the most popular juniors at St. Frank's builds an ark, and the boys try to get away on it from the flood-bound school. If you enjoy reading rousing yarns of schoolboy adventure you will certainly enjoy this week's issue of

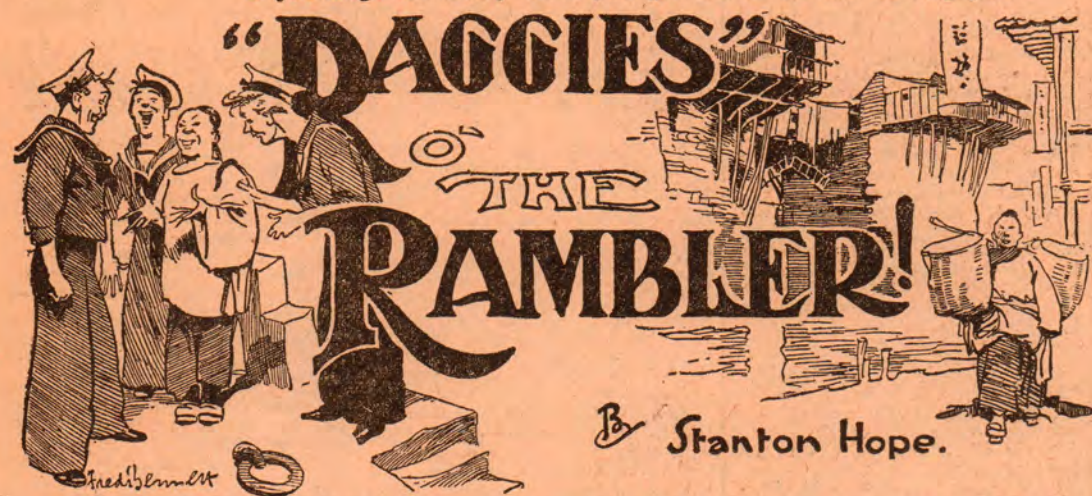
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Price Twopence.



THE RAGGIES They dropped off the roof disguised as a three-headed condor, and they scared the Chinese pirates stiff. That caused a riot—and you'll begin a riot, too, if you laugh too loudly when you get started on this corking yarn!



B. Stanton Hope.

A ROLICKING COMPLETE STORY OF FUN AND ADVENTURE IN CHINA!

The 1st Chapter.

Gurney Among the Eggs!

"Hullo, y' dodderin' young lubbers!" At the familiar, bull-voice of Petty Officer Gurney, Boy "Shiner" Bright looked at his two raggies, "Dusty" Rhodes and Tich Bailey.

"He means us, mates," murmured Shiner. "What's he want now?"

The boys of the Rambler had been temporarily transferred to the Buzzfly—a gunboat moored at Hoochow, on Leemoo Lake. They quickened their pace across the deck as the P.O. bawled at them.

"Jump to it! Jump to it!" bellowed Gurney. "Sufferin' catfish! If I'd ha' slouched round like you when I was a boy in the old Arethusia, I'd ha' got a salted rope's end astern o' me! There's work to do!"

The early mist of the China morning had not yet lifted from Leemoo Lake, and either the chill damp of the mist or the mention of work made Dusty shiver.

Petty Officer Gurney pointed down the gangway to where some huge canvas sacks and wooden crates were stacked on the wharf.

"D'you see them?" he snarled. "Well, get to work, the three of you, and bring those stores aboard and stow 'em below. At the double!"

Groaning under their breath, the luckless raggies doubled down the gangway to commence their herculean task, and, with many gasps and moans, they began the titanic task of loading the sacks and crates aboard the Buzzfly.

Some minutes later Gurney came down the gangway in company with Commander Dill, the skipper of the gunboat.

"I shall be ashore all the morning," Gurney, the skipper said. "In the meantime, you can make that reconnaissance from the observation balloon. Although Wong Kiang and his pirates have been kept on the run, there's reason to think that piratical craft have been seen again in the vicinity of the Isle of the Pagoda. Keep a good look-out for anything suspicious."

With that the skipper returned the salutes of the raggies and marched off along the Bund. When he had gone Gurney set a number of other tars, including Bodger Lees and Horace Stoop, to work on the stores, while he himself went to attend to the inflation of the observation balloon.

The store job done, the raggies and the others ambled along to the balloon to lend a hand with it. Some Chinese fruit vendors, egg sellers, and other merchants also gathered round and tried to do a trade with the bluejackets.

"Never mind those blessed Chinks!" rumbled Gurney. "You attend to this job, my lads. Pay out the rope o' the balloon slowly."

He got into the basket, and as the rope which held the balloon captive was paid out the queer-shaped observation balloon went aloft until it was about a hundred and fifty feet overhead.

For the next five minutes Gurney's observations from the observation balloon were chiefly about the luckless young bluejackets below. His face peered over the edge of the basket, twisted into angry grimaces, until suddenly his roving eye caught sight of a dainty little Chinese girl pattering along in a delicate blue jacket and black satreen trousers.

The way that Gurney's face

This Week's Story: WORSE THAN WONKY!

changed into a beautiful smile would have brought loud applause could it have been screened at any cinema.

As the Chinese girl tripped along he leaned farther and farther out of the basket to get a better view, when suddenly up shot his legs and out he came!

"Oh, my aunt!" gasped Shiner, screening his eyes.

Directly he uncovered them again he saw that Gurney, instead of lying senseless on the ground, was dangling aloft from a rope which had caught round his ankle.

Quite clearly the little Chinese maid thought that this was some new sort of entertainment, for she laughed and clapped her hands delightedly. The boys of the Buzzfly, however, were genuinely concerned for Gurney, except Bodger Lees and Horace Stoop, who emitted deep groans on account of his miraculous escape.

"To the rope!" yelled Shiner. "Haul down the balloon, my lads!"

A fair breeze had sprung up and dispersed the morning mist, and it had the effect of making it extremely difficult to drag down the big observation balloon. Meantime, Gurney struggled, head downwards, like a spider on a string.

"Tar me, he'll get apoplexy, or summat!" muttered Shiner. "We'll never get him down in time!"

He took his jack-knife from his pocket, opened the blade, and put it between his teeth; then, nimbly as a monkey, he shinned up the taut rope of the balloon and reached out towards the other swaying rope, from which Gurney was suspended.

By this time the luckless petty officer was not more than ten feet above the ground; but Shiner, who saw that his face was purpling, slashed through the rope.

Swoosh!

Gurney came down, and a mighty crash heralded his arrival head-first into a great basket of eggs!

"Bravo, Shiner!" cried Dusty and Tich.

The frantic Chinese owner of the eggs dragged Gurney out from his scrambled property. For several minutes the P.O. sat on the ground, peering out dazedly between the dripping yolk and white of the eggs which smothered his head and tunic. Pieces of eggshell adhered to his hair and uniform, and when the tars saw that he had sustained no serious harm they doubled up and hugged themselves with mirth.

Suddenly Gurney seemed to come to his senses, and he flicked some of the eggy mess from his face, gulping as the odour of some of the bad ones came to his nostrils.

"You grinning jackanapes!" he hooted. "Who did that?"

"Pup-please it was Boy Bright!" piped the toady Stoop.

"Ay, petty officer!" put in Bodger. "Me and Stoop and one or two more were haulin' you down safe and sound, when the silly chump went up and slashed through the rope with his knife."

Shiner & Co. cast baleful looks at the two dirty cads.

"I did it to save your life, petty officer," said Shiner, with dignity.

"Save my life!" bellowed Gurney. "I'll farn you! Thought you'd have another of your japes, that's what it was! I'll hot things up for you, my

boy—you and your precious pals, too!"

Gurney then gave a grunt, and went down to the river—followed by the irate egg seller—to wash away the results of his accident.

He was engaged in this task when a rickshaw came along, and Commander Dill, of the Buzzfly, alighted from it. When the amazed skipper heard of Gurney's accident, for the P.O. had the grace to say nothing about Shiner's part in it, he exclaimed:

"You must really be much more careful in undertaking observation. There have been two or three minor accidents in connection with that balloon already. It has occurred to me, too, that if anything serious happened up in the air the observer is supplied with no parachute to make his escape; but there is no likelihood of getting one here at Hoochow."

He went on to the ship, and the petty officer, looking a trifle cleaner, prepared to go aloft again.

"You three go back aboard and scrub the mess-deck," he said to Shiner & Co. "and put some elbow grease into the work! I'll make a careful inspection o' it when I get back. I'll hot things up for you young lubbers," he muttered, as a final word of parting.

With glum faces, the three raggies marched back to the gunboat.

"That bloke is missing his vocation in the Navy," moaned Dusty. "He ought to have been a blessed warder in a Russian gaol!"

The 2nd Chapter.

The Peace Offering!

"STEADY! Steady as you go, mates! Lift up the tail a bit, Tich!"

