THE GREYFRIARS

HOLIDAY

1932 ANNUAL 1932

FOR BOYS AND GIRLS



Frontispiece

"HOW'S THAT?"

The Greyfriars HOLIDAY ANNUAL

1932



This Book Belongs to~ H. B. Laycock
1. Blannel St. Burnley
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Your Editor to his Friends

ONCE again it is my pleasure to place before you a sparkling issue of the HOLIDAY ANNUAL, confident as I am that it will add to its already high reputation, and make a host of new friends.

For thirteen successive years this bumper book has held the hearts of boys and girls all over the world—a record that speaks for itself. That alone is proof positive of its honest adherence to the policy laid down in the first issue. In that Editorial I wrote:

> The object of the HOLIDAY ANNUAL is primarily to give amusement and entertainment by means of cheerful, healthy fiction and verse. . .

I feel sure it will be readily admitted that the HOLIDAY ANNUAL has done all that was promised for it, and more. Improvement has ever been attempted and achieved until now this popular Annual is the undisputed leader of its class. For value it is unbeatable; for entertainment of the right sort it is unrivalled. Its pages, packed with stories by the Best Authors, are generously interspersed with attractive drawings in black and white, half-tone, photogravure and full colour, by the Best Artists. Nothing but the Best is good enough for the HOLIDAY ANNUAL, and the large and ever-growing army of its readers are not slow to voice their appreciation of the fact, as my bulky post bag clearly proves.

In this issue will be found many old friends from Greyfriars, St. Jim's and Rookwood Schools. In addition, I have this year included a story of St. Frank's—a circumstance that will delight the thousands of readers of "Nelson Lee," in which paper the adventures of the St. Frank's boys are recorded weekly.

In short, I am happy in the conviction that this bumper volume of the HOLIDAY ANNUAL in no way falls short of the lofty standard set by its twelve popular predecessors.

THE EDITOR.

THE FLEETWAY HOUSE,
FARRINGDON STREET,
LONDON, E.C.4.

The OLD BOYS' DINNER.

By FRANK NUGENT.



Frank Nugent, a prominent member of the Famous Five at Greyfriars School, gives his impressions of the Old Boys' Dinner as it may be twenty-seven years hence.

THE FIRST CHAPTER

Back to Greyfriars.

IT was my birthday. I was exactly forty-two, and as I drove my little two-seater car to my office, I stroked my moustache and thought I looked younger every year. I was chairman of Nugent & Co., the big merchants. I reached my office, and rang for my clerk to produce the letters, accounts, and other correspondence.

"Good-morning, sir," he said as he came in.

"Good-morning, Smith," I nodded. "By the way, it's my birthday to-day. I'm exactly forty-two."

"Congratulations, sir. You look younger than ever."

"Ha, ha! Is there anything interesting in the post to-day, Smith?"

The clerk sorted through the letters and took out a small gilt-edged card.

"Yes, rather, sir! Here's an invitation to an Old Boys' Dinner at Greyfriars School in Kent."

"Oh! That's where I went to school! Bless my soul, I haven't seen Greyfriars for about twenty-five years! Fancy meeting all the fellows again," I went on dreamily. "I wonder if they'll be altered at all? When is this dinner?"

"Three days before Christmas, sir," said my clerk. "The school will have broken up for the holidays, so the Old Boys will have the place to themselves."

"Ripping!" I said, unconsciously using a word that I had not uttered since I left school. "Send a note saying I shall be attending the dinner."

"Yes, sir."

So three days before Christmas I sorted out a spotless top-hat and seated myself in a first-class carriage of the express to Friardale. I thought for a few moments I should have the carriage to myself, but soon the door opened, and a sprucely-attired Army officer

entered the compartment and sat opposite me.

Something in his face struck me as familiar, and after a time I spoke to him.

"Major Harry Wharton, surely?" I said.

The major started.

"What—what?" he ejaculated. "Is that—is that Mr. Frank Nugent?"

"Your humble servant, major."

We shook hands heartily, and the major slapped me on the back.

"By Gad!" he exclaimed. "It's like old times to see you again, Nugent."

"My dear major, I——"

"Don't be a young ass," grinned Major Wharton. "For goodness' sake, call me Harry as we used to do in Study No. One."

"Ha, ha, ha! Well, then, Harry, are you going to the Old Boys' Dinner?"

"Yes, rather! I've been in India for years, and I'm looking forward to seeing the Remove passage again. By the way, Frank, we shall have a distinguished guest with us. I refer to the Nabob of Bhanipur. His Highness travelled to England on the same boat as myself."

We stared at each other, and grinned.

"I wonder if we shall dare to refer to His Highness as Inky?" I chuckled.

"Ha, ha, ha! I think not!"

The guard's whistle blew, and just as we were moving off the door was flung open and a tall, bony gentleman with an umbrella and gold-rimmed spectacles flew into the carriage like a rocket. He tripped over the major's feet and sat down on the floor.

"Yarooooh!" gasped the tall man, involuntarily.

"Good Gad!" ejaculated the major. "Who is this?"

"My dear Harry," I said, "you have nearly extinguished one of the leading lights of the Law Courts. I recognise this gentleman from photographs in the newspapers. If I am not mistaken, it is Sir Peter Todd, K.C."

"You silly ass!" roared Sir Peter Todd, K.C., picking himself up. "What did you trip me up for, you footling chump?"

"You—you——" gasped the major. "What did you dive into the carriage like that, for?"

"Look here, Wharton——"

"Look here, Toddy——"

"Peace, my infants!" I said, butting in. "Don't begin scrapping at this season of goodwill. We don't want to show up at the Old Boys' Dinner with a set of thick ears and black eyes between us."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

When Toddy had pulled himself together, we started to swop yarns and exchange experiences; and so interested were we that it seemed only a matter of moments before the train steamed into Friardale Station.

THE SECOND CHAPTER
The Famous Five Again.

"I SAY, you fellows!"

That was the first sound that greeted us upon arrival at Friardale. For a moment we fancied we were boys again, so pleasant was that old-time remark.

A fat face with an enormous pair of spectacles blinked in at the window. It belonged to a huge man, who was wearing an overcoat that seemed about the size of a large tent. Never before or since have I seen a fatter person.

"Bunter!" gasped the major.

"Great pip! He's grown fatter than ever!"

"Oh, really, Toddy——"

"Are you going to the Old Boys' Dinner, Bunter?" I asked.

"Catch me missing it!" sniffed Bunter. "I'm going to eat enough to make up for the last six months. I say, you fellows, I've had an awful time," he said pathetically.

"What do you mean, fatty? Haven't you had enough to eat?" asked Sir Peter Todd, getting out of the carriage.

"Numno! I've just come out of chokey, you know——"

"Wha-at?"

"Yes. Horrid, ain't it? And they give you dry bread and thin gruel and water. Think of that, you know. Dry bread!"

"You fat sinner!" roared Wharton. "Why were you sent to chokey?"



A tall, bony gentleman tripped over Major Wharton's feet and sat down on the carriage floor. "Yaroooh!" he gasped involuntarily.

"For nothing. Nothing at all," answered Bunter, blinking at us pathetically.

"Nothing?"

"No. I'm on the Stock Exchange, you know, and some beast made a fuss about some duplicated shares which were fraudulently issued. Just as if I had anything to do with it," argued Bunter. "Why, I'm as innocent as—as a dove, you know. I wouldn't have dreamed of doing anything of the kind. Besides, there were only a few of them, anyway. And I was careful, too—you know how careful I am. I didn't think anybody would find out. Not that I did it, of course. I wouldn't think of it. Besides, I wasn't there."

"You podgy villain!"

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"Come on, you men," grinned Peter Todd. "We can't waste all our time on gaol-birds. Let's get a taxi outside to take us to Greyfriars."

"What-ho!"

We moved towards the station exit.

"I say you fellows——"

"Buzz off, Bunter!"

"Beast! Look here, this is rather important. I've been disappointed about a postal-order, you know——"

"Great Scott!"

"I should have been pleased to stand a taxi to the school, but, as it happens, I'm rather short of cash. So you fellows can pay me back by standing me a taxi."

"You fat frog!"

"Dash it all, Toddy, if you're going to be mean, I'll stand the taxi. There!"

"But would the taxi stand you?" asked Peter, with a shake of the head. "My idea is that it wouldn't. You had better hire a special van."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast!"

"Oh, let him roll in," laughed Major Wharton. "You can crowd in with us, old barrel."

We crammed into a taxi outside the station. When the driver saw Bunter he rubbed his eyes and charged us double the fare on the spot. He said that it would take a year's wear off his engine to tow Bunter to the school.

"Don't crowd me, you beasts!" grumbled Bunter, by way of gratitude, as we sped onwards to the school. "This isn't my style of travelling, you know. If I had known, I would have telephoned Bunter Court and had the Rolls Royce sent along."

"Phew! Is Bunter Court still in existence?" I grinned.

"Yes, rather!" chuckled Toddy. "Only it's usually called Pentonville Gaol."

"Yah!" snapped Bunter. "If you had been where I have, Toddy, you'd be even more of a bony freak than you are now."

"What?"

"They absolutely starve you in prison, you know. Look at me! I'm as thin as a lath."

"My only hat!"

The taxi drew up at the gates of Greyfriars, and we all peered out excitedly to get a first glimpse of the old school. There it was! To our eyes it looked exactly as it had looked five-and-twenty years before. The old tower with the ivy; the clock with the gilt figures; the quadrangle—even the bicycle shed was the same.

"Everything's exactly as we left it," murmured the major, with a lump in his throat. "I say, you know; I feel about fifteen years old. If I saw Quelchy now, I should feel quite terrified."

I was feeling exactly the same. The old school had made me feel like a boy again, and if Wingate or Gwynne had appeared, I should never have dreamed of speaking to them as man to man. I should have said: "Yes, Wingate," and "No, Wingate," in the way I used to when a fag.

"Everything's the same; but everything has altered," said Sir Peter Todd. "The masters are all different; the scholars are all different—there's not a person here who was the same as when we were boys."

"Wot I says is this 'ere—wot are you young rips doing there?"

We jumped as a crusty, crotchety old porter came out of his lodge. He had a bunch of keys in his hand, and a suspicious-looking bottle was sticking out of his pocket.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Wharton. "It's old Gosling. He'll be here as long as Greyfriars stands. Gossy will never die."

"Look 'ere, Master Wharton——"

"How old are you now, Gossy?" asked Sir Peter. "Two hundred and forty, ain't it?"

"Which it's nothing of the kind, Master Todd. I've just turned ninety."

"Wharton! Nugent! Todd! How dare you stand in the gateway and impede my progress?"

We stared in astonishment at an old, white-bearded man who had just arrived at the gates. For a moment we didn't recognise him. We looked at his hands, hair, face and beard—then we caught sight of a pair of gimlet eyes, and we knew him at once.

"Quelchy!"

"Phew!"

He hobbled in through the gates with the aid of a stick, and glared irritably at us.

"You will each take a hundred lines for loitering about at the gates," he snapped.

"Oh, crumbs! Yes, sir," I murmured, feeling just like a boy again.

Quelchy hobbled away, muttering things in his beard. We stared at each other, and then jumped out of the way as a magnificent Rolls Royce slid into the drive. Inside the car were three black gentlemen and one "paleface." One of the coloured gentlemen was evidently a big potentate, for the other two were his attendants. The car stopped, and the two attendants sprang down, opened the door and bowed low.



"Wharton! Nugent! Todd! How dare you stand in the gateway and impede my progress?" We stared in astonishment at the old, white-bearded man.

"It's His Highness!" murmured Major Wharton. "I don't know who the white man is."

"Greetings, sahibs!" said His Highness gravely.

"It's Inky!" sniggered Bunter. "It's that black beast Hurree Singh. Hallo, Inky, old chap. We meet again, old fellow."

"The meet-againfulness is terrific, my esteemed Bunter."

"He, he, he! Haven't you learned English yet, Inky?"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

Then the white man descended from the car and grinned.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" he said cheerfully. "How are you, old beans?"

"Great jumping Jupiter! It's Bob Cherry!" we gasped, and rushed forward to shake his hand.

"Glad to see you," laughed Bob gleefully. "I met old Inky at the Hotel Magnificent this morning, and he offered me a lift down here in his car."

"Good old Inky!"

"I've just come back from Africa," Bob told us. "Been hunting lions and rhinos. I saw a gorilla in the jungle who was the very image of Bunter. In fact, I addressed him as Bunter until I saw him eat. Then I knew it wasn't our old porpoise. The gorilla was a fool to Bunter in the eating line."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast!"

Bob gave a sudden start.

"Why, there it is!" he said. "The gorilla, I mean."

"You—you——" roared Bunter. "This is me."

"Oh, sorry! I thought——"

"Ha, ha, ha!" we shrieked, greatly enjoying the expression on Bunter's speaking features.

At that moment we were interrupted by a few more arrivals for the dinner. There was Mr. Vernon-Smith, the business magnate, in a large motor-car; the Earl Mauleverer in a ditto, ditto; Battling Bolsover, the heavyweight champion of the world; Oliver Kipps, the celebrated conjurer and magician from Maskelynes; and last, but not least, Captain Bull, R.N., who commanded the great ironclad, *H.M.S. Drake*. The captain was in great spirits, and after punching Bunter's nose for having boned a cake belonging to him twenty-five years previously—these naval men always have long memories—he linked arms with us, and the Famous Five marched arm-in-arm to Big Hall, as we had done so many times in the past.

THE THIRD CHAPTER
Coker Does the Trick!

THE dinner was first-rate. It was a glorious spread—in fact, even Bunter was satisfied.

But, of course, what interested us most was to see again all the old faces we had known years before. Some of them were not entire strangers to me. Sir William Wibley, the famous actor, for instance. I had seen Wib several times when I visited the theatre. Once I saw him as Hamlet and another time as Mark Antony. But I had not spoken to him until I met him at the dinner. He told me he had received a letter from Mr. Desmond, his old study-mate, who was in Ireland, and unable to be present at the feast.

There were a number of vacant places, of course. Mr. Fisher T. Fish, the great American fish-paste king, was in the land of his birth. Fishy didn't "see" coming right over to England for a "gosh-darned" feed. Tom Brown, likewise, had returned to New Zealand, and many thousands of miles of water now lay between us and Browney. Mr. Sampson Field—"Squiff," in other words—by good luck happened to be in England for Christmas, before going back to Australia, so he was present. He told us that he would be coming over again in a year or two as a member of the Australian Test Team.

We were all very glad to see our old friends; but we weren't so glad to renew the acquaintance of the masters. Quelchy was very stern. He "lined" Bunter for talking at table, gave Mr. Vernon-Smith a week's detention for lighting a cigar, and when Bob Cherry slapped him on the back and asked him how he was, Quelchy turned purple, and went in search of a cane.

As it happened, Sir Mark Linley—the famous doctor of Harley Street—was present, and he told Bob that he was Quelchy's doctor. Quelchy had a very weak heart, and if he was made angry, he was liable to talk himself into a dangerous condition. Mark said that Quelchy must be given his head—he must not be opposed at all.

"But, dash it all!" howled Bob Cherry. "Do you mean that I've got to let the old bird cane me?"

"Certainly!" said Sir Mark Linley. "It won't hurt you. If you resist him, I won't answer for the consequences. Quelchy might go off at any moment."

Just then Quelchy came stalking back with a cane under his arm—having found one in a master's study. He gave Bob a scorching look.

"Cherry!"

"Oh, crikey!"

"What—what? How dare you utter those ridiculous ejaculations in my presence, Cherry? Bend over!"

"Wha-at?" gasped Bob, turning crimson.

"BEND OVER!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a roar from about fifty of the fellows who had gathered round. They seemed to be enjoying the scene.

Poor Bob, with his face as red as a beetroot, stooped slightly; and Quelchy flourished the cane in his old manner.

Whack! Whack! Whack! WHACK!

"Whoooooop!" roared Bob fiendishly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A tall, stoutly-built man with a face like a sack of coke strolled forward and patted Quelchy on the shoulder.

"That's the style, Quelch!" he said patronisingly. "Always keep the fags in their proper place. That's my motto! Now give that cheeky young scoundrel Wharton a good dose. I'll back you up, old bean."

"Go easy, Coker, you ass!" he murmured. "You mustn't get Quelchy's rag out. His health won't stand it!"

"Great pip!"

"You must let him do whatever he likes. If you make him wild, you might cause him a fatal stroke."

"My only aunt!"

Quelchy seemed to be recovering. His



Wingate took a mighty shot and the ball took Bunter on the nose. "Yarooooh!" he yelled as he sat down on the goal-line.

Quelch jumped.

"Coker!" he thundered. "You forget yourself, sir. I shall report your conduct to Mr. Prout."

"Go hon!" grinned Coker, patting Quelchy's head.

I thought Quelchy was going to explode, judging from his expression. I can only describe it as tremendous.

Mark Linley jumped forward in alarm.

eyes gleamed at Coker like points of fire.

"Coker! Man!" he stuttered. "You have had the temerity to pat my head and address me as 'old bean.' Have you lost your senses, Coker?"

"Nunno!"

"Then I can only imagine that your conduct is the result of sheer, unparalleled impertinence. You will follow me to Doctor Locke, Coker. I shall request him to punish you."

Coker looked dazed.

"Well, mum-my hat!" he stuttered. "Is the old bird potty?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence! Coker, follow me!"

Quelchy stalked away, his beard bristling with wrath. Coker, after a dazed look at the shrieking crowd of spectators, trailed after him. They vanished into the house, leaving us on the verge of having fits.

"I say, Wharton," said Captain Johnny Bull a little while later, "what about getting up a footer eleven and challenging Sir Cecil Temple's gang?"

"Good wheeze!" said Wharton.

"We'll mop up the ground with the Upper Fourth, as we used to in the old days."

"Hear, hear!"

"Half a minute, though," put in Bob Cherry. "What about togs?"

"Oh, bother the togs! We'll play as we are."

"Phew!"

We looked down at our spotless clothes and thin shoes, and we didn't like the idea a little bit. But after Wharton had lectured us all on being slackers and shirkers, we grinned feebly at each other and joined up. Then we went along the Remove passage, looking for volunteers.

"What about a game of footer, Smithy?" asked Wharton, as Mr. Vernon-Smith hove in sight. "We're getting up an eleven to play Temple's gang. Are you game to play in your bee-yewtiful lounge suit?"

Vernon-Smith grinned.

"Oh, I'll play," he said. "Plenty more suits at home."

Battling Bolsover was our next recruit. Dick Rake, Sir Peter Todd, and Squiff also volunteered. Mr. Harold Skinner was asked, but he waved us away in languid fashion. Bob Cherry was inclined to roll Skinner down the stairs; but we carefully held him back.

We had got ten men, and couldn't find an eleventh. Tom Redwing could not stay. Dick Penfold had friends with him and couldn't manage it. Hazeldene was escorting his sister Marjorie, and didn't feel inclined to dirty his spotless clothes.

Finally, however, we found one Remove man who was willing to join up. It was William George Bunter, and the Owl found himself playing for the Remove as goalkeeper. Bob Cherry argued that Bunter would merely have to stand in the goal and there wouldn't be room for the ball to get past him.

Then we went to look for Sir Cecil Temple. The great Temple was chatting languidly with one or two ornaments of Society as we arrived. He was dressed in faultless attire, with white spats and a topper.

When we put the matter to him he eyed us in horror.

"Play football!" he stuttered. "My dear fags, roll away. Your company fatigues me, you know."

"You silly ass!"

"If you don't mind my mentioning it," said Temple, "I much prefer you fags to keep your distance. Thanks awf'ly!"

Bob Cherry drew back his boot, and before we could prevent him, he had landed it on Cecil Reginald Temple's spotless trousers.

"Oooooooop!"

Sir Cecil gave a wild yell as he plunged forward. His top-hat sailed merrily into a puddle near by, and fell with a splash. Leaving him spread-eagled on the ground, we went in search of Hobson.

Hobson merely sniggered when we asked him to get up a football team to play us. Blundell thought it a good idea; but said he couldn't be troubled to get a team together.

"Well, the silly asses!" said Bob in disgust. "There's not one of them willing to play us."

"Afraid they'll get licked," snorted Johnny Bull.

A new voice broke into the discussion.

"Out of the way, you fags!" it said briskly, and we perceived Coker striding towards us.

"Coker!" chortled Bob Cherry. "He'll raise a team. Let Coker do it."

"Good egg!"

We put the matter to Coker. The ex-Fifth-Former stroked his chin.

"Not a bad idea for a fag," he nodded. "All right, leave it to me. I'll raise a team to play you, and we'll wipe the earth up with you. Get down to the footer field. My team will be along in a few minutes."

Squelch ! Bob Cheery squeezed the sponge over me, and I yelled.



He strode away thoughtfully. Bob chuckled.

"The same fatheaded old Coker," he remarked. "Come on, you fellows. Let's punt a ball about."

"I bet Coker doesn't rake up a team," I said.

"Oh, he'll find somebody. Leave it to Coker."

And, sure enough, in about ten minutes a small procession wended its way to the football ground, with Coker in the vanguard, smirking in a pleased fashion.

Major Wharton whistled when he saw them.

"By Gad, Wingate and Gwynne," he observed. "And Blundell, Bland, and Tomlinson."

"Phew! And there's Fry of the Fourth, and Larry Lascelles——"

"Great Christopher! And Hoskins, Stewart, and Churchill of the Shell."

We stared at each other blankly.

"This means a terrific licking for us," I said glumly.

"The lickfulness is terrific," nodded His Highness.

Bob Cherry laughed.

"Cheer up!" he said. "You've forgotten Coker. He's playing for them, and that's as good as several goals to us."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker strolled loftily across the field.

"Is your fag team ready, Wharton?" he asked.

"Waiting," snapped Wharton.

The two captains tossed, and Coker had the satisfaction of winning. The teams lined up, and we noticed that spectators were arriving from far and near to see the most extraordinary match ever played on the Greyfriars football field. There were twenty-two of us, each dressed in different styles. Major Wharton was in army uniform, Captain Bull was in "navy blue," and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh sported a violent mauve cummerbund across his middle.

Wharton kicked off amid cheers from the crowd, and he swung the ball out to Vernon-

Smith on the wing. But Smithy had lost the speed of his earlier days, and he soon surrendered the ball to Blundell, who passed it to Wingate, who punted it on to Larry Lascelles. Coker's side came down the field like a hurricane, and, in spite of neat tackling by Johnny Bull and Bob Cherry, they swarmed about the Remove goal.

Wingate took a mighty shot. The ball sailed for goal like a bullet out of a gun. Bunter tried in vain to get out of its way. He could not move quickly enough.

Bump!

"Yaroooooh!"

The ball took Bunter on the nose, and the fat custodian sat down on his own goal-line.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well saved, fatty!"

Bob kicked the ball up the field, and I managed to dribble Hoskins and pass to Inky. The game now went down to the other goal—where Coker was playing at back. The Remove forwards came down the field in a line; but just when we were nearing goal, Squiff slipped and the ball travelled to Coker. The mighty Horace James Coker had a short way with footballs. With a tremendous kick he booted it far over his own goal-line.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Corner!"

Wingate came rushing up.

"You—you—you—-" he panted. "There was plenty of time to clear the ball. Why must you give away a corner, you hopeless chump?"

"That's enough!" snapped Coker. "You get up to centre-forward's position, George Wingate. I'm captain of this side."

Smothering his feelings with an effort, Wingate turned away. At the same moment Hurree Singh sent in his corner kick. It was a beautiful corner. The ball curved gently into the goalmouth, dropping right on Wharton's head. But before the major could reach it, Coker jumped up and headed the ball past Stewart into the goal.

"Goal!"

"Good old Coker!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Coker's scored a goal against his own side."

Wingate looked so dangerous that Coker retreated hastily. Almost bursting with wrath, the ex-captain of Greyfriars centred the ball and kicked off.

Coker's side now kept the game in the Remove goalmouth. The next ten minutes seemed like a nightmare to Bunter. Balls seemed to be hitting him from every angle. In vain he dodged and yelled. Like so many cannon-balls, hard footballs crashed upon his podgy person, and great was the crashing thereof.

But the ball did not go into the goal. That, at any rate, was so much to the good of our side.

The score stood at 1—0 until the last minute of the first half—then Wingate equalised. Bunter had run away—literally. He was streaking for his life towards the school. Wingate had merely to put the ball into the open goal.

There was no scoring in the second half until the referee was on the point of blowing his whistle for time. Then something happened! Words almost fail to describe it; it was so funny.

The Remove were attacking, but Blundell, shouldering Coker aside, cleared the ball. Squiff took a long shot. It was really hopeless—for Stewart in goal had the ball covered all the way. But just when he was about to save it, Coker rushed up.

What did Coker do? Did he stand aside and let Stewart field the ball? Did he head the ball back towards the half-way line? Did he even try to kick it?

Coker did none of these things. They did not occur to his mighty brain. Coker *caught* the ball. He caught it neatly in his arms, and booted it back up the field. Of course, the referee awarded us a penalty kick on the spot. Bob Cherry was almost laughing too much to take the kick; but he managed to send the leather past Stewart, and the Remove had won 2—1, thanks to Coker.

Wingate and the other players made a bee-line for the misguided Horace Coker. They grasped him, up-ended him, and rolled him in the mud. We could hear furious yells proceeding from the unseen Coker. He was going through it.

"Yarooogh! Ow-ow-ow!" came the howl of Coker's voice from the midst of the enraged members of his team. "Yow-ow! Lemme gerrup! I'll smash you!"

But Coker was not allowed to get up. Struggling, roaring and wriggling, he was, nevertheless, helpless in the grasp of Wingate & Co.

Nature, who had been rather mean with Coker in the matter of brains, had endowed him with an over-abundance of bulldog determination and plenty of physical strength. But these qualities availed him nothing now in the grasp of Wingate & Co. And the hapless Coker was bumped and rolled in the mud, and as he bumped and rolled he roared.

"Come on, you fellows," grinned Bob Cherry, "let's rescue the hopeless ass! He'll be murdered in a minute!"

We ran forward to rescue the freak of the Fifth. Wingate and Gwynne tried to stop us. I felt Gwynne's fist crashing into my face, and then I gave a furious yell—and awoke!

I sat up dazedly.

Bob Cherry was holding a sponge, dripping with water, above my devoted head.

"Rising bell, old bean," he said cheerfully. "Are you going to get up or do you want this sponge?"

"Where's Coker?" I asked breathlessly. "Did we rescue him?"

"Coker!" exclaimed Bob. "Why, he's in the Fifth-Form dormitory, isn't he?"

"And Major Wharton and His Highness?" I went on, looking around blankly. "Are they all right?"

"I think you must be a little bit potty, old chap," Bob said soothingly. "I know a certain cure for that. Here you are."

Squelch!

He squeezed the sponge, and a freezing flood trickled down my pyjamas. I leaped out of bed with a yell. Then I knew it was all a dream. I was not forty-two; I was fifteen. I was not a City merchant; I was a Remove man, who would be lined if he wasn't downstairs in time for Chapel.

So I shook myself hurriedly, and began to dress.



How I Won the Match!

By Horace Coker.



Old Wingate, making humble pleas,
Grovelled before me on his knees
At a respectful distance.
"Coker!" he cried, "I'm two men short
For Saturday, so be a sport
And lend us your assistance!

"Walker is crocked, and Loder lame,
And we've a most important game
Against the Incogniti;
We shall be walloped, I'm afraid,
Unless you give your timely aid,
So grant me my entreaty!"

"Listen, George Wingate!" I replied.
"In silly prejudice and pride
You often have omitted me;
Laughed my ability to scorn,
Said I'm the softest player born,
And patronised and pitied me!

"However, I will overlook
The foolish attitude you took,
And play for you with pleasure;
I'll smite the bowling hip and thigh,
And as for taking wickets, why,
You'll find me quite a treasure!"

When Saturday at last came round,
In spotless flannels I was found,
As handsome as Apollo;
Dreaming of dazzling deeds to come,
And a vast concourse stricken dumb,
And a fine feast to follow!

The Incogniti batted first,
And they avowed themselves accursed—
My bowling, it was magic.
Like rabbits they were skittled out,
The spellbound crowd could scarcely shout—
Jove! the collapse was tragic!

"All out!" I chortled. "That is that!"
Then, brandishing my trusty bat,
I did great execution;
I knocked the cover off the ball,
Smashed the pavilion clock and all,
And caused a revolution!

To say the people were surprised
Is silly; they were paralysed!
They gaped at me in wonder;
And when I reached a hundred runs,
Applause came like the roar of guns,
Coupled with booming thunder!

Old Wingate wrung me by the hand.
"Coker!" he cried, "you're simply grand:
I can't express my gratitude."
Then I awoke! Prout raised his cane—
"Coker! Asleep in class again!
I can't permit such latitude!"







MAKING GAME OF GUSSY

By MARTIN CLIFFORD

No fellow at St. Jim's perhaps has had his leg pulled so much as the elegant, aristocratic Arthur Augustus D'Arcy; and once more, in this snappy humorous story, he finds himself—too late—the game of an enterprising japer.

THE FIRST CHAPTER
Gussy's Aunt Harriet

"MAN in!"

"Get a move on, Gussy!"

"You're holding up the game, slowcoach!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was ready at last. He came out of the pavilion, padded and gloved, and looking capable of doughty deeds. And doughty deeds were necessary now, if the School House eleven was to have a winning chance in the duel with the New House.

Batting first on an excellent wicket, the New House had put together the very useful total of 172.

School House were now replying to this total, but it was not a very convincing reply. The batsmen were all at sea against the deadly bowling of Fatty Wynn, and the crafty deliveries of Koumi Rao, the Indian junior.

Tom Merry, who skippered the side, had played a fast ball into his wicket in the first over. Talbot, usually a sound reliable bat, was caught in the slips without scoring. Harry Noble and Jack Blake had manfully "stopped the rot" and stayed together for half an hour, snatching singles when opportunity offered. But Blake's wicket had fallen now, his stumps being spreadeagled by one of Fatty Wynn's "expresses."

Only twenty runs on the board, and three good men out. That was the position when Arthur Augustus D'Arcy marched majestically down the pavilion steps, gripping his bat with a business-like air.

"Play up, Gussy!" said Tom Merry.

"Wynn's stuff wants watching; it's uncanny!" remarked Jack Blake as he passed his chum.

Arthur Augustus nodded grimly. He was resolved to put a better complexion on the game. He felt good for fifty; he even had dreams of making a century, as he stalked gracefully on to the field. If only he could wear down the New House bowling and rob it of its sting, the rest would be easy. Runs would come fast and free. In his mind's eye, Arthur Augustus visualised himself being carried shoulder-high to the pavilion, to the strains of "The Conquering Hero."

But the fond dreams of the Swell of St. Jim's were rudely shattered. The voice of Kildare, the captain of St. Jim's, hailed him from the distance.

"D'Arcy! You're wanted on the 'phone in the prefects'-room—at once!"

"Oh, bothah!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus, ruefully retracing his steps.

"Come and have your knock first, Gussy!" called Fatty Wynn. "We shan't keep you a second. The first ball will do the trick!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Without deigning to reply to that impudent remark, Arthur Augustus returned to the pavilion. He threw his bat into a corner, and discarded his pads and gloves, and pulled on a blazer.

"Pway put me lowah down in the battin' list, Tom Mewwy," he said. "I've got to go an' answah a telephone call. It is most exaspewatin'."



Gloved and padded, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy emerged from the pavilion, looking capable of doughty deeds.

And Arthur Augustus hurried away to the prefects'-room, wondering who had been thoughtless enough to ring him up at such a critical period in the fortunes of School House cricket.

"D'Arcy speakin'," he said tersely, having placed the receiver to his ear.

It was a feminine voice that replied over the wires—a somewhat sharp, strident voice.

"You are Arthur Augustus D'Arcy?"

"Yaas."

"My dear Arthur! I am your Aunt Harriet."

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated the swell of St. Jim's in surprise. "I was not awah that I possessed an Aunt Hawwiet!"

"Probably not. I have been abroad, Arthur, and have not seen you since you were a baby. You will not, of course, remember how I used to dandle you on my knee and comfort you when you squalled——"

"Ahem!" interjected Arthur Augustus hastily. "Are you stayin' with the patah, aunt, an' speakin' fwom Eastwood House?"

"No, Arthur; I am speaking from a public call-box at Wayland Junction. I am travelling to London, and thought I would break my journey here in order to spend a few hours with my little nephew."

"Yaas, of—of course!" said Arthur Augustus brightly.

Inwardly, he groaned. It was frightful luck, he reflected, that Aunt Harriet, who had not come into his life for fourteen years, should suddenly step into it again at a time when a House-match was in progress. Really, these long lost aunts should show more consideration!

"Will you come over and join me, Arthur? You will find me in the waiting-room. We will have a cup of tea somewhere, and then I should like to pay a flying visit to your school. I trust that will be quite convenient?"

It would not be convenient. It would be most decidedly inconvenient. But Arthur Augustus, who was the soul of chivalry and politeness, would not have dreamed of saying so. He could not explain that he was taking part in an important House-match, in which the School House were fighting with their backs to the wall, and runs were sorely needed. Aunt Harriet would not understand.

"Yaas, it will be quite convenient, Aunt Hawwiet," said Arthur Augustus. "I will come ovah an' join you wight now."

With a rueful countenance, the swell of St. Jim's replaced the receiver on its hooks. Then he sought out Tom Merry, and explained the position.

"What awful luck!" said Tom. "Still, it can't be helped. I expect Figgins will agree to let me play a substitute. And there's just a chance that your aunt may not keep you all the afternoon; in which case, you might be back in time for the second innings."

Arthur Augustus nodded.

"I hope that will be possible, Tom Mewwy. You will be badly needin' my services in the second innin's, I'm thinkin'. I shall hope to bag a centuwy, an' pull the game out of the fiah. So-long, deah boy!"

And Arthur Augustus hurried away to keep his appointment. By taking short cuts across the fields, he soon reached Wayland, and it was in a state of breathlessness that he arrived at the general waiting-room on the station.

There were about a dozen people in the waiting-room. Arthur Augustus surveyed them in turn through his monocle. But he could not "place" his Aunt Harriet. There were only three members of the fair sex, and two of these were schoolgirls. The other was a very freakish-looking old dame, dressed in weird and wonderful attire, which was neither old-fashioned nor new-fashioned, but a fashion all its own. A long, trailing skirt, a blouse buttoned to the chin, and a very gaudy hat, with plumes, were among the old dame's equipment. She also wore an enormous pair of spectacles; and an extremely red nose lent the last ludicrous touch to her appearance.

Arthur Augustus fairly jumped when he caught sight of this strange female. The spectacle of ridiculous and ill-fitting clothes always shocked him, for he was very sensitive in such matters.

He did not suppose for one moment that the old dame could be his Aunt Harriet. The D'Arcy aunts were ladies of elegance and refinement. They dressed tastefully, and certainly they did not specialise in red noses.

Arthur Augustus was about to retreat, when suddenly, to his horror, the grotesque female rose from her seat and came towards him.

"Arthur!" she croaked. "My dear nephew! Your features have changed but little since you were a squalling infant. I should have known you anywhere."

So saying, the old dame flung her arms around the neck of Arthur Augustus, and hugged him fervently, at the same time kissing him soundly on both cheeks.

There was a titter from the onlookers. Arthur Augustus broke away, his face crimson. Out of the corner of his eye he saw that the two schoolgirls were convulsed with merriment.

"You—you are my Aunt Hawwiet?" he gasped incredulously.

"Of course!" was the reproachful reply. "Have you no greeting for your old aunt, who used to dandle you on her knee, and croon lullabies, when you were a fractious babe? Come! Kiss me like a dutiful nephew!"

With burning cheeks, Arthur Augustus obeyed.

There was a fresh titter from the onlookers, and the swell of St. Jim's felt that he could not endure this humiliating situation any longer. He took Aunt Harriet by the arm, and half-led, half-dragged her from the waiting-room. A chuckle followed them.

"Are you not pleased to see me, Arthur?" inquired Aunt Harriet, frowning over her spectacles.

Arthur Augustus gulped hard.

"Weally, aunt, I am delighted!" he murmured; though delight had no place in the emotions which surged within him at that moment. "I twust you are in the pink of condish—that is to say, in the best of health?"

"I am dying——"

"Gweat Scott!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus in alarm.

"I am dying for a cup of tea!"

"Oh!"

"It has been a trying and vexatious journey," said Aunt Harriet.



Gussy surveyed the people in the waiting-room, and gave a start as he saw a freakish-looking old dame staring at him.

"The porters have been appallingly rude, and I have been an object of mirth to my fellow-passengers—though why I can't for the life of me understand!"

Arthur Augustus was scarcely aware of what his aunt was saying. He hurried her out of the station, painfully conscious of his burning cheeks, and the fact that people were staring and sniggering. They had ample cause to stare and snigger, for Aunt Harriet's appearance was so quaint and comical that it was calculated to cause a breach of the peace.

As they passed along the High Street, a gang of urchins followed behind, cackling loudly, and making remarks which were the reverse of complimentary.

Undoubtedly, a large crowd would soon have collected had not Arthur Augustus piloted his aunt into the nearest tea-rooms. He had intended, originally, to take her to the Café Royal, where an orchestra played during the afternoon; but he now shrank from the publicity of a popular café. It was doubtful, even, whether the proprietor would have admitted so strange a female as Aunt Harriet.



"My heye!" ejaculated Taggles as he saw Aunt Harriet arrive. "What a hextraordinary female!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER
Hoaxed!

THE "Blue Bird" tea-rooms, into which Arthur Augustus ushered his aunt, were luckily deserted. They afforded a haven of refuge to Gussy at that moment. He escorted Aunt Harriet to a small table, and ordered tea for two.

"Will you take anythin' to eat, Aunt Hawwiet?" inquired Arthur Augustus.

"Well, I am not hungry, dear boy, but I might peck at a jam-tart or two."

The waitress brought a dish of jam-tarts, and Aunt Harriet "pecked" at them to such good purpose that she soon succeeded in clearing the lot.

Arthur Augustus sat spellbound. He had not expected his aunt to have a voracious appetite, nor to appease that appetite with jam-tarts at a speed which Fatty Wynn or Baggy Trimble would have envied. Gussy had always associated old ladies with dry toast; never with jam-tarts.

But Aunt Harriet was not finished yet. She "pecked" at some doughnuts, and then at some cream-buns; and then she asked for a mouthful of plum-cake. Her "mouthful" disposed of half the cake.

Arthur Augustus sipped his tea, and gaped at his aunt in amazement.

"I—I thought you said you weren't hungwy, Aunt Hawwiet?" he blurted out.

"Neither am I," was the reply. "This is merely a little light refreshment."

"Bai Jove!"

"Have you any ices, waitress? Yes? Well, bring me a strawberry-ice — the largest size."

The waitress brought the ice, and Arthur Augustus began to feel decidedly uncomfortable. He was thinking about the bill, which he would doubtless be expected to pay. Having come away in a hurry, he had left his wallet at St. Jim's; and he had only a few shillings in the pockets of his flannel trousers. Supposing—awful thought!—he had not enough money to meet the bill?

"Come, Arthur, you are very taciturn!" said Aunt Harriet reprovingly. "Tell me all about yourself, and your life at St. James's College. Is it a nice place? I will come up and see it presently."

Arthur Augustus groaned, and quaked inwardly. He was not a snob, and he knew

he ought not to be ashamed of his own aunt; but the prospect of Aunt Harriet bursting upon St. Jim's, in all her grotesqueness, simply appalled him. What a sensation her appearance would create! What endless chaffing and chipping he would have to endure from his school-fellows, afterwards! He wondered how he could possibly survive such an ordeal.

"What time is your twain, aunt?" he inquired, with a wild hope that considerations of time might prevent the visit to St. Jim's.

"Oh, never mind that, Arthur. Let me hear what you have got to say for yourself."

So Arthur Augustus chatted away, with a forced air of cheerfulness. Like Wilkins Micawber, he hid the ravages of care under a sickly mask of mirth. All the time he was talking his mind was haunted by two things—the amount of the bill, and the threatened visit of his aunt to St. Jim's.

Furtively, with his hands under the table-cloth, Arthur Augustus counted out his money. His chatter was punctuated by musical chinks. He calculated that he had six shillings and a halfpenny. And when the waitress bore down upon him, bringing the bill on a salver, Arthur Augustus scarcely dared to look at it.

Prepared for the worst, he forced his gaze towards the bill. It was for exactly six shillings. He was saved! With a gasp of relief, he placed the money on the salver, and was left with only a halfpenny in his pocket. He could not insult the waitress by leaving her such a sum as a tip. It was unfortunate, but she would have to go without.

"And now," said Aunt Harriet, rising, "I will come and see this fine school you have been telling me about, and be introduced to your kind teachers and playmates. Gracious, boy! Why do you groan? Are you ill?"

"Nunno!" stuttered Arthur Augustus, escorting Aunt Harriet from the tea-rooms. "I was not awah that I gwoaned, aunt. Pway excuse me, while I ordah a taxi."

It was Gussy's intention to proceed by taxi-cab to St. Jim's, and to pay the fare on arrival. It would be impossible to walk, without running the gauntlet of grinning crowds. And if Aunt Harriet were to be seen by P.-C. Crump, the local limb of the law, she would probably be arrested on sight as a suspected person.



Arthur Augustus had saved the game, and he was carried off the field shoulder-high by his comrades.

The taxi was summoned, and the journey to St. Jim's was a nightmare to Arthur Augustus.

Fortunately, the quadrangle was deserted, all the fellows being on the playing-fields. The only person who witnessed the arrival of the taxi was Taggles, the porter; and Taggles nearly fell down in his astonishment.

"My heye!" he ejaculated. "Wot a hextraordinary female! I must speak to Master D'Arcy about this. Such characters ain't allowed in these 'ere presinks."

But before Taggles had a chance to tackle Arthur Augustus, that harassed youth fairly rushed his aunt into the building, and took her along to No. 6 Study. He excused himself a moment, in order to go and settle with the taxi-driver; then he rejoined Aunt Harriet. He found her gazing out of the window across the green playing-fields.

"Arthur!" she said. "I see there is a cricket-match in progress. Were you taking part in it?"

"Yaas, aunt. It—it's a House-match, you know."

"Then why did you not tell me, you foolish boy? I would not have interrupted your

childish amusements for worlds. Would you like to go and finish your game? If so, I will wait here."

Arthur Augustus brightened up.

"That is vewy kind of you, Aunt Hawwiet."

"Not at all! Run along, little man!"

Arthur Augustus hurried off to the cricket-ground. He pelted breathlessly up to Tom Merry.

"How's the game goin', deah boy? Am I in time for a knock?"

"Just!" said Tom as another wicket was seen to fall. "You're last man in, Gussy, and we want seventy to win. It's up to you and Levison."

The swell of St. Jim's hastily buckled on his pads, and then hurried out to join Levison major at the wicket.

The New House fieldsmen grinned as they saw him coming.

"Last man in!" chortled Figgins. "It's all over, bar shouting."

But Figgins was wrong. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was out to win the match, and he set about the bowling in wholehearted style. He concentrated his mind on the cricket, and resolutely banished from his thoughts the ordeal that was to follow—the introduction of Aunt Harriet to St. Jim's.

Levison, a sound batsman, and cool in a crisis, backed up Arthur Augustus in spirited fashion. Runs came readily, and Figgins, dismayed by this unexpected rally on the part of the School House, changed his bowlers. Kerr and Redfern relieved Fatty Wynn and Koumi Rao; but the only result of this manœuvre was to increase the rate of scoring.

It was a fine fight for victory, and the excitement became tense as the runs were speedily knocked off, until only four were wanted.

The winning hit fell to Arthur Augustus. Away went the whizzing leather, soaring over mid-on's head to the distant boundary. And from all the School House partisans came a deep-throated roar:

"Bravo, Gussy!"

"School House for ever!"

Arthur Augustus had made 50, and he was carried off the field shoulder-high by his exuberant comrades.

The swell of St. Jim's ought to have shown a happy, smiling face at such a moment; instead of which, he looked very glum as he suddenly remembered Aunt Harriet, waiting in the study.

"I—I say, deah boys!" he faltered, turning to his chums. "My Aunt Hawwiet is heah—waitin' in the study. Will you come along an' be intwoduced?"

"Yes, rather!" said Tom Merry.

And Gussy's face grew longer and longer as the cricketers trooped into the building. He pictured the mirth and amazement which the spectacle of Aunt Harriet would provoke; and he actually shuddered as he led the way to No. 6 study.

On entering that apartment, however, Arthur Augustus had the surprise of his life.

Aunt Harriet was gone! And on the table was a note for Arthur Augustus—a brief but staggering message.

"Dear Gussy,—Thanks awfully for the topping tea! Sorry to have interrupted your cricket, but I didn't know there was a House-match on.

"Your noble leg has been pulled once again by

"Yours cheerily,

GORDON GAY (alias Aunt Harriet)."

Gussy's countenance, as he read that note, underwent a whole variety of expressions.

"Gordon Gay!" he ejaculated at last. "That Gwammah School boundah, in disguise! Oh, the uttah wottah! Next time I see him, I will administah a feahful thwashin'!"

"Where's Aunt Harriet, Gussy?" inquired Jack Blake, glancing round the study.

And when Arthur Augustus described his misadventures of the afternoon, and Gordon Gay's latest masquerade, the study rang with laughter.

The only person who failed to see where the joke came in was Arthur Augustus himself; though he was mightily relieved to find that "Aunt Harriet" was a myth, and that the ordeal he had so much dreaded was not to happen, after all!

THE END

HEROES OF GREYFRIARS HISTORY

By Mr. H. S. QUELCH, M.A.
(Author of "The History of Greyfriars.")



Terence and Trelawny ran up and down the ladders repeatedly, rescuing fags and bearing them to safety.

EVERY great school has its gallery of heroes, whose names and exploits are proudly remembered in its annals.

Greyfriars does not lag behind in this respect. Looking back down its long years of history I find many instances of heroic deeds which have been performed in various crises.

First on the roll of Greyfriars heroes I should place the name of Arthur Courtney, a prefect of the Sixth, who sacrificed his life during one of the war-time air raids. In circumstances of the greatest difficulty and danger he succeeded in rescuing a fellow senior from a blazing building which had been struck by a bomb. Unhappily, Courtney did not emerge unscathed from that fiery furnace. He suffered injuries of so severe a nature that he died shortly afterwards. Never shall I forget the ringing words of Dr. Locke in the school chapel on the Sunday following Courtney's death:

"He died as he lived—a very gallant gentleman!"

Great and sudden disasters always give the potential hero his opportunity. In such crises bravery is born and bravado dies. When Greyfriars School took fire on the fateful night of August 13th, 1873, it was only the heroism of Terence and Trelawny, of the Sixth, which averted serious loss of life.

After the alarm had been given, and the majority of the boys had made a successful dash for safety, it was found that the Third Form dormitory was cut off by a blazing staircase. There was no fire-escape in those days, and the unfortunate fags were trapped. Ladders were hastily fetched and reared up to the windows; and it was Terence and Trelawny who, with untiring energy, played the part of firemen. They ran up and down the ladders repeatedly, rescuing the fags and bearing them to safety. Then a roll-call revealed the startling fact that two of the fags were still left behind in the dormitory, presumably overcome by the fumes. Terence and Trelawny sped up the ladders once more and forced their way through the blinding smoke into the dormitory, which was now a furnace. The fags were rescued in the nick of time, and were carried down the ladders amid tumultuous cheers from the crowd in the Close.

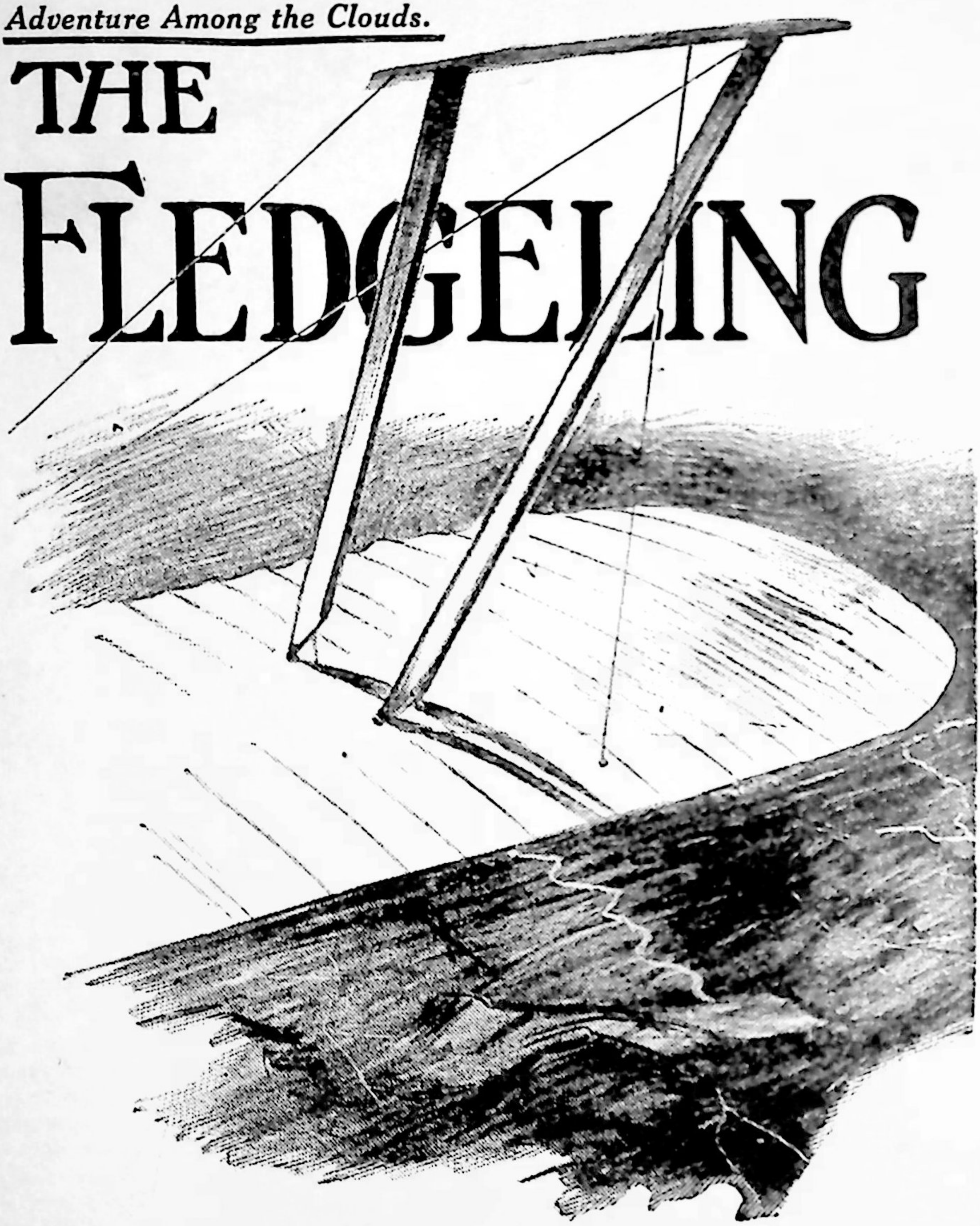
Heroic rescues from the River Sark have been so numerous that I cannot recount them all here, but there is one of these episodes of which I must make mention.

You would scarcely expect the name of William George Bunter, of my Form, to figure on a scroll of heroes. Yet Bunter has been responsible for one conspicuous act of bravery, when he plunged into the river and saved my own niece, Cora Quelch, from drowning.

Bunter has often bragged of feats of heroism which he has never performed, save in his fertile imagination; but on the occasion in question he proved himself a hero indeed. Yet, strange to relate, he never brags about that one genuine heroic exploit in his career.

Adventure Among the Clouds.

THE FLEDGELING



A leap of three feet lies between the "Queen of the Air" and the crook plane, but there's a suicidal drop of thousands of feet to earth if the leap miscarries. But Jim Stone, the fledgeling of the MacInstone Aircraft Co., never hesitates! Here's a non-stop, quick-action yarn that will give you thrill upon thrill!



By J. LAWN-NEWARK

THE FIRST CHAPTER

Crook Cargo!

JIM STONE, the youngest pilot in the service of the MacInstone Aircraft Company, stood in the doorway of the pilots' quarters whilst he drew on his leather gauntlets. In front of him, surrounded by a crowd of scurrying mechanics, stood the giant air-liner "Queen of the Air." Its propellers were revolving slowly, while the passengers mounted the flight of steps that led into the roomy fuselage. Close behind stood a Post Office van from which officials were busily transferring the steel boxes that contained the mails into the great 'plane.

Used as he was to the scene, nevertheless, Jim watched it closely. One could never be too careful on a job such as his. One act of carelessness on someone's part might endanger the safety of human lives.

"Very nearly ready, Stone?" A voice from behind startled him, and he turned suddenly to face the head of the company.

"Yes, sir," replied Jim. "We shall be off in a minute or two now. They are just putting in the last of the mails."

"That's right, then." Mr. MacInstone looked round him anxiously, and then lowered his voice. "I want to speak to you about these mails, Stone," he said.

Jim looked at him inquiringly.

"It's like this," began the older man. "I know you take every precaution, but I felt that——" He broke off suddenly, then went on quickly. "The fact of the matter is, the Post Office have informed me that this consignment of mails is of particular value—exceptional value, they say. They are from Hatton Garden. I thought you ought to know that their safety means a lot to the company."

"That's all right, sir. I never take an undue risk whilst in the air. If it will be any relief to you, I promise that I won't let them out of my sight until they are in the hands of the postal authorities the other end."

"I know I can trust you, Stone," said Mr. MacInstone, looking relieved. "I've given

you Tom O'Donnell as relief-pilot, and Manton as mechanic."

"That's good, sir," said Jim, for he liked both the young men the manager had mentioned. "It looks as if they're ready now, so I'll get off." Nodding his head he started to go, when his chief suddenly grasped him by the arm.

"You may think I'm a nervous fool, Stone," he said, "but I wish you'd slip this into your pocket." With that he turned on his heel and was gone.

Jim looked down at the object which the man had thrust into his hand—a small, yet businesslike-looking automatic reposed in his palm. He grinned as he slipped it into the pocket of his flying kit. By Jove, the old man had got "nerves" rather badly! He soon forgot the incident, however, as, after a quick look round, he climbed into the cockpit. Tom O'Donnell, a fair-haired young Irishman, was already there, whilst by his side was Manton, the mechanic, a young fellow whose one ambition in life was to obtain his pilot's certificate.

"Everything all right?" asked Jim as he slid into the pilot's seat, and gave the joy-stick a wag from side to side.

"O.K.," replied Tom.

Jim glanced through the window that looked into the passenger saloon. Everything seemed in order there. The occupants, five men and two women, were all sitting calmly reading their papers.

Opening the throttle, Jim accelerated the three powerful Rolls-Royce engines with a roar.

A wave of the hand, and the ground mechanics pulled clear the chocks from under the wheels, and the giant plane moved slowly forward. With a kick on the rudder-bar, Jim brought her round into the wind; still more throttle, and they were taxi-ing swiftly over the smooth turf, until, with a quick movement of the stick, she zoomed into the air. Their journey had begun.

There was an undeniable thrill in that first rise from the ground, and, in spite of the numberless times he had done it, Jim still felt the same exhilaration when it was achieved. Climbing higher and higher, until the aerodrome below looked like a tiny mark on a great map, he set the course towards that glint on the horizon which was the English Channel.

For some time he was busy with the controls, whilst Tom and Manton were in communication with the now distant aerodrome through the medium of a short-wave wireless transmitter.

Suddenly Tom switched his 'phones into circuit with those which were part of Jim's flying helmet.

"The chief seemed very upset this morning, Jim," he said as he leaned back in his seat. "What was up?"

"The mails," said Jim laconically, for he knew that he could trust the young Irishman. "He says that they are a valuable consignment from Hatton Garden to Amsterdam. Stones, you know."

"Phew!" Tom pursed his lips. "That's it, is it? I wondered what it was. He came round to me before we started, and though he was obviously nervy, he didn't say anything about the stones. Just said how important our job was, and so on. As if we didn't know that already."

Jim glanced at the instruments before him, then he replied:

"I think this trip means a lot to him," he said, "because if we get this lot over safely, then they will probably send all their valuable stuff via the firm. You see, it's like this——" He broke off as he saw that Manton wished to speak to Tom.

Nodding, the young relief-pilot switched his 'phones through to those of the mechanic, and for a moment or two they spoke. Then Tom turned and peered through the small window into the passenger saloon.

What was up? Jim never took his eyes off his instruments, for whatever it was, the controls were more important.

Tom, switching through, spoke quickly:

"There's someone ill in the saloon," he said anxiously, nodding over his shoulder. "One of the women. It looks as if she is in some sort of a fit, and the fellows are having a bit of a job with her. Will you be all right if Manton and I go through to see what can be done?"



Jim was suddenly conscious of something pressing into his side. "Keep still," said a voice. "Don't attempt to move!"

"Yes, go on. Everything's O.K. here."

"Right-ho. I shan't be a moment."

He and Manton unlocked the communicating door and squeezed through, shutting it behind them.

Jim glanced at the map. Whatever the trouble, there was no question of turning back, for they had gone too far for that. Already below them were the tumbling waters of the Channel, whilst ahead of them a haze showed where the French coast lay. No, it would be quicker to go on.

The minutes passed, and neither Tom nor Manton returned. Jim became anxious as the time went on.

Then the little door opened, and Jim was suddenly conscious of something pressing into his side. He kept perfectly still as with a wave of horror the truth flashed upon him—a revolver!

A hand reached over and plugged a pair of 'phones into circuit.

"Keep still," said a voice. "Don't attempt to move until I tell you."

THE SECOND CHAPTER

The Mails!

JIM made no reply. His brain was working quickly. What could he do? To leave the controls meant death for them all, besides the loss of the plane and the mails. No, there was nothing for it but to obey. Obviously the whole thing was a put-up job, and Tom and Manton were already out of it altogether.

Suddenly the door opened again to admit another man. Then the holder of the revolver spoke :

" Now rise slowly and change places with this pilot."

As he obeyed, Jim could see out of the corner of his eyes that the man who took his place was dressed in flying kit.

Hardly had he released the controls than there was a sharp click, and he felt the cold steel of a pair of handcuffs on his wrists.

Now the firm pressure of the revolver in his ribs guided him towards the door. He squeezed through, followed by his guide. In the saloon a heavy-featured man of foreign appearance came towards him. As the man with the revolver turned to close the door behind him, Jim took his opportunity. Swinging his manacled hands together, he hit the approaching foreigner a blow on the jaw that sent him crashing to the cabin floor. In a flash he had his back to the wall, fighting the rest of the gang, except the women, who cowed back out of harm's way.

But the odds were too many for him, and with a crashing blow from the butt of a revolver one of his assailants sent him in a heap to the floor. For a while everything went black, and Jim was conscious of nothing except a confused sound of conversation, and that of someone tying his legs together.

Though it seemed hours it must really have been only a few minutes before consciousness again returned to him. His head throbbed painfully, but he realised that, but for the fact that he was wearing a thick leather helmet, the blow would probably have laid him up for many weeks. As his brain gradually cleared, he was able to understand what was being said.

At the present moment the crooks were gazing anxiously out of the windows that ran along the sides of the saloon.

" I hope Hugo won't lose his way." It was one of the women who spoke, and her voice sounded alarmed.

" Don't you bother about that ! " Jim recognised the speaker as the man who had first entered the pilot's cockpit. " Hugo knows this part of France like the palm of his hand. He won't make any mistake ! "

" We ought to be nearly there by now, though, Stein," hazarded one of the other men.

" I tell you it's all right ! " rapped out Stein, who was obviously the leader. " If everything goes as well as it's gone so far we shall be in Venice before to-morrow morning. They won't find a trace of us ! "

" What are you going to do with this plane ? "

" Leave her at the aerodrome, with these poor fools in her. The police won't find them for hours, and by that time we shall be clear."

" They may not get you in your plane," remarked the man who had spoken before, " but what about us ? "

There was a murmur of assent from his companions. Stein turned on them angrily.

" What else do you think we can do, then ? If you're so frightened of your feeble skins, now that the time has come, I suppose you want to back out of our plans."

" Why don't we get rid of these three men and then fly straight to Venice in this plane ? Why change ? "

Stein laughed jeeringly.

" You're a brainy lot. What a mess you would be in if you hadn't a leader with a little sense ! " He swung round and faced them all angrily. " What do you think the Italian police would have to say when we cheerfully land there in a stolen air liner ? I suppose you think they'll give us a civic welcome ? " He laughed. " They'll give us that all right, but it will be in prison—"

He broke off suddenly and peered from the window.

" Hallo, we're coming down ! "

" Yes," one of the women spoke excitedly. " There's the farm. Hugo has got us there all right."

Jim, lying bound on the floor, closed his eyes. He didn't want them to know that he had regained consciousness and heard all their conversation. Listening carefully, he heard the pilot cut out the engines, and then felt a slight bump as the landing-wheels touched the ground—a splendid landing. Whoever the crook was piloting the machine, there was no doubt about the fact that he knew his job. In a few moments the bumping stopped, and

the plane came to a standstill. Opening the door, Stein stepped out, followed by his confederates. Jim endeavoured to slip his hands from the gripping pressure of the handcuffs, but without result.

"Are you all right, Jim?" The sound of Tom's whispered voice startled the young airman.

"Quite, thanks," he replied. "If only I could get these confounded handcuffs off I'd make these blighters look up!"

"I can't move mine." Tom sounded annoyed and angry. "I'm sorry we walked into that trap so easily, old man. It was my fault for not being ready for them. You see," he went on, "the moment Manton and I stepped through the saloon door we received a knock on the head that laid us out at once. Poor old Manton is still unconscious."

"Do you think he's badly hurt?" asked Jim anxiously.

"No, I don't think so—only stunned."

"Well, we've got to get out of this somehow." Jim rolled over and faced his companion. "If I edge closer, do you think you could get my feet undone? If the chance comes and we both have our feet free we can make a bolt for it."

"Right, we'll try!"

Jim was edging closer when a warning hiss from his chum stopped him. A shadow darkened the door, and in walked Stein and two companions. Jim again feigned unconsciousness.

"Pick 'em up!" ordered Stein.

The two men obeyed. One by one the three young airmen were carried from the plane, across the grass and into a shed. When they had thrown Manton—who was the last—upon the floor, Stein motioned the two men to precede him from the room. He closed the door carefully behind him, and Jim, as he lay there on the floor, clearly heard the sound of a bolt being shot home, and the noise of footsteps retreating into the distance.

"Well, that's that!" he remarked when all was quiet. "Now, let's see what we can do about getting free."

With an effort he managed to get into a sitting position, Tom following his example; and for the first time the two airmen were able to take stock of their surroundings. The shed had obviously been used for some time as a storehouse for lumber. The light from one small window enabled them to see a pile of empty petrol tins, whilst in one corner a broken table surmounted a pile of miscellaneous oddments. Cobwebs hung in festoons everywhere, whilst the stone floor was covered thickly with dust.

"A cheerful-looking spot," remarked Tom, glancing round him.

"Cheerful people, our hosts," grinned Jim, wriggling his way nearer to his friend. "We had better see if we can do anything with these ropes."

Then for a few minutes they worked upon each other's bonds in silence.

"I think Manton is coming round," said Tom suddenly.

A faint groan from the mechanic proved that what he had said was true. At that moment the rope binding Jim's legs parted, so that he was able to get upon his knees, which was a better position in which to deal with those which still bound Tom. However, these, too, soon gave way, and in a very short time the young men were able to walk across the room and peer out through the small window.

"By Jove!" remarked Tom. "It's an aerodrome. Look at those hangars over there!"

Jim nodded.

"Yes, I guessed something of the sort. What they have done is to turn a small farm into a private aerodrome. A jolly useful sort of place for them. You see, they could land here in an aeroplane without any questions being asked. By the way, I can't see anything of our 'bus, can you?"

Tom, who had been craning his neck so that he might be able to see to the limit which the window would allow, replied eagerly:

"Yes, I can just see the nose. She seems to have been pulled up somewhere at the side of this shed."

"I'm going to see what I can do for Manton," returned Jim.

Crossing the room and kneeling beside the mechanic, he set to work unfastening the bonds that tied his legs. The task was a

difficult one, for the handcuffs which were on Jim's wrists made it hard to move his hands. However, the job was soon done, and as he unfastened the last knot, the mechanic opened his eyes.

"Feeling better now?" asked the young pilot.

"Yes, thanks—I——" A puzzled frown came over the man's face. "Where are we?"

Jim hastened to explain their position to the slowly recovering mechanic.

"The trouble is," he concluded, "to get out of this place. Otherwise we shall be left here, and the mails will have gone. Hang it!" He rose angrily to his feet. "If only we could get these confounded handcuffs undone we should be better able to get out."

Manton stood up with an effort. His legs were still very shaky, but the effects of the cruel blow were swiftly passing away.

"That's easily done," he said.

Jim looked at him in surprise.

"How?" he asked.

Without replying Manton felt in the pocket of his overalls and produced a strong file. The young pilot grasped it eagerly.

"Splendid! The very thing! Now we shall be able——"

"Come and look here!" Tom's excited voice broke in suddenly. "They're shifting the mails."

In a flash Jim was at the window, whilst the mechanic followed more slowly. Together they peered out of the window. It was fast growing dark, but through the gloom they could see that out of one of the hangars several men were wheeling a smart little two-seater biplane. Once in the open, the propeller was set revolving.

"What's the game?" asked Jim.

"Wait a moment," replied Tom. "There's a fellow just gone towards the 'Queen' with a small truck. I have a suspicion that he's going to——"

At that moment the man returned to view pulling a rubber-tyred truck behind him. Upon it were a number of large tin boxes.

"The mails!" cried Tom.

THE THIRD CHAPTER

Neck or Nothing!

SILENTLY the three watchers saw the men start to transfer them into the back seat of the waiting aeroplane.

"There's not a second to lose." Jim turned to his fellow-pilot. "You first, Tom," he said. "We'll have these handcuffs off in no time."

Feverishly he worked upon the chain that held the two cuffs together. There was no time to get them off at the wrists. If they could move their hands about freely the fact that each wore metal bracelets was of no importance. After frenzied working, for Jim had to hold the file in both hands because of his own manacles, there was a sharp snap and Tom was free.

"Now give it to me," said the young Irishman, "and whilst I do the same for you, Jim, perhaps Manton will have a squint out of the window to tell us what is happening."

Manton took up his post and peered out into the darkness.

"They're putting the last in now," he said anxiously, "and a big fellow is putting on a flying helmet."

"That's Stein," remarked Jim; and as he spoke, the link in his handcuffs gave with a crack.

"I'll see what I can do with this door," he snapped. "You get to work on Manton."

A quick glance out of the window gave Jim an even greater urge for speed. Stein was climbing into the cockpit of the machine. Turning his attention to the door, he saw that it was no use trying to open it without something to use as a battering-ram. It was bolted firmly from outside. A swift glance among the pile of litter, and his attention was attracted by the broken-down table. It had been scrapped owing to the loss of a limb, and to Jim it was only a moment's work to deprive it of yet another. Armed with this, he set to work. Blow after blow fell crashing upon the panels. Real need lent strength, whilst, luckily, the noise of the accelerating aeroplane engine drowned the thunder of the blows. One after the other they fell until the panel cracked. Then yet



Swinging his manacled hands together, Jim hit the foreigner a blow on the jaw that sent him crashing to the floor.

another blow, and it was in fragments. Slipping his arm through the broken woodwork, Jim reached the bolt and shot it back. He turned to his companions, as Manton's hands came free.

"Now," he said, "follow me like the dickens!" Flinging open the door, the three airmen rushed out into the open. There a disappointing sight met their eyes. The biplane, its engine roaring, was taxi-ing across the grass, and even as they watched, the wheels lifted and it was in the air.

Tom and the mechanic came to a standstill in despair, but Jim, who had been doing some fast thinking, urged them on.

"To the air liner!" he shouted. "It's our only chance!"

Hard at his heels they realised at once what he meant. Before them stood the abandoned machine. The only members of the gang to be seen were standing in a little group watching their fast disappearing leader. If the airmen could only get there in time—

Running all out, Tom kept his eye on the figures in the distance. Every yard they covered before discovery added to their chances.

It was not until they were within a few yards of the plane that one of the gang, suddenly catching sight of the three runners, shouted a warning to his companions. Immediately they started in an endeavour to frustrate the escaping trio.

Jim clambered up into the cockpit as the other two sprang towards the props. Now it was a matter of seconds. With a roar the huge Rolls-Royce engines started revolving. Manton was in, and Tom was close behind him when the first of the gang reached the plane.

Turning round by the open door of the fuselage, Tom faced the crook. The plane began to move slowly. Their chance hung for a moment in the balance, and Tom, realising this, took a risk. With a swift, hard blow from the shoulder, he sent the crook spinning to the ground. Then, running beside the moving plane, he clambered aboard, aided by Manton's eager hands. The moment he was safe Manton raised his hand to show Jim that everything was O.K., and a few seconds later the huge machine once again took the air.

From the cockpit the three men peered into the darkness ahead. Would they be able to pick up any sign of their quarry? What but a short time ago had only been semi-darkness was now pitch black, and they could not see very far in front of them.

Following the direction in which Stein's plane had disappeared, Jim crammed on all speed.

"I can't see anything of him," said Tom.

They had all coupled their 'phones up so that they could speak with ease.

"No!" Jim's attention was fixed upon the quivering instruments before him. "It's as black as ink!"

"It won't be like that long," volunteered the mechanic; "the moon will rise soon."

"If something doesn't happen," said Jim, "we're done. We can't keep flying on through the darkness like this. The chances are that he has changed his course."

"It's all right!" Tom pointed ahead excitedly. "I can see the glow of his engine exhaust."

As they watched ahead of them, the flame of the burning exhaust gases could faintly be seen.

A puzzled frown appeared upon Tom's face.

"What's the next move?" he asked.

"Keep him in view until the moon rises, and then——" Jim broke off and hesitated. "Well, I think I have a plan which will settle him."

"What's that?" asked Tom curiously.

With a faint smile, the young airman replied:

"The moon hasn't risen yet," he said.

Time passed and still they soared on through the darkness, following that illusive glimmer that shone out every now and then.

If Stein out there, crouched down over his controls, knew of those on his track, he gave no sign, for he kept on his course in an undeviating line. None of the three pursuers spoke again until over the horizon the bright rim of the moon showed, throwing a cold silver light over the sky. Now they were able to see ahead of them the dark wings and fuselage of the biplane. Jim looked at his companions inquiringly.

"At last," he said, "we can get to work. Change places with me, Tom, will you?"

"But I say! What's the idea?" Tom hesitated, but Jim turned to him quickly.

"Come on," he said. "We haven't a moment to lose. It's the only thing we can do to stop the chap escaping, and I'm going to do it."

Tom could see that Jim was quite determined, so he did as he was asked without another word. When he was relieved the young pilot beckoned to Manton, and disappeared into the saloon. A minute or two passed. Tom still kept the same distance behind the crook's plane. Then a noise in his rear informed him that once again the

young pilot was beside him. Glancing round he was shocked, for he realised in a flash what was the plan Jim had in mind, for upon his back there was strapped—a parachute!

Seeing his look of consternation, Jim grinned.

"It's all right, Tom," he said. "Don't get the wind up. It's the only way we can get Stein—and I'm going to get him."

"But you can't!"

"Oh, yes, I can! I'm going to climb out on your wing, and when we draw level I'm going over on to his, and then"—he produced the automatic which the manager had given him—"and then we'll see what Stein has to say."



Jim leaped from the side of the machine as it dived to destruction, and then the parachute unwrapped from his shoulders.

"You can't. It's too risky!"

"Nonsense, Tom. You know there's no other way to stop him escaping with the mails. For one thing we haven't enough gas to follow him to his destination."

Tom glanced quickly at one of the illumined dials.

"Phew!" he whistled, and his face went white. "You're right, we can't last with that amount for another hour."

"No, I didn't think you'd realised that," said Jim. "Now the great thing is that you have got to bring the 'Queen' up as close as ever you dare without actually touching, for that would mean probably death to us all."

Setting his teeth grimly, Tom nodded.

"Right," he said. "I'll do my best."

Jim gripped his shoulder with his hand.

"Thanks, old man; I know you will. You're the only fellow I'd trust for the job!"

Then feeling that he was becoming too serious, he laughed.

"Come on, speed up; the sooner we get Stein now the better."

With that Jim left the young pilot and climbed over the side of the fuselage on to the lower wing.

Manton stood beside Tom.

"I'll watch," he said, "and tell you when you're level."

THE FOURTH CHAPTER

The Crash!

INCH by inch, foot by foot, Jim wormed his way along the plane. The force of the wind was terrific, but he managed to keep his feet by clinging to the struts. Past the engine, with its roaring blades, and now out on to the last stretch that led to the wing-tip. In the meantime Tom was accelerating the engine, and gradually they were creeping up behind the fugitive. Every minute he was finding it more difficult to control the air-liner, for the weight of his friend was causing it to trend towards a side-slip. This inclination he had to keep correcting by the use of the control column.

Out on the wing-tip, Jim, clinging for dear life, raised his arm. Now he was ready. All that remained was to come alongside. The tail of Stein's machine came level.

"A little more," said Manton quietly. His face was set and drawn with nervous excitement. "Another ten feet."

At that moment, whether it was that Stein realised their intention for the first time, or whether he had purposely kept a little speed back in reserve, he accelerated, and his plane forged ahead. Again the air-liner was only level with his rudder. Veering slightly he endeavoured to put them off their course. But Tom was ready for him.

"Ten feet," said Manton again. Then: "Six!"

Jim had risen from his crouching position, and was holding with one hand, ready to grip the other's plane in a second.

"Two feet."

They were level! But Stein's under plane was slightly lower than that of the "Queen." Taking the opportunity he tried to turn sideways, but in doing so his wing rose, and for a fraction of a second the planes of the two machines were level.

With a quick movement that was hardly perceptible to the watchers, Jim was across. He had spanned three feet of space which was thousands of feet deep.

"Right!" Manton's voice was harsh. With a movement of the rudder and stick Tom sent the plane sideways and upwards, and Jim, out there in the darkness, saw the shape of the air-liner gradually move away.

Crawling slowly, he started towards the fuselage and that dim dark shape which was the figure of Stein. As it was a single-propeller machine there were no engines on the wings, and he was able to make quicker progress, until he was half-way to the fuselage. Then Stein endeavoured to combat him. Taking his life in his hands—for with Jim on his wing the machine was unstable—he started stunting. He tried everything he dared to send the young airman hurtling to his death. Up and up he went, then swooped down at a terrific speed. Checking this he zoomed upwards again, the stay wires shrieking their protest. One minute the wings would be right down at an angle, then they would be tilted upwards to the sky, but still Jim clung on regardless, at the same time taking every opportunity to creep nearer to the cockpit.

Six feet from his quarry he released one hand and drew his revolver. Things were coming to a climax, and Stein knew it, as he peered through his misted goggles at the set face of the young airman.

Now it was a battle of wits.

If Jim fired at that point-blank range he would kill Stein without a doubt, but——. It was upon that "but" that the crook gambled—and lost!

Releasing the joy-stick with one hand, he felt in the locker at his side. Now with a gun in his possession it was a duel in the air, and Stein, familiar with revolvers, had the advantage.

Crack! His gun shot flame before Jim even realised that his enemy was armed. It would have spelt death for him but for the hand of Fate. At that moment the machine



Facing page 32

A DUEL AT TEN THOUSAND FEET!

hit an air-pocket—the dread of all pilots. Whistling, the bullet sped past his head and buried itself into a strut.

Back in the air-liner Manton let out a gasp.

"He's in a spin!"

Stein, controlling with one hand, had not been quick enough to steady the machine. Down she roared in a spin of death!

"He's lost control!" Tom and the mechanic peered helplessly into the darkness. The machine was turning and twisting as Stein endeavoured to regain control. But all in vain.

"Where's Jim?" The question came in an agonised whisper from Manton. "Why doesn't he jump?"

Seconds passed which seemed hours. Then Tom spoke:

"He must be trapped amongst the wires. If he doesn't get out in a minute it will be too late——"

"Look!" Manton let out a yell as he pointed eagerly downwards. From the side of the machine hurtling to destruction a human figure had leaped, and as they watched, a parachute unwrapped from its shoulders.

"Phew!" Tom wiped his perspiring brow. "That was a near thing!"

How near a thing it had been was obvious in another few seconds. The nose-diving machine, rushing through the air at a terrific speed, was suddenly brought to a dead stop by the earth.

There was a thud, which was so loud that even the two airmen in the machine above heard it through the noise of their engine. Then there rose a lurid flame from the debris which lit up the sky with gradually increasing brightness. Silhouetted like a dark shadow against the glow could be seen the shape of the descending airman trailing below the dark form of the parachute.

. . . . .

Tom O'Donnell lay back in the long grass and revelled in the sunshine. After the hectic excitement of the night the peaceful countryside was very restful. Some distance away a little group of peasants, standing around a blackened pile of wreckage, marked the spot where all that remained of Stein's machine lay. It was lucky for the pilot that the "Queen" had landed in time to extricate both he and the mails from that blazing mass, before any great damage had been done to either. Stein himself now lay in a hospital not many miles distant, whilst the mails were once again in the roomy fuselage of the air-liner.

Tom roused himself, and gazed towards the field where the plane stood. Those men were a long time filling her up with petrol, despite the fact that Jim was supervising their efforts. A short time passed, then his chum was beside him.

"Come on, Tom, that's all right!"

They strode gaily towards the "Queen."

"We've filled her up, and now we're ready to start again," he continued. "When I was on the 'phone to the chief this morning he told us to get to Paris as soon as we could. He didn't expect we should be ready quite so soon, so this will be another surprise for him."

"I expect he was excited," hazarded Tom, with a grin.

"Excited wasn't the word for it. He was speechless."

The two young men were now close to the fuselage of the aeroplane. Manton appeared at the door.

"Everything all right?" asked Jim as he climbed into the cockpit, followed by Tom.

"O.K.," replied Manton.

The motors accelerated, and the plane moved forward. Running lightly over the turf it lifted gracefully into the air. Once again the "Queen of the Air" rode triumphant, with young Jim, the fledgeling, at the controls!

Later, when Stein came out of hospital, he went to prison for a spell, and on information he gave the rest of the gang was finally apprehended and sentenced to varying terms of imprisonment.

THE END

BUNTER the SKATER!

By DICK PENFOLD.



AT Greyfriars, when the fields were white,
Ice-skating gave us keen delight;
And weird and wondrous was the sight
Of Bunter, rolling rapidly.

His "borrowed" pair of skates were odd.
Belonging each to Bull and Todd,
Who, rushing breathless through the quad,
Were bawling "BUNTER!" rabidly.

But Bunter, as he sped along,
With all the merry Greyfriars throng,
Burst into loud and tuneless song,
His fat face beaming happily!

"The champion skater I shall prove,
The shining star of the Remove.
You clumsy asses must improve!"
Said Billy Bunter snappily.

With breathless snort and gasping wheeze,
His muffler streaming in the breeze;
Like a stout ship in heavy seas
Went Bunter, rolling rapidly.

But thin ice can't accommodate
A human bulk of Bunter's weight;
And so, beneath each borrowed skate
The ice was cracking rapidly!

Then Bunter's gladness turned to gloom,
The ice rent like the crack of doom,
Exposing a wide, watery tomb
Where Bunter sank unhappily!

"Help! Save me!" came the bubbling cry.
"I dud—dud-don't yet want to die!
I've not begun to live, that's why!"
Gasped Bunter, sinking rapidly.

We laid a ladder on the ice,
And saved the porpoise in a trice;
And now, in blankets warm and nice,
We're rolling Bunter rapidly!



REFORMING MAULY!

By
FRANK RICHARDS

Lord Mauleverer was born tired, but when he does "wake up" no one is more surprised than the fellow who set out to reform his lazy lordship.

THE FIRST CHAPTER
Waking Up the Slacker!

"MAULY!"

No answer.

"Mauly!" bawled Bob Cherry, of the Remove Form at Greyfriars, for the second time.

Still no answer. If Mauly—otherwise Lord Mauleverer, the genial slacker of the Remove—heard, then, like the celebrated gladiator, he heeded not.

The probability was that he had heard, for although Bob Cherry was standing at the foot of the stairs leading to the Remove passage, his voice carried. Bob's voice had been likened unto the voice of the Bull of Bashan, and his second yell might well have awakened the Seven Sleepers. It elicited no response, however, from Lord Mauleverer.

With a grunt Bob Cherry swung round the stair-rail and started up the stairs three at a time. In three seconds he was at the top. Precisely one second later he burst into Study No. 12 like a whirlwind.

Crash!

"Mauly!" roared Bob.

Lord Mauleverer awoke. He had been reclining gracefully on the sofa, but he sat up with a jump as Bob Cherry entered. It took a lot to wake his somnolent lordship, but Bob's terrific entry did the trick.

"Ow!" gasped Lord Mauleverer.

"You silly ass!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Yaas!"

Mauly, having recovered from the first shock of surprise, sank back on the sofa and amiably agreed. He was usually willing to agree with anything to avoid an argument. That was Mauleverer's way.

"You frabjous dummy!" hooted Bob Cherry. "This is the third time running you've got Wharton into trouble by not turning up for compulsory footer practice. You knew it was compulsory practice day, I suppose?"

"Yaas!"

"Then why the thump haven't you turned up like the rest?"

Snore!

Bob stared at Mauleverer almost incredulously. His lazy lordship had once more fallen asleep.

"Well, of all the wasters——" gasped Bob.

Then he acted. With a bound he was upon the elegant Removite. The next moment he had yanked Mauly up into a sitting position

and was banging his aristocratic head against the wall.

A series of wild yells rang out in Study No. 12.

"Yarooooh! Yoooop! Lemme go! Whoooop!"

"There!" gasped the most vigorous member of the Remove at Greyfriars, panting from his exertions. "Going to stay awake now?"

"Ow! Yaas! Wow!" groaned Mauleverer. "My napper——"

"Blow your blessed napper! What does your napper matter in comparison with footer practice? You know, Mauly," said Bob seriously, "you've got to pull your socks up."

"Ow!"

"Three times in three weeks you've let us down. It's the giddy limit. Wingate's raging, and Wharton's wild, having to take all the blame. It's got to be altered, Mauly."

"Yaas!"

"In fact, I'm jolly well going to alter it, whether you like it or not," said Bob, with sudden determination. "You want someone to take you in hand, old bean. Well, I'll do it."

"Oh, gad!"

An expression of acute alarm came into Mauleverer's placid features.

"I'll jolly well do it!" said Bob Cherry enthusiastically. "You've been neglected in the past, Mauly; but things are going to change from now on."

"I don't want 'em to change," protested Mauly plaintively.

Bob Cherry grinned.

"Probably not. But when I've transformed you from the jellyfish you are to-day into a live, bustling, hustling sportsman——"

"Oh, gad!" exclaimed Mauleverer, with a shudder he could not repress.

"Then you'll find you'll have changed your mind about it and I expect you'll thank me from the bottom of your heart. It's on!" concluded Bob in a tone of finality.

"But——"

"But nothing. I'm not leaving you alone now until you're a hundred-per-cent he-man. Got your footer clobber?"

"It's in the pavilion, old chap. But——"

"Kim on!"

Mauleverer came on. With the cheerful Bob grasping his shoulders and rushing him out of the study, he had no choice in the matter.

The journey of Bob Cherry and his new protégé down to Little Side that afternoon was a wild and woolly performance. They tore along the Remove passage, rushed down the stairs, raced through the Hall, and fairly flew from the House down to the football pitch.

By the time they arrived in front of the pavilion Mauly hardly knew whether he was on his head or his heels, and was only dimly conscious of his surroundings at all.

His meteoric arrival was heralded by a yell from the waiting footballers.

"Here he comes!"

"Slacker!"

"Waster!"

"Where the thump have you been, Mauleverer?" came a stern query from George Wingate, captain of Greyfriars.

"Oh, gad, I was just havin' a snooze——"

"You were having a snooze when you ought to have been here for footer. Mad?" asked Wingate pleasantly.

"Yaas—I mean, nunno! You see, Wingate——"

"I see a slacking ass who badly needs waking up," said Wingate, with a frown. "Wonder to me someone in the Remove doesn't spend a little time in doing it for you."

"All serene, Wingate; I've already fixed it," grinned Bob Cherry.

Wingate started.

"You mean——"

"I mean I've taken over the job of reforming Mauleverer. I'm going to make a real live wire of him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was a roar from the listening juniors. The idea of making a real live wire of the languid earl struck them as rather funny. Even Wingate grinned.

"Wish you joy of your job, young Cherry!" he remarked. "When does the process begin?"

"It began up in his study just now. It's continuing right now. Kim on, Mauly!" finished up Bob, and again he laid violent hands on Lord Mauleverer and rushed him into the pavilion to change for footer.

The pair were followed by a yell of laughter from the rest.

In the pick-up game that ensued when Mauleverer had changed, Bob Cherry kept a very careful eye on his protégé. Bob, as it happened, was on the same side as Mauly, but that little circumstance didn't stop him from charging his elegant colleague on the slightest provocation or even without provocation at all.

Such tactics would, of course, have been impossible in an ordinary game, but a certain amount of licence was permissible at compulsory practice, and Bob Cherry took advantage of the fact, with results that were quite entertaining from the point of view of most of the players.



Bob yanked Mauly up into a sitting position, and the next moment he was banging his head against the wall.

Mauleverer, of course, was not entertained. That was hardly to be expected. He came off the field at the end of the game looking as though he had just been through a mangle, and almost tottered to the pavilion to change.

Bob Cherry encouraged him with a slap on the back that nearly laid him out altogether.

"Cheer up, Mauly," he grinned. "It's always hard beginning a thing, but you'll soon get used to it."

"Oh, dear!" groaned Mauly.

"I'll look you up after tea and we'll have a trot round the quad. I'm going to wake you up, old bean," said Bob genially, "as you've never been awakened before!"

"Oh, gad!"

That was all Mauly said.

That was all he felt capable of saying for the time being.

THE SECOND CHAPTER
Mauly's Win!

TRUE to his promise, Bob Cherry turned up at No. 12 after tea.

He found Mauleverer standing up in front of the fire. That was unusual, for the languid earl spent by far the greater part of his spare time curled up in an attitude of graceful repose on the sofa.

What was more unusual still was that Mauly had quite a concentrated sort of ex-

pression on his countenance. Mauly's expression was usually far from concentrated; in fact, as a rule, it didn't even exist, unless obvious lack of interest in all that was going on could be dignified with the name of "expression." But this time he was full of expression.

The explanation was that Mauly had been thinking.

Bob Cherry had driven him to it.

Mauly knew Bob Cherry well enough to realise that when he said a thing, he meant it. His threat to wake up Mauly as he had never been awakened before was not idly spoken. He really meant to carry it out.

It was an awful prospect for Mauly—so awful that he simply had to think how to deal with the situation. Mauly pondered deeply.

At the precise moment that Bob Cherry breezed into the study the unwonted mental efforts of the leisurely Removite were at last rewarded.

Inspiration came to him. The solution to the overwhelming problem of how to escape a month or more of wild and whirling activity with Bob Cherry appeared before him in a sort of blinding flash. Mauly could have laughed aloud with joy.

The solution involved a day or possibly two days of tremendous physical effort. That, of course, was a drawback, but Mauly was prepared to put up with it for the sake of the undisturbed peace which he hoped would follow.

He turned to Bob with a bright smile.

"Evenin', old bean," he remarked. "Trot round the quad is indicated, I take it?"

"Just that!" nodded Bob Cherry. "And it's no good your trying to dodge it, because—"

Mauleverer smothered a yawn.

"I won't dodge, I promise you, dear man. In fact, I'm ready."

"Good. Then march!"

They marched.

An interested crowd of grinning juniors followed them down to the quad. The news that Bob Cherry had begun his self-imposed task of reforming Mauly had spread far and wide, and most of the fellows were looking forward to a deadly dual between a zealous reformer and a very unwilling reformee, so to speak.

They were disappointed. Mauly came like a lamb.

Furthermore, on reaching the quad., he started sprinting without even a word from his reformer. The crowd couldn't understand it; as for Bob Cherry, he was flabbergasted.

Round the quad. sprinted Bob Cherry and his pupil. And after completing the circle, round again; and yet again.

Bob was surprised and, after a time, a little disconcerted. Twice round would have suited him very nicely. But Mauly didn't stop at that; he kept on keeping on.

It was very gratifying, of course, to find the reformation taking place so quickly, but Bob hadn't intended spending the remainder of the evening running round and round the quad. and after the fifth lap he felt like calling a halt. To have done so, however, would have been to make the whole thing look ridiculous. So Bob Cherry kept on keeping on, too, while an ironical crowd on the School House steps cheered vociferously.

When it got to the tenth time round, Bob felt that the thing was getting beyond a joke.

"Had enough, Mauly?" he panted.

"Not a bit of it, old top! Feel as if I could go on like this for hours!"

"Well, I don't!" said Bob Cherry frankly, coming to a stop and mopping his perspiring brow. "'Nuff's as good as a feast, you know, and this bizney's getting a bit monotonous, Mauly. Let's move in."

"Pleasure!" said Mauleverer cheerfully. "What's the next item in this wakin'-up programme?"

"Looks as if you're taking it philosophically, Mauly! Matter of fact, I had thought of a little spar round the gym. with the gloves on. You're not quite up to my weight at boxing, of course, but you're useful——"

"Done!" said Lord Mauleverer.

They went to the gym.

The crowd followed, reinforced now by Harry Wharton, Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Singh, who were all quite overcome when they heard of the surprising change in the languid lord of Greyfriars.

The crowd arrived at the gym, and the two principals in the entertainment took off coats and rolled up sleeves and donned the gloves.

"Now!" said Bob Cherry.

He sparred up to Mauly. Mauly, however, didn't spar up to his host. He retreated, instead, retreated round and round the gym., dodging and feinting as he went in an annoying manner.

After him came Bob Cherry, trying hard to touch his elusive opponent. But the harder he tried, the more elusive became his opponent, and somehow he couldn't get home once.

"You silly ass!" he roared. "Why can't you stand still for a minute?"

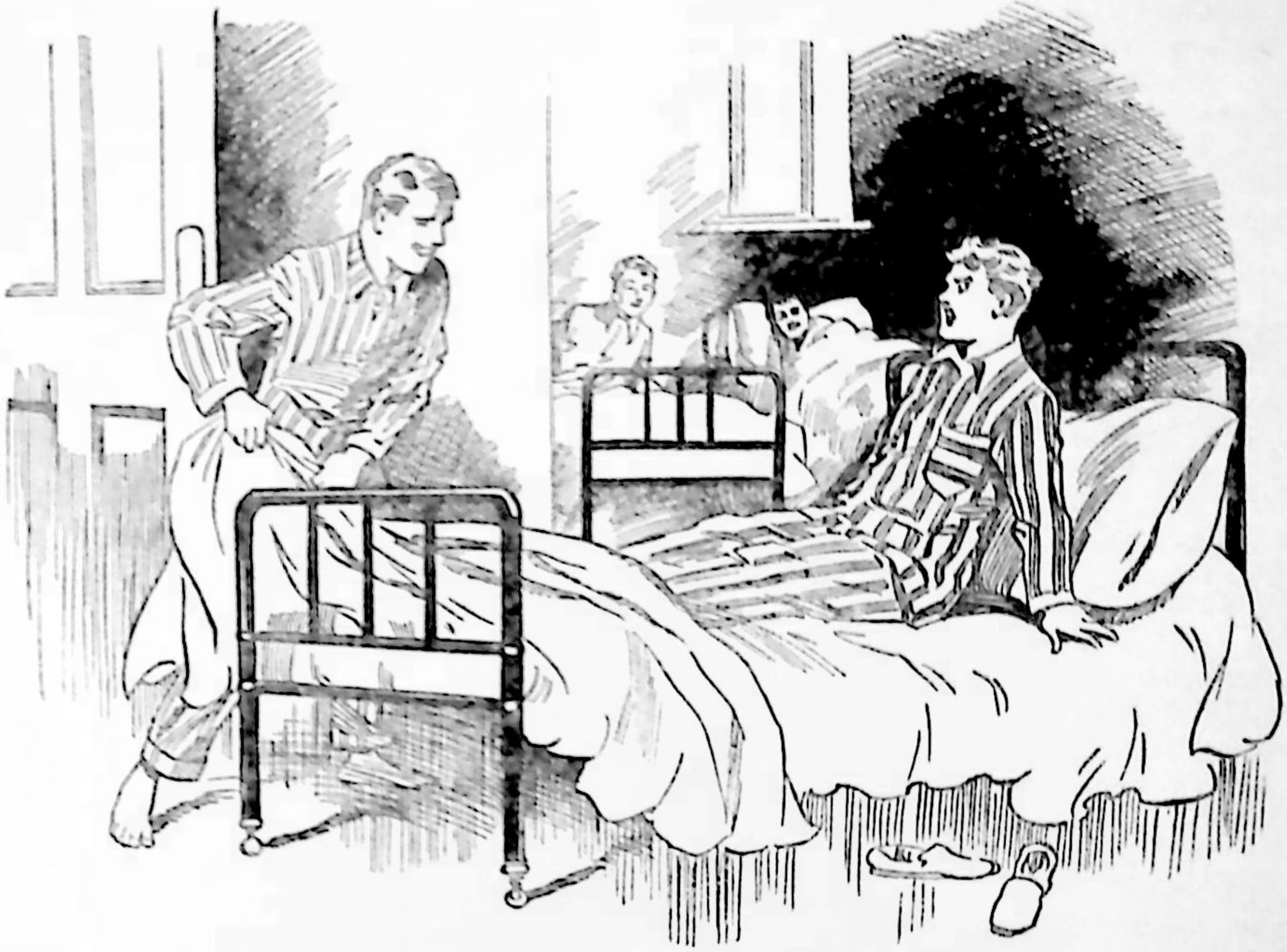
"Because I don't want to be hit, of course, old bean!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But you footlin fathead——"

"I thought that was half the battle in boxing, knowing how to dodge your opponent," said Mauleverer innocently. "That's the half I'm learning at present, you see!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"



Mauly crossed to where Bob slept and dragged off the bedclothes.
"Ow! What the thump——" cried Bob, sitting up in bed.

The grins of the crowd became chuckles, the chuckles laughs, and the laughs a roar.

"Go it, Bob!"

"It's not supposed to be shadow-boxing, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry, whose complexion had reddened until it resembled the colour of a ripe tomato, paused for a moment to glare at the unruffled Mauleverer.

By the time the sparring bout was over the usually sunny-tempered Bob was feeling quite "touchy." Mauleverer, on the other hand, seemed to grow more cheerful every minute. He was almost beaming as he linked arms with his reformer on the way out.

"Not a bad spar, eh?" he remarked genially. "But, honestly, old bean, I don't feel more than half awake yet. What about a bike-ride after prep.—keen night air an' all

that sort of thing ?" Good idea, what !"

Bob Cherry stared.

"A bike ride ? But, you silly dummy, that means breaking bounds !"

"Not necessarily, old chap. We can spin round and round the footer-field. Not strictly legal, perhaps, but we might get away with it ; an' think of all the benefit we'll get !"

"Well, my hat !" said Bob Cherry.

He was astounded. For a moment doubts began to assail him as to Mauleverer's sanity. But Mauly looked sane enough and Bob dismissed his doubts. After a moment of reflection, he agreed to the startling proposal for a spin round the footer-field in the light of the moon. He had set out to wake up Mauly and if Mauly himself had decided to assist in the process, that was all to the good.

It didn't seem too good, however, after they had been whizzing round the field for twenty minutes or so at breakneck speed. Twice Bob Cherry came a cropper in the dim light. Almost he began to regret having set out to reform Mauleverer.

Almost—but not quite. It required another two hours of the electrified earl to annihilate Bob's reforming zeal completely. And those two hours Mauly gave him with a glad heart.

A sprint back to the house was followed by physical jerks in the Common-room. Mauly insisted. Then came bed-time. But even bed-time did not stop the fun. Mauly wanted gymnastics in the dorm., and then a duel with pillows. If Wingate had not come up with an ashplant he might have carried on all night. But Wingate did turn up and peace descended on the dormitory at last. None was more glad than Bob Cherry. Bob usually did sleep well ; on this occasion he slept as though he could have gone on for ever.

Lord Mauleverer was smiling faintly as he tumbled into bed. He felt he had achieved what he had set out to achieve.

At six o'clock in the morning he knew for a fact that he had. At that hour the rattle of the alarm-clock by Mauleverer's bed suddenly disturbed the silence of the dormitory and some of the juniors.

Instantly, Mauleverer shot out of bed, crossed to the bed where Bob Cherry slept and yanked off the bedclothes.

Bob Cherry sat up in bed with a yell.

"Ow ! What the thump——"

"Ready, old top ?" asked Mauleverer blandly.

Bob stared at him half dazedly.

"Ready ? Br-r-r-r ! Gimme back those bedclothes ; it's cold ! What d'you mean by 'Ready' ?"

"Why, ready to carry on ?"

"Carry on what ?" hooted the shivering Bob.

"Carry on reformin' me, of course, old bean !" answered Mauly, registering mild surprise. "I thought you'd like to get out and see that I have a cold plunge an' a trot round the quad., an'——"

"Ha, ha, ha !"

The Remove yelled. Their indignation at being awakened so early on a cold and frosty morning gave place to mirth.

Bob Cherry laughed, too, after a while.

"All right, Mauly," he said. "Give you best ; you win. I'm not getting up yet !"

Mauleverer held up his hands in pretended horror.

"Dear man, you don't mean to say that you're leavin' me to return to my sin an' laziness——"

"Just that !" nodded Bob. "I've had enough of reforming you—more than enough ! You can go and bury yourself in idleness for the rest of your life for all I care. Blow you !"

Having delivered himself of which, the disillusioned reformer turned over on his pillow again.

Mauleverer, with a very tired but utterly blissful look on his face, floated peacefully back to his bed. And in the space of a few seconds he had returned to the Land of Nod with the happy assurance that, thanks to his ingenious little wheeze, it would be a long, long time before anyone attempted again the impossible task of Reforming Mauly !

THE END

THE ST. JIM'S INVENTOR



From the brain of Bernard Glyn, the schoolboy inventor of St. Jim's, have emanated many ingenious inventions—with amazing and amusing results. By special request some of those inventions are described in the accompanying article.

BERNARD GLYN is not the only inventor of which St. Jim's can boast; but there is one essential difference between his inventions and those of Herbert Skimpole. Glyn's work. Skimpole's never do.

The weedy genius of the Shell, with his massive brain full of impracticable ideas, has been responsible for many weird and wonderful contraptions; but as they all refused to perform any of the wonders which their inventor expected of them, it would be useless to describe them here.

The Line Machine.

THE end study in the Shell passage at St. Jim's is justly famous, for that celebrated apartment has been the birthplace of most of Glyn's inventions. And though his study-mates may ramp and rave at the unholy smells that accompany some of the Lancashire lad's labours, or at finding themselves shut out of their study when he is specially busy, they grin and bear it; or, at least, they have to bear it, and they generally end by grinning as well.

They know that something does come out of all Glyn's work, and something worth while, too.

What schoolboy, for instance, would not have welcomed Glyn's line machine? A contrivance that made the getting of lines a matter of no importance was not likely to lie idle at St. Jim's, and it received a heartier welcome than all the rest of his inventions put together. All it wanted was one line of original writing, which it reproduced until further orders. The juniors made the most of it, and for a time lines fell as thick as the leaves in Vallambrosa. They cheerfully collected them in every possible way—lines by the score, the hundred, and the thousand, and had them doubled, trebled, and even quadrupled without a murmur. The expression on the faces of the masters and prefects when stack upon stack of irreproachable lines poured in from all sides was, according to Monty Lowther, worth a guinea a box.

