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OF SPORT & ADVENTURE

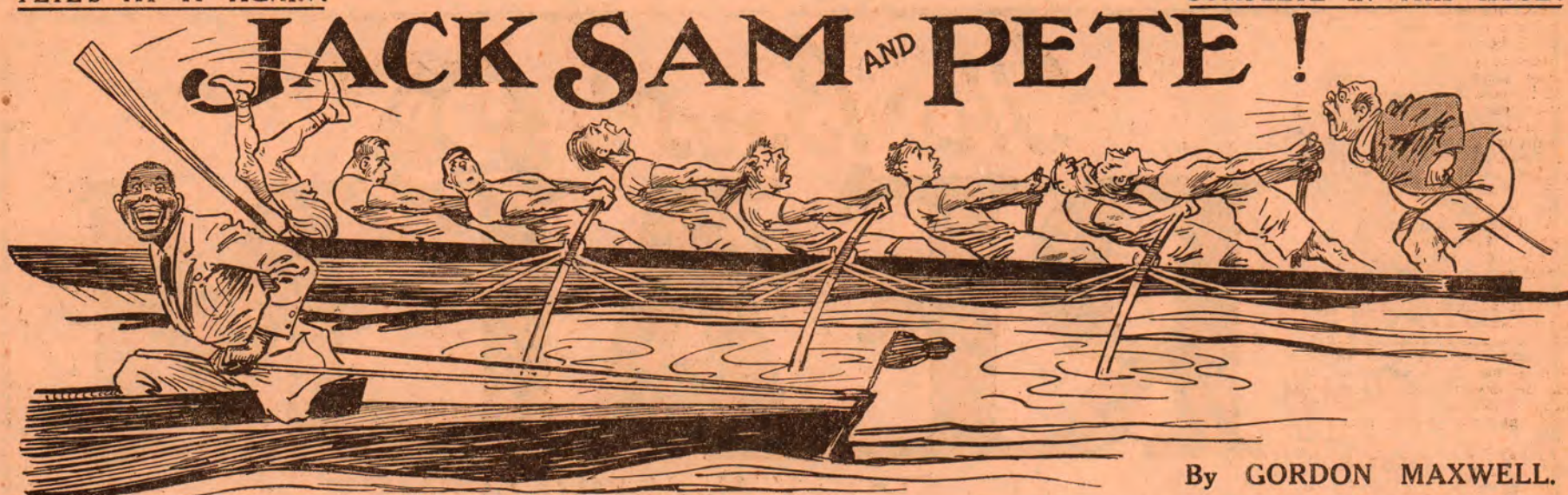


PETE'S BOAT RACE!

A side-splitting long
complete yarn, featur-
ing JACK, SAM, and
PETE.

PETE'S AT IT AGAIN!

COMPLETE IN THIS ISSUE!



By GORDON MAXWELL.

The 1st Chapter.
Very Damp!

"AS I hab often said before," remarked Player Manager Pete, making himself thoroughly comfortable in the stern of the boat, "dere's nothing like plenty ob strenuous exercise for keeping young men in good physical condition. Presactly! Take sculling, frinstance."

"That's a very sound idea, image," drawled Sam Grant, the American member of the famous trio, "and I'll mention that you can take your turn with the oars right now! Here have we been pulling you up and down the river for the greater part of the morning, while you've been lolling back like a fat, lazy Turk!"

"Dat remark is altogether uncalled for, Sammy!" declared Pete, shaking his woolly head. "You ought to know quite well dat I am doing de most important part ob de job. Dere's a great mental strain about steering a craft ob dis description—"

"And there's a great physical strain about pulling a bone-lazy nigger up and down the river!" declared Jack, who looked somewhat moist. "I think I'll do the steering and risk a mental breakdown!"

"No, Jack—I couldn't tink ob it," said Pete. "As I hab already remarked, dere's nothing like plenty ob strenuous exercise— Golly!" he exclaimed, as a trim racing eight flashed past and disappeared round the bend. "Dose lads were going well! I s'pose it wasn't Oxford or Cambridge, by any chance, Jack?"

"No, image," grinned his chum. "Just a local crew, I imagine. But about this steering business. It's certainly time that either Sam or myself relieved you at the helm and allowed you to indulge in some of that strenuous exercise that you've been talking about—"

"Not at all," cut in Pete, somewhat hurriedly. "Smatter ob fact, boys, dere's nothing I don't know about de gentle art ob steering, so it's only right dat I—"

Bump! Smash!
"Hi! Look out, dere, old hoss!" shouted Pete, as his craft shot round the bend and crashed into a dinghy with a force which sent the small boat heeling over on its side. "I'm 'fraid you're going to get damp in a moment, Gumboil, old warrior!"

Pete uttered the prophetic words just as a big-limbed, red-faced man took a violent header out of the dinghy and disappeared with a throaty bellow and a mighty splash, and the surface of the water was lashed into a state of foaming turmoil by the time Gumboil's bald head popped up through the tumble of miniature breakers.

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete, with that brotherly sympathy that he always reserved for his enemy, the Mayor of Seahaven. "I'd got an idea dat you were going to get somewhat damp, my dear old Gumboil!"

It was now some months since Jack, Sam, and Pete had arrived in Seahaven and had settled down. Right from the first, Pete had been up against Amos Gumboil. The trouble had started when Pete had acquired the player-managership of Seahaven Rovers. Gumboil was annoyed with him about it—very annoyed!—because Gumboil had wanted control of the local football team for himself.

As his head broke water he glared at Pete.

"Do something to help me, you black-faced maniac!" shouted Amos, making a noise like a giant grampus. "Are you going to sit there and see me drowned before your very eyes, you villain?"

"No, old hoss," answered Pete; "I shall make a special point ob turning my head away when you go down for de third time! M'yes! Smatter ob fact, Amos, I know you ain't booked for a watery grave, for I happen to know dat you can swim like a bloater!"

"I may be able to swim, you idiot, but it doesn't follow that I'm going to stay here all day, does it?"

"Den what are you going to do about it, old hoss?" asked Pete. "Would you like us to tow you back to de shore?"

"Haul me into your boat, confound you!" shouted the great man, almost swamping the craft as he lashed out with arms and legs. "I shall get cramp in a moment!"

"In dat case," cut in Pete, producing a big boathook, "I'd better use dis harpoon widout delay! M'yes!"

"Be careful with that thing, confound you!" shouted the mayor, as Pete made a tentative lunge at him.

"You'll assist in dis delicate operation if you'll kindly float on your chest, old hoss," said Pete, with a broad grin. "Ah, dat's better!"

Amos was yelling lustily as the steel boathook impaled the rear portion of his trousers, and not a word of gratitude passed his thick lips as Pete swung him over the side and dropped him into the bottom of the boat.

"You're to blame for all my misfortunes, you grinning hound!" he shouted, his close-set little eyes glinting with fury. "You hooligans have no right to be on the river. I'm perfectly certain that you went out of your way to run me down!"

"You're talking through your hat, my dear fellow," said Jack, in his quiet way. "Sam and I were rowing—"

"Rowing? Rowing?" shouted Amos, his throaty voice ringing with scorn. "It's pretty obvious that neither of you know the first thing about the job! And as for that black-faced scoundrel who was steering—" Amos snorted and glared across at Pete. "The river isn't safe with fools like him about!"

"I take it dat you are an expert, my dear old hoss?" remarked Pete.

"Yes, sir, I am an expert!" snorted the mayor, his bloated countenance turning a deep shade of purple. "I don't mind telling you that I know more about rowing than any other man in Seahaven!"

"You really tink dat, old hoss?"

"I don't think—I know!"

"H'm! Now, dat's mighty strange," grinned Pete, "cause it so happens dat I hab forgotten more about de sport dan you hab eber known, my dear old Gumboil!"

"Rot! Utter rot!" shouted Amos. "Did you see that eight that swung along just now?"

"I did, old hoss," answered Pete; "and I must say dat de lads were pulling bery well."

"Exactly, you idiot!" cried Gumboil, baring his gums in a snarl of triumph. "And do you know why they were pulling well?"

"Can't say dat I do, old hoss!"

"Well, I'll tell you, you poor ignoramus!" snorted Amos. "Those lads have been coached by me, sir;

This Week's Side-Splitting Topical Complete Story:
PETE'S BOAT RACE!

they're my own racing crew! So now you understand, perhaps!"

"I didn't know you had a racing crew, old hoss."

"Huh! That's only one of the many things you don't know, you ignorant imbecile! I'm a famous rowing man in this part of the country, so it's no good your trying to bluff me into believing that you know anything about the sport!"

This was a queer kind of reasoning, and Pete ran his fingers through his woolly thatch.

"You know all about rowing—"

"Everything!"

"M'yes! So dat proves dat I don't know anything, my dear old Gumboil? Presactly!"

"I don't give a brass button whether you know anything or not!" blustered Amos, with rising temper. "One thing I do know, though—I'll bet you aren't sportsman enough to put up a crew against mine! I don't mind telling you that my lads are the finest eight in the country; also, you may as well know that they're using a craft that was built in my own boat-yard!"

"Is dat so?"

"Yes, sir; it is so!" snarled Amos.

"Now then, you black scoundrel, what have you got to say to that challenge?" He rubbed his podgy hands together and leered at his enemy. "I reckon I've got you where I want you this time, and I'll see that the story gets all round Seahaven!"

"What story is dat, old hoss?"

"Why, the story of how you're backing out of a sportsmanlike

protest as you brag about everything else, but you aren't so ready to stand by your words, are you?"

"Dat's presactly where you're wrong, dear old Gumboil!" declared Pete, with a broad smile. "Smatter ob fact, I habn't said a word 'bout backing out! What's more, I am ready to accept your challenge—but on one condition!"

The mayor gave a throaty chuckle. "Oh, yes; there's bound to be a condition!" he sneered. "I might have known that! Well, what is your condition, anyway?"

"It's quite a simple one, old hoss, and it should gib you a big advantage, seeing dat you're de greatest rowing man in dis part ob de world! I'll accept your challenge on condition dat you cox your own eight! What hab you got to say to dat, my dear old hoss?"

The 2nd Chapter.
"Gumboil's" Rule!

AMOS had nothing to say for some moments, for about Pete there was an air of quiet confidence which his worship found somewhat disconcerting. For Amos, despite his bragging and bluster, was anything but an expert cox, and it suddenly occurred to him that Pete might not be bluffing, after all. Even so he didn't see how he could back out at the last moment.

"And I suppose you'll cox your eight?" he asked, with a sneer.

"Most certingly, old hoss!"

answered Pete. "I shall be in de boat all right—wid aluminium knobs on! M'yes!"

"Then that's settled!" declared the mayor, forcing an unpleasant grin. "I'll make you the laughing-stock of the river, you poor fool!"

"Dat's all right, old hoss!" returned Pete easily. "I'll chance dat! Now, den, when shall we row de race? Will next Thursday afternoon suit your washup?"

"I want no impertinence, fellow!" thundered Amos, in a voice that echoed over the water. "Thursday afternoon will suit me quite well, but I will let you know if my official duties make it necessary for me to change the date." A shiver ran through his big frame as a gust of wind penetrated his dripping clothing. "Now you can put me ashore—and look sharp about it!"

"How can we refuse dat polite request, boys?" asked Pete, grinning across at his comrades. "Pull up, my noble mariners!"

Amos seemed to have overlooked the fact that the boathook was still attached to the rear portion of his trousers, so he received a mild shock when he was suddenly swung off his feet and Pete held him suspended a moment over the river-bank.

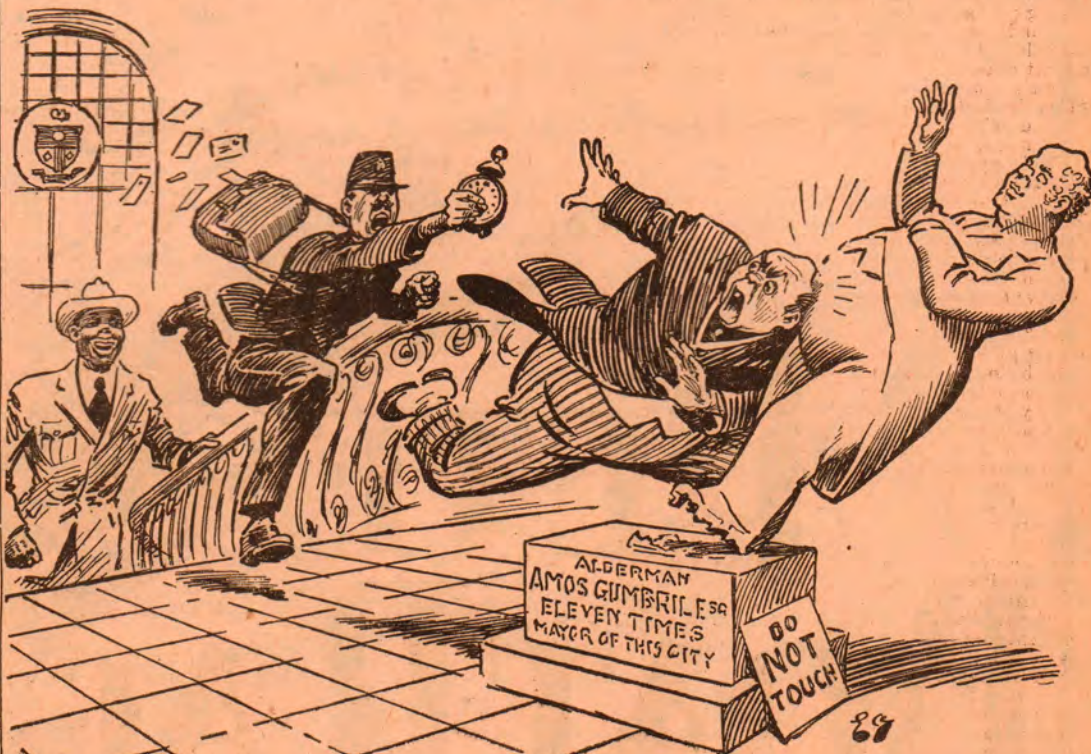
"You look like a wrinkle wriggling on de end ob a knitting-needle!" Pete roared. "Don't wriggle too much, else you might fall off on your nose an' ruin dat schoolboy complexion!"

"Put me down, you black hooligan!" Gumboil yelled.

"Anything to oblige!" said Pete.

And he dumped the mayor on the bank.

Snarling and fuming, Gumboil scrambled to his feet and wrenched viciously at the hook which held him. His fury became almost maniacal



WIND UP! "It's a bomb!" yelled Gumboil, as the postman pursued him with the whirling clock in his hand. Gumboil dashed up the steps and crashed into a statue of himself. The mass of marble heaved over and hit the floor with a mighty, deafening crash that seemed to shake the place to its foundations!

when a loud tearing sound came to his ears and a gust of icy wind chilled him to the toes.

"I'll make you buy me a new pair of trousers, you black scoundrel!" he roared, clapping his hands beneath his coat-tails and finding that a square yard of cloth was missing. "I'll make you pay—"

"Talking about paying, sir," put in a little man, who had raced along the bank on catching sight of his worship, "would you mind settling this bill at once?"

"Would I mind what, you little imbecile?" thundered Amos, towering above the newcomer in threatening fashion. "Do I look as though I'm in a condition to attend to business, you worm? I don't wish to see your confounded bill! I've told you that a dozen times already!"

"I know you have, sir," returned the little man, sticking to his guns, "but that doesn't alter the fact that Toddy Woodman carried out your orders and built a special boat for you!"

"Special boat!" snorted Gumbriel, with a nasty laugh. "Do you really call that ugly tub a boat? You're raving mad, man, and so is Woodman! Why, you two fellows aren't capable of building a paper boat! Go away, you little rat, or I'll chuck you into the river!"

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete. "I hope you don't use dat kind ob language in de mayor's parlour, old hoss! Now den, Henry," he ran on, turning to the diminutive stranger, "what particular brand ob dirty work has his worship been up to dis time?"

"You mind your own business, you hound!" shouted Amos, glaring across at his enemy. "Take my tip and keep your ugly nose out of my affairs!"

"It's Henry's affairs dat I'm tinkin' about, my dear old Gumboil!" smiled Pete. "What's more, I should tink dey are in a mighty bad way if you hab got anything to do wid dem! M'yes! Am I right, Henry?"

The red-haired little fellow with the snub nose did not answer at once, and it was pretty obvious that he was somewhat awed by his worship's blustering manner. Amos, as a matter of fact, was the most influential person in Seahaven, and there were very few townfolk who would run the risk of getting into his bad books.

"Don't answer the impertinent hound!" snorted Gumbriel. "This business is between me and Toddy Woodman!"

"I know it is, sir; so I'm wondering if you could let me have a bit of money on account. You see, sir, I—"

"I don't see!" shouted Amos, working himself into a fury. "I'm willing to admit dat I ordered the boat, but, having seen the finished article, I am perfectly convinced dat it will fall to pieces before it has been in the water for more than ten minutes! I won't accept the thing, and I won't pay for it, and I mean to advertise my reasons for coming to dat decision!"

"I understand dat you make boats yourself, old hoss?" put in Pete, in a quiet voice.

"Well, and what if I do?" snorted Amos, his little eyes blazing.

"And I also understand dat Toddy Woodman is a rival boat-builder."

"Well, confound you?"

"Dat's just it, old hoss," smiled Pete; "it ain't well! 'Smatter ob fact, Gumboil, it looks as dough you're going to do Toddy a bit ob no good ober dis business, don't it? I mean to say, it won't be much ob an advertisement for him, will it?"

"I'd not seen matters in that light!" declared Gumbriel, the lie falling gleefully from his thick lips. "My business methods are always fair and above-board!"

"M'yes!" murmured Pete, shaking his woolly head. "So it seems, old hoss! I look to me as dough you neber meant to use de boat, and I'm inclined to tink dat you hab been guilty ob a particularly unclean bit ob work! 'Smatter ob fact, you're willing to lie until you're blue in de face in order to smash Toddy Woodman and Henry!"

"What do you know about it, you interfering hound?" shouted Gumbriel, showing his ugly teeth in a snarl. "I'll admit dat Woodman is a rival boat-builder, but it doesn't follow dat I would descend to any low or despicable means of doing his business an injury! The mere suggestion is absurd! I have a reputation for straight dealing!"

A noisy splutter came from Henry, and his worship was blue-faced and bellicose as he glared down at the little fellow.

"What's the matter with you, you rat?" demanded the great man.



LOOK WHAT PETE'S CAUGHT! Pete got a fresh grip of the boathook and heaved Gumbriel up. "You look like a very fat wrinkle wriggling on de end ob a knitting needle!" Pete roared. "Don't wriggle too much else you might fall off on your nose an' ruin dat schoolboy complexion!"

"Nothing, sir—nothing!" declared Toddy Woodman's assistant hastily. "Just a tickling in the epiglottis and—"

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete, making the raw air vibrate with his mighty guffaw. "I'm fraid de idea of your doing anyting straight has giben Henry a cold in de head, old hoss! But what are you going to do about dis bill for de boat—"

"Nothing!" roared Amos. "Nothing at all! The craft's badly made, and I refuse to have anything to do with it! Do you understand, you red-headed little rat?" he snarled, looking down into Henry's upturned face. "Go back to Toddy Woodman and tell him dat he won't get a brass farthing out of me!"

His massive frame was quivering with rage and the cold as he swung round and strode off along the towing-path. A shadow passed over Henry's freckled features as he shrugged his shoulders in a hopeless kind of fashion and gazed after the great man.

"H'm! That's torn it, and no error!" he declared emphatically. "Why, what's de matter, Henry?" asked Pete quietly. "What has ripped it?"

"This bad debt," answered the boat-builder, shaking his fiery head. "Amos Gumbriel won't pay a bean, and I know perfectly well dat Toddy won't go to court about it. Toddy's scared of Amos, like most of the tradesmen in the town."

"M'yes!" murmured Pete thoughtfully. "I s'pose dere's nothing de matter wid de craft, old hoss?"

"Not a thing, Mr. Pete!" cried Henry, with a show of enthusiasm. "She's a real beauty, sir; as trim a craft as ever you've seen on this river."

"Den I tink I'd better buzz along and hab a look at her, Henry," said Pete.

"But you don't need a racing boat, do you, sir?"

"'Smatter ob fact, Henry, a racing craft is de bery ting dat I do want at de moment," answered Pete. "and it looks as dough you and Toddy Woodman are going to solbe my difficulty! Where's your yard?"

"Only just along de bank, sir," answered Henry, his freckled face flushed with excitement. "My word, this is a stroke of luck for us, Mr. Pete!"

Toddy Woodman proved to be a sturdy, red-faced old sailorman, with a pair of light blue eyes and a fringe of grey whiskers, and his weather-beaten countenance creased into a beaming smile when Henry told him the good news.

"I give you my word dat you'll find nothing wrong with the boat, sir," he declared, leading the way to his work-sheds. "What's more, I'm willing to wager dat Amos Gumbriel couldn't turn out such a craft in a year of Sundays! That ugly son of a sea-cook is jealous of us, sir, dat's what's the matter with him!"

The famous comrades had a true eye for a boat, and it did not take them long to convince themselves dat the old waterman had not over-rated his craft.

"I'll buy dat, old hoss!" said Pete, producing a bulging notecase.

"'Smatter ob fact, she looks bery good to dis child, and I shall be bery disappointed if I don't win de race wid her!"

"You're rowing against Gumbriel's eight, Mr. Pete?"

"Presactly, old hoss!"

"Then I warn you dat you'll have all your work cut out," said Toddy Woodman, "Cause the Seahaven Rowing Club have got a crack crew!"

"Den it's going to be a mighty fine advertisement for you if we manage to win wid your boat, isn't it?" asked Pete, showing his white teeth in a broad grin. "You leabe eberyting to me, old hoss, for what I don't know 'bout winning a boat race can be engraved on de tip of a gnat's rudder! M'yes!"

The 3rd Chapter. A Bomb for the Boat!

THE news of the forthcoming boat race went through the town of Seahaven with the speed of a prairie fire. Pete,

the Rovers' player manager, was known to everybody in the town, of course, and the fact dat he and Amos were at loggerheads once again added spice to the event dat became the chief topic of conversation throughout the town. Incidentally, Pete enjoyed a popularity which his worship had never known, so it is not surprising, perhaps, dat practically every person in Seahaven wished him the best of luck.

Few people were optimistic for his success, however, for the local rowing club had never had a better crew. As for Pete's eight, they were an unknown quantity, being chosen from the ranks of the Seahaven Rovers' Football Club. Jack and Sam were going to row stroke and bow respectively, whilst Pete was to be cox.

It might also be mentioned dat the whole town knew the story of Toddy Woodman's rejected boat, so everyone was eager to see the craft in the water.

