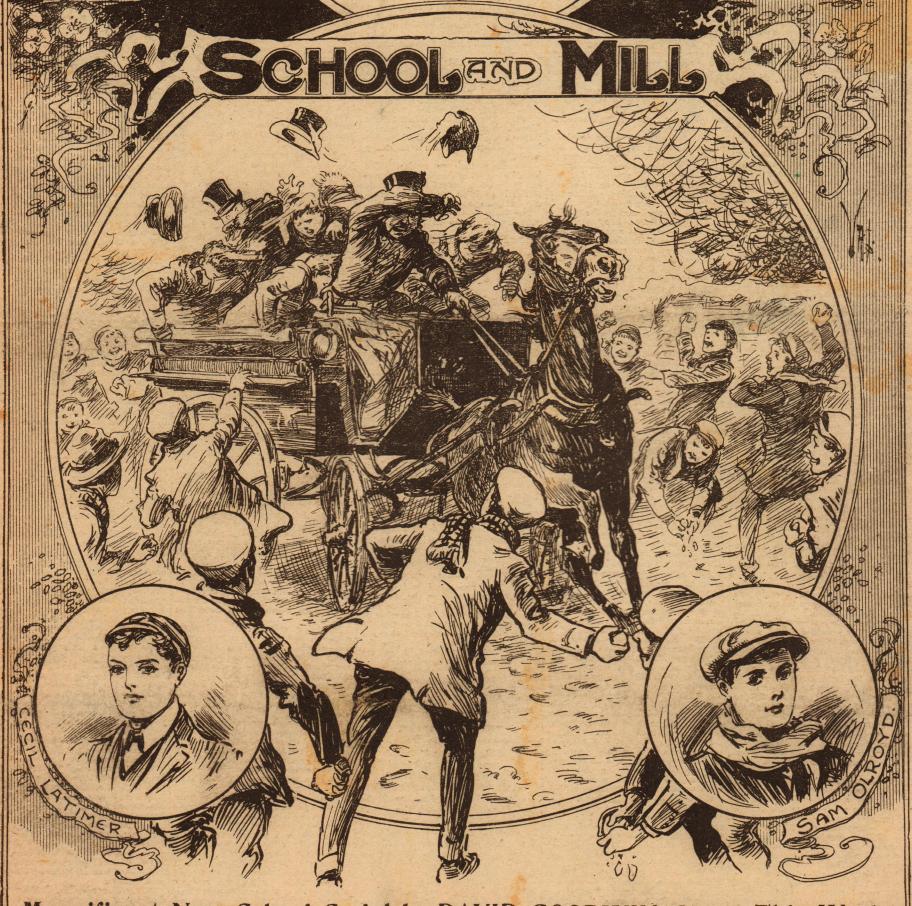
GLORIOUS SPECIAL SPRING NUMBER.

BOS RENDIS



Magnificent New School Serial by DAVID GOODWIN Starts This Week.

SCHOOL AND N

A Grand New Serial of Lancashire School Life.

DAVID GOODWIN. BY

The Runaway Mare,
" AM OLROYD!"

The teacher of the geography class banged furi-cusly with his book upon the desk, and glared at the cheery, freekled face of the boy sixth down from the

"If I see you looking out of the window again, I'll keep you in for an hour."

"If I see you tooking cut of the window again, I'll keep you in for an hour."

It was a face. Sam Olroyd, the "half-timer," who spent half his day at the National School and the other half as a "piecer" in one of the biggest cotton mills in Bottham, had been guilty of the heinous crime of looking out of the window.

He found it dull in the class-room, and outside the frosty sun shone on a white world of snow.

"Aw reight, sir!" he said, with a face like a wax angel's.

The teacher turned his back to consult the map on the wall, and Sam, with a wink at his chum, Job Armstrong, stooped and made an imaginary snowball, which he pretended to hurl ferociously at the back of the teacher's neck in dumb show. The class spluttered with laughter, and Mr. Wade spun round angrily.

"Someone's playing the fool! It must be Olroyd!" he said fiercely. "It's always Olroyd! Olroyd, step out here!"

"Mr. Wade," said the head teacher, suddenly entering, "I should like to consult you about these examination-papers, if you can see me after class. Ah, there goes the bell! You can let the boys go, I think!"

The hour struck, saving Sam Olroyd from the wrath to come, and

think!"
The hour struck, saving Sam Olroyd from the wrath to come, and as Mr. Wade did not like letting the head-teacher sey that he could not keep order, no hour was said. "the

heal teacher see that he could not keep order, no more was said. The boys of Wilde Street School were let loose, and they made the most of it.

Once clear of the room, with a wild yell, Sam charged out into the yard, seizing Job Armstrong and another boy by the waist. They ploughed along in a white spray of snow, and coming down heavily, rolled over and over in it. The others poured out like a swarm of bees.

Sam was on his feet in a moment, and hurled a snowball with unerring aim at the half-open mouth of one of the pupil-teachers, with whom Sam had a feud. The pupil-teacher rushed indoors to complain, but the rest of the crowd were involved in a tremendous snowball-fight in less than ten seconds, and cheering, laughing, and whooping they swept out into the roadway. The air was thick with the flying missiles.

Suddenly a sharp shout rent the air on the farthest fringe of the battle.

"T" collegers! There they coom, lads! Let's give 'em ginger!"

air on the farthest fringe of the battle.

"T" collegers! There they coom, lads! Let's give 'em ginger!"

All civil strife ceased as, if by magic. The name of Canterfield was enough to rouse every Wilde Street boy to fighting-pitch.

Canterfield College was the proud and wealthy establishment whose red towers rose to the sky at the edge of the moors, two miles outside Boltham. Only rich men could afford to send their sons there. Many of the boys looked always as if they had just come out of bandboxes—they carried canes and nice little silk handkerchiefs. They had playing-fields that were good enough for a Cup-tie match, and their parents often brought them out or fetched them away in motor-cars and private broughams. They called National and Board School boys "Cads!"

Sure enough, just at that moment

"Cads!"
Sure enough, just at that moment one of the Canterfield waggonettes was heard approaching round the bend of the road, and a double row of top-hats could be seen across the wall. They had caught the sharp eye of Job Armstrong. In a few moments they would be in full view. "We'll make t' beauties hop!" grinned Job fiendishly. "Run oop, lads! Meet 'em at t' corner!" "Nay! If they see us t' driver'll whip round an go t' other way!" cried Sam Olroyd. His voice rang out sharply: "Get under cover, lads! Back behind t' wall wi' ye, un' let

'em get well oop! Ah'll give t' signal! Ambush t' beggars!'

Sam was a born general. At times of crisis all the boys of Wilde Street turned to him. In twenty seconds he had them all marshalled on the inner side of the school-yard wall on one side and the brickfields wall on the other, crouching close and out of sight, every warrior among them making and piling up snowballs as fast as his fingers could meve.

The waggonette of Canterfield, all unsuspecting, moved slowly into range.

range.

It came in full view as it rounded the corner—a noble sight. Twenty rosy-checked and haughty small boys, all wearing beautifully glossy silk-hats, and many in fur overcoats, sat in the body of the waggonette.

It was breaking-up day, and they were driving to Boltham Station on their way home for the Christmas holidays.

were driving to Boltham Station on their way home for the Christmas holidays.

"Hallo!" said one of them, looking round. "There's the cad's school! Perkins is an ass to drive us this way! None of the animals are about, though!"

"They've all gone home to their tea and skilly, I suppose," said his chum superciliously, "or whatever it is the lower classes live on! Dirty little sweeps! The smell of them still hangs about the place, although they're gone!" he added, putting his handkerchief to his nose. "Ow!"

A hard snowball sent by the deadly hand of Sam Olroyd burst upon the colleger's mouth like a shell. It was the signal for a terrific fusillade.