But it was really too good to last. The machine fell into the hands of Gordon Gay & Co., the enterprising youths from Rylcombe Grammar School, and it was but a short time that the Shell and Fourth revelled in the knowledge that lines were no longer hard lines for them.

The Mechanical Bowler.

THEN there was the mechanical bowler, otherwise Glyn's Patent Automatic Magazine Bowling Machine. It was in the form of a tripod with the legs weighted down. From the top projected a disc with six arms, and there was a handle for winding and a lever for starting. A sloping board, narrowing to a slot, and containing a supply of cricket balls, was fixed to it in such a way that as fast as each arm reached the slot a ball was ready.

This dangerous-looking invention did not belie its appearance, and during his first experiments with it in his study Glyn smashed everything smashable. Later, seeking fresh fields and pastures new, the machine started suddenly and unexpectedly and wrought havoc with practically every window in the neighbourhood of the quadrangle. It went



Mr. Linton started in with the cane, and he was aghast as the figure of Skimpole II. fell to the floor with a crash.

wrong again when Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was bold enough to face it at the wicket, and cricket balls fairly rained upon the unfortunate Gussy. But these accidents were only due to minor defects, which, under Glyn's skilful hands, were soon overcome. The finished, tested, and guaranteed article, so to speak, worked perfectly, even Arthur Augustus agreeing that it was "all wight," and as such an invention was obviously of value. Glyn had it patented.

Skimpole the Second—

BUT of all Glyn's inventions, perhaps the one in which he took the most pride was Skimpole the Second. It was a really wonderful piece of work—an exact reproduction of Herbert Skimpole that blinked its eyes and moved its mouth. It was sufficiently lifelike to take in Mr. Linton, at all events.

One day, both busy with inventions, and too absorbed to bother about classes, Glyn and Skimpole were absent from the Form-room, and the master of the Shell went in search of them. The schoolboy inventor heard him coming and slipped into the cupboard in which he usually kept the figure. The irate master took Skimpole II. for the original Skimmy, and was amazed and wrathful when Skimpole apparently refused to reply to his angry questions. He started in with the cane, and the figure fell with a crash. Mr. Linton was aghast; he feared that he had done the harmless Skimmy some injury. The heart of the prostrate figure did not beat—Glyn's genius had stopped short at providing a heart—and the horrified master rushed off to tell the Head. Glyn saw to it that Skimpole II. had vanished by the time they returned, and scudded off to the Form-room. When Mr. Linton and Dr. Holmes made their appearance there a few minutes later the bewildered master of the Shell was astounded to see Skimpole, who had returned to the Form-room the moment after Mr. Linton had left it, calmly sitting in his place. His first thought was that Skimpole had played a trick on him, but when the rest of the Shell could prove the junior's alibi, he was dazed. Was it possible that it had all been a strange hallucination? he wondered. Glyn looked at the white-faced Form-master and felt that he could not keep back his share in the matter. Mr. Linton's relief at the confession was too great for him to feel angry, and to Glyn's surprise it did not earn him the terrific licking he had expected.

That was not the end of Skimpole II.

It was substituted for the real Skimpole, who had been sentenced to detention by Herr Schneider. The German master discovered the trick, however, and went off to fetch Dr. Holmes. Meanwhile, the figure was hurriedly hidden and Skimpole, despite his protests, was brought back in the Form-room and put in its place. The crusty old Herr returned with the Head, and to prove that what looked like Skimpole was really an inanimate and insensitive figure, stuck a pin in the junior's arm. Skimpole's shock was hardly as great as Herr Schneider's. The German master received a crack on the jaw which nearly sent his teeth through the back of his head, and for some time afterwards his vocabulary consisted of two words: "Mein gootness!"



Herr Schneider stuck a pin in Skimpole's arm, and received a crack on the jaw which nearly sent his teeth through the back of his head.

Glyn's crowning achievement was to make the figure talk. This was done by means of a phonographic record which the schoolboy inventor obtained by imitating Skimpole's voice into a receiver. The record was arranged on a disc inside the head with a fixed needle. There was a spring to wind up the disc, and by simply touching a button at the back of the head the figure reeled off a speech that was quite worthy of the original. Glyn's latest improvement made Skimpole I. and II. so alike that it was almost impossible to tell them apart. And then, to make matters worse, Skimpole III. appeared on the scene.

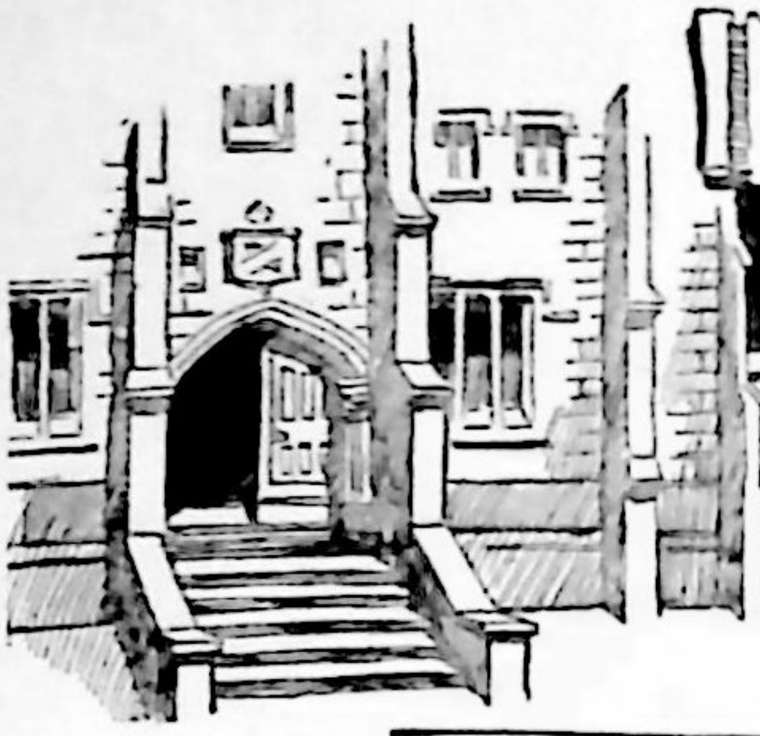
—And the Third!

The third Skimpole was not another invention, but George Francis Kerr, that past-master of impersonation. Figgins & Co. had been ignominiously routed in their attempt to capture Skimpole II. from their rivals of the School House, and they were determined to have their revenge. There was not much fear of detection; Kerr had carefully studied the working of the figure, and he had rehearsed its speech till he could have said it backwards, if necessary. His disguise was so perfect that Glyn and the rest of the School House juniors were completely taken in. To them it seemed as if Skimpole II. had suddenly developed a will of its own, and in some uncanny way was able to talk without being started, walk down a flight of stairs, and turn round when and where it liked. Had the figure, like the Greek statue of old, been made so lifelike that it had come to life? Even when the automaton sent Glyn flying with a right-hander under the chin they had no suspicion of the real truth, and it was not until they had followed it to Tom Merry's study, just in time to see it raiding the cupboard, that it dawned upon them. There was a rush for the pseudo-Skimpole, and during the next few whirlwind minutes the stunning wheeze lost some of its first attractiveness for the japer of the New House. But Tom Merry & Co. had been dished, diddled and done, and it was a long time before they were allowed to forget the remarkable adventures of the three Skimpoles.

THE END

AROUND GREYFRIARS

FAMILIAR SCENES TO EVERY BOY IN THE SCHOOL.



The MAIN ENTRANCE



RUINS *of the* OLD PRIORY





The SCHOOL TUCKSHOP

The View from the PLAYING FIELDS.



BEHIND *the* SCHOOLHOUSE



The HEAD'S GARDEN



GREYFRIARS *from the* RIVER.

Frank Richards, in his splendid stories, has described many scenes and places around Greyfriars. Here the "HOLIDAY ANNUAL" artist has brought his imagination—and his pen—to bear on a few of them for the benefit of readers.



The Pride of the Footplate

Jim Darrell's initial trip on an express has more than the thrill of riding on the footplate—for it coincides with a bandit gang's attempt to rob the train of its bullion!

By
J. R. HIND

THE FIRST CHAPTER
Jim's Chance!

"WHERE's the foreman, son? I want a relief fireman—quickly!"

Jim Darrell, making up his time-sheets at the running-shed foreman's desk, looked up in surprise as the words were flung at him, rather than spoken, by the tall man who stood framed in the doorway of the little office.

"Why, what's the matter, Bill?" he queried.

Big Bill Harrigan, crack driver of the Northport loco. shed express link, heaved his six-foot-two of bone and muscle over the threshold and stood, a massive figure in oil-stained overalls, under the glaring electric light.

"My fireman, Wilson, has hurt himself," he explained briefly. "Fell from the running-board as we were taking water. They've run him off to hospital—it looks like a broken arm."

He gave an anxious glance at the clock.

"Seven-fifty—I must be away in five minutes, for I can't afford to lose time this run. We've got bullion from the South African mail on board! Where's the foreman, Jim?"

His question was answered at that moment by the appearance of Donaldson, a red-headed, choleric Scotsman, who presided over the destinies of the men and engines stabled at Northport Harbour shed.

"Why, Harrigan!" he exclaimed. "What are you doing here? The boat train is due away in about five minutes! I was just

going down to see what had become of you."

Hastily Harrigan explained what had happened to his fireman.

"A fireman I must have, Mr. Donaldson," he concluded. "There'll be the dickens to pay if we don't get that train through right on time. It's bad enough to have to work her up to the Rand on a night like this without a pilot, to say nothing of a small army of detectives snooping round as though they thought I was going to steal my own engine!"

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Donaldson. 'There's not a spare man in the place. The three spare men have gone out to a derailment at Carrowbank. Christmas Eve as usual!"

For a moment there was silence in the office whilst the wind blowing in from the sea whistled round the building and lashed the driving rain into fresh transports of fury against the glass panes of the windows.

Jim Darrell, an interested spectator of the little drama, realised at once the desperate predicament. It being Christmas Eve, there were no trains out of Northport except the South African Mail Special, delayed in departure owing to the late arrival of the liner in harbour. The only available enginemen besides Big Bill Harrigan and his unfortunate fireman Wilson had been called away to a breakdown twenty miles away—and now Wilson was injured and there was no man to fire the engine of the boat train for her long run to the mining metropolis, Johannesburg.

"I'll get a man down from the town now," snapped Donaldson. "You'll be able to get away in half an hour at the most, Harrigan."

The burly driver looked black.

"Is there no one in the shed who can fire for me—now?" he snapped. "This is a matter of minutes, with the Mail Special, Mr. Donaldson."

Donaldson nodded, and grimly reached for the telephone.

"It is; but there's nobody who can——"

"I can!"

It was Jim Darrell, flushed with sudden excitement, who interrupted him. Jumping to his feet, he confronted the startled foreman and driver and, breathlessly, put into a few hurried words the ambition of a life-time.

"Mr. Donaldson, I can fire Bill's loco. for him! You know I shall pass my firing tests next month—I would have passed this month if it hadn't been for my having to go away on holiday relief. I can fire your train for you, Bill."

With a weary smile Donaldson shook his head.

"I'm sorry, Jim. I'd give you the chance if I could, but until you're a passed fireman you're not allowed, by the company's regulations, to fire a passenger locomotive."

Then Big Bill Harrigan broke into the conversation.

"The Mail must get through on time, and we've got to forget regulations in a case like this. Jim's only a kid——"

"I'm eighteen," interjected Jim, "and I'll bet you I can hold the pressure you want all the way up to Johannesburg, Bill. Mr. Donaldson, will you give me a chance to show what I can do?"

For a moment the foreman hesitated, and in that moment the clock began to strike, inexorably: One, two, three, four——

"Eight o'clock, and the Mail due away!" snarled Big Bill Harrigan. "Which is it to be, Mr. Donaldson—regulations and an hour's delay to that bullion, or a blind eye and a chance of keeping time?"

Again Donaldson reflected for a few seconds that seemed eternity to the eager Jim. Then:

"I'll take a chance," he said. "Off you go, Darrell—and the best of luck to you!"

Before Jim could realise his good fortune, Harrigan had caught him by the arm and whirled him from the room into the rain and darkness outside.

"Come on, sonny," he cried exultantly, "you and I and 535 against a wet night, slippery rails, and Father Time; and if you don't give me two hundred on the gauge all the way to the Rand you'll never tread a footplate again!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER

The Danger Light!

FOR so long as he lives Jim Darrell will remember that night when he fired the Mail Special out of Northport. Wind and rain greeted them boisterously as they left the shed at the double and ran across the network



The masked face of an intruder appeared over the side of the cab, and a gun menaced Jim and Harrigan. "Don't move, Mr. Driver!" snapped the man.

of rails, gleaming wet and shining in the light of the lamps, to where the twin headlights of 535, the fastest flier on the line, flickered a cheerful welcome.

Jim Darrell caught a brief glimpse of the long line of coaches strung behind 535, their occupants sitting cosily behind drawn blinds; saw the shadowy shape of the great liner stretching up from the edge of the darkened quay, and then he was swinging with true professional ease up the footrails and into the cab.

The cab! Jim Darrell had cleaned the cab of 535 often enough; had groomed the shining levers with painstaking care, and had burnished with tender hands those gleaming gauges that flickered in the light of the roaring fire. Little had he dreamed that in a night he would turn from engine-cleaner to express fireman, and thus by one stroke of good fortune achieve the half-way milestone to his life's ambition—to sit in the seat where Big Bill Harrigan sat, his body hunched against the sway of the engine, his careful hands nursing 535 over curve and gradient, his eyes scanning those winking reds and greens that pointed the way to safety.

But there was no time for day-dreams now. Harrigan, he saw, was in anxious conclave with Tracey, the guard who had occupied the Mail's van for fifteen years. Mechanically Jim tested brake and injectors, swung over

the lever that controlled the blast, and sent the pressure-gauge creeping upwards to the 200 mark. His fire needed attention, and for half a minute he wielded shovel and "pricker" dexterously, till 535 was purring and hissing with eagerness to be away.

Stray fragments of conversation from the rails floated up to him, then a green lamp was waved, a whistle blew, and Big Bill Harrigan swung himself into the cab, flashed a glance of approval at the levers and gauges, and nodded his satisfaction to his young mate. Then, a touch of the throttle—wider, a twist at the sand-ejector wheel as the giant drivers lost their grip, caught, and spun wildly once more. Then they swung over the points on to the fast line, and the open road lay before them.

That first thirty miles was as some dreadful nightmare to Jim Darrell. The Mail was toiling against the grade all the way, and before the first half hour was up Jim's head was spinning dizzily, while every muscle ached from feeding that roaring, insatiable fire. Try as he would, the pressure began to fall, and as they breasted a stiff climb Big Bill Harrigan cast an anxious glance at the steam-gauge. With a grim smile Jim carried on, swinging the shovel untiringly till Big Bill stopped him with a gesture.

"Over the summit now—easy a while and take a rest—plenty of steam."

His words, shouted across the swaying cab of 535, were almost lost in the thunderous roar of their passage.

For a few minutes Jim took a well-earned rest, hanging over the cab-rail to gaze down the line ahead as signal after signal flashed past. Big Bill, with a glance at his watch, pursed his lips and jerked the regulator still wider; 535, responding gallantly to this new call upon her strength, leaped forward like a live thing, and they raced, swaying and rolling, with whistle screaming defiance, over a long viaduct and through a dark, deserted station whose stark platforms flung back the thundering echo of their eighty-mile-an-hour flight.

"Half-way, and we're ten minutes late!" shouted Big Bill as they raced into a tunnel, only to roar into the open again within a minute. "It's that bullion I'm frightened of, Jim; it's in the two vans behind the engine, and Tracey tells me that the detectives guarding it were afraid of being held up on the way to Johannesburg."

Jim nodded silently. He was an adventure-loving boy, and ordinarily the thought of being involved in a possible attempt to rob the Mail would have thrilled him beyond measure, but now his responsibility to Big Bill and 535 outweighed all other considerations.

As though conscious of the importance of the occasion, 535 was straining every joint and rivet to keep up the speed as they dashed through the storm which howled round the cab and blurred and blinded the signal lights in a flurry of swirling rain.

"Jensen's Spruit!" shouted Harrigan as they dashed over the points at a dark junction. "Keep her going well, Jim; you'll—— Good heavens, what's that?"

But Jim needed no warning to show him what lay ahead. Far down the track he saw a light that grew in volume with every turn of those flying wheels. A red light—red for danger!

He turned to shout to Harrigan, but even as he did so he saw the driver's arm fly out as the regulator thudded into the "shut" position. One second and Big Bill's arm caught the air-latch of the brake; pulled it down.

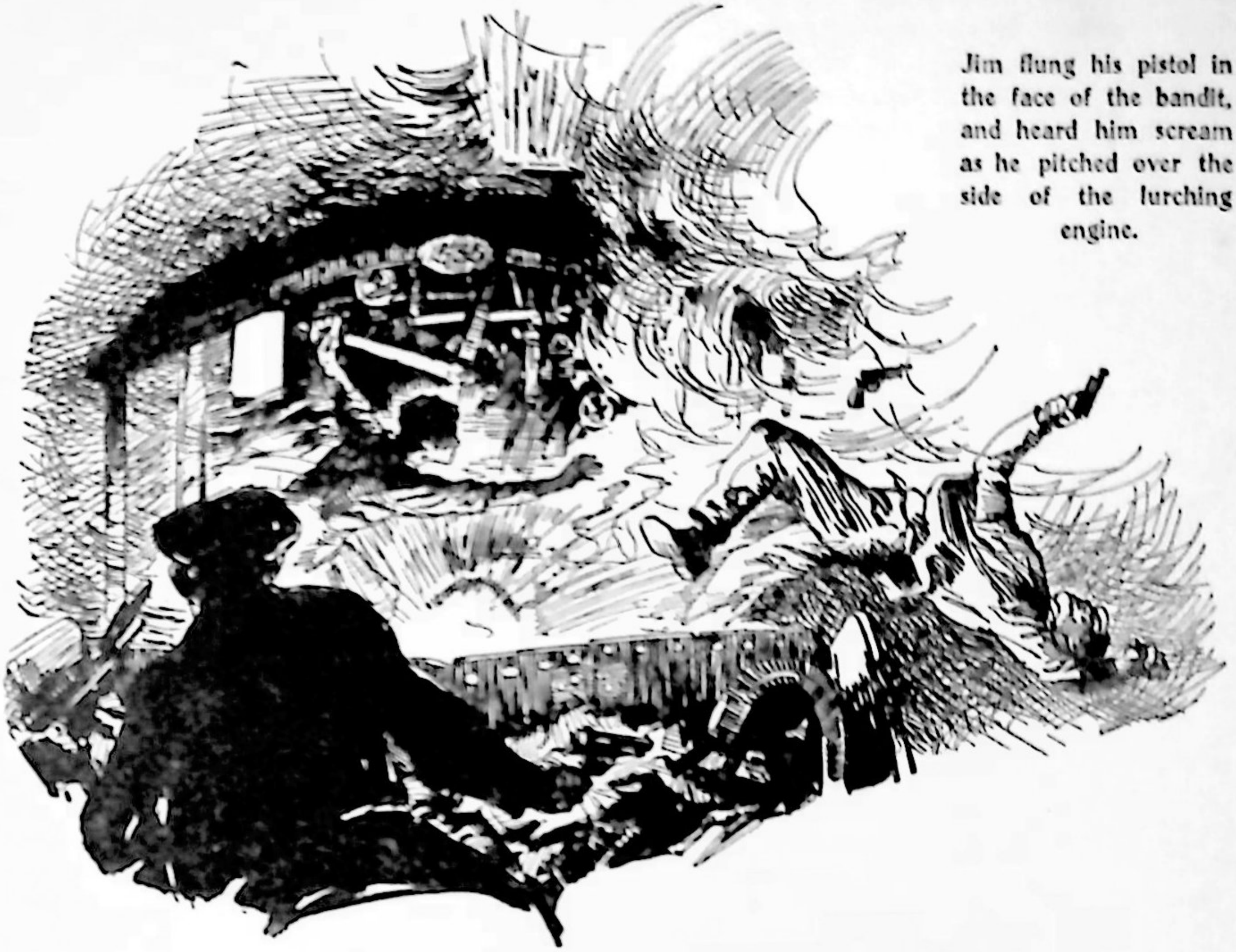
Suddenly checked, 535 lurched like a drunken man, while the harsh grind of brakes told of the air clutching at her tortured driving-wheels. Big Bill, his face tense, was holding down the whistle-chain. And with every revolution of the wheels the red light by the trackside grew ominously nearer.

For a few seconds 535 seemed to be hurling herself at the danger signal; then suddenly her six-coupled drivers locked and she skidded to a dead stand. They had stopped.

"What the thunder!" exclaimed Harrigan impatiently. "A hand-light, by Jiminy!"

At that moment some sixth sense warned Jim Darrell of impending danger, and he jumped to the side of the cab.

Too late! A man's head suddenly appeared over the side of the cab, and the face under the cap worn by the intruder was masked!



Jim flung his pistol in the face of the bandit, and heard him scream as he pitched over the side of the lurching engine.

"Don't move, Mr. Driver!" snapped a harsh voice, and Jim caught a glimpse of a gleaming pistol-barrel. But Big Bill, mad with sudden fury as he realised how they had been trapped, let out a sudden bellow of rage and flung himself across the footplate, brandishing in his right hand a spanner which he had snatched from the tool-rack over the driver's seat.

"You fool!" snarled the masked man, and his gun spat fire.

Big Bill Harrigan swayed on his feet, gazed round him stupidly, and then his eyes seemed to glaze and he crashed in an inanimate heap at the feet of his fireman.

THE THIRD CHAPTER
Strategy!

FOR a moment Jim stood rooted to the spot, too aghast at the brutality of the deed which he had just witnessed to move. Big Bill Harrigan lay ominously still, a thin trickle of blood coursing down his tanned face.

At sight of what had happened to Harrigan, a blind anger possessed Jim Darrell, and he swung round furiously, his fists clenched. But before he could act a powerful pair of arms caught him from behind and gripped him as in a vice, while the unwavering menace of the second bandit's pistol emphasised the futility of resistance.

Jim subsided. His turn would come, he realised, and he resolved that when the chance did come he would make it decidedly unpleasant for the ruffian who had shot down Big Bill Harrigan in cold blood.

"Keep still, you young idiot!" snarled the man who was holding Jim. "Give me any trouble and I'll break your neck!"

"All right," replied Jim sullenly; "I know when I'm beaten."

"That's better," said the bandit, and

released his grip, though he held his gun ready for action if Jim should show further violence.

The footplate of 535 seemed suddenly to have become alive with men. Jim counted five of them, and without exception they wore masks, while turned up coat collars and the pulled-down peaks of tweed caps served still further to veil their identity. One of them, by his nasal twang an American, seemed to be the leader.

He shouted an order, and three of the bandits jumped out of the cab and disappeared in the teeming rain. The other bent over the prone form of Big Bill Harrigan and made a cursory examination of the wound in his head.

"Only a scratch," he reported in tones of quiet satisfaction. "I didn't shoot to kill, and he'll be all right in an hour or two. What's the next move, chief?"

"Stay and guard this stoker fellow," ordered the ringleader. "We'll be ready in a moment."

He climbed off the footplate and walked briskly back along the train, leaving Jim Darrell to take stock of a far from cheerful situation.

So brilliantly had the hold-up been planned and executed, that the bandits had met with scarcely any resistance. The train staff had been quickly subdued, while a fusillade of shots from silencer-fitted automatics had shown the detectives in charge of the bullion cars that to offer fight would be to court death.

At a glance Jim Darrell saw how complete was the mastery of the bandits. The spot they had chosen for the hold-up was ideal for their purpose, being in the middle of desolate, wind-swept veldt. The nearest station—closed that night—was two miles behind them; the nearest signal-box four miles away. With a sudden sense of utter hopelessness, Jim realised that there was no chance of rescue until the bandits had got safely away with the bullion.

Meanwhile, great activity was manifest farther back along the train. Tracey the guard was being driven by one of the bandits along the length of the train, reassuring such passengers as had been roused from sleep by the sudden emergency stop. The five detectives guarding the bullion were lined up by the side of the track, woebegone figures of disaster.

Jim was wondering how the train-robbers proposed to remove their booty, when the return of the ringleader, accompanied by five other members of the gang, solved the problem for him.

The ringleader swung himself into the cab.

"Son, can you drive this engine?" he asked peremptorily, and Jim nodded sullenly. After all, what good purpose could be served by lying, and there was always a chance! There was always a chance with Jim Darrell; that was his creed.

"Get a move on, then!" snapped the bandit, and waved his pistol suggestively. "We've uncoupled the two vans that matter, and you can drive them down the line for us a little way. No tricks now, and stop when I tell you to, or——" He waved the gun again.

With a gesture of resignation Jim turned on his blast to get the pressure up again; then releasing the brake, he swung the regulator to quarter-port and 535 glided obediently forward. At the thought of driving a monster express and feeling the great engine move obediently to his hand, Jim Darrell would in ordinary circumstances have felt both proud and thrilled; now, the great disaster outweighed all else.

Slowly 535 and her load of two cars rolled down the track at about fifteen miles an hour. They had gone perhaps two hundred yards at this speed when the train-robber shouted, and obediently Jim closed the regulator and touched the air-latch. Protestingly, 535 came to a dead stand and stood with safety-valve roaring a column of steam skywards as the gauge needle quivered at the 200 mark.

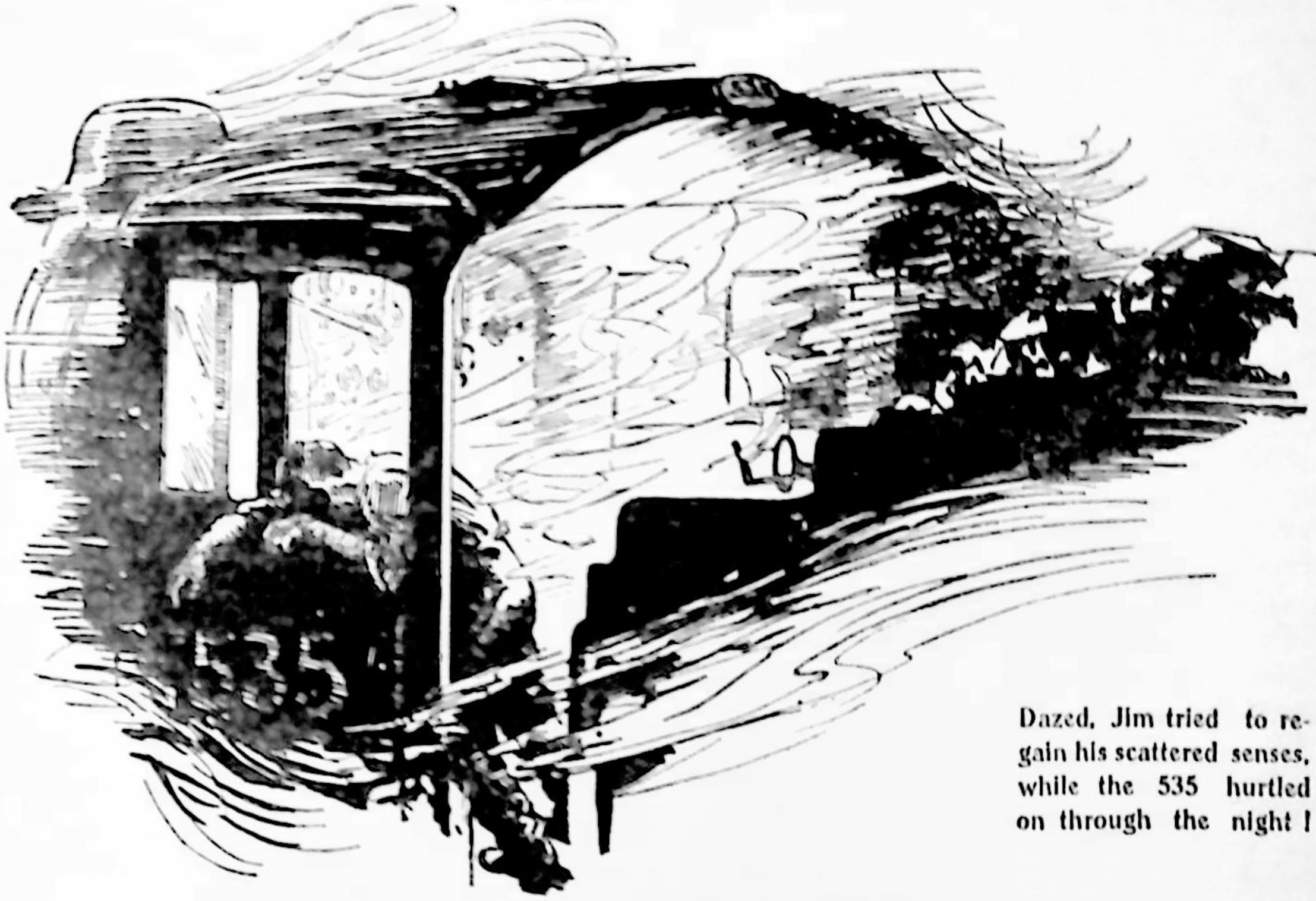
One of the bandits covered Jim while the others clambered down from the cab. Then it was that Jim saw the motor-lorry standing, with lights extinguished, on a rough veldt track that ran alongside the railway line.

So that was it! The bandits would loot the two bullion vans, load their booty on to the lorry and drive away into the darkness,

leaving their victims helpless, with the train split in two and all the telegraph wires cut.

With the realisation of this dastardly plan came the determination to frustrate it if he could. But what could he do? Big Bill Harrigan lay sprawled among the coal in the tender, unconscious, and the pistol-barrel which covered Jim Darrell never wavered.

The bandits were opening the doors of the bullion vans now, and he heard the crashing of the heavy boxes as they were dragged towards the side of the vans. The motor-lorry



Dazed, Jim tried to regain his scattered senses, while the 535 hurtled on through the night!

was being moved up to the side of the two vans, so that the heavy gold boxes could be slid from the floor of the vans to the lorry.

Time was precious. For an instant panic seized Jim, as he realised the odds against him—and then inspiration came to him.

To attack his captor openly would be suicide; strategy was the only way. Jim's eyes narrowed as a brain-wave came to him. It was risky, but it was worth trying, and anything was better than standing there impotently while the train was sacked.

When he felt rather than saw that the bandit was looking at him, he screwed his face into an expression of surprise and fixed his gaze over the masked man's shoulder.

"Jump on him, Bill!" he yelled.

The trick was an old one, but it worked. For an instant the bandit hesitated, indecision written clear on his face. Then he turned to look over his shoulder—and the revolver dropped for a fraction of a second. Jim Darrell flung himself across the cab, his fist, swung from the shoulder, caught the bandit on the point of the jaw and he rocketed headlong into the tender.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER
Winning Through!

A CRY of alarm rose in the bandit's throat, but was stifled as Jim leaped upon him and gripped his lean throat between two brown, knotted fists. For a moment the pair rolled this way and that over the coal-dust and grime that covered the footplate, till the

bandit's head banged with sickening force against a stanchion and he relaxed, inert.

Grabbing the bandit's pistol, Jim leaped to his feet. Not an instant too soon, for the sounds of the struggle had alarmed the other members of the gang, and they came rushing out of the bullion-cars.

Jim was cool as ice. Covering the tender and the darkness behind it with his pistol, he snatched at the regulator and jerked it savagely open. A roar of steam burst from 535's dwarfed smoke-stack as her unleashed drivers slipped impotently on the greasy rails. Instantly Jim caught the sand-ejector and spun the little wheel till the big drivers caught, slipped, and caught again.

Slowly at first, then with rapidly increasing speed, 535 began to move. It seemed that she went forward with agonising slowness, and Jim slammed the regulator wide open. The engine lurched, swayed, and with a stertorous cough, leaped into her stride like a racing greyhound.

Crack! A shot snapped out, and something sang past Jim's head to hit the firebox roof with a ringing crash. Blindly, Jim fired over the back of the tender, and out of the darkness came a scream of agony.

Two of the bandits, Jim realised, had climbed on to the back of the tender. Another bullet whistled over his head, struck the steam-gauge with a shattering crash. Then something hit him in the arm, and he felt a sharp pain creep stingingly down the limb.

A fight to the death, he realised, and fired again. There was an answering crash from the back of the tender, and Jim took aim at a crouching form.

Then they were upon him, two raging bandits. Jim flung his pistol in the face of one, and heard him scream as he pitched over the side of the rolling, lurching engine. The other rushed down the banked coal on the tender, and Jim collared him low round the ankles, Rugger fashion. For a minute they rolled locked together over the footplate, the bandit scratching, snarling, biting, till Jim's clutching hand found a piece of coal, and he brought it down with all his force on the back of his enemy's head.

Dazed, he staggered to his feet and tried to regain his scattered senses. Like a maddened tiger 535 was hurling herself through the darkness; steam from the broken gauge filled the cab, and with every sway of the flying train great lumps of burning coal came rolling through the open firebox door. Except for the prone form of the insensible bandit and the unconscious Harrigan, the lad had the footplate to himself.

Slamming the firebox door shut, Jim staggered to the throttle. His head was going round and round, his arm hurt him badly, and he knew he was losing consciousness.

"Hang on, old chap!" he muttered to himself, and for a moment new life coursed through his veins.

Cutting—station—bridge—tunnel—on tore 535 and the two bullion cars through the night.

"Hang on!" repeated Jim through parched, bleeding lips, and his bloodstained hand closed over the throttle.

Before him he saw the Junction lights; red from the flickering gantries that marked the way to the Rand. Red for danger! With a last effort Jim jammed shut the regulator, pulled down the air-latch, and fell, a tumbled heap, over the lever as 535 and her load dashed, steam-smothered, into a platform of the Junction.

They found him there when 535 came grinding to a stop; police, company officials, and detectives, all hastily summoned by telephone, crowding into the cab where Jim, Big Bill Harrigan, and the train-robber lay together in a crumpled heap.

"Dead!" was the awestruck verdict as they gazed at that tumbled heap of humanity.

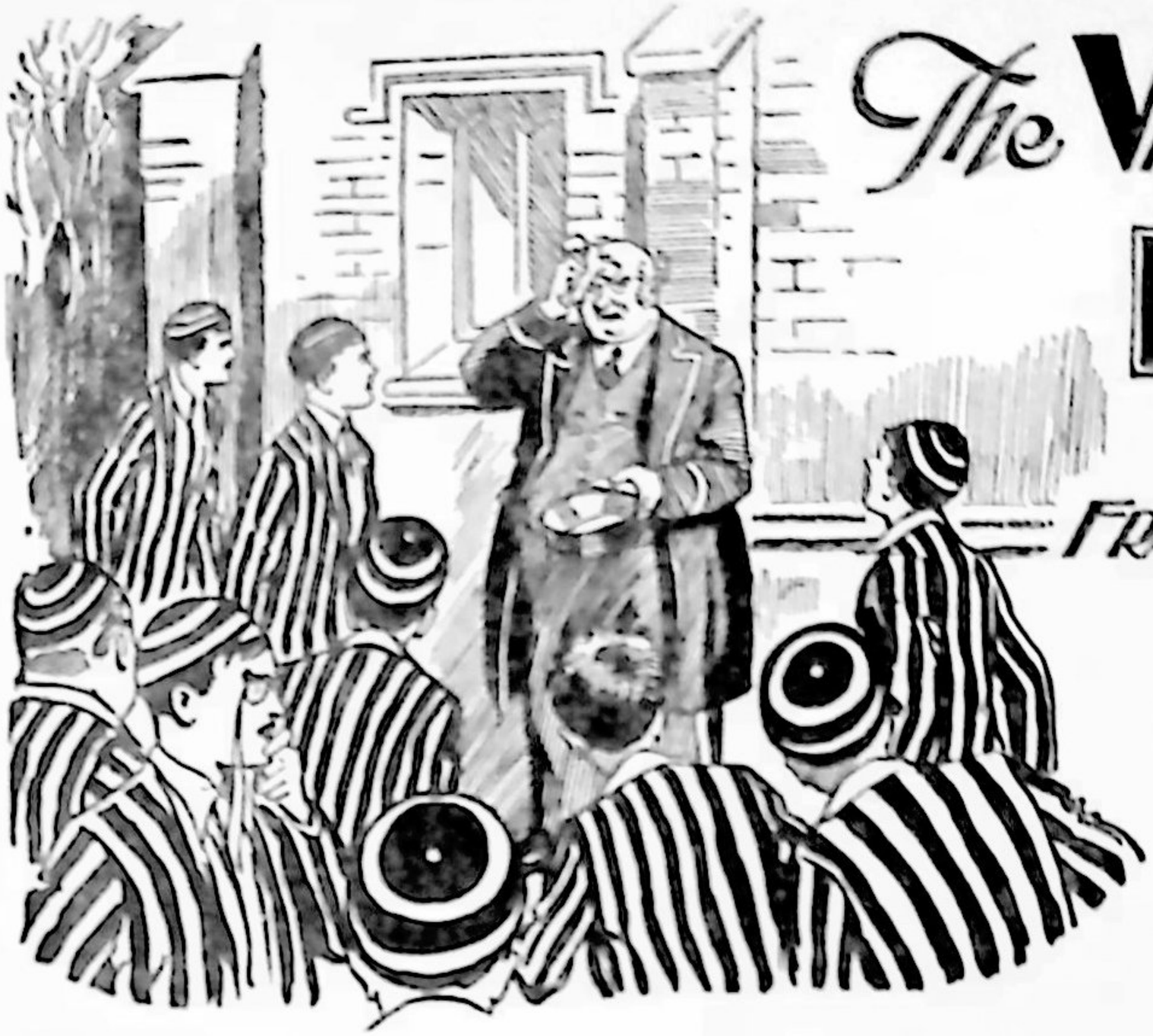
But Jim Darrell's luck held. He wasn't dead—only exhausted—and neither was Big Bill Harrigan. They had saved the Mail and her load of bullion.

. . . . . .

Every day now, when 535 pulls out of Northport on her run, with Big Bill Harrigan at the throttle, you can see Jim Darrell, the pride of the line, standing on the footplate—for he's now a full-blown fireman.

Back in the shed they call him "Lucky Jim," the boy who took his chance one stormy Christmas Eve!

THE END



The VANISHED ELEVEN!

By FRANK RICHARDS

Keen rivalry has always existed between the Remove and the Upper Fourth Form at Greyfriars, but never was it more keen than in this topping long tale—when the Remove Eleven vanishes!

THE FIRST CHAPTER
A Very Good Offer!

TEMPLE of the Fourth smote upon the door of Harry Wharton's study in the Remove passage at Greyfriars with a mighty smite.

Temple of the Fourth was frowning. Dabney and Fry, who were with him, were frowning also. Evidently it was very serious business that had brought the Fourth-Formers to the study of the captain of the Remove.

"You can leave the talking to me," said Temple. "I'm going to put it to them plain."

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"I'm not going to stand any nonsense!"

"Certainly not!" said Fry.

"And if they won't see the right thing, and do the right thing, we'll jolly well let them know that there's going to be trouble!" said Temple darkly.

"What-ho!"

"They haven't heard me knock," said Temple sarcastically. "I'll try again."

There was a buzz of voices in Harry Wharton's study. The cricket committee of the Remove were meeting there. A great occasion was at hand—the Remove match with the junior eleven of St. Jim's. It was a very great occasion—the principal fixture of the cricket season for the Greyfriars Remove. But however busy Harry Wharton & Co. might be with their discussion in the study, it was quite certain that all the Removites there must have heard Temple's smite on the door. It could have been heard at the other end of the Remove passage.

But there came no reply, and Temple smote again, with even more emphasis than before.

Thump!

And as no reply came to the second smite, Temple threw the door open and strode in without waiting for the formality of an invitation, followed by Dabney and Fry.

The study was crowded with fellows. The Famous Five were all there—Wharton, and Nugent, and Johnny Bull and Bob Cherry, and Hurree Singh. Then there were Tom Brown, the New Zealander, and Bulstrode, and Mark Linley, and Vernon-Smith. There really wasn't very much room for Temple and Dabney and Fry to stride in. But in they strode.

And from the cricket committee of the Remove there came a sort of chorus:

"Get out!"

Temple & Co. frowned more darkly. As the chief members of the Upper Fourth Form at Greyfriars, they were older, and, of course, much more important personages than the mere Removites, or Lower Fourth. They felt that they were entitled to a certain amount of respect. But they did not receive any.

"I suppose you're very busy here?" Temple remarked sarcastically.

"You've hit it," said Harry Wharton. "No time to receive visitors, even distinguished guests from the Upper Fourth. Oblige me by travelling."

"I suppose you're talking about the St. Jim's match?"

"Right again! There's the door!"

"That's what we've come to speak to you about," said Temple.

"You're awfully good, but we can do all the talking that is required on the subject," said Wharton, with great politeness. "Thanks for the kind offer, all the same."

Temple and Dabney and Fry exchanged glances. They had come there to speak gently but firmly to the Remove fellows, but their reception made them greatly inclined to proceed to assault and battery upon the spot. But as there were nine Removites present and only three of the Fourth, that was scarcely practicable. So Temple and Dabney and Fry restrained their wrath.

"This is a rather important matter," said Temple, as calmly as he could. "You Remove kids have had the nerve to fix up a match with St. Jim's. Now, you know very well that the St. Jim's team is the junior team of that school, including fellows of the Shell and the Fourth, and mighty few fags from the Lower Fourth."

"Tell us something we don't know," suggested Bob Cherry courteously.

"And you know jolly well, too, that it's like the awful cheek of a Form team—a Lower Fourth team—to challenge a junior eleven at all——"

"Isn't that for the St. Jim's fellows to decide?" asked Wharton mildly. "They're playing us of their own accord, you know."

"That isn't the point. The St. Jim's team ought by rights to be playing us—the junior eleven of Greyfriars."

"Well, ask them."

'We have asked them," growled Temple, "and Tom Merry says that they haven't the dates open for two matches at Greyfriars."

"Then it rather looks as if you won't be able to play them," remarked Frank Nugent. "That saves you from a dead certain licking, so you ought to be pleased."

"The lickfulness would be really terrific, my esteemed and ludicrous Temple," murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Temple grunted.

"By rights," he repeated, "St. Jim's ought to be playing us. There never was a separate Remove team till Wharton came to Greyfriars. As captain of the junior eleven, I used to play a few Remove fags sometimes. Wharton took the bit in his teeth, and made up a rotten eleven in the Lower Fourth, and started getting up fixtures with other schools and places. Our opinion is that it was like his cheek."

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"Awful nerve!" concurred Fry.

"And we don't like it," added Temple, as if that was a clincher.

"If the esteemed Temple does not like it, there is only the lumpfulness left for him," suggested Hurree Singh.

Temple brought his fist down upon the study table with a resounding whack.

"And we're not going to have it!" he continued. "We've stood it for some time, but we are not going to stand it any longer. We never thought of challenging St. Jim's, as they are so far off. But we would have liked the match, of course. We regard Wharton as having stolen a march on us."

"Bow-wow!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully.

"And we say that it's a rotten state of affairs when the St. Jim's team comes over here to play a fag team instead of the junior eleven—that's us!" pursued Temple. "Tom Merry, having fixed up the match with you kids, can't very well throw you over, however much he'd like to. Though it stands to reason that he'd rather play a team of the same age and standing as his own. Now, I'm willing to be accommodating. We're not going to stand this state of things. That's settled. If St. Jim's come here to-morrow, they're

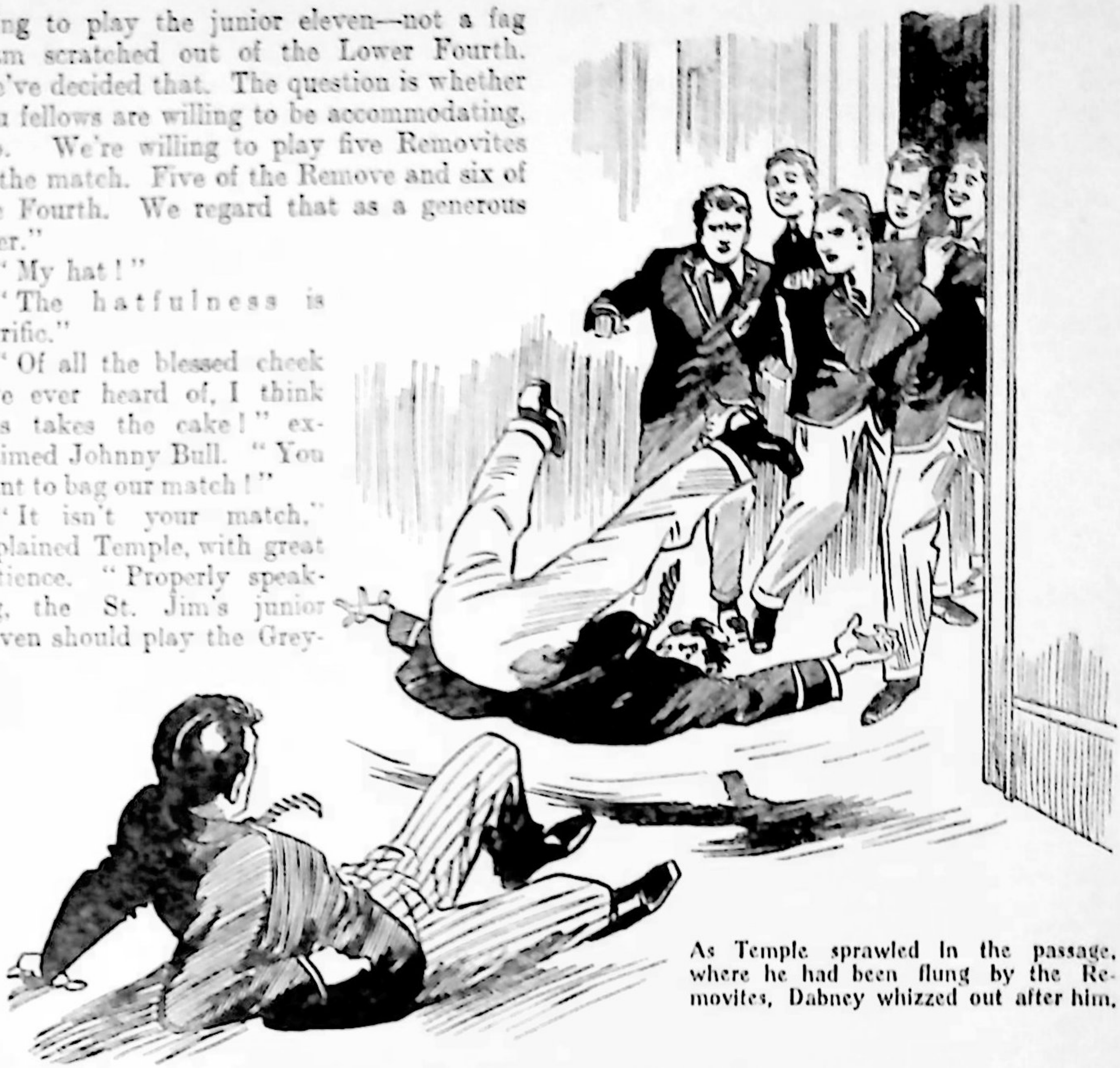
going to play the junior eleven—not a fag team scratched out of the Lower Fourth. We've decided that. The question is whether you fellows are willing to be accommodating, too. We're willing to play five Removites in the match. Five of the Remove and six of the Fourth. We regard that as a generous offer."

"My hat!"

"The hatfulness is terrific."

"Of all the blessed cheek I've ever heard of, I think this takes the cake!" exclaimed Johnny Bull. "You want to bag our match!"

"It isn't your match," explained Temple, with great patience. "Properly speaking, the St. Jim's junior eleven should play the Greyfriars junior eleven. Wharton has wedged in with a fag team on his own. That's the state of things that has got to come to an end. We are going to propose a fair and friendly arrangement. Five Remove kids in the team——"



As Temple sprawled in the passage, where he had been flung by the Removites, Dabney whizzed out after him.

"Including the skipper?" asked Wharton, laughing.

"Certainly not! I am the skipper of the junior eleven," said Temple loftily, "and I can tell you I shall have trouble in the Fourth by conceding so much. The Fourth don't like the idea of playing five fags. But I want to be fair."

Harry Wharton & Co. simply stared at the captain of the Fourth.

Temple's coolness almost took their breath away.

It was an old sore point with Temple & Co. that since Wharton came to Greyfriars the Remove Form team had gone ahead by leaps and bounds, and was in a state of far greater efficiency than the junior eleven itself. Many a time, in fact, the Remove had met the junior eleven on the footer or cricket-field and beaten them soundly. Wharton's team was better able to keep the school colours flying. But Temple would never admit that, and nobody in the Fourth or the Shell would have dreamed of admitting it. All they agreed to admit was that the Remove were a set of cheeky fags who ought,

somehow, to be put into their proper place and kept there.

But that Temple would coolly propose to bag their most important fixture in this way was something that had never occurred to the heroes of the Remove. They could only gasp at the idea.

There was a short silence in the study. It was the calm that preceded the storm.

"Well, what do you say?" demanded Temple at last.

"Say!" ejaculated Wharton. "What do we say, you fellows?"

"Well, I say rats, for one!" remarked Bob Cherry.

"Cheek!"

"Nerve!"

"The cheekfulness is terrific!"

"Get out!"

"Buzz off!"

"Chuck them out!"

Most of the Removites were on their feet now. It looked like war; but Harry Wharton held up his hand.

"Hold on! I'll tell you what we'll do, Temple. We want to be accommodating. We want to meet you in every way possible. We can't hand over our match to you, for jolly good reasons. In the first place, we want to play it ourselves; in the second place, we want the St. Jim's team to be beaten—and you couldn't do it; in the third place, we'll see you blowed first."

"Hear, hear!"

"But we'll do all we can, and I'll make you a good offer," said Wharton.

"Well, what's the offer?" said Temple, suspiciously.

"We're going to play St. Jim's. That's settled. But you chaps in the Fourth can come and watch the match. By watching us carefully, and noting the way we do it, you will be able to pick up a lot of tips about cricket, and the way it should really be played. It will give you a chance to learn something about the game, and in the course of time you may possibly become cricketers yourselves. I don't say you will, but it's possible. Now, I call that a good offer!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Removites burst into a yell of laughter at Wharton's good offer. Temple and Dabney and Fry stared at him speechlessly for a moment. They did not answer. As if moved by the same spring, they made a sudden rush at the captain of the Remove. They laid hands on him at the same moment, yanked him from his chair, and bumped him on the floor.

Then, with one accord, the cricket committee fell upon the visitors, and smote them hip and thigh.

Temple whirled in the air in the grasp of half a dozen pairs of hands, and whizzed through the doorway. As he sprawled in the passage, Dabney whizzed out after him, and rolled over him, knocking out whatever breath was left in his body. And before they could sort themselves out, Fry came tumbling over them with a roar.

Then the study door slammed.

Three dusty and dishevelled Fourth-Formers limped away furiously. In No. 1 Study Harry Wharton remarked cheerfully:

"Now we'll get on with the bizney!"

And the Removites grinned and got on with it.

THE SECOND CHAPTER
Plotting a Plot!

THAT afternoon the Remove cricket eleven were busy at a practice match. Temple, Dabney & Co. stood looking on gloomily for a while. Then they retreated to the tuckshop, and there, over consolatory ginger-beer, they discussed their wrongs and the awful nerve of the Remove.

"The rotten part is that we've got to stand it," said Dabney moodily. "The cheeky young beggars ought to be put in their place, but how's it to be done? We can't prevent them from meeting the St. Jim's team to-morrow."

"Can't we?" said Temple darkly.

"I don't see how."

"We ought to, if we could," remarked Scott virtuously. "Cheek like this in a fag Form ought to be put down. St. Jim's ought to play us, or else not play Greyfriars at all."

"Exactly!" said Temple, with a nod. "That's my idea,"

"But it can't be worked."

Temple looked round him, to make sure

that none but his faithful henchmen were within hearing, and lowered his voice.

"I think it might be worked," he said. "You fellows all agree with me that the Remove have practically bagged our match?"

"I suppose it could be put like that," said Scott thoughtfully.

"It is like that—St. Jim's ought to play the junior eleven, not a Form eleven. They're not a Form eleven themselves. Therefore, we should be justified in shifting the Remove out and bagging the match."

Temple's companions stared at him.

"We should be justified in doing it," agreed Dabney. "But how the dickens is it to be done?"

"I've got an idea. If the Remove eleven weren't here to-morrow when the St. Jim's chaps come, what then?"

"But they will be here."

"Perhaps they won't. Supposing, for the sake of argument, that they're not—what will the St. Jim's chaps do? They won't want to travel that tremendous distance for nothing. Their headmaster allows them a whole holiday instead of the usual half to-morrow, because of this match. They can't go away without a match, can they? I shall put it to them politely, and offer them a match with the Greyfriars junior eleven—that's us. Of course, they'll jump at it."

"I suppose they would," agreed Fry. "But the Remove eleven will be here. I suppose they won't go out for a walk to oblige us."

"I'm supposing they're not here," said Temple calmly. "Then we shall meet St. Jim's, play them, and beat them. We must beat them, of course, and show by that fact that we're the proper team to meet them."

"Ahem!" murmured Scott.

He had inward doubts as to whether the Fourth-Formers could beat St. Jim's. But Temple had no doubts, and he went on calmly:

"It's up to us to beat them, of course, or we shouldn't be justified in taking the match out of the hands of those cheeky kids. And, of course, I shouldn't think of doing it unless we were perfectly justified."

"Of—of course not!" murmured Fry.

"It would be a top-hole jape on the Remove if we could work it," said Scott. "They're always japing us, and there's no getting out of the fact that they generally get the best of it. There was our play they mucked up——"

"And if we muck up their match, it's only a Roland for an Oliver," said Smith minor.

"Shush!" said Temple chidingly. "We're not doing this as a jape on a set of fags. We're doing it to uphold the dignity of the Fourth, and the Middle School generally, and to put those impertinent fags in their places."

"H'm! Well, never mind what we're doing it for, so long as we do it," said Scott. "But how the deuce are we going to do it? That's the giddy question."

"Having settled that we're justified in doing it——"

"Yes, yes; that's all right!"

"And that, in point of fact, it's our duty to do it——"

"Yes, yes, yes!"

"Well, then, I'll explain to you fellows how I've thought of doing it!" said Temple. "I wanted to make that quite clear first, that's all. I've thought it out, and mapped it out, and though it will come a bit expensive, I don't grudge a little cash for the honour of the Form."

"Hear, hear!"

"And you fellows can contribute to the exes——"

"Hum!"

"Ahem!"

"And now listen; and, mind, not a word outside ourselves, not even to the rest of the Fourth!" said Temple impressively. "Those Remove kids are awfully sharp, and if they got a whisper of it, the whole thing would be N.G."

"Not a giddy syllable!" chorused the eager Fourth-Formers.

And Temple lowered his voice to a whisper and expounded his great scheme. The juniors gasped at first, and looked blankly at their leader. Temple's proposal almost took their breath away. Then there was a general chuckle.

"Good egg!" exclaimed Fry. "If it will work——"

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney. "Temple's

cousin, being head of the motor works at Langham——"

"And keen to oblige his rich cousin!" grinned Scott.

"It will work like a charm," said Temple. "I'll take care of that. The only point I wanted to have thoroughly settled was whether we were justified——"

"Oh, blow that!" said Scott. "We're going to do the Remove in the eye! Never mind about being justified!"

Temple frowned. He declined to take that unscrupulous view of the matter. But it came to the same thing, as a matter of fact—the jape on the Remove, planned by Temple, was too good to be missed, and justified or not, they were going to do it. And Harry Wharton & Co. went on with the practice match in great spirits, little dreaming of the plot Temple & Co. were plotting.

THE THIRD CHAPTER
Not a Toss-up!

TEMPLE, DABNEY & Co. had been so extremely ratty about the St. Jim's match that the Famous Five anticipated some trouble with them that evening. They were quite prepared for a raid on the Remove passage, or a rag in the common-room. But Temple, Dabney & Co. seemed to have smoked the pipe of peace. During the evening Harry Wharton saw nothing of them. It came out later that Temple and Dabney had secured passes out from their Form-master, Mr. Capper, and they did not come in till quite late in the evening. It was close upon bed-time, and the juniors were leaving the common-room, when Temple and Dabney came in, looking somewhat tired, but quite satisfied.

"All serene?" asked Smith minor of the Fourth.

Temple made him a gesture.

"Shurrup!" murmured Dabney.

Bob Cherry's eyes were upon them at once.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" he exclaimed. "What's the little game? Is our beloved Temple plotting a plot or scheming a scheme up against his kind uncles?"

"Go and eat coke!" said Temple, in polite reply; and he turned away.

"My offer's still open," called out Wharton.

"What offer?" asked Temple, turning his head.

"About letting you watch the match to-morrow. You can come and watch, and we make no charge for showing you how to play cricket."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Rats!" said Temple. "Perhaps to-morrow you——"

He checked himself and strolled away with Dabney and Fry, without saying any more.

"Poor old Temple!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Quite ratty because he can't bag our match. But what good would it be to him, anyway? He couldn't play it. Just as much good for a donkey to bag a fellow's violin."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Removites went cheerfully to their dormitory. They had great anticipation of the morrow, and the truculence of the Fourth-Formers on the subject only amused them. Coker of the Fifth met them in the passage. Coker nodded amiably to Harry Wharton & Co., and they guessed what was coming, and grinned in anticipation.

"Playing a team from St. Jim's to-morrow, I hear?" said Coker carelessly.

"Yes."

"Rather an older team than your lot," remarked Coker. "I hear that there are Shell fellows in the St. Jim's eleven."

"Your hearing is quite accurate, Coker," said Wharton gravely. "There are."

"A bit above your form, what?"

"Oh, no!"

"You don't think you're booked for a licking, then?"

"Not a bit of it!"

"Now, look here, Wharton," said Coker. "I'll tell you what I'll do."

"I fancy you're going to tell me what you won't do," grinned Wharton. "But fire away! Always a pleasure to hear you talk, Coker."

"Ahem! The Fifth are playing to-morrow,



"The Fifth are playing to-morrow," said Coker. "I am not going to play for Blundell." "Then he may win!" remarked Nugent.

a Form match with the Sixth. I am not going to play for Blundell."

"Then he may win," remarked Nugent.

Horace Coker frowned.

"I shall be free for the day," he said; "after lessons, I mean, of course. But as the Head lets you off morning lessons for this match, of course, he'd do the same for me. I'll play for you, if you like."

"My dear Coker, we wouldn't deprive you of your freedom for worlds!" said Wharton. "You're awfully good, but you can remain free."

"I tell you," said Coker, frowning, "that I'm willing to play for the Remove and give you a leg-up."

Coker was an original fellow in many ways, but never more original than when he played, or rather tried to play, cricket. What his game was like it was hard to say. Fellows hardly knew to what to compare it. Many similitudes had been used, but none of them did Coker's game justice.

What made Coker fancy he could play cricket was a mystery that had never been solved at Greyfriars, or, for that matter, would ever be solved. But there it was—Coker did fancy so!

"There's a difficulty in the way," explained Harry.

"What's that?"

"We're not willing."

"Look here!" roared Coker.

"Have a heart!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Our eyes couldn't stand the strain."

"Look here," went on Coker, ignoring Bob's remark, "do you want to beat St. Jim's or not?"

"We do," said Wharton; "and you can help us to do it——"

"Good!"

"By keeping off the grass!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the juniors marched on, leaving Coker in a state of majestic wrath. Hobson, of the Shell, met them at the door of the dormitory.

"Hold on a minute," he said, tapping Wharton on the arm. "You've got a rather tough match before you to-morrow."

"The toughfulness is terrific, my esteemed Hobson," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Better leave it to the junior eleven, really," said Hobson. "I'll tell you what I've thought of, Wharton. If you don't care about leaving it to the second eleven——"

"I don't!" smiled Wharton.

"Then I'll play for you. I specially want to play against the St. Jim's chaps!"

"Team's full up!"

"I suppose you can leave out some fag to make room for a Shell fellow!" exclaimed Hobson angrily.

"Then your supposer wants oiling!"

"What!"

"I mean, your supposer must be out of order, if you suppose anything like that," said Harry. "Run away and suppose something else."

"You cheeky fag——" roared Hobson.

"Now then, now then, no rags at this time of the night!" said Wingate of the Sixth, coming along the dormitory passage. "Clear off, Hobson!"

And the captain of the Shell cleared off, breathing hard through his nose. The Remove went into their dormitory grinning.

"Might make up a hundred instead of an eleven, with the kind offers we keep getting," said Wharton. "Hobson can play cricket, but we've got plenty of fellows who can play as well as he can—and this is a Remove match, anyway. Let the bounders book their own fixtures. We don't stop them."

THE FOURTH CHAPTER
The Telegram!

Bob Cherry gave a cheery chirrup as he looked out of the dormitory window on the following morning. The rising-bell was clanging across the Close. It was a splendid summer morning, the promise of an ideal day to come.

"Topping!" said Bob. "Lovely day for cricket! We're in luck!"

And the Remove cricketers went down in the best of spirits. Dr. Locke, who had a proper sympathy for games, allowed a whole day's holiday for the St. Jim's match, instead of the half to which the juniors were entitled on Wednesdays. The holiday, of course, only applied to the members of the eleven. And the members of the eleven voted the Head a brick, though the rest of the Remove fellows considered that his brickishness might have been carried reasonably to the extent of granting a whole holiday to all the Form.

Immediately after breakfast Harry Wharton & Co. proceeded to Little Side, to take loving care of the pitch. It was in excellent order. Indeed, as Nugent remarked—Nugent being musical in taste—it was what a musician would have called a perfect pitch.

"What time do the St. Jim's chaps get here?" Peter Todd asked, as the cricketers strolled down to the pitch.

"Not before half-past ten at the earliest," said Wharton. "That's if they catch the earliest train. They have two changes, the second at Langham. After we've rolled the pitch a bit we might go as far as Courtfield to meet them. We're sending a brake, anyway."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's a wire!" said Bob, as Trotter, the page, came towards Little Side with an envelope in his hand. "I hope there's nothing wrong with the St. Jim's chaps. It would be rotten if they couldn't come."

"Master Wharton——"

Harry Wharton took the telegram, looking rather anxious. The other fellows watched him anxiously, too, as he opened it. The telegram was not likely to be from anybody but the St. Jim's fellows, and if something had happened to prevent Tom Merry & Co.

from coming it would be a bitter disappointment to the Remove.

But Wharton's face cleared as he read the telegram, though he looked a little puzzled. It was evidently a very unusual message.

"Well, what's the news?" asked several voices. "Is it from St. Jim's?"

"From Tom Merry," said Wharton. "I'll read it out."

The message ran:

"Wharton, Remove, Greyfriars.

"Coming down by car. Reach Langham half-past nine. Meet us there. Plenty of room in car. Come on together to Greyfriars. Will wait for you outside Langham Station. We want all of you to come. Don't disappoint us.

"MERRY."

"Well, my hat!" Bob Cherry gave a whistle. "That beats the band! They must have a jolly big car if it will hold two dozen fellows."

"The bigfulness must be really terrific!"

"Motor-coach, perhaps," said Nugent. "I should have thought it would be quicker to come by train."

"Well, they could start earlier in a car, I suppose," said Wharton, looking a little perplexed. "They could start any time they chose if they had a car, before the earliest train, of course. I dare say it's a pleasanter way of travelling. But it must have cost them a jolly lot of money."

"Some of them are rolling in tin," said Johnny Bull. "That chap D'Arcy spreads money round like our Mauly. Perhaps he's standing treat. Or it may be his father's car."

"I don't suppose Lord Eastwood keeps a car as big as a motor-coach," said Harry. "However, it's their business. But it's rather odd their asking us to meet them at Langham. It's twenty miles from here."

"It is rather queer."

"Well, they know we have a whole holiday to-day, and that we've nothing to do but wait for them till they come," remarked Tom Brown. "After all, it will be rather a treat. We don't get a long run in a motor-coach every day."

"And it's easy enough to get to Langham," said Balstrode. "There are plenty of trains from Courtfield."

"No reason why we shouldn't go, I suppose?" said Wharton thoughtfully. "It seems to me rather queer to ask us, but it would be disobliging not to go. Besides, Merry says they're going to wait for us outside Langham Station. If they wait for us we must go, or they'll never come on in time for the match."

"That settles it!"

Wharton looked over the telegram again. It was curious, there was no doubt about that. But it seemed quite in order. It bore the inscription "Handed in at Rylcombe at 8 a.m." Rylcombe, as the juniors knew, was the village close by St. Jim's. They had alighted from their train there on their visit to St. Jim's for an away match. Tom Merry had probably cycled down early in the morning to send off the wire as soon as the post-office opened, or perhaps it had been sent as the motor-coach passed through the village en route. Anyway, it was certain that, by this time, the St. Jim's party had started, and there was no way of communicating with them. And if they were going to wait for the Remove cricketers in Langham, it was up to the Removites to go and meet them. They could not be kept waiting there.

"Oh, we'll go!" said Bob Cherry. "The fare isn't so very much to Langham, and we can't look mean about a blessed railway fare, when they're spending a small fortune on a car all the way here from Sussex."

"Better go!"

Harry Wharton nodded.

"We don't really seem to have been left much choice about it," he remarked. "Some of us will have to go, at any rate."

"Every chap who can raise the fare!" grinned Nugent.

"Oh, let's all go!" said Bob. "Tom Merry says specially that he wants the lot of us to meet them there, and it would look a bit ungracious if we didn't. They're all very decent chaps, too."

"Right-ho!" said Harry. He looked at

his watch. "Plenty of time to walk down to Courtfield for the next train. And we can call in and tell them that we shan't want the brake after all at the station."

"And that will go towards the fares," remarked Vernon-Smith. "It will be nearly enough for singles to Langham, if we go third."

"Good egg!" said Wharton, with a kindly glance at the Bounder of Greyfriars. Smithy, who was rolling in money, was not thinking of himself. But Penfold and Linley, the two scholarship boys, who were members of the team, had no cash to waste.

Wharton put the telegram in his pocket, and the eleven cricketers walked out of the school gates. As a matter of fact, they were not sorry to fill up the time instead of waiting for the St. Jim's fellows to arrive. And a rapid rush in a big car, with a merry crowd of good fellows was a pleasant prospect enough. The invitation was a little out of the ordinary, true; but Tom Merry evidently meant to be agreeable, and they were more than willing to meet him half-way.

In the Fourth Form-room Temple of the Fourth made the excuse of a forgotten book, and quitted the Form-room, ostensibly to fetch it. He was a long time fetching that book. As a matter of fact, he was standing by the window in the School House, watching the Removites on the cricket-ground. He watched the delivery of the telegram, and smiled. His look became very eager as the Removites stood in consultation. When they streamed away towards the gates he smiled more broadly than ever.

"Swallowed the giddy bait, hook and all!" murmured Temple. "My hat! When my cousin set up in business at Langham in a blessed motor-works, I couldn't help feeling rather ratty. Rotten to have a relation in trade so near the school. But it's come in jolly handy now—extremely handy. My Cousin Teddy isn't a relation to be exactly proud of; but he's useful, jolly useful."

And Temple chuckled gleefully as he made his way back to the Form-room. Mr. Capper frowned as he came in. Temple had missed half a lesson.

"You have been a very long time, Temple," said Mr. Capper severely.

"Sorry, sir. I couldn't see the book." Which was strictly true, for Cecil Temple had not looked for it.

"You will take fifty lines for carelessness. Temple."

"Yes, sir," said the captain of the Fourth cheerfully. He didn't mind fifty lines. He would not have minded five hundred just then. For his little scheme had succeeded, and he felt that he had his old rivals on the hop. Which was very gratifying indeed for Temple of the Fourth.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER
Bagged!

"THERE's the car!"

Harry Wharton & Co. came out of Langham Station just as half-past nine was striking. Outside the station, at a short distance, stood a very large closed car. It was the only car in sight, with the exception of a couple of taxicabs, so the juniors naturally concluded that it was the car from St. Jim's.

"They're in good time, anyway," said Nugent. "They must have got here before half-past nine. But where are they?"

There was no sign of the St. Jim's fellows near the car. They were not likely to be sitting inside it, bottled up, so to speak. Only the chauffeur could be seen—a big fellow, in coat, cap, and motor-goggles. Hardly any of his face could be seen, the lower part being nearly covered by a big dark beard.

"Not the car, I should say," remarked Vernon-Smith. "It's certainly not big enough for us and the St. Jim's chaps, too. It would be a bit of a squeeze to get eleven chaps into that car, let alone twenty-three or twenty-four."

"The squeezefulness would be terrific."

Wharton looked round. There was no other big car to be seen, and no sign of one coming. The chauffeur was looking towards them, and he made a motion of raising his cap.

"Looks as if he's expecting us," said Tom Brown.

"Let's go and speak to him, anyway."

The juniors crossed over to where the car was standing.

"Is this car waiting for us?" asked Harry. A glance into it showed that it was empty.

"Are you the young gentlemen from Greyfriars School?"

"Yes."

"Then it's all right."

"But where are Tom Merry and the rest?"

"In the other car," explained the chauffeur. "Master Merry found that he could not get a car large enough for the lot, so he had two."

"Oh, I see! Where's the other car, then?"

"On the road, just outside the town. There was a slight accident, but it's repaired by this time, sir." The chauffeur looked at his watch. "Yes, it will be all right now. Master Merry instructed me to come here and wait for you, and take you to join him."

"All serene."

The chauffeur opened the door of the car. The interior certainly did not seem to offer ample accommodation for eleven fellows. The Greyfriars juniors exchanged glances. That joy-ride was not to be so joyful as they had anticipated.

"The other car is larger, sir," said the chauffeur, as if reading their thoughts—which was not difficult, as a matter of fact—from their expressions. "The other car takes sixteen quite comfortably."

"Oh, that's all right!" said Harry. "Some of us could walk to where the other car's waiting. Is it very far?"

"About three miles and a half, sir."

"Oh! We'll go in this, then."

The juniors crowded into the car. There certainly wasn't much room. Eight of them were able to sit down, and the other three had to sit upon knees. But, as Bob Cherry remarked, it was lucky that one of them



Wharton's face looked a little puzzled as he read the message from Tom Merry, for the letter contained an unusual request.

wasn't Bunter. Nothing was so bad but that it might have been worse.

"I say, can't we have the top down?" said Johnny Bull, as the chauffeur was closing the door. "It's pretty stuffy in here."

"I'm sorry, sir; it's jammed."

"Oh!"

The chauffeur closed the door and mounted to his seat. The engine began to snort. Harry

Wharton & Co. felt decidedly uncomfortable. Tom Merry might have meant well in providing them with a motor ride, but to provide a car that was too small, with a cover that wouldn't open, was not exactly what they had expected. They were surprised, to say the least of it. They did not want to look a gift-horse in the mouth, so to speak; but really they felt that they had a right to expect better accommodation than this.

However, they did not put their feelings into words.

The car moved off, and threaded the streets of Langham, and sped out upon the open country road. It was a glorious morning, and the sunshine streamed down upon fields and hedges and green woods. Outside the town the chauffeur put on speed, and the car fairly hummed along. Bob Cherry tried to pull down the window. But that seemed to be jammed, too, for he could not open it. The other window was the same. Inside the car, with eleven fellows packed in it on a warm morning, it was growing uncomfortably stuffy.

"Blessed if I like this," said Bulstrode at last. "If this is the way Tom Merry thinks to give us a treat, he's on the wrong track."

"Well, I suppose they mean well," said Mark Linley.

"Mean well be blowed! I'm jolly well not going to be suffocated. If this lasts much longer, blessed if I don't get out and walk."

"Can't be much longer," said Todd. "We've covered a good two miles already. It's a dusty old car, but it's got a good engine. We're simply eating up the ground."

"By Jove, we are going!" said Bob, looking out at the hedgerows rushing past. "That chap is making the fur fly."

"The flyfulness is terrific."

"The rotten windows won't open, and the blessed cover is jammed!" grunted Bulstrode. "What sort of a rotten rattletrap do you call this?"

"Oh, don't grumble!"

"Rats! If they expect any thanks from me, they won't get any, I know that."

"Nor from me."

"It is rather rotten," said Wharton. "I'm getting jolly warm in here. And you're not a light-weight, Bob."

"I'll sit on Bulstrode for a change."

"Oh, don't flop on me!" growled Bulstrode, whose temper was suffering from the heat and the stuffiness. "Flop on somebody else."

"Sit on me," said Penfold good-humouredly.

Bulstrode tapped on the glass that separated them from the chauffeur. The man did not seem to hear. At all events, he did not turn his head.

"Let him alone," said Tom Brown.

"I want to ask him to open the window."

"He'll only tell you it's jammed."

"The silly chump can't hear me knocking. I've a jolly good mind to break through the blessed pane!" snorted Bulstrode.

"Oh, don't be a beast!"

The car rushed on. Three miles at least had been covered from Langham; but there was no sign so far of the other car mentioned by the chauffeur. The juniors watched for milestones. The car whizzed by so fast that they only caught flashing glimpses of them. A milestone—then another! On the last, Wharton caught the figures.

"Five miles to Langham!" he exclaimed. "He's brought us five miles already! I say, this is jolly queer."

"The queerfulness is——"

"Terrific!" grunted Bob. "So is the stuffiness, and the heat. I'm getting fed up."

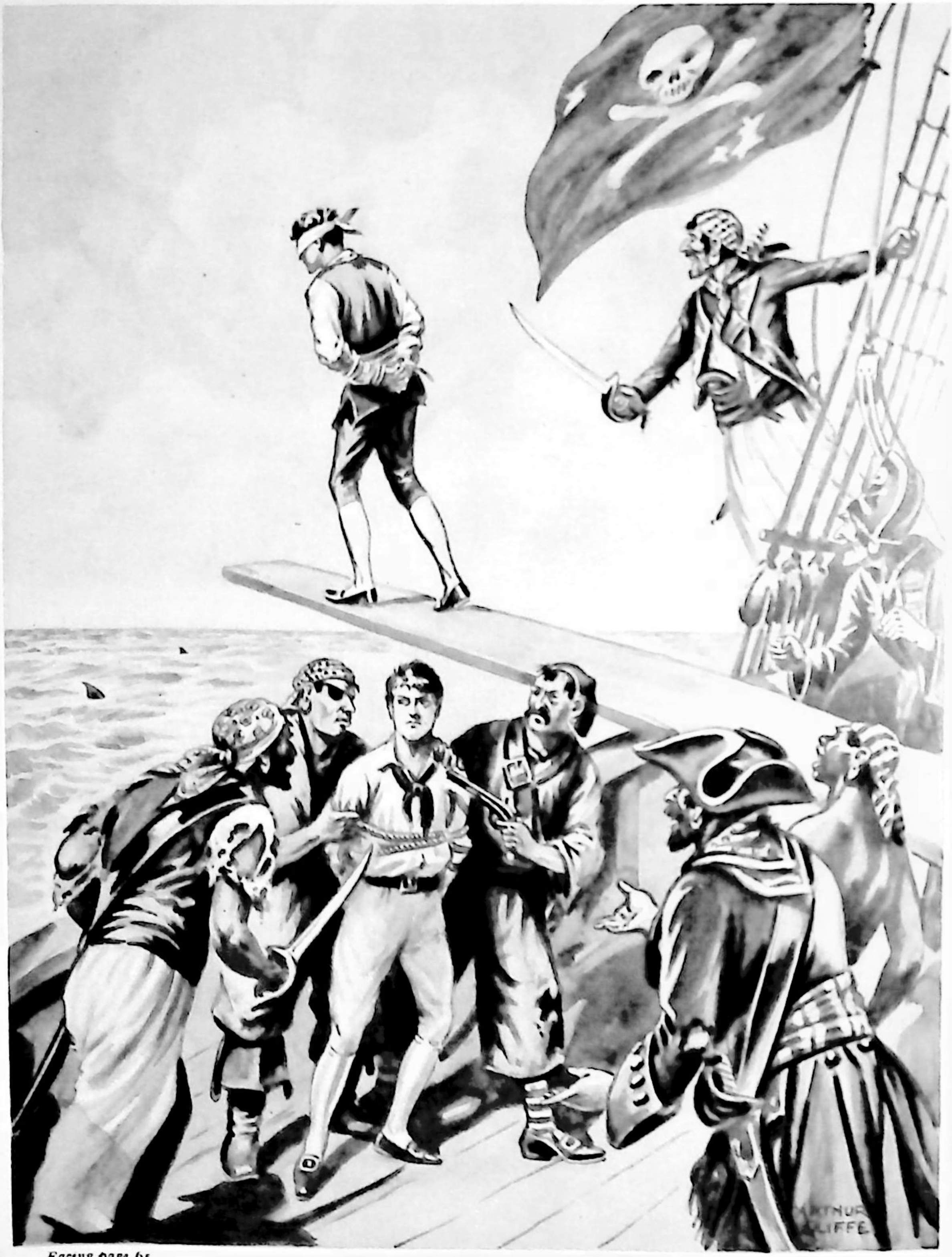
"I've been fed up a long time!" snapped Bulstrode.

"We haven't passed the other car," said Wharton, wrinkling his brows in perplexity. "It must be farther back on the road than the man supposed."

"Speak to him."

Wharton thumped on the thick glass. He thumped almost hard enough to break it. But the chauffeur did not heed. He must have heard; but he paid no attention. He sat with his eyes steadily before him, never slacking for a moment. He was evidently a good driver. But at the speed at which the car was going, it would have been decidedly dangerous for the man to take his eyes off the road in advance for a single moment.

"Is he dotty?" exclaimed Frank Nugent,



Facing page 65

WALKING THE PLANK!

exasperated. "Why doesn't he slack down and let us speak to him!"

"Another milestone!" said Bob.

"Look here, I'm sick of this."

"Might as well be in an oven."

"Blow Tom Merry, and blow his car! I'm not going to stand it!" howled Bulstrode, mopping the perspiration from his brow. "Make him stop!"

"Blessed if I know how to," said Wharton. "There's no communicator here. Besides, he can hear me thumping. He won't stop."

"Another milestone."

"That's seven from Langham," said Johnny Bull. "Is the howling idiot going to take us all the way to St. Jim's!"

The car rushed on, faster and faster, leaving clouds of dust in its wake. Exasperated cyclists on the road yelled "Road-hog!" after the chauffeur as he flashed past them; but the man did not heed. Onward rushed the packed car. Another milestone—another, and another. Ten miles from Langham!

The juniors were looking at one another very queerly now. The chauffeur had distinctly told them that the "other car," with Tom Merry & Co., was three miles and a half from Langham. Now he had taken them ten miles; and was still going ahead.

What did it mean?

"There—there's something wrong!" said Nugent nervously at last. "Is—is it possibl that the man's dotty?"

"Why doesn't he take any notice of our knocking?"

"He won't!"

"And he won't slack down!"

"He must be mad! There isn't any other car at all," said Johnny Bull. "If there was, we should have passed it before now. He's not going to stop—that's clear. And—and we can't stop him."

Another mile—and another. The car was on a lonely road now, racing across a solitary heath. And the chauffeur fairly made it fly. Another mile—another—another—another! Fifteen miles from Langham. It was quite clear that they were not going to meet another car that had broken down on the road. The man had not told them the truth. Why he should have deceived them was simply

WALKING THE PLANK!

Among the records of Greyfriars School there is no more thrilling story than that of the adventure of Jim Blackett and Tony Dewsbury in the year 1784.

Jim Blackett was the son of Sir Jeremy Blackett, Chief Justice of Jamaica, and Sir Jeremy sent for his son to pay him a visit as he was himself unable to come to England. The matter was arranged with the Greyfriars authorities, who also permitted Blackett's friend, Tony Dewsbury, to accompany him. The two boys were in the Sixth Form. Jim was a slight fellow of medium height; Dewsbury was a big boy of seventeen, absolutely fearless and the best boxer at Greyfriars.

The chums embarked upon the good ship Syracuse, and all went swimmingly until they were two days' sail from Kingston, when they encountered a strange vessel, which hoisted the Jolly Roger, and laid them aboard before an effective resistance could be organised.

The pirate ship was the "Happy Venture," commanded by one Jesse Starkins, a cut-throat villain of evil reputation. Short work was made of the captain and crew of the Syracuse, and when the pirates had had their pick of her cargo, the ill-fated vessel was scuttled, Blackett and Dewsbury being hustled aboard the Happy Venture. Then Starkins discovered the identity of Blackett's father, and he forthwith swore the boys should walk the plank. A plank was therefore rigged, and Blackett, bound and blindfolded, was driven at the point of a cutlass to the very edge. Dewsbury, however, by taunting the pirates with cowardice and offering to fight every one of them with bare fists, caused Starkins to countermand the proceedings. That night Dewsbury fought eleven members of the pirate crew in succession, and he was still standing on his feet when the battle was called off.

Two hours later, in thick fog, the Happy Venture ran right under the guns of H.M.S. Thunderer, a line-of-battleship, and was captured without a shot being fired. Blackett and Dewsbury were, of course, rescued, and six months later were back at Greyfriars, little the worse for their adventure.

inconceivable. But he had. There could be no doubt about that.

"I—I can't understand it," stammered Wharton. "Can this be a jape of the St. Jim's chaps? They'd hardly do such a thing."

"Impossible!"

"Then what does it mean? This car was waiting for us by their orders—as we know by their telegram. And—and the windows being fastened, and the cover being jammed, it looks like a put-up job. And the chauffeur won't stop. Why shouldn't he stop?—unless he's been ordered not to."

"Great Scott!"

"But—but——"

Bob Cherry shook his head decidedly.

"It's impossible! Tom Merry wouldn't and couldn't play such an idiotic trick on us; it's out of the question. Why, it's mucking up the match. If we waste much more time, how are we going to play cricket?"

"Then what does it mean?"

"Goodness knows—unless——"

"Unless what?" snapped Bulstrode irritably.

"Unless the man's mad!"

"My hat!"

It was a terrible suggestion—that the chauffeur was not in his right senses—with the juniors packed helplessly in the car going at racing speed. But if the man was sane, why did he not slack down in response to their frantic knocking on the glass screen? If he was sane, why was he tearing off with a party of complete strangers in this manner?

The faces of the juniors grew scared. The conviction grew in their minds that they were shut up in a car guided by a lunatic—racing at fierce speed—to what?

THE SIXTH CHAPTER
Not a Joy-ride!

On rushed the car.

The juniors had given up knocking on the glass. It was clear that the chauffeur heard them, and refused to take any notice. As for opening the doors and jumping out, that was quite out of the question. To jump out of a car going at such a speed was to court instant death.

Mile after mile fled under the racing wheels.

Twenty miles from Langham!

What could it mean?

Not once had the goggled driver looked round. Staring straight ahead, he drove on without a pause, only slackening down a little when passing through a village, keeping up at all times the maximum consistent with safety. He was not taking risks. If he was a lunatic, he was a careful one. But the car never slowed down sufficiently for the juniors to think of jumping out.

"The man's mad!" said Wharton, setting his teeth. "There can't be any doubt about that. Only a lunatic would carry off a party of strangers like this. He must be mad. There's no motive for it."

"What did Tom Merry mean by sending a lunatic with a car to meet us?" groaned Bob. "Why couldn't he be more careful?"

"Did Tom Merry send the car after all?" said Vernon-Smith soberly. "It's a very queer business. We thought it queer he should send such a car—and it is queer. My belief is that he didn't send the car at all."

"But the man was waiting for us in Langham. He asked us if we were from Greyfriars, you remember, and mentioned Merry's name."

"I know that."

"Well, then, the car must have been sent by Tom Merry."

Vernon-Smith shook his head. His brow was wrinkled in deep thought.

"I can't think so," he said decidedly. "This is a jape on us, and I don't believe the St. Jim's fellows would play such a fool trick. They knew they're mucking up their own match if they take us away from Greyfriars like this. It's incredible. If they did such a thing we'd never have anything more to do with them. It's not fair to them to think so. Either this man has gone suddenly mad or Tom Merry hasn't had anything to do with sending this car for us."

"He must be mad!" growled Johnny Bull.

"He's driving jolly carefully for a madman," said the Bounder. "He's keeping up top speed, but he's taking no risks."

Harry Wharton nodded.

"But if he isn't mad, it's a jape," he said.

"And who can be japing us excepting Tom Merry?"

"Somebody who's using Tom Merry's name, I suppose."

Wharton started.

"But—but the telegram. Tom Merry telegraphed us to meet him in Langham, you know, and the car was waiting there."

"The car was sent by the same chap who sent the telegram, of course," said the Bounder quietly. "But I don't believe Tom Merry did either."

"Then who?"

"Somebody who used his name."

The juniors looked at one another, impressed by the Bounder's reasoning. Their first impression had been that the driver had taken leave of his senses. But the Bounder's theory was certainly more plausible. Tom Merry & Co. would not have played such a trick on them. But if somebody else had used Tom Merry's name—an easy matter in sending a telegram——

"You see, it wasn't a letter from Merry," said the Bounder. "We know his writing, or some of us do. And a japer wouldn't be in a hurry to commit forgery, for the sake of ever so good a jape. But anybody could have put the name of Merry at the end of a telegram. He might even reckon that he was putting on that signature as a pun—meaning that he was merry at taking us in. A sort of joke."

"I'd joke him!" said Bob, clenching his big fists. "I'd make him merry, the rotter, if I could get at him!"

"But the telegram came from St. Jim's!" exclaimed Wharton. "I looked it over. Here it is. See for yourself. Handed in at Rylcombe at eight this morning. Rylcombe is close to St. Jim's. Somebody from St. Jim's must have sent the wire immediately the post-office opened."

"But it wasn't Tom Merry," said the Bounder with conviction. "Somebody sent that telegram, and arranged for the car to be at



Temple smiled broadly as the Remove eleven streamed away towards the gates. "Swallowed the giddy bait, hook and all!" he muttered.

Langham ready to meet us. And Tom Merry doesn't know a syllable about it, I bet you!"

"My only hat! In that case, it's all spoof. They're not coming by car at all, and they're coming by train, as usual."

"Exactly!"

"And they'll arrive at Courtfield, and won't find a brake ready to take them to the school, as we had arranged. We've cancelled the brake."

"That's so!"

"And"—Wharton gritted his teeth—"they'll get to Greyfriars, and won't find us there to play them!"

"Precisely! And that's the little game!" said Vernon-Smith. "Some awfully deep rotter had planned this, and spent a good bit of money on it, too; for the hire of this car must have cost something, and I should think that rascal out there must have wanted a good tip for helping in such a trick."

"But—but who could have done it?" gasped Nugent.

"Some fellow at St. Jim's who's up against Tom Merry," grunted Johnny Bull. "Perhaps that rotter Levison, who used to be at Greyfriars."

"It's like one of his tricks," said Bob. "But Levison wouldn't spend the money on it. He would stop short of a jape that cost a lot of money."

"Yes, rather!"

"But I don't believe it's a St. Jim's jape at all," said the Bounder. "More likely it's somebody at Greyfriars."

"But the telegram came from St. Jim's!"

"It came from Rylcombe. Whoever has done this has spent a good bit of money. He might have spent a little more by sending someone to Rylcombe over-night, to despatch that telegram in the morning."

"Oh, crumbs!"

"I—I say, that's rather thick," said Bob. "Like a blessed Machiavellian plot. Old Coker wouldn't have brains enough for that."

"Temple!" shouted Wharton suddenly, as a light burst upon his mind.

"Exactly!" said the Bounder. "Temple & Co. were up against us because we wouldn't let them bag the match. And my belief is that Temple has worked this."

"Oh, the rotter!"

"The cad!"

"Temple's got plenty of tin. And I remember now that he and Dabney were out all last evening. You remember?"

"Yes, yes."

"Making the arrangements, of course," said the Bounder, with a grin. He did not seem to share the exasperation of the rest of the party. The cunning displayed in the scheme seemed to tickle the Bounder's fancy. "We needn't blame ourselves; it was simply impossible to guess that anything of the sort was being planned. They kept it awfully dark. And there's another point. Temple has a cousin who keeps a motor-works at Langham. I've heard talk about that, because Temple's rather a snob, and he's ashamed of having a relation in trade near the school. Some of the Fourth chip him about it. His cousin started a motor-works there last year. My belief is that last evening Temple visited that chap, and arranged with him to send a man to Rylcombe, and to have this car ready for us in the morning. It was as easy as rolling off a log. I dare say the cousin fellow was told it was just a schoolboy jape; nothing about the match at all, most likely. And Temple must have paid the exes. And there you are!"

The juniors had little doubt of it. They would probably not have worked out the problem so easily themselves, but the Bounder's cool, clear brain had done it, and now they were convinced.

They owed their present plight to Temple, Dabney & Co., of the Fourth. Temple had wanted to bag the match, and had failed. He had determined that the Remove should not play St. Jim's. And this was the result.

The discovery of the facts added to the exasperation of the trapped cricketers, for it assuredly looked as if the scheme was to succeed.

Already they were more than twenty miles out of Langham—that is to say, well over forty miles from Greyfriars. And if Tom Merry & Co. were coming by train in the usual way they would be arriving at Greyfriars now. And there would be no Remove team there to play them. What would be the feelings of

the St. Jim's fellows when they reached Greyfriars and found that the home eleven had vanished could not be imagined. There would not be a word of explanation for them. Harry Wharton & Co. had had no doubts when they started. Only themselves had seen the telegram, and all the other fellows being in the Form-room at the time, they had mentioned it to nobody. The Saints would be utterly mystified by the unaccountable action of the Remove eleven in vanishing just before the match, and nobody at Greyfriars would be able to furnish the slightest explanation.

"By George," exclaimed Bob Cherry furiously. "I think Smithy's right, and we've been done by the Fourth! This is Temple's answer to us for refusing to let him bag the match. I think it's beyond a joke myself!"

"The beyondfulness is terrific!"

"It's a dirty trick!" exclaimed Wharton wrathfully. "This kind of thing isn't a jape. It's beastly for the visiting team, as well as us. They'll come all the way from St. Jim's, and unless we get back there won't be a match!"

"Unless the Fourth Form give them one," said the Bounder, with a shrug of the shoulders.

Bob Cherry gave a yell.

"Great pip! I didn't think of that! Don't you see, you fellows, it isn't only to keep us from playing St. Jim's, it's a plot to bag the match after all!"

"The St. Jim's fellows will want to play somebody," said Vernon-Smith. "They won't want their journey for nothing. I fancy that Temple will kindly offer them a match with the second eleven."

"The rotter!"

"The swindler!"

"The beastly spoofer!"

"Something's got to be done!" exclaimed Wharton desperately. "If Smithy's right—and there doesn't seem much doubt about it—this driver chap intends to take us so far that we can't get back in time to play St. Jim's at all! We're booked for the day."

"And this was going to be a giddy joy-ride!" groaned Bob.

"The joyfulness is truly terrific."

"We've got to stop that villain somehow!" Wharton knocked furiously on the glass, and shouted: "Stop, you scoundrel! Do you hear, you villain? Stop!"

The chauffeur certainly heard; but he stared straight on, without turning his head. The car was rushing along a white country road at the full limit of speed.

"We're trapped!" groaned Nugent. "What can we do?"

"I know what I'm going to do," said Harry, setting his teeth. "Give me room to get my boot on this glass!"

Wharton raised his boot and smashed the heel on the glass screen. The glass flew out in a thousand fragments, scattering over the chauffeur. The man gave a violent start. It was perhaps dangerous to startle him while he was going at such a speed; but the juniors were in a mood to take risks now.

But the man's start was followed by his former impassivity. He drove steadily on. Harry Wharton reached out to him and caught his shoulder.

"Stop, you rotter!" he said. "Do you hear? Stop?"

Then the man spoke for the first time.

"Let go my shoulder, sir!"

"Stop!"

"Against orders, sir."

"Whose orders?"

"My employer's, sir."

"Who is your employer?"

"Against orders to talk, sir."

"Look here!" shouted Wharton. "We've got a cricket-match on to-day, and this is a trick to keep us from playing. Do you understand? You're liable to punishment for what you are doing. We could prosecute you."

The man did not reply, but Wharton heard him chuckle. The threat was indeed a vain one. It was hardly feasible for the Remove fellows to think of invoking the law to punish the Fourth Form for a jape. For that was what it amounted to. This trick, it was true, was quite beyond the limits of a schoolboy jape. The juniors agreed in regarding it as a dirty trick, and not a jape at all. But the fact remained that it was a scheme of the Fourth to do them "in the eye," and there was nothing for the Removites to do but to get out of

it if they could, and grin and bear it if they couldn't.

"Will you stop?" Wharton demanded, after a pause.

"Can't, sir!"

"Look here. We'll give you a quid to chuck it!"

"Against orders, sir."

"Give him anything he likes!" exclaimed Vernon-Smith. "I'd stand a fiver to beat Temple at his own game. Look here, chauffeur. Drive us back to Greyfriars as fast as you can and it will mean five quid to you!"

"Against orders, sir."

The man was evidently proof against bribery and corruption, and the juniors suspected that he was not an ordinary chauffeur at all, but some friend of Temple's, perhaps his Cousin Teddy himself. Anyway, it was evidently useless to offer the man money. The escape from the predicament was not quite so easy as that.

"You've got to stop, you beast!" exclaimed Wharton. "Look here! Stop the car, or we'll drag you backwards! You'll stop fast enough then!"

"If you do, sir, you'll wreck the car? I shall not let go the wheel. And if I do, the car will run into the roadside at once and smash up!"

Wharton gritted his teeth in helpless rage. It was true enough—they could not force the chauffeur to stop without wrecking the car. And a sudden smash-up at such a speed was not to be thought of, for it meant death or disablement for everybody in the car.

"Don't stop him, Wharton!" said Bulstrode hastily.

Wharton let go the man's shoulder. He was not beaten, but he was baffled for the moment. And while the juniors crowded there in furious perplexity the car drove on. Mile after mile sped under the racing wheels. Decidedly it was not a joy-ride.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER
Vanished!

"HEAH we are, deah boys!"

It was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, of St. Jim's, who made that remark. The train had stopped at Courtfield Junction.

Fourteen juniors turned out of the train, most of them carrying bags. They were the junior eleven of St. Jim's, and three more fellows. Distinguished among them was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of St. Jim's, with his monocle screwed in his eye, and his elegant jacket and well-pressed trousers looking like things of beauty and joys for ever.

"Yes, here we are!" said Tom Merry. "There's a brake outside, so Nugent said in his letter. This way!"

The St. Jim's team walked off the platform. They looked very fit and well. The eleven was composed of Tom Merry, Lowther, Dane, and Noble, of the Shell; and Blake, D'Arcy, Reilly, Figgins, Kerr, Wynn, and Redfern, of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's. The other three were Glyn, Digby, and Manners, the last of whom carried a camera. Manners was not in the team, but he intended to take photographs of the match, which was even more to his taste.

Tom Merry looked round outside the station, but there was no brake to be seen.

"Bai Jove! Where's that bwake?" said D'Arcy.

"Doesn't seem to be on view," remarked Figgins. "I suppose they knew what train we were coming by?"

"Of course they did! And their secretary said there would be a brake here to meet us," said Tom Merry. "Better wait a few minutes for it, anyway. They're not likely to have forgotten it, I should think."

"It would be wathah a bweach of politeness to forget it," remarked D'Arcy, "and it would be a bweach of politeness to forget our twain."

"By Jove!" said Lowther. "That would make a pair of breeches!"

"Weally, Lowthah——"

"There's a bun-shop over the way," remarked Fatty Wynn. "May as well step over there. I've had nothing since brekker, excepting the sandwiches I brought in the train, and the pie I got at Luxford, and the cake at Langham, and——"

"Then you must be famished," said Tom Merry sympathetically. "Let's get over

to the bun-shop, by all means, before our champion bowler perishes of hunger!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The St. Jim's party adjourned to the bun-shop, where Fatty Wynn's performances were quite worthy of Billy Bunter at his best. They kept an eye on the station, but the brake did not appear. Ten minutes passed without a sign of the brake. Tom Merry frowned a little.

"Looks to me as if they had forgotten it," he said, "or else the brake people have mistaken the time of the train. Anyway, it's no good wasting time here."

"I'm not wasting time," remarked Fatty Wynn. "Try some of these tarts, old chap. They're really topping!"

"You chuck it!" exclaimed Figgins, grasping his fat chum by the arm and dragging him away from the tarts. "You won't be able to bowl if you keep on. Kim on!"

"Just two or three more——"

"Rats!"

"Just one more!" pleaded Wynn.

"Take his other arm, Kerr."

Kerr grinned and took Wynn's other arm, and the fat Fourth-Former was marched forcibly out of the bun-shop. The juniors paused on the pavement to consult. The brake did not appear to be coming, and the question was whether to walk to Greyfriars or to hire vehicles.

"It's a good long walk, I believe," said Blake. "Two miles or more. We don't want that just before playing. I think there's a local train to Friardale, which is near Greyfriars. If we can catch it——"



The Greyfriars juniors exchanged glances as they crowded into the car. There certainly wasn't much room for eleven cricketers.

They crossed to the station again. But the local train was gone, and the next was in half an hour.

"We don't want to hang about here half an hour," said Tom Merry. "And the brake's not coming, it seems. I must say this is rather careless of those chaps. Let's walk."

"Wats!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy decidedly. "We can't walk two or thwee miles and cawwy these bags! We want to be fwesh for the match. They have taxicabs heah; there are thwee of them outside the station. Let's cab it."

"Good egg!" said Blake heartily. "It's

Gussy's treat. Order up the giddy motor-cars, Gussy, and count out your spare cash!"

"I did not mean——"

"Never mind what you meant, old chap. It's your treat and, as we're in a hurry, we won't refuse you."

"Weally, Blake——"

"If Gussy is going to keep us here while he makes speeches, we may as well wait for the local train," said Blake resignedly.

"Wats! Heah, taxi!"

As there were fourteen fellows in the party, three taxis at least were required. The St. Jim's juniors crowded into them, and they started off for Greyfriars. It was quite a procession.

"Bai Jove! Pway don't cwush me!" said Arthur Augustus, who was crowded between Lowther and Noble. "Kangy, deah boy, you are squeezin' me!"

"Sorry!" said Noble, without moving.

"Weally, Kangawooh——"

"That's all right," said the Cornstalk junior affably. "I don't mind a bit."

"But I mind!" howled Arthur Augustus. "You are cwushin' my clothes. I wegard it as vewy wemiss of those Gweyfwiahs chaps to forget our bwake! As a wule, they are wathah decent chaps, but I feel wathah watty about this!"

And Arthur Augustus frowned. He was uncomfortably squeezed, and any breach of politeness jarred upon his sensitive nerves.

"Well, it won't be long," said Blake. "This is quicker than a brake. Awfully good idea of yours, Gussy! Chap's lucky to have money instead of brains, after all!"

"Weally, Blake, you ass——"

"Here's Greyfriars!"

"Bai Jove! I'm jolly glad we've awwived!"

The journey had not been long in the taxicabs. The three vehicles glided in at the open gates of Greyfriars, one after another, and Gosling, the porter, came out of his lodge in considerable surprise. The cabs stopped, and the St. Jim's juniors poured out.

In spite of Blake's little joke, the juniors "whacked out" the cost of the taxicabs and the vehicles rolled away. Then the cricketers looked round them. They had expected Harry Wharton & Co. to be in sight.

But the only person who was in sight was Gosling, the porter. From where they stood they could see part of the playing fields—enough to see that the cricket-ground was deserted. Tom Merry wrinkled his brow in perplexity.

"Well, this beats it!" he exclaimed. "It looks as if we're not expected. No brake at the station, and nobody here to meet us! Can they have made a mistake about the date?"

