WILL YOU BE A CAPTAIN?—GREAT OFFER TO READERS



SCHOOL AND SPORT

1½d



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The St Kit's Rebellion.



LONG COMPLETE SCHOOL STORY.

BUNNY BOOTLES LOSES HIS COURAGE AT A CRITICAL MOMENT!



The ivy rustled and swayed as Harry Lovell tested it with his weight. But it held well, as he was sure it would. The junior drew a deep breath and trusted himself to it.

THE ST. KIT'S REBELLION:

A Magnificent Long Complete School Tale, dealing with the Exciting Adventures of Harry Lovell and Co.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.
The Reformer!

ST. KIT'S was in a turmoil!

The school had had a sample of their new headmaster. That sample had made the whole school realise what a loss they had sustained in losing Dr. Cheyne. The old Head had inspired awe rather than regard among his boys, but since the change to Mr. Carker, the St. Kit's fellows realised that they had lost a friend. An unknown ruffian who had "knocked out" the Head the week before had really injured the school more than the Head. It was deeply exasperating to the St. Kit's fellows that the rascal had escaped, and that the police had not succeeded in tracing him. But just at present they were thinking more about Mr. Carker than anything else. Everybody was curious to see how Randolph Carker would turn out. After the sample they had had their anticipations were not happy ones.

In the Sixth-form room, when Mr. Carker took charge of that form, there were gloomy faces. The Sixth, of course, could not be caned; they had no chastisement to fear. But Mr. Carker had a tongue that was as sharp as his cane. It was not a happy morning for the Sixth, and Mr. Carker succeeded in making himself thoroughly unpopular, if he had not done so already.

But with the seniors Mr. Carker was under some restraint. There was a limit to what they would stand. In the Sixth Form there were half-a-dozen powerful fellows who could have picked up Mr. Carker and thrown him over a desk. Certainly they were not likely to proceed to any such extreme measures. But the fact that they were able to do it had a restraining influence upon the tyrant of St. Kit's. Although they found his tongue a bitter one, and although he treated them as slackers whom it was his unpleasant duty to drive, the Sixth found that they could endure him.

But Mr. Carker was not content with handling the Sixth. Whether he was afflicted with a strong sense of duty or not, it was apparent that he had a very strong love of interference.

In the afternoon he put in an appearance in the Fifth-form room, leaving the Sixth to look after themselves, much to their satisfaction.

Mr. Tulke was surprised to see him, and looked it.

The new Head explained curtly that he intended to take each form in hand in turn, and satisfy himself that matters were progressing satisfactorily. If changes were needed he was ready to introduce them. Above all, he was determined that there should be no slackness.

Mr. Tulke, with feelings too deep for words, handed his class over to the new Head, and retired into a shell of dignified silence.

The Fifth did not enjoy being put through their paces by Randolph Carker. He was well up to his work, so far as scholastic attainments went, and he made some of the Fifth perspire. It was a drastic change after the easy rule of Mr. Tulke.

Gunter of the Fifth was in quite a state of nerves when Mr. Carker had done with him. Gunter was not a bright youth, and his private opinion of the classics was that they were "all rot." Gunter had often told Price, his study-mate, how he would enjoy having the gloves on with Horace, Virgil, Ovid, and Thucydides. Gunter would have taken on all four together and enjoyed it. He would have enjoyed it very much more than he enjoyed their works. So Gunter was reduced to nerves and perspiration by Mr. Carker, and his feelings were shared more or less by all the Fifth.

After school Mr. Carker's "latest" was reported up and down St. Kit's and freely commented upon.

"Takin' all the forms in turn, is he?" said Babtie of the Shell. "Then he'll drop on us tomorrow."

"And on us next!" said Stubbs of the Fourth, with a very long face.

It was not a happy prospect.

The Head had always been a rather far-off figure to the Lower School. But Mr. Carker, evidently, was going to change all that.

There was not a fellow in St. Kit's who was not to make his close acquaintance.

Next morning the Shell went into their form-room with dire anticipations, which were fully realised.

Mr. Rattrey, the master of the Shell, had no choice about handing over his class. But he retired from the room while Mr. Carker was in charge, declining to remain as a witness.

He did not make any secret of the fact that he did not like Mr. Carker's interference. But his dislike did not worry Randolph Carker at all.

Mr. Carker took the Shell for an hour that morning. It was an hour's nightmare to the Shell, to judge by their looks when they came out of the form-room after lessons.

The Fourth were very anxious to know the result; because they were aware that their own turn was coming.

Harry Lovell and Co. looked for Babtie after morning lessons; and they found Babtie talking to his comrades in the quad—and his comrades talking to Babtie—all talking at once, emphatically and furiously. Obviously they had not enjoyed their "tara" with Mr. Carker.

"How did you get on, dear boys?" St. Leger inquired.

Babtie breathed fury.

"I was caned three times!" he said.

"Oh, gad! What for?"

"First," said Babtie, "for not sittin' up straight! Second, for lookin' sulky after bein' caned! Third, because the villain caught me out in Ovid!"

"I had it twice!" groaned Lister.

"Twice for me!" said Verney major.

"The old bounder's arm must ache after the way he ladled it out," said Babtie, savagely. "He seems to enjoy it. I know his game. He daren't cane the seniors, though he'd like to. He's goin' to take it out of the Lower School. Not that the Shell are really Lower School," added Babtie, hastily.

The Shell prided themselves on being Middle School. If they weren't exactly seniors, at least they weren't juniors—in their own estimation. Apparently Mr. Carker had not realised this important distinction.

"You're Lower School same as we are!" grunted Bob Rake. "Carker seems to think so, anyhow."

"Carker's a cad and a rank outsider," snapped Babtie. "If he takes the Shell again I'm goin' to complain to Mr. Rattrey. Our form-master is bound to protect us from that wild Hun."

"He ought!" said Lister, doubtfully.

"He's got to!" declared Babtie. "I can jolly well tell you that I'm not standing any more of Carker in the Shell form-room."

Babtie spoke with all the more emphasis because he did not suppose that Mr. Carker would be taking the Shell again, anyhow. As a matter of fact, Babtie and Co. had been quite subdued by the new Head. They breathed fury, but they breathed it well out of his sight and hearing.

Indeed, it was difficult to see how the Lower School could help itself. Mr. Carker had been regularly appointed by the Governors, and those high and mighty gentlemen were beyond appeal. Whether the form-masters would care to oppose the Head was a very dubious question. Undoubtedly the new Head had the power of dismissing them if he considered them unsatisfactory. Even if they felt that life wasn't worth living under Randolph Carker's rule, still they were likely to endure patiently until Dr. Cheyne returned—as he was bound to return when his health was restored. It was only a question of time—or so, at all events, everyone at St. Kit's supposed.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.
Brave Bunny Bootles.

"I CAN'T make out why you chaps allow it," said Bunny Bootles.

It was Cuthbert Archibald Bootles, the fat junior, who had rolled across the quad and joined the group.

"If this rotter tries his tricks on me," continued Bunny, "I shall deal with him like I did with a scoundrel who attacked my pater once."

The St. Kit's juniors grinned.

"It's no laughing matter," continued Bunny. "The time has come to deal with the Carker bird, and if I take up the matter I shall take it up properly, I can tell you."

Babtie, of the Shell, burst into a roar of laughter.

"I should like to see Bunny deal with the ruffian," he cried. "Did I hear you say you were in the habit of settling scoundrels like this, Bunny?"

Bunny Bootles looked a little scornful.

"I didn't say I was in the habit," he replied. "But when I was home on my holidays once—at Bootles Castle, you know—my pater and I had an awful struggle with a bounder just like Carker. In fact, for all I know it may have been Carker himself!"

"Tell us all about it, Bunny," said half-a-dozen voices. "Tell us exactly how it happened."

"I don't mind," said Bunny, loftily. "I'd rather not mention it—it's such a trifling matter to a chap like me. Still, I don't mind. I happened to be strolling through one of the woods on our estate when I heard a scream——"

"My hat! Did your pater scream?" asked Babtie.

Bunny stammered.

"Ye-e-es, of course," he explained. "It was a dreadful scream, too, for coming through the wood a fearful ruffian suddenly leaped upon us, levelled a revolver at our heads, and shouted 'Hands up!'"

"Great Scott!"

"Did that happen at your home?" asked Catesby.

"Yes, it did."

"Sure it wasn't at Lynne Cinema?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why, you rotter——"

"Well, such things happen oftener in Lynne Cinema than in a real wood," said Catesby, shaking his head solemnly. "I thought perhaps you'd got it mixed."

"When you've told us this yarn before you've never mentioned the revolver," said Algernon Aubrey, looking perplexed. "You said the ruffian had a big, knobbly stick——"

"That's what I meant," said Bunny. "He sprang on us brandishing a terrific bludgeon——"

"You said a revolver a minute ago!" yelled Tracy.

"I—I meant a big stick——"

"Great pip!"

"Brandishing a frightful bludgeon," said Bunny. "Springing at him like a tiger, I felled him to the earth——"

"You did?" shrieked the Fourth and the Shell in chorus.

"I did!"

"How—how—how big was he?" stuttered Algernon Aubrey.

"About six feet—well over six feet, I should say——"

"And you felled him——!" said Algy, dazedly.

"With one fearful blow!" said Bunny. "Straight from the shoulder, you know. One of my terrific lefts."

"Where did it hit him?" asked Durance.

"Fairly on the jaw."

"But if he was six feet high, you must have jumped up two or three feet to hit him on the jaw!" howled Babtie of the Shell.

"Oh! I—I mean—well, so I did," said Bunny desperately. "Filled with the rage of combat, you know, I—I leaped at him—like a—a——"

"Like a jack-in-the-box?" asked Catesby.

"Like a tiger, you ass! Right at him."

"And when did you come down again?" asked Tracy.

"Did you ever come down again, Bunny?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you fellows don't believe me——"

"Yaas—of course we—we believe you, dear old bean—but—but perhaps you exaggerate just a—a—a trifle."

"Not a fraction," said Bunny, firmly. "With that one terrible blow I knocked him senseless."

"Then it was jolly soon over," remarked Durance.

"Oh, yes—my blood was up, you know," said Bunny, carelessly. "You fellows hardly know what I'm like when I'm roused."

"But if he was knocked senseless right at the kick-off, how did he come to handle your pater at all?"

Harry Lovell and Co. walked away, leaving Babtie and company grinning at Bunny's romance, but fuming and raging inwardly at the thought of the new Head.

"Nice for little us, next!" sighed Algernon Aubrey.

"Very!" said Harry, drily.

Bob Rake's eyes glinted.

"If he handles the Fourth like that——" he began.

"We won't stand it," said Bunny Bootles, after a cautious glance round to ascertain that he was not heard. "Let us defy the beast."

The Co. grinned. Bunny Bootles was not likely to defy the tyrant of St. Kit's—not in his hearing, at all events.

Bunny blinked at them.

"If the form had elected me captain, I'd show 'em!" he said. "I'd show that brute! Let him pick on me, that's all! You fellows keep your eyes on me in form this afternoon if that rotter takes the Fourth. I'll stand up to the rotter."

"Fathead!"

"Oh, I say——"

"Can it, Bunny, can it, old sport," said Algy.

Bunny snorted. He was always being told to get his observations "canned." He raised his voice emphatically.

"I tell you I shan't stand any rot from Carker," he said. "I'm not afraid of him. Let him fix his blessed green eyes on me—I'll stand up to him. If he wants to cane me I shall say—I shall say——"

"Well, what will you say?" grinned Bob.

"I shall say 'Certainly not, sir!'" said Bunny, firmly. "I shall say 'I decline to be caned by anyone but my own form-master.' I shall say 'Get out of our form-room and be blowed to you, Carker!'"

It was sheer ill-luck that Mr. Randolph Carker should have come round the corner of the Oak Walk at the precise moment.

He appeared in sight suddenly.

The juniors stopped dead, and Cuthbert Archibald Bootles seemed rooted to the ground. His fat jaw dropped—and the look of utter terror on his face was ludicrous.

It was evident that Mr. Carker had overheard the hapless Bunny's vainglorious declaration.

His thin lips tightened, his pale eyes glinted more like cold steel than ever. His Roman nose looked, to the wretched Bunny, like the great beak of some fearful bird of prey about to swoop.

"Bootles!"

"Oh! Ah! Yes! No! What! Oh, dear!" stuttered Bunny.

"You were speaking of me?"

"Oh, no, sir!"

"You mentioned my name!" thundered Mr. Carker.

"Not at all, sir."

"I heard you."

"I—I—I didn't, sir. I—I—I mentioned—I mentioned—lemme see——" Under that basilisk glare Bunny's fertile imagination did not come to his rescue so quickly as usual. "I—I—I mentioned—I—I was speaking of—of Parker, sir."

"Parker?"

"Parker, sir—Parker of the Shell——"

"I distinctly heard you say Carker."

"Parker, sir—Parker, I assure you," spluttered the terrified Bunny. "Besides, I didn't know you were listening, sir."

"What?"

"I—I mean I knew you were listening—that is—I knew—I didn't know—I—I—I——" Bunny's voice failed him.

Mr. Carker had a cane under his arm. He let it slide down into his hand.

"So you would refuse to be caned by me, would you, Bootles?" he asked, in a deadly voice.

It was evident that Mr. Carker had lingered behind the screen of the Oak Walk as the juniors came along, and had listened intentionally to their talk. If anything could have added to the juniors' dislike and scorn of him, that would have done it.

"Oh, no, sir!" groaned Bunny. "I—I wouldn't think of such a thing, sir. It—it wouldn't be—be respectful, would it, sir?"

"I am going to cane you, Bootles."

"Ow!"

"Hold out your hand!"

"Oh, jiminy!"

"At once, sir!" thundered Mr. Carker.

Swish!

"Now the other hand!"

Swish!

Bunny Bootles tucked his hands under his podgy arms, with an expression of anguish upon his fat face that might have touched the heart of a Prussian Hun. Apparently Mr. Carker had a heart tougher than a Hun's, for it certainly was not touched.

"That will be a lesson to you, Bootles, to speak more respectfully of your masters," he said.

"Ow! Ow! Ow!"

"I trust you will profit by it, Bootles."

"Yow-ow!"

"Answer me, sir!" snapped Mr. Carker.

"Ow! Yes, sir! I—I—I think so, sir. I hope so. Yow-ow-ow-ow-ow!"

"Very good," said Mr. Carker.

He tucked his cane under his arm and walked on. Bunny sank down on one of the benches of the Oak Walk, squeezed his fat hands, and groaned in anguish. The Co. did not speak. Bunny's dire terror and horrified submission after his loud vaunts had a comic side; but the juniors forbore to rub it in. Bunny had had enough. The Co. walked on, leaving Bunny on the bench squeezing his hands and uttering an incessant stream of anguished ejaculations.

"Ow! Ow! Ow! Wow-wow-wow! Yow-ow-wooop!"

It was very probable that the lesson would not be lost on Bunny. It was quite certain that Cuthbert Archibald Bootles would be very, very careful before he "talked out of his hat" on the subject of Mr. Carker again.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Nice for the Fourth!

IT was not a happy Fourth that went into the form-room that afternoon.

The juniors hoped against hope that Mr. Carker would put off "taking the Fourth" till a later date. But it was a faint hope. It was plain that the new Head meant to work his way through the school, impressing his methods on all the forms. The Fourth came next in order after the Shell, and their turn was due.

Some of the juniors wondered how Mr. Lathley would take it. The Fourth-form master was a quiet and reserved gentleman, but he had a strong character, as his pupils knew. There was a vague hope that Mr. Lathley might "stand up" to the tyrant.

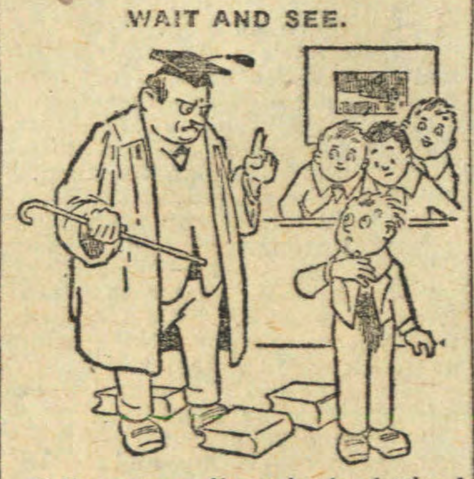
Harry Lovell was in a thoughtful mood as he went into class. As captain of the Fourth it was up to him to take the lead in any resistance that was offered to the new Head. But resistance to a head-master was such a very serious matter that it was only to be thought of as a last extremity. After all, in spite of Mr. Carker's meddling ways, the Fourth was not likely to have much to do with him. They did not come into constant contact with him like the Sixth. Endurance, if endurance was possible, was evidently the best way out. But was it possible?

There had been heated talk in the Fourth. Rex Tracy had declared that he would "write to his people." Stubbs had wildly proposed rigging a booby-trap for the tyrant. O'Donoghue had suggested pelting him out of the form-room with inkpots! Nearly all the Fourth had agreed that, if it was too thick, they "wouldn't stand it." But the degree of "thickness" that they would stand was as yet undetermined.

Certainly it was a very subdued form that met the eye of Mr. Carker when he sailed in that afternoon.

Mr. Lathley happened to be taking his pupils on a personally-conducted tour through "English literature" when the new Head came in. English literature was the least unpopular subject in the Fourth; Mr. Lathley had a way of making it interesting to all but hopeless slackers like Tracy and Lumley and Bunny Bootles. Anyhow, the juniors agreed that it was better than classical literature, and ever so much better than "maths." Mr. Carker stood for a few minutes listening. But he could never stand for long without interfering.

WAIT AND SEE.



"Now, you quite understand why I am going to cane you?"
"Yes. It's because you're a heavy-weight and I'm only a fly-weight."

"You are taking Shakespeare, Mr. Lathley?" he remarked.

"Yes, sir," said Mr. Lathley. "Julius Cæsar."

"Kindly give me the book."

Mr. Lathley paused.

"Is it your intention to take the class?" he asked.

"For this lesson, yes."

"In that case I will retire from the form-room," said Mr. Lathley.

"Better remain, sir," said Mr. Carker. "It is my intention to speed up, to some extent, the work in all the forms here. I have discovered a very alarming amount of slackness. By observing me, sir, you will be able to study my methods, and later to apply them."

Mr. Lathley looked fixedly at the new head-master.

"My own methods, sir, have not failed to give satisfaction to Dr. Cheyne," he said, quietly.

"Dr. Cheyne is no longer head-master of St. Kit's, Mr. Lathley. It is I that you have to deal with in the future."

"Temporarily," reminded Mr. Lathley.

"That remains to be seen," answered Mr. Carker. "It is not at all certain, I understand, that Dr. Cheyne will return to St. Christopher's at all. However, we need not discuss that. While I am in authority here I shall require my methods to be followed; and I may as well say plainly that I am surprised and shocked by the slack state of the school. It may have satisfied Dr. Cheyne. It does not satisfy me."

The Fourth-form master breathed hard.

"I fear, sir, that I am too old to change my methods," he said, drily. "Neither do I see any necessity for doing so, unless it becomes certain that Dr. Cheyne will not return. If you are taking charge of the class, sir, I will withdraw." And Mr. Lathley sailed out of the form-room, with rustling gown, without waiting for the new Head to reply.

Mr. Carker's eyes glinted. He had not scored off the Fourth-form master at all events. Unfortunately for Stubbs of the Fourth, he ventured to grin—and Mr. Carker spotted the grin.

"Stubbs!"

Poor Stubbs' face instantly became as serious as a judge's—indeed, a great deal more serious than a modern judge's. With Mr. Carker's basilisk eye on him, the junior had no inclination to smile.

"Yes, sir," he faltered.

"You were laughing, Stubbs."

"Oh, no, sir," groaned Stubbs.

"Come here."