Shiner, Dusty and the Little 'Un, assisted by Woo Sam, were bringing a queer contrivance of reed matting and bamboo in the form of wings, up the after gangway of H.M.S. Buzzfly. The sea-

man who was acting as sentry at the head of the gangway viewed the ungainly contraption with great suspicion.

"See here, my lads," he pointed out, "if old Gurney sees you with that, the lot of you will be properly in the rattle."

The raggies put down the thing on the deck and mopped their heated brows.

"In the rattle!" echoed Dusty. "For the last five days we ain't never been out of the rattle until we went ashore this afternoon for our first drop o' leave. And here we've spent most of that time making our little peace offering."

"Peace offering!"

"This here thing," said Shiner, jerking a thumb back at the big wing-like object, "is a peace offering for Gurney. You see, matey, he's got his knife in us properly, and feeling as it would hardly be policy to give him a sock in the jaw or a boot astern, we've decided to try diplomacy."

"Well, I wish yer luck," grinned the seaman. "Ere he comes!"

Petty Officer Gurney emerged through a hatchway. He was frowning heavily and perspiring freely; he had been chasing one of the ship's cats, which had pinched his two prize fan-tailed goldfish. At the sight of the four boys with their ungainly contraption, a baleful look came in his steely eyes.

"What's that?" he snapped. "What d'you mean by putting that lumber on the deck? Pick it up! Jump to it!"

The raggies jumped to it, and as they hoisted the reed and bamboo wings, Shiner said hurriedly:

"It—it's for you, petty officer. We made it ourselves—a glider! So if you ever feel like falling out of a balloon again, you can glide gracefully down to earth instead of—er—flopping into a basket of eggs and suchlike."

The mention of his accident did not make Gurney look any the more pleasant, but just at that moment Commander Dill came on deck.

He, too, inquired what that curious contrivance of reed and bamboo was meant to be. Thereupon Shiner fully explained how he and his chums had constructed it so that the observer in the balloon could glide to earth if anything happened aloft.

The commander examined the thing which the young tars had taken a deal of trouble to put together.

"By Jove, it seems to me that it might have possibilities," he murmured. "The span of its wings is certainly against it, but it could be fixed easily enough at the side of the basket—that is, if it will work at all."

"Please, sir," piped Tich, "we've already done several jumps off a roof with it, and it goes like a bird. We'll prove it's the goods, if you like, sir."

"I should be very pleased to see a demonstration," smiled the skipper.

While the raggies and Woo Sam made certain adjustments to their invention, the skipper addressed Gurney.

"Get a working-party immediately, Gurney," he said, "to make the ship spick and span. I'm expecting a most important Chinese mandarin aboard any time now, and I think that he has information about Wong Kiang, the pirate!"

"Ay, ay, sir!"

The petty officer paused to look regretfully at the boys, but as they were hard at work doing something to the glider, he dared not take them away for the harder job of ship cleaning. He hurried below, raked up a working-party, and ordered up pots of paint to give a final touch to the jackstaff and other fittings.

Commander Dill watched the boys in silence and paced the quarter-deck as they carried their invention in the direction of the funnel. Once out of sight of the skipper, Shiner produced a small coin from his pocket.

"We'll toss up to see who does the merry stunt, you chaps," he whispered. "Odd man is unlucky!"

The "honour" fell to Dusty, who immediately clambered up the buff casing of the funnel and balanced himself on the soot-covered rim just inside at the top. By means of a thin line he started to drag the glider aloft; all went well until the invention suddenly got caught under two of the funnel's stays. Next instant, the line broke, and Dusty went backwards head over heels down the funnel!

"Crawlin' crayfish!" gasped Shiner. "He's a gone coon!"

But not a bit of it! As the scared raggies hurried down to the engine-room, they found their chum—covered in soot—coming up the steel ladder.

"Thank goodness!" breathed Shiner. "Things ain't so black after all!"

Dusty stared stonily out of his sooty face.

"Me velly happy you allee light," remarked Woo cheerily. "But me t'inkee nicee ole Dusty wantee wash and bluish-up."

Never had they known Dusty to be in such a nasty mood, however. Instead of thanking them for their kind congratulations, he stamped his way aft and up into the open. He was bruised all over and he seemed partly dazed—he must have been or he would never have gone to that holy of holies, the quarter-deck!

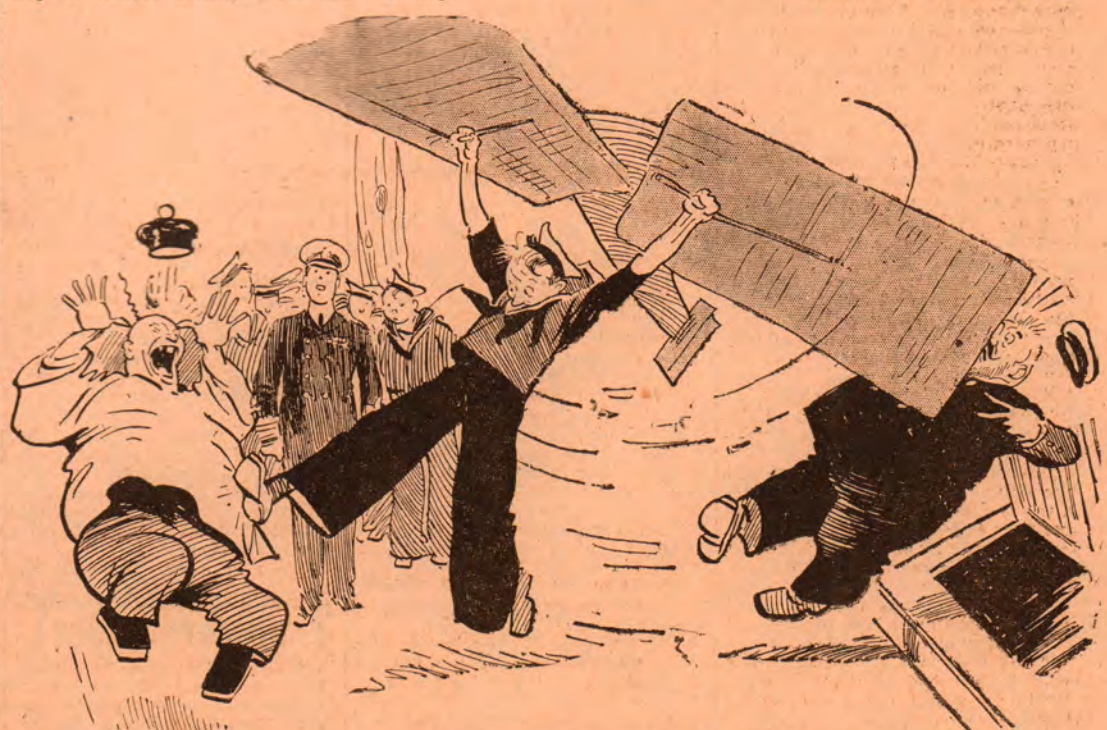
Twice he tramped round in circles, leaving black footprints all over the spotless white quarter-deck; the skipper, hearing the amused laughter of some near-by bluejackets, turned suddenly and saw him.

"Shades of Nelson—my quarter-deck! Gurney! Take that man's name and help him below!"

There was no need for Gurney to take Dusty's name; he knew it in spite of the soot. With the utmost good will, however, he assisted the luckless raggie below—with his boot!

When Dusty had taken his departure for a much-needed wash and brush-up, Shiner, Tich, and little Woo hurried back to the funnel to give the demonstration for which the now irate skipper was waiting.

(Continued on next page.)



"LOOK OUT, BELOW!" Shiner's boot caught the mandarin in the belt and bowled him over. One wing of the glider socked Gurney under the chin, and knocked him through a skylight. It looked as though Shiner's bright idea was not going to be a success!



(Continued from previous page.)

"See here, mateys," exclaimed Shiner, "I'll do the job!"

Hurriedly he shinned aloft the steel ladder that ran up the side of the funnel casing and, taking more care than Dusty, managed to hoist the ungainly glider aloft. Holding the framework of bamboo and reed matting above him, Shiner gave a hail:

"All ready, sir!"

The commander was just greeting a stout silk-clad mandarin who had come aboard, but at Shiner's yell he turned towards the funnel. Petty Officer Gurney, whose peace offering the glider was to be, stood a few arm's lengths away, and several tars who had been hastily swabbing the deck, paused with the mops in their hands.

"Kicker off!" cried the voice of Woo Sam.

And down came Shiner on the glider across the roof of the deck-house and over the bristling Buzzfly guns.

The glider worked beautifully. It came skimming through the air, while Shiner clung on beneath it. Swoosh! It took a sudden swerve, and with increased speed rushed at the group on the quarter-deck.

"Look out below!" yelled Shiner frantically.

Smack!

His boot caught the fat mandarin full in the belt, bowling him backwards into a pot of paint. One wing of the glider caught Gurney's sock under the chin, sending him reeling through the open skylight of the ward-room and almost dislocating his neck.

While the skipper roared furiously and the crowd howled with merriment, a gust of wind gave fresh impetus to the glider; smashing down the jackstaff it went sailing over the taffrail, and finally landed with Shiner in the brown water of the lake near the wharf.