"Pewwaps you have made a mistake, Tom Mewwy——"

"Ass!" said Tom Merry politely. "We've got the date right enough; but it looks as if they haven't. They seem to be in school to-day. Let's ask this chap!"

"Portah, deah boy——"

"Mornin'!" said Gosling, touching his cap.

"We're the St. Jim's team," Tom Merry explained. "We've come over to play the Remove, you know. Can you tell us where the fellows are?"

"They ain't come in yet, sir," said Gosling.

"Are they gone out, then?" exclaimed Tom Merry, in surprise.

"Yes, sir. They all went out some time ago, sir," said Gosling. "I think one of the young gentlemen 'ad a telegram—I know that a telegram come. They didn't say nothing to me, but I seed them go out all together."

"And they haven't come back?" ejaculated Blake.

"No, sir. Wot I says is this 'ere, it's skewrious," said Gosling, "werry skewrious!"

It was certainly curious. The St. Jim's party looked at one another in astonishment.

"Then they haven't make a mistake about the date?" asked Tom Merry. "They know we were coming?"

"Oh, yes, sir! The 'Ead gives them a 'ole 'oliday to-day for the match," said Gosling. "I don't know where they're gone. It's skewrious!"

"Well, this beats the band!" exclaimed Blake. "They can't have gone to meet us, or we should have met them in Courtfield. They knew we were coming to Courtfield."

"Blessed if I can understand it!" said

Tom Merry. "It beats me! I suppose they'll be coming in pretty soon!"

"Yaas, wathah! I twust so. I wegard this as a breech of mannahs!"

"Better get on to the pavilion and change," said Figgins. "Then we shall be ready for them when they come in!"

"Good idea!"

The St. Jim's cricketers, in a state of great amazement, and some exasperation, proceeded to the cricket-ground. There was nobody there. All Greyfriars, with the exception of the Remove eleven, was at lessons, and the Remove eleven had vanished. It was an extraordinary state of affairs. Utterly astonished, and beginning to feel just a little "ratty," Tom Merry & Co. entered the pavilion, which was fortunately open.

There they changed into their flannels, expecting every moment to hear the Remove fellows arrive. But they did not hear them. Having changed, they came out; but the cricket-ground was still deserted.

Blake cut down to the lodge, and spoke to Gosling. He came back to announce that the porter had seen nothing of the Remove fellows yet.

"Well, my hat!" Tom Merry exclaimed. "Unless they've all gone dotty, I'm blessed if I can make anything of it! They knew we were coming and they've deliberately gone out and left us like this!"

"Bai Jove! It's simply wotten!"

"Everybody else is at lessons," said Tom. "Nobody here to meet us, and not a word of explanation. They didn't even leave a message with the porter for us. They might have done that, at least!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I've a jolly good mind to clear off and get back to St. Jim's!" Tom Merry exclaimed wrathfully. "What the deuce do they mean by treating us like that?"

"Must be dotty!"

"Mad as March hattahs, deah boys—I mean hares!"

"Better wait a bit," said Lowther. "Something may have happened, though I'm blessed if I can guess what!"

"May as well ask in the tuck-shop,"

ALONZO'S AILMENTS!



Because instead of sugar I bought soda,
And mixed it up in Loder's ginger-beer,
I was savagely attacked by this same Loder,
And rendered hors de combat for a year!
He treated me with disconcerting roughness,
And thrashed me till I had to gasp for air;
Had I possessed my cousin Peter's toughness,
I never could have stood the wear and tear.

He administered a clip on my auricular,
Which caused a pained ejaculation—"Yah!"
Now, as you fellows know, I'm not particular;
But this is going just a bit too far.
My optic organ also—I admit it—
Was subject to his venomous attack,
Abating no ferocity, he hit it
And transformed it to a pretty shade of black.

I own no sort of fistical ability,
So Loder, striking harder than before,
Reduced me to a state of great debility,
And left me writhing helpless on the floor.
Yet, not content with this attempt to flatten me,
He raised his foot, and with a sneering gibe,
Connected with that part of my anatomy
Which modesty forbids me to describe.

He stamped on all my digital appendages
(I mean my fingers and my thumbs, of course)
Until I screamed aloud for lint and bandages
Which made the bully laugh in manner coarse.
But, giving me no palliating unction,
He punched my nose, and took me by surprise;
This made my nasal organ cease to function,
And brought the tear-drops streaming from my eyes.

I described a parabola through the ether,
And landed on my cranium in the grate;
The bully and his chums went out together
And left me to the tenderness of fate.
They came and took me to the sanatorium;
From there I write this motto short and clear:
If you would live in peace, heed my exordium,
And never mix a prefect's ginger-beer.

suggested Fatty Wynn. "There's a school shop here, you know; and when I was here before, they had jolly good tarts——"

"Shurrup!"

Nobody but Fatty Wynn was in a humour for tarts, even jolly good ones. Their treatment at the hands of the Remove team of Greyfriars was extraordinary—unprecedented.

The St. Jim's cricketers waited for the Remove to turn up; but the Remove team showed no sign whatever of turning up. And Tom Merry & Co., as they waited and discussed the astounding situation, grew more and more exasperated.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER
Something Like a Success!

TEMPLE, DABNEY & Co. came out of the Fourth Form-room with cheery smiles. Morning lessons were over, and the juniors were free for the rest of the day.

The Remove had not yet been dismissed, however, and Temple & Co. lost no time in hurrying down to the cricket-ground.

There was a sound of the click of bat and ball, but the Greyfriars Remove team were not to be seen. Fourteen fellows in St. Jim's caps were on the cricket-ground, and they were apparently putting in the time at cricket practice; but at sight of Temple and his comrades the play ceased. Tom Merry came to meet them.

"Hallo!" said Temple affably. "Tom Merry of St. Jim's—what? I think I remember you from your last visit here. How do you do?"

He held out his hand very genially. The St. Jim's junior skipper shook hands with him; but his brow was clouded.

"I'm Tom Merry," he said.

"I'm Temple of the Fourth, captain of the second eleven here, you know," said Temple. "How are you getting on with the Remove? Innings over?"

"We haven't played yet."

"What!"

"We haven't seen anything of the Remove," said Tom Merry sharply. "We've been here over an hour, and, as nobody turned up, we've been knocking the ball about to amuse ourselves. Better than doing nothing."

Cecil Temple looked extremely astonished.

"But where are Wharton and the rest?" he asked.

"That's what we want to know."

"Yaas, wathah!" chimed in Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "And I must wemark that I wegard this tweatment of a visitin' team as outwageous!"

"Outrageous!" exclaimed Temple warmly. "I should jolly well say so!"

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"Never heard of such a thing!" said Fry.

"It's a bit thick," said Scott. "Do you really mean to say that the Remove eleven haven't shown up at all?"

"If they have, we haven't seen anything of them," said Tom tartly. "We thought they might have mistaken the date, though it was hardly possible, and might still be at lessons. But the porter tells us he saw them all go out."

"Oh, they're not at lessons," said Temple. "They have a whole holiday to-day, you know, for this match."

"Yes, we know. But they seem to have cleared off. We agreed to wait till somebody came out from lessons before going," said Tom Merry. "If there is any explanation to be given we're willing to hear it. We don't want to cut up rusty about nothing, but I shall want a jolly good explanation."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Not much good asking for an explanation," he said. "The Remove kids don't consult the Fourth about their proceedings, and I fancy nobody else in the Remove knows why Wharton has taken himself off like this. They think the match is going on."

"It's extraordinary."

"Rather too extraordinary for my taste," growled Blake. "It looks to me as if Wharton has made fools of us."

"And the best thing we can do is to clear off," said Figgins angrily. "You can tell Wharton when he comes back that we've been, and that we jolly well shan't come again. This fixture is off for good."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Hold on!" said Temple pacifically. "I

must say that you fellows have been treated scandalously, and, as a Greyfriars chap, I apologise sincerely. Nothing of the kind had ever happened here before to my knowledge. It's simply unprecedented. They must simply be off their dots, that's all I can think of."

"I don't see that anything can have happened to them," said Tom Merry. "Accidents don't happen to eleven fellows at once. Besides, the porter told us they all went out of their own accord after one of them had a telegram."

"It beats me," said Temple. "But look here! You fellows can't have a journey like that for nothing. You must have a match."

"We don't want to play a scratch team picked up from the Remove fellows left over from the eleven!" growled Noble.

"Of course you don't," agreed Temple at once. "I wasn't suggesting that. There are enough Remove fellows to make up another team, certainly; but then they're not cricketers. Wharton had all their good players in his eleven. I was thinking that you might care to play the Greyfriars Second Eleven as you're here. As a matter of fact, it's a more suitable team for you to meet than a fag team like Wharton's."

"Oh, rather!"

Tom Merry & Co. exchanged glances. Certainly they did not want to travel the great distance from St. Jim's and not get a match. They did not want to return to St. Jim's and tell the fellows there that they had been fooled, and had not played. Temple's offer came really at the right moment.

"Well, that's not a bad idea," said Tom Merry. "I must admit we feel pretty keenly being treated like this by the Remove, but of course we've nothing up against the rest of Greyfriars. We don't want to be rusty. Are the Second Eleven free to play to-day?"



Tom Merry tossed with Temple for choice of innings, won the toss, and elected to bat.

"Well, we should have had a match with a fag team for practice," said Temple. "Nothing of any importance, however. But we'd put off anything to try to make up to you chaps for the shabby way you've been treated by the Remove. As a matter of fact, we should be very happy to play you."

"Certainly!" said Fry. "We should!"

"And we promise you a good game," said Temple. "As skipper of the Second Eleven, I can answer for that. We play only the Fourth and the Shell in the Second Eleven—no fags."

"Bai Jove, it's wathah a good ideah!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I must wemark that you are actin' vewy handsomely, my deah fellow!"

"Yes, you are indeed!" said Tom Merry. "We don't want our journey for nothing. If you're sure that you'd like a match——"

"Delighted!" said Temple heartily.

"Oh, rather!"

"Then it's a go, and we're much obliged to you. We should feel awful asses going home to St. Jim's and confessing that we hadn't played," said Tom Merry frankly.

"It would have been sickening," said Blake.

"Simply wotten, deah boys!"

"Say no more," said Temple genially. "It will be a pleasure to us. And we'll begin at once, and you fellows can join us at dinner. There will be time for a good bit of an innings before dinner."

"Good enough!"

A crowd of juniors were arriving on the cricket-ground by this time. Most of the Remove, as soon as they were released from morning lessons, came streaming down to Little Side to see how the cricketers were getting on. They stared in blank astonishment when they found that Harry Wharton & Co. were not there.

"Hallo, why aren't you fellows playing?" exclaimed Bolsover major, coming up to the St. Jim's fellows as they stood talking with Temple.

"Because Wharton has cleared off with his team for some reason," said Temple, answering for Tom Merry. "They're playing us instead."

"Wharton cleared off! What rot!"

"We haven't seen anything of them," said Tom Merry.

"My hat! But what—what have they done it for?"

"That's for them to explain," said Tom. "I don't know anything about it. We haven't seen them at all."

"Great Scott!"

"But—but it's extraordinary!" exclaimed Russell. "What can they mean by it? They were here ready for you when we went in to lessons."

"They were not here when we arrived, and there was no brake at the station, either," said Jack Blake.

"But the brake was ordered!" exclaimed Ogilvy. "I was with Nugent when he ordered it."

"It didn't turn up, anyway."

"By Jove! What have you fellows been doing all the time?" asked Esmond.

"Waiting for Wharton," said Tom Merry. "But we're not waiting any longer. Temple has offered us a match with the Second Eleven, to save us from having our journey for nothing."

"Oh, that won't do!" exclaimed Bolsover major. "You came over here to play the Remove. If Wharton chooses to walk off with his team, there's enough of us to make up another eleven. I'll captain a side to meet you, and I'll jolly soon get a team together."

"The fag-end of the Remove," grinned Temple. "Precious sort of a team you'd be able to make up from what's left over after Wharton's picked out his men!"

"Well, it would be a scratch team, of course," said Bolsover; "but we have some pretty good players—better than nothing."

"But not better than the Second Eleven!" said Temple tartly.

"So that's your little game, is it?" said Bolsover major fiercely. "You were trying yesterday to bag our match, and now you think you've got a chance. Well, you're jolly well not going to do it! Tom Merry's team is going to play us!"

Tom Merry's eyes gleamed a little. Bolsover major was a big fellow, and the bully of the Remove. His dictatorial manner had the effect of getting Tom Merry's back up at once. Besides, he had already agreed to play Temple; and above all, he had no desire whatever to play a scratch team composed of fellows whom Wharton did not consider good enough to put into his eleven.

"Excuse me!" said Tom. "I've arranged to play the Second Eleven now."

"But it's a Remove fixture!" exclaimed Bolsover excitedly.

"Yes, but the Remove team have chosen to walk off and leave us to ourselves. I consider it very decent of Temple to get us out of the difficulty. And, to be quite candid, we don't feel inclined to play a scratch team," said Tom Merry bluntly. "And the Remove haven't treated us so well that we need consider their feelings in the matter, so far as I can see."

"Wathah not. Personally, I should wefuse to play the Wemove at all."

"Same here!" said Blake warmly. "We don't blame you fellows if you know nothing about Wharton's conduct; but the Remove fixture is off—very much off!"

"No more Remove for me!" said Lowther.

Bolsover major snorted. He did not feel under the necessity of wasting much politeness on visitors. But he could see that Tom Merry & Co. were determined.

"Oh, have your own way!" he snapped.

"Thanks!" said Tom, unmoved. "We mean to."

Bolsover major stalked away angrily. The Remove fellows discussed the matter in excited tones. Wharton's amazing conduct in vanishing with his eleven just before the match astounded them. They could not think of any possible explanation, and they had to admit that the visitors had plenty of reason for getting ratty about it. It was no wonder that they declined to have anything more to do with the Remove. Besides that, everybody but Bolsover major admitted that the Remove could not raise a second team anything like fit to meet St. Jim's. It was not to be expected of a junior Form. A team composed of players like Bunter, Fisher T. Fish, and Lord Mauleverer would have turned the match into a farce. Anyway, the St. Jim's fellows evidently had a full right to please themselves, and they were going to do it.

Several of the Remove fellows spoke to Tom Merry, telling him they were sorry for what had happened, and explaining that they couldn't imagine for a moment what Wharton meant by it.

Tom Merry received their apologies cheerily enough. He was quite content to play the Greyfriars Second Eleven instead of the Remove, though he resolved that the Greyfriars fixture should be scratched off the St. Jim's list after that day.

Temple, Dabney & Co. lost no time. The Second Eleven were called together. Most of them who were not in the secret of Temple's little plot were astounded at the state of affairs. But they rejoiced. They all agreed with Cecil Temple in his desire to "bag" the Remove match with St. Jim's, and now, unexpectedly, a golden opportunity had offered. Hobson of the Shell, remembering the reception of his kind offer to Harry Wharton the previous evening, chuckled aloud with glee. And the Second Eleven, composed of five fellows of the Shell and six of the Fourth, were soon in their flannels, ready for the game.

And the St. Jim's team were glad enough to get playing, too. At all events, their journey would not now be in vain. Tom Merry tossed with Temple for choice of innings, and won the toss and elected to bat. Cecil Temple led his merry men into the field in great spirits. Temple grinned cheerfully at Fry as he tossed the ball for the first over.

"What price the Remove now?" he murmured.

Fry chuckled.

"I wonder where they are?" he murmured.

"Goodness knows!" said Temple cheerily. "Wherever they are they won't be here again till this match is over, and we've done them—done them fairly in the eye! This is where the Remove sings small."

And certainly it looked like it.

THE NINTH CHAPTER
Getting It in the Neck!

HARRY WHARTON stood in the crowded car, his brows deeply corrugated. The other fellows were furious. But there seemed no help for it. The car was still tearing on, the chauffeur choosing the loneliest roads. Bob Cherry, in desperation, had made an attempt to open the door, only to make the discovery that both doors were locked.

The car slowed a little as a policeman was sighted at a corner, and Johnny Bull smashed

out the side windows with his elbow, with a desperate determination to attract attention and interference. The policeman stared at the car as the glass came rattling out in fragments, but it raced by before he could do more than stare. The juniors, looking back, saw him run into the road, looking after the car. Then he vanished round a bend of the road.

And the car rushed on.

The juniors had ceased to count the miles now. They knew they were a tremendous distance from Greyfriars, and that was enough. It was close upon noon now, and still they were shut up in the car, helpless as rats in a trap.

They hardly dared to think of what was happening at Greyfriars. The St. Jim's fellows arriving at Courtfield, and finding no vehicle and nobody to meet them; arriving at Greyfriars and finding that the home team had vanished without a single word of explanation!

For there was no further doubt, of course, that all this was a trick of Temple & Co., and that the St. Jim's party knew nothing at all of the telegram that had been sent from Rylcombe in Tom Merry's name.

What would the visitors think? What could they think? That they had been deliberately slighted, at least. Probably they had gone away again, angry, and determined to have nothing more to do with the Greyfriars Remove. Of course, Wharton could explain to them afterwards. But the match was hopelessly sacrificed. Or perhaps the Saints were playing Temple & Co., if that was the intended outcome of the Fourth-Form plot.

Wharton gritted his teeth at the thought.

But what was to be done?

To stop the chauffeur by force was to invite the wreck of the car. But the juniors were so furious by this time that they were almost prepared to risk that.

The smashing of the car windows had let in air, but it was insufferably hot in the packed car. Bright sunshine was streaming down upon them. The juniors perspired and grunted and growled. When they passed through villages they shouted out to the passers in the streets, and there were many stares after the car with broken windows, packed with yelling schoolboys.

But the car fled so fast that interference was impossible. And the cunning chauffeur avoided towns, picking unfrequented roads with a thorough knowledge of the country. Probably the people who stared at the car regarded the affair as a "joy-ride" of an unusually rowdy description. That a chauffeur was really driving off a car crammed with schoolboys against their will was not likely to occur to anyone. The smashed windows and the shouting probably caused the party to be set down as a particularly rowdy and noisy gang of joy-riders.

And still the car sped on its way.

"Something's got to be done!" said Harry Wharton, at last. "We shall be laughed to death at Greyfriars if we let this go on."

"The Fourth will cackle over it," said Bob Cherry lugubriously. "They've fairly done us in the eye. I never imagined that Temple had it in him to jape us like this."

"It's more than a jape!" growled Tom Brown. "I call it a dirty trick. But they'll say we were funks for not forcing the chauffeur to stop."

"The beast won't!" said Nugent. "So long as he's going fast, and keeps hold of the wheel, it would wreck the car if we tackled him."

Vernon-Smith's jaw set squarely.

"We're going to stop this, at any risk!" he said. "I'd rather risk my neck a dozen times than be made a fool of like this. Look here, I can drive a car! I've driven my father's car dozens of times. If we can get that brute under I can take the car back to Greyfriars. We're going to stop him!"

"I say, Smithy——"

"I agree with Smithy," said Wharton desperately. "Hang the risk! He's going to stop, or we'll all be smashed up together!"

"But——" began Bulstrode.

"'Nuff said!" snapped the Bounder. "Besides, I've thought of a dodge."

He took out his pocket-knife. It was a combination knife, with all sorts of tools in it. Vernon-Smith opened the gimlet that was



Mud and slime smothered the unhappy chauffeur as he stood up in the ditch. "Groogh! Ugh! Gug-gug-gug!" he spluttered.

attached to it. The other fellows stared at him in surprise and some alarm.

"What the dickens are you going to do?" asked Bob.

"I'm going to give him this in the back of the neck!" said Vernon-Smith grimly. "If he doesn't like punctures in the neck he'll stop."

"My hat!"

"Draw it mild, old man!"

"Rats!" said the Bounder. He thrust himself forward through the broken window, as close as he could get to the man in the driving-seat. The chauffeur gave a start as he felt a sharp point thrust against his neck.

"Stop!" said Vernon-Smith quietly.

"Can't, sir!"

"Very well; how do you like that?"

"Oh! Ow! Take that thing away!" gasped the man, as Vernon-Smith drove the sharp gimlet at his neck with a hard and steady pressure. "You—you're hurting me!"

"I mean to hurt you," said the Bounder coolly. "If you know what's good for you you'll stop before I get to the jugular vein."

"Smithy——"

"Cheese it!" said Vernon-Smith. "I'm running this show now. I'm going to make him stop, or kill him! He can take his choice."

The chauffeur was twisting wildly in his seat, but he still drove on. The pressure of the gimlet on his neck must have been excruciatingly painful. The skin was not yet broken, but now the gimlet pierced it, and there was a trickle of red. The juniors looked on in grim silence.

"Stop it!" shrieked the driver. "Do you want the car to be wrecked?"

"I'll risk that!"

"Take that thing away, or I'll run the car into the hedge."

"Right-ho! Go ahead!"

The threat was idle, of course. Vernon-Smith knew that. But the car wobbled wildly as the man strove to twist himself out of the Bounder's reach. But that he could not do. And the sharp gimlet was in his flesh now. And flesh and blood could not stand that.

"Stop it!" shrieked the man desperately. "I'll stop!"

"Stop first!" said the Bounder mercilessly, and he kept on the pressure of the gimlet.

The brakes jammed on. The car slowed, and stopped. The chauffeur's face was pale with pain. The juniors gave a shout as the car came to a standstill. They felt, perhaps, that the Bounder's method was worthy of a Red Indian; but they were glad enough to stop.

Vernon-Smith had solved the problem.

"Get down and open the doors," said Vernon-Smith quietly.

The man bounded out of his seat. His hand went up to his neck, and his fingers were tinged with red. He glared savagely at the Bounder through the motor-goggles. Vernon-Smith clambered through to the driver's seat.

"Hurrah!"

"Smithy's done the trick!" grinned Bob Cherry. "The rotter has got it fairly in the neck!"

The chauffeur was dabbing furiously at his damaged neck with a handkerchief. Now that the car was at a standstill the juniors scrambled through the broken windows to the road, head-first, caring nothing for the tearing of their clothes. Glad enough were the prisoners to stretch their legs on the road again after their long confinement. And as soon as they were out of the car they closed round the chauffeur, with grim looks. The hour of reckoning had come.

THE TENTH CHAPTER
On the Home Run!

"COLLAR him!"

"Bump him!"

"Rag him!"

"Squash him!"

Hands were laid on the chauffeur on all sides. His struggles were quite unavailing against so many. The juniors bumped him down in the road. His goggles were dragged off, and, to the surprise of the juniors, his beard came off with them. The face of a young man was revealed, and there was sufficient facial resemblance to Temple of the Fourth for the juniors to guess who the man was.

"You're Temple's cousin, I suppose?" said Wharton, looking down grimly at the man as he wriggled in the grasp of the juniors.

The chauffeur grinned faintly.

"Yes!" he gasped.

"And Temple put you up to this, of course?"

"No harm meant, sir. I understood that it was a schoolboy joke; that was how Cecil explained it to me," said Teddy Temple cheerfully. "Cecil told me you youngsters are always japing him in some way or other, and he wanted to get his own back. As he was willing to pay all the expenses, I didn't see why I shouldn't oblige him."

"Didn't you? Then we'll try to make you see," said Wharton. "I suppose the telegram I received this morning was sent by some friend of yours?"

"Can't say."

"Can't you? Bump him!"

Bump! bump! bump!

"Ow, ow! Don't! Yah! Stoppit!"

"Now perhaps you'll explain about that telegram," said Wharton.

"Ow, ow! All right! I sent one of my hands over to Rylcombe last night to send it!" groaned the unhappy Teddy. "Cecil paid for the whole thing, of course. There was no harm in it, you know."

"Do you know that we've been taken away just when a visiting team was coming to play us at Greyfriars?" demanded Wharton.

"Ow! I understood it was something of the sort!" gasped Teddy.

"Well, you've obliged your cousin, and now you're going to pay for it. We're going to borrow your car to go back to Greyfriars."

"Look here!" exclaimed Teddy, in alarm.

"I'm not going to trust my car in the hands of silly schoolboys!"

"How are you going to stop it?" grinned Wharton. "If you can fight eleven fellows you can stop it. Not otherwise."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you can't take my car!"

"Well, whether we can or not, we're going to. If anything happens to it, that's your look-out. Perhaps Temple will pay as he seems to be paying for things so liberally," said Wharton, with a chuckle. "Anyway, we're going to take it. But we're going to give you a lesson first."

"If—if I lend you the car, you'll take me back to Langham?" said Teddy, alarmed. "I was going to take you back there later, of course."

"How far are we from Langham now?"

"About fifty miles."

"That makes it seventy to Greyfriars!" groaned Bob Cherry. "And it's half-past twelve now! We shall have a lot of time to play St. Jim's, if they're still there—I don't think!"

"I fancy they're still there," said the Bounder. "Temple will have managed to get them to play his rotten eleven somehow."

"We'll stop all that when we get back," said Harry. "We can make it a single-innings match, and play St. Jim's after all. As for this rotter, he can walk back to Langham, or find a train somehow. We're not going to take him in the car."

"No fear!"

The juniors were quite resolved upon that point. The unfortunate Teddy had stranded them, and now he was going to be stranded in his turn. It was only justice. But Teddy's expression showed that he did not like it. They were miles from any railway-station, and he had a long tramp before him before he could get a train to Langham. The matter was not working out according to Teddy's programme.

"Look here," exclaimed Teddy. "I'll give in! Only let me come in the car. I've got to get back to the works, you know, and—and——"

"You should have thought of that before, my pippin! You can get back any way you like—excepting in the car. And you're going to be jolly well ragged first! There's a ditch quite handy—that's a bit of luck! Shove him in!"

"Hold on! Leggo! Stoppit! I say—— Yaroooh! Grooh!"

Splash!

There was a deep ditch, with a couple of feet of water and a good foot of mud, beside the lane. Teddy Temple disappeared from sight as the juniors hurled him in. He came into view again, puffing and blowing, and looking a most deplorable object. Mud and slime smothered him from head to foot. And the scent he brought up with him from the depths of the ditch was not pleasant.

"Groogh! Ugh! Gug-gug-gug!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The unhappy Teddy tried to scramble out; but half a dozen boots shoved him back again—not gently—and he squashed into the ditch again.

"You'll stay there till we're gone," said Wharton coolly. "It's our turn now, you know."

"Grooh-hooh!"

"All aboard!" said Vernon-Smith.

The juniors scrambled into the car. Teddy Temple stood half buried in the ditch, blinking at them through smothering mud. His aspect as he stood in the ditch was so extraordinary that the juniors yelled with laughter as they packed themselves into the car. But Teddy did not laugh—he gurgled and gasped.

Bob Cherry waved his hand to the muddy Teddy as Vernon-Smith set the car in motion.

"Good-bye, Bluebell!" he chortled.

"Groogh!"

"Have a nice walk home, won't you?"

"Groogh!"

The car buzzed away.

The unhappy Teddy scrambled out of the ditch and stared muddily after the retreating car. Teddy had certainly come out at the little end of the horn—as Fisher T. Fish of the Remove would have expressed it. His journey home to Langham in his present state would be the reverse of joyful.

But Harry Wharton & Co. did not waste any further thoughts upon Teddy. They had the car in their hands at last, and Vernon-Smith was a good driver. He did not tear

along as Teddy had done, but he kept the car at a good speed, going back on the road they had travelled, and slowed down as he spotted a milestone.

"Six miles to Grassmere," he said, glancing back at the juniors in the car. "What's the time, Wharton?"

"Just on one o'clock."

"Good egg! The express passes through Grassmere at one-thirty," said the Bounder. "From there it's two hours to Courtfield Junction. I'll drive the car to Grassmere, leave it there, and we'll take the train."

"What about driving to Greyfriars?" asked Nugent.

The Bounder shook his head.

"Not enough juice, as Teddy would put it," he replied.

"Besides, the express would be quicker," said Wharton. "Smithy can't go racing along like a real chauffeur; a bobby would stop him soon enough. And this car will attract a lot of attention, with the windows broken. We don't want to be stopped and questioned, and made to waste time. Are you sure about the train at Grassmere, Smithy? I don't know anything about this part of the country."

"Quite sure. My pater came by that train last time he came to see me," said the Bounder. "Besides, I know the line."

"Then go ahead for Grassmere, and blow Langham!"

The car sped on again. Vernon-Smith drove into Grassmere, and stopped at the railway-station. There was ample time for the train. The juniors did not bother about the car. Leaving it standing in the road, they walked into the station. No doubt Teddy would recover it sooner or later. At all events, it was not their business to look after a car which had been used to kidnap them. If Teddy had to advertise for it, it would be something more for Temple of the Fourth to pay for, as Bob Cherry cheerfully remarked. Perhaps by the time the affair was finished with Temple would find it a very expensive jape. But that was Temple's affair—not theirs.

"My treat!" said the Bounder, as he took the tickets for the express. "It was my idea to take the train."

"Oh, rot!" said Wharton warmly. "I——"

"'Nuff said. It's my treat!"

And Smithy changed a fiver for the tickets, and they went on the platform, the Bounder refusing to listen to a word of protest. A few minutes later the juniors were in the express, dashing towards Courtfield Junction, with a two-hours' run before them.

"Courtfield at half-past three!" said Bob Cherry. "That means Greyfriars about four. Not much time for a cricket-match."

"Time to stop Temple's little game, anyway," said Johnny Bull.

"Yes, rather!"

"We may get in a single-innings match," said Wharton. "It keeps light late now, and, under the circumstances, the St. Jim's chaps will be willing to catch the latest train home. If we find them playing——"

"By Jove, we'll soon stop them!"

"No need to waste time talking to them," said Bob. "We'll just go for them bald-headed, and mop up the ground with them."

"Hear, hear!"

And during the long journey the Removites were considerably solaced by the prospect of going for the Fourth bald-headed, and mopping up the ground with them.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER
Not According to Plan!

TEMPLE, DARNEY & Co. were looking a little blue when the innings stopped at dinner-time.

The heroes of the Fourth had "squeezed out" the Remove, and had "wedged in" themselves. So far, all was successful. They had bagged the St. Jim's match, and the Remove team were somewhere miles away, quite off the scene. The programme had been carried out successfully up to that point.

But from the point the programme seemed in danger of collapse. For it had been Cecil Temple's plan to beat St. Jim's and thus show that the Second Eleven was really the proper team to play. And when afterwards the Removites recriminated on the subject

of the vanishing eleven, Temple would be able to say loftily:

"Well, we beat them! You couldn't have beaten them! But we did!"

That would have been a complete answer to the Remove, Temple considered. Only——

There was an "only."

For from the start of the match it was perfectly clear to all the spectators, and to the Second Eleven themselves for that matter, that they hadn't the remotest chance of beating St. Jim's.

Tom Merry & Co. were a big handful for the Remove eleven; and, though Temple never would admit it, the Remove eleven was far and away better than the Second Eleven.

It oughtn't to have been so—it was absurd that it should be so—and Temple never would confess that it was so; but the troublesome fact remained that so it was.

And the St. Jim's fellows, who would have given Harry Wharton & Co. the tussle of their lives, simply walked over Temple and his team.

Tom Merry and Noble—the Cornstalk, whom his comrades called Kangaroo—opened the innings. Fry and Dabney and Temple bowled to them in vain. The two batsmen knocked the bowling all over the field, and took as many runs as they chose, so to speak; and their wickets were never in danger, either from bowlers or fieldsmen.

They played for forty minutes, until there came a pause for the juniors' dinner; and in those forty minutes Tom Merry and Kangaroo had knocked up 55 runs, and looked as if they could knock up 55,000 more, for all Temple & Co. could do to stop them.

The two batsmen, still as fresh as paint, came off the field quite cheerfully and smilingly when the innings stopped for lunch.

The enraged Remove eleven rushed on the cricket-field, collared Temple, Dabney and Fry, and proceeded to bump them.

They could not help smiling. They had come over to Greyfriars expecting a hard-fought fight. They were having a walk-over, as easy as if they had been playing the Third or Second Form at St. Jim's. There were some good bats in Temple's team, but at bowling they were weak, and fielding they always neglected. And it looked as if they would not be batting at all, if St. Jim's chose to keep possession of the wickets for the rest of the day.

"Bai Jove, do they call this cwicket?" Arthur Augustus murmured to Tom Merry, as they walked towards the School House. "Wharton's team play a great deal bettah than this."

Tom Merry laughed.

"Well, it's amusing, anyway," he said. "We shan't want to finish the innings. I'll declare when we have a couple of hundred, and let them bat. If their batting is on a level with their bowling and fielding, we shall be finished in time to catch the early train home."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Extraordinary thing that Wharton hasn't turned up yet and hasn't sent word," Jack Blake remarked.

"Oh, blow Wharton!"

"Yaas, wathah! I wegard him as havin' acted as a wotten boundah, and I shall certainly wefuse to speak to him when he turns up!"

Tom Merry & Co. dined at the Remove table with cheerful faces. Temple, Dabney & Co. were not looking so cheerful; it was borne in upon their minds that they would not beat St. Jim's. The match would count as a defeat for Greyfriars; and when the fellows learned of the trick Temple had played on the vanished team they would be furious. If the Second Eleven won handsomely, there was Temple's excuse ready-made. But a crushing defeat was very different.

What would the fellows say to the junior who had cleared off a winning team by a trick, and played a losing game in their absence? It was not a pleasant reflection for Cecil Temple. Not only the Remove, but his own Form, and the rest of Greyfriars would be heavily down upon him. The one thing that could justify to any extent his action was a victory. And already he realised that a victory was beyond the limits of possibility.

So while Harry Wharton & Co., many miles away, were chafing under the success of Temple's trick, Temple himself was not feeling very happy about it. And Dabney and Fry and Scott and Smith minor, who were in the secret, looked very lugubrious. They had warmly approved of Temple's little plot, but the way it was working out made them very much less satisfied. After a hopeless licking, what would they be able to say in their defence?

Bolsover major and the rest of the Remove were grinning. If Bolsover major had played St. Jim's with a fag-end team of Removites, the result could not very well have been more deplorable. And the Removites were not sorry to see the Fourth and the Shell knocked sky-high by the visitors. It served them right for bagging the match, so Bolsover major declared, and the other fellows agreed with him.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER
Wharton Turns Up!

"Over!"

The innings had restarted. Tom Merry and Kangaroo were at the wickets again, and Fry had bowled the first over. It added six runs to the St. Jim's score.

The St. Jim's batsmen who were waiting their turn stood in a grinning group before the pavilion, looking on. They could not help grinning. Their opponents were so far below their weight that they knew that half the bats would not be wanted. The match was a walk-over, and it would make the fellows yell when they were told about it at St. Jim's. Their anger at the supposed slight from the Remove team had quite faded away now. They could not be angry and amused at the same time, and they could not help being amused at this match.

Temple's team was no good, and that was all there was about it. As a matter of fact, Cecil Temple's influence in the junior cricket club, and his position as skipper of the Second Eleven, were largely due to his wealth and

aristocratic connections, and not to his abilities as a cricketer or as a captain. Hobson of the Shell would have made a much better captain; and certainly he would not have selected a poorer team. Temple's powers chiefly lay in the line of swanking, and his idea of forming a team was to put his own friends into it, or fellows who were extremely civil to him. And his idea of cricket practice was to bat to an admiring audience. With such a skipper, the Second Eleven was not likely to do much. Against a strong team like Tom Merry & Co. they simply crumpled up.

Their fielding was "rotten" and good fielding was wanted now. Their bowling was weak, and only very good bowlers could have touched the St. Jim's wickets. When they came to batting, probably they would do much better. But they would not come to batting until the St. Jim's fellows chose to let them. Coker of the Fifth, who was looking on, remarked to Potter and Greene that St. Jim's could keep their wickets up for a month of Sundays if they chose; and, for once, Coker's chums agreed that he knew what he was talking about. Indeed, all the onlookers were grinning at the poor show made by the Second Eleven.

Tom Merry was out at last, trying for a fifth run when there was only time for four; but he had done it carelessly, with the idea of giving another batsman a show. It was not worth while keeping his wicket up when he knew that all the eleven would not be wanted.

Jack Blake took his place, and knocked the bowling all over the field. The St. Jim's score stood at 100 when Hobson, of the Shell, almost the only good man in the home side, caught Kangaroo out. Two wickets down for 100.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy came in to join Blake. And the swell of St. Jim's showed that, in spite of his elegant ways, he was a hard hitter. D'Arcy and Blake between them brought the score up to 150, when Blake was bowled by a lucky ball from Fry.

By that time the Second Eleven had been given so much leather-hunting that it looked as if they would have no breath left for batting, if they were ever allowed to bat. Unless Tom Merry declared, certainly they would never bat at all. But as Tom wanted a win, he had decided to declare at the round figure of 200. Two hundred, as he calculated, could easily be knocked up by four o'clock, and then the home team could be polished off at the wickets in time for the visitors to catch the six o'clock train home.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and Figgins brought the score up to 200 between them. As a matter of fact, it still wanted five minutes to four when the board showed 200. The batsmen were well set, and could have gone on for hours. Temple, Dabney & Co. were gasping in the field. They felt that that dreadful innings would be the death of them if it lasted much longer.

"I'll declare after this over," said Tom Merry, when a four from Figgins had made up the required 200. There were still three more balls to the over.

Fry bowled again.

Just as he delivered the ball, a crowd of fellows, with faces red from running, came streaming in at the school gates.

The crowd round the cricket-field did not observe them for the moment, all their attention being given to the game, so the return of Harry Wharton & Co. passed for the moment unnoticed.

Figgins had knocked away the ball, and was running with D'Arcy when the new arrivals came running upon the cricket-ground. There was a shout as they were seen.

"Hallo!" roared Bolsover major. "Here they are! Where have you idiots been?"

"Faith, and what do you mean intoirely?" bawled Micky Desmond.

Temple's jaw dropped.

"The Remove! That idiot Teddy—he's let them get back! Oh, crikey!"

Harry Wharton & Co. did not speak a word. They were red and breathless from having run almost without a pause from Courtfield. But they had breath enough left to take summary vengeance upon Temple, Dabney & Co.

They rushed on the cricket-field.

There was a gasp of astonishment from Tom Merry & Co., a yell from the Greyfriars crowd. The returned eleven did not heed.

They collared Temple and Dabney and Fry, and dragged them over and bumped them in the grass.

The fieldsmen who were not in the secret of Temple's plot gathered round angrily, and piled in to help their leaders, but they could not stand against the angry and vengeful Removites.

Temple, Dabney & Co., and their followers, were knocked right and left.

Tom Merry and his comrades stood looking on open-mouthed. Never had they beheld such a scene upon a cricket-field before.

"Well, this beats the giddy band!" gasped Figgins, as he came off from the wicket. "I suppose this will be an unfinished match—what?"

"Looks like it," grinned Blake. "They're Wharton's team, and they've come back. But what they're going for their own chaps for is a giddy mystery."

"Must be pottay, deah boys. Pewwaps it's sunstwoke."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it!" roared Figgins. "Pile in! Hurrah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But the Greyfriars crowd had swarmed on the field, and the combatants were dragged apart. Temple, Dabney & Co., red and dishevelled, struggled away from their assailants. For the moment both parties had forgotten the St. Jim's cricketers, who were looking on.

"What on earth are you up to, you fellows?" roared Bolsover major.

"Where have you been?"

"What does it mean intoirely?"

"Ask that rotter!" panted Wharton, pointing to the dishevelled Temple. "He's got us away by a trick, and we've only just got back, and found him playing our match!"

"Great Scott!"

"Look here!" gasped Temple. "Trick or not, we're playing the match now, and you fags can clear off!"

"Catch us! Do you hear, you fellows? Temple sent me a telegram, signed with Tom Merry's name, and got us away, to bag our match while we were gone."

"My hat!"

"What a rotten trick!"

"Oh, that's the limit!"

"Kick 'em off the field!" shouted Bob Cherry.

"Hurrah! Kick 'em out!"

All the Remove piled in with a will. Temple, Dabney & Co. disappeared from the cricket-ground with a crowd of boots behind them. Hobson and the rest, who were not in the secret—they were in the secret now, of course—retired in disgust. Probably they were not sorry that so hopeless a match had been interrupted. An unfinished match was better than the terrific licking that had only too clearly been in store for them.

Harry Wharton ran towards the pavilion. Four o'clock was striking. Tom Merry & Co. met the captain of the Remove with grim looks.

"I'm awfully sorry, you fellows," Wharton said breathlessly. "You must have thought we were acting in a rotten way, in not being here to meet you."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Well, as a matter of fact, we did," said Tom Merry bluntly. "Temple offered us a match with the Second Eleven, to save wasting the day, and we accepted. And after the way you didn't play us yourselves, I think it's pretty cool of you to clear them off the ground in this way!"

"Let me explain. Look at that!"

Wharton held out the telegram. Tom Merry stared at it in amazement.

"That's my name signed to it," he said.

"Exactly! And we thought it had come from you."

"But—but—— I don't understand——"

"It was a jape of those rotters!" Wharton explained breathlessly. "They wanted to bag our match. Temple sent a man last night to Rylcombe to send this wire—we've found it out since—and had a motor-car at Langham waiting for us. We were carried off—over seventy miles away!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Well, I'm blessed if I've ever heard anything of that sort before!" ejaculated Tom Merry. "Then you thought I'd asked you to meet us in Langham?"

"Of course—from the telegram. We

thought it rather queer, but as the wire said you'd be waiting for us, we thought we'd better go. And then we were whisked off in the car—and it was a long time before we could make the chauffeur stop—and then we were at Grassmere, seventy miles from here!" Wharton panted. "You see now!"

"I see. Of course, you were not to blame, under the circs.," said Tom, cordially enough. "I'm sorry you've had such a trick played on you. To my mind, it's rather beyond the limits of a joke."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"We got back as quickly as we could. We guessed these rotters had bagged the match, somehow. But we've stopped that soon enough!" added Wharton grimly.

Tom Merry looked somewhat perplexed.

"That's all right," he said. "It's a queer business. But what's to be done now? You don't want us to go on playing Temple's team!"

"No fear!"

"But"—Tom Merry glanced up at the clock-tower—"it's turned four. Are you thinking of playing, all the same?"

"If you fellows are willing," said Harry. "We can make it a single-innings match, and I think there will be time. It would be rotten if we're done out of the match altogether. It's rotten for you chaps to have your match mucked up like this by Greyfriars fellows. But you see that we personally were not to blame."

"Quite so! That's all right!"

"Yaas, wathah! As a mattah of fact, it was vewy polite of you to go all the way to Langham, on the pwesumption that Tom Mewwy had asked you to meet us there, deah boy!"

"Well, shall we make the best of it?" asked Wharton. "If you fellows wouldn't mind going by a later train, there's time for a single-innings match."

"Right-ho!" said Tom Merry heartily.



There was a yell of relief from Greyfriars as Harry Wharton brought off a brilliant catch. The Remove had won by a single run!

"All serene! We're ready when you like."

"It won't take us five minutes to get ready."

"But, I say, are you fit to play, after what you've been through?"

"Fit as fiddles; and you've been playing already, too, so that will make it square," said Wharton, laughing.

"All serene! We'll make a match of it yet, then."

"Good egg! We'll be ready in a jiffy."

And Harry Wharton & Co., if not ready in a jiffy, were ready in a few jiffies, and they came out quickly on the field. Temple, Dabney & Co. had vanished, to hide their diminished heads. And a crowd of fellows, buzzing with excited discussion of the strange adventures of the vanished eleven, thronged round the field to watch the performance of Harry Wharton & Co. against St. Jim's.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER
A Fight to a Finish!

HARRY WHARTON had won the toss, and the Remove went in to bat, Wharton opening the innings with Bob Cherry.

And the St. Jim's fellows, if they had expected to find the Remove team anything like the unfortunate Second Eleven, soon had their eyes opened.

Fatty Wynn, the champion junior bowler of St. Jim's, delivered the first over to Harry Wharton. The over brought eight runs to the Remove, which was a good beginning. And Tom Merry remarked to Blake that the Remove would be a hard nut to crack.

And Tom Merry was right.

After the excitement of their adventures that day, the Remove cricketers did not seem at all flustered or out of form. Indeed, if the rest of the team required time to recover, they had it, for Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry held possession of the wickets for a long time, in spite of the efforts of Fatty Wynn and Blake and Kangaroo in turn with the ball, and of the keenness of the fieldsmen.

Fifty runs had been scored when Wharton's wicket fell to Fatty Wynn, and the Greyfriars crowd cheered him as he went out. Peter Todd took his place, and Peter, who was an extremely simple-looking youth, was not expected by the field to stand long against Fatty Wynn. But Peter, as his Form-fellows knew, was not nearly so simple as he looked. He proved to be a mighty man with his hands. His drives were tremendous when he had a chance, and the score went up by leaps and bounds under his hard hitting.

And when Blake clean bowled him at last, Vernon-Smith came in, and the Bounder had seldom been in better form. Fatty Wynn, masterly bowler as he was, exhausted himself in vain against the Bounder's wicket. Vernon-Smith, as cool as a cucumber, put "paid" to every attempt to dislodge him. And the figures went up.

"Bai Jove!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy remarked, when the field crossed over once more. "This is somethin' like cwicket. These boundahs can play!"

"They can!" grinned Tom Merry. "We shall have all our work cut out to beat them, my son. But we're going to beat them!"

"Oh, yaas!"

But it was clear that the Remove would require some beating. Bob Cherry was caught out by Tom Merry in the slips, and Nugent, who took his place, was caught and bowled by Fatty Wynn. The Remove were four down, but the score was 100.

The Bounder was still going strong. Penfold, who joined him, had bad luck, his wicket going down for 6; and Bulstrode fared worse still, being caught out for a "duck's egg." But the Remove looked cheerful enough over those losses. They felt that they could afford them. The Bounder, with Mark Linley at the other end, was still batting away like a Bradman. At 130 Mark Linley was bowled by the redoubtable Fatty, who received a wildly enthusiastic thump on the shoulder from his chum Figgins that nearly doubled him up. Tom Brown came in, and added 9 before he was stumped. Eight down! The Bounder and Johnny Bull were batting, and adding runs every minute.

Tom Merry & Co., tough as they were, were given enough leather-hunting to more than satisfy them.

"Get that chap out, or I'll boil you!" said

Tom Merry genially, as Fatty Wynn went on to bowl against the Bounder once more.

Fatty Wynn grinned, and did his best. Whether he was afraid of being boiled or not, certainly he did remarkably well in that over. The Bounder added half a dozen more runs, and then his middle stump was whisked out of the ground.

"Bravo, Fatty!" yelled the field.

"Last man in!"

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the dusky and serene Nabob of Bhanipur, was last man in. And there were loud shouts of "Go it, Inky!" "Pile in, Snowball!" And the dusky junior grinned and piled in.

But Fatty Wynn was very dangerous now. The score stood at 146 when Johnny Bull's leg stump was whipped out of the ground as clean as a whistle, before Inky had had much time to show what he could do.

"Inky," said Wharton solemnly, as the visitors came off the field, "you've got to bowl as you never bowled before! If you don't perform hat-tricks by the dozen we'll bleach you, and spoil your lovely complexion!"

"The hat-trickfulness shall be terrific, my esteemed chum."

"And you, Browney—you're our other tower of strength in the bowling line. If you don't take the wickets, we'll—we'll make frozen mutton of you!"

The New Zealander grinned.

"Depend on me to do my best. I've never felt in better form."

Harry Wharton led his followers into the field. If there was time to finish the match, he had high hopes of the result. He knew the hitting powers of Tom Merry & Co., but in Inky and Tom Brown he had two bowlers who were really marvellous.

And they did not disappoint him, though they surprised the visitors. From the first over it was clear that this was not to be anything like batting against Temple, Dabney, & Co.

Tom Merry opened the innings with Kangaroo, as before. Tom Merry had knocked up six runs when the New Zealander found his middle stump. And the Saints looked very grave as their skipper came out with only six runs to his credit.

Hat-tricks seemed to be at a discount, but the bowling was first-class. Neither Tom Brown nor Inky provided the much-desired three in an over, but they took wickets in very good style. Figgins was much surprised at being dismissed for twelve, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was simply astounded when Tom Brown bowled him first ball.

But the Kangaroo was making a splendid stand, and the Cornstalk kept his end up well against the bowling of the New Zealand junior. Kerr, at the other end, added fifteen runs before he fell. Lowther added twenty. But Kangaroo was scoring all the time.

Five down for 70!

Fatty Wynn was the next victim. He added only six. But when Redfern joined the Cornstalk, the fur began to fly again. And both Tom Brown and Inky found that they could not touch the wickets. The score had passed the hundred when Kangaroo was caught out by Mark Linley. Seven down for 102.

Another man down—and 115 runs. Another—with the figures on the board at 130. Jack Blake was last man in. Sixteen wanted to tie—seventeen to win! And the light still good. Many eyes were turned anxiously to the sky. But for twenty minutes yet, at least, the light was good enough, and in twenty minutes there was time for the great match to be won and lost.

Jack Blake was at the top of his form. He started the innings with a four, following that up with a couple of twos and a three, which brought Redfern to the batting end. Five wanted to tie—six to win! Plenty of light for that. There was no danger now that the match would be an unfinished one. The innings had been fast and furious from the start, and it was finishing in keen excitement. No more for the over; but in the next, with Tom Brown bowling to Redfern, there came a two—and then another two. The St. Jim's figures stood at 145, and another hit would do it.

The excitement was intense now.

Tom Brown took a grip on the round red ball. That ball, he knew, would probably do it, and he sent it down with all his skill in it.

Clack!

Redfern's bat gleamed and met the ball, and it fled on its journey, and the batsmen were running.

But someone else was running, too. It was Harry Wharton! And he was running with his eyes on the sailing ball—running like lightning—and his hand was ready, and the ball came down, settling, like a bird into its nest, in the palm of the Remove captain, and there was a yell of breathless relief from Greyfriars.

"How's that?"

Wharton held up the ball.

"Out!"

Greyfriars Remove had won the match by a single run!

Harry Wharton & Co. saw the St. Jim's fellows off to Courtfield in great spirits. It had been a close finish—very close—but the Remove had won. And in their delight at the great victory, they felt that they could afford to forgive Temple, Dabney & Co. for their trick. And they forgave them accordingly. And that evening there were great rejoicings in the Remove over the famous victory of the vanished eleven.

THE END

Parables and Parodies

By MONTY LOWTHER

(Of the St. Jim's Shell Form.)

GUSSY'S SARTORIAL SOLO

("I'll Sing Thee Songs of Araby.")

I'll sing thee songs of flannelette
  And tales of fair cashmeah!
For when the wethah's cold and wet
Theah's nothin' beats good flannelette
  For cosy undahweah!
Take my advice, you chaps, and get
  It now, while wintah's heah!

I'll sing thee songs of yellow spats
  And tales of patent shoes.
I have a tip, deah boys, and that's
Be vewy careful of yoah spats,
  Which colowing you choose!
The coloahs always match yoah hats,
  Just plain and simple hues.

I'll sing thee songs of ovahcoats
  And tales of silken scarves.
The fellah who on beauty dotes
Will nevah let his ovahcoats
  Come down below his calves.
And if you follow out these notes
  You don't do things by halves.

NON-STOP SKIMPOLE

("The Brook.")

I come from haunts of Colney Hatch
To lecture fellows daily;
They call me names like "bandersnatch,"
But still my chin wags gaily.
I jaw from morn till night, I do;
My talk is bright and clever,
For men may come, and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

THE FATE OF A CAKE

("Bridge of Sighs.")

Take it up tenderly,
  Lift it with care,
Fashioned so slenderly,
  Beautiful, rare.
Made by a baker-man,
  Flavoured just right;
At such a cake a man
  Screams with delight.

Oh, all ye deities!
  Buck up, you men!
Waiting for tea it is
  In Study Ten.
The cake of a million, it
  Calls forth our lust;
Make yourselves ill on it—
  Eat till you bust.

Do not stand back, you men;
  On, Tommy, on!
Show us your acumen—
  Dash it, it's gone!
Some beast has shifted it,
  Raisins and all;
Trimble has lifted it;
  We'll have tea in Hall!

LUMLEY-LUMLEY'S LAMENT

("Humpty-Dumpty.")

Lumley-Lumley sat on a wall;
Lumley-Lumley had a great fall;
All the king's horses and all the king's men
Would be shocked by the words that old Lumley used then.



PUTTY'S PRICELESS PRANK!



By
OWEN CONQUEST

THE FIRST CHAPTER
A Trade Secret

"EXCUSE me, young gent!"

Putty Grace of the Fourth looked around and stared blankly.

It was a half-holiday at Rookwood. Usually there was a football match in progress on a "halfer," but on this occasion there was a vacant date. Consequently the members of the junior eleven were free to disport themselves in any way they fancied.

And most of the juniors fancied a visit to Watson's Mammoth Circus, which was paying a three-day visit to Coombe. Jimmy Silver and Co., together with Mornington, Erroll, Conroy, Rawson, Putty Grace, and a dozen other juniors, had decided to attend the opening afternoon of the circus, and had walked down to Coombe for that purpose.

Putty Grace, of Rookwood School, has an absorbing passion for practical joking, but never has this propensity proved so amusing as in this uproariously funny story.

Having exhausted the wild beasts and the side-shows, the juniors turned their attention to a large tent bearing a notice:

Three Shows Daily.
PROFESSOR BAMBOOZAL
(Of World Fame).
MYSTERY!
MESMERISM!
MIRTH!

The notice went on to inform the community generally that this amazing exhibition could be witnessed for the perfectly ridiculous sum of sixpence. Moreover, said the notice, those who were impressed by Professor Bamboozal, of world fame, could have their fortunes told by the same enterprising gentleman for another shilling.

"Looks all right," grinned Jimmy Silver, having read the notice. "Let's go in, you men."

"Bound to be a swindle," yawned Mornington. "But we're here to be swindled, anyway. Lead on, Macduff!"

The fellows immediately crowded around the entrance, and fished sixpences from their ample pockets to put in the professor's still more ample pockets.

Except Putty Grace.

Putty was a soft-hearted junior with an absorbing passion for practical jokes. Japes of all kinds were the breath of life to Putty. But he had a very generous nature, and just as he was about to follow Jimmy into the tent, he caught sight of a young lady in nurse's uniform, holding a collecting-box. She was collecting money on behalf of the Coombe Cottage Hospital.

Putty immediately unearthed a handful of coppers and dropped them into her box,

receiving as his reward a grateful smile which quite exhilarated him. And it was as he was about to go back to the professor's tent that the voice addressed him.

"Excuse me, young gent!"

Putty pulled up and stared at his interlocutor. The man who had spoken was a tall, melancholy person with broad-flowing moustachios. He was dressed in a faded riding-habit, and appeared to have had his last shave about the time of the Franco-Prussian war. A generous odour of spirits oozed from him.

Putty stared at him.

"Speaking to me?" he inquired.

"Yes, young gent. Were you about to go into the show run by Professor Bamboozal?"

"Eh?" ejaculated Putty, surprised. "Yes, I was. Why?"

"Then I wonder if you would mind 'aving a word with me on the quiet?" said the tall man.

Without giving Putty a chance to say whether he would mind or not, the tall man with the moustache led the way to the back of the tent. Putty followed, very mystified.

"Now, young sir," said the tall man, very secretively, "would you like to earn a ten-bob note?"

"What?"

"I want somebody to do me a service," he explained. "There's a ten-bob note waiting for whoever does me a little favour."

Putty blinked at him.

"Suppose you explain," he suggested. "I shall know then what you want."

"Well, I'll speak plain to you, sir," said the man softly. "I'm Professor Bamboozal, and I do a great deal of 'ypnotism in my shows."

"A good deal of what?" articulated Putty.

"'Ypnotism," explained the professor. "I 'ypnotise a member of the audience and make him do all sorts o' laughable things."

"Oh, do you?"

"Yes. Now, I'll be quite frank with you," went on the professor uneasily. "My shows are—are—well, look 'ere, the bloke I 'ypnotise is in the game, so to speak. He pretends to be 'ypnotised, and he does everything I tells him. That's a trade secret, sir."

"Is it?" murmured Putty. "Rather a shady trade, I should think."

"Not a bit of it. The folk expect to be swindled, so what does it matter? They gets a good laugh out of it, even though they are doubtful whether the bloke is really 'ypnotised. Now, what I want you to do is this: when I ask a member of the audience to step up to the stage to be 'ypnotised, I want you to come forward."

"Oh!"

"I shall pretend to put the 'fluence on you, and then you'll do just whatever I tells you. And this 'ere ten-bob note will repay you for your trouble."

"You—you want me to pretend to be hypnotised?" ejaculated Putty.

"That's it," nodded the professor, eyeing Putty eagerly.

Putty's eyes glimmered. It was a bad sign. Whenever Putty's eyes began to glimmer, it meant that some kind of jape was forming in Putty's brain. And when Putty Grace thought out one of his extraordinary japes it was difficult to know where everything would end.

He drew a deep breath.

"I'm the very man you want," he said, turning to the professor.

"You'll do it?" cried the professor.

"Leave it to me."

"That's the way I like to 'ear you talk," smiled the professor genially. "You've got sense, you 'ave."

"But first of all," interrupted Putty, "take your ten-shilling note and shove it in that nurse's box over there."

He pointed to where the sister from the Cottage Hospital was still holding her collecting-box. The professor looked puzzled; but all the same he walked over and thrust a ten-shilling note through the slit in the top of the box.

"Is that what you want?" the professor asked as he came back

Putty grinned cheerfully.

"Good man," he said. "Now you can get on with your show as soon as you like. I'll back you up when the time comes."

"You're a toff, young gent," exclaimed the professor. "I won't ask you to do anything too ridic'lous. When I ask someone to step up on the stage, you come out before anyone else gets a chance. Don't forget."

"Leave it to me," grinned Putty.

The professor, evidently greatly relieved about something, strode away. Putty looked thoughtful for a moment, and then paid his sixpence and joined Jimmy Silver & Co. in the tent.

Soon afterwards the curtain went up, and Professor Bamboozal appeared and bowed to the applause of the audience.

The show had started.

THE SECOND CHAPTER

Putty Pulls It Off.

"HOORAY!"

"Go it, sir!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The professor was "going it." He was busy on his entertainment, which was, apparently, a mixture of mystery and mirth.

He had just produced a bowl of goldfish from a cigar, pulled mile upon mile of coloured ribbon from his top hat, and had wound up by squeezing no fewer than forty-two eggs from the very atmosphere itself.

A useful man to have about the home!

The professor beamed at the applause, and bowed to the audience.

"Ain't he a caution?" chortled Lovell. "Go it, professor!"

"The next item is the hypnotism," murmured Jimmy Silver. "This is where the professor breaks down."

"I don't know so much," chipped in Putty Grace seriously. "Some of these fellows are very clever, you know."

The Rookwood fellows chortled.

"Good old Putty!" murmured Lovell. "You'd better go up and let him try on you."

"I wouldn't mind."

"'Hem!"

"All very well to talk," interposed Mornington, a little sarcastically "Bet you you won't do it."

"Done!" cried Putty at once.

"Well, my hat!" murmured Jimmy Silver.



"I shall pretend to put the 'fluence on you," said the professor, "and then you'll do as I tell you. And this 'ere ten-bob note will repay you for your trouble."

"You're not going up there, you ass!"

"Why not?" demanded Putty. "If he can put the 'fluence on me, I'll believe in hypnotism."

"Let him go, Silver," said Mornington. "He won't look a bigger ass than usual. Impossible!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why, you fathead——" began Putty warmly.

"'Sh! The professor's beginning."

Professor Bamboozal had advanced to the front of the stage, and a beaming smile crept out from beneath his flowing moustache.

"Ladies *and* gentlemen," he said, emphasising the conjunction in true circus fashion, "I shall now give you an almost incredible hex'ibition of 'ypnotism. 'Aving asked one of your number to be kind enough to walk up on this 'ere stage, I shall proceed to mesmerise him, and make him do a number of innercent but laughable tricks. Now which one of you will come up on this 'ere stage? Don't all speak at once."

The audience did not all speak at once. They gazed solidly and immovably at the professor.

With one exception.

Putty Grace was upon his feet almost before the words had left the professor's mouth.

"I don't mind coming up, sir," he said.

The audience turned and stared at him. The professor beamed.

"Ladies and gentlemen," trumpeted the professor, "you see before you a yooth from one of England's greatest public schools, who hoffers to come up on this 'ere stage and be 'ypnotised. It is impossible for me, ladies and gentlemen, to 'ave bribed a Rookwood yooth to assist me in this little experiment. That will convince you that my powers are perfickly genooine. Step this way, sir."

There was loud applause from the audience as Putty walked self-consciously to the stage. Shrill Rookwood cheers and laughter followed in his wake.

"Good old Putty!"

"Be a good boy, Putty dear!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The professor solemnly shook hands with Putty Grace and told him to be seated while he put the 'fluence on him.

Putty sat down as directed. The professor stared at him in a terrifying fashion, and slowly moved his hands back and forth in front of Putty's eyes.

Then the professor straightened himself out, leaving Putty absolutely motionless in the chair.

"Ladies and gentlemen," declaimed the professor, "this lad is now under the 'fluence and entirely subject to my will." He turned to Putty. "Rise up!" he commanded majestically.

Putty rose up.

The audience waited breathlessly.

"You are a bulldog," said the professor.

"I am a bulldog," repeated Putty dazedly. "I am a——" He paused. "G-r-r-r!" he growled.

He dropped to his hands and knees, and prowled suspiciously about the stage. The audience grinned in wonderment.

"Good doggy," said the professor enticingly. "You shall have a bone in a minute. What do you say?"

"Woof-woof! G-r-r-r!" snarled Putty, eyeing the professor steadily.

Professor Bamboozal stared at Putty, and he became perceptibly more nervous.

He had intended that Putty should be a friendly bulldog, willing to do some canine tricks, and beg in a pretty manner for a bone. But Putty was not a friendly bulldog.

He seemed, in fact, to be a very unfriendly kind of dog indeed. He glared at the professor with an evil eye, and edged a little nearer his trouser-legs.

"Ahem!" gasped the professor. "Be quiet, Bonzo! Down, sir, down!"

"Go it, Putty!" yelled the Rookwooders. "Good dog, Putty."

Putty went it. He sniffed suspiciously for a moment and then shuffled towards his master on his hands and knees.

The professor retreated hastily.

"Ahem!" he choked. "You—you are not a dog, now. You are—what? Ow! Yarroooh!"

Putty had made a spring. The professor's information that he was now no longer a dog

fell on deaf ears. He clawed fiercely at the professor's trousers and leggings.

"G-r-r-r-r!" roared Putty ferociously. "Woof-woof! Grrh!"

The demented conjurer hopped frantically about the stage, dragging Putty with him. Loud howls of laughter rose from the audience, and the very tent rocked with mirth. Jimmy Silver & Co. sobbed feebly at the back of the tent.

"Leggo, you young fiend!" cried the professor. "You ain't a dog! You're a cat! A dear little pussy-cat! Yow-ow! Take 'im away from me. He's biting me."

"Oh, dear! Ha, ha, ha!" screamed the Rookwood juniors.

"Rescue!" gasped Jimmy Silver. "Pull that ass Putty away, you chaps."

The juniors charged up on the stage, but Putty dodged hurriedly as they made for him. Avoiding their grasp, he jumped down from the stage, tore through the audience, and disappeared by the exit at the back.

A general gasp followed him.

He had gone.

Jimmy Silver & Co. stared at each other. Unless the professor was a fraud, Putty Grace was still under the 'fluence.

The professor pulled himself together. He had only one wish in life—to get near Putty Grace with a dog-whip. He would show Putty whether he was a dog or not.

Jimmy turned to him abruptly.

"Look here," he said. "I know that fellow. He's got a turn for practical joking, and it wouldn't surprise me if this was one of his fatheaded jokes." He paused awkwardly. "I want to know," he added, "whether you really hypnotised him or not. Is he under the 'fluence, or is it just a joke?"

"Of course he was under the 'fluence," snapped the professor loudly. "Are you implying, my lad, that I'm an impostor?"

"Oh, crikey! Nunno, but——"

"Enough!" the professor said briskly. "Ladies and gentlemen, that concludes the entertainment. The next show is at seven-thirty. Admission sixpence. That is all. Good-afternoon."

Jimmy Silver & Co. wandered dazedly out of the tent. They looked at each other in blank astonishment as they left the circus.

"My hat!" murmured Jimmy Silver, breaking into a grin. "Did you ever see anything so funny!"

"Never!"

"Well, hardly ever!" amended Mornington. "I thought the fathead was japing, as usual; but it seems he was actually under the professor's will."

"Rather funny if he's still a dog when we get to Rookwood," chortled Lovell.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, rats!" said Jimmy uneasily. "Impossible."

And the juniors agreed that it was, indeed, impossible.

They were to discover that nothing was impossible to Putty Grace of Rookwood.

THE THIRD CHAPTER
Doggish!

PUTTY chuckled breathlessly.

He slowed up to an easy pace. The gates of Rookwood were in sight farther along Coombe Lane.

Evidently Putty was enjoying himself.

"That's the first bit off the account," he grinned. "The professor will be sorry he asked me to help in his swindles. Cheek!" exclaimed Putty indignantly. "Blessed nerve of the man to expect me to swindle people for a ten-bob note. Well, after the professor-man has dragged up to Rookwood to take the 'fluence off me, I should think he will be rather sorry he picked on me."

Putty paused to consider. Would his proposed jape be safe?

He had a natural distaste for the cane. Mr. Dalton was an athletic kind of master, and he put considerable force into his punishment. Putty had had some, and he wasn't tremendously keen on having any more!

On the other hand, Mr. Dalton could not possibly cane a fellow who was under the influence of hypnotism. The fellow would not know what he was doing—he would be the slave of another's will. Hence to cane him would be out of the question.

But would the professor reveal the fact that Putty was only shamming? Putty shook his head. To do that the professor would have

to confess that he was only shamming himself, and he was not likely to admit that he was a fraud.

"Safe as houses," grinned Putty. "I can have the time of my life; jape all Rookwood, pay out the professor for his cheek, and not bag a single stroke of the cane. Oh, happy day!"

Tubby Muffin was lounging at the gates. Not having the necessary coin of the realm to take him to the circus, he had spent his afternoon in a profitable fashion by rummaging through the studies of the fellows who had been more fortunate.

A smear of jam on his fat face showed that he had been successful in his search. He had a contented shiny look as Putty approached. A bag of tarts in Oswald's study, and a plum-cake from the study of the Fistical Four had taken the edge off his appetite. Mornington's cupboard had provided half a dozen doughnuts and a bottle of cordial, and the three Colonials had added a tin of sardines and some whipped cream walnuts. All was grist that came to Tubby's mill.

He blinked lazily at Putty.

"I say, Putty, old fellow——" he began, and then paused. Putty was sidling towards him in a somewhat alarming fashion.

"What's up with you?" asked Muffin, staring at Putty's movements.

Putty's lip curled in a ferocious snarl.

"Urrrrrgh! Groo! Woof-woof!"

Tubby Muffin jumped.

"Wha-at?" he ejaculated.

"G-r-r-r-r! Boof-woof-woof!"

"What on earth—— Yaroooh!"

Tubby's sentence ended in a fearsome yell. The humorist of the Fourth crouched for a moment, and then sprang upon Tubby with a mighty spring. His fingers clutched Tubby's shoulder, and his teeth closed upon Tubby's ear.

It was only a gentle bite. The Falstaff of the Fourth could not have been hurt by that gentle grip. But judging by the yell he gave, his ear had been bitten completely off.

"Whoooop! Gerroff! He's mad! Help! Putty's biting me! Dragimoff! Yaroooooh!"

Bulkeley and Neville of the Sixth were crossing the quad. They stopped as Tubby's

Rookwood's Reckless Rascal.

IN the year 1790 there came to Rookwood the most daring and defiant boy that ancient school has ever sheltered. To say that no feat requiring unlimited pluck was too risky for George Alfred Gower is not underestimating his foolhardiness. One word from any fellow would be enough to set this extraordinary boy attempting some mad venture—even at the risk of his life.

The routine of school-life, too, was not to Gower's taste and, needless to say, he was always in trouble with authority. But punishment seemed to have no effect on George Alfred—if anything, it made him more daring.

Not a building at Rookwood did this daredevil fail to scale from the outside, including the Modern house. But there came the day, however, when Gower went beyond the limit. It commenced in the Form-room when Mr. Hardy, the Classical House master, attempted to birch the unruly boy for not doing his prep. Without warning, Gower snatched the birch from the master's hand and dashed from the room. Mr. Hardy chased after him, knowing that the boy was intent on taking some foolish risk. He was not mistaken. On reaching the quad., the master was horrified to see Gower climbing up the ivy on the School House, with the birch gripped between his teeth.

Mr. Hardy quickly summoned the school porter to fetch a ladder, and this was reared against the School House. Meantime, Gower had reached the roof, while the juniors swarmed into the quad. to see the fun.

When Gower saw the master ascending the ladder after him, he made for the flag-mast and climbed up it, and to the cheers and laughter of the boys gathered in the quad., he tied the birch to the top.

Reaching the roof, Mr. Hardy hurried across to the reckless rascal, and eventually prevailed upon him to descend. One hour later, George Alfred Gower was being flogged with the very birch he had tied to the mast, and it was not long afterwards that Rookwood saw the last of him. His parents were politely requested to take him away.



Facing page 96

ROOKWOOD'S RECKLESS RASCAL !

fiendish howls awoke the echoes around Rookwood's time-honoured stones. The captain of the school looked blankly at his chum Neville. What was wrong!

Together they raced towards the gates. Arrived there, they saw the origin of the yells. Tubby Muffin was screaming away as if for a wager. Putty Grace had clambered on his chest and was biting his ear.

"What the dickens—"

"Help! He's mad! He's biting me! Rescue! Yooop!"

Bulkeley strode forward and his grasp closed on Putty of the Fourth. With one wrench he pulled Putty from his prey, and the humorist of Rookwood sprawled on the ground.

"What on earth are you doing, Grace!" he snapped. "Have you gone off your head!"

"He's potty!" howled Muffin. "Potty's putty—I mean, Putty's potty! He climbed on me and chewed my ear!"



"Gurrgh! Woof-oof-woof!" growled Putty at the dog, while the juniors and seniors regarded him with astonished eyes.

Putty of the Fourth picked himself up and eyed Bulkeley in a wicked fashion.

"Clear off, you young ass!" snapped Bulkeley. "If I have any more of your rot, I'll give you six."

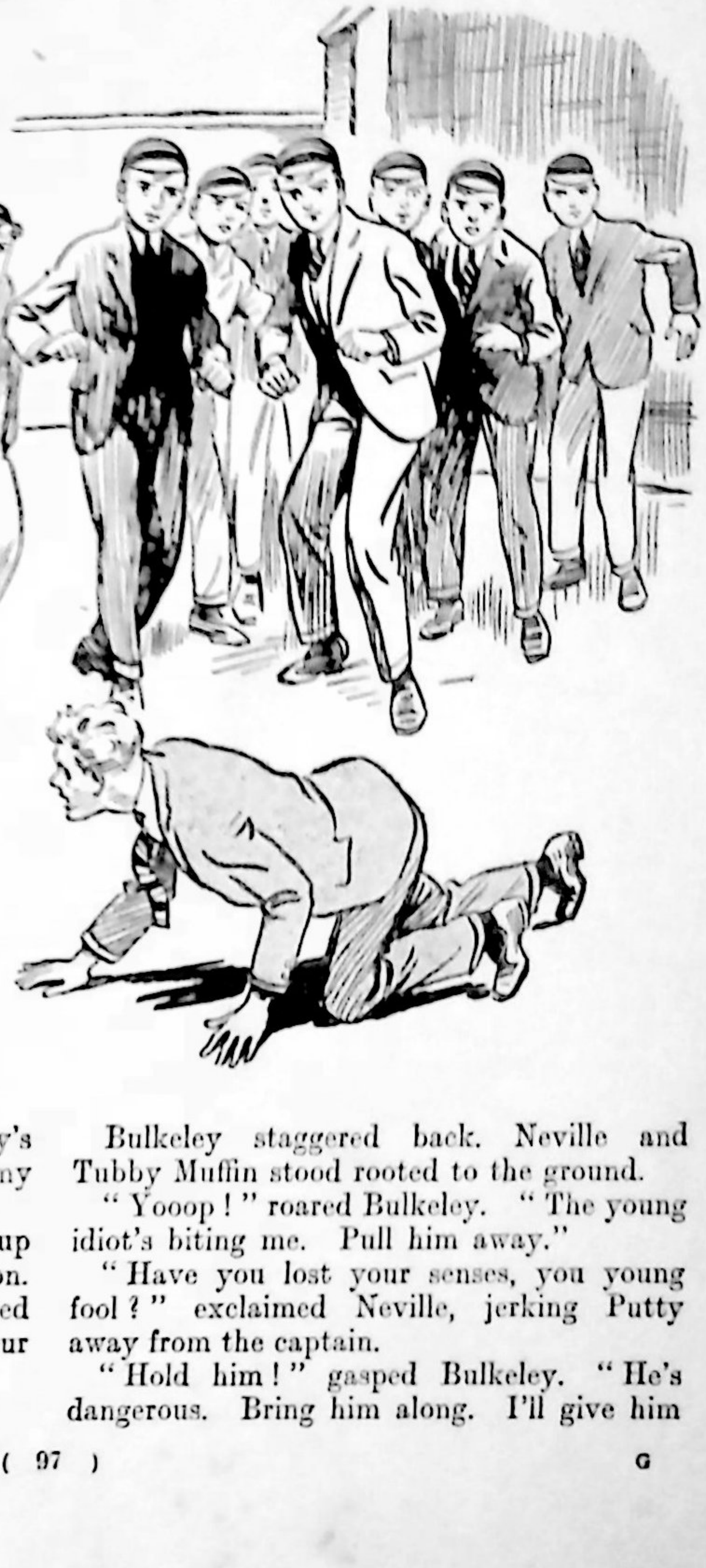
"G-r-r-r-r!" snarled Putty.

Bulkeley and Neville jumped.

"What's that!"

"G-r-r-r! Oof-woof-woof! B-r-r-r! Urrrrgh!" answered Putty, giving selections from his repertoire.

The two prefects stared at him dumbfounded for one moment—not for two. Putty sprang. He landed on Bulkeley's shoulders, and his teeth caressed Bulkeley's neck.



Bulkeley staggered back. Neville and Tubby Muffin stood rooted to the ground.

"Yooop!" roared Bulkeley. "The young idiot's biting me. Pull him away."

"Have you lost your senses, you young fool?" exclaimed Neville, jerking Putty away from the captain.

"Hold him!" gasped Bulkeley. "He's dangerous. Bring him along. I'll give him

six with an ashplant, and see if that will restore his right senses."

"G-r-r-r! Boof-woof!" snarled Putty, wriggling in Neville's grasp.

"I believe the kid is really potty!" exclaimed Neville in alarm. "He ought to see a doctor."

"I'll doctor him!" snapped Bulkeley grimly. "I've got some medicine in my study that will work wonders on him."

"He, he, he!" came Tubby Muffin's fat cachinnation from the rear.

The two seniors marched the writhing form of Putty Grace into the quad; but when they got there, the Fourth-Form humorist gave a sudden turn and broke free. He streaked rapidly across the quadrangle.

Prowling about by the Modern House was the small brown form of an Airedale dog, belonging to Mack, the porter. It was an amiable dog, much liked by all the school on account of its chummy disposition. It answered—occasionally—to the name of Bob.

Putty streaked towards Bob like a hare, followed by the two prefects and Tubby Muffin. Bob wagged his tail as Putty approached; he knew Putty well.

But he jumped back in surprise when Putty dropped on his hands and knees, and crawling towards him, remarked:

"Urrrrgh! Boof-oof-woof!"

Bob circled cautiously. Was this a new game? Putty, he knew, was fond of games. He would often oblige by throwing stones for Bob to fetch. Bob blinked curiously at Putty, and stood by, wagging his tail.

Quite a crowd of fellows now began to collect. Amazed eyes watched Putty. Bulkeley and Neville regarded him wide-eyed with astonishment.

"I really do think he's mad," whispered Neville in alarm.

Bulkeley pursed his lips. Laughter was heard among the other fellows present.

"Well, by Gad, Putty knows how to treat his brother—what?" sniggered Hansom of the Fifth.

Putty lowered his head and roared. Possibly he was thinking he was a bull instead of a bulldog. He snarled and charged Bob head over heels.

"Ha, ha, ha!" howled the crowd.

"What is it? A new game?" demanded Lumsden.

"Blessed if I know. Kid gone cuckoo, I think."

There was a rush of feet, and Jimmy Silver & Co., home from the circus, appeared on the scene. They blinked at Putty in dismay.

"Great pip!" ejaculated Lovell. "He's still under the 'fluence. Well, carry me home to die!"

"Go it, Putty! Woof-woof, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The newly-arrived juniors burst into a howl of laughter as Putty tried to bite one of Bob's legs. But Jimmy Silver didn't laugh. He was looking seriously alarmed. If Putty was, indeed, in a state of hypnosis, it might do him some considerable harm.

Bulkeley strode forward again. Putty wheeled on him savagely.

"G-r-r-r! Grrrrrrgh!"

Bulkeley jumped back—quite frightened.

"Good heavens!" he muttered. "The kid thinks he's a dog. He's bitten Muffin and me already. He's dangerous."

"Mind you don't get hydrophobia," chuckled Lovell.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look out!" exclaimed Newcome. "Here comes Dalton!"

There was a sudden silence as Mr. Dalton strode up.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER

Not Hypnotised.

MR. RICHARD DALTON, the master of the Fourth, had a frown on his brow and a cane under his arm. Evidently he was anticipating trouble. He gave the juniors a severe look, and then his jaw dropped in blank amazement.

He had caught sight of Putty Grace.

Bob had by now properly entered into the spirit of the game. It seemed to Bob that the new pastime was for Putty to growl, and him to make playful snatches at Putty's nose. If he was quick enough, he could lick Putty's nasal organ; if he wasn't, he was rolled over.

Mr. Dalton, as he watched the curious

exhibition, seemed to have difficulty in finding his voice. Jimmy Silver looked on with a serious face.

"Boy! Grace!" gasped Mr. Dalton at length. "What is the meaning of this—this exhibition?"

He paused for a reply. He got one.

"Grrrrgh! Woof!" answered Putty at once.

"Wha-at?" gasped "Dicky" Dalton, staggering back. "Have you—have you taken leave of your senses, Grace!"

Again he paused for a reply. And again he got one.

It was not a reply in words. It took the form of an action. Putty sprang. He seized the Form-master about the knees, and tried to bite his trousers.

Mr. Dalton's face took on an expression that can only be called terrific.

"Bub-bless my soul!" he gasped. "Grace! Boy! Release me!"

"G-r-r-r! Woof-woof-woof!" snarled Putty fiercely.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Lovell.

The crowd of juniors and seniors looked on in dumbfounded amazement.

"Take this boy away," roared Mr. Dalton. "I do believe he is trying to bite me."

Lovell, Mornington and several other juniors swooped on Putty and dragged him away from the scandalised master. Mr. Dalton pulled himself together, and frowned in an angry fashion.

"What is the meaning of this?" he snapped. "Are you quite sane, Grace?"

"Woof! Oof-woof! Yarrrrgh!" roared Putty.

"I think he cannot be sane, sir," said Bulkeley. "He was biting Muffin of the Fourth just now, and then he began to bite me also, when I intervened. I believe he fancies he's a dog."

"Great Scott!" murmured the crowd in wonder.

"Grace, is it possible that——"

"He's hypnotised, sir," Jimmy gulped in confusion.

Mr. Dalton stared at him.



Mr. Manders streaked across the quad. with Putty in pursuit. "Keep him off!" shrieked the Modern master. "He's mad!"

"What? Do you know anything of this matter, Silver?"

"Ye-yes, sir," gasped Jimmy. "Putty was hypnotised by a man at the circus."

"Wha-at? Kindly explain yourself, Silver."

Amid a dead silence, Jimmy breathlessly explained how Professor Bamboozal had put the 'fluence on Putty Grace, and omitted to take it off again. Mr. Dalton's face, as he listened, was a mixture of amazement and incredulity.

"Bless my soul!" he exclaimed, drawing a deep breath. "What—what you say, Silver, passes all the bounds of credulity—yet it seems that it is an actual fact. If Grace is, indeed, in a state of subjection to another's will-power——"

There was a loud murmuring from the crowd.

"My only summer bonnet!"

"Putty—hypnotised!"

"Thinks he's a dog—phew!"

"Garrrgh! Boof-woof!"

"Silence!" snapped Mr. Dalton. "Silver, you will take your bicycle, ride down to the circus and fetch this—this mesmerist here immediately. Lose no time in bringing him to Rookwood. If he will not come, you must call in the assistance of the police to make him. Understand?"

"Oh! Yes, sir!" gasped Jimmy. "I'll cut off right away."

He left the group, and ran towards the bicycle shed. Soon afterwards he whizzed through the gates, and sailed away in the direction of Coombe. Putty carefully concealed a grin as he watched him depart.

"Bring the boy Grace into the house, Bulkeley," commanded Mr. Dalton. "He must be kept quiet until this absurd hypnotist reaches here. And on no account," added the master, turning to the crowd of juniors, "is any boy to make game of this unfortunate lad."

"Hooray!" said Putty silently.

Mr. Dalton turned away, and Bulkeley's grasp closed on the Fourth-Form humorist once more. Putty looked depressed. He had not accomplished half the things he had intended.

Mr. Manders, the sour-faced master of the Modern House, was crossing the quad. Putty noticed that Mr. Dalton spoke to him for a few minutes, and that Manders looked in a horrified way in his direction.

Putty guessed that Dicky Dalton was relating how one of his scholars had suddenly become a dog. Putty licked his lips.

Manders passed by, and stared in undisguised horror at Putty. Teddy Grace drew a deep breath, and quivered all over. What a chance for a jape! How he could scare Manders!

He gave a sudden twist. Bulkeley and Neville grabbed at him; but for the second time that afternoon he managed to break free. Uttering a terrible snarl, he galloped furiously towards Mr. Manders.

"Look out!" gasped Bulkeley. "He's got away again."

"Collar him!"

Mr. Manders heard the shouts of the crowd, and Putty's terrible snarl. He turned about, and his face went green with fear as he saw Putty bounding towards him, clawing the air in a frenzied fashion.

The Modern master blinked at him in horror. Then he ran—wildly, chased by Putty, with the crowd bringing up the rear.

Mr. Manders streamed across the quad, uttering fearful cries for help.

"Keep him off!" shrieked Mr. Manders. "He's mad! Assist me before he bites me!"

"After him!" roared the crowd of juniors.

"Come back, you young ass!" yelled Bulkeley.

Putty did not come back. He was gradually overhauling Mr. Manders, and he snarled more ferociously with each step he took. The master's face was now a peculiar shade of grey. He cast one fearful look behind him, and then ran faster than he had ever run in his life.

The chase ended abruptly at the woodshed.

Mr. Manders wrenched open the door of the woodshed, tore inside, and slammed the door behind him. As it closed, Putty hurled himself at it; but he was too late. Mr. Manders had found sanctuary.

"G-r-r-r! Woof!" roared Putty furiously.

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the juniors helplessly.



"The professor's a wangler," said the policeman, "and I 'spect it was this 'ere boy he put under the 'fluence." And he pointed to Putty.

Really they could not help laughing. The spectacle of Mr. Manders fleeing across the quad, yelling for help, pursued by Putty of the Fourth roaring like a dog, was enough—as Lovell said—to make the Head laugh.

Bulkeley and Neville closed upon Putty at the woodshed. They grasped him—and this time their grasp was such that there was no getting away. Twice Putty had broken away from them. Bulkeley meant to see that there was no third time.

"Have—have you got him, boys?" asked a quivering voice from within the woodshed.

"Ha, ha—I mean, yes, sir," gasped Bulkeley. "He won't get away again."

There was a movement inside the woodshed, and then a loud bump.

"Yaroooh!" came a fiendish yell.

Evidently Mr. Manders had tripped over the faggots.

He opened the door and came out looking very dusty and dishevelled. And at the same moment Mr. Dalton strode up.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Mr. Dalton. "Did I not tell you to keep the boy quiet?"

"He broke away from us, sir," said Bulkeley. "He chased Mr. Manders into the woodshed."

"Good heavens!"

Then there came a cry from Lovell.

"Here's Jimmy, sir."

The crowd turned to where Jimmy Silver was approaching. Putty grinned to himself; but his merriment changed to bewilderment as he saw that Jimmy Silver was accompanied, not by Professor Bamboozal, but by P.c. Cobb, the village constable.

"What the thump——" murmured Mornington.

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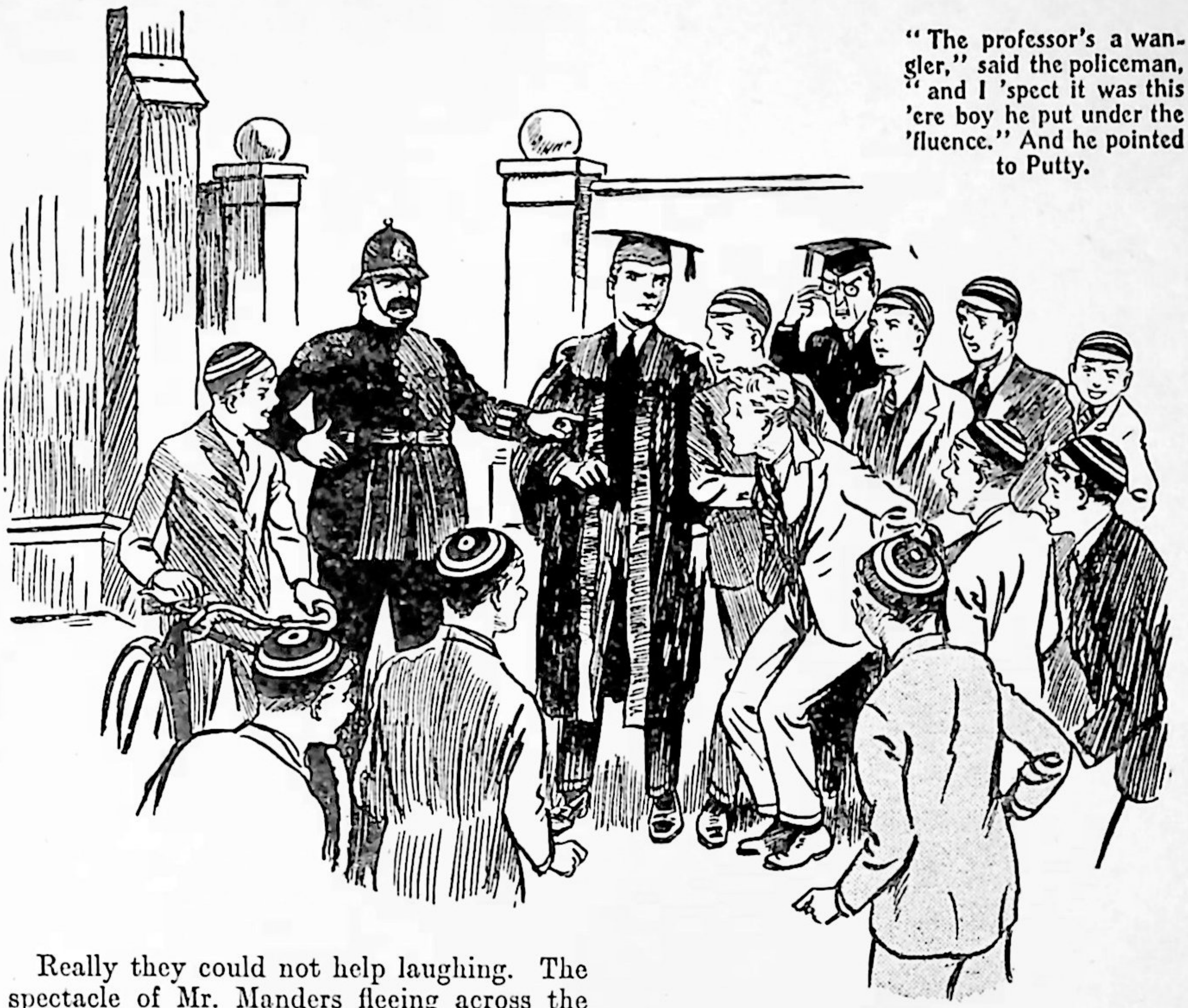

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"What the thump——" murmured Mornington.

"Where's the professor?"

"What's old Cobb want?"

Jimmy Silver and the constable came up to Mr. Dalton, watched in breathless silence by the crowd—masters, seniors and juniors.

"Where is the circus man, Silver?" asked Mr. Dalton, nodding to the policeman.

"I couldn't get hold of the professor, sir," replied Jimmy. "You see, sir, he's——"

"He's been took," interrupted P.c. Cobb.

"Took?" ejaculated Mr. Dalton.

"Ah! He's been took for telling fortunes—pretending to tell 'em, that is. He's a swindle."

"Do you mean that this man is in custody?" inquired Mr. Dalton.

P.c. Cobb nodded seriously.

"Ah! He is that! I took him up arter his show this arternoon. He gives out that he tells fortunes—which is agin the law."

Mr. Dalton looked nonplussed—so did Putty Grace.

"But—but I want him to release this boy from a spell of hypnotic influence," argued Mr. Dalton. "I must see him. It is important."

P.c. Cobb grinned.

"He ain't no 'ypnotist, sir," he said. "'E can't put the 'fluence on anybody. It's all a wangle."

"A—a what?"

"A wangle, sir. In plain English—a do. He bribes people to pretend to be 'ypnotised. 'E confessed that 'e put a ten-bob note in the 'ospital box this arternoon to make a Rookwood boy pretend to be put under the 'fluence. I 'spect this 'ere is the boy, sir."

He pointed to Putty.

That incipient humorist was fervently wishing the ground would open and swallow him. His face was a picture of dejection. He hadn't thought of this possibility.

Every eye turned on Putty.

Mr. Dalton was struggling for speech. Mr. Manders was looking perfectly apoplectic.

"Grace! Boy! Grace!" stuttered Mr. Dalton. "Is this true? Have you been only pretending to be under the influence of an absurd hypnotic spell?"

"Yes, sir," mumbled Putty; and this time he did not put in even so much as a tiny "woof!"

"Then this, I presume, was intended for a practical joke against the scholars and masters of this school?"

"Nunno—not exactly, sir," groaned Putty. "I meant to make the professor come all the way up to Rookwood to take the fluence off me in punishment for his cheek in asking me to help him in a swindle."

There was a moment's silence, then:

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was a perfect volume of laughter. Everybody, except the two masters and Putty Grace, seemed to be on the verge of hysterics. Bulkeley and Neville were trying not to laugh—and were failing badly. Even P.c. Cobb was grinning expansively.

"Silence!" snapped Mr. Dalton. "Grace, you will follow me to my study. I will give you a lesson which will help you to curb your humorous proclivities in future. I shall cane you most severely."

"Oh, crikey!"

"Follow me!"

He strode away into the house, followed by the dejected figure of Putty, leaving a crowd roaring with laughter.

. . . . .

For some time there was a rhythmical swishing sound in Mr. Dalton's study, like the slow, steady beat of a machine. This sound was punctuated at intervals by strangled yelps and moans, suggestive of suffering.

In due course the door opened, and Putty of the Fourth crawled into the corridor and wormed his way along the passage.

Lovell met him at the corner. Arthur Edward was disposed to be sympathetic.

"Had it bad?" he asked commiseratingly.

"Ow-ow-ow!"

"Do you mean—woof-woof-woof?" murmured Lovell.

Putty did not answer—in words, at any rate. He raised his right fist in the air and brought it down on Lovell's nose.

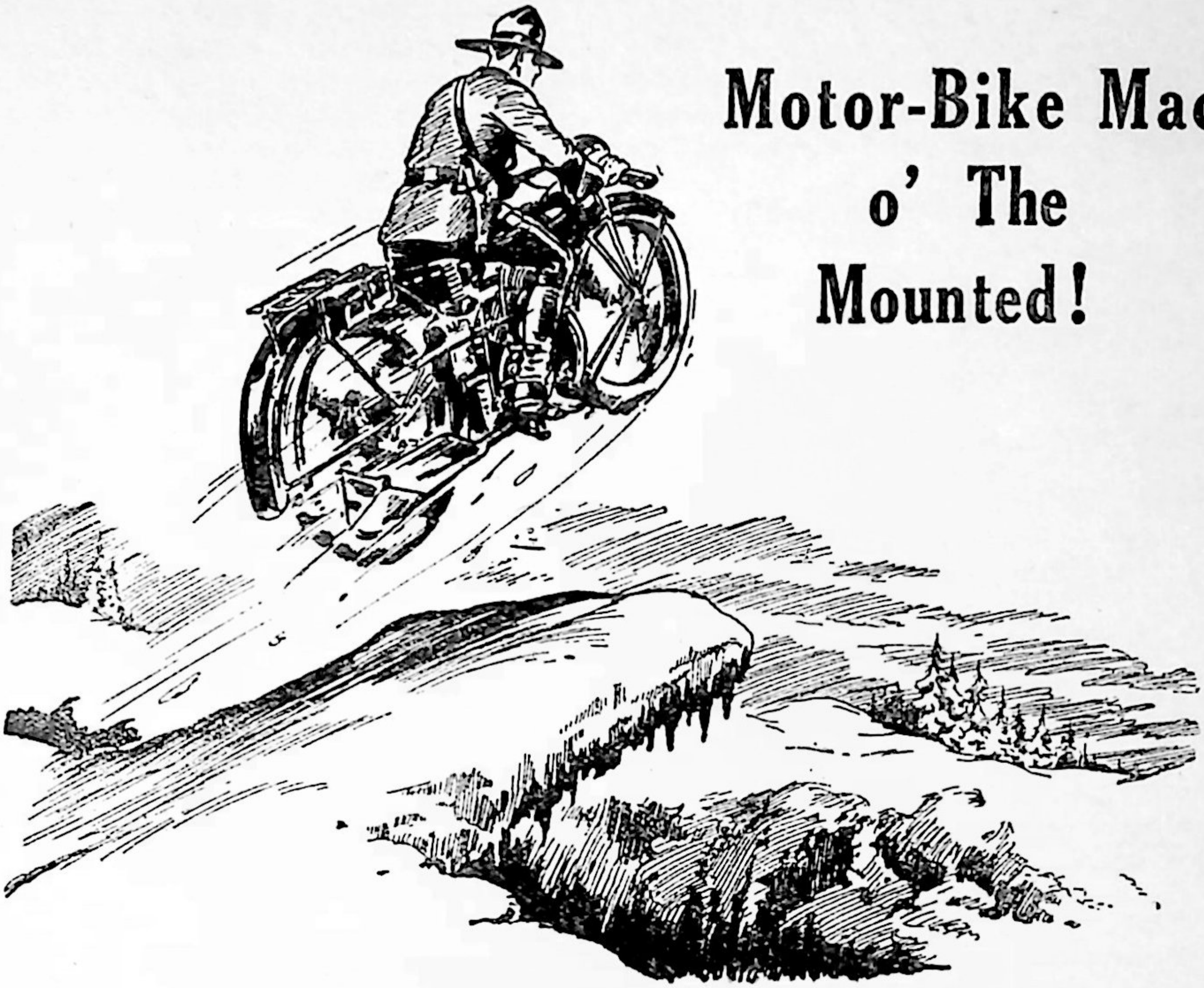
"Yarooh!" roared Lovell, astonished.

Putty crawled on his way, slightly mollified by Lovell's furious yell.

And all over Rookwood that evening, nothing was heard but shouts of laughter and hysterical sobs. That was the closing celebration of Putty's priceless prank.

THE END

Motor-Bike Mac o' The Mounted!



Something new in "Mounties" is Motor-Bike Mac, and his presence in the Yukon Territory is by no means welcome to the gunmen and bad-hats of New Find!

THE FIRST CHAPTER
The Mystery Message!

"HORSES are queer critters," grinned Constable MacFlood, of the Royal Canadian Mounted. "That's why I prefer to fork old 'Dot-and-Dash.' The old mo'-bike's more reliable than any horse-flesh."

He crouched forward in the saddle of his powerful motor-bike, the staccato roar of which struck a strange note among the rugged, snow-clad peaks of the Yukon Territory, as it bowled him across the hard-packed snow.

"Guess it would go hard with this kid just now if I had to do my six-hundred-mile beat on a nag," Mac went on to himself, skidding round a tricky curve. "There wouldn't be much chance to jug the gunmen and bad-hats that hang around. Black Ledger's gang would show me a clean pair o' heels, I reckon. As it is I'll get 'em before long."

Something new in "Mounties" was Mac. Young and sturdy, with a determined jaw, he was the kind that gets things done with as much fun as possible.

Six months before he had been dirt-track and ice-rink riding in England, and having exhausted the thrills, had come over to Canada to join the Mounties and see life.

He had broken away from custom by bringing his motor-bike with him, and though the

machine had not at first met with the approval of his superiors at Regina, Mac had soon made himself a popular favourite. When he was promoted from a mere rookie and drafted to this beat he had been allowed to bring his bike up with him.

At first he had used a horse, but it broke a leg and had to be shot.

That was six weeks before, and instead of reporting it, Mac had been riding his beat upon old "Dot-and-Dash," and found that it gave him more time to deal with the bad-hats of those parts. Since the opening up of the New Find mining camp these were many.

"But they won't be as many when I get a line on the Ledger gang," thought Mac as, turning another bend, he came in sight of his police hut.

"Hallo!" he exclaimed at sight of a dark-clad figure approaching the hut from the opposite direction. "A visitor! An Indian, by gum!"

The Indian had heard the roar of Mac's bike long before he saw the young Mountie, and was waiting for Mac when he pulled up at the door of his hut.

"Huh," the Chilkat grunted. "Message."

"Who from?" Mac demanded as he unscrewed the ball of paper which his visitor handed him.

"Trapper," the Chilkat replied, staring impressively into the Mountie's face. "Le Favre."

Just for an instant Mac's eyes flickered. Then he grinned and nodded, beginning to read. As he did so his expression changed and he looked grim.

"Black Ledger's gang hanging about here. Come right away.—Pierre le Favre."

That was the message scrawled roughly across the paper.

"Did Le Favre give you this to bring to me?" the young Mountie questioned, frowning.

The Chilkat nodded. Mac shrugged.

"Right-o! I'll be along in a jiffy. Thanks for bringing the note!"

Without another word the Indian passed on. Mac stared after him a long moment, deep in thought.

"There's somebody pullin' my leg or I'm a hump-backed lynx," he muttered. "Either it's that Indian or Le Favre, or both. Then again, it might be Black Ledger himself."

He stared at the note critically.

"Rummy! Why should Le Favre tell me he couldn't write even his own name an' then go sending me a message?" the puzzled Mountie grunted. "There sure is some mystery here an' it's this kid who's goin' to solve it. Can't say I liked the look o' that Chilkat, but you never can tell with the Red men, they're so bloomin' deceptive. All the same, while I'm standing here wondering I might be letting slip the first chance I've had o' getting on Black Ledger's track. Here goes for a visit to Le Favre."

As he heard Mac's bike kicked into a roar, the Chilkat looked back. A sardonic grin creased his leathery flat face as he saw Mac skidding over the hard-packed snow and pools of glassy ice, the machine quickly whipping up to thirty miles an hour.

"Policeman one fool," he grunted. "He bluffed. He no good."

With a shrug the Indian turned back, and dropping into an easy lope, followed the track left by the tread of Mac's tyres. A cunning leer lurked in the corners of his slant eyes.

THE SECOND CHAPTER

Mac Makes Merry!

MAC steered his machine along the treacherous icy trail with every sense on the alert. His suspicions had been aroused, but at the same time he thrilled to the prospect of getting on the trail of the gang that had eluded all his efforts to catch them.