Percival Stubbs fairly limped out before the class. He realised, vaguely, that he had to pay for Mr. Lathley's disregard of the new Head's overbearing authority. Mr. Carker wanted a victim, and he had found one.

Swish! Swish!

Stubbs crawled back to his place.

As he sat squeezing his hands under his desk he remembered his wild idea of rigging up a booby-trap for Mr. Carker, and shuddered at the thought. He was glad that Mr. Carker was not a thought-reader.

The St. Kit's tyrant's eye roamed over the class as if seeking another victim. The juniors sat with downcast eyes. Mr. Carker's eye lingered on Harry Lovell. He had not forgotten the incident of the eggs, and he remembered Lovell's bold bearing on the occasion in Hall a couple of days before. He was making a special note of Lovell, and the captain of the Fourth could see it, and he knew that whatever he did that afternoon the lesson would not pass off without trouble with the new Head. It was, in fact, a case of the wolf and the lamb over again.

"You will proceed, Lovell," said Mr. Carker. "Read aloud from where Mr. Lathley left off."

"Yes, sir."

Harry stood up, book in hand.

BLANK AGAIN

This space has been left blank because your Editor is waiting to receive a humorous drawing from any one of his readers. The drawing must be funny. The joke must be good, and the sketch itself must be on drawing board and done with Indian ink. Payment for sketches used will be at usual rate. Contributors must enclose a stamped envelope in case of rejectment.

His clear, rather musical voice did justice to the lines:—

"That you have wronged me doth appear in this,
You have condemned and noted Lucius Pella
For taking bribes here of the Sardians.
Wherein my letters——"

Mr. Carker held up his hand, and Lovell stopped.

"Who were the Sardians, Lovell?"

"The inhabitants of Sardis, sir."

"Where was Sardis?"

Lovell did not answer. He had completely forgotten where Sardis was in ancient times. It was an unexpected question.

"You do not know?" said Mr. Carker, maliciously.

"No, sir," said Harry, frankly.

"Are you a dunce, Lovell?"

"I hope not, sir."

"Merely careless and slovenly. Is that it?"

"Neither, I hope, sir," said Harry.

"Do not answer me in that impertinent manner, Lovell."

"I did not mean to be impertinent, sir," said Harry, controlling his feelings with difficulty.

"I am afraid that I cannot accept that statement, Lovell. I have observed that this is an unruly form, and that you have several times displayed insolence. You are head boy, I believe."

"Yes, sir."

"Go to the bottom of the class."

The captain of the Fourth obeyed that command in silence, but with deep feelings.

"Do not sit there scowling," added Mr. Carker.

"I was not scowling, sir."

"Don't contradict me, boy."

Harry was silent; silence seemed the safest refuge. Mr. Carker's eye lingered on him, but he had no pretext to proceed further, and he had to let Lovell alone. He glanced at Mr. Lathley's volume in his hand, but Mr. Carker had no taste for Shakespeare. He preferred worrying his pupils, or speeding them up, as he had described it.

"I shall ask you a few questions about the characters in this play," he said, and the Fourth summoned up all their energies for the occasion. They knew, as well as if Mr. Carker had told them so, that he was going to try to "catch them out."

Bunny Bootles made himself as small as possible. He was already in Mr. Carker's black books, and his ignorance of Shakespeare was like Sam Weller's knowledge of London—extensive and peculiar. But the basilisk eye fixed on Cuthbert Archibald.

"Bootles!"

Bunny gasped.

"Who was Brutus?"

"B-b-brutus, sir," stammered Bunny.

"Don't repeat my words, Bootles. Answer my questions."

"He—he—he—he was a—a man, sir."

"What?"

"I mean a—a Roman, sir," gasped Bunny.

"That is scarcely an adequate description of Brutus, Bootles."

"Isn't it, sir?" mumbled Bunny.

"If you cannot tell me more than that of a well-known historical character, Bootles——" said Mr. Carker, picking up his cane.

Bunny shuddered. He had had enough of that cane; his fat palms were still aching. He hurried to reply.

"Oh, yes, sir. I—I know all about Brutus, sir; my—my favourite character in Milton, sir."

"What?"

"I—I mean in Shakespeare, sir," stammered Bunny, who hardly knew what he was saying, so dire was his terror. "He—he was the man who—who—who——"

"Well?"

"The man who—who—who was suckled by a she-wolf, sir, in the early days of—of Rome——"

"Are you speaking of Romulus, Bootles?"

"Oh! Ah! Yes! Exactly, sir! I—I mean to say Romulus."

"I was asking you about Brutus, Bootles."

"Of—of course, sir. He—he—he was the man who——"

"Who what?"

"Who let the cakes burn, sir."

"What?"

"And—and never smiled again," gasped Bunny.

"Bootles!"

The Fourth-form certainly would have smiled but for the presence of Mr. Carker. But under Mr. Carker's eye, even Bunny's description of Brutus could not make them smile.

Bunny, utterly confused now, only desiring to ward off the evil moment, plunged on desperately.

"And he—he stood on the burning deck, sir!"

"Upon my word!"

"And—and when he died, he said, 'Kiss me, Hardy——'"

"He said what?"

"He—he said, 'Kiss me, Hardy—had I but loved my country as I have loved my King, I—I—I——"

"So this is the state of ignorance in this form," said Mr. Carker, very unfairly assuming Bunny Bootles to be a sample of the Fourth. "There is a very evident need for change here. Bootles, stand out!"

Bunny Bootles groaned dismally, and did not move. He simply could not screw up the nerve to face that terrible cane.

"Do you hear me, Bootles?"

"Oh dear! Yes, sir!"

"Come here at once!"

"Ow! Ow! Ow!"

Bunny crawled out before the class.

"Hold out your hand, Bootles."

Very gingerly Bunny's fat paw came out. The cane swept up, and it swept down. If that cut had landed on Bunny's palm it would have hurt Bunny, but it didn't. Involuntarily, acting simply on instinct, Bunny jerked his hand back in time.

The cane meeting with no resistance, swept on.

Every bullet is said to have a billet. The cane, with so much vim in the lash, had to land on something. What it landed on was Mr. Carker's own calf, with a crack that rang through the form-room like a pistol-shot. The crack of the cane was followed by a frantic yell. Mr. Carker did not seem to dislike inflicting pain on others, but apparently he was not fond of it himself. And the lash of the cane certainly hurt him. He dropped the cane, and the Fourth-form were treated to the extraordinary spectacle of a tall, thin gentleman hopping on one leg and clasping the other and yelling at the top of his voice.

It was too much for the Fourth—especially in the state of nerves to which Mr. Carker had already reduced them. A yell of laughter rang through the Fourth-form-room.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A STIFF STORY.



Explorer: "Yes, it was awful cold near the Pole. We had to be very careful not to pat our dogs."
Friend: "Why, how was that?"
Explorer: "Their tales were frozen so stiff that if they wagged them they would have broken off."

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Rebellion!

"HA, ha, ha!" The Fourth-formers roared.

"Oh, gad!" murmured St. Leger. "Jevver see anythin' quite so funny as this? Oh, great gad!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Carker ceased to hop. Bunny Bootles, frightened out of his wits at what he had done, stood frozen to the form-room floor. He could not have moved to save his life.

The new Head's glance swept over the class, and the laughter died away quite suddenly.

"So—so——" Mr. Carker choked with passion. "So—so—so this is how you dare to treat your Head-master!"

Dead silence.

Mr. Carker rubbed his leg and winced. Then he picked up the cane and turned on Bunny Bootles with a deadly gleam in his eyes. Like a very fat bird fascinated by a serpent, Bunny watched him with frozen eyes. Mr. Carker gripped the cane with his right hand and Bunny's collar with his left. He twisted the fat junior over a desk, and then the cane rose and fell.

Lash! Lash! Lash!

Bunny Bootles struggled and yelled and kicked.

Lash! Lash!

The fat junior's frantic howls rang through the form-room and far beyond. They reached other form-rooms, where the fellows started and looked at one another.

Lash! Lash! Lash!

The tyrant of St. Kit's seemed beside himself with passion. He lashed at Bunny Bootles with ruthless lashes.

"Ow! Ow! Yoop! Help!" yelled Bunny. "Murder! Police! Oh, you beast! Ow! Ow! Ow! Ow!"

The Fourth-form looked on with stony eyes. Lickings were not uncommon at St. Kit's; floggings were not unknown, but never had the St. Kit's fellows beheld punishment like this.

Lash! Lash! Lash!

Harry Lovell sprang to his feet, his eyes blazing. He could stand it no longer. Utterly reckless of the consequences, the captain of the Fourth intervened.

"Stop!" he shouted.

Mr. Carker stopped in sheer astonishment. He stared round at Harry.

"Lovell—you—you spoke!"

"You are hurting Bootles, sir. I think you have forgotten yourself!" exclaimed the captain of the Fourth

"You think I have forgotten myself!" articulated Mr. Carker, as if he could not believe his ears.

Bunny Bootles rolled off the desk and staggered away. He reeled against the wall and howled dismally.

Mr. Carker did not heed him further. His eyes were fixed on Harry Lovell, and he was trembling with passion.

"Lovell! Come here!"

"What for, sir?" asked Harry, steadily.

"What for? I am going to give you such a thrashing, Lovell, as will never be forgotten in this school!" said Mr. Carker, between his teeth.

Harry set his lips. He knew what he had risked in stopping the tyrant's brutality. It had come to a crisis now, and Harry did not falter.

"I refuse!" he said, curtly.

"You refuse to obey me?"

"Yes!"

There was a murmur in the Fourth of suppressed excitement. The die was cast now—the gauntlet was thrown down.

Mr. Carker stared across the class at Harry.

Standing erect, with a flash in his eyes, Lovell returned his gaze.

"Do I understand you aright, Lovell?" said Mr. Carker. "You refuse to obey my command?"

"I refuse to be caned!"

"If you do not come to me at once, Lovell, I shall come to you, and your punishment will be all the more severe."

"I shall defend myself, sir!"

"Wha-a-t?"

Harry Lovell jerked open his desk and picked up a heavy ebony ruler as Mr. Carker strode round the class towards him. He stepped into the open space beside the forms and waited for the master to advance—the ruler gripped in his hand. His handsome face was pale, but there was no sign in it of faltering.

"Put that ruler down, Lovell!" said Mr. Carker, thickly.

"I refuse!"

"I shall take it from you, and——"

"Keep your distance, sir! If you lay a finger on me I shall hit out!" said the captain of the Fourth.

A sudden bound forward was Mr. Carker's answer. The cane swept in the air. There was a crash as the heavy ruler swept up and came on to Mr. Carker's uplifted arm.

The cane did not reach Lovell—it flew out of Mr. Carker's hand, and the new Headmaster staggered back clasping his right arm with his left hand.

The ruler had caught him on the elbow, and it had hurt.

"Oh!" spluttered Mr. Carker.

"Oh! Oooooh! What! You dare—yaroooh! Ow! Ow! Wow! Grrrrrrrrr!"

Mr. Carker clasped the damaged elbow. His "funny bone" was twittering, and he was quite out of action for some minutes. His aspect was comical enough, but the Fourth-form did not grin—the crisis was too terribly serious for that. Bunny Bootles's groans were still rolling out dismally, and they mingled with Mr. Carker's anguished ejaculations.

Harry Lovell stood where he was, the ruler still in his hand. What was going to follow, he could not even surmise, but he was prepared to defend himself if necessary. And Bob Rake and Algernon Aubrey St. Leger were ready to help him if their help was needed.

But Mr. Carker was "hors de combat." The quivering and twittering of his "funny-bone" was too much for him. He cast a venomous look at the captain of the Fourth, and still clasping his elbow in his hand, he strode away to the door. The Fourth-form breathed hard. It seemed too good to be true that the tyrant was really going; but he was going, and in a moment more he was gone.

"Oh, gad!" murmured Algy, breathlessly.

"Oh, gum!" said Bob Rake.

"Yow-ow-ow!" came from Bunny Bootles. "I'm hurt! Ow! Wow!"

"Good for you, Lovell!" gasped Stubbs. "But—but—but what's going to happen now?"

That was a question to which no answer could be given. There was open rebellion in the school on Mr. Randolph Carker's third day at St. Kit's; and how Mr. Carker would deal with it was known only to himself, if indeed it was even known to himself. It is easier for a tyrant to rouse rebellion than to deal with it when roused.

Harry Lovell sat down in his place, and a few minutes later Mr. Lathley re-entered the form-room.

The juniors looked at their form-master, but he did not meet their eyes. There was a very grave expression on Mr. Lathley's face.

He made no reference whatever to what had happened, though it was certain that he knew. He quietly resumed charge of his class, and lessons went on quietly. Nothing more was seen of Mr. Carker by the Fourth-form during the afternoon. Perhaps he was still occupied with his "funny-bone!"

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.
A Surprise for Turkey and Co.

"ST. KIT'S cad!"

Bob Rake started. He was lying in the grass, under a tree on the wide heath, and he had been thinking of Sydney Harbour and his old home, and his cheerful young life in sunny Australia. He was thinking, too, of the trouble that was brewing at St. Kit's. He smiled to himself as the incident in the Fourth Form class-room flashed through his mind, and he was wondering what was going to happen, when his thoughts were suddenly interrupted by three grinning faces looking down on him.

Bob's mind was so far away that he did not recognise the faces at first, but he knew the caps, which belonged to Lyncroft School. He sat up in the grass.

The three smiling juniors surrounded him, and then Bob Rake suddenly realised that he had fallen into the hands of the Philistines, as one of them, a ruddy-faced youth with very blue eyes, stooped and jerked the cap from his head.

"Bags I his scalp!" said the merry-faced youth.

"Good old Turkey!" said one of his comrades.

Bob Rake jumped up.

"Hallo, you Lyncroft cads!" he cried. "What are you up to? I thought we had given you enough to go on with in the village the other day."

The rivalry that existed between St. Kit's and Lyncroft had gone on for many years. The juniors of the two schools seldom met without a ragging.

"Ha! This is the merchant we had a tussle with in Wicke," said the merry-looking youth, who evidently rejoiced in the peculiar name of Turkey. "Let me see now, your name is Bake or Crake. Who are you, young 'un?"

Bob Rake grinned at the Lyncroft junior's pretended ignorance.

"Who are you, if you come to that?" retorted Bob.

"He doesn't know us to-day," said Turkey, cheerfully, keeping the rag rolling, so to speak. "Let's introduce ourselves once more to the sweet, unsuspectin' youth. First of all—taking the most important—I'm Dick Hawke. Fellows call me Turkey when I'm at home, because——"

"Because you look more like a turkey than a hawk, I suppose?" suggested Bob.

"What?"

"One to the St. Kit's cad!" chuckled one of the juniors. "He's hit it! It's your merry complexion that did it, Hawke, and you know it."

Turkey frowned.

"Shut up, Topford!"

"But you know——"

"This chap," said Turkey, continuing the introduction, "is Topford, who was sent to Lyncroft in mistake for a home for idiots!"

"Look here, Turkey!" bawled Topford.

"This fat chap is Bunce—called Buster Bunce because he's always on the point of bursting!"

"You silly ass!" howled the other junior. He was a plump youth with a round, good-tempered face.

"Now you know us," continued Turkey. "And now——"

"Now you'll give me back my cap," said Bob Rake.

Turkey shook his head.

"No fear!" he answered, emphatically. "We're on the war-path, my innocent youth, and out for scalps. You can have your cap by comin' up to Lyncroft and askin' for it very politely."

"I'd rather have it now, thank you," said Bob. "I've got to get back to St. Kit's for tea."

"He'd rather have it now," said Turkey, winking at his comrades.

"He'd rather have it now," chanted Topford and Bunce.

And they chortled.

"The kid looks as if he's been in a scrap already," said Turkey, surveying Bob critically, "so we won't lick him. We'll only make him cry peccavi on his bended knees."

"You won't!" said Bob, grimly.

"That's the rule," said Turkey. "You cry peccavi and we let you off. See?"

"But I don't specially want you to let me off," said Bob, laughing. "I want my cap, and if you don't hand it over I shall take it!"

"This kid don't know the ropes," said Turkey, shaking his head. "It's up to us to teach him. Put him on his knees."

The three grinning Lyncrofters closed in on the St. Kit's junior.

"Bump him for his ignorance," said Turkey. "Then bump him for his school, and then for good luck. Three bumps."

"Yes, Turkey."

Bob Rake jumped back.

"Hands off, you silly asses!" he exclaimed. "I shall hit out!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Turkey and Co. did not seem much worried by the prospect of the Australian junior hitting out. They rushed on him cheerfully.

But the next moment a change came o'er the spirit of their dream, so to speak. Bob Rake did hit out, and his drive landed on Dick Hawke's chest, and Turkey, of the Lyncroft Fourth, went heels over head in the grass.

"Yaroooh!" spluttered Turkey as he landed.

"My hat!" ejaculated Buster Bunce.

"Oh, crikey!" came from Topford.

They halted in surprise, but Bob Rake did not stop. He realised that three to one was too long odds, and that it was necessary to use his advantage while he had it.

As the two juniors paused irresolute, staring at the sprawling Turkey, Bob sprang forward to the attack.

A sudden grasp and a spin sent Topford whirling across Turkey, and he sprawled across that hapless youth, who let out a muffled howl as he landed.

The next second Bob had closed with Buster Bunce. That plump youth was full of pluck, but he had no chance whatever against the lithe St. Kit's junior in a close wrestle. In a twinkling he was spinning away, to collapse on his two sprawling comrades.

Bob laughed breathlessly.

For the moment he was free from attack—the three Lyncrofters were sprawling in the grass, yelling and gasping. Bob sprang forward and caught up his cap, which Turkey had dropped, and jammed it on his head. Then he snatched up Turkey's cap and fled.

Turkey sat up spluttering.

"Googh! Gerroff! You fat idiot, Buster, roll off my legs! You thumpin' chump, Topy, wharrer you mean by jamming your silly elbow in my blessed eye? Groooooogh!"

"Ow! Oh! Where's that St. Kit's beast?" roared Topford, jumping up.

"Where's my cap?"

"Oh, crumbs!"

Turkey and Co. scrambled to their feet. Bob Rake, already twenty yards away, turned for a moment, laughing, and waved Turkey's cap in the air. Then he resumed his flight.

"After him!" yelled Turkey.

The three Lyncrofters rushed in furious pursuit. So far from having made the St. Kit's junior cry "peccavi" on his bended knees, they had been taken by surprise, and had had far the worst of the trouble so far. They looked much less good-tempered as they tore across the heath in pursuit of the St. Kit's junior.

Bob Rake ran on lightly. He did not intend to encounter three foes at once, and he was quite confident of keeping his lead. He was like a giant refreshed after his long rest in the grass. In spite of the efforts of the Lyncrofters, he increased his lead by the time the chase swept out into the Wicke road. By that time Buster Bunce was out of breath and tailing off behind. Turkey and Topford kept up the pursuit hotly.

Bob ran up on Wicke lane toward's St. Kit's, occasionally pausing to wave back the captured cap.

"Give me my cap, you rotter!" bawled Turkey, as they came gasping across Wicke bridge.

Bob looked back.

"You can come up to St. Kit's for it," he shouted. "You'll have to ask politely, you know."

"I—I—I'll——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob sat on the stone parapet of the bridge to rest. He sat there till the two Lyncrofters were only a dozen feet away, and then slipped off and took up the running again.

"I say, we shall be late for call-over if we keep on, Turkey," gasped Topford. "Better chuck it."

"Blow call-over!" gasped Turkey.

"But——"

"I'm not going back without my cap!"

"But——"

"Rats!"

Turkey put on a spurt and left Topford behind. Bob Rake looked over his shoulder to see a perspiring red face only a few feet from him.

"I've got you!" panted Turkey.

"Not quite."