The instant Sam appeared thirty marksmen bobbed up from behind the walls like Robin Hood's archers in Sherwood Forest, and the air became dark with snowballs, whizzing in from both sides of the road.

Shrieks of dismay, howls of hughter, and the bang and thump of missiles filled the street. Silk hats were flying in every direction, and the triumphant yells of the enemy drowned the enraged cries of the Canterfielders.

"Drat the young demons!" gasped Perkins, the driver, whipping up his

Canterfielders.

"Drat the young demons!" gasped Perkins, the driver, whipping up his horse frautically. "Why don't the police run 'em in?"

"Down to t' corner, lads! Cut 'em off!" shouted Sam. "Get across quick!"

said Job Armstrong, and a broad grin spread over his face. "By goy! What sort o' animile ha we got yonder? Is it one o' they dakes?"

got yonder? Is it one o' they dukes?"

Some way down the road a Canterfield boy was approaching who at once attracted all eyes. He was driving a high, spidery dogcart whose brasswork winked in the sun, drawn by a spirited chestnut mare. His top-hat was cocked right at the back of his head, and he drove as if he owned all Boltham. A remarkably pretty girl of about fourteen, dressed in silver-grey furs, sat beside him, and on the back seat was a slim, dark-haired boy, with an expression of mingled sulkiness and hauteur, though the youthful driver himself at least looked cheery and a good sort.

They were still some distance away, but nearer them was Joe Capp, one of the Wilde Street boys, who stooped swiftly and made an iron-hard snowball, which he pressed between both hands on his knee.

"Hi! Drop that!" shouted Sam Olroyd, his hands to his mouth. "Leave 'em alone, or thou'll hit the lassie! Drop it, or Ah'll clout thy head!"

Joe Capp took no notice. He hurled the snowball with all his force.

head!"

Joe Capp took no notice. He hurled the snowball with all his force, not at the cart, but at the mare. It struck her full on the winkers, sending a stinging shower into her eyes.

The mare gave a terrified bound, reared straight up in the air, and

is Coming in the "B.F."

then dashed forward at a gallop. The young driver was flung head first out of the dogcart, and the mare tore away down the road with the trap bumping and swaying behind her.

"Goy!" said Job Armstrong, aghast. "That's done it!"

The girl in the cart, though nearly jerked out at every bound, made a plucky attempt to stop the maddened animal, but was helpless to do so. The boy at the back, instead of helping, was crazed with fear.

"Stop her. Gracie! Why don't you stop her?" he screamed, clinging on to the rail and trembling, white as paper.

bessen, the Colling comments and the content of the police run 'em in?"

"Goy!" said Job Armstrong, ehast. "That's done it!"

"Down to it' corner, fad. Cut the police run 'em in?"

"Bown to it' corner, fad. Cut the police run 'em in?"

"Swish' shuizt whach' came a tremendous volley, followed by a sex of average clear and getting up speed the boy on the box-seat soired the reins and dragged them out of energy of the policy of the reins and dragged them out of anything the reins and dragged them out of the rost of the reins and dragged them out of the rost of the reins and dragged them out of anything the reins and dragged them out of anything the reins and dragged them out of the rost of the ros

down!" he exclaimed, as willing hands lifted the girl out of the trap. "Thou can thank this lad, missie, that thou'st not a broken neck this wijnith."

But the moment Sam had seen the trap safe, he darted off, and seized Joe Capp by the collar, shaking him like a rat.

"Thou yoong swab, to play a dirty trick like that wi' a lasse in t' cart!" he cried fiercely. "Stand oop, an' Ah'll gie thee t' biggest drubbin' thou ever—"

"Hold on!" said a voice at his ear, and a hand was laid on Sam's arm. "I dare say he didn't mean it."

Sam turned, and to his surprise saw the boy who had been pitched out of the trap. A big snow heap had saved him from injury. His hat was gone, and he was smothered in snow from head to foot, his nose was cut and bleeding; but there was a frank, jolly look about his face that made Sam Olroyd suddenly take to him.

nim.

"Let the kid off!" said the young stranger. "I don't suppose he knew what a rotten, silly thing he was doing! I ought to have kept the mare in hand. I say, you're the biggest brick I ever struck in my life! By Jove, you're a ripper!" He shook Sam's hand enthusiastically again and again. "If it hadn't been for you, my sister might have been killed! Here, come along; she's got to thank you!"

He dragged the hemild.

to thank you!"
He dragged the bewildered Sam up

to thank you!"

He dragged the bewildered Sam up to the cart.

"Hi, Gracie! This is the chap you owe your neck to—you and Jerrold, too! He ought to jolly well have the V.C.!"

"I think you're the bravest boy I ever saw!" said the girl, her eyes sparkling as she shook Sam's hand.
"I don't know how to thank you! You were splendid!"

"It—it wasn't anything at all, miss," stammered Sam, blushing to the roots of his hair.

"It's no more than the fellow ought to have done!" said the blackhared boy viciously. He was still very pale. "It was one of his dirty little mates who frightened the mare! Which was the one? I'm going to have him locked up! Get me a policeman, one of you!"

"Oh, shut up, Jerrold!" said the other impatiently. "You aren't hurt, so you've nothing to make a fuss about. Grace doesn't mind. I say!" he added, catching Sam by the arm just as he was trying to slip away quietly. "Where are you off to? Home to tea? No, you're not! You're coming with us!" He dealt Sam a tremendous slap on the back. "Isn't he, Grace? We're jolly well not going to let you go! Nip into the dogcart—the mare won't bolt twice!"

dazed at this suggestion. "Who is thy uncle?"

"Mr. Neville Latimer's his name. Mine's Cecil Latimer. This is my sister Grace, and that's Jerrold Vane, my cousin, sitting behind. Rum chap," whispered Cecil, with a wink, "but no end clever. His mother was a Latimer too."

a Latimer too."

"Neville Latimer, of Latimer & Co.'s Mills?" cried Sam excitedly.

"That's it."

Sam nearly fell out of the cart with

surprise,
"Here, hi—pull oop!" he exclaimed. "Ah'm not goin' any
further! Ah work for Latimer &

claimed. "Ah'm not goin' any further! Ah work for Latimer & Co.!"

Cecil Latimer gave a roar of laughter, and drove on faster than ever.

"This beats cock-fighting!" he said.
"What! Do you hate us as much as all that?"

"Nay, t'mill's aw reight, but Ah'm only a little piecer there—Ah'm not fettle to go along o' swells like thee! Ah wean't go to Mr. Latimer's house!" said Sam in a panic.

"Yes, you will, my buck! I've got you under my giddy wing!" said Cecil gleefully. "Catch me letting go the chap who saved my sister till I've done him a good turn!"

"Why, you aren't afraid of Uncle Neville, are you?" said Grace Latimer, laughing. "He's a dear old thing! I'll tell him to make you a spinner, or whatever it is!"

"Me a minder!" said Sam, with a splutter of laughter. "Well, missy, thy brother's got me, but Ah wish Ah could get down—Ah'm fleyed of Mr. Latimer!"

The name of the great cotton millionaire had always been one of

The name of the great cotton millionaire had always been one of awe to Sam Olroyd, though there were very few things in this world he stood in awe of. And that feeling did not grow any smaller when, after a rapid drive through Boltham and into the hills to the north of the town, they turned in at the lodge-gates, and rattled away through the splendid park surrounding Amberley Hall, and pulled up in front of the great mansion which was Mr. Latimer's country seat.

country seat.

The wide double-doors flew open as The wide double-doors flew open as the trap rolled up, a groom ran out from the stables and stood at the horse's head, while Cecil helped his sister down.

A tall, grey-haired old gentleman, with a shrewd, kindly face, came down the steps. It was Mr. Neville Latimer himself.