And Amos himself was curious on this score, for he was quick to realise dat he would find himself in a most unenviable position if Pete, by some sort of miracle, managed to win the race. What was more, he found dat he had plenty to think about, for, after watching the rival crew at work upon the river, he was compelled to admit to himself dat Pete and his scratch crew shaped very well; so well, indeed, dat the great man became thoroughly scared.

next. But—dis am important, Gussy!—don't let anybody hear you singin', 'cause dey might discourage you.

M. Clark (Bristol).—One ob your ears am slightly larger dan de odder; can I tell you what to do? Hab you had your ear punched, old hoss, or am it de same size as when you first got it? It it hab been punched, any blacksmith will oblige you by bringin' your little ear up to de size ob de large one—I don't s'pose he'll charge you bery much for de job. If de ear am de same as it has always been, take it back to de shop and change it.

Norman C. Bowen (Battersea).—How'm you fluffin', Norman? Bery glad to hab your letter, and I hope dat your house hab growed anudder chimney by dis time in place ob de one dat de wind blew ober. Dive head-first into a tub ob tar, Norman; nobody won't be able to call you "Ginger" after dat.

P. W. T. (Liverpool).—You can swim like a fish. Dat's nothin', old hoss. Sammy says dat I can eat like a elephant, and I know for a posolute fact dat ebery time old Gumboil falls ober he roars like a lion.

B. Y. (Chesterfield).—Why am wireless called wireless when it uses



Archie Davis (Fawley).—Hab I got any brudders and sisters? I dunno how dat am anyting to do wid you, Archie; still, I'll ask Sammy about it—(Sammy!). I don't tink he heard me dat time, old hoss, I'll try again—(Sammy!). No reply strikes my shell-like ears; let's hab anudder shot—(SAMM-E-E-E!) Still no answer, Archie. 'Smatter ob fact, I hab just giben Sammy a nice li'l box ob bricks to play wid, so I s'pose he am too occupied to take any notice ob me. You'd better ask 'bout my brudders and sisters next week, old hoss; mebbe Sammy'll be about again den.

P. T. (Cambridge).—You want to know what am de difference between a bath and a boiled onion. Listen, old hoss; stand underneaf a window, den get a pal ob yours to drop first de bath and den de boiled onion. You will soon know de difference.

Augustus Martin (Lincoln).—Would I be good enough to tell you how you can become a comedian? Augustus, old hoss, I will tell you wid de greatest ob pleasure. First you must hab a rosy nose; use a large barrel ob red ink for dis. Den learn a good rollicking song wid a libly chorus, someting like "I am a lonely norfan, alone on a lonely sea; nobody seems to lub me, an' I hab not had my tea." Learn de song all de way frough—den write to me again and I'll tell you what to do

George Goodwin (Manchester).—You say dat you want to know if I am bery good looking, or if I am ugly. If I am good looking I'll tell you how you can be good looking as well! M'yes! I am sure dat dere am a catch in dis somewere, Georgie! You know perfectly well dat I am de handsomest man in Seahaven—but if you tink I am goin' to gib away de secret ob my schoolboy complexion, you am mistaken!

**WRITE TO PETE
ABOUT IT!**

One thing was certain—the boat race was not going to be a walk-over for Amos Gumbriel!

"Something's got to be done," mused Amos, on the Wednesday preceding the race. "I'm not going to give dat black hound a chance to crow ober me—and you never know what's going to happen in a boat race! I've got to win the race before it is rowed!"

Amos was that sort of sportsman! It was some hours later, when the river was mist-hung and gloomy, dat Player Manager Pete picked his way through the sable shadows towards Toddy Woodman's boat-building yard.

"My seat seemed mighty hard dis ebening," he mused, as he passed through the gate and padded noiselessly towards the sheds, "so I don't see why I shouldn't experiment wid my patent air-cushion. And p'raps it wouldn't be a bad idea to fix up free-four turbine engines while I'm about it! 'Spity I hadn't tought ob dat! M'yes!"

He came to a sudden standstill as his quick eyes detected a bulky shadow moving about in the blackness.

"H'm! I ain't ob a suspicious nature," he mused, creeping towards the sheds, "but I shall be bery surprised if dat gent isn't Mr. Amos Gumboil! M'yes! I don't s'pose for one moment dat he's up to any monkey tricks; I s'pect he just wants to make sure dat my craft is ship-shape for to-morrow's race. Presactly! M'yes, dat's Amos, right enough; I should know his gentle wheeze anywhere! What dat old hoss wants is a new pair ob bellows!"

Once inside the main shed, Gumbriel switched on a dull glimmer of light, and made his way across to the new boat, and his throaty chuckle echoed through the place as he dropped to his knees and placed a square object beneath the craft.

"I tink dat little firework ought to do the trick, Mr. Blessed Pete!" he muttered, as he straightened himself up and switched off his pocket torch. "My only regret is dat you won't be inside the boat when the explosion occurs!"

"Presactly, old hoss!" murmured Pete, in the darkness.

Amos appeared to be cool and unhurried as he closed the door of the shed and crept quietly out of the yard. No sooner did he disappear into the shadows dan Pete padded across to the door and slipped into the structure.

"H'm! Sounds as dough dere's a clock ticking somewere," he mused.

"and I radersuspect dat dat somewhere isn't a hundred miles away from my boat! Dat's a brilliant bit ob deduction, old hoss! M'yes! As I tought!"

His groping hands had touched something beneath the craft, and, withdrawing the package, he unwrapped it by the light of his electric torch, and saw dat it was a species of clock dat had (Contd. at foot of next page.)

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

wires? I dunno, old hoss—an' here am one dat YOU can't answer, neider! How does a gnat keep his shoes clean when he don't use boot polish?

"Harry" (Beaconsfield).—I am bery glad to know dat you am interested in natural history, Harry. You say dat you want to know why some camels hab got one hump and oder camels hab got two. Well, Harry, de camels dat hab got one hump hab only been biffed in de back once; dose which hab been biffed twice hab got two humps. Dere ain't no camels wid three humps because after dey hab had two biffs, dere ain't no room to biff dem any more.

J. K. (Kingston).—Is it true dat Eskimos eat candles? I'll run up to de Norf Pole an' hab a look, old hoss.

George Goodwin (Manchester).—You say dat you want to know if I am bery good looking, or if I am ugly. If I am good looking I'll tell you how you can be good looking as well! M'yes! I am sure dat dere am a catch in dis somewere, Georgie! You know perfectly well dat I am de handsomest man in Seahaven—but if you tink I am goin' to gib away de secret ob my schoolboy complexion, you am mistaken!

ALL ABOUT THE OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE BOAT RACE!

HOW THE FAMOUS SERIES OF RACES BEGAN.

Thrills and Spills in the Battle of the Blues!

This vivid article tells you of great incidents in past races—when the boats sank, and when the race ended in a dead heat. It will help you to appreciate next Saturday's great event.

MOST of you who live in and around London will be going to the river on Saturday—the River Thames, of course! On that day the rival eights of Oxford and Cambridge will battle for the honour of being Boat-race winners. Should Oxford come out on top this will be their forty-first success; while if their rivals, the Light Blues, pull off the race, it will be the thirty-eighth time they have done so. Thus, with one race that ended in a dead-heat, the rival Blues have met on seventy-seven occasions, Saturday's making the seventy-eighth race between the 'Varsities. Let's hope the weather keeps fine for the lusty lads who will man the boats on Saturday!

Last Year's Event.

Did any of you see last year's race? I expect hundreds of you did. Nevertheless, there are many more who did not. But the race will always stand out as one of the most thrilling that the famous Putney to Mortlake course has ever seen.

Both crews started off with a rush, with Oxford taking the lead straight away. They rowed for all they were worth, and kept their lead for a time. Cambridge, however, were content to take things steadily, and rowed along gaily in the wake of the Dark Blues' boat.

Then both boats began to draw level, and near Chiswick Steps it was seen that Cambridge were taking the lead, rowing with a wonderfully steady stroke. Then, to everyone's amazement, it was seen that No. 5 in the Oxford boat was not rowing.

His strength had given out, he was "out" to the wide—the row had been too much for him. And as no crew can carry a man who is not doing his share of the work, the Oxford men fell farther behind.

Cambridge romped home with over four lengths to spare.

In 1925—that is, the year before last—Cambridge were again the winners, but the race was a fiasco, although it contained a real thrill.

Pull for the Shore!

The day was one of the coldest and dullest the Boat Race has seen for many years and the river was terribly rough. Oxford lost the toss, which meant that they would have to take the centre of the river. Cambridge, being the winners of the toss, naturally decided to take the inside of the river, where it was sheltered by the banks from the heavy winds.

But Oxford, knowing that the middle of the river would be rougher than at the edges where Cambridge would be stationed, started off with a terrific stroke. Perhaps they should have taken things steadily until they were properly under way, but they preferred to do things with a rush.

Waterlogged!

It was the Dark Blues' downfall. The boat was soon waterlogged, and soon after passing Hammersmith Bridge they had perforce to pull for the shore, and give up the race.

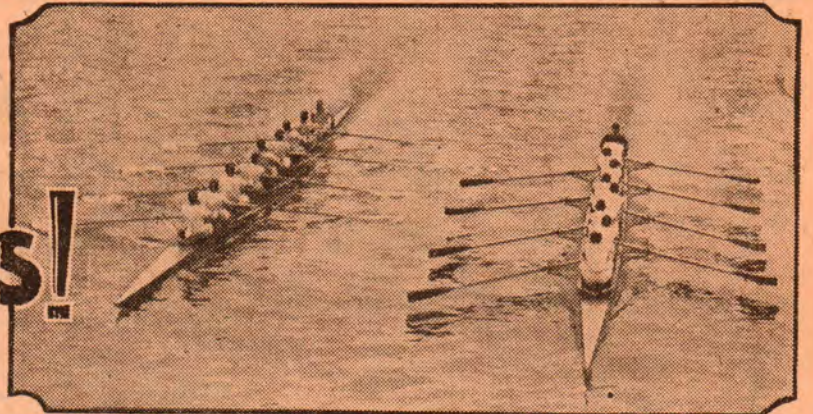
Cambridge, of course, kept on paddling away, doing their best, although their boat

was also taking a lot of water. But what a finish! All the people near the winning post saw the Cambridge eight paddling quietly home as if they were out for a practice spin. Nothing thrilling in a finish like that, is there? Nevertheless, Oxford had provided the thrill earlier when they had been dragged from their boat, drenched through.

Rowed in a Gale!

But here's a race when neither crew was in a fit state to finish. This happened in 1859. The day of the race—a Friday—turned out to be a terrible affair. The wind howled in a gale, the rain poured in torrents. Big crowds turned up to see the battle of the Blues, and many thought the event would be postponed until another day when weather conditions were better. In fact, Cambridge did offer to postpone the race, but Oxford would not hear of such a thing happening. "We will race!" they said.

So the rival crews lined up—at least, they tried to line up, but this was almost impossible. The little boats were tossed about like corks. Eventually both boats started, but before the gallant fellows had made many strokes with their oars their boats were filled with water. Then, to make matters worse, a steamer—which had no business on the course during the race—got into the Cambridge water and completely swamped the boat. And before any of the Light Blues in that boat could say "Jack Robinson," their frail craft was submerged and they had to swim for the bank.



This photograph was taken from Hammersmith Bridge. The crews are still dead level, having already covered about a mile of the course.

Oxford finished the course, but their boat had hardly crossed the line before that, too, went under!

Something worse than that happened in 1912. That year conditions were terribly bad; in fact, they were almost on a par with those described above. Both crews were willing to try their luck on the rough water, so the race was rowed on the advertised day.

Both Boats Sunk Again!

But both eights might have saved themselves the time they spent in getting into their boats and paddling to the starting post. Before they had gone many yards both crews had to swim for the bank, as both boats were sinking!

The event was rowed a few days later, and this time, with half the Cambridge crew feeling the effects of their ducking in the icy water the previous Saturday Oxford romped home by six lengths.

Perhaps you might like to know how the race came to be instituted in the first place. It is said that, in 1869, Cambridge issued the first challenge.

Mr. Snow of St. John's be requested to write to Mr. Stanforth, Christ Church, Cambridge, proposing to make up a University rowing match!

That was the first challenge—and some challenge, too! Oxford, always sportsmen, accepted. The race was rowed and, as luck would

have it, the challengers—Cambridge—were beaten.

In time—not immediately after that event, however, the Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race became an annual event, until now it is one of the most popular of the sporting events of this country.

One dead-heat has been mentioned. Both crews passed the winning post at the same moment, in 1877.

What a race that must have been! A man the other day, who remembers seeing the event, says: "It was a most wonderful race. Both crews rowed hard, rowed all they knew to gain some sort of a lead. But no lead could be secured, and mile after mile they rowed neck and neck, side by side, with their oars cleaving the water only a few yards from each other. They started together and they finished together, with not a hair's-breadth between them. It was a race worth going miles to see!"

The Final Spurt!

Well, lads, here's hoping the weather will be fine for you all on Saturday. I hope to be one of the many thousands on the banks of the Thames, for there is something about the Boat Race which fascinates. The wonderful rhythmic movements of the crews, the gliding of their boats through the water, the straining on the oars, and the last final spurt to gain the upper hand! Good luck to both crews!



ROWED OUT! This photograph shows the Cambridge crew at Mortlake, after the finish. The attitudes of the racing eight show how completely they have rowed themselves out. The race is a very severe test of strength and fitness.



(Continued from previous page.)

been planted by his enemy. It took him no more than a matter of seconds to understand the mechanism of the thing—a powerful bomb that was timed to go off at eleven o'clock the following morning!

"Most interesting!" Pete murmured, as he carefully removed the charge of high explosive. "And I must say dat de old hoss was going to do de job well! Quite so! 'Smatter ob fact, dere wouldn't hab been much ob dis yard left if I hadn't come on de scene!"

He looked unusually thoughtful as he made his way back to the Hotel Majestic that night, and he said nothing to Jack and Sam about Gumbri's attempt to blow the craft into a species of matchwood. But the following morning found him his old cheery self, and no longer did lines of thought corrugate his broad brow.

Having made a hearty breakfast, he placed the clock-like affair in his overcoat pocket and strolled round to the post-office. Then, having expressed the article to Amos Gumbri, he amused himself down at the boathouse until ten minutes to eleven.

"Well, I must be getting along, old hoss!" he said, grinning across at Toddy Woodman. "I've got a sort ob an appointment wid my old friend Gumboil at eleven o'clock!"

"Some folks seem to have a queer choice in friends!" growled the old

waterman, pulling at his fringe of beard. "I wouldn't touch him with a boathook!"

"'Smatter ob fact," grinned Pete. "dat is de bery instrument dat I should choose! So-long, old hoss! Mind dat barnacle doesn't snap at you!"

He arrived at the town hall at five minutes to eleven, and the first person he encountered on the steps of the building was Amos Gumbri, who had paused to put a match to an enormous cigar. Amos looked thoroughly pleased with life as he exhaled a cloud of blue smoke, and he continued to grin even when he found himself looking into the dusky countenance of his great enemy.

"Morning, old hoss!" cried Pete, treating the great man to a re-

spectful bow. "It's a bery nice day after a misty evening! M'yes!"

"Was it misty last night?" asked Gumbri, lifting his thick eyebrows. "I stayed indoors, so I didn't notice it! Still, I don't mind taking your word for it! By the way, what do you think of your chance in to-day's race?"

"Quite a lot, my dear Gumboil!" declared Pete. "My crew is in fine fettle, and dere's certainly nutting de matter wid de boat!"

A throaty chuckle broke from his companion.

"I'm glad to hear it," said Amos; "but I suppose you haven't got pluck enough to back your opinion? Would you care to back your crew for a tenner?"

"Certainly, old hoss!" answered

Pete readily. "But what's de matter wid making it fifty?"

Amos Gumbri glanced up at the town hall clock; it wanted three minutes to the hour. He chuckled again as he gloated over the thought that the bomb was timed to explode on the stroke of eleven o'clock.

"I'm a good sport," he declared, producing a fat wallet, "so I don't mind risking fifty quid! But we must get someone to hold the stakes!"

"Dis old hoss has got an honest face!" grinned Pete, as a sleepy-eyed, flat-footed postman trudged up the broad stone steps. "I'm willing to trust him wid my fifty, anyway!"

"I make it a hard-and-fast rule never to trust any man," said Amos, "but I don't mind stretching a point

on this occasion. Look here, my man," he ran on, turning to the postman, who had halted at his elbow, "I am Amos Gumbri, the mayor of the town, and I want you to mind a hundred pounds in notes until after the boat race this afternoon! Do you understand, fellow?"

The postman didn't understand, but Pete quickly explained matters and put him at ease.

"Oh, it's a bet!" he said, putting the notes into the inside pocket of his tunic. "I get you! Did you say that your name is Gumbri, sir?" he asked, looking up at Amos.

"It is!" snapped the great man. "You ought to know that, my man!" "I'm new to this town, sir," explained the postman, "so you can't expect me to know the name of everybody in Seahaven!"

"I want no impertinence—" began Amos.

"Apology accepted!" growled the postman. "I've got something addressed to Amos Gumbri!"

"Hand it over, then!" snarled the mayor, with a suspicious side-glance at Pete.

"Not so fast, mister!" said the postman, who had obviously taken a strong dislike to the bully. "There's seven-and-six to pay!"

"Seven-and-six to pay!" echoed Amos. "Let me see the article."

"Here it is!" growled the postman, taking something out of his bag and thrusting it into Gumbri's fleshy hand.

The next moment the mayor's close-set little eyes were goggling from their sockets, and the blood ebbed out of his pouchy countenance as he stared fixedly at the dial of his clock-like bomb!

The time was one minute to eleven!

(Continued on next page.)

LARKS IN THE LAUNDRY!

PETE'S LATEST AND GREATEST STUNT!

It's more like a laughter-factory than a laundry! This yarn would make a marble monument mirthful!



Read this stunning yarn on a rainy day—and you'll think the sun is shining! It's a real scream!

"PETE'S LAUNDRY!"

Gumbri goes through it next week—and he comes out boiled, starched, mangled, ironed, and aired! You've never read a better yarn than this; you'll chuckle all the way through it!

COMING NEXT WEDNESDAY—ORDER IN ADVANCE!



(Continued from previous page.)

The 4th Chapter. Cash on Delivery!

"SEVEN-AND-SIX, if you don't mind!" said the postman, stifling a yawn. "I can't stand here all day—"

"And you're not likely to, you maniac!" roared Amos, thrusting the ticking bomb into the other man's hand. "That—that thing—" He glared round for a means of escape, a wild light in his little eyes. "Take it away, you idiot! It's not for me, I tell you! I don't want it!"

"But it's addressed to you!" growled the postman. "Pay me seven-and-six and you can have it!"

"But I don't want it!" roared the mayor, his massive frame quivering with terror. "Take it back to the post-office and say—"

"Not blessed likely!" grunted the postman, looking stubborn. "Your name's Amos Gumbail, so you'd better pay up and look big!"

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete, as the great man shot a scared look up at the town hall clock and started to back away into the building. "What are you laughing about, old hoss?"

"There's—there's enough high explosive in that thing to blow the town hall sky high!" shouted Amos. "It's—it's a bomb!"

"How do you know dat, Gumbail, old hoss?" asked Pete.

"I—I—I—"

A strange, gurgling noise broke from Amos as he swung round and tore into the building, and the postman ripped out a yell as he leapt forward and went off in hot pursuit. "Hi! Come back!" he shouted, chasing Amos across the hall and following him up the broad staircase. "This clock is for you—"

"Throw it away, you maniac!" screamed Amos, shooting a frightened glance over his shoulder and running full tilt into a statue of himself.

"Ooooooh!"

The mass of marble toppled sideways, and fell to the floor with a mighty, deafening crash that seemed to shake the place to its foundations, and the great man's face turned a light shade of green as he stumbled blindly through the debris and made a bee-line for the second flight of stairs.

"Go away! Go away!" he yelled, as he pitched forward upon his nose, and scrambled up the staircase upon his hands and knees. "You're holding a bomb, you imbecile!"

"Bomb or no bomb, it's addressed to you!" panted the postman, galloping across the landing and taking a wild leap up the stairs. "What's more, you've got to pay for it! It's been sent cash-on-delivery, mister!"

"Save me from this lunatic!" roared Amos, tearing into a lofty council chamber in which some decorators were at work. "This madman's got a bomb that will go off at any moment!"

The place was a network of scaffolding, and no sooner did Amos catch sight of a tall ladder than he made a dive for it and started to climb towards the ceiling.

"Don't let him follow me!" he yelled, climbing as though his very life depended upon it. "Throw the bomb out of the window! Throw him out of the window! Throw both of 'em out of the window! But do something, you half-baked idiots!"

The workmen were staring at Amos in utter, open-mouthed amazement, and their surprise increased when a flat-footed postman tore through the doorway and took a running leap at Gumbail's ladder.

"Brain him, someone!" yelled the mayor, still climbing. "He's got a bomb, and you'll all be blown to bits—"

"I want seven-and-six, mister!" shouted the postman, waving the deadly clock above his head. "I want—"

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete, strolling into the council chamber and catching sight of Amos. "It looks to me as dough you'll go out frough de roof, old hoss! I thought you'd like to know dat it's on de stroke ob eleben!"

A shrill yelp of fear echoed through the place as Amos reached a narrow platform and glared round like a trapped animal.

"Go down! Go down!" he shouted, shaking his fist at the impudent postman. "Go—"

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete. "Dat's de first stroke ob eleben, my dear old Gumbail!"

Boom! Boom!

"Save me!" shouted Amos, his husky voice cracking beneath the strain. "Do something—"

Boom!

Losing his head completely, the mayor leapt up and down like a man demented, and such was the weight of his massive body that the scaffolding was quite unequal to the strain.

A thunderous roar of laughter went up from Pete and the workmen as the skeleton structure began to quiver and sway. The clock in the tower was booming forth its eleventh stroke, when there came an ear-splitting report and the mass of scaffolding collapsed like a house of cards.

Amos emitted a wild yell of terror as the terrific report crashed against his eardrums and struck him with almost physical force. He was convinced that his bomb had done its work only too well, as he toppled off the narrow platform and found himself hurtling floorwards in the midst of a crazy avalanche of ladders, ropes, and planks.

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete, as the great man finished up head-first in a big cauldron of size. "Dat's de neatest high dive dat I've seen for a long time, my dear old Gumbail!"

Amos was spluttering noisily as he heaved his head and shoulders out of the nauseous, sticky mess, and his close-set eyes glinted with a murderous red light as a flat-footed little man bore down upon him and poked him in the chest.

"Now, then," snapped the postman, "what about that seven-and-six, Mr. Gumbail?"