The Australian junior put on speed, and fairly walked away from his panting pursuer. The gates of St. Kit's were in sight now. Old Coote had come out to close the gates; the dusk was falling thickly now. The old porter stood in the gateway and stared at the chase bearing down on him.

Turkey made a desperate effort, and reached Bob Rake as he turned in at the gates. Bob stopped, with a breathless clutch on his shoulder. The next moment the breathless Turkey was sitting in the road.

"Ow!" he gasped.

Bob held up the cap.

"Ask politely," he said.

"You—you beast——"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came in a roar from a dozen St. Kit's fellows, who had rushed down to the gates at the sight of the Lyncroft enemy.

"Lyncroft cad!" shouted Jones minor. "Collar him!"

"Bump him!"

Turkey jumped up and backed hastily away.

"Give me my cap!"

"Ask politely," said Bob, laughing. "Your own terms, you know. You've got to cry peccavi."

"I won't!" howled Turkey.

"Collar him!" yelled two or three voices.

Turkey retreated and dodged. Bob held up the cap, laughing. The tables had been completely turned on Turkey and Co. since they had fallen in with the St. Kit's junior on the heath.

"P-p-please give me my cap," gasped Turkey, at last. "Peccavi! There, you rotter! Now hand me my cap."

Bob tossed the cap over, and Turkey caught it and fled, barely dodging Jones minor and Stubbs and Catesby.

"Now, young gentlemen," said old Coote, grinning.

"Yah! St. Kit's cads!" howled Turkey, from the dusky distance as he went.

The St. Kit's juniors crowded in, and Coote clanged the gate.

Jones minor tapped Bob on the arm as the Australian junior crossed the quadrangle towards the School House.

"Good for you!" he said, in great admiration. "You've done old Turkey—done him brown! Lovell couldn't have made old Turkey cry 'peccavi.' Been scrapping with the Lyncroft gang?"

"Yes, a little."

"You look it!" said Jones. "But you bagged Turkey's scalp and made him cry 'peccavi.' I'll tell Lovell after tea—it will make him awfully wild." Jones gave a chuckle. "Even Lovell will be waxy. It's no end of a score."

It was time for tea, and Bob Rake hurried in, followed by Jones in great spirits.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.
In the "Rat-Trap"!

OLIPHANT of the Sixth came along the Fourth-form passage with Carsdale. The Fourth were mostly at tea in their studies—but as soon as the captain of the school was sighted in the passage every study doorway was filled with excited juniors. It was easy to guess that Oliphant was there on Lovell's account.

"After Lovell?" asked Durance, looking out of No. 5.

Oliphant nodded without speaking.

"It's a rotten shame," said Durance.

The St. Kit's captain passed on without answering, but Carsdale, the bully of the Sixth, paused.

"You'd better mind how you talk, Durance," he said. "Lovell is going to be made an example of. Mr. Carker has his eye on the rest of you. Take care!"

Durance's lip curled. The juniors had already observed that Carsdale, alone of the St. Kit's prefects, was in Mr. Carker's good graces. There was much in common between the tyrant and the bully. Carsdale was evidently backing up the new Head heartily; while it was clear that Oliphant was acting very unwillingly in the matter, constrained to do his duty as head prefect. The Sixth Form bully gave Durance a threatening look, and passed on up the passage after Oliphant.

Rex Tracy burst into a low laugh as his study-mate turned back into No. 5 with a dark brow.

"Let them rip!" he said, with a sneer. "Lovell will be sacked if he goes on as he's started—and all the better for us."

"Don't be a rotter, Tracy!" growled Durance. "It's up to the whole form to back Lovell up in this."

"What rot!"

"Well, I'm backing him up, whatever line he takes," said Durance. "So will you if you're decent."

At which Tracy shrugged his shoulders, but made no rejoinder. A dozen juniors followed the two prefects up the passage to the top study, eager to know what was to happen to the rebel of the Fourth.

Oliphant tapped at the door of the top study and threw it open. Harry Lovell and Co. were at tea there—Bunny Bootles wriggling very painfully on his chair, and occasionally uttering a painful ejaculation.

The chums of the Fourth rose as the prefects entered. They had been wondering what would happen—and waiting. Now it was going to happen.

"You're wanted, Lovell!" snapped Carsdale.

"Mr. Carker?" asked Harry.

"Yes, you cheeky young rascal."

"I shall not go."

Carsdale grinned.

"Won't you?" he said. "You'll get carried, then."

"Shut up, Carsdale," growled Oliphant. "What's the good of rubbing it in, when the kid's in trouble? Lovell, we've orders to take you to the punishment room and lock you in. You're not to be taken to the Head—not now, at any rate."

"Oh!" said Harry.

"I'm sorry," went on Oliphant. "You seem to have kicked over the traces in the form-room this afternoon pretty freely. A few days in the 'Rat-trap' may do you good. Come on!"

The captain of the Fourth hesitated.

Bob and St. Leger were both on their feet, only too evidently ready to back him up if he resisted. But a struggle of three juniors against the two stalwart Sixth Formers would not have been of much use. And the breathless crowd looking on from the passage were certainly not prepared for a rag on "old Oliphant." Carsdale alone they might have handled, prefect as he was; but Oliphant was too popular. And he would have been rather a difficult proposition, even for a crowd of juniors.

Lovell thought it out.

He was quite determined that he would not be taken to Mr. Carker's study, there to be dealt with at the tyrant's mercy. But that, apparently, was not intended.

"Say the word, Lovell," muttered Bob.

"Don't be young asses," said Oliphant, patiently. "I've got my duty to do. Lovell's to be put in the punishment-room until Mr. Carker decides what is be done with him. That's all at present. Come with me, Lovell."

"Very well," said Harry, quietly.

"You've finished tea?"

"Yes."

"Come on, then."

Lovell followed Oliphant from the study, taking no notice of Carsdale. The latter followed, scowling.

The punishment-room at St. Kit's, the "Rat-trap," as the juniors called it—was a small room in the oldest part of the ancient building. It was on the third floor, and reached by a narrow staircase from the dormitory corridor. In silence Lovell followed the captain of St. Kit's, Carsdale bringing up the rear. At the door of the Fourth Form dormitory Oliphant stopped.

"Get your things," he said, briefly.

"I'm to sleep in the 'Rat-trap' to-night?" asked Harry.

"Yes."

"And until further orders," grinned Carsdale. "That will bring down your cheek a little—bread and water for a week or so."

Harry did not reply. He went into the dormitory for his pyjamas and the things he would need, and then followed Oliphant up the narrow staircase to the little landing on which the "Rat-trap" opened. Oliphant unlocked the door with a big rusty key, and it swung open with a creek. In Dr. Cheyne's time the "Rat-trap" had seldom, or never, been used, and it was musty and dusty and extremely uninviting. A small square window, barred with iron, was clouded by masses of thick ivy.

The furniture consisted only of a small table, a chair, and a bedstead and washstand. The floor was bare; and the walls, of oak panel over solid stone, were filmed with damp. Oliphant threw the little window open wide, and glanced round the room with grim disapproval.

"Tuckle will bring you a bed," he said. "I'll tell him to light a fire here to air the room."

"Mr. Carker says there is to be no fire lighted," said Carsdale, from the landing. "He doesn't want the young sweep coddled."

Oliphant hesitated.

"Never mind about a fire, Oliphant," said Harry, quickly, anxious to avoid getting the good-natured prefect into trouble with the Head. "I shall be all right."

Oliphant nodded without speaking.

He remained in the room while Tuckle, the page, brought up a mattress and sheets and blankets. Tuckle gave the captain of the Fourth a look of sympathy, but did not venture to speak. The bed was made, and then Harry was left to himself.

The ponderous key turned in the rusty lock, and the heavy oaken door was fast!

Harry Lovell sat on the edge of the bed.

It was bitterly cold in the "Rat-trap," and certainly a fire was needed. But the cold, apparently, was to be part of his punishment.

The junior set his lips.

For some time he sat thinking, in deep silence. Hardly a sound from the school reached the secluded "Rat-trap."

He rose at last, mounted on the chair, and looked out of the window. The iron bars were eaten through with rust, and Harry tested them, and smiled faintly. It would not have needed a very powerful wrench to displace the rusty bars.

Outside, he could see little. The thick, tough old ivy clambered all over the stone walls, and half-hid the window. He had a glimpse of a slit of the quad, with the playing-fields beyond. The ground seemed a very great distance below. He glanced back into the chilly, dusty room. The early winter darkness was coming on, and it was apparent that he was not to be provided with a light. Mr. Carker's way with rebels was a drastic one. For a moment Harry regretted that he had submitted to being placed in the punishment-room. But a struggle would not have served him, as circumstances were then. And a savage struggle with Oliphant, whom he liked and respected, was out of the question. With Mr. Carker, head-master as he was, it would have been very different.

He stood looking down into the growing dusk, thinking. A whistle came faintly from below, and he started. He made out the figure of Bob Rake, far below, waving his hand.

Then a sudden thought came into Harry's mind. He waved his hand from the window, to show Bob that he was seen.

Then he took an old letter from his pocket, scribbled on it hastily with a pencil, wrapped it round his pen-knife to weight it, tying it with a piece of twine, and dropped it from the window. He did not hear it fall; the distance was too great. But he looked from the window again, and Bob Rake waved his hand.

Bob returned to the top study in the Fourth, with the folded note in his pocket. He found Algy and Bunny there, looking dismal—Algy on Lovell's account, Bunny on his own! Bob laid Harry's note on the table, and the Dandy of St. Kit's glanced at it. It was brief.

"Unfasten the back box-room window after lights out. I'm coming back to the dorm. to-night. —H. L."

Algernon Aubrey drew a quick breath.

"Comin' to the dorm.!" he murmured. "But he's locked in."

"The window——" said Bob.

"It's barred."

"He must have some way of getting out, or he wouldn't have written that," said Bob.

"Yaas, that's so."

"We'll see that the window's left unfastened for him."

"Oh, yaas."

And Lovell's chums took comfort in the knowledge that he was not, after all, to spend the winter night in the "Rat-trap."

After lights out that night, Bob Rake turned out of bed, and crept cautiously to the back box-room and unfastened the window, raising the sash an inch. Then the Australian junior crept back to bed, leaving the way open for Harry Lovell to enter—when he came. And while the Fourth Form slept, in the big dormitory, there were two who remained wide awake—Bob and the Honourable Algernon Aubrey St. Leger.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.
A Midnight Mystery!

ELEVEN strokes boomed out dully from the clock-tower of St. Kit's into the misty winter night.

In the "Rat-trap" all was dark. Only the faintest glimmer of starlight came in at the barred window to the imprisoned junior.

Harry Lovell had rolled himself in the blankets on the bed, to keep as warm as possible. But the chill of the damp room was penetrating. If he had remained, there would have been little sleep for him. But he did not intend to remain.

At eleven o'clock all St. Kit's was asleep in bed, unless one or two of the masters sat up later. Harry Lovell had no anticipation of falling in with anyone on his way to the dormitory.

As for trusting himself to the ivy from the height of the "Rat-trap" window, he did not think of hesitating. He knew that it was more than strong enough to bear his weight, and the feat only required nerve. And nerve he had in plenty.

He stood on the chair and tested the iron bars. They were deeply penetrated with rust, and as he expected, a powerful wrench dragged them away. He laid them quietly on the floor, one by one.

The window was small, and would not have been easy for a man to pass through; but it was easy enough for the Fourth Former.

Lovell pushed through the square opening, and found himself on the narrow sill, holding on to thick tendrils of ivy.

Darkness was round him, and silence, save for the sough of the wind in the ivy, and in the branches of the oak trees in the quad.

The ivy rustled and swayed as he tested it with his weight. But it held well, as he was sure it would.

He drew a deep breath, and trusted himself to it.

Hand below hand, with his legs hanging in space, the determined junior worked his way downward, never letting go the hold of one hand till he had found a new and secure hold lower down with the other.

Down and down and down—

grimed with the ancient ivy, and with a growing ache in his arms, on which all his weight hung. He had calculated the distance before dark; but it seemed to lengthen endlessly under him as he descended.

Down and down and down——

Would he never reach the ground?

He set his teeth, and summoned all his strength and nerve. Hand below hand he worked onward, ever downward.

He gave almost a sob of relief when the solid ground touched his boots at last.

He released his hold on the ivy, and stood panting for breath, almost exhausted by the effort he had made.

His heart was beating in great throbs.

For full five minutes he stood, leaning on the ivied wall, breathing hard and fast, till he had recovered his strength.

Then, quietly and cautiously, he moved away from the wall, and picked his way in the darkness into the quadrangle.

A light glimmered on his eyes.

There was only one lighted window in the whole great dark mass of the School-House, the window of the Head's study, now occupied by Randolph Carker. Mr. Carker had not gone to bed yet.

Harry glanced towards the window, and drew back quickly in the shadow of an oak, for the window was only partly curtained, and one wing of the casement was open. Black against the light was the silhouette of a figure he knew well.

Mr. Carker was standing at the open casement, looking out into the darkness of the quad!

Lovell breathed hard, and his eyes gleamed. Was it possible—could it be possible—that Mr. Carker suspected his desperate escape from the punishment room—that the tyrant of St. Kit's was looking out—at him?

He realised that the latter could not be the case. He was ten yards at least from the window, and enshrouded in black darkness. Even with the eyes of a cat Mr. Carker could not have seen him.

And the silhouette at the lighted window did not move.

Certainly if Mr. Carker had suspected his escape, he would have made some movement. He stood still, watching the dark quadrangle. It was borne in upon Lovell's mind that Mr. Carker's concern, just then, was not with him.

He kept close to the oak tree, and waited—watching. He was puzzled, though he was not specially interested in Mr. Carker's midnight vigil. Until the window was closed, he did not intend to emerge from the shadow of the oaks.

He waited—ten minutes—a quarter of an hour! The half-hour came chiming from the clock-tower. Half-past eleven!

Still the figure at the window had hardly moved. Lovell waited—more and more puzzled and mystified.

He started, as a sound came to his ears—the sound of a stealthy step in the darkness. The blood thrilled to his heart.

Who was abroad in the dark quadrangle at that hour?

He stood silent, close to the sheltering oak. The footstep sounded again—it came closer—and passed! Within six or seven feet of the hidden junior a shadowy figure passed, straight towards the lighted window of the Head's study.

As it came out full into the light, Harry s eyes followed it, and again he gave a start. There was something familiar in that heavy, thick-set figure, outlined against the lighted window.

Where had he seen the man before?

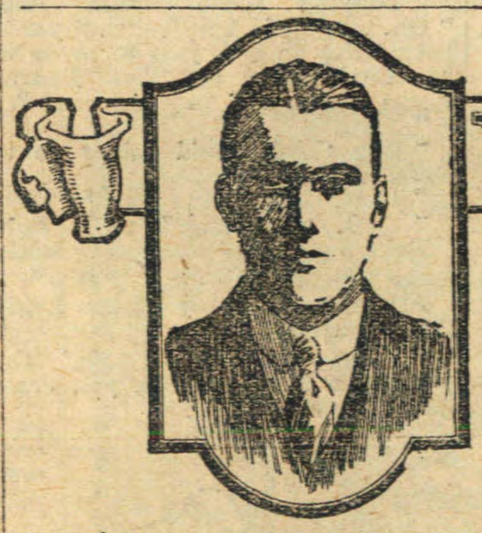
The shadowy figure reached the window. Then, in the silence, came the sharp metallic voice of Mr. Carker—in low tones, which, however, reached the junior's ears in the dead silence.

"Slaney! You fool!"

"I'm here, guvnor," was the reply, with a low chuckle.

The man stood at the lighted window, and the light was on his face, partly turned now, so that Lovell saw it clearly. The junior suppressed a gasp of amazement.

For he knew that face—with his red, beery skin and narrow eyes! it was the face of the man he had seen a week ago in Lynne Wood—



"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.

NEXT MONDAY

There will be another magnificent long complete story of the boys of St. Kit's in next Monday's issue of SCHOOL AND SPORT. It is entitled—

"BARRED OUT!"

and deals with the further adventures of the juniors in their struggle against Mr. Carker. I can assure my chums that a more exciting story than "Barred Out!" has never been written.

Mr. John Winterton's splendid serial story,

"THE CRUISE OF THE 'TARTAR.'"

will also appear in our next issue, and while I am on the subject of serials I will now let you into the secret of yet another story I have ready. The title of this yarn is

"McKINLEY'S MILLIONS!"

and is a story dealing with an amazing invention. It would not be fair to reveal at this stage what this invention is, but the author of the story is convinced that the idea will create a tremendous stir, and as I have been allowed to read the first instalment of

"McKINLEY'S MILLIONS!"

I am sure he is right. The first instalment will appear in SCHOOL AND SPORT very shortly now. You cannot possibly afford to miss it.

Captains Wanted.

On Page 12 of this issue of your favourite paper you will find particulars of a grand new scheme which your Editor has prepared. The League of Sportsmen, with this journal as its official organ, will, I hope, develop into the biggest League in the world.

It can only develop, however, with the help of my friends. First of all, the League requires ten thousand captains. Will you be one of them? If you will, then you must sign the form and give me the names and addresses of your team. The League will not only exist for the benefit of football and cricket teams, but will give even girls a chance to come into the scheme.

A certificate will be sent to every member, and if the scheme is the success I hope it will be a map of the British Isles will be published from time to time showing every town and village that boasts an XI. in the League of Sportsmen.

Competition Result.

Footerprobs No. 4.

The following competitors have each been awarded a splendid football, and each one of them is to be congratulated upon the skill shown.

The correct figures in this competition were:—

1, 4, 7, 5, 3, 8, 6, 10.

Hubert Coates, Merton Road, Malvern Link, Worcester; Alan Uphill, 88, Dalmeny Avenue, Norbury; Kenneth Hiscock, 8, East Borough, Wimborne, Dorset; Enoch Pope, 75, Ludlow Street, Hanley, Staffs; George Robinson, 32, Westbourne Street, Hesstle Road, Hull; R. E. Clarke, Vicarage Lane, Adlsham, Sussex.

Replies in Brief.

Robert Glover (Pudsey, near Leeds).—Thank you, Robert. Glad to hear you like the paper. Perhaps you will be a captain (see page 12). Let Pudsey start the ball rolling.

A. Peters (Iron Acton, near Bristol).—So you had to ride ten miles to get your first three copies. Bully for you! You *would* make a good skipper (see page 12).

Miss Agness T. Loftus (Colne).—There is a charge of 2d. a word for announcements. Thousands of copies of SCHOOL AND SPORT go to Australia every week. Why not try a notice? Write and let me know.

William Smith (Birmingham).—Joke received. Thanks for your congratulations. Your chance has come (see page 12). Raise an XI. to-day.

Cecil Guest (Preston). — Of course, I remember you well. Glad you like SCHOOL AND SPORT. We shall get better and better. You won't find us "dying down." Those photographs cost a lot of money, you know. After all, you buy the paper to read. Join the League of Sportsmen. You are the sort we want.

R. Martin (Southsea).—Thanks so much. Ask your newsagent to get you Nos. 1 and 2. You don't want to miss any numbers. What about R. H. J. Martin, Captain? See page 12.

Allan Jacobsen (Benwell, Newcastle).—Quite right, my friend. Your letter found me in the best of health. Glad you think SCHOOL AND SPORT is "ripping." As you have many friends, what about a team? See page 12.

Stanley Shunald (Islington).—Thanks for yours. Surely you know who I am by now. It's no mystery. Glad to have a chat with you if you would care to call. Meantime get me new readers.

Robert Cunningham (Dundee).—Good fellow, Robert. If you're in a jute factory with all those boys about, what about raising a few XIs.? See page 12. That's the idea!

J. J. Mariott (Kensington).—Thank you. Glad to hear you like SCHOOL AND SPORT. I shall appreciate anything you can do to increase the circulation.

R. F. Clayden.—The portraits will come along in due course. Thanks for your good wishes. What about Captain Clayden? We want you (see page 12).

