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Parted Chums

30,000 words
LONG COMPLETE
SCHOOL STORY

AN UNHAPPY HERO! SCREAMINGLY FUNNY SCENE IN THE TALE OF ST. KIT'S.



PARTED CHUMS

A Magnificent 30,000-word Long Complete
School Story, dealing with the adventures of
the boys of St. Kit's.

By CLIFFORD CLIVE

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Algy is Not Happy.

ALGERNON AUBREY ST. LEGER groaned. It was a deep and dismal groan.

Judging by that dismal groan, the dandy of St. Kit's did not, at that particular moment, find life quite worth living.

Algermon Aubrey was walking up and down his study, No. 5 in the Fourth-form passage, with his hands driven deep into the pockets of his elegant trousers, and a deep wrinkle in his youthful brow. His celebrated eyeglass dangled unheeded at the end of its cord.

He paused and glanced at the clock on the mantelpiece. It indicated half-past two.

"Rotten!" said Algy.

He scowled at the clock, and resumed his tramp up and down the study. The wrinkle deepened in his brow. Evidently there was weighty trouble looming over No. 5 Study.

"Beastly!" said Algy, after a pause.

Then, addressing space, he pronounced the query:

"What the merry thump is a fellow goin' to do?"

Anybody looking into No. 5 Study just then might have wondered what St. Leger of the Fourth had to grumble at. It was a very handsome study—the most expensively-furnished at St. Kit's. Even Beauchamp, of the Sixth, the glass of fashion and the mould of form in the Upper School, hadn't quite so elegant a study as Algy of the Fourth. Its elegance was only marred here and there by a trace of Bunny Bootles. Bunny had a way of leaving bullseyes and aniseed balls about, which was very hard for a fellow like Algy to bear.

Indeed, one of the problems of Algy's existence was, how and why he stood Bunny Bootles.

Algy himself did not look exactly like a fellow under the frown of fortune. His beautifully-creased trousers were the admiration and despair of all the nuts at St. Kit's. His waistcoat was a thing of beauty and a joy for ever. His tie was the last word in ties; and it was tied as only Algermon Aubrey's ties ever were tied.

Any fellow in the Fourth would have said that Algy, so far from having anything to grouse about, was a lucky bargee.

But he was grouching now, most miserably.

He trod on a bullseye that adhered to his expensive Persian rug. But he hardly noticed it. Evidently his present "grouse" was not on the subject of Bunny Bootles. Far more weighty and worrying matters than the fat Bunny occupied his mind—though Bunny was worrying enough, and decidedly weighty!

Algy looked at the clock again.

It indicated twenty minutes to three now.

"Rotten! Oh, rotten!" groaned Algy.

The door opened.

A fat face, with a smear of jam adorning an extensive mouth, looked in. The face and the smear belonged to Cuthbert Archibald Bootles, more familiarly known as Bunny.

Algermon Aubrey stopped his tramping, and jammed his eyeglass into his eye, and fixed it on the fat junior. There was a deadly glare behind the eyeglass; but Bunny Bootles did not notice it. His fat face was merry and bright.

"Hallo, old top!" said Bunny.

No answer from Algermon Aubrey. Only a glare. Merely that, and nothing more.

"They're coming this afternoon, ain't they?" pursued Bunny.

Algy groaned.

"Yaas."

"They'll be here soon?"

"Yaas."

"Good! I'll be on hand, old top," said Bunny Bootles, affectionately. "Rely on me. How many are coming with your pater?"

"I don't know."

"When are they coming exactly?"

"Go an' eat coke."

"Look here, old top, I want to know, you know," said Bunny. "I want to be on hand. I don't want Lord Rayfield to feel neglected, you know."

"Rats!"

"If that's your gratitude to a fellow who's giving up a half-holiday to stand by you, Algy—"

"Blow away, for goodness sake, Bunny," said Algermon Aubrey, plaintively. "I've got to stand a lot of things to-day; but there's no reason why I should stand you too. You see that, don't you?"

"Look here—"

"Bunny, you're superfluous—you're the Thing-too-Much—blow away. I shall kick you if you don't disappear."

"Look here—!" roared Bunny, in great wrath.

"Begad," continued Algermon Aubrey, "I think I'll kick you anyhow, Bunny. It will be some relief."

"You silly ass!" hooted Bunny.

"I tell you—why, you burbling chump, wharrer you up to? Leggo! Yow—ow!"

Algermon Aubrey, apparently feeling the need of some relief, and hoping to find it in kicking Bunny, took the fat junior by the collar, and spun him round in the doorway.

Bunny struggled.

"Leggo, you silly ass—I've come here to stand by you—yarooh—I'm going to help you entertain your—yooop—pater—I'm going—"

"You are!" assented Algermon Aubrey.

"Biff!"

And Bunny went.

The fat junior rolled into the passage, and brought up against

the opposite wall. There he turned, gasping, to fix a ferocious glare upon Algermon Aubrey. That noble youth, in the doorway of No. 5, was grinning now—evidently having found the relief he wanted.

"Yow—ow!" spluttered Bunny.

"You awful rotter! Ow! I won't show up this afternoon now—ow—"

"I won't be bored by your dashed pater—ow—and you can have your silly old aunts all to yourself—wow—"

"Begad! I shall have to kick you again, Bunny."

"Yah!"

Bunny Bootles beat a strategic retreat as the dandy of St. Kit's came out of the study. He bolted down the passage; and it was sheer ill-luck that Compton and Tracy, of the Fourth, were coming along from the stairs just at that moment. There was a terrific collision as Bunny Bootles met the nuts of the Fourth in full career.

Crash!

"Yooooooop!"

"Oh, gad!"

"By Jove! Ow!"

Compton staggered against the wall, and Tracy was hurled headlong. Bunny Bootles sat down and gasped.

"Ow! ow! ow! Wharrer marrer? What—what—oh—ah—ow—"

"You fat idiot!" shrieked Vernon Compton. "What the dooce do you mean by bumpin' into a fellow?"

"Ow!"

"Spifficate him!" panted Tracy.

"I say, old tops—oh, my hat—yaroocoo!"

Compton and Tracy were hurt, and nearly winded. But they found energy enough to begin operations on Bunny Bootles. That fat youth squirmed away frantically from two lunging boots, and fled for the stairs with loud yells.

"Give it to him!" called out Algermon Aubrey, enthusiastically.

"Give him beans! He's been borin' me! Kick him! Kick him hard!"

Bunny Bootles disappeared down the staircase. His voice could still be heard, raised in lamentation, compared with which the celebrated lamentations of Job were a mere whisper.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Parted Chums.

HARRY NAMELESS sat at his desk in the Fourth-form room in the school-house of St. Kit's.

His books were before him on the desk, and he was at work; but his work was very desultory.

It was a half-holiday, and a sunny afternoon; and he was not feeling very much inclined for work.

Through the open window he could hear shouts from the football ground, where a match was going on—a senior match between St. Kit's and Lyncroft, watched by a

big crowd of St. Kit's fellows. Oliphant and his merry men were apparently beating the visitors, to judge by the enthusiastic cheering that rolled from the distance.

The nameless schoolboy would have been glad enough to join the other St. Kit's fellows on Big Side, but his task held him to the form-room. But his attention was not quite fixed on his task.

He could not help his thoughts wandering—he was thinking, and the cloud on his handsome face showed that his thoughts were not pleasant.

Nameless!

That was what he was called—it was the only name he had.

In the little village of South Cove, where he had lived during his early years it had not mattered so much—he had hardly felt that it marked him off from other fellows. But two or three weeks at St. Kit's had brought a change.

Nameless! He had no name—he had no "people." St. Kit's fellows often talked of their "people." A fellow who had no people was strange enough to them. Harry Nameless had none; he had not even a father. He had no name! The strange name he bore was an intimation of the fact. He had felt it little before he came to St. Kit's. But he felt it now.

His books lay unheeded—the pen was idle in his hand. He sat in deep and painful thought; unconscious of the fact that an elegant figure had stepped into the open doorway of the form-room.

Algermon Aubrey St. Leger stood regarding him in silence.

For some minutes he did not speak; but he watched the cloud on the nameless schoolboy's face—the deep line in his boyish brow—and Algy's own face clouded.

He coughed at last.

"Ahem!"

Harry started and looked up.

A flush came into his cheeks, as he saw the eyes of the dandy of St. Kit's fixed upon him. St. Leger came into the form-room.

"Swottin'?" he asked.

"Yes."

"What are you workin' at?"

"Virgil."

"Mr. Lathley detained you this afternoon?" asked Algy, sympathetically.

"Oh, no."

"You're not swottin' from choice?" ejaculated Algy, in astonishment.

Harry smiled slightly.

"Yes," he answered.

"Oh, begad!"

Harry Nameless turned his attention to his books again. Perhaps it was a hint to the dandy of St. Kit's that he would have preferred to be alone. But if it was a hint, Algermon Aubrey did not take it. He seated himself on the end of the desk, evidently having come to stay.

"Am I interruptin' you, dear boy?"

"Well, yes."

"That's too bad," said Algermon Aubrey, placidly. "Do you mind bein' interrupted?"

Harry laughed.

He was in despondent spirits when Algy dawned upon the dusky old form-room. In spite of himself, he was feeling more cheerful already. The elegant Algy had come in like a ray of sunshine.

"It isn't exactly that," said Harry. "But I've got to work. I've put in for the Fortescue prize."

"I see—out for giddy glory?"

"Not exactly that, either—though I should be glad to get on. I want the prize."

"Is it worth havin'?"

"I think so."

"I've often looked over the St. Kit's list," said Algermon Aubrey, reflectively. "My people would be no end delighted if I bagged a prize for classics. I'm goin' to."

I haven't decided which one to go in for yet. I don't want to be in a hurry, you know. I've thought of the Fortescue—and the Gold Medal—and the Woodford—but there's maths. in that, and I'm not a great gun at mathematics. I've never decided—but I'm goin' to. Still, I won't put in for the Fortescue this year, Nameless, if you're goin' in for it. I'll give you a clear field."

"Thank you, said Harry, smiling.

"I'll tell you what I'll do, if you like. I'll give you some coachin'."

said Algy. "I'll help you to bag the prize, Nameless."

"Thanks awfully," said Harry.

"You're very good, St. Leger. Do you mind if I get on with the Virgil now?"

"Not at all, dear boy." Algermon Aubrey did not move from the desk, however. He polished his eyeglass in a thoughtful way. I'm in frightful trouble this afternoon, old bean."

"I'm sorry to hear that," said Harry, seriously enough.

"My people are comin' down to see me."

"Is that a trouble?"

"Simply awful."

"I don't quite see it. I wish I had some people to come down and see me," said Harry Nameless, in a low voice.

Algermon Aubrey nodded.

"Yaas—I daresay! Fellows always want what they haven't got. I've noticed that, lots of times. Not that I don't like my people, you know. I love 'em. My pater is an old trump. My uncle Lovell is no end of a cheery old card. My aunts are all ducks. Delightful family in every way. And I wish they'd stop at home."

Harry's face clouded.

"Is Colonel Lovell coming?" he asked.

"No, as it happens, the cheery old Colonel isn't in the party. He came last week, you know."

"I know."

"When those cads, Compton and Co., ragged you in the study, and left you to see the Colonel in an awful state. I punched Compton's nose."

Harry did not speak.

"Since then," continued Algermon Aubrey, "you've given No. 5 Study the go-by. You've done your prep. in the form-room, and you haven't put your foot in my study. Do you like form-rooms to work in?"

"Not specially."

"You haven't a study now."

"No."

"Don't you want a study?"

"Ye-e-es."

"I think you've acted in rather an unfeelin' way, Nameless. You've left me to endure Bunny Bootles all on my lonely own."

said Algy, pathetically. "I don't call that friendly. We chummed up when you came to St. Kit's, and I think that as a friend you ought to help me bear Bunny."

Harry was silent.

"Now, I want you this afternoon," said Algermon Aubrey, amiably. "My pater is comin'. I'm afraid he'll be here soon. Aunt Georgina is comin'—and Aunt Cordelia. I'm goin' to be lectured—horrid. I want you to stand by me."

Harry shook his head.

"You won't?"

"I can't!" Harry Nameless

made a restless movement. "Look here, St. Leger, better have it out plain. We can't be friends. I'd like to, no end."

"Oh! You'd like to?"

"Yes, of course. But—it's impossible. Can't you see? I'm a poor fellow—so poor that you can't even understand it. I'm here on the Foundation—without paying any fees. Half the fellows look down on me for that reason—Compton and his friends make things as rotten for me as they can. I can stand all that. Harry's lip curled. "But you're in a different position—you're rich, and the son of a nobleman. I made friends with you when I came—without thinking of all that. But when your uncle came—"

"He put his foot in it," murmured Algy.

"Colonel Lovell was right, from his point of view," said Harry. "I don't bear any malice. I—I've tried to look at it fairly. He thought I was a rank outsider, sticking on you because you're good-natured. What else could he think? I don't blame him. Compton and Co. helped to make that impression on him. He was angry with you on my account—he's angry now. Your people are coming down to see you on that matter. Isn't it so?"

"Yaas."

"Well, then," Harry flushed. "How can we be friends, when your father and relations are coming down to see you, to make you agree not to speak to me any more. It's not possible. I—I think I spoke rather bitterly the other day—I'm sorry. But that doesn't change the position. We can't be friends—and I shall keep out of your study. I'm not a banger-on, and I can't be treated as one, can I; but that isn't all. I can't get you into trouble with your people. You are going to be called over the coals now, and I don't blame your people for the view they take—it's natural. But—but—"

Harry hesitated. "Their attitude is quite natural, but it's an insult to me—and—and there's an end."

Algernon Aubrey nodded.

"But I'm going to set all that right," he said.

"How?"

"I want you to meet my people this afternoon," explained the dandy of St. Kit's. "When they see you, an' make your acquaintance, it will be all right. See? They're bound to like you."

Harry laughed.

"I don't think it at all likely," he said. "They certainly won't like me—and—and Colonel Lovell thought I was making a claim on you because I pulled you out of the river." He crimsoned. "I don't blame him—I've tried to be just. But—I can't stand it. You'd better cut off now, St. Leger—your people will be here soon."

"But I'm quite sure, old chap, that if you had a jaw with my pater he would like you no end."

Harry shook his head.

"And I want you to turn up," continued St. Leger, serenely. "You leave it to me—I'm no end of a tactful chap. You see, I'm goin' on bein' your friend whether you like it or not. You're the only fellow at St. Kit's who doesn't bore me, and I can't forget it. Besides, you did pull me out of the river—"

"Oh, rats!"

Algernon Aubrey slid off the desk.

"You're an obstinate ass, Nameless."

"Thanks."

"An' a silly jabberwock," added Algy, thoughtfully.

"Go it!"

"And a young duffer," said Algy, "and I'm goin' to stick to you, and I'll jolly well punch your silly nose if you won't be pally."

Harry Nameless laughed.

"I mean it," said Algy. "I'm a no end determined chap. And if you won't come and see my people—"

"I can't."

"Then I shall bring them to see you."

"What?"

"Here, in the form-room," said Algernon Aubrey, calmly. "If the giddy mountain won't come to Mahomet, you know, merry old Mahomet has to bunk off to the mountain. Prepare to receive guests in the form-room. Perhaps I ought to warn you that Aunt Cordelia is a little deaf, and rather tryin'. Aunt Georgina fixes you with a lorgnette, and stares you out of countenance. But you'll take it smilin', for my sake, I know."

"Look here, St. Leger!" exclaimed Harry, in dismay.

"Consider it done, dear boy."

And Algernon Aubrey walked out of the form-room, his mind evidently made up. Harry Nameless stared after him, blankly.

"My only hat!" he ejaculated.

He sat for some moments in thought, and then rose from his desk and put his books away. Evidently there was no more "swotting" for him that sunny afternoon. It was disconcerting; for there were reasons—weighty reasons—why the nameless schoolboy was anxious to capture the Fortescue prize. But to remain in the form-room till the happy Algy marched his "people" in upon him was out of the question. In spite of Algy's faith in his own judgment, the interview was likely to be too awkward for all concerned.

Harry Nameless looked out of the doorway. St. Leger had disappeared—and Harry took his cap, and hurried out of the School House. He lost no time in crossing to the gates.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Stranded!

"Oh, dear!"

"How very distressing!"

"Oh, gad!"

Two rather high-pitched feminine voices, followed by a man's deep tones, fell upon Harry Nameless's ears.

Harry had turned from the Wicke road, and followed the footpath through Lyncroft Wood. He intended to keep out of gates all that afternoon in order to make sure of not coming into contact with Algernon Aubrey St. Leger's "people." And as he had never yet seen Lyncroft School, which was only a mile or so from St. Kit's, he had turned his steps in that direction, to have a look at the school on the hill. He came out of the winding woodland footpath into the Lyncroft road, in time to hear the three disconcerted ejaculations.

He paused.

A large, handsome motor-car was halted in the road, and from underneath it protruded a pair of legs. Evidently the legs belonged to the chauffeur, who was examining some damage in that rather cabined, cribbed, and confined position. Three persons stood looking on—two ladies and a gentleman.

The two ladies were elderly. One of them was watching the chauffeur's wriggling boots through a pair of tortoiseshell eye-glasses which she held over her Roman nose. She was rather a severe-looking lady. The other had a benevolent countenance and a flattered manner. The gentleman, who was tall and stately, had an eyeglass screwed into his right eye, and his brows wrinkled over it. He was evidently in a state of deep annoyance.

"Oh, gad!" he repeated.

He looked as if he would have made use of a more strenuous expression if the ladies had not been present.

"How very distressing!" said the lady with the eyeglasses. "How long are we likely to be delayed, Edward?"

Edward shrugged his shoulders. "Stumson is doing his best, Georgina!" said the other lady. "Georgina gave a slight sniff. "The question is, how long are we to be delayed?" she said.

"We must rely upon Stumson for that!" remarked the gentleman. "Ah! here is a boy! I will ask this boy how far it is to walk. I do not think it is very far, if we could only find some sort of—a short cut, or something—by the road it is a considerable distance, but no doubt some path exists through the wood."

The gentleman signed to Harry Nameless while he was speaking.

Harry had paused for a moment, as he came out into the road, to glance at the halted party, ready to lend any assistance if that was in his power. He came up as the tall gentleman signed to him, and raised his hat politely to the two ladies.

"Why, it is a St. Kit's boy," said the gentleman, glancing at Harry's cap, which was adorned with the school badge. "How very fortunate. He will be able to tell us exactly how to reach the school by walking. My boy, is there a footpath through this wood?"

"Yes, sir," said Harry.

"Is it very far?" asked the lady

with the tortoiseshell eyeglasses, turning them upon Harry.

"Only a mile or so, madam."

"How very fortunate," said the gentleman. "Of course, I was sure there was a footpath. In fact, I remember most distinctly that there is a footpath. But there are several footpaths, if my memory serves me well, and it is quite possible that we might take the wrong one. Hem!"

"The boy will guide us, I am sure," said Georgina.

"Perhaps the boy is going somewhere, Georgina," murmured the milder lady. "Perhaps—"

"I am sure he will guide us, Cordelia."

"Let us see. You belong to St. Kit's, my boy?"

"Yes, sir," said Harry.

His voice faltered a little as he spoke.

He had little doubt now as to the identity of this stranded party. Algernon Aubrey had mentioned his aunts Georgina and Cordelia. It was not likely that two other elderly ladies of the same names would be going to St. Kit's that afternoon. In leaving the school to avoid St. Leger's people, the nameless schoolboy had walked right upon them—out of the frying-pan into the fire, as it were. He did not need telling now that the tall gentleman was Lord Rayfield, the "pater" of the Honourable Algernon.

His cheeks deepened a little in colour, and he would gladly have retreated from the spot. But that was scarcely possible. His aid was wanted.

There was a grunt from beneath the halted car. The legs wriggled, and a body emerged, and a red face looked up. The tall gentleman turned his eyeglass upon the flustered chauffeur.

"How long do you think, Stumson?" he asked.

"I'm afraid I shall have to go back to the garage in the village we passed, sir, and get 'elp with it," said the chauffeur.

"Oh, gad!"

"If the school is only a mile away, we will walk!" said Miss Georgina St. Leger, decidedly.

"The car can come on after us."

"Only a mile away, you say, my boy?" asked the gentleman.

"Through the woods, sir—it's four or five miles by the road, I think," answered Harry.

"We will walk, Edward."

"Quite so, my dear. Stumson, you will—ah—bring the car on to the school as soon as—as—as practicable."

"Yes, my lord."

"And now, my young friend," said his lordship, turning to Harry, and giving him the full benefit of the eyeglass, "if you are not busily occupied, will you have the kindness to show us the way through the woods? There are, I believe, a number of footpaths, and a total absence of signposts—"

"Yes, sir," said Harry. "If you don't know the woods I don't think you'd find your way very easily."

"But you were a St. Kit's boy once, Edward!" remarked Miss Cordelia.

"It is forty years since I was a St. Kit's boy, Cordelia. And in my day the Lyncroft Woods were not open to the public. If this young gentleman will be kind enough to show us the way—"

"Certainly, sir," said Harry.

The junior wished himself anywhere else at that moment, but it was scarcely possible to decline. He could not help wondering what his lordship would have thought if he had known that he was asking aid from the very person he had come down to St. Kit's to lecture his son about.

Evidently such a possibility did not even cross his lordship's noble mind.