"Spike me!" gulped Shiner, as he swam ashore. "Somehow I don't think that this peace offering is going to be a howlin' success!"

It wasn't! In the first place, the indignant skipper of the Buzzfly informed the raggies precisely what he thought of them and their invention. He insisted on what was left of it being handed over to a Chinaman who happened to be on the wharf, and, what was worse, he afterwards turned them over to the tender mercies of Petty Officer Gurney, who promptly set them to the dirtiest and most unpleasant job in the whole ship—cleaning out the bilges.

"Gurney!" groaned Dusty. "It's a nasty name, and it fits him like a shell to the riding of a gun. Talk about these here pirates being blessed ruffians—why, they're like a lot of milkops compared with that frabjous P.O.! Worse than Wonky himself he is, and I only hope as one day old Wonky will nab him and give him a taste of a split bamboo on the soles of his great feet!"

The 3rd Chapter. Giving Wonky the Bird!

FALL in the leave party!"

With the first thrill of joy for days, Shiner & Co. went bounding up on deck to pounce on the inspection of the shore party on the quarter-deck. At the top of the companion-ladder a burly form barred their path, and a grim face was thrust before them.

"Not you!" snapped Gurney.

"There's polisher to be done!"

"Polisher?" gulped Dusty. "The blessed brass o' this ship is so bright it gives me sore eyes to look at it!"

"None of your cheek!" rumbled the P.O. "Your leave is docked—d'you understand? Now, 'op off and get your polisher rags!"

"He ain't a human being," Tich observed, as the chums leaned despairingly against a gun-turret. "With that face of his, he reminds me of nothing more nor less than a blessed ape peering out of a—"

"Ho, I do, do I?" thundered a voice from just round the gun-turret. "I'll slaughter you, you young lubber!"

Away went the raggies round the gun-turret, while Petty Officer Gurney hoofed it after them.

Deciding that this chase was not compatible with his dignity Petty

Officer Gurney abandoned it. Muttering something about "hotting it up" for someone, he went off to inspect the leave men.

From behind the gun-turret the raggies heard him telling them that it was the captain's wish that all men, while they were ashore, should try to discover what they could about Wong Kiang and his pirates. The pirates had been active again near Hoochow, and if anyone happened upon any information he was to return to the ship immediately.

For a quarter of an hour after the leave party had gone, Shiner & Co. made a pretence of polishing brass; then, to their great relief, they saw Petty Officer Gurney himself go marching down the gangway and walk away into Hoochow.

To pass the time the raggies chatted with a pal of theirs, genial Fred Selby, who was acting as sentry on the gangway. While they were telling him what a nice place Portsmouth was, and how they wished they were back there, a wizened Chinaman came on board with a note. He handed it to Shiner, who was nearest, and Shiner opened it.

It was in the spidery handwriting of Horace Stoop, and after squinting at it several times, Shiner read aloud the following:

sends me another pink flannel chest-protector, it's yours!"

With hearts beating fast, Shiner & Co. hurried down the gang-plank and dived into one of the narrow streets off the Bund. They decided that rescuing Corny was a job in which little Woo Sam's aid was needed, and they looked for him in his favourite refreshment resort—known as the Teahouse of the Tired-Faced Tortoise.

The Chinese mess-boy was drinking green tea, without milk or sugar, and amusing himself by producing defunct bluebottles out of a currant-bun, to the indignation of the proprietor. At the sight of the excited Shiner & Co. Woo ceased his merry conjuring trick and asked:

"Whassee matter?"

"Corny's copped!" panted Shiner. "We've seen a note that Stoop sent to Bodger, saying as our old pet is a prisoner in the Joss-house of the Three-Headed Condor. Do you know where that is?"

"Me heap savvy," said Woo. "Squattee down and dlinkee nicee cup of tea."

While Shiner & Co. drank their tea, which tasted more like medicine, Woo told them all about the Joss-house of the Three-Headed Condor

when sun sittee down in west," said little Woo.

If Corny was indeed a prisoner in the joss-house, his rescue was likely to be no easy matter. Various ideas were suggested, and presently Woo hit upon what was voted "the real goods." Between fits of laughing the little Chink explained it, and after he had gone over it about four times the chums began to laugh, too.

Beating it to the abode of one How Pong, who was the Chinese equivalent of an English rag-and-bone man, they bought their glider back from him for a few cash coins, because How Pong was the man who had taken it at Commander Dill's orders. After that the raggies hired a cart drawn by oxen, and took it to within easy distance of the Joss-house of the Three-Headed Condor, while Woo went off to make a few necessary purchases.

At last came the sleepy hour before sunset, when only the dull beating of a gong from within the temple broke the silence. Not a soul was about save some lazy water-buffaloes, which moved sleepily in a near-by pond. Unseen, Shiner & Co. carried the glider among some bushes and across a small courtyard at the back of the temple. It was easy to reach the lowest of the several curly roofs

"Shiny," he whispered hoarsely, "there's ole Wonky down there. Me t'inkee Wonky and fiends muchee been hiding in joss-house. Savvy?"

"You mean the guardians of the temple have been hiding him and his ruffians," answered Shiner. "That wouldn't surprise me at all. And I'll bet it was Wonky who hit on the idea of bagging Corny for a sacrifice; he never took a fancy to that camel."

The sky to the westward was growing blood-red as the sun sank below the distant hills. The muffled beating of a gong sounded from the front of the joss-house, and the weird chanting of the Chinese was eerie and sinister. After listening carefully for a minute or two, Woo stated that the mysterious rites were about to begin outside the temple.

"Then we'll be getting on the top deck, mates," muttered Shiner. "It's no good us trying to tackle a big bunch of Chinese with our bare fists, but we'll scare 'em out of their yellow skins!"

Standing erect on the flat of the roof towards the rear, they made sure that the brown cloth was adjusted completely round their chests and belts. The Chinese masks, with the long beaklike noses, gave them a fierce expression, and when they gripped the glider, and held it poised above their shoulders, they resembled nothing more in the world than the mythical Three-headed Condor itself.

"Makee hurry," whispered Woo, whose sharp ears had caught some of the Chinamen's conversation. "Me hear Wonky says he now takee it out of plisoner."

"Take it out of old Corny, will he?" grunted Dusty. "We'll larn him!"

"Ready, mates?" whispered Shiner.

With stately tread—left, right, left, right—the three raggies walked forward on the narrow red roof, holding the big, winglike glider behind their shoulders.

They paused at the edge of the roof and stood motionless. In the red dusk they could see a throng of Chinese just outside the spiked bamboo palisade. What they were doing was not quite clear, but certainly Corny was not present.

"There are one or two more blokes just coming out of the front door," whispered Shiner. "I s'pect our old pal will be led out now."

At that precise moment one of the Chinese caught sight of that weird creature perched on the temple roof. With a wild yelp of terror he beat it for the back-blocks!

"Now's our chance," said Shiner. "Altogether—down we go!"

They leaped from the high roof of the joss-house and went gliding down like the great three-headed condor they intended to represent.

Immediately a terrific babel of howls rose from the assembled Chinks as they saw this strange "bird" swooping down upon them. In the eerie red dusk of evening they allowed their superstitious fears full rein, and, fearing that the deity of the joss-house was offended, scattered in all directions.

To add reality to their appearance, Shiner & Co. emitted fierce, squawking cries which rose shrilly above the terrified yelps of the fleeing Chinese. Then, just as it seemed that they had cleared the bamboo palisade, the glider swung round in the breeze, and Dusty emitted a shriek of pain.

"Yoh! Ooh—my trousers!"

He had come to rest on one of the spiked bamboos, and checked the downward descent of Shiner and Tich, who hung momentarily to one side of him, and rather lower.

"What are you playing at, mate?" demanded Shiner. "You'll spoil the whole pantomime!"

Hooting with pain, Dusty released the glider and tried to get his hands behind him. As he did so there was a sharp rip of cloth, the brown covering which was round the bodies of the three parted company, and Shiner and Tich, accompanied by the glider, crashed to the ground.

Their first concern was to rescue their luckless raggy, who was hitched up on the spiked bamboo by the back of his trousers, and they accomplished this with difficulty. Directly Dusty reached the ground, he resembled rather a jumping kangaroo than a part of a large and dignified bird.

"Fancy leaving a lot of beastly spikes sticking up out of the ground!" he hooted. "Ain't there no by-laws in Hoochow?"

Shiner and Tich turned from him and peered through the palisade at the running Chinks.

(Continued on the next page.)

CRICKET MEDALS GIVEN AWAY!

Next week's issue will contain full particulars of

THE "BOYS' REALM" CRICKET LEAGUE and all about the handsome trophies offered for the coming season.

Pete's at it again!

"PETE'S BOAT RACE!"

Of course, Pete's got to have a boat race—so he has one against Gumbrell. If you can imagine the Mayor of Seahaven at the rudder lines of a racing eight, then you can guess some of the fun that is coming in this rollicking yarn.