Ronald S. Mann (Glasgow).—It was good of you to help. We can't afford to sit down and let things slide. We must increase our circulation. What about an XI.? See page 12.

J. P. Marsh (Clerkenwell Close).—Thanks for your card and good wishes. Have you got any more new ones? Captain Marsh sounds well. Get a form filled up.

Miss Peg Patten (Sunderland).—Of course, I kept the address. I hate losing touch with my friends. I cannot understand though why you never received an answer before. You might let me know how SCHOOL AND SPORT is doing in your part of the world. Ask the newsagents.

Your Editor

HAVE YOU ANYTHING YOU WISH TO SELL?

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the face of the man who had struck down Dr. Cheyne!

It was the Head's assailant—the ruffian for whom the police were still searching, and searching in vain.

Lovell stood and stared, wondering if he was dreaming. What was there—what could there be between that ruffian and the new Head of St. Kit's? They seemed as far as the poles asunder—the hard, severe-featured headmaster—the low-browed, red-faced, beery ruffian! What did it mean? Like a flash of light the meaning of it came into Harry Lovell's mind.

THE EIGHT CHAPTER.

The Secret!

MR. CARKER stared from the window at the low, grinning face. His expression showed plainly enough that the midnight visitor was not welcome. Slaney, as he had called the man, evidently knew it—and was not at all disturbed by it. He grinned up at the angry face.

"Ain't you lettin' me in?" he asked.

"You fool! If you were seen——" muttered the man at the window.

"More likely to be seen outside than inside, guvnor! And it's cold standin' 'ere."

Mr. Carker drew back from the window, and the narrow-eyed man climbed lightly in.

The casement snapped shut, and the curtain fell across the glass.

Harry Lovell stirred at last.

His mind was in a whirl with what he had seen—and heard!

The man who had attacked the Head—he was sure of it! The recognition was certain—Slaney was the man the police wanted for that brutal attack in Lynne Wood.

That man—visiting the new Head of St. Kit's close on midnight when all the school was sleeping! He was shut up in the Head's study now with Randolph Carker! No doubt he would leave as he had come—secretly—hidden in the darkness, and only Randolph Carker would know that the visit had taken place—excepting Harry Lovell of the Fourth! The tyrant's tyranny had over-reached itself—it was by Mr. Carker's own act that he had caused a witness to be present at the secret meeting.

Lovell stole silently from under the oaks, and made his way round the school buildings.

He reached the outhouse under the box-room window, and climbed to the leads.

He was sure that he would find the box-room window open—he knew that Bob Rake would not fail him. He stood on the leads and tried the window—the sash pushed up at his touch. A minute more and he was in the box-room—the window closed and fastened.

He entered the Fourth-form dormitory without a sound. But as the door closed behind him there came a whispering voice:

"That you, dear boy?"

"You awake, Algy?"

"Yaas, old bean."

"Same here," said Bob Rake. "How the thump did you get out of the 'Rat Trap'?"

"By the ivy."

"You ass! You might have broken your neck."

"All serene," said Harry.

"Hallo! who's that?" yawned the voice of Stubbs. "My hat! Is that Lovell?"

"Yes. Quiet, old man."

"Oh, crumbs! Lovell!"

"Lovell's come back!"

Half-a-dozen of the Fourth were awake now, and sitting up in bed, peering in the darkness of the dormitory.

"I've shoved some pyjamas on your bed, Lovell," chuckled Algernon Aubrey. Turn in, old bean. Feelin' all right, what?"

"Right as rain," said Harry. "But——"

"But what?"

"I've got something to tell you fellows——"

"Go ahead."

Harry Lovell paused.

He was eager to tell his chums what he had seen in the quad—to consult with them as to what he should do—if he should do anything. It was his duty—anyone's duty—to send information to the police, which would help them to capture the man they wanted.

But that was not practicable now. The man Slaney was not likely to stay long with Mr. Carker—he might even be gone already. Certainly he would be long gone before Lovell could possibly have brought the police on the scene—if he had decided on such a measure.

The meeting between the two men could mean only one thing—it was almost too terrible to be believed, yet it was certain that Randolph Carker had been a party to the attack on Dr. Cheyne in Lynne Wood. The ruffian's motive had been a mystery—it had puzzled the police and the school—but it was clear to Lovell now. The man was a hired ruffian—and he had been carrying out the orders of the unscrupulous man who hoped to step into the Head's shoes at St. Kit's!

But who would believe such an accusation?

To tell his chums, with a dozen pairs of ears eagerly listening, was impossible. It was a matter for thinking out—and for the present, the captain of the Fourth simply did not know what he should do.

His silence puzzled his chums.

"Go ahead, old bean," repeated Algy. "What's the trouble on your little mind?"

"You didn't run into the Carker-bird coming here, did you?" chuckled Bob.

"N—no."

"Well, then——"

"I'll tell you about it in the morning," said Harry, at last. "I'll turn in now."

"Right you are, old bean," said Algernon Aubrey, sleepily. "By gad! I shall be dashed sorry to hear the risin'-bell in the mornin'. Still, there's goin' to be some fun to-morrow! Fancy the Carker man's face when he finds that you're here!"

"There'll be an awful row!" said Stubbs.

"Yaas, probably."

And Algy turned over to go to sleep, evidently not much disturbed by the prospect of an awful row on the morrow!

Harry Lovell turned in.

But it was long before he slept! He could not help thinking of the mysterious meeting he had witnessed in the quad—and of the morrow——! He would be missed from the punishment-room—he would be found among his form-fellows—and then——

It was open war now!

He slept at last, and slept soundly, till the rising-bell clanged out over St. Kit's—in the dawn of the most eventful day in the history of the old school.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Trouble to Come.

CLANG! Clang!

Bob Rake sat up in bed in the Fourth-form dormitory at St. Kit's, and yawned.

Bob was usually the first out of bed in the Fourth, up and active before the rising-bell ceased to clang. On this especial Saturday morning, however, he sat and rubbed his eyes and yawned portentiously.

Clang! clang!

Harry Lovell, the captain of the Fourth, sat up and he too yawned. And Algernon Aubrey St. Leger, the dandy of St. Kit's, yawned more deeply than either of his chums.

"Yaw-aw-aw-aw!" came from Algernon Aubrey. "Oh, gad! I'm dashed sleepy! Bother the risin'-bell!"

"Blow it!" said Bob Rake. "This is what comes of keeping late hours, my infants."

He jumped out of bed, and Harry Lovell followed his example. Several other juniors turned out; but Algernon Aubrey St. Leger gathered the bedclothes about him again, and settled his noble head comfortably on the pillow.

"Turn out, slacker!" said Bob.

"I'm thinkin'——"

"Do you want me to help you out?" inquired Bob.

"No, you fathead! Keep off! Look here, I'm thinkin'," said Algernon Aubrey. "Just listen to a chap. We're landed for trouble with our merry new headmaster to-day——"

"We are," assented Bob.

"There's goin' to be a row," continued Algy.

"There is, old top!"

"We're goin' to make this Carker-man comprehend that we're not standin' his rot!"

"That's so."

"Well, then, suppose we begin by refusin' to get up at risin'-bell?" suggested Algernon Aubrey with great sagacity.

Bob Rake chuckled.

Algy's bright idea was evidently caused by his dislike of getting out of bed early on a cold morning, after being awake till midnight the night before.

"Topping idea!" said Bob. "Oh, ripping! You feel that you'd better stay in bed, just to prove to the Carker-bird that the Fourth Form is free and independent?"

"Yaas."

"You think you'd better go to sleep again?"

"Yaas."

"Well, go ahead," said Bob. "Take a pleasant little doze while I dip the sponge into this jug."

Algernon Aubrey St. Leger started up.

"What are you dippin' the sponge in that jug for, you crass ass?" he exclaimed.

"To squeeze down the back of your neck, old scout."

"Look here——"

"Ready?" said Bob.

The dripping sponge was withdrawn from the jug, and Bob Rake started towards the bed occupied by the Honourable Algernon Aubrey St. Leger.

With a bound Algernon Aubrey cleared out on the other side of the bed. He was quite wide awake all of a sudden.

"Keep off, you dangerous maniac!" he yelled.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob. "Feel quite woke up now?"

"Yaas, you burblin' jabberwock!"

"You can have the sponge if you like——"

"Keep off, you frumptious chump!"

"Buck up, old infant," said Bob, chuckling. "We've got a busy day before us, you know; and slacking in bed won't do any good. This is going to be the liveliest day at St. Kit's since Dr. Cheyne left."

"Br-r-r-r!" said Algy.

The Fourth-formers were all turning out now—with the exception of Bunny Bootles. Cuthbert Archibald Bootles was always the last to turn out. By reducing his morning ablutions to the lowest possible minimum, Bunny was able to get some precious minutes extra in bed. His morning ablutions consisted of what the juniors described as a "cat-lick"—and it was often a very hurried and inefficacious cat-lick. Long ago Bunny had brought it to the irreducible minimum, with a keenness of calculation which gave promise of future distinction in the higher mathematics.

But that was before Bob Rake came to St. Kit's. Bob was a strenuous youth, bursting with energy; and he always had a little energy to spare for others who were less strenuous. He was always willing to help any slacker who found it difficult to turn out on a cold morning.

"Bunny!" he bawled.

Snore!

"Wake up, Bunny!"

Snore!

Bunny had certainly heard the rising-bell; and he still more certainly heard Bob Rake, whose powerful voice put the rising-bell to the blush. But he considered it judicious to snore.

"Turn out, Bunny, you fat slacker!" exclaimed Algernon Aubrey. "What the thump are you slackin' in bed for?"

"Yah!" came from Bunny. "You were slackin' a minute ago." Bunny forgot for the moment that he was asleep.

"Out with you, Bootles!" roared Bob Rake.

Snore!

"Do you hear, Bunny?"

Snore!

"Why, you fat owl!" exclaimed Bob. "You're awake, you blithering porpoise—you were talking a second ago——"

"I—I was talkin' in my sleep!" gasped Bunny.

"Ha! ha! ha!"

"Well, if you're still fast asleep I'll give you something to cure all that," chuckled Bob.

He laid hold of Bunny's bedclothes, and they came off in a heap to the floor. Bunny Bootles started up with a shiver and a yell.

"Yah! Rotter! Groooogh!"

"Now, where will you have it?" asked Bob, poising the wet sponge in the air.

Bunny yelled in alarm.

"Yah! Chuck it, you silly ass!"

"Certainly!"

Whiz!

Bob Rake "chucked" it; not in the sense that Cuthbert Archibald Bootles intended.

The sponge caught Bunny under his fat chin, and squelched there. The howl that Bunny Bootles gave rang far beyond the Fourth-form dormitory.

"Yooooooop!"

Bunny Bootles rolled out of bed. That morning, at least, he had ample time for more than the customary "cat-lick."

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

No Surrender!

"LOVELL! You here!"

Bunny Bootles uttered that ejaculation as he caught sight of the captain of the Fourth.

Harry glanced at him, and smiled.

"Looks like it," he answered.

"But—but wern't you locked up in the punishment room for the night?" ejaculated Bunny.

"I was," assented Harry.



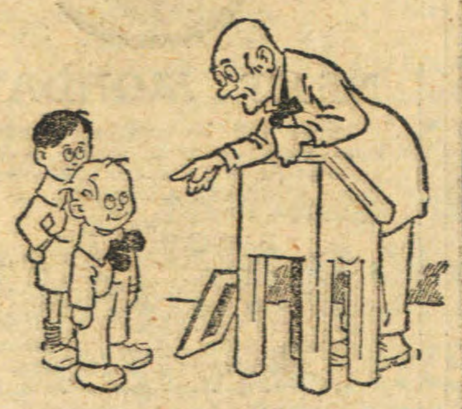
"If a man was crossing London Bridge and his hat blew away, what would his telephone number be?"

"Goodness! I've no idea, what would it be?"

"Avenue one. (Have a new one.)"

STORYETTES

Readers are invited to contribute to this feature. If you know a funny story send it to your Editor, and he will pay you half-a-crown if it is good enough to be published.



"Supposing you had twenty shillings and I asked you to give me ten and ninepence, how much would you have left?"

"Twenty shillings."

CONSCIENCE.

The following amusing conversation recently took place between the head master of a board school and one of his classes, from which he was endeavouring to elicit the meaning of the word "conscience."

"Now, boys," said the genial old master, "suppose one of you stole a piece of sugar from the basin and popped it in your mouth, and mother came in, what would happen?"

Small boy: "Get a tannin', sir."

"Yes, I suppose so. But your face would become red, wouldn't it?"

Chorus: "Yes, sir."

"And what is it that makes your face red?" queried the master, thinking he had gained his point.

But the small boy answered, with a solemn look:

"Tryin' to swallow the sugar quick, sir."

ONE IN THE EYE.

A few days since a traveller for an optical instrument house called at a local optician's place, and, while exhibiting his samples, produced a box of imitation eyes and began to descant upon their superiority.

While enlarging pompously upon the beauty of his goods a little man broke in with:

"You may talk about your goods being the finest in the market, but can you prove your assertions? No, sir, you cannot. Just look at this left eye of mine if you would see perfection."

The optical man examined it closely, and, with a sneer in his voice, asked:

"Where did you get that eye?"

"Got it in Birmingham."

"Well, sir, I can assure you that you didn't get it from our house."

"No, I got it at another place."

"Exactly. Such botch-work as that is never allowed to leave our factory. The least defect of an eye condemns it, and yours is full of blemishes. In the first place it is of too light a shade to match the other one, and anyone can see that it is a size too small for you. Again, it is not natural in its appearance. It will deceive no one. Its artificial points creep out on every side, and it has not one single aspect of the natural eye. How long have you worn it?"

"Ever since I can remember. You see, I was born in Birmingham, and this eye was born with me. It's a natural one, and a mighty good one, too."

The eye-man picked up his samples and quietly faded from view.

KEEP OFF THE GRASS.

"Hallo! hallo!" shouted the fireman, answering the frantic telephone summons.

"Are you there?" came back in sweet feminine tones.

"Yes."

"Who is it?"

"The fire station."

"I wish to say that my front garden——"

"This is the f-i-r-e station you've got."

"Yes, I know. My front garden runs along the side of Billkin's house. Now you know to-day I sprinkled some fine grass seed on my lawn ——"

"This ain't the gardener's!" roared the fireman.

"I know. I k-n-o-w! But I want to say that as my garden is my particular pride——"

"Wot's that to do with us?"

"Oh, well, the Billkin's house is on fire, so don't let your nasty firemen trample——"

But he was gone.

(Sent in by RAE ISOBEL MCKISSOCK, Haslemere, Staines, Middlesex.)

NOT MUCH DIFFERENCE.

Purchaser: "How much are these pails?"

Shopman: "Eighteenpence, sir."

Purchaser: "And the others?"

Shopman: "Two shillings, sir."

Purchaser: "They look much the same. What is the difference?"

Shopman: "Sixpence, sir."

NEEDED A REST.

"You are working too hard," said a policeman to a man he found drilling a hole in a safe at two o'clock in the morning.

"What's that!" asked the burglar in a discontented tone as he looked down the muzzle of the policeman's revolver.

"I merely mentioned that you needed arrest," answered the guardian of the law.

QUITE SAFE.

Witty One: "Do you know how to avoid eating toadstools in mistake for mushrooms?"

Idiot: "No!"

Witty One: "Why eat parsnips!"

HE WANTED TO KNOW.

Customer (in furniture shop): "And how much is this drawing-room suite?"

Assistant: "That, sir, is nine pounds a month for twelve months on the hire system."

Customer: "Er, well, I'm afraid I can't afford that. How much is it on the lower system?"

"Why is a billposter a very loyal man?"

"Because he always sticks up for his master."

Jack: "Why is Queen Anne unlike a gooseberry bush?"

Jill: "Dunno. Why?"

Jack: "Because Queen Anne is dead and buried, but a gooseberry bush isn't dead if its berried and is not berried if it is dead."

BETTER STILL.

Lolo: "I saw a cup made of bone."

Lulu: "Did you! That's nothing. I saw a tumbler made of flesh and blood last night."

Lolo: "Where was that?"

Lulu: "At the circus."

Which letters are the best workers? The B's!

"How did you get out?"

"Climbed down the ivy from the window."

"And we stayed up to greet the prodigal son when he came hiking home," said Bob Rake. "That's why we're so jolly sleepy this morning."

"I say, there'll be a row when old Carker finds that you've hooked it out of the punishment-room, Lovell," said Bunny.

"Most likely."

"Never mind," said Bunny Bootles, consolingly. "I'll stand by you, Lovell. You rely on me."

Harry Lovell laughed. Bunny's assistance was not likely to be of much use when he had to face Mr. Randolph Carker, the new Head of St. Kit's. It was quite certain that there was going to be trouble in the Fourth Form of St. Kit's that Saturday morning.

Harry was taking it calmly enough.

Most of the Fourth were enthusiastic in supporting him—and they were prepared for trouble with the tyrant of St. Kit's. Already there had been whispers of a "barring-out" in the Fourth.

So far as Mr. Carker knew, Harry was still a prisoner in the "Rat-trap." It was certain that there would be considerable surprise when he came down from the dormitory with the rest of the Fourth.

The three members of the "Top Study" were taking the peculiar situation in their own peculiar ways. Harry Lovell was quiet and grave—Algernon Aubrey nonchalant, as usual—while Bob Rake seemed to be looking forward with keen zest to trouble with Mr. Carker.

"We'd better stick together when we go down," said Bob. "By gum! I want to see Carker's face when he catches sight of you, Lovell! It will be worth a guinea a box!"

"Yaas, that's so," chuckled Algernon Aubrey. "But what are you goin' to do if he orders you back to the 'Rat-trap,' old bean?"

"I shall refuse to go," said Harry, quietly.

"And we'll back you up!" said Bob Rake. "And if Carker cuts up rusty, we'll scrag him!"

"Scrag Carker!" ejaculated Stubbs, of the Fourth.

"Oh, I say!" murmured Bunny.

"I believe I could handle him," said Bob. "He's twice as long as I am, but no wider——"

"Ha! ha! ha!"

"One good 'cosh' on his watch-chain would double him up like a pocket-knife," said Bob, confidently.

"You silly ass!" exclaimed Tracy. "Are you thinkin' of punching your headmaster?"

"He's not really our headmaster," retorted Bob. "Dr. Cheyne's our headmaster, and Carker's only in his place while he's away ill. And I'm jolly sure that Dr. Cheyne wouldn't approve of the way Carker is running things at St. Kit's."

"Very likely—but he's Head all the same, for the present," said Tracy. "The Governors appointed him."

"Blow the Governors!" said Bob.

"Draw it mild, old bean," said Algernon Aubrey. "My pater's chairman of the giddy Governors, and Lovell's pater is a Governor."

"Well, blow them all, excepting your pater and Lovell's pater!" said Bob, laughing. "Now, are you ready, my infants? Where's my mouth-organ?"

"What the thump do you want a mouth-organ for?"

"To play the 'Conquering Hero' when we take Lovell along!" chuckled Bob. "Sort of triumphal march, to announce to the Carker merchant that we don't care a German mark for him."

"Fathead!"

Bob Rake found his mouth-organ, and blew a fearful blast on it to begin with. Then he hurled open the dormitory door and marched out, with heavy footsteps. Lovell and St. Leger followed him, and after them came Stubbs, and Scott, and Myers, and Wheatford, and Jones minor, and Durance, and a crowd of the Fourth.

"For goodness sake, old bean, stop that awful row!" murmured Algernon Aubrey, plaintively, as Bob Rake headed the juniors with the mouth-organ going strong.

Bob ceased for a moment, and glanced round.

"What awful row?" he demanded. "Haven't you any ear for music, you ass?"

"Music? Oh, gad!"

Bob blew again.