The mayor stood silent and still for a second or so, but strange noises came from him as he caught sight of a heavy-looking mallet.

"I'll pay you in full in a moment!" he announced, his husky voice quivering with fury. "Just wait a moment, will you? I'll certainly settle your account, my little man!"

The words were both a threat and a promise, and there was a strange light in his little eyes as he pawed at the sticky mess that was streaming down his flabby features, and sidled across the room to the mallet.

"Oh, yes!" he repeated, with a grin. "I'll settle with you at once, my little man!"

The promise should have been good news for the postman, but no sooner did Gumbail's muscular fingers close round the handle of the mallet, than he ripped out a wild yell of horror, tore madly across the council chamber and shot through the doorway as though a thousand demons were close upon his heels.

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete, as Amos uttered a throaty bellow and went off in hot pursuit. "It seems to me dat dis cash-on-delivery idea has got considerable drawbacks! M'yes!"

The 5th Chapter. Seven-and-Six!

THURSDAY afternoon brought perfect weather for the great boat race, and sportsmen flocked to the towing-path from all parts of the countryside. Rumours of strange happenings of the morning had travelled through the town—and lost nothing on their

Had You Heard Dis One?



One way and anudder, old Sambo am bery nearly as bad as Gumbail. I know I shall smole in a minute if he keeps up dis sort ob ting! Listen to his latest:

De odder day Sambo went after a job, and de employer said to him:

"I like de look ob you, Sambo. Did you bring your character wid you?"

"No, sah," says Sambo. "I got it at home. I'll go an' get it for you, sah."

"Bery well," says de gent. "You bring it wid you in de morning, an' if it am all right you can hab de job straight away."

Sambo didn't wait until de next morning, he turned up again de same day.

"Well, hab you got your character?" asks de employer.

"I ain't, sah," says Sambo. "But I hab got yours—an' I ain't comin'!"

Yah, yah, yah! Good old Sambo—dere ain't no flies on him!

journey, of course—and there was scarcely a person in Seahaven who was not fully convinced that Amos Gumbail had been up to more of his usual tricks. He was a rank bad sportsman, and everybody knew it.

It is quite on the cards that the flat-footed postman had not remained silent after being chased out of the town hall by a madman with a heavy mallet, in which case the whole post-office staff would have lost no time in broadcasting the story of the great man's queer adventures in the council chamber.

The mayor was anything but a sensitive individual, but even he realised that something was amiss as he lolled back in the new thousand-guinea car that was taking him down to the course.

"What's the matter with the carriage?" he muttered savagely, as townsfolk scowled at him or jerked a contemptuous thumb in his direction. "Nobody knows anything about that confounded bomb!" A wave of angry blood overspread his pouchy countenance as he thought of the flat-footed postman. "Surely that snivelling hound wouldn't have made a song about it!" he mused uneasily. "It would be as much as his job is worth, and he should know it! By heck, I'll have the fool fired on the spot if he breathes a word!"

Gumbail's thoughts were anything but pleasant as he sped towards the river, and he looked as amiable as a wild boar as the car swung round on to the towing-path and came to a standstill outside the Seahaven Rowing Club.

A large crowd had gathered outside the premises, and Amos flushed as he was greeted with stony stares.

"They can't possibly know anything!" he told himself once again. "That bone-headed postman wouldn't have dared—"

"Good-afternoon, Mr. Gumbail!" chirped the individual in question. "I have something for you, and there's seven-and-six to pay!"

The dense crowd was swarming

round the car, and a general titter reached Gumbail's burning ears as he glared down into the little postman's vacuous countenance.

"You've got what for me, you idiot?" he snarled.

"This, sir!" answered the postman, producing the bomb and pushing it under the mayor's ample nose. "There's seven-and-six—"

"Then—then it didn't go off, after all!" gasped Amos, his little eyes goggling.

"What didn't go off?" demanded the postman.

"Why, the—the—" Amos began to stutter as he realised that he had said too much. "Why, the—the clock, you maniac!" he blustered.

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete, who, with Jack and Sam, had taken up a position on the fringe of the crowd. "I s'pose you're quite sure dat it isn't a clock-bomb, old hoss?"

"Of course I'm sure, you black barbarian!" shouted Amos, jumping up and glowering at his enemy. "This is just an ordinary clock—"

"You didn't seem to think so yesterday, mister!" cut in the postman, in a loud voice. "I've got my own opinion—"

"And I advise you to keep it to yourself, you meddling fool!" snorted his worship, a threat in his tone. "I've got influence at the post-office, remember, and a word from me—"

A low growl broke from the crowd.

"Gr-r-r-r!"

"You dirty bow-wow, Gumbail!"

"What's this yarn about the bomb, Amos!"

"Have you been up to some more tricks, Gummy?"

The great man was purple-cheeked and quivering as he glared round at the sea of angry faces.

"This is a deep-laid plot to injure me, you fools!" he snarled. "This thing isn't a bomb—"

"Why not prove it, old man?" shouted someone in the crowd.

"How can I possibly prove it, you madman?" demanded Gumbail, with a savage malediction.

"By sitting on it for two-free minutes, old hoss!" cried Player Manager Pete.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That's the idea, Gumbail!"

Pete's bright suggestion caught on at once, and Amos fumed and muttered as he found himself in a most difficult and undignified position. It was seldom indeed that the people of Seahaven dared to stand up to the great man, but this crowd made it very plain that it did not mean to be blustered or bullied into meek submission. Something had got to be done at once, thought Gumbail, otherwise the fools would really believe that story about the bomb.

"Very well!" he shouted, pointing a quivering finger at Pete. "I'll do as you suggest, you grinning

hound! What is more, I'll prove to these intelligent people that you're a liar and a blackguard!"

"What's de idea, den?" asked Pete, a mischievous light gleaming in his dark eyes.

"I'm going to sit on this harmless clock for two whole minutes!" cried his worship, with a forced laugh. "I'll soon knock the bottom out of your wild story, you scoundrel!"

A few of the mayor's sycophants set up a feeble cheer.

"Bravo, sir!"

"You're a sportsman, Mr. Gumbail!"

"You bet I am!" shouted Amos, placing the clock upon the back seat of the car and lowering his massive frame somewhat gingerly. "Don't forget, gentlemen! I'm going to sit here for two minutes, in order to prove that Mr. Tricky Pete is a liar!"

"Dat's all right, old hoss!" grinned Pete. "All I hope is dat de climatic conditions remain favourable to de experiment!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't encourage the black-faced, lying hound!" shouted his worship.

"Only a blackguard would suggest that this clock is a bomb! Only a fool would suggest that it's a bomb! Only a barefaced liar would suggest that it's a bomb! It's merely a harmless clock, a cheap little clock that couldn't possibly be a bomb! And to suggest that it might explode—"

Bang!

The mayor's flow of words ceased abruptly as a shattering, ear-splitting detonation rang out like a giant thunderclap, and a wild shout burst from the pop-eyed crowd as his worship half jumped, was half blown out of the car in a dense cloud of smoke, describing a graceful arc that took him head-foremost into the river!

"Tank goodness it was only a harmless clock, old hoss!" roared Pete.

"What about my seven-and-six?" demanded the postman as the great man dived.

"Yah, yah, yah!" laughed Pete again. "Don't you know dat

(Continued on next page.)



MIXED BATHING!

The terrific explosion in the car sent Gumbail soaring into the air. He just missed the bank and dived head-first into the river. "What about my seven-and-six?" demanded the postman as the great man fell, while Pete roared: "Don't you know dat bathing in de river ain't allowed after eight o'clock, Gumbail? Yah, yah, yah!"



(Continued from previous page.)

bathing in de river ain't allowed after eight o'clock, Gumboil? You'll get into trouble for dis?"

The rest of the crowd appeared to be too stunned to say anything, and it was to a complete silence that the waters of the river parted and the hairless mayoral head came to the surface.

"Is dis de usual hour for your morning dip, old hoss?" asked Pete, as Amos splashed and spluttered his way towards the towing-path.

"Don't talk to me, you black hound!" panted the great man, scrambling out of the river and shaking himself. "You played a trick on me, you scoundrel, and I'll have the law on you for it! There was some explosive inside that clock—"

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete. "I'm really surprised dat you should hab noticed dat, old hoss!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You were caught out that time, Gummy!"

The initial shock did not last for more than a matter of seconds, and the crowd began to roar with laughter as it saw the funny side of the affair.

"That black scoundrel is at the bottom of this outrage!" bellowed his worship, pointing a dramatic finger at Pete. "He's gone too far this time—"

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared his enemy. "I always seem to be going too far wid you, old hoss! 'Smatter ob fact, it's becoming quite a habit. But you can't blame dis child just because your harmless clock refused to be harmless and biffed you into de moisture."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence, you cackling fools!" bellowed Amos, shaking his big fists above his head and glowering round at the laughing multitude. "Remember that I am your mayor! Remember that I am entitled to respect! I'll have that black villain clapped into gaol before he's much older! I'll— What the thunder and lightning do you want, you snipe-faced little rat!" he snarled, glaring down at the diminutive individual who had poked him in the ribs.

"Seven-and-six, please!" the flat-footed postman answered in a stern, authoritative voice.

"Yah, yah, yah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Gumboil stood perfectly still as a mighty shout of laughter broke from the crowd; then, emitting a throaty bellow, he swung round and rushed into the headquarters of the Seahaven Rowing Club!

The 6th Chapter. The Race.

PETE was chuckling to himself as, accompanied by Jack and Sam, he strode along the towing-path towards Toddy Woodman's boathouse.

"I suppose you were responsible for that pantomime, image?" asked Jack, with a broad smile.

"I don't know why you should suspect dis child," said Pete, "'cause you know perfectly well dat I hab de greatest respect for de mayor! However, p'raps I did hab two-free words wid de postman dis afternoon!"

"I guess you did," drawled Sam. "And I'll bet you bribed him to let you monkey about with the clock!"

"M'yes!" murmured Pete thoughtfully. "I shouldn't be surprised if you're right, Sammy!"

"Do you think Amos will go through with the race?" asked Jack as they turned into Woodman's yard.

"I don't see dat he can do oder-wise," answered Pete. "He hasn't had much luck wid his harmless clock, so you can bet your life dat he'll try to gib us a licking on de water! M'yes! Besides, it wouldn't pay him to back out at de last moment, 'specially as he's got fifty pounds at stake! No, boys; Gumboil will be on de spot right enough!"

Pete's confident prediction came true, for Amos and his crew arrived at the starting-point on the stroke of three o'clock.

"Afternoon, old hoss!" cried Pete cheerfully. "What about swimming ober de course instead ob rowing it?"

A rumble of laughter came from the people on the towing-path, but not so much as a flicker of mirth crossed the purple countenance of Mr. Amos Gumboil.

"This is a serious business, you black scoundrel!" he snarled from his position in the stern of the boat. "Kindly keep your idiotic remarks to yourself, you hound!"

"I will be as silent as de tomb!" promised Pete, in a low, sepulchral voice.

"I wish you were inside one!" snarled Amos pleasantly.

"M'yes! I hab no doubt you do, old hoss!" grinned Pete, as the boats lined up and waited for the sound of the cannon. "Smatter ob fact, it ain't altogether your fault dat I'm not inside a tomb, is it?"

"No, it isn't, you hound!" snorted his worship, losing all control of himself.

For once in his life that amiable gentleman told the truth.

"Are you ready?" roared a stentorian voice through a megaphone.

"De gent wid de fog-horn is speaking to you, Gumboil, old hoss!" murmured Pete.

"One—two—"

Boom!

Both boats shot off from the starting-point in perfect fashion, the crews pulling with a smooth, rhythmic action that sent the frail crafts cutting through the water at ever-increasing speed, and for the first hundred yards there was nothing in it, the boats being neck and neck.

"Get a move on, Gumboil, old hoss!" cried Pete. "We're not going to wait all day for you to get going, you know! Hadn't you better wake your fellows up wid dat alarm-clock ob yours?"

"Hold your tongue, you maniac!" roared the mayor, shooting a murderous glance across the water. "We'll lick your heads off before we've finished!"

"You couldn't lick de gum off a ha'penny postage stamp!"

"Put your backs into the job, you lazy hounds!" bellowed his worship, as he glared furiously at his crew, his husky voice winging its way across the river. "Don't you know that I've backed you for fifty quid, you—you snails!"

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete, as his boat continued to pull away from the rival craft. "Dere's nothing like gibing your crew a few words ob encouragement, old hoss!"

"Row! Row!" shouted Amos, his mighty bulk rolling from side to side and threatening to swamp the boat. "Get a move on, you lazy young scoundrels!"

"Sit still; confound your fat face!" shouted his stroke. "You'll have the boat over in a moment, you big stiff!"

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete, his gentle bellow floating back to Gumboil's burning ears. "Now you know what you are, old hoss!"

"Big stiff? Big stiff?" shouted Amos, half rising from his seat. "Do you know that you're talking to the mayor—"

"I know that I'm talking to the biggest idiot who ever sat in a boat!" returned his stroke, with a blistering malediction. "Sit down and be quiet, confound you!"

It was seldom indeed that anyone dared to address the great man in this rude fashion, and he trembled so violently that it looked as though he would shake the frail craft to pieces.

"Do you—do you—do—!" he stammered, fixing his blazing eyes upon the hot-cheeked young man who had defied him.

"Oh, put a sock in it!" snorted the young man, adding insult to injury.

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete, as the insult reached his ears. "I'm 'fraid dere's mutiny aboard, old hoss!"

"Pull! Pull! Pull!" shouted Amos, his little eyes blazing with fury. "Faster! Faster! Put more beef into it, you lazy young blackguards! Faster! Faster!"

He looked like a person demented as he gasped wheezily and shook a mighty fist at his sweating crew. "You aren't trying, you hounds! I know you aren't trying! You've been bribed to lose by that black-faced scoundrel in the other boat! He's bribed you to lose the race! I know it—I know it!"

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete, "Pete wins! Pete wins!"

Pete's craft was in sight of the winning-post by this time, and the thousands of people who lined the river banks were shouting in a manner which must have carried their voices all over the town.

Certain it is that at least one man heard the wild cheering, and that illustrious individual was Mr. Amos Gumboil.

"Pull, you hounds—pull!" he yelled, his blazing eyes staring fixedly ahead. "There's still a chance! Faster—"

"Hurrah!"

"Pete's past the post!"

"Pete wins!"

A mighty roar of reverberant cheering floated down the river, and was taken up by the people on either bank. It was at this precise moment that Amos Gumboil's crew pulled with such desperate vigour, and to such good purpose, that their strenuous effort broke the boat in half, the two sections parting company just in front of the mayor's feet!

"Hi! Come back—come back!" roared Amos, as his crew shot ahead and left him perched upon the miniature raft. "Don't leave me, you hounds! Help!"

His was an uncomfortable plight, of course, but he received plenty of well-meant advice from the towing-path.

"Send up a rocket, old man!"

"Nail your shirt to the mast, Gummy!"

"What about sending out an S.O.S.?"

"Mind you don't get your feet wet, Amos!"

"Use your wireless, your worship!"

The major portion of Gumboil's craft had gone under almost at once, and the laughing crew were swimming about and shouting light-heartedly as the mayor's tiny raft filled with water and started to disappear from view. For everyone knew he was a powerful swimmer.

"Save me! Save me!" he gurgled, "Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete, arriving on the scene just in time to see the mayoral bald head sink beneath the surface. "Has anyone seen anything ob my dear old college chum, Amos Gumboil?"

"I think he's probably down there, image!" laughed Jack. "Down where, old hoss?"

"Down there, imbecile!" repeated Jack, pointing to a patch of seething bubbles.

"Oh, dat's all right!" grinned Pete, sitting back and making himself comfortable. "I hab an idea dat he's bound to come up for de third time, and we'll get him den! Yah, yah, yah!"

THE END.

(What a yarn! And there's another one like it coming next week! You mustn't miss "PETE'S LAUNDRY!" It's one long laugh, and you'll thoroughly enjoy it. You can make certain of reading it if you order your copy of the REALM in advance!)

GRAND FREE CRICKET MEDALS!

WHAT PATSY HENDREN THINKS!



What the League Offers.

The enormous success of the BOYS' REALM Football League, and the large number of suggestions which have come in, has persuaded the Sports Editor to inaugurate a new formation to accommodate junior teams during the summer months.

Full particulars and regulations of the BOYS' REALM Cricket League are published below. In order to get going in good time, clubs are advised to make immediate application. Football teams now registered with the winter league, and who intend playing cricket this year, should approach their Section Secretaries without delay.

Any junior cricket club is eligible for membership, but the average limit is eighteen years.

Each Section is awarded a set of twelve handsome bronze medals, which are presented at the end of the cricket season to the club winning the Championship of its Section.

A Section is, in reality, a little league working on its own, and not necessarily in relation to any other Section.

A Section cannot consist of less than eight clubs, but may embody more than this number.

To be eligible for the medals offered by the BOYS' REALM Cricket League a Section must have commenced playing off its fixtures by June 4th, 1927.

In order to secure the medals, the clubs of a Section must complete their fixtures. That is, the teams in, say, an eight-club Section must play off fourteen fixtures—i.e., play each of the other clubs in its Section once at home and once away.

In the event of a team falling out of a Section during the season for any reason, another club may take over its fixtures after receiving the consent of the Sports Editor, which consent will not unreasonably be withheld.

The Medals.

A Section can receive only one set of medals from the League in one season. The Section Secretary will receive the medals for him to present them to the Champions.

The medals become the property of the winners, eleven of them going to the team, and the twelfth medal to the first reserve man.

All clubs must fill in the BOYS' REALM Cricket League Club registration form, in return for which each club will receive a registration certificate. Clubs not so registered are ineligible to play in the Championship Competition.

There are no registration forms for players.

There is no entrance fee to the League.

All games should be double-wicket matches. Only single-innings games should be played, unless it is agreed prior to the commencement of a match.



The 1927 Championship Medal.

that the game shall go to the length of two innings.

Points: Clubs shall score 2 points for a win, 1 point for a draw.

All matches abandoned owing to inclement weather shall be replayed on a date mutually agreed, or the clubs concerned shall forfeit the points.

Protests.

Games concerning which a protest is raised in the matter of average age shall be investigated by the Section Committee, who shall have the power, if the protest is upheld, to order the defaulting club to lose two points, which go to the protesting club, or for the game to be replayed.

In the event of the club defaulting for the second time, it shall lose two points, and those points shall be awarded to its opponents.

The Section Committee shall have power to determine that a fee shall be lodged by a protesting club; if the protest is not upheld, the fee shall be paid into the Section funds.

All communications, requests for Registration Forms, queries, etc., should be addressed to:

THE SPORTS EDITOR,
"BOYS' REALM"
CRICKET LEAGUE,
GOUGH HOUSE,
GOUGH SQUARE,
LONDON, E.C. 4.

Letters needing a reply should be accompanied by a stamped and addressed envelope.

A MESSAGE FROM A FAMOUS CRICKETER!

In the letter below Patsy Hendren, the popular Middlesex player, says what he thinks of the new REALM Cricket League.

I think that the Boys' Realm Cricket League is an excellent scheme, and it should do much to promote the grand old game amongst junior clubs. I wish it every success.

*Yours faithfully,
Patsy Hendren.*

"I think that the BOYS' REALM Cricket League is an excellent scheme, and it should do much to promote the grand old game amongst junior clubs. I wish it every success."

"Yours faithfully, E. PATSY HENDREN."



PATSY HENDREN.

BOOKED FOR
WEMBLEY!

The Albion are well away for the Cup Final—and Chick's the boy who's pulled 'em through.

All For The Albion!

By G. MALCOLM HINCKS.



ANOTHER SMASHING INSTALMENT OF OUR STIRRING CUP-FIGHTING SERIAL.

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 football enthusiasts in Oldford—whose aim is to stimulate enthusiasm in the town for the Albion. Their mascot is a goat named Buster. Chick's three chief lieutenants are Sam Snodger, Bones—commonly known as Bones—and pretty

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

The Albion play Maston Villa in the Semi-final of the F.A. Cup, and are leading 2-1. Then, five minutes from full time, the Villa succeed in equalising!

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

Fatal Minutes!

IF the goal that had put the Albion ahead had been a lucky one, the goal by which Maston Villa had equalised was even more fluky, a tame shot that would never have found the net but for the goalie slipping and falling as he was springing across the goalmouth. And only five minutes remained for play.

There was intense excitement as the goalie, looking very crestfallen, threw out the ball. The Villa players looked jubilant. A few moments ago they had seemed a beaten side, their only possible hope being a draw, but now they stood as good a chance of victory as their opponents, in fact a better one, for some of the Albion players looked rattled.

But Chick Chandler was as cool as ever, and as they walked up to the centre, he called Sandy McCraill and Darkie Green to him.

"We must pin them in their own half," he said; "play ourselves to a standstill, but keep up the pressure. It's the team that can stick it all out for the next few minutes who will come out on top!"

"Och!" said the imperturbable Sandy, and Darkie nodded, and grim resolution came into his face.

The Maston Villa supporters were yelling excitedly, but they were drowned by the Push Gang, who were frantic with excitement now they had got over the shock of that goal.

"Come along the Albion!" But it was the Villa who immediately became prominent, and a thunderous roar came from their supporters as they looked like going through.

Sandy McCraill had dropped back. He had the measure of the Villa's centre-half, and was on him in a flash as he received the ball, robbed him of it, swerved round another opponent, and was off down the field three minutes to go!

Many of the members of the Push Gang were croaking hoarsely.

"Is this going to be bright and breezy?" asked Bones.

"Shut up!" snapped the excited Sam, scarcely daring to look at the big man racing along in that ungainly but speedy run of his.

Sandy, with two men upon him, passed swiftly to Darkie Green, who was unmarked.

Darkie's one desire was to get rid of the ball; he lacked the coolness of his young manager and the imperturbable Scot. This was a terrible responsibility, and he hated it.

But two men marked Chick. Sandy was too far behind, and if a goal was to come it had got to come quickly.

He dared not centre, for the inside-right in his excitement had placed himself offside.

"Silly ass!" said Darkie, almost hysterically, as he raced in, and his heart seemed to be in his mouth. He dreaded the shrill note of the whistle.

"Shoot!" came a shout, but for the most part the crowd was too excited to roar. There was a sort of hum like millions of gigantic bees swarming round a hive.

Pung-g-g!

Bloo-oom! Darkie had shot for the corner of the net, and hit the upright. The ball rebounded into play, a frantic back booted it, it rose high—so did a sandy head.

Ploink! A thin-skulled man would have been knocked out, but Andy McCraill got his sandy head to the ball, and nodded it towards Chick. The young manager saw it come towards him. He bent double and charged at it—much in the manner of Buster, the mascot goat of the Push Gang—and sent himself and the ball flying towards the Villa's goal.