Chuckles in China!

"THE RAGGIES TO THE RESCUE!"

Riding over half China on an old car which sheds nuts and bolts at every bump—AND pursued by pirates whooping for their blood! Sounds lively, doesn't it? The raggies certainly do find it lively; you'll thoroughly enjoy this yarn next Wednesday.

Rousing chapters from our two smashing Footer Serials—

"ALL FOR THE ALBION!"

and

"GINGER—FOR PLUCK!"

Special topical article—

"THRILLS AND SPILLS

— IN THE —

BATTLE OF THE BLUES!"



Look out for this cover next week—and don't forget that our next number contains full details of the new REALM Cricket League.

OUT ON WEDNESDAY!

"Corny is captured, and is in the Joss-house of the Three-Headed Condor. What a jape!"

"Tar me!" ejaculated Shiner.

"According to this note, someone's been pinching our camel. Who gave you this, ole Ping-Pong? A chap with a face like a cheese and pale-blue rat-eyes?"

The old Chink nodded.

"It was Horace Stoop all right," Shiner said. "And who did he say you were to bring it to?"

"Me no savvy," replied the Chinaman. "He say takee to place called sickie bay."

"For Bodger!" piped Tich. "He's doing a bit of scrimshanking in the sick-bay."

"So he is!" cried Shiner. "He made out this morning as he was sufferin' from dizzy fits, due to the sun. Every time an officer looked his way he pretended to catch flies in front of his face. So old Stoop is trying to cheer his pal up by telling him that our giddy old camel has been bagged, is he? This has got to be looked into at once, mates!"

"But our leave's been docked!" groaned Dusty. "We can't go ashore!"

"Can't we?" exclaimed Shiner. "There's the gangway, and there's the blessed shore!"

"And I happen to be a-looking the other way, mateys!" grinned Fred Selby, deliberately turning his back. "Of course, it will have to be your own pidgin, 'cause I shall say as I never saw you go down the gangway, which will be true enough."

"You're a good sport, Fred!" whooped Shiner, thumping him on the back. "Next time when mother

and the fierce Chinese guardians who had charge of it.

The condor, he stated, was a species of vulture, and inside the temple was a great image of a condor with three heads and six great legs. According to Woo, it was the custom for animals to be sacrificed to its image. This last bit of news set the raggies' blood boiling with indignation.

"Well, they're jolly well not going to sacrifice our good old splayfooted pet to any giddy bird with three figureheads!" cried Shiner fiercely. "Let's up-anchor and get to this joss-house, mateys!"

Leaving the teahouse, they went, under Woo's guidance, to the very outskirts of Hoochow. The Joss-house of the Three-Headed Condor had curly red roofs, carved gateways, and twinkling wind-bells, with fish-ponds and a spiked bamboo palisade in front. No one appeared to be about, and the big carved doors at the front of the building were shut and bolted. As the chums listened they could hear muffled voices inside; but they saw not a sign of Corny nor of any Chinks.

"Me t'inkee they killee old Corny

POCKET MONEY!

You could do something with an odd 5s., couldn't you? Have a shot at this week's Free Football Competition—5s. for six correct results; £500 for Ten!

(See back page.)

possessed by the joss-house; Shiner and Tich shinned up quietly, and Dusty handed up the glider. Then the doleful tar joined his shipmates aloft.

There among the joss-house roofs the three lay until they heard a faint whistle. At the sound of it Shiner clambered down over the curly edge of the roofs and gave little Woo a hand up.

Back in the hiding-place under the topmost roof, Woo opened a sack and produced a roll of rough brown cloth and three comic masks, with long, beak-like noses. Then, with the mess-boy's help, Shiner & Co. wrapped the brown cloth in one great piece around their three bodies, giving themselves the appearance of having one exceedingly broad and fat body and three heads. When, afterwards, they adjusted the masks on their faces, little Woo Sam almost fell off the roof from laughter.

"The Tlee-headed Condor!" he giggled. "Me t'inkee nicee ole Shiny and fiends plenty scare people who pinchee Corny."

The raggies drew the winglike glider a little towards them. "Ay, matey, you bet we'll give 'em the bird!" grinned Shiner. "Hallo! I think I can hear the doors of the temple opening."

Woo clambered to the flat top of the temple, and squirmed his way along on his stomach. He saw that some Chinese had begun to gather outside the building, but he could make out nothing of Corny.

Suddenly he gave a start at the sight of one burly Chink, and hastily shinned back to where his three pals were awaiting him.

"Great sea-serpents!" ejaculated Shiner. "There's old Wonky himself, and he's making off with a prisoner—a Navy man!"

"Gurney!" yelled Tich. "It's Gurney himself!"

Woo, who had clambered down from the temple roof, came running to them.

"Ole Wonky catchee Gurney allee light!" he cried excitedly. "Me t'inkee you makee mistake when you lead note froom ole Bodger, Shiny."

"Must have done!" exclaimed Shiner. "The handwriting of that young beast Stoop is so bad that I thought he'd written 'Corny,' but it was Gurney."

By this time Dusty, though wounded astern, had joined his chums at the palisade. With popping eyes, he watched Gurney being dragged off by Wong Kiang, the bloodthirsty Chinese pirate.

"Sufferin' catfish!" he gurgled, reeling faintly. "And to think, mateys, by our interfering action we might ha' rescued him!"

The 4th Chapter. Gurney in the Soup.

THE relief of seeing Gurney going off in company with Wonky lasted but a brief space. Then Shiner & Co. put aside the thought of their past wrongs, and remembered that, although Gurney was a gorilla aboard the Buzzfly, he yet wore the uniform of their own Service.

"Tar me!" grunted Shiner. "We've simply got to rescue him!"

"Whaffor, Shiny?" inquired Woo Sam. "Me t'inkee that p'laps, if we no buttee in, Wonky plenty soon boil old Gurney in oil."

"You don't understand, Woo," remarked Tich. "We can't let one of our own race be boiled, fried, or roasted by a gang of giddy pirates."

"I'm afraid not," mumbled Dusty, shaking his head. "It's our painful duty to rescue that frabjous he-bear from the pirates, and restore him safe to the Buzzfly, so that he can knock seven bells out of us for the rest of our stay on the China Station."

Being a Chinaman, Woo did not quite understand this viewpoint, but he gamely agreed to go on the track of Wonky.

Dusk was fast deepening as the boys cautiously followed the pirate chieftain and his prisoner out through the rough country beyond Hoochow. The pirates and temple guardians had scattered in all directions, but two or three of his gang joined Wonky about three miles from the town.

Finally, as the moon came out, flooding the country with light, Wonky came to a one-roomed bungalow, with a thatched roof, in a rocky valley. He pushed the prisoner inside, and the other Chinks followed him. Quickening their pace, Shiner & Co. silently reached the building and peered through the holes in the ancient wall.

An amazing sight met their eyes. Inside was a dirty, barren room, with a couple of Chinese lanterns suspended from black rafters. Gurney, with his hands tied behind him and his ankles now bound, was propped with his back against a wall. Wonky and a couple of pirates were leaning against another wall, laughing uproariously, while a fourth Chinaman was heaving knives at the unfortunate captive.

Smack, smack, smack!

The dull thud of the knives synchronised with violent heartbeats of the raggies as they watched. In a few moments there were a dozen knives sticking in the wall all round Gurney's body, and the Chink was making ready to throw a thirteenth.

Shiner gripped the arms of Dusty and Tich and drew a sharp breath.

Smack!

The thirteenth knife struck the woodwork and quivered so that the handle flicked Gurney's ear.

"Corks! Missed him again!" gurgled Dusty.

Little Woo drew the three Navy boys away from the building.

"Me hear Wonky say he no killee Gurney!" he whispered. "Good!" said Shiner. "That's a relief, anyway."

"Instead, Wonky allee same give him taste of bamboo on nicee big feet of ole Gurney."



GOOD EGG! Shiner cut the rope, and the unpopular petty officer dived head-first into a basket of Chinese eggs. "Good egg, Shiner!" yelled Dusty and Tich but, as it happened, most of the eggs in the basket were bad!

"A licking!" hooted Dusty joyously. "Well, that's just what he deserves, and I'm all for letting the Chinks get on with the job."

The others were of the same opinion—that it was poetic justice for Gurney to get a taste of the bamboo. But all were equally agreed that they would risk their lives, if necessary, to prevent him from being seriously injured by the pirates.

As Shiner started to edge towards the building again, Woo gestured towards the thatched roof. One after another they silently clambered aloft, and were hardly settled when a Chinaman emerged to act as sentry.

A family of storks lived on the roof, but they were tame and took no notice of the boys. The birds were handy in the circumstances, too, for the raggies were able to scratch holes in the thatch through which to peer, without rousing the suspicion of the pirates in the room below. If Wonky and his men heard the noises at all, they undoubtedly put them down to the storks.

Peering through the openings, Shiner & Co. saw Gurney hauled on his back and his boots and socks dragged from his feet.