"Welcome home, Jerrold, my bey! Welcome, Cecil!" he cried cheerily. "Hallo! Who's this?"
Sam shrank back, conscious of his shabby clothes and thick clogs, but Cecil put an arm through his, and fairly hauled him forward.

"My word, uncle, you can thank

SCHOOL AND MILL.

(Continued from the previous page.)

see more of you."

"Me stay here!" said Sam staring.
"A poor chap like me! A little piecer!"

"My boy," said Mr. Latimer kindly, dropping a hand on his shoulder, "no lad with courage and honesty is poor—he's bound to rise. As for little piecers—why, I was one myself once. Cecil, take your young guest, and give him the best time that Amberley Hall can show!"

"Hurrah!" cried Cecil, giving Sam a mighty thump on the back. "We'll make the feathers fly, Sam, before we've done! Five whole weeks—and we'll make the most of it!"

"What!" exclaimed Jerrold Vane, coming into the room. "Do you mean to say that boundah is going to stay in this house?"

He checked himself and coloured as he saw his uncle. Luckily for him, Mr. Latimer had gone over to the window, and did not hear the words. Cecil's eyes blazed.

"Look here, Jerry," he said fiercely, under his breath, "what do you mean by this?"

"I mean that gentlemen ought not to be expected to consort with chaps of that class," retorted Jerrold, in the same low tone. "What d'you want him here for? If you think he's done any good, give him ten bob, and send him home to his slums!"

"I tell you this much!" whispered Cecil hotly. "He's going to stay! And if you check him while he's here, you'll get the best hiding you ever had in your life!"

Then he turned on his heel, and, taking Sam by the arm, led him away. There was not a trace of side or swagger about Cecil Latimer. He showed Sam all over Amberley Hall, made him free of everything, put his best pony at the boy's disposal, and Sam found him the jolliest and most sporting companion he had ever met with. Cecil, for his part, grew more interested in Sam and his accounts of his life in Boltham as they roamed through the house and chatted together.

"You're a nailing good sort, Sam," Cecil said. "I wish we had you at Canterfield."

"Haw, haw!" guffawed Sam.
"Ah'd look a rum 'un there! S'pose it's fine to be at a school like that, though?"

"Well, we do have some sport! Lots of life at Canterfield—I'll say that for it!"

"You're a nailing good sort, Sam," Cecil said. "I wish we had you at Canterfield."

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"Well, we do have some sport. Lots of life at Canterfield—I'll say that for it!"

"Ah, but thou's a rich man's sonor or nephew! It's different for thee! Happen thou will have all t' mills for they own some day—all Latimer's Mills!"

Cecil jumped up on the oak chest by the hall window, and sat there with his legs swinging.

"I'll tell you how it is," he said. "Jerry Vane and I are both Uncle Neville's nephews, and the idea is that we're to get half shares. See? We're to divide the mill, and all itbrings in. Grace, my sister, gets this house, and a lot of money separately. But of course, all that's when uncle is gone—and I hope he'll live to be a hundred and fifty! He's the best chap going! Jerry and I are the same as sons to him!"

"Thy Cousin Jerrold don't seem to like me."

"He's a rum chap, Jerry. You mustn't take him too seriously, 'said cecil hastily. He could never get on with his cousin, but felt bound to be loyal to him. "He doesn't mean to be rude. And I say, Sam, if you notice anything a bit queer while you're here—about Jerry, I meankeep it to yourself. See? My uncle's the kindest man living, but if he found one of us doing—well, something that he didn't think right—why, he'd make jolly short work of him. Nbody uncle didn't think was straightforward would ever be allowed a finger in his mills nor get a penny out of them. He'd be sent to the right-about pretty quick!"

"I see," said Sam. "But thy cousin—"

"All I mean is that Jerrold's got some rum ways, and if you see any-"

"Kit of the Fifth" Starts To-mor

꺯 늏쑴쑽롺캶콯묲쯗뚕쯗쯗쯗쯗쯗쯗쯗쯗쯗쯗쯗쯗쯗쯗쯗쯗쯗쯗쯗쯗쯗쯗쯗쯗쯗 the life of a half-timer in a great cotton-mill. As he was finishing, Cecil came in.

"He's going to stop, isn't he, uncle?" the boy said eagerly.

"As long as ever he likes," said Mr. Latimer heartily; "for I find there's no one in Boltham he need trouble about! And I hope my nephews will make you happy here for the holidays, Sam! I should like to see more of you."

"Me stay here!" said Sam staring.

"Me stay here!" said Sam staring.
"A poor chap like me! A little piecer!"

"My boy," said Mr. Latimer kindly, dropping a hand on his

meant.

He had the time of his life at Amberley Hall, and but that the take of his doings there has nothing to do with this story, I would set them down. He rambled all over the estate with Cecil, caught a twelve-pound pike in the river, nearly shothimself while out after pheasants, fell off Cecil's pony until he learned to stick on, and generally enjoyed himself beyond belief.

Cecil put him up to everything—

off Cecil's pony until he learned to stick on, and generally enjoyed himself beyond belief.

Cecil put him up to everything—lent him clothes, without ever hurting his feelings—and the two were inseparable. Mr. Latimer was always kind and cheery to him. The only fly in Sam's ointment was Jerrold Vane, who hated the mill-boy, and let him feel it.

Jerrold was not like Cecil. He cared nothing for sport—except betting-news—or the open air. He never accompanied the other two on their rambles, but disappeared and went off by himself, and sometimes was away for a night or two together. Sam thought he was the oldest boy for his years he had ever come across. He seemed to be able also to do practically as he liked, and it struck Sam that he was slightly the favourite of the two nephews with Mr. Latimer.

It was on the fifth day, by a pure accident, that Sam discovered what Cecil meant by his warning. The young visitor was seeking his chum on the top floors of the great house—Cecil had gone up to reut out some fishing-rods—when he opened the door of a box-room at the end of a passage.

"Hallo, Cecil!" he exclaimed, and

"Hallo, Cecil!" he exclaimed, and then he started back with an excla-mation of astonishment. And well he might.

It was not Cecil he had found, but

he might.

It was not Cecil he had found, but Jerrold Vane. That worthy youth was lounging in a hammock-chair, with a very green face, a large cigar between his lips, a tumbler of brandy-and-soda on a box beside him, and a sporting paper in his hands.

thought of Jerrold Vane, the insults, and the blow that had been struck. Sam was slow to rouse. But once roused he was a very hard nut to deal with.

once roused he was a very hard nut to deal with.

"Ah can't stay here!" he said to himself fiercely. "Ah shall go for him whenever Ah see him. There'll be such a row as'll bust him up. An'that ain't fair to Cecil nor to Mr. Latimer, who've been main decent to me. Ah like Cecil better'n any chap livin', 'cept Job Armstrong!' A-fierce outburst of anger shook him again. "Ah'll clear out, an' get back to work. Boltham for me! A chap can use his hands there, if another chap hits him!"

Sam may have been wrong, but there was no moving him from his resolution—he felt he could not explain to Mr. Latimer and Cecil, or see them again. If he did, the whole thing might come out, and there would be trouble all round. He did not want to bring trouble to Amberley Hall.

"Deve Cecil—L've gone back to

"Dere Cecil,—I've gone back to Boltham, and ain't likely to see you no more. If you want to no why, ask Jerrold. It's better for you I should go, as I ain't much class, and should only make trubble. I am sorry, because I like you uncommon. Please thank Master Latimer very much for all his kindness. He would understand if he knew.

"If I could paste Jerry in the

"If I could paste Jerry in the eye it would do us both good. But that won't do.—Yours,
"SAM OLEOYD."

hurried along with a quicker step, and a lighter heart than most. He did not have to go to school now as well as to the mill. The school holidays lasted a long time yet, but the mill holidays did not.