"GOAL!" Chick was down on his hands and knees, men were surging round him, but the ball was in the net, and the crowd seemed to have gone mad.

Pheweeep! The long-drawn blast of the whistle went as Chick picked himself up.

Oldford Albion had won through to Wembley!

There was a rush for the dressing-rooms, the crowd was breaking on to the playing pitch in places, the jazz band in the stand was going all out, croaking voices were singing triumphantly. Chick and Sandy were the special heroes, for everyone knew of the ordeal they had gone through on board the tramp, of their daring escape at the mouth of the Mersey, and yet they had contributed most to the sensational victory in a great game packed with thrills.

Chick plunged into a hot tub, and then rubbed himself down. He was putting on his collar and tie when little Mr. Miskin, the chairman, came hurrying in.

"Well done! Splendid! Great game! Proud of you all! Westwick won in London."

"By much?" asked Chick.

"Three—one!"

Chick whistled softly. Westwick would be favourites in the big match at Wembley. They had been fully expected to win the other Semi-Final, their form right through the competition had been very convincing, whilst the critics considered that the Albion had had their full share of luck.

"It'll be some match!" he said, as he buttoned up his waistcoat.

Little Miskin was beaming.

"We'll forget all about matches for the present. Out of training for the moment. I've phoned the hotel and told them to have a meal ready, the best they can put on, at my expense

and we'll travel home by the seven o'clock train. Proud of you, boys—very proud!"

Chick grinned as the chairman hurried out.

"There's one thing about Miskin, he does do you well after a victory!"

"See the Conquering Heroes Come!"

SAM SNODGER and Bones travelled home by an excursion train that had left Liverpool immediately after the match. Sam had missed the scenery round Liverpool, for Bones had put the big drum on the rack, and as the train had bumped over some points outside Lime Street Station, the drum had descended violently upon Sam's head.

The drum had not been hurt, but it had knocked Sam out for some time, and when he had recovered, several members of the Push Gang had threatened to knock their portly lieutenant out again unless he stopped making such a fuss over a little thing like that.

"Little thing!" murmured Sam to himself, as the crowded train sped on towards Oldford. "And I told him it wasn't safe on the rack!"

He glared malevolently at his tall, thin chum, who now had the drum on the floor.

But Sam's genial nature did not permit him to be sulky for long, and suddenly a bright idea occurred to him.

"Look here, we are due at Oldford about eight, but the team won't arrive until half-past nine. That gives us plenty of time to organise a proper welcome for them. We'll have a torchlight procession, led by the band, and do the giddy thing in style."

"That's bright and breezy," said Bones; "but wouldn't it be better to wait until they come home with the Cup?"

"No, it wouldn't!" snapped Sam.

"For one thing, they may not bring home the Cup, and you'd never get a crowd out to cheer a team that has lost; not to what I call cheer, anyway. Besides, we shall be going to Wembley, and we may not get back until after the team. This is our chance to show Oldford what the Albion have done and what we can do. This is going to be the Push Gang's show, and we'll have the mayor at the station to make a speech!"

Bones blinked, and the other occupants of the carriage stared in astonishment.

"What do you want the mayor for?"

"Make it easier with the police. If his worship comes to the station and says a few words, it will put a sort of official stamp on the proceedings. Of course, we know he's a pompous old ass, who takes no interest in sport, but he likes to be in the limelight and stand well with the crowd, and he'll roll up all right."

A youth in the corner of the carriage broke into ribald laughter. He could not imagine the pompous Mayor of Oldford granting Sam Snodger an interview and falling in with his plans.

"I vote we go and watch old Sam kicked down the steps," he said.

But the portly lieutenant of the Push Gang knew what he was doing. He realised that the mayor would not listen to him, but the Push Gang had members of all classes, and among them was the son of a prosperous alderman. It would be his job to secure the presence of the mayor and corporation at the station.

"That's quite bright and breezy," admitted Bones. "And I'll go home and get Buster."

"I'll lay there'll be trouble if you bring that giddy goat," declared Sam; but his lanky chum, who had so bitterly resented the ban on taking the mascot to Liverpool, was determined that the venerable one should be in to-night's big show.

The making of plans certainly helped to pass away the last stage of the journey. Messengers were sent along the corridor. General Sam Snodger was issuing his commands. Lads were appointed to call together stay-at-home members of the gang, others had to make torches. There would be a march to the station to attract a crowd, and the news was to be spread amongst parents and friends.

By the time the train steamed into Oldford Central, preparations were complete. Bones had refused to undertake any task because, he said, he had got to push up Buster. The goat had got to be a credit to the Push Gang and to the great team they were to welcome home from the match that had taken them to Wembley.

By nine o'clock the news was all over Oldford. A squad of mounted police rode quietly to the station. They had received official intimation that the mayor of the borough was to be present in state to welcome home the victorious team, and unofficial intimation that the lively Push Gang were out to make things hum.

And in the express rushing towards Oldford Chick Chandler lolled back luxuriously in the corner seat of a first-class compartment, talking to little Miskin, who was more genial than he had ever known him to be.

"Don't go and get swelled head," Miskin was saying. "Don't think you're that sort, or I wouldn't speak as I'm doing. Proud of you. Took a big risk. People laughed at me when I made you manager, but it's my turn to laugh now, and it will be a perfect scream if we win the Cup. My word, I'll pull Gregson's leg!"

Chick grinned, and advised the chairman to stand well clear when he did it. He knew this last-minute triumph at Liverpool would be a bitter blow to the florid publican director.

Miskin chuckled, and then became serious.

"What do you think about special training, Chandler? No expense must be spared to have the boys in the pink for Wembley. I give you a free hand."

"I'll talk it over with Tomlin."

"Ah, you seem to be working quite in harmony with the trainer now, though I'm told his son still resents having been stood down."

"Oh, Tomlin's come round," acknowledged Chick. "When he found he couldn't have things his own way, and I was nearly firing him, but gave him another chance. He saw sense, and though he's got rather a sullen manner, he's quite loyal to me now, and we work without any friction. But his son is a bad egg; he and that chap Huddleston are a pair of rotters; they drink too much and slack. I vote for giving the pair of them a free transfer at the end of the season."

"All right," said Miskin. "I—Hullo! What's up?"

The train had slowed down to enter Oldford Central, and there was a sudden blare of music.

"Sounds like the Push Gang at it again," said Chick, and put his head out of the window. "Great Scott! There's a sort of official welcome. There's the mayor standing down by the barrier in his robes, with mace-bearer and the whole collection."

"Beastly nuisance!" jerked the little chairman, who was not fond of publicity. "You must deal with it, Chandler. I'm going to keep in the background."

Chick mustered his men. Ordinary passengers were being turned off to a different exit. The football team, led by their young manager, passed the barrier of police and railway officials, and walked towards the pompous mayor in his red robe and gold chain of office, who, with other members of the corporation, the mace-bearer, the town clerk, and two burly be-medalled policemen, was waiting to receive them.

Just behind the mayor was the jazz band of the Push Gang. Bones, who had the big drum to attend to, handed over Buster to the care of Sam Snodger, who held his lead in one hand and his baton in the other. Sam positively swelled with importance, but the venerable one looked unutterably bored.

"I shouldn't be surprised if there's trouble with that wretched goat," said Chick to Sandy.

"Och!" said the Scot, who shared Chick's distrust of the Push Gang's mascot. Up went Sam's baton, the band blared, and voices inside and outside the station took up the song so familiar upon the Albion's ground.

(Continued on next page.)



THE GOAL THAT DID IT!

Chick flung himself headlong at the ball. He just got his head to it, and the leather hurtled past the goalie. That goal booked the Albion for Wembley!

HOW DID
YOU FIND
THE RIVER?

THE BINGO BOYS.

HEAD
FIRST!

THEY HAVE THEIR OWN BOAT RACE!





(Continued from previous page.)

"Chick, Chick, Chick, Chick, Chick, Chick."

A fighting Chick is he! Chick, Chick, Chick, Chick, Chick, Chick.

He's booked us for Wembley! We are very proud of—"

The chorus died away. The mayor had stepped forward, and the big white goat, decorated with the Albion's black-and-orange colours, had pulled his lead out of Sam's hand and was after the mayor!

"Stop that giddy goat!" shouted Sam frantically.

But the venerable one, when he meant business, was a mover; experience had shown him that human beings had a most unpleasant habit of frustrating one's best intentions if given time to think. The mayor's red robe had annoyed Buster. So long as he was held on the lead, however, he had been unable to express his annoyance, but now he was free, and it was only a matter of acting quickly.

With his head lowered he charged. The Mayor of Oldford, unconscious of the peril from the rear, was addressing Chick, who saw what was coming, but was powerless to prevent it.

Biff! The venerable one had got there!

"And I should like to say—Ough!"

The portly, pompous mayor's speech was ended abruptly as he was propelled violently forward, and in desperation he flung his arms round Chick's neck. The burly be-medalled

policemen succeeded in catching hold of the venerable one before he could do any more damage. Sandy McCrail helped the young manager to set the mayor on his feet.

"That goat gets rather out of hand at times," said Chick gravely, but most of the players were unsuccessfully trying to stifle their laughter, and the troubled Sam waved his baton in vain. Bones had deserted his drum to take charge of Buster, and the other bandmen were doubled up with laughter.

It spoilt the civic reception. The mayor seemed to labour under the delusion that the rear attack had been planned by the gang of enthusiastic young supporters of the Albion, and went off in a huff, but his departure did not damp the spirits of the demonstrators. They rushed Chick and his team into an elderly wagonette pulled by a couple of dozen stalwart youths, and, headed by Buster and the band, they made a torchlight procession of the streets amid wildly-cheering crowds.

"It's a licker!" said Chick Chandler, and he was wondering what it would be like if the Albion managed to bring the Cup in triumph to Oldford!

More Trouble for Tomlin.

OLD FORD was still rejoicing on the Tuesday following that fine victory at Liverpool, but Fred Tomlin certainly did not rejoice, nor did the florid-faced man on the other side of the saloon bar of the Three Crowns.

Tomlin had been putting in an hour's training on the Albion's ground, and had dropped into Gregson's place for early lunch before going back to the offices of Messrs. Henley & Henson, the lawyers in Bank Street. There was a plate of cold beef and pickles on the bar in front of him.

Gregson was in his shirt-sleeves, and was moodily smoking a cigar. "I'm surprised at your father, Fred; he eats out of the hand of

that glorified office-boy now. Won't hear a word against him!" "Oh, he's gone over to him completely."

"You haven't, I'll lay! Reckon you know something about that little trip to the Argentine that our popular young manager nearly took just before the Semi-final?"

"What ever makes you think that?" asked Tomlin. "All I know is that I wish that he had gone. He's a winner now. Old Miskin won't hear a word against him. And although most people seem to think that Westwick will win at Wembley, I believe he'll bring the Cup here!"

An ugly expression came into the publican's florid face. "There's many a slip twixt the Cup and the lip!" he said shortly, and turned away to attend a customer who had entered.

Fred Tomlin felt convinced that Gregson had some move against Chick up his sleeve, and he wished he knew what it was. The young manager's daring escape from the steamer bound for the Argentine had been a terrible blow to Tomlin. The arrangements had cost him a lot of money, and success had seemed assured.

But there was one thing to be thankful for. Hobbs and his two companions were safely out of the country. He had not got to keep them for fear that their arrest would lead to his own, so, though the plot had cost him a lot of money, he was at least free from that expense.

Having finished his lunch, Tomlin made for the office. Before Chick Chandler had taken control of the club and stood him down, he had been a privileged person there, and had put on airs. Now, as a mere reserve player, his fellow-clerks thought little of him, and his boss had told him that, at the end of the present season he would have to choose between football and his job, and that they could have no more of this going off in the mornings for training. How he hated the audacious young man who had

(Continued at top of next page.)

10s. FOR LLANGOLLEN VICS!

ALL THE WINNERS!

PRIZE FOOTER PARS.

Each week the Editor will award TEN SHILLINGS for the most interesting paragraph concerning a reader's football club. ALL CLUBS MENTIONED IN THIS FEATURE, other than that winning the first prize, WILL RECEIVE A TABLE FOOTBALL GAME! All letters should be addressed to the BOYS' REALM, "Prize Footer Pars," Gough House, Gough Square, London, E.C. 4.



A Little Misunderstanding.

BLUE ROVERS (Walton) started life on a sub of 2d. a week, and were beaten, though not ingloriously, in their first match. They soon put this right, however. They have a centre-forward of uncommon brilliance, and he scored 50 goals last season. Their inside-right was twenty behind this total. Out of 30 matches last season, Rovers only lost three, drawing two. (Football Game.)

Success at South Shields.

ST. JOHN'S F.C. (South Shields). This club, formed from an ex-school team, and consequently having been through the merry mill, will be a member of the South Shields Section of the REALM League. They have made a grand recovery after a spell of bad luck, and in the last seven league games only lost 3 points, these being all draws. They have recently met much weightier teams, and have held their own. (Football Game.)

A Change for the Better!

BELVUE BOYS A.F.C. (Dublin) have a varied history. Three years ago they were playing Gaelic football; the captain fired one member because of his fondness for looking at Soccer! At that time they did not know what a grand game Soccer was, but now they are always playing it, and, although rather short of kit, are doing well. (Football Game.)

A Good Bunch.

QUARRINGTON F.C. (Quarrington Hill, Co. Durham) were undefeated last season, and are leading in the Mid-Durham League. They have won fourteen and drawn one out of fifteen games. Quarrington is all out for the Cup; they have a good set of lads and a specially strong forward line. M. Mason, the centre-forward, always gets two or three goals every game. Makes a habit of it! (Football Game.)

Nothing but the Best.

WIGAN CELTIC (Wigan). Nothing but a first-class show satisfies Wigan, and that holds good for the Celtic, though this good, fighting team have suffered some rotten luck. They have now joined the REALM League and are doing well, having been beaten only once. (Football Game.)

A Regular Galloping Major!

NELSON UNITED (Manchester) have a left-back who never runs—he gallops! He is a terrific ground-coverer, and they

talk about his prodigious doings up north. Thanks, in part, to this racer, Nelson have had a good season, and hope to keep at the head of the league table. There was a hard tussle with Chambers Colliery, who were a fine lot of chaps, but the galloper managed to score the only goal—1 to nil. A Football Game is coming your way, Nelson, for that galloper to give it the Nelson touch.

The "All-mads."

BECONTREE NOMADS F.C. (Chadwell) are an all-round jolly crowd and keen as a dozen cans of the finest mustard! They have earned the title of "The All-mads" for the reason that they are mad on footer. It has been quick work, for the team only bounced into being this season; all matches are played away, because they have no ground; but 3d. a week sub. will work wonders, and with a player—A. Proctor—who can score 10 goals in three matches, all will be well. (Football Game.)

Good Sports.

MOUNTAVON 2ND (Belfast) started a football team two years since and entered the REALM League. The first season they won 20 out of 24 matches, and finished third in the league. They are not counting their chickens before they are hatched, but they think that as they have won 10 matches this season and

defeated teams that thrashed them last time, the Belfast Championship will be theirs. Stick it, Mountavon! (Football Game.)

Better Times Ahead.

TEAMS VILLA A.F.C. (Gateshead) have had to push their way through a fairly bad time, for the industrial situation has hit them rather badly. Most of the players are miners, and have been hard put to it to carry on. The last two seasons they have been runners-up in their league, and they are a good all-round team. One and all read the REALM! Good luck, Villa, and a thumping wind-up for this season. (Football Game.)

Sporting Beginners.

LEVEN ROVERS F.C. (Leven) began this year and have not got their jerseys yet; the colours are to be yellow and black. They have won nearly all of their matches this season, and are going to do big things next year. (Football Game.)

The Way To Do It!

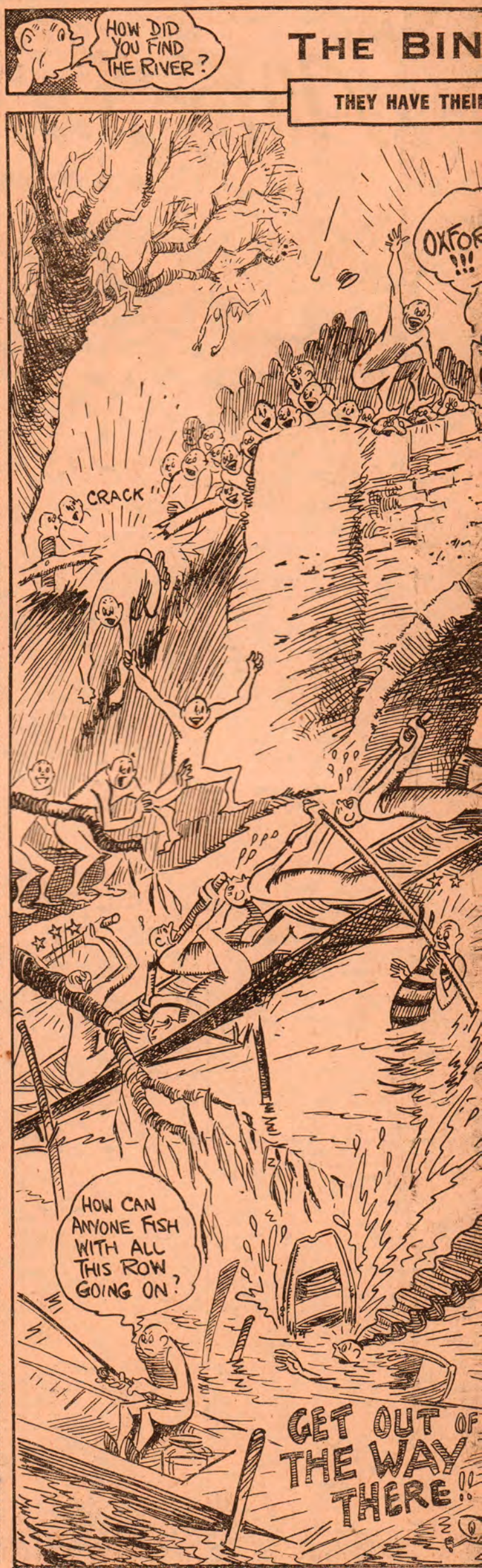
ST. PATRICK'S F.C. (Stafford) started by selling football tickets for matches on the Stafford Rangers ground. They took 25 per cent on each ticket, and the more they sold the more they got—with the result that they were able to buy a ball. For a season and a half they played on other teams' grounds. After ten weeks there was enough cash to buy knicks and shirts, and a ground was hired. Then after a bit the man who owned the ground gave it to the club for keeps. Three cheers for him! (Football Game.)

Causing a Stir!

LINGWELL GATE UNITED F.C. (Outwood, near Wakefield) are making the football fans in the district eager to see them play. For two successive weeks there have been thrills; they have the real team spirit and have put up some really fine performances. Lingwell started with nothing in hand, but has a confident eye on the future. (Football Game.)

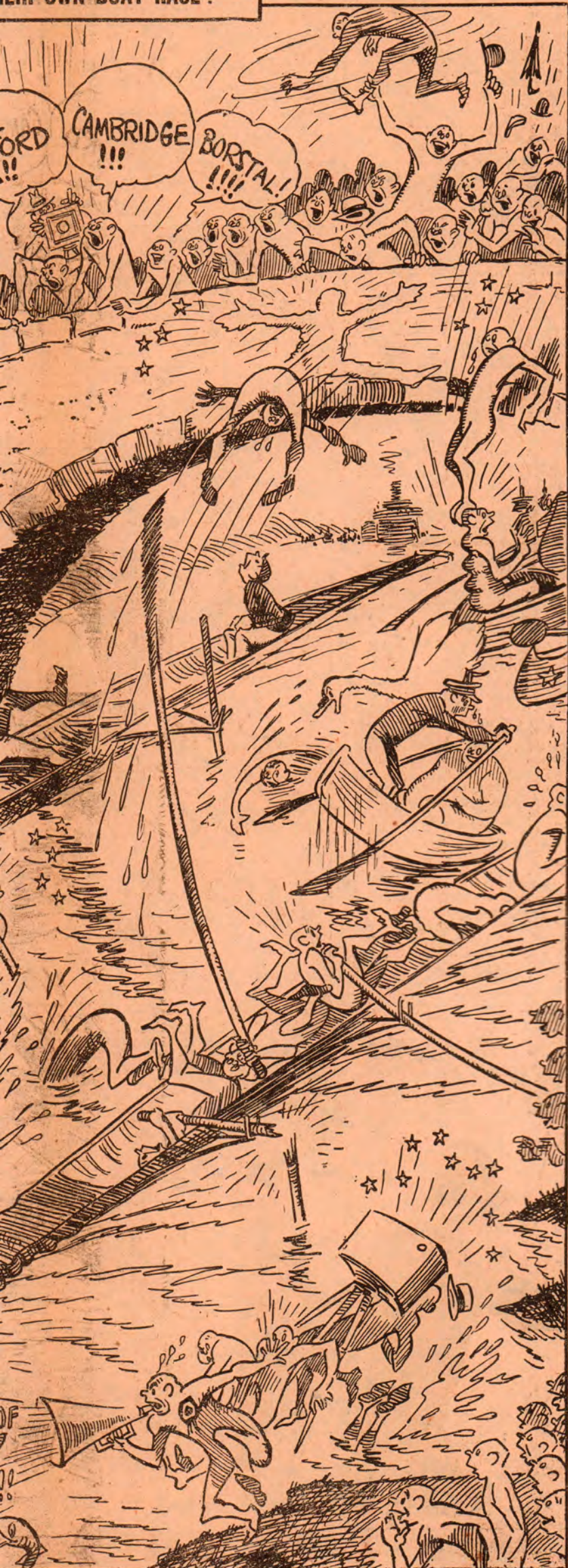
A Good "Friendly" Start.

CALEDONIA THISTLE F.C. (Govanhill) are now under the banner of Mr. Moran, the energetic Section Secretary of Govanhill. But Caledonia had a long course of preparation, and a host of friendly preliminaries before they came to be recognised—37 goals for, 16 against, is not so bad! Copland, the centre-forward, is a fair nailer, and has scored 19 goals. (Football Game.)



NGO BOYS.

THEIR OWN BOAT RACE!



(Continued from previous page.)

butted in and spoilt everything for him!

Early in the afternoon his employer sent for him.

"Oh, Tomlin!" he said. "I want you to find out the address of a girl named Marjorie Mainland. She's living somewhere in the town, and I want to know her address, and anything you can find out about her."

Tomlin's heart seemed to cease to beat.

"What for?" he asked, forgetting his position.

"That is my affair!" said Mr. Henley curtly, and gave a nod of dismissal.