"We can't let 'em do this to him!" gasped Shiner. "It's a bit too thick!"

"Gr-r-rrh, you yellow swabs!" they heard Gurney growl fiercely. "Wouldn't I like you among my crew aboard the Buzzfly for half an hour! I'd hot it up for you!"

"I'm going down!" exclaimed Shiner. "It'll be torture for Gurney if they start on him!"

As he jerked himself violently towards the edge of the roof there was the loud cracking of timbers as the rotten old supports under the thatch gave way.

Crash!

"Yaroooh!"

Down came the four boys amid a shower of broken woodwork and a cloud of dusty thatch.

Shiner landed full on Wonky's shoulders, and the pirate chief thudded face forward on to the dirty wooden floor. Dusty fell on Gurney, almost laying him out. Tich and Woo dropped between the other two amazed pirates, and, bruised though they were, quickly bounded to their feet and laid about them with right good will.

Under the impact of the raggies' fists, the yelping Chinamen ran for the open, just as the fellow who was acting as sentry entered the bungalow. Bawling in Chinese that they were being attacked, they butted into their comrade, hurtling him on to the back of his neck. Though hurt, the sentry scrambled up, and, leaving his gun behind him, followed hot-foot in the wake of his piratical pals.

Inside the bungalow Petty Officer Gurney recognised the lad who had crashed on top of him. And, though somewhat short of breath, for Dusty was sitting dazedly on top of him, he gave a gasp of sheer joy. Never in his life had he been so pleased to see the raggies!

"C'mon the Navy!" he panted.

The choking cry was heard by Wong Kiang, whose nose was looking considerably the worse for wear. He caught a glimpse of his under-

lings beating it for the bush, and, deciding that a landing-party from the Buzzfly had routed him out, grabbed the big bamboo and laid about him.

Shiner, who luckily had only sustained a sprained left wrist and a grazed cheek, jumped up, and, diving under the bamboo, planted his right full on the Chink's thick lips.

Wong thudded back against the wall so heavily that he shook the whole building.

"Bag the bounder!" bellowed Shiner.

The shout roused Wonky to his danger as nothing else had done. He slung the heavy bamboo full at Shiner, but the boy ducked in a flash, and the stick smote Dusty, who had just risen from Gurney's prostrate form.

To Dusty's disturbed senses a sudden burst of stars seemed to come through the roof, and, swaying dizzily, he reeled backwards and sat down with a bump on Gurney's head again.

"Ow!"

He went straight into the air as though made of indiarubber, for although Gurney's hands and feet were tied, he had no gag in his mouth, and his teeth were in good working order.

Wonky, the pirate, did not stay, however, to see the result of his feat with the bamboo. Directly he had thrown it, he dashed out of the door with Shiner and Tich in hot pursuit.

"No go chasee ole Wonky!" howled little Woo. "Makee get-away quick. Wonky plenty soon bling too muchee pirates back!"

The little freak's right, matey!" puffed Shiner. "Alter course back for the bungalow, Tich! We know the country's full of Wonky's ruffians, and it's up to us to get old Gurney away while the going's good."

Sprinting back, they barged into Dusty near the door.

"Just our blessed luck!" muttered Dusty, in an undertone. "Just when old Wonky was going to tickle that gorilla Gurney up with the bamboo, too!"

"The disappointment's terrible, mate," admitted Shiner. "But you leave it to me!"

He rushed across to the centre of the room, where Gurney was vainly struggling to get to his feet.

"Quick, petty officer—quick!" he hooted. "Out of it for your life! The country's swarming with pirates!"

He and his pals dragged Gurney to his feet, and hustled him through the door.

"Half a mo!" gurgled Gurney. "What about me hands and me ankles! Cut these ropes and look lively!"

"Got a knife, Dusty?" demanded Shiner.

Dusty flapped his hands over himself.

"N-unno!" he replied. "It's most misfortunate; I've left it aboard."

"Stop that shoving!" hooted Gurney, hopping violently to the vigorous efforts of the raggies. "Cut these bonds, I tell you!"

"How can we?" piped Tich. "Take my tip and hop along, petty officer, unless you want them pirates to tickle the soles o' your plates-o'-meat with a bamboo again!"

Gurney groaned and hopped the faster over the rough ground.

"Me boots!" he hooted suddenly. "Go and fetch 'em, you wonky-eyed yellow freak!"

"That's you, Woo matey!" said Shiner, as the little messboy stared. "No can do," replied Woo promptly.

Muttering savagely, Gurney went hopping across the rough country like a particularly fat and ungainly kangaroo.

"Keep going! Keep going!" urged Shiner. "You're doing fine!"

The sight of Gurney hopping through the night with his hands tied behind him, his ankles bound, and a long rope trailing from the back of his feet, caused the four boys to cut curious capers as they shoved him along. They squirmed and doubled up as though in severe pain, and alternately burst into violent fits of coughing. In fact, their efforts to bottle up their laughter almost choked them.

"Phew! Whooh!" puffed Gurney. "I—I think we've shaken those Ch-Chinks off now."

"I can see summat right astern, mate!" cried Dusty hastily. "For the love of Mike, keep a-going! Think of the bamboo and your feet!"

Gurney exploded into awful groans. "Tearin' typhoons! I am a-thinking of me feet!" he cried. "This blessed bit o' country must be made o' broken slates! Ow! O-oh, my blisters!"

"Blisters have you got?" inquired Dusty, with the utmost concern. "You're getting blisters, you say?" "Scores of 'em!" moaned Gurney. Curious noises which might have been murmurs of sympathy, or might not, came from the cock-a-whoop raggies.

"Look here, you young lubbers," bellowed Gurney, thoroughly annoyed, "you get a knife—see?—and cut these bonds! Hang the pirates!"

"That's what we're going to do when we catch 'em, old sport!" said Shiner soothingly. "But you must hop into town, 'cause we can't borrow a knife out here in this wilderness. Be reasonable!"

So, with many gasps and groans, Gurney hopped into the outskirts of Hoochow, and was soon being followed by a delighted crowd of young Chinks, who thought this was some new kind of entertainment for their benefit. When a few small cash coins began to rattle on the cobbled stones around Gurney's blistered feet the P.O.'s rage knew no bounds.

"Look here, you grinning young jackanapes," he hooted, glaring at

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(Continued on page 416.)

ON THE WAY TO WEMBLEY! Chick gets a few shocks before he arrives at the ground for the Albion's great Semi-final game! Chick's as plucky as they're made; he's the boy to take the team to Wembley!

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**, **Bonsor**—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.

Chick secures the transfer of an expensive Scots footballer named **McCrail**, and is accused by **Gregon**—a scoundrelly Albion director—of spending too much money. The young manager gets the better of **Gregon**, however—in fact, the director is reprimanded by the rest of the board—and his hatred of Chick is increased.

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

The Plot.

FRED TOMLIN was waiting on the platform at Oldfield Central Station. His friend **Huddleston** had obtained a couple of days' leave to visit a relative who was lying dangerously ill in Manchester, but Tomlin knew that the relative in Manchester was a myth, and that **Huddleston** had been to visit a friend of his who was the skipper of a vessel now lying in the Mersey.

It was the Tuesday evening before the much-talked-of Semi-final at Liverpool, and Oldford were now the favourites. In the away match on Saturday, **McCrail**, benefiting by the constant practice with the team, had given a great display, showing himself an artist both in attack and defence, and the Albion had had a day out, winning six-nil, going up to second place in the table, with a superior goal average to the leaders.

It was a condition of affairs that greatly annoyed **Fred Tomlin**, but his hopes were fixed upon **Huddleston**.

The train from Liverpool and Manchester steamed in a few minutes late, and the burly left-winger joined him.

"It's all right!" he said excitedly. "Got everything fixed! Let's go somewhere where we can talk."

They made for a public-house, and, seated in the corner of an almost empty smoke-room, **Huddleston** explained what had happened.

Hobbs and his two companions had been hiding from the police, and had been kept at Tomlin's expense. They had threatened to tell the police of his connection with the attempted kidnapping of **Marjorie Mainland** if they should be arrested. Now they had got safely to Liverpool, and were hiding on the ss. **Luke Lovard**, which was in dock and loading with a cargo for the Argentine.

"My pal, the skipper, is hurrying things so as to sail early on Saturday morning, and arrangements have been made for the distinguished guest, who doesn't know that he's going on a sea voyage for the benefit of his health, to go aboard on Friday night."

Huddleston spoke with grim humour, but **Fred Tomlin** was in no mood for joking.

"What's the arrangement? I hope you've told them that he's a fighter?"

"You bet I did, so did **Hobbs** and his two pals—they've had some!" replied **Huddleston**. "This is what is being arranged. Just after the team have had their dinner on Friday, a chap who looks the part is going to call upon **Chick Chandler**, representing himself to be a detective in the Liverpool police. He'll tell him that they've arrested a man on suspicion of being **Hobbs**, the man wanted by the Oldford police, and that Oldford has told them he—**Chandler**—was in Liverpool, was in a position to identify the man if he was **Hobbs**, and would he go round to the station? Of course he'll go, and there will be half a dozen hefty chaps waiting for him in a slummy street, so if he fought like three men he'd be outnumbered by over two to one. We're not taking any risks. My pal, the skipper, says he'll enjoy taming a young man like that, and you're paying him well."