"It may be just a bluff," he muttered, steering Dot-and-Dash around lumps of piled-up frozen snow and slippery curves as only an expert ice-rink rider could have done. "Then again, it might be genuine, and some simple explanation of the note possible. In that case maybe I'll get my first line on the gang, an' that's all I want. Better keep my eyes peeled for trouble, though."

Le Favre's cabin lay through a spidery wood of tall spruce about ten miles from

Mac's hut, and half-way to New Find. The Mountie had paid the little old French trapper a visit only a week before, and it was then that Le Favre had told Mac he could not write a line. Naturally, the young Mountie felt there was something queer about the message the Chilkat had delivered.

Before him Mac saw a screen of tall trees, their feathery boughs laden with sparkling snow, and roared along the trail which led through. Eventually he came in sight of the trapper's cabin, a one-roomed hut of square logs, with snow drift piled three feet high against the near wall.



With rifle clubbed, a figure leaped down from the roof of the shack towards Mac.

As he throttled down, Mac suddenly stiffened in the saddle. Darkly outlined against the white drift snow he saw a sprawling figure dressed like a trapper.

"Great Scott!" he gasped. "Le Favre!"

Hardly pulling up, Mac leaped from the saddle and plunged forward toward the inert body, anxious to see what he could do. Then he remembered the note, and instantly every fibre of his being became actively alert. Even as he hurried forward his quick eyes darted round, taking in every little detail for sign of a possible trap.

Something moved on the roof of the cabin. What it was Mac could not be sure, but he came to a quick decision.

"Yep, a trap, by gosh!" he muttered.

Then he saw something which made him sure. A rough scar coursed along the track of the sprawled man's outflung hand!

There was only one man who owned such a scar, as far as the Mountie knew—Scarhand Jackson. Then it wasn't the old trapper sprawling there, but a member of Black Ledger's gang!

Mac could have shouted with the pleasure the thought gave him. He was hot on the trail!

He made as if to stoop over the man, then caught the faintest of sounds from the roof-edge above his head. He jumped back quickly.

Followed by a cloud of fine snow a tight-clad figure with clubbed rifle dropped down into the snow at the point where Mac had been stooped a moment before. He floundered

a second, and as he did so, the sprawled figure of Scarhand Jackson leaped to life, snarling.

Mac went into action when Scarhand was half-way to his feet. The Mountie pushed the fellow who had dropped from the roof so that he barged heavily against Scarhand, who gave a grunt as he went down again with the other on his chest.

"Attaboy!" Mac grinned; and snatching the rifle, raised it and swung. Crack!

The second fellow dropped senseless as the heavy butt connected with his head.

Scarhand leaped free of the clinging snow and rushed, but Mac dodged quickly, and as his assailant barged past, poked the rifle forward between his legs.

Scarhand tripped and shot forward on his head. Unfortunately for him, the snow did not cushion his fall. His head hit the tank of Mac's machine, and he, too, was knocked out.

"Clean K.O.," Mac grinned, looking round. "Any more for any more?"

Apparently there was not, so the young Mountie took the precaution of going over his prisoners for weapons, and when the two men came to, they found themselves unarmed and staring into the muzzle of the rifle, while their guns hung prominently from Mac's belt.

"Don't know what your game is," Mac gritted. "But I guess I'll soon find out. March! Inside the cabin."

Scowling, Scarhand and his companion had to obey, and with Mac close behind they entered the cabin. As the young Mountie crossed the threshold he caught sight of Le Favre, angry-eyed and excitable, with a gag in his mouth and securely bound to the rough, heavy table.

"Here you, Scarhand; cut him loose, an' no hanky-panky," he ordered. "Get that knife on the table, an' keep this side where I can shoot without having any obstacles in the way."

The crook did as commanded without relishing the task. Once free the little French trapper was voluble. He stormed at Mac's two prisoners and brandished his fist under their noses, until Mac intervened.

"That's all right," the youngster grunted. "Pipe down a bit, old chap, while I find out what it's all about. D'you know anything?"

"Pardieu!" the excitable trapper exclaimed, his eyes dancing. "I forgetting. Pierre know it all. Ze skunks dey talk while dey wait the coming of the Mountie. Dey are of Black Ledger's gang, ze gang ze poleeceman is after."

"So that Chilkat was a fake, as I thought," Mac put in.

"Dey send the Indian with message, an' when he gone dey say it ees to you from me."

"Yes, but why? What do they want me out of the way for?" Mac questioned.

"Pardieu, again I forgetting!" Le Favre exclaimed. "Ze gold at New Find dey wish to take. Dey get you first out of ze way den it all vairy simple."

Mac stared, then confronted his prisoners, poking his rifle into their ribs.

"Is that right, Scarhand?" he demanded.

Scarhand scowled and nodded sulkily.

"Sure it's right," he growled. "They'll have shot up the place before you kin get there to stop 'em, so you don't gain anythin' by bein' told."

"Don't I?" Mac put in, a determined look in his eyes. "Don't be too sure about that. Look here, Pierre," he went on, turning to Le Favre. "You like these two quite a lot, don't you?"

The little trapper snorted.

"Like ze bear which springs my traps," he shrieked. "Dey hit me over ze head, den dey tie me up for one-two hours. Yeh, I like 'em plenty."

"That's good," Mac grinned. "I can trust you to look after 'em while I'm away, then. Here, take some o' this armoury. I'm off to New Find. Be back some time. S'long!"

Leaving the trapper herding the two men into a corner with threats as to what he would do if they tried anything, the young Mountie strode out of the cabin.

Mac moved quickly. He yanked his machine off the ground where he had let it lie, kicked on the starter almost at the same time, flung himself in the saddle, and once more the snowy mountain peaks echoed to Dot-and-Dash's high-pitched hum.

"Got to get to New Find in less time than it takes a puppy dog to wag its tail, else the Ledger crowd will get away with the best haul of the century," Mac thought. "It was a cute dodge getting me out o' the way while the main party raided New Find. If I take the short cut over the Hump Back and old Dot-and-Dash'll stand the gruelling, I'll show 'em they weren't cute enough by a long chalk."

Sending flurries of snow up from its back wheel, Dot-and-Dash hummed along. Mac, for all his anxiety to reach New Find, handled his machine expertly. A bad skid on such treacherous surface at the fast clip he was making meant a broken neck at least. He didn't mean to risk that when he was so hot on the trail of one of the biggest gang of crooks in the Yukon Territory.

THE THIRD CHAPTER
Crossing the Canyon !

A MILE farther on Mac bounced on to the frozen Yukon. For two more miles the going was easy, skimming across the ice, on which was a thin layer of snow to grip the wheels, with frowning white peaks on either side.

"Guess if it was like this all the way I'd do it easy, but it ain't. There's the Hump Back to get over. Here we are! Left wheel, old boy."

The young Mountie took on the risky task cheerfully, grinning all over his face as his wheels bounced and ducked over the rough, treacherous trail leading up from the river between snowy bluffs.

By this short cut he saved a detour of six miles to New Find, and that meant a lot.

"Doing nicely," the youngster grinned as they neared the top. "Get the other side of Whispering Canyon an' we're sitting on top o' the world!"

Mac had come this way during the first fortnight of his work in the district, on horseback. The steady beast had been as safe as houses up this trail, which nobody but trappers wishing to make a short cut used. The peak of the trail was at Whispering Canyon where a cleft of two hundred feet split the mountain-side almost in two, the trail going over a rough wooden bridge of spruce logs to the other side.

Dot-and-Dash behaved splendidly. Bounces and bumps came all the same to the powerful motor-bike, which was roaring its staccato challenge to the snowy landscape with the same vigour at the top as when Mac first turned off the Yukon.

Mac came in sight of the bridge—then checked the whoopee which rose to his lips. The bridge was broken down, nothing but two stumps driven deep into the ground on this side remaining.

"Well, that's a facer and no mistake," Mac muttered, too flabbergasted at first to think.

He pulled up, and moved forward to examine the structure more closely. With his hand upon the wooden posts he carefully scrutinised the wreckage.

"Great saddlebags!" he muttered. "Has the Ledger lot done this, too? I'll stake a month's pay that bridge has been broken down with an axe from the other side, and pretty recently."

The run of his thoughts was checked suddenly, in a dramatic manner. The bark of an automatic crashed out from somewhere on the other side of Whispering Canyon, and the next moment the bullet bit deep into the stump upon which Mac was leaning.

"Gosh, looks as if I'm right again. Black Ledger's got a man up here, an' that fellow's ripe for shooting. Dot-and-Dash, old stocking, we've got to get out o' this!"

For all the jocularity of his speech Mac was feeling far from easy. Standing there by the stump he was an open mark for a gunman on the other side of the canyon. The first thing to do was get into cover.

As another shot rang out from the invisible marksman, Mac steered his machine behind a large boulder. There he propped it; then drawing his heavy Webley, peered round to see how the land lay.

"Ah, that's you, is it!" he exclaimed a moment later as another bullet ricochetted from the boulder just by his head. But he had seen a slight movement and caught the flash as the hidden marksman's gun spoke. Mac poked his own Webley round the boulder and waited.

Presently the hidden marksman's weapon appeared again, and Mac fired. His shot was followed by a sneering laugh.

"Shoot, Mountie; that's the ticket. But yuh couldn't hit me in a week o' Sundays from there."

"The bounder's right!" Mac muttered grimly. "He's so well covered by them two chunks o' rock there's only a chance in a million o' hitting him. Gosh, I know!"

An idea had occurred to him, and he turned to his machine. First blocking the wheels, he kicked old Dot-and-Dash into throbbing life, and left her propped against the boulder humming away.

"That'll give that Johnny over the way something to occupy his attention thinking what I aim to do," he grinned. "While he's thinking, I'll be doing."

Cautiously, keeping the boulder between himself and the marksman, he crawled backwards upon his stomach until his boots came into contact with another boulder ten yards away. Mac dodged behind this, and then continued the process until he was well down the hill and out of sight of the marksman, whose whole attention was occupied by the staccato roar of Mac's bike.

Caution was now no longer necessary, and, getting to his feet, Mac edged about fifty yards parallel to the chasm, then started climbing the hill again, so that when Whispering Canyon again blocked his progress he was fifty yards away from his machine.

"There he is! Now for the surprise packet!" Mac muttered, after a keen glance.

From here the marksman was not so well covered as he thought. Mac could see him steadying his gun upon a rock, tensely waiting for Mac to show up behind the boulder he had originally occupied, and where Dot-and-Dash was still burning petrol.

Mac levelled his gun. Crack!

The shot was so unexpected that the fellow leaped in the air. His gun was shot clean out of his fist, and he yelled with the pain in his wrist. The next moment, casting a startled glance about, not sure from which direction his new adversary had fired, and thinking that the Mountie had received reinforcement, he started slithering and stumbling down the hillside, anxious to get out of the way.

"That's settled him!" Mac muttered grimly. "Now for crossing this little hole."

Coming out from cover, Mac examined his side of the chasm. His gaze was attracted by an icy projection which glittered and shimmered as the bright glare of a harsh sun played upon it.

The Mountie stared at it calculatingly a long moment, then set his jaw firmly.

"Chances have got to be taken at this game," he muttered. "So we'll take 'em, an' with a bit o' luck we'll pull this off."

He hurried back to his machine, and a few moments later was steering it down from the shattered bridge towards the icy projection, which was nothing more than a heap of snow frozen hard as it drifted over the edge of the chasm.

"Almost like my ice-rink days, this," the young Mountie thought as he drew back to get a start.

Then he kicked his machine into roaring life and gave her full throttle.

Dot-and-Dash raced forward. The chasm leaped towards Mac at alarming speed. Cool as the ice all around, he steered for the bridge of snow. Over the edge and upon the queer bridge went the front wheel. The next moment Mac and the motor-bike were shot upwards into the air by the elevated bridge, to come down with a bump upon the ground the other side and roar on. Mac was safely across!

THE FOURTH CHAPTER

A Knock-out Stunt!

As Mac dropped down into New Find it soon became evident that Black Ledger's gang was in full charge. Half a mile away he could hear shots and shouts, and a little later a sharp crack, and the whizz of a bullet perilously close to his head warned him of the danger he himself was running.

Danger could not stop the young Mountie, however, although it did teach him caution. He had thought of barging right into New Find and seeing what he could do, but now he realised that against the whole gang, using such methods, he would stand no chance, and

so he swerved round and approached the mining town from behind.

Two long rows of buildings comprised the place, some of them only partially constructed. Riding up behind these, Mac could hear the wild riot of noise as the gunmen rode around, shooting and bullying, creating a reign of terror while they stripped the place and everybody in it of their hard-won gold-dust.

"Well, I sure am hot on Black Ledger's trail now," thought the Mountie grimly. "The point is getting the cuffs on him an' his merry men."



Crack! Mac's shot knocked the gangster's gun clean out of his hand, and the fellow yelled with pain and clasped his wrist.

The sight of a new plank of wood reared up against the low roof behind the Money-Pot Saloon gave him an idea.

"Just the thing!" he murmured, his cheery face broadening in a grin. "They'll get the shock o' their lives when they see me."

"Go it, Dot-and-Dash! Do your stuff!"

Roaring into full speed, Mac drove his machine for the plank. He braced himself upwards as the front wheel touched. The next moment he went easily upwards to the roof, the motor-bike mounting the plank easily.

"Attaboy!" Mac chuckled, and cut the motor dead.

Then, laying the bike down upon the roof of the Money-Pot, he looked around. He spotted a fanlight, and hurried over towards it.

Peering down into the saloon, a sight that almost made him shout for joy met his eyes.

The saloon was almost crowded, but only a few of the crowd seemed happy. These gripped guns in a menacing manner. Obviously it was a hold-up by Black Ledger's gang, for others were raking through the miners' pockets. The gangsters were in complete control, and while one or two collected the spoils from the miners the bulk lounged against the bar counter, which was almost directly beneath Mac.

"Couldn't be better placed," thought Mac. "Can't see Black Ledger among 'em, but it looks like this is the main part of the gang. Mac, you're going to make the cop o' your life."

Cocking his Webley in readiness, Mac lifted the fanlight and swung it back against the roof. Then, before a current of cold air could warn the gang, he dropped down feet first, to land behind the counter with a heavy thud.

"Don't move! Not a man!" he barked. "I'm shooting!"

Both crooks and miners were flabbergasted. Just one of Black Ledger's gang swung round with a snarl. Mac's Webley spoke and he dropped, cursing, with a bullet in his shoulder.

"Quick—drop your guns, before I count three," Mac rapped. "One—two——"

Clatter! Clatter! Thud! Thump! Weapons thudded upon the boarded floor of the Money-Pot, dropped as if they were red hot.

"Three!" Mac finished his count. "Ah, that's better."

Every man in the Money-Pot was unarmed except Mac. The floor was littered with guns and arms of every description. Mac's sudden entrance and his quick action in winging the first man who had disobeyed his command had completely demoralised the gunmen.

Mac made a sign to a long, lean-faced man among the miners.

"Collect the armoury, an' dump it over here, Pete," he ordered. Pete Borrow, the saloon keeper, did as requested. "Now, just pick out for me which is Ledger's gang an' which isn't, an' then get 'em tied up, will you?"

"Sure, Mountie," Pete answered with a grin. "Glad to."

Five minutes later Mac's captives were securely tied up, the miners had recovered the guns the crooks had taken from them, and their gold was in a pile on the counter.

"Don't know how you're goin' to sort that out among you," Mac told the saloon keeper. "Guess you'll have to trust each man to say how much belongs to him."

"That's easy," Pete Borrow said with a frown. "What's on that table ain't nothin'! There were a dozen fortunes in the bank, an' Black Ledger's got clean away with the lot."

"You don't say so!" Mac exclaimed.

"I sure do," Borrow replied. "Him an' Butch Barlow skipped off after raiding the bank, to get a good start with the main haul while this crowd rifled the men. They're well away by now, so I guess we'll have to whistle f'r our fortunes. That there on the table ain't nothin' compared to it."

"That's bad," Mac admitted. "I wondered where Black Ledger was. If I knew which way they'd gone there'd still be a chance."

"They said they was makin' Le Favre's cabin their meetin' place," the saloon keeper explained. "They said you would be there, an' they were goin' to enjoy themselves at your expense. Guess they—— Say, what yuh on?"

But Mac didn't stop to explain what he was on. He jumped on the bar counter, grabbed the edge of the fanlight above his head, and disappeared. The next thing the saloon keeper heard was the roar of a motor-bike on the roof above his head.

Pete Borrow was surprised. He would have been more surprised, however, had he seen Mac cleverly steer Dot-and-Dash down the planking by which he had mounted the roof. The Mountie pulled up, however, when he had reached the ground. An idea had suddenly occurred to him.

"Gosh, the very thing!" he exclaimed; and turning back, levered the useful piece of planking from against the Money-Pot wall. "Tied to old Dot-and-Dash, it'll be a knock-out!"

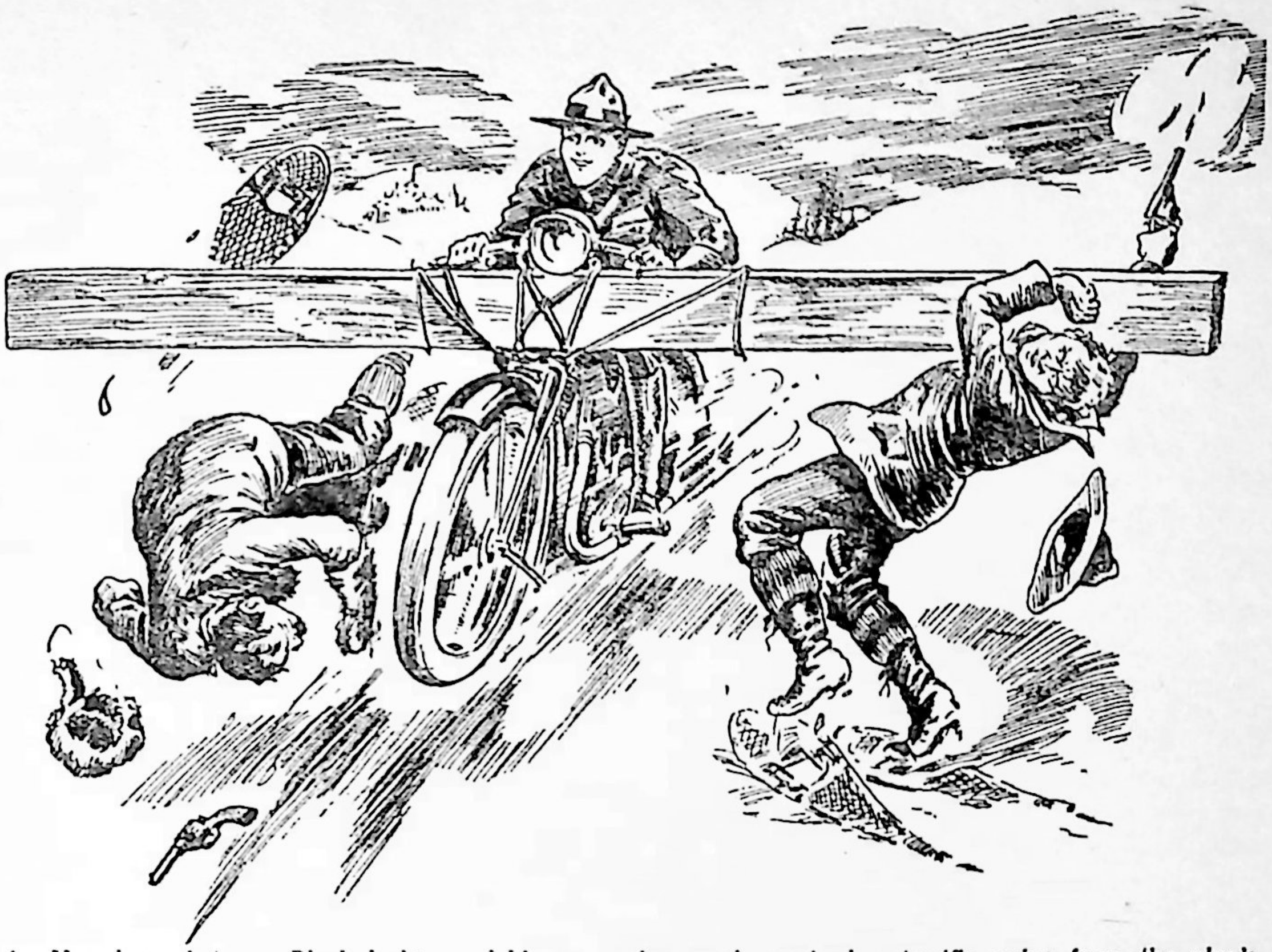
Mac was an ingenious youngster, given to cute dodges. He was also one who believed in the usefulness of stout string, and for that reason always had a ball handy in his bag, which he now got out.

With the string he fastened the planking to the headstock of his motor-bike, just below the handlebars, so that the ends of the plank stuck out at either side about ten feet.

"Guess I'd get jugged back in England doing carrying service this way," he grinned. "Right away, Dot-and-Dash, an' if we don't give Black Ledger an' his pal beans before they get to Le Favre's cabin I'll eat my uniform."

With a roar that startled the echoes, machine and Mountie bounced away. As soon as he could, Mac edged round on to the main trail and presently bounced once more on to the frozen Yukon, skirting round the base of the Hump Back this time.

"Should spot 'em any minute now." He grinned in the teeth of the icy wind streaming about his eyes. "Ah, thought so! There



As Mac drove between Black Ledger and his companion, each received a terrific swipe from the plank and was sent flying. Mac's stunt surely was a knock-out !

they go, an' by Harry, they've heard me ! "

Considering that the two men in front, who were mushing along on snow-shoes when he first saw them, were two of the most desperate gunmen in the Yukon Territory, Mac was surprisingly cool.

Black Ledger and his lieutenant had stopped. They had heard the roar of Mac's machine, and drew apart wondering who it could be.

Mac raced on, convinced that the two men would not detect the white planking against the white background of snow at the pace he was travelling. Then he saw the two draw their guns.

" Spotted my uniform," Mac thought. " They're going to spot an earthquake in a minute ! "

He rode on, increasing his pace upon the frozen surface of the river to thirty-five miles per hour. At that speed he would be an elusive target to hit.

However, the two crooks had hopes. With guns cocked, standing about a dozen feet apart, they waited, ready to plug Mac as he screamed past. The young Mountie, chuckling inwardly, steered towards them at a fast clip.

Black Ledger got ready to ease back on the trigger immediately Mac was between them. The next second he received a terrific swipe in the chest that sent him flying on to his head and laid him out. The very same moment his companion was knocked out, too, as the other end of Mac's plank hit him. Mac's stunt surely was a knock-out !

Grinning triumphantly, Mac throttled Dot-and-Dash down, swerved round, and came back to where the senseless forms of the two crooks lay upon the ice. Dismounting, the young Mountie removed their guns,

transferred the bag of gold they had taken from New Find bank to his own saddlebag, then scratched his head. For the two crooks didn't look like coming round yet!

"Got to get 'em round somehow," he pondered. "I've got it!"

Mac's method was simple but very effective. He took two large handfuls of snow, and pushed a handful down the back of each crook. With contorted faces Black Ledger and Butch Barlow blinked their eyes open, then wriggled uncomfortably as the icy-cold stuff worked right down their backs.

Black Ledger recovered first, and with a length of stout string Mac bound him to one end of his plank. When Butch was able to stand on two legs without help, Mac did the same for him, tying him to the other end of the plank. By the time all was complete, the two crooks were sufficiently awake to realise that Motor-Bike Mac had beaten them on every count!

Naturally they scowled. But Mac just grinned cheerfully.

"Now, my beauties," he said. "One way an' another you've cost me some petrol scorching around looking for you, so now I hope you won't mind saving me a bit. You're going to mush back to New Find, while I ride. But Dot-and-Dash isn't goin' to burn any petrol, see? March!"

They marched. There was nothing else for it. And Mac enjoyed the ride, sitting comfortably in the saddle while the crooks, whom he had tied to the plank, dragged him and his machine along.

It took nearly two hours to reach New Find, but what a welcome there was for Mac as he brought his two new prisoners in! The miners went almost crazy, especially when Mac handed the bank its gold.

There was no need for Mac to ask for help in getting his bunch of prisoners down to Regina—nearly all in the place volunteered, and after Mac had dispatched half a dozen to bring in the two members of the gang he had left in Le Favre's charge, they set off, the biggest round-up any single Mountie had made in the history of the North-West Mounted.

"An' all because o' Dot-and-Dash," muttered Mac as he rode behind the procession.





The Carroty-Headed Hero!

By JOHN BREARLEY

An Exhilarating Yarn of School-life and the Rugger Field

THE FIRST CHAPTER
The Smash !

"WHACK her up, Sandy !"

"Gettin' nervous, old top ?"

The youthful driver of the racing, roaring Bentley, speeding up the lonely country road, grinned recklessly at the gleeful challenges.

"Whack her up" was it ? He'd show 'em ! Already the local speed-limit had been "busted" to smithereens ; the great car was swaying dangerously. But spurred by the laughing jeers of his chums, Sanders of the Sixth at Clayton School, as jaunty a madcap who ever risked his neck at Brooklands in the "vac.", or barged his way in and out of scrums on the Rugger field, rammed his foot down hard on the accelerator. The sleek Bentley fairly leaped from the road like a spur-maddened thoroughbred.

Behind it, half-choked by the dust, an angry A.A. motor-cyclist compressed his lips and cracked on a fresh burst of speed. He knew from experience that if the young fools ahead didn't slow down soon, only a miracle would prevent a serious accident. Clayton village was only two miles away now.

"Hurrah ! That's the stuff !"

Clinging to their seats, Paxton and Elliott-Smith, also of the Sixth, cheered riotously. There was a flush in each boy's cheeks and a brightness in their eyes that was due to something else besides speed and excitement ; to the effects, in fact, of the little card-party at the "Blue Lion" in Wilton, from which the trio were racing back to school in time for "call over" ! Tucked away in Paxton's pocket was a silver-tasselled prefect's cap, and all three boys wore Clayton First XV ties. But hang it ! What was the use of being "bloods" at school and pals of a millionaire's son like Sanders if one couldn't have a flutter occasionally ? All three were in their last term at Clayton—and they meant to enjoy it !

Bellowing its vibrant song, the Bentley flashed down the road. A sharp turn rushed towards them ; Sanders swung the steering expertly, flicking the car round the corner almost on two wheels. Then——

Into the middle of the road a little girl

from a neighbouring farm darted out heedlessly in pursuit of a frolicking pup. The huge Bentley seemed to leap round the bend right on top of her. Sobered in an instant, Sanders threw himself on the steering, trying desperately to turn—there was no time to brake. The kiddie, paralysed with fright, screamed and collapsed, covering her terrified eyes.

With a swift stab of horror, even in that split-second, Sanders saw he could not clear her. Next instant he saw something else.

As if by magic, a burly, raw-boned fellow, with a Clayton cap rammed on his fiery shock-head, darted from the hedge, and, leaving the ground in a flying leap, hurled himself at the child. The off-wing of the car brushed him as he streaked in front of it and plucked the girl from under the front wheels; then falling, he rolled over and over out of danger.

Utterly out of control, the swerving Bentley hit the grassy roadside, mounted the bank and tore its way through the hedge. Heavy ploughland greeted it on the other side, bringing its rush to an abrupt halt. The spinning rear-wheels rose in the air, hung there for a second, then the occupants were flung out like so many dolls.

White of face, the A.A. man pelted to the scene. He had seen nothing of the cause of the smash, or the gallant rescue, but flinging himself from the saddle, he was through the hedge in a second.

One glance told him the Bentley was a total loss; its driver lay face down a few yards away, unconscious. Another boy was huddled on the ground, groaning over a curiously twisted leg, while the third sat up groggily, his right arm limp and broken. Of the child and her red-headed saviour, there was no sign.

Sanders' little joy-ride was over!

THE SECOND CHAPTER

The Fifteenth Man!

At call-over that evening in Clayton School there was astonishment and dismay. The news of the disaster had spread like wildfire. A crowd of boys, returning from a "punt-about" had seen a dusty A.A. man drive swiftly up the drive to the Head's house, and shortly afterwards an ambulance had arrived, bearing the injured trio to the School sanatorium.

The story was soon told. Elliott-Smith, the only one with any sense left in him after the smash, had confessed everything. It appeared that Sanders, in his lavish way, had ordered the Bentley from town on hire, garaging it secretly in Clayton village. The three had gone joy-riding, stopped for a little flutter in Wilton and, cutting it fine for "call over," had scorched back to school.

Neither Elliott-Smith or Paxton had the vaguest idea of the cause of the smash—and Sanders, the only one who could say, was still unconscious. And that, for the present, was all.

But it was enough for Clayton. In Big Hall, studies and Common-room, the school lifted its three hundred voices and mourned.

The fact that three of the most popular "bloods" in Clayton were badly injured was rotten enough; that they would certainly be expelled later was worse. But—most hideous fact of all!—in four days' time was the match against the Harlequins' "A", the second XV of the famous London club! The match of the season!

There was not a man in the school Fifteen, or the school itself, who had not been counting the days to the Harlequins fixture. Last year the 'Quins had inflicted a frightful licking, outweighing the school in the scrum and beating them for pace and trickiness in the threequarter line. This season, however, the result would be different—*must* be different, for Clayton were acknowledged to be the best school XV in the country.

They had beaten their other school rivals, Uppingham, Rugby and Haileybury with glaring ease. The backs were all fast and clever, and in Dawson, the skipper, eleven stone of wire and whipcord, Clayton had one of the quickest, pluckiest scrum-halves that ever whipped the ball from the feet of charging forwards and slung out bullet-like passes to his partner at fly-half. But it was in the scrummage that the real strength lay—eight tall, muscular fellows from the Fifth and Sixth, trained to a hair, and fast enough and heavy enough for once to hold their own even against the full-grown men of the London club.



A red-headed fellow leaped in front of the car, plucked the child from under its very wheels, and falling, rolled over and over out of danger.

And now that fast and powerful pack was weakened. Its three " stars," Sanders, that dashing, skirmishing wing-forward, and the hefty, hard-tackling, hard-shoving Elliott-Smith, and Paxton, lay bandaged and helpless in the " San." Small wonder that prep. was neglected that night and groups of boys drifted from study to study in deepest gloom.

It was ghastly, putrid luck !

Meanwhile, in one of the Sixth Form studies, " Sphinx " Dawson, chin in hand, frowned at a paper on the table before him.

It was very rarely that the skipper of Clayton football ever betrayed his feelings. He had won his nickname as a solemn-faced new boy in the Second Form, and it had clung to him all the way up the school. But now, in the privacy of his study, there was worry in his face, and his quiet steady eyes were troubled.

Nor was it the loss of his three best forwards that was worrying him so much. That was bad enough, true ; but in place of Elliott-Smith and Paxton, he could promote French and Peed from the Seconds—two sturdy Fifth-Formers who would push in the scrum till all was blue. It was the " sub " for Sanders that was the trouble ; Sanders, who from the back row of the pack could break away like lightning, hurtling into the opposing three-quarters, harassing them, spoiling their attacks with his whirlwind tackling before they could get started. Or, when the school had the ball, turning himself into an extra raider, a long-striding, clever and powerful runner.

That was the snag. And Dawson conned it over long and carefully. The awkward part of it was, too, that there was a fellow in the school every bit as good as Sandy ; stronger and harder to pull down if anything. But——

Sphinx Dawson's jaw suddenly hardened. Picking up his pencil, he ran his eye for the last time over the fourteen names on the paper, and, with a firm hand, added the fifteenth. He got up then, instinctively squaring his shoulders.

" Paddy plays ! " he murmured to himself. " And if the school don't like it, they can lump it. I'm skipper, and I want to beat the 'Quins ! "

He left the study quietly and strode across to the Head's house.

Half an hour later " Inky " Parsons, the captain's fag, strutted into Big Hall with the team list in one grubby paw. Barely had he pinned it to the notice-board than there was a general rush to see the names, and Parsons disappeared beneath a crowd of juniors and middle-school men.

" Don't barge, you asses ! Ow ! You're kik-killing me ! "

Heedless of Parsons' outcries, a freckle-faced Shell man elbowed his way first to the board. He gave a shout.

" French is in ! "

" Good ! "

" And Peed ! "

" Hear, hear ! "

Two sturdy fellows who had been biting their lips nervously in the rear suddenly grinned at each other. They waited for the third name. Wright, probably, or Henson. They were the next best in the Second XV.

Then, in a shout of sharp surprise, followed by a gasp, and then complete bewildered silence, came the voice of the announcer with the third name.

" Pad-dy Flanagan ! Flanagan's playing against the 'Quins ! "

THE THIRD CHAPTER
Sphinx Dawson Gets Angry !

" WHA-AT'S that ? "

Before any of the startled crowd could speak or move, into their midst strode a tall, scowling senior, followed by another Sixth-Former—both members of the First XV. Roughly the newcomer bullocked his way through the mob, and the juniors, who knew Smithson of Hayter's House to their cost, cowered away from his path hastily.

He bent to read the list. When he looked up again, his face was scarlet.

" M-my hat, it's right ! " he snapped to Jenkins, the school's stolid full-back, beside him. " That low-down, guttersnipe fouler's in the team for Saturday. Dawson must be mad ! "

" Tha-anks ! " drawled a placid voice at his elbow ; and wheeling, Smithson found himself

staring into the calm eyes of Sphinx. He scowled sullenly.

"D'you mean you're really going to play that—that scholarship outsider?" he growled.

Dawson smiled.

"And what's a man's scholarship to do with his Rugger, Smithson?"

The school captain eyed the other coolly, waiting amid an expectant hush for an answer. He had his own opinion of Smithson, and it was not a good one. The fellow was a hefty, well-built forward, and a really dangerous man when things were going well, or he could play to the gallery. But more than once Dawson had noticed him slacking in the tight mauls and shirking his share of the donkey-work, although he was clever enough to escape disapproval.

"Flanagan's an Irish lout!" muttered Smithson at last.

"And you're a silly ass!" rapped Dawson with a suddenness that electrified his listeners. "Ever since Flanagan came to this school you've ragged him with your rotten snobbery—because he's the only scholarship boy in Clayton, and your people are wealthier than his. No, don't go!" he said sharply, as Smithson swung away, raging. "You've asked for trouble a lot. Now you're goin' to get it—publicly!"

In an effort to smooth things down, big Jenkins broke in mildly.

"But, I say, Sphinx!" he murmured. "Paddy *can't* play. Hasn't the Head barred him from footer this term?"

"Yes, he has!" exploded Smithson viciously. "And Dawson knows it. Flanagan's a raving lunatic at Rugger; not fit to play with gen—decent fellows. You remember him in the School House match against ours? He lost his temper like a guttersnipe, caught Hawkins and me unawares and knocked us clean out. That's why the Head barred him. No wonder!"

Dawson's eyes were like steel points.

"And why did Paddy lose his temper, Smithson?" he asked softly.

"Why?" Smithson shrugged. "Ask me another!"

"As you pretend not to know, I'm going to tell you—and these others, too. Flanagan lost his hair in that House match because you and Hawkins hacked and tripped him, tackled him without the ball—and whispered 'Scholarship cad' and 'Charity Mick' all through the game!"

The throng gasped. Instinctively everyone fell back from the glaring Smithson. Jenkins' heavy face grew dark.

"First I've heard of that!" he growled, glancing curiously at the school captain. Never before had anyone seen Dawson so flushed and bitter. "Go on, Sphinx!"

"I mean to. Paddy's a wild Irishman. He doesn't know his own strength, and that bizney nearly broke his heart. For two months he's been the most unpopular fellow in the school. We've sent him to Coventry for dirty play; he's been warned off footer and mooches round the countryside alone for exercise. You jeer at his shabby clothes, Smithson, and his brogue—you've even set the fags hissing him. By Gad, if I had known at the time why Paddy hit you in that match, instead of only finding it out three days ago, I'd have run you before the Head myself there and then! That's flat!"

The big senior sneered and tried to laugh. The hostility in the faces around him, however, hit him like a blow. Some of the juniors even started to hiss. He gave an angry snarl.

"We do love our charity boy suddenly, don't we? But while we're so high an' mighty, Dawson, hadn't you better consult the Head before Saturday?" he finished blandly.

Dawson only smiled at that. He had recovered himself again as quickly as he had lost control.

"I've done so!" he said. "I told him the full yarn as I heard it—but without names!" Smithson, who had gone white, breathed again. "And Paddy's to play against the 'Quins!"

Contemptuously, Dawson ignored his chagrined opponent and turned to the crowd.

"You chaps, we've all done Paddy a dirty trick. When he comes on the field on Saturday, give him a yell!"

"You're thunderin' right!" snorted Jenkins vigorously, and a shout of agreement went up.

Then Dawson waved his hand.

"Right. Now, all of you—scat!"

They "scatted." Quickly the group broke up to spread the latest sensation round the school, and Dawson sauntered thoughtfully away to his study. As he turned into the Sixth Form passage, a heavy step sounded behind him; a nervous hand plucked at his arm. He swung round to see the cause of all the rumpus—Paddy Flanagan, huge, shabby and untidy as usual—staring at him wistfully.

"Dawson! I—is—is it thrue? Am I playing against the 'Quins on Saturday? Ye aren't pullin' me leg——?"

Sphinx grinned. He was no fairy himself, but the strapping six-footer with the anxious freckled face and auburn hair dwarfed him as he did every other Claytonian save Smithson and the injured Sandy. Paddy Flanagan was a giant compared to the rest of the school.

"Yes, Paddy. The Head says you can play. But"—Dawson laid a hand on the Irishman's arm—"no more fighting. The Head's giving you one last chance. Any more rows and——"

Flanagan shook his red fighting-top, letting forth a yell that echoed through the house.

"Wirroo! Rugger again! Sphinx, darlin'," he cried earnestly, "I'll be as good as gold. Sure, the 'Quins can walk over me dead body—and I'll never say a worrrd!"

And he raced back to his study like the madman he was, leaving his skipper chuckling quietly.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER

The Big Game!

"SCHOO-OOL! Schoo-lll!"

"Keep 'em out, Clayton!"

"Tackle low, School. Sit on 'em, Clay-ay-ton!"

Three hundred voices, feverish with excitement, broke into a fresh roar of encouragement and appeal. Right on the school "twenty-five" line, grim, panting Clayton forwards and brightly-coloured Harlequins were queuing up in double files for a "line-out," while behind them the school three-quarters, almost level with the forwards, watched their tricky opposite-numbers like cats.

The Harlequins were pressing like fury. Past half-time—only twenty minutes to go, and no score yet! Verily the game of the season! The school, huddled round the ropes, were hoarse with cheering, tearful with anxiety; while on the field itself, the Fifteen, outweighted and outpaced, were silently and doggedly playing the game of their lives.

Warned by Clayton's reputation, the 'Quins had brought down an extra powerful side; a scratch lot, but very fast and heavy. But still—there was no score!

"Mark your men, School!"

Each player glanced for a second at his marker in the line-out; then the ball was thrown in from touch, figures leaped in the air, arms and clutching hands flew upwards.

A weighty Harlequin, jumping high, pulled the "pill" down one-handed, ducked his head and tried to bullock through by sheer weight. Not a hope! A great red-headed forward in black smothered him fiercely, crashing him to the turf; the leather rolled clear, and round came both gasping packs, barging and fighting for possession.

"Oh, well tackled, Paddy!"

The Harlequin scrum-half, a little chunky man, dived in, scooped up the ball, whirled to sling it to his speedy "threes." Before he could do so, Dawson, calm-eyed, more sphinx-like than ever under the grime and sweat, "nailed" him in his tracks as he had done fifty times before already, and the two vanished under falling bodies.

Again the ball was heeled; this time another Harlequin, the burliest of their pack, picked it up and plunged through. A tall school forward tried to grab his shoulders instead of his knees. He was handed-off vigorously.

Groans from the touch-lines.

"Go low, Smithson!"

"Low, you chump! Wake up!"

Smithson picked himself up, scowling. The big 'Quin had fought his way clear and slung the ball out on the blind side of the scrum to where a racing wing-threequarter took it in his stride. He swerved round the school winger, handed Jenkins off; the white line loomed up only ten yards ahead.

Yells, cheers, the thud of pounding feet. He was over—over—it was a try.

"Paddy! Flanagan! Take him, Paddy!"

Out of nowhere seemingly leaped the red-haired, raw-boned Claytonian. Two yards from the flying Harlequin his feet left the ground, his fiery head disappeared between outstretched arms. At full toss he dived at the runner's flashing knees, bringing him down heavily to save that certain score. The desperate forwards followed up hard, but Dawson got there first, snapped up the rolling ball and screw-kicked out of play.

"Well kicked, Sphinx!"

And a thunderous roar:

"Well tackled, Paddy! Good old Flanagan!"



Two yards from the flying Harlequin, Paddy leaped clear of the ground in a headlong dive and grasped the runner round the knees.

The Irish boy, heaving himself up, trotted up-field for the line-out, a little grin on his red, grim face. Smithson, catching that grin, grunted. Throughout the weary, hard-fought game the school had been chanting Flanagan's name uproariously—he had come into his own once more, the finest, fiercest forward in the tough Clayton pack, and as clean as they make 'em!

Roughly handled time and again, he had fought back with all his strength and weight, smiling always, rallying and stiffening the others by his whirlwind tackling and dribbling. The Harlequins wanted the ball "out"—wanted it heeled at all costs to feed their hungry, crouching sprinters in the three-quarter line. But Clayton weren't having any.

"Keep the ball *tight*, School!" Dawson had ordered. "If their bally threes get it often—good-night!"

So Clayton were keeping it tight; dribbling and pounding down the touchlines, Welsh fashion; spreading out like demons the moment the 'Quins did attack. And always Flanagan was first to the ball or man, with one big foot over it to keep it in the scrummage while his big, hard body and long arms fended off the striving visitors.

Without the ball the London threequarters were useless. Every time the Harlequin forwards heeled, Dawson, moving like a streak, squashed their scrum-half flat; then the school pack would wheel and come round, diving in like terriers, tackling like bulldogs.

Still there was no score.

Gradually the battle of Big Side raged to a pitch that sent the crowd delirious with thrills.

There came a scrum in midfield ; Dawson had the ball waiting to slip it into the arch made by the heaving, straining packs.

" Coming in left, School ! Wheel and take it ! " he barked.

The ball went into the Clayton back-row ; stuck there. In a perfectly drilled wheel, the forwards screwed the 'Quins off their balance and, with Paddy, Smithson and French in the van and the lolloping oval just ahead, went storming through the visiting threequarters in a solid black squad. Men threw themselves on the ball in vain ; it was twitched from beneath their writhing arms and bodies and taken onwards, while the crowd yelled their heads off.

Coolly the Harlequins full-back darted in front of the avalanche, scooping the ball from Paddy's toe. Smithson was the next man up—he should have downed the defender there and then. Instead, for some reason he appeared to hesitate ; missed his tackle once more. A hollow moan burst forth as the full-back wriggled away and cleared his lines with a mighty kick to touch.

There were grunts of disgust from the breathless forwards ; harsh criticisms from the touchlines. Forty precious yards gone to waste ! Dawson frowned impatiently, and for the first time in his career ticked a man off on the field of play.

" For goodness' sake, Smithson," he jerked, " go *low*, man ! "

In a frenzy of spite, the disgruntled scrummager whirled on him.

" It—it's that infernal charity bounder always in the way ! " he spluttered. Dawson's face paled with anger. Then a big, muddy paw slapped Smithson on the shoulder and an Irish brogue butted in gently :

" Sure, it was my fault intoirely then, Sphinx. Smithson would have tackled the spalpeen only I barged against him as he doived ! "

It was a lie—a howling lie ! But Paddy told it with a calm apologetic grin and Sphinx almost believed him. Only by the sudden looked of shamed surprise that crept into Smithson's flushed face did the Clayton skipper realise the Irishman was swallowing the shouted insult, soothing his persecutor down so that the team shouldn't suffer.

Quick to see the position, Dawson nodded briskly.

" Sorry, Smithson—I was mistaken. Forget I spoke. Into it again, chaps ! "

The incident was over in a few seconds ; but the school had noticed it and buzzed with comment. No fault of Paddy's this time ; he was grinning like a Cheshire cat. And to everyone's surprise, Smithson, chin up and eyes agleam, began suddenly to play like a lion refreshed, chucking himself into the thick of it magnificently.

Time slipped by ; bit by bit the school's team-work asserted itself over their heavier but scratch opponents. Paddy, slamming through three tacklers, gained fifteen yards ; an unexpected raid by the school backs was only checked on the Harlequin line. A minute later Dawson saw the referee glance at his watch and his jaw hardened.

The school simply *must* win ; somehow, someone had got to carry that ball over that distant line. A scrum was formed on the half-way line. He threw the ball in smoothly.

" *Heel* now, Clayton ! " The order snapped like a whiplash. Out came the ball cleanly, Sphinx whipped it up, sold the dummy to the opposing scrum-half, and swerved through the breaking forwards and raced away.

The crowd shrieked.

" Daw-son ! Clay-ton ! Run, run, run ! "

Head thrown back, Sphinx dodged and weaved his way through. A racing wing-threequarter bore down on him—he knew he hadn't speed enough to draw clear. Despairingly he looked round for someone to pass to, and gasped with delight to see Paddy Flanagan, hands ready for the pass, pounding up just behind him.

Next moment the Harlequin had tackled him. Falling, Sphinx swung the ball out and saw Paddy take it beautifully, hand-off the full-back and drive onwards, fighting towards the line, the frantic 'Quins grabbing for his shoulders and legs.

He'd do it—no, they'd got him. For another yard or so Paddy staggered, amid pandemonium. Then a cry, half-gasp, half-sob, reached him from outside the pack.



Handing off the full-back, Paddy rushed onwards, fighting towards the 'Quins line.

"With you, Paddy! With you!"

It was Smithson—cleverly in position and running free. The sight spurred Paddy to a last great stride. With a heave that shook an opponent from his powerful thighs, he flipped the ball clean and straight into Smithson's hands.

The last he saw before going down under a torrent of black and coloured shirts was the tall senior bowling over a tackler and falling, ball outstretched—over the Harlequins line.

"Try! Try! Try!"

The touchlines went crazy. Panting with excitement, the Clayton men stood while Jenkins took the kick at goal. The whistle shrilled as he planted the ball squarely between the sticks; it shrilled again next instant and the match was finished.

Clayton, 5 points; Harlequins "A," nil!

Through the mist of weariness before his eyes, Paddy became aware of Smithson holding out a diffident hand. He was mumbling something.

"Thanks, Paddy! I've been a goop!"

Truly all things are possible at Rugger!

Grinning all over his mud-stained face, the scholarship boy hugged him boisterously. And with that, the school burst the ropes, lifted Smithson up, Paddy up, and the Sphinx as well; and the Harlequins joined in to help them do it.

The shouting procession headed towards the pavilion.

That evening Paddy Flanagan sat alone in his study, silently admiring the new cap on the table before him—the black velvet, silver-tasselled cap of Clayton's First XV. Presently, as a quiet knock sounded on the door, he snatched it up hastily.

Visitors had been rare in Paddy's study for the last few weeks. In quick surprise he shouted, "Come in!"

Sphinx Dawson entered. Behind him, furtively grinning, was Smithson, of Hayter's House. There was a conspiratorial air about both seniors; and Sphinx's voice was soft and guileless.

"Paddy, where were you—last Tuesday?"

Flanagan stiffened slightly.

"Eh? Why I—I forget——"

"You didn't by any chance dive in front of Sandy's car?" pursued Dawson sweetly. "You didn't snatch Farmer Nicholls' kiddie from under the wheels and afterwards run her home, did you?"

The Irishman's face was a study.

"I didn't—I wasn't!" he stammered; and Dawson's eyes gleamed.

"That's funny. Because Sanders recovered enough this afternoon to tell the Head that you did; and old Nicholls has just described the rescuer; a chap from Clayton; huge, freckled face, red hair——"

"Oh!" mumbled Paddy furiously. "The spalpeen promised he wouldn't and——"

"You old blighter! Grab him, Smithy!" chuckled Dawson, leaping in at the words.

In a flash, Paddy was hustled out of his chair and forced to the window by four strong arms. Smithson flung it open; they rammed him out till his head and shoulders were in the open air.

Below in the quad the school stood waiting, silently. At the sight, Paddy almost fainted. But Sphinx, holding him tight, roared aloud.

"Here he is, School! The giddy, carroty-headed hero! Now cheer, you beggars!"

For the second time that day Paddy Flanagan, the school's "outsider" for the past two months, heard his name shouted by three hundred voices in a solid yell:

"Good—old—Paddy!"

Nor was it until he had ungratefully chucked his friend Smithson under the table, pitched Dawson into the armchair and bolted for his life, that the cheering ceased.

But whether he liked it or not, the scholarship boy from Connaught had become a Clayton "blood."



Warbled, Chanted, or Otherwise Perpetrated by H. Skinner, W. Stott and S. J. Snoop, the Remove "Gay Dogs".

In the woodshed slyly lurking
Three Greyfriars "gay dogs" we.
Outdoor games we're gladly shirking;
Penny nap's our mark, you see!
What-ho, for the life of a "blade"!

Cards and cash on upturned boxes—
That's the stuff for merry sport!
Eyes alert, as keen as foxes,
Lest by Wingate we are caught;
For such is the life of a "blade"!

To fragrant "gaspers" we're partial;
We can't see why smoking's banned,
Until Quelchy, looking martial,
Whacks us till we understand!
Then sad is the life of a "blade"!

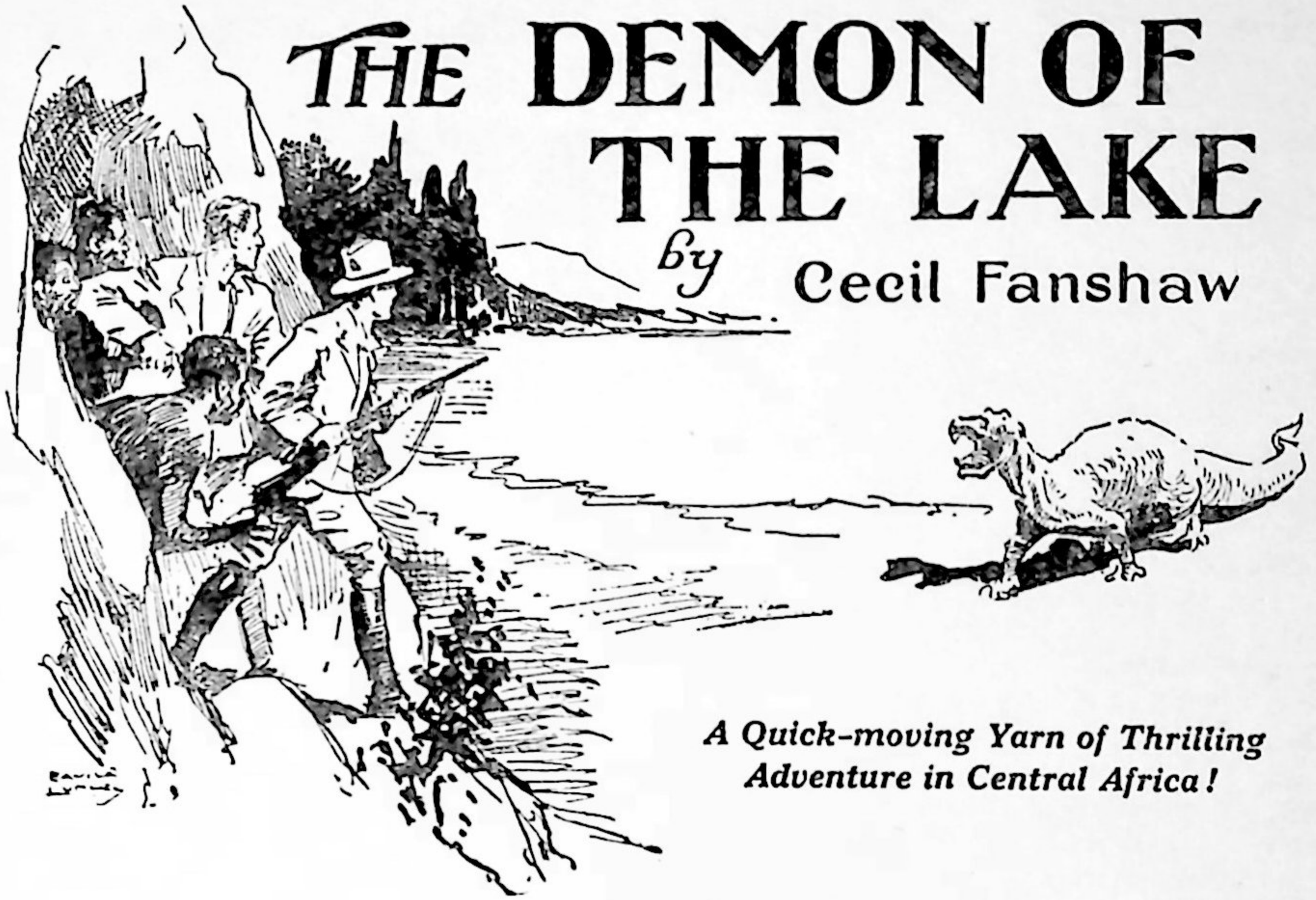
Sometimes, when the fancy takes us,
"Cross-Keys"-ward at night we go;
Gamble till the luck forsakes us,
Then return with spirits low,
Repenting the life of a "blade"!

On "gee-gees," too, we like to bet,
Stabbing race-lists with a pin;
And so we find ourselves in debt—
No horse of ours tries to win!
For hard is the life of a "blade"!

Three weary, weedy slackers, we,
Short-winded, pale and tired.
A hopeless, helpless, dingy three,
Deserving to be "fired"—
Result of the life of a "blade"!

THE DEMON OF THE LAKE

by Cecil Fanshaw



A Quick-moving Yarn of Thrilling Adventure in Central Africa!

THE FIRST CHAPTER
The Arab Slave-Train!

'WELL, we're now deep in Nchanga's country, Bob. Another day's hard trekking should see us safely through it, and near that mysterious Lake Komi at last. The porters are tired, and we must camp to-night behind that ridge yonder!"

Lean and sunburnt, Colonel John Marsden frowned somewhat anxiously as he gripped his rifle and showed his young nephew, Bob, a bush-clad ridge outlined against the sky.

The fierce sun was sinking swiftly, the sky glowing with the myriad flaming colours that are only seen in a Central African sunset; and the boulders and thorn trees that dotted the plain were casting long black shadows. It was the country of Nchanga, the chief of a notoriously savage cannibal tribe; hence Colonel Marsden's anxiety to pass swiftly through it.

After two months' strenuous trekking, the colonel and his nephew, with an outfit of fifty Swahili porters, had got deep into unexplored regions of the Congo. They were searching for a mysterious lake, called by natives Lake Komi, near which they hoped to discover remains of Rex Tyrannosaurus—one of the giant lizards of prehistoric times.

No explorer had ever succeeded in discovering a complete skeleton of this monster. In fact, some scientists declared it never existed.

But native yarns told of strange, gigantic skeletons to be seen near the lake they called Komi. And Colonel Marsden, after much difficulty, had persuaded a London museum to finance his expedition.

"I feel sure there's something in the yarns, Bob," he told his nephew as he beckoned on the sweating porters. "And the museum will pay us almost anything for a complete skeleton of Rex T., or even for large bones."

"A fortune in bones, uncle!" Bob grinned. "But we've got to find Lake Komi first. You've still got that native hunter's chart all right?"

"Yes; the chart I was able to make from what the fellow told us," Colonel Marsden

replied, referring to a chart he had drawn on information received from a friendly native hunter. "And I've no doubt the fellow really went up to Lake Komi."

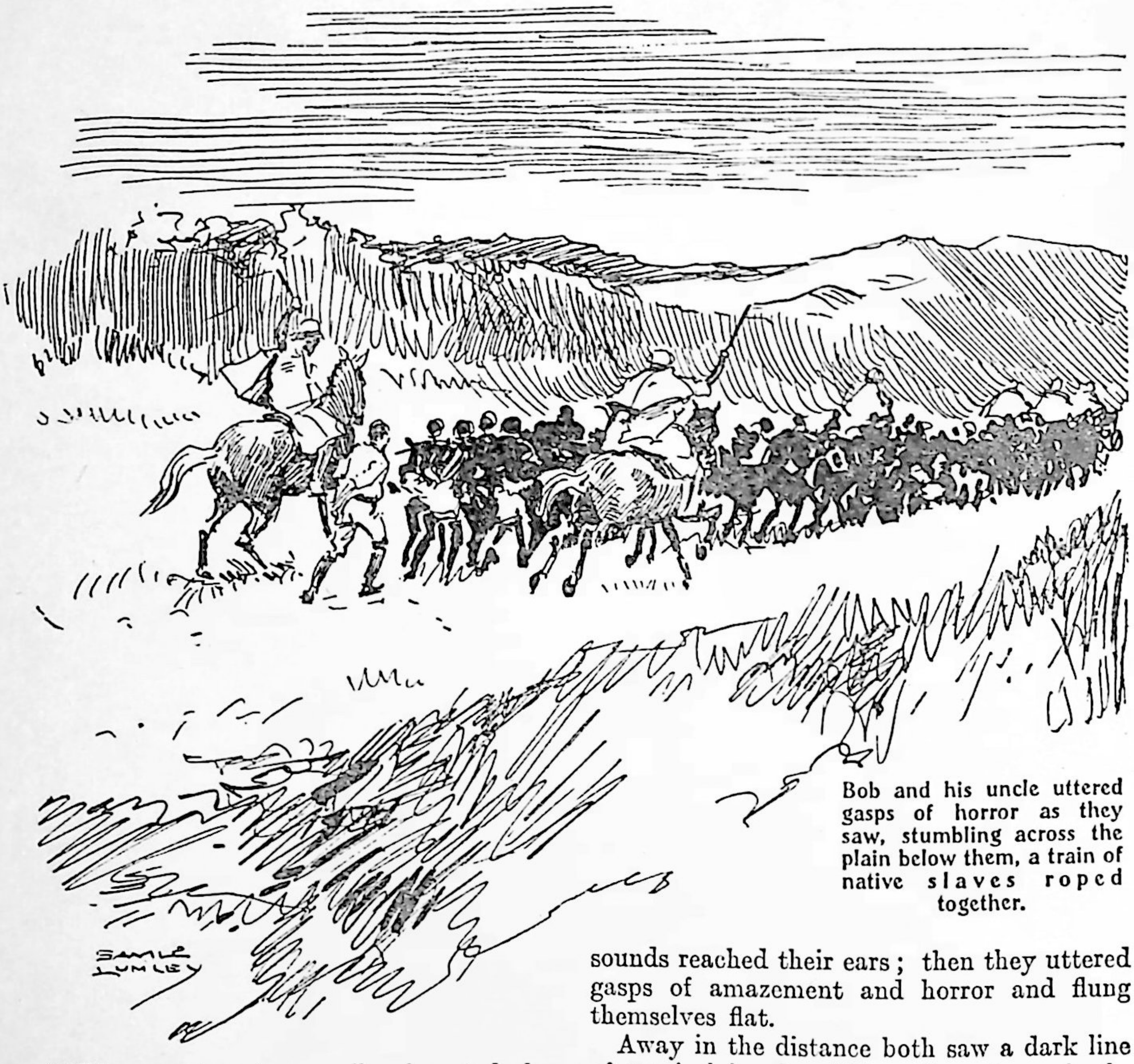
"He vowed it was haunted by ghosts and demons!" Bob chuckled.

"This country is usually haunted by Nchanga's warriors." Colonel Marsden smiled grimly as he stared round at the darkening plain. "And all will be up if the ruffians collar us. Come on!"

The porters also seemed uneasy, knowing Chief Nchanga's grim reputation.

So the party hurried silently on towards the ridge, hoping to find water-holes and a safe place to camp amongst the rocks on the farther side.

Dust-grimed and weary, the colonel and his nephew reached the ridge-crest ahead of their men. That same instant indescribable



Bob and his uncle uttered gasps of horror as they saw, stumbling across the plain below them, a train of native slaves roped together.

sounds reached their ears; then they uttered gasps of amazement and horror and flung themselves flat.

Away in the distance both saw a dark line of tropical jungle. Below them lay a bush-clad plain, across which was travelling a small caravan, consisting of about a hundred natives roped together. Ahead of the winding chain of natives rode three armed horsemen in white robes, while several others rode up and down, flourishing hippo-hide whips and shouting savagely.

Even as Colonel Marsden and Bob glared down into the plain, two or three of the bound natives stumbled, seeming utterly spent. Then the robed horsemen's whips rose and fell, and shrieks and howls rose on the heat-laden air.

"Those scoundrels are Arabs—slavers, by gosh!" Bob gasped furiously.

"You're right, Bob. They must have been slave-raiding down South," Colonel Marsden gritted. "They're trying to hurry through Nchanga's country before——"

"Look, uncle!" burst out Bob. "A white slave!"

The colonel stared, and anger appeared in his face when he saw that Bob was indeed right. At the end of the long, staggering chain of natives was a dust-grimed man in rags. He was hatless and bare-footed, but he wore riding breeches and a blood-stained shirt. Despite the dim light, it could be seen that he was a white man.

Both Colonel Marsden and his nephew were speechless with fury. At first sight of the Arab slave-train both had felt the urge to endeavour to rescue the wretched natives and scatter their merciless captors, despite the heavy odds against them. Now that a white man was visible amongst the slaves, being brutally flogged by Arab horsemen, an attempt at rescue was imperative, at any cost.

Even though the noise of battle might draw savages to the scene, and imperil the quest to find remains of the giant lizard at Lake Komi.

"Open fire, uncle!" breathed Bob, thrusting forward his rifle.

"Useless, my lad!" snapped the colonel. "Those Arab thugs will take cover behind their slaves, and blaze at us over them. What's more, 'twill be dark very soon, and then—— By Jove, I've got a plan!"

Breaking off, Colonel Marsden beckoned his porters, some of whom, according to custom in Africa, carried spears, while a few had muskets.



"Drop your loads!" he snapped in Swahili. "And come here quickly, on your hands and knees!"

The porters obeyed, fearful of an attack from Nchanga's cannibal warriors. They came crawling up to the ridge-crest, gripping their weapons, to utter grunts of astonishment and wrath at sight of the slave-train.

"You would attempt a rescue, bwana?" gasped Gozo, the colonel's Swahili head man. "Wow! It is impossible!"

"Not if you obey me," said Colonel Marsden. "Listen! Take thirty of the porters,

Gozo, and run through the bush ahead of those Arabs, and pretend to be Nchanga's warriors. You understand? The porters must feign to be savages, leaving here their water-bottles, jerseys, and blankets."

"I understand, bwana," Gozo laughed grimly.

"Then be off. Directly you charge howling from the bush, I, the young master, and the other porters, will charge the rear of the slavers. We will defeat them, Gozo."

The head man nodded, and a few seconds later he stole off along the side of the ridge, leading thirty half-naked, spear-armed porters, who now resembled savage warriors.

Bob heard them depart, and his nerves thrilled as he glared down at the reeling slave-train, hearing the groans and yells, seeing the white captive fall on his face, to be beaten to his feet again.

Would his uncle's plan to fool the Arabs work? the lad wondered anxiously. Would the Arabs really take the disguised porters under Gozo for Nchanga's cannibal warriors?

Of a sudden the African evening was rent by fierce howls and whoops.

Away ahead of the slave-train Bob saw black figures come darting through the bush, howling, hurling spears, and firing muskets.

"Good old Gozo!" Colonel Marsden laughed grimly. "That's the stuff!"

Bob smiled also, for the scheme seemed to be working.

Directly the uproar started nearly all the Arabs galloped full speed at the attackers, firing blindly from their saddles and whipping out scimitars. They left only five mounted men in charge of the slave-train.

"By my beard! Nchanga's dogs!" roared their turbaned leader. "Follow me! Ride them down, my sons!"

"Rapid fire, Bob!" snapped the colonel.

Bang—bang! Bang!

The two rifles spat flame and bullets, and three of the Arabs on guard over the slaves dropped from their saddles. Then down the ridge-face charged Colonel Marsden, Bob, and the remaining porters, cheering and whooping.

This second attack was a complete surprise. Already the main body of the Arabs had lost three men to the porters' spears, but had become suspicious of the latter, since they turned and fled into the bush when the Arabs charged home. At the clatter of rifle fire in their rear the Arabs wheeled, to see the two white figures, with other sham savages, routing their slave-guards.

"Ho Akbar! A trick!" boomed the Arab leader furiously. "Yonder are white curs—not Nchanga's dogs, after all! Capture them! We will have more white slaves to sell in the North!"

Back the Arab horsemen came thundering in a packed body, robes flying, long rifles firing.

Bullets hummed about Bob and his uncle, but mostly screeched wildly overhead. Now the latter had their foes in front of them, on open ground, and the fire from their magazine rifles had a terrible effect.

It was more than the Arabs had bargained for. After five minutes' pandemonium several men and horses lay prone on the ground. The remainder fled into the bush, where Gozo's fellows ambushed and utterly routed them.

"Gozo's crew turned up trumps!" Colonel Marsden laughed grimly. "Now to set free these slaves."

The wretched natives were quickly cut free. But they were panic-stricken, and promptly fled into the bush, evidently fearing their rescuers as much as the Arabs. Remained only the ragged white man, who lay groaning in the dust.

To him hurried Colonel Marsden and Bob, little guessing the evil character of the fellow they had rescued from a fate worse than death.

THE SECOND CHAPTER

Treachery!

"Up with you, old man!" said Bob anxiously. "Can you walk?"

The lad helped the rescued white man to his feet, and saw that he was a short, wiry fellow, black-moustached, and with thin, hawk-like features tanned the colour of mahogany. Mighty tough indeed he seemed to be. Despite his brutal treatment by the Arab slavers, he quickly recovered as Bob forced some water between his teeth.

"Thanks, son!" he gasped. "You sure

pulled a cute trick on those Arab thugs. I took your faked-up porters for Nchanga's soldiers myself."

"It was my uncle's plan," Bob grinned. "This is my uncle—Colonel Marsden."

"Proud to meet you, colonel," said the wiry man, turning. "I'm Davis—Paul Davis, of U.S.A. I've been elephant hunting for years in Africa, but those Arabs caught me napping an' scuppered all my outfit."

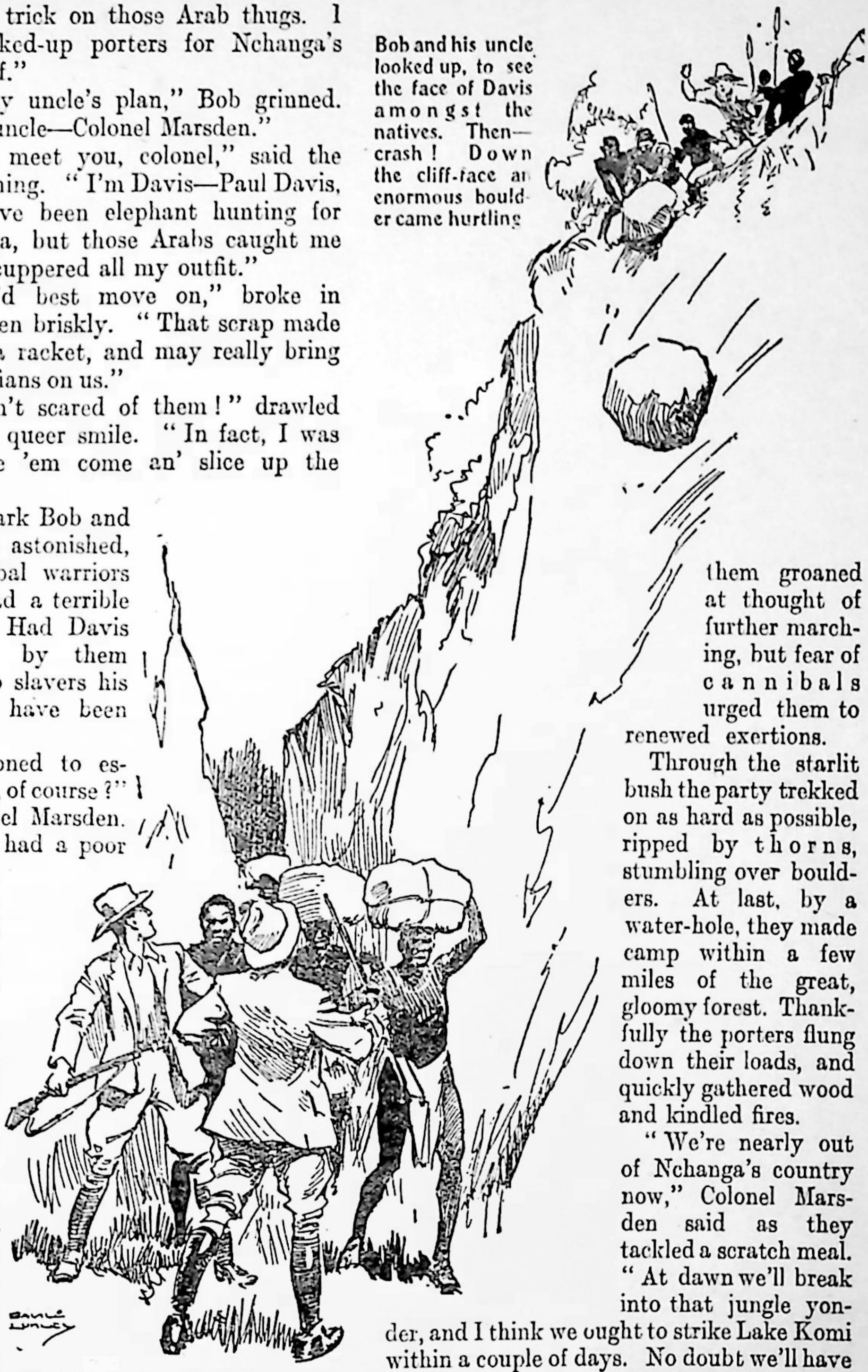
"Well, we'd best move on," broke in Colonel Marsden briskly. "That scrap made the deuce of a racket, and may really bring Nchanga's ruffians on us."

"Gee, I ain't scared of them!" drawled Davis, with a queer smile. "In fact, I was hoping to see 'em come an' slice up the Arabs."

At this remark Bob and his uncle were astonished, for the cannibal warriors of Nchanga had a terrible reputation. Had Davis been rescued by them from the Arab slavers his plight would have been even worse.

"You reckoned to escape in a scrap, of course?" returned Colonel Marsden. "You'd have had a poor chance, Davis. Nchanga is a cunning fiend and as merciless as a hyena."

Night was fast shutting down, so Colonel Marsden insisted on trekking towards the dark jungle without delay, in case savages surprised them in the plain.



Bob and his uncle looked up, to see the face of Davis amongst the natives. Then—crash! Down the cliff-face an enormous boulder came hurtling

Quickly the porters recovered their loads. Gozo and all of them groaned at thought of further marching, but fear of cannibals urged them to renewed exertions.

Through the starlit bush the party trekked on as hard as possible, ripped by thorns, stumbling over boulders. At last, by a water-hole, they made camp within a few miles of the great, gloomy forest. Thankfully the porters flung down their loads, and quickly gathered wood and kindled fires.

"We're nearly out of Nchanga's country now," Colonel Marsden said as they tackled a scratch meal. "At dawn we'll break into that jungle yonder, and I think we ought to strike Lake Komi within a couple of days. No doubt we'll have to find some other way back to civilisation."

At that the hunter, Davis, sat up.

He had been silent during the journey through the bush. It seemed his terrible experiences had exhausted him, but now he sat up, with an eager light flickering in his eyes.

"Say, colonel, is that your game? I took you for a hunting party. You're looking for Lake Komi?"

"We are," nodded Colonel Marsden. "And I believe we shall find remains of Rex Tyrannosaurus, supposed to be the biggest of all the prehistoric giant lizards. By Jove, do you know where that lake is?"

Davis shook his head.

"I've heard the native yarns about it," he replied, "but I ain't sure that lake really exists."

"I am," said Colonel Marsden.

With the firelight flickering on his clean-cut features, the colonel told Davis how he and his nephew had met a native hunter who gave them a detailed account of Lake Komi's surroundings. He produced the rough chart he had made from that native's information, showing they must march due west through Nchanga's country to the great forest.

"Keeping due west," the colonel went on enthusiastically, tracing on the chart with his finger, "we shall come to a big ridge of hills in the forest, and have to find a pass through it. Then comes a river; after that a great mountain with two peaks. Near the base of that mountain is said to be the lake called Komi."

"An' what the heck will you do with any bones you find?" Davis broke in, with a laugh. "I'd meant to look for Lake Komi one day, reckonin' to find gold."

"Bones of the giant lizard will bring us gold enough," Colonel Marsden laughed shortly. "The London museum that financed my expedition have promised several thousand pounds for proof that Rex Tyrannosaurus really existed, and there's a good deal of kudos to be gained by making the discovery."

"I should say!" gasped Paul Davis. "I'm with you, colonel."

Seeing that the rescued hunter was pretty well bound to stay with the party, his offer of help was unnecessary. But Bob and his uncle were really glad to have another white man with them. They said so, and the colonel promised Paul Davis a share of what they might gain.

Shortly afterwards the little camp settled down for the night.

The porters huddled asleep round the embers of their fire, and the three whites took it in turn to keep watch; but nothing disturbed them.

Lions roared out in the plain, and from the direction of the forest came the grisly moans of prowling hyenas, but that was all.

At dawn Bob awoke with a start to find Davis had vanished.

"The fellow's gone, uncle!" cried the lad. "He relieved me on guard about three hours ago."

Great was the astonishment of Colonel Marsden at seeing no sign of the rescued hunter. At first it was thought he had wandered off in search of firewood and lost his way back to camp, but he was an old hunter and not likely to lose himself.

Had a lion caught him? There had been no sounds of a struggle. The mystery of Davis's disappearance seemed insoluble. In vain the party searched and shouted.

At last it was certain that Davis had deliberately walked off into the grim African night, doubtless soon to fall a prey to wild beasts or savages.

"We can't stop longer to search for him, Bob," said Colonel Marsden, after an hour's search with the porters. "We risk all our men's lives every minute we stay in Nchanga's country."

"Do you think the Arabs' treatment crazed him, uncle?" asked Bob.

"I do, Bob," nodded the colonel. "Why, he hoped Nchanga's warriors would rescue him from Arabs. Clean mad, by Jove!"

So, without hunter Davis, the party marched on.

Soon they reached the great wall of jungle, as the flaming sun of Africa rose over the tree-tops. The colonel took compass bearings to make sure of their direction; then into the primeval forest the party plunged, hacking their way through screens of creepers, anxiously searching for elephant paths.

Very quickly they were out of the world of man, in the world of wild things and sinister silence. All about them towered gigantic trees, and the air under the laced branches was dead and stifling.

They were surrounded by green gloom, like the murk of a fog. On all sides was a tangle of undergrowth, moss-grown rocks, and fallen trees festooned with lichen. The smell of rotting vegetation was in their nostrils as they struggled on through perpetual dusk in grim silence, hearing occasionally the trumpet of an elephant.

Bob gasped and perspired in the dank atmosphere, and longed for a glimpse of bright sunlight and blue sky.

For hours the party toiled on, Bob and his uncle keyed up with excitement at the thought that they must be approaching Lake Komi. The porters continually grumbled, however, but were too afraid to bolt back through Nchanga's country and desert their masters.

Then suddenly the party burst out of the jungle at the base of stony hills, and right before them was a rocky defile.

"The pass through the hills, uncle!" cried Bob. "We've kept due west, and that native hunter told us right."

It seemed that the pass ahead must be the one referred to. Through it they glimpsed more dense jungle beyond, but all were very relieved as they hurried forward between cliff-like walls.

The party was only half-way through the pass, however, when whoops and howls burst forth above their heads. They looked up, to catch the glint of spear-blades, to glimpse black, savage faces grinning down through foliage.

Roars of anger burst from Bob and his uncle, for they saw the hawk-like features of a white man amongst the blacks and recognised Paul Davis, the vanished hunter.

"What the deuce does this mean, Davis?" Colonel Marsden shouted, in astonishment.

"That I want th' giant lizard's bones, colonel!" came down the mocking reply. "And all th' London Museum's reward!"

Then—boom! crash! Down the cliff-face an enormous boulder came thundering, followed quickly by others.

THE THIRD CHAPTER
The Giant Lizard!

"TAKE that, you treacherous cur!" yelled Bob.

Wildly the lad fired up at Davis and at the whooping savages, who could be seen striving to roll down more rocks. Colonel Marsden fired, too, but true aim was impossible, for small stones and rocks were leaping downwards in a growing avalanche.

"Run for it!" the colonel shouted furiously. "Those black scoundrels are Nchanga's warriors! Davis must have brought them round ahead of us!"

A desperate dash forward through the defile was the only course open to the party. As one, all hurled themselves forward, bent double from their waists, running for dear life.

Pandemonium reigned. Bob could hear the delighted whoops of the savages above, the howls of the terrified porters, and the thunder of falling rocks.

Whizz! Boom! Crash! Small and big boulders hurtled amongst the party. Some of the Swahili porters dropped their loads, others protected their heads with their burdens. One man crashed down, killed outright by a jagged boulder; and two more staggered, howling with the pain of injuries.

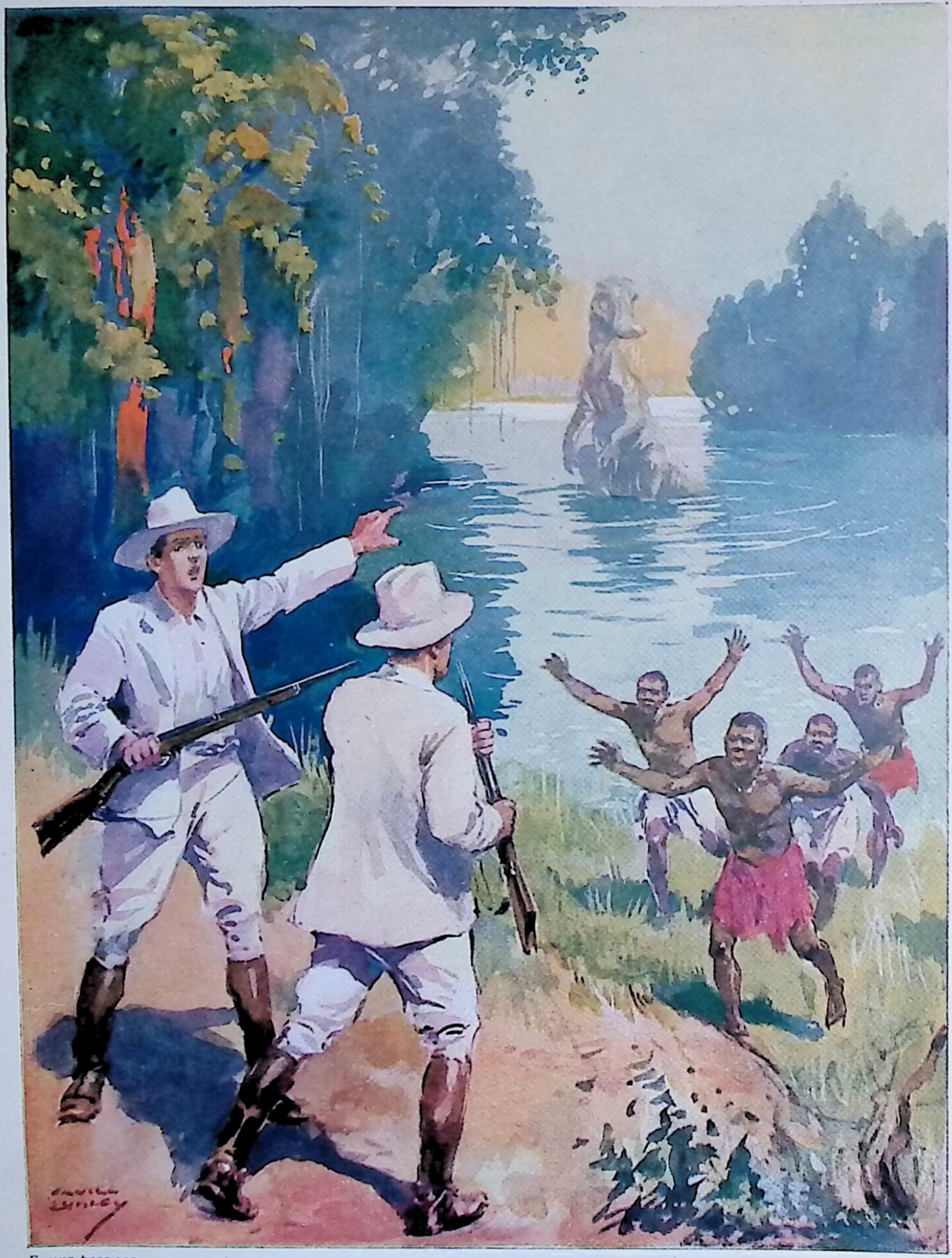
To Bob that desperate dash through the defile seemed endless. But at last the lad and his uncle, helping the injured porters, raced through to the shelter of the jungle beyond, with their yelling porters surging about them.

They had come through the rain of rocks and spears, and the angry yells of Nchanga's warriors were now faint behind them. But nearly all were bruised and wounded, and the party had lost several valuable loads of food and camp equipment.

"What a rotter Davis is!" Bob gasped. "We save him from those Arabs, and then he tries to scupper us, to grab all the reward for the prehistoric remains."

Colonel Marsden was livid with wrath, for now all was plain.

The American hunter was not crazed. Having seen the colonel's chart and learnt of the party's quest, he had deliberately stolen away in the night to fetch Nchanga's warriors.



Facing page 129

THE DEMON OF THE LAKE!

Indeed, it was now clear that Davis was friendly with the cannibal chief, Nchanga. Had he not admitted that he was not scared of Nchanga's black soldiers—that, in fact, he had reckoned they might rescue him from the Arab slavers?

"I couldn't understand at first," Bob said as they struggled on through gloomy jungle, "but now I know what the rotter meant!"

"Yes, Bob, Davis must have some hold over Nchanga," Colonel Marsden returned. "We only reached that pass just in time. A few minutes later Davis's gang would have had tons of rocks ready for us. Push on quickly."

"You think they'll pursue, uncle?" Bob asked.

"Certainly, when they've collected more of their pals," was the grim reply. "Davis had only half a dozen men, but I bet he's sent runners to round up some more, and we'll be pursued right up to the lake."

The party pushed on as hard as possible through the hot, gloomy jungle, following an elephant path. The colonel knew that pursuit would be swift and grim.

Yet, once Lake Komi was reached, Nchanga's warriors would fear to come to close quarters, dreading the yarns of demons in that region.

"We must find the lake before those scoundrels catch us," said Colonel Marsden.

The party's porters hacked and thrust forward willingly. Being down-country natives, they were not scared of local savages' demon yarns. But they were very scared of a cannibal attack in their rear, and toiled on frantically.

Followed several hours of pushing through primeval forest, but eventually the party reached a small, muddy river. It was shallow, and they waded swiftly across it.

Bob and his uncle were now growing excited, for the river was another point on the colonel's chart.

And, some time later, through a gap in the leafy canopy above their heads, the colonel spotted the twin peaks of a huge, forested mountain outlined against the sky.

"That must be the mountain we want!" he cried delightedly. "Lake Komi is at its foot somewhere."

They noticed, too, as they toiled on, that the trees were taller; more light filtered down, and consequently it was much warmer. Ferns and other plants grew to prodigious size, and enormous butterflies flitted through glades.

Colonel Marsden and Bob were astonished at their unusual surroundings, at the strange scenery.

"Look at those trees, lad!" cried Colonel Marsden. "They must be nearly three hundred feet high—their trunks are in segments, like a telescope. By Jove, they're 'segillaria'!"

"What's that, uncle?" gasped Bob, craning his head back.

"Prehistoric trees, my boy!" said the colonel. "Why, this part of the world hasn't changed in a million years! It's the same as it was in the Jurassic period. No white man has ever set foot here before."

Bob was spellbound, feeling as though he had jumped right back into prehistoric times. The party struggled on through the weirdest jungle imaginable.

Of a sudden a shout burst from the colonel.

"A lake!" he cried. "It must be Lake Komi!"

A moment later the party emerged from the jungle, to find themselves on a stretch of yellow sand; the shore of a great lake, blue and sparkling in the sunlight. They could see dim jungle on the farther shore. On their right the ground sloped up, gradually forming a cliff.

All stood with bulging eyes for a moment before Bob found his voice.

"Where do we look for the giant lizard bones?" he asked.

"Maybe we'll find some along the shore, under that cliff yonder," replied Colonel Marsden. "But I tell you, my lad, we daren't stop to search with Davis's gang after us. We must cross this lake; probably there are skeletons on the other shore, too. And Nchanga's warriors won't dare try to follow us, fearing the demon yarns."

Bob saw the wisdom of his uncle's plan, and immediately the whole party set to work to hack down a great tree to form dug-out canoes.

Gozo and the other Swahili porters toiled at this work with frantic haste. At last a giant tree smashed down on the sand, and two crude canoes swiftly took shape beneath the flashing axes.

"Now in with you, Gozo, and the remaining baggage and half the porters," Colonel Marsden commanded his head man. "I and the young master will follow with the rest directly you are safely launched."

The colonel's plan was to cover this canoe, in case the treacherous Davis and Nchanga's savages arrived. He and Bob stood waiting by the second canoe, forming a rearguard with their rifles. Both watched the first canoe paddle briskly out on to the surface of the lake, manned by a score of porters, saw it draw well away from the sandy shore.

"Now we can follow, Bob," said Colonel Marsden, beckoning the remaining porters.

"Shove the boat——"

He broke off at the sound of a fearful cry that seemed to come from the centre of the lake. It was a whistling scream, eerily reverberating over the lake's surface.

Cries of astonishment burst from Bob and his uncle and yells of fear from the porters. Away out on the blue water all saw a black object rapidly approaching. A moment later up into the air shot a gigantic, hideous head, on a tapering neck, to be followed by a huge scaly body.



Howling, Davis's party broke and fled before the giant lizard's rush—but great jaws closed on one or other of them as they ran.

"What the deuce!" yelled Bob.

"A giant lizard—a survivor from prehistoric times!" roared the colonel, astounded. "It's alive—Rex Tyrannosaurus itself!"

The whole party was spellbound. Bob could hardly believe that he was seeing a live giant lizard, a surviving monster of a prehistoric age.

With terrified howls the porters in the launched canoe hurled themselves out into the water and came swimming and plunging towards the shore. Then they came racing and howling up the sand to Bob and his uncle.

The giant lizard followed. With cavernous jaws wide, the monster plunged through the water, its upraised head black against the sun. It uttered a fearful noise as it approached the party.

"To the cliffs—quick!" roared Colonel Marsden. "There's caves up there! That monster can smash through jungle after us!"

Followed a wild dash along the sandy shore, the porters running and howling like mad. The party scrambled up the cliff-face, to where a cave offered protection. Three times in that dash had Bob turned and fired at the monster, but none of the bullets had had any effect on the animal.

From the cave the party saw the monster reach the shore, still making a frightful noise; saw it drag its vast bulk out on to the sand. Its plated body, dull green in colour, was shaped like a crocodile's, and its four pillar-like legs were about four feet high, while in rear a massive tail flopped about.

With a swift, waddling run the monster came charging up across the sand, bellowing and roaring.

Of a sudden, however, the party saw the monster whirl round. A moment later it dashed away along the sandy shore with uncanny speed. Colonel Marsden and Bob scrambled down from the cave to see what on earth had attracted the creature.

Then they uttered shouts of surprise and horror, for they saw a short, wiry white man and a party of about forty armed savages flying for their lives towards the jungle.

"It's Davis and Nchanga's warriors!" yelled Bob.

The newcomers were the American hunter and his cannibal allies. Too late they realised the terrible fate in store for them.

Howling, they broke and fled before the lizard's rush, but they were caught in twos and threes. Great jaws, armed with terrible teeth, snapped and closed on them as they ran.

The scene was a nightmare. Bob saw Davis and a dozen black warriors slain in terrible fashion. Then the shrieks ceased as the surviving cannibals vanished into the jungle.

But the monster did not pursue them farther. It swung round, and came lurching back towards Bob and his uncle, who were some feet below the cave. Seeing the terrible monster returning slowly, with its wicked eyes gleaming, Bob whipped his rifle to his shoulder, took a deep breath, and aimed for the gaping jaws.

That instant, with a whistling roar, the giant lizard lurched forward for another charge—as Bob fired.

Bang! His bullet sped straight between the scarlet jaws, and evidently crashed into the monster's brain, taking instant effect. There rang out one fearful screech, then the giant lizard fell, rolled over on its side, wriggling and thrashing the sand with its mighty tail. At last its struggles ceased, and it lay motionless. The demon of the lake was no more.

"Well done, my lad!" cried the delighted colonel. "You've killed it. You're the only fellow who has ever shot a prehistoric lizard!"

Down to the sand dashed the whole party, to examine the amazing animal. Then the porters went out and recovered the drifting canoe, from which the colonel seized his camera, to take photographs of the giant monster just slain. Finally, they took armour-plated scales and some of the larger bones, as further proof of their discovery, and started back for civilisation.

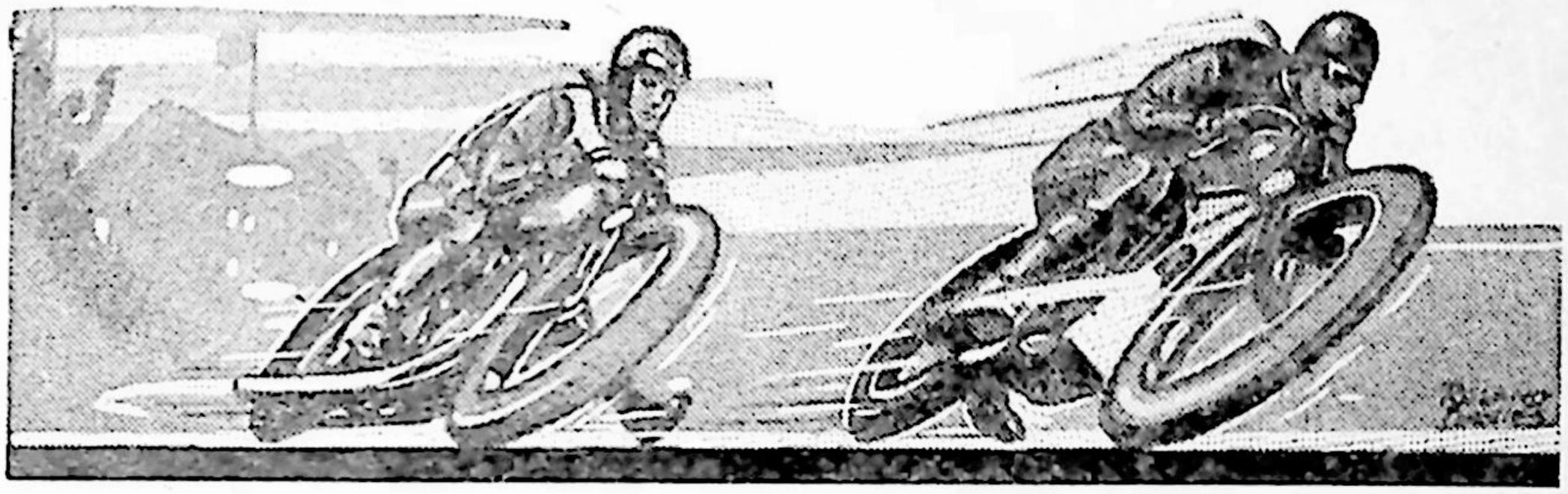
They passed safely through Nchanga's country, for chief Nchanga himself, as well as the villainous Davis, had been killed by the monster. On reaching civilisation Colonel Marsden well rewarded Gozo and the other porters, then he and Bob took ship for England.

"No, we found no skeleton of Rex Tyrannosaurus," the colonel reported, some weeks later, to the London museum. "We found a surviving specimen of the monster alive! and, by Jove, it's lucky for us it was alive, for a white scoundrel and forty cannibals were hot on our heels!"

He and Bob produced their proofs, to earn fame as discoverers, and several thousand pounds.

A Magnificent Story of Dirt-Track Racing. *By A. CARNEY ALLAN*

SPEEDWAY FURY



THE FIRST CHAPTER
Flat Out !

EXCITEMENT ran high at the Burford Speedway, and thirty-thousand pairs of eyes were fixed on the four riders who had answered the call of the bell and wheeled their D.T. bikes across the ramp to the starting-point.

A hush had descended over the crowd, a hush of expectation, for the event billed on the programme was the final heat of the Track Challenge Match between the boys of the home team and their keenest rivals in the Southern League, Fernlea. With the points evenly shared up till now, a desperate race for the honours seemed certain.

Five hundred pounds is offered to Jim Conway to lose a race . . . And five hundred pounds is the sum he needs to save his brother's life !

The visiting "fans" looked to Ray Hampson, the Fernlea Stadium's "star," the home supporters to Jim Conway, ace and captain of the Burford team.

Jim, idol of the local enthusiasts, was six feet from the rim of his crash-helmet to the steel toe-cap of his field-boot—thirteen stone of genial dare-devil ; a youngster with a ready smile, but with a glint in his eye and a set of the jaw that marked the will to win.

He and Ray Hampson were the men to watch, for the others—Bill Ritchie of Burford, and Wal Davids, of Fernlea—were second-place men, though capable of giving a good performance when at the peak of their form.

The track attendants pushed the quartet forward, and the four bikes ripped out their deep-toned notes. The lights swinging above the quarter-mile circuit glanced on the chromium plating of the speed-irons as the riders covered the preliminary lap, one forging ahead of the others every now and then as he tested the acceleration of his machine.

They pushed along the back straight, swung round the second bend to come into the front stretch, and then, forming up, "turned on the taps" for the flying start. They passed the judge in a straight line, and the green light signalled the "all clear." The final heat of the Track Challenge Match had begun.

To the cheers of the Fernlea supporters, Ray Hampson snatched the lead, twisting his throttle-grip hard round and driving for the first bend with his head sunk low over the

handle-bars. But close on the tail of Hampson's bike came Jim Conway, and there was scarcely daylight between them as they hit the curve.

They hurtled into the corner and raked round, cinder-shifting. Jim fought determinedly to hold his rival, but Hampson had the advantage of the inside position and, hugging the white line, he swerved on to the back straight a couple of lengths ahead of the Burford ace.

Jim opened up after him, and as he turned up the "wick," it was as if his gleaming speed-iron slipped some unseen leash. Storming in pursuit with deafening engine-roar, it clipped off the lead that the Fernlea man had gained. As the back bend loomed near, Jim and Hampson were riding wheel to wheel.

Ritchie and Davids were battling in the rear, fighting for third place and the single point it would secure at the end of the race.

Meanwhile, dead-level with each other, Jim and Hampson dived into the corner, and the grit streamed from their back wheels in a murky cascade as they skidded round. Once again the advantage of the inner position gave the Fernlea "star" the lead, and he had not lost it when he crossed the line for the second lap.

He tore into the bend amid the delirious shouts of his admirers, while the home "fans" yelled themselves hoarse as Jim drove his screaming speed-iron flat out at the corner in a neck-or-nothing bid for first place. Then suddenly there was an involuntary gasp.

Using the "cut-out." Jim lashed his back wheel into a terrific broadside, and for an instant it seemed as if he had wrecked himself, for the machine swept up towards the safety fence in a vicious skid. Jim fought that skid, gauntleted fists grappling on the handle-bars, toe-plate scrabbling in the track surface and striking up the sparks as it bit deep. With the strength of his powerful wrists concentrated on the twist-grips, and the muscles of his left leg flexed into bands of steel, he mastered the side-slip and swung the rocking bike on to the back-straight.

The crowd breathed again, and gave vent to a spontaneous roar of admiration.

Jim had lost ground, but, undaunted by the deficit, he let rip with the throttle and chased Hampson along the stretch. On his right the faces of the crowd appeared as one blurred mass, and the din of their shouting merged into the ear-splitting note of his shuddering speed-iron.

Hampson drove into the corner ten lengths in front of the Burford ace. Jim, entering it high up by the safety fence, cut down towards the white line and fought his way round it in a fearsome slide that brought the spectators to their feet. He finished up on the straight with the back wheel wrenching towards the right and the front wheel forced hard round to baffle the skid.

Toe-plate and grappling hands again mastered the speed-iron; and, with only five yards between him and the tail of his rival's machine, Jim twisted the throttle grip and opened up in pursuit.

The line was crossed for lap three, and, riding full out to keep his advantage, Ray Hampson launched his "iron" into the bend at the end of the straight. Jim dived after him, cut out his engine, and then came in with it again, so that the exhaust-spouts blurted flame and sound and the back wheel whipped round in a slashing broadside.



Jim Conway, captain of the Burford Speedway.

A stream of cinders raked across the track. Through that haze of dirt Jim suddenly saw a figure forging its way. It was Wal Davids of Fernlea, making an unexpected challenge for second place.

The spectators, like Jim, immediately realised that Davids had left Ritchie standing, and they cheered this effort of his to pit himself against the two stars. But, though he rode like one inspired, Davids had attempted

more than he could achieve. A long slide actually took him ahead of Jim, but he could not control the skid and down he came in a smother of grit.

Bike and rider parted, and the machine, grinding on its side, thudded into the safety fence.

Jim swept on round the corner and flashed along the back straight after Hampson; but the Fernlea crack was driving his speed-iron at full throttle, and at full throttle he hurled it into the second bend. He had to win now to save his team from defeat and make the match a draw.

Jim tore into the curve hard behind him, and was taking the cinders from Hampson's back wheel when they gained the front straight. The grit peppered his tank and gauze shield, and some of it must have found its way into the mechanism, for all at once his speed-iron faltered. The check was momentary, but, quickly as the engine cleared itself, Hampson had increased his lead to two lengths when he was flagged for the last lap.

Jim rallied, and the note of his speed-iron had risen to a shriek when he launched her into the first curve. An ugly skid almost brought him down, but he dug his field-boot into the track surface and swerved on to the back straight in masterly style.

Jim lashed his back wheel into a terrific broadside, and there was a gasp from the spectators as the machine skidded right up to the safety fence.



He was only a length behind Ray Hampson now, and the gap between them remained the same in the spurt for the last bend. Both men swung into the corner, and their spouts blazed simultaneously as each juggled with the "cut-out." The Fernlea star was sticking close to the white line, but Jim was forcing abreast of him. They were wheel by wheel as they hit the home stretch, and their bikes roared in unison as they switched the throttles full round. The "fans" stood up to a man and yelled.

"Keep her at it, Ray!"

"Come on, Jim. You've got it, Jim!"

Jim's speed-iron pulled ahead almost imperceptibly. He was taking first place, fighting for it inch by inch. The finishing-line was just ahead——

The checked flag fell and the gun banged. In the same instant there arose a mighty cheer, deliriously triumphant.

"Jim Conway wins! Burford wins!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER

The Bribe!

It was late when Jim Conway reached his flat, fifteen minutes' journey from the Speedway; but in spite of the hour he had hardly slipped his key into the front-door latch when he heard footsteps.

Jim shared the flat with his younger brother, and it was Tom Conway who met him as he crossed the threshold. There was only a couple of years between them, but they bore little resemblance to each other. Jim, ruddy, fair-haired and stalwart, was a magnificent specimen of Anglo-Saxon manhood and carried himself with the lithe, easy gait of an athlete. Tom was dark, pallid and spare, with a complexion almost transparent and the manner of a student. But one thing they held in common—an affection which was "as steadfast as the stars."

"How did you get on?" was Tom's first question, and for the next five minutes Jim was obliged to describe, in detail, the night's racing.