Tomlin went back to his desk, but he could not concentrate on his work. Did this mean that old Grover was dead, that Henley wanted to find Marjorie to tell her that she was heiress to ten thousand pounds? Was the inside knowledge he had had for weeks going to be general knowledge within a few days?

It would be no use pretending that he had any difficulty in finding the girl. If old Henley had taken the least interest in football, he would have known that she was Chick Chandler's secretary at the Albion ground, and the most casual inquiries on his part would trace her. Of course, it might be that Grover had only taken a turn for the worse, but at the thought of the girl and her money slipping away from him, he grew desperate.

"You're wanted on the telephone," said an office-boy at his elbow.

With a surprised expression on his face, Tomlin made for the instrument. Personal calls were unusual, and were certainly discouraged.

"Hallo!" he said a little nervously.

"That you, Fred? Huddy speaking? I say, can you slip out and meet me at Tyson's Tea Rooms at four? It's very important. Some bad news, and I must see you at once."

With several clerk in the general

office, Tomlin dared not ask for further particulars.

"All right!" he said, trying to keep his voice steady, and went back to his desk in an agony of apprehension. Had the police learnt anything about the attempted smothering of Chick? Was his share in it suspected? Huddleston had sounded frightfully upset, and it was Huddy who had carried out most of the work for him.

It was easy enough to get out. He told the managing clerk that he had an inquiry to make for Mr. Henley, and he was waiting outside the tea-rooms for some minutes before Huddleston came hurrying up.

The burly left-winger looked pale and agitated.

"We're up against it, Tommy!" he said, in a faltering voice.

"Hobbs is back!"

Tomlin's jaw dropped; he fell back against the shop window.

"H-hobbs b-back!" he stammered stupidly.

"Pull yourself together, and come inside, man, and I'll tell you all about it."

They secured a quiet table at the far end of the tea-room, which had not begun to fill yet, and in a troubled voice Huddleston told his friend what had happened.

It seemed that, from the moment Chick and the brawny Scot had plunged overboard, the bullying captain of the tramp steamer had been in a panic. He knew that his victims were people of importance in the football world, and there was certain to be a row. The wireless message had increased his panic. Hobbs was suspected of being on board, so Hobbs had got to go.

The captain had given him some money, put in at Holyhead, telling a lying story to the police there of two drunken men being brought aboard by friends, and he had mistaken them for men he had signed on, but they had been so violent that he had told some of the crew to secure them until they sobered down.

"That gave Hobbs his chance to slip away," Huddleston went on. "His two companions preferred to take the chance of a search of the ship, and were needed on board, but Hobbs is back in the 'rabbit warren,' and he says you've got to keep him till he has another chance to get out of the country. He reckons he's safer here than anywhere."

Tomlin's face was as white as a sheet.

Huddleston moodily sipped his tea. He was, as usual, hard up. The flat-racing season had opened

disastrously for him, and he had hoped to touch his friend for a few pounds, but with Hobbs at it again, he saw no chance of that.

For a while the news startled Fred Tomlin, then his cunning brain began to work again. If only he could get Marjorie and her money, he could leave Hobbs to his fate, be independent of both football club and lawyers. There was no time to lose. He was thinking clearer now. Grover could not be dead, or he would have heard of it in the office; he must be worse, and not expected to live. Perhaps there was still time to act.

And then, in a flash, an idea occurred to him.

"Huddy," he said slowly, "if Hobbs reckons I'm going to keep him, he's got to earn his keep. I've got an idea we've left things too much to the others. Now we're going to make a move—just you and I, with Hobbs to help us."

"He won't try any more tricks with that chap Chandler!" said the deposed left-winger, with conviction. "He says that if you'd only left him alone they'd have got clear of the country without any trouble."

Tomlin swallowed something in his throat.

"This is against friend Chandler, but doesn't involve personal contact with him. You know that on the ground this morning they were all talking about that fancy-dress dance they're organising to provide funds for taking a big contingent of the precious Push Gang to Wembley?"

"Yes. But what—"

"Hold on! Marjorie Mainland will be at the dance."

"So will his nibs!" said Huddleston, who stood in great awe of the very young man who had made the Albion.

"He won't count in this," said Tomlin, an excited gleam in his eyes. "Look here! A few weeks ago I was reading how a kid at some school went to get a bottle of phosphorus for some chemical experiment, and dropped it to the floor. Coming in contact with the air, it began to burn and give off dense fumes. If that happened in a dance-room, and someone yelled 'Fire!' there wouldn't be the discipline there would be at that school. There would be a panic all right, and you and I could rush daintily Marjorie out of the building and into your diggings—which are close to the Agricultural Hall—before she fully realised what had happened!"

Huddleston looked nervous.

(Continued on next page.)

NEW SECTION FOR EBBW VALE!

CRICKET LEAGUE—(SEE PAGE 6.)



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 him 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.

Champions v. the Rest.

Mr. G. C. Morris has been carrying on with the work of the Macclesfield Section during the regrettable absence through illness of the actual secretary of this go-ahead Section, namely, Mr. Burgess. There is immense enthusiasm in the Macclesfield area, and a challenge has just gone out from the Section to Manchester. I hope this inter-Section match will be a big success. It has all the makings of it, for Manchester can put up a first-class team—and there are no flies on Macclesfield!

Mr. Morris has arranged, for the end of the season, a match "Champions v. The Rest"; this is an excellent idea.

In common with other Sections there is keen interest among the Macclesfield clubs concerning the REALM Cricket League.

Thanks to the courtesy of the editor of the "Macclesfield Times and East Cheshire Observer," the Macclesfield Section is able to get plenty of publicity.

The League table shows great keenness and much hard work.

Recruits for Govanhill.

It just shows what special kind of service the REALM League is doing when one gets a letter like that from J. Adams, 28, Brown Street, Glasgow. This correspondent writes on behalf of the Strathmore F.C. This team has found it very difficult to get matches. It is just in such cases that the REALM League helps; many a hard-working club gets discouraged by lack of fixtures. I have referred the correspondent in question to Mr. William Moran, whose Govanhill Section is doing such fine work in the North.

The Cricket League.

By every post I get letters of congratulations about the Cricket League. It is easy to see that the Summer League will have claims to be considered as something infinitely more than either an experiment, or a mere link between

seasons. Full particulars are on page 6 of this issue.

Another Manchester Eligible.

Wellington Lads F.C., whose secretary is L. Wilson, are one of the many new entrants of the Manchester Section. Their average age is sixteen, and, wise in their day and generation, they are eager to be well in the running for next season.

For Paisley Clubs.

The Uddington Rovers want to join the Paisley Section of the REALM League, and they will get a welcome, for they are a good, all-round bunch, and have proved their mettle, though as regards equipment they have had bad luck. They have not got a ground as yet, but they are prepared to pay—and play—their way. Paisley has a new member here of which it can be proud. Other clubs in the Paisley area should write to Mr. R. Turnbull, 32, Graham Street, Govan, Glasgow.

A Blackburn Section.

I have just written to Mr. R. W. Cunliffe, 58, Oswald Street, Blackburn, Lancs, concerning his timely proposal to start a Section in his area. I should much like to see this proposition realised. Blackburn is fairly teeming with energetic spirits and enthusiasts for the game. Judging from the tenor of Mr. Cunliffe's letter there is no doubt that, if that gentleman cares to put his shoulder to the wheel, we shall

right speedily have a Blackburn Section of which we can be justly proud.

Jarrow.

This Section is not able to offer any inter-Section matches this year, though, despite the unpromising nature of the start, owing to the industrial depression in the early part of the season, Jarrow is steadily gaining ground. Several Sections are keen to try their weight with Jarrow—and we shall see what we shall see in 1927-8.

Any Vacancies.

Ernest W. Cawte, 4, Meadow Place, South Lambeth Road, Vauxhall, S.W.8, wants a place in a team. Age 16½; has played right-half; height 5 feet; if he cannot get a team this season he would like to have a trial for next.

A New Welsh Section.

A very keen letter has just come to hand from the Ebbw Vale area, Monmouthshire. A Section is proposed, with its headquarters in Ebbw Vale, to serve the districts of Cwm, Waunllwyd, Victoria, Ebbw Vale, Newtown, and Beaufort—a radius of about six miles.

There is every possibility of success for this formation, and a Section here will greatly help clubs too light and too young to enter the local League. Clubs in the districts above should write to

Mr. T. H. King,
5, Greenfield Terrace,
Ebbw Vale,
Mon.

Mr. King is at present secretary of Ebbw Vale Argyle A.F.C., and is very experienced in junior football work. Clubs writing to him can be assured of a speedy reply. Early application is advised; there is every chance of friendly matches to run out the end of the present season; the 1927-8 term will find Ebbw Vale Section fully established and ready to do big things.

WHAT ABOUT IT?

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 page 12.)

"I don't want to be mixed up in any further trouble."

"There'll be no trouble," said Tomlin rather impatiently. "Hobbs will have a big, thin glass bottle full of phosphorus; he'll be there in evening dress, wearing a mask, as all those who are not in fancy dress are expected to do; he's safe from recognition. We know what your landlady is, she's ready to earn a few pounds; and if this comes off all right, Huddy, and I marry Marjorie, you won't have to worry about finding winners this season. Between ourselves, I'll be very comfortably off if I marry Marjorie Mainland, and it would be the biggest blow we could possibly deal to Chick Chandler!"

"I want to know more about this before I touch it," said Huddleston cautiously.

Tomlin gulped down his tea. "The dance isn't until to-morrow week, and I've got to think out our plans. I'll drop round to-night, Huddy, and I'll drop your landlady a hint about a new lodger who'll need great care, but who'll be a very paying proposition. Don't say anything to Hobbs until I've got it all thought out, but just give him a hint that something's in the wind."

Fred Tomlin walked back to the office almost trembling with excitement.

Chick on the Spot!

INSPECTOR CHANDLER, off duty from the station, looked out of the window of the sitting-room of the little house in River Road.

"Here's Chick's taxi, mother! Bless me, how that boy's got on! He counts for quite a lot in Oldford to-day!"

"He does that!" agreed Mrs. Chandler proudly. "Fancy earning eight pounds a week at his age! But it hasn't spoilt him. It's true he mixes with swells and always dresses well and does himself well, but he's content in his old home, and pays twice as much as I like to take from him!"

"Ay, success hasn't spoilt our lad! A man who should know told me only this morning that if the Cup comes to Oldford, Chick will be manager next season at nearly twice what he's getting now, especially if the club goes up into the First Division, which seems likely—and he said he'd be worth every penny of it, so long as he can play and manage, too!"

Mrs. Chandler looked staggered, and then the door opened, and Napoleon walked in!

"Good heavens!" gasped the railway inspector; and his wife stared, open mouthed.

"Not too dusty, is it?" said Chick, removing the big black hat. The transformation was really wonderful. When Chick did a thing he believed in doing it well. The blue coat and white breeches, with black knee-boots, fitted him perfectly. His dark curly hair had been flattened out with some very adhesive brillianine, with a dark curl brushed down over his forehead; and, though his face was rather impudent for a Napoleon, his thick-set figure and his firm jaw made it an excellent fancy dress for the young manager of the Albion.

"It's marvellous, dear!" cried his mother. "Oh, and your taxi is here!"

"Right-ho!" said Chick, donning a military-looking cloak. "I'll be off to call for Marjorie!"

It was the Wednesday of the week following the severe shock received by Fred Tomlin, and Chick was off to the fancy dress dance promoted by the Push Gang, to raise funds to send a contingent of supporters to Wembley. Tickets had been secured, but Sam Snodger and Bones wanted the band and leaders of the chorus to spend the Friday night in town, and be fresh to urge on the Albion in the big match.

Chick had secured the support of little

RUNNING A CRICKET CLUB.—No. 1.



RAISING THE WIND!

All cricket clubs need funds. This breezy chat gives you many valuable hints about starting a club and getting the cash to keep it going.

It's easy enough to run a cricket club, only like most other things, there are a few pitfalls and difficulties which must crop up. Not that they need worry you over much, but a word or two of advice may help to make things run more smoothly for you—that's the purpose of this little series of articles.

People play cricket for all sorts of reasons; some because they want to keep fit for football—others simply because they want to play cricket! Anyway, now is the time to get busy forming a club; spring is on us, and all the pitches are beginning to look as though, some day soon, they will be ready for play.

First of all, it might be as well to have a word with the secretaries of football clubs who intend to run their members in cricket matches. For these chaps there is less work—and, maybe, less fun!—than for the fellow who has got to form his club out of the air, so to speak.

The Cost of Kit!

The established secretary has his players—no worry there! His club is in a sound way financially—or should be! This is just as well, because you will find that your cricket kit will cost you rather more than that employed for football—into these details, however, we will go later on.

Your club ought to own more than one of everything in the way of bats, pads, etc. I advise you to see that, as a start, you are equipped with at least three bats, three pairs of pads, a set of stumps and balls, and as many old balls as you can collect. These, of course, will only be used for practice. A new ball should be used for every game, if that is possible.

Well, that's players and kit fixed—at

least, we'll say they are! Now, what about subscriptions from each member of the club? This question of cash is really important; the amount of the "subs" depends on the amount the club has in reserve. If you've been fairly successful as a footer concern, you should have some surplus cash which will now come in extremely handy.

If you are a new club, there won't be any reserve on which to draw; therefore, you must build a reserve, and the basis of this is the weekly "subs" paid by the members.

Saving Fares!

What about threepence per head? That's not too much; most lads can manage to find threepence per week from some source or other.

One club last year raised money in a variety of ways. One of these was that each member always walked instead of riding by tram, bus, etc., and the fares thus saved were paid over to the club secretary. That's easy enough! Youngsters with fine strong limbs will find no difficulty in walking each day to work, or to school—or even when you're out for pleasure, and would otherwise ride to your destination.

Try this; you'll be surprised when you count up how much you've saved through using your legs.

Then, of course, there's the old plan of scent cards. This idea is worked by

Full particulars of THE BOYS' REALM CRICKET LEAGUE will be found on page 6.

The speed of the taxi decreased, became a crawl, and then they were alighting outside the Agricultural Hall, the scene of the fight promoted by the Push Gang on that memorable occasion a few weeks ago, when they had boycotted the Albion's ground.

But it looked a very different place when Chick and Marjorie entered it for the dance. The bare walls were decorated with flags, fairy lights were in festoons, Chinese lanterns hung from the roof, the floor was beautifully polished; and, half-hidden in a bower of palms and flowers, an excellent band was playing a fox-trot, to which people in all sorts of dresses were dancing.

Chick stood and watched them, recognised several members of his team; saw lanky Bones—effectively dressed as a lamp-post—making an awful ass of himself, and giving his pretty partner a terrible time.

Burly Huddleston had come as a policeman. He looked the part and danced well, but the young manager thought he looked rather pale and worried. Many men and girls had come in ordinary evening dress, and wore black dominoes that concealed the upper half of their faces.

With a crash the band stopped,

and eager, would-be partners swarmed round Marjorie; but she had promised most of the dances to Chick, for that young man, so clever on the football field, such a fighter, and such an audacious young business man, was precious little use at dancing, and relied upon the skill of his pretty sweetheart to get him through. So, though many sparkling eyes were turned towards him, and almost every girl in the place longed to dance with the football hero of Oldford, who made such an effective Napoleon, Chick had decided to sit out the more difficult dances.

The music started again, and, somehow, Marjorie seemed to be steering him round the hall.

Bump!

"Sorry!" said Chick.

"Quite all right!" said a pretty girl, all smiles when she saw who the offender was.

"I wish I was out of this!" said Chick, cold perspiration breaking out on his forehead as he tried to follow the instructions of his pretty partner.

They had practised some steps in the office, and little Miskin had been greatly amused when he had caught them at it; but it all seemed so different now.

"I want room!" he said to Marjorie, after a second collision.

"It does look like it!" admitted that young lady, just avoiding another disaster. "But stick it, Chick!"

Chick stuck it grimly for two more dances, then he decided that he needed a rest.

The band struck up again. Marjorie went off with an eager young man, and Chick got out of the way and gazed idly round the crowded hall, envying the people who could glide about so gracefully. A few others were taking a rest, some were making for the refreshment-room. His eyes rested on a bearded man with a black domino; he was a little conspicuous in a hall filled principally by quite young people, and he appeared nervous and ill-at-ease.

And then suddenly he placed his hand inside his loosely-fitting white waistcoat, took out a fairly large thin glass bottle in a furtive sort of way, and dropped it to the floor.

"Now, what on earth—" said Chick; but before he could complete the sentence the man had plunged among the dancers.

"Fire!" he called. "Fire!"

From the shattered bottle the man had dropped there gouted clouds of dense smoke.

The thing had happened so suddenly that Chick stood amazed. There was no fire amongst the smoke—only oily, grey-black clouds that writhed out over the floor. Evil-smelling fumes rose, too, and Chick realised that the thing the man had dropped was virtually harmless.

All it would do was to create the semblance of a fire; but smoke, in clouds like those which were rising now, was more than enough to startle the folk in the crowded hall.

"Fire!" The man's hoarse voice rang out again.

Dancers stopped and stared. The band faltered, and its tune grew discordant. People began to take up the terrifying cry.

For an instant Chick hesitated. The smoke was growing in volume every moment.

Chick saw the fellow dashing on and spreading panic, and he leaped after him. He reached the bearded man and caught him by the shoulder. The fellow swung round, and as he saw Chick he lashed out savagely.

The vicious blow caught the lad on the side of the head, and he staggered.

The man turned and ran on. But Chick was after him on the instant.

"Hi! Stop that man!" he called, but nobody attempted to obey him.

Chick sped across the polished floor, and once more he grabbed the bearded fellow. The man snarled savagely as he felt Chick's grasp on his shoulder, and again he hit out.

But Chick was ready for him this time. He ducked the other's punch, then his own right whipped in and the fellow reeled back. Chick plunged after him and lashed out again; this time he got the man fairly on the jaw, and the stranger went down with a crash.

Chick whirled round. Half the band were on their feet.

A terrible tragedy was threatened—a tragedy that meant loss of life and injuries. That thought flashed through Chick's brain instantly, and he realised that a panic must be averted at all costs.

The band had stopped playing, and people, gazing round in terror or rushing frenziedly for an exit, saw the young man dressed as Napoleon dash forward to the bearded man in evening dress, and deal him a fierce blow that stretched him to the floor.

"Keep on playing!" Chick roared to the startled band. "There's no danger! No one is to leave the hall! Rally round, the Albion and the Push Gang!"

(Another rousing instalment of this grand footer yarn coming next Wednesday! Don't miss it! You can make sure of getting your REALM each week if you ask your news-agent to reserve it for you.)

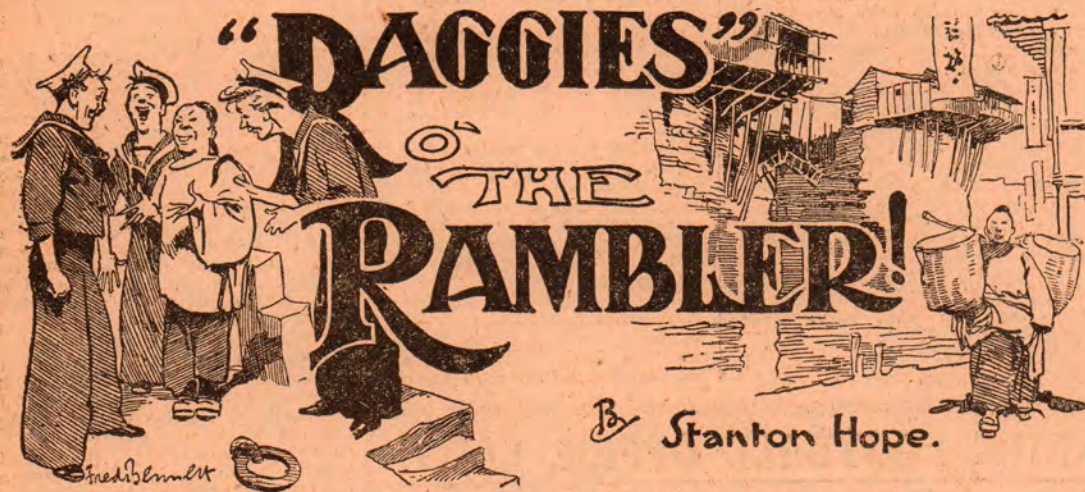


BUSTER GREETES THE MAYOR!

Buster propelled the pompous mayor violently forward. He flung his arms round Chick's neck, while fat policemen hurled themselves at the Albion's mascot. Buster was certainly livening up the proceedings.

THEY'VE ALL
GONE MAD!

At least, that's what it looks like—Shiner & Co., in an ancient car that's gone wrong, being towed by a camel and pursued by a horde of yelling pirates!
What a yarn—dig into it right away!



A STIRRING STORY OF ROUSING FUN AND ADVENTURE IN CHINA.

The 1st Chapter.

What Luck!

LUCKY dogs!" Ordinary Seaman "Bodger" Lees ejaculated the remark in a tone of sheer envy, and his toady, Boy Horace Stoop, bitterly mumbled an agreement.

The objects of the cads' envy were merry Boy "Shiner" Bright and his three raggies, or chums, Dusty Rhodes, Tich Bailey, and Woo Sam, the little Chinese mess-boy. They had recently been transferred from H.M.S. Rambler for duty aboard H.M.S. Buzzfly, the gunboat moored at Hoochow, China. The pals were down in the sleeping-flat, tittivating themselves ready to go ashore.

It was the knowledge that Shiner & Co. and Woo Sam were making ready to go to a feast ashore which caused Bodger and Stoop to emit groans of envy.

"It's fair got me whacked!" muttered Bodger, gritting his teeth. "Fancy the skipper offering to take a bunch o' blessed ships' boys to a dinner! Hanged if I know what the Service is coming to! Now, if the owner had invited me and you, Stoop—chaps wi' decent education and such-like—there'd have been some sense in it!"

"It fair gives me face-ache!" spluttered Stoop.

Ignoring the envious Bodger and Stoop, the raggies fell to discussing the dinner they shortly hoped to enjoy. Mr. Brewster, the Consul of Panchin—a town some miles distant—had invited Commander Dill, of the Buzzfly, to dine with him. In his invitation, received a few days before, he mentioned he would be delighted if the skipper would bring a quartet of ratings along with him.

By this means the Consul wished to show his appreciation of the lower deck of the Buzzfly, which had done so much good work in keeping order in the neighbourhood. The skipper had selected Shiner & Co. and Woo Sam for the honour, chiefly because of their brilliant services against Wong Kiang, the notorious Chinese pirate, whose horde had been menacing the district.

The chums went on deck, and their faces lighted up as Commander Dill himself drove up to the quay in a rickshaw. As he came up the gangway Shiner & Co. sprang to attention and saluted.