"I should think I was!" said **Fred Tomlin** mournfully.

He hated to think what this business was costing him, but when he left his friend and set off home he cheered himself with the thought of what it was going to mean to him.

There would be no more anxiety about **Hobbs** and his companions, no more blackmail to pay, but that was a comparatively small part of the business. The big thing was that he was getting rid of **Chick Chandler**. With his young rival out of the way, he would again be playing for Oldford Albion, and pretty **Marjorie**, deserted mysteriously by the young manager, should be comforted by him. Then, with luck, **Tomlin** hoped to win her before she learnt that she was heiress to ten thousand pounds.

Saturday was going to be a great day. All Oldford was excited about it; but wouldn't they be excited if they knew what was going to happen to the young star who had made the Albion's attack dreaded by every club that had to meet them!

Caught!

AS many members of the Push Gang as possible were at the station to see the Albion off to Liverpool, and a section of them would be travelling to the great city on the Mersey by the excursion trains the next day.

"The poorer chaps are saving up for Wembley," Sam declared.

"Let's hope it's bright and breezy!" said **Bones**, a little gloomily.

He was pained because **Chick** had given firm orders that **Buster** was not to be taken to Liverpool, and even the young manager's promise that if the Albion went to Wembley the venerable one should go, too, did not greatly cheer him.

Marjorie, who was unable to get away herself, was at the station to see the team off. **Miskin** travelled with the team, for the little man was so bubbling over with excitement that he felt he could not stay in Oldford. **Gregon** was not among

the crowd to see them off. He was sulking, and at the moment was a very unpopular man in the town, for though most people gave him the benefit of the doubt, at best he had been very unwise.

The train steamed out of the station amid loud cheers for **Chick**, **Green**, and **Sandy Andy McCrail**, who, since his display last Saturday, had become a popular hero. The jazz-band blared, and the strains of the "Chick, chick, chick" song rang out loudly and triumphantly.

Chick Chandler was a very happy young man as he settled down for the journey. He had got ten men in the pink of condition—men quietly full of confidence and determined to reach Wembley—to support him against the great **Maston Villa** team on Liverpool's ground, and though he was not one to crow, he felt that, given ordinary luck, the Albion would be making the journey to London in a month's time.

It was six o'clock when they reached Liverpool, and after leaving their bags at a big hotel near Lime Street Station, the men had a stroll to stretch their legs before going in to dinner. **Chick** noticed that the raw young man from **Pitstruther** appreciated hero-worship, and that there were plenty of men ready to spoil him, so he decided to keep a sharp eye on the Scots lad that evening, and not take any risks.

The team, of course, was in strict training and had a specially prepared meal, but quite an attractive one, though there were no sweets, no wines, and no smokes.

"Boys," said little **Mr. Miskin** jerkily, "if you win to-morrow, I'll say hang to training! I'll stand a feed. Many smokes as you like. Don't care if we go down wallop next week!"

"Don't you, old son?" said **Chick**, under his breath. "Well, I do! Have to keep you within reasonable limits!"

Although it was the Cup that mattered most, **Chick Chandler** was out for the double event—he wanted to see the Albion not only winners of the Cup, but figuring in the premier division next season.

As the men rose from the table, he joined **McCrail**.

"Look here, **Sandy**. I don't know Liverpool well, nor do you. Shall we take a walk round together?"

"Och!" said the brawny Scot, feeling flattered by the invitation from the young man, whom he had quickly realised was the man who mattered in his new club.

As they passed out into the lobby, the hall porter came up to **Chick**.

"You're **Mr. Chandler**, sir, aren't you?"

Chick nodded. "Detective-sergeant **Smith** is asking to see you for a few moments on important business."

A neatly dressed, rather military-looking man stepped forward.

"I'm sorry to disturb you, sir, at such a time. But we have detained a man whom we have reason to believe is the man **Hobbs**, who is wanted by the Oldford police, and about whom information was circulated some time ago. We have been in communication with the chief

inspector at Oldford, and he tells us that you know **Hobbs** well, and that if you would be good enough to accompany me to the station, both time and expense could be saved. If you identify him, they will send a man to receive him into custody when he has been before the magistrate in the morning. There would be no need for you to attend the court."

"Well, that's a lick!" gasped **Chick**. "**Hobbs** free all this time, and your people getting him—or thinking they've got him—just as I happen to be in the city! I can identify him all right. Come on, **Sandy**, we'll trot round to the police-station first."

"There's no need for your friend to attend," said the detective hastily. "Your—"

"My young friend doesn't know **Hobbs** from **Adam**, but we're spending the evening together. This business won't take any time, and anyway **Mr. McCrail** comes, too."

The police officer seemed a little annoyed, and **Chick** supposed that he had broken some red-tape regulation. But his manner showed the man that he meant to keep an eye on **Sandy**, and that if crossed in that matter, **Hobbs** or the man who resembled him, could stay in his cell, and await identification by the Oldford police.

So the three set off together. **Chick** was ready to chat, but the detective seemed morose, and **McCrail**, as usual, had precious little to say for himself.

"I thought that the police-station was in **Dale Street**," said the young manager, who had walked along that famous thoroughfare before dinner.

"That's the main station, sir," replied his companion. "Our man is down at the riverside station, where we deal with that sort of case."

"Oh, I see," said **Chick**, who was becoming a little surprised at the length of the walk, and the squalor of the neighbourhood.

"This is a short cut," said the man, and turned into a dark alleyway.

And then there was suddenly a certain liveliness, for men darted out of the shadows. **Chick**, taken by surprise, was nearly knocked down, but sent a man flying.

"Look out, **Sandy**, we're trapped!" he shouted.

"Och!" said the brawny Scot, and **Chick**, punching a man on the jaw, saw a huge red, rawboned fist come into heavy contact with a wicked-looking face.

Then something hit him heavily on the back of the head, and he felt his senses leaving him!

Trapped in a Tramp.

CHICK CHANDLER'S first discovery as consciousness returned to him on the Saturday morning was that something was wedged tightly into

his mouth, while his hands and feet were bound!

"This is a lick!" he murmured into the wad of cotton-waste that impeded speech and tasted most unpleasant.

Slowly recollection came back. He had arrived in Liverpool for the Semi-final; he had dined with the Oldford Albion team. He had been going to take that dour young Scot, **Andy McCrail**—the Albion new centre-half—for a walk, when a detective had asked him to go to the police-station to identify the man **Hobbs**, who was wanted by the Oldford police.

He had walked into a trap!

That was galling, but he remembered the short fight against heavy odds. He had laid out a man, so had the brawny Scottish centre-half; then had come that terrible bang on the head—probably a bludgeon—and he had known no more. Vaguely he wondered what had happened to **Sandy**, and then he became intensely interested as to what had actually happened to himself.

He had come to Liverpool to lead the Albion against **Maston Villa** in the match that meant Wembley for the winners, and now he found himself gazing up at what might possibly be the roof of a police-cell, but somehow vaguely suggested the interior of a ship.

A ship!

There were movements above his head, a thudding of feet, something was creaking.

Clang, clang!

With clearing brain, if aching head, **Chick** recognised that sound all right. It was the engine-room telegraph-bell on a steamer. He was lying trussed up and helpless on a ship that was just beginning to put out to sea!

Desperately he struggled to release his hands, but the only effect was to make the cords cut into his flesh. He tried to rise and look around him, but he could not; he seemed almost paralysed, and that horrible stuff in his mouth was making him feel sick.

"Whist, mon! Keep still!"

The voice beside him startled him. He would have cried out had he been able to do so. It was **Andy McCrail's** voice, and he saw the big, gaunt Scot beside him.

With wildly-staring eyes **Chick** felt the Albion's new player busy on the cords that bound his aching wrists. Then that horrible gag was pulled from his mouth and in a few minutes his legs were also free.

He sat up and gazed eagerly round. They were obviously in the fo'c'sle of a steamer. Immediately in front of him was a steep flight of steps leading from the scuttle on the deck, and behind him was a long deal table with the remains of a meal upon it, and round the sides were rows of bunks. He looked at his watch. It was still going, and announced the time as being ten minutes past eight.



GOT HIM! From where he lay, gagged and bound, **Chick** saw **Sandy** grab the burly sailor and yank him off the steps. The fellow crashed to the floor with a thud—knocked out! **Chick** and **Sandy** had taken the first step towards escape.

Chick's brain was working quickly. They had been kidnapped, and were being borne away to some unknown destination, when, in a few hours, they were due to play against Manton Villa in the Semi-final for the Cup on the big ground in Anfield Road.

"Can you swim?" he asked his companion.

"Och!" replied his companion. "I can swim alright!"