The mill opened again after Christers

well as to the mill. The school holidays lasted a long time yet, but the mill holidays did not.

The mill opened again after Christmas, and Sam had to return to work. Latimer & Co.'s was an easier mill than most, too—it gave three days longer holiday than any other, and as Christmas Day happened to fall on a Tuesday, Latimer's had been shut for all the rest of the week. It was now Monday morning.

Sam had not forgotten Amberley Hall. He tried not to think about it. The present job seemed too miserable, after the splendid time he had had there. But it took a good deal to dash Sam's spirits, and, besides, he was rather late. He had to run the last part of the way, and dashed through the gates of the huge yard of Latimer & Co., which stood, not in the town itself, but on the outskirts, with a good deal of open, rough ground and building sites round it, the main streets into Boltham opening close by. Sam passed the timekeeper and dashed upstairs, shouting greetings to several of his friends who were already going into the spinning-rooms to work. He made straight for the changing-lobby, where he always got rid of his clogs and jacket.

"Hallo, Job!" he cried gleefully,

jacket.

"Hallo, Job!" he cried gleefully, gripping his chum, Armstrong, by the hand. "Ah'm main glad to see thee! Ah've had a rum time of it. Ah'll tell thee all about it—"
Suddenly the head overlooker, Elim Stott, slipped in round the



The occupants of the burning mill rushed out just in time, but the last of them, on the very brink of safety, was dashed to the ground by a heavy beam. It was Neville Latimer!

Twenty minutes later Sam was striding along the high road clear of Amberley Hall, and he paused and looked back for a moment at the great house.

"Ah wunner how long it takes rich folk to forget poor folk?" he said with a sigh.

Then, whistling dolorously between his teeth to keep up his spirits, Sam, the half-timer, tramped back to the gloom and mud and chimneys of Boltham.

THE 3rd CHAPTER.
Fire!

LAMP! Clamp! Clamp!

The dark streets of the great cotton city were echoing to the rattle of ten thousand clogs. It was past five o'clock in the morning, and Boltham was going to work. Shivering figures, stale from want of sleep and pinched by the raw cold, thronged the streets the raw cold, thronged the streets in myriads. The huge cotton-mills showed lights at all their windows, and here and there a factory shaft belched red flames into the sky as the furnaces were made ready. Men, and women and children, tired before the day had begun, had to tramp off to the mills.

Sam Olroyd was among them. He

corner in the peculiar, noiseless way he had.

corner in the peculiar, noiseless way he had.

"Late again, thou young runagate! Why isn't thou at thy wheelgate!" He gave Sam a savage cuff that sent him reeling. "Get there inside a minute, or Ah'll sack thee!" Sam, gasping from the force of the blow, shut his teeth tight and pulled off his clogs. It was no part of Stott's duty to go about hunting up half-timers, but the head overlooker, not daring to bully the older hands, took it out of the boys. He was a thick-set man with an ainflamed red face, and was generally detested.

"Thou hears me!" he cried threateningly as he went out. "This ain't t' place for cubs to chatter in. Nex' time, out thou goes!"

"Tha'st better not clout young

"Tha'st better not clout young Olroyd's head any more," said one of the timekeepers grinning, as he met Stott at the door. "Ah've heerd he spent Christmas wi' owd Latimer an' his boys, an' p'r'aps he'll get thee sacked instead." "Wot!" Mr. Stott almost exploded. "Who are thou getting at!"

possible the owner of the mills was taking any interest in this wretched little half-timer?

Sam brushed straight past him without a word, and went down to his work with Job Armstrong. He would have given a year's pay to be big enough to challenge Mr. Stott to come outside and take off his coat. But he must obey or starve.

"Ah'd like to wring that bully's neck?" said Job Armstrong fiercely, for Stott's treatment of his cum enraged him. "Ah'il tell him—"

"Nay, let it alone or thou'll make it worse for thysen, old chap," said Sam. "Com on!"

The two boys worked in the big Mo. 1 Spinning room of the Annexe. The Annexe was a new building of two storeys, built on to the end of the great mill itself, and connected with it by passages and doors. The business was growing so fast that they had to increase the space. Samoon found himself back in wheelgate once more.

The hum and roar of machinery, the bare, slippery floor, the warm smell of engine-oil and cotton, and the whirling wheel-bands filled the great room. The wheelgate in which the half-timer and his chum worked was a large space surrounded by a great vehicle called a mule-carriage, that ran back and forth spinning the wheelgate was a sour-looking man of forty. The boys worked under him, and their job was to stand in the minds of those two though and the provides of the wheelgate was a sour-looking man of forty. The boys worked under him, and their job was to stand in the minds of those two though and the provides of the wheelgate was a sour-looking man of forty. The boys worked under him as the mule-carriage drew back, and sweep the floor with the precept of the wheelgate was a sour-looking man of forty. The boys worked under him as the mule-carriage drew back, and sweep the floor with the precept of the wheelgate was a sour-looking man of forty. The bordy was a spend wheelgate was a sour-looking man of forty. The bordy was a spend wheelgate was a sour-looking man of the precept was a spend was a spe

"Kit of the Fifth" Starts To-morrow in THE BOYS' HERALD. Grand New School Tale.

He was roused by a tremendous slap between the shoulders, and before he knew what had happened Cecil Latimer was shaking his hand as if he would pull it off.

"Why, Sam, old chap!" cried Cecil delightedly. "Here you are at last! What the dickens did you mean by scooting off like that? Uncle was awfully sick about it. We've been looking for you everywhere!"

We've been looking for you everywhere!"

"Ah couldn't help it," said Sam, all his anger disappearing as he met Cecil's frank look. There was something about Cecil that Sam could never resist. He began to feel a beast for having run away from Amberley as he had done. "Ah'm awful sorry, but—"

"Come on, Cecil!" cried Jerrold impatiently; and a dark shade came over his face as he saw the mill-boy. He hated to see Sam talking to his cousin. "Hurry up, I tell you, and let's go!"

He hated to see Sam talking to his cousin. "Hurry up, I tell you, and let's go!"

Cecil turned his back on him without a word. He knew it was Jerrold's doing that Sam had had to leave Amberley, and he was unable to forget it. Jerrold's face, as Cecil drew the mill-boy aside, grew livid with anger. He felt inclined to fling Sam in among the machinery. A sudden thought occurred to him. Nobody was looking. Stott was talking to the minder of the wheelgate, Sam and Cecil had their backs to him. Jerrold was standing just behind Sam. There was a loose match in Jerrold's pocket, and he drew it out.

What his idea was, he could hardly have told himself, but he guessed that any blame falling on Sam would get the half-timer into the worst of trouble.

Jerrold struck the match on his

get the half-timer into the worst trouble.

Jerrold struck the match on his sleeve. It was a "silent" vesta, and as the flame broke, hid in the hollow of his hand, he touched it quickly against one of the long threads that ran from the spindles to the mulecarriage. It was all done in a second, and he had crushed out the match in his hand, and thrust it into his pocket.

his nand, and the booket.

Flash! Puff!

The flame ran along the thread quick as lightning, and in an instant the spindle was ablaze. Before there was time to think, the flame had caught a hundred other threads, and was flashing along them back to the mule, and again to the spindles. Before one could count five, the whole frame was a sheet of fire, and the mule, moving swiftly along, carried the flames all down the wheel-house, flaring to the ceiling, and

whole frame was a sheet of fire, and the mule, moving swiftly along, carried the flames all down the wheel-house, flaring to the ceiling, and sending the sparks far and wide. For an instant the occupants of the wheel-house stood aghast—Jerrold more so than any of them.

"Fire!" yelled the minder, running frantically for one of the water-buckets on the wall. "Help, here, quick! What devil was it went an' fired the spindles?"

"It was this chap! He set a match to the cotton!" cried Jerrold, in terror, pointing to Sam.