"All ready for the beach, sir!" reported Shiner.

"So I observe, Bright," answered the skipper; "but I regret that I find it necessary to call off the visit to the Consul of Panchin."

The raggies' jaws dropped like trapdoors. From behind a gun-turret near by came the suppressed giggles of Bodger Lees and Horace Stoop.

"Y-you m-mean, sir," stammered Dusty, "as we ain't going there for grub, after all?"

"Yes, Rhodes," replied Commander Dill. "The Consul sent an invitation, and I replied accepting it. Since then I have expected to hear from him again, but nothing more has come from him about the matter. In the meantime, I have been ashore, and have received reports from Chinese informers that the whole country between here and Panchin is infested by the large gang of outlaws which Wong the pirate has been gathering. To pay a visit to Panchin in the circumstances would be extremely unwise. You boys are free, however, to go ashore on leave for the rest of the day."

This Week's Story:

THE RAGGIES TO
THE RESCUE!

The disappointed raggies saluted and marched briskly down the gangway, then hurried as fast as their legs would carry them into Hoochow. In the shadow of the Temple of the Two-Toed Tortoise they paused.

"Well, what's the blessed use of all this?" puffed Dusty dismally. "Here we are ashore, with all day afore us, nothin' under our belts, and no grub on the horizon!"

"And broke to the wide!" added Shiner ruefully. "Look here, mates," he added suddenly, "here's Mr. Brewster, the Consul o' Panchin, all ready to give us a gorgeous spread! Don't you think as it's a pity that good grub should be wasted?"

The eyes of little Tich sparkled. "Good old Shiner!" he piped. "The skipper can't go to the spread, but that's no reason why we shouldn't, pirates or no pirates!"

The 2nd Chapter.
Corny Catches Up!

THE town of Panchin was nine miles from Hoochow, and, as Shiner pointed out, two and a half hours' marching ought to get them there.

They set off together, and on the dusty road on the outskirts of Hoochow came up with an old wagon drawn by a couple of bullocks and driven by a wizened Chink, accompanied by his burly son. With a joyful cry, Woo Sam ran forward and began talking in voluble Chinese to his fellow countryman.

"Come on, laggies!" he shouted. My friends' honourable cart allee same going to Panchin! Hop aboard for velly nicee lide!"

"A ride!" cried Dusty. "That suits my style fine, old son! I'd sooner perch among pomegranates in a bullock wagon any day of the week than get blisters on me feet through gravel-whacking!"

The old bullock wagon, with its rough sun-cover of brown canvas, was well laden with vegetables and fruit; the four Buzzfly boys had a job fitting themselves in. Shiner and Woo Sam positioned themselves amidships, while Dusty and Tich sat aft, with their legs dangling out of the back of the ramshackle vehicle.

The sun poured on the dusty Chinese countryside, and the heat and the slow, rumbling movement of the bullock wagon combined to make the raggies drowsy.

They were roused suddenly to life among the vegetables and fruits by a raucous squeal and the dull plop-plop of padded feet coming along the road.

"Whiskery catfish!" exclaimed Shiner. "It's old Corny! Hang it, we don't want him followin' us to Panchin! Beat it, you big freak!"

This polite intimation that he was not wanted had no effect whatever on their ungainly mascot. Corny's mind worked in weird and wondrous grooves, and he had suddenly taken it into his ugly head that he needed the company of his young masters.

"Shoo! Shove off!" hooted Dusty. He selected a small, over-ripe orange from a basket near him in the wagon and shied it at the camel. Plonk! It caught Corny on his big black nose, and he emitted a

squeal like a buzzsaw going through a nail.

Instead of beating it, however, he loped up right behind the slow-moving bullock wagon, his long legs and splay feet shuffling about with the action of a flat-footed, knock-kneed recruit marking time at the double.

"Me tinkee you better buzzee off back to Hoochow, nicee old Corny!" advised Woo Sam. "Catchee honourable cucumber, and hoppee away!"

There were dozens of cucumbers in the bullock wagon, and Woo was sure that the Chinese driver would not object to his borrowing one. He knew, moreover, how fond Corny was of that species of vegetable, and he tossed the cucumber towards the camel's open mouth.

Corny's great yellow teeth snapped together, and, missing the cucumber with his mouth, he got the knobby end of it in his eye. Round and round he went in circles—but he was never far from the back of the bullock wagon.

"Great whelks! Have we got to have that camel at our heels all the blessed day!" gulped Dusty. "How the thump can blokes look dignified reporting themselves to the Consul when they've got a great splay-footed, hump-backed freak like that loping at their heels?"

"Pretend not to notice him, mates," advised Shiner. "He'll soon get fed-up hiking along the dusty road and go off back to his chow by the lakeside."

It was soon apparent, though, that Corny was in one of his most obstinate moods. On he came, with big spurts of brown dust shooting up from under his flat feet. His lower jaw sawed from side to side, and he kept his eyelid down on his slightly injured optic, giving him a one-eyed appearance which certainly did not improve his beauty.

"Chuck a few veges and things at him," advised Tich. "We've simply got to drive him off. What the dickens would the Consul think if we appeared with that great freak in tow?"

In desperation, the raggies started heaving small potatoes, dried dates,

over-ripe oranges, pomegranates, and radishes at Corny to induce him to beat it.

At first, as the fruit and vegetables bounced off his humped back, Corny swished his tail, as if flies were worrying him. Then a pomegranate thrown by Dusty caught him a sock on the ear, and he became annoyed.

With a sudden dive of his head he caught Dusty by the leg of his bell-bottomed trousers, and yanked that luckless tar out of the cart on the back of his neck in the roadway, bringing baskets of fruit and stuff with him.

"Ow! Groogh! Ooh, me figure-head!"

Corny gave another tug at him as the raggie reclined in the dust, and there was a sharp, ominous, tearing sound—z-z-z-zzzz!—and Dusty's left trouser-leg was ripped right up the seam.

"Buzz off, you brute!" bellowed Dusty frantically. "Hi! Stop the cart! Come back, you rotters! Drive this mangy, man-eating monstrosity away!"

The bullock wagon came to a rumbling halt: the two Chinks in charge were alarmed by the hullabaloo. Already Shiner & Co. had dismounted, and were hastening to the aid of their unfortunate raggie. It took all their persuasion to induce Corny to give up chewing their chum's torn trouser-leg; but they succeeded at last, and stooped down to help Dusty to his feet.

Corny, with a contented look on his ugly face, went stalking across a paddy-field, with the intention of having a bath in a large and very green pond.

Behind the raggies came the irate old Chink and his son, their slant eyes blazing at the sight of the vegetables and fruit strewn over the road. The good right hand of the younger Chink grasped a stout cowhide whip, which he cracked suggestively.

"Woo, matey," said Shiner hastily, "apologise to your Chink pals, and say we'll help 'em to pick up the doings and get under way again."

Very politely Woo made the offer; but the Chinks were fed-up, and one of them again waved his cowhide whip threateningly.

"Chinee fiends no wantee our nicee, kind help, Shiny," remarked Woo. "They allee same say for us to go and boilee our faces."

"That's a gentle hint as we can hoof it the rest of the way to Panchin," groaned Dusty. "How many miles do you think it is, Woo?"

"Me t'inkee only 'bout five miles," returned the Chinese mess-boy.

"Then full steam ahead, mates!" cried Shiner. "Step it out, and think of the merry old roast chicken, chestnut stuffing, and green peas waiting for us!"

The 3rd Chapter.

Besieged!

PHEW! Whooh! Ooh-er!"

Footsore and leg-weary, Shiner & Co. plodded into the town of Panchin. The perspiration was rolling in beads from their cheeks, their spick-and-span shore-going uniforms were smothered in dust, and each had a grim gnawing pain under his tightened belt. Only the prospect of the coming feast kept them going, indeed.

In the narrow streets of Panchin, with their queer open shops and big, gaudy banners, the raggies noted that the Chinks they passed gazed at them maliciously.

Obviously, either through the agency of Wong Kiang, the notorious Chinese pirate, or by some other means, the populace of Panchin had been inflamed against the British uniform. So threatening did some of the natives become, shaking sticks in the faces of the boys, that Woo hurriedly turned down a narrow alleyway, making for the Consulate by a circuitous route.

The building, which still flew the Union Jack, was situated near the eastern end of the city in a wide area of ground of its own. As they drew nearer to it they heard the low rumblings of guttural voices, and saw a small mob of Chinese hooligans gathered about the wide front steps of the place, which were barricaded with barbed wire.

"Phew!" whistled Shiner. "This don't look healthy, mates! What the thump have the people of Panchin got against the good old Union Jack, anyway?"

Woo gripped his arm. "Shiny," he breathed, "those de-based Chineemen no belongee Panchin. They allee same fiends of old Wonky."

"Great whelks!" gulped Dusty. "Strikes me, chums, we've walked plumb into the lion's mouth, so to speak!"

"Good thing we have," muttered Shiner grimly. "It occurs to me, raggies, that the Consul may need our help, and I ain't going back to Hoochow without seeing how he's fixed here!"

"Better go round the back, then," suggested Dusty. "If those blokes at the front door spot us they might get shirty, and there's some pretty hefty clubs among 'em."

They cautiously made their way round to the back of the Consulate. It appeared deserted there, but they heard shuffling sounds coming through the large, open doors of an outhouse. Trotting across, they came upon Mr. Brewster himself, leaning against the bonnet of a Panhandle motor-car, the design of which looked as though it might have dated back to the time of the Flood.

"B-bless my heart!" gasped the Consul, as the boys entered the garage and saluted. "Is Commander Dill with you?"

"No, sir," replied Shiner; "but we thought as you'd be disappointed if no one turned up to the spread, so we came here—most of the way on foot."

"The spread!" mumbled the Consul dazedly. "Ah, the dinner to which I invited the commander and some of his ratings!"

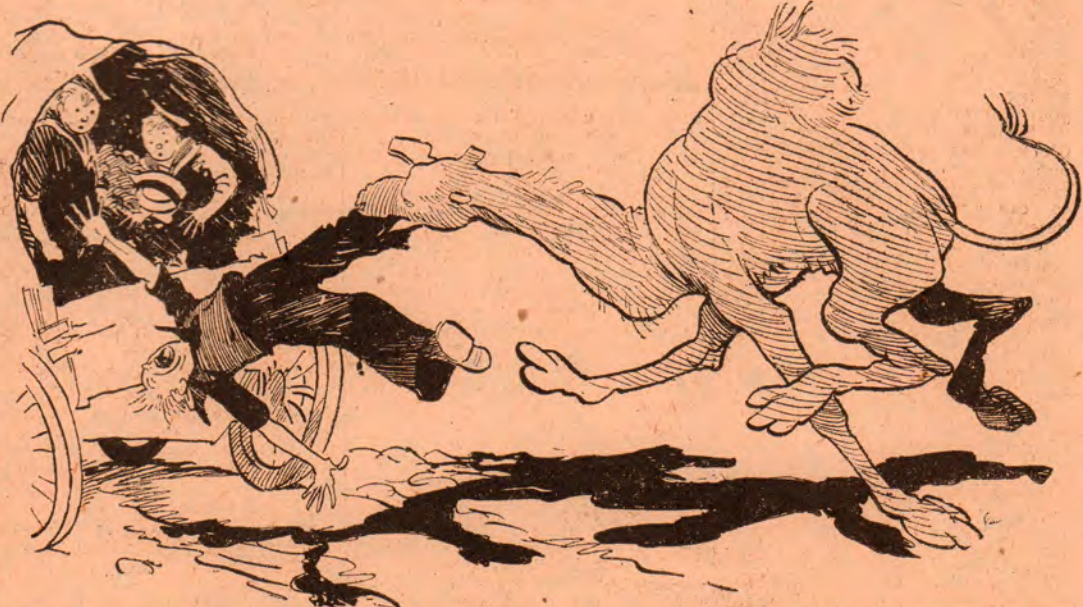
"Is it ready, sir?" inquired Tich hopefully.

Mr. Brewster shook his head.

"I fear not, my boys," he replied.

"The situation in Panchin has been very bad during the last day or so. Wong Kiang and his pirate ruffians have been here in large numbers, and in the neighbourhood around. When I tried to wireless to your commander this morning I discovered that some Chinese enemy—probably a spy in my own household—had put my radio set out of gear. I have kept the old flag flying, boys, as you see! But I am the only white man

(Continued on the next page.)



COME BACK, DUSTY!

With a sudden dart Corny caught Dusty by the leg of his bell-bottomed trousers and yanked him out of the Chinese cart. If Corny couldn't go, then he wasn't going to let Dusty out of his sight!



(Continued from previous page.)

here, and those yellow brutes are after my life."

"Corks!"

"You've come to a hot shop, I fear," the Consul resumed, "and you must get away as quickly as you can."

"Without any grub?" gulped Dusty hoarsely.

Mr. Brewster allowed his calm grey eyes to rove over the dusty, travel-stained young bluejackets.

"I can see that it's absolutely necessary for you to have food," he remarked. "If you'll slip through that door at the back of the Consulate, one of my trusty Chinese servants will give you provisions from the emergency store of bully beef and biscuits."

"B-b-bully b-beef and b-biscuits?" stuttered Shiner.

"You won't have time to eat it now," the Consul said; "but you can bring it along to the car. Confound this arm of mine! I'm afraid I've ricked it; I've been trying to start this machine up, but it's no good."

He reeled back a pace, and the raggies started forward to his assistance.

"Tar me, you're in a bad way, sir!" cried Shiner. "We'll get the old 'tin lizzie' going for you! Woo, go and draw the rations while we chaps start up the engine!"

"Splendid boys!" muttered the Consul. "I wouldn't abandon the place but that my presence here constitutes an absolute danger to the faithful Chinese who are in my service. They, at least, will be safe from Wong and his men with me out of the way. And—and I must get your commander to send a strong detachment up here."

"You bet he will, sir!" piped Dusty. "Now you hop aboard the Flying Bedstead and make yourself all comfy. Shiner mate, you understand the steering of this type of craft. Take the helm, and I'll do the barrel-organ stunt with the giddy old handle on the bows!"

The 4th Chapter.

Shiner at the Wheel!

NOTHING loth, Shiner took his seat at the wheel, released the hand-brake, and tinkered with the accelerator. Dusty stooped down in front of the car, grabbed the handle, and began winding.

It was hard work in that sultry climate, and soon the perspiration was rolling in streams from him. Eventually, however, after about five minutes' hard work, Dusty managed to get the engine running.

By then Woo had returned with some tins of bully beef, and these he deposited in the "tin lizzie," which was rattling and shaking as though afflicted by some species of mechanical malaria.

"All aboard?" piped Shiner cheerily.

He let in the clutch and dropped his regulation boot on the accelerator. The old car leaped forward like a racehorse at the starting-gate, throwing the passengers violently backwards in their seats, and bringing down the bamboo frame of the garage door upon them.

"Steady, you chump!" hooted Dusty. "Slow ahead! And for the love of Mike look out for rocks!"

Shiner glanced back, and promptly the car swerved and knocked over an iron water-pump in the Consulate courtyard.

"Sorry, mates!" he apologised. "But I ain't got me hand in yet. I'll navigate the old packet all right when I have."

There was a wide, open gateway in a brick wall just ahead, and the ancient car zigzagged swiftly towards it as Shiner frantically struggled with a lever in the attempt to get into second gear.

"My aunt! Look what you're doing!" howled Tich. "Phew! That was a narrow one!"

The hubs of the offside wheel scraped heavily as the car bounded through the opening.

"Spike me!" exclaimed Shiner. "I never saw that wall! I was looking to find out where you shove the lever for second gear."

Mr. Brewster, the Consul, gulped several times.

"I—I think I could manage to steer with my left hand, if we change places!" he suggested.

"Not a bit of it, sir!" cried Shiner heartily. "You take it easy and keep yourself snug and comfy in the back. Oops!"

The "tin lizzie" bucked like a broncho over a great boulder on the side of the road.

"Never mind about looking back, you mugwump!" hooted Dusty. "Whoop her up a bit! Wonky's gang have spotted us, and if my eyes don't deceive me, Wonky himself is among 'em!"

Loud howls rose from the pirates who had been blockading the front of the Consulate; most of them started running down one of the near-by streets.

"They've gone to find some of

had brought the car to a halt and Woo had limped up to it, Wong and several of his pirates appeared on the road leading from Panchin.

All the outlaws were mounted on shaggy Chinese ponies, and each man was armed with a heavy bamboo club.

"You go straight on, Shiny!" howled Woo Sam angrily as he clambered aboard again. "Pletty soon if you makee car run allee same snake, old Wonky catchee evellybody and boilee in beef-dipping!"

"If we're boiled in dripping, it will be your fault, Shiner!" growled Dusty. "Spike me! The road's wide enough, and imitations of the Witching Waves like you get at the Southsea Fair, ain't appreciated—and that's flat!"

Next instant he was flat, for there was a loud explosion, and the car

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Shiner. "What a jape! This is a bit of all right, ain't it, mates? Are we droppin' old Wonky and his pals well astern?"

The passengers clung on grimly as they were hurled about like limp sacks in the crazy old vehicle.

"K-keep a-go'in', Shiner!" stuttered Tich. "We ain't shaken 'em off yet."

Something went wrong with the engine, which began to splutter and cough distressingly. While the Consul was making suggestions, the trouble seemed to right itself, but by this time the pirates—with Wonky well in the lead—had gained considerably on the car.

The crazy race continued, but the wiry ponies found the rough going far more to their liking than did the "tin lizzie." Wonky himself was mounted on the fleetest pony of

away already and almost dragging under the forward starboard wheel. If we lose any more nuts, the whole giddy bag of tricks will collapse like a corrugated iron hut hit by a fifteen-inch naval shell!"

On they raced, one tyre flat on the ground, zigzagging and lurching tremendously. And, with guttural hoots of triumph, Wonky galloped nearer and nearer until he could almost have touched the car with the end of his bamboo club.

The car still bumped on its way, and, showing his discoloured teeth in a wolfish leer, Wonky spurred his pony forward until the animal was level with the rear seat of the vehicle. Tich squirmed upward in his seat, and Wonky aimed a vicious blow at him with the bamboo.

Instantly Tich ducked, and the bamboo at the end of its swing caught Shiner, sitting forward at the wheel, a hearty clump over the back of the head. Without even a groan, Shiner collapsed in his seat; his shoulder knocked the hand throttle forward, and the "tin lizzie" promptly proceeded to describe a great circle.

Gathering that the boys were unarmed, Wonky gave a guttural laugh and half rose in his saddle. For a moment or so he poised there, while the pony galloped alongside the car. Then, launching himself forth, he attempted to leap into the runaway vehicle.

Out shot the knobbly fist of little Tich in a flash, and connected full with the pirate's squat, yellow nose.

"Yoop!"

With that frantic bellow, Wonky clawed at the side of the "tin lizzie," and then Tich followed up with another beauty full to the left eye, which sent Wonky bowling on his back in the dust!

The 6th Chapter.

A Tow From Another Craft.

"H A, ha, ha! Bravo, old Tich!"

The sight of Wonky on his back astern made little Woo Sam fairly shake with mirth, until he suddenly realised that the car was prescribing a circle back in the direction of the pursuing pirates.

Shiner, although half dazed as a result of the blow on his head, managed to realise that he was at the driving-wheel of a motor-car. He had a vision of several horsemen leaping out of the way as the car lurched among them, and there was a sudden thwack of bamboos on the tin bodywork as two or three of Wonky's pirates aimed blows in passing.

Mechanically Shiner fumbled with the hand throttle, and, to the dismay of his pals, the car came to a chugging halt.

"Go ahead, fathead!" shrieked Tich.

By this time Shiner had recovered from the immediate effects of the blow on the back of his head. He restarted, but not before half a dozen of the pirates had thronged round. Dusty, Tich, and Woo leaped up to repel boarders; the Consul, too feeble to give physical help, cheered them on.

One of the pirates caught Woo a buff on the shoulder with his bamboo, and the little Chink promptly retaliated with a snapping left which knocked the grin off the man's gloating face.

Two other of the outlaws dismounted and tried to scramble over the back of the car. Whereupon Dusty rapped the pair sharply on the knuckles with a spanner, causing them to let go with squeals of pain. Tich, meanwhile, dealt with another ruffian who tried to attack Shiner at the wheel, catching him a beauty on the chest with a heavy tin of bully beef and knocking him headlong in the dust.

While the short scrap was proceeding Shiner got the "tin lizzie" moving forward again, and, after much harsh grinding of gears, the car started travelling at full speed.

A quarter of a mile away Wonky was limping around, vainly trying to catch a riderless pony, and apparently two or three other pirates had decided that the raggies were too hard a nut to crack. The remainder, however, galloped hard in pursuit. "We're well away now, mates!" piped Shiner cheerfully. "It's all downhill here!"

The crazy old car almost capsized, as it swerved between tree-stumps and continued its bumping, jumping career downhill. The engine was smoking like a volcano; a portion of the back flooring dropped out and lay derelict in the wilderness.

(Continued on next page.)

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PLYMOUTH A.	v. BRIGHTON & H. A.
BLACKPOOL	v. MIDDLESBROUGH
COVENTRY CITY	v. EXETER CITY
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17

B.R.

CUT HERE.

RULES.

(Which must be strictly adhered to.)

1. All forecasts must be made on coupons taken from this journal or from any of the issues of the journals which contain this competition offer.
2. Any alteration or mutilation of the coupon will disqualify the effort. When more than one effort is submitted, coupons must not be pinned or in any other way fastened together.
3. In the event of postponement, or abandonment before full time on April 23rd, of any of the first six matches on this coupon, 5s. will be awarded to each of the readers who correctly forecast the results of the first six completed games on the coupon.
4. The prize of 5s. for every correct forecast of the first six matches will be paid up to a maximum of £1,000—an equal division of that sum being made if the successful entrants in this section exceed four thousand.
5. In the event of ties between competitors, the prizes will be divided at the Editor's discretion, but no competitor will be awarded more than one prize or share of a prize.

6. No correspondence will be allowed, nor interviews granted.
7. The prize of £500 will be awarded to the competitor whose forecast of all the matches on the coupon is correct or most nearly correct. Any match abandoned or not fully played for any reason, will be ignored in the adjudication.
8. It is a distinct condition of entry that the Editor's decision shall be accepted as final and legally binding in all matters concerning this competition.
9. All entries must be sent through the post, and any received after THURSDAY, APRIL 21st, will be disqualified. No responsibility can be accepted for any effort, or efforts, lost, mislaid, or delayed. Proof of posting will not be accepted as proof of delivery. Unstamped or insufficiently stamped efforts will be refused.

