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SCHOOL AND SPORT 1¹/₂



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A DUCKING FOR THE NAMELESS SCHOOLBOY. EXCITING INCIDENT IN THE TALE OF ST. KIT'S!



Nameless perused the letter which

had caused this remarkable ebullition of wrath. It ran:

My dear Algernon,—
I have received your impertinent letter; I excuse the impertinence because I think you have written under the influence of your new friend.

Your foolish and unfounded remarks have not changed my opinion in the slightest degree.

The boy called Nameless is not, in my opinion, a fit companion for you, or a fit associate for other boys in my old school.

That there is nothing to be said against him since he came to St. Kit's is beside the point. I fear that there may be much to be said against him previously.

I repeat that, when I was at St. Kit's a short time ago I recognised Nameless as a person I had seen before. His face was quite well known to me. He denied having been in any place where he could have been under my observation.

Evidently he lied. "Nameless" is a name quite unknown to me, and I conclude therefore that when I saw him earlier, he was passing under another name. I conclude, moreover, that the occasion of our meeting was discreditable to him; that I was upon the magistrate's bench at the time, and he came before me as an offender. This is the only way I can account for my recognition of him, and his denial of knowing me.

He has lied; and he would not lie without some good reason, such as a shameful secret to conceal.

For this reason I intended to bring the matter before the Board of Governors, and cause him to be sent away from St. Kit's.

I have refrained from doing this, on his solemn undertaking to leave the school quietly at the end of the term, and not return.

If he should fail to keep his undertaking, I shall take immediate steps to have his scholarship cancelled, and himself excluded from the school. This is my duty, and I shall do it without compunction.

I trust that when this evil influence is removed, you will be once again the respectful and dutiful nephew you have always been until now.

Your affectionate Uncle,
HENRY LOVELL.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Face from the Past.

HARRY NAMELESS laid down the letter, and a deep sigh escaped his lips. An "evil influence"—that was how Algy's uncle regarded him. It was unjust—cruelly unjust—the injustice of it rankled bitterly in his breast. Why did the Colonel despise him so? What had he done to deserve it?

His conscience told him—nothing.

He was nameless—he came from nobody knew where—he had no "people." He had been brought up in a sailorman's cottage; he had come to St. Kit's "on the Foundation," paying no fees. Those facts had set Compton and Co. against him—but they should not have influenced a man like Colonel Lovell. But it was the Colonel who had done him the harm. Vernon Compton had tried in vain to do his bitter condemnation of the nameless schoolboy had set all St. Kit's against him—and the sentence of "Coventry" was the result. For a couple of weeks now No. 5 Study had been sent to Coventry by the school—and it dated from the day of the Colonel's visit.

Algy had thrown in his lot with his chum, the only fellow at St. Kit's who stood by the nameless schoolboy. It was very well known that Compton and Co. would have received Algy with open arms, if the dandy of St. Kit's had chosen to desert his ostracised chum. But the thought of that never even crossed Algy's loyal mind.

"You frabjous ass!"

Algernon Aubrey came to a halt at last, in his restless tramp round the study, and stared wrathfully at his chum across the table.

"You footlin' chump!"

"But—"

"Nunky says you've undertaken to clear out at the end of the term."

"Yes."

"You shan't!" roared Algy.

Harry Nameless smiled faintly.

"I must," he said. "The Colonel will hold me to my word. I—I've given my promise, Algy. I—I wasn't going to tell you till the end—I—I knew you'd not like it—"

"Like it!" hooted Algy, derisively. "You shan't do it! I won't let you. What about your scholarship?—it's for three years."

"I'm going to resign it."

"Ass! What will you do then?"

"Go home!" said Harry.

"To South Cove?"

"Yes."

"You—you shriekin' ass! You shan't! You told me that old Jack Straw, your old sailorman chap, was hard up—you were working for the Fortescue prize to help him."

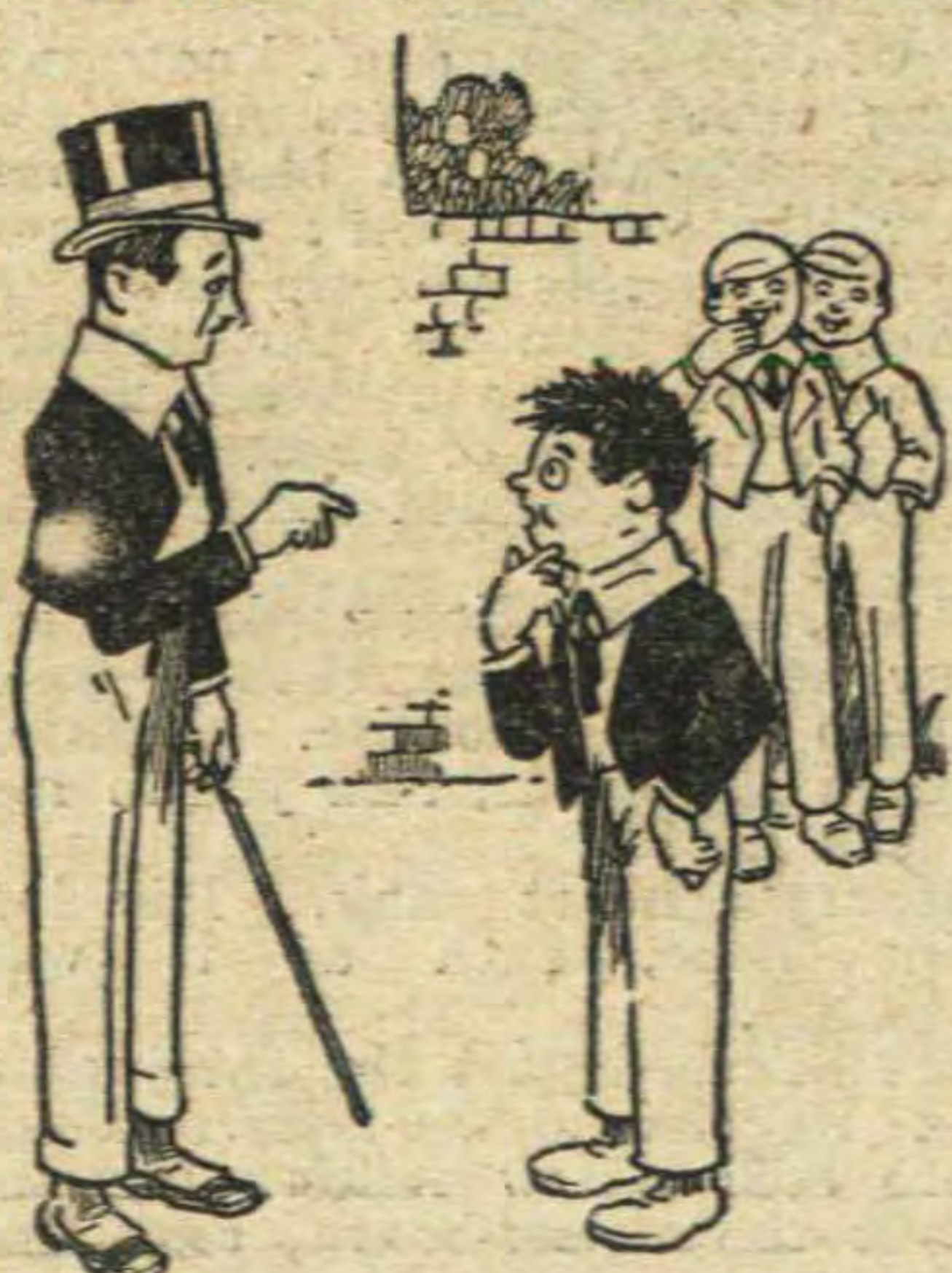
"I hope to win that, Algy. And—and when I go home, I shall give up the idea of—of a lot of things I've dreamed about," said Harry, with a clouded brow. "I shall get to work somehow, and help old Jack Straw that way. It seems rather rotten, after I won my scholarship here—and that wasn't easy—but I've got to stand it."

Algy sniffed. "You shan't stand it—and if you do, I won't. What on earth possessed you to promise my uncle anything of the kind?"

"I—I had to—," Harry coloured painfully.

"Because you thought he'd influence the governors? I tell you

A VERY GOOD REASON.



"Look here, your hair is very untidy. Why don't you brush it?"
"Haven't got a brush."
"Then why not use your father's?"
"He hasn't got one."
"No brush! How does he brush his hair, then?"
"He hasn't got any hair."

my pater was goin' to stand up for you, and he's chairman, and I know jolly well he would have his way."

"That's the reason," said Harry, in a low voice. "St. Leger, old chap, it couldn't be helped. Your father has been very kind to me—and—and you've been a good chum, when I wanted one badly. And—and Colonel Lovell is doing what he thinks is his duty. I—I couldn't be the cause of trouble in your family—"

"Fathead!"

"If Lord Rayfield defended me before the governors—"

"No 'if' about it—he would; he's told me so."

"Yes, and you told me that if he did, and the Colonel was defeated in his object, there would be serious disagreement between them—your father and your mother's brother, who have always been friends—"

"You couldn't help that!"

"I could—and I think I ought. Look at it reasonably, old chap. You've been my only friend here, and your father has treated me kindly—your mother has been kind to me—dash it all, you must see how I feel about it. I'd rather clear out of St. Kit's to-morrow than bring trouble among your people."

"You—you awful old 'ass!' muttered Algy, and there was a shake in his voice. "You're sacrificin' everythin' just for my sake—and the sake of my people. You—you frabjous ass!"

"It's better so," said Harry, quietly.

"I might have guessed it was some quixotic rot like this," said Algernon Aubrey, wrathfully.

"Now you've promised nunky—"

"Yes—and I must keep my promise, though he doesn't seem to feel sure that I shall," said Harry, his lip quivering a little.

"You can't break your word,"

said Algernon Aubrey. "That's impossible, of course. But you're not goin'."

"My dear chap—"

"There's another way—nunky will have to release you from your promise."

"He will not do that."

"He will if he finds he is mistaken about you, and is playin' the goat on the subject."

"But he won't—"

"I'll make him!" said Algy, savagely. "I'll make him see sense, somehow. You're not goin' to leave St. Kit's: If you do, I—I'll leave too. I'll jolly well chuck up, and come along with you."

Harry Nameless smiled.

"I mean it," said Algernon Aubrey. "I tell you I won't let you go. Nunky has got to see reason, and I'm the merchant that is goin' to open his eyes. Catchy on?"

"But how—?"

"I don't quite know how, yet," confessed Algy, "but I mean bizney. I'm a no end determined chap, as perhaps you've noticed. And I tell you I'm goin' to bring nunky round. I shall speak to him very severely when I see him on Saturday."

"You're going to see Colonel Lovell on Saturday?" asked Harry, in surprise. "Is he coming here?"

"No; I'm goin' to visit him. I've telephoned to the pater, askin' him to beg me off for the week-end from the Head," said Algernon Aubrey, placidly. "I'm goin' up to town to give nunky a very severe talkin' to. I think I mentioned that I was goin' to bring nunky round, didn't I?"

Harry Nameless smiled faintly.

"You said so," he answered.

"I mean it, dear boy. I'm goin' to talk to him like a Dutch uncle. I'm goin' to make him see your old guardian chap—"

"Jack Straw?"

"Yaas."

"What on earth for?" asked Harry Nameless, with a stare.

"I've been thinkin' it out," said Algy, cheerfully. "I'm a bit of a downy bird, you know—as I've mentioned once or twice. When I get my powerful intellect fairly geared up, you know, it goes tremendous. Now, Nunky Lovell was down on you—for what reason? He thought he knew you—an' as you denied it, he thought you must have been passin' under another name at the time—p'raps came before him as a magistrate. Don't look waxy, old bird—I'm only goin' into the matter. Now, you deny havin' met him before you came to St. Kit's, and I, of course, take your word. So there's a mistake somewhere. Nunky must have seen somebody like you, at some time, an' got it all mixed. See?"

"I suppose so," said Harry, slowly. "I—I've wondered, sometimes, whether Colonel Lovell may have seen some connection of mine—I must have relations somewhere, though I don't know them. I—I may even have a father living, without knowing him. Though I'm afraid he must have been on the ship when she went down off South Cove, ten or eleven years ago."

"Algernon Aubrey looked rather curiously at his chum.

"It's a jolly odd story, yours," he remarked. "Never heard anything like it before, by gad. Nobody else was saved from the wreck?"

"Nobody."

"What was the name of the ship?"

Harry shook his head.

"That's not known," he said.

"She went down with all hands on the shoals, and hardly a stick came ashore—so I've heard from Jack Straw. He was out that night, having seen signals of distress, to help if he could. But the vessel went down on the sunken rocks a quarter of a mile out at sea."

"But you—"

"I was thrown ashore by the waves—from a boat. The boat got quite close in, when it was overwhelmed by the waves, and sunk. Who was in the boat beside myself I've no idea—but nobody was saved. Jack Straw plunged into the water to help, and he got hold of me and brought me safe to land—but he was exhausted, and fell down beside me on the sand, just out of reach of the sea. Of course, I only know this from what he's told me; I was too young to remember. He thought I was about four."

"Jolly queer," said Algy. "And nobody ever inquired after you?"

"Nobody. I—I suppose my people were on the ship," said Harry, with a clouded brow. "Father and mother, perhaps—and I never knew them to remember. I—I've got a faint recollection. I think, of my mother—but nothing of my father. Of course, I know my mother's face."

"How's that?"

"I've got her miniature in a locket. It was on a little gold chain round my neck when Jack Straw picked me up."

"You've got it still?"

"I'm not likely to part with it."

"And there's no name on it?"

"No."

"You're sure it's your mother?"

"I shouldn't be likely to have anybody else's portrait in a locket round my neck," said Harry, with a faint smile. "Besides, it's like me a good deal—different, of course, but there's a likeness. I don't know her name—or my own—"

"But you're called Harry—"

"Yes, I knew that much—I don't remember, of course, but Jack Straw says that I said at the time I was called Harry. That's my Christian name right enough: the surname I suppose I shall never know."

Harry sighed a little. "When I grew up at South Cove, I came to be called Nameless—that's the only name I've ever known. Would you like to see the portrait?"

"Yaas, rather."

Harry drew a slender gold chain from under his waistcoat. At the end of it was a little gold locket.

He snapped open the locket, and Algy looked with keen interest at the face of the miniature within.

It was a sweet, kind face, with blue eyes that were very like Harry's own. There was some resemblance of feature—though those in the miniature were of a softer cast.

"The poor lady!" murmured Algy, softly. "What a beautiful face, Harry, old chap. And—you think she was on the ship with you?"

"Well! That was bad luck!"

The bright and pushing youth just from school, bursting in: "What sort of chance is there for a young fellow beginning at the bottom to work his way up?"

Manager: "Not much chance here; we are contractors for digging wells!"

"I think she must have been."

Harry replaced the locket. "But I don't know—I can't remember—I could not have been more than three or four years old. I shall never part with this—it's all I have of my people." He smiled faintly. "The fellows here think a lot about a chap's 'people.' I can understand it, too; I'd give a great deal to find even one blood-relation. But I never shall, of course."

St. Leger looked very thoughtful.

"I don't know," he said, slowly. "There's the fact that nunky is certain that he knows your face—and you know that he never saw you before you came to St. Kit's. Isn't it jolly likely that he may have seen some relation of yours—perhaps your father—years ago, when he was young. I shall jolly well put that to him when I see him."

"I'm afraid it's not much good your seeing him, St. Leger," said Harry, quietly. "He's down on me—and you can't alter that. And—and if he sees Jack Straw, it can't do any good. How could it?"

"Ass!" said Algy, politely.

"Don't you see this? Old Jack Straw can prove that you've always lived at South Cove—wherever that is—and if you've always lived there, you can't have gone round on the ran-dan as Uncle Lovell suspects. Then there's the neighbours—I suppose you had neighbours?"

"I suppose you had neighbours?"

"Plenty."

"They all knew you?"

"Of course."

"Well, then, if nunky goes down to South Cove to inquire, he's bound to find that you're all O.K. and that his suspicions are simply silly. Catchy on."

"But will he go?" asked Harry, doubtfully.

"I'll make him."

"Oh!"

"I shall put it to him as an old sport, you know," said Algernon Aubrey. "He's bound to give you a chance. I'll make him, you'll see."

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thought of causing a heavy and irreparable loss to his best friend was acutely distressing to the nameless schoolboy.

On all counts, it was better for him to go—he realised it very clearly. Without Algy's friendship he felt he would scarcely care to remain at St. Kit's, if it came to that—and if he kept Algy's friendship, it would be ruin to his chum's prospects. It was better for him to go—better for him to relinquish his ambitions than to cause injury to his best friend. It was hard—bitterly hard; but he had to face it. He would not have recalled that promise to Colonel Lovell if he could.

A few more short weeks and he would be gone. At least, he would win the Fortescue prize; the exam. was on Monday, and he was practically sure of success. He would be able to help Jack Straw, as he had hoped; and, after all, the old sailorman, though disappointed, would be glad to see him home again.

He thought it over as he walked back to St. Kit's—his face grave, but cheerful. He little dreamed, at that moment, of what was to happen before the end of the term.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Ragging!

SUNDAY was not a happy day to the nameless schoolboy. He missed his chum sorely.

Never had he felt the sentence of "Coventry" so keenly as he felt it now. No. 5 Study was silent and desolate.

Even the far from fascinating society of Bunny Bootles was withdrawn. It was only when Algy was there that No. 5 was a land flowing with milk and honey. While Algy was away, Bunny Bootles did not honour No. 5 with his presence.