"Thank you, very much," said Lord Rayfield, graciously. "Shall we start at once, my dears?"

"Certainly," said Miss Georgina.

"Now, my boy, if you will kindly guide us."

"This way, sir."

Harry Nameless re-entered the wood he had just quitted, and Lord Rayfield and his sisters followed. The unhappy Stumson was left to solve the problem of the car, probably feeling a little happier now that his lordship and his lordship's sisters were off the scene.

In a few minutes the deep brown woods swallowed up the party.

Harry Nameless had been only a few weeks at St. Kit's, but he had spent a good deal of time in the woods, and he knew his way well. To a stranger the woods were perplexing enough, with a tangle of

footpaths, some of them little more than tracks scarcely marked.

It was a pleasant walk, with the afternoon sun glinting through the foliage overhead and birds twittering on all sides. Harry had no objection to putting in that extra walk to assist the stranded party, but he kept a little ahead of them to avoid possible conversation. A meeting at St. Kit's would have been awkward enough, but just now the awkwardness would have been extreme if Algy's relations had discovered his identity. They were coming down to St. Kit's apparently to save Algy from his unscrupulous clutches, and to find that they were receiving a favour from the "unscrupulous outsider" would have been very disconcerting indeed to his lordship and Co.

Keeping ahead of the party, Harry Nameless led the way, winding through one leafy footpath after another, deeper and deeper into the heart of the woods. But suddenly he stopped. A burly figure in tattered garb lurched into view from the thickets and stopped in the middle of the narrow path, and a husky voice ejaculated:—

"Old on!"

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Fight in the Wood.

MR. WILLIAM HUGGINS—known more familiarly in the intimate circle of his friends as Bill Huggins—had been dozing under the trees in the middle of the wood. Mr. Huggins had his own reasons for taking his repose in a secluded spot. There were occasions when Mr. Huggins hated publicity. This was one of them. In one of Mr. Huggins's pockets was a stolen fowl, and over by Lyncroft a farmer was thirsting for Mr. Huggins's blood. In another of his pockets was a lady's purse, and a flustered lady was even at that moment telling a tale of woe at Wicke Police Station. Inside Mr. Huggins was a large quantity of beer, imbibed at a wayside inn and not paid for, and a dark circle round one of Mr. Huggins's eyes hinted at trouble with a potman. In that lonely spot Mr. Huggins was about the last person anyone with a good coat to his back would have desired to meet.

"Old on!" repeated Mr. Huggins.

The party held on. There was a faint shriek from Miss Cordelia and a stern sniff from Miss Georgina. Lord Rayfield set his lips hard. He had not even a cane with him, and under one of the ruffian's arms was a heavy, knobby stick which he slid down into his hand. A grin came over Bill Huggins's dirty, stubby, boozy face. Two elderly ladies and an old gentleman, evidently wealthy, had walked fairly into his hands—a rich prize for Mr. Huggins in the depths of the solitary wood. As the party stopped Bill Huggins lurched towards them till they were favoured with the beery aroma of his heavy breathing. Of the schoolboy Mr. Huggins took no notice at all.

"Afternoon, ladies and gents!" said Mr. Huggins, humorously. "Fancy meetin' you 'ere. Wot?"

"Good afternoon!" said Lord Rayfield with cold politeness.

Perhaps his lordship was a believer in the soft answer which turneth away wrath. But Mr. Huggins was on the warpath.

There was evidently sufficient cash about this party to keep him gloriously drunk for weeks, if he could get it into his stubby hands—and he had no doubt on that point. He was prepared to rob his lordship and co., with as much violence as was necessary for the purpose, and then make "tracks" for the next county without delay—there to enjoy life in his own happy way till the supply ran out.

"Praps you wouldn't mind 'elping a poor cove on his way," said the tramp.

"Give him a shilling, Edward!" said Miss Cordelia, faintly.

"I'm afeared that a bob wouldn't see me through, mum," grinned Mr. Huggins. "I'm going to trouble you for hany loose cash you 'ave about you, likewise your watches and rings. No objection, I 'ope?"

Mr. Huggins flourished his knobby stick as a hint of what would happen if objections were raised.

Harry Nameless set his teeth. The hulking ruffian was a for-

midable fellow to tackle, and it was for his lordship to decide whether he would resist the robbery. But if there was resistance, it was quite certain that the St. Kits junior would not be left out of the tussle.

Lord Rayfield set his teeth.

"Keep behind me, Cordelia, Georgina," he said in a low voice, and he made a step towards the tramp and raised his hand. "Now, you rascal, stand out of my path at once. Do you hear?"

The ruffian eyed him evilly.

His lordship had a commanding manner, but the spot was solitary, and he was at the mercy of the footpad. And the beer inside Mr. Huggins lent him additional courage.

"You torkin' to me?" he demanded.

"Yes. Stand aside."

"Are you goin' to 'and over your spondulices, you ole fool?" was Mr. Huggins's reply. "'Cause if you aint I'll crack your 'ead in as soon as look at yer."

"I will not give you a sixpence," said his lordship, grimly. "But I will see that you are sent to prison for this, you scoundrel."

"That's enough."

The ruffian made a spring towards the old gentleman, whirling up the bludgeon. Lord Rayfield sprang back with an activity beyond his years, and eluded the slash of the weapon, and then, closing in quickly, he struck hard at the ruffian's face.

Bill Huggins gave a howl as he received a hard set of knuckles full upon his beery nose. But the blow hardly made him stagger. The next moment the slim old gentleman was in his powerful grasp—and he crumpled up like a reed.

Lord shrieks rang out from Miss Cordelia and Miss Georgina as Lord Rayfield went with a crash into the grass, the ruffian sprawling over him. One heavy knee was jammed on his lordship's chest, and the bludgeon whirled up again in the ruffian's hand.

"Now then—"

Before the blow could fall Harry Nameless rushed in.

He threw his arms round the tramp's neck and dragged him by main force from his victim and rolled in the grass with him.

The bludgeon fell from the ruffian's hand, and he fastened his grasp savagely on the schoolboy.

"By gum! I'll smash yer!" he panted.

Shriek after shriek rose from the two terrified women.

Lord Rayfield lay gasping in the grass, dazed and dizzy, hardly knowing now what was happening.

Harry Nameless was rolling over with the ruffian, fighting like a tiger.

Boy as he was Harry was strong and sinewy, no match for the big ruffian, but a dangerous adversary all the same. Harry had roughed it in his early days at South Cove among the sailors and longshoremen; his muscles were like steel and his courage dauntless. He planted one fierce blow right in Mr. Huggins's eye, which half blinded the ruffian, but he had no time for a second. He was struggling, wrestling, twisting, rolling over in a fight that was like the fierce scrambling of wild cats.

The schoolboy went under at last, the ruffian sprawling over him and raining blows, but he twisted out like an eel, dazed but undaunted, and renewed the fight. A fierce drive that caught Mr. Huggins behind the ear laid him gasping in the grass, and in a flash Harry threw himself upon him.

His knee jammed down on the ruffian, and both his fists came crashing down in the tramp's face, jamming his head hard on the earth beneath. Bill Huggins howled like a wild animal, and his sinewy arms closed round the schoolboy in a savage hug like that of a bear.

"Now I got you!" he panted.

Harry Nameless fought on, fiercely, savagely. But the tramp had the advantage now, though the junior would not yield an inch.

But his lordship had staggered up now, breathless, dazed, but trying to pull himself together. He blinked at the struggling pair, while shriek on shriek rang through the wood from the two old ladies. The bludgeon dropped by the tramp lay almost at his feet.

Lord Rayfield stooped and clutched it and tottered towards the two combatants.

Harry was underneath again, and a heavy, savage fist was crashing down on him with stunning force.

Thud!

With all his remaining strength Lord Rayfield brought the bludgeon down on the tramp's head.

Bill Huggins gave a sharp cry and a groan and rolled off his victim. He dropped into the grass like a log.

He was stunned. "Oh, gad!" gasped his lordship, reeling against a tree. "Oh, gad!"

Shriek, shriek, shriek! "Compose yourselves, please," stammered his lordship. "The danger is over—the scoundrel is stunned, I think. Bless my soul, I—I—I feel extremely—extremely upset. Dear me!"

"The poor boy is hurt!" exclaimed Miss Cordelia.

Bill Huggins still lay motionless. It was likely to be some time before he recovered from that crashing blow on the head.

Harry Nameless sat up dazedly. There were bruises all over his body and several on his face, and a thin stream of crimson oozed from under his dark hair.

He felt utterly dazed and exhausted, and his senses were swimming.

Miss Cordelia knelt by his side and supported him.

"My dear, brave, good boy!" she stammered. "You are hurt."

"N-n-not much," gasped Harry. "I—I—I'm all right, ma'am."

"A very, very brave lad," said the severe Miss Georgina with stern approval. "You have acted like a hero, my dear boy."

"By gad!" spluttered his lordship, detaching himself from the tree at last. "By gad! A credit to my old school, by gad—a braver lad I never saw—and, by gad, you must have some muscle, my boy, to put up a fight like that against that hulking ruffian. Are you hurt much?"

"N-no," gasped Harry. He gained his feet with an effort and pulled himself together.

"You—you had better get on," he panted, "before he comes to."

"Yes, begad," said his lordship. "Come on, take my arm my dear Cordelia, you are overcome. Come on at once, Georgina. We will—hem—send the police to look for that scoundrel when we, oh, dear! get to the school! Let us lose no time—hem."

Leaving Mr. William Huggins still stretched in the grass the party hurried on.

There was still half a mile before them of winding footpaths, and it was necessary to hurry. Mr. Huggins was likely to prove dangerous if they were within his range when he came to his senses.

The flustered trio were glad enough when the open Wicke road lay before them at last and the wood was left behind.

The grey old tower of St. Kit's was now visible in the distance above the oaks.

Harry Nameless stopped. "You know the way now, sir," he said.

"But you are coming on to the school—"

"I—I'll trot down to the village, sir, and tell them at the police station about that footpad," stammered Harry. "They may be in time to catch him."

"A very good idea," said his lordship, approvingly, "but I want to see you again before I leave the school. What is your name, my boy?"

Harry did not seem to hear that question. He raised his cap to the ladies and started for Wicke at a run.

"Begad! I am feeling very upset," said his lordship. "The boy seems in a hurry—he hasn't told me his name! Let us go on. I—I shall be very glad to sit down. I suppose you feel the same, my dears!"

And Lord Rayfield and his sisters walked on towards St. Kit's, Harry Nameless disappearing in the opposite direction.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Some Excitement!

"IT'S the pater! Begad! what's happened?"

Algernon Aubrey St. Leger came sprinting across the quadrangle, his eye-glass streaming at the end of its cord.

A number of St. Kit's fellows gathered round as the visitors came in at the gateway.

The dishevelled looks of Lord Rayfield, who was well known at St. Kit's, attracted surprised attention at once.

His lordship was a governor of the school, a peer of the realm, and several other important things; and, as a rule, his looks and manner had all the repose which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere.

Now he looked as if he had had a fight with a tramp—as, indeed, he had; a most unusual experience for the stately old gentleman.

With a flustered elderly lady leaning on either arm, his lordship sailed into the quadrangle, and was at once the cynosure of all eyes. Old Cootie, the porter, fairly blinked at him. Old Cootie had never seen a peer of the realm before with his collar torn out, his hat knocked in, and his trousers rumpled and dusty. Old Cootie was rather shocked at the sight, and wondered whether the peer of the realm had been drinking.

"Father!" stammered Algernon Aubrey. "Auntie! Oh, dear! Has anything happened?"

"Yes, Algernon."

"Car busted?" asked Algy.

"The car broke down, Algernon. Did you learn that offensive expression—busted—from your peculiar new friend?" asked Aunt Georgina, fixing her tortoise-shell eyeglasses on her nephew.

"My dear auntie—"

"Come along, my dears," said Lord Rayfield; "I am extremely fatigued. I shall really be glad of a cup of tea. I will speak to you presently, Algernon."

"Yaas, dad."

The Head was on the steps of the schoolhouse when the old gentleman and the two old ladies arrived there. Mr. Lathley, the master of the Fourth, and Mr. Tulke, of the Fifth, hovered in the offing. Oliphant and Wake, of the Sixth, fresh in from the football match, gazed on from a respectful distance. Hilton, of the Fifth, peered over the banisters. From every available corner juniors looked on. There was evidently a deep and general interest in St. Leger's people. Catesby, of the Fourth, remarked that his lordship, at that moment, was as good as a circus.

Compton and Co. came out of the common-room to look on; Lickie and Stubbs and another crowd emerged from the Glory Hole. Even when he was "on his legs" in the House of Lords the Earl of Rayfield never had such an attentive audience. Dr. Cheyne was blinking at him—it was impossible for even the stately old Head to avoid looking surprised. No governor of the school had ever arrived at St. Kit's before with his collar hanging on a single stud.

"Bless my soul!" said the Head, "what—what—what—there has been an accident?"

"An outrage, sir!" said his lordship. "My car broke down, and I had to walk through the wood—and we were attacked—"

"Goodness gracious!" "Attacked by a desperate ruffian, sir—a footpad—a—a—an unspeakable ruffian off-of-of the most brutal and beery nature, sir!"

"Bless my soul!"

"I have been handled, sir!—actually handled, sir!—by a footpad—and—considerably upset!" gasped his lordship. "My sisters have been frightened—alarmed—terrified! I should have been seriously injured—probably killed—but for the courage of a brave lad who was showing us the way through the wood—oh, dear!"

"Pray come in at once," said the Head. "You are in need of rest. Pray come with me—"

The agitated party faded into the house.

They left an excited crowd buzzing behind them when they disappeared from sight.

Aunt Cordelia and Aunt Georgina were taken charge of by the Head's wife, to be soothed, restored, and put to rights. In their agitation they had almost forgotten the purpose of their visit to St. Kit's—certainly they were not wasting much thought upon the nameless schoolboy just then. Mrs. Cheyne received an agitated account of the terrific happenings in the wood—or, rather, she received two agitated accounts at the same time, and patiently tried to make head and tail of them. In the Head's study his lordship—after having set himself in order in a more private apartment—gave Dr. Cheyne another agitated account. Then he requested the use of the Head's telephone, in order to give the police-station at Wicke an account in its turn.

By that time all St. Kit's was buzzing with the story of the adventure. Algernon Aubrey St.

Leger was in a state of great excitement. There was much speculation on all sides as to the identity of the heroic youth who had helped his lordship in the hour of danger. It was known that he was a St. Kit's junior—but his name was not known. It was impossible to guess which fellow it was, for there were thirty or forty juniors out of gates that sunny half-holiday, and it might have been any one of them—but there was keen interest in the subject.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Bunny Obliges.

BUNNY BOOTLES stopped, stared, and sniffed.

Bunny was surprised—Bunny was shocked—and Bunny was disgusted. Labouring under all those feelings at once, it was no wonder that Bunny sniffed.

Bunny was sitting on a grassy bank by the side of Wicke Lane when Harry Nameless came along—fresh from his combat in the wood. Bunny sat up and regarded him. Bunny was in a disappointed mood. Not a single fellow at St. Kit's had condescended to take any note of Bunny's tale that his uncle had promised to send him a pound, the said pound being freely offered by Bunny as security for a present loan. The security, somehow, did not seem good enough. Algernon Aubrey, generally a good resource when Bunny was hard up, had failed him, being too worried that afternoon about his people to give Bunny any attention beyond a drive of his boot.

So the fat and fatuous Bunny was cross that afternoon, and feeling inclined to kick somebody. Probably he would have sniffed anyhow at the sight of the nameless schoolboy; but in these circumstances his sniff was loud, prolonged, and scornful.

Harry paused and looked at him.

The junior was feeling severely the effects of his fight with the tramp in the wood. He was torn, dishevelled, dusty, and he was aching all over from Bill Huggins' hefty blows. He had hurried away from Lord Rayfield towards the village, simply to escape from the party with his identity undiscovered,—to give information to the police of the outrage was little more than a pretext. He was feeling greatly in need of rest and quiet. But it had been necessary to get away, and certainly he did not intend to go back to St. Kit's until it was assured that his lordship had left. The affair in the wood had made an encounter more awkward than ever.

Sniff! sniff! came from Bunny Bootles.

"Hallo, Nameless! Been through a mangle?" he asked.

"I feel a little like it," answered Harry.

"You look like it!"

"Dash it all! Am I very untidy?" asked Harry.

It occurred to him that it would be as well to brush down a little before entering the village.

"You might give me a brush down," he remarked.

"What have you been up to?" asked Bunny.

"Scrap," said Harry, briefly.

"Compton again?"

"No—no—a tramp in the wood."

"Shouldn't have thought a tramp would go for you," grinned Bunny Bootles. "They say dog don't eat dog, you know."

Harry Nameless gave the fat junior a quiet look.

"Do you want me to give you a thick ear, Bunny?" he asked.

"Eh! No." Bunny jumped up in alarm. "Here, you keep off."

"Keep a civil tongue in your head, then, you fat duffer."

"Did the tramp rob you?" asked Bunny.

"No; I've nothing to be robbed of." He wanted to rob somebody else.

"You chipped in?" asked Bunny, opening his eyes.

"Yes."

"What for?"

"No reason that you'd understand, probably," answered Harry Nameless, drily. "I say—"

He paused.

He was extremely desirous of keeping the part he had played in the affair from the knowledge of Algy's "people." To place them under an obligation when they had come down to the school to denounce him, as it were, was something like heaping coals of fire on their heads, and he did not want to do that. Unjustly as he felt he was treated, he was very wishful

of sparing the feelings of Algy's people—for Algy's sake. Parted as the chums were, Harry Nameless was not likely to forget the friendship Algy had shown to him on his first coming to St. Kit's, or how much easier Algy's kindness had made his first days at the big public school. His only desire was to keep clear of Algy's people; certainly not to make them feel awkward or humiliated.

"Look here, Bootles," he said, "A tramp has tried to rob Lord Rayfield in Lyncroft Wood."

"Phew!"

"I was going to the police-station at Wicke to tell them. The tramp's still in the wood; he was stunned. Lord Rayfield knocked him on the head."

"Great Scott!"

"Will you go to the police-station and tell them?"

"Why?"

"I—I'd rather not go," said Harry. "I—I'm going for a ramble, and if you'd go, Bootles—"

Bunny Bootles' fat face brightened. He was very willing to go—quite willing to do anything that would mix him up with such an exciting affair. Anything in the nature of limelight—even of reflected limelight—was welcome to Cuthbert Archibald Bootles.

"Right, old top," he said, "I'll go."

"Tell them the tramp is still in the wood at the cross paths near the dead elm, and if they're quick they may find him before he clears off."

"Righto. But, I say, why don't you want to go, though?" asked Bunny, curiously. "If you were mixed up in the scrap I daresay the old codger would stand you a quid or so if you gave him a hint."

Harry laughed.

"Possibly," he said, "but I don't want Lord Rayfield to stand me a quid, Bunny."

"You're an ass, then," said Bunny, sententiously; "a quid is a quid. I wish he'd offer me a quid. Oh, I catch on." Bunny grinned.

"Old Rayfield's sent you to tell the bobbies, and you're in a hurry to get back to St. Kit's before he goes. How much do you think he will shell out?"

"I'm not going back to St. Kit's now."

"But I say, old Rayfield won't stay long—you'll miss your chance."

"I'm willing to miss it."

"Blessed if I understand you, Nameless. You haven't got such a thumpin' lot of money that you can turn up your nose at a quid."

"That's true enough," assented Harry. "Cut along to the station now, will you, Bunny?"

"I don't quite see why you don't want to go, though," said Bunny, inquisitively. "You're not pulling my leg, are you? Not stuffin' me?"

"Of course not."

"No; I've noticed you don't tell whoppers," said Bunny, with a nod. "I expected you'd be an awful liar, you know, considering how you were brought up, but you ain't. I say, what are you looking waxy for?"

Harry burst into a laugh; it was not much use being angry with the egregious Bunny. Bunny did not seem to be aware of anything offensive in his valuable observations.

"Cut off," said Harry. "But you haven't told me yet why you don't want to go to the bobby station." Bunny was decidedly inquisitive.

"I'd rather keep clear of the business," said Harry, impatiently.

"For goodness' sake, cut off, Bunny, and don't talk about this at St. Kit's till Lord Rayfield is gone—not at all, in fact."

"Blessed if I understand you at all," confessed Bunny. "If a man were down on me, and I helped him in a fight, I'd jolly well rub it in, and make him jolly well ashamed of himself. Why, you could make him feel awfully uncomfortable."

"Will you cut off, Bunny?"

"Oh, all right! I think you're an ass," said Bunny. "You're not a very intelligent chap, Nameless. Well, I'm off."

And Bunny Bootles rolled off at last.

Harry Nameless turned out of the road into a lane that led towards Wicke Heath, and on the wide open heath he lay down to rest in the grass. He was feeling

badly in need of a rest, and he was very glad to be relieved of his task by Bunny Bootles. If he had gone personally to the police-station he would have had to give his name, and his name could scarcely have failed to be reported to Lord Rayfield, who would naturally want to know who his rescuer was. Now it looked as if his whole connection with the affair would remain unknown to his lordship—a consummation devoutly to be wished from Harry's point of view.

Meanwhile Bunny rolled into Wicke, and made straight for the little village police-station.