"You cad!" cried Cecil hotly, grasping him. "He didn't do it, and you know it! I believe it was you!"

Jerrold gave a gasp of rage and fright at the accusation, and wrenching himself free, gave Cecil a furious push straight at the mule. Cecil's foot slipped on the oily floor, and the next moment he would have been crushed to a pulp by the flaming carriage if Sam Olroyd had not gripped him in the nick of time, and jerked him out of the way.

Jerold fled out of the burning wheel-house as if he were demented, and Cecil scrambled to his feet. Sam paid no more attention to either of them, but rushed to the buckets, and began flinging water on the flames with all his might.

Never did a fire spread with more deadly speed. The whole wheelgate was in flames by now, and the flying sparks caught a great pile of dry waste cotton further on, and this flared up as if it were gunpowder. The folding-doors at the end of the room were opened at that moment, and a violent draught swept through and showered the flaming waste among the other mules. The entire spinning-room was soon roaring and blazing.

"Brigade!" roared the undermanager, rushing into the room.

"Brigade!" roared the undermanager, rushing into the room.
"Fall in the brigade! Take your places, quick! Hoses and axes!
Man the hydrants!"
Already the men were uncoiling the hoses with all speed, even before the order was given. Nearly every ablebodied man in Latimer's belonged to the mill fire-brigade, and they often did fire-drill. Even the senior half-timers were members, and had their jobs to do.

Sam had rushed to his place the

moment the buckets became useless, and had uncapped the big water-hydrant which belonged to his section. He was reckoned the smartest of all the juniors at drill, but he had never seen a real fire before except a small one in the engine-sheds the year before.

In a twinkling the hoses were screwed together, and streams of water were playing on the flames. Everybody worked like niggers, and the pipes fought the crackling fire back for a while. Jerrold Vane had bolted at the first opportunity, but Cecil Latimer had thrown his coat off, and was toiling with the rest, blackened and dripping, to clear the place, and prevent the flames spreading.

But No 1 Spinning your was

place, and prevent the flames spreading.

But No. 1 Spinning-room was doomed. The fire was devouring it apace, and the men were soon driven right out of it. The brigade had to devote every ounce of energy to cutting the fire off in other directions.

"The Annexe is done for!" cried the manager, seeing it was beyond hope. "All the hoses together here, and make sure it doesn't spread to the main buildings!"

Nobody doubted for a moment that they would be able to save the mill itself, even though the Annexe had to go. But suddenly a shout arose from the party who had been sent to get through the lower carding-room on the ground floor and reach the hoses and hydrants on the other side.

other side.
"We're cut off! We can't get

"We're cut off! We can't get through!"

"What!" roared the manager, rushing horror-stricken to the spot.

"You must get through! It's easily stopped if you can get at those hoses! If you don't the mill's doomed!"

It was doomed indeed! With a thrill of dismay, the men saw that the fire had suddenly broken through into the central rooms of the Annexe, and a roaring sheet of flame, thin but fierce, prevented their getting through to the other pipes and hydrants.

through to the other pipes and hydrants.

Those hydrants were the key to safety. If they were brought into action—even one of them—the fire could be prevented from reaching the mill itself. If they were not, then Latimer & Co. was doomed. Everybody could see that. Over 600 men would be thrown out of work.

There was no way round—it could only be done by going through the fire. The hydrants ought to have been manned before; but nobody is all-wise, and the manager had hoped to save the Annexe itself.

"Get through, for Heaven's sake!"

Get through, for Heaven's sake!"

"Get through, for Heaven's sake!" he cried.

The men tried to face that wall of flame, but they were beaten back, scorched and blackened. Even if they got through and reached the hoses, it might be too late now.

"It's no good, guv'nor!" shouted Stott. "We can't get through! If a chap got there, an' then couldn't stop it, he'd be cooked alive!"

"Then the whole mills are done for!" groaned the manager.

"Let me try!" shouted Sam excitedly, and his small form came cleaving through the crowd like a bullet.

He tied a cloth that had been

eleaving through the crowd like a bullet.

He tied a cloth that had been soaked in the hose-water over his mouth and nose, and ran straight at the mass of flame and smoke.

To the utter amazement of everybody, he plunged straight into it and disappeared. Without a thought to the danger the active little half-timer shot through the fire, where the slower and heavier men had failed. He knew he would find the concrete floor safe underfoot, and that once through the smoky barrier, there would be a free space clear of all fire as yet in the iron-built rooms behind. Once he stumbled, and thought he was done, but Sam came through on the other side, gasping and half-choked, but with no worse injuries than singed hair and scorched hands. It was his speed that had saved him.

Once through to the farther rooms, he reached the little open courtyard in the middle, and in a twinkling he had screwed up one of the hoses, and connected it to the hydrant. A few turns of the lever brought a tremendous four-inch stream spouting through the hose, and, lifting it up, he directed it at the encoming fire, that was beginning to ring the courtyard all round.

And now Sam Olroyd carried his life literally in his hands. To go back

all round.

And now Sam Olroyd carried his life literally in his hands. To go back was impossible, and unless he stopped the fire single-handed and saved the mill, he would be burnt to death. He

mill, he would be burnt to death. He knew it well.

Luckily, with the huge main-pipe hose he had, and the position he was now in, he could do more good than all the brigade outside put together. There was just a fair chance for him,

and no more. He must save the mill, or perish in the ruins of the blazing Annexe.

With a thrill running through every nerve in his body, he began to fear he had left it too late. The fire gained, the heat all round him grew terrific, the sparks flew in myriads, and the smoke rolled in vast clouds. The flames were already licking the very walls of the great factory building itself, threatening to take hold every second.

itself, threatening to take hold every second.

Sam found himself fainting, gasping, his strength leaving him. He almost sank to the ground as his hose played a mighty hissing stream all along the base of the fire.

The men of Latimer's were trying heroically to reach him, but it was utterly impossible. The boy inside was wholly cut off from them, and hardly anybody supposed he could be alive. The regular Boltham firemen had arrived with two engines, but they saw at once that all their force could never save the mill if the flames gripped it at the windowed end—and even the helmeted firemen could not get through to where Sam was.

In the very midst of that inferno of flame, surrounded only by a breathing-space that grew less and less, the sturdy little half-timer directed his hose with unerring aim at the one place which he saw must be

In the very midst of that inferno of flame, surrounded only by a breathing-space that grew less and less, the sturdy little half-timer directed his hose with unerring aim at the one place which he saw must be saved if the mill was not to go. It was only twenty feet long or so, but he kept the stream playing all along it, for it meant life or death to him.

The fire gained. Scorched, blistered, gasping for breath, he sank to his knees, keeping the hose up with the last of his strength.

A flash of hope returned. A gasping cheer came from his cracked lips. Success! The line of flame was giving way. It grew feebler and feebler. It retreated from the great wall of Latimer's Mill, and became a mere hissing, spluttering volcano of smoke. The mill was saved!

Sam could do no more. He collapsed where he was, and the hose spouted its stream over the ground.

BUFFALO BILL

is Coming in the "B.F."

The Annexe building was burning itself out. The men outside, able to get at the fire now that Sam had cut off the worst of it from spreading, presently got the remainder well under control, and saved the last quarter of the Annexe where the boy lay. Three helmeted firemen, with a couple of Latimer's men, burst through into the courtyard, and gave a shout of joy as they saw Sam was safe.

through into the courtyard, and gave a shout of joy as they saw Sam was safe.

"It's the little nipper that's done it!" cried one of the mill-hands. "We'd never ha' got through but for him! Is tha' hurt, lad? Howd him up, mates, an' give him some water!"

They soon revived Sam between them. He pulled himself together, and quickly got over his exhaustion.