"I wish I'd been there to see you," was Tom's rueful comment, when Jim had finished his account of Burford's victory over their rivals.

Jim shook his head.

"It struck me as being mighty chilly on the way home to-night," he observed, "and you know the night air isn't good for you."

Tom nodded. He had to take care of his delicate constitution. Chill night air, fog, wet weather, all the rigours of the English climate that only seemed to make others, like Jim, more hardy—these were disastrous to Tom. And if he sometimes felt that Jim was inclined to play the nurse-maid with him, he realised that, ever since the death of their parents, Jim had been something like a guardian to him.

Jim was the bread-winner. Regular employment for one in Tom's state of health was out of the question. Yet he was no idler, for, interested in everything relating to science and mechanics, he had made a hobby of inventing various devices of his own. They scarcely ever found a market, or brought any money into the house, but the modelling of them amused him immensely.

Jim inadvertently turned the conversation to the subject of Tom's hobby by asking him what he had been doing with himself.

"I've been working on my latest wheeze," Tom rejoined, and indicated an adjoining room which he had fixed up as a workshop. "Would you like to hear about it?"

Jim was dog-tired. He would rather have gone to bed, but he was not the one to hurt his brother's feelings by any sign of disinterest, so he listened patiently to a long description of Tom's most recent invention.

"And pretty soon," Tom added, when he had explained the principle of his device, "I hope to give you a practical demonstration of it. Of course, I know the idea has been worked out before, but not so simply as in my process."

"Of course," agreed Jim vaguely, and then: "Look here, old son, we'd better get to bed."

As he spoke he idly picked up the evening newspaper, and his eye caught a headline on the front page.

"'Carnation' Clancy Believed To Be Lying Low In England," the black type ran. "International Swindler And Cracksman Wanted For £40,000 Robbery."

There was a head-and-shoulders picture of 'Carnation' Clancy under the print, the picture of a rakish-looking individual in a soft hat. Jim regarded the photograph cynically.

"Forty thousand pounds," he mused, a twisted smile appearing on his face. "I believe I'll turn burglar."

"Burglar!" exclaimed Tom, staring at him. "What the dickens are you talking about? What makes you say that?"

Jim laughed.

"Oh, I'm just talking rot," he answered. "Shove along to bed. Good-night!"

Alone in his bedroom, Jim's eye wandered to that newspaper again, and once more he stared at the picture of "Carnation" Clancy.

Forty thousand pounds, he reflected. One-eightieth part of that amount was all that he needed. Five hundred pounds——

He bit his lip. That same morning he had had a talk with a specialist whom he had called in to examine Tom. His verdict, delivered to Jim in privacy, had been terse and to the point.

He had told Jim quite frankly that his brother could not last out the winter if he remained in England; but three months in one of the finest nursing homes in the South of France would make a new man of him. The South of France was his only chance, and if he could afford the expense, which five hundred pounds would cover——

Jim clenched his hands. Naturally, he did not intend to imitate the career of "Carnation" Clancy in order to raise the necessary amount, but he vowed there and then to risk his neck on the dirt-tracks, and win all the prize-money he could. He reckoned that, by so doing, he could earn five hundred by the end of the season. He *had* to earn it, or Tom's health was forfeit. It was a life-and-death affair.

"Hey, Jim!" Tom's thin voice reached him from the other bedroom. "Hey, Jim, that's the telephone, and I've got my things off. Are you still dressed?"

Jim roused himself, and heard the bell ringing insistently in the hall.

"Sure, I'm dressed, Tom," he called, and hurried out of his room, wondering who could be on the 'phone at that late hour.

Picking up the receiver, he held it against his ear and spoke into the mouth-piece.

"Hallo, yes!" he said. "This is Burford 4460. Yes, it's Jim Conway here. Who is it talking?"

A quiet voice answered him at the other end of the wire.

"The name doesn't matter," it rejoined; "but I have a proposition to make to you. I understand you're riding at Burford Speedway in the Silver Helmet event next Thursday, and"—the voice became measured and deliberate—"it would be to my interest—if you did not win!"

Jim's hand tightened on the receiver spasmodically, but for the moment he was so taken aback that he could make no reply.

"If you happened to lose," the voice continued, "I would see to it that you received a handsome amount of money—tenfold the amount you would collect if you won the event——"

"Listen to me!" Jim cut in on the speaker, and his voice shook. "Listen to me! If I could see you as well as hear you, I'd answer your dirty offer of a bribe with the back of my hand."

"I see," was the grim rejoinder. "In that case, I may as well tell you that you'll have cause to regret your words."

And next instant Jim heard the man at the other end of the wire hang up the receiver.

The young dirt-track rider immediately put himself in touch with the operator at the exchange, and demanded the telephone number of the unknown person who had called him up; but he was speedily disappointed.

"The call just put through to you was made from a public telephone-booth," he was informed.

THE THIRD CHAPTER

Foul Play!

IT was the evening of the Thursday following Burford's win over Fernlea, and under the eyes of a record crowd the heats of the Silver Helmet had already been run off.

The bell was now calling the respective winners to the starting-point, and there were two among them whose appearance in the final had been more or less a foregone conclusion. One was Jim Conway, who had come through in flying style, riding even more daringly than he had ever ridden before. The other was a speedman known as "Spark" Bronson, captain of a rival team from the other side of the Metropolis; a big, bluff, dark-haired fellow whose fame on the tracks was as great as Jim's.

It was likewise a foregone conclusion that

the coveted Helmet would go to one or other of these two "cracks." Such, at least, was the opinion of the crowd, for the remaining contestants, Con Steele and Terry Morgan by name, were hardly in the same rank.

In a tense silence the competitors were pushed off, and, making the preliminary circuit, they swung at length into the front straight and throttled up for the dash across the line. Three of them kept abreast, but the fourth, Con Steele, hung back until the last second, and then spurted forward to pull level.

The riders were actually in line when they passed the starter, but Steele's ruse had given his bike an advantage of five-miles-an-hour in speed, so that in another instant he would have forged ahead. The judge, however, was quick of eye, and, a fault being signalled, the riders were flagged down by the attendants.

They circled the track again, and for the second time Steele made that flying spurt at the starting-line. But on this occasion he was cunning enough to deceive the official, and, with the race begun, he dashed into the lead.

"Spark" Bronson stormed into second place. Jim, riding third, was closely followed by Morgan.

They swept into the bend, and Bronson passed Steele in a long, raking slide. Jim, broadsiding recklessly, was making up on Steele as well when the fellow swung out in front of him.

Steele had side-slipped, whether by accident or design Jim could not tell, though he had never had much of an opinion of the man. At any rate, the young Burford ace was forced to pull out, and lost ground with the swerve.

Bronson increased his lead in the dash along the back straight, and Steele seemed content to remain in second place. After Steele came Jim, intent on recovering the two or three lengths that his swerve on the corner had cost him.

He clipped off a yard in the race along the stretch and fairly hurtled into the second bend, to gain the front straight close on the tail of Steele's machine. But Steele rode desperately to hold his narrow advantage over Jim. It seemed as if he were determined to keep the Burford ace behind him rather than to overhaul Bronson.

The second lap saw little or no change in the positions of the riders, and during the third lap Jim was baulked by wild cornering on the part of Steele. With the yellow flag fluttering to signal the last circuit, the Burford crack drove full out in an effort to beat Steele and then challenge Bronson.

His screaming speed-iron slashed into the first bend, and half-way round the curve he was almost abreast of Steele. Then from over thirty-thousand throats a sharp cry of horror went up, for without warning Steele came down in a smother of grit, machine and rider parting company.

It was not on Steele's account that the sharp cry of anxiety arose, for the falling speedman pitched himself sideways on to the turf. But his "iron" lashed round into Jim Conway's path, and the front wheel of the Burford captain's bike crashed into the other machine's tank and stopped dead.

Jim plunged head foremost over the handle-bars, and as he slid through the cinders his speed-iron somersaulted violently and crushed his legs beneath its weight.

"Spark" Bronson drove on round the track to win, but several seconds before the checked flag sliced down a crowd of attendants had run to the scene of Jim's disaster and carried him on to the grass, together with the wreckage of the two bikes.

Jim made no movement. His face looked white and drawn. Someone raised the shout of "stretcher."

Steele, limping near, uninjured but for a bruise or two, was loud in his expressions of concern, though the eyes behind his goggles held a curious glint.

Jim was carried through the well under the main stand, and soon the track medical officer was stripping off his padded suit to examine him. He was not long in delivering his verdict.

"This boy won't ride again for weeks," he said grimly. "He's taken a bad spill——"

Jim had opened his eyes and roused himself a little, and he had heard. He thought of

Tom and that other doctor's verdict, and he groaned.

. . . . . .

Days of pain had been followed by the slow process of mending, and now Jim Conway was home again, impatient at the enforced idleness of convalescence, but awaiting with little heart the resumption of his career on the dirt-tracks. For ever since he had known that he was temporarily out of the game, he had realised that he could never make good the resolve which had been his greatest match-winning incentive—the resolve to earn enough to send Tom abroad.

A week before he was due to make his bow before the "fans" at Burford Stadium again, some of the boys called to see him. Not only did the party contain members of the Burford team, but it included one or two riders from other clubs, and among the latter was "Spark" Bronson.



Davids over-did a broadside and came down in a smother of grit. Bike and rider parted, and the machine, grinding on its side, thudded into the safety fence.

Tom was out at the time, and his name being mentioned, Jim took his visitors into his confidence. He had brooded over the business so long that he felt he must give utterance to his thoughts, somehow, and while his visitors listened in silence he told them of the desperate condition of his brother's health.

"That crash had to come when I was desperate to win every race," he finished bitterly, "and the weeks I've had in hospital have killed my chance of raising the money I needed. I go back to the Speedway on Saturday, but if I won every event from now on until the end of the season I couldn't make that five hundred. It's too late now; too late now——"

It was in an awkward silence, which was eloquent of sympathy, that the other riders eventually took their leave, each one gripping him mutely by the hand till "Spark" Bronson moved forward to say good-bye.

"Keep your pecker up, kid," he stated, in

his loud, bluff voice. "You never know what might happen between now an' the end of the season. See you on Saturday, anyway. I'm ridin' in the inter-track Captains' Race at Burford Stadium, an' I mean to win through to the Final. If you pull off your heat you can have another shot at tryin' to beat me."

Bronson departed on the heels of the others, and Jim watched him go, a little rattled for the moment by the man's impudent self-confidence and his crude attempt to commiserate with him over Tom. Then he fell to thinking of his brother's plight, and his mind was in that groove when Tom arrived home.

Jim heard him go to the room he had fitted out as a workshop, and he remained there for quite a spell. When at length he emerged he seemed unnaturally flushed, and Jim noticed that he was carrying a small case in his hand, something like a radio set.

"Well," announced Tom, "here it is." Then, as Jim looked blank: "My latest invention. You know, the television device."

Jim had vague recollections of the night Tom had tried to explain the principle of the invention to him, and he watched his younger brother fix the apparatus below the telephone in the hall and then substitute an ear-piece of his own design.

"There you are," he declared; "all ready for the final test. Now all that remains for me to do is to fix my own special-type transmitter to another 'phone and get someone to call up this number. Wait a bit, I've got an idea. There's a public call-box in the next street. I'll slip into it, attach the television transmitter and ring up the flat. You be here, ready to answer, and when you hear my voice look into the screen of the television box."

Jim nodded, and, as excited as a youngster with a new toy, Tom left the flat and hurried to the public 'phone booth in the near-by street. He found it empty, and covertly substituted his transmitter for the regulation instrument. Then he lifted the receiver and gave the number of the flat.

A few seconds later he heard Jim's voice.

"Hallo, Jim!" he called. "What's the verdict? Can you see me?"

At the other end of the wire Jim was staring into the television set, and before his eyes a miniature impression of his brother's head and shoulders took shape, hazy at first, but gradually dawning clearer.

"Great Scott!" he said. "It's marvellous! I can see you as plain as a photograph."

"That's all I wanted to know," Tom returned, and replaced the receiver. He was on the point of removing the special transmitter when to his consternation he saw a man waiting outside the booth.

Tom had no wish to be accused of tampering with Government property; so, deciding that he would hang around until a more favourable opportunity occurred of changing the transmitters, he emerged from the call-box.

The man who had been waiting took his place in it. He was a dapper individual in a slouch hat. He shut the door and picked up the receiver, while Tom moved off along the street.

Tom Conway's transmitter differed very little in outward appearance from the regulation instrument, and, unsuspectingly, the man called up the exchange and gave the number, Burford 4460—the 'phone number of the Conway flat.

In the hall-way of that flat Jim was examining Tom's invention interestedly when the call came through. As he picked up the ear-piece he heard a quiet, measured voice, a voice that was oddly familiar.

"Is that Jim Conway? Good. Listen, Conway! I'm making you another offer, and I think you'll accept—for your brother's sake. How about five hundred pounds—if you lose on Saturday?"

Jim started. The man at the other end of the wire was the mysterious stranger who had tried to bribe him just before the race for the Silver Helmet, and the truth had scarcely flashed on him when, half by chance, his glance wandered to the television set.

He saw a face, the face of a rakish-looking individual in a soft hat, and suddenly he remembered where he had encountered it before—below the headlines of an evening newspaper.

The man was "Carnation" Clancy, international cracksman and swindler!

"I've had five hundred pounds placed in the hands of a solicitor," the voice of Clancy went on. "I'll give you his name and address, but you needn't ask him for mine. He doesn't know it. Now, that five hundred will be handed to you if you do as I've asked. You can go to this lawyer between now and Saturday and verify what I've said——"

He spelled out a name and address.

"You've got that?" he went on. "And get this, too, Conway. I'm taking no risks; that's why I'm making this offer. But I warn you, if you win through your first heat, I'll see that something is done to prevent your winning the Final. I've got men in my pay, like a certain party who brought you down in the race for the Silver Helmet."

Steele! The name leaped to Jim's mind. So Steele had been hired by Clancy!

"What's your game?" the youngster asked unsteadily.

"I'll tell you this much," was the answer. "I'm gambling against you. If you lose, I collect ten thousand in private bets—and you get a cut-out of five hundred to send your brother abroad. What's your answer?"

Jim's face was haggard. He thought of Tom, and what this offer meant to *him*. He knew that he should turn down the bribe and notify the police, but his brother's life was at stake. This was his one chance to raise enough to save him, and kinship grappled with conscience.

"Give me time," he said in a strangled voice.

At the other end of the wire, standing with lips close to the mouth-piece, "Carnation" Clancy drew in his breath.

"All right, Conway," he murmured. "But remember what I told you—about the men in my pay."

The front wheel of Jim's bike crashed into the tank of the other machine, and Jim plunged headlong over the handle-bars.

Clancy hung up and slipped out of the booth hurriedly. His back was hardly turned before Tom Conway entered the call-box, changed the transmitters, and hastened along the street. At a corner fifty yards away he saw the man in the slouch hat in company with another individual, but paid no particular heed to either of them until, as they were on the point of entering a taxi, he recognised one of them as "Spark" Bronson.

About that same time, Jim Conway was gazing miserably into the television set, from which the face of "Carnation" Clancy had faded like something seen in a dream.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER

The Captains' Race I

THE stands at the Burford Stadium were packed, and there was a fluttering of programmes as Event No. 10 was registered on the indicator. It was the second heat of the Captains' Race, and Jim Conway was one of the entrants.

The crowd knew nothing of the story behind the contest. They knew nothing of Jim's thoughts. But down in the pits the Burford ace was stammering out a few broken words to his brother Tom, who had insisted on coming along to watch the afternoon's sport.

"Tom," Jim panted, "I can't ride crooked—not even for your sake. I've got to go in there and—win. Try to understand, old son. It goes against the grain to take a bribe——"

"What the dickens are you talking about?" Tom demanded.

Jim told him all; broke the dread news to him concerning the state of his health, and gave an account of his televised conversation with "Carnation" Clancy over the 'phone. When he had finished there was a stark silence, during which Tom stood like one in a trance, for it was as if he had heard a death-sentence passed upon him. Then he straightened up, and the expression on his face was magnificently courageous.

"There goes the bell, Jim," he said quietly. "Go in—and win!"

Jim turned blindly, and with a lump in his throat, wheeled his bike across the ramp. Tom watched him thoughtfully from his privileged vantage-point, and was only aroused from his gloomy reflections when someone brushed against him in passing.

The someone was "Spark" Bronson, just off the track after winning the first heat of the Captains' Race and qualifying for the Final. As he caught sight of him, Tom instantly recalled his acquaintance with the man who had turned out to be "Carnation" Clancy.

Steele had been in Clancy's pay. Was Bronson one of the swindler's hirelings as well?

Jim was out on the track, beyond recall, but when he returned to the pits, having won his heat fairly comfortably, Tom put him wise to Bronson's connection with the international crook.

Jim's eyes hardened.

"Bronson's in the Final, eh?" he said grimly. "Then I'm going all out to beat him. I owe it to every Burford 'fan' who's paid money to come through the turnstiles. But in the meantime, Tom, you get in touch with Scotland Yard and tell them you think you can put them on to 'Carnation' Clancy."

Tom slipped away. Before Event 12 had been run off he was back.

"They're sending a couple of plain clothes men down right away," he announced. "They'll be here before the end of the meeting."

The detectives had not arrived, however, when the bell called the competitors to the starting-line for Event 21, the Final of the Captains' Race. There were four riders in the contest—Jim, Bronson and two others, Melville and Shipton by name.

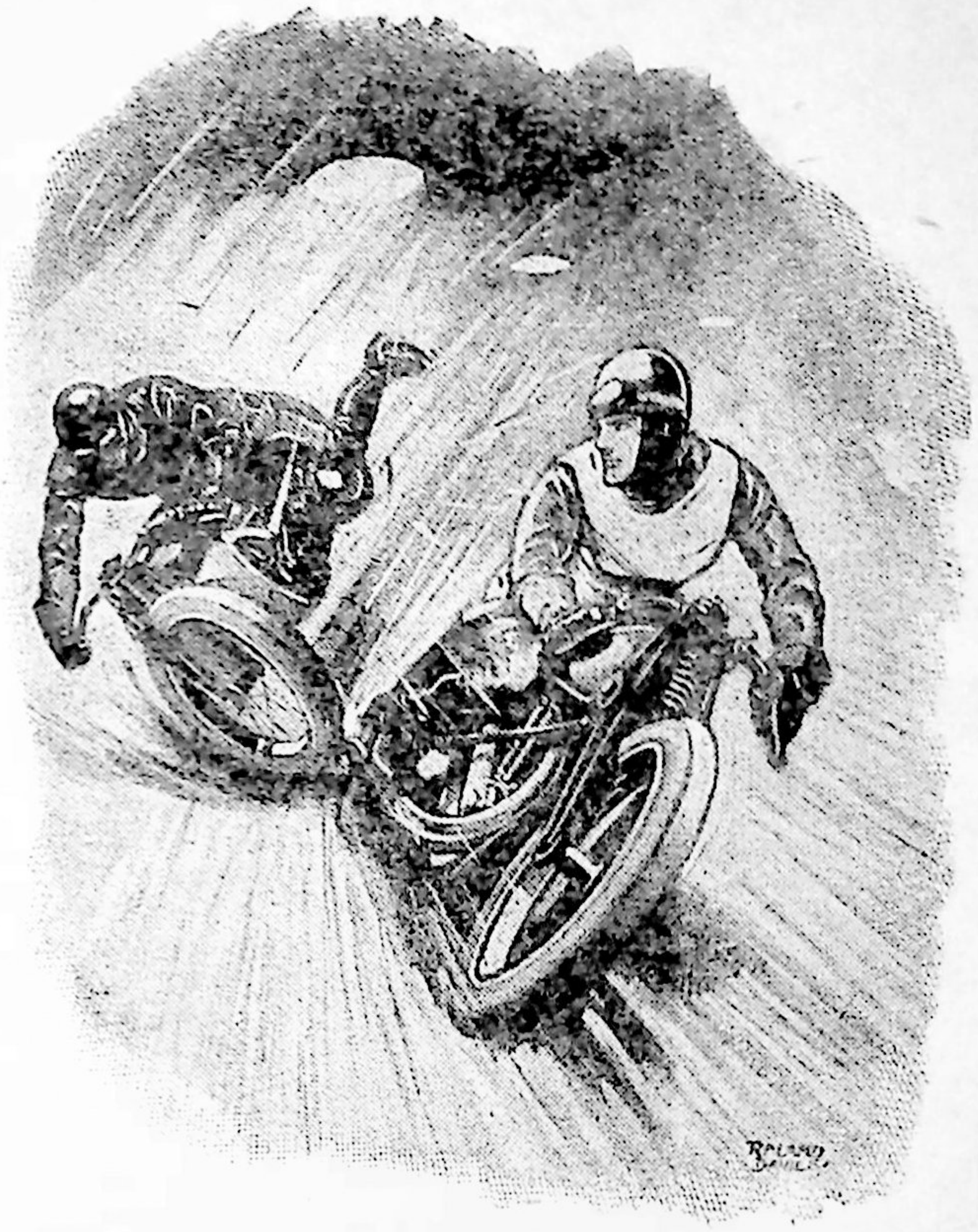
Taking up their positions, they were pushed off by the attendants. The luck of the draw had given Jim the inside position, and from the flying start he dashed into the lead and stormed over the straight for the first corner. But Bronson was hard behind him, and he was still close on the tail of the Burford captain's speed-iron when they rocked out of the bend on to the back straight.

Fierce cornering on the second curve brought no change in the positions of the riders, and Jim was still a shade in advance of Bronson when he crossed the line for lap two and stormed on to the first bend again.

He swerved into it recklessly and shifted the cinders in a wicked slide. Then Bronson slashed abreast of him in break-neck style, holding him till the sweep of the corner was passed, when Jim looked like pulling ahead once more.

The toe of Bronson's heavy field-boot was poised over the track surface. The bikes were very close, and about them rose a cloud of grit. Under cover of the dirt-haze Bronson jabbed with his foot, and his steel plate caught the rim of Jim's front wheel and kicked it out of his control.

The wheel wrenched violently sideways, and in the same instant Bronson pulled out to avoid collision. Jim, scrabbling desperately, felt the pad on his left knee scrape the ground, while his toe ripped through the cinders. On his right-hand he saw Bronson forge past him to take the lead, and a moment later Melville and Shipton had swayed round the Burford ace's skidding bike as well.



The handle-bars were jerked out of Bronson's hands as his front wheel grazed Jim's back wheel, and he came down with a crash.

It was by main strength that Jim regained control, and when he opened up along the back straight his jaw was set in determination. It was clear that no one but himself had seen Bronson's foul, and he did not intend to whine an appeal to the judges. But he was more determined now to beat the man in spite of dirty riding.

He felt certain now that Bronson was hand-in-glove with Clancy, and he suddenly realised that it must have been from Bronson that the swindler had heard of Tom's health.

Jim's speed-iron fairly roared as he whipped the throttle hard round. He was five yards behind Melville and Shipton when he entered the second bend, but he was scarcely a couple of lengths in arrears during the spurt along the front straight. Up at the first curve again he saw his chance and bored between them to gain second place.

Bronson was several lengths ahead of him,

but Jim reduced the lead on the next corner, and the crowd was yelling for the Burford youngster when the line was crossed for the final lap.

On the bend at the end of the front straight his tank was peppered by the cinders from Bronson's back wheel, so close was he to the leader. In the race over the back straight there were only inches between them. With the last bend opening out before him Jim hurled his speed-iron for the curve at full throttle.

The tail of his bike ripped through the grit, and he was forging almost level when Bronson swung wide in an attempt to check him. But Jim had a trick to meet Bronson's. He swung wider still and raked his way round the other bike to take the lead. As he was passing he felt Bronson's front wheel graze the back wheel of his own speed-iron.

The handle-bars jerked out of his grasp, Bronson came down with a smashing crash. As he lay there, groaning, he heard Jim's bike storm on along the home stretch to carry him triumphant across the line.

A doctor might have pronounced Bronson's injuries trivial, and diagnosed him to be suffering mainly from shock, when he limped into the pits. At any rate, there was no question about the shock he received when he found himself arrested by two Scotland Yard men!

. . . . . .

It was in a moody silence that Jim and Tom Conway made their way back to their flat after tea, and though Tom once or twice tried to affect a light-hearted air, he made a miserable show. Neither he nor Jim could forget that, by the time the winter was over, he would in all probability be done with life.

So lost were they in their tragic thoughts that they reached the door of their flat without noticing a man who stood beside it. Not until the man spoke were they aware of his presence. They looked up, then, and recognised one of the Scotland Yard men.

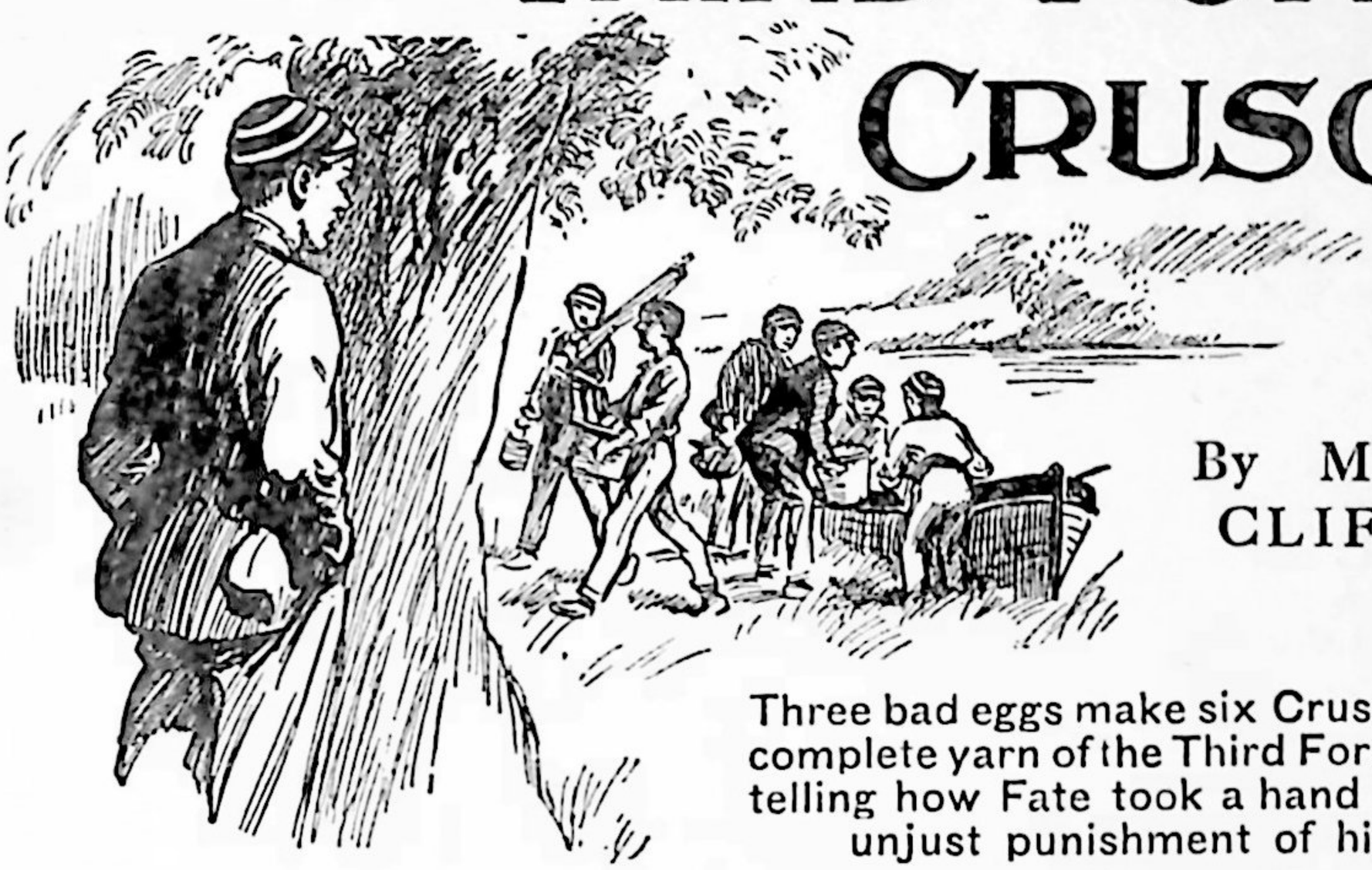
"Bronson owned up," the detective told them, "and gave away Clancy's hiding-place, so your information has led to the 'wanted' man's capture and the discovery of the Thorndike jewels, which were missed some weeks back. I may say there was a reward offered at the time, and it still holds."

"Reward?" Jim echoed.

"Mr. Thorndike," the detective went on—"Mr. Julian Thorndike, the millionaire, has asked me to tell you that his cheque for a thousand pounds is already in the post."



THE THIRD FORM CRUSOES



By MARTIN CLIFFORD

Three bad eggs make six Crusoes! A lively complete yarn of the Third Form at St. Jim's, telling how Fate took a hand in a master's unjust punishment of his Form!

THE FIRST CHAPTER
Cardew Butts In.

"CAVE!"

A dozen voices sounded the warning cry in the Third Form-room at St. Jim's.

But it was too late. Mr. Selby, the Form-master, was already at the door.

Frank Levison stopped in his tracks, but he had gone too far. He was within a yard of Mr. Selby's chair—and what lay upon it!

Everyone stood where he was—except Cardew, of the Fourth. Cardew sat on a desk, one leg swinging. He was screened by some of the crowd, and Mr. Selby did not perceive him.

"Levison!"

The master's voice was like thunder.

"Yes, sir."

"What are you doing?"

"Nothing, sir," answered Frank meekly.

Mr. Selby drew nearer, his face full of suspicion. He looked down at his chair.

His eyes flashed balefully. Three eggs, tinted in such a manner that they harmonised with the colour of the padding, lay on that chair!

"Do you deny that you put those there, Levison?" he snapped.

"Yes, sir."

"What do you mean by that? Are you admitting your guilt?"

"No, sir. I didn't put them there."

In point of fact, Frank had been just about to remove the eggs.

The Third did not regard a practical joke upon their Form-master with virtuous disapproval. They made no pretence of liking Mr. Selby. But there are limits, and to Levison minor it seemed that someone had gone beyond them.

"Then who did?"

At that query from the master the lip of Ralph Reckness Cardew curled in contempt, and D'Arcy minor gave a half-muffled snort. For in the St. Jim's code it was not to be expected that Frank would tell, and for Mr. Selby to ask him to play the informer was not cricket.

Also, Frank did not know. Only one person there knew the truth—and Reuben Piggott, the black sheep of the Form, was not the kind of fellow likely to make a confession to save anyone else!

It was no habit of Piggott's to play jokes on his Form-master. In a general way he did all he could to "suck up to Selby," as the Form put it.

Mr. Selby could not be said to have favourites. He disliked all boys. He disliked Piggott less than he did Wally D'Arcy or Frank Levison; but he had chanced to be down on Piggott of late, and the black sheep had planted those eggs on his chair secretly, out of revenge.

Frank Levison stood silent, his mouth firmly set.

"Who did?" repeated Mr. Selby, his voice rising.

"I don't know, sir."

"I cannot believe that, Levison!"

From somewhere well in the background came a hiss. The Third held that Mr. Selby should know that a decent fellow does not lie to get himself out of a scrape.

"It's true, sir."

"Unless you tell me who the guilty party is, Levison, I shall be compelled to assume that you are he, and to take measures accordingly."

"He doesn't know, sir!" exclaimed Wally D'Arcy.

"Silence, D'Arcy minor! Levison!"

"I've nothing more to say, sir."

Mr. Selby, glowering, reached for a cane.

Cardew slipped from the desk.

"Excuse me, sir," he said, "but I can answer for it that Levison minor does not know."

"What are you doing in my Form-room, Cardew?" snapped Mr. Selby, noting the Fourth-Former for the first time.

"Isn't that rather my affair, sir? I'm breaking no school rule."

"You should now be in your study, the hour of preparation having begun."

"I beg your pardon, sir." Cardew drew out his watch. "There are two minutes an' twenty seconds left—ample time for me to comply with regulations."

"I am master here, Cardew!" retorted Mr. Selby. "I order you to go at once!"

"Very well, sir."

Cardew lounged to the door, and halted just outside it.

The master had turned his back upon him. Cardew propped himself against the wall, and waited.

"I give you one more chance, Levison!"

"I didn't put the eggs there, sir, and I don't know who did."

"I do not believe you. Hold out your hand!"

Frank obeyed.

Swish!

It was a vicious stroke. Frank winced, but no sound came from him.

Swish—swish—swish! Three times more the cane fell. Frank had to set his teeth hard.

"Shame!"

The cry came from Cardew. It was echoed by Wally D'Arcy, Reggie Manners, Curly Gibson and a few more of the Third.

Mr. Selby swung round, pale with wrath.

"Was that you, Cardew?" he thundered.

"It was."

"How dare you?"

The hot, rebellious spirit of Ralph Reckness Cardew flared up.

"I've a right to protest against gross injustice!" he retorted.

"You have no right to be here! It is sheer impertinence on your part to interfere in a matter of discipline between I and my Form, and——"

"Why, you tyrannical old acidulated drop——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The splutter of laughter from the Third drowned the rest of Cardew's speech—if, indeed, he said any more. He had already said too much.

"You will come with me to the Head at once, Cardew!" rapped out Mr. Selby.

"I think not, sir. To Mr. Railton first, I believe—only to the Head if he chooses to refer the matter."

Cardew was right, and the master knew it.

The Fourth-Former stood aside while Mr. Selby swung out of the room, his gown rustling, the cane still in his right hand.

"Excuse me, sir," said Cardew, "but if Mr. Railton needs a cane he will probably have one handy."

The Third gurgled and sniggered at that. Mr. Selby dropped the cane and stalked on,

with Cardew strolling in his wake. They were not a dozen yards away when Wally D'Arcy pounced upon the weapon.

. . . . .

The master of the School House looked up from a book as Mr. Selby, frowning portentously, strode into his study, followed by Cardew, looking calm and bland.

"What is it, Mr. Selby?" asked Mr. Railton.

"This impertinent boy has grossly insulted me!" snorted the Third Form master.

"Yes? Perhaps you will tell me just what happened?"



"He had the intolerable impudence to interfere in the discipline of my Form. I ordered him out, and he called me—he called me——"

The objectionable phrase fairly stuck in Mr. Selby's throat.

The Housemaster bent an inquiring glance upon Cardew.

Cardew did not even flush.

"The expression I used, sir," he said, "was 'tyrannical old acidulated drop.' In the circumstances I consider it was quite a mild one."

For a second Mr. Railton's right hand went up to his mouth. He could not restrain a faint smile; but he did his best to ensure that neither master nor boy saw it. Then he said sternly:

"Such language from boy to master is certainly intolerable, Cardew! Hold out your hand!"

'Do you deny that you put those eggs there, Levison?" snapped Mr. Selby. "Yes, sir!"

Cardew took his punishment stoically. But he seethed within. He did not blame Railton so much; but he considered Selby was beyond the limit.

"Is that all, sir?" he asked coolly, when the Housemaster laid down the cane.

"If Mr. Selby is satisfied."

"I am satisfied, Mr. Railton," said the Third Form master.

Mr. Railton nodded. Mr. Selby gave a stiff jerk of the head and marched out. Cardew politely held the door open for him, well knowing that the act of courtesy would gall.

Mr. Selby might be satisfied, but Ralph Reckness Cardew was not!

THE SECOND CHAPTER

Wally's Wheeze !

"Oh, what's the odds ?" said Frank Levison. "I only got four, and I've often had it a lot hotter than that."

"It's a bit rough on Cardew, though," remarked Joe Frayne. "I reckon it was decent of him to speak up for you, Franky."

"Hang Cardew !" exclaimed Wally. "What's he want butting in for ?"

"He stood up for me like a brick, whatever he wanted," said Frank. "And I fancy you can guess what he was after here, Wally—for japing him this morning. That makes it all the more sporty of him, because he must have guessed I was in it."

"Oh, that!" sniffed Wally. "Cardew's got nerve to think he could tackle us in our own Form-room about it, I think. But see here, young Levison ; why were you such a fat-headed chump as to think of meddling with those eggs ? It was none of our bizney !"

"Yes. Why didn't you let the old bounder sit on them ?" chimed in Reggie Manners.

Wally flourished the cane and did his best to look like his Form-master.

"I didn't think it was quite a decent trick," replied Frank. "I bet they're jolly niffy eggs !"

"Rats ! Of course, no fellow would be ass enough to use perfectly good eggs for a job like that. But they were quite good enough for an old sweep like Selby——"

Wally broke off short, and a gasp went up from the assembly.

The summary execution meted out to Cardew had brought Mr. Selby back sooner than he had been expected. He was in the doorway.

How much he had heard they could only guess. But that he saw the cane in Wally's hand was obvious.

The sniggering of Piggott and a few of his kidney exasperated Wally. With dignity worthy of his major, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, he marched up to Mr. Selby and proffered the cane.

"I picked this up, sir," he said.

"Ah ! Thank you, D'Arcy minor ! Hold out your hand !"

Six times the cane rose and fell. Thereafter, Wally went to his place with both hands in his pockets. And Mr. Selby went to his seat. In his wrath the Form-master's memory had suffered a curious lapse !

He sat down. There was the sound of cracking shells, and then there impinged upon the atmosphere of the Form-room a smell truly awful.

Mr. Selby leaped up, cast a glance behind him, and fled, followed by a roar of laughter from his Form.

He was back in a few minutes, his gown changed. The chair was removed by Toby, the page, another replaced it, and prep. proceeded in solemn silence.

When the moment of dismissal came Mr. Selby rose.

"I call upon the guilty boy to come forward and confess !" he said.

But no one came forward. Piggott was not of the stuff of which heroes are made.

"I give you until to-morrow morning. If confession is not then made the whole Form will be punished !"

With that drastic pronouncement Mr. Selby departed.

In the Third dormitory that night there was much talk. Everyone was in agreement on one score. The fellow who had played that trick must own up ! It was not to be thought of that the entire Form should suffer for the fault of one.

The fact that there was no dissenting voice might have told the Third-Formers that there was small likelihood of confession. If the culprit had meant to own up he would have said so then and there. No one would have felt annoyed with him for what the Form-master had suffered, and he would have been regarded as a hero for saving the Form.

But Piggott thought that his share of the Form's pains and penalties, whatever they might be, would be less than he would bring upon himself by braving alone Mr. Selby's ire. And the voice of Piggott, though heard with the rest, merely echoed what the rest said.

Mr. Selby came to his Form-room next morning firmly persuaded that half the Form knew who the miscreant was, and believing that he would be forced into confession. If he baulked that, it was the duty of someone else to tell the truth, so Mr. Selby held.

The Form-master rapped with his pointer upon the desk before him.

"With reference to the abominable occurrence of last night," he said sternly, "I call upon the boy or boys responsible to confess!"

Feet shuffled, but no one spoke.

"Levison minor, do you still maintain your ignorance of the identity of the offender?" demanded the master harshly.

"Yes, sir."

"Very well! The whole Form will be gated till further notice. We shall work an extra half-hour both morning and afternoon, and I shall set special tasks for half-holidays."

The Third felt stunned. They would have regarded it as unjust had the whole Form been caned; that would have been soon over. This was a sentence the length of which no one could even guess. It would have been bad enough at any time; now, in the glorious summer weather, it was unendurable. No cricket—no river—no anything!

Mr. Selby spoke no more on the matter, and the lesson proceeded. But to the indignant Form it seemed ages before half-past twelve eventually came. It was a Wednesday, and Mr. Selby set for the half-holiday task a stiff piece of Latin translation, with a few algebraic problems to vary it. When he left the Form-room there was instant uproar.

"We ought to go to Railton!"

"No! Appeal to the Head!"

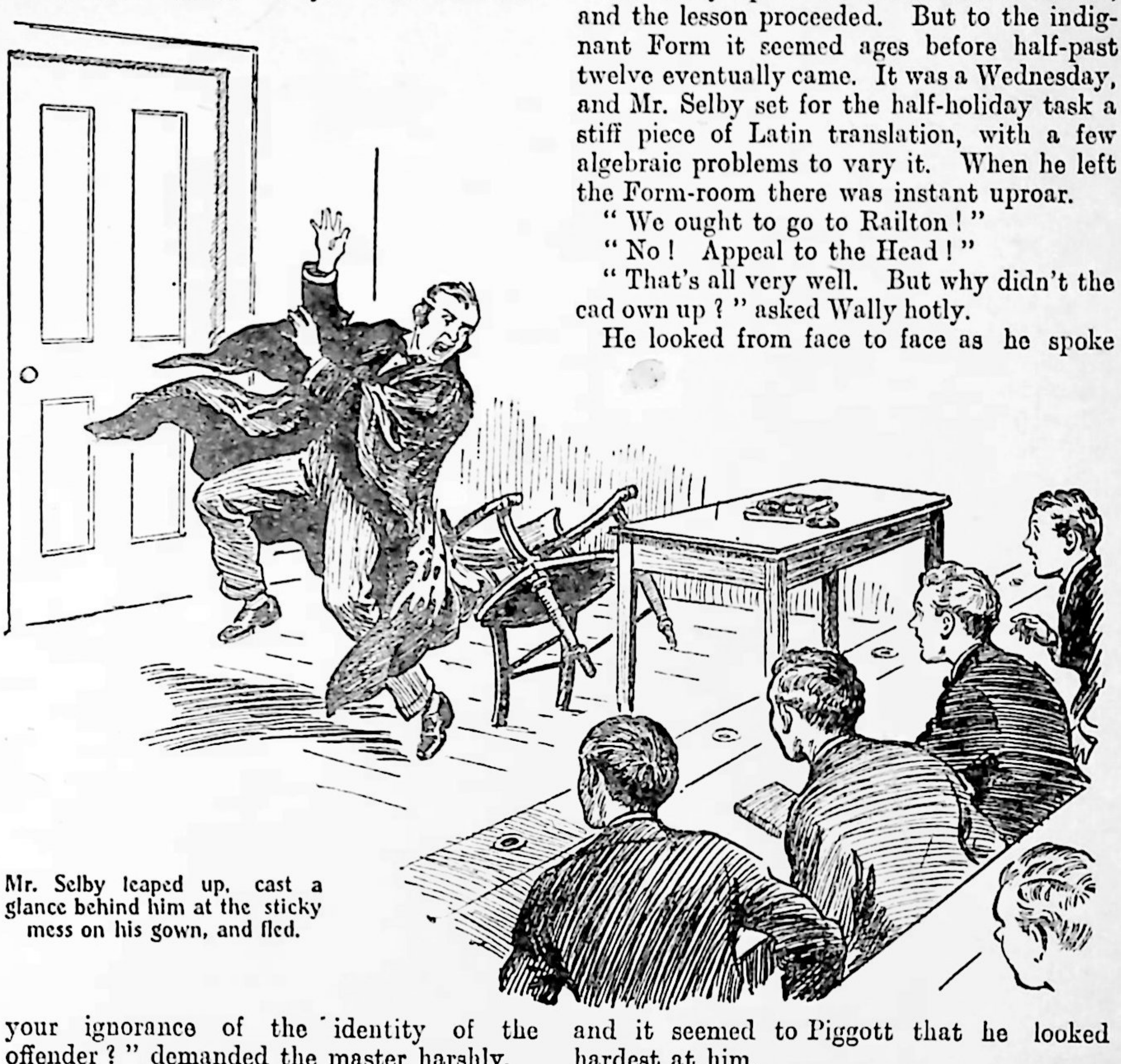
"That's all very well. But why didn't the cad own up?" asked Wally hotly.

He looked from face to face as he spoke and it seemed to Piggott that he looked hardest at him.

"Selby seemed to think the cad was one of your crowd, D'Arcy," said Piggott mildly.

"Do you mean you think so?" flashed back Wally.

"Me? I don't know who it was—how should I? And, of course, it couldn't have been Levison. Unless——"



Mr. Selby leaped up, cast a glance behind him at the sticky mess on his gown, and fled.

Piggott paused. Frank thrust forward.

"Unless what?" he asked. "Speak up, Piggy!"

"Unless you did it, and then funked at the last moment."

A small hard fist approached within an inch of Piggott's nose.

"Do you say that, you rotter?" snapped the owner of the fist.

"No, of course not."

"Well, you'd better not even think it, or you'll get it in the neck!"

Piggott backed away.

"Oh, come along, Franky!" said Wally. "We've got to decide what we're to do. These chaps may be willing to take it sitting down, but we won't."

"Fat lot you can do!" sneered someone.

Wally paid no heed to the taunt. He marched out, followed by Levison minor, Manners minor, Frayne, Gibson, and Jameson.

In a corner of the quad he addressed the Third-Formers.

"There's only one thing to do—bunk!" he said resolutely.

The other five stared at him.

"Where to?" asked Frank.

"That's it. I know I'm jolly well not going home. They'd only send me back," said Reggie Manners.

"Same here," Wally admitted. "A chap's people can't see things the same way as he does. I never meant bolt home. I've a better notion than that."

"I'm on, if it's anything poss.," Jameson said.

"Oh, it's poss. enough," said Wally. "If we bunk we can't go home—that's settled. We can't wander about the country—the police would be on our giddy tracks. But if we took grub and things and hid on Mayfly Island——"

"My hat! That's a ripping notion!" Jameson cried.

"It's not so dusty," said Curly Gibson. "But, of course——"

"They'd find us in about five minutes," Reggie broke in.

"Rats!" snorted Wally. "Why should they?"

"For one thing, we can't get there without a boat, and the boat's sure to be missed."

"I've thought all that out. I was thinking about this scheme all the morning," Wally replied.

"But there's another thing in the way," said Frank. "If we're to stay there more than a few hours we shall need plenty of grub, and where's the money coming from to get it?"

All dug into their pockets, though of them all only one did so with any real hope of helping to supply an answer to that question.

Jameson produced a postal order for ten shillings.

"Came this morning," he said.

The combined wealth of the other five totalled three and fivepence. Levison minor had half a crown, the rest elevenpence among them. No one had hoped for anything better; Jameson's windfall made their funds larger than they could have expected.

"Thirteen and eleven," said Wally, rubbing his head thoughtfully. "It would do for a bit of a tuck-out now, but it wouldn't go a giddy long way towards provisions for days and days."

"Let's go and have the tuck-out," suggested Reggie. "We can't play Crusoes on thirteen and eleven."

"Wally! Hi, deah boy! Heah's somethin' for you!"

It was the voice of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of the Fourth and Wally's major, that hailed thus.

"Oh, bother old Gussy!" said Wally impatiently. "I don't suppose it's anything that matters. If I could touch him for a quid now—but I know he's stony."

He advanced, however, though without hurry, to meet his major.

Arthur Augustus beamed as he came towards his minor.

"Congwats., deah boy!" he said warmly.

"What about?" growled Wally. "I suppose you know we're gated—the whole giddy Form! P'r'aps you're being sarcastic?"

"No, Wally, I assuah you! I am sowwy to hear of your twouble, but I wathah think this will welieve it somewhat. That bay colt of Conway's has won its first wace, and I have had the wemittance he pwomised.

and I have no doubt whatevah that heah is ——"

"Oh, hold your jaw and give me the letter!" Wally interrupted him.

Looking rather injured, Arthur Augustus handed it over. It had been registered, but the envelope was an ordinary one, and Wally slit it open with a hasty forefinger.

Lord Conway, the heir of the Earl of Eastwood, was the elder brother of the two D'Arcys, and an elder brother of the right sort!

Inside the envelope were pound Treasury notes—five of them!

The commissariat problem was solved!

THE THIRD CHAPTER
Cardew's Curious Game

CARDEW lay in the long grass not far from the river bank, with the latest HOLIDAY ANNUAL to beguile the tedium of a hot afternoon.

Much too hot for cricket, he had told his chums, Levison major and Clive; and they had called him a slacker, which had not worried Cardew in the least, since they had so often applied to him that epithet.

It was so very hot that he grew quite sleepy and the book dropped from his hands. But a sound struck upon his ears, and he sat up.

The sound was a familiar one—the shrill yelp of Pongo, Wally D'Arcy's dog of indeterminate breed.

Then Cardew saw something that struck him as curious.

A heavy old tub of a boat, which certainly did not belong to the school flotilla, was approaching the well-wooded Mayfly Island in the Rhyl.

Pongo was in the bows, his forepaws on the gunwale. Gibson sat by him, with a restraining hand on his collar. Reggie Manners steered; the rowers were D'Arcy minor, Levison minor, Frayne and Jameson.

It struck Cardew that the boat was very heavily laden.

"There's somethin' more here than meets the eye," said Cardew to himself. "It may be only a picnic, of course. But I fancy it's hardly that."

Taking care not to show himself, he watched. He knew from Ernest Levison that the Third were booked for gating. It was unlikely that these six, young bounders though they were, would incur the risk of their Form-master's vengeance just to go picnicking while that punishment hung over their heads.

Gibson jumped out as soon as the boat was conveniently laid alongside the island bank. Pongo, still yapping, followed him; and Wally and Jameson followed Pongo.

The other three proceeded to hand out various packages—hampers, bundles of rags, parcels of curious shapes. The spout of a kettle stuck through the brown paper wrapping of one parcel. The ripped covering of another disclosed the enamelled surface of a cooking pot.

Perhaps there was not another fellow at St. Jim's whose mind would have jumped at the right conclusion as quickly as did Cardew's. He guessed the whole plan.

And now he recognised the boat. It belonged to one of Rylcombe's oldest inhabitants, who was long past using it, and it had lain moored in a little creek for years past. The six had thought it would not be missed, as any of the school boats must have been, Cardew supposed. But to leave it where it was must surely give them away.

For a few minutes the Third-Formers went back and forth, bearing burdens into the interior of the island. Cardew watched the rickety old craft rise higher in the water as its cargo was removed. Then for a few minutes nothing was to be seen of the adventurers. But Pongo's yapping was still to be heard.

The six reappeared. Wally and Frank Levison were in bathing costumes. The two got into the boat, pushed off and rowed away.

"A dashed good move!" said Cardew to himself. "When that old tub's back in its moorings they'll have covered their tracks a bit. But they can't hold out long. More's the pity, for it would put the wind up old Selby if they were missin' for a few days!"

Then into his mind, always active for mischief, there came an idea.

He wanted badly to get his own back on their Form-master. Here was his chance!

In the ordinary course of events the island might be searched as soon as it was known that

the juniors were missing. But if a false trail were laid they might remain undiscovered for some time. They would take no harm in this weather; they would have the time of their lives. The only person who would suffer much, as Cardew saw it, was Mr. Selby, and the more Mr. Selby suffered the better Ralph Reckness Cardew would be pleased.

Wally and Frank obviously meant to swim back to the island. But they were hardly likely to swim all the way from the creek. They would run along the bank to somewhere near the place of his hiding and take the shortest distance across.

Cardew wanted a word or two with them. He shifted nearer the bank. Two small figures in blue bathing suits came into view, racing to be first at the pollard willow against which Cardew lounged.

They did not see him until he hailed them.

"How goes the Crusoe enterprise, my hearties?" he asked.

They stared at him, wondering how much or how little he knew.

"Of course, you would never think of tellin' me any real crammers," Cardew said blandly. "But in case you might be thinkin' of a few, let me tell you that I am on your giddy little game!"

"I say, you won't be a rotter and give us away Cardew:" said Wally with some heat.

"No—if you let me help you!"

"I don't see how you can help us," said Wally.

"As far as they go your plans are quite well laid," returned Cardew, "though it was an error of judgment to bring along the dog. But unless attention is diverted elsewhere the island is bound to come under suspicion. If the pursuers are led to believe, however, that you have fled to remoter parts they will hardly think of lookin' for you here."

"What do you mean by remoter parts, Cardew?" Wally inquired.

"That is rather my affair, I think."

"But why are you helping us?" asked Wally.

"That again is my bizney."

"Oh, well, I know you won't let on, and I only hope you won't come a mucker trying to help us, Cardew," said Wally.

The Third-Formers entered the water, and as they swam across to the island, Levison spoke to Wally.

"Cardew's got something pretty big up his sleeve, I'll bet."

"Oh, well, you never know. I don't much believe in his schemes myself."

But Cardew really had something rather ingenious in his mind. Even Wally would have admitted that had he known what it was.

It was a curious game the Fourth-Former was playing. But Cardew had played so many curious games that St. Jim's was not easily surprised by anything he did. Sometimes these games seemed without motive. In this case he had a very definite motive—to get his own back on Mr. Selby.

To that end he was willing to take trouble and spend money. The money was of small account, for Cardew usually had plenty of cash; but he hated taking trouble.

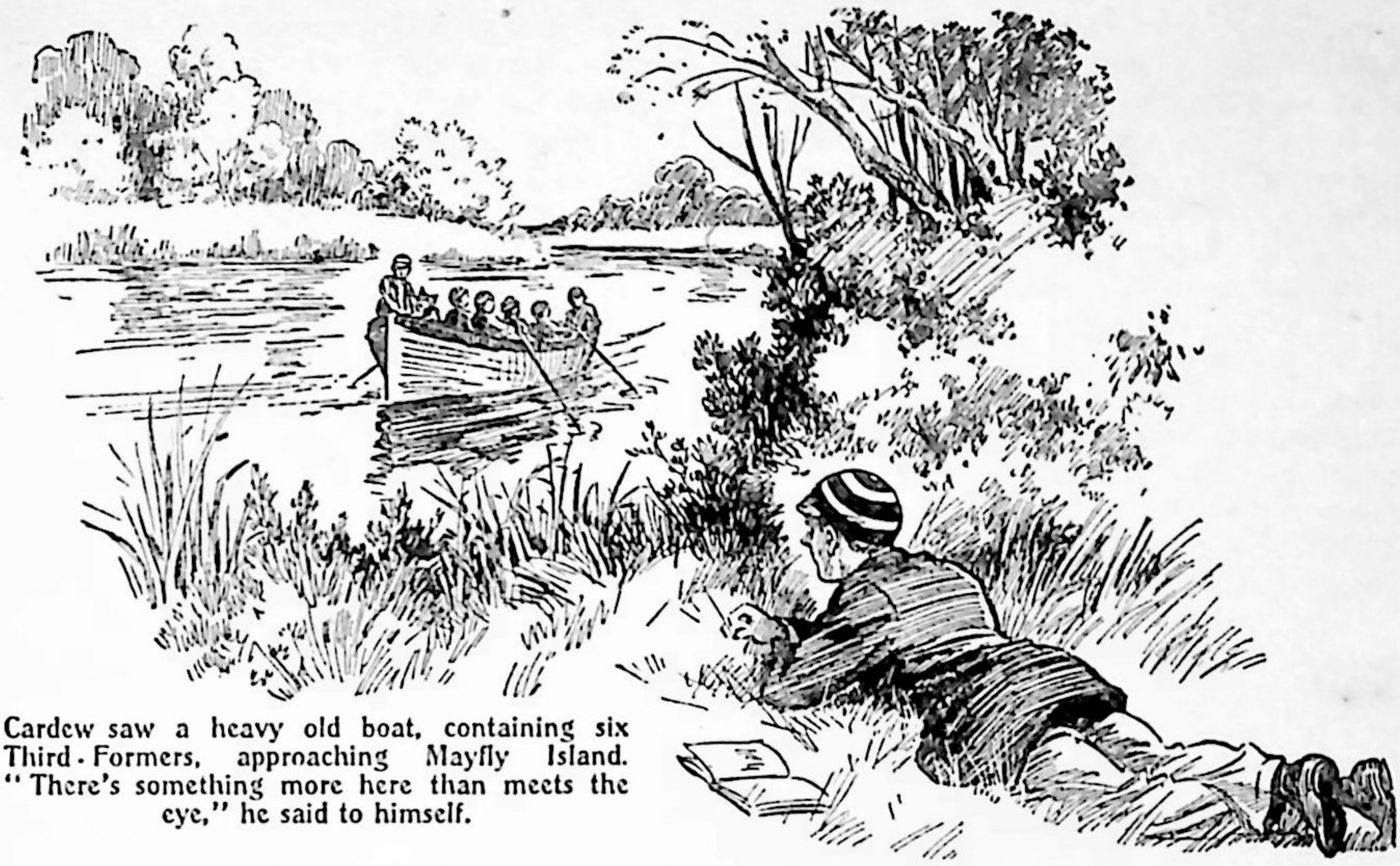
Nevertheless, he walked back to St. Jim's at quite a good pace, went to the bicycle shed, wheeled out his machine, and took the road to Wayland.

The sun poured down upon Wayland Moor. Lightly clad though he was, Cardew perspired and gasped at times as he wiped his heated brow. But he held on.

At Wayland Junction he approached the window of the booking office with his cap pulled down well over his eyes, so that his face was partly disguised. He bent his knees, to take off from his height. He asked and paid for six third singles and a dog ticket to London.

The train for town was due in a few minutes. But Cardew did not wait for it. It was easy enough, he knew, to get on to the platform at Wayland without showing tickets. Therefore, those he had did not need to be shown in order to prove that they had been used. Once the fact was established that they had been bought, it would be some time before full inquiries as to whether they had been given up could be put through; and, meanwhile, no one at the St. Jim's end would suspect that their being taken was only a ruse.

Nearing the outskirts of the town on his way back, he chanced to see a police constable



Cardew saw a heavy old boat, containing six Third-Formers, approaching Mayfly Island. "There's something more here than meets the eye," he said to himself.

whose face was unfamiliar to him. As he did not know the man by sight, it was likely the man did not know him. So he jumped from his bike, and said politely:

"I say, constable, do you happen to have seen half a dozen of our kids, with a mongrel dog, in the town this afternoon?"

"No, sir. Were you looking for them?"

"Well, I might say I was. But I don't know that it matters much. Thanks!"

"You're welcome, sir."

"That's a pointer to the false trail," Cardew said to himself as he remounted. "When Wayland Police Station is rung up to ask if the kids have been seen my man will remember the inquiry, an' it will be supposed that they were in the town. Then there are sure to be questions asked at the station. After which——"

A chuckle finished the speech.

Cardew was very pleased with himself. The false trail would cause enough delay to give Mr. Henry Selby acute discomfort!

THE FOURTH CHAPTER

Captive to the Crusoes!

"I SAY, you fellows, isn't this spiffing?" asked Wally as he lay on his back and gazed up at the spreading branches of a big elm.

"Ra-ther!" agreed Curly Gibson.

The six Third-Formers were enjoying a comfortable sense of repletion. The scent of frying still hung upon the still air. Sausages and bacon, followed by raspberry turnovers, had made a meal that had seemed nothing short of ideal. They had drunk cocoa with it. Ginger-pop had been vetoed as making too big a weight when there was so much else to bring along; but they had plenty of tea and cocoa, and also some packets of lemonade powder, which were to be used next day.

They had chosen a place right in the middle of the island for their camp. Trees screened them on every side, and they had lighted a fire without fear that it would be seen. The river banks were lonely here, in any case, and few boats except those from the school and from Rylcombe Grammar School were ever seen on the Rhyl.

For half an hour or so there was no sound but the regular snoring of Jameson, who lay asleep on his back with his head pillowed upon his hands.

Then Wally jumped to his feet.

"Time to get everything right for the

night," he said. "Wake up, Jimmy, you old foghorn!"

The Crusoes stirred themselves and started to rig up a big strip of canvas, fastening it to the branches of the trees so as to form a rough roof. Then Wally commenced to scoop out a hole in the ground.

"What are you playing at?" asked Manners.

"That's to take my hip-bone. A chap's hip-bone begins to ache like billy-ho after he's been lying a few hours on it; and very few people can sleep on their backs all night."

The others dug holes in imitation of Wally. It was, indeed, no more than an elementary bit of scoutcraft.

This done, such of the stores as were counted perishable were brought in under the shelter, leaving the tinned stuff and the cooking utensils outside. Then each of the Third Form Crusoes rolled himself up in his rug, and silence fell upon the camp.

The first to awaken was Reggie Manners, as the slanting beams of the sun penetrated the foliage.

He rose and stretched.

"Lazy bounders!" he said scornfully, looking down at his chums.

After a wash, he started to prepare for breakfast. Tinned salmon had been agreed upon as the staple of that meal.

Three tins were opened, and the bread was set beside them, with a bottle of vinegar and a packet of salt. Then Reggie took the kettle, and went to the bank to fill it.

Looking across to the opposite bank, he saw what made him let the kettle fall and lower himself instantly to the ground that he might not be seen.

For there was Piggott, slouching along furtively, as though he had something upon his mind.

What on earth could Piggott be doing up the Rhyl at this hour?

Spying upon them! That was naturally the first thought of Manners minor. But second thoughts told him that the chances of Piggott's having penetrated their secret were too small to be worth considering. Besides, the black sheep did not even glance towards the island.

It seemed to Reggie that he was concealing something under his jacket.

Reggie let him get well past, then rose to his feet, and bolted to tell Wally.

The leader of the Crusoes awoke at once, and flung away his rug. He and Reggie ran together to the northernmost point of the island.

They were in time to see what Piggott did.

He had halted, and had produced something from under his jacket. They could not see what it was while in his hand. But he flung it into the river, and Wally's keen eyes made it out to be a small tin of some sort.

In the very instant in which he made his throw Piggott saw them. He bolted at once.

"Great Scott! We're done if he gets away!" exclaimed Wally.

And, regardless of the fact that he was more than half clothed, he plunged into the water. Reggie took off his boots and most of his clothes before following.

The chances seemed with Piggott. Even the best swimmer cannot keep pace with a very ordinary runner.

But Piggott had gone upstream beyond the island, and his deadly funk handicapped him. He was not thirty yards nearer St. Jim's than Wally when the leader of the Crusoes clambered up the bank in pursuit. The cad of the Third Form put on a desperate spurt, and gained a yard or two. Then one of his feet struck something, and he fell headlong.

Wally was sitting on his back when Manners minor emerged from the river.

"Good man, Reggie!" cried Wally. "We have got the sweep!"

Manners minor added his weight to that of D'Arcy minor. Piggott groaned and writhed, but was helpless.

"You're a pretty beauty, aren't you?" said Wally. "Spying after us, eh?"

"I didn't!" howled Piggott. "I hadn't a notion you were on the island."

"Coo-ee-ee!"

Wally's call brought to the bank Jameson, Levison minor, Gibson and Frayne, in various stages of undress. They were rubbing their eyes, partly from the sudden waking, partly because they could not begin to guess what had happened.

Pongo, left alone in the camp, proceeded to investigate one of the tins of salmon. He cut his nose slightly, but paid no heed to that. He cleared up the first tin, and at once began on the second. This was an entertainment to Pongo's taste.

"It's Piggy!" shouted Wally.

Jameson and Frank Levison swam across. There was no more room on Piggott's back, so Frank sat on his legs and the New House fag on his head.

"What was he after?" yelled Curly.

"Dunno. But it's a dead cert we can't let him go back," answered Wally. "He'd be sure to split on us."

"I won't!" gasped Piggott. "I'll swear any oath you like that I'll keep it dark about you fellows being here!"

"I say, Wally, what was it the bounder chucked into the river?" asked Reggie.

At that Piggott writhed convulsively.

"How should I know?" said Wally. "He's our prisoner; that's all I care about. We shall have to swim him across to the island, and keep him there as long as we stay. We don't want his company, of course; but it's the only way to make us safe."

"I fancy I can guess what he chucked in!" exclaimed Frank.

"You can?" said Wally. "It looked like a tin of some sort, but—oh, I see!"

Wally's mind had jumped to the same conclusion as Frank's. A tin—the stain which had harmonised the colouring of those very bad eggs to that of the padding on Mr. Selby's chair—Piggott, afraid of hiding that tin any longer, thinking the waters of the Rhyl a safe depository for it!

Not a spy, then, but worse—the miscreant through whose failure to play the game the whole Form had been punished!

But if not a spy, still a certain traitor if allowed to return to St. Jim's. He would tell where they were, and would deny that what he had hurled into the river was anything of importance. They would not be able to prove that their theory about it was correct. Within two or three hours after he was let go they would be rounded up, and the Crusoe game would be over!

If they let him go, that was. But they would not let him go! The four had but one mind on that question. Reuben Piggott must stay—a captive to the Crusoes!

"I reckon you'll have to take most of your clobber off, Piggy," said Wally. "Of course, if you like to swim to the island in it that's all right. But if you'd rather have it dry when you get there you can make it into a bundle and take it across on your coconut."

"I'm not going! I can't swim all that way!" burbled Piggott.

"Your mistake. I've seen you swim farther than that," replied Wally. "What will you do? You're going across with us, anyway."

Eventually Piggott, after many whining protests, stripped himself to his underclothing, while Jameson fetched the Crusoes' swimming costumes. When they were changed, Wally gave Piggott a lusty shove, and he flopped into the water.

"Ooooch! Yarooogh! I'm drowning!" he gasped.

"Drown, then!" was the callous reply of the Crusoes' leader.

But he knew well that there was no danger for Piggott.

The four entered the water, carrying garments on their heads, and escorted Piggott to the island.

Pongo came up, wagging his stump of a tail. About the jaws of Pongo were certain pink smears. He did not even trouble to lick them away; he had had enough tinned salmon. But he was not so subdued in spirit that he could not growl at Piggott, whom he hated.

The three tins—two empty, the third nearly so—were discovered. But Pongo got off with a word or two of reprimand, which did not in the least daunt him. There was still one unopened tin of salmon left, and there were several boxes of sardines.

Piggott sulkily refused to have any breakfast. He wished he had been less emphatic in refusing when he found that no one bothered in the least about his going without.

It was Frank who thought of diving for the tin Piggott had thrown into the river. The black sheep of the Third had weighted it with stones to ensure its sinking, but he was on tenterhooks for the next two or three hours. One of the Crusoes, each in turn,

with Pongo as aider, kept watch on Piggott, while the other five dived.

Wally was the successful diver in the long run. He brought up the tin in triumph. A very few minutes more would have spoiled it as evidence against Piggott, for the soaking had all but washed away the paper label. But it was retrieved just in time, and among the six there was no doubt as to Piggott's guilt.

He was set to peel potatoes and onions for the stew they designed for dinner. And after a time he got on with his job energetically, having had no breakfast. But he did not mean to stay on the island if he could get away. The Crusoe life had no charm for Piggott, and he saw the benefit to himself that would come from his reaching St. Jim's with tidings of the runaways' whereabouts.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER
Cardew's Plan.

"WHAT'S it matter to anyone but old Selby?" asked Cardew lightly.

Ernest Levison glared at him.

"It matters a bit to me," he said. "Frank's my minor, and the people at home will be half off their heads when they hear about this."

"That's true enough," chimed in Sidney Clive. "It does matter to Ernie, and to Manners major, too, and to Gussy. It's a bit rough on them all, and my notion is, Ralph, that if you really know anything you ought to speak up."

Cardew yawned as if but mildly interested. He was sorry now that he had let drop a hint or two from which Levison major, who was uncommonly acute, had drawn deductions.

The harmony of No. 9 was disturbed. Inquiries made on the previous evening, when the absence of the six had been discovered, had led to the general acceptance of the theory that they had made for London. The Head had conferred with the two Housemasters and Mr. Selby, and the Third Form-master had left the conference considerably chastened. Neither Dr. Holmes nor Mr. Railton exactly approved of the punishment of a whole Form for the fault of one of its members; and Mr. Ratcliff, though he might have done the same thing himself, saw no reason for lifting his voice on Mr. Selby's behalf.

"My dear, good asses," said Cardew lazily, "what is there in the wide, wide world to worry about? Of course, the young absconders will get it in the neck more or less when retrieved. But none of them will be sacked, you may be sure—sackin's much more likely for Selby. An' now I propose to dry up an' say no more about it."

"You're not going to dry up!" returned Levison major fiercely. "You were in the bizney with them—I'm dashed certain of that. And all out of spite against Selby because he got you caned by Railton! That's pretty small-minded, I think. I'm going to have out of you what you know!"

"An' how do you propose to get it out of me—assumin that I know anythin', which I don't admit?"

Cardew was white to the lips with rage. The epithet "small-minded" had hit him hard, coming from a chum. He would not see it as justified; but it wounded, nevertheless. He spoke quietly; but both Levison and Clive could see that he was furious.

"With my fists if necessary!"

"Tha-a-anks, but it's really too dashed hot for fightin' to-day," drawled Cardew.

He dropped upon the couch, took out his handkerchief, and began to fan himself.

Levison darted at him one baleful look, then departed. Clive lingered for a few seconds, as though trying to make up his mind to say something, then followed Levison.

Not two minutes had passed when Arthur Augustus D'Arcy invaded the study with his chums Blake, Digby, and Herries in his wake.

"I heah, Cardew, that you know wheah my minah is!" said the swell of the Fourth, with none of his usual urbanity of manner.

"Isn't it regarded as common knowledge that he's gone to town, with the rest of the elopin' kids?" returned Cardew.

Arthur Augustus surveyed the dandy of the Fourth through his famous monocle with great scorn.

"That is a paltry subtahfuge, Cardew!" he said severely. "If you——"

"Clear out, Gussy! You gas too much. Now, Cardew, if you know anything about what that young ass of a minor of mine is up to you'd better tell it at once, or——"

The speaker was Manners major of the Shell. Tom Merry, junior captain of St. Jim's, and Monty Lowther, the other member of the Co. known as the Terrible Three, were with him. Behind these and the Fourth Form quartet showed up Levison and Clive, who had thought the occasion grave enough to call in aid.

"Or?" spoke Cardew mildly, as Manners paused.

"Or I'll make you!" flashed Manners.

"I say, have you fellows heard?" inquired the boy from the Isle of Man. "That young sweep Piggott's missing, too! He went to bed last night as usual, but no one's seen him since."

"Well, Piggott's no loss," remarked Cardew.

But he did not feel easy. He alone could guess that there might be some connection between the absence of Piggott and that of the Crusoes. To the other juniors, all well aware how completely Wally & Co. barred



Piggott's behaviour was mysterious. He flung something into the river, and Wally's keen eyes made it out to be a tin of some sort.

"Excuse me, but Levison has first claim. D'Arcy has not yet registered a defiance, but——"

"I shall pwoceed to administah to you a fwightful thwashin', Cardew!" howled Arthur Augustus indignantly.

"There you are, Manners! He was here before you, so I think we must fairly reckon him as No. 2. You are No. 3. In the course of a day or two we can fix up details. I hope this torrid heat will abate meanwhile."

Kerruish, of the Fourth, came up behind the small crowd at the door of No. 9.

Piggott, all believing that the six had travelled to town, there seemed no possible link. Yet they were made still more uncomfortable by the news.

"I think you should help if you can, Cardew," said Tom Merry.

"Oh, he can all right!" Levison exclaimed. "I know he's got something up his sleeve."

"A tolerably hefty arm, Levison, as I propose to prove to you—not to mention D'Arcy an' Manners—when the weather conditions allow of my meetin' you on even terms," drawled Cardew. "Knowin' as you

do that I simply cannot endure extreme heat, you will hardly press me to combat before that, I should imagine."

"I don't see why we should wait to suit him," said Manners.

"No fear!" exclaimed Levison.

"Weally, Cardew——"

"It's no use, Gussy," broke in Blake. "You'll get nothing out of him unless he chooses, and I don't see that you'll be any forwarder by taking a licking. Come along. Let's leave him to it. If he really is playing some deep game of his own, he knows what we shall think of him when it comes out."

They all departed, Levison and Clive included. Cardew glanced at his watch. There was time to get along to the island and back before dinner.

He went down to the boat-house, and paddled a Canadian canoe up the Rhyl.

Pongo's yapping came to his ears long before he reached Mayfly Island.

He landed without seeing anyone. But to the yapping was now added the sound of voices, and he made his way straight to the camp.

Wally greeted him in a friendly way.

"Hallo, Cardew! Just in time for grub! It's stew—plenty of it, and jolly good, I can tell you. Just niff it!"

The stew certainly smelt savoury enough. But Cardew had not come to the island to eat stew.

"I see you've Piggott here," he remarked.

Piggott sat a yard or so in rear of the rest, very sulky and very hungry.

"He would come," replied Wally, grinning.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Wally's chums.

The notion of Piggott's throwing in his lot with the Crusoes by choice struck them all as very funny.

"I didn't—I wouldn't—I never wanted to come on the beastly island!" burbled the black sheep. "They got me, and made me swim across—I was jolly near drowned, I can tell you, Cardew! But they can't keep me now you know about it."

"Cardew wouldn't sneak," said Frank Levison.

"No, I wouldn't sneak," said Cardew, very gravely. "But this has gone far enough. Unless you get back to St. Jim's this afternoon some of you—perhaps all—will be booked for the sack!"

"Oh, rats!" cried Wally. "They'd never sack us, and we're having the time of our lives here! Plenty of grub, and a prisoner to do the dirty work for us. It's ripping, Cardew!"

But Manners minor and Gibson betrayed by their faces that some little doubt had assailed their minds; and even Frank and Joe Frayne and Jameson did not feel quite as free from anxiety as Wally.

"See here, you'd better let me take Piggott back with me," said Cardew. "After all, he's only been absent for a few hours, an' he can easily cook up some crammer to explain that."

But the six were dissentient.

"Piggy would tell crammers for himself, but not for us," said Frank.

Piggott protested that he was willing to tell them to any extent and on any account if he was only suffered to go.

But the Crusoes were adamant on that score.

"You're not going till we go, Piggy!" said Wally decisively.

"I should still recommend this afternoon for the exodus," Cardew said. "If you like I'll get a couple of boats up directly after dinner."

"Nothing doing!" spoke Wally.

And with that Cardew departed. As he paddled downstream, he thought hard.

The sum of his thinking led him to a conclusion that he did not like a bit, though it seemed inevitable. He would have to force the Crusoes off the island, and he could not do that alone. Moreover, he could not ask anyone to help him till he had owned up to those concerned his share in the matter.

He was not going to ask Levison major, or Harry Manners, or Arthur Augustus. They would know later on what an ass he had been; but they should not know yet.

Clive he could depend upon, though Clive would not relish keeping Levison in the dark. Of the three besides D'Arcy in No. 6 study on the Fourth Form passage he decided upon Blake. He thought Tom Merry and Lowther would both come in.



Wally gave Piggott a lusty shove and he flopped into the water. "Oooooch! Yaroooh! I'm drowning!" he gasped.

But the clearing of the island must be done by a stratagem. Four would not be enough to do it by force; and, anyway, Cardew disliked the idea of using force. He would have to think it out during classes.

Meanwhile, on the island the Crusoes and their captive found the stew no end good, and the Swiss rolls that formed the second course also to their taste.

"The grub won't last more than another day, though, Wally," said Frank.

"What? Why, we reckoned on having enough for a giddy week!"

"Well, we must have reckoned wrong. For one thing, we've wolfed all the bread but a couple of loaves."

"Half rations, then!" returned Wally, quite cheerfully.

But not all who heard that edict shared his cheeriness.

"Anybody got a pencil?" Wally asked.

Jameson found a stump. Frank produced on request a blank half sheet of a letter. Then a command was issued to Piggott.

He said that he would not obey, whatever they did to him. They did nothing, and yet he obeyed, in fear of what might be done.

He wrote a confession of his guilt, and his signature was witnessed by all the six. Then Wally carefully put the paper away.

It was then that Piggott made up his mind to the most desperate deed of his life!

THE SIXTH CHAPTER

Painful for Piggott!

IF it had been quite dark that night Piggott's resolution would probably have failed him. He could swim well enough to make six times the distance between island and bank without difficulty; but he had little courage, and would not have dared to enter the water alone in the dark.

If he had not been able to retrieve the confession he might not have gone. It was an important part of his plan to destroy that evidence. In its absence nothing that mattered could be proved against him, he thought; and Mr. Selby would not be ready to lend ear to a charge against the boy who had done him the good service of finding the runaways.

But, with the moon shining its brightest in a clear sky, Piggott felt safe. And the incriminating document was found with very little difficulty.

Piggott looked down contemptuously at the seven sleeping forms; for Pongo slept as soundly as any of the fags.

"Think you're giddy clever!" muttered Piggott. "But I'm a match for you all!"

Then Piggott left the camp, thrusting the confession into his handkerchief pocket. Easy to tear it up later.

He entered the river fully dressed, except for his boots, which were slung round his neck. He gave one gasp—not of cold, but of fright at the thought of his risk. But the warmth of the water and the fact that the bank opposite was visible in the dim light reassured him, and he was soon across.

His boots put on, he set off at a steady trot towards St. Jim's. Then he remembered the paper, and stopped, fumbling for it.

There came to his ears the sound of oars, and dimly he made out the shape of a boat in the middle of the stream!

Panic seized him. He started to run. What was a boat doing upon the Rhyl at this hour?

Cardew must be at the bottom of this development. But Cardew would not have told Mr. Selby. It was far more likely that he and some of his pals had gone to fetch the Crusoes off.

That would not suit Piggott's book at all. He wanted the credit of giving them away, and he wanted them to be punished for the way they had treated him. If he could only get to Mr. Selby in time he might achieve both ends, and at the same time make it hot for Cardew, who had refused to extend any sympathy to the captive.

So Piggott rushed on. It was easy enough for him to get into the quad and thence into the School House; he knew the ropes if anyone did. It was not so easy to nerve himself to the trespassing upon Mr. Selby in his bedroom; but even to do that Piggott found courage.

The Form-master was rudely awakened from sleep by a clammy hand set upon his shoulder. He sat up with a start.

"It's me—Piggott!" sounded the shaking voice of the intruder. "I came to tell you that D'Arcy and the rest of that lot are on Mayfly Island! They captured me, and wouldn't let me come away; but I escaped in the night, and—atishooo-oo-ooo!"

A prolonged fit of sneezing caused Piggott to reach for his handkerchief. It came out, soaked. A match flared. Mr. Selby had dragged on his dressing-gown and was lighting the gas.

"What is this wild story?" he demanded sternly.

But a glance at the black sheep of the Third showed him that the story was not necessarily a wild one. For Piggott had been absent without explanation; and his condition showed that he had been in the water.

"Get to your bed at once!" snapped the master. "You were right not to delay in coming to me. I will take instant measures. But get to your bed! Rub yourself into a glow with a rough towel first, or you will be ill."

Piggott bolted. In another minute Mr. Selby was arousing Mr. Railton.

The Housemaster thought, but would not say, that no great harm could have come out of leaving the runaways on the island till the morning. It was natural enough that Mr. Selby should be flustered and hurried.

Some of the prefects were aroused, and a party a dozen strong went down to the boat-house. Kildare, the captain, was not among these. He had strained an ankle slightly in a cricket match the day before. But he got up and limped about, while the House woke as though tidings had come to the fellows in their sleep; and there was a stir in every dormitory and lights began to show in most of the upper windows.

Meanwhile, on the island the escape of Piggott had been discovered.

Piggott's sleeping place had been close to Wally's—so close that Wally could have touched him by extending a hand.

Half asleep, half awake, Wally flung out an arm. Had Piggott been there Wally's fist must have struck him.

"Sorry, Piggy!" murmured Wally sleepily.

Then he awoke, for it was suddenly borne in upon him that he had not struck a body, but the earth. And in another minute the whole six were awake, and Pongo was yapping his hardest; but it was plain to all that the captive had escaped!

"Well, if this doesn't beat the band!" said Wally. "Who'd have thought he had the pluck?"

"Perhaps he's on the island still," suggested Reggie.

But it did not take a long search to make it clear he was not.

"There's only one thing to be done—go after him!"

"What's the good of that, Wally?" objected Gibson. "We don't know how long ago he slid off, and we haven't a chance of catching him."

"What's the good of staying here if we can't catch him and drag him back?" returned Wally hotly. "I say there is a chance, and I'm going, anyway!"

All agreed to go. Stripped to their underclothing, leaving their boots behind, they plunged in and swam for the mainland bank.

But Pongo would not make the plunge, though Wally called to him. He stood yapping on the bank.

Two terrible-looking ruffians heard that yapping. One of them struck a match, to find that they had reached the camp and that the camp was deserted.

They might have been burglars or even cut-throats, so very ruffianly they looked. But in fact, they were only Cardew and Monty Lowther, made up and wearing costumes from the wardrobe of the Junior Amateur Dramatic Society. Cardew's plan had been to frighten the Crusoes away by making them believe the island the resort of the worst kind of villains. Lowther had been strongly for it, sure that with his aid it could not fail to be a success. He had several blood-curdling speeches prepared, to be delivered in a terrifying voice, and was a trifle huffed because Cardew would not consent to have replies made for him, saying that he could think out his own.

Tom Merry, Blake, and Clive were not so sanguine, but thought the scheme worth trying. If it failed there could be made the resort to force that seemed its only alternative. But they were not keen on that.

They stayed in the boat—the same boat Piggott had dimly seen.

"My only Aunt Jemima! They've cleared already!" exclaimed Lowther, in deep disgust at being deprived of the pleasure of playing villain.

"I don't know about that. They've left their clothes behind if they have," replied Cardew. "They may have heard us, an' hidden somewhere else. Where's that giddy cur? He hasn't gone, anyway."

Pongo was easy enough to find, but though the five searched every scrap of the island they found neither Wally & Co. nor Piggott.

They had come up on one side almost at the moment when the six had plunged in from the other.

Day began to glimmer in the sky. Cardew's aiders recognised the fact that their mission had failed.

"We'd better go back," Tom Merry said. "After all, if they have cleared out for good, there's nothing left for us to do."

But Cardew held that the presence of the fags' outer clothing proved that they had not returned to the school. He suggested that they had gone for a swim up river.

It was possible; the rest admitted that. Some time was spent in discussion. Then Cardew broke out impatiently:

"What an absolute idiot I am! I see it now. Piggott's clobber's all gone. He escaped, and they went after him."

"What's that?" inquired Tom Merry, with hand to ear.

The sound of oars and voices in the distance had just reached him.

A few minutes enlightened them. Mr. Selby's grating tones were heard.

"You were right, Cardew," said Tom

Merry. "Piggott did a bolt and got to St. Jim's. We're in the soup if we're spotted."

"My hat! To be nabbed in this ghastly clobber!" moaned Lowther.

"We needn't be nabbed—any of us," spoke Cardew quickly. "Make for the boat, push upstream a bit, then land Lowther an' me. We must dodge back along the bank. You stand on and off till you see which side of the island the boats put in, and then dodge down the other. It's a fair chance they won't twig you. But you'll have to leave that dog. He'll give you away if you take him."

Light was broadening, but it was still grey over the river, and the five had the advantage that their presence was not suspected. Cardew and Lowther were landed, and scuttled off. They had left the school in their disguises, and could not change till their return, so that there must have been many awkward questions asked had the boat been stopped with them in it.

Once they had gone Tom Merry hit on a bold stroke.

"Let's row down quietly a bit, and then make upstream again, as though we'd followed the other boats," he said. "We shall get jumped on for coming along without leave, but if we hold on we may run right into the jaws of another boatload or two of masters and prefects."

"Good notion!" agreed Blake. "We shall see the fun that way, too!"

But there was very little fun to see. The island was deserted; the expedition found that they had had their trouble for nothing.

The six fags reached the boat-house without catching Piggott. They knew by this time that the game was up, for they also had heard and seen boats on the river, and were not surprised to see lights in the boat-house. It was something like a relief when Kildare, limping, appeared in their midst as they huddled together.

"You young asses!" snapped the captain. "Get along inside, rub yourselves down and scramble between the sheets. You'll answer for your actions in the morning."

"Weally, Wally——"

"I always knew you were a bit potty, Reggie, but——"

"Frank! My word, aren't you ashamed of yourself?"

D'Arcy major, Manners major, and Levison major were all there. At least fifty fellows were in and about the boat-house. The six, as they made their way to the School House under escort, heard Kildare ordering that another boat should start at once to carry the news of their arrival to Mr. Railton and Mr. Selby.

It was no time to even up matters with the traitorous Piggott. So tired out with all the excitement were the Crusoes that they slept like tops.

Cardew and Lowther made their way in safely, though not without a narrow squeak or two. Tom Merry and his companions were reprimanded for coming along without permission; that was all. And Cardew's secret was kept by those who were told it, including Levison major, Harry Manners, and Arthur Augustus. All were indignant at first, but cooled down later when it became known that the Crusoes were to get off comparatively lightly.

The sack would have been certain for Cardew had his share in the matter reached the ears of authority. Tom Merry said that he hoped it would be a lesson to him, but had no strong belief that it would.

The hatchet prepared for the necks of the Crusoes came down first and hardest upon the neck of Reuben Piggott!

A sneeze had ruined what chance Piggott had possessed of keeping his guilty secret from his Form-master. From the Form it could not have been kept, of course. But all the Form, except the Crusoes and Piggott himself, first learned it from Mr. Selby's lips.

The Third was gathered, and Mr. Selby rapped on his desk. The six nerved themselves for the ordeal.

"Piggott, stand out!"

Piggott obeyed. For a second or two he had a wild notion that he was to be thanked publicly. He did not want that, but what came he wanted even less.

"You were in my bedroom last night, Piggott. This morning I found on the floor a paper, still wet but decipherable, which I shall now read to the Form."



There came to Piggott's ears the sound of oars, and dimly he made out the shape of a boat in the middle of the stream.

Sternly the master read that wretched confession, while Piggott squirmed.

"You have nothing to say?"

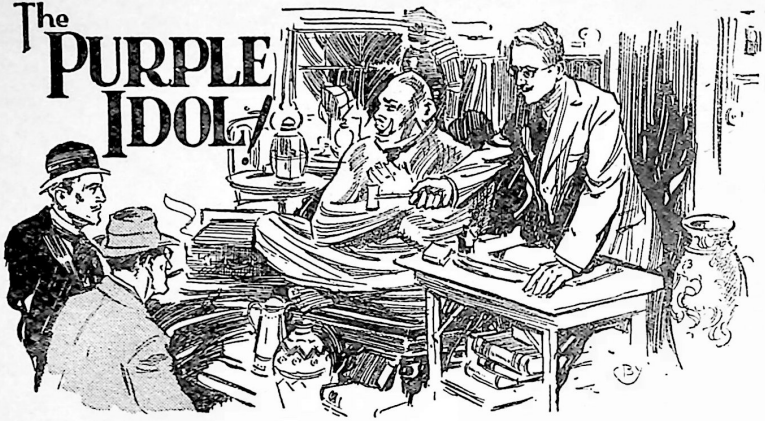
Piggott had nothing to say. What was there to be said?

"The Head will deal with you later, and also with D'Arcy minor, Levison minor, Frayne, Jameson, Gibson and Manners minor. And as the culprit of the wretched trick played upon me is now known, the punishment I imposed on the Form will be rescinded. Now we will proceed with our work."

The Form hissed Piggott as he shuffled back to his seat, but no rebuke came from Mr. Selby.

During the lesson the Head summoned the seven Third-Formers to his study. He had already been enlightened on the matter. The Crusoes were severely reprimanded and caned for their actions. But worse was in store for Piggott. We will draw a veil over what took place, and make our conclusion from the facts that the school porter was sent for, and that Piggott found it painful to sit down for quite a long time afterwards.

The PURPLE IDOL



THE FIRST CHAPTER

The Tragedy of the Curio-shop I

"TWELVE o'clock."

Ferrers Locke restored his watch to his pocket and halted.

He and his young assistant, Jack Drake, had just emerged from Baker Street Tube Station. They had spent most of the morning with a friend of Locke, a Bengalee called Chandar Lal, who was staying at the Waldorf Hotel.

Both Locke and Drake had come away from the hotel the possessor of a valuable little souvenir. Locke's took the form of a small golden representation of the Hindu god Ganeesh. Drake's was an image of the sacred white peacock, beautifully carved in ivory.

In sinister circumstances Ferrers Locke finds his friend, Andrea Ollson, dead. Is it a case of murder or suicide? Read how the famous Baker Street detective sifts the mystery to the bottom—there are thrills and surprises throughout!

These valuable gifts, presented by Lal, were in token of the Indian's appreciation of services rendered by Locke and Drake.

As Ferrers Locke halted outside the Tube station, his hand encountered the little box in which reposed the gift he had received.

"I think, Drake," he murmured, "we might walk home via Loftus Road. We have time before lunch. And I rather fancy my old friend, Andrea Ollson, would like to see these examples of Indian workmanship with which we've been presented."

"Good idea, sir."

The two stepped off together. Instead of taking the direct route to their quarters in Baker Street, they turned down a side road. The first turning on their left brought them into the little-frequented thoroughfare known as Loftus Road.

"You know, my boy," said Locke as they strode along, "I've known Ollson almost more years than I care to remember."

"You never miss an opportunity of dropping in on the old fellow, I notice, sir," remarked Drake. "But he struck me, on the only occasion I met him, as though he were a bit old-fashioned."

"And so he is, my boy. I don't think Andrea Ollson ever rode in a Tube train. It almost broke his heart when the old horse omnibuses in London were done away with. He's always had a profound distrust of banks, too."

Jack Drake smiled.

"Perhaps that is merely wisdom on his part, sir," he said. "However, he can't do a

very great business in this out-of-the-way spot, I should think."

"On the contrary, I think his business connections are excellent. He has a number of clients among very wealthy collectors, I know. But I was thinking more of his habits. A more generous man never lived."

"He gave a good deal to a School for Tropical Medicine, I believe?" said Drake.

"Yes; Andrea Ollson's hobby is medicine and anatomy, I think. But he's spent a good deal on his protégé, Stephen Ferrell, one way and another."

"Stephen Ferrell!" repeated Drake. "That's his assistant in the curio business, isn't it?"

"Yes; but Ferrell is more like a son of the old man than an assistant."

The premises were small and dingy. The exterior, with its small window, gave but little inkling of the valuable antiques and curios within. Behind the window, images of various kinds in brass, ivory, and ebony, wrought by Indian, Chinese, and African craftsmen, were cheek by jowl with ancient Babylonian coins, old English pottery, and age-worn Italian paintings.

The detective and Drake stepped into the shop. The interior, untidy and ill-lighted, was in keeping with the exterior of the place. The shop, though, had a greater depth than seemed likely for so narrow a building.

To the right was an old desk. Beside it were some glass cases in which reposed small objets d'art. These acted in lieu of a counter.

Japanese Samurai armour, war spears and shields surmounted by tufts of human hair from the Solomon Islands, grotesque idols from the East Indies, and totem-poles from Alaska, littered the shop.

Locke rapped on the desk with his walking-stick.

There was no response.

He knocked again, louder this time. Still receiving no response, he turned to Drake.

"Give that imitation of a canary, my boy," he said—"or, rather, of a thousand canaries rolled into one. That ought to fetch him."

Jack Drake smiled. Then, pursing his lips, he sent a shrill, exultant piping reverberating through the curio-shop.

But even Drake's piercing whistle failed to bring the old curio-dealer into view.

By this time the eyes of the two visitors had become more accustomed to the dim light. Gazing through the shop, Locke became aware of the form of a huge Javanese idol which grinned from the back portion of the premises.

Often during his former visits to the old curio-dealer he had seen this selfsame grotesque, purple-coloured idol. Andrea Ollson had had it for years for the simple reason that he had never been able to find a purchaser for it. Always there was the self-same ugly grin on the face of the image, though on this occasion it seemed to Locke as if the grin was just a trifle more evil and sinister.

Taking a step or two farther into the shop, Ferrers Locke halted, and again rapped loudly with his stick. Hardly had he done so than he sprang to attention. Every fibre of his being was a-quiver. His eyes had fallen and were large with horror. For there at the base of the purple idol was the motionless figure of a man!

Locke's inaction was but momentary. With a cry, he dashed forward and dropped on his knees beside the still form.

Hearing the cry, Jack Drake, whose view of the base of the image had been obstructed by a huge vase of Matsuma ware, rushed through the shop.

He arrived by Locke as the detective grasped the inert figure and turned it over.

"Andrea Ollson!"

The name left Locke's lips in an awed whisper. He who had unravelled so many gruesome mysteries was shocked beyond measure at finding his old friend in these sinister circumstances.

And certainly the old curio-dealer presented a pathetic spectacle. Despite the gloom which shrouded this back portion of the shop, his face revealed almost a marble whiteness. His eyes were set and staring. A few bubbles of froth rested at the corners of his lips.

"He's—he's dead, sir!"

Locke felt the old man's pulse. Then he took a small hand-mirror from his pocket and held it to Ollson's lips. A thin film of moisture settled on the glass.

"He's alive, my boy. Go with all speed for a doctor!"

Drake dashed from the shop.

Once outside the place, he glanced swiftly up and down the road. His eyes lighted on a brass plate outside a house on the other side of the thoroughfare.

Running to the house, he read with satisfaction the name on the plate, "Dr. Graham Stead, M.D."

As luck would have it, the doctor was at home. Bearing a small black bag, he hastily accompanied Drake back to the curio-shop.

They found that Locke had propped the old curio-dealer against the base of the big idol, and was rendering what first-aid he could. He had lighted a gas-jet, and by the aid of this the doctor made an examination of the patient.

Rising, he met Locke's inquiring gaze with a shake of his head.

"He is beyond human aid," said the medico quietly. "Mr. Ollson is dead."

Ferrers Locke drew a deep breath and turned to Drake.

"Help us to lift him into the room at the back of the shop, my boy," he said quietly. "Then go upstairs and see whether anyone is on the premises."

The three carried the body of the old curio-dealer into the back room and reverently laid it on a couch. That done, Jack Drake mounted the flight of stairs which led to the living-rooms and bedrooms of the place.

No one was on the first floor, but as he went up the stairs towards the second landing, he heard footsteps.

"Hallo! Who's, that?" called a voice.

"Is that Mr. Stephen Ferrell?" called back Drake.

A head appeared over the banisters.

"Yes, that's me! Who are you?"

In a few words Drake told the protégé of the late Mr. Ollson of what had occurred. At first Stephen Ferrell, a slim, dark man of about twenty-six years, stood clutching the banisters as though rooted to the spot. Then, coming to life, he dashed madly down the stairs, brushing Drake roughly aside. Arriving in the little back room where Locke and the doctor were standing by the couch, he threw himself across the body of Andrea Ollson.

"Dad!" he cried, in agonised tones. "Dad! Speak to me!"

A few moments elapsed, and the doctor made a sign to Jack Drake. The boy raised Stephen Ferrell, and led him, sobbing and shaking convulsively, to a chair.

The doctor put his mouth close to the detective's ear.

"I think, sir," he said, "that the police should be notified at once. In my opinion, there will have to be an inquest on the deceased."

"You suspect poison?"

"To be frank, I do."

"And I, too."

Ferrers Locke made a gesture towards the left wrist of the dead man.

"Perhaps, doctor," he whispered, "you noticed, as I did, the bluish tint of the flesh about the left wrist? Imbedded in the flesh is a small black thorn."

The doctor raised his eyebrows.

"I did not notice that," he admitted. "But there's certainly a suggestion that death was caused by a particularly rapid and potent poison. The body must not be touched again until the police have been communicated with."

THE SECOND CHAPTER
The Coroner's Inquest

It was shortly following the tragic discovery narrated in the previous chapter. In a dingy hall in the Marylebone district the coroner was holding his court. The inquest was on the body of Andrea Ollson, aged sixty-three, a naturalised British subject, whose occupation had been a curio-dealer in Loftus Road.

A number of witnesses had been called. Among these were Ferrers Locke, Jack Drake, Dr. Graham Stead, Stephen Ferrell, a noted Harley Street pathologist who was an expert in Oriental poisons, and Inspector Pycroft, of Scotland Yard.

Owing to the sinister circumstances in which the discovery in the curio-shop had been made, it had been necessary to call in the police. For three days Pycroft and his men had been amassing evidence of the habits, financial position, and so forth, of the dead man. In his evidence in court the inspector gave his opinion of the affair in no uncertain manner.

"A case of suicide," said Pycroft.

Moreover, there seemed to be no little ground for this opinion.

The evidence of the Harley Street poison expert tended to confirm it. He testified to having been called in by the police to see the body of the late curio-dealer. He had extracted a small thorn from the left wrist of the dead man. This thorn had been dipped in a paste made from the sap of the ipoh-tree, a species of plant which flourishes in Borneo.



An astounding sight met Jack Drake's eyes. Canning and his friend were kneeling before a drawer full of banknotes.

The expert went on to explain that this type of poison was used by the Kenyahs of Borneo for putting on the points of the darts used with their blowpipes. Mr. Andrea Ollson, who had visited Borneo on a number of occasions, was well aware of the properties of this deadly poison. It was easy for the deceased to have taken a thorn from a rose-bush which grew outside his back window, dipped it in the poison, and jabbed it in his wrist.

The suggestion of suicide was startlingly confirmed in the evidence given by Stephen Ferrell.

Pale, and dressed in deep mourning for the old man who had befriended him, he presented a pathetic spectacle as he took his place in the witness-box.

The coroner began his questioning in a quiet, sympathetic voice.

"Your name is Stephen Ferrell?"

"Yes, sir—Stephen George Ferrell."

"When did you first meet Mr. Ollson?"

"About two and a half years ago. It was in Sarawak."

"He took you into his employ?"

"Well, not exactly. That is, he didn't engage me as an assistant in his business

at wages. It happened that he had known my father. I was on my beam-ends after a period of ill-luck and ill-health in Borneo, and he offered me a passage to England. After arriving in London he invited me to stay with him."

"I may take it," said the coroner, "that the late Mr. Ollson was a man of kindly disposition?"

"Exceedingly so, sir," replied Stephen Ferrell. "He was—was like a father to me."

He bent his head forward and roughly brushed the back of his hand across his eyes.

The coroner paused for a few seconds until the witness had got over his emotion.

"And now, Mr. Ferrell," he said, "as far as we can discover, Mr. Ollson died intestate. Did you ever hear him mention a will?"

"Never, sir. The matter was never discussed between us. I don't think he ever made one."

"Had he any wealth apart from the value of the stock in his curio-shop?"

"He had no other wealth as far as I know. He gave liberally to charities."

The coroner glanced at a paper which he held in his hand. Peering over his spectacles at the witness again, he opened up a fresh line of examination.

"Now, please, think carefully about this question, Mr. Ferrell," he said. "Had Mr. Ollson any private or business worry on his mind to your knowledge?"

Stephen Ferrell hung his head.

"Yes, sir; he—he had seemed worried of late."

Inspector Pycroft, sitting near Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake, nodded his head significantly.

"What was his worry due to?" the coroner resumed.

"To his health partly, sir. And he seemed depressed by the gloom of the English winter. Oft-times he regretted that his business would not permit him to reside always out in the East Indies."

"Did he ever mention the subject of suicide to you, Mr. Ferrell?"

"Er—no, sir. That is, he—he sometimes spoke rather strangely. For instance, he occasionally became morbid and made pessimistic remarks about 'never seeing the sun shine again.' Once he told me that he expected he would be 'found dead in his musty curio-shop.'"

From the table in front of him the coroner took up a small metal box. He explained that the box, which contained a darkish coloured paste, had been found in the desk of the deceased. The paste, as had been proved by analysis, was a poisonous substance made from the sap of the ipoh-tree of Borneo.

The box was passed to Stephen Ferrell at the coroner's request.

"Now, Mr. Ferrell, have you ever seen this box containing this paste before?"

"Yes, sir. The paste is a deadly poison. Mr. Ollson brought it from Borneo with him. He took a delight in showing the box and its contents to certain of his clients, together with some darts and a blowpipe."

A small thorn with a dull crimson point was next shown to the witness, who shrank back in horror. This was the thorn taken from the wrist of the dead man. Ferrell was asked if he had ever seen it before, but replied that he had not.

As the coroner concluded his examination, Ferrers Locke rose.

"May I, sir, as an old friend of the deceased, be permitted to put a few questions to the last witness?"

"Certainly, Mr. Locke."

Rising to his feet, the detective faced Stephen Ferrell.

"Would it be correct to say that your benefactor, Mr. Ollson, was an enthusiastic student of anatomy?"

Ferrell appeared surprised.

"Why, yes, I should say he was."