Harry Nameless had his "Sunday walk" by himself. It came as quite a relief to him to "do" Milton in the Sunday class with Mr. Lathley.

The nameless schoolboy still held his head proudly erect, and did not allow his face to betray his feelings. But undoubtedly that day his looks were more clouded than his form-fellows had seen them before.

There was no "swotting" that day for Harry Nameless. It was Sunday, a day on which swotting was barred; and, moreover, he knew that it was wiser not to grind on that day before the exam. He fixed all his thoughts on the examination that was to take place on Monday. Most of the day he spent in the open air, taking care, however, not to fatigue himself. He had to be at the top of his form the next day. He had eight competitors for the Fortescue prize—three of them in the Shell—and Babbie of the Shell, at least, was a dangerous rival. He could not afford to run risks.

The evening was fine and clear, though dark, when he turned out for his usual "trot" round the quadrangle. Not the remotest suspicion of danger crossed his mind as he left the lighted school-house and followed the gravel path round under the old oaks, in deep shadow.

Deep and dark shadow was round him, but he was familiar with every inch of the way, and he kept up an easy trot. And he was taken quite by surprise when dark forms leaped suddenly from the shadows and seized him.

He staggered, with four pairs of hands grasping him, and came down with a crash to the ground. The shock half dazed him.

"Bring him along!"

It was Compton's voice, in a panting whisper.

Dazed as he was, Harry struggled as he was lifted from the ground. But each arm and leg was grasped by one of his assailants, and he was helpless.

He was rushed along in the darkness, writhing.

His teeth set.

He knew that he was in the hands of Compton and Co., and was booked for a ragging. But even yet he did not suspect the truth.

A dim shape loomed up in the darkness. It was the old stone fountain in the quad.

"In with him!"

Harry struggled desperately, but in vain.

Splash!

He rolled into the great stone

basin, and the icy water covered him, even his face. He came up spluttering, only to find the grasp of hostile hands upon him again.

"You cowards!" he gasped.

"Let me go—let me go—"

"Duck him!"

Splash!

He went under again, gasping and choking.

"I—I say, that's enough, Comp.," muttered Tracy.

"Shut up, you fool. Duck him again."

Splash!

Harry Nameless struggled furiously. The water splashed round him in showers, and there were gasps and exclamations from the raggers, as they caught many of the splashes.

"Hang him! Keep him in—"

"Dash it all—I'm drenched—"

"Confound the fellow—"

"I'm soaked—"

"Keep him in, I tell you," hissed Compton.

Harry Nameless tore himself loose at last. He struggled away in the water, and rolled out of the stone basin on the other side.

He was soaked to the skin, icy cold, and his teeth were chattering together.

For a moment he was inclined to charge at the four raggers, in the dark; but he restrained himself. He started at a run for the schoolhouse. He was shivering with bitter cold, and he knew that it was dangerous to linger in his wet clothes. If he was ill—if he even caught a cold—it was all up with the exam. Of course, Compton had thought of that! Like a flash it came to Harry what was the meaning of that savage ragging.

He ran on, squelching out water with every step. He left wet foot-prints on the stone steps as he ran up to the open lighted doorway. He left wet marks across the hall when he entered.

Half-a-dozen fellows stared at him in amazement as he came in.

Harry ran up the stairs.

In the dormitory, Harry stripped off his drenched clothing, and rubbed himself down hurriedly with a towel.

His fingers were blue with cold, and almost frozen stiff; his teeth chattered like castanets. It was long before he could restore the circulation.

When he came down at last, he was very pale.

The fire was out in No. 5 Study, and he re-lighted it, and sat down before it to warm himself through.

His thoughts were bitter enough as he sat there.

No one came to the study; even Bunny Bootles did not look in.

Harry remained in No. 5 till bedtime, when he went quietly to the Fourth-form dormitory. Compton and Co. were already there, and they grinned as the nameless schoolboy came in.

Harry walked directly towards the captain of the Fourth, and the mocking grin died off Compton's face. He made a movement to back away, and a scornful smile crossed the nameless schoolboy's lips.

"I am not going to touch you—now," he said, quietly.

"Don't talk to me," said Compton, with an attempt at bluster.

"You're in Coventry."

Harry looked at him steadily.

"You've tried to crock me for the exam, to-morrow, Compton."

"I don't know what you're talkin' about."

"Whether you've succeeded or not, I don't know, yet," said Harry, unheeding the interruption.

"I shall know better to-morrow. But if you have succeeded in that, Compton, you shall be sorry for it. I will thrash you like a dog."

"You bullyin' cad!"

Harry Nameless turned away without another word.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Examination.

MR. LATHLEY, the master of the Fourth, glanced rather curiously at Harry Nameless at the breakfast-table the next morning. He could not help noticing that the junior did not look well.

Harry was feeling far from well that morning.

Fat and healthy as he was, the ordeal he had been through had told severely upon him. He had caught a cold, and though it was not developed yet, it lurked all over his system—his throat burned, his head was heavy, and his eyes had lost their brightness. His keenness, his fitness, had gone

—his energy had lost its edge. Compton had rather over than underdone the ragging—but for Harry's perfect health, he might have been made really ill. As it was, he was feeling "rotten" from head to foot—"rotten" was the only word that expressed it. He would have found it a heavy labour to go through the ordinary class work that morning. And it was the morning of the exam.—the exam, he had worked for through long weeks!

He knew that he was in no fit condition to enter the examination room—he knew that only a miracle could bring success now. But he did not think of standing out.

Ill or well, he had to face the music that morning, and do his best for old Jack Straw's sake. He was at liberty to take his name off the list if he liked; but tant was all. He did not care to do that. He had a faint hope that by sheer determination he might pull through yet.

He would—he would pull through, he told himself. But if he did not. His eyes burned as they rested on Vernon Compton, cheery and debonair, on the other side of the long table. If he failed, Vernon Compton should pay for it—and for many other transgressions at the same time.

While the other fellows were in form that morning, the entrants for the Fortescue were shepherded into the examination room. Three hours was the time allowed; and there was plenty of work to fill the three hours. Harry glanced over his paper when it was handed to him; and he saw that it was a paper he could have dealt with easily—after his long, long preparation for the test. He was confident that under normal conditions he would have finished his paper well within the specified time, and that he would have scored at least as many marks as any other fellow present.

But it was not to be!

By sheer effort of will, he concentrated his thoughts on the paper before him. But he worked slowly—and he knew that he was not working well. His head ached—his eyes were heavy. In spite of his determination, it was impossible to keep his attention concentrated.

But he worked on grimly.

He knew that he was better up in Latin than any other fellow in the room, but it did not serve him now. Passages that he would have elucidated without a second thought the day before now seemed to him crabbed and thorny, and full of difficulties.

He had barely half-done his paper when Mr. Lathley gave the signal for all papers to be handed in.

Harry rose with a heavy heart, and took his unfinished paper to the desk with the rest.

Then he left the examination room with the other fellows—with a black cloud on his face. Babbie of the Shell glanced after him curiously.

"That's the only chap I was afraid of," Babbie remarked to his chum Verney, "but dashed if he looks like a winner now."

"Anythin' but that," grinned Verney. "He don't seem to think so. Judgin' by his merry and bright expression, he will be at the tail-end."

"Just about, I should think," remarked Scott of the Fourth.

Harry Nameless went out into the quadrangle alone.

If Algy had been there, he would have found some comfort in his chum's society; but Algy was not there. There had been a letter from him, stating that he was going down to South Cove with Colonel Lovell, and that his "exeat" was extended for a few days.

Not before the middle of the week, at the earliest, was Harry Nameless likely to see his chum again. And never had he missed him so sorely.

But, for once, Harry was thinking less of his friend than of his foe.

Compton had robbed him of the fruits of his toil.

For long weeks he had worked and "swotted," and all for nothing—all to be robbed of his prize by treachery at the last moment.

It was not like Harry to nourish bitterness in his breast; but for once he could not help it. He thought of old Jack Straw, in his cottage on the cliff at South Cove—of his needs, that could not be supplied. This opportunity had come

of repaying a fraction of what he owed the kind old man—of helping him in age, as Jack Straw had helped him in childhood. And the opportunity had been taken from him—by the foulest of foul play.

The result of the examination was to be announced on the morrow, when the Head was to award the prize. Perhaps the nameless schoolboy was still clinging to a faint hope—he knew his paper was bad, but it was barely possible that the others were worse. At all events, he avoided Vernon Compton that day—much to the great Comp.'s relief.

It was the following day, at tea-time, when Harry Nameless was alone in his study, that Bunny Bootles put a grinning face in at the doorway.

"Ain't you anxious to see it?" he asked.

Harry looked up without speaking.

He was feeling better that day; the threatened cold had been staved off, and he was feeling more like his old self. Indeed, he had a thought that if the exam. had been postponed for one day, he might have done well enough.

"Ain't you anxious to see it?" continued Bunny. "All the other fellows have been staring at it ever since it was put up."

"At what?"

"The list."

"What list?" exclaimed Harry, impatiently.

Bunny sniggered.

"Of course, you don't know anything about the rules here," he said, scornfully; "a blessed outsider like you! Don't you know that the list is put up after an exam., as soon as the result's known, with the fellows' names and the number of marks."

"Oh!" exclaimed Harry, and he rose quickly.

"He, he, he! You needn't break your neck to see it, though—your name's at the bottom. Babbie's bagged the quids, and you're last on the list!"

Harry's heart sank. His last faint hope, such as it was, vanished.

He brushed past the fat junior, and hurried downstairs. There were still a few fellows hanging about the notice-board, and they grinned as Harry Nameless came up. A glance at the paper was enough for the nameless schoolboy—Bunny had told him the facts.

He turned away without a word and strode towards the door of the Glory Hole. Some of the juniors round the board glanced at one another.

"There's going to be ructions in the Glory Hole this evening!" said Stubbs. "I'm going to see the circus."

"Same here!"

And the juniors followed Harry Nameless.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Paying the Penalty.

THERE was already a crowd of the Fourth Form in the Glory Hole. Vernon Compton had called a meeting in that celebrated apartment to settle certain important matters in connection with the junior football club. As a matter of fact, nobody but Compton quite understood the importance of the meeting; and Durance, at least, guessed Comp.'s real motive. Compton had called the meeting hurriedly after looking at the announcement of the Fortescue result. He wanted to have a crowd about him of his friends and backers when Harry Nameless started on the warpath—as Comp. knew must happen soon. He was right on that point. The flinging open of the door of the Glory Hole, and the abrupt entrance of the nameless schoolboy, interrupted the meeting.

"Here he comes, Comp.!" murmured Durance. "Pull up your socks, old man. He looks wratny."

Compton answered only by a fierce scowl.

The buzz of voices in the room died away, and all eyes were turned on Harry Nameless as he strode towards the captain of the Fourth. The look on his face made a tremor pass through Vernon Compton; for the moment, he wished fervently that he had never thought of that cunning scheme for "dishing" the Foundation junior.

He pulled himself together, however, and faced the newcomer with as much coolness as he could muster.

"Get on! of this, Nameless," he

said, sharply. "You're not wanted here. This is a football meetin'."

Harry did not heed. He came straight on towards Compton, his hands clenched, and his eyes glittering under knitted brows.

"Collar him and put him out!" shouted Compton.

No one stirred.

A number of juniors followed Harry Nameless into the room, and Catesby closed the door after they were in.

So far from showing any desire to "put out" the nameless schoolboy, the juniors seemed rather inclined to watch the proceedings with something like enjoyment.

Compton breathed hard.

He had carried all the Lower School with him in ostracising the nameless junior; but there was a limit. The trick that had been played on Harry just before the exam. was pretty well understood by the Fourth, and it was condemned on all sides. Even the fellows who had helped Compton were not proud of themselves or anxious to have their part in the affair known. And all the rest considered that, as Compton had done it, Compton could answer for it without their assistance. Indeed, some began to suspect, as well as Durance, why Comp. had called that superfluous meeting at that precise time.

"Will you get outside, Nameless?" panted Compton.

"No!"

"Put that cad out!" exclaimed the captain of the Fourth.

"Put him out yourself, if you don't want him here," said Elliott.

Harry stopped a couple of paces from Compton. The captain of the Fourth backed a step.

All eyes were fixed on them; and not a hand was raised. It dawned upon Vernon Compton that he had only himself to depend upon at that moment.

Harry glanced round at the crowd of faces.

"I think you fellows know what that cad has done," he said, his voice trembling with anger.

"You've sent me to Coventry. That's your own affair. But on Sunday night that coward, with three others, caught me napping in the quad, after dark, and ducked me in the fountain—and held me in the water a long time. On Monday I was too rotten to work in the exam. You all know that he did it. He dare not deny it."

Compton shrugged his shoulders.

It was not of much use to deny what every fellow present knew to be the truth.

"I am not sure who the others were," continued Harry Nameless.

"I think Tracy was one. I don't care about that. It was Compton's doing, and Compton is going to answer for it. I've lost the exam. that I've been swotting for for six weeks. Compton, before all the Form I call you a coward, and a scoundrel. Now put up your hands."

Compton put his hands behind him.

"I'm not goin' to fight you," he said, sullenly. "I've fought you once, and given you best. I'm not goin' to fight you again."

"You are going to be thrashed, whether you fight or not," answered Harry Nameless. "You can please yourself."

"You rotten bully—"

"Stand up to him, Comp.!" whispered Durance.

Harry Nameless advanced a step, and Compton backed away, a savage glitter in his eyes.

"Stand back, you rotter!"

He cast a fierce glance round.

The meeting was there—there were two dozen fellows in the room, or more. But the crowd brought no safety to the plotting junior; they were only witnesses of his humiliation.

He backed further away, and there was a murmur from the Fourth-formers, and the word "funk" was plainly audible.

"Put up your hands, you cad!" said Harry Nameless, between his teeth.

Smack!

His open palm struck the captain of the Fourth across the face, with a crack like a pistol shot.

Compton staggered.

The scorn in every face stung him then, and he made a savage spring at Harry Nameless.

In a moment more, they were fighting furiously.

Crash!

Compton went down heavily.

"Man down!" grinned Wheat-

ford. "Pick him up, somebody. He can't get up by himself."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm waiting for you, Compton," said Harry Nameless, after the captain of the Fourth had sprawled on the floor for fully half-a-minute.

Compton raised himself on his elbow.

"Hang you! I give you best."

"You are not thrashed yet," said Harry Nameless, grimly. "You should have thought of this before you crooked me for the exam."

"By gad, you should, you know, Comp.," remarked Durance. "Get up, man; you're not licked yet."

"Funk!"

"And that fellow's the captain of the Form!" ejaculated Stubbs. "I fancy the Fourth will want a new captain after this."

"Stand up to it, Comp.!"

"Get up, man!"

"Funk!"

Compton staggered up. Shame was stronger than fear, and once more he faced the lashing fists of the nameless schoolboy.

The juniors looked on breathlessly.

Compton had screwed up his courage to the sticking-point, and for a full minute he fought gamely enough. But he soon began to give ground, and backed away, and backed further and further, till he was driven fairly round the long mahogany table.

The Fourth-formers were grinning now.

Their derisive remarks lashed Vernon Compton like whips; he realised, only too clearly, that his hold on the Fourth Form of St. Kit's was going, if it had not already gone. After this bitter humiliation, he would have fallen from his high estate. Contempt, it is said, will pierce even the shell of the tortoise; and Comp. was by no means thick-skinned. But there was no help for it—his courage failed him, and he backed away, and backed further, till he was almost running backwards.

Loud laughter rang through the Glory Hole now.

Harry Nameless stopped at last. "Will you come on, you coward?" he exclaimed.

Compton panted, but did not answer.

"That's enough, then," said Harry, contemptuously. "You haven't had half the licking you've asked for; but you've shown yourself up as a coward as well as a hooligan and a rotter. If you like it better that way, please yourself."

And he turned on his heel and walked out of the Glory Hole.

Compton panted for breath.

He hardly dared to look at the faces round him. In every face he knew was scorn and contempt and derision. He glanced at Durance, and Durance turned his back on him, with a shrug of the shoulders. He looked at Tracy—and Rex Tracy carefully avoided meeting his eye.

"Funk!" shouted a dozen voices.

With a crimson face, Vernon Compton limped to the door. Nothing seemed so desirable at that moment as to get out of the sight of so many scornful eyes.

A howl of derision followed him, as he disappeared.

Compton almost staggered away to the top study.

He had not been much hurt in the fight, such as it was; but he writhed with shame and rage and humiliation. He had lost his place in the school—lost it for ever. He knew that. Nobody in the Fourth would ever forget that scene in the Glory Hole. It was very doubtful whether he would remain captain of the Form; but if he did, his position would never be what it had been of old. He shut himself up in his study, and the feelings of rage and hatred and shame ran riot in his breast.

Vengeance upon the nameless schoolboy was his thought now—vengeance upon the fellow who had shamed him; vengeance, by any means, and the more savage and implacable, the better. That was all that remained to Vernon Compton.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

A Letter from Algy.

THERE was a letter from Algernon Aubrey St. Leger the next day, in the afternoon, and Harry Nameless was very glad to receive it. It was Wednesday, a half-holiday, and Harry had the afternoon to him-

self. Football was going on, on Little Side, but the nameless schoolboy had no concern with that. The Fourth were playing the Shell, and Vernon Compton captained the Fourth Form side. It was not easy for Compton, with all his nerve, to face a crowd of his form-fellows again, after the scene in the Glory Hole. And the derisive grin that greeted him on the football ground stung him to the quick. It was likely to be a long time before his humiliation was forgotten—if ever it was. He played badly enough that afternoon, which was not surprising.