The police force of Wicke, consisting of one plump constable, was smoking a pipe on the steps when Bunny arrived.

Police Constable Bandy gave ear to Bunny Bootles' information with a rather dubious, not to say incredulous, expression on his fat face.

"You stuffing, Master Bootles?" he asked, suspiciously.

Just then the ringing of the telephone bell called Mr. Bandy into the station, and he left Bunny to himself.

He came out in a few minutes with his helmet and truncheon on and started down the street at a great rate.

Bunny stared after him.

"I say, Mr. Bandy!" he shouted.

"It's all right, Master Bootles," answered Mr. Bandy; "I've just eard it from the school."

He hurried on, and called to a friend who was sucking a straw outside the "Red Cow." Mr. Bandy felt that help might be required in dealing with a tramp who was of so desperate a character as to have laid hands on a peer of the realm. Mr. Bandy and his friend hurried away together, and lost no time in getting into Lyncroft Wood, and they reached the cross-roads by the dead elm in a state of breathlessness. There they found many signs of the conflict in trampled footprints and a spot or two of crimson on the grass. But, to their great disappointment, they did not find Mr. William Huggins.

That gentleman, with a headache and a temper that was nothing short of Hunnish, was already a mile away, tramping for his life, possibly reflecting that honesty was, after all, the best policy.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Called Over the Coals.

"ALGERNON!" Three voices pronounced that name at once as the dandy of St. Kit's came into the visitors' room, with a sinking heart, to interview his "people."

Lord Rayfield was quiet and severe. Aunt Georgina was more severe but less quiet. Aunt Cordelia had an expression that was more of sorrow than of anger.

But all three were what would have been described in the language of the St. Kit's Fourth as "stuffy" or "frumpious." There was trouble in the air.

"Now, Algernon—"

"Now—"

"Now—"

"Yaas?" said the happy Algernon.

"You may sit down, Algernon," said his lordship.

Algy sat down.

"Your aunts and I," said Lord Rayfield, "have come down specially to the school to see you, Algernon."

"Specially!" said Aunt Cordelia. "Particularly!" said Aunt Georgina.

Algernon Aubrey suppressed a groan.

"It's awfully kind of you," he said. "I feel that—enormously. I—I hope you are feelin' all right, after your rather rotten experience in the wood."

"Allow me to speak, Algernon," said Lord Rayfield.

"Oh, certainly."

"It appears that you have made friends with a—certain youth, a boy who has come to this school on a Foundation scholarship."

"Yaas."

"He has no name, his parents are unknown, he was brought up among rough sailors and fishermen."

"I—I believe so."

"On the occasion when your uncle, Colonel Lovell, came to see you he found this boy in your study."

"He's my study-mate."

"The boy had been tattered and feathered, I understand, by con-

temptuous school-fellows," said Aunt Georgina.

"Nothin' of the sort, auntie. Some rotters ragged him for a rotten lark, because Uncle Lovell was comin'—"

"Some what, Algernon?"

"Rotters, auntie," said Algernon Aubrey, innocently.

"What a word! Did you learn that offensive word from this boy Nameless?"

"Nunno."

"I fear, Algernon, that you must have done so."

"Really, auntie—"

"Now, Algernon, your Uncle Lovell was very unfavourably impressed with this boy Nameless," resumed his lordship.

"He only saw him for a few minutes, dad, tied to a chair, and lookin' awfully mucked up owin' to those rotters—ahem—"

"Why are his schoolfellows prejudiced against him if there is nothing wrong with the boy?"

"It's only a few snobs, father."

"Algernon, you are of too easy going a disposition. You are liable to be victimised by any unscrupulous boy. I am surprised—really surprised—at Dr. Cheyne admitting the boy here. Doubtless he was in an awkward position, as the person had some legal rights founded upon an—ah—obsolete scholarship. Now, Algernon, it is quite possible that this boy may be quite—quite a nice person in his own class, but—that does not make him a suitable associate for you."

"But, dad—"

"Algernon is growing argumentative," remarked Aunt Georgina. "I fear that this is due to the influence of a bad associate."

"Oh, dear! I say—"

"I wish to be just," said Lord Rayfield, ponderously. "My desire is to be strictly just. The desire of your aunts, Algernon, is to be strictly just. We will see this boy."

"By all means," said Aunt Cordelia.

"We will see him," said Aunt Georgina, grimly.

"Call him here, Algernon."

Algernon shifted uneasily.

"I—I'm afraid he won't come, dad."

"What?"

"How?"

"Indeed!"

"He—he's awfully hurt at bein' treated like this," said Algernon, his face crimsoning. "He's in the form-room now, workin'—he's swottin' for an exam., you know. He—he's been tryin' to drop my acquaintance—"

"Very proper on his part since he knows that your relatives do not approve of your friendship with him," said Aunt Georgina.

"I presume he will come here when he knows it is my wish," said Lord Rayfield, in his most stately manner. "He may be aware that I am a governor of the school."

"I—I hope so, father. But—perhaps you'd like to step into the form-room and catch him?" suggested Algy.

"I—I think he's rather—rather shy, and—Uncle Lovell hurt his feelin's, you know. He's a very sensitive chap."

Lord Rayfield rose.

"We will proceed to the form-room," he said, with great dignity. "Since this—ah—young person will not deign to come to us, we will—ah—go to him. Certainly we must see him."

"Undoubtedly," said Aunt Georgina.

"Yaas. This way," said Algy.

Poor Algy's heart was sinking yet lower as he led the way to the Fourth Form room. Having left Harry Nameless there "swotting" for the afternoon, Algy fully expected to find him there still. But he was no longer expecting Harry to make a favourable impression upon his relations. Evidently there was a very strong prejudice to overcome.

The form-room was empty.

Algernon Aubrey blinked round it in surprise and dismay. This was worse than ever. It looked as if the nameless schoolboy was actually "dodging" a meeting with his lordship, as indeed he was. The angust relatives were not likely to attribute that simply to pride or sensitiveness. A guilty conscience seemed more probable to them.

"Well, where is the boy?" asked his lordship.

"He—he—he isn't here," babbled Algernon.

"Where is he, then?"

"I—I told him I was goin' to bring you in here," said Algernon Aubrey, wretchedly. "I—I suppose he—he—he cleared off."

"To avoid us?" exclaimed Aunt Georgina, in an awful voice.

"Perhaps—perhaps he's just round the corner somewhere," gasped Algy. "I—I—I'll look for him."

"We will return to the visitors' room," said Lord Rayfield, with intensified dignity. "We will await you there, Algernon."

"Yaas, father."

"Bring the boy with you, if he is still within the school. If he has deliberately gone out of gates to avoid us I shall know what to think."

"Oh, begad!"

The old gentleman and the two old ladies paraded solemnly back to the visitors' room, what time Algernon Aubrey rushed to and fro, in great dismay, inquiring after the missing junior.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER. His Lordship is Not Pleased.

LORD RAYFIELD was gone. His lordship's interview with the Head had been short and not particularly sweet. The old gentleman was in a state of annoyance, and he had a feeling that he had been treated with something like disrespect or, at least, negligence.

He had come down to St. Kit's specially that afternoon to lecture his son on the subject of forming thoughtless and reckless friendships, and to see the nameless schoolboy and ascertain exactly what sort of a fellow he was. His lordship desired to be just.

And he had not seen the boy at St. Kit's.

He had taken it for granted that the boy would be at his beck and call as it were. A peer of the realm, who was also a governor of the school, did not consider it

over, the episode of the tramp in the wood had upset his nerves a little and made him irritable. In that state of mind he was inclined to take the darkest possible view of the conduct of Harry Nameless. The fact that the Head of St. Kit's seemed to entertain a rather high opinion of the nameless schoolboy somehow irritated his lordship further. He had a high opinion of Dr. Cheyne as a scholar and a headmaster; of the Head's knowledge of the world he had not a very high opinion. He thought it probable that the amiable old Head might be deceived quite easily.

"The boy has deliberately avoided meeting my son's relatives," said his lordship, in the Head's study. "Knowing I was coming he left the school; not by chance, but deliberately."

"But—," murmured the Head.

"I have the worst possible im-

ing it fairly freely. "But with regard to my own son—"

"Oh, certainly."

"I prefer that he should see nothing of this boy, who skulks away to avoid seeing my son's relatives—"

"Very good," said the Head, quietly. "Your wishes shall certainly be met. I will see that Nameless does not occupy the same study."

"Chance meetings in the form-room and about the school, of course, can do no great harm. But intimate association—I set my face very seriously against that, Dr. Cheyne."

"I will see that your wishes are observed, Lord Rayfield."

"Very good."

"On another occasion I will give the boy instructions to remain within gates—"

"I fear that I shall be unable to visit the school for some time to come. My duties in the House

"Yes, yes, no doubt. I may mention that the boy's form-master has a high opinion of him," said the Head.

"I am glad to hear it." His lordship did not look glad, however. "I desire to be just. I only request that my own son may be relieved from—ah—contact with this—this young person from—from, in fact, possible contamination. He made a bad impression upon my brother-in-law, Colonel Lovell, whose judgment I respect greatly. But I think we understand one another."

"Oh, quite so, quite so," said the Head, with the corner of his eye on the clock.

Lord Rayfield rose.

"One other matter, Dr. Cheyne.

You are aware that some lad belonging to St. Kit's acted very gallantly when I was—ah—attacked by a scoundrel in the wood to-day. I should like my—ah—thanks to be conveyed to that boy; I should like to know his name. His conduct was very creditable to the school. Perhaps you would ascertain—"

"Undoubtedly," said the Head.

"I will inquire into the matter, and ascertain which of the boys had the happiness to be of service to you."

And so his lordship took his leave, greatly dissatisfied with the result of his visit to St. Kit's.

That dissatisfaction was laid to the account of Harry Nameless, and Lord Rayfield took away a very bad impression of that hapless youth in consequence.

So did Algy's aunts, especially Georgina.

Stumson had long ago arrived with the car, repaired. Lord Rayfield and his sisters entered the car, perhaps to the relief of the Head—certainly to the relief of Algernon Aubrey.

Algy was an affectionate son and an affectionate nephew. But there were trials that were hard to bear, and this visit was one of them.

Affectionate youth as he was, Algernon Aubrey could not help experiencing a feeling of relief when the car glided out of the gates of St. Kit's.

THE NINTH CHAPTER. Bunny Has a Brain-Wave!

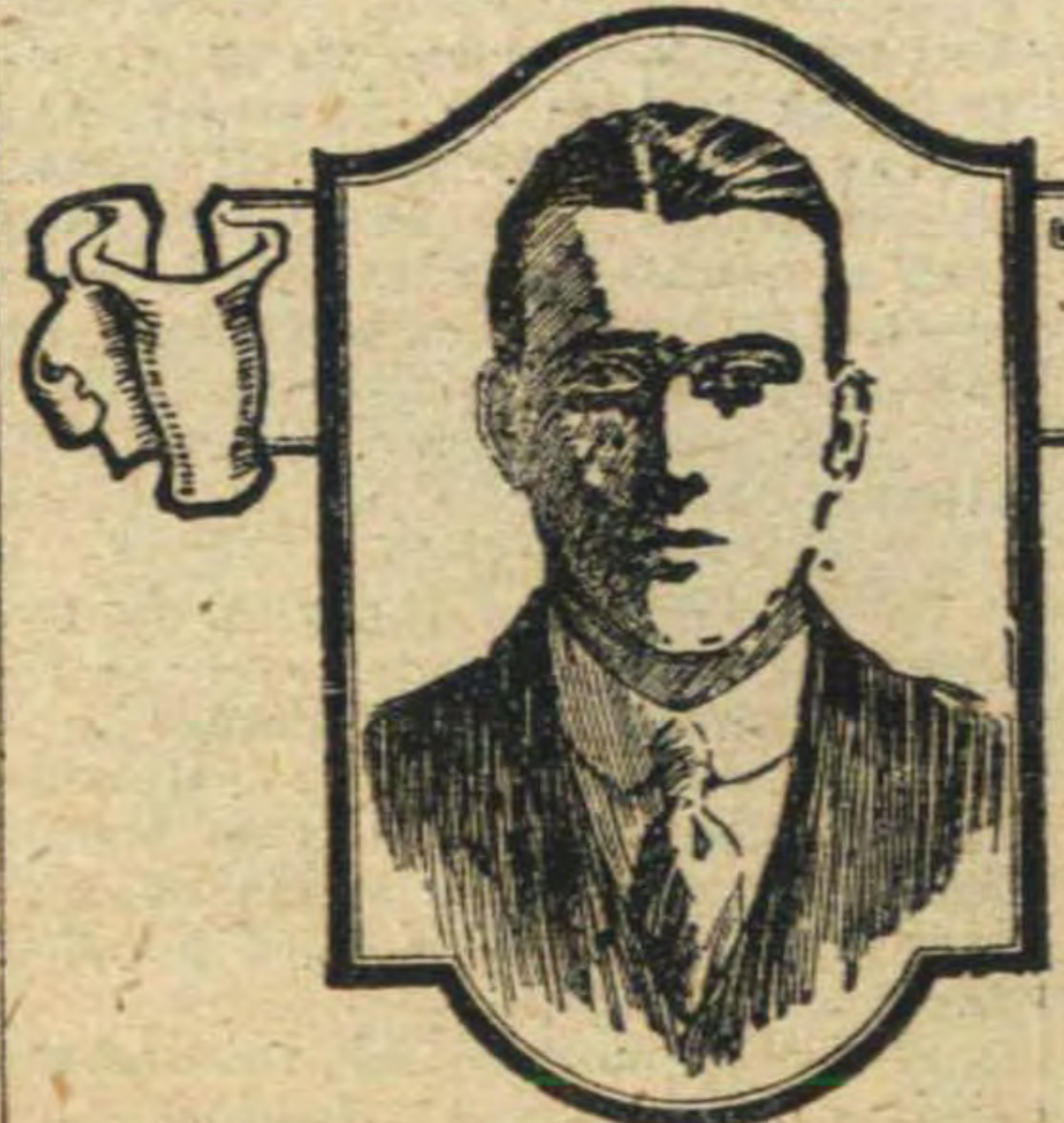
HARRY NAMELESS went into the hall to tea after call-over, and for once Algernon Aubrey omitted to ask him to come up to the study. Although, since Colonel Lovell's visit, Harry had refused steadfastly to enter No. 5 study, Algy had never omitted to press him to do so, especially at tea-time. But on this occasion Algy was feeling sore and worried, and he let the nameless schoolboy have his own way without remark.

Harry found himself the centre of a great deal of interested observation at the Fourth-form table.

Not half the Fourth were there; most of the juniors had tea in their studies; it was generally a tightness of funds that drove them to the common table in the hall. But the fellows who happened to be there all looked at Harry with great interest. His "cool cheek," as they considered it, in going out of gates when a governor of the school wanted to see him had been talked of up and down the Fourth, and it elicited great admiration for the nameless schoolboy's nerve.

After tea a number of the Fourth gathered round Harry Nameless in the passage, and marched him off to the Glory Hole,

"SCHOOL AND SPORT." 154, Fleet Street, London, E.C.4.



YOUR EDITOR'S DEN

Your Editor is always pleased to hear from his readers. A prompt reply is sent when a stamped addressed envelope is enclosed. Other correspondence is dealt with in these columns.

OUR RECEPTION.

It is too early at the time of going to press with this issue to let my friends know how No. 1 of SCHOOL AND SPORT was received. If you have not yet written and told me what you think of our stories, will you do so this week?

NEXT WEEK'S PROGRAMME.

The long story by Clifford Clive is entitled "Sent to Coventry," and deals with the further adventures of Algernon, Harry Nameless, Bunny Bootles, and the boys of St. Kit's. There will be a strong football interest in this grand story. There will also be another long instalment of John Winterton's great serial "The Cruise of the Tartar."

More footballs will be offered in our novel football competition, and altogether No. 3 of SCHOOL AND SPORT will be packed with good things.

CHRISTMAS ARRANGEMENTS.

For the benefit of my readers I am arranging for next week's

issue to be on sale at all newsagents on Saturday, December 24. So if you want a really happy Christmas buy No. 3 of SCHOOL AND SPORT before the shops close.

And, by the way, there are many poor boys who do not receive a Christmas present of any

To Readers in all parts
of the British Empire.

Sincerest Good
Wishes for a
Happy Christmas
and Best Wishes
for the New Year.

sort. If you know of one give him a copy of SCHOOL AND SPORT. The actual money value of a gift should never be considered. It is the "kindly thought," and our stories will give quite a lot of pleasure to any fellow who reads them.

WEEKLY STORYETTES.

I am anxious to start a feature in these pages wherein only readers' contributions will appear. For a start I suggest that this feature is "Storyettes," so if you know a funny tale send it to me. A postcard will do. Every contribution published will be paid for. Half a crown for every storyette used. Now then, boys and girls, get busy.

A TIP.

There may be some of you who were not lucky enough to get a copy of our first issue. It is still not too late. If you ask your newsagent to get you a copy he will be only too happy to oblige.

Your Editor.

But his inquiries failed to unearth Harry Nameless.

It was with a heavy heart that the dandy of the Fourth repaired to the visitors' room at last with the news that Harry Nameless could not be found.

His statement was received in chilling silence.

"The boy is deliberately avoiding us," said Aunt Georgina, breaking the painful stillness at last.

"He knew we were coming, Algernon."

"Yaas, father."

"You told him you would bring us to see him?"

"Ya-a-as."

"Then there is no doubt whatever that he is intentionally avoiding facing us."

"You—you see—" stammered Algy.

"I see only too clearly," interrupted Lord Rayfield, icily. "You may go, Algernon. I shall now express my views to the Head."

"Oh, dear!"

Algernon Aubrey almost limped away.

He had looked forward with dread and misgiving to this afternoon; but he had not expected it to be quite so bad as this. He limped away with a woe-begone look that made Compton and Co. chortle when they sighted him in the passage.

necessary to make a special appointment in advance when he wanted a few words with a fag in the Fourth Form.

That was natural enough. It was also natural that a junior not under detention should choose to spend his half-holiday out of gates. But that, though natural, was exasperating in the circumstances.

As Lord Rayfield explained to the Head he was a busy man; his duties in the "House" made it impossible for him to come down to the school again for some time. It is barely possible, too, that grateful as Lord Rayfield must have felt to his two elder sisters for their affectionate interest in his son Algy, he did not wholly enjoy excursions accompanied by both of them at once, especially Georgina.

Lord Rayfield was a peer; he sat in the House of Peers; he had held important appointments. But to Georgina he was still her younger brother Edward, whom she was a little doubtful about trusting out of her sight.

This was very kind and affectionate of Miss Georgina St. Leger. But it caused a mingling of feelings in his lordship's breast, not all of them of a satisfactory nature.

Certainly he was not anxious to repeat that family visit. More-

pression of the boy, Dr. Cheyne. I cannot say I am pleased at his admission to St. Kit's."

The Head raised his eyebrows. "Every investigation was made, Lord Rayfield, he answered, with a touch of loftiness. The boy was poor and brought up in poor surroundings, but his record was spotless."

"Still—"

"It is true that his origin is—ah—obscure. But, Mr. Carew, an old St. Kit's man answers for him, in fact, taught him most that he knows, and helped him prepare for the foundation examination."

"I remember Carew; he was here in my time," said Lord Rayfield. "A kind-hearted fellow, and no judge of character."

"Hem! But—"

"I fear, Dr. Cheyne, that this boy, this—this Nameless—what a very extraordinary appellation!—I really fear that he may be quite unsuitable to associate with St. Kit's boys. His deliberate avoidance of me gives me that disagreeable impression, at least."

"The boy may have felt shy—"

"Boys suitable to associate with my son do not feel shy or awkward. Far be it from me to criticise your administration of the school, Dr. Cheyne," said his lordship, apparently unconscious of the fact that he had been criticis-

there to give a full account of his daring.

Harry gave a modest account enough. Algernon Aubrey sauntered in while he was speaking to his very attentive audience, and Compton and Co. also dropped in. "Hallo, here's old Oliphant," said Catesby.

The captain of St. Kit's came into the Glory Hole, eyed rather suspiciously by the juniors.

The Glory Hole was their own special domain, where seniors had no admittance: even prefects were not supposed to venture into that sacred apartment save on very special occasions. Carsdale of the Sixth had once been mobbed there for breaking the unwritten law. Oliphant, the popular captain of the school, was too much liked for his presence to be objected to anywhere; still, the fags eyed even Oliphant suspiciously. In the Glory Hole even Oliphant's authority carried less weight than elsewhere.

"I'm looking for a fellow," said Oliphant, amiably. "The Head's asked me to find the kid who pitched into a tramp to-day in Lyncroft Wood. Is he here?"

No answer. He was there, as a matter of fact, but he did not care to speak. Harry Nameless fervently hoped that his connection with that affair would never come to light.

"Not here?" asked Oliphant, looking round. "It's dashed queer. I've asked a horde of fags, and nobody seems to be the chap. Lord Rayfield is certain that it was a St. Kit's fellow. He had a school cap. I suppose I've got to go on huntin'. Dashed bore."

And the St. Kit's captain went out.

"Begad," remarked Algernon Aubrey St. Leger, "I want to find that chap, too. I'm awfully obliged to him for savin' my pater from bein' knocked on the napper. Doesn't anybody know who it was?"

"Blessed if I do," said Compton. "I daresay it's a lot exaggerated, and there wasn't much in it."