"He was a man who could have pointed out, without hesitation, where the principal veins and arteries of the body are situated?"

"He could have done, I've no doubt."

The face of the witness wore a puzzled look. So did the countenances of others in the court.

"When did you last see Mr. Ollson alive?"

"About half an hour before that—that boy—er—Drake called to me to notify me of the tragedy."

"Roughly speaking, then, you saw Mr.

Ollson about half an hour before he died. Where was that ? "

" Down in the shop. He had a customer —a Mr. Bream, an antiquary—with him. But I had something to do, and went upstairs to——"

" Quite so," murmured Locke. " But will you please tell me if, in your opinion, Mr. Ollson seemed in his normal senses on the last occasion you saw him alive ? "

" Why, yes, he—he seemed all right."

"On the face of it, Mr. Ferrell, wouldn't you think it strange if it were suggested that Andrea Ollson had killed himself by jabbing a poisoned thorn into his wrist ? The wound, we were assured by the doctor in his evidence, was fully half an inch from any important vein."

" I—I don't quite understand ! " stammered Stephen Ferrell.

" I suggest to you," said Ferrers Locke, " that it must be regarded as strange that a man like Mr. Ollson, who had a thorough knowledge of anatomy, should so bungle the job of suicide as to give himself a more lingering death than was necessary. By pressing the thorn into a vein, he would have assured himself a speedier and less painful end."

Stephen Ferrell drew himself up.

" I see your point, Mr. Locke. I suppose it is queer. Doubtless, though, sir, my old friend was out of his mind at the time."

The detective paused until the clerk who was taking down the evidence had finished writing.

" There is one other question I wish to ask," he said. " Are you aware whether Mr. Ollson had any enemies ? "

" That I don't know, sir. I shouldn't have thought so."

Ferrers Locke thanked the coroner for his courtesy, and resumed his seat. It was evident that Locke's point about the late Mr. Ollson's anatomical knowledge had made an impression in the court. And in the absence of any direct evidence bearing on the tragedy, an open verdict was recorded.

As Locke and Drake were leaving the place, Inspector Pycroft came up with them. It was clear that he was not at all pleased with the turn that things had taken.

" You know, Locke," he said, in an annoyed tone, " this business is most unfortunate. A simple case—an old man tired of life—turned into an unsolved mystery ! The newspapers will ask ' Was Andrea Ollson murdered ? ' Scotland Yard will be put in the pillory because no murderer is forthcoming. And what's the good of explaining to 'em that you can't catch a hare if there isn't a hare to be caught ? "

Ferrers Locke smiled, and patted the inspector on the shoulder.

" Come, Pycroft," he said—" come along to Baker Street and have some lunch with us. I can promise you some very excellent jugged hare ! "

THE THIRD CHAPTER

An Unexpected Visit !

It took but a couple of moments for the Yard man to regain his usual good-humour. Very cordially he accepted Locke's invitation.

As Inspector Pycroft said afterwards, the jugged hare, cooked by Sing-Sing, Locke's Chinese servant, was worth acquaintanceship !

After the meal the inspector, with a six-inch cigar stuck at an angle in his mouth, stayed to chat with his host and Drake. It was while they were conversing—talking " shop "—that the front door bell sounded. An interval elapsed, and Sing-Sing entered, bearing a visiting card.

" Stephen Ferrell ! " said Locke. " Show him into the consulting-room."

Leaving the inspector to be entertained by Jack Drake, Ferrers Locke went to his consulting-room. A few moments later Stephen Ferrell was shown in, looking haggard and worried.

" You will pardon my taking a few minutes of your valuable time, Mr. Locke ? I—I came——"

" Be seated, Mr. Ferrell. I can well spare the time this afternoon."

Stephen Ferrell accepted a cigarette, and seemed more at his ease.

" I called, Mr. Locke," he said, " because I was impressed by the questions you put to me this morning. You — you don't

think that Mr. Ollson committed suicide ? "

" Candidly, I don't."

" And I suppose, Mr. Locke, as you knew Mr. Ollson well, you will endeavour to elucidate the mystery of his death ? "

" That is my intention."

Stephen Ferrell breathed deeply.

" I thought that was the situation," he said. " Well, I think that I may be of some slight assistance to you, after all."

The detective nodded his approval.

" Needless to say, Mr. Locke, I am as anxious as you are to have this matter cleared up—if indeed Mr. Ollson was the victim of foul play. There exists one man at least who had a deep grievance against my old friend and benefactor. He was an antiquary, and coveted a very unique medallion unearthed at Nineveh, which Mr. Ollson possessed. But, for some reason, Mr. Ollson, who had a small private collection of antiques himself, steadfastly refused to part with that particular medallion. Once, I remember, after pressing Mr. Ollson to sell, this client completely lost his temper. The strange part of it is that I cannot trace the medallion now among the things in the shop. I had a look after the inquest to-day."

" That is certainly interesting," said Ferrers Locke. " And what is the name of the antiquary who was so persistently thwarted ? "

" Oscar Bream."

The eyes of Ferrers Locke narrowed to two slits.

" Bream ! " he muttered, as though to himself. " Bream ! That was the name of the man you mentioned in the coroner's court—the man who was in the shop shortly before Mr. Ollson was found at death's door."

" The same."

Rising from his chair, Locke looked his visitor full in the face.

" Inspector Pycroft, of the Yard, is here, Mr. Ferrell," he said. " Have you any objection to my repeating that statement to him ? "

" I—I have no objection whatever."

When Inspector Pycroft and Jack Drake, in response to Locke's summons, entered the consulting-room, Stephen Ferrell had regained his composure. He repeated his statement to the Scotland Yard man, and readily answered a number of questions which Pycroft put to him.

" I suppose," said Pycroft finally, " after you had left Mr. Ollson and Oscar Bream together in the shop you heard nothing from your room ? "

The brows of the visitor contracted as though in deep thought.

Suddenly his face lighted.

" By Jove ! " he exclaimed. " I remember. Shortly after reaching my room I heard a faint cry, as though of someone in pain. I was hardly conscious of it at the time ; but now it comes back to me."

Inspector Pycroft looked at Locke significantly.

" This is a matter which must be followed up," he said. " Does Oscar Bream live in town, do you know, Mr. Ferrell ? "

" Yes ; he lives in West Kensington."

Reaching for the telephone directory, Ferrers Locke rapidly turned over the pages. Then, taking the receiver from the telephone, he gave a number. There was a pause, then:

" Is that Kensington three five double-four double-nine ? " he inquired. " Is Mr. Oscar Bream at home ? "

A pause ensued. Then Locke hung up the receiver and turned from the telephone.

" Gentlemen," he said, " Mr. Oscar Bream has left his Kensington address, and the servants know nothing of his whereabouts."

THE FOURTH CHAPTER
Unmasked!

DURING the course of the following days Jack Drake learnt little more about the curio-shop mystery than the papers published, and this was not much. For these two days he was engaged on another case concerning a forged cheque for a client who visited Baker Street.

On the evening after he had finished his work on this minor case he was sitting in his room in Baker Street when Locke entered. The detective had been out all day, and he looked a trifle tired and drawn.

" Well, sir, what luck ? "

Locke smiled at the boy's question, and sank into a chair.

" The man Oscar Bream is found ! " he

announced. "As a matter of fact, although I did not tell you, I discovered yesterday that he was staying at an hotel in Liverpool."

"He is under arrest, sir?"

"Not yet—though he may be at any moment. Inspector Pycroft himself has gone to the North, and Bream is being watched closely. But, by the way, my boy, I have another little job for you."

"Good, sir!"

"To-morrow morning," said Locke, "I want you to put on a suit of rough clothes, and be at a place called Duke's Crescent, Kentish Town, not later than nine o'clock. You will watch the house which is named Elmer. You can't miss it. There's a mews which runs along one side of it, and an outbuilding at the back. Make yourself as inconspicuous as possible, and when this man comes out shadow him until he returns home again."



At Ferrers Locke's bidding Jack Drake snatched off the beard of Canning's companion, and then let out a gasp of surprise.

Ferrers Locke drew a small photograph from his pocket and showed it to Drake.

The picture was of a man of about thirty years of age, with a broad face, high cheek-bones, and a heavy, cloven chin.

"This," said the detective, tapping the picture, "is a man called Frederick Canning! He has private means, and I have reasons for thinking he is going to attend the auction sale to-morrow of the property of the late Mr. Ollson. After he has returned home you must come back here."

Punctually at nine o'clock on the following morning Jack Drake arrived in Duke's Crescent, Kentish Town. The house Elmer was quite the most imposing residence in the crescent.

For fully an hour and a half Drake lounged about the corners of the crescent, and then

Frederick Canning emerged from the house. The boy recognised him at once from the photo he had seen.

That Canning was going to attend the auction sale to be held in the curio-shop was soon evident. He took the Tube to Baker Street Station, and then walked to Loftus Road. Jack Drake kept him in sight the whole time.

Entering the shop, Canning dropped into one of the few chairs which had been provided. Drake remained near the doorway.

Gradually, more and more folk gathered in the shop until the place was crowded. Stephen Ferrell was present, though he kept in the background, a pathetic figure in his suit of deep mourning.

The keen-faced auctioneer began the business of the day, and a number of coins and small curios found a ready sale.

With a tinge of interest Jack Drake saw the auctioneer walk to the large purple-coloured idol and tap it lightly with his hammer.

"Come, gentlemen," he said, "will someone name a bid for this Javanese image?"

Apparently to his surprise, the bidding was started, though at a small sum. Gradually it rose. Soon two men only were competing for the idol—Frederick Canning and a lean person with a blue chin and tortoise-shell spectacles, who spoke with an American accent. But finally Canning secured the ugly image for the sum of nine pounds.

Directly Canning's name had been taken by the auctioneer's assistant he left the curio-shop and returned direct to Kentish Town. In accordance with his instructions, Jack Drake followed him, and saw him enter the house called Elmer. Then the boy returned to Baker Street, where he reported to Ferrers Locke.

"Thanks, Drake, my boy!" said Locke, with a smile. "I thought he might visit other places beside the auction. As a matter of fact, I was well aware that he visited the shop in Loftus Road. You see, I was there myself."

"You were, sir?"

"Yes, I was the guy with the tortoise-shell spectacles and the American accent. Afterwards, from the auctioneer's clerk, I discovered that this man Canning has arranged to have the idol removed at five o'clock this afternoon by the Brennan Haulage Company. Mr. Ted Brennan is a friend of mine, and I have arranged for you to enter his employ."

"I'm to help take the idol away, sir?"

"Smart lad!" murmured Locke. "That's exactly the idea! This afternoon you will disguise yourself as a typical vanboy, and join a motor-lorry which will be waiting for you in Brennan's yard. Here is the address. It is not far from here. By going with the motor-lorry you will find out where the idol is taken. Then I want you to keep your eyes on this fellow Canning again."

. . . . . .

Late that afternoon Jack Drake presented himself at the yard of Messrs. Brennan, haulage contractors. He was wearing his oldest clothes. His face was begrimed with dirt, and a blue scarf was about his neck. They were expecting him, and he took his seat on a lorry, the driver of which was a coarse-looking, gruff-speaking Cockney.

Proceeding to the curio-shop in Loftus Road, Drake found that Frederick Canning was waiting there. With him was a man whose age appeared to be about forty-five or fifty—a slim individual, with a lined face and a fringe of beard.

All assisted in getting the idol out of the shop and on to the lorry.

When the image had been placed in the van and covered with a tarpaulin, Canning and the bearded man climbed into the vehicle.

In half an hour's time they arrived at the place, and the driver took the lorry up the mews by the side of the residence, where the idol was taken into an outbuilding.

After the lorry had been backed out of the mews, Drake slipped off the back of it. He watched for a moment as the vehicle lumbered slowly along Duke's Crescent, and then he stole back to the outbuilding.

The door was shut, but a gleam of light shone through a crack in the boards of which the shed was built. Drake put his eye to the crevice, but could see nothing. He walked round the building. But there was no other

crack in the sides through which he could obtain a clear view of the interior.

Walking quietly back into the mews, he gazed up at the roof. A broad beam of light shone through, and, taking a ladder which was lying near the building, he placed it gently against a wall.

Very gingerly Jack Drake mounted the ladder, and, leaning forward, peered through the broken roof.

An astounding sight met his eyes. A cavity showed in the base of the idol. On the ground beside it lay a drawer. And Canning and his friend, kneeling beside the drawer, were running their hands through a pile of banknotes which it contained.

With staring eyes Drake leaned over the roof a little farther to obtain a clearer view. In doing so, he lost his balance and fell on to the roof. The rotten wooden tiles gave way, and with a cry he crashed through into the shed, close to the two men.

"Look out—a spy!"

Canning sprang to his feet. The bearded man hurled himself downwards at Drake. But the boy, twisting sharply over, avoided him.

Next moment Drake had gained his feet. He felt shaken and bruised, but luckily not otherwise hurt. The man called Canning thrust his hand into his jacket pocket. Jack Drake lashed out with his right and sent the fellow reeling from a sizzling swing to the chin.

Then there was a terrific crash at the door of the shed. Drake glanced round and saw the driver of the lorry burst into the place. In the hands of the newcomer were a couple of grim-looking Colt revolvers. Feeling not unlike a trapped rat, the boy started to make a dash for liberty, when the lorry driver spoke:

"Hands up, you scoundrels!" And the voice was the voice of Ferrers Locke!

The hands of Canning and his bearded friend went above their heads in almost ludicrous haste.

"And now, Drake, my boy," said the detective, "kindly remove the facial growth of our friend, the Beaver!"

Greatly wondering, Drake snatched off the beard of Canning's companion.

"M-my hat! It's Stephen Ferrell!"

"None other," said Locke. "The murderer of my old friend, Andrea Ollson!"

While Canning stood whitefaced and shaken, the other man broke down completely.

"I'll confess, I'll confess!" he whispered. "I—I did it! I was mad—mad!"

"That will be for the jury to decide, Mr. Ferrell," said Locke solemnly. "But for two things you might never have been caught. Firstly, my suspicions were aroused by the fact that the deadly thorn had not penetrated a vein in Mr. Ollson's wrist. In other words, I suspected that it was a case of murder—not suicide, as you attempted to lead the coroner to believe. Secondly, you gave yourself away in your eagerness to throw suspicion on another. When you found I did not believe in the suicide theory, you attempted to cast suspicion on a Mr. Bream. But you went a trifle too far. You told us that you heard a faint cry from the shop when you were in your room."

Stephen Ferrell sank on to his knees. But Ferrers Locke continued remorselessly.

"As a fact, I knew you could have heard no human cry from your room on the second floor," he said. "When we were in the curio-shop before the body was recovered, my assistant, Drake, whistled louder than anyone could have called. Yet you did not hear that. So while Inspector Pycroft of the Yard watched Oscar Bream, I watched you. I overheard a conversation between you and your precious friend, Canning, in a coffee-shop in the Edgware Road. You told him that you knew that Ollson had a considerable amount of wealth, and that he kept it in the purple idol. And you sought his assistance in getting the idol to this place."

"I'll admit it," interposed Canning dully. "But I knew nothing of the murder—that I'll swear."

"I don't think you did," replied Locke. "This arch villain and hypocrite, who killed the man who had befriended him, alone is responsible for that. He will meet his just due at the hands of the law. Drake, run and fetch a policeman!"

The Bells of Greyfriars!

by Dick Penfold.



HEAR the hated rising-bell,
Booming bell!
In the murky winter morning
How we dread the sombre warning
Of its chime!
Falling on our ears like thunder,
Surely Gosling's made a blunder
In the time?
If the porter, sour and surly,
Has awakened us too early
To the day's fierce hurly-burly,
It's a crime!



Hear the horrid lesson-bell,
Beastly bell!
On our spirits it's a damper,
To the Form-room we must scamper
In a throng,
As it tolls its solemn summons
To the gloomy and the glum 'uns,
"Come along!"
We must hurry, we must hustle;
Breakfast bolted, we must bustle
To begin our tedious tussle—
Ding! Dong!



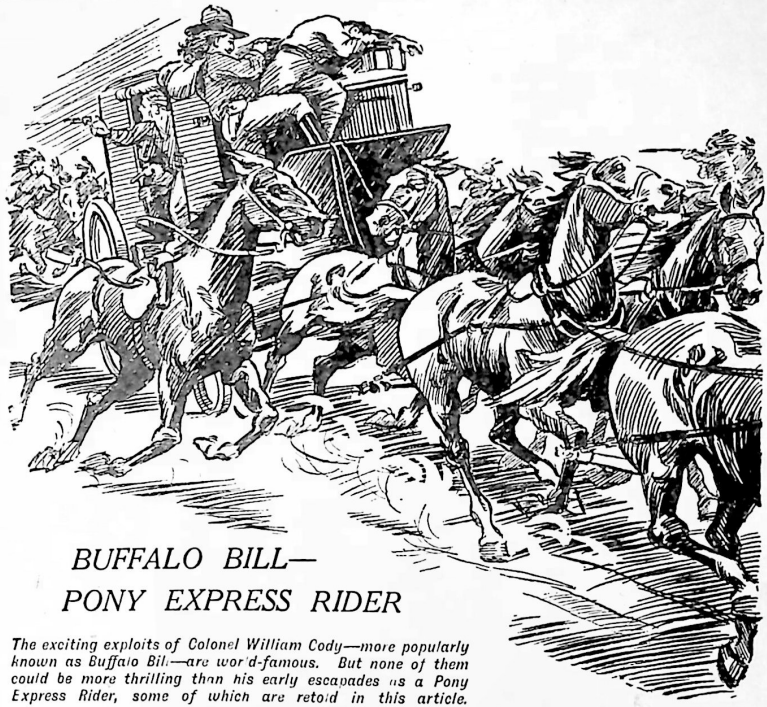


Hear the mellow dinner-bell,
Golden bell!
There is music in its tocsin
As the hungry rabble flocks in
To the hall.
How we love its jolly jingle
As right merrily we mingle,
Large and small.
Billy Bunter's eyes are gleaming,
Of a feast divine he's dreaming,
And his full-moon face is beaming
On us all!





Hear the loud assembly-bell,
Brazen bell!
Bidding us in Hall assemble;
How the culprits quake and tremble,
Moist of brow!
Well they know its message sinister;
The headmaster will administer
Right now
A most painful castigation,
A most fearsome flagellation,
Which will have for termination—
"Ow-ow-ow!"



BUFFALO BILL— PONY EXPRESS RIDER

The exciting exploits of Colonel William Cody—more popularly known as Buffalo Bill—are world-famous. But none of them could be more thrilling than his early escapades as a Pony Express Rider, some of which are retold in this article.

THE Pony Express Service of the Wild West has been aptly described as "the most romantic mail service in the world," and in the summer of 1923 the 63rd anniversary of the first ride by John Fry was celebrated. For one week men rode over the old trails on pony-back at the usual pace of fifteen miles an hour.

Deeds of "Derring-do"

Before Buffalo Bill—Colonel William Cody—won his great fame as a scout, he was a Pony Express Rider, carrying Uncle Sam's mails over a run of seventy-five miles, from Red Buttes to Three Crossings, having to ford the North Platte River where it was half a mile wide, en route. Some of his deeds of "derring-do," while so engaged, read like fiction.

On one occasion he found that the "rider" to Three Crossings, to whom he had to hand over the mails, had been killed by outlaws. So he went over the dead man's section—another 85 miles on top of his own 75—then rode back to Red Buttes without a rest,

covering a distance in all of 320 miles.

The Express Company presented him with a purse of gold for the feat, and made him their "boss" rider.

Another time, learning that some road agents were "laying" for his mail, which contained a big sum of money, Buffalo Bill concealed the real mail under his saddle and carried a bogus one openly. In a lonely spot, just as he anticipated, two masked men barred his way with pointed revolvers. He feigned compliance with their order to hand over his pouches, then suddenly flung the bogus bag in the face of one man, rode full tilt at the other, bowling him over, and at the same time, fired at the bandit who had "received" the pouches. His bullet flew straight to its mark, breaking the arm of the robber. Galloping on, Buffalo Bill duly delivered the real mail at the end of his section.

A Dash for Life!

On a third occasion he rode up to a midway "station"—where riders changed their horses—just after a party of Indians had captured it and murdered the two station-masters. He had to ride for his life, hotly pursued by the Redskins.

When he reached the North Platte River, which he had to cross, the Indians were hot on his heels. But his tired pony was still game, and he plunged it down the steep bank of the river into the water, with Redskin arrows flying after him. To ease his horse, Buffalo Bill slipped from the saddle and swam beside it, and reached the opposite bank in safety. But as he remounted, a glance behind told him that the Indians were still in pursuit, and the hectic chase continued, with his pony now almost exhausted.

A chief, being well mounted, began to overtake him. Buffalo Bill wheeled about and fired, shooting the chief dead. The slain Indian's horse galloped on, and, as it was fresh and his own mount so jaded, Buffalo Bill seized its bridle and hurriedly transferred his mailbags to its back. Another Indian came tearing up, but young Cody shot him dead ere he could come to close quarters. Mounting the chief's horse, and abandoning his own pony, the daring young Express Rider eventually outdistanced his other pursuers.

Buffalo Bill—"Post-girl!"

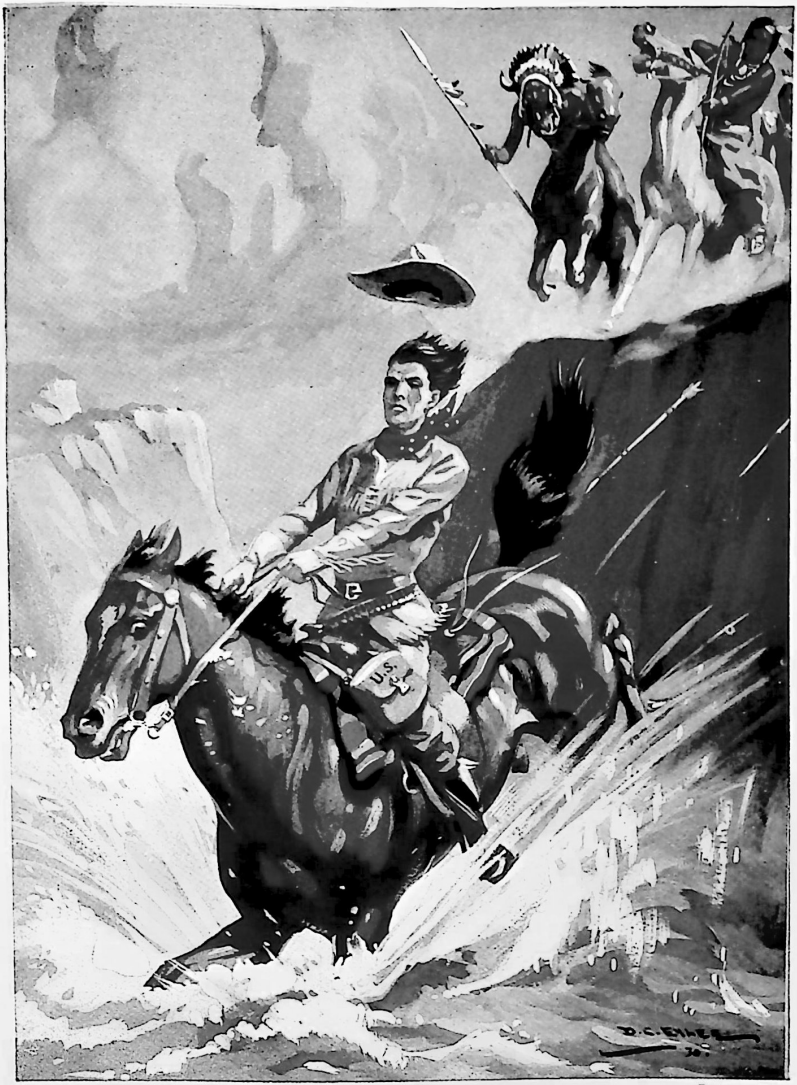
In another adventure he came upon a stage coach, its six horses, in pairs, racing along as fast as they would go, with mounted Indians pursuing and shooting at the inside passengers. Buffalo Bill saw that the driver lay dead on the box-seat, so, heading for the flying coach, thereby laying himself open to the Redskins' shots, he galloped alongside the coach-box, and, with the horses still going at top speed, clambered from the saddle on to it, with his mailbags slung round his neck. Grasping the reins, he drove the six horses with such skill that the Indians had to relinquish the chase. His own pony kept ahead, and was waiting for him at the next station.

For this dashing achievement Cody was made a driver of the Overland Mail-coach. But prior to that event, and while still a Pony Express Rider, he is said to have captured, single-handed, a notorious road agent known as "The Cavalier" on account of his Claude Duval-like courtesy to women. This man continually held up the Express Riders, and was dreaded along the whole route.

Buffalo Bill dressed up as a post-*girl*, and so met with the outlaw. They entered into conversation, and Buffalo Bill bamboozled the fellow into agreeing to elope on a future occasion when the mail contained the money for the company's paymaster. The disguised Cody then asked "The Cavalier" to dismount and tighten "her" saddle-girths. The outlaw alighted, and immediately the supposed girl covered him with a revolver, forced him to toss aside his weapons and then walk ahead to the next station.

The Pony Express Riders covered a distance of 2,000 miles in all, the trail crossing Nebraska, Wyoming, Idaho, Nevada, and California. St. Joseph, in Missouri, was the start of the trans-continental railway, and Sacramento, in the heart of the goldfields, where it finished.

"Day or night," Buffalo Bill himself wrote, "in sunshine or in storm, the brave rider must speed on. Nearly 2,000 miles in eight days must be made!"



H.A.

SAVING UNCLE SAM'S MAIL!

Facing page 176



The St. Sam's Propheteer!

By DICKY NUGENT.

The "HOLIDAY ANNUAL" wouldn't be complete without one of Dicky Nugent's literary efforts; and although in this, his latest masterpiece, the orthography is unique, the story lacks nothing in fun and amusement.

THE FIRST CHAPTER

The Head's Swindle!

"THE Head's jolly late this morning!" Burleigh, of the Sixth at St. Sam's, screwed up his face as he spoke, and rivetted his eyes on the Form-room clock.

"I suppose the old buffer's overslept," yawned Tallboy. "When you reach the ripe old age of ninety, you can't be eggspected to leap out of bed with the lark—or even with the sparro."

"And yet," said Bounder, "the Head's the sole of punctuality, as a rule. It's queer!"

The lofty and diggnified members of the Sixth began to fidgett in their places. They lissened in vane for the fammiliar footmark of Dr. Birchemall, and the swish of his gown.

Prezzently, to wile away the time, they started to pelt each other with paper pellets. And instead of pouring over their books, they proseeded to pour ink down the nex of the fellows in front of them.

When they had grown weary of these jolly divershuns, the seniors started to play leap-frogg over the desks.

The din in the Sixth Form-room was terrifick. It smote the ears of Mr. Justiss, who was taking the Fifth in the next room. But Mr. Justiss didn't interfeer. Sounds of riot and revelry from the Sixth were quite usual; for the Head himself often joined in a game of leap-frog, as a welcome releef from Horris and Homer.

The time flew by, and still there was no sign of Dr. Birchemall.

"Better go and root him out," said Burleigh to Tallboy. "He mite be ill, or something."

"No such luck!" grunted Tallboy as he walked away from the hurly-burly with the burly Burleigh.

The two seniors went straight to the Head's study. Burleigh politely bashed the door with his boot, and marched in, with Tallboy at his heals.

"Good-mourning, Burleigh!"

It was not the Head's base voice that greeted the kaptin of St. Sam's, but the sweet dulset treble of Molly Birchemall, the Head's bewtiful and charming daughter. Molly was seated in her father's chair, idly pulling his blotting-pad to peaces.

"Good-mourning, Miss Molly!" said Burleigh, bowing like a night-errand of old. "Where is your esteemed pop? He hasn't

shown up in the Sixth Form-room yet."

Molly smiled—one of her bewitching smiles—from ear to ear.

"Father has forgotten all about lessons to-day," she said. "You'll find him at the tuckshop, busy with some new stunt of his."

"My hat!"

"The tuckshop dame having taken a holler-day," Molly went on, "my father thought it would be a pity to put up the shutters—espeshally at this time of the year, when jam-tarts sell like hot cakes. So he desided to take over the tuckshop himself, and pocket the prophets."

"On the make, as usual!" growled Tall-boy. Then he flushed scarlett. "I—I'm sorry, Miss Molly. I was forgetting you were the Head's daughter——"

"I wish I could forget it!" sighed Molly. "My father is a regular old scamp—though I have done my best to bring him up in the way he should go. But these modern parents are hopelessly out of hand!"

"Quite!" agreed Burleigh. "You have my simperthy, Miss Molly. Come along, Tallboy! Let's go and interview the new tuckshop proprietor."

As they strolled across the sunny quad., the two seniors caught sight of Dr. Birchemall. He was perched on a pear of steps, putting the finishing tuches to a painted inscription above the door of the tuckshop.

The slap-dashing Head had not troubled to remove his gown, and that garment was simply smothered with red paint.

Burleigh and Tallboy chuckled as they gazed at the newly-painted inscription:

"UNDER NEW MANNIDGEMENT!"

The Head stepped back to survey his handy-work; and, forgetting where he stood, he stepped back into space.

"Yarooop!"

But for the presence of Burleigh and Tall-boy, Dr. Birchemall would certainly have broken his neck. Instead of which, he broke his fall—thanks to the seniors. They rushed forward and caught him in the nick of time.

"That was a near thing, sir!" panted Burleigh. "I was hoping—I mean, I feared you would come an awful cropper!"

"Thank you, my boys!" gasped Dr. Birchemall. "But for your presents of mind, I should now be lying unconshus on the flag-stones. By the way, what do you think of me as a sign-painter?"

Burleigh and Tallboy did not dare to say what they trooly thought. Their opinion of the Head's slap-dashing would have given that jentleman an appleplectic fit.

"So you've taken over the tuckshop, sir?" said Burleigh.

The Head nodded.

"I'm going to show the world how a tuck-shop should be run," he said. "No fancy prices—no propheteering—no stale stock unfit for yewman consumption! Smart, up-to-date serviss, and sivility and curtsey behind the counter. I've cleared out all the old stock, and got in an entirely new lot. Step inside and have a jinger-pop with me, as a reward for saving my life. It will only cost you a tanner."

"A—a tanner?" faltered Burleigh. "Isn't that sticking it on, sir? Dame Buxom used only to charge threepence a bottle——"

"Yes—for weak, watery stuff which had neither jinger nor pop in it!" snapped the Head. "My methods, Burleigh, are going to be vastly different from Dame Buxom's. Come inside and taste the real goods—foaming, delishus jinger-pop which will gurgle down your nex like nectar!"

So saying, Dr. Birchemall ushered the two seniors into the shop, and proseeded to pour out a very pail-looking liquid into a couple of cracked tumblers. It was very peculiar-looking jinger-pop.

"P'r'aps you would like to suck it through a straw?" suggested the Head. "Straws are only tuppence each!"

"My hat!" muttered Burleigh, under his breath. "Is this what he calls 'No pro-pheteering'?"

The seniors declined the straws and quaffed their jinger-pop, making rye faces as they did so. For the taste was nothing like the taste of jinger-pop. They had a shrood suspishun that the Head had filled his mineral-water

bottles from the school fountain, the water of which was far from fresh.

"Ug-gug-gug! Groooogh!" spluttered Burleigh.

"What garstly muck!" gurgled Tallboy.

Dr. Birchemall surveyed his first customers with a beaming smile.

"Sippit—drink it—drain it!" he eggs-claimed. "Bewtiful stuff—bright to the last drop!"

"Ow!"

"Oooooch!"

The faces of Burleigh and Tallboy were suddenly overspred by a sickly green paller. Dumping their glasses on the counter, they staggered out of the shop.



With a sickly pallor in their faces, Burleigh and Tallboy tottered from the tuckshop, leaning on each other for support.

"Hi! Woe, there!" shouted Dr. Birchemall eggsitedly. "Come back, you sneek-theefs! You haven't paid for your jinger-pop! I want a tanner from each of you, plus an extra penny for the use of the glass, plus a ferther penny for washing it up. That will be one-and-fourpence altogether!"

It struck Burleigh and Tallboy as very ironicle that they should have to pay one-and-fourpence for the priviledge of being poysoned. But they paid up without protest and tottered away, leaning on each other for support.

Dr. Birchemall chuckled as he swept the coins into the till.

"A very promising start!" he chortled. "If I go on at this rate, the tuckshop will prove a little gold-mine. Hark! I here the sound of scurrying feet. The mourning brake is bringing the boys to the tuckshop."

The next minnit a hussling, jossling crowd of juniors swarmed into the shop; and another big crowd halted outside to read the annousement pasted in the window:

"ROLL UP! ROLL UP! ROLL UP
THIS IS THE CAFFY FOR COFFY!
THIS IS THE SHOP FOR 'POP'!
CAKES AND PASTRYS AT CUT-THROAT PRICES!
I SCREAM CORNETS!
I SCREAM WAFERS!

"Every purchaser of tuck to the valew of sixpence will be aloud to partissipate in THE LUCKY DIP. If lucky, he will draw a Free Voucher, entitling him to a ferther sixpenny-worth of tuck ABSOLUTELY FREE! The chance of a lifetime! No propheteering! No fancy prices, but prices you fancy! This shop is run on strictly fillanthropic lines!

"ROLL UP! ROLL UP! ROLL UP!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER
Trouble in the Tuckshop!

CUSTOMERS rolled up to such purrpuss that Dr. Birchemall was nearly swept off his feet by the yewman tidal-wave.

The tuckshop was packed to suffercation, and there was such a clammer of tungs that

the sellybrated Tower of Babel was a mere wispering gallery by comparison.

"Sixpenn'orth of jam-tarts, please!"

"Sixpenn'orth of buns this way!"

"Six penny ices, please, sir!"

Dr. Birchemall frowned.

"Penny ices!" he roared, above the din. "Who's asking for penny ices?"

"Me, sir!" said Jack Jolly eagerly.

"Then you'll be unlucky, Jolly. My ices are sixpence each. They are real cream-ices, cooked in my own refrigerater, and garanteed to melt in the mouth. None of your beestly custerd powders, like Dame Buxom used to serve. My ices are worth a bob of anybody's munny. But I am not a propheteer—not me. I am running this tuckshop for everybody's bennyfit but my own. Is that clear, Jolly?"

"Clear as mud, sir," said Jack Jolly. "I'll have a sixpenny cornet, please."

Dr. Birchemall dived into the i-scream tub and ladelled out a very messy concoction, which he smacked into a cornet and handed to Jack Jolly; but not before that youth had tendered his sixpence, which the Head nawed with his teeth, and then wrung on the counter, to make sure it was a good one.

Meanwhile, Tubby Barrell of the Fourth had scrambled round to the Head's side of the counter, and he wispered eagerly in Dr. Birchemall's ear.

"Yes, Barrell, I should be glad of an assistant," said the Head. "I can't cope with all these orders single-handed. You serve the buns and tarts, while I dispense the i-scream. And keep your eye on the Lucky Dip, to see that there's no cheating. The Dip contains a number of Free Vouchers and a number of blanks. The Vouchers are stamped '6d.,' and they entitle the holders to sixpennyworth of tuck—free, grattis, and for nicks. The blanks, of corse, are worthless."

Tubby Barrell nodded. His fat face was beaming like a fool moon as he bussled around, serving tarts and buns to the clammerus customers.

A shower of coins—mostly sixpences—clattered musickally into the till; and Dr. Birchemall and his plump assistant were doing a roaring trade.

Most of the customers made a rush for the Lucky Dip, in the hope of securing a ferther sixpennyworth of tuck absolutely free.

Eager hands were plunged into the barrel of straw, and many of them came up clutching cards. But a lass and a lack! The cards were all blanks. Nobody was lucky enuff to secure any of the Free Vouchers with "6d." stamped on them.

Jack Jolly looked disgusted.

"It's a swindle!" he growled. "Strikes me the Head has filled this blessed barrel with blanks, and forgotten to put in the Free Vouchers!"



Tubby Barrell's hand came from the Lucky Dip clasping a card. "I've drawn a Free Voucher!" "Hooray!" he shouted.

Dr. Birchemall overheard this remark.

"There is no swindle, Jolly!" he thundered. "There are duzzens and duzzens of Free Vouchers in that barrel. They only want bringing to the surfiss. Seek, and ye shall find. Keep on buying sixpenn'orths of tuck, and every purchase will entitle you to a dip!"

"That's all very well," grumbled Jack Jolly, "but I'm not a blessed millionaire!"



Pandemonium broke loose in the tuckshop. The angry fellows overturned chairs and tables and smashed everything they could lay hands on.

When bizziness had slacked off a little, Tubby Barrell turned to the Head.

"I should like to have a go at the Lucky Dip myself, sir," he said.

"So you shall!" said Dr. Birchemall affably. "Lissen to me, Barrell." And he lowered his voice so that only Tubby could here. "I want you to take this Free Voucher" —the Head slipped a card into Tubby's hand —"and pretend you've drawn it out of the Lucky Dip. See? Then you can have sixpennyworth of tuck for nicks. Make a big song about it, and that will induce all the others to try their luck. Do you compray?"

"I compray, sir!" grinned Tubby Barrell.

And he elbowed his way through a crowd of customers, and plunged his podgy hand into the Lucky Dip.

"Only a blank, I suppose!" growled Tubby as his hand came up clasping a card. "No, it isn't, though. It's a Free Voucher! Hooray! Sixpenn'orth of jam-tarts, please, sir!"

"Sertainly, Barrell!" said Dr. Birchemall, grinning all over his dile.

And he made a big parade of serving the fat junior with jam-tarts. Tubby Barrell made an even bigger parade of eating them.

"Free tarts!" he chortled, munching away contentedly. "I'm in clover!"

The luck of Tubby Barrell caused a fresh spurt of bizziness—which was just as the Head had intended. He was simply bombarded with orders, and he bussled about with serprizing agility for a man of his years.

The customers made a fresh onslaught upon the Lucky Dip, in the hope that Dame Fortune would smile on them. But the only person who smiled on them was Dr. Birchemall—a sly, sardonnick smile of sattisfaction.

Tubby Barrell smiled, too. He had finished his tarts, and he felt in the mood for more. So he desided to use his Free Voucher again, and pretend he had drawn it from the Lucky Dip. The ruse mite suxxeed, or it mite not. Anyway, it was worth trying.

The Head's smile vannished suddenly as

he caught sight of Tubby making his way to the barrel. He glared and glowered at the fat junior, and made frantick signals to him; but Tubby pretended not to see. He dived his hand into the barrel, and withdrew it with a woop of delight.

"Hooray! My luck's in, you fellows, and no mistake! I've drawn another Free Voucher!"

"Well, I'm jiggered!" eggsclaimed Jack Jolly, who had tried his luck several times without suxxess. "Some fellows get all the plums!"

Tubby Barrell grinned, and turned to the Head.

"Another sixpenn'orth of tarts, please, sir!" he said cheerfully.

With a very ill-grace, Dr. Birchemall served the tarts. He bent over the counter, and hist in Tubby Barrell's ear:

"That's quite enuff, Barrell! Don't play that trick with the Free Voucher any more. I only ment you to do it once, as an advertissment."

"All serene, sir!" said Tubby.

But when he had gobbled the second lot of tarts, and fairly wetted his appetite, he could not resist having yet another go at the Lucky Dip. Tubby was not greedy, but he liked a lot!

When, for the third time in suxxession, the fat junior drew a Free Voucher from the barrel, there was a loud mermer of amazement, cuppled with a low growl of suspishun.

"That's three times running!" cried Frank Fearless. "It can't be a coincidence. It must be a put-up job!"

"Shame!"

Heedless of the howls of the mob, Tubby Barrell pushed his way to the counter. He blinked jenially at the Head.

"I'll have sixpenn'orth of doe-nutts this time, for a change!" he said.

Dr. Birchemall's face was a study. He looked perfectly feendish.

"You—you——!" spluttered the Head. "Of all the cheek! Of all the ordassity! How dare you try to practiss such a low-down swindle on your headmaster, Barrell?"

Tubby Barrell coward before the Head's feerce glare.

"Oh, really, sir! I'm not trying to swindle you. I drew this Free Voucher out of the Lucky Dip——"

"No, you never!" roared the Head, who was too eggsited to realise what he was saying. "You lying young sneck-theef! You never drew a single Voucher out of that barrel, for the very good reason that there was not a single Free Voucher in it!"

As the Head made this unintenshunal confession, a roar of rage went up from the crowd in the tuckshop. Too late, Dr. Birchemall realised that in opening his mouth too wide he had put his foot in it!

"We've been swindled!" howled Jack Jolly. "We've blued all our tanners for nothing! The Lucky Dip was all a spoof!"

"Shame!"

"Let's reck the shop!" cried Frank Fearless, wrecklessly.

The angry crowd needed no second bidding. Pandymonium broke loose in the tuckshop. Stools were overturned; dishes and glasses were swept from the counter; and the sound of the shivering glass made the Head shiver, too.

Dr. Birchemall realised that this was no place for him. He had better "get," he reflected, wile the going was good. But before beating a retreat from that seen of commotion and confusion, the Head rushed to the till, and transferred all the munny to his pockets. He was taking his leave, but he wasn't going to leave his takings!

There was a back way out, through Dame Buxom's little parler. And Dr. Birchemall, his pockets loaded with plunder, vannished as suddenly as a spirrit; leaving the tuckshop to the tender mersies of the mob.

"Rather a pity," panted the Head as he scuttled across the quad, "that my little venture has come to such an untimely end. As for the dammidge those young hooligans are doing, Dame Buxom will have to make that good. I'll tell the good dame there has been an earthquake in her absence."

A few minnits later Dr. Birchemall was bizzily engaged in counting out the spoils in his study. And he discovered that he really hadn't done badly, for a jentleman who never propheteered!

THE END

BUNTER COMES to TEA!



DICK PENFOLD.

WHEN my Aunt Kate, of Kensal Rise,
Who something of a saint is,
Sent me a hamper packed with pies,
And other tempting dainties,
Some cheerful chump proposed to me
That Billy Bunter came to tea!

I'm not in love with Bunter, mind,
With all his vice and vanities;
But feeling generously inclined,
I said: "A ripping plan it is!"
And sent a note at half-past three:
"Dear Bunter—will you come to tea?"

Upon a cloth of virgin white
We set that feed majestic;
With everything correct and right
(Tom Brown's a skilled domestic!)
Happy our humour, great our glee,
When Billy Bunter came to tea.

"I say, you fellows," Bunter cried,
"I'm off my feed—don't giggle!
There's something very wrong inside,
It makes me writhe and wriggle!
I'll merely peck a trifle, see?"
Could this be *Bunter* come to tea?

I carved the chicken with a will,
And served it with a flourish.
"Come, Bunty! this won't make you ill;
'Twill fortify and nourish.
So try and peck enough for three,
Like a true Bunter come to tea."

Then Bunter's fat and famous jaws
Commenced, in manner vicious;
He ate and ate, without a pause,
Except to say, "Delicious!"
Ye Gods! It was a sight to see,
When Billy Bunter came to tea!

Trifles of this and tastes of that,
Samples of all and sundry;
In spellbound silence there we sat;
My brow grew dark and thund'ry.
Soon there was nothing left for me,
When Billy Bunter came to tea.

He swept the board and left us dumb!
Such was his greed and gumption,
That not a solitary crumb
Remained for our consumption.
He gorged enough for *three times three*,
When Billy Bunter came to tea!

With hollow groan and haunting moan,
He sank beneath the table;
We hailed the doctor on the 'phone—
"Come quickly as you're able!"
Never again, is my decree,
Shall Billy Bunter come to tea!

"England Expects—"



The thrills and adventure of the days when the Jolly Roger menaced the seas, and the glamour and romance of Lord Nelson's epic victory at Trafalgar, combine to make this old-time yarn one that you'll want to read again and again.

THE FIRST CHAPTER

The Jolly Roger!

"SAIL, ho!" came the hail from the look-out at the masthead.

"Where away?" shouted the first officer, Reeves, from the deck. "What's she like?"

"On the port bow, sir. Looks like a brig."

The answer caused considerable excitement on board the good ship Mediator, for a strange sail in those days caused many misgivings. Privateers were harassing the merchant shipping in all seas, and a merchantman would often escape from a danger to run into a worse one in the form of a pirate.

It was a glorious morning in early October of the year 1805, and the Mediator was licking along at a good ten knots, with a fair breeze, hoping to make the shores of Old England in less than a week.

The Mediator was a full-rigged ship of some one thousand tons burden, bound from Port Royal, in Jamaica, for the Port of London. She carried, as well as a valuable cargo, a complement of thirty-five passengers, amongst whom were Charlie and Victor Dane, the sons of a wealthy planter in the West Indies.

The two boys were coming home to England alone to stay with their uncle for a short time, and then to enter his Britannic Majesty's Navy as midshipmen.

Once more the look-out hailed the deck.

"She's changed her course, sir, and is pointing straight for us. She's a brig, right enough, sir; but I can't make out her flag."

"Ay, ay!" hailed back the officer of the watch. Then, addressing a seaman who stood near, he said: "Hoist the ensign!"

In a few seconds the Red Ensign of Britain was fluttering at the peak, while the excitement on the ship was becoming more intense; small arms were being distributed to all the able-bodied men, both passengers and crew, and the six small carronades which formed the Mediator's armament were got in readiness;

in fact, everything showed that the plucky old skipper was going to, if necessary, make a fight for it.

Terrible tales were being freely circulated of bloodthirsty pirates, particularly of one, Captain Peter Dark, and his brig the Scourge, who frequented these waters.

"Suppose we run up against the Scourge!" said Charlie Dane to his brother, as they stood in the fo'c's'le. "That would be something of an adventure, wouldn't it?"

"Yes," broke in a sailor who was standing by; "it 'ud be an adventure as none of us 'ere 'ud ever live to talk of. Pete Dark believes in the sayin' that dead men tell no tales. If that there brig's the Scourge, we won't see to-morrer's daylight, young masters. You think o' that."

The two youngsters did think, and came to the conclusion that perhaps it wouldn't be such an adventure after all.

In the meanwhile the ships had approached quite close to one another, and from the deck the view of the stranger, with her long, low, black hull and her tall, raking masts, inspired a certain amount of fear, for, whatever she might turn out to be, she certainly looked dangerous.

"She's sending up her flag!" came a cry; and, breathlessly, the company of the Mediator waited to see what the small, black object which was being hoisted up the halyards would be.

The flag reached the peak and broke out, and as it did so a groan went up from the ship's deck, for the worst had happened. The flag the brig sailed under was the so-called Jolly Roger—the white skull and crossbones on a black ground—the flag of the pirate.

The brig was determined to waste no time, for hardly had her infamous flag fluttered free in the breeze than a couple of shots from her big bowchaser hit the water a short distance ahead of the Mediator's stem.

"To your stations!" shouted Captain Trehearne in a firm voice.

In an instant each man had gone to his appointed place, with a look of grim determination on his face, though each knew well that it was an almost hopeless task that they were up against.

The two ships had now approached within hailing distance, and a man on the pirate was seen to spring into the main rigging, speaking-trumpet in hand.

"I'm Captain Dark of the Scourge," came a voice across the intervening water. "Will you hand over your cargo and keep your lives, or will you fight and lose both?"

In a voice of thunder Captain Trehearne, the gallant old sea-dog answered the pirate's impertinent question.

"You and your murdering crew," he yelled through his speaking-trumpet, "can go to blazes!"

The pirate captain made no reply, but hardly had he left the rigging than the fight started with a broadside from the Scourge which raked the Mediator's deck, killing two men outright and wounding a third.

"Remember, men," cried the captain, "there'll be no mercy if we're taken. We must fight to the end!"

A cheer greeted this speech, as each man settled down to his appointed task.

The work allotted to Charlie and Victor was that of bringing ammunition from the small magazine to the gunners at the carronades, and hard they had to work.

The fight had now waxed furious, as the pirate poured in broadside after broadside on the unfortunate merchantman, who was only able to reply with her six small guns, all of which were concentrated on one side.

It soon became evident that the Mediator had no chance, for men were dying all around, and she was literally riddled with shot. Still the gallant remainder fought on calmly and steadily.

The air was rent with the crash of the guns and the oaths of the pirates and shrieks of the dying on both ships. There was no time to attend to the wounded, as one by one the men fell at their posts, for every available man was wanted to work the guns.

The mainmast had gone, and the deck was encumbered with ropes and gear of all kinds, yet the Britishers fought, stern and collected as ever.

The Scourge had drawn off for a time, and the weary Englishmen were glad of the respite to clear the wreckage away.

"I'm afraid it's all up, captain," said Reeves. "They're coming up on the other side."

It was so, for the pirate was now bearing down again on the starboard side—the side on which there were no cannon to meet her.

Frantically the remnant of a crew strove to drag the tiny guns to the other side across the debris-strewn deck. But they were too late. The pirate had the merchantman at her mercy.

Crash! went a broadside as the brig drew near.

"They're going to board, captain!" shouted a gunner; for through the smoke the Scourge's rigging could be seen crowded with men preparing to board their helpless antagonist.

Captain Trehearne had long anticipated this. He saw the case was hopeless, so, advancing to his men, who were still striving to get the carronades across, he shouted:

"We've done our best, men, but it's no good. We shall get no mercy from that scoundrel. But he shan't have our ship. I'll sink her first!"

"Ay, ay, captain!" answered the seamen. "Blow the old ship up, and trust to blowing that villain up with her!"

The two boys stood by, half dazed with the awful scene of slaughter and battle which they had seen; and as the skipper went below to fire the magazine, Charlie took Victor's hand.

"Good-bye, old chap!" he said.

"Good-bye, Charlie!" Victor answered.

And the brothers waited calmly with the rest for their death, preferring to die bravely on board their own vessel rather than to fall into the hands of the scoundrel, the captain of the pirate.

There was a scraping noise as the two vessels came together, a hideous yell from the ruffians of the Scourge as they leapt on the Mediator's deck, a short, sharp scuffle, then a dull boom, mingled with inhuman shrieks, and the boys were hurled senseless to the deck as a great mass of flame broke out in the middle of the ship, and the gallant old Mediator slowly filled and sank.

THE SECOND CHAPTER
On Board the Scourge.

"Is that you, Charlie?"

Victor opened his eyes and gazed across a small, unfamiliar, dirty cabin at his brother, who lay in the opposite berth.

Victor roused at his brother's voice.

"Yes," he said. "But where are we, Vic? I don't seem to remember anything."

"I don't know," replied Victor. "Let me see. Why, of course, don't you remember the fight with the pirate, and the blowing-up of the Mediator? Why, this must be the Scourge! We've been picked up, and are now imprisoned on board the brig."

"Yes, that must be it. The last I remember was a blinding flash, and being hurled to the deck."

At that moment footsteps were heard coming down the companion-ladder, and in a few seconds a tall man, with a swarthy complexion, entered the cabin and gazed at the boys.

"So you brats are awake? The cap'n wants to see you."

"Who's the captain?" asked Victor as he slid out of his bunk.

"Why, Pete Dark, of course. He'll soon let yer know who he is, my young beauties!" replied the man, with a malicious grin.

Fearing the worst, the two boys got up and followed the sailor along a passage, and presently entered a cabin, where a short, evil-visaged man, with black hair and deep-set eyes, sat perusing a chart.

"The two prisoners, cap'n," said the sailor, then left the cabin.

Dark looked up from his chart and surveyed the boys for a moment.

"What's your nationality?" he said at length.

"We're British!" replied Charlie proudly.

The reply and its spirited intonation seemed to infuriate the pirate captain.

"Those cursed British!" he roared. "I hate them! The fools always defy me! But you'll learn what I do with the dogs when I get my hands on them! You're the only survivors of your ship, and you won't survive much longer!"

Then he called aloud:



A terrific explosion, mingled with inhuman shrieks, came from the centre of the ship, and Charlie and Vic were flung to the deck.

"Hernandez!"

The swarthy sailor whom the lads had first seen came in answer to the call.

"Hernandez," said the pirate, "take these British brats and put them in irons."

Seizing the unfortunate brothers, the man dragged them down below, fixed heavy irons to their hands and legs, and left them in the darkness of the hold.

"We're done for this time, old chap," said Charlie, in a hopeless voice.

"I'm afraid so," Victor replied. "Though we mustn't give up hope yet. Something may happen before to-morrow."

The brothers then lapsed into silence, a prey to every kind of despair as the hours passed by, the monotony of the darkness only broken by the sound of the water splashing against the hull and the scuttle of rats as they ran about the hold.

Both boys were feeling weak and exhausted from hunger and thirst, and after a while they dropped off to sleep.

Many hours later, however, they were rudely awakened by a brutal kick, and found Hernandez's swarthy face leering at them.

"Come on, rouse up!" he growled, and proceeded to knock off the irons.

The boys got up and followed him, each feeling sure that the moment had arrived when he was to meet his death.

So weak and exhausted were they that it was with the utmost difficulty they stumbled up the ladder, out into the light; and then, staggering rather than walking, they were led into the pirate captain's cabin.

Dark, surrounded by half a dozen pirates, was in the midst of a drunken feast when Charlie and his brother entered, and a burst of coarse laughter greeted their appearance.

Pete Dark rose unsteadily to his feet.

"Well, comrades," he said, addressing his ruffianly companions, "we've had a good day, and we'll finish it with a good night's amusement. These two brats shall walk for us at sundown."

Charlie cast a despairing glance at the outside world. The sun was already sinking low, and he was wondering how much longer he had to live. Dark read his thoughts, and replied brutally:

"Yes, my young cub, about another half hour and you'll be howling for mercy at the end of the plank."

The boy drew himself up.

"We don't ask mercy from cowards and murderers!" he replied scornfully.

"We shall see, you brats!" shouted the pirate, in an angry voice. "Here, Hernandez, we won't wait for sundown; run the planks out now, and we'll watch these two walk without asking for mercy!"

A shriek of drunken laughter greeted this speech of Dark's, and, without further ado, the boys were taken out and bound with their hands behind their backs. Then from the side of the ship two planks were run out, projecting some twelve feet overboard.

The brothers stood, guarded by a couple of men, watching the arrangements without the slightest sign of fear on their young faces. The feeling of fatigue and exhaustion was gone, and only a determination to die with a stiff upper lip remained.

The order was given, and bravely each lad walked to the end of the planks placed side by side.

The deck of the Scourge was crowded with men, all anxious to see and enjoy the foul murder that was to be perpetrated.

A howl of joy went up from this collection of brutes as Dark ordered the planks to be raised.

"Now!" he shouted. The boys gave one glance at one another, and then were precipitated with a splash into the water beneath, a confused medley of oaths and coarse laughter ringing in their ears as the water closed over them.

Luckily, Charlie and Vic were both excellent swimmers. In a few moments they rose to the surface, and as they did so a dull boom greeted their ears.

Boom! Again the report rang out, and the boys, throwing themselves on their backs, gazed eagerly in the direction from which the sound came, and saw that, unnoticed by the pirates in the confusion and excitement of the last half-hour, a large gun-brig had approached, flying the French tricolour at her peak.

With feverish haste the crew of the Scourge sprang into the rigging to set all sail, for the pirate did not relish the chance of a fight with anything likely to be properly armed.

Shots were now falling fast around the floating boys, who forgot their peril in the excitement of watching the fight. They were lightly clad, and found little difficulty in keeping afloat.

The pirate was now well under way, and moving rapidly through the water. There could be no doubt as to the result if it came to a chase, for the Scourge could sail two feet to the other's one.

At last a well-aimed shot from the Frenchman struck the foretopmast of the pirate, and a great mass of white canvas and a tangle of ropes came overboard with a crash.

Rapidly the crew cut the wreckage loose, and as the Scourge tore along, it was soon left far behind.

"Victor," cried Charlie, "there's a chance."

"What?" queried the other.

"The wreckage, if we can swim to it, will keep us afloat for a long time; we may be picked up yet."

Without another word, both struck out with their legs, and swam on their backs for the floating topmast.

It was a long swim, and the boys were severely handicapped by their bound arms and their terrible fatigue. But the hope of rescue bore them up, and they toiled on bravely, lessening the distance foot by foot, till at last the distant wreckage was reached. Throwing themselves across the floating spars, they managed to get astride and look about them.

Then each turned his attention to the now far distant ships. It was a wonderfully pretty sight, those two brigs, their white canvas showing up with startling distinctness against the sunset sky as little by little the Frenchman decreased the distance between herself and the pirate. The sound of incessant firing was borne across the waters to the helpless

lads who had found temporary safety on the wreckage.

It was almost dark now, and the reports from the guns were growing very far away, and the ships were almost invisible. Despair was creeping again into the boys' hearts.

"I'm afraid there's not much chance," said Charlie hopelessly. "Goodness knows when another ship will pass, and even if we sight one we can't wave a signal here in any way."

"Cheer up," said Victor; "we must hope for the best." Then, after a pause, "I think I can—yes, good!" He raised one arm above his head. "I've got the rope off," he continued, more confidently. It was so, for the rope which bound his hands, becoming soaked with water, had stretched slightly, and Victor slipped his arms free.

"Now to get you undone," he said as he worked his way along the spar, and started to untie his brother's arms. In a few moments Charlie, too, was free, and, making use of their bonds, they lashed themselves securely to the spar.

The sound of firing had completely ceased, and only the gentle splash of the waves broke the silence.

Some three hours must have passed, since darkness had set in, when Charlie heard some noise other than the splash of the waves. It was a gentle creaking, and then the sound of human voices.

Turning his head, he gazed in the direction of the noise. Showing black, like a shadowy blot on the ocean, was the form of a ship, with a dim light showing here and there.

"Victor!" he yelled. "Victor! Look!"

Slowly Victor, who had been dozing, opened his eyes, and turned to the ship.

"Hail her!" he said. "We must make her hear." And putting all their remaining strength into a shout of "Ship ahoy!" the two boys proceeded to unlash themselves.

"Ship ahoy!" Again the hail rang out, and this time an answering hail, in a foreign tongue, came back through the still night air.

"Help!" cried back the boys; and in reply a long babble of indistinct words, followed by the creaking of blocks and the splash of a boat dropping from the davits.

The boys continued to yell as the regular dip of oars drew nearer and nearer, till at last a man could be distinguished standing in the bows with a lantern and boat-hook in his hand.

"Allri', ve come quick!" he shouted as he caught sight of the mast and its human crew, and in another minute strong arms reached over and dragged the boys into the boat in safety.

THE THIRD CHAPTER
Bound for Cadiz.

NEITHER Victor nor Charlie knew much of the next forty-eight hours, for, utterly worn out with fatigue, and exhausted by lack of food, the two boys fell asleep the moment they were rescued, and didn't wake until two days had passed.

When at last they did wake it was to find themselves in a comfortable cabin, and with a cheerful-looking Frenchman tending them.

"Good!" exclaimed the Frenchman. "You 'ave 'ad a ver' long sleep, but you vill be soon allri' now."

"Where am I?" muttered Victor, who was the first to grasp the situation.

"You are on the French ship La Gloire; ve did pick you up two days ago from a ver' small piece of wreckage."

"Oh, yes, I remember now," said Vic. "May we see the captain?"

"Yes, ze captaine vill come 'ere to see you soon," the foreigner replied, in a friendly tone. And then, promising to send some food, the good-natured Frenchman went away.

A few minutes later a boy appeared with a tray full of good things to eat, and as the boys rapidly set to work on the food, they plied the youngster who had brought it with questions, to all of which the only reply was a smile, a shrug of the shoulders, and "I speak no Engleesh."

Feeling much refreshed by the sleep and the hearty meal, Charlie and Vic began to think of getting up. Somehow or other they managed to convey their meaning to the French boy, and also pointed out that they had no clothes to put on.

Heartily amused at the situation, the youngster disappeared, and returned shortly

with an armful of odd garments, which, with much laughter, the English lads soon donned. Hardly had they finished than the door opened, and a man, whose uniform was much bedecked with gold lace, entered.

"I am Captain Roche, of the French gunbrig, La Gloire," he said in excellent English; "and we picked you up from a piece of floating wreckage the night before last."

"Yes," said Vic; "the last thing I remember was being pulled into one of your boats, and I cannot tell you how grateful I am to you for your timely rescue."

"There is no need for thanks," replied the officer; "but I should be interested to hear how you managed to be adrift in the Atlantic on a small spar."

In a few words the boys told their story, and the face of the French captain grew very dark as he heard of the barbarous way in which the boys had been treated.

"So that was the Scourge, was it?" he said, when Charlie had added the last word of their adventures. "We very nearly captured her, but she escaped in the darkness, so we gave up the chase, and returned luckily in time to pick you up."

"Thank Heaven for that, sir!" said Victor fervently. "So you were the ship we saw attacking the pirate?"

"Yes," replied the other, with a smile; "and though she escaped us, I think we left our mark on her."

"What are you going to do with us?" queried Charlie, at length.

The Frenchman looked thoughtful for a moment.

"Well, monsieur," he replied, "unfortunately our countries are at war at present, and, really, I suppose you must be considered, for the time being, prisoners. But," he continued kindly, "I need only ask your word not to escape, and I will try to make the rest of your voyage with us as pleasant as possible. I am now bound for Cadiz, where I join our fleet."

"I promise, on my word of honour, not to interfere with or attempt to escape from this ship," replied Victor.

"And I promise also," Charlie added.

"Thank you, messieurs. Being Britishers, I know that your word is sufficient. And now," he continued, "this cabin shall be set aside for your use, and you will, perhaps, do me the honour of taking your meals with me."

The boys offered their profound thanks, and the captain, bidding them au revoir, left them to their own devices for an hour or so.

The next four days passed very happily for the two English boys. They were treated kindly and courteously by their captors, who spared no pains to make the lads feel more like guests than prisoners.

Early in the morning of the sixth day after they had been picked up, the two boys were talking over their adventures right up in the bows.

"I somehow feel that we shall see the Scourge again," said Charlie lazily.

"Perhaps," answered Victor. "If, as Captain Roche said last night, we are released when we get to Cadiz, and sent home, we may be midshipmen on board a ship that meets her. Then," he added feelingly, "we'll have an account to settle with Pete Dark."

At that moment there came a hail from the look-out. Following the general gaze, the boys looked away to the east, and saw a number of tiny specks on the horizon.

"I wonder what it is?" said Charlie.

The boys had picked up several words of French since they had come aboard La Gloire, and from the conversation of the seamen they soon learnt that it was a fleet that they saw, but whether French or British no one could say.

All was bustle and excitement on the French brig, for this fleet they were rapidly nearing might mean that she would have to run, or even to fight. Every telescope was levelled at the collection of white sails rising higher and higher every minute.

Presently a cheer from the masthead set all doubts at rest, and the captain sent up the French tricolour to the peak, and pointed the brig for the approaching fleet. It was the French fleet that had been sighted, and towards the very centre of them La Gloire made her way.

Another half-hour, and they were quite in the midst of a magnificent collection of thirty-four line of battle ships, both French and

Spanish—great three and four-deckers that towered above the little La Gloire, and made her seem like a tiny cockle-shell beside them. Running close up to the huge Bucentaur, the French Admiral Villeneuve's flagship, Captain Roche put off to report to the commander-in-chief.

The wind, which had been blowing fresh early in the morning, had now dropped entirely, and the great Armada swam with loose and flapping sails on a sea of glass.

After some twenty minutes Captain Roche returned, and as soon as he reached his brig's deck he asked for the two boys.

"Monsieur Dane and your brother," he said, addressing Victor, "I much regret to say that you must now leave me. I have just received orders from my admiral to start at once on a commission, and he requests me to send you both on board his ship, the Bucentaur—that big three-decker there."

Five minutes later found the boys at La Gloire's gangway, bidding farewell to the kind and courteous French captain; and then, entering the cutter, they were rowed rapidly towards the great battleship Bucentaur.

After the confined space of the brig, the huge decks of the three-decker seemed tremendous. At the gangway the boys were met by a lieutenant, who gave them over to a corporal of Marines to escort to their cabin down below.

"What are they going to do with us now?" asked Charlie of the Marine.

The corporal shrugged his shoulders.

"I not know," he replied. "I 'ave no orders received. If you keep out of the way, I suppose you do vot you like."

With this he left them, and after a few minutes the two youngsters made their way on deck again.

The wind had now risen slightly, and the whole fleet was slowly moving in splendid formation to the south, while away to the north the little La Gloire could be seen moving rapidly along, with every stitch of canvas set.

No one on board the big ship seemed to take much notice of them; so, keeping—as the Marine corporal had suggested—out of the way, the two boys wandered about and did pretty well as they liked. Their meals they

The Remove Passage



The noise is appalling, for Bolsover's calling
And Loder is bawling aloud for a fag!
Some voices are merry, some miserable—very—
While Wharton and Cherry are staging a rag.
The victim is Coker, a senior joker,
And Bob with a poker is giving him beans;
While Ogilvy gaily is singing "Bill Bailey"—
The Remove Passage daily does witness such scenes.

For Linley is swotting, and Skinner is plotting;
Frank Nugent is rotting with other bright boys.
Whatever they're doing, there's trouble a-brewing
For one thing's accruing—that one thing is NOISE!
To-night they're excelling the record for yelling,
The tumult is swelling—a Babel of sounds;
And Quelchy, the master, will come with disaster,
And much sticking-plaster, will bind up our wounds.

Now Coker's inviting a licking by fighting,
And we are delighting to pile in our hits;
He's roaring with anger, and yells like a ganger
As Bob lands a banger which giveth him fits.
And Coker, who's muddy, shrieks, "Stop, everybody!
To-night from my study at twenty-past six
Some tuck-hunting rotter a cake stole from Potter,
'Twas Bunter who got her—it's one of his tricks!"

Now Bunter is under a crowd with his plunder;
He rends them asunder and burbles with fright;
Then this fat defrauder, to add to disorder,
Says, "My postal-order is coming to-night!"
A great roar of laughter resounds from each rafter;
We know what he's after—we've heard it before.
He's trying to borrow a bob till to-morrow,
But finds to his sorrow we laugh all the more.

We kick him and lick him—we never can stick him—
We all try to trick him—our misguided Bill;
He's speaking and squeaking, for mercy he's shrieking;
But we never like sneaking—he goes through the mill.
Then, Wingate appearing, soon starts interfering;
Says, "Bed-time, I'm fearing—get up from the floor."
The screaming, the streaming, the scheming and beaming
All sink into dreaming—and peace reigns once more.

took with the junior officers, and, from the conversation at supper, it was plain the French fleet expected to encounter Lord Nelson's fleet before long.

"I wonder whether we shall see a big fight?" said Vic as he turned in that night.

"I wonder?" replied Charlie. "Good-night, Vic!"

THE FOURTH CHAPTER
The End of the Scourge.

It was a glorious morning when Charlie and Victor came on deck. The sun had just risen, and a light breeze from the west hardly ruffled the surface of the water. There was a heavy roll on, and the beautiful ships, as they rose and fell to the swell, made a lovely sight. A faint line to the north showed where the coast of Spain lay; but the most important thing of all was the sight which was to be seen southward, for there, showing clear in the early sunlight, lay a great fleet, moving slowly towards the French and Spanish ships.

"Nelson's fleet, Vic! Look!" cried Charlie as he caught sight of the distant sails. "Vic, we're going to see that fight!"

Victor made no reply. His eyes were fixed on the oncoming ships, and his thoughts were with them.

After a hurried breakfast the two boys came on deck again. The fleets had approached very close now, and from the ships all around the Bucentaur came the sounds of preparation for the coming battle.

From the Bucentaur the French and Spanish ships stretched out on either side, forming altogether a huge crescent, moving slowly, but in splendid order, to meet the foe, while the approaching English fleet had divided into two parts, each of a wedge-shaped formation.

Nearer and nearer came the two masses of ships, gracefully and silently, their white canvas glittering like the spray at their bows.

Suddenly, from the foremost of the left column of the British fleet, from a fine three-decker flying St. George's Cross at her fore, a string of little black dots ran rapidly up the signal halyards, and then broke out into a string of brightly coloured flags, fluttering in the fresh morning breeze.

"That's the Victory, Admiral Nelson's flagship, making a signal," said a sailor standing near to Charlie.

Little did the two boys think, as they watched those tiny flags flutter free, that they conveyed a message to the fleet that would be remembered as long as the British Empire should last.

Just then the lieutenant who had first received them came up.

"You boys will have to go below now," he said. "The action is about to begin. Your Admiral Nelson has just signalled the rest of his fleet."

"What was the message? Can you say?" inquired Vic and Charlie eagerly.

"Yes," replied the officer grimly. "It read, 'England expects every man will do his duty.'"

The sudden crash of guns which followed drowned the lads' hearty cheer. Without further ado, the lieutenant left the boys to themselves, as he turned to go to his post of duty.

"They've started now, Vic. Let's watch for a bit."

And the brothers turned again to watch their country's fleet.

A great change had come over the formation of the ships, as with the first shot fired each wedge-shaped column had spread out fan-wise, every ship pointing for one particular opponent; and bearing straight for the Bucentaur came the Victory herself, her sails riddled with shot and her mizzenmast trailing over the side.

The two ships were close—almost touching—when a deafening crash came, and the deck of the French flagship was literally mown with flying, shrieking ball. Crash, crash! The Victory poured broadside after broadside into the Bucentaur, who replied gamely enough, though she had suffered fearful punishment.

In the midst of this scene of carnage and death stood Charlie and Victor—untouched, almost unconscious—spellbound by the scene before them, and watching the great Victory as she drifted by with the tide.

"Look, Charlie—look! That's him!"

Victor clutched his brother's arm and pointed to a small man in a faded uniform, who

was pacing the English ship's deck as calmly as if he were strolling along a London street.

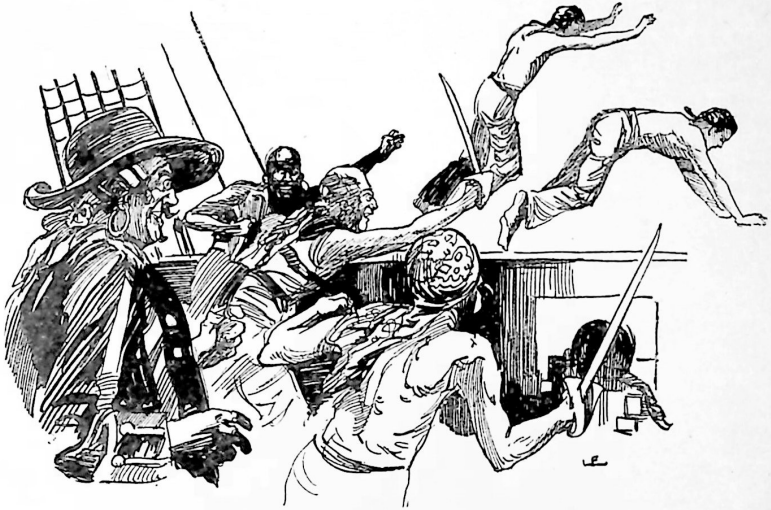
The small man in the faded uniform, conspicuous by the number of stars on his breast and the gold lace on his coat, was Admiral Lord Nelson, his right sleeve empty and pinned across to his left shoulder.

Slowly the two flagships drifted apart, the Victory taking her place alongside the Redoubtable, the next ship in line, while on the other side the fine old Fighting Temeraire took her position.

The noise was deafening, The smoke hung about in dense clouds in the motionless air, and still the fight grew harder. The shrieks and yells, the crash of broadsides, the storm of cheers, the scrunching of great ships together, and the flying, tearing cannon-balls, all joined to make a fearful picture never to be forgotten.

The British ships on either side of the Bucentaur poured in a continuous hail of iron, and at last, after some two hours' engagement, her mainmast went by the board.

There was nothing else to be done. Admiral Villeneuve had fought a plucky fight, but his ship was honeycombed with shot, leaking badly, on fire in four places, and his crew decimated. The brave men had to submit, and, amid ear-splitting cheers from the Englishmen, the French flag was lowered, and the Bucentaur surrendered.



The pirates made a rush towards Vic and Charlie, but they were not quick enough. The boys leaped from the gunwale into the sea.

Still, in other parts of the line the action continued with unabated fury, though one by one the ships of the allied fleet drew free—sinking or on fire—and before the end of the afternoon the victory was achieved. The great Armada had been utterly defeated, and before the sun set, of that brave crescent of thirty-four ships that swept on to meet the British in the morning only fifteen battered and ruined hulks remained!

Nelson had triumphed and died, and Napoleon's power on the sea had gone for ever.

Less than two hours of that October day remained, and Charlie and Victor were still walking the Bucentaur's deck, watching the last of the great sea fight, both lost in thought, when suddenly Victor stopped and gazed far away through the smoke.

"What is it, Vic?" said Charlie.

Victor paid no heed for a moment; then he turned on his brother suddenly.

"Look at that ship yonder, Charlie. It's the Scourge, flying the White Ensign."

"You're right! It is, true enough! There's no mistaking her build. Vic, what can we do? She's absolutely unsuspected, and in a few minutes, with her heavy guns, she'll have the Victory at her mercy for a time."

The boys were right. Pete Dark, in his hatred for Britishers, had arrived at the scene of battle, and, hoisting the White Ensign, had come up unnoticed right to the centre of the fleet, bent on vengeance and destruction.

"Charlie, we must get aboard her and stop her somehow," said Vic firmly. "Come on, old chap, follow me!"

And, without further parley, the youngsters proceeded to divest themselves of their clothing, and dropped noiselessly down the ship's side into the sea.

With long, swift strokes the boys quickly covered the three hundred yards that lay between the Bucentaur and the pirate brig; and, reaching the latter, they managed to haul themselves up to an open porthole in the starboard side. Peering cautiously through the open port, they saw that all was safe, and, climbing into the ship, they stopped for a minute to make their plans.

"I'll find my way to the magazine somehow, Charlie; and you must get on deck, wait for a few seconds, then cut the flag down, and trust to luck. Good-bye, old chap!"

Victor disappeared along a passage to the right, and Charlie, picking up a knife from the table of the cabin they had entered, carefully made his way up the ladder to the deck.

As he wormed his way along he saw that he was only just in time—if that; for upon the port side of the gun-deck a host of men were concentrated, with the whole broadside trained on the rapidly approaching Victory.

Cautiously Charlie made his way up to the main deck, crawled along by the bulwarks till he reached the halyards that supported the White Ensign and with a swift slash of the knife severed the rope.

Down came the flag with a run, drawing the immediate attention of the few sailors on deck, who at once rushed towards Charlie.

Then, to add to the confusion, a form appeared from the companion ladder. It was Victor, having completed his task.

"Over, Charlie—over!" he cried, catching sight of his brother. And, suiting the action to the word, he made for the side, and leaped into the sea. Charlie followed suit, and in a couple of seconds the boys were swimming madly away from the brig.

"I've done it!" gasped Vic between the strokes. "The magazine will explode in a few seconds!"

Just then a crash from the brig showed that she had fired her first broadside. Then, before the sound had died away, the whole hull seemed to quiver, there was a deafening roar, a huge mass of flame shot up, and the sea and air was black with falling spars and burning rigging. The boys, pausing in their swim a minute later, looked back to see that the place occupied by the Scourge was now but a smudge of charred and burning wood on the water.

With the explosion of the brig a dozen boats put out from the surrounding ships, and the two gallant lads were quickly drawn from the sea and taken aboard the Victory, where they told their story to Captain Hardy, from whose lips they learnt of the death of the brave admiral.

Three weeks later found the boys in old England, safe with their uncle—an old country squire, who lived near Winchester. A month after that two proud boys set out on the Portsmouth coach to join their first ship as midshipmen.

Although new to the Navy, Charlie and Victor were not new to the sea and to naval fights, and the fame of their brave action went before them, so that when they got on board the Hannibal they were welcomed as heroes.

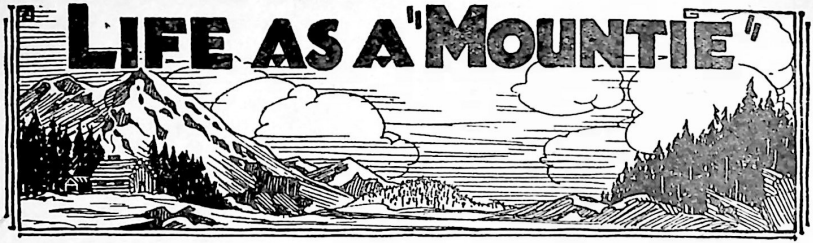
THE GREYFRIARS "ZOO"!



The "HOLIDAY ANNUAL" artist went to the Zoo the other day, with the above result! We're hoping he won't do this too often!

"HE ALWAYS GETS HIS MAN!"

LIFE AS A "MOUNTIE"



Adventurous and romantic as the job of a "Mountie" seems, it is far removed from being a cushy." This article puts you wise to his many duties and the intense training he is put through to fit him for his hard and hazardous life.

WHAT romantic and thrilling stories have been—and are still—written around that splendid body of men—the Royal North-West Mounted Police; or, as they are now termed, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police! Stories of perils and adventures in the Frozen North; seemingly endless treks over a snowbound wilderness after "wanteds"; living up to their grim slogan "Get your man!" keeping law and order over a district so vast that England could be placed into it many times!

But thrilling as these stories undoubtedly are, they not only come from the fertile imagination of authors—they are founded on fact.

Therefore, very few fellows are not interested in the R.C.M.P.; the work of a "Mountie," his training, the knowledge he has to acquire, and many other tasks that fit him for his hard and hazardous job.

So let us follow a recruit from the date of acceptance to the day of his signing on for the required engagement of five years.

Signing On.

A recruit has to be between the ages of twenty-two and forty, and must be sound in health and of good character. He must be able to read and write the English or the French language, and must both ride well and understand the care of horses.

In the first place, the recruit will take the oath of allegiance, together with the oath of office, which runs as follows:

"*I, John Jones, solemnly swear that I will faithfully, diligently, and impartially execute and perform the duties required of me as a member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Force, and will well and truly obey and perform all lawful orders and instructions which I shall receive as such, without fear, favour, or affection of or toward any person. So help me, God.*"

Next—if not there already—the recruit will be sent to the headquarters at Regina, to be supplied with a kit and started on the road to acquire a police education.

The kit, which is a free issue to every recruit, is a complete cavalryman's outfit, with, in addition, a supply of warm underclothing, fur cap, fur coat, buckskin "mitts," moccasins, etc. For service in the Yukon and far Northern districts an extra kit is provided.

Routine at Regina.

Riding and drill first mostly occupy the recruit's attention. The question of horsemanship is of the greatest importance, as so much of his time will be spent in the saddle, and very often his life may depend upon it. Among the duties that a recruit will have to perform are the grooming of his mount, and, on certain days, having to act as stable guard. The stables are seen to three times a day. He must learn, also, how to clean all harness, how to saddle and unsaddle a horse, how to shoe it, and how to care for it in the various conditions of his work in and out of barracks.

A day's routine at Regina is as follows:

Reveille, 5.30 a.m.; stables, 6 to 7; break-

fast, 7.15; rides and drills, 8.30 to 11.30 (including lectures on various subjects); midday stables, 11.30 to 12.30; dinner, 12.45; rides, drills and lectures, 1.30 to 4; tea, 4.15; evening stables, 4.45 to 5.30. "Lights out" is sounded at 10.15 p.m. Extra duties that are entailed are: Escorts on prisoners who are employed in various ways in the barracks; night guard, from 6.30 to reveille; and night guards over the prisons and stables.

"*The efficient training of a recruit requires twelve months,*" stated the Commissioner of Police in an official order. "*He must be drilled, set up, taught to ride (cavalry fashion), to shoot with rifle and revolver, acquire a knowledge of his duties and powers as a police officer, be instructed in veterinary knowledge, understand how a horse should be taken care of, and become an efficient prairie man—by which is implied a knowledge of cooking and the ability to find his way about and to look after the comfort of himself and his horse.*"

This is the ideal. More often than not a recruit has to leave barracks with less than six months' service to his credit; time does not allow of the full twelve months being taken in training.

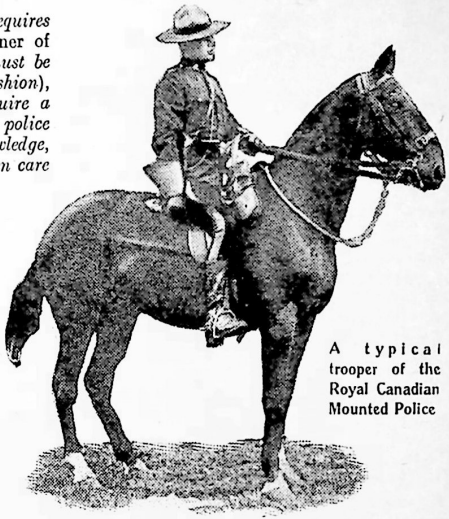
Target Practice.

The recruit will find a little relief from his class work in target practice on the rifle range. Having learnt the mechanism of his weapon, he is next taught to shoot at given distances—200, 500, 600, and 800 yards. Disappearing targets are used for the purpose. In the mounted squads the constables are taken a mile away from the targets—which only appear for a minute at a time—and started towards them at a gallop. They then have to dismount, judging the distances themselves, fire, remount, and gallop on again, to repeat the same process. The targets appear four times in the mile at unknown ranges.

In revolver practice, the recruit is taught its use on foot, how to shoot mounted, at a walk, full gallop, and sudden halt. These four methods are taken in one lesson, the target being from 25 yards to 35 yards distant.

The picturesque uniform of a "Mountie" consists of scarlet serge tunic, brown belt and high-laced brown boots, blue breeches with a two-inch yellow stripe down each side, a Stetson hat and brown gauntlets. A sword and a lance are part of the equipment of every policeman, but they are only used at drill or on "musical rides."

When in the Yukon the duties of the police are varied, as a summary of their work shows:



A typical trooper of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police

Patrols, rescue work, care of asylums, prisons, and prisoners; bailiffs for the sheriff, court bailiffs, patrolmen in Dawson and other towns; health officers, mining recorders, mining inspectors, timber agents, royalty collectors; customs house agents, gold dust inspectors, baggage inspectors, magistrates; mail carriers, coroners, and postmasters at the smaller posts on river and trail.

Thus, anyone on the look-out for a "cushy" job would be ill-advised to apply to the R.C.M.P. Life for these stalwart fellows means Work, spelt with a capital "W," and only at the end of twenty years' service can the "Mountie" rest easy on a well-earned pension.



RIVALS of ST. FRANK'S!

Edward Oswald Handforth's out-size in tuck-hampers makes a very meaty bone of contention for the rivals of St. Frank's, and the resultant fun and adventure provide a yarn you'll be sure to enjoy.

THE FIRST CHAPTER
The Ambush !

"THERE'S everything in here," said Edward Oswald Handforth contentedly. "A whacking great fruit cake, pastries, jam, sausage rolls, pork pies, beef patties, honey, marmalade, and all sorts of other topping tuck. We're going to have the feed of the term to-day, my sons !"

"Good old Handy !" chorused the crowd.

A large party of Remove fellows from St. Frank's were assisting the famous leader of Study D with his big tuck-hamper. They were carrying it up the lane from the station, and as it was a half-holiday they had the whole afternoon before them.

Anybody not "in the know" would have



By Edwy Searles Brooks.

been excused for supposing that the juniors were bringing home the laundry! It was so large it required two fellows to carry it. They were all taking it in turns, for that laden hamper became heavy after a hundred yards or so.

All these fellows were Old-Timers—Nipper, the cheery Remove skipper, and Tregellis-West and Watson, who shared Study C with him; Handforth and Church and McClure; Vivian Travers and Sir James Potts, of Study H; Fullwood, Russell, Gresham, and a few more. Handforth, with his usual generosity, had invited them all to the feed. There would be enough, and to spare.

"Your people have done the thing properly this time, Handy," remarked Fullwood.

"Well, it's a sort of celebration," explained Handforth. "My pater has just been made a Privy Councillor, and they've had a grand dinner up in London, and all sorts of fuss. As I couldn't attend, I've got this hamper as my share. That's why it's such a special one."

"Where does your minor come in?" asked Gresham pointedly.

"Willy?" said Handforth with a frown. "The cheeky young ass had the nerve to suggest that we should go halves. I soon squashed him, and said that this hamper was for the Remove. Like his rot!"

The others chuckled. It was quite probable that Willy Handforth, of the Third, was fully entitled to half that feed; but Edward Oswald was an autocrat, and he never recognised his minor's claims.

"We'll take it straight into the gym," said Nipper as they turned a bend and came within view of the grey walls of the famous old school. "We can lock the door, and be private for the rest of the afternoon."

"Why lock the door?" asked Handforth. "Nobody's likely to raid us. The only danger was from the River House chaps, and that danger's over now. They'd never dare to raid us within our own gates."

"I was thinking of somebody else," said Nipper thoughtfully.

It was curious that the very person of whom he was thinking should at that moment emerge briskly from the hedge a dozen paces ahead. He was a big, burly, red-headed schoolboy, with a cheery grin. And, what was more, he was followed out of the hedge by eleven other hefty schoolboys.

"Look-out!" gasped Handforth in alarm. "Red-Hots!"

"I'm not surprised," said Nipper grimly.

Kirby Keeble Parkington, the red-headed leader of the Red-Hots, smiled amiably as he approached. But there was something suggestive in the way he casually pushed up his sleeves and closed his knuckles.

"K.K."—as he was known for short—and his eleven henchmen were not recognised by the other Removites as of themselves. These twelve had come in a bunch from Carlton College, and had stuck together ever since. Terming themselves the Red-Hots, they had proceeded to "run" the Remove. At least, they had tried to run it. But the others, under Nipper's leadership, had formed their own party, proudly calling themselves the Old-Timers. Needless to say, rivalry had been the order of the hour from their advent.

"Nice afternoon," said K.K. casually as he and his crowd formed themselves into a solid barrier across the lane. "You're busy, I see."

"None of your rot, Parkington," growled Handforth. "I thought you'd gone off to Bannington with your beastly mob!"

"I did spread a rumour to that effect," murmured K.K. "We also left the school, ostensibly for Bannington. Merely a blind, my innocent. Actually, we've been waiting in ambush; and now we'll trouble you for that hamper."

"Try and get it!" roared Handforth.

Parkington sighed.

"I thought you'd be unreasonable." he said, with regret. "It'll save an awful lot of bother if you hand that hamper over quietly."

Handforth looked at him with scorn.

"Have you got the nerve to suppose that you and your gorillas can whack us?" he asked, with a snort. "If you try any funny business, my son, we'll wipe you up! Get out of our way!"

"Come on, K.K.!" said Harvey Deeks gruffly. "We told you it would be better to dash out and attack straight away."

"But I wanted to give them a chance of saving themselves," said K.K. "We don't really enjoy giving black eyes, and fat noses and—— Whoa! Now, look here, Handy—— Hi! What the——"

He backed away, and dodged a straight left with the agility of a boxer. Handforth was a fellow of action, and he was not waiting for any further words. The other Old-Timers followed his example, and the great Kirby Keeble Parkington realised that he had made a tactical blunder—an unusual thing for him.

He should have attacked by surprise, as Deeks had said. However, it wasn't too late. K.K. and his satellites sailed in with real enthusiasm.

The hamper was hastily slung on to the greensward which bordered the lane, and although it was the bone of contention, so to speak, it ceased to figure in the proceedings. The Red-Hots and the Old-Timers were always spoiling for a fight, and any excuse was better than none.

Later, perhaps, the victors would collect that hamper and triumphantly march off with it. But at present it had ceased to be of any importance. The rival factions of the St. Frank's Remove battled for the sheer joy of battling, though, of course, in the right spirit.

The fight waged hot and fierce. K.K. had deliberately selected the burly Handforth, who was a fair match for him. Deeks was having a personal "dust-up" with Nipper, Goffin was fighting "hammer and tongs" with Travers. Letts, Jepson, Langley, Baines and the rest of the Red-Hots were fighting indiscriminately with the other Old-Timers.

For the most part the action took the form of individual combats. The rivals spread themselves over the road, and at least a dozen separate scraps were in simultaneous progress. The highway was barred completely, and it was fortunate that no traffic came along at the time.

Smack!

Handforth went down with a thud, K.K. having got in a beautiful right-hander. He rubbed his knuckles tenderly as Handforth scrambled to his feet.

"Fearfully sorry, Handy, but I'm afraid I must polish you off quickly," said K.K. "I believe Deeks wants a bit of assistance."

"You funny red-haired ass, I'm not finished off yet!" bellowed Handforth.

He rushed in like a whirlwind, and the next time it was K.K. who went down. Both their faces were somewhat battered by now.

But this time they were girls—six of them. They were Irene & Co., of the Moor View School—a big, select academy for young ladies which was situated half a mile beyond St. Frank's.

After one look at the gory scene, Irene ran forward, her pretty face flushed, her blue eyes flashing with indignation. Doris Berkeley and Marjorie Temple were right at her heels; and Phyllis Palmer and Mary Summers and Betty Barlowe were only a yard or two behind.

"Stop!" cried Irene frantically as she ran into the thick of the battle. "How can you fight like this, on the public highway? Oh, my goodness!"

Handforth, lunging at K.K., nearly delivered a left-hand drive at Irene which would have knocked her clean out. She dodged



A burly junior emerged from the hedge ahead, followed by several others. "Look out!" cried Handforth in alarm. "Red-Hots!"

Fortunately, Deeks had recovered, and was wiring in with fresh vigour. The battle, in fact, was still inconclusive. It was anybody's victory.

While the issue thus remained in doubt, another party turned the bend in the lane and came unexpectedly upon the battlefield.

in the nick of time, and Handforth, aghast, dropped his hands to his sides.

"Where—where did you spring from?" he asked dazedly.

"Stop, all of you!" commanded Irene angrily. "You all look a disgraceful sight."

The other girls were in amongst the com-

batants by now, and the fight had come to a dramatic stop. The St. Frank's fellows stood about, breathing hard, irritated at this unexpected interruption, but far too polite to say so.

"Cheese it, you girls!" said K.K. complainingly. "You might have been sporting, and stood aside until we'd finished the job. In another two minutes we should have had these Old-Timers whacked."

"Why, you poor idiot, we were just putting the final touches to your defeat!" roared Handforth. "But what's the good? We can't fight now!"

"A good thing you can't," said Irene coldly. "Look at your face, Ted!"

"How can I look at it?" growled Handforth. "I'm not a contortionist."

"Your nose is bleeding, your left eye is half closed up, and one of your ears is twice the size of the other," said Irene accusingly.

"Is that all?" asked Handforth. "Look at K.K.!"

K.K. was certainly worse off, for both his eyes were blackened, and the rest of his face was considerably battered.

Scarcely one of the fighters was unmarked. Nipper and Travers and Deeks and Goffin and the rest were all much bruised. Blood had been flowing freely, and it was hardly any wonder that the girls were appalled.

"It's—it's like a slaughter house!" said Doris Berkeley with a shudder. "Oh, why are boys such brutes?"

"You don't understand, old girl," said Travers gently. "We were thoroughly enjoying ourselves until you butted in. It won't take us long to clean up, and——"

"You needn't try to whitewash yourselves," put in Phyllis Palmer icily. "I'm ashamed of you, Vivian. And I always thought you were such a nice boy."

"I'm still nice," said Travers promptly.

"You're just a lot of—of hooligans," said Irene, tossing her head. "We girls believe in boys scrapping when the occasion demands, but this free fighting in the open lane is a different thing. It's—it's degrading. We're ashamed of you!"

"All of us," chorused the other girls.

"But look here——"

"And if you think we're going to forgive you, you're mistaken," went on Irene. "Instead of saying you're sorry, all you do is to try to defend yourselves!"

"We ought never to speak to them again," said Marjorie indignantly.

"They asked us to a party on Saturday, but I think we ought to stay away," proceeded Irene, her coldness as chilly as an Arctic blast. "As a punishment, we won't go to that party, girls."

"Hear, hear!" said the others, looking at the boys with disdain.

"Oh, I say, have a heart!" protested Nipper. "That's going to be a very special party on Saturday, and it'll be ruined unless you girls turn up. I've got some ripping new records for my gramophone, and we're going to have dancing and a big feed, and——"

"It can't be helped," interrupted Irene. "You've got to be punished somehow, and we wouldn't dream of coming to that party. What's more, we'll 'cut' you for at least a week. So don't dare to speak to us if you happen to meet us by chance."

"This fighting in the road is altogether too thick," said Doris, gazing accusingly from one to the other. "I agree with everything that Irene has said, and so do the other girls."

"Yes, rather," said Phyllis. "Come on—let's go. We don't want to be seen with these—these roughs!"

"Oh, I say—roughs!" protested Handforth feebly.

But the girls, unrelenting, uttered no further word, but walked on with their noses high in the air. The Old-Timers and Red-Hots gazed at one another with mournful faces. There was no further fight left in them.

"Well, I suppose we'd better call the fight off," remarked K.K. with regret. "A pity we can't have that hamper—it would have been ours in another two minutes."

"Rot!" snorted Handforth. "You couldn't have whacked us—By George! Where *is* the hamper?" he added in alarm. "Who's taken my hamper?"

They all looked round, dismayed. The hamper, over which the battle had been waged, had completely vanished.

THE SECOND CHAPTER
Another Raid.

IRENE MANNERS held her sides, and fairly gasped for breath.

"Oh, girls, do stop!" she breathed. "I haven't laughed so much for terms! The way those boys swallowed everything we said was a scream!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

If the Removites could have seen those six young ladies just then they would have had something of a shock. Gone were their cold looks; instead, they were doubled up with laughter.

"I never thought it was so easy to spoof those boys," chuckled Doris gleefully. "It was a topping stunt of yours, Renie. The way they swallowed our stern censure was simply too ridiculous. I wonder how long it will be before they jump to it?"

"Not until we turn up at that party, and tell them," laughed Marjorie. "Boys aren't so smart as they think they are."

Irene & Co. were healthy girls, and they did not regard scrapping with anything like the horror they had pretended. But they were rivals of the St. Frank's fellows, too, in a way, and any opportunity for a spoof was gladly seized. Never for a moment had Irene believed, when she ran forward so indignantly, that the Removites would take her seriously. But when they had done so she had mischievously carried on the good work.

"And they think we're not going to their party!" chuckled Phyllis. "I say, we ought to tell them before that, you know, or they might be unprepared when we turn up. It would be tragic if there was a shortage of grub."

"Oh, they'll know before Saturday," said Irene. "They're not such duffers as all that. They're bound to put two and two together as soon as they start thinking. While we were there they were flustered and confused."

They walked on, chuckling delightedly. It was a feather in their caps to "put it across" the boys.

The sound of triumphant laughter drew their attention after they had walked a little farther; it was coming from a belt of trees some distance from the road, at the angle of a neigh-



Through the trees Irene & Co. saw the Third-Formers commence operations on Handforth's big hamper. "My hat!" one fag said. "What a find!"

bouring meadow. The girls halted, their curiosity aroused.

"There's something else going on, it seems," murmured Doris.

"Listen!" urged Irene, holding up a finger.

They could even hear a few words, and they recognised the cheery voice of Willy Handforth.

"And there was my major and those other fatheads scrapping with the Red-Hots, and never giving a thought to their giddy hamper!" came Willy's voice. "They didn't even see us dodge in and lift it!"

"Well, it's ours now," came Chubby Heath's gleeful comment.

"Oh-ho!" breathed Irene. "So that's how it stands, is it? Those chaps were fighting over a hamper, were they? We didn't know that before, girls. I say, why didn't they explain?"

"Too flustered, I suppose," said Doris. "But it was too bad of us to spoof them like that. If they were fighting for a hamper, they were justified."

Beyond the trees a merry band of Third-Formers was making vigorous attacks upon the coveted prize. Chubby Heath and Juicy Lemon had just unfastened the hamper's lid, and it had now been thrown back.

"My only sainted aunt! What a find!" shouted Dicky Jones. "Look at this whacking great cake! Look at——"

"Not so loud, you ass!" warned Willy Handforth. "In fact, it wouldn't be a bad idea if we got farther away. I'm not sure if we're safe here."

"Those Remove fatheads will never suspect us," said Lemon disdainfully.

"Well, it'll be better if we don't give them the chance," retorted Willy. "As for this hamper, it's just as much ours as theirs. It's like my major's nerve to bag it for himself and to tell me to go and eat coke."

"You like eating plum cake better, eh?" grinned Owen minor.

The fags were proud of themselves. It was seldom, indeed, that a chance offered for them to raid the Remove. But the sight of that hamper, lying unprotected at the side of the road, had been too much for them. Besides, as Willy had said, it was just as much his as Edward Oswald's.

And the fags believed in quick action. To smuggle that hamper far away would be to waste time. Far better to open it, and demolish the contents on the spot. Once eaten, they were safe.

But Willy & Co. were up against an unexpected factor this afternoon. Even if they had known that Irene & Co. were near at hand, they would not have worried. But Irene & Co. were in a particularly mischievous mood.

"Why not?" murmured Irene, her eyes twinkling.

"Do you think we could?" asked Doris eagerly.

"There are six of us—and I don't suppose there are more than eight or ten of those fags," replied Irene. "Come on, girls! Let's chance it!"

They firmly believed in the policy of raiding tuck-hampers. They did it among themselves, but, hitherto, they had never raided a St. Frank's hamper.

They gave themselves no opportunity for hesitating. They burst through the trees just as Willy & Co. were unpacking the top layer. The fags started up in alarm as they heard the crashing of the branches.

"Look out!" gasped Chubby. "They're on us!"

Willy glanced round, frantic, and then he grinned.

"Cheese it," he said. "Only girls!"

"What!"

"It's Irene and her crowd," said Willy. "They won't—Here, I say! What the dickens—Oh, my only hat!"

Willy sat down in the grass with a violent thud. He had been bowled over in the first rush. And his eyes nearly started out of his head when he saw that the girls were putting the things back into the hamper, and closing the lid.

"Hi! What's the idea?" howled Chubby Heath in dismay.

"This is ours," said Irene calmly. "We're raiding it."

"You're doing *what?*" yelled Willy.

"This hamper isn't yours—you bagged it

from those Remove fellows," explained Irene. "So we're bagging it from you. This hamper is going to have a good home at last."

"But—but—— Here, you chaps!" exclaimed Willy desperately. "We're not going to let these girls ride roughshod over us and bone our spoils!"

"Not likely!" chorused the other fags excitedly.

When it came to the point, however, they hardly knew how to circumvent these feminine raiders. They were up against something new. And it was an undeniable fact that Irene and Doris and Phyllis and the others looked extremely capable. Not only were they in a fighting mood, but they were on the offensive.

To Willy's horror, Doris advanced upon him, her expression warlike; and when he feebly put up his hands to resist she swept them aside, advanced still farther, and pushed him violently backwards into the middle of a bush.

"Well, what are you going to do?" she asked defiantly.

"Oh, crumbs!" groaned Willy.

Never had he felt so helpless. A born fighter himself, and a remarkably capable leader, he would have laughed with scorn if anybody had told him that a party of six girls would have put him to rout. The other fags were equally dumbfounded.

For once in his life, Willy Handforth was at a loss. His keen, resourceful wits deserted him. Had he been dealing with Removites or Fourth-Formers he would have put up a stern fight, and by some dodge he would probably have won. For Willy was full of bright dodges.

But all he could do now was to scramble out of the bush and watch Irene & Co. triumphantly marching away with that hamper. His fellow fags were looking at him for guidance, dismay and consternation on their faces.

"It's no good looking at me," said Willy sadly. "We can't fight girls. We're done!"

"Why can't we fight 'em?" demanded Chubby Heath, with fierce resentment. "They're taking advantage of us—they're fooling us! They counted on us letting 'em walk off with the hamper! But if they play boys' tricks they must expect to be treated as boys."

"Yes, rather!" shouted the other fags.

"Come on!" yelled Chubby excitedly. "On 'em!"

"Wait a minute——" began Willy.