Delighted to find he was not hurt, they ran him quickly out of the courtyard, for the whole buildings were now in danger of collapse. As they came through into the scorched and blackened outer hall, which was now dripping with water and full of Latimer's men, who had swarmed in, a tremendous cheer was raised.
"Hooray for young Olroyd—t' pluckiest youngster in Boltham! Three cheers for t' kid that saved t' mill!"

To Sam's astonishment, Mr. Neville

mill!"
To Sam's astonishment, Mr. Neville Latimer himself came hurrying forward, hatless and dripping. He had arrived at the height of the fire, and hearing what Sam had done, the old mill-owner toiled and strove like the youngest man there to try and save

mill-owner toiled and strove like the youngest man there to try and save him.

"My lad, we owe the mill to you!" he cried. "I'm proud to be a Lancashire man while we grow such lads as you, and I'll repay you this a hundredfold! Cecil—"

"Look out!" roared a fireman suddenly. "Out o' this, all o' ye, quick! T' place is nigh comin' down!"

The man's quick eye had seen the danger only just in time. The fire had made the whole place utterly unsafe, and the water was making things worse. One of the walls split right across—the roof suddenly began to bulge downwards.

There was a rush for the open. Everybody turned and fled instantly. There were no doors to get through, for the outer wall was composed of great sliding wooden gates, most of which stood open. But the warning barely came in time. With a rattle

and a roar the whole vast room collapsed in a cloud of dust.

There was a cry and a stumble, drowned in the uproar of the wreckage. One man was struck down, and one only, for the rest dashed out just in time. The last of the fugitives, on the very brink of safety, was dashed to the ground by a heavy beam from the ceiling, and lay motionless and silent, his grey hair dabbled with blood.

It was Neville Latimer, the great mill-owner, himself.

THE 4th CHAPTER.

The Hand at the Window-sill.

ECIL LATIMER gave a wild cry, and dashed back among the ruins. He had thought his uncle was the first out, and when he realised what had happened his grief was intense. He knelt by the old man's side, and tried to raise his head.

old man's side, and tried to raise his head.

"Uncle, speak to me!" he said piteously. A sob broke from the boy's lips. "Oh, he's dead!"

"Nay, lad, not dead!" said one of the minders gravely as he stooped. "Ah'm feared he's not far off it, though!" he added, under his breath. "A bad day for us all if we've lost Neville Latimer. Here, lads, lift him oot! A doctor—quick!"

A stretcher was brought inseately.

lads, lift him oot! A doctor—quick!"

A stretcher was brought instantly, for the mill was well equipped, and a dector, who had hurried to the scene of the fire, at once attended Latimer. He looked so bad that the hearts of those around fell, and had the unconscious man removed gently and rapidly.

Sam Olroyd was horrified at the disaster. He had been close at Mr. Latimer's side when it happened, and had himself escaped scot-free. The sight of the old gentleman's dead-white face gave him a dreadful shock, and his eyes filled with tears as he remembered the kindnesses with which Mr. Latimer had loaded him at Amberley. Cecil was beside himself with anxiety and fear; his instinct told him the worst had happened.

There was a cottage on the open brishfold just beyond the mills.

instinct told him the worst had happened.

There was a cottage on the open brickfield just beyond the mills, where one of the minders lived. It was the nearest place where a bed was to be found, and the injured man was taken there at once.

Cecil and the doctor alone remained with him in the bed-room, but as the surgeon was examining Mr. Latimer the door opened softly, and Jerrold Vane stole into the room. There was a curious look on his dark face as he peered at the bed.

Cecil cast one glance towards his cousin, but he could not trust himself to speak. The doctor left the bed-side.

"You are Mr. Latimer's nephews.

cousin, but he could not trust himself to speak. The doctor left the bedside.

"You are Mr. Latimer's nephews, are you not?" he said gravely. "I must not hide the truth from you. Your uncle is injured beyond hope of recovery. He cannot live for more than an hour!"

Neville Latimer opened his eyes as the surgeon was speaking. His face was white as marble.

"You are right, doctor," he said faintly; "I know that I must die. You can do nothing for me. Please leave me with my nephews, for I must settle my earthly affairs, and do justice before I go!"

The doctor retired sadly, and Cecil dropped on his knees by the bedside in a passion of grief.

"Don't take it to heart, boy," said Mr. Latimer gently, his cold hand clasping Cecil's. "You have been as a son to me, and I am an old man. Come nearer, Jerrold. I want you"—he paused for breath—"to bring here as soon as you can that fine little fellow Olroyd, for I must reward him fittingly before I go. We owe the safety of the mill to his courage. He must be provided for as he deserves, for he is poor."

Jerrold Vane gave a start, and moved nearer.

"My dear uncle," he said softly,

Jerrold Vane gave a start, and moved nearer.

"My dear uncle," he said softly, "it grieves me terribly to have to say so at such a time as this, but you are making a dreadful mistake! You think the boy Olroyd saved the mill. He did not; he destroyed it! I saw him myself set a match to the cotton. I saw him with my own eyes, when I was in the wheelhouse! It was he who fired the mill!"

Mr. Latimer looked aghast. But before he could reply Cecil rose to his feet, horror-stricken.

"Uncle," he gasped, "I must speak! I can't hear such a thing said to you about a boy who is innocent! I was talking to Olroyd at the very time, and I can swear upon the Book that he did not do it!"

"Oh! Perhaps you think I did it myself?" sneered Jerrold.

"Oh! Perhaps you think I did it myself?" sneered Jerrold.

This was more than Cecil could stand, for to hear such a cruel lio told to a dying man appalled him.

"You did do it, Jerrold?" he said in a low, passionate voice. "You know it, and Heaven forgive you! You are trying to shuffle your crime off upon the boy that risked his life to undo the harm you'd done!"

"Jerrold!" said the mill-owner, in a terrible voice, rising with an effort upon his elbow and looking into the boy's eyes. "Is this true?"

Jerrold denied it hotly, but the dying man's eyes pierced his very soul, and Neville Latimer read the guilt in Jerrold's face.

"I-see it is true—it is true!" muttered the mill-owner, sinking back with a groan.

Dead silence filled the room. Jerrold tried to speak, but his tongue refused its office. In his mean fear that the mill-boy was going to be bequeathed a sum of money by Mr. Latimer, and in his dislike and contempt for Sam Olroyd, Jerrold had overreached himself beyond recall.

"Jerrold Vane," said the old millowner family, "you have caused me more sorrow on my deathbed than ever I felt yet. To find that you, my own sister's grandson, could behave so vilely and cruelly is the bitterest blow of my life! It is not the first time I have suspected you of evil and deceit, though I have always trusted you fully. But now I know you for what you are!

"You know my rule. You have known it all your life. I never forgive dishonesty or deceit, and yours is the blackest I have ever known. even in a grown man. No dishonest man or boy shall ever benefit from my fortune, nor have any share in the Latimer Mills! They were built up by honour and straight dealing, and so they shall continue.

"I forgive you, Jerrold, as I hope to be forgiven, but not one penny shall you have from me. You have the small fortune your mother left you, but the half-share in my mills, which I would have given you, is lost to you for ever! Go!"

Neville Latimer pointed to the door with a trembling hand. Jerrold, seeing it was useless to stay, left the room without a word, looking black as thunder.

"I forg

lawyer arrived at the same time as Sam.

"Is he very bad, Cecil?" asked Sam, under his breath.

"He's dying!" said Cecil, choking.
"I don't know what he wants you for. Sam, but you must do whatever he tells you."

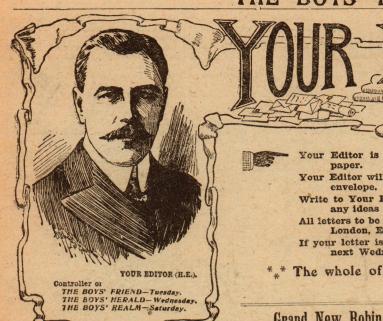
There was a lump in Sam's throat as he entered the room with the lawyer. Short though the time was that he had known Mr. Latimer, the boy loved and respected him.