Coupons from "Answers," "Family Journal," "Home Companion," "Woman's World," "Pictorial Weekly," "Sports Budget," "Union Jack," "Chums," "Football and Sports Favourite," and "All Sports Weekly" may also be used. Employees of the proprietors of these journals are not eligible to compete.

their pals, I 'spect," remarked Tich, opening a tin of bully beef. "I s'pose there ain't enough of 'em to tackle us!"

Under Shiner's inexperienced hands, the old car rattled and banged its way along one of the two roads which led to Hoochow.

"Have we shaken 'em off, mates?" he demanded after a while, narrowly missing a tree-stump. "Can't see any of old Wonky's gang now, eh?"

Dusty looked back and reported that there was no sign of the pirates.

The 5th Chapter.

Wonky on the Trail!

THE passengers were flung from side to side like sacks of flour as Shiner zigzagged swiftly among a drove of oxen in the roadway. Only Woo Sam was thrown out, however; fortunately, he received nothing worse than a thick car and a badly-bruised leg and shoulder.

The mishap caused an unfortunate delay, for by the time that Shiner

gave a violent lurch, which landed him on his back.

"Corks!" gasped Tich. "Who chucked that bomb?"

The "tin lizzie" was taking a serpentine career along the road, while Shiner was anxiously peering over the side.

"It's all right, mates!" he breathed, with a sigh of relief; "only a tyre gone phut!"

The Consul raised himself feebly to see which one.

"I'm!" he mumbled. "The best of the four, too! That one only had about fifteen patches on the inner tube."

"And how many patches has the worst one got, sir?" inquired Shiner, with interest. "Five hundred and fifteen?"

Steering the "tin lizzie" was even more difficult now; Shiner, finding it impossible to keep it on the narrow road, with its thick brown carpet of dust, took to the fields. The car bumped and banged its way over the dried yellow grass, lurching like a ship struck by a big wave as it ran over small clumps of cactus.

all, and, waving a heavy length of bamboo, he gained yard upon yard on the raggies.

He bellowed an order in pidgin English for them to stop, for he was determined to capture the whole lot alive. Even when they refused to obey, the look of gloating remained on his face. Out here in the open country far from Hoochow, he and his ruffians would prove more than a match for the Buzzfly boys and the disabled Consul—at least, so thought Wonky.

"Are any of you lads armed with revolvers?" inquired the Consul weakly. "I've run out of ammunition for mine."

"There ain't a gun among us, sir," replied Tich. "Crumbs! Old Wonky's pony would give some racehorses I've seen a furlong's start and lick 'em by a street!"

"It's shifting like a slab of margarine across the mess-table in a gale!" moaned Dusty. "To shake off old Wonky we shall have to steam under forced draught, mateys."

"Can't get another ounce out of her!" returned Shiner grimly. "There's half the bonnet carried

"B-b-better b-brake her!" advised Dusty.

"She's breaking all right without my help, mate!" retorted Shiner cheerfully.

Even as he joked, he jammed his foot down on the brake-pedal, and his eyes sought the speedometer. Instead of coming down to the region of thirty miles an hour, the needle quivered up to forty.

"The hand-brake, ass!" hooted Dusty, clinging madly to the seat.

Shiner jammed on the hand-brake, and his eyes moved slowly inward towards one another as he saw the indicator quivering up to the forty-five mark.

"Phew!" he gulped. "The brakes are busted!"

"Sufferin' whelks!" howled Dusty, and shut his eyes as a clump of banana-palms whipped towards the car.

How Shiner avoided those palms the raggies never knew. They felt the car lurch over on two wheels and heard a dull explosion as another tyre burst. This had the effect of evening things up a bit, and, with the pursuing pirates now far astern, the "tin lizzie" whooped down the rest of the hill. A clump of large mimosa bushes rushed by, and the prickly branches whipped madly at the raggies.

"Another bump and a lurch, and the car was on a dusty road leading to a village. Blue smoke poured from its bonnet, half blinding and choking the driver and passengers.

The road became flat, and a slight rise followed to the plateau whereon stood the Chinese village. On the plateau the car came to a halt, and from the amount of smoke rising from it the raggies judged, even before Mr. Brewster told them the worst, that motoring was over for that day.

Then suddenly little Woo pointed excitedly back.

"Looksee!" he cried. "Debased old Wonky and fiends makee come heap quick now!"

They gazed hastily about them and spotted what looked like a small brown hillock near a large and very green duckpond.

"That anthill!" cried Shiner. "We'd better hop across to it and duck down out of sight!"

Then, to the utter amazement of them all, the "anthill" slowly rose higher and higher on the ground and turned broadside on, revealing that it was possessed of a serpentine neck, an ungainly head, four splay-footed legs, and a long, brush-like tail!

"Corny?" whooped Shiner gleefully. "There's a chance for us yet!"

The Buzzfly mascot, who had been happily basking in the sun after a mudbath, gave a squeal that set their teeth on edge, and came running across to them, his knobby legs shooting out in all directions from his unshapely body.

Rapidly Shiner took off the long halter, which Corny invariably wore in a series of coils round his neck when allowed free to graze, and turned it into a towrope. They all took their seats in the car again, and Corny, who had pulled an Egyptian cart in his time, started along the road, with the "tin lizzie" rolling astern.

In this strange fashion the raggies passed through the village and out into the country beyond. Hoochow lay in the sunshine a mile and a half away on their starboard bow, with the Leemoon Lake spread out like a blue enamel tray beyond.

A good mile and a half behind rode a number of the pirates, whose ponies were beginning to tire. At the sight of the raggies on the move again they lashed their weary steeds, still hopeful of overtaking the boys.

"Hurrah!" cried Shiner. "We're going downhill again, mates! Now we sha'n't be long!"

"And we'd better not be, neither!" grunted Dusty. "Wonky's rotters are riding out of the village!"

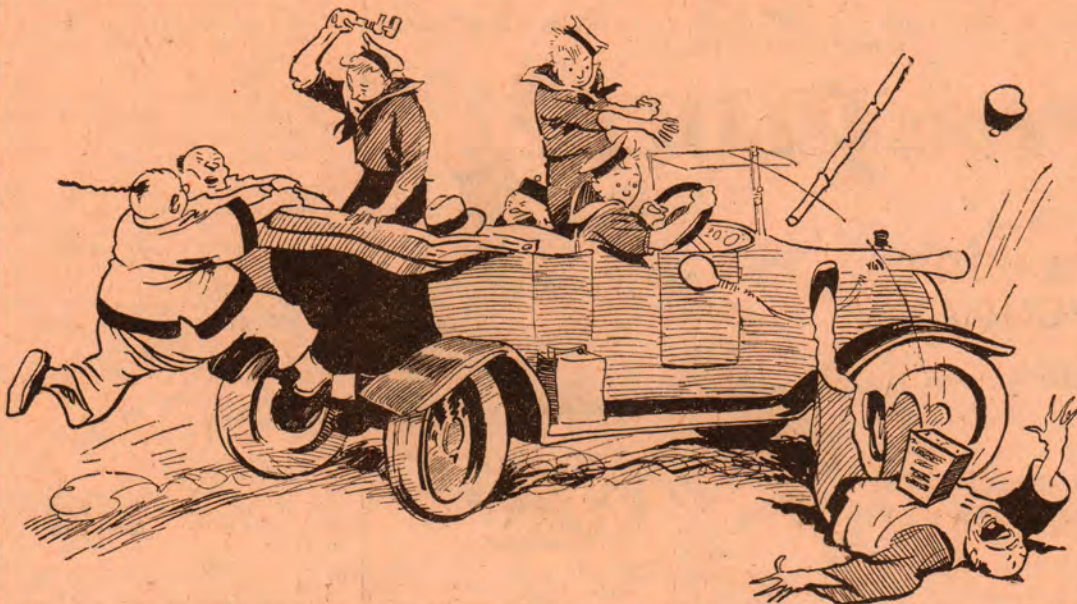
There was no doubt about it that Corny and the car were on the downgrade, for both were gathering speed. Shiner instinctively put on the brakes, only to be brought back to the realisation that both were broken.

Dusty, whose shoulders were on the seat, waved his legs in protest.

"Avast heaving!" he bellowed. "Leggo the hook! Backwater!"

But now the brakeless car had gathered impetus on the down-slope, and was catching up with the camel. The tow-rope had slackened, and, astutely adapting himself to the situation, Shiner gave the wheel a sharp turn to starboard.

Biff! A mudguard caught Corny a thump in the stern-sheets, and



REPEL BOARDERS!

The pirate went over with a howl as Tich caught him in the chest with a tin of bully beef, while Dusty rapped two more of the gang over the knuckles with a spanner. Then Shiner got the car going again at full speed.

with a squeal of protest, the camel did a sort of somersault which would have earned him huge applause in any circus in the world. Simultaneously the tow-rope parted, and the old car rushed on its mad career downhill, Dusty with one of his boots sticking through the windscreen.

"B-b-bless m-my heart!" panted the breathless Consul.

"Cheer-lie, evellybody!" sang Woo solemnly. "Good-bye-e-e-e!"

Tich, bouncing like a pea on a shovel in the back seat, rapped his left heel against Shiner's neck.

"Hard a-port, fathead!" he shrieked. "D'you want to wreck us?"

Shiner made no reply, but set his teeth grimly. He knew that if he tried to swing the car round at the speed they were travelling it would immediately turn turtle.

The one hope, as it seemed to him, was to whip down the hill and up the other side. The middle of the depression appeared to be covered with thick green vegetation, and would make smooth running for the runaway car.

While the bewildered Corny sat on the ground gazing after the speeding vehicle, the "tin lizzie" careered wildly downward. In the thrill of that mad rush the boys forgot the pirates, and prepared themselves for a zipping switchback up the opposite hill. The front wheels struck the border of green vegetation at the bottom, and a sudden shower of water and black mud shot upward, splattering over the remaining glass of the broken windscreen, the amateur driver, and his luckless passengers.

What had looked like a thick

carpet of green grass from a short distance away, was nothing but the weeds of a shallow, muddy pond!

The car skidded violently, and crashed over on its side. Out shot Shiner and his passengers like so many sacks of meal among the slimy greenness and mud!

"Strewth!"

It was all Shiner had time to say. Next instant he had loudly flopped face downward into many inches of thick green water and rank black mud.

A violent struggle got him to his hands and knees, and after scraping a goodly portion of mud out of his eyes, he gazed in dazed fashion about him.

What he saw was four pairs of legs kicking vigorously in the air. Dusty, Tich, and Woo had landed head-first in the ooze, and their heads and upper parts of their bodies were completely immersed in mud and weed. The Consul was on his back, also kicking vigorously, and bubbles were bursting on the surface of the discoloured water over his head.

Shiner's first inclination to laugh was swiftly followed by a thrill of horror.

"Tar me!" he gulped. "They're stuck!"

Squelching through the green ooze up to his knees, he dragged the Consul into a sitting position. Both little Tich and Woo were equally easy to rescue, and Shiner vigorously vanked them to their feet, and left them spluttering violently while he attended to Dusty.

"Steady—steady, mate!" bellowed Shiner. "I'm a-comin'!"

As Dusty's head was fixed in the

mud under the shallow water, he naturally failed to hear those words of cheer. With his breath almost gone, he gave a last, frantic kick—thwack!—and caught Shiner a hefty clump on the nose.

"Wow! Ooch, y'hooligan!"

Despite his injury, Shiner still realised the dire need of his doleful chum, and, staggering forward again, threw both his arms round the now feebly waving legs. A mighty heave, and—swoooooosh!—Dusty came upward like a tight-fitting cork out of a rubber bottle.

"Glub—glub! Grooh-urgle-urgle!" Though unintelligible, Dusty's gurgles showed he was in the land of the living, and Shiner, in his joy, gave him a hearty thump on the back which knocked the luckless one head-first into the mud again.

"Sorry, mate!" piped Shiner, again lending a helping hand. "I was so jolly glad about you, I didn't think o' what I was a-doing!"

Dusty squelched round and round in the mud.

"Glad?" he hooted. "Why, you half-baked cousin to a lop-sided land-crab! First you go and upset the craft by your lubberly steering, and afterwards laugh at the poor blokes you toppled overboard! I thought old Wonky was a pretty rotten sort o' pirate, but you—"

"Belay, sonny," advised Shiner. "Hang it, is this gratitood? You wouldn't have said half as much agin me, matey, if I'd left you standing there on your head in the mud for another half-minute!"

A cry from Woo made them look sharply round.

"Looksee! Wonky's fiends makee come top-side!"

NEXT WEEK'S PROGRAMME.

Mirth Amongst the Mangles!

"PETE'S LAUNDRY!"

Absolutely the best yarn that Gordon Maxwell has yet given us! If you want to know what Gumbrell sounds like when he's screaming amongst the soapuds—don't miss this story! It's one long laugh. More details on page 4.

"BOMBS IN THE BUZZFLY!"

Another roaring story of the famous Raggies o' the Rambler. Shiner & Co. are looking for bombs next week—and this yarn goes with a bang!

Special Instalments of

"ALL FOR THE ALBION!"

and

"GINGER—FOR PLUCK!"

Look Out for a Mirth-making Cartoon of

THE BINGO BOYS.

They're in special training for their Cup Final next week!

LOTS OF OTHER GRAND FEATURES.

OUT ON WEDNESDAY!



Half a dozen of the pirates on their ponies had arrived on the top of the hill whence the car had made that swift descent. Half-way up the slope Corny was waltzing slowly round and round like a great misshapen kitten in chase of its tail. He also saw the ponies, and, baring his big yellow teeth, screeched defiance at them.

Instantly the ponies pricked their ears, and, in spite of the pirates' efforts to turn them down the slope, they swung round and galloped back towards the village as fast as their shaggy legs would carry them.

"Tar me, that's a rum go!" exclaimed Shiner.

By this time the Consul had removed sufficient mud from his features to be able to speak.

"It's a real bit of luck for us, boys, that the camel should be there!" he said. "There are very few horses in the world which will stand the presence of a camel or dromedary. Why it should be, I don't know; but those ponies are no exception to the general rule. Now's our chance to get a move toward Hoochow; the car will have to remain here. Possibly I can get some Chinese dealer to make an offer for it as it stands."

"Me savvy fiend in Hoochow who keepee nicee lag-and-bone shop," remarked Woo helpfully. "Plaps he give honourable Consul two or t'lee velly good plants in pot for it."

Shiner whistled for Corny, and, with the camel bringing up the rear, they staggered on towards the city. After a quarter of a mile, the Consul could go no farther; but they wrenched up a hurdle from a rough fence, and between them carried him the rest of the way to the water-front.

The appearance of the four mud-blackened figures, with the fifth on the impromptu stretcher, and Corny and a great crowd of Chinese in the rear, brought Petty Officer Gurney to the head of the gangway.

"Thunder and lightning!" ejaculated the P.O. "It's those young cubs, Boy Bright and his pals!"

"Pon my word, so it is!" exclaimed Commander Dill, joining him. "What is the meaning of this spectacular return to your ship, my lads?"

Mr. Brewster weakly raised himself on the hurdle.

"It means, commander," he said, "that these four members of your crew have saved the life of the Panchin Consul! By their splendid grit and initiative, they've outwitted Wong Kiang and his gang!"

A hot bath, the liberal use of embrocation, and a change of uniform, speedily put Shiner & Co. to rights. Their open-hearted shipmates heartily congratulated them on their feat, and only Bodger Lees and Horace Stoop ate the bitter-fruit of envy.

A messenger arrived from aft informing them they were to go to the ward-room at once.

The skipper was there in the ward-room, beside the other officers, with the exception of the officer of the watch. And down the centre of the ward-room was set a white table which gleamed with cut glass and silver and great dishes of oranges, bananas, custard apples, pomegranates, and new figs!

"Ye-yum-m-m-mmm!" muttered Tich, his mouth watering.

"My boys," spoke up Commander Dill, "the Consul has fully informed me of your brilliant rescue, and how you kept the pirates at bay. It has also come to my knowledge that food has not passed your lips for some hours; therefore I and my officers cordially invite you to be our guests in this little ward-room spread."

Shiner & Co. were so taken aback by this unique honour that they could only mumble their thanks in an undertone, while little Woo Sam heartily shook hands with himself a dozen times to show his pleasure.

Leed grapefruit, baked fresh fish and sweet potatoes, roast chicken and caper sauce, caramel-pudding, fruit, and home-made toffees followed one another into the glowing interior of the gratified pals.

"Phew! What a blow-out, mateys!" puffed Shiner, as they rolled forward to seek their hammocks half an hour later. "This evenin' I feel as though I could even lend ole Bodger half a month's pay wiv a smile!"

THE END.

(Another rollicking long complete yarn of the good old raggies in next Wednesday's issue: "BOMBS IN THE BUZZFLY!" This yarn is a real scream! Order your REALM to-day!)

UP AGAINST A
CRACK TEAM!The Ragged Ramblers are matched against Steelvale United — and
Ginger is out to win!

GINGER—FOR PLUCK!

BY
ROBERT
MURRAY.On his toes—all the
time! That's Ginger
Terry, the greatest
little footballer that
ever kicked a ball!

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.

Ginger buys the Ramblers some new football kit, but it is stolen. They learn, later, that a set of hoodlums known as the Doolan Street gang were the thieves, and that the latter are going to sell the kit that night!

(Now read on.)

The Stolen Kit!

EVERY gaze was fixed upon the diminutive figure of Huggins' young brother as he stood in the doorway of the Ramblers' clubhouse, wide-eyed and panting with excitement and self-importance, as he delivered his startling news.

"I ain't kidding; it's the real truth!" he shrieked proudly, as he surveyed the crowd of footballers. "I know where the Doolan Street gang has their headquarters, where they hold their meetings; and I heard Sloan say as they had all your stolen football kit there—all the boots and clobber as was pinched from here the other night!"

A shout of consternation and excitement burst from Sergeant Boom and the members of the Ramblers' team.

"By James, I knew all along it was them that pinched our clobber!" exclaimed Huggins, clenching his big fists. "Jest let me lay my hands on 'em! Come on; trot it out, Bert! Let's have the whole yarn."

Bert Huggins belonged to the local troop of Wolf Cubs, and was mighty proud of it. His uniform was not strictly in accord with regulations, but he wore shorts, a scarf around his throat, and carried a broom-handle in one hand.

"Stand to attention, my lad, and let's hear your report!" roared Sergeant Boom. "How did you get into touch with the enemy? What is their disposition? Where are they located?"

"I didn't touch 'em, and I don't know nothing about their disposition," replied the youngster. "But if you want to know where I ran across 'em, it was on the piece of waste ground at the back of Brooms' Steel Works. I'd been out scouting with my troop, and I was coming home that way on my own, when I caught sight of Sloan and Nobby Bowker and half a dozen others walking towards me. I didn't want to run into them, so I nips down behind them piles of bricks that is all that is left of an old house that used to stand jest behind the steel works."

"I know where you mean," jerked Sid Yates. "I believe they're going to start building there later on."

Bert Huggins nodded, and masticated vigorously at a lump of chewing-gum.

"The gang didn't see me," he continued, "though they went right past me; and then blowed if the whole lot of 'em didn't suddenly seem to disappear into the earth!"

"Do what?" echoed Tom Carter incredulously.

"Vanish—like that!" replied Bert Huggins, snapping his fingers. "They was there and then they wasn't, if you know wot I means?"

"I don't," admitted Sid Yates candidly. "How could Nobby Bowker and the rest of 'em disappear into the earth?"

"Well, they did at any rate," insisted the youngster. "And I mighty soon twigged the wheeze when I scouted forward. I could hear voices right under the ground, and bust me if there wasn't a great big pit dug there, roofed over with old railway-sleepers and then covered up with earth. It didn't take me long to find the entrance to it. It was just a square hole, covered with an old door. I moved it a bit to one side, and bust me if there wasn't Sloan and the whole of 'em sittin' on boxes, puffing fags and whispering together like a lot of conspirators!"

"What—sitting in the dark?" queried Tom Carter.

"No; there was an oil-lamp hanging on the wall, and they had all sorts of stuff down there that they'd probably pinched—boxes of biscuits, tins of sweets, and a heap of other things."

"And the football togs they stole from us?" asked Sid Yates eagerly.

"No; I didn't see nothin' of them," admitted Huggins' brother. "But I know they're there, because I heard Sloan say so. He was as mad as a hornet, and was talking about the way you fellows treated him the other night when you tied that fire-cracker to his coat and kicked him out of the Rents."

"Never mind; I'll get me own back on the beasts!" he was saying. "They'll never see their danged football things again!"

"Wot are you going to do with 'em—burn 'em?" ses Nobby Bowker. "It ain't safe to keep 'em down here."

"I've found someone to buy 'em," ses Sloan. "A bloke over at Cutbridge. That's why I want you fellows to meet me here at six o'clock this evening and help me shift the stuff!"

The Charity Cup!

BERT HUGGINS paused for breath, and Ginger and his chums stared grimly at one another. They knew now who had stolen their brand-new boots, kit, and footballs from the clubhouse the previous Friday night, although they had suspected all along the mean theft had been committed by Sloan and his unsavoury, unscrupulous gang.

"By gosh, this is where Sloan and his cheerful chums are going to get it right in the neck!" said Ginger meaningly. "It was a rotten trick they played on us, and they've got to be taught a lesson once and for all!"

"Hear, hear!" agreed Sid Yates. "What's the wheeze, Ginger?"

"Nab 'em red-handed, and paste them good and hard," replied the young footballer. "Thanks to this nipper here we know where our stolen stuff is, and we know that Sloan and his gang intend to meet there at six o'clock this evening in order to collect it and take it away. I suggest that we pay them a visit, and ask them nicely if they'd be kind enough to return us our boots and other kit."

"Yes; there's nothing like being nice and polite," agreed Huggins, with a broad grin of pleasurable anticipation. "I shall just walk

straight up to Sloan and plug him smack in the jaw, and reserve any kind inquiries as to his health until afterwards."

"The great thing is to get our football kit back," said Tom Carter. "That ought to be easy enough. If we take 'em by surprise we ought to be more than a match for Sloan and all his hangers-on."

"We'll wipe the floor with 'em!" growled Sergeant Boom ferociously. "Best for us to get there half an hour earlier, and lay in wait for the thieving brutes. Is there anywhere we could hide?"

"Sure enough," volunteered young Bert Huggins. "There's a big wooden shed close handy where some builder's workmen keep their spades and hods and other things."

"Then here's to six o'clock this evening," chuckled Huggins, doubling his fists and delivering a smashing upper-cut at some imaginary opponent. "We'll get our new clobber back again just in time for Wednesday, when we play our first round for the local Charity Cup."

"Hallo! What's this?" asked Ginger curiously. "First I've heard about any match for Wednesday."