Harry Nameless gave little thought to his enemy. He had lost the prize he had laboured for, and it was a heavy blow; but he was not a fellow to keep on mourning over what could not be helped. He tried to dismiss the matter from his mind. Algy's letter helped. It was a very cheerful letter, and quite in Algy's style.

about him, I'm sure I shall like the old sport no end. I hope nunky will. Depend on it, old bean, everything is going to turn out all right.

"Nunky is still very grim on the subject of you. He is convinced that he knows your face quite well, and that you've related tarradiddles on the subject. Don't be waxy; man can't help what he thinks. Mr. Straw will convince him all right, I'm sure. As soon as nunky knows he's made a mistake, he will own up like a little man; he's a real sportsman, you know, though a bit rusty and crusty and dusty."

"I hope you've bagged the Fortescue. The names should be out on Tuesday—to-day. I wish I knew! But I feel sure you are rolling in the quids by this time. Don't lend any of them to Bunny. Expect to see me Thursday morning. Au revoir, old bean.—ALGY."

Harry Nameless smiled as he

gates. It was a rough and windy afternoon; and Harry spent it in a ramble over Wicke Heath. He did not return to St. Kit's till dusk, when he went into Hall to tea. He did not care for tea in the study in Algy's absence.

As a rule, when the nameless schoolboy turned up to tea in Hall, there was a good space left on either side of him, and the rest of the juniors displayed a total ignorance of his presence there; the sentence of Coventry was rigidly enforced there. But on this occasion Harry Nameless soon became conscious of a relaxation.

Licke dropped into the seat beside him and gave him a nod.

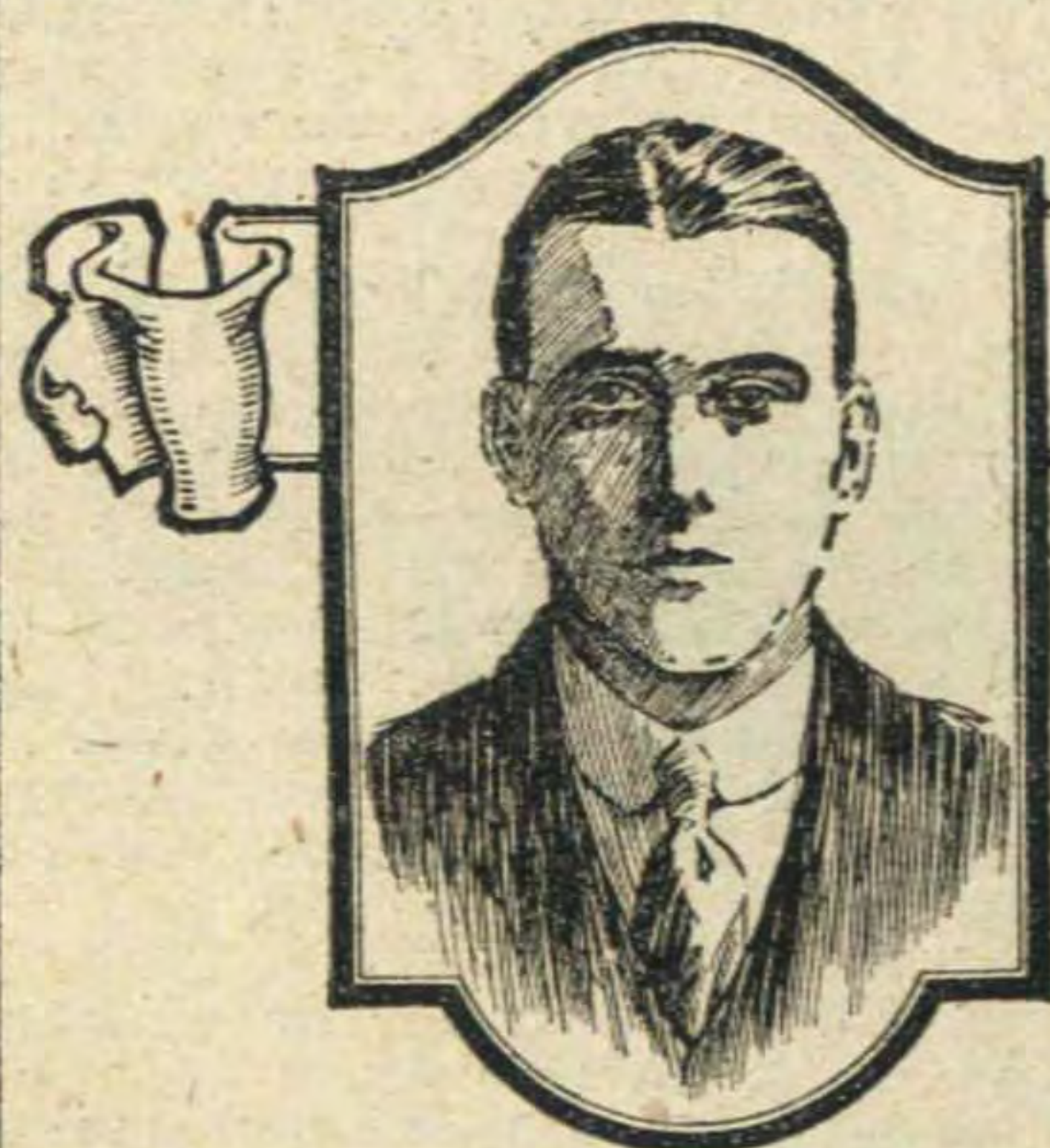
"I've been out with the bug-hunters," said Licke.

Harry nodded.

Durance passed him bread and butter, and Jones minor pushed the marmalade dish his way.

Harry smiled a little.

"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.

"Footerprobs" No. 1 Result.

I shall have to crave the indulgence of my readers this week. On account of the Christmas holidays this issue of SCHOOL AND SPORT will be printed before Christmas, and it does not give me sufficient time to properly judge the thousands of entries I have received from competitors in our first "Footerprob" Competition. The result will appear in these columns next Monday.

OUR NEXT NUMBER.

There is another splendid programme for next week. Mr. Clifford Clive's long complete story is entitled:

"WHO SHALL BE CAPTAIN?"

and deals with the great election in the Fourth Form at St. Kit's. The excitement and fun is fast and furious, and honours are divided until a newcomer arrives at St. Kit's. This newcomer is Bob Rake of Australia, and the lucky candidate who gains his favour becomes Captain of the Fourth.

Who is it? You cannot miss this great story, and the only way to

make certain of your copy of SCHOOL AND SPORT is by ordering it in advance.

"THE CRUISE OF THE TARTAR."

There will be an extra long instalment of John Winterton's sport and adventure story, and next week I shall start my readers' own feature. Have you sent in a story yet? Every story published will be paid for at the rate of half-a-crown each.

There will be another one-week competition, so altogether No. 5 of SCHOOL AND SPORT will be better than ever.

1922.

Your Editor wishes all his readers a Happy New Year, and hopes that British girls and boys in every part of the Empire will have heaps of good luck during 1922.

MY CORRESPONDENTS.

Letters of congratulation and praise from readers come to hand each day. I have now got a list of thousands of names, and I am afraid I rashly promised in my chat last week that I would print the names of all readers who wrote to me. This I cannot do without filling an entire edition, so I must take this opportunity of thanking you all for your kind letters, and

I will, from time to time, publish the names in batches.

ANXIOUS TIMES.

I have received a number of complaints from readers saying they find their newsgagent does not stock SCHOOL AND SPORT.

Others tell me they only heard of the paper by accident, and therefore missed getting Nos. 1 and 2. When a new paper arrives on the scene this is bound to occur, but it is a real help to me when readers write and tell me these little details, as I am naturally anxious to make a big success of our paper.

If you have any difficulty whatever in getting SCHOOL AND SPORT let me know.

If you have missed Nos. 1, 2, and 3 you can easily obtain them even now, if you ask your newsagent to order them for you.

Your sincere friend,

Your Editor.

"Dear old bean," it commenced.

"I hope you are going strong, and not missing me much. I'm off to South Cove with nunky on Wednesday. I wanted him to make it Monday; but it couldn't be done; nunky has his own affairs, you know—not of very much importance, I daresay; but he thinks so."

"Nunky is unusually calm and reasonable. He was no end flabbergasted when I meandered into his club on Saturday evening. He was there, snorting over politics with some other old fogies, and he nearly fell down when I walked up and said 'Hallo, nunky!'"

"But he was glad to see me. Not only because I'm an awfully nice chap, you know. I see right through nunky. He's chinned the pater, and got him to get me a further exeat from the Head. I can stay away till the wind up of the term if I like. Guess why?"

"Nunky hasn't told me; but I read the dear old boy like an open book. He's glad of the chance of keeping me away from my dear old pal!!! He thinks you're not coming back to St. Kit's next term, and he calculates I shall never see you again. I'm very kind to the poor old soul; I believe in treating grown-ups with gentleness and tact. They need it, poor things."

"We shall be at South Cove about the time you get this letter; and interviewing your respected guardian, or whatever he is, Mr. Straw. From what you've told me

read the letter, and he read it a second time. It was a cheering letter; and it seemed to bring Algy's cheery presence back to him.

As for faith in Algy's mission, he had little or none. Jack Straw, certainly, could prove, and his neighbours could prove, if necessary, what kind of a life Harry Nameless had led at South Cove. But was Colonel Lovell likely to take much note of evidence, in his bitter prejudice? And in spite of evidence, the strange fact remained that the Colonel was convinced that he had seen the nameless schoolboy before he came to St. Kit's; his conviction was too strong to be shaken by evidence to the contrary. Harry felt sure of that. For he knew that the stern old man was just and honourable; without a strong conviction in his mind, he would never have uttered the words at St. Kit's which had turned the school against Harry.

But though Algy's letter gave him little hope, it brought comfort; with its assurance of his chum's loyalty. That the Colonel would desire to keep Algy away for the remainder of the term, and prevent any further meeting between him and his chum, was certain; but Harry did not think it was likely that he would succeed. He would see Algy again, once at least, before he left St. Kit's for ever.

He put the letter in his pocket at last, and strolled out of the school

It was the beginning of the relaxation of the severe rules of "Coventry", and it was due to the fall of Vernon Compton from his high estate. Compton's influence counted for little now in the Fourth Form of St. Kit's, and without Compton keeping them up to the mark, many of the fellows were naturally inclined to let the matter "slide." It was some weeks now since Colonel Lovell had been at St. Kit's, and schoolboy memories are short.

Harry Nameless wondered whether, after all, he could have succeeded in living down that painful episode, and holding up his head at St. Kit's, in spite of the Colonel. But that was not to be thought of now. His promise was given, and the end of the term was near at hand, when he was to leave for ever. That was his own secret, so far, shared only with his chum. And bitterly as he regretted leaving the school he had learned to love, he did not regret that he had given his word.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Bunny Asks for It.

"DURANCE, old top—"

"Buzz off, you fat blue-bottle."

"I say, Durance—"

Dick Durance made a motion with his foot. Bunny Bootles retreated a pace, but he did not depart.

"I say, old top, just listen a minute. I'm stony—"

"Go hon!"

"Broke to the wide, old fellow!" said Bunny, pathetically.

"I suppose you would be while St. Leger's away."

"If you think I borrow money of St. Leger, you ass—"

"I know you're not goin' to borrow any of me," answered Durance. "Roll away and don't worry."

"Hasn't your uncle sent you that pound note he promised?" grinned Tracy.

"The fact is—"

"Yes, let's hear the facts," said Tracy, with a chuckle; "I like Bunny's facts; they're as good as any fiction."

"Of course, I'm telling you the exact truth," said Bunny. "The fact is, I did get that pound note from my uncle—"

"And you've framed it and hung it up in the study?" asked Durance, sarcastically.

"No—no."

"Where is it then?"

"I—I've lent it to Nameless—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Honest injun," said Bunny.

"You know how hard up his people are! He's got the bailiffs in at home, or something of the kind. And—and I'm a kind-hearted chap. So I—I gave him my pound note."

"Pile it on," said Tracy.

"I did, you know. 'Here you are, you poor rotter,' I said to him; 'you're a rank outsider, but here you are—take it!' And he thanked me for it with tears in his eyes."

"I can see him doing it!" said Durance.

"Yes, and it's left me stony," said Bunny; "so if you'd like to lend me half-a-crown, old top—"

"I wouldn't."

"Even a bob—"

"Not even a bob. You shouldn't be so jolly generous!" grinned Durance.

"I know it's a fault; I can't help being generous," said the fatuous Bunny. "I've given more than a pound to that poor devil Nameless, I can tell you. Yaroooooooh!"

Bunny yelled as a grasp fell upon the back of his collar. Durance and Tracy roared with laughter. Harry Nameless had come along in time to hear Cuthbert Archibald making that free use of his name.

"What's that, you lying young rascal?" exclaimed Harry, indignantly.

"Yow! Leggo! I wasn't saying anything—"

"You were saying you had given me money, you rotter."

Bunny jerked himself away.

"D-d-don't you speak to me!"

he gasped. "You're in Coventry, you know. Here! keep off, you beast!"

And Bunny fled incontinently.

"Stop! I'll—"

Bunny vanished up the staircase with a speed that was quite remarkable, considering the weight he had to carry.

Harry Nameless followed up the stairs with a frowning brow. He was not pursuing Bunny Bootles, as a matter of fact; he had to go to the study for prep. Bunny had taken refuge in No. 5 Study, and he quaked as he heard the nameless schoolboy's footsteps approaching the door.

Bunny knew what he deserved, and he quaked.

"Oh, dear! The beast is after me!" gasped Bunny.

He scudded across to the window, almost resolving to trust his fat person to the ivy. But he could not quite make up his mind to that. He dived under the table instead and squatted there, still quaking.

Harry Nameless came into the study and closed the door.

He did not glance under the table; it did not even occur to him that the fat junior was squatting there in hiding.

He took out his books and sat down at the table.

Bunny groaned inwardly.

The beast had evidently come there to work, and Bunny had his prep. to do, too. He could have done his prep. in some other study, but he could not venture to show himself. A guilty conscience held Bunny Bootles enchained under the table, with Harry's boots only a few inches from his fat knees.

It came as a great relief to Bunny when footsteps approached the door at last, and there was a tap. The door opened, and from under the table Bunny Bootles recognised the elegant trousers of Vernon Compton in the doorway.

"Nameless!"

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.

hardly grasp it. "Why, you're mad—you must be out of your senses, Oliphant! How dare you accuse me of anything of the sort?"

Oliphant knitted his brows. "Do you deny it, then?" he snapped.

"Deny it!" shouted Harry, savagely. "I don't take the trouble to deny it. I only say you are either a fool or a liar."

"What?" roared Oliphant.

It was the first time a Fourth-form junior had used language like that to the captain of St. Kit's.

"A fool or a liar!" shouted Harry, fiercely, "and I'll say so before all the school."

Oliphant's jaw set grimly.

"Do you understand that you'll be taken before the Head if you keep this up?" he asked, quietly.

"I demand to be taken before the Head, and if you don't take me there, I shall go myself. Do you think I would lie down under a rotten, lying accusation like this?" exclaimed Harry, passionately.

"That's enough," said Oliphant, curtly. "Open the door, will you, Wake? I'll take him to the Head at once."

Wake opened the door.

"Come," said Oliphant, roughly.

"I'm ready," answered Harry Nameless, disdainfully.

And with his head erect, though with a hot flush in his cheeks, he walked by Oliphant's side to the Head's study. A dozen fellows saw them go, and marked the sternness in Oliphant's rugged face and the flush in Harry's, and the blaze in his eyes. And in five minutes most of the Lower School of St. Kit's knew that something was "up," and that Harry Nameless had been taken in to the Head by the captain of the school.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Before the Head.

DR. CHEYNE was chatting with Mr. Lathley in his study when Oliphant knocked at the door. In response to the Head's "Come in," Oliphant opened the door and walked in with the accused junior. Dr. Cheyne adjusted his spectacles, and glanced at them.

"What is it, Oliphant? What has happened?" It was clear enough from Harry's look that something very unusual had happened.

"It's a rotten thing, sir," said Oliphant; "I'm sorry to have to report anything of the kind. It's theft."

"Theft!" exclaimed the Head, with a start, nearly dropping his gold-rimmed pince-nez.

"Yes, sir!"

"But surely Nameless has not—" began Mr. Lathley. The Fourth-form master had a very high opinion of his nameless pupil.

"I think so, sir; but I'd better state exactly what has happened, and you can question Nameless," said Oliphant, looking at the Head.

"Pray do so," said the Head, quietly.

Oliphant explained succinctly. He had been out with Wake, and the money-drawer in his desk had been intact when he left the study. On his return he had found Nameless in the room, not having sent for him. Later he found that the drawer had been forced and the money gone.

Harry Nameless calmed down considerably as he listened to Oliphant's explanation. He realised that, whatever became of the charge, there was no question of Oliphant being a party to any foul play. The captain of St. Kit's had jumped to a conclusion, that was all. And it was not, at the first glance, a conclusion without some grounds.

Dr. Cheyne listened patiently to the prefect, and when he had finished turned his glimmering glasses upon Harry.

"What have you to say Nameless?" he asked, gently enough. And again it came into Harry's mind that here, at least, he would get fair play. The Head had only one desire—to get at the truth of the matter. That there was a thief in the school was certain; but the junior upon whom suspicion had fallen was to have every opportunity of proving his innocence—if he was innocent. To his thoughts on that point Dr. Cheyne's face gave no clue.

"I know nothing, whatever about the money, sir," answered Harry, calmly. "It seems to me infamous that I should be suspected."