But the others were already at it. Willy looked on in horror. It wasn't that he feared for the girls—but for his fellow fags. It seemed to him that Irene & Co. were not so incapable as girls are supposed to be.

The fags found it out, too.

Rushing up, they attempted to push the fair raiders off that hamper, and to seize it for themselves. The result was disastrous. The girls dropped the hamper, and sailed into action.

Thud! Smack! Crash!

Chubby Heath received a slap on one cheek which dazed him; something hard and forceful biffed him in the ribs, and knocked him over backwards. It was hardly possible to believe that that something had been a girl's closed fist.

Juicy Lemon was dealt with by Doris. She simply wiped him up, and left him flat on his back with his head singing painfully. He had had his ears boxed a few times, but this example beat all the others.

"Oh, my only hat!" babbled Chubby. "Let's bunk, you chaps!"

They fled in utter disorder, and Willy at least had the satisfaction of remembering that he had not ordered that attack, and that he had taken no part in it. But he had seen, from the first, that it had been doomed to failure.

He would face any amount of odds of the ordinary kind, and face them gamely. But girls—never! Willy knew his limitations.

THE THIRD CHAPTER

Held Up.

EDWARD OSWALD HANDFORTH looked round with something like desperation.

"But can't something be done about it?" he asked fiercely. "Are we going to stand idle and—and——"

"It's no good getting excited, Handy," interrupted Nipper. "We don't know where the hamper went, but we can take it as a

certainty that it's gone for good. By this time the contents will have been wolfed."

"Oh, help!" groaned Handforth.

The Old-Timers and the Red-Hots, in their common grievance, had sunk their own differences. They had cleaned themselves up by now, and were looking fairly respectable as they stood in a big group in the Triangle of St. Frank's.

There was no earthly sense in being at loggerheads now. The hamper had gone, and Irene & Co. had given them much food for thought, too. They were in the girls' bad books, and it worried them.

"Never mind the hamper," said Kirby Keeble Parkington. "What are we going to do about Saturday? That party will be ruined unless the girls turn up. I think we ought to get out some wheeze to have our own back."

"How do you mean?" asked Handforth, staring.

"Well, it's a bit thick of Irene and Doris and the others to threaten to 'cut' us," said K. K. warmly. "I thought better of 'em! Can't they understand that scrapping is all in the day's work?"

"Girls can't understand anything," said Travers caustically.

"Well, anyhow, they need a lesson," declared K.K. "We ought to get something up and show them——"

"I say, you chaps!" interrupted an excited voice.

Teddy Long came bustling up, and the Removites regarded him with disfavour. Teddy was the champion sneak of the Remove—the busybody of the Lower School.

"If you want a thick ear, interrupt again!" said Handforth threateningly.

"Oh, I say!" protested Teddy. "I thought you wanted to know what happened to your hamper, that's all. If you'll lend me a bob I can give you some information on the subject."

"Our hamper!" yelled Handforth.

"I know where it is," grinned Teddy. "For a couple of bob——"

"You said a bob just now," broke in Handforth grimly. "But you won't even get that, you—you fat rotter! Where's that hamper?" he added, seizing Teddy and holding him firmly.

"If you don't give me half a crown, I won't tell you anything!" gasped Teddy. "Stop him, you chaps! Don't stand by and see him bully me!"

"Where's that hamper?" roared the others, closing in on him.

"Oh, corks!" panted Teddy Long. "You're all against me! Hi! Mind what you're doing to my arm, Handforth! Your minor's got that hamper! He and a crowd of other fags bagged it and carried it off while you were scrapping."

"What rot!" said Handforth. "You're only fibbing, you rotter!"

"Willy's just come in, so we can verify it, anyhow," put in K.K. "He doesn't look particularly happy, I must say."

Willy & Co., disconsolate and dishevelled, were attempting to get past unnoticed. But they were collared and questioned.

"Yes, we took that hamper," said Willy defiantly. "It was sent as much for me as for you, Ted—so the Third had a right to it."

"And—and you've eaten everything?" asked Handforth, horrified.

"We didn't even get a taste," replied Willy sadly. "Irene and those other girls came along and bagged it! Did you ever hear of such a thing?" he went on complainingly. "We couldn't biff girls, could we? We had to stand by and see 'em walk off with the hamper."

The fags thought it unnecessary to add that they had been soundly trounced by the Moor View girls. Not that the Removites thought of asking. They had heard enough. And Willy and Co. were allowed to go their way. Even Handforth was too staggered to slaughter his minor.

"It's—it's awful!" he said hoarsely. "First those girls rag us for fighting, and threaten to cut us; then they pinch our tuck! What the dickens can we do?"

"We can do plenty!" said Kirby Keeble Parkington grimly. "Children, let us put our heads together."

. . . . . .

Nothing further happened that day, and Irene & Co. came to the conclusion that the

boys had "given them best." And there was no doubt about it that that hamper had been well worth the raiding.

It wasn't until the next day that anything fresh developed—and this was quite different from anything the girls had anticipated. In fact, it hardly seemed to be connected with St. Frank's at all.

About eight of the girls set off for the village, immediately after lessons, on their usual weekly trip. They were well laden with parcels—shopping baskets, cardboard boxes, and so forth.



The Third-Formers attempted to recover the tuck-hamper from the fair raiders, but the result was disastrous. Slap! Smack! Thud! The girls made short work of the fags.

In a word, they were bent upon distributing the results of their morning labours. There was a cookery class every Thursday at the Moor View School, and the girls produced large quantities of questionable cakes, and even more questionable pastry. Their own inclination was to consume their handiwork; but Miss Bond, the headmistress, had consistently put her foot down on any such suggestion.

The products of the cookery class were always taken down to the village, to be distributed among the poor and needy. Miss Bond evidently believed in being on the safe side. Perhaps she had visions of the sanatorium being filled to overflowing every Friday if she granted her enthusiastic pupils' request.

The poor and needy, apparently, did not matter. The St. Frank's fellows had always commented unfavourably upon the practice. What had the poor and needy done to deserve such a weekly visitation? But this, perhaps, was only their fun. And such sentiments were only uttered because the delicacies were beyond their own reach. The boys would really have welcomed the opportunity of demolishing the products of their girl friends.

Irene & Co. were half afraid of meeting some Removites on their way to Bellton, and they hardly knew what to do if such a contingency arose. They all looked very charming as they walked briskly down the lane, carrying their serviette-covered receptacles.

"We shall have to keep our word, of course," declared Irene. "Might as well keep up the spoof for a bit. So if we meet any of the chaps, we've got to raise our noses in the air, and cut them dead."

"If they'll let us," commented Doris. "But I'll bet they'll have twigged by now."

As they turned the bend by the stile, they half-hesitated. A number of boys were coming out of Bellton Wood, and the meeting had all the appearance of an accidental one. But it obviously wasn't.

"My goodness!" murmured Phyllis. "For a tick I thought they were St. Frank's chaps. But it's only those River House fellows."

Hal Brewster & Co., of the River House School—traditional and deadly rivals of the St. Frank's boys—paused politely as they spotted the schoolgirls. They raised their caps gallantly. But Irene & Co. eyed them with suspicion.

"Ah, Thursday afternoon," said Hal Brewster genially. "Just off to the village, I see, with the awful results of the cookery class. No wonder the village chemist is always so busy on Friday!"

"You wretch!" said Irene indignantly. "These cakes and pastries are as good as you can buy in a shop."

Brewster, it seemed, had been expecting that rejoinder, for he was prompt to take his cue.

"By Jove, really?" he said. "Did you hear that, you chaps? These cakes and pastries are as good as you can buy in any of the shops. We must have had a wrong impression."

"There's only one way to test it thoroughly," declared Ascott.

"Sample the goods for ourselves," added Glynn promptly.

Irene frowned.

"Well, you won't sample any of these," she said coldly. "Next week, perhaps, if you're really in earnest, we might make a few extra things, and smuggle them out of the cookery class for you without Miss Bond knowing——"

"We can't wait until next week!" interrupted Brewster. "There's no time like the present. How about it, you chaps? Irene says this tuck is A.1. How about taking her at her word?"

"It wouldn't be polite to do anything else," said Kingswood firmly. "It's always the correct thing to take a girl's word."

"So we'll trouble you for these packages," said Brewster, with a bland smile. "If the tuck's as good as you say, we'll——"

"Don't be silly!" broke in Irene. "You know perfectly well that these things are for the Bellton poor. You wouldn't rob the poor, would you?"

"Heaven forbid!" replied Brewster gravely. "But it all depends upon the point of view. Perhaps we shall be doing the poor a good turn."

"You—you cheeky rotter!" cried Doris hotly.

"Anyhow, we'll give you one minute to hand those parcels over," said Brewster. "If you don't obey, we'll take 'em by force."

Irene & Co. looked at one another helplessly. Week after week they had openly carried their tit-bits down to the village. Nobody had ever dreamed of raiding them. So this hold-up had taken them completely by surprise.

"Aren't you bold and brave?" asked Irene scornfully. "Over a dozen boys to seven or eight girls! Things have come to a pretty pass if we can't walk along the public highway without being raided."

"Just a minute, old girl," said Hal, rather stung. "Who started this raiding business? We seem to have heard a rumour that you bagged a St. Frank's hamper yesterday, and wolfed the contents."

"What—what of it?" asked Phyllis feebly.

"You admit it, then?" demanded Brewster. "If you girls have started on this raiding stunt, you've laid yourselves open to attack. As long as you kept out of it, we couldn't touch you. But you're in the swim now, and that lets us in. Hand over!"

"Oh, dear!" said Irene helplessly.

Her sense of fair play told her that the River House boys were right. It had seemed great fun to raid that hamper yesterday—but not until now had they realised the possible consequences.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER
Honours Even.

THE girls were not weaklings, however. When Irene glanced round at her companions, she found that they were all looking very determined.

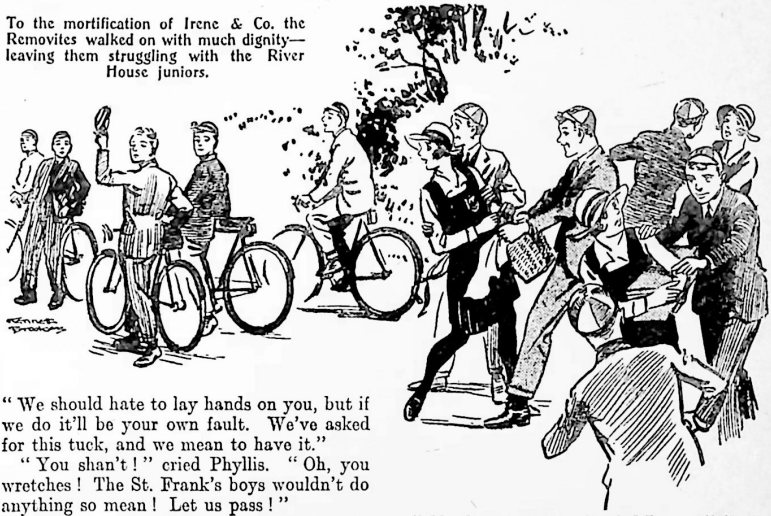
"Come on, let's be going," said Irene simply. "These silly boys are only bluffing. They wouldn't dare to rob the poor."

"They can't spoof us," said Doris tartly.

They attempted to walk on, but Hal Brewster & Co. spread themselves over the road, and barred the way.

"Better take it quietly, girls," said Hal.

To the mortification of Irene & Co. the Removites walked on with much dignity—leaving them struggling with the River House juniors.



"We should hate to lay hands on you, but if we do it'll be your own fault. We've asked for this tuck, and we mean to have it."

"You shan't!" cried Phyllis. "Oh, you wretches! The St. Frank's boys wouldn't do anything so mean! Let us pass!"

"Come on!" said Irene. "They won't dare to touch us."

But the bluff didn't work. Hal Brewster & Co. not only dared, but they touched the girls to some purpose. They held them firmly, in spite of their struggles, and the raid was soon over. The boys quickly began to seize the various packages.

It was at this interesting moment that some newcomers arrived on the scene.

Nipper, Handforth, Parkington, and at least a dozen other Old-Timers and Red-Hots came sailing round the bend on their bicycles. They braked up on seeing the obstruction, and dismounted.

"Hallo! What's going on here?" asked Nipper wonderingly.

"Oh, thank goodness you boys have come!" called Irene. "Quick! Stop these awful River House fellows! They're stealing all the food we were taking down to the poor!"

"The stuff you made in cookery class this morning?" asked Travers incredulously. "What do they want that for? Are they going to build something?"

"Oh, don't be funny," cried Irene. "Can't you see they're taking our baskets and things? Why don't you fight them?"

Handforth looked horrified.

"Fight them?" he repeated, aghast. "Are you suggesting that we should act like hooligans and fight on the public highway?"

"Perish the thought," said K.K., shuddering.

The girls looked dumbfounded. Here was another "come-back" at them! Vividly,

they remembered their spoof censure of the previous day—only these juniors didn't know that it had been spoof.

"Awfully sorry to hear that Brewster and his gang have so far forgotten their manners as to molest you," said Nipper solemnly. "One day, perhaps, we'll punish them for it. But not here, girls. You taught us a lesson yesterday. You'll never find us fighting like roughs on the public road again."

"So I'm afraid we can't do anything," added Handforth regretfully.

To the mortification of Irene & Co. the Removites tilted their chins very high in the air and walked on with much dignity. Brewster & Co. watched them with triumphant faces.

"And quite right, too," said Hal. "What are these girls coming to nowadays, you fellows? Did you hear that? They actually asked those St. Frank's chaps to fight us!"

"Horrible!" said Glynn sternly.

They looked at the girls with frank disapproval and marched back into the wood, whence they had originally come. Irene & Co. were helpless. It was impossible to attack these boys themselves, and their own friends of St. Frank's had given them the cold shoulder.

"Oh!' panted Irene, nearly boiling over. "Oh, I'm furious!"

"What's the good of being furious?" asked Doris sadly. "When you get down to rock bottom, you've got to admit that we brought this on ourselves."

"I don't see it," cried Irene angrily. "Raiding an ordinary hamper is one thing, but taking all this food from the poor people of Bellton is another. Those River House boys ought to be ashamed of themselves. And Ted Handforth and Nipper and the others are just as bad for refusing to help us."

Having no reason to go to the village now, the girls turned back home. They were hot and indignant, and they fervently hoped that Miss Bond wouldn't ask any awkward questions. Greatly as they scorned the boys' action, they did not want to sneak on them. And they knew, of course, that it had all been a carefully arranged conspiracy—a "come-back" at them for what had happened yesterday.

"In future, I think we'll leave raids alone," said Irene dismally as she sat in her study with Doris and Marjorie. "It doesn't pay for us to butt in!"

"And we thought we were so jolly clever yesterday, too," said Doris. "I wish we'd never touched that giddy hamper!"

They were in momentary fear that Miss Bond would send for them, and ask awkward questions. Of course, it would serve the boys right if the whole truth came out—and it was quite certain that Miss Bond would complain bitterly to Dr. Hogge, their headmaster. That would mean lickings all round—and more bad feeling.

"We asked for it," said Marjorie, "and we got it."

"Which all proves that the boys are one too many for us—much as we hate to admit it," said Doris dolefully.

The door opened abruptly, and Vera Wilkes entered. She wasn't really supposed to be there, for Vera was a day girl—in fact, the daughter of Mr. Alington Wilkes, of the Ancient House at St. Frank's. She was looking hot and excited.

"I say! I've heard about that River House raid on our cookery stuff," she said breathlessly. "Do you know what happened afterwards?"

"I hope we really *did* make some stodgy stuff this time, and that the boys are all ill!" said Irene promptly. "It would serve them right."

"I've just come from the village, and those River House boys have been taking the stuff round to the cottagers just the same as you would have done."

"What!" cried the others.

"It's a fact," said Vera. "Brewster and his lot haven't even a single cake or a single piece of pastry. They've distributed everything."

"Well, I'm blessed!" said Irene in an unladylike whisper. "I say, what duffers we are! We were spoofed up to the eyes, and we didn't even know it! I believe the whole thing was a jape from beginning to end."

"Looks like it," said Doris, her eyes

twinkling. "I wonder if the St. Frank's chaps were mixed up in it? Let's buzz along and ask them."

"Good idea!" cried the others.

And off they went, helter-skelter.

When they arrived at St. Frank's they found their schoolboy friends laughing uproariously in the Triangle. Hal Brewster and his merry men were there, too, laden with empty baskets and other receptacles.

"Hallo, girls!" said Hal, grinning. "It's a lucky thing you've turned up. We were on our way to bring these baskets and things back, and you've saved us the trouble."

"You awful spoofers!" said Irene breathlessly. "We thought you had taken all those good things for yourselves."

"Ahem! We're not quite so rash," murmured Hal.

"Cheese it! You know jolly well that the stuff is good," said Doris. "But we couldn't understand you robbing the poor. So it was all a jape, was it?"

"Don't blame us," said Ascott. "These St. Frank's chaps put us up to it."

"Exactly," said Nipper, smiling. "You see, we thought you girls needed a lesson—after yesterday. And we staged that little affair so that we could walk past and refuse to fight. Just our fun."

The girls laughed merrily.

"Well, you could have saved yourselves the trouble," said Irene blandly. "You silly donkeys, don't you understand that we were spoofing you, too?"

"Spoofing us?" asked Kirby Keeble Parkington. "You mean that you were spoofing us yesterday?"

"Of course we were, silly!"

"When you ragged us for fighting?" asked Handforth.

"We never meant to stay away from your party on Saturday, or to cut you, or anything," explained Irene. "In fact, we didn't think you'd 'fall' for it. But when you did we kept it up. If you ask me, it's honours even."

"In a way," admitted Nipper. "But there's one other little point. Forgive me for mentioning it, but are we to understand that it was only a spoof when you raided that hamper from young Willy and his fags?"

"No, that was the real thing," admitted Irene, with a chuckle. "And I must say, Ted, that your people know how to send hampers!"

Handforth sniffed.

"I thought there was a catch in it somewhere!" he said tartly. "All the rest was spoof—but raiding our hamper wasn't! My hamper, in fact! Dash it, it's a bit thick for you girls to start those sort of games."

"We thought it was topping," laughed Doris. "Give us the tip next time you have a hamper coming along, won't you, Ted? We'll see if we can't repeat the dose!"

Laughing heartily, Irene & Co. took their departure. The boys watched them go with mingled feelings. Hal Brewster chuckled.

"Well, thank goodness our school's two or three miles away from theirs!" he said, with feeling. "It's rough on you St. Frank's chaps, being so near."

"Rats!" said Nipper lightly. "The more they jape us, the better we shall like it—and don't forget that they have hampers occasionally. One of these days we'll have our revenge."

The other St. Frank's juniors echoed his sentiments. The keener the rivalry, the better they liked it.

THE END



FOOTBALL FLASHLIGHTS

Some "Illuminating" Notes on Rookwood Football
By George Bulkeley.

THE last football season was one of the best we have ever experienced at Rookwood. Both senior and junior elevens did remarkably well, and in the circumstances we may be excused for patting ourselves on the back, and blowing our own trumpet to the extent of a gentle blast!

* * *

THE First Eleven played 40 games (including mid-week matches) and won 30. There were five drawn games and five defeats. The goal average makes healthy reading, 122 goals being scored by us, against 57 by our opponents. Our biggest win was to the tune of 11—0 against Coombe Athletic; and our worst defeat was 0—7 at Greyfriars; but we lacked the services of Neville, one of our "stars," for the major portion of the game.

* * *

OUR victory of 11—0 over the village team by no means represents a record. When my uncle was captain of Rookwood, way back in the 'nineties, he helped to beat a school called Stonehouse by 19 goals to 1! It is true that Stonehouse did not field their strongest eleven on that occasion; but one trembles to think what the score might have been had they fielded their weakest! It would have been a cricket score!

OUR Junior Eleven, under the able leadership of Jimmy Silver, ran into form quite early in the season, and started winning matches in a manner that became monotonous — monotonous to their opponents, at all events. But Greyfriars stepped in and spoilt their winning sequence, even as they spoilt ours. I happened to referee the match in question, and it was anybody's game right up to the finish, when Wharton of Greyfriars dashed through and scored the winning goal for his side.

* * *

THE Junior Eleven played 38 matches; won 27, drew 6, and lost 5. Goals for, 105; goals against, 44. Jimmy Silver accomplished the "hat-trick" on three occasions—a "hat-trick of hat-tricks," so to speak; and Lovell and Tommy Dodd were also prolific scorers. Tom Rawson rendered yeoman service in goal.

* * *

THE annual junior match between Classicals and Moderns was fought out at a terrific pace, and Rookwood was all agog with excitement for ninety minutes on end! In the first half Tommy Dodd, Tommy Doyle, and Tommy Cook each scored a goal for the Moderns, and Jimmy Silver replied for the Classicals just before the interval. In the second half, with the wind behind them, the Classicals rallied in fine style, and Mornington netted twice. The score was 3—3 until a few minutes from the end, when Jimmy Silver won the match for the Classicals with a powerful drive from twenty yards out. It was a most memorable match. Bravo, the Classicals!



Robin Hood's Coup!

A thrilling old-time romance of the days of Robin Hood, telling how the outlaw chief of Sherwood Forest cleverly outwits King John in a matter of life and death.

THE FIRST CHAPTER

A Dispatch for the King.

"GRAMERCY! What have we here, my merry men?"

Robin Hood bounded to his feet, and, shading his eyes with one hand, peered down the road beside him in the glare of the setting sun.

Little John, Will Scarlet, and a dozen other outlaws had also leaped to their feet and were likewise staring down the road, which ran due west and east through Sherwood Forest. The spot lay about midway between King John's palace at Clipstone, in the heart of the forest, and Chesterfield, in the adjoining county of Derbyshire.

Well might Robin Hood and his companions gaze, amazed, down the road, for round a sharp bend in it had come a most curious sight—three men standing upon one another's shoulders in the form of a human ladder. The undermost was walking along with arms folded, without even staggering beneath the weight of his double burden.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Robin Hood. "They are tumblers, of course, making their way to Clipstone for the revels in the morning, and practising their tricks on the journey. I have a good mind to ask them to accompany us to our camp at Creswell, to entertain us with a performance to-night."

"We should have to blindfold them, chief," said Little John deprecatingly, "to prevent them betraying the place afterwards to King John's varlets."

He broke off as there came the rapidly

approaching sound of a horse galloping upon soft turf. Then out of the wood beside the human ladder burst a mounted man-at-arms. He rode straight at the tumblers, and must have ridden them down had not all three immediately jumped apart and out of his way.

Laughing derisively, the man-at-arms wheeled his horse and came on at unabated speed up the road towards the outlaws, who were hidden from him by the trees.

"That Norman boor cared not if he had killed or maimed those poor fellows," said Robin Hood. "He did it just to have the laugh of them. He sadly needs teaching a lesson, methinks. Stay you here, lads, until I call you!"

The man-at-arms was now close upon the hidden outlaws, and Robin sprang out right in his path.

"Stand! Whither away so fast, fellow?" he called out.

"Fellow in your teeth!" roared the horseman; and, quickly couching his lance, he rode full tilt at Robin.

The outlaw chief waited until the lance-point was within a couple of feet of his body, then skipped nimbly aside, whipping forth his sword as he did so. His trusty longbow was on his back, his quiver of clothyard shafts at his girdle.

The lance-point, being directed downward, struck the road just beyond him, and the rider was tumbled headlong out of the saddle with the force of the impact even as Robin seized and dragged upon the bridle. Releasing the horse promptly and calling to his men to secure it, the outlaw chief turned and planted a foot upon the soldier's breast.

"You are a Norman, I warrant, from your behaviour to poor Saxon folk. Yield, and be thankful I do not pin you to the earth with my sword for your attempt to spit me on your lance."

"Have a care, caitiff! Let me up and suffer me to continue my journey to Clipstone Palace. It boots of no delay, you malapert fool!" snarled the fallen man. "I am the bearer of a dispatch to King John himself from the Welsh Marches."

"Say you so? What is the burden of your dispatch, knave?"

"As if I would tell such as you! Who are you? You are a bold one to dare molest the King's messenger."

"I am Robin Hood of Sherwood. Methinks you will have heard of me."

"That pestiferous robber!"

"Civility, knave, if you value your life! Hither, lads, and search me this fellow for a dispatch he carries to King John."

In spite of the man-at-arms' alternate threats and protestations, Little John and Will Scarlet obeyed their leader's behest and speedily produced the dispatch from his wallet. Showing no respect for the imposing-looking seals upon it, Robin Hood slit it open with his dagger and unfolded it.

"So," he said, when he had read it, "this is the sign-manual of William de Stuteville, Lord Warden of the Welsh Marches, to the usurper John, acquainting the usurper that the Welsh have again risen in revolt under their prince, Llewellyn, and urging the instant execution of the twenty-eight Welsh hostages, in his custody at Nottingham Castle, in reprisal. Well, I trow the royal tyrant needs no such urging."

The three tumblers had now come up, and were standing by, looking on rather fearfully.

"Your mercy, kind sir," ventured one, "but you will be the famous Robin Hood, the defender of all poor, simple folk?"

"I am Robin Hood, and these are some of my merry men. You have nothing to fear from us. Pass on if you will; but see you tell no man of this meeting or my vengeance will surely overtake you."

"We will keep silent on the matter; never doubt it, good captain. We be tumblers, or strolling players, on our way to the revels at Clipstone to-morrow, to earn what we can with our tricks."

"Hark you, good fellows! Come with us to-night to our camp and entertain us with your tumbling, and, I promise, you will go to Clipstone in the morning with your pockets already well lined, and your stomachs also, for that matter."

"We will go with you gladly, good sir, and do our tricks for your entertainment. And none shall ever learn from us aught that can injure you," cried all three tumblers together eagerly.

"Ye must, howbeit, submit to being blindfolded," returned Robin, "along with our prisoner here. I trust none but sworn members of my company with the secrets of our haunts. Fear not, though; no harm will come to you. That I promise you on my honour."

"And 'tis well known you never broke your word yet to the gentle or simple, sir," cried the eldest tumbler. "Blindfold us by all means."

of flaring torches, safeguarded in their fastness by the cordon of sentinels and scouts thrown out. They treated their three guests and their prisoner, the Norman man-at-arms, to a feast fit for royalty itself, and were in turn entertained by the tumblers, who performed various acrobatic feats for their amusement.

For the most part, however, Robin Hood sat apart, thinking deeply, while his men and his guests enjoyed themselves. And



As Robin Hood skipped aside, the lance-point of the man-at-arms struck the road beyond, and he was flung from the saddle.

Still further to guard against betrayal of their camp, the foresters led their blindfolded guests and prisoner by a roundabout route, northward to Creswell Crags. Those romantic rocks were a favourite retreat of Robin Hood and his greenwood company, honeycombed as they were with deep caverns, ages old, in which snug quarters were to be had in wintertime or very wet weather.

In a deep ravine between the two high ranges of wooded cliffs the greenwood company held jolly revel that night by the light

when the revelry was at an end he called Little John, Will Scarlet and Friar Tuck aside.

The four walked down to the stream, which ran through the ravine, and strolled to and fro for some time beside the bank, talking very earnestly.

. . . . . .

"By the bones of my forefathers, but I shall act on De Stuteville's suggestion! I will show these Welsh rebels I am not to be trifled with. Varlet, ride forthwith to Not-

tingham Castle, give this ring to the governor, and tell him instantly to erect twenty-eight scaffolds in a row upon the ramparts, for the execution of the brats of the Welsh chiefs we hold as hostages. I will myself at once return to Clipstone, partake of noonmeat, and follow you to Nottingham thereafter.

"Yet, stay! I see no reason why I should abandon my day's diversion. Tell the governor to expect me in the forenoon to-morrow, when I will have the brats executed under my eyes."

The scene was a glade in Sherwood, not far from Clipstone, and the speaker, King John, who was hunting with a brilliant retinue. Before him knelt a man-at-arms, who had just ridden up to the party and delivered the intercepted dispatch from De Stuteville.

Receiving the signet ring, the messenger rose, sprang to horse again, and galloped off, due south, in the direction of Nottingham.

"Beshrew me," he muttered, when well out of hearing of any of the royal train, "but 'tis the first time I ever bowed the knee to the tyrant, and I trust it will be the last time, too. But I had to bemean myself to effect my purpose—to try to save those twenty-eight innocent young lives. By it I have got the usurper's signet ring as token I come from him, and so will readily be admitted to Nottingham Castle. And my name is not Robin Hood if I do not now achieve my object before to-morrow's sun rises, and carry off the whole twenty-eight young hostages to safety."

Nottingham at that period was enclosed by a strong wall, built within a moat thirty feet wide and twenty feet deep, on all sides but the east, where it was protected by marshy ground.

Entering unchallenged at one of the northern gates, the disguised Robin made his way up the steeply sloping streets to the Castle Hill. King John's signet ring promptly obtained his admission to the castle and an interview with the Norman governor.

"It is his royal highness's order that the twenty-eight young Welsh hostages you have here be at once confined to the dungeons until his coming, which will be some time to-morrow morning," said Robin.

Without replying, the governor stepped to an open window which overlooked the castle terrace, and, thrusting his head out, shouted:

"Arrest every one of those Welsh brats forthwith, and convey them to the cells below ground."

Robin Hood followed him to the casement, and looking forth, beheld the twenty-eight youths playing at various games. Some of them were mere children, and cried out in alarm and wept bitterly when they were seized by their guards, only too well realising that some dreadful doom was in store for them.

THE SECOND CHAPTER
In the Night!

IT was the midnight hour when Robin Hood, still in the guise of a man-at-arms, rose softly from the bench allotted him as a sleeping-place in the castle hall, and stole past the slumbering retainers around him out into the corridor. Quietly unbolting a side-door there, he slipped forth into the court.

He had doffed his heavy boots, and like a shadow he hurried round to where a low-browed iron door was deep sunk in a portion of the rock on which the castle stood. Three gentle taps he gave upon this door, when it was immediately opened from within, disclosing Little John, Will Scarlet, and two more of his band with drawn bows.

They at once recognized Robin and put up their bows.

"Call the others, Will," he breathed.

And Will Scarlet skipped back down the subterranean passage, to return in a moment at the head of a strong force of outlaws.

All had straw or hay bound round their boots to deaden the sound of their footsteps, and all, too, were armed with bows and swords.

"Follow me," ordered Robin Hood; and he led the way back to the side door.

Altogether, the band numbered fully seventy men. Inside the castle they all marched as silently as mice, and their leader conducted them to the stairs leading down

to the dungeons. These, like the subterranean passage they had come in by, were tunnelled in the solid rock.

Quickly the best pick-locks amongst them started operations upon the several dungeon-doors; and as the first of these rolled open, Robin Hood stepped across the threshold, whispering:

"Silence on your lives, my brave boys! We are here to rescue you. I am Robin Hood, and these are my men; so have no fear. You will have heard, even in your native Wales, I trow, of Robin Hood, the Outlaw of Sherwood."

"We have, indeed; and, if you be that noble Englishman, we know we are in safe hands," replied one of the six youths in the dungeon—a manly stripling of seventeen years of age. "I am David, son of Prince Llewellyn of North Wales, and this is my younger brother Griffin."

And he indicated a lad some two years his junior.

"Come softly, fair youths, and I will soon have you all safe out of this and in one of my snuggest retreats in merry Sherwood," said Robin. "Then it shall be my pleasant task to convey you with all speed and safety to your own country."

"Our blessings be on your head, kind sir!" huskily returned Prince David, as he and his companions followed the outlaw chief from the dungeon.

Little John, Will Scarlet, Allan-a-Dale, and others of the greenwood company, who, as usual, were all clad in Lincoln green, had meanwhile entered the other cells and reassured the youthful inmates.

Hurriedly now, all twenty-eight boys were marshalled and placed in the middle of their rescuers, being told to remove their boots or shoes and make no noise. Dark lanterns had been lighted with flint and steel as soon as the vaults were invaded. Taking one each in the left hand and gripping a short, double-edged sword in the right hand, Robin Hood and Will Scarlet put themselves at the head of the procession and led the way back up the steps to the ground floor, while the giant, Little John, and Allan-a-Dale, the harper, brought up the rear.

With such a strong force at his command—seventy men, all well armed and ready for action—Robin Hood might very easily have seized the castle there and then; for all in it, except the sentinels on the outer walls and at the gate, were fast asleep. In other circumstances, perhaps, he would not have hesitated to do so; but hampered as he was with the youthful Welsh hostages, it would have been the height of folly. The townspeople, mostly Normans, would sooner or later in such an event beleaguer him, cutting off his retreat; and, moreover, it was highly essential he should get the young hostages away as quickly as possible to a safe retreat, whence they might be transported at leisure and secretly to their kinsfolk.

Discretion, therefore, was the order of the moment, and stealth was enjoined upon all until they should have negotiated the subterranean passage in the hill and were well away from the castle, if not within the friendly shelter of Sherwood Forest itself.

Silently they all filed along the ground-floor corridor, blowing out their dark lanterns ere issuing into it, and passed through the open side door into the court.

They were closely hugging the walls of this, and Robin Hood and Will Scarlet were within a few strides of the yawning mouth of the secret passage, when the shrill blast of a warder's horn smote the brooding silence of the night, rousing all the slumbering echoes of fortress, town, and cliff.

A sentinel had espied the long triple line of moving shadows stealing so soundlessly round the court, and, filled though he was with superstitious terror at the sight—taking them all, as he did, for ghosts—he yet had the sense of duty to wind his horn and alarm the castle.

"Confusion!" snapped Robin Hood. "We are discovered. Quick, Will, see to the children! Get them and the men here down the subterranean galleries with all speed. I go to join Little John and Allan-a-Dale, and help cover the retreat." And he darted away back along the line.

Will Scarlet hastily bade the men near to follow him with the young hostages, as fast as

they could, inside the secret passage, and down it.

The children needed no urging. Inside the rocky cavern they scampered, the foresters preventing any blind panic, however, and keeping them in something like order.

Hewn in the solid rock of the hill in bygone times by the ancient inhabitants of Nottingham, the cavern wound down just within the face of the precipice, showing here and there an embrasure cut through to the open air.

Lighted lanterns had been left by the foresters within the passage in case of just such an emergency, and picking these up, Will Scarlet and those with him were enabled to guide their terrified young charges safely down to the outlet, beside the road near the little River Leen, at the foot of the precipice. This lower exit was concealed by a wild growth of bushes. Just within the outlet were some ten more outlaws, under the command of sturdy Friar Tuck, waiting with some thirty horses, saddled and bridled, to mount the youthful hostages upon. And hidden all around outside, extending to the marshes on the east side of the castle and town, were at least a score more of Robin Hood's band, under the leadership of Much the miller's son.

In quick rotation the children were set upon the horses. Then a forester mounted behind each, and, led by Friar Tuck, the cavalcade dashed away at top speed round the foot of the cliff towards the marshes eastward.

Will Scarlet remained behind with such men as had not been accommodated with mounts, to help Robin Hood and the rearguard to cover the flight, with the support of Much and his party.

Robin Hood, Little John and Allan-a-Dale were the last three to descend the subterranean passage. They were about half-way down it when the light of torches came flashing along in their wake, accompanied by echoing shouts in Norman-French of:

"Follow! Follow! Death to the scurvy intruders! They are carrying off the Welsh hostages. Our very lives depend on their recovery. King John will exact a terrible revenge upon us if we lose them!"

With the crush in the narrow gallery the



outlaw chief and those with him forming the rearguard could not hope to outstrip their pursuers.

"Stand, men!" ordered Robin Hood, just after rounding a curve of the cavern. "Only four of you, that is, as well as Little John, Allan and myself. Three will kneel to shoot, and the four others will shoot over. The rest of you there get ahead as smartly as you can!"

The leading pursuers burst round the curve, brandishing blazing torches and flashing spears. On the instant the seven bows twanged in rapid succession, and almost as many Norman soldiers fell in a heap, impeding those behind, some of whom tumbled over them, increasing the barrier.

Nevertheless, about half a dozen of the pursuers managed to get over it, but only to be shot down with a second flight of arrows. On that, their comrades pushed their way back by main force round the curve, out of sight again.

"Run now, every man!" cried Robin, springing to his feet once more. "Run until you overtake your fellows, then face about again!"

With the way cleared for some distance by their diversion, the seven had only to turn at bay once more and repeat their defence, round another curve, before reaching the exit of the subterranean passage.

There they broke and ran their fastest round the cliff-foot, their comrades, under Will Scarlet and Much, covering their flight by such showers of arrows from the adjoining swamps that it was death for a would-be pursuer to show himself outside the cavern-mouth.

Robin Hood, Little John and Allan-a-Dale, with their four companions, were given horses by some of Much's detachment, and, joined by about half its number, who also had mounts, galloped hard after Friar Tuck's cavalcade. This was in



The outlaws' bows twanged in rapid succession as the pursuers charged forward, and a number of the soldiers fell to the ground.

case Tuck had been intercepted by unlooked-for foes. The safety of the twenty-eight young hostages was of paramount importance; and the outlaw chief knew well that the division left behind, with Much and Will Scarlet, could look after itself. Everything was done according to plan.

Only when Robin Hood and those accompanying him were out of sight round the hill, to the north, did Much wind his horn for his men and Will Scarlet's to desist shooting at the passage-outlet and seek their own safety.

But, well disciplined as they were, and bound to one another by the closest ties of brotherhood, the foresters under Much and Will did not flee incontinently after their comrades. They drew off from the scene—that was all—fell back along the paths through the swamps.

Still keeping their faces turned towards the foemen, they retreated in good order, wheeling about ever and anon to send another flight of arrows as a warning that it would not do to press them too closely.

Owing to the flurry of the sudden alarm, the Normans were mainly armed only with spears and swords, and had few crossbowmen amongst them. They, therefore, did not follow up the fugitives with any great ardour; and these, being scattered over the marshes and ever on the move, presented indifferent marks in the darkness, which soon swallowed them up.

All safely reached the shelter of Sherwood, and Robin Hood had the satisfaction of knowing that he had brought off his grand *coup*, and once more frustrated the brutality of King John, without the loss of a single member of his band.

Much and Will Scarlet overtook the rest of the company under their beloved leader just within the depths of the forest. Amid the utmost jubilation the whole reunited party marched leisurely back to the camp at Creswell Crags. There, safe from all chance of recapture by the baffled myrmidons of King John, the young hostages were regaled at a grand feast by their outlaw host, and were afterwards shown to equally welcome couches within the caves.

Knowing that all the roads to Wales must be closely guarded by King John's orders, when he learned of how his meditated vengeance had been foiled, Robin Hood kept the children at Creswell for over a week, entertaining them with feats of archery and other sports. But he sent trusty messengers to Prince Llewellyn, to relieve their kinsfolk of all anxiety on their account, as well as to arrange where they were to be met.

The very next evening after their rescue, the giant, Little John, came to Robin, consumed with merriment.

"Captain, would you believe?" he said, his great shoulders shaking with his mirth. "King John was so enraged at being balked of his looked-for revenge upon the noble Welsh children that he had twenty-eight dummies, dressed to look like them, hanged in a row upon the walls of Nottingham Castle this afternoon. Needless to add, the secret is being well kept by the garrison, and everyone in the town believes he has actually hanged the children."

"I marvel much," rejoined Robin, "that he did not string up twenty-eight men of the garrison itself, including its governor, to mark his vengeful fury the more. But doubtless he thought better than to do so, knowing how few retainers he can safely count on, even amongst the Normans themselves."

Robin Hood and his entire greenwood company escorted their youthful guests safely to the Welsh border, travelling on horseback by night and lying snugly hidden during the day in coppices or lonely mountain defiles. They passed through the Peak district of Derbyshire, and thence through the southern part of Cheshire into Denbighshire, or North Wales.

Prince Llewellyn's men met them at Wrexham, and cordial indeed were the farewells of the youths and their friends to the gallant outlaw chief and his band.

The End

A CYCLING TRAGEDY!

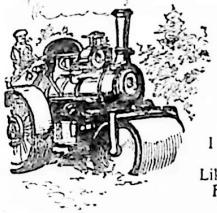
by MICKY DESMOND.



"TOM BROWN, Tom Brown, lend me your new bike
All-along, down-along, out-along lea;
For a holiday spin to the seaside I'd like
With Wharton, Tom Merry, and cheery Bob Cherry,
Dick Russell, Dick Rake, Jimmy Silver, Jack Blake,
Horace Coker, the joker, and Skinner, the sinner,
Old Uncle Pete Toddy and all!"

"And when shall I see again my new bike?
All-along, down-along, out-along lea."
"By the end of the Vac.—if I ever get back,
With Wharton, Tom Merry, and cheery Bob
Cherry," etc.

So with Browney's consent, like a whirlwind I went
All-along, down-along, out-along lea;
With a whirring of wheels, I flew hard on the heels
Of Wharton, Tom Merry, and cheery Bob
Cherry, etc.



With a smile and a song, I went skimming along,
All-along, down-along, out-along lea;
Till a steam-roller loomed, and I shouted, "I'm
doomed!
So are Wharton, Tom Merry, and cheery Bob
Cherry," etc.

I swerved left and right, then I shot out of sight,
All-along, down-along, out-along lea.
Like a demon I darted, and found myself parted
From Wharton, Tom Merry, and cheery Bob
Cherry, etc.



I jammed on the brake as I saw a vast lake,
All-along, down-along, out-along lea;
Then head-over-heels I went hurtling, with squeals
Of "Wharton! Tom Merry! and cheery Bob
Cherry!" etc.



In a horrified trance, I gave a last glance
All-along, down-along, out-along lea.
In the mud of the mere did I then disappear,
Without Wharton, Tom Merry, and cheery Bob
Cherry, etc.

My cries of distress could be heard, I confess,
All-along, down-along, out-along lea.
I was hauled to the bank and for this I must thank
Harry Wharton, Tom Merry, and cheery Bob
Cherry, etc.



When I came home again, I travelled by train
All-along, down-along, out-along lea;
And, shure as I'm Michael, no more will I cycle
With Wharton, Tom Merry, and cheery Bob Cherry,
Dick Russell, Dick Rake, Jimmy Silver, Jack Blake
Horace Coker, the joker, and Skinner, the sinner,
Old Uncle Pete Toddy and all!

A.D. 1999!



By
BERNARD GLYN
(The inventor of the St. Jim's Shell Form.)

Bernard Glyn's inventive brain has in no wise failed him in this unusual yarn of St. Jim's sixty-eight years hence!

THE FIRST CHAPTER
Rip Van Skimpole!

SKIMPOLE woke up!

It was dizzy, unnatural awakening, unlike anything he had ever experienced before. He had quite a job to recall who he was for a moment. Then he wondered where he was, and after that, how long he had been asleep.

Suddenly it all came back.

He was in one of the secret underground passages underneath St. Jim's. He had found it whilst exploring on his own, and recollected ruminating on the history of the School and the amazing variety of scenes that the old buildings had witnessed in the past. Then a strange tiredness had come over him, and he had lost consciousness.

Skimpole blinked up dizzily.

Then he jumped.

Someone was bending over him—someone with penetrating eyes and an expressionless face, who wore a metallic skull-cap and strange, unfamiliar clothes.

"Awake?" asked the stranger.

"Yes, my good fellow. But—but who are you?"

"Well, who are you?" retorted the stranger. "You look as if you belong to nineteen-thirty-one, or thereabouts!"

"Eh? Of course I belong to nineteen-thirty-one. This is nineteen-thirty-one, isn't it?" asked Skimpole.

The stranger stared.

"Nineteen-thirty-one?" he repeated. "But surely you know that this is nineteen-ninety-nine?"

"What?" shrieked Skimpole.

The stranger eyed Skimpole attentively for a minute. Then a low whistle escaped him.

"What is your name?" he asked.

"I am Herbert Skimpole!"

"Heavens! Then you must be the same Skimpole—the one that belonged to the School sixty-eight years ago! I have read of you in old books."

"But—but my good fellow, it is only a couple of hours since I left the quadrangle—"

"There is no quadrangle at this school

now, Skimpole. It was built on fifty years ago! Don't you realise what has happened? You have been in a trance for two-thirds of a century!"

Skimpole gasped.

"You are mad—you are deceiving me——"

"Come!" said the stranger. "You will see for yourself. I will show you St. Jim's as it is to-day!"

"But who are you?" demanded the bewildered genius of the 1931 Shell of St. Jim's.

"I am Pupil 8906 in the School! Come!"

Skimpole came. He was too flabbergasted to do anything else.

He followed Pupil 8906 through the concealed door he remembered finding before he had fallen asleep, and along innumerable dark passages and chambers till they reached a flight of steps leading to a dim kind of daylight.

Skimpole came out into the open air and looked round him and gasped.

Gone were the grey walls and latticed windows of the St. Jim's he had known. In their place were glittering white buildings that towered up to the sky. At least, Skimpole supposed it was the sky, though very little could be seen of it on account of the flocks of silent aeroplanes that whizzed by in unending procession overhead, turning day almost into night.

"Still think you are in nineteen-thirty-one?" asked Pupil 8906.

"Nunno. But I am staggered—overwhelmed!" gasped Skimpole. "I must accept the fact that I have been in a trance for sixty-eight years, but really——"

"Let me show you over the School, and you'll see if you notice any difference——"

"I already notice a thousand differences, my dear fellow!" cried Skimpole, staring round him with fascinated eyes. "Dear me! The walls of these buildings are all covered with moving electric signs! And—and they are actually talking! Listen!"

"BUY SMITH'S ELECTRIC BRAIN ADAPTER AND LEARN GREEK IN AN HOUR!" thundered out one large electric sign representing a boy with an enormous head smiling cheerfully as twinkling streams of light marked "KNOWLEDGE" poured into him.

"TAKE TROTTER'S HALF-DAY TRIPS TO THE EQUATOR!" roared out another brilliant sign depicting a moving aeroplane crowded with excursionists gazing down on a land of lakes and palm-trees.

There were scores of these animated talking advertisements, and Skimpole could have stayed there for hours watching them. But Pupil 8906 was anxious to show him the interior of the new and amazing St. Jim's.

"You'll see more interesting things than these if you follow me, Friend Skimpole," he said. And he quickly redeemed his promise.



In the Form-room the boys wore steel skull-caps, all wired to a gadget in the ceiling. A strange phosphorescent figure was lecturing them.

THE SECOND CHAPTER
Back to 1931!

THE pair stepped on to the drive leading to the main building. Skimpole found, to his surprise, that it was a moving drive running on concealed rollers, and that they were carried along to the building without having the trouble of walking.

Up the moving steps into the school they went.

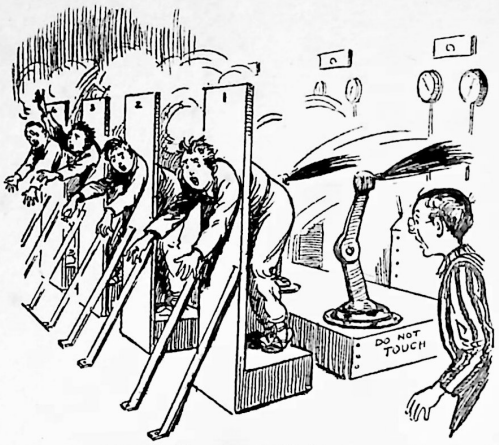
"Like to see the football?" asked Skimpole's guide.

"Most decidedly. But we shall have to go out again—"

Pupil 8906 laughed.

"I have heard before that you used to play football in the open-air in your day. Nowadays, of course, every inch of land has been built on, so we play indoors under artificial sunlight. Come."

He led the way into a big hall, and Skimpole jumped. Instead of the spectacle of twenty-two players which he had anticipated, what actually confronted him was a vision of some hundreds of boys all connected up by wires to huge electrical dials, kicking away for all they were worth—at nothing!



A depressing sight met Skimpole in the Birching-room. A number of fellows were fixed in pillories, and were yelling with pain as the electric birches smote them.

"But—but where is the ball?" asked the astonished Skimpole.

"Ball? Oh, of course! I forgot to tell you that the ball was abolished years ago. Nowadays the players are all wired up to electrical recorders, and the strength and number of their kicks are shown on the dials. More economical in space, you see—five hundred at a time play in this hall. But follow me; there is lots more to see. I will show you a Form-room."

The wondering visitor from the past left the football-room and followed his host into a lift, and they were whirled dizzily through a dozen floors. Emerging, they were carried by an express floor through several passages to a door marked "Form-room No. 436."

They stepped off into the Form-room.

A score of boys were seated at desks, their steel skull-caps being wired like the footballers' had been. In front of the Form stood a strange phosphorescent figure lecturing apparently on the History of the War with Mars.

Skimpole clutched his guide's arm.

"Surely, my good chap," he whispered, "that master is not real?"

Pupil 8906 shook his head.

"No, Skimpole. He is a television figure, transmitted from a Central Teaching Department. The same figure lectures in hundreds of Form-rooms at the same time."

Skimpole glanced at the silent Form in surprise.

"It's a wonder the Form is so attentive without a real master——"

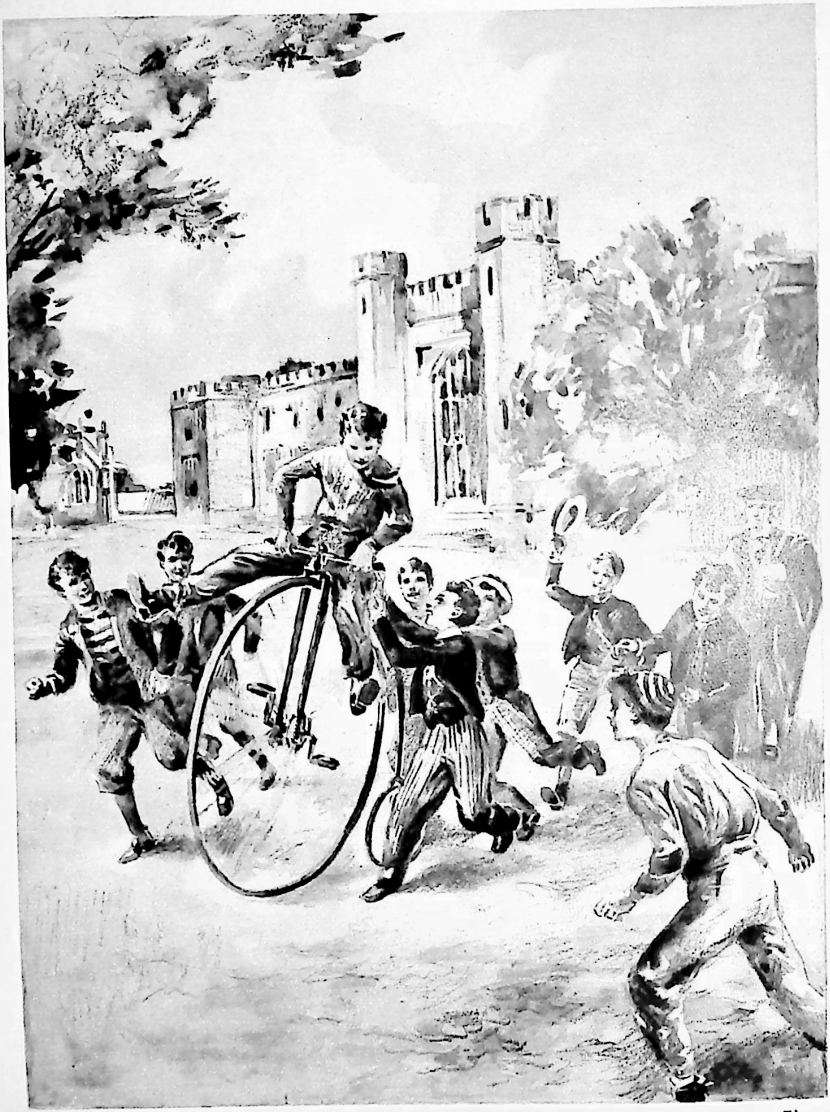
The 1999 schoolboy chuckled.

"It would go hard with them if they were not. You see those wires leading from their heads? They record each boy's thoughts, which are transmitted to the Central Discipline Signal Boxes. As soon as anyone is seen to be inattentive the Discipline foreman communicates by wireless with his desk and orders him to the Electric Birching-room. Perhaps you would like to see it?"

Skimpole signified agreement, and they went back to the lift and were whirled up another twenty storeys.

On the way Pupil 8906 pointed out the tuckshop—a room like a chemical laboratory where food was supplied in the form of compressed tablets—and the dormitories, which consisted of halls where pupils were given five minutes of concentrated sleep every day.

These wonders interested Skimpole deeply.



Facing page 225

HA

THE FIRST BICYCLE AT ST. JIM'S

The First Bicycle at St. Jim's!

THE old quad. at St. Jim's has looked on at some wild scenes during its history, but for sheer, break-neck excitement it would be hard to beat the day when the first bicycle made its appearance at the school.

Front wheel every inch of five feet in height, back one little bigger than a football; tires of solid rubber that were about as soft as cast iron, and a tiny saddle that jolted the spine at every bump—these were the main "attractions" of the brand-new bike that arrived one bright morning at St. Jim's, addressed to Dickinson minor of the Fourth.

No boy could have been more delighted than young "Dicky" was when he unpacked his "bone-shaker," a surprise present from an indulgent uncle; and he resolved to try it at once.

Putting that resolve into operation, however, was by no means simple. But with the help of other juniors Dicky at last found himself perched precariously on his mount and ready to start. Pedalling was out of the question; the Fourth-Former's feet were at least six inches away from the pedals. Still, his grinning chums were only too willing to push him round, and off they went, a whooping, yelling crowd that brought wondering fellows from all directions.

Clinging on like a leech, legs swinging wildly in the air, Dickinson and his bike shot across the quad. at a pace that simply asked for trouble. And it wasn't long in coming. A stern figure in cap and gown suddenly appeared on the scene, and Dicky's helpers let go the bike as if it had become red hot. Careering on at full-tilt, its rider helpless, the bone-shaker crashed head-on into the first obstruction in its path—the wall of the Head's garden!

Crash! Feet first through the glass of a cucumber frame on the other side went Dicky, while the bike dropped back with a final clang.

On that memorable day the fiat went forth that, under pain of direful penalties, no more bicycles were to be ridden in the quadrangle of St. Jim's.

But he was more moved than interested when he came to the Electric Birching-room. Here were hundreds of pillories into which culprits were placed to receive castigation from the electric birch. Yells of pain were echoing all round the room, mixed with the steady rhythmical swishing of hundreds of electrically controlled birches operated by one overalled mechanic.

Rather glad to get away from such a distressing scene, Skimpole followed his guide to the Concentrated Knowledge Hall, where scores of pupils were sitting in electric chairs in a state of coma, having knowledge injected into their brains from huge electric motors.

Then Pupil 8906 suggested that they paid a visit to the Head.

One more journey in an express lift to the eightieth floor and they were in his sanctum. And Skimpole got the greatest shock of all.

For instead of the venerable gowned and capped figure he had expected to meet, all Skimpole could see was a glittering piece of machinery which hummed and roared and revolved in a great state of animation.

"W-w-where is the Head, then?" stuttered Skimpole.

Pupil 8906 pointed to the machine.

"There he is, of course. It's a machine-controlled school now, you see. Barring one or two lecturers and a few mechanics there are no men in the school. Now, look here; about your joining St. Jim's again——"

"I don't want to join St. Jim's again!" shouted Skimpole. "Bother 1999! Give me back 1931!"

With that he rushed to the lift and was immediately shot down eighty floors, then down still farther till he was back again in the old secret passage from which he had started.

There, strangely enough, he immediately felt that peculiar tiredness come over him again.

And when he awoke for the second time it was to find, to his great relief, that he had returned to 1931. Rushing back to the open air, he saw the old ivy-covered buildings and green fields just as they had been originally.

It had only been a dream, after all.

THE END

The TUCKSHOP DAME!

by Dick Penfold.



UNDER the elm-tree's leafy shade
"Ye Olde School Tuck shoppe" stands,
Where many a tempting tart is made
By good Dame Mimble's hands.
In happy pride she doth preside
To deal with our demands.

Her hair is long and silver-grey,
Not bobbed in modern style;
And on her pleasant face doth play
An ever-pleasant smile,
Till Bunter starts to beg free tarts,
And then it drops a mile!



Week in, week out, from morn till night,
She's cooking at her range;
Dispensing tarts for our delight,
Or counting out our change.
Without her pies to charm our eyes,
Life would be sad and strange.



And schoolboys, coming out of class,
Flock in at the open door;
They love to quaff the foaming glass
And gobble buns galore,
Or eat ice cream as in a dream,
Then clamour loud for more!

She goes each Thursday to the town,
Her weekly spell of leisure;
And spends a well-earned half a crown
On simple, harmless pleasure.
And when we see "SHOP CLOSED
TILL TEA!"
Our sadness who can measure?





Toiling, rejoicing, sorrowing,
Onward through life she goes;
But draws the line at borrowing,
As Billy Bunter knows!
With a sullen scowl the thwarted Owl
Goes forth to air his woes!

Thanks—thanks to thee, my worthy dame,
For the lesson thou dost teach.
With merry hearts to play life's game,
And a sunny smile for each.
May your happy reign o'er the tuck domain
Far into the future reach!

A Delightful Nature Story *By CLIVE R. FENN*



FIXING THE BLAME

FOR long past there had been serious trouble at Rampsfield Farm. It may have been that to the outside world everything jogged along placidly enough, but appearances are very frequently deceptive, and so it was here. The farmer's wife had counted the ducklings, of which she had many, time and time again, but there was always a lamentable shortage. At first she fancied that No. 7 or No. 8 had meanly ducked, as by nature, and out of sheer wickedness had chosen to be counted twice.

However the matter was, ducklings ran short, and the evil circumstance was carried through to the next day—and the next.

Mysteriously duckling after duckling disappears from Rampsfield Farm, and Timmins, the cat, is the suspect, until Rollover, her son, decides to investigate . . . .

The obvious thing was to fix the blame, and Mrs. Panton, the farmer's wife, who ran the farmyard, and did it well, looked round for the thief who was depopulating her run. Her ducks were famous in all that countryside, and customers who were keen on duck and green peas booked their orders early.

The good woman said it must be the cat. The cat on the staff was Timmins, a thoroughly reliable mouser, and quite equal to making a buck rat sorry he had met her. Timmins had a reputation of the best. Her young family, six in all, was now growing up to mouse-snaffling age. Timmins was a lump of blinking, furry equanimity and did not look capable of any bad action. Moreover, she had the run of the menu in a certain bucket of "stuff" in the yard. You might almost as well have suspected a millionaire of pinching odd coppers out of a collecting plate as suggesting that Timmins descended so low as to gobble an occasional plump young duckling.

When it became quite clear that Timmins was suspected the fat was fairly in the fire. Timmins herself blinked as usual with the mild air of one supremely conscious of rectitude. Slander fell off from her as water from a duck's back. She was inwardly hurt, but too proud to resent the absurd injustice, or to bring an action for libel. She did nothing; merely sat in her accustomed place at the farmhouse door, and winked pleasantly at the sunshine, feeling she had earned her time of repose.

Boxer, the retriever (too old now to retrieve), who seldom went more than a dozen yards from his kennel, being old and sleepy, felt the business pretty much, for he and Timmins had grown up together and, as youngsters, had chevied each other through the brick

yard as far as the plum-tree on the stable wall, up which a far younger Timmins had streaked when pressed too hard.

Nobody liked the peace of the place to be disturbed. Everybody talked of the sad happening. Incidentally, the crowd of ducklings continued to decrease. That was disquieting, say what you will. The ducklings got panicky. It is not pleasant to think that one morning some companion will be *non est*, just missing, vanished into thin air—or elsewhere.

And Rampsfield was no longer the same place. The little river continued to run down to the sea—or, rather, to the marsh, where it was taken in charge by a bigger waterway; Mrs. Panton went on being huffy to Timmins; there was no longer the same response when the old cat rolled at her feet, or rubbed its chin on her shoe.

Luckily, Rollover took the matter up. He was Timmins' eldest son, a smart youngster, who was about to take up an appointment at the next farm up the tiny river. He had ratriculated, and was regarded generally as a coming cat.

It was his self-appointed job to watch by the old bucket in the yard, for he felt that the thief must come that way. In fact, there was no other means of reaching the wired entrenchments of the ducklings—so far as he knew. He felt certain that the wrongdoer was a rat.

Rollover was not really big enough to tackle a rat, but he thought he was, and sometimes it comes to the same thing.

The first night he watched by the bucket nothing happened for a long time. The cat may have fallen asleep as he crouched in the shadow, but of a sudden he was wideawake, every sense keen and taut, for he heard a curious little rustle, then a clawing on the smooth cobbles of the yard.

What was it? The cat made a grab at a dark object. He felt something soft, but the marauder, whoever he happened to be, was elusive, and had faded out like lightning. There was nothing there—nothing, that is, more than a clawful of funny looking brown hair, which Rollover examined in the morning, but could not track down to any animal he had ever met. Still another duckling missed roll-call that morning!

The following night it was bright moonlight, but the cat took up his watch notwithstanding.

He had not long to wait this time. A quaint long brown object darted into the yard, making straight for the shed where the ducklings were housed. The cat was too busy to think then, but he knew that he was in the presence of the slinking enemy, and he made a spring.

The stranger was an otter from a snug bank in the riverside a quarter of a mile distant. This otter had grown a bit weary of a fish diet, and, owing to one or two unlucky incidents with the otter hounds, he had felt it was time to look elsewhere than the water for his food.

The brown otter was amazed at the onslaught. He felt a huge contempt for his adversary, who was a cat, not much more than a kitten; but as the robber rolled on his back with his antagonist on top, he felt that there would be no duckling that night. The cat scratched, kicked and bit. The otter was in a flurry, and naturally nervous. He had a dab from the cat's right paw on the chin, then a left-hander which enraged him. After that the fur began to fly. Rollover was here, there and everywhere else, and the foe did not know what to make of it all, for his life had been a quiet one by the side of the river—and in it—keeping himself to himself.

But he had to fight. The two contestants rolled this way and that, with the cat making brilliant sallies, and showing right excellent strategy in retreat. Rollover was hopelessly outmatched by the otter, who had a quick way with him, being here, there and somewhere else at the same time; but nevertheless the marauder suffered considerable damage from the claws of puss. The antagonists fought on regardless of all besides, but without question the fight would have gone to the thief from the river, this wretched robber of the duck yard, had not the otter come down suddenly on his back, and rolled to that side of the yard where the trusty, though sleepy Boxer had been observing the struggle through half-closed eyes, like a lazy spectator in a front seat at a show.

As a rule Boxer dozed, but he was very much on the alert now as he saw the otter



Rollover made a spring and landed on the otter, who was so amazed at the sudden onslaught that he rolled over on his back.

lurch towards him. The big retriever never had thought much of otters, and the occasion was altogether too good to be missed. So Boxer gave a snap, and had he done what he intended doing, without a doubt that otter would have been out of the fight and have said farewell to pleasant fishing days all in one. But the intruder saw what was coming. He had had a jacketing from the cat, but Rollover had had his share of punishment as well.

Boxer's snap failed signally of its purpose. The otter saw what was coming and gave a leap. If Rollover had felt a bit fresher he would have gone in again and the otter's tale would have ended differently. As things were, the otter scored. With a movement which resembled lightning the little animal whirled itself clear of the fat retriever, and whisked off to safety.

Boxer gave a husky bark of contempt and turned in once more. Rollover blinked. He had not got another scratch in him.

In the morning the farmer's wife found odd bits of the sad tail of an otter in the yard, and formed her own conclusions. And indeed she realised that Rollover had been in the fight, and she gave him an extra saucer of milk; for, truth to tell, he was in a sorry plight. What was more, the good woman reproached herself for her unkind accusation against Timmins, who was promptly restored to favour.

Boxer was far too dignified to put in any claim for a reward—say, an additional mutton bone. Rollover was fussed up, and felt mighty proud.

"Let the youngster have the glory," growled Boxer, as he chawed an old chop. "I'm too old for that sort of thing."

Which was a most reasonable and gallant view to take.

THE END

Our Incurable Interviewer Calls On

LORD MAULEVERER

(The slacker of the Greyfriars Remove.)



"THIS afternoon," said the Editor of the HOLIDAY ANNUAL, "you will oblige me by interviewing Lord Mauleverer, of the Greyfriars Remove."

I saluted smartly, rushed out into the street, got into the Ford-Rolls, hurtled madly through town and country to Greyfriars, tore up the School House stairs, and shot into Study No. 12, in the Remove passage.

"Lord Mauleverer in?" I inquired. "Ah! So you are taking your ease on the sofa, your lordship?"

Snore!

"I have come to interview you for the benefit of the readers of the HOLIDAY ANNUAL ——"

Snore!

"I know your time is valuable, and that you are an awfully busy sort of fellow——"

Snore!

"Possibly you would like to answer one or two questions, your lordship. Just so that I can be sure that you are fully awake, do you mind if I tweak your nose—like this?"

"Yoooooop! Ow! Oh, gad!"

"Awfully sorry, your lordship! Did I hurt you?"

"Yaas!"

"Careless of me! Now for the questions! First, would you care to tell the readers of the HOLIDAY ANNUAL your greatest ambition?"

"Yaas. To find a study where silly asses don't butt in on a man's forty winks!"

"'Hem! Second question: what sort of recreation does your lordship indulge in?"

"Sleep!"

"Your favourite place?"

"Ya-a-aw! Bed!"

"Your favourite author?"

Snore!

"No good! Nothing will wake up Mauly for more than two minutes at a time!" came a laughing voice from the doorway.

I turned round and recognised Sir Jimmy Vivian, the languid aristocrat's study-mate. Sir Jimmy shook his head when I explained my mission.

"That's all you'll get out of Mauly today, take it from me!" he said. "Why not give it up, and come with me for a snack in the tuck-shop and a trot round the School?"

It was an excellent suggestion, and under Sir Jimmy's wing I spent several very enjoyable hours "doing" Greyfriars.

It was quite late when I left the old School. On my way out, to my utter amazement, I saw Lord Mauleverer racing up the stairs as though he had suddenly received a powerful charge of electricity.

"Your lordship——" I cried.

But Mauly had already passed me like a flash.

"Can't stop, old bean!" he gasped. "It's bed-time!"

THE END

My Little Mistake!



A Humorous Complete Story of Rookwood School.
Written by CLARENCE CUFFY
(The Simpleton of the Modern House.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER
Dear Thomas's Good Deed.

I AM a most unfortunate youth. Dreadful! Sometimes I think, dear readers—though it sounds wicked to say so—that my gentle manner and kind heart are taken advantage of by some of my sweet playfellows. Ah! I shudder as I write those terrible words; but really, really——

I shall not easily forget the time when dear James Towle persuaded me to place a frog in the desk of my Form-master, a somewhat short-tempered gentleman named Manders. Dear James informed me that Mr. Manders had been complaining of the number of flies in his desk, and he—dear James—said that frogs were noted for the way they devoured flies. If only Mr. Manders had the frog in his desk, he would never be troubled by flies again.

I therefore inserted the amphibian in the master's desk, nothing doubting that Mr. Manders would be overwhelmed by gratitude. Unfortunately, however, the misguided creature flew into Mr. Manders' eye when the desk was opened, and this put the master somewhat out of temper. To cut a long story short, I was the reluctant recipient of six strokes of the cane upon a spot which considerations of modesty prevent me from making public.

I should have put the whole affair down to an accident had not dear James come forward and told Mr. Manders that he had prevailed upon me to put the grotesque creature in the desk by way of a joke. My eyes were opened, dear readers. I gave dear James a short lecture—a mere two or three hours of it—and I think he is converted now.

The last person in Rookwood whom I should have conceived of playing practical jokes was dear Thomas Dodd, the captain of the Form. But even here it seems that I was too sanguine. My eyes fill with tears, dear boys. Scalding tear-drops blind me as I write, but truth must be told at any cost. Dear Thomas Dodd is no better than anybody else.

I knew him when he was a sweet, angelic infant at Ganders Green. If anybody had told me then that he would play such a low and debased trick upon me as he did last week, I should have refused to believe it. But now—ah, me! I know it but too well.

This was how it happened, dear fellows.

It was nearly tea-time when I came in the study. In addition to dear Thomas and his two friends, James Towle and one or two other sweet youths were present. I beamed at them in a friendly way, and then I perceived that Thomas was holding a bottle in his hand.

"What is it, dear Thomas?" I asked. "Medicine?"

Thomas coughed.

"Ahem! Exactly!" he replied seriously.

"A very powerful medicine, in fact."

"That's very nice," I said. "But I didn't know there was anything the matter with you, Thomas."

"It's not for me—ass!" replied Thomas, in his pleasant way. "I'm going to do a good turn with this medicine. Ain't I, Towle?"

"Oh, rather!" giggled James, who is a somewhat frivolous youth.

"This medicine bucks you up, you know," went on Thomas. "It sort of makes you feel braced, if you understand. You want to roll on the floor in ecstasy, don't you, Towle?"

James shrieked.

"Ha, ha, ha! Oh, absolutely!"

If James said so, I thought, it must be true; for dear James is very fond of chemistry, and knows a lot about it. He is always experimenting in the laboratory, and many a time he has made fearful concoctions which give off most unpleasant smells.

"What are you going to do with the tonic?" I asked Thomas.

"I'm going to give it to our dear little playfellows over in the Classical House," answered Thomas. "I am sure Silver and Lovell and Mornington and the rest will benefit by it."

I beamed with joy. This—this was kind-heartedness itself. For dear Thomas Dodd and dear James Silver were rivals. The two Houses, my dear fellows, are always engaging in friendly rivalry, and to my mind there is a danger that such things will run to real enmity.

"This is noble of you, Thomas," I said, with moist eyes. "I am so proud of you, my dear fellow."

Thomas coughed again.

"Quite so!" he nodded. "But the fact is, Cuffy, I don't want dear James and the rest to know who gives them this tonic. I don't want them even to know they are taking it. We want to hide our lights under a peck, you know——"

"A bushel, dear Thomas!"

"I meant a bushel. So we've decided to ask you to administer this medicine to the Classics."

Can you picture my joy and gratification. my dear fellows? I was overwhelmed with honour.

"Dear Thomas, this is splendid of you," I said, and nearly wept. "But why pick on me, my dear fellow?"

"Well, the fact is," said Thomas cautiously, "if any Modern man went into the Classical passage, he would be booted out. But they won't take any notice of you. You're well known to be a bit potty—I mean, to be so friendly and kind-hearted."

"Very good, dear Thomas," said I, taking the bottle. "But how am I to give it to them without them knowing it?"

"Put it in their tea."

"In their tea?"

"Yes. We want you to go along the Classical passage and put one spoonful of this stuff in every Classical tea-pot you can find."

"But they'll see me doing it, surely, dear Thomas."

Thomas paused, and it seemed to me that he eyed me cautiously.

"We've thought of that," he said slowly. "So we've thought out a little scheme to get them out of the way. We'll wait until they are all at tea, and then we'll stand under their windows and—and sort of invite them to come out and play with us for a few minutes."

"Oh!"

"They'll all rush out of the House, and directly they are gone, you will nip into their studies and put one teaspoonful of the mixture into each tea-pot. See?"

He paused. The other juniors looked at me in a way I can only describe as wolfish. And I'm bound to say, my dear boys, that I considered the idea for some minutes in silence. It was so very extraordinary, if you understand me, that really I wondered what might lay behind it.

However, I overcame my fears and consented.

Thomas grasped my hand.

"You'll do it!" he choked, almost speechless with emotion.

"Certainly, dear Thomas!" I rejoined, with sparkling eyes.

At this point James Towle fell under the table and shrieked. He was black in the face

with laughter when he crawled out.

"It's the heat," explained Thomas Cook. "It's given him a slight touch of hysterics."

"Dear me!" I cried. "Poor James! Perhaps a little of this medicine might make him better."

"Don't you give me any of that stuff!" gasped Towle. "I made it, and I know what's in it!"

"Shut up, you ass!" admonished dear Thomas.

I shook my head sadly.

"I fear you are a little lightheaded, dear James," I said. "I will fetch you a little pill that has worked wonders with me."

I left the study to get it, but when I came back they had all disappeared.



Unfortunately the misguided frog flew into Mr. Manders' eye when the desk was opened.

THE SECOND CHAPTER

Making the Most of It.

As the clock struck four-thirty I secreted the precious bottle under my jacket and made my way over to the door of the Classical House. There was nobody about at the moment, and I wondered, my dear fellows, what had happened to my Modern playmates.

In five minutes they appeared. But in what a disgusting and degrading state! I gasp with shame as I write these words, but I must tell you all. They were carrying dear Reginald Muffin—a Classical fellow.

No doubt they meant it for the best. Perhaps dear Reginald was tired, and they were assisting him back to the school. But how careful they should be in that case. They should not, my dear friends, carry their passenger by his arms and legs, with his face turned to the ground. I understand it is termed a "frog-march." I should imagine that it cannot be very comfortable. Judging by dear Reginald's remarks, it was very uncomfortable indeed.

I was about to go forward and venture a gentle remonstrance, when they halted under the windows of the Classical studies and began, slowly and deliberately, to bump poor Reginald Muffin. Imagine my horror! They were deliberately bumping a poor schoolfellow.

Dear Arthur Lovell heard Muffin's cries,

and he looked out of his study window very indignantly—rightly so, in my opinion.

"You—you—you rotters!" bawled Arthur Edward Lovell, in what was almost a Hunnish voice. "Bumping one of our own men at his House door! Why, we'll spifficate you!"

I began to feel alarmed. I am unacquainted with the verb "to spifficate." I am sure we have never conjugated that verb in class. But the tone of dear Arthur's voice left me in no doubt that to be spificated was to be submitted to some very unpleasant process.

"Rescue, Classics!" roared dear Flynn from his window.

"The cheeky villains are bumping Muffin right outside our door!" shrieked Oswald.

"Mop them up!" roared somebody else.

"This way, you men!" came the voice of dear James Silver, the captain of the Form.

For a moment there was silence, except for the agonised yells of poor, dear Reginald Muffin. Then the staircase was full of wrathful fellows, and the whole of the Classical Fourth poured out into the quadrangle.

Ah, my dear fellows, I cannot write about the scene that followed! It was a dreadful—dreadful battle royal. A scene of riot and carnage such as I have never witnessed before. I could not stay to hear the cries of the injured ones. Stopping my ears with my fingers, and trembling with horror, I rushed up the stairs and made my way to the Fourth-Form passage.

Study after study was untenanted. In each tea-pot I dropped a little dose of that wonderful tonic, my eyes glistening with pride as I did so. It is, of course, very, very wrong to fight; but dear Thomas was doing it in a good cause, for when dear James and the other Classics returned to their studies their tea would contain a dose of a wonderful revitalising medicine.

Only in the study belonging to dear Cyril Peele did I meet with any opposition. Dear Cyril had not gone downstairs with the other juniors. He was having tea in his study. When I looked in at the door he did not wait to hear what I required. He merely picked up a large lexicon and flung it at me. The book caught me squarely on the nose. I was pained, my dear fellows—pained in the nose and in the bosom. I did not imagine dear Cyril was such a barbarian.

In all the other studies I dropped a dose of the mixture, and when I had finished I discovered to my delight that the bottle was still nearly half-full. Hiding it once more beneath my jacket, I made my way downstairs to the hall, where I found Mr. Dalton, the master of the Fourth, talking to Mr. Greely, the Fifth Form-master.

Mr. Greely has an exceptionally loud, booming voice, and I couldn't help hearing his remarks.

"The hot weather, my dear Dalton," he was saying, "affects my system powerfully. I am very susceptible to fatigue, and I grow tired and listless in this weather."

"I am the same, to a smaller degree," agreed Mr. Dalton. "A certain languor descends on one——"

"Exactly!"

"A weary, fatigued feeling——"

"You have taken the words out of my mouth, Dalton. What we really need is a strong, bracing tonic——"

I waited to hear no more, my dear fellows. A splendid idea had dawned upon me. Here was yet a further chance of doing a good turn. I moved away swiftly to Mr. Dalton's study.

The maid had just got his tea ready. The tea-pot was steaming gently on the hob. With a quick action I measured out a teaspoonful of the tonic, and poured it into the pot. Then I visited Mr. Greely's study, and treated his tea-pot in the same way.

As I came out, my friends, I paused. If Mr. Greely and Mr. Dalton were affected by the heat, no doubt all the other masters were in the same condition. I had plenty of tonic left. It would be a pitiful thing to waste it.

Mr. Wiggins was the only master in his study, so he was unfortunate. I could scarcely drop the mixture into his tea while he was still there. Into the tea-pots of Mr. Manders, Mr. Flinders, Mr. Mooney, and Mr. Bohun, however, a dose of the tonic was inserted carefully.

Then I made my way cautiously to the study of the headmaster, Dr. Chisholm. He was out. With my eyes glistening with gratitude, I treated his tea-pot in exactly

the same way.

When I issued forth into the quadrangle, the awful warfare was still in progress. Ah, how I yearned to stop the fight. But I dared not. Tempers were rising to such a pitch that I was really doubtful if the inflamed juniors would have paid any heed to me. Indeed—awful as it is—they might even have struck me in the violence of their anger. Terrible, blood-curdling cries were coming from the struggling juniors.

"Mop them up!"

"This way, Classics!"

"That's for your eye, Doddy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"



Todd and Cook held their waistcoats and moaned in agony, and Doyle dived under the table. "My dear fellows," I managed to cry, "what ever is the matter?"

My heart was nearly broken as I wended my way to my own House. Ah, dear readers, can you not sympathise with me? Can you not imagine that awful, horrible scene of enmity and bloodshed? To my certain knowledge noses were punched, and eyes were blackened. Indeed, later Thomas Dodd was wearing a much larger size in ears than is customary with him, and he said it was a present from Kit Erroll. And dear Kit, I know well, is as peaceable a youth as any in Rookwood. Is it not terrible when a savage temper breaks out?

I entered the study of dear Thomas, and was about to place the bottle upon the table, when I perceived that it was still a quarter full I thought it would be a shame to waste it.

"Would it not be pleasant," I smiled, "if dear Thomas and dear James and the other Moderns could also have a dose of the tonic they have so unselfishly given to their rivals?"

Filled with this noble idea, I went through the Modern House, dosing each tea-pot with the mixture. Then—when the stuff was all gone—I smiled in a whimsical way.

"After all," I said to myself, "the only junior in Rookwood—except dear Cyril Peele—who loses his share in the tonic is the one who has distributed it. Myself. Well, well, I must not be selfish. I can only hope that it will do everybody good."

THE THIRD CHAPTER
Awful !

DEAR Thomas Dodd came in ten minutes later. He looked at me in a certain way.

"Dummy!" he said.

I jumped.

"What was that, my dear Thomas?"

"Dummy!" bawled Thomas Dodd. "Why couldn't you have let us know you had finished the job? We've been hanging out the fight to give you plenty of time, and all the while you have finished the job and are roosting in the study. B-r-r-r-r!"

"Mum-my dearest Thomas——"

"Rats!"

It was a time to speak firmly, my dear readers. You will understand that. Thomas Dodd had been fighting; his temper had suffered. He had done things he ought not to have done, and left undone things he should have done.

I began to give him a mild, but disapproving lecture. I pointed out how pained I had been to witness that pitched battle between juniors who should have been friends. I admonished him on the treatment he had meted out to dear Reginald.

While I was still speaking, dear Thomas Cook and dear Doyle advanced upon me like a couple of tigers. They laid rough and violent hands upon my person. Dear Thomas Dodd opened the door. I felt myself lifted off my feet, and then ensued a peculiar sensation, as though I was flying through the air.

The next second I had hit the linoleum in the passage.

"Oooooooop!" I observed.

"Now talk sense or shut up!" howled Thomas.

They applied themselves to their tea, while I nursed my injuries. I say nothing of their black ingratitude. I was wounded to the depths of my soul, but I have chosen to forget it, and to put it down to their sinful tempers.

For a few moments there was peace.

Then dear Thomas suddenly rose to his feet, dropped the cup of tea he was drinking, and clasping his two hands upon his waistcoat, he jumped into the air and said:

"Oooooooosh!"

I stared at him. But before I could make any remark, dear Thomas Cook and Doyle were similarly affected. Thomas Cook fell over backwards and broke his chair, and Thomas Doyle dived head-first under the table.

"Yow! Whoooooop!" shrieked Thomas Cook.

Dear Doyle moaned fitfully like a demented cow.

"My dear fellows," I managed to cry, "whatever is the matter?"

"Yoooop! Mooooooh! Ger-roooooch!" screamed Thomas Dodd. "I'm poisoned! Oooooop!"

I turned pale.

"Mum-my dear boys," I muttered, trembling. "You are ill. I shall fetch a doctor."

"Ooooch!" yelled Thomas Cook. "You—you—you burbler! Have you put anything into our tea, you howling maniac?"

"Only a dose of the tonic, dear Thomas," I replied.

Never shall I forget the expression that dawned upon Thomas Dodd's face. He caught up the bread-knife, and for one dreadful second, my dear fellows, my life was in danger. Then, fortunately for me, another severe pain shot through his interior, and he clasped his hands upon his middle and howled.

"Holy mother av Moses!" moaned Thomas Doyle from under the table. "I'm kilt, intirely. If I doie, bhoys, kill that spalpeen Cuffy for me. If I don't, begorrah, I'll do ut meself! Oooooop!"

My head was absolutely swimming round.

"I don't understand," I cried. "Why should that strengthening tonic give you pain? Is it not tasteless?"

"You—you—you——" yelled Thomas Cook. "It was a joke, you shrieking dummy. Towle made the stuff to give to the Classicals. Ow-ow-ow! Yerroooch! It gives the fellow who takes it a severe pain in the tummy for a few minutes. Oooooop! Otherwise it's quite harmless, of course. Ow!"

I saw it all.

Nobody will ever be able to understand the disgust and horror that overwhelmed me. I was sickened with dismay. All the time I thought dear Thomas Dodd was

doing a good turn, he was merely making use of me to give pain to the other dear fellows in the Classical House. How can I describe my feelings? I won't try. You can imagine them better than I can portray them.

My face was pale.

"I understand everything, Thomas," I said sternly. "I shall now try to undo the wrong I have done through you. I shall go over to the Classical House immediately, and warn every fellow not to taste his tea."

"Come back, imbecile!" howled Thomas Cook.

I paid no heed. My duty was clear. I had done a great wrong unintentionally, and that was the only way to right it.

But as I sped hot foot to the Classical House, I knew I was too late.

From every part of the building furious yells and demoniacal howls were ascending to the sky. I rushed into the hall. The first object that met my eye was Mr. Greely, rolling downstairs. Every time he hit the stairs he gave forth a booming roar.

Bump! Roar! Bump! Roar!

He rolled into the hall and lay there, moaning indecently at frequent intervals.

"Ah! I am poisoned! Oh, I am a dead man!" I ran forward to assist him to rise.



The Fourth-Form passage was a shambles. A struggling, writhing, moaning, howling group of juniors were worming about on the floor.

"Mr. Greely——"

"Let me die, boy!" he groaned, waving me away. "I have been foully murdered, like Hamlet's father. Cut off in the prime of life, boy! Sent to my final reckoning with all my imperfections on my head. Gerrrooooch—fetch a doctor! Stay! It is too late! Fetch an undertaker at once! Wooooooh!"

I ran upstairs. The Fourth-Form passage was a shambles. A struggling, writhing, moaning, howling group of juniors were worming about on the floor.

"Ooooooooooch!" yelled Lovell. "I've swallowed prussic acid!"

I bent over him.

"No, you have not, my dear Arthur," I said soothingly. "You have merely——"

His fist caught me on the nose. With a dreadful yell I added myself to the writhing group. In a moment daylight was blotted from my gaze by a struggling heap of bodies.

More dead than alive, I regained my feet. I was obviously too late to save the Fourth. Perhaps Mr. Dalton or one of the other masters had not yet partaken of the venom.

Mr. Dalton was not in his study. At least I thought not for the moment. Then I perceived him under the table. He was jerking his legs about spasmodically, and trying to bury his head in the wastepaper basket.

"My dear sir——" I gasped.

He gave me five thousand lines.

I retired, hurt, and went to Mr. Bohun's study.

Mr. Bohun was hanging so far out of his window that for a moment I thought he was trying to commit suicide. I tapped him on the shoulder.

"Mr. Bohun! My dear sir!" I gasped. "You will fall out."

"Push me out, boy!" he roared fiercely. "Push me out this minute! Better a quick death than lingering agony! Moooooooh!"

I hesitated. I am not a boy to disobey the commands of my kind masters, yet surely it is a trifle awkward to be told to push a gentleman out of a second-floor window?

However, such were my orders and, stifling a groan, I caught hold of Mr. Bohun's ankles and commenced to tip him out of the window.

It was at this moment that he changed his mind. He said that he would rather drown himself in the river, as that was a more comfortable death. I was thankful to hear him say so, and I hauled him in and left him.

Mr. Manders was in a really wicked frame of mind. No sooner had I opened the door of his study than he clutched his cane and made such a terrible swipe at me that he would certainly have cut me in halves if I had not fallen backwards into the passage. As it was he pursued me down the corridor, cutting at my legs, and I was thankful to reach the quadrangle alive.

I saw Dr. Draycott, the medical man, racing to the school in his car. He went straight to the Head's study, and through the window I observed Dr. Chisholm leaning on his shoulder, weeping.

"I have been poisoned, my dear sir," wept the Head. "I have been cruelly poisoned by some wicked miscreant who——"

"No doubt, no doubt!" said the doctor soothingly.

"Some evil and base-hearted reprobate has placed a dreadful toxicant in my tea."

I waited to hear no more. Too dispirited to heed what I was doing I wandered back to my own House, and the first thing I found out was that every fellow in the House was seeking my blood.

I dodged into the boot-room, quaking.

There was a key in the door of the boot-room. I turned it. Then, squatting down among the old boots, brushes and blacking, I waited for three hours, palpitating.

. . . . . .

Ah, what a terrible fracas there was, afterwards, my dear fellows! The Head sent for me, and said he would be merciful, and merely sentence me to be flogged within an inch of my life and expelled from the school. I dread to think of what would have happened to me if he hadn't decided to be merciful.

Fortunately Thomas Dodd, Cook, Towle and the others came to my rescue, and after the matter had been explained, we were all sentenced to a severe caning. Dear Thomas Dodd, however, point-blank refused to hear of me being caned—saying that I was under the impression all the time that I was doing a kindly action. So well did he put the case to the Head that, to my surprise, I was dismissed without being caned or even detained.

I am grateful to dear Thomas for that—but, ah! the burden of sorrow upon my heart when I think of his deception. My faith in him is shaken. Never again can I consider him the spotless youth of former years.

But it's a sad and sinful world, and the longer I live the more I find it out.

BEHIND THE COUNTER!

Our Special Reporter, TOM BROWN, chats with DAME MIMBLE, of tuckshop fame.



PERCHED on one of the high stools at the tuckshop counter, with my notebook on my knee, and a dish of jam tarts at my elbow, I chatted with the plump and matronly Dame Mimble.

"It must be great fun running a tuckshop," I suggested. "Nothing to do all day but dispense jam tarts to those that hunger, and ginger-pop to those that thirst. Why, it's the life of a lady of leisure."

Dame Mimble gave me a reproachful glare.

"Nothing to do, indeed!" she exclaimed. "You know nothing about running a tuckshop, Master Brown. Why, I'm as busy as the day's long."

Even as she spoke, the worthy dame was vigorously churning ice cream in a barrel.

"In that case, ma'am," said I, "you want an assistant. I shall be pleased to act in that capacity for a salary of six doughnuts per day, and a strawberry ice whenever I happen to fancy one."

Dame Mimble shook her head.

"I've had enough of assistants," she said. "Once, in a moment of weakness, I agreed to let Master Bunter help in the shop. I told him he could help himself to an occasional tart, or a glass of ginger-beer, but he helped himself too fast and frequent for my liking. Why, the fat rascal ate me out of house and home."

"Ha, ha, ha! Just like Bunter!"

"It was no laughing matter, Master Brown. As fast as I made cakes Master Bunter tucked 'em away. I had to exhibit the 'SOLD OUT!' notice long before closing time came, and my customers were wild. I got rid of Master Bunter, and I'll never take on an assistant again—never!"

And Dame Mimble churned the ice cream quite viciously.

"Who is your best customer, ma'am?" I inquired.

"Lord Mauleverer," was the prompt reply. "His lordship spends pounds where others spend pence. He thinks nothing of spending a five-pound note on a study celebration. And once, on a very special occasion, he bought up my entire stock."

"My hat! And who is your worst customer?"

"Master Bunter and Master Skinner tie for that distinction. Master Bunter is always wanting credit. He doesn't seem to realise that this is a tuckshop—not a tickshop. As for Master Skinner, he's dreadfully mean and artful. When I was giving away free samples of ice cream the other day—one sample per customer—Master Skinner came back at least half a dozen times and each time he declared it was his first appearance. And he always waits till my cakes are stale before he buys them, because they drop to half price."

I was pondering on the meanness of Skinner by contrast with the liberality of Lord Mauleverer, when the tuckshop was suddenly beseiged by an army of cricketers, and I was swept from my perch.

There was an impatient clamour of "Ice cream here!" and "Ginger-pop here!" and "Buck up, Mrs. Mimble!" And I squeezed my way out of the shop, leaving the tuckshop dame to her strenuous labours.



The Song of the "Fish"!

OH, yes!
I'm Fisher, I guess,
An American guy
In my talk and my dress.
I'm cute and I'm early, I'll twist you to-day;
'Sno use being surly—it's business, you jay.
Hi! Guy!
I mean what I say.

Say, bo!
I've bargains to show;
I sell any object,
I'm out for your dough.
I'm a business firm, sonny—the boss and the staff.
Why, gee! That ain't funny—no reason to laugh.
Eh? Say!
I mean it—not half!

Here, you!
You're looking quite blue!
I'm a swindler, you say?
Get out of it, do!
I know it's sharp practice; you don't need to talk.
You see, sir, the fact is, I come from New York.
Too—true!
We're sharp in New York!

Buy, buy!
Swindling, my eye!
I have to make money—
Or, rather, I try.
Whenever I start on a scheme to make gain
Cherry and Wharton both give me great pain!
Ow-Wow!
It's a ragging again.

Don't care!
I never despair!
They rag me and nag me,
But Fisher's still there.
So roll up, my tulips—roll up to my shack!
And spend your spondulicks—you won't get 'em back.
I'm prime!
Till I get the sack.

Eyes of the Night!

WHO could foresee the rapid development that would come of the initial successful flight of the first power-driven aeroplane? Certainly not the famous Wright brothers who accomplished that first flight—and very few others even so much as dreamed of the startling strides that flying would make.

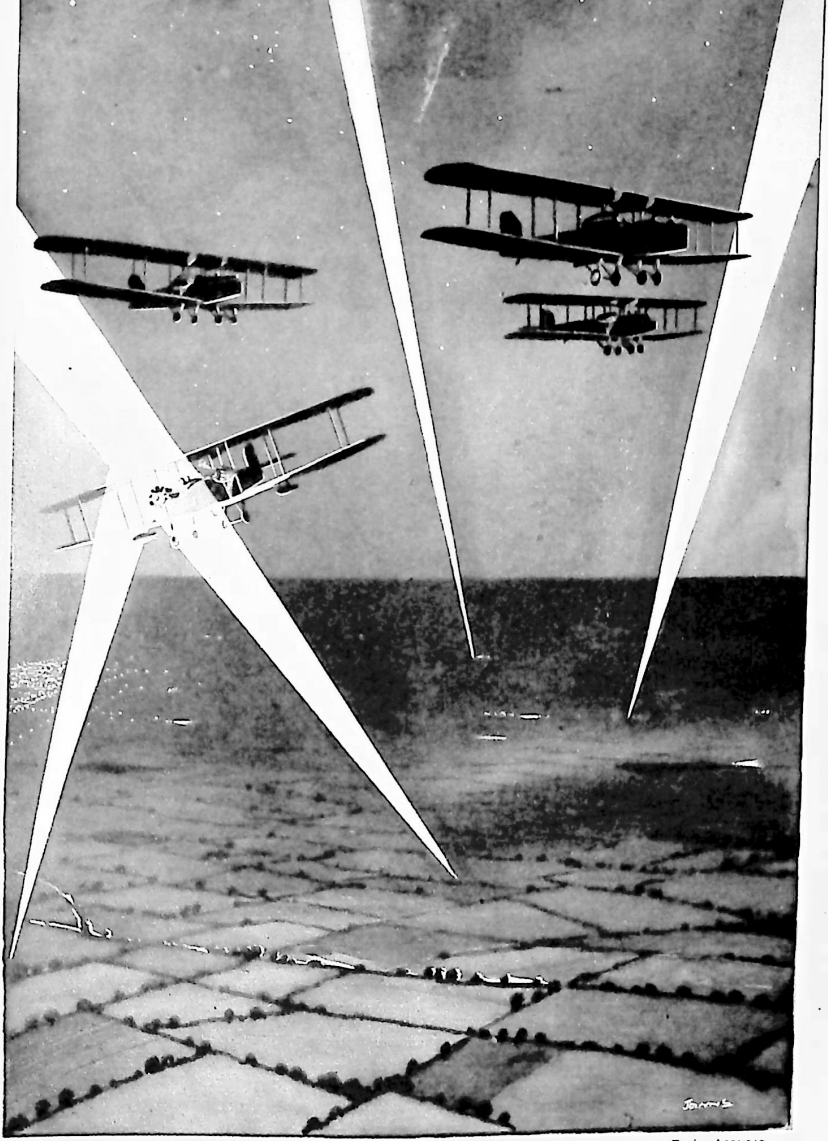
One of the directions in which aeroplanes have made the most progress is shown in the accompanying photogravure plate, where a flight of four night-bombers is seen in action. These 'planes, loaded with death-dealing bombs, are attacking an enemy objective. The enemy has got "wind" of their approach, and one of the bombers has been caught full in the blinding glare of two searchlights.

Behind those revealing beams are anti-aircraft guns. And woe betide the "spotted" night-bomber if the pilot thereof does not twist and turn, and scoot into the blackness which masked his stealthy approach!

Only by sweeping the sky in all directions is there a chance of the night-bombers being spotted—unless the defenders' mechanical "ears" manage to pick up the sounds of the enemy's approach. These "ears" are the night-bombers' greatest danger, for they register the direction and height of approaching 'planes for the guidance of the crew manning the defending anti-aircraft guns.

The night-bombers, unless caught in the blinding glare of the restless, sweeping searchlights, are absolutely indistinguishable in the dark sky. To render them ordinarily invisible in such circumstances, British night-bombers are painted dark green, and from the usual red, white and blue R.A.F. identification circles the white is omitted.

R.A.F. pilots are amazingly adept at dropping deadly "eggs" from thousands of feet in the air, the pilot of the machine releasing his bombs by pulling a lever—the deadly bombs being slung beneath the undercarriage of the big night-machines. Always the pilot has in mind the possibility of a forced landing which, if clumsily carried out, may result in his load of bombs bumping the ground and promptly blowing him and his machine back, in fragments, into the night sky!



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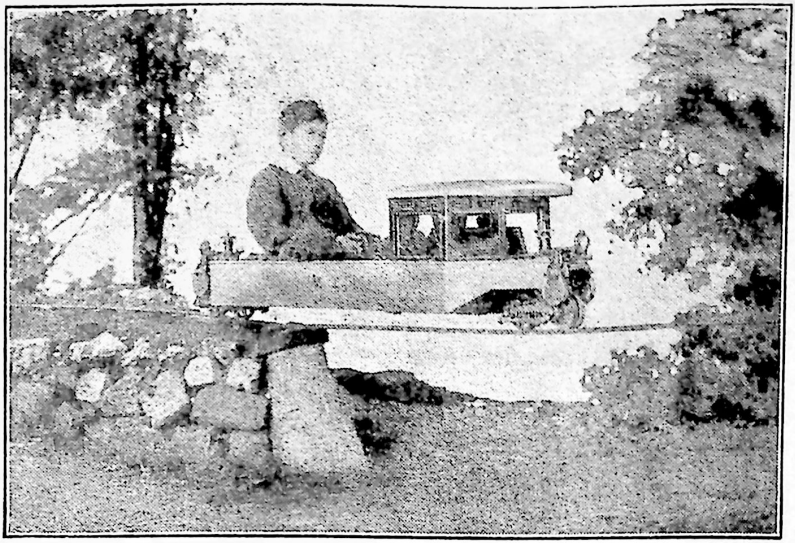
EYES OF THE NIGHT!



A Very Queer Railway

That a railway could evolve from the gyrations of a toy top seems incredible, yet that's the romantic story behind the birth of the Brennan Mono-railway. Read all about it in this pithy article.

A MAN sat sunning himself near the sea in the South of France when his attention was attracted by a street-seller with a tray of toys. Amongst them was a gyroscopic top, such as may be seen in many English shops.

Somehow this top held a strange fascination for the man who was watching the hawker. Suddenly he jumped to his feet, bought the top, and exclaimed: "That's it—the very idea! This will do the business!"

So goes the romantic story of the first stage in the invention of the Brennan Mono-railway!

Lieutenant Brennan had come to the homeland from Australia to show an important invention to the War Office, who, having seen a demonstration, had at once decided to buy the patent, paying the young inventor what must have appeared quite a large fortune. The matter settled, he went for a holiday to the South of France.

It was then that the gyroscopic top came into his possession, and from it the idea he needed to make his train travel safely on the single railway which he had long planned. Lieutenant Brennan finished his holiday, came back to England, and then, in a garden, he built a railway upon which might travel the tiny car which he had had almost ready for it. The car was driven by a small motor, and its stability was ensured by the gyroscope, the latter fashioned on the same principle as found in the top already mentioned.

The Try-out.

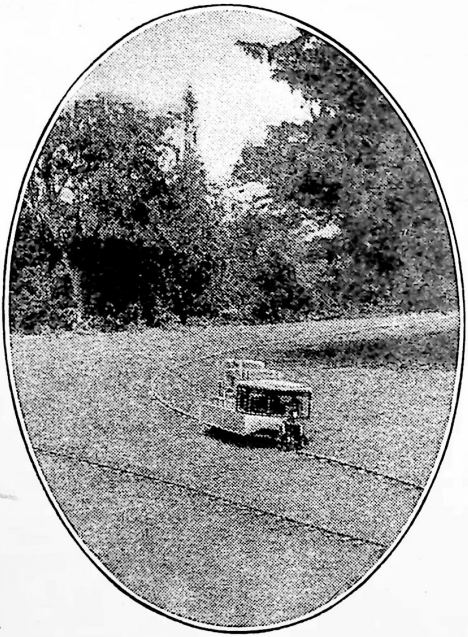
There was a great deal of work involved in building the car. Much experiment had to be undertaken, and there were the usual setbacks. No particular care was taken to get the line on an exactly level surface; there was a reason for this which will appear in a moment.

Then came the day when the little railway could have its train. Our pictures show the car on the move, and also one of the first passengers riding safely upon it.

Look closely at the picture shown at the beginning of this article. You will notice that a rope bridge has been made, and that the car is actually entering upon it; also that the boy has no qualms, even if we allow that the distance for his possible fall is not very great. But if he had not full confidence in the car it is obvious that he would be in a more alert position.

Now, the experiments undertaken were made designedly to show that the Brennan system of the mono-rail was not only perfectly safe, but that there was no need to spend a great deal of money on laying an elaborate track.

This latter point is most important, for railway building is the most expensive method of road-making. Think of the carefully-prepared bed, then the big ballast stones, then the granite chippings, then the pickled sleepers, the chairs, the fish-plates, the bolts and nuts, and finally the cost of maintenance!



Many experiments were made to prove that the Brennan Mono-railway was perfectly safe. This photo shows the little car, loaded with cargo, taking a trial trip.