"Great Scott! Didn't you know we'd entered the Ramblers for the local Charity Cup competition?" exclaimed Sid Yates. "It's open to any and every club in Steelvale that chooses to enter—amateur or professional. There's a cup and medals presented by the mayor, and all the proceeds go to the local hospital. I know we've got a bit of a neck entering, but it only costs a few bob. There's sixteen teams entered this year, and the draw comes off on Monday."

"My word, wouldn't it be a lark if we were drawn against Steelvale United Reserves?" said Huggins. "The United Reserves?" echoed Ginger. "Are they allowed to enter?"

"Sure thing," informed Sid Yates. "They generally win, and as the final is played on their ground under any circumstances, it means a bumper gate to go to the hospital. And the losing team in the final get medals as well."

It had commenced to rain heavily, and Ginger and Sid Yates spent the afternoon seated over the fire in Sergeant Boom's cosy sitting-room.

"Bust my buttons, but I can't realise now that you're the new landlord of Raggs' Rents!" said the old soldier bluntly, as he puffed at his pipe and surveyed Ginger with a puzzled shake of his grizzled head. "It don't seem right that you should be sitting here."

"I don't care a hang what it seems like to you, but you're certainly not going to turn me out," grinned Ginger. "Forget all about it. I'm not really the landlord, and I sha'n't be until I come of age. Mr. Catchpole is the real boss when it comes down to brass tacks, but he let's me do pretty much as I like."

"That fellow Crocker's a pig if ever there was one," said Sid Yates. "It's mighty white of you not to let him buy the Rents, so as he can pull 'em down, Ginger. And he dared to suggest this morning that you yourself probably set fire to the place."

"I'd like to know who was responsible," muttered Ginger grimly. "I can't for the life of me imagine who would dare to do such a dastardly thing. It's beyond even the Doolan Street gang."

"Henry Crocker was soon on the spot when he heard what had happened!" grunted Sergeant Boom, resting his wooden peg on the fender and tapping his pipe against it. "I

reckon it would have been all to his advantage if the whole place had been burned down. You might have sold him your land then, eh, Ginger?"

Ginger was silent for a moment. "I suppose I should have had to," he said, at length. "I certainly couldn't have rebuilt the Rents myself."

Ginger had read more than a hint in the sergeant's remarks, but he couldn't possibly bring himself to believe that Henry Crocker might have had any hand in the deliberate attempt to destroy the tenements. Yet he was the one person in all Steelvale who, probably, would have benefited had the Rents been razed to the ground.

"Ay, Crocker's a man who needs watching," supplemented Sergeant Boom shrewdly. "He's in Queer Street. He's practically ruined the United by his pig-headed refusal to buy new players, and I've heard that he'll be a ruined man if he fails to fulfil his contract with the council and build a block of model dwellings in the town."

"Why can't he do it?" queried Sid Yates.

"Because it was part of his contract that he should supply a plot of freehold ground on which to build 'em, and there ain't a suitable one available in all Steelvale, excepting this property," said the old soldier. "I reckon he must have offered you a big price for the Rents, Ginger, if it ain't a pertinent question to ask."

"He did; but it wouldn't have made any difference if he'd offered me ten times the amount," replied Ginger cheerfully.

The Gang's Dugout!

JUST after five o'clock, Huggins, Tom Carter, Hayes, and the other members of the Ramblers put in an appearance, all anxious to get to grips with Sloan and his rascally gang and recover the property that had been stolen from them the previous Friday.

There were fourteen in the party altogether, including young Bert Huggins.

Brooms' Steel Works was situated on the extreme outskirts of the town, and the piece of waste ground at the back was a gloomy, desolate spot.

It was after half-past five. The steel works were closed, and there was not a living soul about to observe Sergeant Boom and the crowd of footballers as they made straight for the wooden hut that Bert Huggins had described.

There was plenty of room inside for all of them, despite the fact that the hut was littered with shovels and picks and other builder's workmen's implements.

Bert Huggins pointed out the exact position of the underground dugout which was the headquarters of the Doolan Street gang. It was scarcely more than half a dozen yards away, and was distinguishable only by the old door lying on the ground that

covered the entrance to the subterranean chamber.

Tom Carter was anxious to make a tour of inspection to see if he could discover where their stolen property was concealed, but it was decided to wait until the gang arrived before any move was made.

There was a water-tap laid on just outside the door of the shed, and Ginger was the first to discover a big coil of hose-pipe hanging on the wall.

"This is just what we want!" he grinned, as he lifted it down. "We'll drown the beggars out. If there's one thing chaps like Sloan and his pals don't like, it's cold water. They'll be yelling for someone to fling 'em a lifebelt before I've finished with them."

Tom Carter had not come unprepared. He had been chuckling quietly to himself for several minutes, and now he suddenly produced a bulky, mysterious-looking parcel from his pocket. It looked like a round ball of damp brown paper, about eight inches in diameter, with a short length of fuse attached to it.

"This is a jolly old smoke canister," he announced proudly. "My elder brother in the Navy showed me how to make 'em. They smoke like billy-ho, and whiff enough to suffocate a stuffed alligator at ten miles' range. I dunno what they're made of. My brother brought the stuff back from China with him."

"Suffering cats, we don't want to kill the beggars!" muttered Sid Yates uneasily.

"It won't kill 'em, but it'll probably make 'em feel mighty ill," assured Tom Carter. "I got a niff of one once by accident, and it was just like bad eggs, a glue-factory, and dead fish all mixed up together."

The footballers did not have very long to wait. Young Bert Huggins was standing sentry outside, and it was just about ten minutes to six when he came creeping into the shed and closed the door behind him.

"Here come three or four of them!" he whispered; and Ginger applied his eyes to a handy crack in the wooden wall of the hut, just as Sloan, accompanied by Nobby Bowker and several other young hoodlums, came slouching across the piece of waste ground. After a cautious glance around, Sloan kicked the wooden door to one side with his foot, and vanished down the entrance to the cunningly-concealed dugout.

All of his companions save one followed suit, and he remained standing puffing at a cheap cigarette until another four members of the gang arrived on the scene and went below to join their leader. The sentry followed them.

"Like a lot of thieving rats, and that's just what they are," growled Sergeant Boom.

The Ramblers waited a couple of minutes before they went into action. Ginger clipped one end of the length of hose on to the tap outside the

(Continued on next page.)

AT THE TOP OF THE TREE!

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Splendid Stories
of
Harry Wharton
& Co.
of
Greyfriars
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EVERY MONDAY.

shed, and left it to young Huggins to turn the water on when necessary. Then, uncoiling the hose as he went, he took up his stance just in front of the entrance to the dugout.

Tom Carter had been deputed to fire the first shot; in other words, to open proceedings with the unpleasant-looking contrivance that he was hugging so affectionately.

Amid a dead silence he struck a match and set light to the short length of fuse. He watched it burn down almost level, and then suddenly lifted the wooden door, and heaved the spluttering object down into the underground chamber where Sloan and his cronies sat mumbling together.

Then Tom Carter closed the door over the hole again, and planted himself solidly on top of it, accompanied by Huggins and Sergeant Boom.

There was one moment's tense silence, followed by a muffled yell of alarm, and another, and another, which speedily merged into one panic-stricken, dismayed uproar.

"Look out—it's a bomb!"
"Put yer foot on it, yer gowk!"
"Wow! We shall be blown to pieces! Gerrout of the way!"

Then sounded a dull report as the smoke-bomb proceeded to get on sturdily with its good work, and spirals of greasy, black, evil-smelling smoke commenced to curl up through the interstices in the roof of the dugout, and around the edges of the door that covered the entrance.

"Suffering snakes, it's enough to poison an elephant!" gulped Sergeant Boom, clapping his handkerchief over his nose. "I wouldn't be down underneath there for all the money in the Bank of England!"

A terrific struggle seemed to be going on down below as Sloan and his companions fought and tore to gain the exit from their underground chamber.

"Phoo! Hellup! Lemme past! I'm dying!"

"I'll kill the brute who did this!" screamed the furious voice of Sloan. "Lemme get at 'im! Gerrout o' my way, ye fools!"

There was the sound of heavy blows, and the thud of boxes and packing-cases being overturned. Evidently the smoke was so thick that the Doolan Street gang could not see where they were, and it was several moments before one of them succeeded in finding his way to the door and made a futile attempt to thrust it open.

"We're shut in! I can't get out!" wailed a despairing voice.

A chorus of wild howls of horror went up, mingled with coughings and splutterings, and ominous sounds as though several people were feeling far from well.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

"Let us out! Open this door!"

"You jest wait! We'll boot you to a pulp for this!"

"We'll all be suffocated!"

Sergeant Boom and his companions stood their ground a few minutes longer, and while they remained standing on the door it would have taken a hydraulic-jack to have lifted it open from below.

"Let 'em have a good dose of it—it'll do 'em good!" grinned Tom Carter, highly delighted over the success of his bomb. "It'll disinfect 'em!"

"My hat! I should think it would!" agreed Ginger Terry, who had caught a stray whiff of the ghastly contents of the bomb. "I shouldn't think there's a germ of any kind would go near 'em in future. Stand away, ye fellows—let's clear the atmosphere!"

Ginger Gets Even.

SERGEANT BOOM and his two companions stepped away from the door, and Ginger gave young Bert Huggins the signal to turn on the water-tap. Then the door was sent flying to one side, and



WASHED OUT!

Terry kept the hissing stream of water concentrated steadily on the entrance to the gang's dugout. Every time that a head appeared it was promptly swept out of sight again. The Ramblers were having their own back now!

the head and shoulders of Sloan popped into view. The gangster presented a ludicrous spectacle.

His hair was standing on end, his face was the colour of a piece of bad cheese, tears were streaming down his cheeks, and his mouth was wide open as he gasped painfully for breath.

Before he could scramble up out of the entrance to the dugout, Ginger had levelled the nozzle of the hose and let fly. The powerful jet of water caught Sloan full, and sent him floundering back on top of his companions.

Nobby Bowker made a momentary appearance, but was immediately swept out of sight again, and engulfed in the depths of the underground headquarters of the Doolan Street gang.

Ginger did not intend to spare the unscrupulous, underhanded hooligans who had robbed the Ramblers of all their brand-new football kit, and thereby causing them to lose the last match they had played. It had been a cruel, spiteful thing to do, and he was determined that they should suffer for it and be taught a lesson that they might remember in the future.

He kept the jet of water concentrated steadily on the entrance to the dugout, and every time a head appeared in view it was promptly swept out of sight again.

Sloan could be heard screeching and howling like a maniac, uttering the most blood-curdling threats and imprecations.

What he wasn't going to do to Ginger Terry and his chums could have been plainly written on the edge of a razor. He presented a choice of violent deaths that would have turned the Spanish Inquisition green with envy.

But the water-treatment gradually gained the upper hand. The tumult of vile threats and fiery oaths slowly died away, and were replaced by whining moans of distress, and appeals for a cessation of hostilities.

Sloan did make one more frantic effort to charge up out of the dugout, but collapsed at the top, and slid helplessly back into the mud and mire.

It was the last straw, and suddenly a handkerchief that had once been white was elevated into view on the end of a piece of stick.

"All right; we'll give in!" snarled the sullen voice of the leader of the Doolan Street gang. "You've got us beat, you scuts! Turn that blessed water off, and let's get out of this stinking 'ole!"

"None of your funny tricks, or you'll get a double dose next time!" warned Ginger. "I'm all ready for you if you start cutting capers!"

"Cutting any capers! As though we would, or could!" moaned the dolorous voice of Nobby Bowker. "I'm dying! Send for a doctor! I've been poisoned!"

"I don't wonder, mixing with the crowd you do!" grinned Tom Carter unfeelingly. "I wouldn't touch one of 'em with a barge-pole!"

Terry signalled to young Bert to turn off the water, and one by one Sloan and his seven cronies came slouching up from the water-logged depths of their dugout. Every one of them was soaked to the skin, and smeared from head to foot with mud and slime. Nobby Bowker's face was the hue of a bad orange, and he was holding his stomach tenderly with both hands.

The whole gang looked as though they had just landed from a Channel steamer after an extra-rough crossing, and their appearance testified strongly to the powers of Tom Carter's bomb.

"Line up there, you swabs!" roared Sergeant Boom, stepping forward with a threatening scowl. "Step lively! 'Shun! Keep your heads up and your hands by your sides!"

Sullenly and reluctantly Sloan and his companions did as they were told. It was easy to see that they had been partially cowed by the unpleasant experience they had undergone, and many of them shuddered and shuffled their feet uneasily as they eyed the hose that Ginger Terry still held in his hands, the dripping nozzle pointing towards them.

Sloan was the first to find his voice as his courage commenced to ooze back. His beady eyes were red

with fury, and the scorching look of hatred he directed at Ginger Terry would have incinerated an asbestos salamander.

"Wot's the game?" he snarled thickly. "Wot d'you think you're playing at, eh? Wot right have you got to come and interfere with us when we're having a quiet conversation together? Look at my togs. If I catches ammonia an' dies, you'll be 'ung fer murder! I'll 'ave the lor on you for this!"

"I feel quite certain that you haven't the slightest desire to have anything whatever to do with the law," replied Ginger sweetly. "That is why I am half inclined to send for the police and give the whole bunch of you in charge!"

Sloan blinked his eyes uneasily. "Garn, you ain't got nothing to charge us with!" he sneered.

"Oh, no! Only housebreaking and burglary!" rapped Terry. "What about the boots, and knickers, and shirts, and footballs you stole from the Ramblers' clubhouse last Saturday night?"

Sloan started slightly, and a sullen, stubborn expression crept across his ugly face.

"You're crackers!" he blurted defiantly. "I don't know nothing about your blessed football togs! If you've 'ad them pinched, why should you come and haccuse me and me pals?"

"Because we happen to know that you and your pals did the pinching!" snapped Ginger grimly. "And we happen to know that our kit's hidden down in that dugout of yours, and that you came here this evening to take it away and sell it."

Sloan's jaw dropped, and he and his companions stared suspiciously at one another, as though wondering which of them had betrayed the others.

"It's a lie!" blurted Sloan recklessly at length. "I ain't never set eyes on your mouldy football clobber!"

"Look here, we're not going to waste any more time on these swabs!" growled Sergeant Boom, stepping forward. "I'll give them jest one minute to tell us where our stolen property is, and if they

haven't answered by then, give them another tickling up with that hose. Ginger, and drive 'em back where they came from."

Sloan licked his lips, and wriggled his shoulders uneasily as the old soldier commenced to tick off the seconds. Terry levelled the nozzle of the hose, and motioned to Bert Huggins to "stand-by" the water-tap.

"Fifty-seven—fifty-eight—fifty-nine—"

It was not until the last second was about to be ticked off that the leader of the Doolan Street gang capitulated.

"Steady on, you don't need to waste no more of that water," he mumbled. "Your blessed stuff's down in the dugout, and I'd like to know the name of the scut 'oo blew the gaff on us! How did you know we were coming here this hevening?"

"That is a matter that does not concern you!" snapped Ginger. "You're a dirty, thieving brute, Sloan, and if we'd known last Saturday afternoon what we know now, you'd still be in hospital wondering what had hit you!"

"And if the stuff's down there, you jest go and bring it up!" demanded Sergeant Boom ferociously. "And step lively, me lad!"

"Wot! Me go down there again?" gasped Sloan in horror-stricken tones, as he gazed at the entrance to the dugout, from which wreaths of smoke and evil-smelling fumes were still emerging. "Not me! I'd sooner go to prison! It was Nobby Bowker suggested pinching your togs and boots, so let 'im go and fetch 'em back!"

Nobby Bowker tried to wriggle back like a snail receding into its shell, but Sergeant Boom promptly seized him by the scruff of the neck, spun him round, and connected the toe of his boot in such a manner that Nobby sailed through the air and disappeared into the depths of the dugout.

"If you don't get busy and bring that stuff up we'll turn the hose on you again!" roared the old soldier.

It was evident that Nobby Bowker was not having a very happy time of it. They could hear him coughing and spluttering, and choking and groaning as he floundered about the underground chamber, falling over boxes and crates and other articles.

"Serve the beggar right!" muttered Sid Yates. "I guessed all along that it was his idea to pinch our kit!"

Several minutes passed, and then Bowker slowly appeared in view again, bent almost double beneath the weight of a big wooden packing-case that he carried on his shoulders. He dumped it down on the ground, and promptly collapsed in a limp heap, groaning dismally, and hugging his stomach tenderly.

A yell of delight burst from Ginger Terry and his chums as they swarmed forward and wrenched off the lid of the packing-case. Neatly stowed away inside was the new football kit that had been stolen from their clubhouse on the eve of their last home fixture.

A brief examination sufficed to show that it was quite intact. Shirts, knickers, boots, stockings, and the six match footballs were all there.

The Draw!

IN their excitement and relief the Ramblers had forgotten all about Sloan and his gang, and the hooligans seized their opportunity to take to their heels and go tearing away across the piece of waste ground.

"Never mind; let the beggars go," said Ginger. "We've got our stuff back, and we've given them something to remember us by."

Like a pack of yapping curs Sloan and his gang halted when they had reached a safe distance, and stood shaking their fists and shouting at the footballers.

"You jest wait!" screamed Sloan, flourishing his arms like a maniac. "We ain't finished with you yet! We'll get our own back for this!"

They turned tail and vanished as Sergeant Boom made a move towards them.

"Reckon their bark's worse'n their bite," grunted the old soldier contemptuously. "Come on, lads."

Tom Carter and Huggins picked up the packing-case between them, and it was in a highly elated mood that the Ramblers started back towards Raggs' Rents.

"We ought to have a whip-round for young Bert Huggins, and buy him a new scout's outfit!" suggested Sid Yates. "If it hadn't been for him we should never have got our stuff back."

(Continued on next page.)

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(Continued from previous page.)

Ginger Terry dropped behind for a few moments to purchase a football paper for young Johnny Norris, the crippled lad, and it was just as he was emerging from the shop with his purchase that a friendly hand fell heavily on his shoulder, and a familiar voice spoke his name.

"Hallo, young Terry Tyrill! How are you getting on, my boy?"

Terry's face lit up with a smile of pleasure as he swung round to find that it was John Jackson, the late manager of Steelvale United, who had addressed him.

He and Jackson had always been good friends, and it was the latter who had done his best to get Ginger a trial for the local professional club, and would have done had it not been for Henry Crocker and the subsequent loss of his job.

"I've been hearing all sorts of stories about you, my lad," said John Jackson, as they shook hands. "Someone was telling me that your uncle had died and left you some property?"

"That's true enough," replied Ginger Terry; and he briefly related exactly what had transpired after his uncle's death, and how he was now playing for the tenement team that was known as the Ragged Ramblers.

"Not good enough for you, Ginger," declared the ex-manager. "You ought to be playing in a different class of football to that, and you could be if you wanted to."

"I'm quite happy," said Terry quietly. "And how about you, Mr. Jackson? What are you doing back in Steelvale?"

"Business, but I'm afraid I've come on a fruitless errand," replied the football manager, with a shrug of his shoulders. "I've had a stroke of luck something like yours, Terry. A distant relation of mine died and left me a few hundred pounds, and, hearing how things were going with the United, I came here to Steelvale to see Henry Crocker, to try and purchase his controlling interest in the club."

"By James, that's a great idea!" exclaimed Ginger eagerly. "You'd soon put the United on its feet again, Mr. Jackson."

"Yes, I think I could," admitted the late manager. "I'm certain that the Steelvale folk would flock back to see the United if I put a new team in the field, and that the club could be made to pay handsomely."

"And what has Henry Crocker got to say? Surely he is willing to sell his shares, under the circumstances. He must be losing money every week."

"Yes, he is willing to sell, but he has named a price that is beyond me," replied John Jackson moodily. "I must keep by a certain amount of capital to buy some fresh players. Crocker is just a dog in the manger. He wants to get free of the United, but I don't think he wants me to have it. At any rate, he has named a figure that I am unable to pay. Still, I haven't given up hope yet. I'll have another interview with him to-morrow. I suppose you haven't a

few spare hundreds you'd like to put up and come in with me, Ginger?"

"My hat, I only wish I had!" declared the young footballer wistfully. "What money my uncle left me is being used to repair Raggs' Rents, otherwise I'd join you like a shot. But don't give up hope, Mr. Jackson. I happen to know that Henry Crocker is likely to be in a tight position for money very shortly, and I've no doubt he'd be only too glad to accept your offer for his share in the United. Just hang on and see what happens."

"I intend to," said Jackson, as they parted. "And I'll come along

to the Rents and see your team play one of these days. I'm staying at the Station Hotel, if you care to drop in and have a chat any time."

Monday afternoon was a time of suspense and anticipation for Ginger Terry and his chums of the Ramblers. The draw for the first round of the local Charity Cup was being made at the town hall by the mayor himself, and quite a crowd had collected outside the building, waiting for the result to be known.

Ginger and his chums were there in force. It was the first time the tenement had had the nerve to enter for the competition, and they were

bubbling over with excitement to learn who they had been drawn against.

A few minutes later the list was displayed on a board outside the town hall, and during the rush that ensued Tom Carter was the first to get within reading distance. His cheeks were flushed and his eyes were blazing as he shouldered his way back towards his chums.

"By James, you'd never credit it!" he exclaimed. "We've been drawn away against Steelvale United Reserves! Now, what do you think of that?"

Ginger Terry and his chums stared at one another in open-mouthed consternation. By an extraordinary coincidence Raggs Ramblers had been drawn against the reserve eleven of the local professional club, of which Henry Crocker was the managing director and chief shareholder!

(Can the Ramblers win? You can bet that Ginger is going to put up a mighty good scrap! You'll find tons of real footer thrills in next week's fine long instalment of this corking story. Do YOU order your REALM in advance?)

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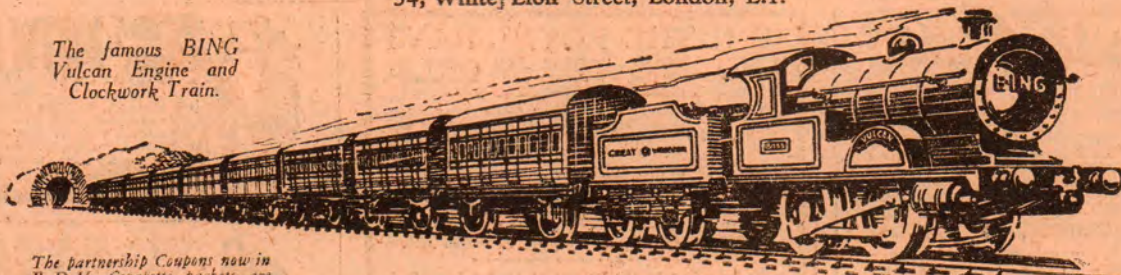
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