"You do not deny Oliphant's statements?"

"No, sir; I was in the study."

"What were you doing there?"

"I was told that Oliphant wanted me, and that I was to wait till he came in if he wasn't in the study. I waited."

"If that point is proved, Oliphant, Nameless's presence in the study will be fully accounted for," said the Head, mildly.

"Quite so, sir," said Oliphant. He reddened a little, wondering whether he had been too hasty.

"Of course, Nameless can say who told him to come there, and if the fact bears him out—"

"Precisely. Who told you to go to Oliphant's study, Nameless?"

"Compton of the Fourth, sir."

"Oliphant, will you kindly call Compton here?"

Oliphant left the study, smitten with still deeper doubts as to whether he had been hasty.

sternness in his voice now.

"Silence, sir! Now, Compton, pray remember, and speak very carefully."

Nameless states that you gave him a message, supposed to come from Oliphant, which caused him to go to Oliphant's study and wait there. Do you deny that this is the case?"

"Most certainly, sir," answered Compton, calmly. "Nameless has been sent to Coventry, sir, and I never speak to him at all."

"Have you spoken to him at all this evening?"

"No, sir."

"You are sure, Compton?"

"Perfectly sure, sir."

Harry's eyes blazed at his old enemy. And yet there was a sense of unreality about the scene. Bitterly as Compton hated him he could scarcely understand that the fellow would stand before the Head and utter deliberate falsehoods. And what was his object? If

Head, with considerable dryness of manner. "Very unfortunate, indeed. If Compton played a foolish trick upon you in sending you to wait in Oliphant's study, there is no reason whatever why he should not admit as much. Unless you can produce a witness of some sort, I am bound to accept Compton's statement that he did not give you any such pretended message from Oliphant."

"He came in when all the fellows were at prep., sir," said Harry. "I suppose he picked a time when there would be nobody about."

"Why should he?"

"I don't know, unless because I'm in Coventry, and he mayn't have liked to be seen speaking to me."

The Head made a gesture.

"I fear, Nameless, that Compton's statement invalidates your assertion that you received a message calling you to Oliphant's

sometimes fetched things for him from the tuck shop, and once or twice he's taken the money from a drawer in his desk."

The Head made Compton a sign to leave the study. The captain of the Fourth went quietly out.

"I believe, Nameless, that you have much less money than most of the boys at this school," the Head resumed, when Compton was gone.

"I—I think so, sir."

"You have recently been in need of money, I think?"

"That's no secret, sir, owing to Booties prying and tattling my affairs about the school," said Harry, bitterly. "But it was not for myself that I wanted the money."

"No doubt. It was this need of money that caused you to work very hard for the Fortescue prize."

"I admit it, sir."

"But you did not gain the prize," continued the Head, "and the pressing need of money, I presume, continues."

Harry's cheeks burned.

"I—I suppose so, sir."

There was a pause. Oliphant's face was very grim, and Mr. Lathley avoided looking at Harry. But the Head's keen eyes remained fixed upon him.

"I will give you time to reflect, Nameless," said the Head at last. "Take your time if you have any confession to make."

"I have nothing to confess, sir. I do not need to reflect to know whether I am a thief or not," said Harry, indignantly.

"Very well," said the Head. "If you have nothing to confess the matter must go further. You are ready, I presume, to submit to a search?"

"I am ready to submit to anything you think necessary, sir."

"Please touch the bell, Oliphant."

Oliphant rang, and Tuckle, the page, appeared. Tuckle blinked from one grave face to another. Harry's cheeks burned hotly; every nerve in his body revolted at the indignity that was to be put upon him. But he realised that there was no help for it, and he kept cool.

"If you have any money about you, Nameless, kindly lay it on my desk for the present," said the Head.

Harry laid his money on the desk. There were two pound notes and some silver.

"What money was missed from your drawer, Oliphant?"

"A five pound note and two pound notes, sir."

"Have you the numbers?"

"I have the number of the five pound note, sir. Not of the others."

"Give me the number, please."

Oliphant copied it from his pocket-book upon a sheet of paper—0003579.

"These two pound notes are yours, Nameless?"

"Yes, sir, they are all I have left of five pounds I had when I came to school."

"Tuckle, will you oblige me by making a thorough search of Nameless and laying upon my desk anything you find upon him."

"Yessir," gasped Tuckle.

And the search began.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

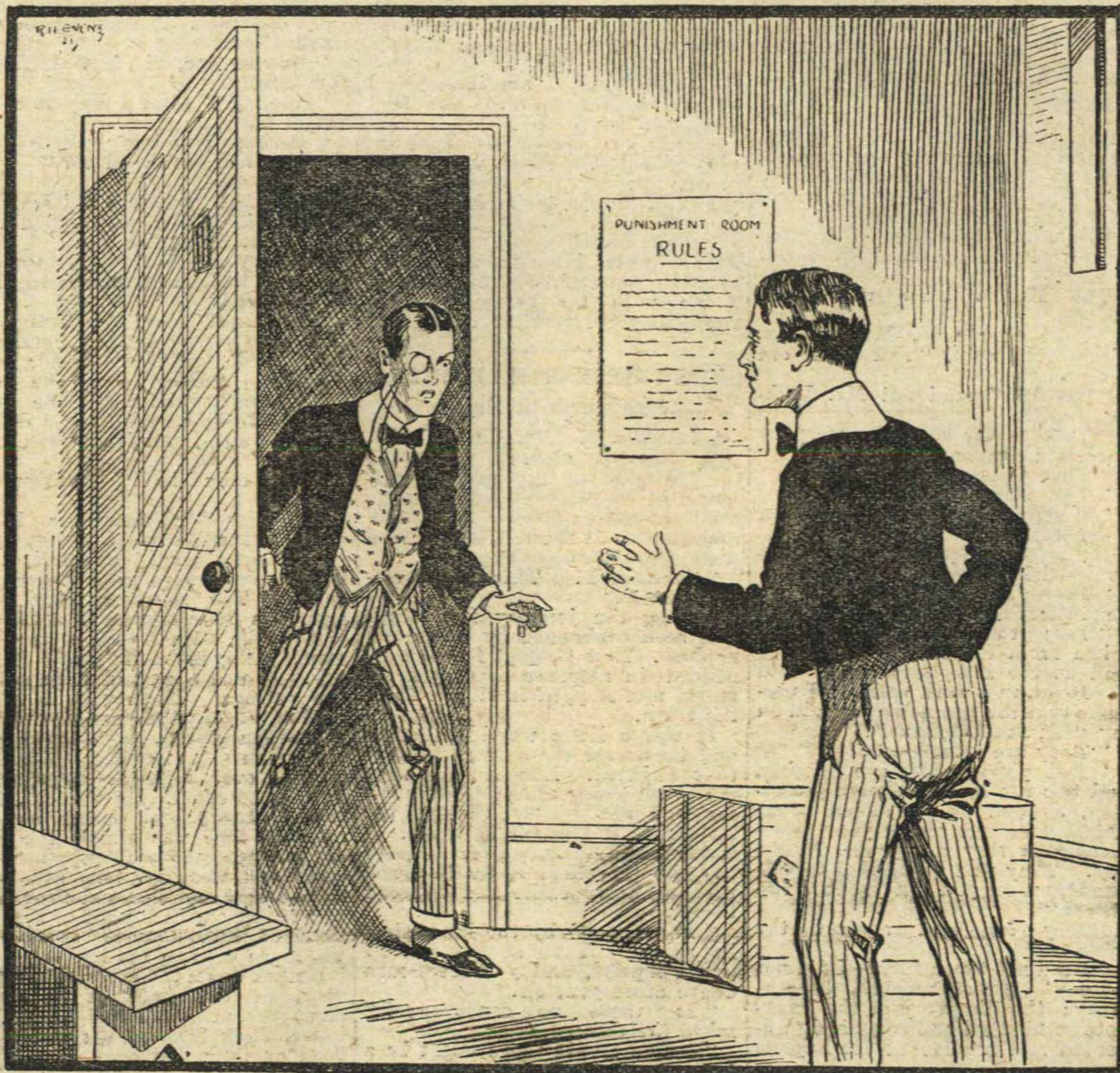
The Proof of Guilt.

HARRY NAMELESS submitted quietly. His position was humiliating enough, but any objection would only have strengthened the suspicion already black enough against him. He realised, too, that a search was the simplest way of proving his innocence. The theft had been discovered so quickly that it was improbable that the thief would have had time to conceal his plunder in some safe place. If the notes were not found about him or in his belongings it was a point very much in his favour.

A good many articles were turned to light in Tuckle's search. Several letters—two from Algy—and a pencil, a fountain pen, a few stamps, and a pocket-knife. The pocket-knife was glanced at very keenly by the Head. It was a combination knife, with several implements in it, and it occurred to all present at once that it might have been used in forcing open the flimsy lock of Oliphant's money drawer.

But no money was found on the junior excepting the amount he had placed before the Head and which he declared to be his own.

"That is all, Tuckle?"



"I'm sacked—turned out—in disgrace!" panted Harry Nameless. "On my word of honour, St. Leger, I am innocent—as innocent as you are!" (See page 10.)

Harry's answers were calm and ready, and it seemed incredible that he would be guilty of the folly of calling a witness if he was not certain of what that witness was bound to say. A few minutes would settle the matter.

Mr. Lathley's countenance cleared. It would have been a great shock to the Fourth-form master to find that his opinion of the nameless schoolboy was ill-founded.

There was silence in the study while they waited; but in a few minutes Oliphant entered, followed by Vernon Compton.

The latter did not glance at Harry. He looked cool and unconcerned, only slightly surprised. He fixed his glance upon the Head.

"Oliphant says you want to speak to me, sir?"

"Yes, Compton. You have not told Compton what is toward, Oliphant?"

"Not a word, sir. I simply told him he was wanted."

"Very good. Compton, did you take a message from Oliphant to Nameless a short time ago?"

"No, sir."

"I should rather have said, a pretended message, telling Nameless to go to Oliphant's study and wait there for him?"

"No, sir."

Harry Nameless started forward. He could scarcely believe his ears.

"Compton!" he exclaimed, in a choking voice. "You—"

"Stand back, Nameless!" said the Head, and there was a note of

Oliphant had not told him of the theft, why should he utter these lies? If he did not know of the theft he could not know the harm he was doing his enemy.

"Very well," said the Head, turning to Harry. "Nameless, do you repeat that Compton gave you the message you allude to which accounts for your presence in Oliphant's study?"

"Yes, sir."

"You have heard Compton deny it."

"He lies," exclaimed Harry, bitterly. "It's pretty well known in the school that Compton hates me. He's lying now to do me an injury."

"Compton does not even know why you are being questioned, Nameless," said the Head, coldly. "Kindly do not make wild statements. This is a matter for proof. Was anyone present when Compton gave you this message, as you state?"

"No, sir."

"Where do you say he spoke to you?"

"In my study."

"You were alone there?"

"Quite alone, at prep. One of my study-mates is away from the school at present."

"Ah, yes; St. Leger. But you have another—Booties—where was he?"

"I don't know."

"He was not in the study?"

"No, sir."

"It is unfortunate that you happened to be alone when Compton gave you this message, upon which so much depends," said the

study. It is quite possible, however, that you may have been there for some reason of your own, unconnected with the theft. Had you any such reason?"

"No, sir; I went because of what Compton told me."

The Head coughed.

"At what time did you leave your study, Oliphant?"

"About half-past seven, sir."

"And you returned—"

"At eight."

"You are sure the drawer was intact when you left?"

"Quite sure."

"Then the theft must have been committed between half-past seven and eight o'clock. At what time did you reach the study, Nameless?"

"I had been there about a quarter of an hour when Oliphant came in, sir."

"Then, on your own statement, in the previous quarter of an hour the theft must have been committed by some other person."

"I suppose so."

"Did you see anyone near Oliphant's study?"

"No one, sir."

"What did you do while you waited there?"

"I sat in a chair, sir."

"Did you know there was money in the drawer?"

"I never thought about it."

"But, if you had thought about it, would you have known that there was money there?"

"I might have," said Harry, flushing. "I've seen Oliphant take money from the drawer. So have fifty other fellows, I suppose. I've

"Nothink else, sir," said Tuckle. The search had been thorough enough; the watching eyes had made sure of that.

Dr. Cheyne rose. "Very good. Then we shall proceed to Nameless's study."

The Head led the way. Following him came Harry Nameless, Oliphant, and Mr. Lathley. Tuckle brought up the rear.

A hundred eyes at least watched that stately procession to the Fourth Form passage. There was suppressed excitement all over St. Kit's now. The facts were not yet known. But the juniors did not need telling that something very unusual indeed was "on."

At a respectful distance behind the procession a crowd of juniors fell in and marched in pursuit. Half the Fourth and the Shell were hanging about the staircase end of the passage by the time the Head reached No. 5 Study.

Bunny Bootles was there. He had finished prep, and was making a minute examination of the study cupboard, in the hope that Harry Nameless might have left something of an eatable nature there. His search was fruitless, and as he heard steps in the doorway Bunny threw a scornful remark over his fat shoulder.

"You needn't think I'm after your grub, you beast. I knew there wasn't any. I wouldn't touch it, anyhow. Oh, crumbs," added Bunny as he sighted the awe-inspiring figure in cap and gown that loomed up in the doorway. "I—I didn't know. Oh, dear—is—is it you, sir?"

The Head paid no heed to Bunny Bootles.

"Kindly point out your—er—belongings to Tuckle, Nameless," he said.

"Yes, sir."

Bunny retreated into the window recess and looked on at the scene with wide-open eyes.

Little was said in the study.

Harry pointed out his few belongings. Most of the furnishing of the study was the property of Algernon Aubrey St. Leger.

His belongings were carefully searched by Tuckle, under the eyes of the Head, Mr. Lathley, and Oliphant.

There was no result. "Nameless has a box in the dormitory, I think, Mr. Lathley," said the Head.

"Certainly."

"We will proceed to the dormitory."

The procession restarted after the interval, so to speak. But for the grave countenance of Dr. Cheyne there would have been something just a little absurd in it. They proceeded up the dormitory stairs, and in the distance behind, as before, followed a crowd of juniors.

Dr. Cheyne did not look back, and was apparently unaware of the almost feverish interest his proceedings excited among the fags.

Oliphant turned on the light in the dormitory.

Harry's box, which stood at the foot of his bed, was turned out methodically by Tuckle, who was now warming to his work, Harry having handed over the key. The nameless schoolboy stood and looked on with a scornful smile on his lips.

Again the search was in vain; the trunk was drawn blank.

Then there was a pause.

A faint murmur came from the passage outside, and Dr. Cheyne, turning his head in that direction, saw the doorway crammed with eager faces.

Those faces met the Head's stern, rebuking glance and vanished like ghosts at cockerow.

"Mr. Lathley, your boys have lockers in the form room, I think?"

"Yes, sir."

"We will proceed there."

They proceeded.

The crowd of juniors in the dormitory passage broke into tumultuous flight as the Head emerged and rustled down the corridor.

They fled by all ways, and did not gather again until the procession was past. Then they closed up in the rear like the waves behind a stately ship.

Mr. Lathley turned on the light in the dusky form-room. Harry handed over the key of his locker.

Tuckle recommenced his labours with keen interest. Tuckle was feeling quite like a Scotland Yard detective by this time, and was really anxious to unearth stolen banknotes. But there was a dis-

appointment for Tuckle. The locker was drawn as blank as the trunk in the dormitory.

Again there was a pause. The crowd outside the form-room dodged back in case the Head should come out.

"You have an overcoat, Nameless?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where is it?"

"Hanging in the lobby, sir."

"We will proceed to the lobby."

Arrived in the lobby, Harry's coat was taken down, and Tuckle spread it on a table to go through it scientifically. Harry Nameless stood looking quietly on. He had no fear of the result of the search, and the scornful smile was still on his face.

"The pockets is all empty, sir," said Tuckle, "but the lining's torn 'ere, sir, and there seems to be something inside, sir."

"Make a thorough examination, Tuckle."

"Yessir."

Tuckle shoved his hand through the torn lining, considerably increasing the rent in the process.

His hand came out with something clutched in the fingers—something that glimmered and rustled. He held it up for inspection.

"It—it—it is a five-pound note," said Mr. Lathley, faintly.

Oliphant's lip curled with contempt. There was no doubt about it now.

The Head's brow was thunderous.

"Take that note, Mr. Lathley, please," he said, "and read out the number."

"0003579!" read out Mr. Lathley, faintly.

"That is the number of your banknote, Oliphant?"

"That is the number, sir."

"You may take it."

"Where are the other notes, Nameless?"

Harry was standing with a bewildered look on his face.

"The—what—the other notes?" he stuttered.

"Yes; two pound notes were taken from Oliphant's drawer, as well as the five-pound note," said the Head, in a hard voice. "I presume that the two notes you laid on my desk are Oliphant's."

"They are mine."

"Two pound notes are missing, and two are found in your possession, as well as the stolen banknote. I cannot accept your statement that they are yours, Nameless. They will be handed to Oliphant, unless you can produce two others."

Harry staggered against the table.

"I did not touch them—I did not—I—" He stammered, breathlessly; the discovery of the banknote in his coat had completely unnerved and bewildered the hapless boy.

"You need not add further falsehoods to your guilt, Nameless," said the Head, coldly.

"I am telling the truth—I—"

"Oliphant's banknote has been found in your coat—hidden in the lining. No doubt you placed it there, in readiness to be taken out of gates at the first opportunity and got rid of. Have you the audacity, sir," exclaimed the Head, "to utter any further impudent denial of the theft?"