"Come here, my lad." said Mr. Latimer, with a faint smile. "I have very little time before me, so I must not speak with you till after I have done my duty. Mr. Faweett. I wish to alter my will—to make an entirely fresh one. Will you take (Continued at the bottom of the next page.) (Continued at the bottom of the next page.)

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If your letter is not replied to here, it may be answered in "The Boys' Herald" next Wednesday, or "The Boys' Realm" next Saturday.

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Grand New Robin Hood Story Next Tuesday in THE BOYS' FRIEND.

YOUR EDITOR'S HEARTY THANKS.

N this Grand Spring Number I am commencing what promises to be one of my most successful serial stories, "School and Mill," written by Mr. David Goodwin. I am very proud of this superb new story, and of our Special Number in particular, and I want to ask you all to make an effort this week to obtain me at least one new reader.

There could be no better time than the present for gaining new friends for me, for this journal has never been better, and I firmly believe that the magnificent number you hold in your hands is the very best on record.

And THE BOYS' FRIEND is booming. New followers gather round me every week in their thousands, sure tribute to the excellence of our paper. More and more grateful letters reach me from my boys, and altogether the position of the old Green 'Un is now stronger than ever.

I feel that this great boom with our journal is due in no small measure to the keen enthusiasm of my boys themselves. Personal recommendation does more to gain me new readers than anything else, and I want

to thank you all most heartily for your loyal support so cheerfully given.

Good as THE BOYS' FRIEND is, and has always been, it is by friendly counsel from one boy who is a reader to another who is not that the name and fame of the old favourite is spread; and there is no one more appreciative of this help from readers than myself.

I THANK YOU ALL

from the bottom of my heart, and you will see that I am showing my pleasure and appreciation by making The Boys' Friend better and better almost every week.

BUFFALO BILL AND THE "B. F."

The week after next, in The Boys' FRIEND, I am going to start a wonderful new serial dealing with that king of scouts Buffalo Bill. There is no more picturesque figure living than Colonel Cody, no man who has had so many exciting adventures, no man who knows so much about the Wild Red Man of the West, as the Indian is sometimes called.

""The Black Canyon" our grand new serial will be called, and it will deal largely with the adventures and struggles of a Scots emigrant family with whom Buffalo Bill comes in contact, and whom he assists most manfully in their time of danger.

Of all the tales of Buffalo Bill, and the great prairies of Canada that have ever been written, "The Black Canyon" will rank as one of the best, and I can promise my boys

something inspiriting and thrilling with this my latest serial. Mr. T. W. Holmes, who has made a special study of Indians, their dress, and ways, and the country in which they live, will illustrate our new serial, and the author will be none other than Mr. Clive R. Fenn, the youngest son of the late Mr. George Manville Fenn, one of the ablest and most popular boys' authors who ever lived.

"The Black Canyon" our mage-

lived.
"The Black Canyon," our mag-nificent new serial of Buffalo Bill, will positively commence in The Boys' Friend the week after next.

"THE BLACK CANYON."

Every British boy knows the name of George Manville Fenn, whose books have earned for themselves such a wide popularity, and who in his later years wrote stories for my

such a wide popularity, and who in his later years wrote stories for my papers.

"The Black Canyon," our new Buffalo Bill serial, is being written by Mr. Clive R. Fenn, the youngest son of the great boys' author, and it is not going too far to say that the son is, to a great extent, taking up the work where his father left off.

Certainly there is no one in a better position to follow in the footsteps of his father than Mr. Clive, as for many years he acted as secretary to his father, and assisted him very greatly in working out the wonderful stories that have fascinated so many thousands of boy readers.

Morning after morning would find the father and son in the library at Syon Lodge, Isleworth, looking out on to the old-world garden and Syon Park. During those five years young Mr. Clive learned more about story writing than at any other time in his life.

"I am showing you how to write

life.
"I am showing you how to write stories," the father would say. Then he would walk up and down the library talking over the chapters till

the mood took him, when it was all the son could do to keep pace with him as he dictated.

Next Tuesday, in THE Boys' FRIEND, I will tell you more about "The Black Canyon," and its gifted young author.

HOW TO BE SOUND IN WIND.

From Taunton I have received a letter in which the writer, J. D., asks me if I can give him any exercise for improving his wind. He further tells me that he imagines he has broken his wind by smoking cigarettes.

broken his wind by smoking cigarettes.

This is undoubtedly the reason why J. D.'s wind is in a bad condition, and the very first thing he must do if he wishes to improve his wind is to give up this habit of smoking.

My Taunton reader should take up breathing exercise. Every morning upon rising he should throw open the window, and standing near it, take in a deep breath through his nose. Then slowly exhale this breath until the lungs are as far as possible emptied, when another deep breath must be taken.

J. D. should also go in for short runs, but directly he feels at all winded he must discontinue the running for that day. At first he will only be able to run a short distance, but after a time his wind will so far improve that he will be able to jog along for quite a considerable distance before he feels at all pumped or winded.

IN TROUBLE AT THE LIBRARY.

W. P., one of my Harrogate readers, is in trouble over a library book, and wisely comes to me for advice. The fact of the matter is, my chum borrowed a book from the local library, and took it to the shop where he works. When he picked up the book again he discovered that

two half-pages were torn out, and now he does not know what to do, for a notice on the cover of the book states that borrowers defacing the books will be prosecuted.

Naturally, W. P. is very worried over this matter, but I think I may tell him at once that the rule about the prosecution of offenders is only expressed so very strongly as a safeguard, and is not likely to be enforced in his case.

What W. P. should do is to go to the librarian, and make a confession of the damage. I am sure this gentleman will take a commonsense view of the position, and the damage will be fairly estimated, and W. P. will be asked to pay. I can sympathise with my chum, for his thoughtless action has made him responsible. Another time when he takes a book to his place of business he should be sure to put it away in a safe spot.

TWO IDEAL EMIGRANTS.

Two of my Preston chums write asking for my advice regarding emigration to Canada. They are both about twenty-one years of age, have been working on farms or in gardens since they left school, and one of them, F. W. N., has an uncle in Ottawa, to whom he and his friend can go.

In my opinion, these two young men are ideal emigrants, just the kind of workers who will get on—as I sincerely hope they may. They ask me to tell them where to get a list of boats, fares, and so on, and in reply I should advise them to write to the Chief Clerk, Emigrants' Information Office, 31, The Broadway, Westminster, London, S.W., and to the Agent-General for Canada, Victoria Street, Westminster, London, S.W. Either of these gentlemen will, I am sure, be pleased to give them official advice and guidance, and to help them all they can.

I hope my two chums will not forget the old Boys' Friend or its

and guidance, and to help them all they can.

I hope my two chums will not forget the old BOYS' FRIEND or its Editor when they get out to Canada, and that I shall often receive letters from them from their new home.

WANTS TO BE A PRINTER.



EVERAL of my boys have written to me regarding becoming printers, and the calling is an honourable one, with bright prospects for the lad who commences at an early are, prepared to work his way through the various stages.

I am arraid, however, "An Essex Reasters is too old now to commence in the printing trade, for he is more than wenty two years of age, and no department is open to him. Even as a clerk to a printing-manager he would hardly be acceptable, for he has no knowledge of the trade.

If my chum will write to me again,

If my chum will write to me again, and give me some inkling of his likes and dislikes, capabilities, and so on, I shall be only too pleased to offer him the best advice that lies in my power.

YOUR EDITOR (H. E.).

SCHOOL AND MILL. (Continued from the previous page.) *************

down my words, and witness my signature?"