"Well, our only chance is to make a swim for it before the vessel leaves the Mersey. She's only just getting clear of her moorings now, and evidently all the crew are being kept busy, but as soon as they get really going someone is pretty sure to come down. We must knock him out and then make a dash for it."

"Och!" said Sandy; and the two crack players remained gloomily silent for a while.

Clang! Clang! Clang! The telegraph-bell rang out sharply again, the noise of the throbbing engines became louder and the speed was accelerated. Chick reckoned they must be going at half-speed now, and men were moving quickly about the deck above them; they heard the rattle of a donkey-engine and the clank of chains.

"How on earth did you get free?" asked Chick abruptly, remembering how tightly he had been bound.

"Ma brither taught me," replied Sandy. "I was going into his business; but, losh, there's more money in footba'!"

Chick learnt that McCraill's brother made his living by allowing himself to be bound up, and then freeing himself from his bonds, and that he had taught Sandy many of his tricks, so that those big, red, awkward-looking fingers could undo knots that would defeat ninety-nine men in a hundred.

Sandy had been partly conscious when bound, and instinctively he had tautened his muscles; upon recovering consciousness—some time before Chick—he had promptly put into practice the useful knowledge he had gained before making a name for himself as a footballer.

"Well, we've both of us got good cause to be grateful to your brother, but we're not out of the wood yet," said Chick. "Look here, Sandy, I've just been thinking; anyone opening the scuttle would see I was free, and give the alarm. Just fix me up to look as though I am still gagged and bound, then you stand over there, out of sight. As soon as anyone appears on the steps seize hold of his legs, and pull the man down with a rush, and we'll be on him and 'out' him before he can cry out."

The brawny Scot nodded, whereat Chick was made to appear as though he were still bound and gagged.

"Losh, mon, I wish they'd hurry!" said Sandy McCraill. "I'm an awfu' sailor, and each minute it's getting us nearer the sea."

Chick was worried, too.

He had no idea as to their position. They might have left a dock well up above the landing-stage, or one quite close to the mouth of the river, though, from the speed of the vessel, he felt fairly sure that she was still going cautiously down the river. He longed for action, and yet was afraid to be too precipitate, for a false step would finish them.

Then, after what seemed hours, there was a rattle at the top of the steep companion-way, the scuttle opened, a foot appeared.

Chick drew in his breath. The crucial moment had arrived; someone was coming down!

At the Mouth of the Mersey.

CHICK had credited the Scotsman with quite a fair amount of strength, but the way he dealt with that man descending the companion-way took him by surprise.

It certainly surprised the victim! It all happened in a flash—a big man half-way down the steep steps, a sudden rush, a steel-like grip, the swift yanking of the big man off the steps, the dull thud. There was no need for Chick's intervention, for the man's head had hit the floor before he could cry out, and he lay like a log.

Immediately Chick pulled off his overcoat, and he had his shoes off in a flash.

"Quick, Sandy; off with coats and boots!"

"Mon," said Sandy, "these are bonnie boots. Happen I'll be able to carry them in one hand and swim with the other."

There was no time for argument, and, after all, the boots could be dropped if they were a handicap.



LUCKY LADS! Sandy barged past Chick and slammed at the ball with all his strength. The leather whizzed away and hit the Villa back on the side of the head, knocking him half off his feet as it skidded into the back of the net. The Albion took the lead with that lucky goal!

"All right!" said Chick. "Follow me and make for the side. Hit out at anyone who tries to stop you, and our one chance is speed; we must be in the water before they can fully realise what has happened."

"Och!" said Sandy; and, in his shirt-sleeves, and carrying his boots in his left hand, he quickly followed the very young manager of Oldford Albion up on to the deck.

And as he emerged from the scuttle, Chick met the captain.

It was a dramatic meeting. Chick knew he was the captain by the three faded gold rings on the cuff of his old jacket. A great hulking, bullying man, who had clearly been about to pay a visit to the boys he thought were safely trussed up.

There was no explanation or by your leave from Chick Chandler. He drove his fist with all his force into the red, bloated face, and the burly skipper sat down violently upon the deck. A cadaverous-looking mate made a spring for Chick, just as another man—whom he recognised as the "detective" of the previous night—rushed upon him, and Chick felt that they were beaten.

Ough!

The cadaverous mate was writhing on the deck; one of Sandy's bonnie boots had taken him squarely on the side of the head.

"Well bowled!" shouted Chick, making a nasty mess of the "detective's" face. "Come on, Sandy!"

The big, raw-boned Scot sent another man flying with a terrific punch on the jaw, then dashed after his young manager. A big man made as though to intercept him, and got Sandy's other boot full on his jaw.

Splash!

Chick was in the water, he turned on his back, saw Sandy taking a dive from the side of the vessel towering above him.

Splash, and the sandy head bobbed up beside him.

Although Chick Chandler had never been to Liverpool before, he knew sufficient of the geography of the place to realise that the pier in the distance was that of New Brighton, and that that was the place to make for.

Clang, clang, clang!

The engines of the vessel they had just so sensationally left had been stopped, and, glancing round, he saw that the steamer was being hove to and that they were preparing to lower a boat.

It was best part of a mile to the shore; it was obvious that a boat would overtake them before they could reach it, and that a knock over the head with an oar would leave them helpless in their enemies' hands.

And then he saw a motor-boat making for them from the shore!

"Saved!" he shouted encouragingly to his companion.

Meanwhile, the pursuing boat had shot away from the side of the steamer they had left.

Chug, chug, chug!

The motor-boat was almost upon them; a bearded fisherman in shabby blue jersey and thigh boots was at the tiller. Suddenly he shut off his old-fashioned engine, skilfully brought his rapidly slowing boat up to the two swimmers, and the two

soaked and tired young men climbed in.

"Look here," said Chick, with an anxious eye on the approaching rowing-boat. "We're members of the Oldford Albion football team, and were kidnapped last night. Take us ashore and we'll pay you a couple of pounds."

At first the fisherman—who thought that Chick and Sandy were deserters from the steamer—refused, but eventually Chick convinced him of his real identity. The fact that the steamer was recalling the pursuing boat, and was preparing to head towards the sea, also proved to him that what Chick told him was probably the truth.

So the bewildered fisherman, on seeing the wet notes that Chick produced from his hip-pocket, announced himself as being perfectly willing, and, swinging over the tiller, headed for New Brighton pier.

"That's the Luke Lovard, bound for the Argentine," said the fisherman. "Her skipper always has difficulty in getting a crew, and I suppose a gang of toughs thought you looked likely chaps and shanghai'd you aboard her. It looks as though the old man had a pretty shrewd suspicion that there'd been dirty work, or he would have chased you ashore."

"Oh, he knew all right!" said Chick grimly. "But there's more in this than meets the eye."

He shivered as the boat headed for the pier; he felt like a drowned rat, and glanced anxiously at McCraill. The business was enough to give them both a severe chill, and might still keep them from playing in the Semi-final that afternoon.

They raced down the pier and dashed into a big hotel close to it. Fortunately the manager was a keen football fan, and, as he recognised

Chick at once, there was little delay in giving an explanation. After swallowing a stiff dose of hot grog, the two players were rushed to hot mustard baths, and then the telephone got busy.

First little Mr. Miskin, accompanied by Tomlin, the trainer, hurried in, looking very anxious.

Then a detective-inspector from Dale Street Station was shown in.

"I can scarcely imagine that the captain of a steamer would lend himself to that sort of thing," the detective said, when Chick had told him the amazing story. "If he did, you may be sure that he took every care to clear himself in the event of a row, and it seems to me useless to go for him. Whether it is true or not, he'll say that he believed you to be two members of the crew he had signed on, and who were brought on board drunk. But it's equally clear that this was no ordinary case. The fact of the man visiting your hotel and posing as a police-officer shows that it was all carefully planned, and that there's someone who knows about your connection with Hobbs behind it."

Tomlin paled. He knew his son Fred hated the young manager, and that he and Huddleston were very thick. Had he suspected he would have warned Chick. He had been against the young manager once, then he had been frightened of him, now he was loyal to him. He could not denounce his own son to the police, especially as he had no real evidence to go upon, but he would give Fred a fright when he got back home.

"It's clear that it was a carefully planned affair, and if I hadn't had McCraill with me, I should now be well out to sea, bound for the Argentine," said Chick. "It strikes me that it's more than on the cards

that Hobbs and his pals are on board."

"That's mere surmise, Mr. Chandler," said the detective. "A wireless message will be sent to the steamer, and I shall immediately get in touch with the Oldford police. Meanwhile, I congratulate you upon your escape, and hope you will be none the worse for your adventure!"

And away in Oldford, a quietly-dressed man who would have passed unnoticed in a crowd, was reading the report from Liverpool that the inspector on duty had just handed him.

"It strikes me that Hobbs himself was the man behind the business," said the inspector. "It's his type of crime. He attacked Chandler with a small gang and got knocked out. By a lot of perjury and a clever lawyer he got away with the charge. Then came the attempted kidnapping of Miss Mainland; that was foiled by those youngsters of the Push Gang with their goat. Now Chandler gets lured from his hotel on the plea of going to identify Hobbs; there is more rough work, and he finds himself on a boat bound for the Argentine."