"Well, what the thump do you want to play the 'Dead March' in 'Saul' for, anyhow?" demanded Algy.

"You silly owl! I'm playing the 'Conquering Hero.'"

"Ha! ha! ha!"

The Fourth Form "processed" down the big staircase, to the accompaniment of fearsome blasts on the mouth-organ. Oliphant, of the Sixth, the captain of St. Kit's, looked up from the lower passage.

"Stop that thundering row!" he shouted.

"Oh! ah! Yes, Oliphant," said Bob, meekly, and the mouth-organ disappeared into his pocket.

Oliphant gave a jump the next moment as he sighted Harry Lovell among the Fourth.

"Lovell!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, Oliphant!" said Harry, cheerfully.

The captain of St. Kit's fairly blinked at him. The evening before he had left Harry locked in the punishment-room, and the keys were still in Mr. Carker's keeping. The sight of the ghost of Banquo did not startle Macbeth more than the sight of Harry Lovell startled the St. Kit's captain just then.

"He's not going! Carker can go and eat coke! Is that plain enough?"

"Here, this won't do!" said Oliphant, uneasily. "You mustn't speak of Mr. Carker like that, Rake."

Bob opened his lips to retort; but he closed them again. He did not want any trouble with the popular captain of St. Kit's if it could be helped. Carsdale broke in.

"I shall report your words to Mr. Carker, Rake."

"Report and be hanged!" said Bob, disdainfully.

"I'll deal with you when I'm through with Lovell," said the bully of the Sixth, with a black scowl. "Come with me, Lovell."

"I shall do nothing of the kind."

Carsdale laughed grimly, and dropped his heavy hand on the junior's shoulder. He was far from expecting resistance from a Fourth-former. The persons of the Sixth-form prefects were sacred; "punching a prefect" was a delightful dream to many juniors, but it had never been put into practice. But the Fourth Form were in an unusual mood that morning. The tyrant of St. Kit's had ruled with too heavy a hand; and the fellows who were prepared to "back up against Carker" were not likely to be overawed by Carsdale.

As Carsdale's grip closed on his shoulder, Harry Lovell's lips set. He clenched his hand, and struck upwards.

Crack!

Carsdale's wrist caught the blow, and it was a hefty blow. The prefect gave a howl of pain as his hand flew from Lovell's shoulder.

"Good man!" murmured Algernon Aubrey.

Carsdale clasped his right wrist with his left hand, and stood fairly gasping with rage and astonishment.

"You—you—you've struck a prefect!" he stuttered.

"I shall strike again if you touch me again!" said Harry, coolly.

"Bravo!" chirruped Stubbs.

Carsdale's reply was not in words. He made a savage spring at the captain of the Fourth.

Had Harry Lovell been left alone to deal with the powerful Sixth-former, he would certainly have fared badly. But his chums sprang to his aid as if moved by the same spring.

Three pairs of hands closed on Carsdale, and he was hurled back from the stairs, and went sprawling along the hall.

Crash!

"Oh!" roared Carsdale. "Ow! Oh! Oooooop!"

He sat up dazedly.

"Come on and have some more!" bawled Bob Rake.

Oliphant stood looking on in a sort of stupefaction. It was the first time he had seen a St. Kit's prefect handled by juniors.

"Good gad!" ejaculated Oliphant.

Gerald Carsdale staggered to his feet. He was almost foaming with wrath. A score of fellows had gathered at the sight of the amazing altercation at the foot of the staircase. Gunter of the Fifth remarked to Price that things were coming to something! Price agreed that they were. But they did not dream of interfering.

"You—you young scoundrels!" roared Carsdale.

"Rats!"

"Boo!"

"Go home, Carsdale!"

"Go and eat coke!"

It was a roar of defiance from the crowded staircase. The example set by Harry Lovell and Co. had fired the blood of the Fourth. At that moment the St. Kit's rebels were prepared to tackle all St. Kit's—headmasters, staff, and prefects, with the Sixth Form thrown in!

"Scrag him!" yelled Bunny Bootles, valiant in the rear. "Scrag him, you fellows! Down with the prefects!"

"Collar him!"

"Bump him!"

"Hurray!"

There was a rush of excited fags after Carsdale. The prefect stared round, gaped and gasped, and fairly bolted into his study. Had not Gerald Carsdale turned the key in his door very quickly St. Kit's would have been treated to the amazing and unheard-of sight of a Sixth-form prefect being "bumped" by a crowd of juniors.

Fortunately for Carsdale, the key turned in time. But a prefect locking himself in his study to escape from juniors was the last touch—all that the Fourth required to encourage them to reckless revolt. A dozen boots kicked and crashed on Carsdale's door—a dozen ferocious voices yelled to Carsdale to "Come out!"

"By gad!" yawned Algernon Aubrey St. Leger, as he strolled out into the quad with his chums, "things are beginning to look lively. Do you know, dear old beans, I really think that I shan't be bored to-day."

"I don't think you will!" chuckled Bob Rake.

"This reminds me of somethin' in the history lesson," said Algernon Aubrey, thoughtfully. "Chap named Lidley, or Ratimer, or somethin', who said—what was it he said? 'This day we have lighted a bonfire at St. Kit's which the Carker-bird will never be able to put out.' Somethin' to that effect! What?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo, there's the Carker-bird in the Head's study!" exclaimed Bob. "He's looking out of the window. March past."

And the Top Study, arm-in-arm, marched past Mr. Carker's window, to give him a full view of the junior whom he still supposed to be a prisoner in the punishment-room.



"I was asking you about Brutus, Bootles!" said Mr. Carker. "Of—of course, sir. He—he—he was the man who let the cakes burn, sir, and—and never smiled again, and when he died he said, 'Kiss me, Hardy——'" (See page 3.)

"Did Mr. Carker release you after all?" ejaculated Oliphant, at last.

"Oh, no."

"Then how did you get out?"

"By the window."

"But the window's barred!" exclaimed the prefect.

"The bars were rusted through, and I snapped them off."

"The merry dickens you did!" exclaimed Oliphant. "So you've been to bed in the dormitory after all."

"Yes," said Harry.

Carsdale of the Sixth was lounging in the lower passage, and he came up, staring at Harry. Oliphant seemed puzzled to know what to do; but the Sixth-form bully had no doubts.

"So you cleared out, did you, you cheeky young rascal?" exclaimed Carsdale. "Well, you're going back pretty sharp. Come on."

Harry stopped on the lowest step of the staircase. His chums stopped with him, breathing hard. The trouble was beginning!

"Where do you want me to come, Carsdale?" asked the captain of the Fourth, quietly.

"Back to the punishment-room, of course."

"I'm not going."

"What?"

"Deaf?" asked Bob Rake.

"Oliphant! Help me deal with these young villains!" howled Carsdale.

Oliphant shook his head.

"Leave them to Mr. Carker," he said. "You can report that Lovell is out of the punishment-room. It's Mr. Carker's business; not ours."

And Oliphant walked away, very much perplexed and distressed by this new state of affairs at St. Kit's. If he blamed the juniors, he did not blame them so much as he blamed Mr. Randolph Carker, whose iron-handed tyranny had brought about the revolt. Mr. Carker had roused the trouble, and Mr. Carker could deal with it—that was Oliphant's idea.

Carsdale stood stuttering with rage, glaring at the juniors on the staircase. He was greatly inclined to "run amuck" among them, hitting out right and left. But that, obviously, was a game that two sides could play at, and Carsdale realised that it was "not good enough." He shook a savage fist at the Fourth, and turned away.

But at the sight of a Sixth-form prefect retreating, after being bowled over by the fags, the Fourth broke through all restraint. They felt the intoxication of victory.

"After him!" roared Stubbs.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Surprise for Mr. Carker.

MR. RANDOLPH CARKER, temporary Head of St. Kit's, had not risen in a good temper that eventful morning.

Mr. Carker was, indeed, very seldom in a very good temper.

He was one of those unhappy gentlemen who are always sharp and bitter, and frequently angry; and perhaps, like the prophet of old, he considered that he "did well to be angry."

Matters had not gone to Mr. Carker's satisfaction since his coming to St. Kit's in the place of Dr. Cheyne.

With the Board of Governors Mr. Carker had had great success. There was a party on that august Board that desired Dr. Cheyne to retire from the head-mastership, and Randolph Carker to take his place. A bare majority had prevented that—it was only the casting vote of Lord Rayfield, Algy's noble pater, that had turned the scale.

Mr. Carker, probably, had counted upon complete success. Tyrant as he was to those in his power, he could be soft and sycophantic to those from whom he had benefits to expect, and he had ingratiated himself with several of the governors.

He had been disappointed; but his chance had come when the Head of St. Kit's was attacked in Lynne Wood by an unknown ruffian, and rather severely hurt. The old gentleman would have been still more severely hurt but for the fact that Lovell and Co. had come to the rescue. As it was, he had been compelled to throw up his duties at St. Kit's, and retire from the old school for a time. And then Randolph Carker had been appointed Headmaster pro tem.

In a very few days Mr. Carker had succeeded in making all St. Kit's loathe him.

He had interfered with every master in turn, and put up the backs of the staff in a most effective manner.

In the Masters' Room there had been suppressed talk of resignations—of the whole staff handing in their resignations in a body!

Indeed, only the hope that Mr. Carker's rule was strictly temporary restrained the staff from some decided step.

The prefects were no better satisfied. Mr. Carker "nagged" his prefects, and worried them, and rated them in the presence of

juniors; in fact, he did everything that he ought not to have done, besides leaving undone many things that he ought to have done.

He had taken every form in turn, with the intention of "speeding up" work—and every form hated Mr. Carker with a ferocious hatred.

Added to that, he had a cruel strain in his nature that made it a pleasure to him to use the cane! There had been more caning since Mr. Carker's arrival than in the whole term previously. And Mr. Carker caned with a severity that kind old Dr. Cheyne would never have thought of.

Masters and prefects, Middle School and fags, objected to Mr. Carker and Mr. Carker's methods.

That made no difference to Randolph Carker. His idea was to crush opposition—opposition only made him the more determined. Sullen and discontented faces round about him did not trouble him—indeed, he seemed to like his presence to cause faces to grow long.

He was breakfasting in his study that morning, and he had snapped at Tuckle, who brought his breakfast in. Tuckle, with deep feeling, had retired to the kitchen, where he confided to the cook that he would give a week's wages to "land" the "old josser" a "oner."

Mr. Carker was thinking of Lovell of the Fourth as he breakfasted. He probably had other troubles on his bitter mind; but Lovell of the Fourth was prominent.

Lovell of the Fourth had resisted his authority—Lovell of the Fourth had had the audacity to defend himself with a ruler when attacked with a cane! There was no end to the offences of Lovell of the Fourth!

Mr. Carker set his thin lips as he thought of it.

The young rascal was locked in the punishment-room: and that morning Mr. Carker intended to take the birch to the "Rat-trap," and administer such a terrific flogging as would be a lesson to Harry Lovell for the remainder of his youthful days.

There was satisfaction in the thought; Mr. Carker almost smiled. The picture of Lovell of the Fourth wriggling under the birch gave a flavour to his breakfast egg, an added aroma to his morning coffee. It was the kind of mental picture that gratified Mr. Carker's peculiar nature.

He rose from the breakfast-table, and stepped to the window, and looked out into the quadrangle.

Then he jumped.

The picture of Lovell, half-frozen after a night in the cold unheated "Rat-trap," squirming under the birch, vanished from his mind — and was replaced by another picture, not imaginary, but real, which was the picture of Harry Lovell strolling past the window, with his arms linked in those of Bob Rake and Algernon Aubrey St. Leger.

Mr. Carker's pale eyes, almost leaden in colour, seemed to bulge out under his brows.

He stared at the three cheery juniors—he blinked at them—and his lean jaw dropped in his astonishment.

It really was Lovell—there was no mistake about it! Mr. Carker realised that his prisoner was no longer a prisoner—and to judge by his looks, the imprisonment had had little effect on his spirits.

Mr. Carker muttered a word between his teeth—a word which would have convinced the Governing Board of St. Kit's, if they could have heard it, that Randolph Carker was not a suitable person to take Dr. Cheyne's place as headmaster.

He leaned from the window, and waved a long, lean hand at the juniors.

"Lovell!" he shouted.

The captain of the Fourth halted. The three juniors swung round in line, to face Mr. Carker's study window.

They faced it—and him—with equanimity.

"Yes, sir!" said Harry.

"Why are you not in the punishment-room?" thundered Mr. Carker. "Has anyone released you without my authority?"

"No, sir."

"Then how do you come here?"

"Walked, sir."

"What?"

"Walked."

Mr. Carker spluttered.

"Is that reply intended for insolence, Lovell?" he howled.

"Not at all, sir; I'm just stating the fact, in answer to your question," said the captain of the Fourth.

"I asked you how you came here when you were left locked in the punishment-room last night?"

"Walked!" repeated Lovell.

"Ha—ha—ha!" roared Bob Rake, greatly tickled by the extraordinary expression upon Mr. Carker's face. Algernon Aubrey St. Leger indulged in a faint grin, and put up his celebrated eyeglass the better to survey the enraged headmaster.

"This—this—this is rebellious insolence!" gasped Mr. Carker. "Lovell! return to the punishment-room at once."

Harry shook his head.

"I've had enough of that, Mr. Carker," he answered.

"Do you dare to disobey me?"

"Yes."

Mr. Carker spluttered again. That unexpected answer seemed to take the wind out of his sails, so to speak.

"Straight from the shoulder, old bean," murmured Algernon Aubrey. "By Gad! I hope the Carker man isn't subject to apoplexy! If he is, he's booked for a fit."

Mr. Carker really seemed on the verge of an apoplectic seizure as he stood at the study window, spluttering with rage, and staring at Lovell.

"Lovell!" he spluttered out. "You—you young scoundrel——"

"Better language, please," said Harry.

"Wha—a—at?"

"Yaas, begad!" said Algy. "That isn't the way for a headmaster to talk, you know. Yellin' at a fellow gets on his nerves. Besides, consider your choice of expressions, sir—not at all gentlemanly."

"Ha—ha—ha!" roared Bob.

"I shall flog you both for insolence," raved Mr. Carker. "And you, Lovell, you—you—you——" He almost foamed. "Come into my study immediately."

He turned back into the study and grasped at his cane. He seemed to have no doubt that Lovell would obey his command, and appear in the study in a couple of minutes.

As a matter of fact, nothing was further from Harry's thoughts. He walked on with his chums—and Mr. Carker, waiting for him in the study, waited in vain. Tuckle, who came in to remove the breakfast things, was quite startled by the expression on Mr. Carker's face. He was glad to get out of the study, and in his haste and agitation he dropped a teacup to the floor, and it smashed. And Mr. Carker addressed him with a flow of vigorous language as he fairly fled with the tray. Tuckle even had doubts about whether he was quite safe from the cane if he remained within reach of Mr. Carker. He quite gasped with relief when he escaped into the shelter of the kitchen.

"Looked as if he'd lay the blooming cane round me!" said Tuckle, to the cook. "Me, you know! I'd show him! I ain't one of his blessed boys that he can wallop as much as he likes—no fear! I can give notice if I choose—which is more than they can do! I'd jolly soon show him that he can't treat me as if I was a St. Kit's bloke!" said Tuckle, disdainfully.

From which it appeared that Master Tuckle compared his position at St. Kit's very favourably with that of Harry Lovell and Co.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

What Harry Lovell Knew.

"COME into the Cloisters!" said Harry.

"Yaas."

"Brekker soon!" remarked Bob. Bob Rake had brought a very healthy appetite with him from Australia.

"I've got something to tell you fellows before brekker," said Harry. "It—it's rather serious."

"Oh! all right."

The three chums strolled into the Cloisters, a spot where they were not likely to be interrupted at that early hour of the morning.

Harry Lovell's handsome face was very grave. His chums regarded him curiously.

"I fancy somethin' happened when you bunked out of the 'Rat-trap' last night, old bean," said Algy. "Is that it?"

"Yes."

"Blessed if I can see what," said Bob. "You got to the dormitory all right. What happened, Harry?"

"I'm going to tell you fellows—I don't know whether I ought to let the school know yet," said Harry. "It's rather serious. You fellows remember how the Head was attacked in Lynne Wood by a rotten ruffian?"

"Not likely to forget it as we chipped in to help the merry old sport," said Bob.

"You'd know that hooligan again if you saw him?"

"Yes, rather—a rather burly brute with narrow eyes like a—like a dashed fox," said Bob.

"That's it!" said Harry, with a nod.

"Not likely to see him again, though," said Bob. "The police have been looking for him ever since, and they can't trail him out. I'll bet you he's miles out of Sussex long ago."

"It was rather mysterious why a hooligan should pitch into the Head like that," said Harry. "It wasn't robbery he meant—he just went for Dr. Cheyne with a stick. He hurt him, and would have hurt him more if we hadn't come up when we did."

"Yaas!" said Algy.

"I never thought then of a connection between the affair and Mr. Carker," said Harry, "but I believe that detectives say that when a crime is committed you have to look for the man that benefits. Mr. Carker has benefited by that attack on the Head."

"He's bagged the Head's place here, certainly," said Bob, with a stare. "From the talk that's been going round the school it looks as if he was after the Head's job, anyhow, but——"

"That's true," said Algernon Aubrey, quietly. "I've heard about that from home. My pater and Lovell's pater stood up for the Head at the meeting of the governors—the Head was coming back from that meeting when the johnny pitched into him in the wood, I believe. Some of the duffy old fossils wanted the Head to resign and give up the job to Carker. The cunnin' rotter wormed round them somehow—they can't know the kind of man he really is."

"But——" said Bob. He drew a deep breath. "Lovell, old man, you can't suspect that Carker had a hand in that attack on the Head?"

"I never suspected it till last night," said Harry. "Now I know it."

"You know it!" ejaculated Bob.

"For certain!" said Harry.

Algernon Aubrey's eyeglass dropped from his eye.

"Dear old bean!" he murmured, in gentle remonstrance.

Bob Rake was shaking his head vigorously. Low as his opinion of Randolph Carker was, he could not imagine that a man in Mr. Carker's position could, or would, mix himself up in a crime.

"There's no doubt about it," said Harry Lovell, quietly. "Listen to me, you chaps. After getting down from the 'Rat-trap' window I came round by the quad and found Carker's study window open between eleven and twelve at night. Carker was standing at it looking—and, of course I lay doggo till he should clear. And then a man came out of the dark and joined him, and entered his study by the window. They met as friends—in a way, at least; Mr. Carker certainly did not seem pleased to see him. And the man was the ruffian who attacked Dr. Cheyne in Lynne Wood!"

"Good heavens!" muttered Bob.

"Oh, great gad!"

Harry Lovell's chums stared at him. He was speaking with quiet, grave seriousness; but they could scarcely believe that what he stated was correct. Brute Mr. Carker certainly was—cruel, ruthless, tyrannical. Unscrupulous, he certainly was. But this——"

"It's not possible," muttered Bob. "You—you must be mistaken, old man. It was dark last night——"

"I saw his face in the light of the study window—the window where we've just been speaking to Mr. Carker."

"But—but——" stammered Bob.

"You're sure, old bean?" muttered Algy.

"Perfectly certain."

"If—if you're right, Carker is no better than a dashed criminal!" said St. Leger. "But—but——"

"There's no doubt that I'm right—in my mind at least," said the captain of the Fourth. "I saw the man plainly enough. I want to know what I ought to do."

Algernon Aubrey whistled.

"If—if you made a mistake——"

"Why should any man visit the Head secretly, by his window, at close on midnight?" asked Harry. "If it was not that man, it was some man. What could such a secret meeting mean? Mr. Carker was seeing someone who dared not show his face here till all the school were in bed."

"That's so," assented Bob.

"It looks suspicious," said Algy. "But—but—it's too awf'ly thick! Even Carker——" He paused.

"I heard him speak to the man by name," said Harry. "He addressed him as Slaney."