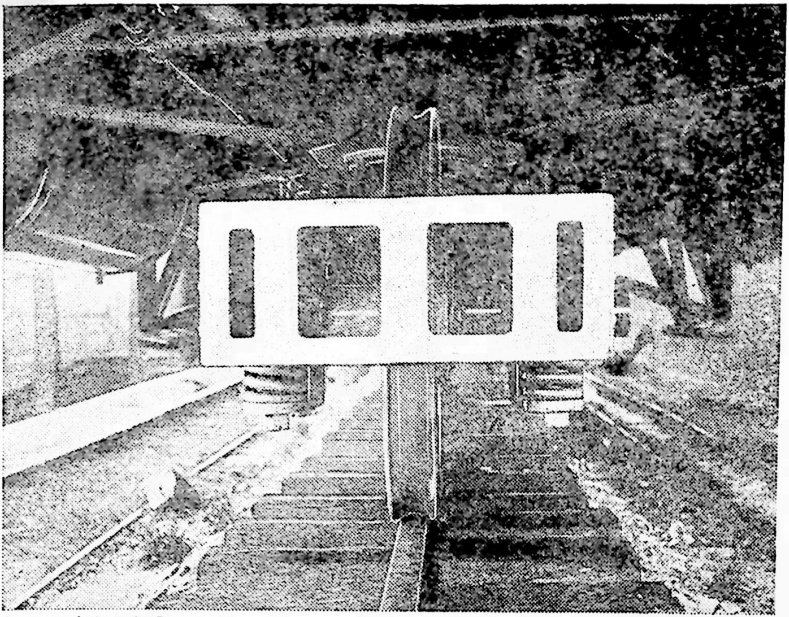
That is one of the chief reasons why railways have practically ceased to be built. The motor is so much cheaper in every way when the cost per ton is calculated; though, of course, a train with three men in charge of it will take 1,000 tons against a possible 10 by a motor and trailer!

Cheap to Run.

All this heavy cost Lieutenant Brennan sought to avoid when proposing his Mono-railway for general use. The cost of his track would have been less than half that of the lightest laid railway of the ordinary kind, and, again, the cost of operation would have been small in comparison.

If the Great War had not come when it did, there would have been a good chance of the Mono-railway taking its place amongst our transport systems. But the War altered everything. In the first place Brennan had the idea that the new type of railway would be just the thing for military purposes, since it could be laid quite easily, taken up and carried to fresh positions. It would serve for taking men and munitions to the front-line trenches; indeed, it could be actually laid in the trenches if the need arose.

Before it could be thoroughly tried out over something more than a purely experimental line, the Great War burst upon the world, and in the rush of using



An unusual view of a Brennan Mono-railway car, showing the chassis and mechanism. This, of course, is a full-sized car ; not the experimental model described in this article.

what was to hand there was no time to go ahead with the scheme which, after all, had not been tried in regular working conditions. Then, again, the motor had been so rapidly improved that the roads were alive with traffic which not so long before had been handled by the railways.

Fled for His Life!

An experimental line was laid down at a London exhibition, and was used by thousands of travellers. To their great amazement they found that even when the motor driving the wheels was stopped, and they all walked to one side of the car, it did not topple over ! Everyone thought it must, and many were the questions as to how a car on a single rail could remain stable.

One old countryman who saw it start exclaimed : " Ah, that's all right ! He can keep going all right now like a man on a bicycle. But let me see him stop ! " As if to answer him the car stopped on its next trip exactly against the old fellow. Despite his rheumatism he fled for his life, feeling that he would be crushed beneath it when it fell over !

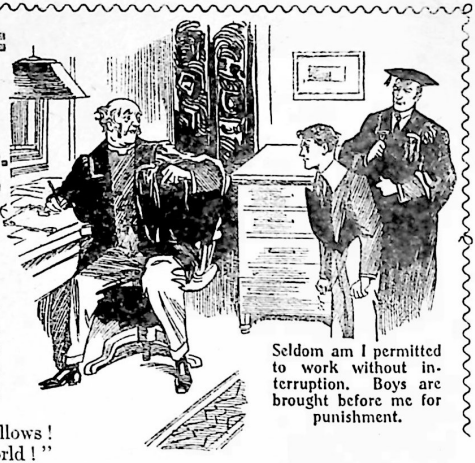
But he had forgotten the greatest wonder of the Brennan system—that little motor which kept the gyroscope in action. So long as the gyroscope revolved there was perfect safety. The only real objection found to the use of the system was the fact that the motor driving the gyroscope might fail for a few moments, and then that the car might topple over, having lost its balance. The motor never failed in practice, and the cases in which it would do so must be few indeed.

A Day in the Life of a Headmaster

by

The Rev. Herbert H. Locke, D.D.

(Headmaster of Greyfriars School)



Seldom am I permitted to work without interruption. Boys are brought before me for punishment.

"How jolly nice to be a head master!"

I happened to hear Robert Cherry, of the Remove Form make this remark to his school-fellows when I was passing the door of his study. Pausing for a moment, I heard Cherry add:

"What a lovely, lazy life, you fellows! No work, no worry, not a care in the world!"

I passed on, with a smile. Cherry's thoughtless words had not been intended for my ears, so I did not step into the study and contradict them. I can assure my readers, however, that Cherry's impression of a headmaster's life was entirely wrong, and founded upon ignorance.

A lazy life, forsooth! I will draw a brief sketch of the duties which fall to my lot, and I think it will open the eyes of some—particularly Master Robert Cherry!

To begin with, I rise early. At the first clang of the rising-bell, to be precise. Awaiting me, on my study desk, is a miniature mountain of correspondence. There are letters from parents and guardians, and aunts and uncles, making anxious inquiries as to the welfare of their sons and wards and nephews.

How is Jones minor progressing? Will I be good enough to see that he does not leave off his chest-protector until the warm weather comes? Will I be sure to take Brown minor under my wing, and see that he gets into no scrapes? These are but two of the inquiries with which I have to deal.

Then there are letters dealing with the admission of new boys to the school; there are complaints from local landowners of Greyfriars boys trespassing on their property; letters from Old Boys; tradesmen's bills and begging letters, and so forth. So you will see that my correspondence is a day's work in itself!

I snatch a hurried breakfast, and return to my study until lesson-time, when I adjourn to the Sixth Form-room to give instruction to the senior boys. Thus the morning passes, and after lunch I renew the attack upon my correspondence.

Seldom am I permitted to work without interruption. Masters call on me at intervals, seeking advice; boys are brought before me for punishment; visitors from outside the school are continually being shown into my sanctum. Interviews, letter-writing, floggings; more interviews, more letter-writing, more floggings; and hey presto! the day is gone, with many tasks still undone. Sometimes I work far into the night; for there are reports to be submitted to the School Governors, and sermons to be composed for the Sunday services.

Where, then, is the lovely, lazy life, with not a care in the world? It has no existence, save in Master Robert Cherry's imagination. Believe me, a headmaster's post is not a sinecure.

BE AT POPULAR PARTIES

Performed with ordinary skill the posers in this chatty article will add pep to any party—and popularity to yourself!

THE boy or girl who can do a few simple tricks is always sure of a warm welcome at parties.

Here are a few little "stunts" which will help to "break the ice," and make you a personage of importance at any party!

METAMORPHOSES.

This is a new way of spending an odd few minutes. The problem is to change one given word into another, by altering one letter at a time, each alteration making a whole new word, the number of letters being always the same, and the letters always in the same order.

Example:

Change HAND to BENT in three moves.
Hand—band, bend, bent.

1. Change WOOD to COAL in 3 moves.
2. Change FOOT to YARD in 5 moves.
3. Change ROCK to SAND in 4 moves.
4. Change COAL to SOOT in 3 moves.

Solutions:

1. WOOD—wool, cool, COAL.
2. FOOT—Food, ford, cord, card, YARD.
3. ROCK—rack, rank, sank, SAND.
4. COAL—cool, coot, SOOT.

Small prizes can be offered for the quickest solutions and those which tally correctly with the originals.

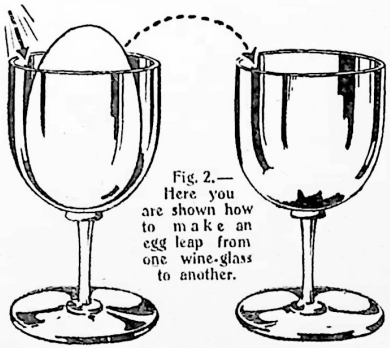


Fig. 2.—Here you are shown how to make an egg leap from one wine-glass to another.



Fig. 1.—The "Spinning Egg" trick will baffle any audience.

EGGS-ACTLY!
The Spinning Egg.

Make a little net bag of string, just large enough to hold an egg. Produce a fresh egg, and put it in the bag, to which a long loop of string is attached, as in Fig. 1. Put the egg in, and invite the audience, one at a time, to see how long they can make the egg spin in the net, timing each one.

They will be surprised to find that it very quickly stops spinning. This is due to the fluid in the egg, which checks the motion.

If each one is allowed to put the egg in in their own way, it will help you, and they will not think they are being "diddled."

Now say that you will be able to make your egg spin the longest. This you can do

by substituting a hard-boiled egg when it is your turn, though, naturally, this must not be spotted by your audience. The hard-boiled egg will spin indefinitely, and your friends will be completely mystified!

The Frog Egg.

Ask your audience if they can make an egg move from one wine-glass to another, without touching it by hand. Of course, they will be baffled, yet it is quite simple.

Place a hard-boiled egg in a glass, as shown in Fig. 2, with a second wine-glass by the side. Now blow sharply down the glass in the direction of the arrow, and with a little puff and patience, the egg will jump safely from one glass to the other!

THE STREET BEGGAR'S SIGN.

Copy the cryptic message shown in Fig. 3 on to a piece of paper, and telling your audience that it is a street beggar's sign, ask them if they can read it. Give them a minute each, and see who is the quickest to decipher it.

The correct solution is: "For a week on end I ate next to nothing." Easy, isn't it?

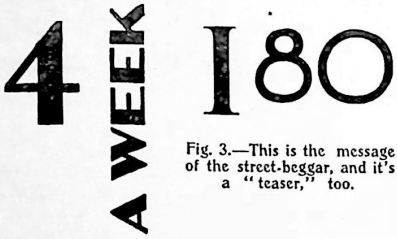


Fig. 3.—This is the message of the street-beggar, and it's a "teaser," too.

FRUITY FUN!

As there is usually a supply of fruit at parties, it is a simple matter to perform some easy but mystifying tricks with it.

The Bewitched Banana.

Arrange a dish of fruit, with a banana on the top, and ask one of your elderly aunts to take a banana. Naturally, if she remembers her party manners, she will take the top one! Tell her you will cut it in four pieces for her without breaking the skin.

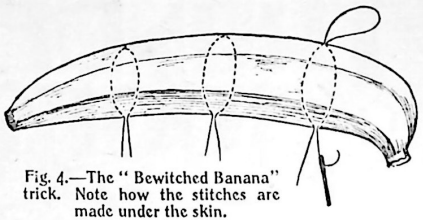


Fig. 4.—The "Bewitched Banana" trick. Note how the stitches are made under the skin.

Make some "magic passes" over the fruit, and then, when she peels it, she will find it in four.

This, of course, is really done beforehand. Thread a needle with very fine cotton, slip it into the rind, and make a short stitch *under the skin*. Now push the needle out through the skin, insert through the same hole at which it came out, and make another stitch under the skin. Continue in this manner round the banana, eventually bringing the needle out of the original hole of entry. Take the two ends of cotton, cross them, and pull gently. This cuts through the fruit. Repeat this operation on two other parts of the banana, as in Fig. 4.

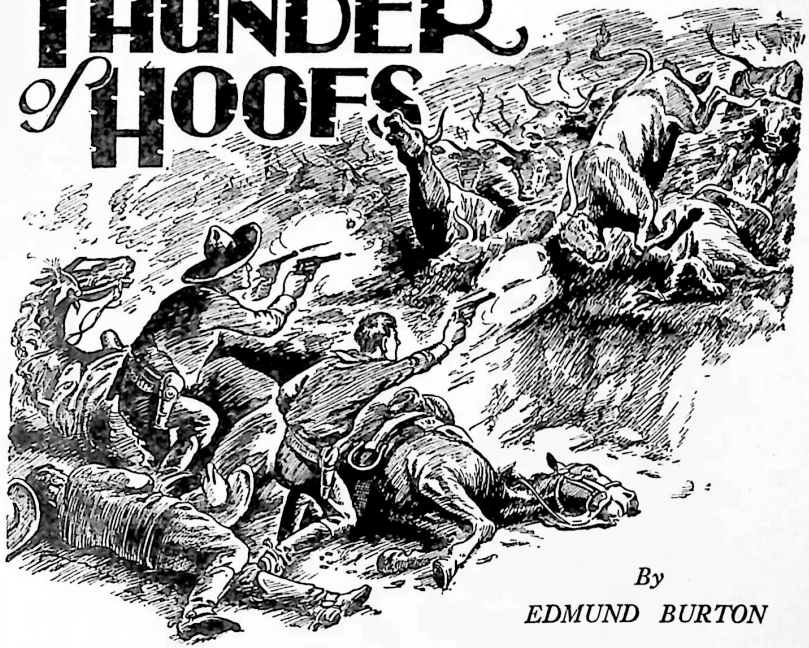
This trick should be practised once or twice beforehand, and if your audience is at all suspicious-minded, then "doctor" every banana on the dish, concentrating on *one person on whom to work*.

The Orange Mystery.

Hand an orange round to your audience to let them see it is a perfectly genuine one. Then begin to peel it. The surprise comes when you pull a quantity of ribbon from the fruit!

This is simple. Take three yards of narrow orange-coloured ribbon, and thread it through a darning needle. Coil the ribbon round the needle, and—unknown to your chums—conceal it in your left hand, with the needle sticking up. When you take the orange, you push it down on top of the needle, so that when you start peeling, you can take hold of the needle and pull. As soon as the ribbon comes through, drop the needle out of the way. Your audience will never solve the mystery—unless you explain!

THUNDER & HOOFS



By
EDMUND BURTON

THE FIRST CHAPTER
The Great Stampede !

FLASH-flash ! Rumble ! Crash !

The three seemed to blend as one. First came a blinding zigzag blaze of fork lightning that dimmed the glare of the oil lamps hanging from the raftered ceiling of Larrigan's Saloon ; then an ear-splitting peal of thunder which made the bottles—mainly empty now—fairly dance on their shelves ; and, lastly, down crashed a big ornamental stone vase from its niche in the wall, missing the head of a youth sitting almost directly beneath it ere it smashed to pieces on the floor. The youngster started, jumped aside, and made a wild grab at a piece of paper which he had been pondering over, and which, driven by the wind stirred up by his sudden spring, had fluttered towards the smoky stove in the centre of the saloon.

He caught it just in time, grinned, and went back to his place, where, pencil in hand, he again bent to his task. A big man—a very big man—sitting not far away, looked at the boy and smiled, showing a perfect double row of splendid teeth set in a mahogany countenance.

" Well caught, younker ! " he laughed, and there was something good to hear in that deep rumbling laugh of his. "I guessed it was goin' straight to ashes."

Bob Carrington looked up, returning the smile.

Bob Carrington's first taste of the Wild West is not without incident, and he needs all his courage to win through.

" And I'm jolly glad it didn't ! " he replied. " It may only be a poom, but I think it's a good one——"

" Poem ? " The big man's eyes took on a new interest. " Eh—you said poem, didn't ye ? "

Bob Carrington nodded.

" Why, yes—I did ; it's one of my own. I like writing the stuff ; it makes a kind of hobby if you've nothing better to do for half an hour or so." He paused. " I had several published in the Old Country—mainly in our school mag. The fellows all said they weren't too bad——"

" Ah ! You're English, then ? I thought so." The other's gaze rested on the lad's face ponderingly. " I'm Irish meself—or Irish-American, to be exact. Name of Muldoon. An' I'm a bit of a poet, too ! "

" You are ? "

Bob could not altogether keep the trace of incredulity from his tone, for anyone more unlike a poet than Muldoon he had never seen. The man was a typical Westerner, big-bodied, strong, and " heeled " with a couple of long guns which the great brown hands ever and anon caressed, as though their owner was in the habit of pulling his " artillery " at short notice.

Muldoon laughed again.

" Oh, 'tis gospel truth I'm telling ye, kid ! " he said. " I'm a poet like yerself, though I don't get too much time for it. Got other things to do, gener'lly. And—and p'r'aps I might be able to help ye with that paper ; if I may say so, ye seemed a bit puzzled over it just now."

Whilst speaking Muldoon had risen and crossed the floor. He dropped down into a seat beside Bob, who was quite eager to let him try his hand at a rather knotty bit of rhyming and scansion which had been bothering him at odd moments. Bob, somehow, had taken a sudden liking to this big fellow. Indeed, most folk had a liking for Muldoon—except those of a certain fraternity with whom he was continually at war.

He read the pencilled lines through, grunted approvingly, and made a few deft alterations.

" Now, how's this ? " he asked, reading out the verses he had changed in a deep, musical voice which betrayed more than a trace of the born elocutionist. Bob's eyes shone when he had finished.

" Fine—fine ! " he exclaimed. " Funny how you settled the whole trouble so quickly, when it was worrying me for hours. You're some poet, Mr. Muldoon ! "

" I told you I was ! " the latter laughed.

It was the only thing Muldoon ever boasted about. He could have boasted of other more important matters ; but he didn't. It was his poetry in which he seemed to take most pride and glory.

" Pity I hadn't a bigger audience ! " he grinned, glancing round the saloon which, save for the bar-tender who nodded on his stool, half-asleep, was empty. " We're the only visitors here to-night, though I half expected—someone else. 'Fact is, I was waitin' for him."

" An appointment ? " asked Bob carelessly, and Muldoon gave a kind of ironic one-sided smile.

" Not exac'ly," he said ; then changed the subject. " Say, kid, what you doin' out here, if it ain't any harm to ask ? "

All this time the thunder had been booming at intervals, making the somewhat ramshackle saloon fairly rattle, but it was gradually dying away as the storm passed to westward. There had been no rain ; it was merely one of those sudden spasms common on the great plains, and they never lasted very long.

Bob looked at his interrogator for a moment, then replied :

" My uncle's in a bunk in another room ; he's got a touch of fever or something—at least, I believe it's fever, though he seems to be pessimistic. Took bad just after we left Hot Springs, so, the storm coming on, we put up here for the night. I was trying to kill time with this poetry stuff, as uncle seems asleep now—though how he slept through that racket I don't know ! "

" Where ye bound for ? "

" Buffalo Ranch. Uncle Ben owns that place, and——" Bob paused, shooting another glance over his companion ; then, reassured by Muldoon's frank expression, continued : " He got wind of something queer



"SLICK" MULDOON

going on there—something to do with his manager, a Mexican called Miguel Ferraro. Uncle Ben nicknamed him 'Snaky,' because he always reminded him of a reptile crawling about, he said, though the fellow seems to have made the place pay in the past."

"Ah!" the other commented. "Doesn't trust the dago—eh?"

"That's about it, though he seems to have little to go on—only a message from one of the head punchers, hinting that he wanted a talk with Uncle Ben and wouldn't put too much on paper. And now poor old Nunky's ill, and——"

"Let's have a squint at him," Muldoon broke in. "Where is he, did ye say?"

Bob accompanied his new acquaintance to the next room of the saloon. In a bunk against the wall an elderly, big-built man was tossing feverishly. His eyes were open and his face was drawn with pain, but he turned round as the pair entered.



BOB CARRINGTON

"Ah! That you, Bob? I feel mortal bad," he groaned. "I don't believe this is fever. Who's that with you?"

"Gent named Muldoon," replied Bob. "He says he'd like to have a look at you. Seems to know something about sickness, Uncle Ben. You don't object?"

"Not if he'll do me any good," murmured the man in the bunk; "but I doubt it. Bob, lad, my call's due, and—and you'll soon be the boss of Buffalo Ranch."

"Hush! Don't talk like that, uncle!" Bob interrupted. "It's not so bad as you think: wait till Mr. Muldoon examines you."

He stood aside as the Irishman bent over the bunk. For a few minutes he attended to the patient; then stood back with a puzzled expression on his face.

"Well?" asked Bob.

"It may be fever," Muldoon replied. "Cert'inly he's got a temperature of sorts, but there's other funny symptoms—it's queer."

At that moment Carrington senior turned again. His face was still drawn, but in it there was a look of great resolve.

"Look here," he said, staring at Muldoon. 'Who are you? What's your callin'?"

The big Westerner looked round the room, then smiled.

"I'm 'Slick' Muldoon," he said; "known as 'Slick,' I s'pose, because I've got a purty good reputation as a two-gun man——"

"Yes, yes; but what's your job?"

"Anythin', when it comes to lookin' into the affairs of the ungentle community," replied "Slick." "That is to say, siree, that I'm employed occasionally for that purpose by any local sheriff in whose district I happen to be." Then he added: "I also write poetry, boss."

"Never mind about that," said Carrington. "What are you doin' here now?"

"Nothin'," answered Muldoon briefly. "I was here on business—but the business didn't develop. And that's that!"

Carrington was silent for a few moments before speaking.

"I'm goin' back to Buffalo Ranch. I'm not fit to travel, I know; but I've got to settle matters with "Snaky" before—before I——However, things have got to be squared



"SNAKY" FERRARO

so far as you are concerned, Bob. I've already made a will leaving you the place; but—but—well, 'Snaky' is a queer fellow. I want to see him and tell him what's what! The storm's passin', so we'll move. Goin' our way, Mister Muldoon, by any chance?"

Slick smiled again.

"I may as well go that way as any other now," he replied. "I'll get my 'meat' later. I know Buffalo Ranch, sir, so I'll help ye to get there, though——"

"Yes, I guess I'm not fit to move," Carrington broke in, "but I'm movin', all the same! Chuck us over those togs, Bob, and help me to dress."

In a short time they were going at a slow canter across the prairie, the sick man determinedly sticking in his saddle, despite the pains that racked his frame. An hour later they were well on their way to Buffalo Ranch, Muldoon riding in front, when the latter suddenly pulled up his horse and pointed to the right.

"Gosh! It's happened! That's what I most feared!" he said, and there was a tremor in his deep voice which was excusable under the circumstances.

The storm had passed, and the moon was now riding high, making the surroundings as bright almost as by day. But on the horizon another light was visible—a flickering, dancing glow which seemed to be spreading to right and left. The lightning had fired the prairie grass and, above all things, it is a prairie fire which the plainsman dreads most on earth. There is no stopping it; it sweeps onward until everything in its track has been demolished; then, like a satiated demon, it burns itself out.

"Down!" gasped Muldoon. "Throw your hosses in that sandy dip yonder, an' get down behind them! We can't outpace that blaze. Hark!"

He dismounted and laid his ear to the ground. He heard a drum-drum of sound through the earth—the clatter of countless hoofs from animals as yet unseen. But they were coming their way!

In the wide, sandy hollow Muldoon's horse lay down obediently, as also did Bob's; but the ranch owner's broke away and dashed wildly off, making towards the farthest end of the flickering line of fire. Muldoon muttered something beneath his breath.

The trio crouched down. Slick's guns were out, and Bob, seeing the manœuvre but not yet understanding it, did likewise with his. The Irishman, ear to ground, listened again.

"Yes, they're comin'—droves of 'em!"

"Droves of what?" asked Bob.

"Steers—cattle!" rapped the other. "And look!" he pointed. "There go the prairie-dogs—driven from their underground towns! That's a sure sign, lad!"

"But what are you going to do?"

"The only thing!" Muldoon's voice was very grim. "We're done if it fails. In a few minutes them steers will come surgin' this way—herds of 'em—an' we've got to split the advance guard. If we don't we'll be smashed to pulp!"

"I see!" muttered Bob swiftly understanding now. "Well, say when!"

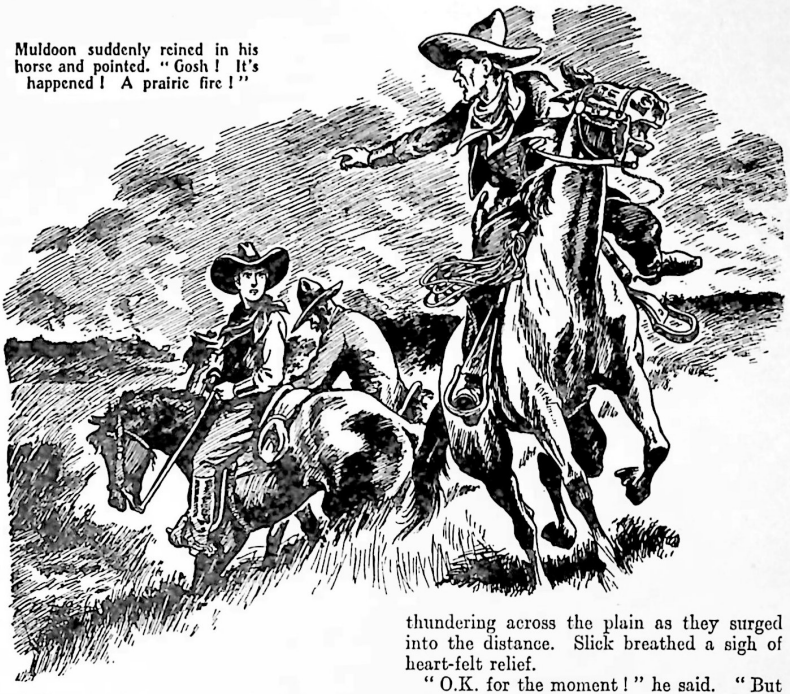
Slick shot an admiring glance at the lad. He was scarcely seventeen, yet Bob Carrington was made of splendid material. He guessed the terrible danger, yet he never flinched; in fact, his whole concern seemed to be for his uncle.

"Lie still, uncle," he whispered, bending over the prostrate form. "We'll get you out of it!"

"Right, lad; carry on!" was all the other murmured, as his face again contorted in a twist of pain.

Drum-drum-drum! Drum-drum-drummm! The thunder of those countless hoofs now shook the very ground on which the trio lay. Across the advancing line of flame, and silhouetted against its brilliance, a dark, heaving mass was easily visible—a mass of tossing horns and waving tails, from which clouds of steam from snorting nostrils arose in the air.

Then the unexpected happened. Rancher Carrington's horse, unable to pass the end of the fire, came galloping back again, its mane streaming out and its eye-balls gleaming white with fear. It crossed the lip of the hollow before them, and Muldoon shot it down without a moment's hesitation; it was impossible to recapture it.



Muldoon suddenly reined in his horse and pointed. "Gosh! It's happened! A prairie fire!"

"First brick in the fortifications!" he grated. "Now for it!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER
At Buffalo Ranch.

NEXT moment the herd was within a few yards of their refuge. Muldoon's guns chattered rapidly, and four big steers went down, two more falling to Bob's weapon. It was almost impossible to miss at such short range.

Crack! Another big beast tumbled to earth, and Muldoon stared anxiously. Would the plan succeed?

It did! The advancing mass of cattle suddenly split in twain, divided by the mountain of meat in front of them, and broke away to right and left, their hoofs thundering across the plain as they surged into the distance. Slick breathed a sigh of heart-felt relief.

"O.K. for the moment!" he said. "But we're not out of the wood yet! We've only two hosses now, and your uncle can't travel fast— even if we could outpace the fire. Let's hope this bare hollow will break it."

Bob did not reply. He was again bending over his stricken relative; then he looked up, his lips quivering.

"Poor uncle has travelled his last journey!" he said quietly. "Look!"

Muldoon bent low, and then removed his sombrero. Rancher Carrington was dead.

The fire came sweeping onwards. As far as eye could see on either side, it stretched for a long, unbroken line— flames leaping and dancing as though in devilish enjoyment. There was no chance of rounding it; no hope of anything, indeed, save that the sandy hollow in which they now rested might prove

their salvation. But the ordeal would be enough to test the stoutest nerves to their utmost.

On came the raging blaze, licking the prairie grass up like tinder and fanning the faces of the surviving pair with its scorching breath. Then—joy of joys!—the fire reached the lip of the hollow, some little distance away, split in two and raced round the edges. The horses whinnied in fear; Muldoon and Bob pressed their faces into the parched sand to protect them.

Muldoon's hair, which he wore rather long, began to smoulder at the nape of his neck and, with a swift movement, he crushed it with his big hand. His clothing and also Bob's caught alight, too, but this they were able to extinguish by rolling about, before it got a firm grip.

The horses proved the most difficult problem; they kicked and plunged wildly, yet that very action saved the body of Rancher Carrington from injury by fire, for one of the mounts rolled almost on top of him, and sheltered him from the direct heat of the advancing conflagration. He lay through it all, a slight smile on his peaceful face—all traces of pain now banished, as if he were just asleep.

At last it was over. Smoke-blackened and grimed with ashes, Bob and Muldoon rose painfully to their knees. The hollow had split the fire in two and it was now racing east and west behind them. The bodies of the cattle they had shot were roasted meat by this time. The smell of burnt flesh and singed hair was almost intolerable.

As far as eye could reach, when the moonlight at length penetrated the thick smoke-pall drifting overhead, was naught save a blackened tract of ground, leagues in extent, which had once been rich grazing-land.

"And now, kid, what's the next move?" Muldoon said, in a low voice, as he looked down at Carrington's body. "I'm sorry for you, younker—main sorry, and—and I dunno quite what to suggest. I s'pose we'd better bring the poor old chap to the ranch?"

"Of course," Bob murmured, with a twitch of the lips. "Uncle always said he wanted to be buried there—'where the mustangs would gallop over his grave,' as he put it. We must rope him up on my horse, Muldoon, and I'll have to ride in front of you. Wait! I'd best secure his papers first: he said that all the documents he possessed which were of any value were in his wallet, and he told me to take them if anything should happen to him."

The boy felt in the dead man's inner pocket, drawing forth a well-packed case which he transferred to his own person. Then, with some difficulty, the body of Rancher Ben Carrington was secured to one of the horses, while Slick and the young heir mounted the other, en route for Buffalo Ranch.

Surely the strangest funeral procession that ever crossed the great plains!

Only "Greasy," the half-breed cook, and a solitary cowpuncher were available when Bob and Muldoon reached the ranch house. The remainder of the big complement were absent on the ranges, including Snaky Ferraro himself.

But Jim Graves, the puncher who had sent word to Bob's uncle, had a tale to tell, as soon as his late boss's body had been reverently laid on the bed in the big chamber in which he had usually slept during life.

"It's happened, then," Graves said, frowning. "Ferraro said it would——"

"Said it would?" gasped Bob. "Said what would happen?"

"Why, that!" Graves nodded to the bed-chamber. "At least, he said to me not long back that he feared Boss Carrington was not long for this world; that he wasn't as strong as he looked an' would go out like a candle."

"He said that, did he?" Muldoon put in curiously. "Yet it was a remark anyone might have made, if he thought the boss was really delicate——"

"Ay, that's true," Graves interrupted; "but I've got somethin' else to tell ye." He addressed himself particularly to Bob. "To-day, young boss, Ferraro knew your uncle was dead—knew it long before you brought home his body. Get a chew on that, sir."

Bob fairly staggered back, so great was his surprise.

"He also believed that you had passed in



The prairie fire reached Muldoon and Bob in the hollow, and they were compelled to roll about to extinguish their burning clothing.

yer cheeks, Mister Bob," Graves continued, thereby increasing the astonishment of his hearers, if that were possible, "and that the ranch would pass into his ownership. Since your uncle went to meet you, sir, and bring you along here, so that you might learn how to work this show against the time when it would be yours, Boss Snaky Ferraro has had some queer callers.

"First there was a lawyer feller, who spent hours writin' on various papers in the livin'-room yonder, under Snaky's direction. Then, only a couple of days ago, another chap came here—a dirty-lookin' dago, with a limp, whom Ferraro addressed as Velasquez——"

"What?" Slick Muldoon suddenly shouted, seizing Graves by the wrist in a grip that fairly trembled with excitement. "A man with a limp called Velasquez! Great smoke!"

It was now Graves' and Bob's turn to stare at Slick, for the big Irish-American seemed greatly astonished. He rapidly explained matters.

"It was for Velasquez I was waitin' at Larrigan's, kid, when we fell in with each other to-night. I've been after him for weeks, concerning a bit of dirty work up at Seven Pines. I knew he had made off in this direction, and I guessed he would call at Larrigan's Saloon sooner or later. In fact, Larrigan himself was workin' with me; he'd spoken to Velasquez only a few days before I put in an appearance, and expected he might return at any moment. I'd haunted that saloon for three nights in succession, but drew blank. He didn't turn up again."

"Great Scott!" Bob exclaimed. "This is pretty queer." He turned again to Graves. "Well, what did Ferraro say to this other chap? How, indeed, did you come to be present?"

Jim Graves grinned.

"I wasn't present—that is to say, they didn't think I was," he replied. "I suspected that something crooked was afoot. I didn't like Snaky's evident confidence that he would soon own this outfit, nor did I like the look of his visitors. So I listened—on the veranda, there, beneath the open window.

"Ye know, young boss, we were all very fond of your uncle; we'd have done anythin' for him; so when I found my suspicions aroused I went all out to have 'em either verified or squashed——"

"What did you hear?" cut in Bob eagerly.

"Enough to make me wonder—enough to make me understand now," Graves said. "I know why Ferraro is so anxious to get hold of this place: it's not on account of the cattle-stock, good though that is, nor on account of the pastures. He has been drivin' round the whole show, gener'lly at night—him and this lawyer chap, who stayed for a few days. They came back, lookin' pretty well elated over something, and it was then that the lawyer began all that writin'. I listened on that occasion, too, and I discovered exac'ly what they were after—oil!"

"Oil? There's no oil here!"

"There is. They've found it—a promisin' spring, and that's at the bottom of this mystery. What Velasquez was told to do at a price was to see that neither you nor your uncle ever reached here from Hot Springs, where Snaky knew you'd be sure to put up on your way. Velasquez was to shadow you, and——"

"I've got it!" Bob suddenly cried, passing his hand over his brow. "I see the whole thing plainly now. A man with a limp, you said?"

"Yep."

"Then listen! I'd nearly forgotten the whole thing, it seemed so ordinary at the time, and I never connected it with this business. When we arrived at the hotel in Hot Springs, a dark man with a pronounced limp struck up a sudden friendship with Uncle Ben, and invited us to dine with him, which we did."

Bob paused, stared at the others a moment, then continued:

"We thought nothing of that; it seems the usual thing among travellers; but now I remember that it was shortly after dinner uncle complained first of sickness. He said he thought it might be the pudding, which was a new-fangled thing, and he had remarked upon its strange taste. Velasquez laughed, and said that that was probably because he had never tasted it before. I myself did not have any——"

"Ah! You had none," Muldoon commented. "Why? Wasn't any offered you?"

"It was served to me, but I didn't eat it," Bob said, "because I'd already had sufficient of other things."

"Lucky for you, kid," Muldoon commented. "And what happened next?"

"Why, Velasquez suddenly left us," Bob said. "He jumped up with a start, looked at his watch, and hastily excused himself—on account of a forgotten appointment owing to 'the influence of congenial company,' as he put it. That was shortly after the pudding arrived on the table."

"Did he know you didn't eat any?" asked Slick.

Bob shook his head.

"He didn't wait long enough to see," he answered. "He saw my portion served out, but that's all. Where's Snaky now?"

"I can't say for certain," Graves said. "The lawyer chap rode in and the pair of 'em set out at once. They took the mule cart."

"Their trail is a bit old now," Muldoon commented, "but the moon's good and I may be able to trace it. I'm used to that kind o' work. What say, younker? Suppose you, an' me, an' Graves here follows 'em? There's no time like the present, and goodness knows when them galoots will return."

"I'm with you!" replied Bob instantly, and Graves, without more ado, brought the necessary fresh horses round from the corral.



"Gents below thar!" barked Muldoon. "Sorry to disturb ye, but will ye kindly reach for the sky?"

THE THIRD CHAPTER
A Trio of Crooks!

LIKE the human bloodhound he was, Muldoon followed that trail across the moonlit prairie. He was seldom at fault, for the signs, though old, were still readable to his trained sight.

Moreover, few cattle had strayed this way to obliterate the tracks of the pair he sought, and he was in high fettle as the pursuers neared Buffalo Crags.

"We're on the right road, chums!" Slick grinned, loosening the heavy gun at his right hip. "They've come this way, and haven't retraced their course."

A few minutes later Muldoon made the startling announcement that a mounted man had joined the pair in the mule cart. Jim Graves and Bob Carrington looked at one another, as though asking a mute question. It was Slick who supplied the answer.

"Velasquez, I reckon. He probably was to join 'em by prearrangement, as soon as he could manage it. They must all be in this oil affair—possibly goin' shares."

Shortly afterwards the rising ground told them that they were climbing the lower slopes of Buffalo Crags, and here the hardness of the surface made the trail more difficult to follow—indeed, even Muldoon at times lost it altogether. He paused on the crest of a low ridge, frowning as he glanced about him.

"This is a purty extensive place," he observed, "and there's no tellin' exac'ly where them coyotes went. I can see, though, that they dismounted and led the mules along here, and they seemed to be goin' straight on towards that tough bit of a mountain

yonder." He pointed to a towering crag some distance off. "Come on– an' quietly!"

Leading their mounts, the trio toiled up the steep slope, and were almost at the top when Muldoon suddenly stopped dead, his finger on his lips. His keen ears had caught some sound.

"'Sh! They're on the far side," he whispered to Bob. "I heard 'em just now. Leave the nags, an' crawl after me!"

From the top of the hill they glanced down into the hollow beyond. A fire was flickering a little way off, and between it and where the watchers lay three men stood round some kind of apparatus which had been fixed in the rocky ground. They were bending intently over this, all unconscious of the fact that three pairs of keen eyes were following their every action.

Bob had just time to take in all this when Muldoon's sharp voice suddenly barked:

"Gents below thar! Sorry to disturb ye, but will ye kindly reach for the sky?"

Bob gasped. In Slick's hands a pair of heavy guns had suddenly gleamed in the bright moonlight. Jim Graves had followed suit, bringing his own "artillery" into line with Muldoon's. Four grim muzzles covered the trio below, and those muzzles never wavered a hair's-breadth.

The three surprised men spun round, stood stock still, and stared upwards. Their faces were clearly revealed in the moonlight. One was obviously Velasquez, from his awkward build, which showed one leg to be distinctly shorter than its fellow. The second was clever-looking in a sly way. The third was stout, dark-haired, and of a very sallow complexion. The jaws of all three had dropped ludicrously in the overwhelming surprise of Slick's challenge.

Their hands went up obediently, nevertheless.

"Now, Velasquez," Muldoon continued, "I've got you. I want you for double murder —a knifin' job at Seven Pines and a poisoning stunt at Hot Springs. You, Mister Ferraro, will answer to the latter charge. And your lawyer feller—it so happens that I know you, too; your name's Tranter. You were mixed up in a nasty swindle I was investigatin' some months back, an' only escaped jail by yer smartness. But this time I get my innin's. Keep 'em up, gents"—as the trio showed signs of letting their arms fall—"keep 'em well in the sky. I don't want to waste good ammunition on yer carcases."

With that he shot a glance at the astounded Bob.

"Take the lariat from my waist, kid," he ordered, "and go down an' rope up them coyotes. They won't bite ye; if they try it they'll bite lead, which would sure be most indigestible. Slick's the word—an' Slick's my name."

Bob hastened down the slope, and soon had the three unresisting prisoners safely tethered. He roped them back to back, using practically all of that long lariat, and made a thorough job of it.

"Now," said Muldoon, as he and Graves joined their companion. "Now we'll see what this is all about."

He examined the apparatus the others had fixed up. There was quite a miscellaneous collection of articles, the largest of which was a steel tripod, and several lengths of piping also played a prominent part in the arrangements. Muldoon fiddled about for a little while, scowlingly watched by the captives, until a thin blue jet of something spouted upwards from a boring already made in the rock. Slick bent lower; then stood erect again.

"Oil, sure enough," he said, with a grin. "Younker, ye're worth robbin'; this is great stuff, or I'm no judge."

Thereupon he made a deft search of the prisoners' persons, drawing from Ferraro's pocket a sheaf of papers which he examined closely in the moonlight. He looked first at Snaky, then at Tranter.

"Durned good forgeries," he remarked to the latter. He turned to Bob. "See here, kid. These are concessions, in your uncle's handwriting—or supposedly so—by which Ferraro takes over both the ranch and this tract of oil-bearin' ground. A sweet plot, 'pon my life. Why, even his signature has been added, which proves that Tranter's a bit of an artist. These documents cancel Boss Carrington's former will, and it was only

necessary to get 'em state-stamped to have the matter in order."

Bob let his blazing eyes rove over the trio, finally fixing them upon Velasquez, whom he had since recognised as their "host" at the Hot Springs hotel.

"You hound!" he said quietly. "Fortunately for myself, I was too fed up to eat any of that pudding, though your rotten game succeeded only too well in—in my poor uncle's case——"

"But he'll pay—he'll pay all right, lad!" Muldoon cut in. "And so will the others: they're all accessories, an' ye can leave it to me to see that things are squared."

Shortly afterwards, with the bound trio lying in the mule cart, which had been standing not far away, the journey back to the ranch was embarked upon. Bob drove the mules, and in some little measure felt that he was doing something towards punishing the miscreants who had robbed him of his unfortunate relative. Graves and Muldoon cantered behind, the latter leading Bob's spare horse.

The local sheriff, summoned to Buffalo Ranch, needed little convincing. The facts were self-evident, and Muldoon saw to it that everything was done to make a pretty plain case. The trio were removed to the calaboose in Hot Springs, where justice came into its own eventually.

"Well, kid," Muldoon said at parting, as he gripped the hand of the new ranch owner, "I'll say so-long, though possibly we'll bob up against each other again. The world ain't so large, y'know."

"Buffalo Ranch is always open to you, Slick," Bob returned; "and if ever I can help you in any way, you've only got to say so. You did me a right good turn over this business."

"And you did me another," Muldoon smiled. "I guess there must be somethin' in poetry, after all."

"How's that?"

"Why, if I hadn't chummed up with you, kid, an' squared up that poem of yours in Larrigan's, it's quite possible that I'd never have roped in Velasquez."



THE SNOW-FIGHT

THE snow lies deep at Gosling's door,
And he is almost weeping;
The more he sweeps it up, the more
The snow itself comes sweeping!
Then Gosling blames the Weather Clerk
For causing all the trouble:
"Although I've swept from dawn till dark
The fall is nearly double!"

But happy schoolboys love the snow;
We fairly revel in it!
And while the wintry winds do blow
We're busy every minute,
Kneading our snowballs into shape,
And rushing into action;
A stirring snow-fight is a jape
Which yields full satisfaction.

The Upper Fourth and the Remove
Are waging war with fervour;
And very sturdy foes we prove,
Delighting each observer.
Volleys of snowballs fill the air,
Crashing upon our foemen;
Till they retreat in wild despair,
Looking as white as snowmen!

Uttering war-cries loud and shrill,
And joining forces neatly,
We hurl our snowballs with a will,
Routing the foe completely!
And Gosling, lingering at his lodge,
With visage melancholy,
Is just one tick too late to dodge
Our last triumphant volley!



Our Incurable Interviewer Calls On HAROLD SKINNER

(The black sheep of the Greyfriars Remove.)

A BRIGHT midsummer sun shone overhead, and the playing-fields of Greyfriars were crowded with the white-clad figures of countless cricketers.

I searched them in vain for Harold Skinner.

Almost despairing, I drifted round behind the School Chapel. There, in a shady nook, I spied three pasty-faced juniors playing a game of cards.

"Mr. Skinner here?" I asked.

The three card players started violently, and one of them half rose to his feet.

"Yes, I'm Skinner. Who are you?" he asked. "Thought you were a blessed beak at first!"

"I have called to interview you on behalf of the HOLIDAY ANNUAL, Mr. Skinner."

"Good! Take a hand at banker, and interview me while you are playin'!" grinned Skinner.

"You're very kind, Mr. Skinner. But I came here to interview you, not to gamble," I reminded him. "Have a cigar, Mr. Skinner?"

"Certainly, old bean!" Skinner took a cigar with alacrity. "Quite a treat to meet a man of the world in this old-fashioned hole! This cigar is the goods!"

"It's a Flor de Killemkwik, so it ought to be!" I smiled. "Now for our interview! How do you like Greyfriars, Mr. Skinner?"

"Rotten!" said Skinner, puffing away with an appearance of great relish. "This moth-eaten old show is no place for a go-ahead fellow like myself, I can tell you!"

"How unfortunate that you are here then, Mr. Skinner!"

"I should jolly well think it is! Wretched, I find it!"

"I mean unfortunate for Greyfriars!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Snoop and Stott.

Skinner fixed his shifty eyes on me and glared.

"I suppose that means you're one of Wharton's sort, does it?" he sneered. "If so, you can buzz off as soon as you like!"

"But I've come specially to interview you——"

"Well, all right, then!" growled Skinner. "Let's get it over quickly. Just tell your readers that my idea is to have a jolly good time. By that I mean playin' cards, followin' the gee-gees, dodgin' games and strenuous things like that, and enjoyin' the good things that life offers."

"Like cigars?" I suggested.

"Ye-es! Like cigars," assented Skinner, whose pasty face had become suddenly tinged with a greyish hue. "Th-th-this is —aaaaah!"

"My dear Mr. Skinner——"

"M-m-m-m-m!"

"Why, you are throwing away that beautiful cigar!" I exclaimed. "Aren't you going to finish it?"

"I—— Aaaaaah! I—— Mmmmmm! Ooooooh!" said Skinner.

And with those words of Skinner's my interview came to an end.

Skinner didn't finish the cigar. The cigar had already finished him!

THE END

GOING to SCHOOL in the GOOD OLD DAYS!



The Coach Starts for Canterbury.

IT was snowing—how it was snowing! Drifts of snow—some nearly five feet deep—lay in every corner. The chairmen carrying the sedan-chairs slipped and stumbled as they went along, and the old ladies inside screamed out in affright. Even the horses in the chaises and phaetons could hardly keep their feet, and it seemed as though the postillions on their backs would fall off any moment.

Thomas Merridew, fifteen years of age, captain of the Remove Form at Greyfriars School, drew his great-coat about him and plodded gaily through the London streets. Whatever other people thought about it, Tom liked the snow; and even the fact that he was returning to school after the Christmas holidays could not damp his spirits. The tassel on his cap swung merrily to and fro as he walked.

Wearisome as the journey was going to school in the good old days it certainly lacked nothing in adventure—with "knights of the road" lurking along the highway.

It was foggy in London, and link-boys were in great demand. These ragged little boys, carrying their flaming torches, were dodging about everywhere, offering their services to old men who could not see their way. At the corner of the street a crowd of shivering men and boys were warming their fingers at a hot-pieman's stand, and blinking delightedly at the glowing coals.

"B-r-r-r!" said Tom, and his breath, as he said it, went up like a cloud of steam. "It's cold. And those hot pies look tempting. I expect they're made of dog, or something—but here goes!"

He bought a hot pie, and went on, munching happily. The warmth of the pie made him feel glowing all over, and he felt like jumping about in sheer delight.

The steam was rising from the horses' backs as they went along, like drying-day at a big laundry. Coachmen and footmen were almost invisible for the fog and the steam; but everybody seemed jolly, and they called out New Year greetings as they passed.

Presently Tom reached the Borough, and made his way into the Market Inn. Drawers and waiters were bustling about serving dinner, and Tom sat down and had a good meal.

The Canterbury coach started from the Market Inn, and every place was booked. Tom had taken an outside ticket three days previously, so he had no reason to worry. But many fat and panting old gentlemen came along for seats on the coach, and were angry when they found it was full.

"Gadzooks!" roared one old chap in a green coat with a white pigtail. "How am I going to get to Canterbury—hey? Answer

me that? 'Faith, can't you speak—a plague on ye!"

"Very sorry, sir," said the ticket clerk. "All the seats are taken. You can hire a chaise, if you like——"

"And what about the cost, drat ye?" stormed the old man furiously. "D'ye think I've got money to throw away on chaises—hey? I want a seat in the coach."

The poor ticket clerk suggested that perhaps they might manage to crowd the old gentleman inside, but all the other inside passengers sternly refused. The old gentleman finally went away grumbling, to make a voyage down river on a steamer as far as Gravesend, and then get a conveyance from there.

The coach arrived prompt to time—with four beautiful horses, eager to be off along the snowy high road. The coachman, the guard, and the ostlers, after taking a glass of punch to keep the cold out, threw themselves fiercely on the passengers' luggage, and began stacking it in the boot—a place underneath the coach specially reserved for luggage.

"Now, then, gen'lmen," said the coachman, at length, "get in, if you please. Time we were off, if we're going to make Canterbury to-day. The snow is mortal deep at some places in Kent."

Tom climbed to his seat on the roof of the coach, three stout gentlemen and one thin lady climbed inside, and five other passengers followed Tom to the outside. One of these passengers, to Tom's joy, was his special chum, Roger Bates.

"'Faith, Roger," laughed he, "'tis great to see thee again, old lad. Didst have a good time?"

"Couldn't ha' been better, Tom," answered Roger gaily. "Zooks! This coach ever going to start?"

The coachman climbed to his seat and caught hold of the ribbons. The guard blew a mighty blast from his long key-bugle, and the ostlers caught the horses' heads.

"Right!" cried the coachman, puffing after his climb. "Run 'em out, George! Who-oa! That'll do, George! Give 'em their heads!"

And away went the coach along the Borough, the guard blowing his bugle, the two chums shouting, and the coachman cracking his whip in the air.

Hunch, the Highwayman!

FAIRLY soon London was left behind, and the coach was passing through the village of Walworth. The cottagers came out and stared at it, and waved their hands. Tom and Roger waved in reply, and with much laughter they left Walworth behind and were soon approaching Camberwell.

As they penetrated deeper and deeper into the lanes of Kent, the snow grew thicker and thicker, until the guard began to speculate whether they would succeed in reaching Canterbury at all.

"We'll be lucky, methinks," said he, blowing on his hands, "if we manage to get to Sevenoaks at this rate. Why, bless me, the snow is up to the 'orses' 'aunches already."

So it was, and the poor animals were not feeling quite as fresh as when they started. However, they stumbled and slithered along the snowy road, helped by the guard, who called out in an encouraging fashion to them and spurred them to do their best.

A rustic in a three-cornered hat which was tied on his head with a large handkerchief, stared at them and then called out:

"Hey! You be moighty careful that 'ee doan't run into Hunch, the Hoighwayman! The dratted thief be 'aunting this road somewhere, so they tell Oi."

"Zounds!" muttered Tom. "If we fell in with the highwayman here, we couldn't get away for the snow. Odds seize him! We won't let him rifle the coach, anyway!"

The coachman called out his thanks to the rustic, and urged the tired horses forward to the Lord Beverley at Sevenoaks, where fresh horses were awaiting them. Keeping a sharp look-out for the highwayman all the time, the coachman drove as fast as he dared, and was greatly relieved when they reached Sevenoaks without mishap.

They had another meal while the horses were being changed. Two of the passengers left the coach at Sevenoaks, and their places were taken by two lean, sinister men, who spoke not a word the whole time they were on the coach.

Fresh horses were put in, and the coach started off again. Mile after mile of snow slipped under the horses' hoofs and Canterbury was drawing gradually nearer. But just before they got to Maidstone the worst happened.

Hunch, the highwayman, appeared.

He was not at all the type of bold, fearless highwayman of which we read in books. In appearance he was short and grotesque—he had a horrifying hump on his shoulders, which was responsible for his nickname Hunch. Two black, terribly fierce eyes glittered out from beneath his brows—eyes which neither knew nor recognised mercy.

"Hold!" he rapped out, waving a brace of pistols.

Tom and Roger experienced a thrill as the short, evil highwayman cantered up to the coach. They knew he was likely enough to shoot any one of them on sight—for the penalty of the road agent was death, and murder would not matter to him.



The poor horses struggled along the snowy road with much difficulty, and it seemed doubtful whether the coach would reach Sevenoaks.

The coachman, quaking, drew to a halt.

"Throw out all your valuables!" commanded the robber harshly. "Waste no time!"

The thin lady inside uttered a fearful scream, and wrenched off her pearl necklace. She tossed it out of the window with such good aim that it struck the highwayman between the eyes.

The robber snarled wickedly, and levelling his pistol made to shoot her in cold blood. At that second, however, the two sinister men on top of the coach each drew a pistol and, without the smallest discomfort, fired two shots into the robber's head. The highwayman uttered a strangled yell and dropped from his horse into the snow.

"We are Bow Street runners," snapped one of the men. "We have been looking for this fellow for a fair long time. Perchance we'd have rather taken him alive; but 'tis no matter. He's out o' the way, and that's the main thing."

They got down, and the pale-faced coachman gathered up the ribbons and the coach moved off. Tom and Roger, shivering slightly as they saw the still form in the snow, were soon whirled away from the grim tragedy.

The coach was long overdue by the time it reached Canterbury. The snow had made travelling very slow work. Cheery again now, however, Tom and Roger greeted and were greeted by a score of other Greyfriars pupils. The school brake came along; they crowded in, and in a couple of hours they were once more at Greyfriars.

Such, then, was the manner in which the Removites went to school in the bad good old days.



BURIED TREASURE

Some thrilling "finds" in the Greyfriars district.
By HARRY WHARTON

THE old Smugglers' Caves at Pegg have long been a happy hunting-ground for schoolboy treasure-seekers.

Many a half-holiday has been spent, delving with pick and spade in those dark, cavernous depths, in the hope of coming across treasure-trove hidden by the pirates and smugglers of those picturesque days when piracy and smuggling were overcrowded professions.

In the majority of cases the searchers have delved in vain, and their repeated burrowings and ferretings have yielded nothing. On several occasions in Greyfriars history, however, the labours of the treasure-seekers have borne fruit.

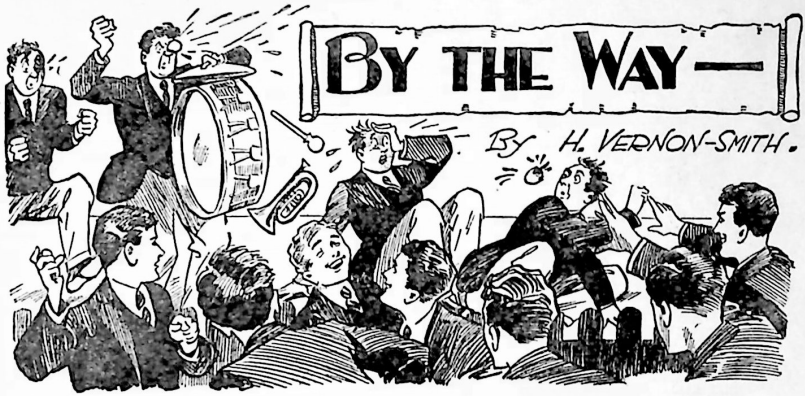
As far back as 1895 a couple of juniors named Wynyard and Wharton (the latter was not related to me) were fortunate enough to discover a very valuable treasure. It was the traditional old oak chest, full of doubloons, pieces-of-eight, jewellery, and gold and silver trinkets. The treasure was valued at several thousand pounds, and the lucky finders received a substantial share of the spoils, the remainder being claimed by the Crown.

The curious thing about this discovery was that it was purely accidental. Wynyard and Wharton had gone to the caves in order to bury a "fake" treasure and play a trick on some of their schoolfellows by filling an old trunk full of worthless rubble. They were digging a deep hole in which to bury the trunk, when their spades came into sudden contact with the iron bands of the treasure chest. Their surprise and delight on forcing open the chest and viewing the glittering hoard may be better imagined than described.

It was not until 1910 that a further discovery of treasure was made. Some enterprising and adventurous fags, exploring the caves one half-holiday, discovered the entrance to a subterranean passage. The entrance was practically walled in, and had escaped the notice of previous searchers. When the blocked-up opening was cleared and the passage explored, it was found to lead to an underground vault, in the recesses of which two caskets were hidden. The caskets were crammed with gold and jewels, and there was a document showing that they had been buried by one Captain Peter Sankey—presumably a pirate—in the reign of George III.

Several more finds of treasure—some valuable and important, and others of less note—have been made since I came to Greyfriars, and I have taken part in many thrilling treasure hunts both in the old Smugglers' Caves and elsewhere. I have not space to tell of these adventures now, but you may be sure that the caves have not yielded up all the treasure that lies buried therein.

One of these days some patient and persevering explorer will make a find which will eclipse all the famous finds of the past. May it be myself! Failing which, may it be Billy Bunter, because he will then be in a position to square up with his numerous creditors!



H. Vernon-Smith, of the Remove, recalls some of the little-known but important happenings of the year at Greyfriars School.

THE Greyfriars Jazz Band was an idea which originated in the amazing brain of Horace Coker of the Fifth. Poor old Coker gets steadily funnier—and madder—as time passes.

From the various Forms at Greyfriars he recruited twenty potty musicians armed with tin whistles, cornets, mouth-organs, drums, saxophones and trumpets.

Full of enthusiasm, Coker arranged a concert in the music-room, and a tremendous audience, including most of the Remove, rolled up—bent on ragging.

We stood about ten minutes of the horrible din made by Coker's band, under the lordly Horace's conductorship. Then a hail of rotten eggs, squashy fruit, and old cabbage stumps drove the players from the platform in utter confusion.

After that the band was disbanded—in fact, Coker himself narrowly escaped being disbanded by his own infuriated musicians.

AN event which aroused great enthusiasm throughout the school was the Greyfriars Model Exhibition.

Sir Leslie Rainham, one of the School Governors, offered a prize of £20 for the best model made by a Greyfriars boy. There was no restriction as to subject.

The exhibition was a huge success, roars of laughter being caused by Billy Bunter's weird model of the Greyfriars Tuckshop and Dicky Nugent's model coal mine, which was more coal than mine.

Many of the entries were really good, however, and the prize was deservedly taken by George Blundell of the Fifth, whose working model of an Atlantic liner was wonderfully accurate and detailed.



Billy Bunter's model of the tuckshop caused roars of laughter.

The runner-up was Robert Donald Ogilvy of the Remove. Ogilvy constructed a complete model of Greyfriars in plywood, and his work was so good that he was awarded a special prize of £10. William George Bunter immediately discovered that the canny Scot was the best pal he had ever had.



The desk-lid shot up and caught Mr. Quelch a nasty crack under the chin.

THE coming of "spring" was heralded at Greyfriars by some japer who fixed a large and rusty coil spring under the lid of Mr. Quelch's desk in the Remove Form-room.

When Quelchy turned the key in the lock the desk-lid shot up and caught him a terrific crack under the chin.

The irate Form-master inquired deeply into the matter and discovered that Harold Skinner was the culprit. So Skinner's little joke "recoiled" on his own head, but there was not much "spring" about him when Quelchy had finished with the cane.

TOWARDS the end of the winter deep anxiety was felt when Dr. Locke, the headmaster, had a short but serious illness.

The Greyfriars fellows, without exception, rallied round, and almost complete silence reigned over the School, everyone moving about as quietly as possible.

Whole Forms clubbed together to send him flowers, and even Bunter could hardly have dealt with the great stacks of fruit which were conveyed to the Head's house.

When the invalid appeared in public once more he was given an overwhelming reception, and the old Head's voice trembled with emotion as he said a few words of thanks to the assembled School. It was truly a wonderful tribute to Dr. Locke's popularity.

TENNIS is not very extensively played at Greyfriars, but in spite of that, George Wingate and the other members of the Sports Committee decided to organise a "knock-out" tennis tournament open to all Greyfriars fellows.



Frank Nugent was cheered to the echo for his victory in the tennis tournament.

The affair went off quite successfully, though Horace Coker did not think so when he was soundly and completely routed by Dicky Nugent of the Second.

The result provided a certain amount of surprise and, incidentally, was a triumph for the Remove, for Frank Nugent came out victorious in the Final after a hot tussle with Cecil Reginald Temple of the Fourth.

Nugent showed himself to be a graceful and clever player and was cheered to the echo for his win.

PERHAPS the most daring jape of the year was carried out at the expense of Mr. Hacker, the master of the Shell. One evening Mr. Hacker was summoned to the Head's study. Exactly what happened there is not generally known, but it seems that Dr. Locke had given the Shell master a very thorough "dressing down."



The pseudo Dr. Locke "slanged" Mr. Hacker without mercy.

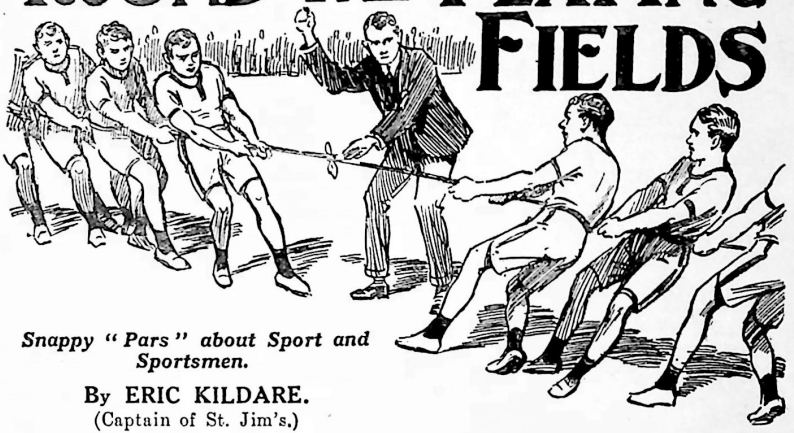
Mr. Hacker, taken completely by surprise, had been reduced to a state of helpless bewilderment—until he found that the Head had been out the whole of that evening.

With consummate daring, some practical joker had disguised himself as Dr. Locke, seated himself in the Head's study, sent for Mr. Hacker and "slanged" him without mercy.

The impostor had turned the light low, and had evidently played his part very cleverly, for the Shell master was completely deceived.

Luckily for himself, the identity of the japer is still a mystery. Everyone seems to think that it was a Shell fellow, so perhaps it was only coincidence that Mr. Hacker had reported William Wibley, the actor of the Remove, for sliding down the banisters a few days previously.

ROUND THE PLAYING FIELDS



Snappy "Pars" about Sport and Sportsmen.

By ERIC KILDARE.
(Captain of St. Jim's.)

SPORTS' DAY has been observed annually at St. Jim's since the reign of good Queen Bess. A feature of the old-fashioned Sports' Day was the archery tournament, in which the scholars tested their skill with bows and arrows. A football match was also played, but the "football" was a monstrous sphere, which had to be shoved and pushed, and the "pitch" was several miles in length. The whole school took part in the game, and the tactics employed were none too gentle, judging by the number of names which used to appear on "ye sicke lyst" after the fray!

* * * *

In 1879 the Sports' Day programme was carried through in spite of a severe thunderstorm and a tropical deluge of rain. Needless to state no records were broken on such a day.

* * * *

A silver cup is presented annually to the best senior sportsman, and one to the best junior sportsman. The senior cup came to me this year, after a stern tussle with Darrell and Monteith. And Tom Merry won the junior cup, though hard pressed by Talbot, Figgins, and Redfern. The cups were awarded to those winning the greatest number of events.

* * * *

The 100 yards record (seniors) is held by George Darrell, who covered the distance in ten and one-fifth seconds. George Figgins holds the junior record, his time being ten and four-fifths seconds.

* * * *

The inter-House tug-of-war contest has been won by the School House for seven years in succession. We don't believe in giving the New House too much "rope"!

* * * *

The finest long-distance runner at St. Jim's is Baker, who has a wonderful action, and seems never to tire. Of the juniors, Tom Merry and Talbot are probably the best runners over long distances. The best sprinter is Figgins, whose long legs carry him over the turf at a terrific pace.



Baggy Trimble, clinging grimly to the handle-bars, crawled along at a snail's pace.

Even Baggy Trimble, the fat and fatuous, has managed to take a prize on Sports' Day at last. Baggy won the slow bicycle race. Clinging firmly to the handle-bars he crawled along at a snail's pace, and, try as they would, the other competitors could not get behind him! Trimble came in last, and was therefore accounted the winner. So the race is not always to the swift!

* * * *

The real bicycle race was won by Jack Blake, after a thrilling tussle with Tom Merry and Harry Noble. The course was five miles, and Blake was slightly behind at the last lap, but with a final burst of speed he just managed to overhaul his rivals, winning an exciting race by a matter of inches.

* * * *

The annual boat-race on the river between School House and New House had a sensational finish, the two boats dead-heating. This is the first result of its kind since 1899. It was decided to share the honours rather than re-row the race; so we must wait till next year to determine which is "Cock House of the River."

* * * *

Since the commencement of this contest eighty races have been rowed. Of these the School House has won forty, the New House thirty-eight, while two have been declared void.

A feature of the old-fashioned Sports' Day was the archery tournament, in which the scholars tested their skill with bows and arrows.





MY IDEAL FILM

A SYMPOSIUM.

WITH EDITORIAL COMMENTS

By

BOB CHERRY

(of the Remove.)

WILLIAM GEORGE BUNTER.—In my ideal film the heroes would be manly, well-developed fellows instead of skinny beasts like they usually show. Of corse, there would be plenty of eating and drinking seens. These give the actors a bit of encurrigement at their work and enable them to put hart and sole into their job besides providing a subject of never-failing interest to the awdience. To get down to the details of this ideal film——

(But that was as far as our Prize Porpoise got. Somebody passing Bunter's study happened to mention the word "tuck" just then and Bunter had no more time for literary work after that!)

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH.—My ideal film? Well, from what I've seen of films I should say that if some brilliant inventor were to bring out a film that could neither be seen nor heard, he'd be nearer the ideal than any producer has been so far!

(An ambulance is at present picking up the few pieces of Smithy that were left after he had defended this statement to an indignant army of film fans!)

DICKY NUGENT.—My ideal film is one in which pirates and bandits and briggands persew their nefarious callings and blud flows in torrents. But a lass! I'm afraid it won't be perjooced just yet. The awdiences are too squeemish!

(Hard luck, Dicky! But why not a film featuring that celebrated hero of yours, Dr. Alfred Birchemall? There's no doubt whatever that he'd make a "striking" success!)

BOLSOVER MAJOR.—Films? Bah. Full of puerile piffle, sickly sentiment and footling fudge. I'd like to see a film about prize-fighters hitting each other for hours on end. But what chance is there of such an ideal film being shown? None whatever!

(But you're not consistent, Bolsy! When I offered to allay your disappointment by giving you the real thing, you walked away without even thanking me for the offer!)

HORACE JAMES COKER.—I find something lacking in modern films. They're

lavvish enough and well produced, I suppose, but one gets the feeling that they still need a final "something" to make them perfect. I've thawt over this very carefully and the conclusion I've come to is that a new jeenius is needed on the films to show all the rest how to act. This jeenius should have a superb figger—something like mine, for instance—and a handsum face. My own face gives you an idea of what I mean. And simply marvellous powers of expression, like I used when I took the part of the Second Gravedigger in the Fifth Form production of "Hamlet." A film with a jeenius like this in the leading roll would be perfect in every respect.

(Coker has evidently gone off the rails a bit, for judging by his comparisons the "jeenius" he has mentioned would have a face like a pound of pickled pork, a "figger" like a sack of potatoes, and the powers of expression of a graven image. Still, I'll admit that if he acted seriously he'd turn out the funniest farce on record. Good old Coker!)

PAUL PROUT, M.A.—My ideal film is the film that shows grizzly bears in their native haunts. Seeing such a film always takes my mind back to the 'nineties when I was big-game hunting in the Rockies——

(Sorry, Mr. Prout, but we can't go back with you just now. Call again when we want to be soothed to sleep!)

H. H. QUELCH, M.A.—There is no film which I have any particular desire to see. I would much rather watch one of Shakespeare's plays—though I must confess I might be interested if I were to see one of his plays on the screen. But, unfortunately, I am afraid my fancy would not find favour with the majority of the great army of film fans.

(The least said here the better—for me! Readers must imagine what I'd say if Mr. Quelch wasn't my Form-master.)

FISHER T. FISH.—You want the low-down on my ideal movie? I guess I'm the guy to do that. Yessir! I kinda guess and calculate I like all movies, though I don't get the time to see many. But I reckon I'd be first in a queue to see a movie of a guy who cornered



Bunter "... In my ideal film there would be plenty of eating and drinking scens...."

chewing-gum and made a pile o' dollars. Yep, that's my fancy!

(You would be the only one in that queue, Fishy! Yessir! And I guess and calculate you could find time to see every film at the Courtfield Cinema—if somebody paid for you every time!)

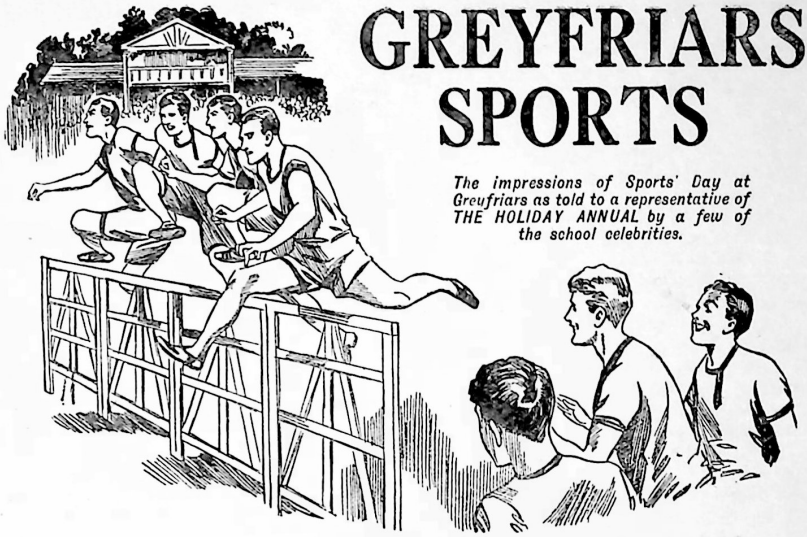
WILLIAM GOSLING.—What I sez is this 'ere: I hain't got any ideal film, becos I never gets time to see one. Keeping my heye on the young rips of this 'ere school takes up all my time.

(Never mind, Gossy. I know you prefer to spend your money on liquid refreshment!)

HAROLD SKINNER.—I want to see a film in which the Good Little Eric gets it well and truly in the neck and the Bold Bad Villain wins all along the line——

(That's enough from you, old bean! This is where I stop collecting opinions and devote five minutes to seeing that someone else gets it well and truly in the neck—to wit, Harold Skinner!)

GREYFRIARS SPORTS



The impressions of Sports' Day at Greyfriars as told to a representative of THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL by a few of the school celebrities.

AFTER the sports which were held at Greyfriars during the summer, several of the school celebrities were invited to give their impressions of the day to a special representative of the HOLIDAY ANNUAL. Judging by the following selection, the events of the day were more in number than the programme indicated!

Bob Cherry.—Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's that? My impression of the sports? Oh, had a topping time! When I wasn't hoofing it or jumping it, I was chucking the cricket-ball, and when I wasn't doing that I was enjoying watching old Wingate and North bagging all the seniors' pots. It was a great day!

The Head.—My impressions of Sports' Day? Certainly! It was a very enjoyable day for all concerned, especially those who were successful in the events for which they had entered. My task in awarding the prizes to winners afforded me an added pleasure to that of watching the keenly-contested events.

Skinner.—The sports? Well, Wharton won the junior 220 yards by a short head, Russell won the junior mile by a neck, and Linley pulled off the hurdle race after shying at the last fence. After that I got bored stiff and went off to play nap in the study with Snoop and Stott!

Horace Coker.—It was a day of sheer rotten luck. For whom? Why, for me—Horace Coker! First I slipped on a banana-skin in the 100 yards, which prevented me winning that. Then the silly idiots of judges disqualified me in the mile, merely for knocking down Wingate and Blundell when they were passing me. Disqualified *me*, you know! I certainly beat the rest at throwing the cricket-ball. The ball went so far that they never found it, until some fathead said he saw it slip out of my hand and lodge in a tree at the back of me. It's true they found a ball there, but, as I explained to them, a jealous Sixth-Former might have put it there! Anyway, but for bad luck I should certainly have won most of the trophies. I stood Potter

and Greene a feed afterwards and jawed it over with them, and they quite agreed with me!

Billy Bunter.—It was a jolly fine Sports' Day. They did things really well in the refreshment-tent. It was all free, you know, and I rolled in there after dinner and had quite a decent snack. In fact, to tell you the truth, I stayed there till it was all over!

Dame Mimble.—Sports' Day was a day of hard work for me, and I was dead knocked at the end of it. I had a very busy time in the refreshment-tent, and didn't have a second to spare. When I wasn't serving some of the boys, I was watching Master Bunter. No, I don't relish Sports' Day!

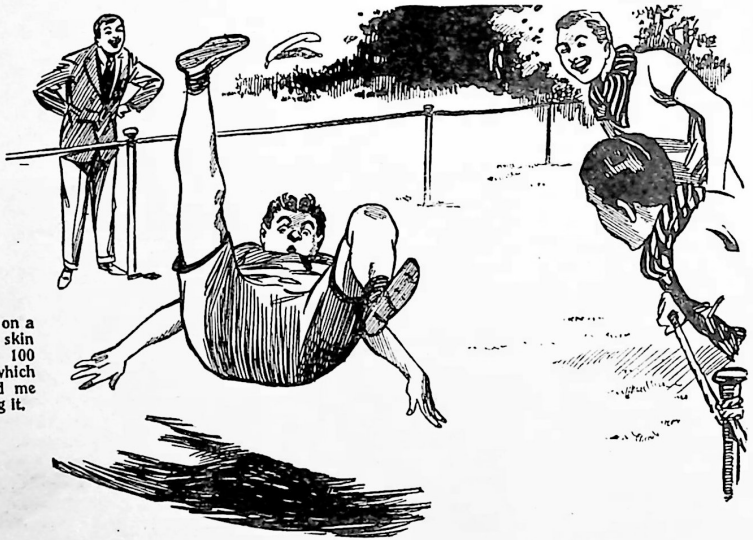
Gosling.—Wot I says is this 'ere—all boys oughter be drownded at birth. But seein' they ain't, the least the 'Ead can do is to stop young varmints like that there Master Cherry throwin' 'is blinkin' cricket-ball through a winder I only just put right agin! An' the crowd a-cheerin' 'im, too! Sports! Huh!

Harry Wharton.—It was a day of real pleasure to me. I was fortunate enough to carry off three prizes, and I enjoyed every second of winning them.

Lord Mauleverer.—My impressions of the sports? Sorry, dear boy, but after all the energetic fellows had buzzed off I had a little snooze in the study and didn't wake up.

Fisher T. Fish.—Sports, did you call 'em? Say, but ain't you Britishers the humorists? I guess I've seen cripples putting more hustle in a stroll down a New York side-walk than you guys put in your running! Go in for 'em myself! Nope! There ain't enough greenbacks in the game, sir!

Tom Dutton.—Snorts? Who snorts? If you're suggesting I snort, I'll punch you on the nose! Oh, PORTS! Well, if you've had three ports, you must be pretty merry, I should say. What? WARTS? Why didn't you say so at first, then? If you've got warts, you'd better put something on them—— What are you walking away for? Silly ass!



I slipped on a banana-skin in the 100 yards, which prevented me winning it.



The GHOST of No. 1 STUDY!

A Play in Verse for Amateur Actors

By

The GREYFRIARS RHYMESTER

SCENE I.
Harry Wharton's Study.

WHARTON (*turning a flushed face from the fireplace, at which he is kneeling, frying eggs*):
Buck up, and buzz about there, Bob!
Your lazy limbs want oiling!
I've shoved the kettle on the hob,
And soon it will be boiling.

CHERRY:
Well, give a chap a giddy chance;
I've set the chairs out ready.
But look at Frank—he's in a trance;
Look out, you idiot—steady!
(*Nugent staggers towards the table in a dreamy manner with a pile of plates, which totter for an instant, then fall over with a crash.*)

BULL:
To juggle in a way so rum
Is scarcely scientific;

NABOB (*holding his ears*):
The dinfulness, my worthy chum,
Is really most terrific!

NUGENT (*ruefully surveying the wreckage*):
I've done it now! This blessed spill
Will get me in bad odour.
We may not mind, but *someone* will—
The plates belonged to Loder!

WHARTON:
If he should come upon your track
A poker he'll be using!

NUGENT:
Upon the coming Christmas vac.
My mind was sweetly musing.

CHERRY:
It can't be helped, but pass the ham,
And I'll commence the carving.
That soap-dish there will hold the jam—
Ye gods! I'm simply starving!

CHARACTERS

Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry, Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull, Hurree Singh	The Famous Five of Greyfriars
Billy Bunter	The Fat Boy of Greyfriars
Herbert Vernon-Smith	The Bounder of Greyfriars

NOTE.—This play may be performed by readers of the HOLIDAY ANNUAL without fee or licence on condition that the words "By permission of the Editor of HOLIDAY ANNUAL" appear on each programme.



Bull (as Nugent drops a pile of plates) : To juggle in a way so rum
Is scarcely scientific !
Hurree Singh (holding his ears) : The dinfulness, my worthy chum,
Is really most terrific !

But pass the bread-and-butter, Frank,
And pour the tea out, Harry.

WHARTON (*rising, after serving the tea*) :

Here's health to us, the Famous Five
Of good old Greyfriars College !
To lead the way we'll always strive
In every branch of knowledge.

(*All solemnly raise their cups and drink the toast. Suddenly* BUNTER *is descried peeping into the study.*)

WHARTON (*rising, the eggs being finished*) :

The close connection with the grate
Has made my face quite ruddy.
My word ! there's not a single plate—
We'll ransack someone's study !

BULL :

Just drop the eggs upon this dish ;
I'll get some plates from that guy Fish.
[*Exit.*

WHARTON (*turning the eggs into the dish with relish*) :

I like a really ripping egg,
There's nothing quite so decent ;
" And 'pon my soul," said Uncle Clegg,
" The things was laid quite recent ! "

NABOB (*who is making toast at the fireplace*) :

Bananas in a luscious bunch
Content my humble wishes :
At tea or at the worthy lunch
They form the finest dishes.

(*Re-enter* BULL *with a pile of plates, which are distributed, and the feast commences.*)

CHERRY :

These eggs among the finest rank,
So prithee do not tarry ;

NUGENT (*threateningly*) :

Intruding porpoise, off you trot !

BUNTER :

Oh, what a ripping feed you've got !

WHARTON :

We want no uninvited scum !

BUNTER :

Is that the way you treat a chum ?

NABOB :

The beastly Bunter is a cad—
His hateful presence makes me mad !

BUNTER (*edging farther into the room*) :

I say, you fellows—just *one* tart !

WHARTON :

Vamoose !

CHERRY :

Absquatulate ! !

BULL :

Depart ! ! !

BUNTER (*looking longingly at the feast*) :

Come, don't be cads ! A bun will do—
Or else a piece of —— Ow ! Yarooh !

(CHERRY *hurls a loaf at* BUNTER'S *head, and the fat junior retreats from the study in wild disorder.*)

WHARTON (*laughing*) :

You are a splendid marksman, Bob ;
That shot was jolly clever ;
But why not make a perfect job
And floor the worm for ever ?

BULL :

Resume ! I'm hungry as a hunter.
Thank heaven we've seen the last of Bunter !

(*All sit down and resume tea*).

VOICE FROM WITHOUT :

Yah ! Beasts ! Cads ! Rotters !

(CHERRY *and the* NABOB *rush from the room, and a scuffle is heard outside. After a few seconds have elapsed they return to the study, dragging* BUNTER *along by the ears.*)

WHARTON (*sternly*) :

Just hold him for a tick, my lads !
Now, Bunter, did you call us cads ?

BUNTER (*gasping and spluttering*) :

Oh, no ! I never said a word !
'Twas someone else you must have heard.

WHARTON (*angrily*) :

Beware, you blessed Ananias !
No scum of your sort dare defy us !

BUNTER (*in tones of injured innocence*) :

Alas ! my word is always doubted.
I know 'twas someone else who shouted.

WHARTON (*turning to the others*) :

I really feel inclined to clump him ;
But, on reflection, why not bump him ?

OTHERS (*in chorus*) :

Yes, bump him ! Bump him !

BUNTER (*greatly alarmed*) :

Hands off, you cads ! Or else I'll tell
The Head, and Mr. Quelch as well !

(BUNTER *is seized by the Famous Five, and bumped three times on the floor, yelling and struggling. Then he is bundled unceremoniously from the study.*)

WHARTON :

Now we have bruised and bumped the beast,
We'll recommence our ripping feast.

(BUNTER *reappears in the doorway, dusty and dishevelled. Each of the feasters immediately seizes an available missile.*)

BUNTER (*malevolently*) :

The way you chucked me out was neat ;
But wait, you cads ! REVENGE IS SWEET !

Exit.

SCENE II.

Vernon-Smith's Study.

THE BOUNDER *is lounging comfortably back in an armchair, smoking, and scanning a sporting paper. On a table near at hand is a glass containing contents of a suspicious character. Suddenly a double-knock sounds on the door.* VERNON-SMITH *jumps up in alarm, sweeping the glass from the table in so doing, and throws the cigarette into a corner of the room. The knocking is repeated with*



Bunter : Come, don't be cads ! A bun will do—
Or else a piece of—Ow ! Yarooh !
Bunter broke off with a cry as Bob Cherry hurled a loaf at him.

greater violence. He waves the paper frantically to and fro in an endeavour to remove all traces of smoke; then, controlling his countenance with an effort, he mutters:

Good heavens! what a frightful din!
I mustn't lose my nerve. (*Louder*) Come in!
(*Enter* BUNTER.)

SMITH (*angrily*):

Be off, you fat, intruding beast!
You're always spying, dash you!
And if you came to find a feast,
To smithereens I'll smash you!

BUNTER:

Oh, Smithy! I suppose you're joking?
I'm sorry I disturbed your smoking.

SMITH (*aside*):

What *can* the silly idiot mean?
No signs of smoking can be seen!

BUNTER (*advancing into the study*):

I've guessed the rotten tricks you play,
And p'r'aps may let you off with lenience,
Which just depends! But, anyway,
A keyhole is a great convenience!

SMITH (*seizing a cricket-stump*):

You spy! I'll thrash you till you're dead!

BUNTER (*retreating with an amiable smile*):

Good-bye! I'm off to tell the Head!

SMITH (*hurriedly*):

Come back, you idiot! Don't be silly! Would tarts be very tempting. Billy?

BUNTER:

I feel that I could go great guns;
But mind, they *must* be four-penny ones!

(THE BOUNDER *tosses* BUNTER *a coin.*)

BUNTER (*about to depart*):

Thanks, Smithy! Now *I'll* have some fun
As well as Study No. 1.

SMITH:

What's up with Wharton and Bob Cherry?
Are both the rotters making merry?

BUNTER:

I chanced to pass the study door,
And through the keyhole looking,
I quite collapsed upon the floor,
So fine a feed they're cooking!

SMITH:

But did you have the nerve to stop
And help the rotters scoff it?

BUNTER (*mournfully*):

With lusty kicks they made me hop,
And meant to keep me off it!

SMITH (*grinning*):

I guess you beat a sad retreat!
But what has Wharton got to eat?

BUNTER:

Sardines, and jam, and eggs, and cake,
And doughnuts quite delicious;
'Tis done in style, and no mistake,
And makes me jolly vicious!

SMITH (*edging closer to* BUNTER):

Then why not rob them of their feed,
And make the cads look silly?
A steady nerve is all we need,
So will you help me, Billy?

BUNTER:

I'm game! But afterwards, I fear,
The pair of us will rue it!
And, by the way, it is not clear
How you intend to do it!

(VERNON-SMITH *paces to and fro for a moment in deep thought. Then he gives a start.*)



Bob Cherry and Hurree Singh soon returned to the study, dragging Bunter along by the ears.

My word! we'll
have the
cads on
toast,
As sure as
I'm the
Bounder!
We'll institute
a giddy
ghost!
What pro-
ject could
be sound-
er?

BUNTER (*doubtfully*):

No doubt 'twill
give them
fits and
starts,
And make
the rotters
dread it;
Yet how a ghost can get us tarts
Is more than I can credit.

SMITH:

'Twill make them in a frightful funk,
And stop their hearts from beating;
And when the cads have had to bunk,
We then commence the eating.

BUNTER (*doubling up with laughter*):

Ha, ha! The plan is simply prime—
For nerve it can't be beaten.
But if you don't dress up in time,
The grub will all be eaten!

SMITH:

Some paint and powder, and a sheet,
You'll see a transformation!
I think the dodge is really neat—
Excuse my jubilation!

(*He prances delightedly from the room.*)

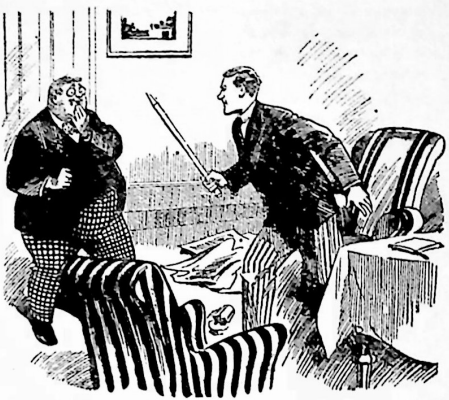
BUNTER (*throwing himself into a chair and kicking up his heels with merriment*):

Ere long my stomach will be packed
With ham, eggs and buttered toast;
And trouble, if the wheeze won't act,
Will fall on Smithy—*he's* the ghost!

SCENE III.

Harry Wharton's Study.

(*The feast is proceeding merrily, and the chums are in high feather.*)



Smith (seizing a cricket-stump): You spy! I'll thrash you till you're dead!

Bunter (retreating with a smile): Good-bye! I'm off to tell the Head!

CHERRY (*leaning back in his chair with a contented sigh*):

A better feast
could not
be found
In all the
country
far and
wide!

(WHARTON *offers him the toast.*)

I could not eat
another
round—
My inner
man is
satisfied.

NUGENT (*shaking his head as the plate of toast is passed to him*):

If any more grub I try to pack,
I'm bound to get a bilious attack!

WHARTON:

Will no one finish off the toast?
Come, now, do justice to your host!

BULL:

My "little Mary's" far too full;
So no more, thanks, for Johnny Bull!

NABOB:

Your good and worthy English dish
Gives strengthfulness to every sinew!
I'll make so boldful as to wish
That such repasts may long continue!

ALL:

Bravo, Inky!

WHARTON:

But what of all this extra grub?
It seems a rotten shame to waste it.
Where *can* we put it? There's the rub;
We don't want Bunter here to taste it.

CHERRY:

No fear! I'd scalp the giddy glutton!
Let's give the grub to Todd and Dutton.

WHARTON (*slapping* CHERRY *on the back*):

Not bad for Bob! There's something in it;
I'll fetch the fellows in this minute.

(*He rises to his feet, just as the door is thrown open, and* VERNON-SMITH, *clad*

in a long white sheet, and with his features powdered and rendered ghost-like by a snow-white beard, enters the room. A scene of panic ensues. WHARTON *staggers back, aghast, while his chums remain at the table, gazing with terror-stricken eyes at the strange apparition.*)

WHARTON :

What *is* the thing, for goodness' sake ?

CHERRY (*rubbing his eyes*) :

Great Scott, you chaps ! Am I awake ?

(*The "ghost" utters a series of low moans.*)

WHARTON :

This is a most uncanny visit,
And makes me creep ! Whatever is it ?

GHOST :

Withhold your tongue, infernal fool !
I am the ghost of Greyfriars School !
While lurking in the gloomy cloisters,
I thought me of sardines and oysters ;
And seeing both are on this table,
Depart as fast as you are able,
That I may speedily enjoy
A meal of fish, instead of boy !

WHARTON :

If this is meant to be a hoax,
Depart, my friend, with expedition ;
It must be one of Smithy's jokes—
You cannot be an apparition !

GHOST :

Insulting infant, get thee hence,
Or face the fearful consequence !

WHARTON (*turning to his chums*) :

United we stand, divided we fall !
I don't believe it's a ghost at all !

CHERRY :

If not, whatever can it be ?

BULL (*seizing a lump of butter*) :

Stand back a bit, and you will see !

(BULL *hurls the butter with deadly precision, and it strikes the "ghost" full in the face. He starts back with a yell.*)

NUGENT (*laughing*) :

It's clinging to his face like mud !
The thing, no doubt, is flesh and blood.

WHARTON :

Advance, the five so good and famous !
A measly ghost shall never shame us !

ALL :

Never !

(*The spectre backs away in alarm, but is seized and borne to the floor, struggling fiercely. He is soon overpowered, and* WHARTON *wrenches off the beard and outer garments, then utters an exclamation.*)

WHARTON :

I knew the thing was all a myth ;
The spook, you chaps, is Vernon-Smith !

(*The others crowd round threateningly.*)

SMITH :

Hands off, you rotters ! Lemme go !
'Twas only just a joke, you know !

NUGENT :

It was a plot to bone our feast—
A poor attempt, to say the least.

(*A scuffling noise is heard without, and* CHERRY *dashes from the room. After a few seconds he returns, dragging* BUNTER *along by the collar.*)

CHERRY (*rolling his victim on the floor in a heap*) :



As Vernon-Smith hurried from the room, Bunter threw himself into the armchair and kicked up his heels with merriment.

I found this crafty worm outside;
He constitutes the second victim.
With Smithy he becomes allied,
Because we previously had licked him.

BUNTER (*sitting up and adjusting his glasses*):
'Twas Smith alone the plot did hatch,
For I've been playing in a match.



Johnny Bull hurled the butter with deadly precision and it struck the "ghost" full in the face.

WHARTON (*incredulously*):
You worm! You couldn't kick a ball,
And couldn't run or even crawl!

NUGENT:
No doubt beneath the bar he sat
And watched the skylark soaring;
And as the porpoise is so fat,
He kept the rest from scoring!

SMITH:
He's not been near the football-field;
It's no good, Billy; all's revealed.

WHARTON:
Does anyone possess a cane—
Effective, strong, and supple?
I think we will impart some pain
To this delightful couple!

BULL:
I've got one in my study cupboard;
It's quite an age since Bunter blubbered!
(*He leaves the room, and returns shortly after with a cane.*)

BUNTER:
Hold on! You know I'm very weak,
And if you hit me, I shall shriek;
Or else will go and fetch the Head,
And you will all be flogged instead.

WHARTON:
Although you may create a babel,
We mean to hoist you on the table
And flog as hard as we are able!

(CHERRY *and* NUGENT *proceed to lay* BUNTER *across the table, while* WHARTON *bends the cane into a convenient shape.*)

WHARTON:
I think I'll give him three or four,
Although he merits quite a score.

NABOB (*stepping forward*):
The Christmastidefulness is here,
A time of peace and goodful cheer;
And though my worthy chums may scoff,
I would suggest we let them off.

NUGENT:
I can't help thinking Inky's right;
Besides, the cads have had a fright.

WHARTON:
A licking each is what they need,
Without the slightest question;
Instead, we'll give them both a feed
Through Inky's kind suggestion.

SMITH:
I thank you, Wharton. Here's my hand!
Your sportsmanship is simply grand!

WHARTON (*shaking hands*):
Your thanks to Inky should be given;
'Tis he who for your cause has striven.



While Vernon-Smith and Bunter continued their meal, the Famous Five joined hands around them and wished them good cheer.

BUNTER (*seated at table*) :

I say, you chaps, these tarts are great !
The feed is going down first-rate !

BULL :

The porpoise takes away my breath ;
One day he'll eat himself to death !

CHERRY :

I reckon Smithy must be deft,
Or else there will be nothing left !

SMITH (*joining* BUNTER *at the table*) :

This pie looks absolutely prime,
But ere I start upon a plateful,
I'll wish you chaps a cheerful time,
And, honour bright, I'm very grateful !

BUNTER :

In sampling this delightful dish,
I also will express the wish
That all you chaps may be supplied
With quite a ripping Christmastide !

(VERNON-SMITH *and* BUNTER *continue their meal, while the others all join hands.*)

WHARTON :

Then here's to us, the Famous Five
Of good old Greyfriars College !
To lead the way we'll always strive
In every branch of knowledge !

SMITH :

To Wharton's remarks I would say,
" Hear, hear ! "
May your faces with fun soon be ruddy !

WHARTON :

And I, in return, give the grandest good cheer
To the Ghost of No. 1 Study !

CURTAIN

INDEX

PAGE

A

A.D. 1999! *Story by Bernard Glyn* .. 222
Alonzo's Ailments! *Poem* 73
Around Greyfriars 44

B

Bells of Greyfriars, The *Poem by Dick Penfold* 174
Behind the Counter! *By Tom Brown (in an interview)* 239
Be Popular at Parties 245
Buffalo Bill—Pony Express Rider. *Article* 175
Bunter Comes to Tea! *Poem by Dick Penfold* 183
Bunter the Skater! *Poem by Dick Penfold* 34
Buried Treasure. *Article by Harry Wharton* 262
By the Way—— *Article by H. Vernon-Smith* 263

C

Carroty-Headed Hero, The *Story by John Brearley* 113
Cycling Tragedy, A *Poem by Micky Desmond* 221

D

Day in the Life of a Headmaster, A *Article by the Rev. H. H. Locke* .. 244
Demon of the Lake, The *Story by Cecil Fanshaw* 123

E

"England Expects——" *Story* .. 184
Eyes of the Night! 240

F

First Bicycle at St. Jim's, The 225
Fixing the Blame. *Story by Clive R. Fenn* 227
Fledgeling, The *Story by J. Lawn-Newark* 22
Football Flashlights. *Article by George Bulkeley* 212

G

Ghost of No. 1 Study, The *Play in Verse by the Greyfriars Rhymester* .. 271
Going to School in the Good Old Days! *Article* 259
Greyfriars Sports. *Article* 269
Greyfriars "Zoo," The 195

H

Heroes of Greyfriars History. *Article by Mr. Quelch* 21
How I Won the Match! *Poem by Horace Coker* 14

L

Life as a "Mountie." *Article* 196
Life of a Blade, The *Poem* 122

M

Making Game of Gussy. *Story by Martin Clifford* 15
Motor-Bike Mac o' the Mounted! *Story* 103
My Ideal Film 267
My Little Mistake! *Story by Clarence Cuffy* 231

N

Nature Story. *By Clive R. Fenn* .. 227

O

Old Boys' Dinner, The *Story by Frank Nugent* 3
Our Incurable Interviewer Calls On:
Lord Mauleverer 230
Harold Skinner 258

P

Parables and Parodies. *By Monty Lowther* 90
Plates in Colour:
Demon of the Lake, The *Facing* 129
Duel at Ten Thousand Feet, A. *Facing* 32
"How's That?" .. .. *Frontispiece*
Saving Uncle Sam's Mail! *Facing* 176

PAGE

Plates in Photogravure :
Eyes of the Night! .. *Facing* 240
First Bicycle at St. Jim's, The *Facing* 225
Rookwood's Reckless Rascal! *Facing* 96
Walking the Plank! .. *Facing* 65
Pride of the Footplate, The *Story by J. R. Hind* 45
Purple Idol, The *Story* 164
Putty's Priceless Prank! *Story by Owen Conquest* 91

Q

Queer Railway, A Very *Article* .. 241

R

Reforming Mauly! *Story by Frank Richards* 35
Remove Passage, The *Poem* 191
Rivals of St. Frank's! *Story by Edwy Searles Brooks* 198
Robin Hood's Coup! *Story* 213
Rookwood's Reckless Rascal! 96

PAGE

Round the Playing Fields. *Article by Eric Kildare* 265

S

Snow-Fight, The *Poem* 257
Song of the "Fish," The *Poem* .. 240
Speedway Fury! *Story by A. Carney Allan* 133
St. Jim's Inventor, The *Article* .. 41
St. Sam's Propheteer, The *Story by Dicky Nugent* 177

T

Third Form Crusoes, The *Story by Martin Clifford* 145
Thunder of Hoofs. *Story by Edmund Burton* 247
Tuckshop Dame, The *Poem by Dick Penfold* 226

V

Vanished Eleven, The *Story by Frank Richards* 53

W

Walking the Plank! 65

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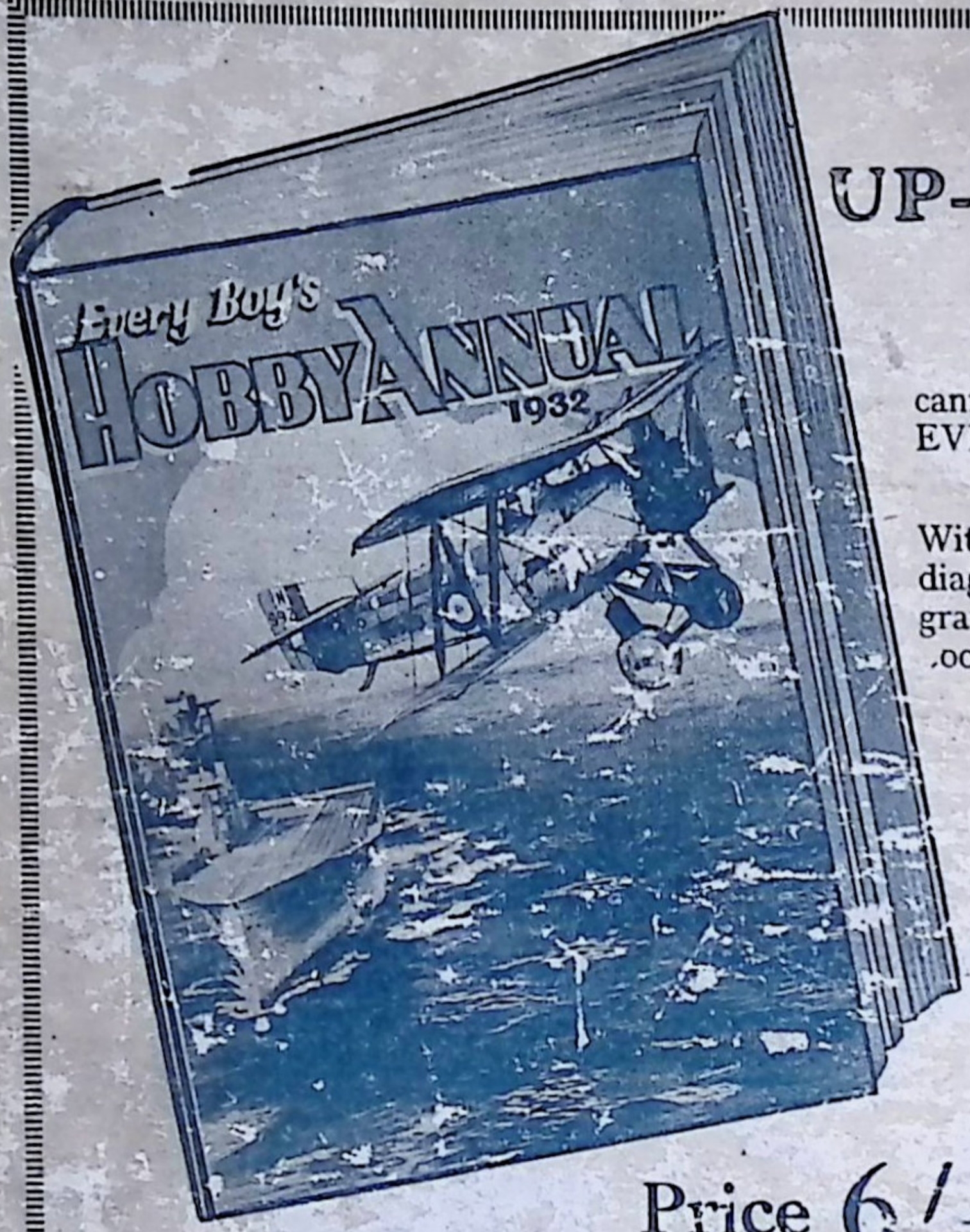
The EDITOR



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