The detective said nothing, but he went to his room. Unlocking his desk, he took out the papers referring to the Hobbs case—which was among other work he had been patiently following up—and as he did so, a piece of a broken cuff-link fell on his desk. His notes told him that it had been picked up in a house in the "rabbit warren" that Sunday afternoon during the police raid in the hope of rounding up Hobbs and the other two men who were wanted. It's unusual design had led to it being identified by a local jeweller as having been sold by him to Huddleston, the Albion's crack left-winger whom the new manager had caused a great sensation by standing down.

There was a pencilled note that told him that the footballer was, or should be, under observation.

He telephoned to another department in the building, and presently a message came through. Huddleston had visited Liverpool on Monday and returned on Tuesday evening.

"Thanks," said the detective, and made another note.

Patient folk, the police!

Who Goes to Wembley?

AMONG the thousands of excursionists pouring into Liverpool to see the Semi-final for the Cup, members of the Push Gang from Oldford were particularly prominent.

Upon their arrival at Liverpool, Sam Snodger and Bonsor—the chief lieutenants of the Gang—with half a dozen boon companions, decided to get something to eat and then take a tram to the ground. Suddenly Sam noticed a placard that a news-bey was holding before him.

"OLDFORD FOOTBALLERS KIDNAPPED! Sensational Story."

Hastily he bought a paper, and the little group gathered round him (Continued on next page.)



TRAPPED!

"Look out, Sandy, we're trapped!" shouted Chick, when the gang were on them. Chick sent one man flying, and crashed his fist to another's jaw, then one of the brutes smashed a club to the back of his head and he went down.



(Continued from previous page.)

and read about what had happened to Chick Chandler and Sandy McCraill.

"This isn't a bit bright and breezy!" said Bones gloomily, as they waited to get on a Scotland Road tram. "The paper says they're all right, but it must have taken a lot out of them."

But in the dressing-room on the Anfield Road ground, the most talked-of man in Liverpool was feeling little or none the worse for his exciting adventure, and Sandy McCraill was as fit as ever he had been.

Several of the Albion players looked nervous as they went out on to the field, even Chick was not quite as calm as usual, and the one really imperturbable member of the team was the big raw-boned Scot.

Maston Villa—whose colours were black shirts and white knickers—had been given a great reception, but that accorded to the wearers of the black-and-orange shirts made it appear tame. For as Chick appeared leading his men on to the playing pitch, the jazz band of the Push Gang startled the occupants of the crowded stand, and groups of the Push Gang in different parts of the ground started singing and cheering. There was certainly no lack of enthusiasm as the teams lined up!

Phceeeep!

At the sound of the whistle the band ceased abruptly. The roar died away, only to swell out louder again as the Villa forwards swept down on the Albion goal.

The Push Gang looked anxious.

The Villa winger centred the ball to his inside-right, the Albion back tackled just too late, and the leather was swung across the goalmouth. The Villa's crack International centre-forward got to it, and the Albion's steady, reliable goalie had no earthly with the stinging shot that sent the ball into the back of the net.

"Goal!"

The excursionists from Maston were almost delirious with joy. Cornets blared, rattles went like machine-guns. The people of Liverpool, for the most part neutral, cheered a well-worked-for goal.

"Blessed if this is bright and breezy!" growled Bones to his portly chum. "I told you what it would be, leaving poor old Buster at home!"

"Shut up about the giddy goat!" growled Sam, anxiously watching the teams line up again.

The Albion, determined to equalise, started off with a fine dash. They were all over the Villa; but Chick was fouled just as he seemed certain to score, and the Albion did not benefit from the free kick. Two men were paying particular attention to the Albion's centre-forward, just as the Albion themselves were now carefully marking that flying right-winger.

But Chick kept on trying, and Sandy McCraill was justifying that race to the north and the big transfer fee paid for him. He was absolutely cool and collected. He had taken the measure of Maston's crack International, and, though inclined to play the short-passing game to which he was so used, he was a tower of strength to the Albion.

Darkey Green was off form and giving a poor display—though he worked as hard as any man on the

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field—and Chick badly missed his support in the few opportunities that came his way.

Phceeeep!

Half-time—and Maston Villa were one up!

The resumption was startling enough for anyone. Darkey Green was unmarked when McCraill sent the ball to him. He snapped it up with all his usual dash and was off at full speed with it.

"Centre!" roared the Push Gang.

"Send it in to Chick!"

But Darkey knew what he was doing. He went clean between two Maston men, and then sent in a long, swift pass to Chick.

And Chick Chandler was a shade too fast for the brilliant Villa back. He had the goalie guessing, and a fast, low shot found the net!

The Push Gang let themselves go, and the excursionists from Oldford rejoiced. Chick Chandler had done it again; he had put his team on level terms. The jazz band played the "Chick, Chick" song, and it was taken up by an ever-swelling chorus. They cheered Chick, and they cheered Darkey Green, and the latter felt that life was living again.

Maston Villa, dismayed at the loss of their lead, attacked strongly. Five

minutes later the Albion goalie brought off the save of his life, leaping high into the air and catching the ball when it seemed bound to enter the net.

"Saved, sir!"

All but the most partisan supporters of Maston applauded that wonderful save, and then came another sensation.

Sandy had got Darkey going again. Darkey had centred to Chick, and the young manager looked like repeating his previous performance, when the back charged him off the ball; but before he could clear it, McCraill—who had followed up—charged like a bull upon the ball, and shot.

It was a wild shot. It went high and the direction was poor, but it had the force of a projectile behind it, and there was a sudden howl of amazement from the spectators.

The ball had hit the Villa left-back on the side of the head, sent him stunned to the ground, and then re-

bounded into the net! It was a freak goal, but a goal that counted, and it put Oldford Albion one up.

The supporters of the Albion, led by the elated Push Gang, were yelling with delight, the Liverpool people were laughing over the goal that would be talked of for days, and the men from Maston were looking glum.

"That was a licker!" said Chick, with a grin. "That shot will make you famous, Sandy!"

With the game drawing towards a close, Maston were going all out. A thin, drizzling rain had started, making the ground in front of each goal decidedly treacherous, and the players swarming round the Albion's goal, after a great rush down the left wing, had a job to keep their feet. Then suddenly the men wearing black-and-white ribbons gave a great triumphant roar.

The goalie had skidded and fallen when rushing across to clear a very tame shot, and the ball had rolled gently into the net!

Maston Villa had equalised, and only five minutes remained for play!

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"RAGGIES" OF THE RAMBLER!

(Continued from page 413.)

Woo, "you ask one of these other blessed heathens to lend you something to cut these bonds!"

"Me get somet'ing heap quick, nicee kind Gurney," replied Woo. "Please squattee down in stleet for halfee mo!"

For the next five minutes or so, while a huge crowd gathered, Woo appeared to make frantic efforts to obtain something. Finally, he arrived bearing a large nutmeg-grater.

"Why the thump didn't you get a knife, you young idiot?" roared Gurney. "Still, anything will do! These ropes are only fibre, and you can soon file 'em away with that, Bright, I expect."

"Lemme do it," pleaded Dusty.

Shiner refused to part up; and after about fifteen minutes' work Gurney, with his hands and ankles well scraped with the grater, found himself free again.

"Hi! A rickshaw!" he bellowed. And, muttering fiercely under his breath, he engaged the first two-wheeled vehicle to arrive, and drove through the cheering mob back to the Buzzfly.

The raggies fell into one another's arms, feeble with laughter.

"I'm glad we rescued him," Shiner said. "And jolly glad, too, that we've had a bit of our own back!"

They were sobered up by Dusty saying:

"But what about when we get back on board, mates? Crumbs, we sha'n't half be 'for it!'"

When, after waiting an hour, they arrived back in the ship they at once received a message to go and see Gurney in the sick bay. They found the petty officer with his feet in pink bandages, reclining in one of the bunks. To their amazement, however, Gurney offered his hand, and the astounded raggies shook it in turn.

"You fellows saved me from a sticky end at the hands of old Wonky," said the P.O. "And, spike me, you won't find me ungrateful! That was smart of you to rout me out. How did you come to do it?"

"A—a note came aboard the ship, petty officer," replied Shiner; "and, although we wasn't supposed to have leave, we naturally couldn't do nothing else but what we considered our plain dooty."

"That was the right type of Navy initiative, my lads," responded Gurney; "and I'm glad to find as you've been learning something under me, after all. I shall highly commend you to the skipper, so as you won't miss your promotion when it's due."

"Thanks, petty officer! And it would be a great favour if we was put back on the list for leave," murmured Shiner.

Gurney actually smiled. "That's as good as done," he said. "And when I'm better I—I want you all to come and have a right royal feed with me in my mess."

("The Raggies to the Rescue!" is the title of next week's rollicking long complete yarn of fun and adventure in China—Order in advance.)

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