Algernon Aubrey and Bob were silent. They knew that their chum would not speak lightly on so terribly serious a matter; but they simply could not credit that Mr. Carker had leagued with a ruffian to clear the way for him to the head-mastership of St. Kit's.

"I want to know what to do," said Harry, after a pause. "That man, Slaney, as Mr. Carker called him, is wanted by the police. I can give them his name, at least—it may help to trace him. He could have been caught last night in the school——"

Algernon Aubrey shuddered.

"What a frightful disgrace for St. Kit's if he had been!" he muttered.

"I thought of that," said Harry. "But anyhow, I could have done nothing—it was fairly certain that the man would not stop long, and you know how long it would have taken to fetch P.C. Bandy from Wicke. Of course, Mr. Carker would have denied that he had ever been there, if I had brought a policeman along after the man was gone."

"Of course he would! But—but the policeman wouldn't have come on such a yarn," said Algy. "He wouldn't have believed it."

Harry smiled faintly.

"You fellows don't quite believe it," he said.

"Well——"

"Of course, we believe you," said Bob. "But—but I can't help thinking that—in the dark—you made a mistake. There's something fishy about Carker, if he has midnight visitors at his window after the school's in bed. But—but—there's a limit—you must have been mistaken, Harry."

"I was not mistaken."

"Well," said Bob, following a new train of thought, "Carker saw somebody late last night—that's so much certain. If it was the man of Lynne Wood, that's not proof that he was mixed up in the attack on the Head. He might have been seeing the man about something else——"

"What else?"

"Oh, I give that up, but—but it's too thick, Harry. Carker is a brute and a bully, but he's a University man and a Master of Arts—dash it all, he couldn't stoop so low."

Harry Lovell was silent, and the chums of the Fourth paced the silent old Cloisters for some minutes without speaking. It was borne in upon Harry's mind that he was helpless—that it was useless to speak. His own chums could not credit his staggering statement—what reception was it likely to meet with from others? Would it not be looked upon as a wild and reckless slander—with an obvious motive, too—the bitter feud between the new Head and the captain of the Fourth furnished a very plausible motive.

"Then you advise me to say nothing at present?" asked Harry, at last.

"For goodness' sake don't tell anybody else what you've told us," said Bob, hastily. "It can't be right—there's a mistake somewhere. Thank goodness you didn't bring it out before all the dormitory last night. You can't make a fearful accusation like that without proof."

"I suppose not," admitted Harry, slowly.

"Yaas, keep it dark, at least unless we can get to know somethin' more," said St. Leger, uneasily. "If you're right, Harry, the brute ought to be pickin' oakum in chokey. But—but—a thing like that would have to be proved beyond the shadow of a doubt. And you've got no proof—only a glimpse of a man's face at a window on a dark night. And depend on it, Carker would deny that there ever was a man——"

"I'm sure of that."

"Then how would you stand?" said Algy.

The captain of the Fourth nodded.

"I can see that I'd better say nothing at present," he said. "That's all right. But—I know in my heart that Mr. Carker is not better than a criminal—no better than the rough he hired to knock poor old Dr. Cheyne on the head. And I'll stand up against that brute all the way and all the time." A blaze came into Lovell's eyes. "He got his head-mastership here by a crime. He's using it like a bully and a tyrant. We——"

"Oh, I say! Here you are." Bunny Bootles came rolling along the Cloisters. "I've been looking for you chaps. Don't you know the brekker bell's gone."

"We're coming," said Harry. There was nothing more to be said, and the Top Study started for the schoolhouse, Bunny trotting along with them.

"Carker's after you, Lovell," the fat junior announced.

"Hang Carker."

"I heard him tell Mr. Lathley that he ordered you to come to his study, and you didn't come," chuckled Bunny. "He says you're to be looked for, and sent to him at once."

Harry shrugged his shoulders.

The chums of the Fourth entered the school-house together, and went into the dining-room, where St. Kit's were already at breakfast. Mr. Lathley, the master of the Fourth, was at the head of his table, and he cast a very curious glance at Harry. Like all the rest of the school, he had been astonished to find that Lovell was at liberty that morning.

Fellows looked round from all the tables at Harry as he went to his place. Even the high and mighty Sixth were, for once, interested in a junior. Oliphant, Carsdale, Beauchamp, Wake, Tomlinson, and all the rest of the Sixth glanced round at Harry—Carsdale scowling blackly at him. Harry went to his place and sat down, seemingly unconscious of the general stare.

Mr. Lathley coughed slightly.

"Ahem! Lovell."

"Yes, sir," said Harry.

"Mr. Carker requires your immediate attendance in his study."

Harry drew a deep breath.

"I know what Mr. Carker wants, sir," he answered. "He wants to act like a brute and a bully——"

"*Lovell!*"

"I do not intend to submit, sir."

Mr. Lathley paused. In Dr. Cheyne's time, if the Head had sent for a junior and the junior had made such an answer, Mr. Lathley would have acted promptly and drastically. But matters were changed now. Mr. Lathley had been "nagged" in his own form-room before his class—he had been troubled and interfered with by the tyrant of St. Kit's—and he was, in his heart of hearts, fully in sympathy with Lovell.

He reflected for a few moments, and then let the matter drop, saying nothing further.

The Fourth Form breakfasted in a state of tension. At any moment they expected to see Mr. Carker stride in at the door, cane in hand. But he did not appear, and breakfast finished without interruption.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Too Much for Carsdale.

"IS he going to back down?" Bob Rake asked that question when the bell rung for morning classes.

So far the chums of the Fourth had seen nothing of Mr. Carker. Lovell's refusal to go to his study had passed—without incident. It really looked as if the tyrant of St. Kit's realised that he was "up against" something that it was beyond his power to subdue, and had decided to beat a timely retreat.

But Harry Lovell did not think so for a moment. He was quite assured that Randolph Carker had not done with him.

He was very wary when he came into the school-house for class, and his chums kept close to his side. Carsdale of the Sixth passed them on his way to the Sixth Form; he scowled, but did not speak. The bully of the Sixth had evidently not forgotten the happenings of that morning yet.

The Fourth went into their form-room, with a great deal of suppressed excitement.

Was Mr. Carker going to take it "lying down," after all? If so, it was certain that Mr. Carker would not receive much respect

from the Lower School while he wielded authority at St. Kit's.

The St. Kit's tyrant, in fact, had reached a point at which it was difficult to proceed, but quite impossible to retreat, if he was to retain a tatter of authority in the school.

The "heavy hand" had provoked resistance; and unless the resistance was crushed, Mr. Carker's authority was at an end. The captain of the Fourth was quite assured that the tyrant would make some effort to crush the resistance he had provoked. It only remained to see what Mr. Carker's method would be.

Mr. Lathley began lessons with a gloomy brow, in a troubled mood. He felt the thunder in the air.

Very soon after the commencement of lessons, Carsdale of the Sixth entered the Fourth-form room. Mr. Lathley glanced at him inquiringly.

"Message from the Head, sir," said Carsdale. "Lovell is to be taken to his study at once."

"I leave that matter entirely in the hands of Mr. Carker, Carsdale," said the form-master. "You may tell him so."

"Mr. Carker's instructions are that I am to take Lovell with me to his study, sir."

"Very good."

"You hear me, Lovell?" called out Carsdale.

"Oh, yes," answered Harry.

"Well, I'm waiting."

"Wait, then!"

"Wait till you grow whiskers," said Bob Rake. "Lovell's not coming."

"Would you mind waitin' in the passage, Carsdale?" asked Algernon Aubrey St. Leger, with elaborate politeness. "Your face worries me a little. Catchy on?"

There was a chuckle in the Fourth. Carsdale breathed hard. The remembrance of his morning's experience made him hesitate.

"Mr. Lathley, will you order Lovell to accompany me?" he asked.

"I have already said that I leave the matter entirely in Mr. Carker's hands," answered the Fourth-form master, icily. "I have nothing to add to that."

Carsdale set his lips.

"I shall have to take Lovell by force if he does not come quietly," he said.

"That is your own affair," answered Mr. Lathley.

The bully of the Sixth made a step towards Harry. Every eye in the Fourth was fixed on him; and most of the eyes were gleaming threats. He paused—but he had already experienced the bitter edge of Mr. Carker's tongue, and he did not care to retreat and report that the junior would not come. He strode at Harry and grasped him by the collar.

"Now come, you young cad!" he snarled.

Harry Lovell did not hesitate for a moment. He hit out straight from the shoulder, and Carsdale staggered, as he caught with his chin a set of knuckles that seemed like iron.

He gave a howl that rang through the form-room.

As he staggered Bob Rake hurled a Latin grammar, and it came with a mighty smite upon Carsdale's nose. The contents of an inkpot flew from Algy's hand at the same moment, catching Carsdale in one ear.

The example of the Top Study was enough for the Fourth. Seven or eight juniors were on their feet, and a shower of missiles rattled upon Carsdale. Latin grammars, rulers, and inkpots whizzed around him. Mr. Lathley prudently retired behind his high desk. The aim was not always good, and a whizzing inkpot was no respecter of persons.

"Stop it!" yelled Carsdale. "Stop it, you young fiends! Oh, my hat! Yarooch! Oh, crumbs! Ow! Oooooop!"

"Ha! Ha! Ha!"

"Give him socks!" yelled Bob.

"Give him beans!"

Five or six juniors jumped from their desks. Carsdale backed to the door and fled. A flying inkpot caught him on the back of the head as he went, and a fiendish yell floated back from Carsdale.

Then his fleeing footsteps were heard dying away in the corridor. There was uproar in the Fourth-form room. Mr. Lathley emerged from behind his desk.

"Order!" he rapped out. "Take your places at once!"

Some of the Fourth were disinclined to obey; the spirit of riot had spread. But Harry Lovell set the example of returning quietly to his place, and the rest followed. The Top Study wanted to make it quite clear that the revolt was against Mr. Carker's tyranny, and not against just authority. In a few minutes all was quiet in the Fourth-form room, and the lesson recommenced—without much prospect of finishing in peace. Meanwhile Carsdale of the Sixth hurried to the Head's study, breathless, bruised, and splashed from head to foot with ink.

Mr. Carker was waiting there, birch in hand. Whether he really expected to find Lovell coming with the prefect is a doubtful point. But he scowled as he saw Carsdale alone.

"Where is Lovell?" he snapped.

"He wouldn't come!" gasped Carsdale.

"Pish!"

"The whole crowd set on to me!"

"Nonsense!"

"I—I had to cut!" gasped Carsdale.

"Fool!"

"I've done my best," muttered Carsdale, sullenly. "They—they're entirely out of hand, sir."

Randolph Carker's jaw set grimly.

"I shall very quickly bring them to heel," he said. "Follow me!"

Birch in hand, Mr. Carker started for the Fourth-form room. It was now or never—neck or nothing. Carsdale followed at his heels, doubtfully. He hoped that he was going to witness a thorough all-round flogging of the rebels of St. Kit's. He hoped so, but he had his doubts. And his doubts were justified.

Next Monday's Great Story

"BARRED OUT!"

Order "School and Sport" Early and tell your Chum to do likewise.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Hand to Hand!

"HERE comes the Carker-bird!"

Bob Rake made that observation quite loudly as the tall, lean form of Mr. Randolph Carker appeared in the doorway of the Fourth-form room. Bob did not seem to care whether Mr. Carker heard him or not—and certainly Mr. Carker heard him, and his flinty eyes glittered.

Mr. Lathley turned wearily round. He was finding his duties as master of the Fourth much more onerous than they had been in Dr. Cheyne's time.

"Mr. Lathley!" snapped the new Head.

"Sir!"

"I sent Carsdale to bring Lovell to my study."

"I am aware of that, sir."

"You have allowed Carsdale—a prefect of the Sixth Form—to be assaulted under your eyes by the boys of your form. Is that what you consider your duty, Mr. Lathley?"

"I do not require you to teach me my duty, Mr. Carker," said the form-master, icily. "And if you intend to interfere in this form-room I shall retire and leave the form in your hands as I did yesterday."

"Retire by all means!" snapped Mr. Carker. "I am well aware that I cannot count upon your support in dealing with this rebellious form. I am aware that you encourage them in insubordination."

"That is not true, sir!"

"Mr. Lathley!"

"Insubordination has certainly taken place," said Mr. Lathley. "It has been caused entirely by you, Mr. Carker. After what you have said I decline to act any longer as form-master under your direction."

"You may resign your post, sir, the moment you think fit," snarled Mr. Carker. "I shall easily fill your place, have no doubt on that point."

"I shall not resign my post," answered Mr. Lathley, calmly. "But I shall refuse to act with you, Mr. Carker, and leave the matter between us to be settled by Dr. Cheyne and the Board of Governors. I wish you a very good-morning, sir."

And the form-master, trembling with anger and indignation, rustled out of the form-room.

Mr. Carker turned to the class, with a malevolent eye.

"Lovell, stand out before the class!"

Harry Lovell did not stir.

"You hear me, Lovell?"

No answer.

"Carsdale, bring that boy to me!"

The hapless Carsdale hesitated. The Fourth were ready for him, and he knew it. Mr. Carker turned a bitter eye on him.

"Do you hear me, Carsdale?"

"Ye-e-es, sir!" stammered the bully of the Sixth, fervently wishing at that moment that he had not curried favour with the tyrant of St. Kit's, and been selected as his henchman.

"Then obey me!" rapped out Mr. Carker. "If there is resistance I shall assist you."

"Very well, sir," mumbled Carsdale.

He advanced towards the class in a very gingerly manner. An inkpot whizzed from somewhere and landed on his chin with a crash. Carsdale gave a wild yell.

"Goal!" howled Bob Rake.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bring that boy here!" thundered Mr. Carker.

The wretched Carsdale made another step forward, and a Latin grammar crashed on his nose. He staggered back.

"You—you see, sir," he stuttered.

"Pish!"

Mr. Carker strode savagely forward and reached out at Harry Lovell. He grasped the junior by the collar, and by main force dragged him over the desk and out into the middle of the form-room.

Lash! Lash! Lash!

The birch rose and fell.

Harry Lovell struggled and struck fiercely. Like an arrow from a bow Bob Rake came rushing out from the desks, with a heavy Latin dictionary in his grip. He did not hurl it—he swung it up and smote Mr. Carker on the head with a mighty smite.

"Bravo!" chirruped Algernon Aubrey.

"Give him socks!" yelled Stubbs.

"Back up, Fourth!" roared Durance. And Durance was the next to reach the tyrant of St. Kit's with a ruler in his hand.

Mr. Carker released Harry Lovell perforce, as six or seven assailants closed round him, all hitting out.

Carsdale made a half-hearted attempt to help his chief, but Algernon Aubrey headed him off with a thick ebony ruler which he had thoughtfully placed in his desk with a view to trouble that morning. The ruler rapped on Carsdale's nose, and the Sixth-former jumped away. Myers and Wheatford rushed at him, also armed with rulers, and Carsdale backed to the door.

Even Licke, the bug-hunter, wildly excited, glaring ferociously through his big glasses, clutched up the cane from Mr. Lathley's desk and rushed into the fray. His first slash caught Carsdale across the face; his second landed on the back of St. Leger's neck, and there was a fearful yell from Algy. His third would probably have booked Wheatford for the school hospital, had not someone fortunately tripped him behind and sent him sprawling with the cane along the form-room floor.

Meanwhile, Mr. Carker had his hands full with Lovell, Bob, and Stubbs, and Durance, and several other fellows. Of all the Fourth, only Rex Tracy sat tight and took no part in the riot. Even his nutty pals, Lumley and Howard, Verney minor and Leigh, were up and doing. It was the Fourth against the tyrant now, and if Harry Lovell and Co. were subdued, it would go hard with the whole form, and even the nuts realised it and joined in the fray. Not that their aid was much needed—there were more than enough to deal with Randolph Carker now that the juniors had fairly taken the bit between their teeth.

The tall, angular form of Randolph Carker swayed to and fro with never fewer than five or six juniors clinging to him.

He came down at last with a terrific crash on the form-room floor. Two or three juniors sprawled with him.

"Sit on him!" roared Bob.

"Sit on his head!"

"Here, Bootles, sit on his head!" yelled Stubbs. "You're heaviest! Sit on his head, Bunny!"

"Oh, I say——"

"Ha, ha, ha!" It was a breathless howl of laughter from the excited Fourth. "Sit on his head, Bunny!"

Bunny Bootles rolled forward, eager to distinguish himself, but fearfully afraid of the tyrant, fallen as he was. Three or four hands pushed him, and he sat down—on Mr. Carker's head. Mr. Carker, struggling with his foes, was vainly endeavouring to rise. His struggles petered out suddenly as Bunny Bootles sat down. There was no arguing with the extensive avoirdupois of Cuthbert Archibald Bootles.

"Gooooooch!" came faintly from Mr. Carker.

Carsdale dodged out of the form-room and fled, followed by a derisive yell. Licke scrambled up and groped for his spectacles, and jammed them on his nose and blinked round wildly.

"Somebody tripped me——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I got in two jolly good whacks," panted Licke. "Two jolly good ones! I gave it to Carsdale—I did——"

"Ow!" groaned Algernon Aubrey, caressing the back of his neck. "You gave it to me too, you thumpin' idiot! Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Where's that cane?" Licke blinked round. "I say, give Carker the cane. He's given us enough of it."

"By gad! What a ferocious bug-hunter!" ejaculated Algy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Licke, the bug-hunter, was on the warpath with a vengeance. He clutched up the cane and rushed towards the struggling tyrant, who was gasping and hooting under Bunny's weight.

"Let's give him some of his own medicine. Stand clear!" shouted Licke, whirling up the cane.

"Yaroooh!"

"Look out, you blind idiot——"

"Stop him!"

Stubbs got the first lick from the short-sighted hero, and Bob Rake the second, then Bob jerked the cane away.

"You're more dangerous than the Carker bird, you image!" he cried. "You run away and leave this to a chap who can see straight."

Licke's blood was fairly boiling now, however, and he glared angrily at the Australian junior.

"I'm in this just as much as you are, Rake!" he cried. "A man like Carker is a danger to the community. As I said in a speech in the Glory Hole last term, if——"

"Shut up!"

"If——"

Bob Rake interrupted the bug-hunter with a gentle push which sent the excited Licke flying over Mr. Carker's flying legs.

There was a loud howl from Licke as he received a violent kick on the back of his head.

"My hat!" cried Harry Lovell. "That sounded a hefty one! We shall have to pay interest on that!"

"Give it to Carker!" shouted Wheatford.

"You bet!"

Whack! Whack! Whack!

"Hurray!"

The form-master's cane came lashing down across Mr. Carker's struggling, thrashing legs. There was a gurgling gasp from Mr. Carker, and then a fiendish howl from Bunny Bootles. The fat junior leaped up raving.

"Sit down, Bootles——"

"What's the matter with you, Bunny?"

"Yow-ow-ow! I'm bitten! Yow-ow-ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! The beast bit me—yow-ow-ow! I'm bitten—yaroooh!" yelled Bunny. He staggered to a form and sat down—but jumped up again as if the form were red-hot. Apparently the bite had made Bunny disinclined to sit down.

Mr. Carker made a desperate effort to rise.

He struck out savagely on all sides with clenched fists, and succeeded in getting to his feet.

His collar and tie were gone, his gown was in rags and tatters, his hair wildly rumpled. He stood and panted and glared breathlessly at the Fourth Formers—only too evidently out of hand now. Then, as there was a rush at him, he turned and fled.

With almost a wolfish howl, the Fourth rushed in pursuit. Mr. Carker just got out of the form-room—just! Bob's cane lashed along his back as he escaped—and he went down the corridor like a deer.

Bob slammed the form-room door.

"Hooray for us!" he roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hip—hip—hurray!"

Every voice in the Fourth joined in the roar that rang and echoed through St. Kit's from end to end. In the other form-rooms masters and boys started and stared—and in the Fourth Form room pandemonium reigned.