"I—I—" gasped Harry.

He tried to regain his self-control. The Head's angry condemnation almost stunned him. There was sorrow, as well as indignation, in Mr. Lathley's kind face—bitter scorn in Oliphant's. Even Tuckle was sneering. A murmuring whisper came from the throng outside the lobby doorway. Condemnation—condemnation on all sides—and he was innocent—innocent! Was it possible for an innocent lad to be adjudged guilty? He could never have believed it. But—

His eyes sought the Head's stern face wildly.

"Dr. Cheyne, you do not—you can't believe—"

"Believe what?" said the Head, in a grinding voice. "Believe that you are a despicable thief? Undoubtedly. Believe that you have brought disgrace and shame upon the school you ought never to have entered? Most certainly!"

"Oh, sir! I—I—"

"I would to heaven, now, that I had listened to Colonel Lovell," the Head exclaimed, passionately. "That would have saved St. Kit's from this disgrace. I defended you, unhappy boy, and this is how you have repaid me."

"I swear I—"

The Head glanced at the door-

way—thronged by a breathless crowd. This time the juniors did not back away; they saw that their headmaster wished to speak to them.

"Boys!" The Head's voice was deep. "Listen to me! This boy, Nameless, is found guilty of purloining money from Oliphant's study. He will be expelled from this school, in utter ignominy, and will leave to-morrow morning. No boy is permitted to speak to him, or to hold any communication with him, again. Any boy doing so will be most severely punished. But I think I can trust to your own sense of rectitude—your own contempt and abhorrence of the act of which this wretched boy has been guilty."

There was a low murmur in the crowd. The Head made a gesture, and the juniors backed off the scene.

He turned to Harry Nameless. "Boy! You will be taken to the punishment room now, and confined there until you are removed from the school."

Harry panted.

"Dr. Cheyne, I am innocent—I swear that I never even saw that banknote before—I—"

Take him away, Mr. Lathley, please," said the Head, with a look of disgust.

The form-master's hand fell heavily upon Harry Nameless's shoulder, and he was led away. Five minutes later he was locked in the punishment room—alone. Alone with his thoughts! His thoughts were terrible enough.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Jack Straw at Home.

ALGERNON AUBREY ST. LEGER glanced from the window of the railway carriage, at the little station nestling amid the Sussex downs. He smiled, and glanced at the tall, stern-faced gentleman sitting opposite.

"Southwood! This is the station, uncle."

During the journey few words had been exchanged by uncle and nephew. Now Colonel Lovell nodded in response to Algy's remark, and stepped in silence from the train.

It was a little wayside station, and they were the only passengers that alighted. Round them were the green slopes of the downs; the sea was not visible, though the taste of it was in the keen air. A ruddy-faced stationmaster directed the two travellers to South Cove, with a cheery smile and a broad accent.

"Three moils by the lane, sir," he said. "Tarn at the end by Goiles's pond, and you see South Cove afore you, sir."

"Is there no conveyance?" asked the Colonel.

"I—I'm afraid there won't be a taxi here, uncle," murmured Algernon Aubrey.

The station-master scratched his straggling beard, thoughtfully.

"There's young Jones's trap," he said. "He'll be back from South Cove with the fish in an hour or two, sir; and after restin' his horse, I make no doubt he'd take you to the Cove."

"Thank you; I think I will walk," said the Colonel. "Come, Algernon!"

Uncle and nephew left the station. Neither traveller was keen on waiting an hour or two for Willie Jones, and then taking a passage in a vehicle that had been used for the conveyance of fish. It was a cold but sunny day, and the hills stood out clear against the sky. A keen breeze came from the sea, and they faced it for the three-mile tramp to the Cove.

Algernon Aubrey looked about him with great interest as they walked on.

There were the early surroundings of his chum—in this quiet spot almost all Harry's young life had been spent. Over these green, abrupt uplands he had tramped and rambled—along this very lane, probably, he had walked and cycled hundreds of times—before Algy had met him. It was a beautiful place—far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife—the few inhabitants that were passed seemed poor, certainly, but healthy and contented. The fever of town life had not penetrated within miles of South Cove.

The three-mile walk was little enough to the Colonel and to the sturdy junior; though it was a rugged road. There were steep slopes, and sharp acclivities. Over the last roll of the green "down" they came suddenly in sight of the

sea—blue and wide, curling in the wind, with little crests of white, stretching away towards the distant coast of France. In a hollow of the downs reposed the little straggling village, and two or three boats were drawn up beyond the tide. A dozen children played near and among the boats on the sand; an ancient mariner, gnarled and grizzled, stood and stared at the sea, and smoked a clay pipe, and at intervals, with a regular solemnity as if it were a religious rite, he hitched up his huge trousers. He glanced at the travellers without turning his head, merely because they came in his line of vision, without curiosity.

The Colonel paused.

"I think we had better inquire where Mr. Straw's cottage is, Algernon," he remarked.

"Yass, uncle. Shall I ask this old gentleman?"

"Do so, Algernon."

Algernon Aubrey raised his cap politely as he approached the ancient mariner. A slow stare rewarded him.

"Excuse me, sir," said Algy, courteously.

"Aye, aye," came a deep voice in reply.

"Perhaps you know where Mr. Straw—Jack Straw—lives?"

"Aye, aye."

With that reply the old seaman turned his steady stare upon the sea again. Algy coughed.

"Will you have the kindness to direct us to Jack Straw's cottage?" he inquired.

"Aye, aye." The old gentleman hitched his trousers and detached a gnarled mahogany hand, and pointed. "Bear up by the cliff-yonder, messmate, abaff the inn, keep a straight course for a dozen cables' length, and you'll raise her to port."

"My only hat!" murmured Algy.

The direction seemed a little vague to landsmen. However, they knew that "port" was left, and they knew how to keep a straight course. Ten minutes later they sighted a little cottage in a hollow of the cliff, with a thin column of smoke rising from its single chimney. It was a rugged path up to the cottage. There was a little garden, and in the garden, outside a wooden porch, a bronzed old sailorman sat, smoking a pipe and reading over a letter—apparently with some effort. He was old, but looked sturdy and strong as an oak—his face was almost the hue of mahogany from exposure to wind and weather, but his eyes were bright and blue and clear. He was reading with the aid of a large pair of horn-rimmed spectacles, which he held in his left hand.

He put down the spectacles, however, at the sight of the two strangers at his gate. At a distance, Jack Straw's eyes were as good as they had ever been. He rose to his feet as Algy opened the little garden gate, and the tall, bronzed Colonel walked up the little path to the porch.

"Afternoon, sir," said the old seaman civilly, though he was evidently surprised by the visit.

"Good afternoon," said the Colonel. "May I ask if you are Mr. Jack Straw?"

"That's my name, sir."

The Colonel's keen eyes were on the old mahogany face searchingly. In that weatherbeaten face there was to be read plain honesty and truth too clearly to be mistaken. Whatever Harry Nameless was or was not, no judge of character could be mistaken as to what Jack Straw was; a simple, honest, and kind-hearted old man; one of "nature's gentlemen," superior in a good many ways to the manufactured article.

Colonel Lovell was a judge of character. He had come there prejudiced, and his prejudice melted away on the instant.

"I must ask you to excuse this sudden visit," he said. "I should really have given you notice that I was coming. But—" The Colonel did not care to explain, naturally, that he had not chosen to give Harry Nameless's guardian time to prepare a tale for his hearing. The first glance at Jack Straw, too, showed how unnecessary the precaution had been.

"May I have a few minutes' conversation with you?"

"Certainly, sir," said Jack Straw, natural politeness overcoming his astonishment. "Please step into my cottage, sir."

It was a little dusky room, but scrupulously clean. Jack Straw drew out two chairs for his visitors, and they thanked him

and sat down. Algernon Aubrey's eyes were dancing with delight. He could not fail to observe the impression Jack Straw had made upon his uncle, and he had taken a liking to the old sailorman at first sight. Jack Straw remained standing, possibly a little awed by the Colonel.

It was evident that he had not the faintest idea of his visitor's identity, or of the object of the visit.

"Won't you sit down, Mr. Straw?" said the Colonel. "I am afraid I shall keep you some time—if you will allow me. Let me introduce myself. I am Colonel Lovell, a governor of St. Kit's School."

"My boy's school, sir?" said Jack Straw.

The Colonel coughed.

"Exactly."

Jack Straw sat down, with a cheery smile on his weather-beaten face.

"I take it very kindly, sir, for you to call on me here," he said. "It's an honour to me, sir. My boy, he's getting on all right at the big school?"

Colonel Lovell coughed again. He began to realise that his mission was a difficult one. In the presence of this simple old gentleman he felt half ashamed of his suspicions of Harry Nameless.

"He's gettin' on toppin', sir," said Algernon Aubrey, answering for his uncle. "I daresay he has mentioned me to you, Mr. Straw—I'm his best chum; my name is St. Leger."

Jack Straw looked at the elegant Algy in evident wonder.

"Aye, aye, sir," he said. "Harry has mentioned you a hundred times, I should say; he's mentioned you in this letter what I was readin' when you hove in sight, sir. And you're the friend of my boy?"

"Yass; we're great pals."

"I'm glad to hear it, sir," said Jack Straw. "My boy, Harry, he makes friends wherever he goes. But you had something to say to me, sir?" he added, touching his forelock to the Colonel.

"Ye-es—yes," said Colonel Lovell.

He began to wish that he had not acceded to Algy's desire to visit Mr. Straw. His mission was a very awkward one. Yet it had been impossible to refuse; he had a stern sense of justice. If Harry was to be condemned it was only fair play to make some investigation first, and Jack Straw was the man of whom information was to be sought. Colonel Lovell plunged into the subject at once with an effort.

"I understand, Mr. Straw, that your son—"

"Not my son, sir," said Jack Straw. "He's my boy, but he ain't any relation to me. In these parts he was called Nameless, 'cause his name wasn't known, and it stuck to him. But he's my boy, and he's as good to me as any son could be to his father."

"Yes, yes. I understand that he has always lived here with you until he went to St. Kit's."

"All his life, sir, since he was about four I reckon."

"He has been absent at times, no doubt?"

"Never, sir, 'cept for a day or two when he was goin' on his bike."

"You are sure of that, Mr. Straw?"

"Aye, aye, sir."

Colonel Lovell drew a deep breath.

"I will be frank with you, Mr. Straw. I saw your boy—Harry Nameless—a few weeks ago at St. Kit's on the football field, and I recognized him."

Jack Straw opened his big blue eyes, as open and innocent as a child's.

"Did you, sir?"

"Yes. Exactly where I knew him before I cannot say, but his face was quite familiar to me."

"Praps you've had a holiday here at South Cove, and seen him about, sir," said the old seaman.

"I have never been within twenty miles of the place, to my knowledge."

"Ain't you, sir? Then that's queer, ain't it?" said Jack Straw, politely interested, but evidently attaching no importance to the circumstance.

Algernon Aubrey winked at a waltz task that adorned the little mantelshelf in the sitting-room. He knew that his uncle was feeling distinctly uncomfortable.

"His name I did not know,"

said the Colonel, after a pause. "I could only conclude that when I saw him before he was passing under another name."

Jack Straw smiled. "My boy Harry wouldn't play larks like that, sir," he answered. "I think you're out of your reckoning there, sir."

"I had better be plain, Mr. Straw. I have sat on the bench as a magistrate, and juvenile offenders have sometimes come before me. As Nameless denies having met or seen me before, I have been driven to the conclusion that he has come before the Bench charged with some offence."

It was out now. Jack Straw did not seem for some moments to take in the full import of the Colonel's words. But when the visitor's meaning fully dawned upon him, his rugged face grew crimson. His knotted old hand trembled on his pipe. Algernon Aubrey was grave enough now. There was silence in the little dusky room for a few minutes.

When old Jack Straw spoke again his voice was steady.

"You're mistaken, sir," he said.

"I am not mistaken," said Colonel Lovell, coldly. "The boy is perfectly well known to me, and there must be some explanation of the fact. If you can offer any explanation I am willing to hear it. If you cannot I retain my belief that the boy has deceived."

"Harry wouldn't deceive anybody, sir," said Jack Straw, quietly. "Mr. Carew—that's our vicar, sir, who took him in tow and eddicated him, will tell you that. I never knowed Harry tell a lie."

"He told me a lie, in stating that I was unknown to him."

"He did not tell you a lie, sir," answered Jack Straw, steadily. "With all respect, sir, if you think my boy would tell a lie, you don't know what you're talking about."

The Colonel flushed a little.

"I fear that he has deceived you, Mr. Straw, as well as others," he said, rising. "I cannot think after seeing you that you have been a party to his deceit. But that he is guilty of deceit is certain to my mind, and his deceit can have only one reason—the desire to cover up something he dare not make known."

"That's what you come 'ere to tell me, sir?"

"Yes, I am very sorry to give you pain, but I have my duty to do as a governor of the school Nameless has entered."

"You're mistaken, sir," said Jack Straw, earnestly. "If you knowed that boy as I know him—as every man in South Cove knows him—you wouldn't think nothing of the sort. You couldn't. Do you think that if he got into trouble as you s'pose, I shouldn't know nothing about it? What you says, sir, is an insult to my boy, and I fear, sir, you must have a bad heart to think such things."

"That is enough," said the Colonel, curtly. "I am sorry, but I have my duty to do, and shall do it."

And he turned to the door.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

An Amazing Discovery.

ALGY was polishing his eyeglass, his usual resource when worried or dismayed. The visit to South Cove was not turning out the success he had hoped for and anticipated.

Jack Straw stood like a rock, his weatherbeaten old face flushed with anger and scorn. There was scorn in his clear old blue eyes. Colonel Lovell was frowning and uneasy. The transparent honesty of the old sailorman had struck him at once; he could not doubt that. But it only forced him to the conclusion that the nameless boy had deceived his kind protector as well as others.

"Come, Algernon," said the Colonel, sharply. "We have finished here. I wish you good-afternoon, Mr. Straw."

"Good-afternoon, sir," said Jack Straw, stolidly, "and heaven send you a better heart and judgment, sir."

"Hold on, uncle," said the dismayed Algy. "There's no fearful hurry, you know."

"Come, come."

"We've got to go right into the matter while we're here, uncle," said Algernon Aubrey.

"We have done so," snapped the Colonel.

"Not quite, sir. You know what I think—"

"What you think is nonsense, Algernon," said the Colonel, brusquely.

"Harry Nameless is my best pal," exclaimed Algy. "I'm stickin' to him, anyhow, and that's flat. He says that he never met you before he came to St. Kit's, and I believe him."

"His statement is untrue."

"Mr. Straw backs it up," said Algy.

Colonel Lovell shrugged his shoulders.

"I've thought it out, uncle," continued Algy. "It's plain enough to me that you've seen somebody like Harry."

"Nonsense."

"Very likely some relation of his," urged Algernon Aubrey. "He may have relations—dozens of 'em—without knowing them. Perhaps Mr. Straw can tell us something about that." The dandy of St. Kit's looked hopefully at the old sailorman.

Jack Straw shook his head slowly.

"I'm afeared not, sir," he said. "Cause why—I picked up young Harry out of the sea, on the beach a mile from 'ere, nigh on eleven years ago, and he was a kid of about four then. There wasn't nobody else saved, and nobody ever made any inquiry arter him. That's how he came to be my boy. I don't see how he could have any relations that know about him, anyhow. Course, he may have a lot, and praps this gentleman have seen them. That's more like then that my boy have told a lie. If we only knowed his real name, that might help."

"And—and there isn't any clue to his real name?" mumbled Algy, hopelessly.

"Only the first letter, sir, and that ain't much use."

"Begad! That's somethin', anyhow. What's the initial?"

"Same as this gentleman's, sir—L."

Colonel Lovell was standing at the open doorway, staring out at the sea and waiting impatiently for his nephew. But at this remark he turned suddenly back into the room.

"What did you say?" he ejaculated.

Jack Straw glanced at him.

"I said the initial was L, sir, same as yours as it appens."

"Uncle!" exclaimed Algy in alarm. He was startled at the look that had come over the Colonel's face.

"You're ill, sir," exclaimed Jack Straw, making a quick step towards the Colonel.

"No, no!" Colonel Lovell waved him back. "No, no, I—I was startled. I—I was—it gave me a shock—what you said. Did you say it to torture me?" he muttered, hoarsely, sinking into a chair.

"I—I don't understand you, sir," said Jack Straw, staring at him in blank wonder.

"Uncle," murmured Algy.

"Silence—silence—let me think for a moment," muttered the Colonel. "For heaven's sake be silent."

He sat for a full minute, his bronzed face white, his eyes half closed, his nephew and the old sailorman watching him in deep silence and something like fear.

He stirred at last.

"It is not possible," he said in a low, distinct voice. "Of course, it is simply madness to think of it."

He was following his own train of thought aloud. "It is not possible—not possible—after all these years! It is only a fancy come to torture me. He is dead—dead—dead!" The words were uttered with a groan. "He is dead—dead at the bottom of the sea, eleven years ago. But—but—"

"Is it shell-shock?" was Algy's alarmed thought as he heard the strange muttered words.

The Colonel started up and made a step towards the amazed old sailorman. His eyes seemed to burn at the rugged mahogany face.

"Man," he said, huskily. "Man, tell me, in heaven's name, tell me the truth. This boy, Nameless—his name is—is—Harry? If you picked him up as you say, how do you know his name is Harry?"

"He knew it himself, sir," said Jack Straw. "He lisped it out when he was first in this 'ere cottage, sir."