"Yaas, that's just what you would think, dear boy," said Algy, and he walked out of the Glory Hole to join in the search for the missing hero.

Harry Nameless escaped from the crowd as soon as he could, and looked for Bunny Bootles. Bunny was the only fellow who knew of his connection with the affair in Lyncroft Wood, and Harry was anxious to secure the fat junior's silence. He found Bunny in the Fourth Form passage, just leaving No. 5 after finishing up Algy's supplies for tea.

Bunny greeted him with a grin. "I say, I've been hearing a lot about you," he said. "His nibs—I mean Algy's pater, you know—was awfully waxy about your being out of gates."

"I'm afraid so," said Harry.

"And he met you and doesn't know it," chuckled Bunny.

"Awfully queer, ain't it? I say, they're inquiring for the chap who helped old Tin-ribs in the wood. No end of kudos. I suppose you're going to be called up

before the form and complimented, and so on. That's what you've been thinking of, isn't it?"

"No," said Harry, quietly. "You didn't mention my name at the police-station, Bunny?"

"Never thought of it. Besides, I didn't have a chance. Old Tin-ribs telephoned from here, and interrupted when I was telling the bobby."

"Good. I want you not to mention me at all, Bunny."

Bunny winked a fat wink.

"What's the game?" he asked.

"There isn't any game—"

"Oh, come off," said Bunny. "You've got some awfully deep game on. I can see that. No green in my eye, you know."

"Nothing of the sort," said Harry, patiently. "I simply don't want to be talked of in connection with the affair."

"Why not?"

"Well, I don't."

Bunny stared at him.

"Do you mean to say you're not going to own up, and you're going to keep it dark about helping old Tin-ribs?" he ejaculated.

"Yes."

"I don't catch on. I'd rather you told me what the game was," said Bunny, suspiciously. "I know it's something awfully deep."

Harry Nameless laughed. The fat junior knew his motives, as a matter of fact, but did not believe in them in the least. Delicacy of that kind was an unknown quantity to the fat Bunny.

"Well, will you keep it dark, Bunny?" he asked. "Simply say nothing. Nobody knows you know anything about it, and you needn't say anything. The whole thing will be forgotten in a day or two."

"If it was me I wouldn't let it be forgotten in a hurry," said Bunny. "Still, I don't mind keeping it dark if it comes to that. No biznai of mine to go around blowing your trumpet, is it?"

"Exactly," said Harry, relieved.

"In fact," said Bunny, with another wink, "I rather think I catch on. It wasn't you at all."

"Eh?"

"If it was you you'd own up fast enough and bag the glory," said Bunny, wagging his head sagely. "I know. You can't spoof me, you know. I'm pretty wide."

"Why, you young ass—" began Harry, indignantly.

Bunny wagged a fat forefinger at him reprovingly.

"Come off," he said. "It wasn't you. Old Tin-ribs asked you to go to the bobby-station all right, same as you asked me. But it was another fellow in the wood. I see that now. I wonder I didn't tumble before. Do you know who it was all the time, Nameless?"

Harry stared at him.

Evidently the fat youth was satisfied with the new theory that had entered his powerful brain. He simply couldn't imagine that any fellow who had a chance of getting into the limelight would prefer to blush unseen.

"Well," said Harry, laughing, "I don't mind what you think about it, Bunny, so long as you don't say it was I."

"Not likely to say so when I know it wasn't," retorted Bunny. "The queer thing is, who was it? Got any idea?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't see anything to burble at. Nameless. My idea is that it wasn't a St. Kit's chap at all, or he'd have spoken up before now," said Bunny. "Old Tin-ribs was mistaken in thinking it was a St. Kit's chap. What?"

"Let it go at that, if you like," said Harry.

"Might have been me, for all you know," said Bunny.

"Eh?"

"Well, I was out of gates," said Bunny, argumentatively; "and I think my boundless pluck is pretty well known—"

"Ha—ha—ha!"

"If you cackle at me, you rotter—"

Harry Nameless walked away, laughing. He went to the form-room to put in some time with P. Virgilius Maro before prep. Bunny Bootles sat in the window-seat, at the end of the Fourth-form passage, and thought.

He thought deeply.

Bunny wasn't much given to thinking, but now he was thinking hard, with a deep wrinkle in his fat brow. There was a peculiar gleam in his little round eyes, and several times he grinned, gleefully. Great thoughts were working in the fat brain of Cuthbert Archibald Bootles; and the outcome of that "big think" was to be quite surprising.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Missing Hero.

THE following day there was considerable discussion and speculation at St. Kit's on one topic.

That topic was the missing hero! A St. Kit's fellow—unknown—had chipped in to rescue a governor of the school from a tramp's savage attack. And that St. Kit's fellow couldn't be discovered.

It was a remarkable state of affairs. Lord Rayfield was grateful; his sisters were grateful; and Algernon Aubrey St. Leger was grateful and ready to testify his gratitude for the valuable service rendered to his pater.

With so much gratitude going begging, so to speak, it was extremely odd that there should be no claimant.

Moreover, as Catesby of the Fourth—a very keen youth—remarked, Lord Rayfield's gratitude was likely to take a solid and practical turn, if he found the proper recipient. A gold watch, Catesby thought, was the least his lordship could do, in the circumstances.

Catesby, indeed, expressed his regret that he had been watching the senior football match at the time; if only he had been out of the gates, he would have been tempted to "put in" for the gratitude.

At Lord Rayfield's request, the Head was inquiring after the modest hero who was hiding his blushes in this unexpected way; and he had called on the Sixth-

Form prefects for assistance. The prefects had gone up and down and round about, without discovering the hero.

"The chap's too modest to come forward!" Algernon Aubrey observed. "Real heroes, you know, are modest. I'm awfully modest."

A remark which called forth a loud chortle from Algernon Aubrey's hearers.

Modesty carried to that extent was decidedly uncommon in the Lower School at St. Kit's.

An impression spread that his lordship had been mistaken, and that the gallant rescuer wasn't a St. Kit's fellow at all. Might even have been a Lyncroft cad, some of the fellows thought.

Harry Nameless heard the verdict, and was quite willing for any possible glory to be attributed to some unknown Lyncroft fellow.

An interview he had with the Head that morning made him all the more anxious that his part in the affair should not come to light. After morning lessons, Mr. Lathley had told him that the Head wished to speak to him in his study, and Harry repaired thither. He found the Head as amiable and benevolent as usual—in fact, a little more so—but slightly hesitating in his manner, which was very unusual.

"You sent for me, sir?" said Harry.

Dr. Cheyne coughed.

"Yes, I—I sent for you, Nameless," he said. "I have an—er—a—ah—communication to make."

"Yes, sir," said Harry, quietly. He could guess that the Head's communication had some connection with the visit of Lord Rayfield the previous day.

The Head coughed again. He was feeling most uncomfortable.

"Pray understand, in the first place, Nameless, that I have no fault to find with you," he said.

"Thank you, sir."

"You are aware that St. Leger's father came down yesterday—he wished to see you. Unfortunately, you were out of gates."

"It was a half-holiday, sir—"

"Quite so—quite so, you had every right to be out of gates. It was, however, rather unfortunate. His lordship wished specially to see you, and he—ah—has an impression that you were intentionally eluding an interview—"

"That is correct, sir," said Harry.

"Eh?"

"I did not wish to see Lord Rayfield, sir," said Harry, flushing.

"Hem—hem! As Lord Rayfield is a governor of the school, Nameless, it would have been more respectful—"

"Lord Rayfield objects to my friendship with his son, sir," said Harry, his colour deepening. "As soon as I knew that, I told St. Leger we could no longer be friends. It was quite unnecessary for his lordship to speak to me on the subject. I have some pride, sir."

"Hem—hem! Quite so, my boy. I understand that you share St. Leger's study in the Fourth—"

"Not now, sir."

"Indeed! It was not aware—"

"I left the study, sir, after

Colonel Lovell's visit a week or two ago. As soon as I knew St. Leger's relations objected—"

"I see! A very proper step on your part, Nameless," said the Head. "It shows a proper pride—very proper, indeed. What study do you occupy now?"

"None at present, sir; I work in the form-room."

The Head regarded him rather curiously over his glasses.

"Ah! I must speak to Mr. Lathley on that subject," he said. "It is—ahem!—then unnecessary for me to mention, Nameless, that your intimacy with St. Leger should cease—"

"Quite, sir; I have explained very clearly to St. Leger. He is a good, kind fellow, and—and—I—Harry's voice faltered a little—"I've never liked a fellow so much as I do Algy—I mean St. Leger. But I keep out of his way, now, all I can."

"Quite right, Nameless, quite right. Pray understand that I do not share Lord Rayfield's views in the least; but you know that I am bound to respect a parent's wishes. You may go, Nameless. By the way, your form-master has spoken to me very highly of you, Nameless, and I have no doubt that you have—a—ah—a very useful and honourable career before you at St. Kit's."

So Harry Nameless left the Head's study rather pleased than otherwise, but almost passionately determined that Lord Rayfield should never know to whom he was under an obligation.

And the missing hero remained missing.

But not for long!

Bunny's brain-wave was about to produce its effect, to the astonishment of St. Kit's, and to the astonishment, most of all, of Harry Nameless.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Amazing!

"B"OOTLES! said Bunny Bootles, in an expiring voice.

Mr. Lathley frowned.

Afternoon lessons were on in the Fourth-form room, and Bunny Bootles was drawing some unusual attention to himself.

Bunny had let the morning pass, to give the missing hero a last chance, as it were, of turning up. He had not turned up, and Bunny felt safe. Babbie of the Shell had proved to his own satisfaction, and many other fellows, that the missing hero wasn't within the walls of St. Kit's at all. So the fat and fatuous Bunny felt that the coast was clear—clear for the entrance of the unknown hero in all his glory!

Blissfully ignorant of the amazing thoughts working in Bunny's remarkable brain, Mr. Lathley was only perplexed and annoyed by his conduct that afternoon. The fat junior was always as inattentive as he dared to be—now he was openly, almost flagrantly, inattentive. He leaned his head on his desk several times with a tired and suffering air; and when his form-master sharply told him to sit up, he sat up, with the look of a patient martyr. All the Fourth began to

Grand Competition

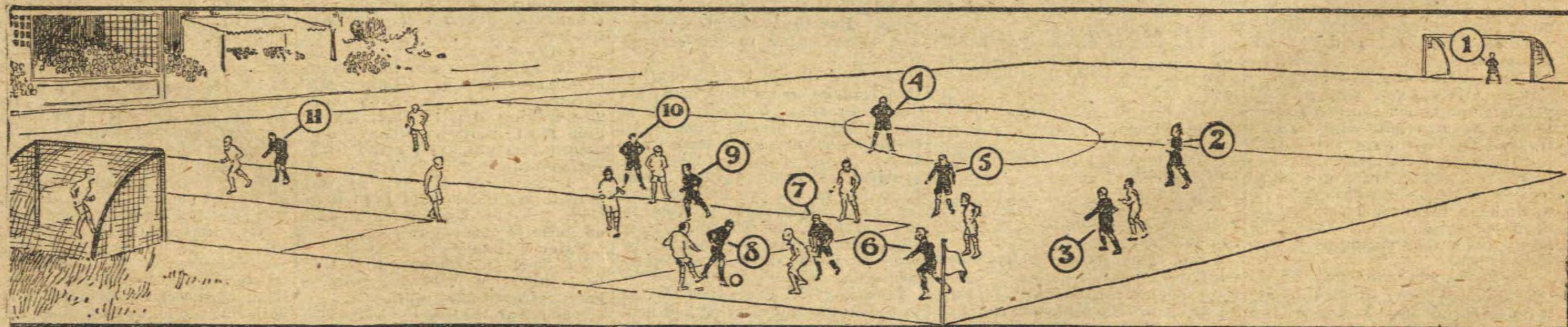
NO
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"FOOTER PROBS"

(FOOTBALL PROBLEMS)

Football as Prizes

RE D
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RULES



Fill in the Numbers of the Players—Figures only.

8

Name.....

Address.....

I enter "Footer Probs" Competition No. 2, and agree to accept the Editor's decision as final and legally binding. Closing date December 29th, 1921.

RULES.

The diagram given above is from an actual photograph taken at a school football match. "Blacks" had invaded their opponents' territory, and as a result scored a goal. The ball was netted after a fine exhibition of team work—the ball being actually kicked or headed by "Blacks" eight times. "Whites" did not touch the ball at all.

Now, readers of SCHOOL AND SPORT are set an interesting little problem. They are invited to show their skill in the great game by writing down in

correct order the "numbers" of the players who kicked or headed the ball. Here is an example showing how your effort might look:—8, 1, 9, 6, 7, 2, 4, 5.

The six readers who send in the correct or most nearly correct numbers will each receive a splendid full-size match football. If more than six correct results are received, the prizes will be awarded to the first correct six examined by the Editor.

All efforts must be received by December 29th, 1921.

The Competition Coupon must be

used, and sent to SCHOOL AND SPORT, No. 2 Competition, 154, Fleet Street, London, E.C. 4.

No correspondence can be entered into in connection with the Competition.

No responsibility can be undertaken for entries lost, mislaid, or delayed, and proof of posting will not be accepted as proof of delivery.

The decision of the Editor must be accepted as final and legally binding in all matters concerning the contest, and entries are only accepted on this express condition.

take note of Bunny and his mysterious stunts, and wondered what was the matter with him. The general opinion was that he was looking for trouble, and would undoubtedly find it. Mr. Lathley was getting very restive.

Once more Bunny's elbows rested on his desk, and his head dropped into his fat hands for support, with an exhausted air. And then Mr. Lathley thundered:

"BOOTLES!"

"Now he's goin' to catch it," murmured Algernon Aubrey St. Leger. "The silly ass is simply askin' for it."

And the Fourth grinned in anticipation.

Mr. Lathley came towards Bunny, thoughtfully picking up his cane on the way.

"Bootles," he said, grimly, "you are always inattentive, always idle, and always obtuse. This afternoon you seem resolved to exhibit these qualities until I can't see you. In order to save time, Bootles, I will cane you now. Hold out your hand, Bootles."

There was an audible smile from the Fourth. Mr. Lathley was being grimly humorous. A form-master's humour has to be acknowledged by his form—on such an occasion a dutiful chuckle is expected and delivered.

But Bunny did not hold out his fat paw. He gave his form-master a sad and reproachful look.

"I'm sorry, sir," he said, meekly, "but I feel so bad—"

"Have you been over-eating again, Bootles?"

"Oh! no, sir—I never do. I eat very little."

"Oh, begad!" murmured St. Leger.

"But—but that blow on my chest, sir—"

"That what?"

"Blow on my chest, sir."

"What do you mean, Bootles? If you are ill—"

"Not exactly ill, sir, but that fearful blow—"

"Will you kindly tell me at once what you are talking about, Bootles!" exclaimed Mr. Lathley, angrily. "Have you met with an accident? Is that your meaning?"

"No—no—not exactly, sir. But that blow—"

"What blow?"

"I—I was hit awfully hard, sir—"

"You have been fighting?"

"Ye-es, sir, yesterday. I—I had to, sir—"

"With whom were you fighting, Bootles?"

"A—a—tramp, sir."

"A tramp! You should not fight with a tramp," said Mr. Lathley, crossly. "What nonsense! How dare you go out of the school and fight with tramps, Bootles?"

This was not a good beginning. Mr. Lathley evidently did not suspect, yet, the particular tramp Bunny was alluding to.

"I—I couldn't help it, sir," murmured Bunny.

"Do you mean that you have been attacked by a tramp, and injured?" exclaimed the puzzled form-master.

"Nunno, sir. I—I attacked him—"

"Bootles! You venture to tell me that you deliberately picked a quarrel with some disreputable character, and fought with him!" exclaimed Mr. Lathley. "You have the impudence—the audacity—"

"Nunno, sir," gasped Bunny.

"I—I—"

All the Fourth was watching Bunny very curiously now. What had not yet dawned on Mr. Lathley had dawned upon them.

"Then tell me what you mean?" snapped the form-master; "I warn you, Bootles, that I am very near the end of my patience."

"I—I couldn't help it, sir," gasped Bunny. "I—I couldn't see an old man knocked about—"

"What?"

"And—and robbed, sir—"

"Wh-a-a-at?"

"And two old ladies, sir," said Bunny; "I couldn't stand by and see it, sir. A—a St. Kit's chap was bound to play up, sir."

Mr. Lathley blinked at Bunny. The form stared at him.

A pin might have been heard to drop in the Fourth-form room of St. Kit's, for one astonished moment.

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated Mr. Lathley, at last. "You—you—you tell me, Bootles, that you—you—you attacked a tramp, to—to—to save an old gentleman and two old ladies—from—from robbery—"

"I felt bound to, sir," said

Bunny; "I should have felt an awful cad, sir, if I'd stood by and—"

"Are you alluding to Lord Rayfield and the Misses St. Leger?"

"I—I never meant to say anything, sir—"

"Answer my question."

"Yes, sir!" gasped Bunny.

The die was cast now—it was a case of "jacta est alea." The egregious Bunny was fairly committed now to the role of hero.

Mr. Lathley regarded him long and attentively.

Like the other masters at St. Kit's, he had wondered who was the unknown junior who had so gallantly tackled the hulking ruffian in Lyncroft Wood. Certainly he had never thought of Bunny Bootles. Bunny's name was not one that was likely to occur to anybody's mind in such a connection.

And Mr. Lathley had very strong doubts now. He was willing to give credit where it was due; but he was well aware that Cuthbert Archibald Bootles was not a disciple of the late lamented George Washington. That excellent gentleman, according to his own state-

ment, could not tell a lie. Bunny Bootles could, and did—often.

"So you are the—the—" stammered Mr. Lathley at last.

"Yes, sir," Bunny smirked. "I—I wasn't going to mention, sir—I—I hate to seem like bragging of a little thing like that, sir—a thing any fellow would have done—any fellow with my pluck, I mean. But—but that fearful blow on my chest, sir—the ruffian fought like a tiger, sir—and I'm not feeling very well to-day, sir, in consequence."

"My only hat!" murmured Compton; "the awful little liar—he's makin' out that he's the chap—"

"The giddy hero!" grinned Durance. "What a surprise! If Lathley swallows that, I reckon he will swallow anything."

Harry Nameless sat silent.

He was too astonished to speak, even if he had felt inclined to do so. The barefaced audacity of Bunny's impudence quite took his breath away.

"This is a most remarkable statement, Bootles," said Mr. Lathley, breaking another silence.

"Is it, sir?" said Bunny; "quite an ordinary thing, I think, sir—any fellow would have—"

"I shall require proof of your assertion, Bootles."

"But I'm not making an assertion, sir," said Bunny, calmly; "I'm only explaining why I feel bad this afternoon, sir. I hope you don't think, sir, that I'm telling you this with the idea of getting any credit for my brave action. I'm too modest, sir."

"Bless my soul! You are a—a very odd boy, Bootles. If you are

really the person concerned in the affair, great credit is due to you. But—but I am—somewhat surprised," Mr. Lathley glanced over the class, and saw a grin upon nearly every face. Evidently the Fourth Form was not taking Bunny the Hero very seriously, so far.

"Can anyone tell me where Bootles was yesterday afternoon, at the time of the outrage in Lyncroft Wood?"

"He was out of gates, sir," said Stubbs; "I saw him go."

"At what time, Stubbs?"

"While the senior football match was on, sir."

"That would be about the time. However—"

Mr. Lathley paused. "Bootles, you assure me that what you have stated is the truth?"

"Oh, sir! Yes, sir."

"You are aware, Bootles, that the matter can be put to an unmistakable test?"

Bunny quaked.

"Oh, sir! I—"

"The boy concerned was sent to the Wicke police-station, by Lord Rayfield, to give information regarding the assault," said Mr. Lathley; "as the boy has not come

truth in what you've been telling Lathley?"

"I disdain to answer that question," said Bunny.

"What?"

"It's a reflection on my personal honour," said Bunny, loftily.

"His personal honour!" said Catesby; "my only winter bonnet! His honour—Bunny's honour!"

"I never knew Bunny was such a dashed funny merchant," remarked Compton; "where do you keep your honour, Bunny?"

"Jolly dark, somewhere," said Jones minor; "I've never seen anything of it."

Bunny sniffed.

"Wait till Lathley comes back!" he said; "you'll know the truth then."

"The truth?" exclaimed Harry Nameless, speaking for the first time; with a stare of contempt at Bunny which had no perceptible effect upon that fat and unashamed youth.

"Yes—the truth—the frozen truth," said Bunny, calmly; "if you're hinting that I'm not telling the truth, Nameless—"

"You awful little liar!" exclaimed Harry, indignantly.



Harry Nameless rushed in. He threw his arms round the tramp's neck and dragged him by main force from his victim. (See Page 3.)

forward, Dr. Cheyne intends to apply at the police-station for his name. It will, of course, be known there."

Bunny smiled.

"That's all right, sir."

"You are prepared to stand that test, Bootles?"

"Of course, sir! A fellow who's telling the exact truth has nothing to fear, I suppose."

Mr. Lathley coughed.

"N-n-no, quite so, Bootles," Mr. Lathley paused. He was perplexed, but he was a little impressed now.

"If you are really suffering from the effects of a struggle with a brutal ruffian, Bootles, I shall excuse you from lessons this afternoon."

"Oh, thank you, sir."

Bunny made a prompt move.