The fat was in the fire now with a vengeance. How would it end? How could it end?

That Mr. Carker was a man utterly unsuited for the responsible position of Headmaster at St. Kit's was certain. His opportunity had gone. There was not one atom of discipline in the Fourth Form, and very little in any other of the forms. Mr. Carker could not even rely upon his staff of masters or upon the prefects.

Mr. Carker could hear the cries of victory and defiance even when he had staggered into his own study, and had locked the door on himself.

He gritted his teeth and collapsed into the armchair.

THE END.

(Do not miss "Barred Out!" next Monday. Order early, and tell your friends about SCHOOL AND SPORT.)



THE CRUISE OF THE "TARTAR"

A Great Story of Sport and Adventure

By JOHN WINTERTON

Featuring

JACK FEARLESS . . . . . of Great Yarmouth
JOE LAWLESS . . . . . of Bradford
BILL CARELESS . . . . . The Trapeze Artist

AND

CAPTAIN BOB OAK . . Master of "The Tartar"

Captain Bob Oak, of the s.s. "Tartar," advertises for three boys to join his ship. They must be willing to do anything and go anywhere. Out of thousands of boys who go down to the docks to join up are Jack Fearless, Joe Lawless, and Bill Careless. These three 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, Ching, 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 the crew of the "Tartar" come into conflict with an outlaw German submarine officer and his band of brigands. The "Tartar" puts to sea again, and the three boys are landed on the Burling Rocks where they rescue Nick Grief—a detective. The "Tartar" then sails south, and a party is made up in order to capture a pirate's stronghold.

"Are You Afraid?"

THE three boys were wild with delight. Here was a chance for which half the bold spirits of the *Tartar* would have given their ears.

To get ashore on that wild coast into a real corsair stronghold of the old-fashioned sort was to them as good as living in the pages of a story book.

Nick Grief, however, looked more serious. So did Yussuf, the huge negro, who was to act as their guide. Yussuf knew something of the nature of the ruined city of El Kor, once one of the coast strongholds of the famous Barbary Rovers.

The Rovers were long since dead and departed. Their harbour works had decayed and had been battered away by the sea. Their dread galleys had long since rotted away, and it was doubtful if on all the hundreds of miles of that savage coast there existed a single man with cunning enough to build a twelve-foot row boat.

But the pirates, though they had forgotten their seafaring craft, had not lost their appetite for piracy.

Once a Phœnician and then a Roman city, the huge ruins of El Kor still lay scattered along two miles under the huge hills that bordered the coast.

But its ancient palaces were deserted save by bats, and the degenerate inhabitants built their mud hovels against the mighty walls of palaces and fortresses cracked by earthquake and scoured by the eternal drift of sand from the sandhills which long since had blotted out the old port. And here only the lizards kept watch on the hot stones, whilst an occasional jackal, starving and watchful, gave out its sharp, querulous bark at night.

This was the place for which the boys were bound, an evil place swarming with the outlaws of Morocco, for El Kor was the last refuge of the criminal.

Here were black men, brown men, yellow men and even white men who had long ago forgotten their language. And all were subject to Kaid Sidi Bu Hamara, the greatest ruffian of them all.

Swiftly Captain Oak sketched in the sort of place they were off to.

"If you are fond of ruins, boys, you'll find plenty of ruins there on the beach. Lots of scientists would give money for the chance of exploring them. But Sidi Bu Hamara has never approved of scientifics coming ashore and nosing round his city. Last bunch of Germans he caught there he held to ransom, and started to clip their ears and their noses till it was paid up. But he got more friendly with the Germans later, when he thought that they were going to have all Morocco and were going to make him king of the whole country."

"Is he likely to clip our ears, sir?" asked Joe Lawless.

"No, my lad," replied Captain Oak, grimly. "You, as a poor shipwrecked sailor boy, won't be worth ransom. He'll just make a slave of you!"

Joe grunted.

"Ah'd like to see the chaap that'd maake a slave o' a Bradford lad!" said he. "Soon let him know Ah coom from Yorkshire!"

"It's no good telling him you come from Yorkshire," replied Captain Oak, laughing. "He's never heard of Bradford or Huddersfield."

"Never heard of Hull, sir?" asked Joe, astounded.

"Not a bit of it, my boy," replied Captain Oak, laughing at Joe's disgust at such ignorance. "I don't suppose that our friend Sidi Bu Hamara knows the result of the Great War yet. As like as not, he has heard that Germany won and that Great Britain is a back number. That's the sort of news they get down in this part of the world. So you can look out for a rough house when you get ashore. The ruffians are not likely to be scared of getting a British cruiser round the coast to look them up. Not afraid, are you?"

The three boys shook their heads.

It was plain that, far from being afraid, they were burning to be off on this wild expedition.

The eyes of the Duchess shone as she regarded this little party of brave men.

"You go to rescue by bruzzer, Don Miguel?" she exclaimed.

"Rescue him, lady!" replied Bucko Scott, gallantly. "We'll do more than rescue him; we'll bring you back the beard of this tug Sidi Bu Hamara to stuff a sofa cushion with. They do say that he's got a beard that's three feet long and as thick as a mare's tail. And we'll bring his head with it if he doesn't watch out!"

This was the sort of talk that the Duchess understood.

"You so brave men!" she exclaimed, clasping her hands. "Embrace my poor bruzzer for me."

"Certainly, madam," replied Bucko, looking rather doubtful at the idea of embracing a Dago, even if he were a Marquis.

"Now, boys," said the Captain. "Yussuf has all his instructions, and Mr. Grief takes charge of the expedition. Get into your oldest duds and look the part of shipwrecked sailors as near as you can. We shall be heading into the land soon, and I don't want to take the ship in too close here, for the sea is as full of reefs as a Christmas pudding is full of plums."

The boys hastened off to get into their oldest and shabbiest gear, and by the time they were on deck again every light in the ship was dowsed, and she was slowly heading landward with a leadsman in his perch on each side of the bridge.

Each lead swung with a monotonous whizz, and soon they got soundings.

The *Tartar* went slower and slower through the dark, starlit night, and against the stars they could catch the loom of the land ahead.

"That's as near as we are going," called Captain Oak from the bridge. "No good playing put and take with this sort of coast, or it will be a case of take all. Stand by to lower."

The ship came to a standstill. The shabby old boat was lowered and brought alongside the ladder, and the six adventurers were ready.

The stokers came up from below to see them off. Rough, hard hands gripped theirs in the darkness, and gruff voices wished them good luck.

Then the crowd parted respectfully, and there was the Duchess herself to see them off.

Her two women attendants were sobbing, but the Spanish lady was calm.

She held out a soft, jewelled hand to each of the boys.

"Go you with God, gentlemen," said she. "I doubt not that such brave boys will bring my brother safe out from amongst his enemies."

And Jack, Joe and Bill felt good enough to demolish the strongholds of a dozen Moorish pirates.

They climbed down into the boat that was gently heaving up and down alongside the steamer.

Already there was a hooded figure sitting in the boat, a figure they did not recognise, for it was wrapped up to the eyes in a white bernouse, the haik or hood of which was drawn over a turbaned head.

Yussuf and Bucko followed.

"All aboard?" said Bucko, cheerily, as the boys settled themselves on the thwarts and tossed oars. "Shove off."

"Where's Mr. Grief?" asked Joe. "Isn't he coming?"

Bucko laughed.

"He's aboard," said he. "That native gentleman sitting up in the bows is Mr. Grief, only his own mother wouldn't know him now!"

The boys looked over their shoulders in wonderment at the silent, shrouded figure which showed plainly against the stars.

The detective seemed to have put off his European nationality with his European clothing. It was a wild-looking Riff who sat up there in the bows of the boat, chuckling quietly as they pulled off from the dark hull that towered above them.

There was a faint cheer in the darkness. Then they heard the thump of the propellers of the good ship *Tartar* as she backed away into the deeper water seaward.

A Dramatic Surprise.

BUCKO took a squint into the boat compass.

"We are about eight miles off the city, boys," said he; "but we will steer straight in for the land, because Mr. Grief and Yussuf don't want to get caught in our company. Then, when we've put them on the beach, we put to sea again and sail along till we are abreast of the city. There we land because we want the stiffs who live up that street to see the boat and to know that it is all Sir Garney, and Nick and Yussuf will work on their own after that. They'll do all the trailing that's necessary once we are captured. Now, boys, there is a nice light draught of breeze; the night is dark, and the sail is good and dirty; I think we can set it and run inshore."

The mast was stepped, and Nick Grief came aft as the sail was hoisted.

The boys gasped and stared at him as he struck a match, carefully shading it in his hand, and lit a cigarette.

For Nick Grief was now coal black, and his smooth hair was shaven to the scalp, all save the long scalp lock which hung over his left ear in accordance with the custom of the true believers amongst the Riffs, who hold that by this scalp lock they will be saved from falling into the fires of Eternal Judgment when they walk the narrow bridge that leads to Paradise.

The detective smiled, his teeth showing white in his ebony face.

"It's the last cigarette I'll smoke for some time, boys," said he, ruefully. "But I've got the old water pipe rolled up in my bundle and some of the right tobacco. It would be death to be caught with a packet of Woodbines in that country ashore."

"Why, sir?" asked Joe.

"Because that would be a sure sign that we had come from a civilised spot, and Yussuf and I are going to play the parts of a native hakim or travelling doctor and his assistant. I am the doctor, and Yussuf is the assistant, and we are both conjurers. That will account for us wandering about the country with nothing but a bundle for luggage."

As the boat sped shorewards over the smooth rollers of the calm sea Nick Grief explained his plans.

He and Yussuf, having been landed, would work their way up to the ruined city of El Kor by the old caravan route which ran along the sandhills.

Many years had passed since a caravan had dared to pass along that neglected road, for Sidi Bu Hamara, from taking toll of each load that passed, had gradually got to taking the lot and making slaves of the caravan people.

Bucko nodded.

"I see the game, sir," said he. "Ole Boo got fed up with jus' takin' a commission on the goods. 'E got to Take All. That's the way they play Put an' Take in Morocco!"

"That's it," answered Nick Grief; "but, as Yussuf and I shall not be worth robbing, they won't worry us. Besides, I am a hajji, a holy man. I've been three times to the Holy Places at Mecca and Medina; and my amulets will show that I am not to be touched, even by Bu Hamara."

Bucko glanced with surprise at the keen black face which showed faintly in the glimmer of the small binnacle lamp.

"Mean to say, sir, that you've been all amongst this push? I thought you got scragged if it was a cop?" he asked.

Nick Grief smiled grimly.

"You do get scragged if you are suspected," said he; "but you make very certain that you are not suspected when a single wrong word or a wrong gesture will give you away."

"Give me home!" replied Bucko. "Home all the time! I don't mind the rough alleys where one man is as good as another if he can use his fists. But it's nix for Turban Alley, where they cut your throat if they dream that you don't belong to their crush."

The detective laughed.

"Yet you don't mind walking into a hornet's nest without disguise, as you are going to do to-night!" said he. "You'll come through all right, Bucko. But before we get ashore I am going to give you the stuff to leave a trail behind you."

And from under his robe he drew four bags of silk.

These were small bags, green in colour and marked with an embroidering in gold, figured in Arabic characters.

"What's these, sir?" asked Bucko. "They look like scent sachets, same as the young ladies fill with lavender and put amongst their hankies."

"They are kif bags," replied the detective, "and, even if those ruffians ashore strip you of everything, they won't dare to take those bags from you, for they are the sacred bags given to pilgrims at Mecca, and which are dusted with the dust from the Tomb of the Prophet. To rob a man of one of these bags is to ask for ruin, for such a bag stolen or taken by force brings ruin and death upon the thief."

"But what's in the bags, sir?" asked Bucko.

"Just seeds of hemp—to look at!" replied the detective. "But each grain of hemp has been split and filled with a tiny pellet of aniline dye, and if you boys are carried away into the interior, I want you just to drop a single grain on your path at every quarter of a mile or so. And that will lay the trail for us as good as a paper-chase."

"But how are you going to see a little grain of hemp, sir?" demanded Bucko. "You haven't got eyes like a chicken!" he added.

Nick Grief shook his head.

"I shan't look for the grain," said he; "but I shall look for a spot of crimson dye on the rocks or the grass where you drop it, for the sun will swiftly split the grain and the dye will spread with the damp till a blind man could pick up the trail. Have you never seen what a bit of copying pencil will leave behind it in the way of a stain?"

"Yes, sir," replied the boys.

"Well, each of these pellets of dye is a hundred times more powerful than a bit of copying pencil. Throw it on the ground or in the sand and it will look as if someone had bled badly. And you've enough stuff in those four bags to leave a clear trail for a hundred and fifty miles, so use them sparingly."

"Well, now!" said Bucko, admiringly, "that's the ribuck talk. I've seen some of our black

OUR GREAT LEAGUE OF SPORTSMEN

See Page 12.

The Name of every Member will be entered up in the books of the League.

WILL YOU BE ONE OF THE CAPTAINS?

If so, raise your XI. to-day.

BEAUTIFUL CERTIFICATES FOR EVERY MEMBER.

trackers at home in Australia do wonders, but they never had a trail of bloodstains left for them."

"And the stains are luminous by night," added Nick Grief.

Bucko looked up at the sail of the boat. The ocean swells were growing steeper now, a sure sign that they were running into shallower water.

"I think we'll take the rag in now, sir," said he. "We are getting near the shore. Listen, you can hear the surf running on the beach."

He held up his finger for silence.

Sure enough, over the silent sea came the low thundering of the waves on a long, deserted stretch of beach.

The sail was lowered and the mast was unstepped. The boys settled themselves at the oars and pulled in towards the shore.

Although the sea sounded so loudly on this silent, dark coast, there was no heavy run of waves on the empty beaches.

They rowed in till the water was quite shallow.

"No need to beach the boat," said Nick Grief, picking up his bundle; "we can drop into the water now, it's only waist deep."

"But what about your blacking, sir?" asked Bucko; "won't it wash off or leave you streaky?"

Nick Grief laughed.

"I've got a bottle of stuff on the ship that will shift it in two days," said he; "but it will wear sunshine, rain, and all weathers for six months. And then it won't come off. Good-night, boys. You will sail up to the town, and remember that Yussuf and I don't know you from this moment. Not a sign of recognition between us, remember, or it may cost us all our lives!"

"Right, sir," replied Bucko.

The boys ceased to row. The boat was now close in to the surf. Through the darkness they had a glimpse of a ragged-looking stretch of sandhills through which the night wind moaned fitfully.

And in another second Nick Grief and Yussuf had slipped overside and were splashing through the waves to the shore.

Then they turned the boat and pulled away seawards.

Bucko took an oar and they pulled out over a couple of miles across the dark, starlit waves. There was not a sign of the *Tartar* to be seen anywhere, only the blank, dark horizon of the Atlantic on one side, and the dark loom of the land on the other.

"We can get up the sail now, boys," said Bucko, laying in his oar. "No need to use the wooden wind when we can sail up to the city like a picnic party. And we'll have a nice bit of supper as we go along. Old Ching has put something good up in a basket for us, but we mustn't take it ashore. Shipwrecked sailors don't get off with cut ham and cold chicken and mince pies!"

Bucko rummaged in the sternsheets.

Here were piled a couple of sacks of biscuit and some tins of bully beef, and a few odds and ends, such as shipwrecked sailors might throw into a boat at the last minute. But amongst them was a handsome basket weighted on each handle with a heavy lump of old iron.

"See, boys," said Bucko, displaying the basket proudly, "ole Ching don't forget his pals, and he don't forget how to take care of 'em. The basket is weighted so that it will sink when we've eaten the grub, and no stories told. I'll bet ole Ching was a real King Pin in the pirate trade once. He don't leave anything to tell stories behind him."

He opened the basket. Pinned on top was a rudely scrawled note in pencil: "With lov from Ching Ho and Kingaloo," ran the words which Bucko spelled out by the dim light of the binnacle lamp.

And if Ching's love could be measured by the grub he had stowed in the basket, it was a big love indeed, for not only was there chicken and ham, but a noble red sausage and a sugared cake with the marzipan and almond icing that the boys loved.

"Well!" said Bucko, admiringly, "we shall have to take old Ching back a nice present from Pirateville in return for this little surprise. Eat hearty, boys, for what we can't eat we'll have to chuck overboard for the sharks!"

And it was a very merry little supper party that gathered in the sternsheets of the quarterboat as she drifted along the coast, heading southwards for the pirate stronghold.

Bucko kept his head well away seawards as they supped, for he did not wish to get in too close to the shore.

And soon a dim light or two showed under the land.

"That's the buzzards' nest, boys!" said Bucko, shutting up his claspknife regretfully. "We are getting abreast of it, and soon it will be time to turn and sail boldly in, just as if we had come straight in from the Atlantic. Want any more supper?" he added; "it may be a long time before there's chicken and ham and sugary cake again!"

But the boys could eat no more of Ching's generous fare, so the weighted basket was dropped overboard and sank, whilst Bucko, changing his course, sailed boldly in for the few distant lights that marked the whereabouts of the pirate city.

There were no boats about fishing off the shore in the darkness, and the beach, as they approached it, was as lonely at the coast on which they had landed Yussuf and Nick Grief.

Soon they could hear the sound of the surges on the sandy shore.

"Here we come!" said Bucko, gaily. "Pirateville-on-Sea, lots of sand and niggers, but I don't see any pier."

The beach seemed quite deserted as they sailed in, and the rise of the sandhills shut out the few dim lights of the city.

Bucko lowered the sail when they were yet a quarter of a mile from the dark shore.

"May as well take in the washing, boys," said he; "we don't want to spoil the boat by beaching her hard, for you never know, we may want her again."

He was unstepping the mast when suddenly from ahead of the boat there came a low call.

"Boat ahoy!"

"Spare me days!" ejaculated Bucko. "What's that? A Christian voice!"

"Boat ahoy!" repeated the voice, "and if ye be Christian men keep off this infernal beach."

Bucko peered into the darkness.

In the water ahead he could see a big shape like a submarine mine or a buoy, and to this buoy clung a man.

"Who are you, mate?" he called.

"'Arry Obbs," replied the voice.

"'Old on, 'Arry!" answered Bucko. "What are you floating about on, there?"

"Water jar!" replied the voice. "It's the only craft on the beach that we could get away on. My mate's jus' behind!"

"Who's your mate?" asked Bucko.

"Albert 'All!" replied the man in the water, "and for 'Eaven's sake take us aboard, mate!"

The boys pulled forward a few strokes, and Bucko, leaning over the gunwale, reached down and grabbed the man by the shoulder, lifting him into the boat.

Then he passed a line about the neck of the queer object which had supported the man in the water. It was a large Moorish water jar of baked clay, stoppered with a wooden stopper.

"Sit down, Harry!" said Bucko, kindly. "Sit down and collect yourself."

Harry Hobbs, who wore nothing but an ancient ragged turban and pair of baggy trousers, sat down, and covering his face with his hands began to sob.

"Cheer up, partner," said Bucko, as the poor man's shoulders heaved with convulsive sobbing. "Where have you come from?"

"Out of 'Ell!" replied the man, between his sobs. "Albert's coming behind me on another water jar. Let me cry. I ain't a cryin' sort. But we've been there since 1918—January, 1918. Our ship was sunk by one of them German submarines cruising round the Canaries. And we got here in the small boat, Albert and me. But those lads ashore was worse'n the Germans. We've been slaves, Albert and me. Never a word from home, never a touch with the world. They are jus' savages, an' worse."

"You sit there, cobber," said Bucko, peering over the bows of the boat. "I can see Albert comin' along with 'is navy!"

There was another faint hail in the darkness, and soon a second man came drifting alongside the boat, clinging to the neck of a similar jar.