"And the initial of his second name—how do you know that?"

"It was marked on his little collar, sir—a little lace collar such as kids wear."

"When was he found. When was the wreck?"

"Eleven years ago come Michaelmas, sir."

"That would be the time—that would be the time. The name of the ship?"

"Taint known, sir. Not a timber come ashore with the name of it," said Jack Straw. "It never was known."

"No one else was saved?"

"Not a soul, sir."

"Then how came this child to be saved when so many grown men went down?"

"He was in the boat they put off, sir, and it fouled on the sunken rocks and sunk. I went into the water to help and got hold of the baby. It was all I could save. It was tough and go with me, sir."

A KEY INDUSTRY.



The studious one, reading paper: "Over two thousand elephants go every year to make piano keys."

The other: "Wonderful! Isn't it marvellous what they can train animals to do nowadays?"

"God bless you for a brave man," said the Colonel, in a trembling voice. "If it should be possible—if it should be—His voice broke. "You have raised a hope in my heart that has been dead for many years. I knew his face—I knew it so well that I was sure I had seen him before—blind fool that I have been—blind, blind fool! I knew his face, and did not know that it was Lucy's face that was looking at me—Lucy's eyes that met mine even when I denounced him as a liar."

"Uncle!" gasped Algy.

"I don't quite follow, sir," said Jack Straw.

"Listen." In his strong agitation, the Colonel grasped the old sailorman by the shoulder. "Listen, man! Eleven years ago I was stationed in Egypt—there my dear wife died, and my child—my little boy of four—was sent home to England in the care of his nurse. The ship was lost at sea with all hands—after she came into northern waters she vanished and left no trace behind—it was only surmised that she had gone down in a terrible storm during which, at that time, many other vessels were lost. It was months later that I heard—heard the news that made my heart stand still in my breast. My boy had gone down to his death in the sea—and left me desolate. Do you understand now?"

"By hokey!" was all Jack Straw could say.

Algernon Aubrey gazed at his uncle, almost awed. He understood the wild hope that had sprung up in the old soldier's heart. It seemed like a dream—it seemed too strange to be true—yet—

If it was true—

Often enough had Algy heard, from his mother, of the grief that had soured and embittered the life of her brother—of the loss at sea of his little cousin, the Colonel's only son.

His cousin!

Harry Nameless—was it possible?

"You spoke of a collar, bearing his initials," said the Colonel, in a steadier voice. "Have you it still?"

"I've got everything he had at that time, sir—I kept everything, in case it should be some use, some day," helping him," said Jack Straw. "They're all here, sir, such as they are."

He opened a big sea-chest that stood under the little window.

The Colonel watched him feverishly, as he turned out the things—little childish garments, neatly and cleanly packed. He caught up the little lace collar, upon which the initials "H. L." were worked in silk. His hand trembled as he grasped it.

"I saw those initials worked!" he muttered, in a scarcely audible voice. "With my own eyes—by a hand now dead and gone. My boy! Is this all—is this all? Listen! When my boy was taken on the ship he wore round his neck a gold chain—a little chain—with a locket, and in the locket his mother's picture—a miniature in colours. Had the boy such a locket?"

"He's got it now, sir," said Jack Straw. "He knew it was his mother, though he never knewed her name, and he wouldn't part with it for a fortune."

"I've seen it, uncle!" chirruped Algy. "He showed it to me at St. Kit's."

"He has it still?"

"Yes, yes!"

"It is certain now—certain—but if the face is the same—if it is Lucy's picture—"

Colonel Lovell pressed his hand to his brow.

"God bless you, Algernon, for bringing me here. Do you know what you have done? You have found for me my son—my lost boy."

There were tears running down the bronzed cheeks now.

"My boy, that I have mourned as dead these long, long years—my little Harry—God in heaven be thanked for this!"

WHEN IS A BISON NOT A BASIN?



Teacher: "It says here that the explorer was killed by a bison. Now, can anyone describe a bison to me?"

Willie: "Yes, Sir; a bison is what mother bakes her puddens in."

He grasped the rough, knotty hand of the old sailorman.

"You saved my son from death," he said. "Do you understand it—it was my son that you saved! If I had but known—if I could have guessed—why did no voice in my heart tell me, when I looked on his face, and knew it—knew it as familiarly as my own? And I thought that he lied when he said he did not know me, and had not seen me—my poor boy! He had seen me, the poor lad, but he did not remember—he was a baby then."

"Your son!" said Jack Straw, dazedly. "You are goin' to take my boy away from me?"

"You shall not lose him, though I have found him," said the Colonel, gripping the rough old hand again. "Do you think I would part you from him, when you saved his life, and saved me from a lonely and desolate old age? God bless you, my dear friend. But I must go—I must see him at once! Algernon—come, come! I shall see you again soon, my dear friend, and bring the boy with me. But I must go now—I must see my son."

He wrung the old seaman's hand again, and hurried from the cottage. Algernon Aubrey paused to shake hands with Jack Straw.

"It was my idea to bring nunky here," said Algy, cheerily. "Rather a nobby idea—what? Of course, I can't say I foresaw this—ahem! Still, it was my idea. I'm rather a downy bird, Mr. Straw. Harry's my cousin—catchy on?—my giddy cousin, begad! and so you're a sort of uncle. Good-bye, Uncle Jack!"

And the dandy of St. Kit's sprinted after the Colonel. Jack Straw stood in the cottage doorway and stared dazedly after them till they were out of sight. Then he took up his horn glasses and Harry's letter again. His old

mahogany face was thoughtful, but it was happy—if he had lost his boy, the boy had found his father—and such a father! The sun shone brightly for old Jack Straw that afternoon.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Cousin Harry.

"HALLO, Algy! Back again, old top!" said Bunny Bootles, affectionately.

The bell had not yet gone for morning lessons, when the hack from the station brought Colonel Lovell and his nephew into St. Kit's. There was a crowd of fellows in the quadrangle, and all of them looked at Algy with curious eyes. The same thought was in all minds—how would Algy take the news? The news that the chum whom he had stood by so loyally was condemned as a thief, and was to be sent away in disgrace that morning!

Compton was on the steps, with Durance; he was not looking his best that morning. His face was a little pale, and there was a wrinkle in his brow, and he coloured and turned away as Algy stepped from the hack after his uncle. Apparently Vernon Compton did not care to meet Algy just then.

Algernon Aubrey bestowed cheery nods on the fellows at hand—the little affair of "Coventry" being forgotten on both sides just then. Algernon Aubrey had more important matters to think of than that; and as far as the St. Kit's fellows were concerned, it was over. It was Algy's loyalty to his nameless chum that had turned the school against him—but now that Nameless was going, that cause of offence would go with him. Bunny Bootles was especially eager to greet St. Leger. Algy's absence had been to Bunny like one of the lean years in Egypt.

Moreover, Bunny was anxious to be the first with the startling news. Bunny liked to be the first with news.

Colonel Lovell entered the house with his nephew, and Tuckle took his name in to the Head, who had gone to his study after breakfast. In a couple of minutes the Colonel was shown in, and Algy remained in the hall with a smiling and happy face.

He was feeling so happy that morning that he felt quite affable towards even Bunny Bootles.

"Well, how have you been gettin' on, old tub?" inquired Algy. "Gettin' thinner—what? It will do you good. Where's Nameless?"

Two or three fellows close at hand looked at one another, and were silent. No one was anxious to tell Algy what had happened—excepting Bunny. Bunny was.

"Of course you haven't heard?" he grinned. "He, he, he!"

"Heard what?"

"About Nameless being expelled! He, he!"

The smile died off Algy's face. "Nameless—expelled!" he repeated.

"Yes. You see, he stole a bank-note from Oliphant—yarrroooooh!" roared Bunny Bootles, as Algernon Aubrey seized him by the collar and shook him like a terrier shaking a rat. "Yow-ow-owooooop! Help!"

Shake! shake! shake!

"You little fat scoundrel!" said Algy, savagely. "You must keep your weird sense of humour within limits, and not make jokes like that!"

Shake! shake.

"Gerrrrrooooooh! It's true!" spluttered Bunny. "Ask Catesby—or Jones—it's true, you silly idiot. Leggo! Yooop!"

Bump! Algernon Aubrey let go, suddenly, and the hapless Bunny sat down on the floor with a loud concussion and a louder yell.

Algy turned quietly to the other fellows.

"Anythin' happened while I've been away?" he asked.

"Nameless—"

Jones, minor, hesitated.

"Where is he?" asked Algy, abruptly.

"In the punishment room."

Algy compressed his lips.

"Is this a rag?" he asked, ominously.

"It's true, St. Leger," broke in Babbie of the Shell. "Nameless is going this morning."

"Going! Where?"

"I mean he's sacked."

"Don't be a fool, Babbie," snapped Algy.

"Fool or not, he's sacked," said Babbie, tartly. "He bagged a five-

pound note from Oliphant's study yesterday evening, and it was found on him. Here, hands off, you silly fool!" roared Babbie, as the dandy of St. Kit's sprang towards him with clenched fists.

Algy controlled himself. "You're welcome to your own opinion, Babbie—any opinion your feeble little brain can hold," he said; "but you're not to speak of my cousin as a thief in my presence, or I shall hit you. Catchy on?"

"Your cousin! What cousin? I was speaking of Nameless."

"Nameless is my cousin," said Algernon Aubrey, calmly, and rather enjoying the sensation his words caused. "His father's been found, and his father is my Uncle Lovell."

"Gammon!"

"Rats!"

"Honest injun, dear boys,"

said Algernon Aubrey, cheerfully.

"Some of you have heard me mention my kid cousin who was lost at sea when I was a nipper. Well, it turns out that he wasn't drowned after all. He was picked up and saved by an old sailorman at South Cove, and the kid is Harry Nameless. My uncle's tellin' the Head so at this minute."

"Draw it mild, Algy," gasped Bunny.

"You'll see when his name is entered on the school register as H. Lovell," said Algernon Aubrey.

"But—" gasped Tracy.

"Gammon!" said Babbie of the Shell. "Algy's pullin' our leg."

But whatever his name is it will never be on the school books here, because he's sacked, and he's goin' this morning."

"Is it true that he's in the punishment room now?" asked Algy, quietly.

"Yes; locked in last night, and there now."

Algernon Aubrey strode away towards the staircase.

"Hold on!" called out Tracy.

"Head's given strict orders that nobody's to speak to him before he goes. You'll get into a row, Algy."

Algernon Aubrey did not heed; probably he did not even hear. He was running up the stairs two at a time.

He reached the door of the punishment room very quickly. Tuckie had left the key in the outside of the door after locking it.

Algy turned the key back in a twinkling and threw the door open.

"Harry!"

Harry Nameless turned. His face was white.

"Algy, old man!"

The dandy of St. Kit's came quickly towards him.

"Old fellow, I—"

"Hold on a minute," said Harry, huskily. "St. Leger—I—I'm accused—"

"I know; they've told me—"

"I'm sacked—turned out—in disgrace," panted Harry. "On my word of honour, St. Leger, I am innocent—as innocent as you are."

"You needn't tell me that, ass," said Algy; "I know you are. Do you think I would believe you bagged a fellow's money, even if you told me yourself? I should only think you were wanderin' in your mind."

Harry smiled faintly.

"Thank Heaven you believe in me, St. Leger. That will help me to bear it. Thank Heaven! When I'm gone—"

"You're not going," said Algernon Aubrey, grimly. "We're jolly well goin' into this—uncle and I—"

"Your uncle! I'm afraid Colonel Lovell will hardly take your view," said Harry. "He believed all along that I—"

"Hush! hush! Harry, old fellow. Do you remember tellin' me that, after all the harm nunky had done, you felt you couldn't hate him—"

"Yes."

"You said you felt attracted towards him, and liked him somehow, though he was so hard on you—"

"Yes," said Harry in wonder.

"You feel like that now?"

"I know it's strange, St. Leger," said Harry, colouring; "I can't account for it myself. But it's there. I—I'd give my right hand for Colonel Lovell not to believe that I am a thief."

"The giddy voice of nature," said Algernon Aubrey, soliloquisingly.

"Harry, old man, I've got news for you—great news, glorious news! As for this rot about Oliphant's banknote, we'll clear that up somehow. Nunky will have a

Scotland Yard detective in-if necessary. Harry, can you stand a terrific shock?"

"What?"

"We've seen old Jack Straw, and we've found—"

Harry's heart beat faster; he scarcely knew why.

"Harry, I mentioned to you once about poor old nunky—how it soured him and hardened him because his only son, a little boy, was lost at sea. The mater's often told me, and I was always no end sympathetic about it. I've told you—"

"Yes, yes."

"And we've found—"

"You've found—what?"

"Your father!"

"Algy!"

"And—and it's nunky!"

"Algy! are you mad?" said Harry Nameless, hoarsely.

"Sober as a judge, old bean!"

Algy chirruped and held out his hand. "Give us your fist, old bean! Give us your fist, Cousin Harry!"

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Startling News

COLONEL LOVELL shook hands with the Head of St. Kit's, conscious of the surprise in that gentleman's face.

Such an extremely early morning call was more than enough to surprise Dr. Cheyne. But the Head was glad to see his visitor, as it happened; he felt that the news regarding Harry Nameless would afford the old military gentleman a certain grim satisfaction. He felt, too, that he owed some apology for not having adopted the Colonel's views, which had been so amply justified by the events of the preceding evening.

"I am glad to see you, Colonel Lovell. I have some news that will not, I think, be entirely unexpected to you," said the Head. "I regret to say that, in regard to Nameless, you were in the right, and I was in the wrong."

"What?"

The Colonel gasped out the words.

Undoubtedly that information would have caused the Colonel some grim satisfaction—before his interview with Jack Straw at South Cove. It was very far from causing him satisfaction now.

"You had a low opinion of the boy," continued the Head. "You were right, my dear sir."

"Dr. Cheyne!"

"I freely confess that he imposed upon me and upon his form-master," said the Head. "Bitterly I regret that I did not accede to your demand and send him away immediately from the school."

"But—what—what—" said the Colonel, faintly.

"You were right in your judgment of his character, Colonel Lovell. The boy is a rascal."

"A—rascal?"

"A thief," said the Head, sadly.

Colonel Lovell dropped into a chair, helplessly.

"Am I dreaming, or what?" he exclaimed. "You—you tell me—that—the boy—the boy you have known as Harry Nameless—is a thief?"

"I am sorry to say so. Yesterday he purloined a banknote from a Sixth Form study—"

"Who dares to say so?" thundered the Colonel, recovering himself, and springing to his feet.

Dr. Cheyne started back.

He had reason to be astonished. The Colonel was glaring at him with savagely gleaming eyes. His voice rang through the study and far beyond.

"Colonel Lovell!" gasped the Head, faintly.

"Who dares to say that the boy is a thief?" roared the Colonel, in a formidable voice.

"Sir! I—I—I am astounded—scandalised!" exclaimed the Head, greatly agitated. "I—I scarcely expected this from you, sir! Your well-known opinion of the boy—"

"I have changed it."

"You may have changed a hasty opinion, sir, as hastily as you formed it," said Dr. Cheyne, tartly.

"But you can scarcely expect others to change a conviction founded upon irrefutable evidence."

"Nonsense!"

The Head crimsoned with anger.

"Kindly measure your words, sir, in addressing me!" he exclaimed. "I am quite aware, sir, that you are chairman of the governing body; but I am head-master of this school, and I insist—"

"Pardon me," said the Colonel. "I beg your pardon most sincerely, Dr. Cheyne—I am not quite myself. Your news is simply astounding, and I cannot believe that the boy is bad. I know he cannot be bad."

The Head bowed coldly.

"That is a very remarkable change from your previous opinion, you must permit me to say," he said, with a touch of sarcasm.

"I have had good reason to change my opinion, Dr. Cheyne. I recognised the boy, and his denial of any knowledge of me caused me to condemn him as guilty of falsehood. I know now my mistake. I know now, sir, why his features were familiar to me—it is because he is my own son, sir, whom I have believed dead these ten years and more."

Dr. Cheyne sank limply into his seat. This was a little too much for him.

"Your—your son!" he said, feebly.

"My lost son—lost at sea, supposed to be drowned with the rest of the passengers—but saved, as I have discovered, by a noble old sailor—one of the best and bravest men that ever breathed, named Jack Straw," said Colonel Lovell.

"I saw the man yesterday and learned the truth. I have come here, sir, to acknowledge and claim my son."

"Bless my soul!"

"You greet me with the news that he has been adjudged a thief. You can scarcely expect me to believe it."

"But it is true, sir," said the Head. "I regret it for your sake, if what you believe now is correct—but that does not alter the fact that Nameless stole money from a study, and is to be expelled from the school this morning. I am sorry, deeply sorry, but there the matter stands."

Colonel Lovell pressed his hand to his brow.

"I must know all," he said.

"Will you send for the boy—my son? So long as there is the faintest hope that he may be cleared, I shall not despair."

"I will send for him at once."

The Head touched a bell, and Tuckie appeared.

"Request Mr. Lathley to bring Nameless here before taking him to the station, Tuckie."

"Yessir."

The door closed on Tuckie, and the Head proceeded to give a succinct account of the previous evening's happenings, the Colonel listening attentively. His bronzed old face was pale and the wrinkles had deepened on his lined brow. He had found his son—and he had found him—thus! But so long as there was the faintest hope left he clung to it.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

To Save His Son.

HARRY NAMELESS entered the Head's study with Mr. Lathley, and Algernon Aubrey. St. Leger followed him in.

Algy was quite determined to be "on" in this scene, and he was blind to Mr. Lathley's frowning glance. The Head did not look at him.