"You need not leave the form-room yet, Bootles. I shall speak to Dr. Cheyne, and ask his leave to telephone immediately to Police-Constable Bandy at Wicke. The matter shall be set at rest immediately. Boys, you will continue your task, and kindly keep order here while I am absent for a few minutes."

Mr. Lathley left the form-room.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Found—The Missing Hero!

ALGERNON AUBREY ST. LEGER extracted his eyeglass from his waistcoat-pocket, polished it thoughtfully, and adjusted it in his noble eye. Then he fixed it upon Cuthbert Archibald Bootles.

"Bunny, you awful fabricator," he said; "is there a single word of

"Oh, draw it mild," said Compton, inclined at once to take Bunny's side, as soon as the nameless schoolboy came out on the other; "you can't know anything about it, Nameless. You weren't there."

"I—I!" began Harry, hotly.

He checked himself abruptly.

It was evidently too late for him to state the facts, even if he wanted to—and he did not want to.

To state them now was not to find believers, he realised—it was to enter into a ridiculous competition with Bunny Bootles.

He would be in the position of claiming credit for a brave deed—a position that no earthly consideration would have induced him to take up—and in competition with Bunny—disputing with Bunny which was the hero!

Harry sat down again and closed his lips.

Compton grinned, feeling that he had scored for once. With a jeering grin at Harry Nameless, the captain of the Fourth went on:

"After all, Lathley's gone to find out for certain. It's just barely possible that it was Bunny. It was somebody—and nobody else has laid claim to the merry distinction."

"If it is true that you helped my pater, Bunny, I am very grateful to you," said Algernon Aubrey, thoughtfully; "but—"

"Hullo, here comes Lathley!"

"Look out for the cane now, Bunny."

"You're going to be bowled out, you fat fraud."

The juniors scudded back to their seats as Mr. Lathley's footsteps were heard in the corridor.

They were all in their places when their form-master entered. All eyes turned upon him.

He came towards the class with a very grave brow. The juniors noticed that he did not pick up his cane.

"Bootles!"

"Yes, sir."

"I have telephoned to the police-station at Wicke, and Police-Constable Bandy has informed me that it was you—Master Bootles—who came to him yesterday afternoon with the news of the outrage in Lyncroft Wood."

Bunny smiled serenely.

There was a buzz in the class.

"Begad!" murmured Algernon Aubrey; "Bunny! Then it's true!"

"I can no longer doubt your statement, Bootles," continued Mr. Lathley, kindly. "I am sorry that I doubted it at all, but—"

"Oh, don't mench, sir," said Bunny, cheerfully; "it's all right. I knew you'd do me justice, sir, when you knew the—the truth."

"Certainly, Bootles. I understand that the boy—I mean, you—had a very severe struggle with the rascally tramp—"

"Frightful, sir."

"No doubt you are feeling the effects of it to-day—"

"Awful, sir," said Bunny, pathetically; "aching all over, sir. A fearful blow on my chest—"

"If there is a bad bruise, Bootles, you had better go to the house-dame immediately, and—"

"Oh, no, sir—it's not so bad as that," said Bunny, hastily; "just a-a-ache, sir. I'm not a fellow to complain. But—but I am a bit tired to-day, sir—I had a terrific fight—simply terrific—"

"I shall excuse you from lessons for the remainder of the day, Bootles. You may leave the form-room. When the Head is disengaged, he wishes to speak to you, and you may go to his study at half past five."

"Yes, sir," said Bunny; "I—I don't want a fuss made, sir. I—I'm sure any fellow would have done what I did."

Bunny Bootles, scarcely daring to believe in his good luck, crossed to the form-room door. The Fourth stared after him speechlessly. Bunny—Bunny was the hero—Bunny of the Fourth! If he was officially accepted as the hero, by the Head and the form-master, there could be no further doubt on the subject. But—but it was astounding.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Heroic.

"HERE he is!"

"Here's the merry hero!"

"What does it feel like to be a hero, Bunny?"

"Ha! ha! ha!"

"Did you bark your knuckles on his boko, Bunny?"

"Three cheers for the giddy hero!"

Quite a crowd surrounded Bunny Bootles in the passage, when the Fourth Form came trooping out at last, dismissed by Mr. Lathley. Harry Nameless hurried away at once—he was not likely to take a deep interest in the new hero of St. Kit's. He was, in fact, sorely exercised in his mind on the subject. It was too trying to hear Bunny Bootles rolling out astounding "whoppers," and to see the young rascal swanking on his borrowed glory. Yet Harry could not see what was to be done. He took it for granted that Bunny would be bowled over sooner or later, and he had to leave it at that, for the present.

Seated on a bench in the quad, with his Virgil on his knees, Harry put in the interval to tea-time in extra study, and soon forgot all about the hero of the Fourth. But he was the only member of the Fourth Form who wasn't interested.

Even the lofty Compton and Co. condescended to join the crowd round Bunny Bootles, and give him a little attention. Some of the fellows were rather admiring—all were surprised. Algernon Aubrey felt some compunction at being so surprised at Bunny turning out to be a hero. He felt that it implied want of gratitude to the fellow who had saved his father from injury. He dropped his hand on Bunny's fat shoulder in the most cordial manner. Somehow or other, he couldn't like Bunny very much, heroic as he was; but he was determined to be very kind, and to

make up for some past shortcomings. The fellow who had saved Lord Rayfield's "napper" from being broken by a tramp's bludgeon was a fellow whom Algernon Aubrey delighted to honour.

Bunny Bootles bore his blushing honours thick upon him—not modestly. If, as Algy had said, real heroes were modest, there must have been some doubt about the reality of Bunny's heroism.

For he wasn't modest. Far from that. He swanked, he almost strutted. Limestone so seldom came Bunny's way, that perhaps it was pardonable in Bunny to make the most of it, now that he had it in liberal measure.

"My dear old bean," said Algernon Aubrey, "I feel bound to apologise. I—I admit I doubted your word at first, old chap. I'm sorry."

Bunny waved a fat hand loftily.

"You know better now," he said.

"Yaas, I'm awfully obliged to you, Bunny. My pater said he would have had his head cracked if you hadn't chipped in—might have been awfully dangerous, at his age, you know. I'm no end obliged to you, Bunny. I'm sorry this didn't come out while my pater was here."

Bunny wasn't!

Lord Rayfield's presence would have been extremely disconcerting to the fat youth who claimed to be his heroic rescuer.

But Bunny was careful not to mention that.

"Well, I'm sorry, Algy," he said.

"But a fellow couldn't very well seem to be bragging of a little thing like that. You can write and tell your father, if you like. But I don't want his thanks—I don't, really."

"Blessed if I catch on to this," said Compton, in wonder; "Bunny's such an awful funk, as a rule."

"Look here, Compton—"

bawled Bunny, indignantly.

"Well, you are," said Compton, "and you're such a braggin' ass, too—if you did a thing like this, it's like you to shout it all over the place—right from the giddy house-tops, by Jove. But you've kept it dark."

"I'm not a fellow to brag—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"It came out by accident, didn't it?" demanded Bunny; "I just mentioned it to Mr. Lathley, by chance."

"Before all the form," said Durance. "Couldn't have timed it better for everybody to hear."

"Ha—ha—ha!"

"You rotter, Durance; I—I—"

"Dash it all, that's rotten," said Algernon Aubrey. "It isn't as if there's any doubt on the subject, Durance. It's proved. Mr. Bundy at the police-station knows whether it was Bunny came to him—"

"That's what beats me," said Compton. "It must be true—and it's too steep to swallow at the same time. Jolly odd."

Algernon Aubrey slipped his elegant arm through the fat arm of Cuthbert Archibald Bootles.

"Come up to the study, dear boy," he said, "I'm sure you're ready for tea."

"You bet!" said Bunny. "Come on, old chap."

That afternoon the brew in No. 5 Study was a right royal one. Algernon Aubrey could not help feeling puzzled, but the main fact was assured that Bunny had saved Lord Rayfield from injury—at least, Algy thought it was. And Algy was quite pleased to expend a whole pound note on a royal feed as a testimony of his gratitude. And Bunny, as he did justice—full justice—to the brew, reflected upon the advantages of being a hero, and perhaps wondered a little, incidentally, who on earth had really rescued Algy's pater.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Too Much Bunny!

"ARMA virumque cano—"

"Eh?"

"Trojae qui primus ab oris—"

"What?"

"Italiam, fato profugus—"

"What the dickens are you driving at, St. Leger?"

"Refreshin' your memory, dear boy," answered Algernon Aubrey, dropping into a seat on the desk.

"Didn't you tell me you were muggin' up merry old Virgil for the Fortescue prize?"

Harry Nameless laughed.

"Yes; but I'm a little beyond arma virumque," he said. "St.

Leger, if you don't mind, I—I'd rather you didn't interrupt."

"I'm botherin' you?"

"Yes."

"Too bad. But what's to be done?" asked Algy. "Bunny's botherin' me, and I've fled for my life. If I venture out of the form-room he will have me again. I'm not exactly dodgin' Bunny, of course; only keepin' out of his way. Can I help you with your Latin?"

"I'm afraid not."

"Come up to the study—"

"I wish you'd look at things as they are, St. Leger. The Head has told me to keep clear of you, practically, owing to your relations' view of the matter. You place me in a rotten awkward position by coming and speaking to me."

"I suppose a chap is entitled to speak to his pal."

"But we're not pals."

"Yaas we are, dear boy," assured Algernon Aubrey, calmly.

"But your father—your uncle—"

and aunts—

"My pater misunderstands—my uncle misapprehends—my aunts don't know anythin'. Wash them out," said Algy, cheerfully.

"But I can't wash them out," said Harry, half laughing and half vexed. "It's awfully decent of you to want to stick to me, St. Leger, and I'd like it no end if it was possible, but it isn't. Do be a good fellow and cut it off."

Algy shook his head.

It was four or five days since Lord Rayfield's visit to St. Kit's, and during that time Algernon Aubrey had had several letters from his people.

He had sighed over them lugubriously.

He had other worries, too. There was Bunny—Bunny the Hero.

At the first flush Algy had been quite grateful to Bunny the Hero for the supposed assistance rendered to his pater. He had stood Bunny nobly; he had lent him ten-bob note after ten-bob note; he had even walked in the quad with Bunny's fat arm through his, an experience that made him shudder, but which he felt it his duty to go through with patience.

Perhaps it was not surprising that Algy's gratitude was wearing a little thin. Bunny Bootles would certainly have worn out anybody's gratitude in the long run.

Algy had fallen into the way of dodging along passages and disappearing round corners when he caught sight of Bunny.

He felt that he couldn't be brusque to the fellow who had heroically helped his noble pater in the hour of peril. But every nerve in his aristocratic body rebelled against the familiarity of Cuthbert Archibald.

He missed his chum sorely.

Harry Nameless was the only fellow at St. Kit's whom Algy felt seriously disposed to pal with, and it seemed quite "rotten" that he should be parted from his chum just when he needed him. Harry, he felt, could have helped him to endure Bunny.

At this very moment he knew Bunny Bootles was looking for him. He felt rather a beast for dodging the heroic rescuer in this way. But he couldn't help it. Hero or not, he couldn't stand too much Bunny.

Harry Nameless dropped his eyes on his work again. He had been getting some extra tuition—extra toot as the juniors called it—from Mr. Lathley, and he was beginning to have high hopes of the Latin prize. Compton and Co. were already referring to him sneeringly as "the prize-hunter."

Harry did not heed the sneers; the money prize was wanted to help old Jack Straw in his cottage at South Cove, and for that object Harry could have tolerated a good deal of sneering.

He went on with his work, while Algernon Aubrey sat on the desk and polished his eyeglass and watched him.

Two or three times Algy glanced apprehensively at the door. He feared to see a fat face looking into the form-room.

"Gettin' on all right, old bean?" he asked at last.

"Eh? Oh, yes."

"You want me to hook it?" said Algy, dismally.

"You—you see, my dear old chap—"

"I wish you'd seen my people last week, Nameless," said Algernon Aubrey, wistfully. "I've got a feeling that that would have made it all right. You don't really know

what my pater's like, as you've never seen him."

Harry smiled a little over P. Virgilius Maro.

His meeting with Lord Rayfield in Lyncroft Wood was still a secret, and not likely to be revealed now. Bunny's claim to be the missing hero, covered up the nameless schoolboy's tracks completely.

"He's quite a good old scout," pursued Algy. "He was offended at your goin' out to avoid meetin' him, and that's really done the mischief. Now, if he comes down to St. Kit's again—"

Harry made a restless movement.

"I hope he won't," he said.

"He's bound to come sooner or later," said Algy. "In fact, if he can find time he may come down in the car and see Bootles."

"Bootles?"

"Yaas, I've told him about Bunny, of course."

"About Bunny?" repeated Harry Nameless.

"About Bunny bein' the giddy rescuer, you know. The pater's awfully keen to know who saved his napper from bein' cracked by that tramp. He was no end pleased when I wrote and gave him the chap's name."

Harry bit his lip hard.

"You told him Bunny—"

"Yaas."

"But it's not true, St. Leger."

Bunny's lying—

"Begad!"

"It's a rotten spoof from beginning to end," exclaimed Harry, his face flushing with anger. "Surely you ought to be able to see that."

"My dear old bean, you're mistaken. You see, it's proved."

"A lie can't be proved," growled the Foundation junior.

"But it isn't a lie this time. I admit that it's rather remarkable for Bunny to be tellin' the truth. And—and he does pile on the agony about the terrific combat."

Algy grinned. "But there's no doubt he's the chap; the Head himself has commended him—"

"He's taken the Head in."

"And Mr. Lathley—"

"He's taken Mr. Lathley in."

"But all the fellows—"

"He's taken all the fellows in," exclaimed Harry, impatiently. "I tell you, Bunny would have scooted like a bunny rabbit if he'd been there at all."

"Yaas, so I should have thought—only—you see, it's proved. I'm rather surprised to see you so down on Bunny, old scout, when he's played up decently for once in his life."

"He hasn't."

"Bow-wow," said Algernon Aubrey, good humouredly. "I suppose you find Bunny rather disagreeable, but honour where honour is due, you know. Give a chap credit when he earns it."

"When," grunted the nameless junior.

"That's one reason," continued Algernon Aubrey, thoughtfully, "why I want you back in the study, Nameless. I'm bound to stand Bunny now. As a pal, I think you ought to help me stand him. What?"

"Why should you stand him at all?"

"Because he rescued my pater."

"Spoof, I tell you."

"Bow-wow! You're prejudiced, old chap. It's awfully on my conscience that I kicked him that very afternoon," said Algernon Aubrey, remorsefully. "I did, you know—I was feelin' bothered about my people comin', and he came into the study an' bored me, an' I kicked him out."

"Serve him right."

"And he went straight off and chipped in to help my pater—"

"Oh, rot!"

"Do you know, Nameless, that you're the only fellow in the school that doesn't believe Bunny did that?"

"Very likely."

"Of course, he exaggerates a lot, but he did it; it's taken as proved. I really think, Nameless, that a decent chap like you might do a chap justice. I—I'm rather surprised—" Algy paused. "You've talked like this before, old bean, and some fellows put it that you're jealous of Bunny gettin' so much kudos. I'm mentionin' that just to put you on your guard. It's so unlike you to run any fellow down. And Bunny—"

"Oh, hang Bunny," said Harry Nameless.

"Hallo, old tops."

It was Bunny's fat voice in the

doorway, and Algernon Aubrey groaned. The fat junior looked in with an agreeable grin.

"I've been looking for you, Algy."

"H-a-have you?" stammered Algy, guiltily.

"Yes; everywhere. Coming out, old fellow?"

Algernon Aubrey detached himself from the desk.

"Yaas, if you like."

"Mrs. Coote has some new tarts in," said Bunny, confidentially. "I'm going to stand you some, Algy; you've stood me a good bit lately. One good turn deserves another. Come on, old top. You won't mind lendin' me a few bob; my uncle's promised to send me a pound note, and when it comes—"

Bunny's voice died away down the passage as he led Algernon Aubrey St. Leger away to his fate.

Harry Nameless sat down with a frown on his face, and it was some minutes before he resumed his work.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunny's Little Bill.

"TROUSERS, two guineas!" Harry Nameless glanced at Bunny.

The fat junior was seated at the table in No. 5 Study in the Fourth. He had a pen in his hand, ink on his fingers, and a dab of ink on his fat little nose. There was a wrinkle of thought in his fat brow as he scrawled on the sheet of the imput paper before him.

Bunny was deep in calculations.

Harry Nameless had come up to the study to look for a book. The nameless schoolboy was still doing his work in the form-room, and carefully avoiding No. 5 Study. But one of his books had been overlooked in the study bookcase, and having seen St. Leger on the football ground Harry slipped up to the study to fetch it, having need of it just then. He found Bunny in the study.

Bunny looked up—and frowned.

"What do you want?" he inquired. "This ain't your study now, Nameless. The Head said—"

"I've come for my Horace," said Harry, quietly. "It's here."

Bunny gave a fat sneer.

"You do Horace, do you, you blessed swot?" he asked. "Make out that you can read Horace."

Harry Nameless did not trouble to answer that question. He looked through the bookcase for the volume he wanted.

Bunny gave a sniff, and his attention returned to his calculations.

"Trousers, two guineas—that's moderate. Waistcoat—say thirty bob. Thirty bob ain't too much."

Harry found his Horace, and turned round to Bunny again.

"I've been wanting to speak to you, Bootles," he said. "Now I'm here, I'll take the opportunity—"

"The want's entirely on your side," snapped Bunny. "I don't usually talk with nameless bouncers. Buzz off."

"You've been getting money out of St. Leger—"

"St. Leger may have lent me a little money. No biznai of yours that I know of."

"You've made him believe that you helped his father in the tussle with the tramp in Lyncroft Wood—"

"I've told him the facts, if that's what you mean."

"The facts!" exclaimed Harry. "Yes."

"You lying young rascal—"

"That's enough." Bunny lifted a fat forefinger, considerably inky, and pointed to the door. "Get out."

"I've something to say first," said Harry Nameless, quietly.

"You can tell silly lies and swank as much as you like, Bootles."

"There's the door."

"I suppose that's not my business, but when it comes to getting money out of St. Leger it's time to stop."

"Can't you mind your own biznai?" demanded Bunny.

"This is my business, as I'm the only fellow in the school who knows that you are lying, and that you were miles away when the tramp attacked Algy's father."

Bunny stared.

"What do you know about it?" he asked.

"You know that it was I," ex-

claimed Harry, angrily. "I told you at the time, when I asked you to go to the police-station that afternoon."

Bunny winked.

"Draw it mild," he said. "I admit you pulled my leg at first, but I soon saw that you were gas-sing. That chicken won't fight you know. If you're going to claim to be the chap—"

"I'm going to say nothing about it. But you're not going to draw money out of St. Leger—"

"I'm going to do exactly as I choose," said Bunny Bootles, calmly. "As for borrowing money of St. Leger, I should disdain to do anything of the kind after his ingratitude."

"Oh!" said Harry. "If you've stopped that—"

"I may have borrowed a few quids, which I shall settle up when I'm in funds," said Bunny, with dignity. "A low-bred fellow like you wouldn't understand that a gentleman's bound to settle up his little personal debts, and that I never fail to do so."

"Why, you—you—"

"I can excuse you, Nameless, because you've been brought up among some sort of dashed hooligans, and don't know any better. But you ought to be careful how you express your low opinions in the presence of a gentleman."

Harry looked at him fixedly.

"You're not worth lickin'," he said, after a pause. "But you've got to stop sticking St. Leger for money, Bootles. If you don't stop, I shall think out some way of stopping you. That's all."

With that the nameless school-boy quitted the study.

Bunny sniffed.

He dismissed Harry and his warning from his fat mind, and bestowed his attention on his calculations again. Those mysterious calculations kept Bunny Bootles busy for quite a long time, and it was past tea-time when he had finished. Algy had not returned to the study.

Without Algy tea in the study was not a possibility and Bunny hurried down to Hall in a very discontented frame of mind.

He found Algernon Aubrey at the Fourth-form table there.

It was seldom that Algy honoured the school table with his presence at tea, but he was dropping into the habit of late. There was too much Bunny in No. 5 Study, and since the rescue Algy did not feel that he could treat Bunny as of old. He could not kick his noble pater's rescuer, and without a due allowance of kicks Bunny was intolerable. So Algy was getting into the way of avoiding his own study, excepting for a prep.

Bunny squeezed into a seat at the Honourable Algernon's side, and bestowed a lofty glance upon him.

"I want to speak to you after tea," he said.

Algy did not reply.

But he had taken the tip, and after tea he vanished. Bunny looked for him in vain.

At the usual hour for prep. Bunny sought him in No. 5 Study, confident of running him to earth then.

But No. 5 was empty.

"Where the thump is the silly ass?" Bunny exclaimed, wrathfully. "I believe he's dodging me on purpose."

Bunny's belief was well-founded.

Bunny had his own prep, to do, and the dread of Mr. Lathley in the morning made him do it. He finished early, and looked along the passage for Algy. He found that noble youth in No. 6 doing his prep. in company with Stubbs and Elliott.

"Oh, here you are!" said Bunny, angrily; "you've been dodging me—"

"Yaas."

"Well, I want—"

Elliott interposed at this point.

He picked up a fives bat and started towards Bunny. That fat youth dodged into the passage just in time. The door slammed on him.