This was Albert Hall who, with his friend Harry Hobbs, was all that was left of the crew of the British steamer *Iris*, sunk by German submarine action before the end of the war.

Albert's Farting Tip.

BUCKO seized Albert Hall and hoisted him, dripping, into the boat.

Albert was worse off for clothing than his mate, for he only wore a waistcloth and had no turban.

He sat down on the thwart and gasped.

"A Christian boat!" he panted. "Thank the Lord for His mercies! Who won the war?"

"We did!" replied the boys, in chorus.

"What did they do with Kaiser Bill?" asked Albert, heavily.

"He's all right. He's living in Holland," answered Jack Fearless.

Albert Hall sighed.

"Ought to have hung him!" said he, shaking his head. "He's as bad as those niggers ashore. Are they playin' the Cup-ties again?"

"Yes," answered Bill.

"That's the talk!" rejoined Albert. "We've been slaves, 'Arry and me. Got any grub?"

"Heaps," replied Jack Fearless, opening a sack of biscuits. "There's some tinned beef here. Do you mind bully beef?"

"Bully beef!" exclaimed Albert. "Lead me to it! W'y, young gents, 'Arry an' me ain't 'ad anything but kous-kous and a bit off a dead camel once a month for nigh four years."

Jack opened a tin of bully beef with his cleasp knife and cut it up for the two men.

Harry Hobbs ceased to sob.

He smashed a biscuit in the palm of his hand and ate it as if it were the greatest delicay he had tasted in his life.

"Thank 'Eaven for a taste of a good ship biscuit again," said he.

"Run your 'ands over my back, young gents," said Albert.

The boys reached out and touched his back. They shuddered, for Albert's back was wealed till the flesh stood up in ridges.

"You could strike matches on it, couldn't you?" laughed Albert, grimly. "Toob did that!"

"Who's Toob?" asked Jack Fearless.

"Toob is a nigger," said Albert. "He's the first mate o' that pirate Bu O'Mara ashore. We was Toob's slaves. Toob used to lick us 'cause we wouldn't bow down to 'im. Licked me most, he did, 'cause I cut 'im one over the eye one day when 'e got setting about 'Arry too much. 'E's a one, Toob is!"

And Albert chuckled hoarsely like a man who has forgotten how to laugh.

"There's no one on the beach," said he. "Harry an' me were sent down to bring up sea-water for Toob's bath. An' we saw your boat just showing white off the shore, so we pushed off on our water bottles and 'ere we are! Now get up your sail and clear out of this, mates. I see you are shipwrecked mariners, like we was. But you got to sail three hundred miles along this coast afore you can land safe, or you'll fall into Toob's clutches, and he'll either keep you as slaves or send you up inland to Boo O'Mara."

"Bu Hamara!" exclaimed the boys. "But that's just the chap we want to be sent to. We are not shipwrecked. We are an expedition!"

"Expedytion from a loonatic asylum, I should say," rejoined Albert, chewing his biscuit hungrily. "Why, you must be off your chumps!"

"No, Albert," put in Bucko. "We are not silly. We are the vanguard of an expedition that's going to wipe up ole Bu Hamara with a duster. And we got to go ashore and get caught, same as you. But there's those behind that is going to hit things up so as your pal Toob will get it jus' where the chicken got the axe. And as for Bu Hamara, he's going to get such a stoush in the slats that he won't take any more sailor men prisoners for years and years and years. We are giving him his ticket for Portland Jail."

"Then we've met lucky. That's all I can say!" sighed Albert, shaking his head. "Poor ole 'Arry is near broke up. We can't go back to El Kor again. When we've had our supper we'll get off on the old waterpots again. The tide will soon be setting off the coast, and if your ship is about we'll chance her picking us up."

"That's all right," replied Bucko, cheerfully. "We've met lucky, as you say. You chaps want a boat, and we chaps want to get ashore. All you and Harry have got to do is to land us on the beach and leave us to Toob and his mates. Then you sail out due West for fifteen miles, and it won't be very long before our ship picks you up. She's the *Tartar*, of London. Captain Oak."

The two castaways started.

"Bob Oak!" they exclaimed.

"The same," answered Bucko. "You get aboard and take a rest, and tell him that Bucko and the boys have landed at El Kor. He'll soon nurse you up fightin' fit, and you can come back and take change for half-a-crown out of your friend Toob."

The two weary men were speechless. To them, just escaped from torment, it seemed madness that Bucko and the boys should walk straight into the trap from which they had escaped.

But to hear that the great Captain Bob Oak was just in the offing put a different complexion on things.

Albert shivered.

"I'd go back with you, if I dared!" he muttered. "You are brave chaps. I'd go back with you, but, Harry, he'd go crazy. They've broke our spirits, the cruel demons. And they've broke Harry worse'n me!"

"Look here, mate!" said Bucko, kindly, "you are not going back there till you come back with a hundred men behind you, a hundred rustlers, proper pebs, with enough neck to take all Morocco and put it in their pockets. You be off to the ship and report us. She'll be cruising up and down, and she'll find you all right. And fe'll attend to old Tuppenny Toob ashore, give you my word. Then when you've recuperated, and got yourself a pair of trousers, you'll be a different man. Now push in to the shore a bit so's we can land, and we'll turn the boat and set the sail, and off you go."

Albert was too dead beat to make any objections.

The boys ran the boat close into

CHATTY PARS ABOUT SPORT

Should There Be Two Refs?—Where Do The Best Footballers Come From?—Rugger Schoolboys.

DO YOU AGREE?

"Whence come the best footballers in these days?" asks the *Evening Standard*.

A manager who has a wide reputation for economical discoveries and—even more convincing—a successful team, says:—

"The most fruitful regions in these days are the pit districts. When my side sags at some spot I spend a week-end in the Midland Black Country or the environs of Newcastle, and it will be strange if I do not land a likely lad."

It is interesting in this connection to note that the Tottenham Hotspur and Aston Villa elevens have both been largely recruited from the scientific North-Eastern section.

THE NEXT BIG BOXING CONTEST.

Carpentier states that he intends going into training shortly for his forthcoming fight in March with "Kid" Lewis in London.

After that he believes that he will meet Tom Gibbons in the United States.

TWO REFEREES WANTED.

Major A. E. V. Trestrail, the one-time captain of Somerset County XI., has written an interesting letter wherein he says that there is a growing feeling among Association football players and onlookers that in a fast game—the game is more open and faster than it was—it is almost impossible for one referee accurately to supervise and control the whole field of play. In consequence of this a referee, admirable in every way, is or may be unable to give entire satisfaction either to himself, the players, or the onlookers.

This can to a certain extent be remedied by having two referees and no linesmen. A referee for each half of the ground—each referee to control his half and to signal the throws-in on the whole length of his side of the touch-line, and award the corners in his half, changing over to the other touch-line and other half at half-time.

WALES—HARD TO BEAT.

England have only once proved successful in a Rugby International at Cardiff, and that was in 1913, when Wales were beaten by a placed goal, a dropped goal, and a try to nothing.

RUGGER SCHOOLBOYS.

If I were asked to name the best Rugger schoolboy player of the year I should give the palm to Jackson, the Cheltenham outside half, although Collier, of Merchant Taylors and Felsted, runs him close (writes a correspondent).

Jackson is fast, runs straight, has a fine pair of hands and swerve, and possesses a strong tackle. He played very well for Richmond the other week, but is now in the North.

Collier is excellent—also an outside half—and put up a fine performance for the O.M.T.'s against Cardiff, a stiff test for a boy.

YOUR FOOTER MAY COST YOU LESS.

That very live body, the Charlton Athletic Supporters' Association, are making a strong appeal for a reduction in the price of admission to League matches. In a letter which is being circulated to the Football League and various other competitions it is pointed out that:—

"Wages are still in the process of reduction, and in a good many instances are nearly down to pre-war level, whilst *prices generally* have not fallen in anything like the same proportion; therefore it becomes a matter of increasing difficulty for the working man to find the 1s. admission money to each League game.

"Football is claimed to be the game of the public, and in return the artisan will support it so long as the pocket allows, but it is for the powers that be to see that the game is placed within his reach."

WHAT ABOUT YOUR CLUB?

The Editor of SCHOOL AND SPORT invites responsible members of school and other junior football teams to send in reports of matches, etc. When space permits, these reports will be published.

FATHER AND SON IN SAME MATCH.

In a recent Rugger match—P. S. Services versus Public Schools—a father and his son were playing. The father was Mr. J. C. Jenkins, the old Welsh international, and he scored the first try, as pretty a one as you could wish to see. R. H. O'Brien, the Middlesex captain, broke away, and he and Jenkins, sen., passed and repassed to each other three or four times before the latter had just sufficient pace left to go over between the posts.

ST. DUNSTAN'S.

St. Dunstan's College, Catford, probably produces some of the best London Rugger players. This is evidenced by the fact that their old boys have a wonderful record of wins this season.

St. Dunstan's play cricket, Rugby, and lacrosse.

LEIGH'S HAT TRICK.

Leigh's hat trick for Bristol Rovers against Aberdare was the first obtained by any Bristol player this season, while the Rovers' score was the highest obtained by either of the Bristol clubs this season.

Coming as it did after seven consecutive defeats, the 5 to 1 victory was especially welcome, but after Aberdare's display Bristol people are wondering why they are where they are in the League table.

A "SPORTY" FAMILY.

Two sons, three daughters, and a daughter-in-law of Mr. H. Weller, J.P., were figuring in Egham hockey teams recently. Mr. Weller himself refereed, and a son-in-law, who is usually a regular player, was unable to play owing to an indisposition. A real sporting family!

The Cruise of the "Tartar"

(Continued from previous page.)

the dark shore and turned her. Then they stepped the mast and hoisted the sail with last whispered injunctions to the two rescued slaves as to their course.

Then they pushed her off into the night and watched her sail fade into the darkness, leaving them on this desert and inhospitable shore.

A last faint voice came back to them.

"If they shuts you up next the lion, call 'im Towser and throw 'im the camel bone!"

It was Albert's voice which called.

"Righto," answered Bucko, and he waded cheerfully ashore on to the sands of El Kor, followed by his companions.

Attacked by Lions.

THERE were three boats hauled up on the beach, and these Bucko examined, for they apparently made up the navy of Bu Hamara.

But running his fingers in between the strakes, he discovered that the sun had warped and twisted these from the ribs, so that the boats were boats no longer. They were baskets, half full of drifted sand.

"If old Boo keeps all his gear same as he keeps his ships, we are going to have an easier job than we thought for," said Bucko. "Now where's the city? Either the sea has gone back from the city, or the city has gone back from the sea!"

The last was the case, for as soon as they had reached the crest of the first range of the sandhills they saw that the lights they had seen from the sea were nearly a mile inland.

In the palmy days of El Kor it had been a seaport with a stone-walled harbour of its own, and in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries it had fitted out sea-going craft for the dread fleets of the Sallee Rovers.

But time and neglect had done their work. The shifting, untended sand dunes had crept along the coast, blotting out harbour and port, and a mile of dunes separated the city gate from the seashore.

It was over this that the escaped Harry Hobbs and Albert Hall had toiled day after day, staggering under the load of the great earthen water jars, bringing up sea-water for the baths of their black master, El Toob, the nigger governor of El Kor.

"Come on, boys," said Bucko, stepping out briskly over the dunes, "the sooner we introduce ourselves to the city, the better. And we've got to remember what Albert called back to us; if they shove us in the cage next to the lion, we've got to call him Towser and throw him the camel bone. Sounds as if we are going to have pleasant quarters at ole Toob's hotel, I don't think!"

The dunes seemed quite deserted, and dead silent save for the soft drifting of the sand in the night breeze, and the occasional call of a night bird hawking for lizards over the marram tufts.

"A nice cheerful place!" grunted Bucko, depressed in spite of himself. "I don't wonder that Albert and Harry wanted to get while the going was good. It's worse'n our Never Never country in old Australia."

Presently he stopped as the faint tinkling of a bell sounded on the night wind.

He dropped into a tuft on the crest of a sand dune and motioned to the boys to take cover.

"Listen, boys!" he whispered, "there's someone coming. I don't like the tinkle of a bell in these parts. It means a leper. Lie close!"

The boys had dropped behind the marram grass. There was an uncomfortable, creepy sort of chill running up their backs.

"Tinkle! Tinkle!" sounded the bell, growing nearer.

"I wonder if he's spotted us!" muttered Bucko, under his breath. "He's coming this way. And I don't want to run into a leper. In a place like this they are all spies!"

Nearer and nearer came the bell that gave warning of the coming of the outcast, and peering through the spikes of the marram grass the boys could discern a dim, ghostly figure advancing through the hollows of the dunes.

They drew their breath as the figure neared them, shrouded in its white garment, the clapper of the bell sounding more noisily as the leper limped along.

A pair of sightless eyes were turned in their direction, and Bucko's hand went instinctively to the revolver that was hidden in the breast of his shirt.

But the ghostly figure stopped at the foot of the dune where they were hidden, and touched at its slope gropingly with its staff. Then it turned and followed the hollow below, slowly fading into the darkness.

"Spare me days, but I'm glad he's gone," muttered Bucko, wiping his forehead with a red handkerchief. "I don't mind meeting old Toob, but I don't like his lepers. This is a bad place, boys. Come along!"

He rose and hurried over the sand hills with the boys at his heels.

Soon a red glare showed in front of them, and Bucko stopped to reconnoitre.

"Must be Guy Forks' night in the old town," said he. "Look, they are lighting up bonfires."

And sure enough red flares were showing in front of the town.

And the red glare was answered by a deep braying amongst the sandhills away to the left of the spot where they were standing.

"What's that?" asked Jack.

"It's a donkey!" said Joe Lawless, listening intently.

"Donkey!" exclaimed Bucko. "That's no donkey. A donkey can't get that circular saw sound off his chest like that. That's a lion!"

"Tame lion?" asked Bill Careless.

"No, a wild one!" replied Bucko. "And a jolly wild one, too, by the sound of his voice. He's asinging for his supper like little Tom Tucker, and if we don't watch out he'll get the wind of us and we'll be the first course. That's what they are lighting the fires up for—to keep the lions out of the town. Food is short up in the hills, and they are coming down to see if they can't pick up a stray camel off the drying grounds."

"Crikey!" exclaimed Bill. "Let's get into the town!"

The red glow of the fires increased. It was plain that the inhabitants of El Kor were not big game hunters by nature.

There was a lot of shouting and running about as the fires lit up one after another in a great circle. And in the glare of the fires the boys had their first view of the mystery city of El Kor, for the red glow of huge piles of thorn bush and resinous branches lit up the great walls and the city gate.

Such walls the boys had never seen before. They were a hundred feet high, broken and split by weather and earthquakes, but each of the massive stones of which they were built was as large as a railway coach, and the great gate of the city which pierced them was supported by eight huge Corinthian columns, the ambitious work of Rome in the zenith of her power.

Against these enormous piles of masonry were clustered a few miserable whitewashed huts out of the doors of which flitted dancing lights—the light of torches—with which the inhabitants of El Kor were firing the ring of fires before the gate of the city.

"My word!" exclaimed Joe Lawless, as the red glare of their fires lit the enormous walls. "It's a bigger place than Bradford! Nay! It's bigger'n Huddersfield! It's as big as Leeds!"

A hoarse roar sounded from behind them.

"Look out, boys," said Bucko. "We've walked into the zoo without the cages. Jiminy! But this is the lions' night out. The place is stiff with lions!"

Startled by the sudden glow of the fires, the lions, which were prowling amongst the sand dunes, suddenly gave voice led by a dismal roar from the interior of the city of ruins.

It was the tame lion of El Toob shut up in his cage behind those ancient, grim walls, that was setting the chorus to these hunger-driven creatures of the desert and the hills.

And it seemed to be answered from every direction. From right and left and from behind them, the boys heard the deep, braying roars.

"Jerushy!" muttered Bucko. "They can talk about walking into the lion's den, but we've walked into a proper old picnic of lions. We gotta mix it with 'em, or me name is mud. Look out, Jack! What's that coming up on the left?"

"That" was a black shape crouching low among the marram grass of the dunes.

Jack crouched low on the crest of the dune, and drew his revolver. He saw a pair of gleaming eyes and a huge mane of hair which made the lion look like one huge head which slowly and stealthily advanced up the dune towards him.

"Fire!" roared Bucko.

He and Jack fired together. The lion seemed to rise in the air at their shots. Then with a heavy thump it fell in a cloud of sand just six feet short of the spot where Jack was crouching, one of the bullets from the heavy revolvers had traversed it's brain.

Bucko swung round.

"Here's another!" he cried.

The lion which was advancing from the left crouched and snarled.

There was a fusillade of shots, for the whole party fired together, but none of the shots appeared to have struck the infuriated brute.

With a mighty leap it bounded up the sandhill, and quick as lightning Bucko emptied his revolver almost in its face, and the huge brute rolled slowly over on its side.

(There will be another magnificent long instalment of this grand story in next Monday's issue of SCHOOL AND SPORT. *In order to make certain of getting your copy you are recommended to place an advance order with your newsagent.)*

A QUEER BILL.

		s.	d.
Six plated spoons, at 6d.	...	3	0
One wooden do at 6d.	...		6
Total	...		

Now ask someone to fill in the total. Of course, they will say 3s. 6d., but this is wrong.

		s.	d.
Six plated spoons, at 6d.	...	3	0
One wouldn't do	... ...		6
Total		2	6

As one wouldn't do, it was returned, and the sixpence refunded, leaving a balance of 2s. 6d.

POSERS FOR YOUR FRIENDS.

Q. Why is an umbrella like a hot cross bun?

A. Because it is never seen after Lent.

Q. Why is an Englishman like nineteen and elevenpence three farthings?

A. Because he is under a sovereign.

Q. Why is your nose in the middle of your face?

A. Because it is the scenter.

Q. Why is a tight shoe like a fine summer?

A. Because it makes the corn grow.

Q. With what song would you advertise a cure for deafness?

A. "Come back to Erin" (hearing).

Q. When does cannibalism occur in England?

A. When a rash man eats a rasher.

Q. Why is it dangerous to walk in the woods in early spring?

A. Because the trees are shooting.

Q. What is the difference between the tick of a watch and the tick of a bed?

A. The tick of a watch is inside, and the tick of a bed is outside.

Q. Which is the best way to eat a door?

A. Bolt it at night.

CAPTAINS WANTED AT ONCE

"SCHOOL AND SPORT" LEAGUE of SPORTSMEN

CAN YOU RAISE AN "ELEVEN"

AT LEAST ONE TEAM IN EVERY TOWN and VILLAGE

READ THIS:

If you can raise an "eleven," get the ten fellows who are to be members under your captaincy to fill in their names and addresses in the form printed below. Each member must give you a coupon taken from the same issue of "School and Sport." This means that supposing you raise your team this week you must enclose with your form eleven coupons marked "'School and Sport' League of Sportsmen No. I Coupon"—the coupon is given at the foot of this announcement. If you cannot raise the team until next week your eleven coupons must be "'School and Sport' League of Sportsmen, No. 2 Coupon"—and so on.

On receipt of the form duly filled in, with the eleven coupons, at this office, ELEVEN BEAUTIFUL CERTIFICATES will be sent to the Captain. Ten of them for distribution to the members of his team. Instructions and particulars of the scheme will also be sent to the Captain.

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MUST BE THE BIGGEST LEAGUE IN THE WORLD

10,000 CAPTAINS WANTED AT ONCE

GET YOUR TEAM SIGNED ON TO-DAY.

Name and Address of Captain .....

.....

THE TEAM.

	Name.	Address.
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

This Form MUST be sent with the eleven coupons. If the writing on the Form is indistinct the Captain should also enclose a sheet of notepaper with the members' names and addresses of his Team clearly written thereon.

"SCHOOL AND SPORT" LEAGUE OF SPORTSMEN. No. 1 COUPON.

Read the rules given above very carefully. **No. 1**

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