Colonel Lovell turned to the nameless schoolboy. His bronzed face was full of an emotion he tried to suppress.

"Harry! My boy—has Algernon told you—?"

"He has told me, sir," said Harry. "He—he has told me that—that you are my father, sir—that he is my cousin—"

"It is true, my dear boy," said the Colonel. "The last proof is in your possession." The Colonel seemed to have forgotten the presence of the Head and Mr. Lathley, who looked out of the window.

"Harry, when my boy was put on the ship that carried him, as I believed, to his death, he had a little gold locket on a thin gold chain round his neck, containing a miniature—a portrait of my dear wife—of your dear mother, my boy. You have it still?"

In silence Harry Nameless drew out the locket that he had already shown to Algy in the study.

The Colonel opened it and gazed at the sweet pictured face within. His eyes filled with tears.

It was some moments before he could speak.

"Your mother, Harry," he whispered. "The best and noblest woman that ever walked the earth. Blind that I was not to see your face in hers—not to see her face in

yours! Blind! Yet I knew you—I knew you. Forgive me, my boy, for not knowing you as I should." He handed back the locket. "My dear boy, I am your father—this very day you shall take your own name—Nameless no longer, but Lovell, my son."

"I—I can hardly believe it yet," said Harry, softly. "I—"

"But it is true, by heaven's mercy. My foolish blindness has done you harm here, Harry; but that will be set right. Your school-fellows will know at once that you bear an honoured name—"

"But—" said Harry, his face clouding—"you—you forget—"

"You forget, Colonel Lovell—" began the Head, a little stiffly.

It was true that the Colonel had forgotten. But in a moment he recovered himself; no trace of emotion remained in his iron face. He turned coldly to the Head.

"It is true—I am wasting your time, sir," he said. "But I wish all to understand that this boy is my son, and that I acknowledge him before all the world; even if he leaves this school in disgrace. I have not asked him if he is innocent of this charge—his face tells me that much—"

"I am innocent, father!" said Harry Nameless.

Father! The word trembled on his tongue. It was the first time he had called anyone father!

Even the shadow of shame that was hanging over him could not destroy his happiness at that moment.

The Colonel's iron face melted for an instant.

"I believe you, my boy," he said. "But this is a question of evidence. Dr. Cheyne has told me of what happened yesterday. You deny, of course, taking the banknote from Oliphant's desk?"

"Of course."

"It was, then, placed in your overcoat in the lobby by some other person?"

"Yes."

An indistinct sound came from the Head. Mr. Lathley stared from the window.

"Do you suspect anyone of this act, Harry?"

"Yes."

"His name?"

"Vernon Compton, of the Fourth Form."

"Really—" began the Head, impatiently.

Colonel Lovell raised his hand.

"Dr. Cheyne, my boy's future and the honour of my name are at stake. I must beg you to be patient."

"I am patient, I trust," said the Head; "but this wild and reckless accusation against another lad—"

"Let me question my son. Why do you suspect Compton, Harry?"

"Compton brought me the message, which he pretended was from Oliphant, calling me to his study. He denied it afterwards. I—I did not know then why he denied it—he hates me, but I thought he did not know about the theft, and how he was making suspicion fall on me—"

"He did not know of it," said the Head. "Nothing had been said so far."

"He did know, sir," said Harry, quietly. "For I feel sure now that Compton had taken the banknote from Oliphant's desk—not to steal it, but to place it in my overcoat. That was his motive in sending me to Oliphant's study—and denying it afterwards. That was why he chose a time when he could come to my study without being noticed, so that he could deny it afterwards. It could not be a coincidence that he played that trick on me, just when somebody else had taken the banknote and put it in my pocket."

"Let Compton be sent for," said Colonel Lovell.

"I have questioned Compton, sir, and he denies having given Nameless any message purporting to come from Oliphant."

"I must see him," said the Colonel, stubbornly.

The Head gave an almost imperceptible shrug of the shoulders, and spoke to Mr. Lathley.

"Kindly call Compton here, Mr. Lathley."

The Fourth Form master quitted the study.

"You will see, Dr. Cheyne," said the Colonel, in his hard, incisive manner, "that the whole charge hangs upon this incident. If it can be proved that Compton did actually give this message to my son, the accusation drops to the ground. If Compton sent him to Oliphant's study and denied doing so at the time the banknote was

taken, this charge becomes simply a dastardly scheme of the boy Compton."

"If that can be proved, certainly," said the Head, drily. "But I have no reason whatever to doubt Compton's denial."

"We shall see."

The door reopened, and Mr. Lathley entered, followed by Vernon Compton.

The captain of the Fourth was a little pale, but his manner was calm. He was well aware that he required to have all his wits about him now.

Colonel Lovell eyed him scrutinisingly, but Compton looked at the Head. Somehow, he did not care to meet that steady, penetrating glance.

"Colonel Lovell wishes to ask you some questions, Compton," said Dr. Cheyne. "Answer him freely."

"Certainly, sir."

Compton's voice was steady enough.

"You deny having taken a message to my son—to Harry Nameless—in his study yesterday evening?" asked the Colonel.

"Yes, sir."

"You did not tell him that Oliphant wanted him in his study, and that he was to wait there till Oliphant came in?"

"No, sir."

"Did you go to No. 5 Study at all?"

"No."

"Did you speak to Nameless at all?"

"No."

"You are aware now, Compton, if you were not aware before, that upon your denial a great deal depends. If Nameless's presence in Oliphant's study is accounted for—"

"I cannot account for it, sir," said Compton, steadily. "I never gave him any message, or went to his study, or spoke to him at all, and if he says I did, he is speaking falsely."

Harry's eyes blazed, but he did not speak. The matter was in his father's hands now.

"There were no witnesses, Harry?" asked the Colonel.

"None, sir. Compton took care of that."

"Yet it is possible—at least possible—that someone may have seen or heard something," said the Colonel. "Has inquiry been made, Dr. Cheyne, as to whether any boy in the school knows whether Compton went to No. 5 Study last evening?"

"No, sir; certainly not. Nameless himself stated that there were no witnesses," said the Head, drily.

Colonel Lovell knitted his brows.

"True. But there may have been witnesses my son knows nothing of—"

"I was alone in the study," said Harry.

"No doubt, but some boy may have opened his study door while Compton was with you; some boy may have heard his voice. Kindly keep patient, Dr. Cheyne; you cannot expect me to leave a stone unturned in proving my son's innocence."

"I do not expect it," said the Head, coldly. "But—"

"I request that inquiry may be made, in the Fourth Form, as to whether any boy in the form can throw light on the matter," said the Colonel, firmly. "I request that this inquiry may be made by myself, in your presence."

"Really, Colonel Lovell—"

"My boys are now in their form-room, sir," murmured Mr. Lathley. "It would be an easy matter for Colonel Lovell to step there and question them—"

"If the Colonel desires—"

"I do, most emphatically," said Colonel Lovell. "Will you step to the form-room with me, Dr. Cheyne?"

The Head rose with great dignity.

"You shall have no reason, Colonel Lovell, to suppose that I desire to place any obstacle in your way. I am satisfied that the truth has been discovered, but I desire that you shall be satisfied too."

"That is all I desire, sir."

"Come with me."

And the Head rustled out of the study, a very dignified figure.

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Truth at Last.

THE members of the Fourth Form were prim and orderly as could be desired when the Head swept into the form-room.

The juniors rose to their feet respectfully, wondering what had brought their Headmaster there.

Mr. Lathley came in with the Colonel, and they were followed by Harry Nameless, Vernon Compton, and Algernon Aubrey St. Leger. Evidently something was about to happen.

Colonel Lovell glanced over the attentive class.

"My boys," he said, in his deep voice, "your Headmaster has given me permission to speak to you and ask you a question."

There was a hush of expectation. "Does any boy present know whether Vernon Compton visited No. 5 Study last evening, taking a message from Oliphant to Harry Nameless?"

Silence. Bunny Bootles' round eyes grew rounder.

He blinked at the Colonel.

"The matter is very important," continued Colonel Lovell. "It's importance I will explain afterwards, or your Headmaster will explain. Any boy who can give evidence one way or the other on this point will be helping to get justice done, and will perform a very great service. If any boy present knows anything on the subject I beg him, on his honour and conscience, to come forward and say so."

There was a movement in the class.

Bunny Bootles shoved his way out and came before the class smirking. Never had such an opportunity for limelight come Bunny's way. Bunny was in great spirits. Why it mattered whether Compton had taken a message to Nameless or not Bunny couldn't imagine; but evidently it was important, and so Bunny was important.

There was a murmur as Bunny rolled forward. Vernon Compton stared at him savagely. Bunny could know nothing.

Harry's face brightened.

Was it possible that Bunny's prying and spying was going to come in useful for once?

"You know something of the matter, Bootles?" asked the Head.

"Yes, rather, sir," said Bunny, importantly.

"What do you know?"

"I was there when Compton came, sir," explained Bunny Bootles.

Sensation! Colonel Lovell smiled grimly, the Head stared, and Mr. Lathley gave a little gasp. Compton turned as white as chalk.

It was Compton who spoke first.

"It's false—he's lying, sir! Everybody knows what a liar Bootles is. He's been put up to this!"

"Silence, Compton!" said the Head, sternly.

"Nameless himself says there were no witnesses," panted Compton.

"That is true," said the Head. "Nameless has stated that he was alone in the study."

Bunny grinned.

"He thought he was, sir."

"What do you mean, Bootles? Do you state that you were there and that Compton came in and gave Nameless a message?"

"Yes, sir," said Bunny. "You see, Nameless had his rag out—"

"What?"

"I—I mean Nameless was waxy with me, sir," said Bunny, stammering. "He—he heard me saying something to Durance and Tracy, and—and misunderstood, sir."

"What has that to do with this matter?"

"He was after me, sir."

"After you?" repeated the Head.

"Yes, the beast was going to kick me, sir, just because of a—a misunderstanding. So when I heard him coming to the study I got under the table."

"Oh!" exclaimed the Head.

"I thought he might clear off, you see, sir," explained Bunny. "But the beast—I—I mean Nameless sat down to prep. Nearly stuck his boot in my eye when he sat down—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came from the Fourth Form.

The Head frowned.

"Silence! Go on, Bootles."

"I—I was just thinking, sir, whether I should crawl out and own up, and—and lick Nameless if he cut up rusty when Compton came in—"

"You are sure Compton came

(Continued on page 12.)



In the Hands of Satan the Bandit!

A ROUGH path it was, too, for the roads of Spain are divided into many classes. There is the Camino Real, or the Royal Highway, great and magnificent trunk roads which radiate from the capital, Madrid, like the spokes of a wheel. There are the carreteras, or carriage roads, mostly rutted and dusty. There are the bridle-ways, which are only usable by horses, and there are the smugglers' paths or contrabandista roads, which are used only by sure-footed donkeys and mules, goats and smugglers.

It was over a bad specimen of this last type that our friends were hurried as fast as the donkeys could climb, and, having regard to the ruggedness of the path, they made good progress.

They could see great mountains and crags closing around them, blotting out the stars.

The boys looked up, awed by the huge crags which towered above them. The air was colder here, and they were getting very high in the world.

Far away in the valley below they could hear a river brawling over great rocks. Above them rose huge precipices, silent as the grave save for the occasional trill of a nightingale or the hoot of a mountain owl hawking amongst the rocks for small lizards.

"Ah don't like this place," said Joe Lawless. "Ah wish ah was back in Bradford."

A dig in the ribs with the butt of a blunderbuss warned Joe to be silent.

And there was reason for silence here, too, for they were going to cross a huge slide of rock where the mountain had given way, and where a great slope of rubble and broken stones two miles in length was pitched up at an impossible angle, four thousand feet in height and ending at the river below.

The mountain here was rotten, millions of tons of greasy, rubbly schist had weathered off its crest in tremendous rock slides, which were constantly pouring down its slopes and filling up the huge gorge of the valley beneath. And, at this season of the year, it was particularly dangerous.

The natives called it the Camino de Muerte, or the Path of Death, for many a string of mules and donkeys had been buried beneath the rockslides, and the Guardia Civil, or the military police who patrolled the country, were very loath to risk their lives upon it at any time.

But it was one of the barriers of the bandit Satan's stronghold, and his followers had learned to take the risk.

But even these did not care about crossing the Path of Death by night. In the heat of the day the path was fairly safe. But nine-tenths of the rockslides took place from an hour after sunset to an hour after dawn, for the cool of the night and the fall of the dews contracted the stone and brought it crashing down.

A whisper went along the party for silence as the old bell animal,

carefully led by two men, stepped out on to the enormous rock-slide.

Even Bucko held his peace. He was an old miner who had worked in the emerald mines of Ecuador and in the silver mines of the Rockies, and he knew the danger of such a place as well as the most experienced of these ruffianly mountaineers.

And the donkeys, too, seemed to know the danger, for they stepped daintily and neatly, as only a burro can, as they crossed the face of the moving mountain.

They hardly made any sound at all as they paced across the loose fragments, and all went well till they were within three hundred yards or so of safety. Ahead of them, in the dim starlight, they could see the black masses of the trees and the rocks, which showed where the sound ground started on the far side of the rock slide.

"We are well across that patch," said Bucko. "That's as rotten a road as I've seen for many a year. You have only gotta fire a gun on that slope and you could get buried cheap."

At this moment the padron, or head of the band, who was walking by the side of Bucko's donkey as gingerly as a cat on hot bricks, saw fit to jab Bucko in the ribs with the brass-covered butt of his blunderbuss as an order for silence.

"Ere, mister," protested Bucko. "Keep that cannon o' yours to yourself, or when I get outa this I'll catch you one that you'll remember for a week of Sundays!"

"Calla te!" ("Shut up thou!") muttered the nervous ruffian, and he gave Bucko another drive in the ribs.

It was very unfortunate that the trigger of the blunderbuss, which had a very light pull, caught in the beaded trimming of the padron's jacket.

Bang!

There was a flash of flame and a roar like a cannon as the weapon exploded, sending a hail of slugs and buckshot up the slope and upsetting the ruffian by its recoil.

Down he went in a cloud of dust as the bell donkey, alarmed by the report, took to its heels and dashed across the slope, breaking away from its leaders and closely followed by its companions.

"That's done it," cried Bucko, as the face of the moving mountain took up the roar of the explosion. "That's backed the barrier into this cleft proper. Come along boys before it rains."

There was no need to tell the boys to come along. They bumped on their donkeys like flour sacks as they raced across the slide, tearing their halters from the bandits who led them.

The donkeys, panic stricken, were an easy first as they raced across that rotten path followed by the string of cursing, sputtering bandits who, dropping their heavy weapons, were running for their lives.

Boom! Boom! Boom! Crash!

The echoes sounded as though an artillery battle was raging in these tremendous hills.

THE CRUISE OF THE "TARTAR"

A Great Story of Sport and Adventure

By JOHN WINTERTON

Featuring
JACK FEARLESS
JOE LAWLESS
BILL CARELESS
AND
CAPTAIN BOB OAK
of Great Yarmouth
of Bradford
The Trapeze Artist
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 boys are chosen because they rescue Captain Oak from drowning. The "Tartar" sets sail, and the three boys soon make friends with the various members of the crew. There is Mr. Dark, Chiang, Kingaloo, Bucko, Viscount Swishington, Wilfred the seal, Harold and Clifford the penguins, and Whiskers, a leopard. Their first stop is on the coast of Spain, where a shore party from the "Tartar" is captured by brigands, who have previously kidnapped a great Spanish lady. The "Tartar" party is taken up into the mountains on donkeys.

Then there was a crash and a roar like a thunder peal above as a huge mass of the face of the crag, long loosened by heavy rains and mountain frosts, gave way in a slide of millions of tons, and came roaring down the slide in a vast torrent of rock.

"Stick to the burros, boys. The end of the world has come!" yelled Bucko.

But his voice was lost in the tremendous roar of the falling mountain.

The yells of the ruffians, caught on the slope behind them, were likewise drowned in this terrible crash. They cowered as huge rocks, weighing many tons, came bounding down the slopes, bursting into red hot fragments like exploding shells.

Well it was for the little party of prisoners that they had been made fast to their sure-footed steeds.

They were close at the heels of Bucko's mount as it leaped from the slide on to solid ground as the avalanche of rocks poured down in tons where they had passed by a few seconds before.

Then the five donkeys came to a stand, turning their backs to a sudden and tremendous wind which roared down through the cork trees which covered these solid slopes, the wind of that mighty rock fall.

It tore branches from the stout trees and filled the air with rustling leaves. A thick fog of dust filled the air, almost choking them as they sat there stunned by the tremendous noise, their trembling mounts standing steady beneath them.

Then the roar died away in the valley below, and the sliding mountain became still again.

And, when the air cleared, they were alone on the mountain. Swift retribution had fallen on their captors, for all of these were hurled yards deep beneath the smoking slopes of debris which had been heated almost red hot by the immense friction of its fall.

The boys were stunned by the awful suddenness of the catastrophe.

They were brought to themselves by the complaining voice of Swishy.

"Bai jove!" he exclaimed.

"What a bore! I believe I have lost mai ai-glawss!"

"Never mind about your ai-glawss, dook," replied Bucko, briskly. "Next bit on the film is how are we to get off the mokes. We are bound hand and foot. Joseph in the pit is nix to us. I'm tied up like a parcel for post."

"Wait a minute," gasped Bill Careless, who was working his hands behind him. "I've been in this line when I was one of the Careless Brothers. I used to do an act, Bingo the Fearless, or 'The Boy Who Could Not Be Tied,' and I know the knots these chaps have tied me with. I'll get my hand free in a minute or two. I've forgotten the trick in the trapeze business, but I got my wrists a bit loose coming along.