Prep. in No. 6 finished uninterrupted. Bunny did not like fives bats at close quarters.

But he hung about the passage in a state of growing wrath and indignation till No. 8 disgorged its occupants. Then he rolled after Algy.

"Look here, St. Leger—"

he began.

"Oh, blow away, Bunny!" said Algernon Aubrey, plaintively, "blow away and give a fellow a rest."

"Look here —!" roared Bunny.

Algernon Aubrey went downstairs. He wore a slightly worried look as he walked into the common-room. Too much Bunny was getting on his nerves; and he was debating in his mind whether it would be consistent with proper gratitude towards an heroic rescuer to give Bunny a gentle kicking.

Bunny followed him in. There were a good many of the Fourth and the Shell in the common-room after prep. Algernon Aubrey crossed the room to an armchair, and Bunny tracked him down and stood before him.

"Now, St. Leger—" "Oh, begad! Won't you blow away, Bunny?"

"I'm not going to ask you to lend me money, St. Leger," said Cuthbert Archibald, with a great deal of dignity, "I merely want a few words. I want you to settle up the money you owe me."

"Eh?" "You've lent me a little money lately," said Bunny, "I'm prepared to deduct that from the account."

"The—the account?"

"Yes. That will leave a balance due to me, which I will thank you to settle up at your earliest convenience," said Bunny, still in the same lofty and dignified manner.

Algernon Aubrey adjusted his eyeglass with care and stared at Bunny.

"I owe you money?" he ejaculated. "Are you dreamin', dear boy?"

"Look here—"

"Go an' take a nap, old bean, and dream again!" suggested Algy.

"I've got the account here." "My hat! He's wanderin' in his mind, I suppose," said Algernon Aubrey, in great perplexity. "Any of you fellows know what's the matter with him?"

Some of the juniors had gathered round, grinning. They were quite interested in this curious conversation.

"Of course, I'll send the bill to your pater, if you prefer it, St. Leger," said Bunny.

"But what—what—?"

"I think you ought to pay it. Otherwise, I shall certainly send it to your father. I can't be put to heavy loss on account of your family."

"Babblin'!" said Algy, in wonder, "burblin' and babblin'. Quite potty! Poor old Bunny! I wonder how long this has been comin' on?"

"Here's the bill!" roared Bunny.

"Oh, begad!"

A sheet of impot paper covered with scrawling blots and smudges dropped on the knees of Algy's elegant trousers, and he turned his eyeglass upon it in wonder. Then he jumped, for the inky document ran as follows:

ACCOUNT IN COMPENSATION OF DAMMIDGES RECEIVED IN FITTING WITH A TRAMP.

Trousers badly tawn	2 2 0
Waistcoat burst	1 10 0
Cap tawn	0 10 6
Koller tawn	0 2 6
Valveable gold sleeve-links lost	10 10 0
Diamond stud lost	10 10 0
TOTAL	£25 5 0

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Unpaid!

"Oh, begad!" Algernon Aubrey St. Leger's voice was quite faint as he uttered that amazed ejaculation.

He blinked at Bunny's little bill.

Bunny Bootles folded his arms across his podgy chest and stood looking at the dandy of the Fourth in a very lofty and dignified attitude, an attitude reminiscent of that of Ajax in his celebrated lightning-defying act.

The juniors crowded round Algy's armchair to stare at the little bill, and there was a howl of merriment in the common-room.

"Ha-ha-ha!"

"Twenty-five quids!" roared Stubbs. "Oh, my hat!"

"Why, the fat duffer isn't

worth that melted down into tallow, with all his clobber thrown in," said Catesby.

"Ha-ha-ha!"

"Valuable gold sleeve links!" sobbed Howard; "I've seen those sleeve-links. Penny a pair at a fair."

"Look here, Howard—" "Diamond stud, ten guineas!"

shrieked Durand; "Bunny—with a ten-guinea diamond stud!" "Ha! ha! ha!"

"Look here, this ain't any business of you fellows!" roared Bunny; "I want this bill paid, St. Leger."

"You—you want it paid!" stammered Algy; "Oh, begad! Oh, my only aunt Belinda! You—you want it paid!"

"If you're short of cash, I'm willing to give you time—"

"Give him time!" said Compton, with a chuckle; "I fancy a judge will be giving you time, Bunny, if you keep on like this."

"I'm asking for my due, St. Leger," said Bunny, loftily; "for rescuing your father from deadly peril. I make no charge—"

"Ha! ha! ha!"

"I—I—I suppose this is—is—is some deep joke, Bunny," said Algernon Aubrey, at last.

"Nothing of the kind. I'm waiting to be paid."

"But you never had a diamond stud, dear boy—"

"Look here, St. Leger—" "You never had any gold sleeve-links—"

"If you doubt my word, St. Leger—" "Your word! Oh, begad! I suppose I should have seen something of them, in the same study—"

"You did see them, St. Leger, often enough."

"If you mean that tin stuff—"

"I mean those valuable gold sleeve-links," said Bunny, firmly. "You're not going to wriggle out of it like that, St. Leger, now that they're lost beyond recovery. I rushed to the rescue that time, without thinking of the—the danger—or—or of losing my valuable gold sleeve-links, and—and diamond stud. They went! Drop in the grass, you know, while I was fighting like a tiger—"

"Ha! ha! ha!"

"Why, I could stick you for compensation for the fearful injuries I received," exclaimed Bunny, indignantly; "this is moderate—jolly moderate. I suppose Lord Rayfield doesn't want a chap to be put to heavy loss for rescuing him, does he? I hope your pater's a gentleman, Algy?"

"I—I hope so," gasped Algy.

"He can scarcely do less than pay this account. I can't afford to lose valuable gold sleeve-links and diamond studs for nothing."

"But you never had any to lose!" shrieked Algy.

"If you're going to prevaricate, St. Leger—" "Wha-a-at?"

"Prevaricate. If you're going to prevaricate, I disdain to discuss the matter with you. Are you going to pay this account, or are you not going to pay this account?" asked Bunny Bootles, categorically.

Algy blinked at him. The fat junior was in deadly earnest—that was evident.

The juniors were yelling with laughter. Bunny's little bill had taken Algy by surprise, and it had taken the common-room by storm. They yelled—and howled—and almost wept. It was Bunny's greatest success.

Bunny looked serious enough. He did not seem to see anything to laugh at.

"I'm waiting, St. Leger!" he said, with lofty calmness.

"But—but—but—" stammered Algy.

"Are you going to pay up?"

"Begad! No jolly fear!" said Algernon Aubrey, emphatically.

"If you're thinking of swindling me, St. Leger—" "What?" shrieked Algy.

"Swindling me—I can tell you—"

"Why, you—you—you fat, spoofing, swindlin' rotter!" spluttered Algy; "I'll—I'll—I'll jolly well kick you!"

"Then I shall send the account in to the proper quarter!"

"What?"

"I shall send it through the post to Lord Rayfield."

"You—you will send that awful rot to my father?"

"Look here—yarooh—" "Algernon Aubrey leaped up. His

noble temper failed him—which was not really surprising. He grasped Bunny with one hand, and Bunny's little bill with the other, and jammed the little bill down the back of Bunny's fat neck. Then he spun the roaring Bunny round, and planted an elegant but forcible boot behind the hapless Cuthbert Archibald.

There was what a novelist would call a sickening thud, and Bunny Bootles spun away, amid a roar of laughter.

"There!" gasped Algy; "I knew it would come to that! I knew that he would make me kick him, in the long run! I felt it."

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

His Lordship is Shocked.

"S. T. LEGER!"

"Yaas."

"You're wanted—Head's study."

"Oh, begad!"

Olipphant of the Sixth walked on, regardless of Algernon Aubrey's evident desire to seek further information. Algy would have been glad to know what the Head

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AND
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wanted him for. But the Captain of St. Kit's walked on his way, lofty and regardless.

"Now, I wonder what's the row?" said Algernon Aubrey, plaintively; "I haven't been kickin' over the traces, that I know of. What the thump does the Head want?"

Algernon Aubrey betook himself reluctantly to the Head's study. That apartment was seldom approached with willing steps by members of the Lower School. Unless it was a "row," Algy could not guess what he was wanted for. And his noble conscience was quite clear just at present. Somehow or other, he had dropped going out of bounds with Compton and Co., ever since Harry Nameless had come to St. Kit's. He was glad of it now. It would have been distinctly awkward to be called up before the Head on account of a surreptitious visit to the Lizard "pub."

He tapped at the Head's door, and entered as the Doctor's deep voice bade him "Come in."

To his great relief, Dr. Cheyne was looking as benevolent as usual, and there was no sign of a cane.

"St. Leger—" "Yaas, sir."

"Your father has telephoned—"

"Oh!" ejaculated Algy.

"He desires to speak to you," said the Head; "you may take the receiver, St. Leger."

"Thank you very much, sir."

Algy noticed now that the receiver was off the telephone. He took it up; and Dr. Cheyne walked to the most distant window, and stood looking sedately out into the quadrangle.

Algy was still feeling uneasy. He was no longer uneasy with regard to the Head, certainly; he had transferred the uneasiness to the account of his father. It was most unusual for Lord Rayfield to telephone to his son at the school.

Algy wondered whether there was illness at home, or whether it was a fresh "law" on the subject of Harry Nameless. He feared that it was the latter; and his voice was quite dispirited as he spoke into the transmitter.

"That you, dad?"

"Yes," came Lord Rayfield's voice over the wires. "Is that you, Algy?"

"Yaas, I'm here, dad. Anybody crocked?"

"No, no."

"I'm glad. What's the matter?"

"I have received a letter, Algernon—a letter from the school—signed by a—a person—named Bootles."

"Oh!" said Algy.

He understood now. Then Bunny Bootles had sent his amazing account through the post in spite of the kicking he had received. It was upon the subject of Cuthbert Archibald's little bill that his lordship desired to speak.

Algy was greatly relieved. For once, he was not to hear about the nameless schoolboy from his respected parent.

"It is a most extraordinary letter," went on his lordship. "The—the boy claims a large sum of money—a very large sum—"

"Yaas, dad."

"According to his letter to me, Algernon, this—this person—this Bootles—is the youth who assisted me when I was attacked by a ruffian in the wood—"

"Yaas."

"You are doubtless aware, then, whether he—ahem—whether he

actually possessed the very expensive jewellery enumerated in his letter to me?"

Algy grinned.

"He had some sleeve-links, dad, and a stud—I don't know whether he really lost them in scrappin' with the johnny in the wood."

"Is his word not reliable, then?"

"Ahem!"

"Have you known him to tell untruths, Algernon?"

"Oh, begad! Yaas—a few million," gasped Algy.

"Oh! Have you any idea, Algernon, of the actual value of the articles of jewellery he declares that he has lost?"

"About a shillin', dad."

"Eh?"

"Perhaps eighteenpence," said Algernon; "that's on the safe side."

"It appears then that this—this person—this Bootles—is attempting to impose on me?"

"Ahem!"

"What did you say, Algernon?"

"Bunny's a born idiot, sir."

"Bunny! What do you mean? What bunny? I am not talking to you about rabbits, Algernon."

"Oh, dear! We call him Bunny, sir—that's Bootles. He's a born idiot, sir—no more brains than a Cabinet Minister. He simply doesn't know right from wrong, you know."

"Nonsense!"

"Oh!"

"The boy must be dishonest."

"You—you see, sir—" stammered Algernon Aubrey, feebly. He really did not know how to make his noble pater understand quite what a peculiar youth Bunny Bootles was.

"Yet he intervened in the most gallant manner to save me from injury," said his lordship. "It is astounding. Are you absolutely certain, Algernon, that this—this Bootles, is really the person who helped me on that occasion?"

"I—I suppose so, sir. Nobody else has turned up—"

"I am very much perplexed. I am both shocked and astonished," said Lord Rayfield.

Algy was silent. If his noble parent was in that mixed and painful state, Algy did not see how any remarks of his would help.

"This matter must be probed to the bottom," said Lord Rayfield;

"I shall come down to the school to-morrow, Algernon. It is very awkward and inconvenient, but I must see this boy. While I am at St. Kit's, I will take the opportunity of seeing Nameless—"

"Oh, crikey!"

"What did you say, Algernon?"

"N-n-nothin', sir."

"I thought you uttered a foolish and slangy ejaculation."

"Oh!"

"Kindly ask Dr. Cheyne to speak to me for a moment."

"Yaas, sir."

Algernon Aubrey willingly relinquished the receiver to Dr. Cheyne. He quitted the study, leaving the Head to enjoy Lord Rayfield's further conversation. The Head heard, with mingled feelings, that he was to be honoured with another visit from Lord Rayfield on the following day. His lordship was coming down in his car; and he particularly desired that two junior boys, named Bootles and Nameless, might be on the spot when he came. His lordship's time, it appeared, was valuable.

To all of which the Head politely assented; and when he hung up the receiver, he sighed.

Even a public-school headmaster's life was not all a bed of roses. There were thorns; though it would have surprised Lord Rayfield very much to learn that he was one of the thorns.

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

Gating for Two.

THE next day was a half-holiday at St. Kit's, and there was junior football in the afternoon. Compton's team was playing the Shell, and Algy, who sometimes honoured the Fourth by playing for them, asked Compton to scratch his name after dinner that day. So far, Algy had said nothing to anyone of his father's intended visit. He felt instinctively that it would have a dismaying effect on Bunny Bootles; and the good-natured Algy did not want to dismay Bunny. He considered it probable, too, that Harry Nameless would take his half-holiday out of gates if he knew; and Algy did not want that to happen a second time. So—with his usual policy of following the line of least resistance—Algy said nothing.

"Scratch you!" said Compton, when Algy proffered his request; "why ain't you playin'?"

"My pater's comin'," confessed Algy; "I shall have to be on hand to do the dutiful stunt."

"My only aunt! Is your pater goin' to live at St. Kit's?" said Compton, with a grunt; "is he bringin' the giddy old gals this time?"

Algernon Aubrey frowned.

"If you want me to pull your nose, Compton, you've only got to repeat that remark!" he said.

"Bow-wow!" answered Compton, and he walked away.

Algy felt a tug at his sleeve. He turned to see a fat, scared face at his elbow—the startled countenance of Cuthbert Archibald Bootles.

"Algy! I—I say—did you say your pater was coming?" stammered Bunny.

"Yaas."

"Why didn't you tell me before, you beast?"

"Eh?"

"I suppose that's why he hasn't sent the cheque?" said Bunny; "he hasn't, you know."

"I know!" grinned Algy.

"I've been expecting it every post—"

"Blessed are those who expect!" said Algy, genially. "Perhaps he'll bring it with him, Bunny. Perhaps! If you make good your claim you'll get the tin. You've only got to make it good."

"But, but—" stammered Bunny, in great dismay.

"He wants to see you, you see."

"I—I can't see him—"

"Why not?" demanded Algy.

"I—I've got a special appointment out of gates," stammered Bunny; "I—I'm sorry I can't stay in to see your father, St. Leger. Tell him I'm sorry, and—and ask him to leave the money with you?"

"No jolly fear."

"Look here, you rotter—"

"Cut it out, here's Lathley!"

said Jones minor. Mr. Lathley came out of his study. He glanced over the juniors and signed to Bunny Bootles.

"Bootles!"

"Yes, sir!" faltered Bunny.

"Lord Rayfield will be here about three o'clock, and he specially desires to speak to you."

"I—I'm going out, sir—"

Mr. Lathley raised his eyebrows.

"You are not to go out, Bootles."

"I—I—"

"You are to be in the visitors' room at three o'clock precisely," said Mr. Lathley, curtly. "You need say no more, Bootles. If you should go out of the gates the consequences will be very serious to you."

"I—I—I—"

"I cannot understand you, Bootles. Probably his lordship desires to thank you in person, for the service you rendered him."

"Ow!" gasped Bunny.

"In any case, you are to be here to see him. Nameless is also required. I do not see him here. Does anyone know where Nameless is?"

"In the form-room, sir," said Stubbs.

"Thank you, Stubbs."

Mr. Lathley rustled away to the form-room.

He found Harry Nameless there, deep in Latin. The Foundation junior rose respectfully to his feet as his form-master entered. Mr. Lathley blinked at him over his glasses.

"Ah! At work, I see, my boy," he said, kindly.

"I'm putting in a little extra, sir," said Harry, colouring.

"You must not over-do it, Nameless. However, that is not the subject upon which I came here to speak to you. I do not wish you to go out of gates this afternoon."

"Very good, sir."

"You did not intend to go out of gates, Nameless?"

"Oh! no, sir."

"Very well. Lord Rayfield is coming—"

"Oh!" ejaculated Harry.

Mr. Lathley smiled slightly at his dismayed look.

"I am aware, Nameless, that you avoided Lord Rayfield on the occasion of his last visit. That must not occur again."

"But—but, sir—," stammered Harry.

"You have nothing to fear from an interview, Nameless."

"I know, sir. But—"

"A governor of the school has a right to see any boy he chooses to see; you must be aware of that."

"Oh! yes, sir; but—"

"You will observe my wishes, Nameless—the Head's wishes. Lord Rayfield is not coming specially to see you, but another boy—Bootles. But he desires to see you while he is here. You will remain here till his lordship comes."

"Very good."

Mr. Lathley quitted the form-room, very much perplexed, and a little annoyed. Both Nameless and Bootles had puzzled him.

Harry sat down at his desk again with a clouded brow.

There was no help for it; the long-avoided interview had to come at last; he was helpless. If he had refused to give his word to the form-master, the Head would certainly have ordered him to be detained to meet the visitor—even to the extent of having him locked in the punishment-room if necessary. There was no help for it; and Harry Nameless, with deep dismay and uneasiness, had to resign himself to the inevitable.

But deep as his dismay was, it was nothing to that of Bunny Bootles, the hero of St. Kit's. Compared with Bunny's dismay, it was as moonlight unto sunlight, as water unto wine!

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER.

The Woes of Bunny Bootles!

BUNNY BOOTLES was quaking.

He quaked with good reason.

Every nerve in his fat body shrank from that interview with his lordship.

Lord Rayfield was coming to see his heroic rescuer who had made on him such a very extraordinary claim for compensation.

And it was absolutely certain that, at the first glance, he would know that Bunny wasn't the heroic rescuer.

Bunny couldn't have any doubt on that point.

Who on earth had rescued Lord Rayfield Bunny didn't know and didn't care. He scouted Harry Nameless's statements on the sub-

ject. But whoever had or hadn't done it, Bunny hadn't!

That, at least, was certain.

The prospect of meeting his lordship, face to face, made the fat junior tremble in every podgy limb.

In spite of Mr. Lathley's stern warning, Bunny felt that there was only one thing to be done. He had to escape that interview.

Better a licking from the Head, afterwards, than exposure and punishment for having made a false claim. It was, in fact, a licking in any case, as Bunny dimly saw.

If he was bowled out, it certainly was a licking; if he dodged the interview, it was a licking; wherever the hapless Bunny turned his eyes, he saw only lickings on the horizon.

He could have kicked himself for having sent that claim for damages to Lord Rayfield. But, as he dimly asked himself, who could have expected this? Fancy the old bounder coming down specially to St. Kit's about a miserable twenty-five quid! In his distress of mind, Bunny actually referred to a peer of the realm as "an old bounder."

Escape was evidently the only way, and Bunny decided upon escape. But the fates were against him.

For a dozen fellows, at least, had discerned the very obvious fact that Bunny Bootles earnestly desired to avoid the personal thanks of the peer he had so heroically rescued.

Doubts as to Bunny's heroism had always lingered. The thrilling details he frequently gave of the Homeric combat in the wood added very considerably to the doubts.

Now his anxiety not to see Lord Rayfield—his feverish desire to keep out of that nobleman's sight—put the lid on, as Catesby expressed it.

So when Bunny Bootles drifted down towards the gates, to his horror he discovered that seven or eight juniors drifted after him. And they rained questions on him:

"Where are you going, Bunny?"

"Going to meet the car?"

"Aren't you going to ask his nibs for the quids?"

"Are you afraid he won't know his giddy rescuer again?"

"Ha—ha—ha!"

The hapless Bunny realised that there was no escape. He was still vainly imploring his heartless form-fellows when the buzz of a big motor-car was heard at the gates. There was a yell from Stubbs.

"Here's his nibs!"

Lord Rayfield's big car rolled in and rolled on to the house. Bunny Bootles gave a squeak of terror.

"Help me out, you beasts—"

"Ha—ha—ha!"

"Come on, Bunny!"

"Bring him along."

"Leggo!" shrieked Bunny.

But the hilarious juniors did not let go. They collared Bunny on all sides and marched him off towards the schoolhouse. In the midst of a chortling crowd Bunny Bootles rolled to his interview with Algy's pater—and to his doom! Quite a little army of juniors escorted Bunny Bootles to the room where his lordship waited. Algernon Aubrey St. Leger met them outside the visitors' room, and turned his eyes-glass upon the horrified Bunny in amused interest.

"What's the matter with Bunny?" he asked.

"He doesn't want to come—"

"He's too modest—"

"He doesn't even want his little bill settled now—"

"Ha—ha—ha!"

"Poor old Bunny!"

Bunny Bootles cast a desperate glance round. Even at that late moment he would have bolted, if it had been possible. He would have given the amount of his little bill—if he had possessed it—to be safe in his study, or locked up in the furthestmost box-room.