And he sneezed in the fog of dust which still hung in the air.

The donkeys grouped together head to head, and his companions watched him anxiously as he struggled with his bonds behind his back.

"They are coming!" he muttered.

"Awright," said Bucko, tranquilly. "Don't break a blood vessel, sonny. We got all night to do it in."

But in less than three minutes, Bill had accomplished his feat. The tight bindings of cord about his wrists fell free, and he brought his numbed hands from behind his back, chafing his wrists to bring the use back to the sinews.

To stoop and untie his feet, which were lashed under the donkey's girth, was an easy matter for an accomplished acrobat, and in another second Bill had slipped to the ground, and was limping round in a circle to get back the use of his legs.

He had just returned to Bucko and was casting loose the bonds that held his arms behind him, when there came a sudden pattering of running feet along the rocky path.

Bucko groaned.

"We are sold, boys. Here's the rest of the click!"

And his words were true, for, in another second, the little group was surrounded by a scared, shouting mob of armed men, headed by a loud-voiced, hairy ruffian, who carried a torch which shed its red glow on a red brewer's cap and a richly laced jacket of mulberry-coloured velvet.

This time they had fallen into the hands of Satan the Bandit himself!

Bucko Introduces Himself.

It was easy enough to see what had happened.

The main body of the bandits had been on the watch for their rear guard, and, when the awful reverberation of the rock-slide had thundered through the mountains, had at once rushed back to its brink, only to find their five donkeys in the possession of five Englishmen who were plainly prisoners.

Satan the bandit caught at the halter of Bucko's mount.

If his men could not speak English, it was plain that Satan had some acquaintance with the language.

"You Englis?" he demanded, holding up his flaring torch and peering into Bucko's face.

"I should smile!" replied Bucko, calmly.

"What you done along my men?" demanded the bandit.

"Nawthin," replied Bucko, calmly. "They've done themselves in. If you are the head of Satan and Co., smugglers, bandits, and general warehousemen, Mister, I can tell you that your little click that picked us up have missed the bus. They were caught on the rockslide. Now they are mafeish! They are done in. Saved the

The Cruise of the "Tartar"

(Continued from previous page.)

hangman a job, I should say, by the look of their dials."

Part of this was lost on Satan the bandit. But he ground his teeth. "What does it mean? Who are you?" he demanded.

"Cook's tourists," replied Bucko, with a grin. "Come to see your beautiful hills. If you keep an hotel up here, Mister, lead up to the steak and kidney parlour. We are getting hungry."

"Ha! You are from ze sheep?" demanded the bandit, his lip curving with an evil smile which showed a row of teeth like the fangs of a wild animal.

"That's so," replied Bucko. "And you come to spy!" snarled the bandit.

"Maybe," replied Bucko, tranquilly. "If we did we got caught early in the game by your Maid o' the Mountains' No. 3 Company. And I suppose you are the original production."

"You shall die," replied Satan the bandit.

"Aw, can that rough talk," replied Bucko. "We'll talk about dyin' when the time comes. But you be careful with us. We are hoodoo to your crush. If you don't want to dash your luck return us where we came from. But don't return us empty. In the meantime lead on to the lion's den, MacDuff."

The ruffian stood utterly taken aback by the calm of this grim-faced prisoner. He was accustomed to see his victims fall at his feet and yell for mercy, so great was the terror of his name.

But this strange Englishman and his companions eyed him as calmly as if he were the most harmless peasant in the world.

"Yes, you shall come to ze den of ze lion," he muttered. "And you shall feel ze claw of ze lion also. Know zat I am Satan ze Bandit. He who knows no mercy."

"And I am Elmo the Fearless,

Son of the Clutchin'-and, and first cousin to Doug Fairbanks, so mind where you are steppin'," replied Bucko with the utmost calm.

The ruffian, unable to keep up this conversation, seized the halter of the donkey and turned its head along the dark path that wound in and out amongst the rocky slope of the cork woods.

Soon a guard challenged and was answered by a shrill whistle. Another guard of astonished ruffians was passed, and the file of prisoners and captor was led out into an open space before the mouths of two great caverns that tunnelled far into a great crag of rock.

On the plateau before these caves burned half a dozen fires, over which were suspended kettles which gave forth an agreeable odour of stew.

"Goat and onions!" muttered Bucko to Jack. "Smells all Sir Garney, too. But I don't think these merchants are goin' to ask us to supper. It's more like that we are in the soup than that the soup is in us."

The donkeys were brought to a halt before one of the low cavern entrances, and the ruffians whipped their knives out of their broad red sashes.

"Gee whizz," muttered Bucko—"the wasps are showin' their stings. We are for it!"

But the knives were only used to cut their bonds. They were tumbled unceremoniously from their saddles, and pushed into the entrance of the cave, whilst a strong guard of a dozen armed men closed round it, shouting mockingly after them.

"Don't take any notice of 'em, boys!" said Bucko placidly; "they're just showin' their ignorance! What's the matter, Viscount?"

"Aw, by jove," replied that

worthy; "I'm in awful luck. Ai've just found my ai-glass, and, bai jove—what?"

He had fished the monocle from where it had swung in their struggle with their captors at the back of his neck. Now he screwed it into his left eye, as he surveyed the interior of the cavern.

And there, seated on a pile of pack saddles, as though it were a throne, was the most beautiful lady the boys had ever seen.

By her side knelt two weeping serving women, whose shoulders she was gently patting, as she comforted them.

Bucko had come to a standstill, with the Viscount at his side, at this sight of ladies in distress.

The lady's head turned as she heard their footsteps in the arch of the cavern, and her black eyes blazed with a dangerous light. It was evident that she thought that some of Satan's ruffians were approaching.

Then she gave a little glad cry of astonishment as the light of the blazing fire was reflected in the single eyeglass of the Viscount, which showed like a red lamp.

Bandits do not wear single eyeglasses.

"Courage, my pigeons. We are saved!" she whispered in Spanish. Then she rose to greet the newcomers.

"Brave caballeros," she asked; "whence do you come?"

Bucko did not understand the Spanish, but he understood the meaning.

"Good evening, lady," said he; "we've sort of dropped in to see how you are getting on. We heard down in the Bay below that you had been caught by these bandits, and as we are British, it is against our principle to leave ladies in distress. So here we are."

"You, Ingles?" asked the lady, smiling brilliantly.

"Yes, ma'am," replied Bucko. "Permit me to introduce myself and my friends. I am Bucko Scott, at your service. Drill instructor of the British merchantile cruiser Tartar. This is Viscount Swish-

ington—el Excelentissimo Senor Visconde de Swishington. He don't look it, but he is. And there are the boys Fearless, Careless, and Lawless, all very much at your service!"

And Bucko made a bow that would not have disgraced a finished courtier.

The lady gave them a sweeping courtesy.

"And you, madam?" he asked.

"I am ze Dona Paz, Duquesa—what you call 'im—Dutches of Antequera, Countess de Setenian, Mistress of ze Robe to 'Er mos' Cat'olic Majesty ze Queen of Spain," replied the lady. "You come to my rescue, gentlemen mos' noble?"

"Well, lady," replied Bucko, truthfully, "we didn't exactly come; we were fetched. But now we are here, there's enough of us to make a rough house for these pirates who have pinched you. And I promise you that if any miscreant lays his dirty hand on you, I'll lay a hand on him that will thump the sawdust out of him so's his ole mother won't know him. D'ye catch my smoke?"

There was a gleam of admiration in the eyes of the Duchess as she eyed Bucko standing there, a fine figure of a man in the red firelight.

She turned to her maids who were ceasing to weep.

"Courage, my daughters," said she. "Here are five British noble- men come to our rescue!"

"That's the talk," put in Bucko. "Dry your lamps, my pretties. We won't let the ugly men frighten you!"

"And my faithful steward Esteban?" demanded the Duchess.

"Safe as the Bank of England, lady," replied Bucko. "We got him aboard the ship, and now he is arranging with Capten Oak for an expedition after your Excellency. Before long they will be coming up the trail after you, and then you will see sparks fly in this Glory Hole. There's a hundred Champeens on the war path by now. We only came in advance!"

"Ah, ze Capitan Oak!" exclaimed the lady, evidently recog-

nising the name. "You ship, then, arrive in the bay jus' as these bad men attack us!"

"That was the luck, lady," replied Bucko. "But these Dagoes, have they given you any supper?"

"Suppaire!" exclaimed the Duchess. "No, Caballero, we've 'ad no bread but tears."

"Geewhizz!" replied Bucko, "that ain't very fillin'. Arf a mo', Dame. I'll do the catering!"

For calm insolence Bucko's next proceeding was without parallel.

He walked to the entrance of the cavern. Here the six guards, assured that their prisoners were safe, had squatted themselves down by their watchfire and were playing a game of greasy cards whilst they waited for their cauldron of kid stew to finish cooking.

In the entrance to the cave they had placed their ration of bread, six disc-like loaves and a round cheese.

Bucko said nothing. He stooped, and picking up these provisions he hurled them into the cavern to his friends.

Then he calmly lifted the stew from the fire.

A yell of protest went up from the card players, and their leader, leaping to his feet, attempted to grapple with the pugilist.

"Aw, cut it out!" said Bucko, contemptuously, as the man's hand went to the knife in his sash. "Let that toothpick alone, or—"

Up went the iron pot and down it dropped on the man's head, the flood of hot stew pouring over his shoulders.

Two others leaped to their feet, but only to meet Bucko's fists.

Smack, smack.

It was a double-barrelled punch, and the two desperadoes crumpled up like rag dolls and lay where they fell.

(There will be an extra long instalment of this grand serial in next Monday's issue of "School and Sport." Order your copy in advance.)

How Harry Nameless Found His Father

(Continued from col. 1, page 11.)

in?" asked the Head, very quietly. "You know it was Compton?"

"I knew his bags, sir."

"His—his what?"

"I—I mean his keeks, sir,"

stammered Bunny.

"What does the boy mean?" exclaimed the perplexed Head.

"His trucks, sir—" spluttered Bunny.

"I think he means that he recognised Compton's trousers, sir," said Mr. Lathley.

"Oh! Is that the case, Bootles?"

"Yes, sir—I mean trousers, of course, sir—his bags, sir."

"A boy cannot be identified by such a garment—"

"Everybody knows Comp's expensive bags, sir," said Bunny, innocently; "and then he gave Nameless his message; and, of course, I knew his voice. I could only see his bags from under the table, but I knew his foot—I mean his chirrup—that is, his voice, sir. He gave Nameless a message from Oliphant."

"I—I did not!" panted Compton.

Bunny blinked at him.

"I say, Comp., you've forgotten. You remember you said—"

"Silence, Compton!" said the Head, angrily. "Go on, Bootles. Repeat exactly what Compton said."

"I—I hope I ain't getting Compton into a row, sir," said Bunny, looking bewildered. "This ain't sneaking, is it?"

"Nothing of the kind. Tell me Compton's exact words."

"He said 'Nameless' when he came in, sir," said Bunny in wonder, "and Nameless asked him what he wanted. He said nothing, only a message from Oliphant."

"What was the message, Bootles?"

"He said Oliphant wanted Nameless to fag, and if he wasn't in his study Nameless was to wait there for him."

The Head drew a deep breath.

"Is that all, Bootles?"

"No, sir. He said Nameless needn't fancy he'd come there if Oliphant hadn't sent him."

"That is all?"

"That's all, sir—he buzzed then."

Harry Nameless's face was very bright now, and Algernon Aubrey St. Leger squeezed his chin's arm ecstatically. It was patent to all that Bunny Bootles was blurring out exactly what had happened, and that he did not even surmise the importance of what he was stating.

"What happened afterwards, Bootles?" asked the Head, very quietly.

"Nameless cleared off, sir, to go to Oliphant's study, I suppose. Then I locked the door, and when he came back I wouldn't let him in till he made it pay."

"That will do, Bootles."

"Is—is there anything else I can tell you about, sir?" asked Bunny, apparently reluctant to get out of the limelight. "I thought it jolly queer Oliphant sending for Nameless to fag at that time, sir, the prefects never fag us during prep, and Oliphant isn't a beast like Carsdale."

"That will do, Bootles. You may go back to your place."

"Yes, sir. Did Nameless steal the banknote while he was fagging in Oliphant's study, sir? Bit risky trusting him there, considering—"

"Go to your place, Bootles."

"Oh, yes, sir."

Bunny rolled back to his place at last. He realised that his evidence had caused a sensation, though he was still quite in the dark as to the why and the wherefore. So were most of the Fourth for that matter. But the group standing before the class were quite enlightened.

Dr. Cheyne fixed his eyes on Compton, who was chalky white. The wretched junior's knees were knocking together

It came on him, like an overwhelming tide, that he was lost; that one unguarded point had ruined the whole fabric of his cunning plot. It is always so; it is seldom or never that a crime can be accomplished without some weak spot being left in the armour of the criminal—some chink through which the light of truth may enter. "The best-laid schemes of mice and men gang oft agley," as the poet has told us. And Vernon Compton's carefully-laid scheme had "ganged agley" with a vengeance!

"Compton,"—the Head spoke in a grinding voice—"you lied to me when I questioned you yesterday evening."

Compton tried to speak, but his throat was hoarse and husky. No words came from his ashy lips.

He knew that he was discovered, and that knowledge choked him.

"You denied having given the message to Nameless! It is now established beyond doubt that you gave him the message."

Compton muttered huskily.

"You sent the boy to Oliphant's study and caused him to wait there till Oliphant came in," said the Head, with growing grimness.

"What was your object in doing this? You can have had only one object, Compton, in doing as you did and denying it afterwards. When you denied it you knew of the theft, and knew that the banknote was in Nameless's overcoat. You knew, because you had placed it there. That is beyond doubt now. Heaven forgive me for having so nearly committed a fearful injustice!" The Head's voice trembled. "Colonel Lovell, I beg your pardon. Thank Heaven, you insisted upon probing this matter to the very bottom. Harry Nameless stands before the school cleared of the faintest suspicion. He is restored to his place with all honour."

"How's that, old bean?" whispered Algernon Aubrey.

Harry smiled.

"As for you, Compton,"—the Head's voice grew deep and stern again—"unhappy boy! What can I say to you? You have deliberately lied to swear away the good name of your schoolfellow! You have caused me, your Headmaster,

to commit a terrible injustice! Wretched boy!"

"I—I—" Compton groaned. All his nerve was gone now.

"The charge that was made against Nameless now falls upon you, Compton."

The wretched junior gave a cry.

"I am not a thief! I did not steal the banknote! I knew it would be found! You can't call me a thief!"

"No, you are not a thief, Compton, I believe that. But you are almost worse than a thief. I could never have dreamed of such unscrupulousness in one so young! You are not a thief, but you are a slanderer, a bearer of false witness." The Head paused. "You will remain here no longer, Compton, to contaminate other boys by your presence. Go at once and pack your box! You leave the school this morning!"

With an ashen face the wretched junior turned and staggered from the form-room. An hour later St. Kit's knew Vernon Compton no more.

That day was a red-letter day in No. 5 Study.

Even Bunny Bootles was in high favour there.

True, the fat Bunny had not had the least idea of the importance of the service he had rendered at the time he rendered it; but he understood now, and he swelled with importance.

Colonel Lovell remained that day at St. Kit's; he was not willing to part with his newly-found son. And the Head gave No. 5 study a whole holiday. That was a happy day to Harry Nameless—Nameless no longer. Already he was entered on the school books as Harry Lovell. And by that name—his own name—he was always to be known. Tea in No. 5 study was a merry meal that afternoon.

Colonel Lovell, of course, was there, and Algy remarked that "nunky" looked ten years younger—as, indeed, he did. Bunny Bootles was there, revelling in the fat of the land, and very affectionate to Harry, for Bunny had found that the one-time nameless schoolboy was going to have an allowance almost equal to Algy's, and that discovery endeared him to

Bunny as nothing else could have done. Bunny's only regret was that his own parentage was not a matter of mystery and that he couldn't be discovered to be the colonel's son, too. As that wasn't possible, the next best thing was to borrow as much as practicable from the colonel's son, which Bunny nobly resolved to do.

There were many guests in No. 5 study, too; looking at the merry party, no one would have dreamed that Harry had ever been "sent to Coventry" at St. Kit's. "Coventry" was a thing very much of the past. Now that all was cleared up, the St. Kit's fellows were feeling that they wanted to make it up to Harry for having been "down" on him without reason. And Harry was only too pleased to meet them halfway.

It was a merry party, and the colonel seemed as merry as anyone—very unlike the colonel as he had been known before. In the dusk that afternoon Harry walked with him to the station to see him off. His father! Even yet it seemed too good to be true, like a nappy dream from which he must awaken. The bronzed face smiled at him as the train glided out of the station. Harry waved his hand to his father, and walked back to St. Kit's as if he were walking on air.

In No. 5 study Algy greeted him with a cheery grin.

"Are you goin' to help me with my prep., Cousin Harry?"

Harry laughed.

"Jolly glad to, Cousin Algernon."

"Sounds jolly, don't it?" said Algernon Aubrey, with a chuckle. "When I think of some poor fellows who have Bunny for a cousin—"

"Why, you beast—" said Bunny.

"Never mind, Bunny, you've played up like a little man for once," said Algy. "and I won't kick you again till the end of the term—if I can help it! There!"

THE END.

(There will be another splendid long complete story of the chums of St. Kit's next Monday. Order your copy in advance and get a new reader.)