But there was no escape. The hilarious Fourth-formers saw to that. And Mr. Lathley was visible in the distance, and through the open doorway of the visitors' room was visible a slim, aristocratic-looking gentleman, with a curved nose and an eyeglass. Never had Bunny hated so much the company of a peer of the realm.

"Come on, Bunny, old bean," said Algy, encouragingly.

"Oh, lor!"

Bunny was marched in.

Algernon Aubrey walked into the room with him, the rest of the juniors remained at the doorway. They were deeply interested in what was to happen.

Lord Rayfield glanced at his son and at Bunny. He seemed perplexed.

"Well, Algernon?"

"Here he is, father."

"Eh! Who is that?"

"Bootles, father."

"What?"

"Bootles—Bunny, you know," said Algy, perplexed in his turn.

"You wanted to see Bootles, father."

"I wanted to see the boy who helped me in Lyncroft Wood," snapped his lordship.

"This is the chap."

"What?"

"It's Bootles, anyhow."

"Oh, dear!" moaned Bunny.

Lord Rayfield jammed his glass a little more tightly into his eye and surveyed Cuthbert Archibald Bootles with a glance that made C. A. Bootles quake.

"Are there two boys at St. Kit's named Bootles, Algernon?"

"Nunno. One's enough, dad."

"I received a letter from you stating that it was Bootles who fought with the tramp in the wood—"

"Yaas."

"I received a letter signed with the name of Bootles demanding compensation for losses sustained in that affair—"

"Yaas."

"And this is Bootles?"

"Yaas."

"Then you have been deceived!" thundered his lordship. "This is not the boy who helped me in the wood."

"Oh!"

"He bears no resemblance whatever to the boy."

"Oh, gad!"

"Boy!" Lord Rayfield's eyeglass seemed to be boring a hole into the unhappy Bunny, "you have deceived—"

"Nunno, sir."

"You have stated—"

"Not at all, sir," spluttered Bunny. "It—it's all a mistake, sir! I—I can explain it—if you'll give me time, sir."

"What?"

"I—I mean—I meant—"

Bunny spluttered helplessly. "I—I—it was a joke, sir—I—I was simply pulling Algy's leg, sir—Algy being such a silly ass, as you know, sir—"

"Oh, begad!" ejaculated Algy.

"You—you understand, sir—"

"I understand quite well," said Lord Rayfield, grimly. "You have claimed the credit of a brave action you never performed; you have claimed money in compensation for losses never incurred; you are a young rascal, sir."

"Oh, crumbs!"

"And I shall take you to your headmaster at once, sir!" thundered Lord Rayfield. "Upon my word! I never heard of such a thing! Come."

"Yaroooooh!"

His lordship's slim but sinewy hand fell on Bunny's fat shoulder and closed there in a grasp of iron.

"Follow me, Algernon."

"Yaas," said Algy, faintly.

Bunny Bootles limped out of the room, with a grip on his shoulder that made him wriggle. Algy followed. They passed through a grinning crowd of juniors. Bunny blinked round at the grinning faces pathetically. But there was no sympathy for Bunny.

The spoofer was exposed with a vengeance now; there were dry eyes in all the Fourth Form. Nobody had any sympathy to waste upon Cuthbert Archibald Bootles.

"I—I say, sir—," gasped Bunny, as they reached the Head's study.

"Silence!"

"Oh, lor!"

Lord Rayfield tapped at the door and opened it; and Dr. Cheyne blinked over his glasses as Bunny Bootles marched into the study with a peer of the realm grasping his fat shoulder.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed the Head. "What—what—?"

"This boy, sir—this Bootles," said Lord Rayfield, in a very deep voice; "my son informs me that this is Bootles—"

"Oh, yaas," said Algy.

"That certainly is Bootles," said the Head, "the—the boy who aided you so—so gallantly, Lord Rayfield—"

"Nothing of the kind, sir! This is not the boy."

"What?"

"An impostor, sir," said his lordship. "An unscrupulous impostor! Look at that letter, sir."

Bunny Bootles yelped with terror as he saw his precious little bill tossed on the Head's desk. He knew what to expect now. Dr. Cheyne gazed at the little bill with eyes that almost bulged through his spectacles.

"Bless my soul! Extraordinary! And—and you say he is not the boy at all!"

"Most decidedly not."

Bunny's fat knees knocked together as the Head turned a terrifying gaze upon him.

"Bootles! What have you to say?"

"I—I—I—"

"Wretched boy!" thundered the Head. "You have deceived me—deceived your schoolfellows—"

"Oh, no, sir! I—I think—his lordship is—is making a mistake, sir," gasped Bunny. "He's forgotten what the chap was like—"

"What?"

"He's rather shortsighted. I think, sir—he doesn't recognise me," spluttered Bunny. "That—that—that's it, sir—I—I forgive him, sir—c-c-c-can I go now, sir?"

"Bless my soul! You cannot go, Bootles. Do you dare to maintain that you are the boy that helped Lord Rayfield, against his lordship's explicit statement that you are not?" thundered the Head.

"Oh, no, sir!" gasped the quaking Bunny.

"The boy appears to be little more than an idiot!" said Lord Rayfield, who was staring in great wonder at Bunny.

"He is undoubtedly very obtuse," said the Head. "But for that fact, I should be disposed to expel him from the school for this action—"

"Ow!"

"Bootles, you will be flogged—"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Most severely—"

"Wh-wh-what for, sir?"

"What for?" gasped the Head.

"Do you not know what for, you utterly stupid boy?"

"Nunno, sir! After my gallant conduct—"

"Leave my study!" gasped Dr. Cheyne. He really felt unequal to dealing further with the amazing Bunny just then. "Go! I will deal with you later."

Algy gently led Bunny to the door and pushed him out.

THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER.

A Startling Recognition!

"NAMELESS!"

Mr. Lathley looked into the form-room.

"Yes, sir," said Harry, rising from his desk.

"Kindly go to the Head's study now, Nameless. Lord Rayfield is there, and will speak to you."

"Very well, sir," said Harry, compressing his lips.

He put away his books and left the form-room. Two or three juniors met him on the way, and Stubbs gave him a consoling whisper.

"Keep your pecker up, kid. The old sport doesn't bite."

Harry Nameless smiled faintly, and nodded, and passed on. He was not afraid that his lordship would "bite." But he was shrinking inwardly from the interview that could no longer be avoided.

He had no doubt that Algy's pater would recognise him at a glance; the secret that had been kept so long would be a secret no longer. But it could not be helped; and he nerved himself for the ordeal.

He tapped at the Head's door and entered.

Algernon Aubrey gave him a look in which commiseration and encouragement were mingled. Dr. Cheyne looked at him very gravely over his glasses. Lord Rayfield started to his feet.

"The boy!" he ejaculated.

The severe frown which Lord Rayfield had all ready for Harry Nameless melted away at once at sight of the boy who had rescued him so gallantly from the tramp of Lyncroft Wood.

His look became extremely genial and cordial.

"Yes, this is the boy," said the Head, misunderstanding.

"My dear boy!" exclaimed Lord Rayfield, advancing towards the junior, who stopped with a flush in his cheeks. "I am glad to see you."

Algy jumped.

A dreadful suspicion shot across his mind that his respected parent

had suddenly taken leave of his senses.

The Head rose to his feet in blank amazement.

Lord Rayfield's prejudice against the nameless schoolboy had already worried the Head. He had been prepared for a disagreeable five minutes in his study. Instead of which, here was his lordship smiling most benignly upon the nameless junior, and holding out his hand—actually holding out his aristocratic hand to Harry Nameless.

"Upon my word!" gasped the Head.

"Father!" stuttered Algy, blankly.

Lord Rayfield did not heed.

"Give me your hand, my boy," said his lordship, with a benignant smile at the crimson junior. "I am proud, my boy, to shake the hand of a lad so brave, so plucky, so worthy of the best traditions of my old school."

"Bless my soul!" murmured the Head, wondering whether he was dreaming.

Harry Nameless mechanically held out his hand. He could not do otherwise, with the aristocratic fingers of a peer of the realm outstretched to shake it.

Lord Rayfield shook hands with him heartily.

Then he turned to the Head.

"This is very fortunate," he said. "I understood the boy was unknown—"

"His—his origin is certainly unknown," stammered the Head. "That is why he is called—"

"I do not quite follow, sir. The boy Bootles made a false claim—"

"Eh?"

"Which this boy could have disproved at once. It appears that he has not spoken of the matter—"

"Wha-a-t?"

"It is fortunate that he came to your study at this moment, while I am here," said Lord Rayfield. "I was very desirous of making his acquaintance."

"You—you—you were desirous of making his acquaintance—," stuttered the Head.

"Certainly."

"But—but—you—I—bless my soul! Do you know who this boy is, Lord Rayfield?"

"I do not yet know his name, sir; but I know he is the lad who helped me so gallantly one day last week—"

"What—?"

"Oh, my only aunt!" yelled Algernon Aubrey, forgetting the august presence in which he stood. "So that's it?"

He shook his fist at Harry Nameless.

"You spoofer! bounder, why didn't you tell me?" howled Algy.

"The boy appears to have kept quite silent on the matter," said his lordship, in some perplexity.

"Modesty, of course, is—quite becoming, but this was really carrying it very far. Have you quite recovered from the injuries you received, my dear boy?"

"Yes," gasped Harry.

"That is good, Algernon!"

"Ye-es, father."

"There is no need for you to seek friends among—among persons of—of obscure origin and unknown antecedents," said his lordship, severely. "A boy like this would be a much more suitable friend for you."

"Oh, gad!" gasped Algy, helplessly.

"I hope that you will be friends, Algernon."

"We—we—we are, sir!"

"I am glad to hear it—very glad to hear it. By the way, I do not yet know your name, my boy," said his lordship, turning to Harry with a kind smile. "I must know the name of the brave lad to whom I owe my personal safety."

Harry Nameless looked helplessly at the Head. That gentleman seemed to be in a dazed state.

"Lord Rayfield!" stuttered the Head, "I—I—I am amazed—this is most—most extraordinary! This—this boy—this is Nameless!"

"Harry Nameless, father!" said Algernon, with a chirp of glee.

Lord Rayfield stood stock still. His noble brain did not seem quite able to grasp the startling information for a moment or two.

"Nameless!" he repeated, vaguely. "I—I was waiting here to see Nameless—"

"He came because he was sent for to see you, sir," said the Head. "This boy is Nameless, whose friendship with your son has—"

"Good gad!"

Harry's cheeks burned.

"I—I'm sorry, sir!" he fal-

tered. "It—it was not my wish to see you, sir—"

"You—you are Nameless!" Even yet his lordship did not seem quite able to grasp it. "But you are the boy who assisted me so gallantly in the wood—"

Harry smiled faintly. "Yes, sir."

"The two are one and the same, apparently, Lord Rayfield," said the Head, with a smile. "It was Harry Nameless who helped you—"

Lord Rayfield sat down. "I—I am somewhat at a loss," he said. "I—I never knew—I did not think—I—I— Boy, why did you not give me your name when I asked you? I asked you that afternoon, and you did not tell me—"

Harry's colour deepened. "Because—" He spoke haltingly. "I—I knew why you'd come down to St. Kit's, sir—and—and—"

"You did not choose to let me know that I was under an obligation to you?"

"Yes, sir," said Harry, quietly. "But—but—" His lordship was not often at a loss for words. But he was at a loss now. He looked long and earnestly at Harry's flushed proud face. And he found words at last. "My desire was to be just, Nameless. That is it—to be just. If I had seen you when I came—in fact, I did see you, it appears—not as I expected—I mean, if you had been here I should have formed a different opinion of you. Your avoidance of me gave me a bad impression— Perhaps I did not make a sufficient allowance for your natural feelings—"

My brother-in-law, Colonel Lovell, saw you under very unfavourable circumstances, I believe; that accounts—"

His lordship paused again. He coloured a little as he rose to his feet. "My boy, I feel that I owe you an apology—"

"Oh, no, sir," exclaimed Harry. "I do, and I now render it," said his lordship, in the most stately manner. "Algernon."

"Yaas, father."

"I hope that you and Nameless will be great friends."

Algy's eyes danced. "Yaas, rather," he said. "Nameless is a bit proud and standoffish, but I'll make him be pally."

"I trust, Nameless, that you will let bygones be bygones and not remember any—any unfortunate misunderstandings—"

He shook hands again with Harry Nameless.

"Algernon, you may take your friend away while I speak to the Head a few minutes—and if you youngsters will ask me to tea in your study—"

"What ho!" chuckled Algernon Aubrey.

He caught Harry's arm and marched him from the study.

It was a right merry tea party in No. 5 study that afternoon.

Bunny Bootles did not venture in, which did not detract from the happiness of the occasion.

Lord Rayfield had on his most charming manners; he was kind and courteous to the Foundation junior.

Harry, rather to his surprise, found that he liked Algy's pater immensely.

When his lordship was gone the Honourable Algernon Aubrey St. Leger looked rather comically at his chum.

"All serene now, what?" he said.

"Yes, rather," said Harry, laughing.

The door opened, and a dolorous face blinked in.

"Has he gone?" groaned Bunny Bootles. "Anything left to eat? Oh, dear! I say, the Head has been pitching into me. I—I've been hogged."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

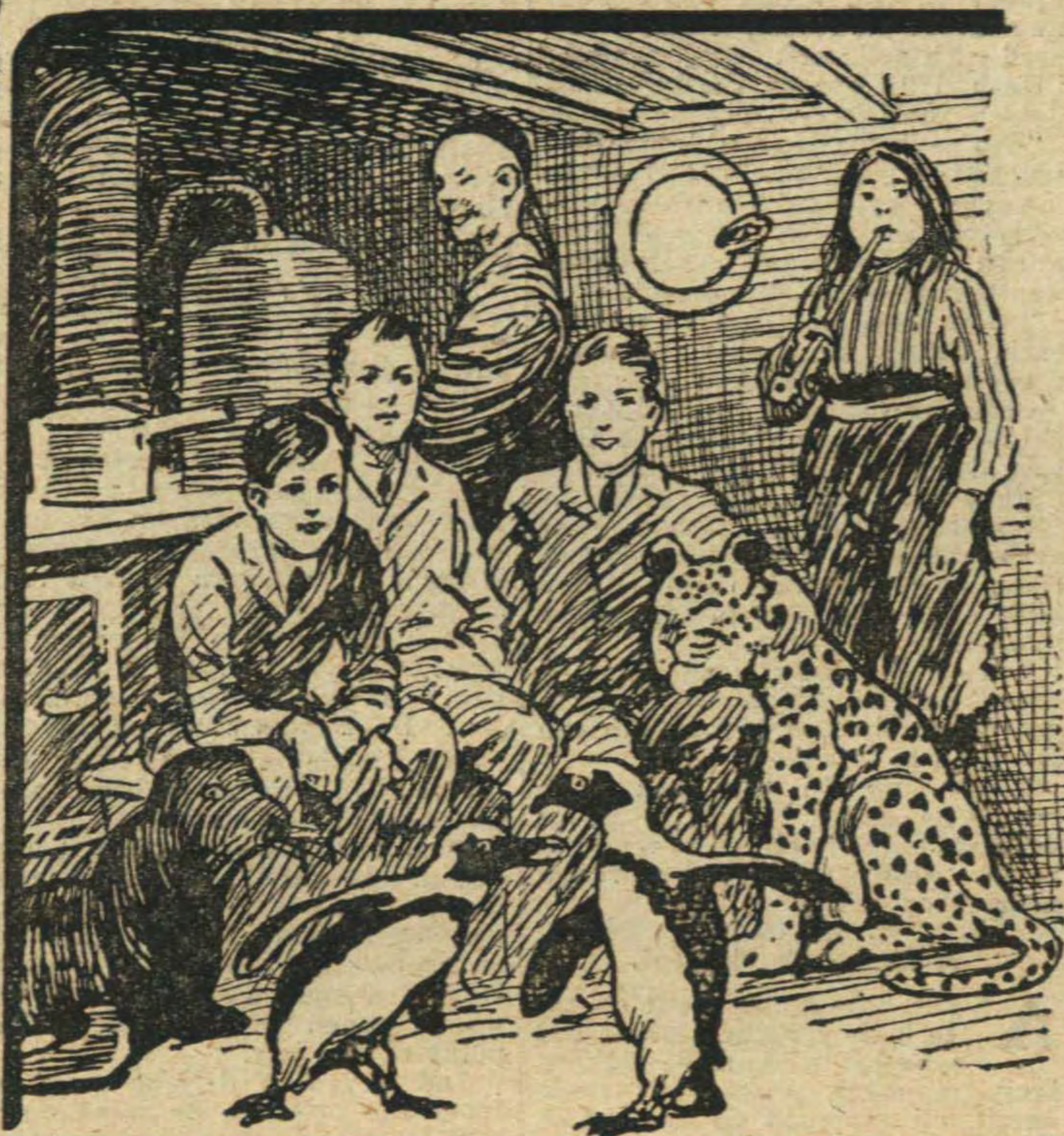
Algernon Aubrey rose to his feet. "So long as I believed it was you helped my pater, Bunny, I felt that I oughtn't to kick you," he said. "Now I know it wasn't you, I feel that I ought. Catchy on?"

"Look here, you beast—yaroocoo!"

The study door closed on Bunny. And that evening peace and contentment reigned in No. 5 study, and all was calm and bright for Harry Nameless and Algernon Aubrey—no longer Parted Chums.

THE END.

(A splendid school-football story last week entitled: "Sent to Coventry"—a story of St. Kit's. Don't miss it. Order School and Sport in advance.)



A Surprise for the Chums.

HAROLD lay on the floor of the galley, a puffing ball of feathers, whilst Clifford stood over him, his flippers hanging like the arms of a conquering pugilist, ready to give him another if he tried to get up.

Then Ching spoke with authority. "Now you boys," said he, "you pretty hungry?"

"Ravenous!" said Jack. "Me got supper along for you," said Ching, laying the table. "Sea pie, beef an' pastry to top up. Get on your clothes an' we all go to supper."

And the boys started their strange voyage seated in the bright little galley of the *Tartar*, round a table spread with a snowy white cloth, in the strangest company they had ever supped with in their lives.

At the head of the table sat Ching, bland and smiling, doing the honours of the tremendous sea pie.

At the foot sat Kingaloo, the Eskimo, in his sealskin trousers, with his narrow eyes peering out amiably at the boys through his long black hair.

A chair was placed for Whiskers, who leaped up into it with the air of a well-trained dog, and who licked his chops and purled like a dynamo at the smell of the sea pie.

And, finally, Clifford and Harold flopped up into two infant chairs which were placed for them, forgetting their fight in their intense interest in the sea pie. Ching tied a napkin round each of their necks, and the supper party proceeded as the ship rapidly sped down the river to the sea.

The seal did not join the supper party. He lay on the floor blinking drowsily at the red glow of the galley fire, as though he, too, could see pictures in the fire, like his master, the magician.

Supper over, Clifford and Harold retired to their bunk, which was a cheese box in the corner of the galley, on which was painted in red letters "Clifford's Little Home." They flopped into the box together and laid down amicably, Clifford with his flipper round Harold's neck. Fighting was over for the day.

And the boys, greatly to Ching's approval, helped him to wash up, whilst Whiskers, the leopard, took up his old place in front of the fire.

"You stop along here till Captain he send along for you," said Ching, and the boys sat round the fire watching Ching as he brought out his workbox and went on with the work of carving a wonderful model of a Chinese junk out of old beef bones.

And Kingaloo was not idle. He took off his sealskin pants and patched them with a needle of bone, threaded with walrus sinew. Kingaloo did not hold with the white man's cotton or thread, which he regarded as fragile stuff.

The boys were well content to stay there in this quaint domestic circle.

They hardly wanted to show themselves on deck yet, for, in spite of the First Officer's assurance that they were taken on amongst

the crew of the *Tartar* for rescuing the old lady, they had an uncomfortable lurking feeling that there might be some mistake, and that they might be put ashore.

Two hours or more passed, but nobody sent for them. The ship was rounding the Forelands now, and they could feel her rising and falling to a sea that was knocking up before a fresh and sudden north-easterly gale.

Outside it was a dark and dirty night, and every now and then a scattering rain shower would patter down on the streaming decks, whilst showers of spray wetted the glasses of the scuttles, which Ching, who, like all Chinamen, loved a good fog, kept screwed up and closed.

Perhaps it was the close air of the galley which made the boys nod. They had all travelled far.

Ching grinned as Joe, overcome with sleep, leaned his head on the leopard's shoulder and went soundly to sleep, whilst Jack rolled himself up against the warm fur coat of Wilfred, the seal, and found that he made a soft, if rather bristly, pillow.

Soon they were all asleep.

How long they had slept they did not know. But the galley door was suddenly wrenched open, and a well-combed head wearing a single eyeglass which glittered with spray was thrust in at the doorway.

Whiskers lifted his dappled head and growled. He did not like the cold draught.

"Here—aw, stop that, old fellow!" exclaimed the sailor, for he was a sailor in spite of his single eyeglass. "Ching, deah boy, why don't you put that infernal leopard to bed at decent hours. I just dropped in to let you know that these three—aw—prize boys are wanted on the bridge. Au 'voir!"

The head was withdrawn and the door slammed to as the boys struggled up.

"Who was that talking?" asked Bill drowsily.

"Him sailor man!" replied Ching. "Him callee Archeel!"

"But he talked like a toff, in a sort of yaw haw!" exclaimed Bill.

"Him number one big toff," said Ching, with his mysterious smile. Plentee sailor big toff on dis ship. Plendy mandarin likee come along Captain Oki. Him de most Honourable Mandarin Viscount Swishington. Him plenty big swell!"

"Swishington!" exclaimed the three boys in chorus. To them there was only one Swishington in the world—the finest batsman who ever played for England.

"Not the cricketer?" gasped Jack.

Ching nodded. "Him play plentee cicket!" said he. "Him try allee time to teachee Clifford an' 'Arold to play cicket! But you hurry along to topside along bridge. No keep Captain waiting!"

The boys tumbled out on the dark wet deck and sought their way through a cloud of mingled sleet and spray to the bridge ladders.

THE CRUISE OF THE "TARTAR"

A Great Story of Sport and Adventure

By JOHN WINTERTON

Featuring
JACK FEARLESS of Great Yarmouth
JOE LAWLESS of Bradford
BILL CARELESS The Trapeze Artist
AND
CAPTAIN BOB OAK Master of "The Tartar"

Captain Bob Oak, of the s.s. "*Tartar*," advertises for three boys to join his ship. They must be willing to do anything and go anywhere. Out of thousands of boys who go down to the docks to join up are Jack Fearless, Joe Lawless, and Bill Careless. These three dive into the dock to save an old lady, and rescuers and rescued are taken on board the "*Tartar*," which gets under way at once. While the boys are drying their clothes in Ching's cabin Harold and Clifford—two penguins—have a fight. The contest is stopped by Mr. Dark, the first officer, who comes into the cabin to tell the boys that they have been chosen.

Up they went. Jack was the only sailor amongst them, and he noticed the loom of a large steamer which was drumming down Channel on the same course, but a bare quarter-mile to windward. To him it seemed that this great steamer was a great deal too close to them, and that their course was converging on their own.

But he said nothing to his companions as they climbed up on the bridge.

There were no signs of the Captain there. The First Officer and another were on watch, and their eyes were upon the great dark hull that loomed through the mist.

"No lights!" exclaimed the First Officer without noticing the boys. "And she's bearing down on us in a way I don't like. If it's the old firm, they are starting early in the game, for she's a German for a dollar. Call the Captain."

His companion blew into a speaking tube, and the Officer kept his glasses on the strange, lightless steamer.

Nearer and nearer she loomed out of the mist.

"By Jingo!" exclaimed Mr. Dark. "She's trying to run us down! Here's the Captain!"

The boys turned in astonishment as the door of the charthouse swung open rapidly, and a figure leaped on to the bridge. It took one glance at the ship which was looming over them out of the mist and jumped to the engine room telegraph with a rapid order to the helmsman.

It was the old lady they had helped to fish out of the dock, in the same old-fashioned bonnet, the white curls, and the gold-rimmed spectacles.

There was a jangle of engine room telegraphs as the two ships dashed on almost side by side.

Jack Fearless could read the manoeuvring that was going on as the flash of a lightship showed almost ahead of them.

The big German ship was trying to bore the *Tartar* on to the outer fringe of the deadly Goodwin Sands, to put her ashore, or to bring her into a collision that would sink her.

But the little old lady stood by the engine room telegraphs, giving a string of rapid orders to the quartermaster at the wheel.

They could hear the sands thundering and spouting close under their lee.

Then, with a sudden racing, the engines of the *Tartar* went to full speed ahead. A sea burst over her bows as she swung round to her helm, crossing the bows of the great lubberly steamer which was chasing her.

There was a welter of white water round them, and for a moment Jack thought that they were on the sands.

Then a sudden lurch of the ship to her helm sent the three boys flying across the bridge deck.

The old lady was leaning at the end of the bridge, looking astern at the black ship which had run well on to the sands in her effort to put the *Tartar* ashore.

"Got you again, you dirty Hamburg Fatheads!" she shouted in a voice like thunder, and, grabbing

her bonnet, it rose, spectacles, wig, and all, to be hurled joyously into the sea, revealing the hard-bitten face of Captain Bob Oak, Master of the *Tartar*, looking down at the pile of boys at his feet.

A Pirate Captain.

CAPTAIN BOB OAK grinned cheerfully as the three boys scrambled to their feet, staring at him in astonishment.

He threw off the rusty old mantle he was wearing and kicked off the rusty old skirt, pitching these overboard.

Then he faced the boys. They saw a hard-faced, clean-shaven, cheerful-looking man of small stature, but of tremendous strength, with iron-grey hair and smiling blue eyes.

"Here we are, boys," said he. "I bet you did not guess that the old lady you fished out of the dock was me. But I had to put the jest on you because it was the only way in which I could select three boys out of that mob on the quay. I said to my first officer that any three boys who would jump into the dock to save an old woman were good enough for me. Now, what are your names?"

"Jack Fearless," replied Jack.

"Good! Where d'ye hail from?"

"Great Yarmouth, sir," answered Jack.

"Better still, a fisher lad. And you?"

"Joe Lawless, sir," answered Joe. "Ah'm fro' Bradford."

"Better again. A real Yorkshire tyke?"

"Aye," assented Joe. "We bite fast an' hold fast oop in Yorkshire."

"That's the chap I'm looking for," said Captain Oak. "And you?"

"Careless, sir—Bill Careless, of the Careless Brothers, trapeze artists and sand dancers," replied Bill. "I'm the little chap that they used to throw about. But I'm just getting too heavy for it, and there was a chance of my getting a miss. So I thought I would come away to sea."

"Well you are Careful Careless, at any rate," laughed Captain Oak. "And I suppose you boys have come to sea for pleasure?"

"Yes, sir," replied the three in chorus.

"Right," said the little Captain. "Let me tell you that a chap who will go to sea for pleasure will go to Gehenna for recreation. Now you have told me all about you. So I will tell you all about me. I am a sort of pirate like Blackbeard Teach and Captain Morgan and Captain Kid."

The boys started.

But the Captain lifted his hand. "Don't be nervous, boys," he answered. "I am not one of your old time walk-the-plank pirates. But I am a sort of Pirate of Penzance; the sort that has turned over a new leaf. My line is to put salt on the tail of the biggest pirate in the world."

"Who's he, sir?" asked Bill.

The Cruise of the "Tartar."

(Continued from previous page.)

"Hugo Stenk, of Hamburg," replied the Captain.

Joe shook his head.

"We don't know that chap up in Bradford," he answered.

"You will soon," replied Captain Oak. "Hugo Stenk is the new Emperor of Germany."

"But there is no Emperor in Germany now, sir," said Jack.

"Not the old penny plain, two-pence coloured rooster that we put the lid on in the war. But this fellow is going to be ten times more dangerous and ten times more poisonous. He doesn't shoot his mouth like the late Bill. He doesn't wear a crown or talk about his never-to-be-forgotten grandfather. But he bites first and talks afterwards, and that's the sort of dog that you've to watch out for. He is not going to conquer the world with guns like the late Bill, who got knocked out of that game by Old Bill, but he's going to conquer it with underground work, crook finance, and dirty doings all over the place. I mean to get him and he means to get me. Did you see that big steamer that nearly put us on the beach just now?"

"Yes, sir," replied the three boys, breathless with interest.

"Well, that's Hugo Stenk's *Lorelei*, one of the ships that we left the Flatheads to get along with," answered Captain Oak.

"And they have put themselves on the Goodwins instead of us. As like as not she'll stick there and break her back in a few days unless the Dover tugs get her off. That's one peg to us. But don't you worry, Hugo will get in the next punch, and as like as not, it will be under the belt. Look!"

Rocket after rocket was soaring up into the black night astern.

"She's ashore all right," said Captain Oak, rubbing his hands with great satisfaction. "I was not expecting Stenk to move so quickly. Stenk was not expecting me to move so quickly. But all's well that ends well, as the monkey said when he fell through the window of the cook shop. Now come into the chart room, and I'll introduce you to Bucko Scott, my sparring partner, and physical instructor to the ship."

He led the three boys into the chart room, a large mahogany lined cabin surrounded by lockers, chart drawers, and desks.

Seated at the table was a young man whose body was as near as possible square, so powerful was its outline. His shoulders were of immense breadth, his chest deep, and his waist small.

He was wearing only a singlet and dungaree trousers, and the boys' eyes turned to his arms, which were unusually long and thick, and were covered all over with patterns of blue tattoo, under which huge muscles rippled as if they were living and moving on their own account.

His face was square, with a powerful jaw. He was all squares and straight lines—square forehead, square chin, straight eyebrows, straight nose, and, above all, straight eyes.

He rose as the Captain entered.

"Here are the three new recruits, Bucko," said the Captain.

Bucko held out a huge hand.

"So these are the three ginks who are coming to do the J. Hawkins with us. Say, boys, I'm glad to meet you. I'm from Australia, the land of the Sunny South, the land of the kangaroo and the white-headed boys. On the Muller-Mulle Hills my father feeds his flocks, and I'm own nephew to Ned Kelly, the famous bushranger."

"Quit sparking, Bucko," said Captain Oak, briefly. "I want you to overhaul these boys, see that they are sound, and put them to bed. They want sleep. I'm for the bridge in case Hugo Stenk has got another ship waiting for us down the Channel."

And off he marched to the bridge.

"Captain Oak, he's the King Pin of this push, and what he says goes, my young nobles," said

Bucko. "So off with your Wolseys, and let us have a dekho at your cough-boxes."

For the moment the boys were mystified. It seemed that Bucko was an expert in Anglo-Australian-American slang. Then they realised Wolsey was an undervest, dekho was to look, and a cough-box was a chest.

So they stripped, and Bucko punched gently at their chests, listened to their breathing with a stethoscope, and nodded his approval.

"All shiny," said he. "And that's the Dinkum oil (the honest truth). I'll take you in hand tomorrow, boys, and we'll hit things up. Shackleton's Scout shall be nix to you, and I'll teach you to deal it out so that when any plug-ugly sasshays up to you on the street to take a crack at your Ingersoll you'll be able to drop him a sixty pound Irish kiss in the starboard earhole that will make him see more stars than there are in heaven on a frosty night. D'ye catch my smoke?"

The three boys gasped. Never had they heard such a string of futuristic language before.

Bucko grinned amiably.

"Now, kids," said he, "you are all well away from the starting-gate, three good chesty young rustlers that ought to be able to earn the crust with your dukes. But first of all have you got any coffin nails, garspers, lung scorchers, or cough sticks on you?"

"Fags, you mean?" asked Jack.

"I've got some."

And he pulled a packet of cigarettes from his pockets. So did each of his chums.

Bucko swept them up in his great hand.

"Now, boys, no more of these 'ave ones,'" said he. "They aint glad on the lungs. Have you got me?"

"Yes, sir," replied the three.

"This is a sporting ship," said Bucko. "They are pretty well all Champeens on board. And it's my job to keep the whole lot of you in the nick, and if I don't my name is mud. I don't want to skate, but we've got the finest crew and the finest ship that skates the briny. There's hardly one of them that isn't good enough to top off the bunch of cheeses that calls 'emselves pugs these days. It's nix to your Fighting Smiths and Battling Joneses when they finds themselves playing kiss-in-the-ring with the Tartars. And I want to bring you kids on to take your place in the Stajium. I want you to be the Boy Scrappers of Swatville-on-the-Stoush, the ribuck stuff. Now, come along o' me, and I'll take you to your cabins, where you can hit the hay. I'll Albert Hall you in the morning at six, and when you've had your cup of gunfire you can come up on deck and we'll start up the roundabouts."

With these words Bucko led the boys below, showing them three comfortable cabins where they hit the hay or went to bed, and were soon sound asleep.

The night seemed to pass like a flash.

They heard a call of "Show a leg there, show a leg," and there was Bucko thrusting a cheerful red face in at the doorway.

"Get your drop of Annabel Lee and come out on the roof," said their instructor, meaning that they should get a cup of tea at the galley and come up on deck.

They rolled out of their bunks quickly. The ship was rolling down Channel somewhere off the Isle of Wight, and there was a gleam of watery sunshine swinging up and down on the white walls of their cabins.

They chased along to the galley carrying their towels.

Ching was there already busy taking bakings of pastry from the oven, for Ching was a proper Chinese who never seemed to go to bed at all.

He grinned at the sight of the boys, and handed them out a bowl of gunfire.

Bucko Scott was at the serving

hatch taking what he called a liqueur of tea, which was a pudding basin of strong Chinese tea laced with molasses.

He had his eye on the boys and also on the pastry.

"No good starting to lamp that sweetstuff, boys," he called as he saw their eyes turn rather hungrily on the great trays of rich brown raspberry puffs that Ching was taking out of the oven.

"Give 'em a Tartar teacake each, Ching, to timber up their tum-tums," he added.

"Ching smiled, and handed out a ship's biscuit from the sack that was always open in the galley.

They were the hardest ship's biscuits that the boys had ever encountered. But Bucko showed them how to crush them with a blow of the fist and to soak them in their bowls of tea.

"They are very good biscuits, boys," said he, "but you've got to give them the left before you can get them to bits."

"Now, up to the deck with you," he added. "My class is waiting, and the circus is ready to begin. And a proper lot of rough necks they are."

A Desperate Moment.

AS the boys stepped out on the deck they found that it was crowded with men—stokers, lamp-trimmers, oilers, and deckhands all stripped to the waist.

They were different from any crew that Jack Fearless had ever seen, for they were quiet spoken and refined in their appearance.

Bucko surveyed his class with pride.

Help Your Editor

When finished with,
please give this copy of

"School & Sport"

to your friend, and
ask him or her to

Place a Regular Order.

He slipped on a pair of boxing gloves, and threw a pair to Jack, keeping up a desultory conversation as he started sparring with him. "You gotta remember that boxin' is medicine for the soul as well as for the corpse," said he.

"You gotta learn to take a stoush without winking," and to come up smilin' when you are knocked 'ead over turkey, and to crack hardy when your knees are wambling under you and your stomach is trying to crawl up your back. You gotta remember"—and he hooked Jack neatly on the jaw—"that."

"Yes, sir," said Jack, and he came back with a body punch that made Bucko grunt.

"Been doin' some of these kindergarten stunts before?" said Bucko, rather breathlessly, as he fell into a clinch.

"North Sea fishing fleet," replied Jack, as he blocked a left.

"You'll be full o' mine-sweepin' tricks," suggested Bucko.

"Like that," said Jack, with a swift jab that shot over Bucko's guard.

"Say, kid," said Bucko, rather astonished, "you are no long-haired dog. You are no Pekin pup. You are not missin' any 'buses at all. You are the Bonzer from Biffville."

"Not much," replied Jack, sidestepping a left, "but I always took an interest in boxing."

And Bucko took a punch on the nose that made him blink.

The boxing on the deck had slackened. The crew gathered round to see what was doing, for they had been swift to realise that this boy who was standing up to Bucko could use his fists above the average.

"Say when you have enough, bo," suggested Bucko. "You were hittin' up old Ching's lobster parlour a bit late last night, and—"

"I feel a treat," said Jack, taking a heavy jolt without losing his footing on the wet and slippery deck.

Bucko kept his eye on the boy, but he addressed the laughing crowd as he feinted and circled.

"Say, pebs," said he, "we've shipped some kid here. He's a real Bonzer Alick, and knows how to hand out the bananas, and—Jerushy the Golden—but that's a blue eye for me!"

Jack had got in with his left in splendid style.

The crowd cheered. Bucko was easily the best boxer on the ship, but the fisherboy was holding him.

Bucko ceased to talk now. He found that he had too much business on hand. His eyes grew watchful and he became the boxer.

There was a set look on his face, and his jaw protruded slightly. When Jack came in with a rush he slipped him.

Then Jack took a few spoons of gruel, the gloves rattling on him with the speed of a quick-firing gun. Bucko was warming up.

Jack made another rush and Bucko went to meet him, head down and hands busy.

Then goodness knows how it happened. It might have been that Jack, newly out of a small trawler, was more sure-footed than his antagonist on that slippery deck. But of a sudden Bucko took the whole bunch of bananas on the point of his jaw.

And a yell of delight went up from the crew as he went down with a grand slam on the teak planks, shooting across the deck and fetching up in a heap in the lee scuppers, whilst Jack stood against the bulwarks, somewhat dazed and overcome by his victory, fondling a bleeding nose with a four ounce glove.

"Three cheers for the Kipper Kid," yelled someone.

And three tremendous cheers were given, whilst at the end of fifteen seconds, Bucko sat up and blinked.

"Pink me," said he, looking round with dazed and wondering eyes, "but I've taken the count from the Baby Boy. Take me 'ome, I've done me dash. It's the Kid that's going to be the King Pin of the ship. He's no mixed ale scrapper, but a proper young bear cat!"

And getting to his feet he shook hands heartily with his victor.

"This eye of mine's goin' to be a proper pippin to-morrow," said he, rather ruefully. "Now, what about you two other boys?" he added, regarding Joe Lawless and Bill Careless doubtfully.

"We are ready," they both replied.

But Bucko shook his head.

"No," he replied. "One out of your nursery is enough for this morning. Now for the bath."

The hoses were going, throwing heavy jets of sparkling sea water, and the big canvas bath was filled in the fore well deck.

Then a roar of laughter went up from the crew. Clifford and Harold, the penguins, who had seen something of the sparring, suddenly fell foul of one another, breasting up to one another and slugging with their hard-hitting flippers.

The ring closed round them.

But Mr. Dark, the first officer, to whom they belonged, strode into the ring and seized their combatants by the neck.

"Stop the fight and into the bath with you, you rascals," he cried.

And he hurled Clifford and Harold into the great canvas bath, where they disappeared with a splash, and were seen swimming round under water at tremendous speed, trying to find a fish in its canvas lined depths.

The boys tumbled into the bath after the penguins, and then, barking and frisking with delight, Wilfrid the seal came flopping over the deck, begging for a swim.

So he was picked up and hurled into the bath to soak. He swam round a terrific speed after Harold and Clifford, but he never got near the birds, for they seemed to be able to turn much more swiftly than he could.

The boys climbed out of the bath glowing all over, leaving the seal and the penguins to fight it out, and drying themselves hurried off to breakfast well content to find

themselves members of such a happy crew.

Soon they found themselves working with the crew cleaning ship, painting, and polishing the brasses, following a sea routine which left them as hungry as hunters, and so tired at night that, after a yarn with Ching and Kingaloo in the galley, they went off to their beds and at once fell into a dreamless sleep.

The *Tartar* rolled down a grey and lumpy Bay of Biscay, till nearing the north coast of Spain. The weather cleared and a blue sky showed in the late afternoon.

By dusk they had picked up the light on Cape Vilano. Then Finistère came into sight.

Captain Oak steered close into this ironbound coast, where the great Atlantic rollers were thundering at the foot of the tremendous cliffs.

There was considerable speculation amongst the crew who were gathered on deck waiting for supper as to what the old man was up to. But on this mystery ship Captain Oak kept his own counsel, and nobody asked questions.

They did not stand off the land after passing the fixed white light and the half-minute flash that marks Cape Finistère. They held along the coast under the loom of the tremendous cliffs and hills of this mighty headland.

The three boys stood together in silence on the dark deck.

Suddenly, almost at their feet, a bunker plate was heaved up and a head popped up out of the circular coalhole revealed.

"Bai Jove," said a voice. "We are deuced neah the shoah, ain't we? Is that not Finnisteah we have just passed. Where the doose are we going to? My word, what a perfectly awful coast!"

The coal-smothered head was that of Viscount Swishington, that mysterious member of the crew who had been trimming coal down in the number four bunker.

A shadowy figure leaning on the rail greeted the Viscount in Bucko's voice.

"Say, Dook Swishington, this is some coast!" said Bucko in rather troubled tones.

"That you, Bucko, deah boy?" asked the Viscount.

"That's me, Algy," replied Bucko. "What about it? We are going closer and closer. My Aunt Joelia, but this is a crook place. And I'm a fightin' man, not a swimmer. If we cannon off the cush and get into the middle pocket here it's nix for me. I'll pass in my cheque, sure thing!"

"Aw—don't wowwy, old thing," replied the Viscount, cheerfully.

"Last time I was out with the Pwince we—aw—passed very neah heah!"

"So did we larst time I was sailing round here with my ole clobber the Dook!" replied Bucko rather acidly. "I'm no sailor; I'm not, but I wish Captain Oak wouldn't hug this coast as if it wuz his best girl. I'm going to take my boots off. Look! Spare me days. The Ole Man's dilly! He's for the foolish house! He's steering straight for the cliffs!"

This was true.

There was a dead silence on deck, broken only by the rattle of steering-gear as the *Tartar*, a few sparks flying from her funnels, heeled slightly to the pull of her rudder, and turning in a wide circle, headed straight for that awful coast.

Viscount Swishington stayed where he was, leaning out of the bunker placidly.

Bucko was hastily kicking off his boots and getting ready to swim. Off came his coat and waistcoat and trousers as the *Tartar*, rolling heavily in a confused, black sea, steamed apparently to her doom.

The boys held their breaths as the steamer rolled in under tremendous cliffs that blotted out the stars above her masts.

Bucko, stripped to his pants for swimming, was fumbling in his trouser pockets to find his pipe and tobacco and matches before the impending crash.

They could see the luminous gleam of acres of foam on either hand, and were almost deafened by the mighty thundering of the bursting surges that were hurled back from the cliffs.

(To be continued next Monday.)