The lawyer, with a grave face, seated himself by the bedside with his writing-table, and wrote down slowly as the mill-owner, in a faint but clear voice, dictated to him:

"I, Neville Latimer of Amberley Hall, Lancashire, being about to die, declare this to be my last will and testament. And I hereby revoke and declare void all former wills made by

declare void all former wins indue by me.

"First, I expressly forbid that my grand-nephew, Jerrold Vane, shall benefit either from my estate or business in any way whatsoever, he not having proved worthy. To prevent all misunderstanding, I declare here that he shall have nothing from me. And I forbid my heirs, below mentioned, to pass any part of their legacy to him, upon any terms whatever.

and income of Latimer's Mills, the same to be held in trust till he is

and income of Latimer's Mills, the same to be held in trust till he is twenty-one.

"To Samuel Olroyd, of Boltham, I bequeath an equal half of the said property and income of Latimer's Mills, also to be held in trust till he is twenty-one. And in order that Samuel Olroyd shall fit himself to fill this position, and eventually direct and manage the factory of Latimer's Mills, I provide that the said Samuel Olroyd shall be educated at Canterfield College, which he shall enter at once, the sum of £200 per annum being devoted to the cost of his education. He shall afterwards enter upon a complete course of engineering and business training at Varne Hill. Samuel Olroyd shall thus enjoy all the advantages and fortune which before I had intended should be possessed by Jerrold Vane, whom I disinherit, and who shall have nothing but what he already possesses."

benefit either from my estate or business in any way whatsoever, he not having proved worthy. To prevent all misunderstanding, I declare here that he shall have nothing from me. And I forbid my heirs, below mentioned, to pass any part of their legacy to him, upon any terms whatever.

"To my beloved niece, Gracie Latimer, I bequeath my house and estate of Amberley Hall, with all income and monies pertaining thereto.

"To my nephew, Cecil Latimer, I bequeath half the entire property of the condition I impose. My greatest wish is that an honest man bequeath half the entire property of the said which shall have nothing but what he already possesses."

Mr. Latimer paused, and passed his hand across his forehead wearily. It was all he could do to set his name at the foot. Mr. Fawcett called in the doctor to be the second witness to the signature.

"It is done!" said the lawyer, and folding the will gravely, without a word, he placed it in his leather window; but it sank out of sight again, and none of the others saw it. The mill-owner continued:

"One condition I impose. My greatest wish is that an honest man and none other should succeed to the little piecer! He, Sam Olroyd, to go

management and partnership of Latimer's Mills. I am confident that Samuel Olroyd is, and will remain,

Samuel Orio, a schemes, while he is at Canterfield College, that he should ever be publicly disgraced and proved guilty of dishonour, then shall he lose all benefits and legacies under this will, and shall receive only the sum of £50, and go forth into the world again with no claim upon my estate.

the world again with no claim upon my estate.

"I hereby appoint Wilson Fawcett, Esquire (of Fawcett & Jones, solicitors,) to be my executor and trustee, on whom shall devolve the duty of seeing these bequests faithfully carried out.

"As witness my hand and seal, this thirty-first day of December, 19—"

Mr. Latimer sank back, exhausted. "Give it to me to sign," he said

to Canterfield College, among two hundred rich men's sons!

He could not realise it—it seemed impossible. And benefits were the last thing he thought of there before his dying benefactor. It all seemed like a wild dream to Sam.

Yet it was simple truth. There was the will—signed, sealed, and locked away. Sam turned towards Mr. Latimer, his eyes filling with tears.

locked away. Sam turned towards Mr. Latimer, his eyes filling with tears.

As he did so a hand moved stealthily in through the open window—a white hand arm. Unseen by anybody, the fingers grasped the little leather portfolio on the window-sill, and silently vanished with it.

"Come here, Sam Olroyd," said Mr. Latimer faintly. "Give me your hand! And you, Ceeil, my dear nephew, give me yours! You are my heirs. Ceeil, I want your promise to help this boy all you can, and stand by him, no matter what befalls, in his way upward through life. Stick to him at school, and befriend him in his troubles, for you owe everything to him to-day."

"I will, sir. I promise it," said Ceeil huskily.

"And you, Sam Olroyd, be loyal to Ceeil and straightforward and courageous with him as you have shown yourself to be. Fit yourself for the great work I have set you, and keep to the straight path. Promise me to do your utmost, whatever it costs you."

"Ah will, sir! Ah give ma word!" said Sam, hardly able to speak.

"My blessing on you both, lads! Do right, speak the truth, and fear nothing!"

A quiet, peaceful smile came upon the great mill-owner's lips as his eyes closed, his marble-white face reposed in a gentle slumber. There was dead silence. The doctor stole to the bedside and bent over him.

"He is asleep," whispered the doctor, "and I fear he will not waken again in this world. We can only give thanks that his end will be gentle and painless."

"Amen!" said Mr. Fawcett gravely. "Cecil Latimer, my deepest sympathy is with you. And you," he murmured, turning to Sam. "I hope will prove worthy of the great trust which is placed in your hands. And now it is best that I should leave you both."

He turned to the window-sill, and a stifled exclamation came from him.

"The will! The will!" he gasped.

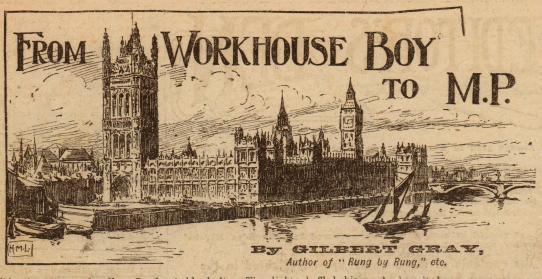
a stifled exclamation came from him.

"The will! The will!" he gasped, under his breath. "Where is it?"

Ay, where? Where was the document that made Sam Olroyd a millionaire, but without which he would be no more than a pauper?

The sill was empty. The portfolio that held the will was gone!

(This enthralling new serial will be continued in next week's "Boys' Friend." Tell your chums about it!)



This is Where the New Reader-Should Commence.

Fatherless, motherless, and almost friend less, WILL BRIGGS is an inmate of the Blackfield Workhouse. Will is a sturdy, open lad, and clever beyond his years. At a meeting of the Blackfield Board of Guardians it is proposed by the committee that Will shall be apprenticed to a trade, and the only one to disagree to this suggestion is SIR CLEMENT ROXBY, the pompous and snobbish chairman. However, force of numbers compel Sir Clement to waive the point and it is decided that Will shall be apprenticed to a saddler in the town. Fatherless, motherless, and almost friend less, WILL BRIGGS is an inmate of the Blackfield Workhouse. Will is a sturdy, open lad, and clever beyond his years. At a meeting of the Blackfield Board of Guardians it is proposed by the committee that Will shall be apprenticed to a trade, and the only one to disagree to this suggestion is SIR CLEMENT ROXBY, the pompous and snobbish chairman. However, force of numbers compel Sir Clement to waive the point and it is decided that Will shall be apprenticed to a saddler in the town.

A Workhouse Boy's Ambition.

Will is delighted on hearing this news. He is an ambitious lad, and has long cherished a desire to carve a position for himself in life, and to earn his own inde-

himself in life, and to earn his own independence.

The same day Will falls foul of VICTOR ROXBY, Sir Clement's caddish young son. Victor is ill-treating a poor dog, and Will seeks to prevent him. Victor loses his temper, and strikes the boy to the ground with a heavy stone, stunning him. At the same second a little girl appears on the scene. She is WINNIE REECE, the daughter of DAVID REECE, a wealthy ronmaster and a self-made man, and one who commands Will's profound respect. Winnie helps Will bak to consciousness, and they part on friendly terms—the workhouse boy and the little heiress.

Out Into the World.

The following day the blow falls. Victor

Out into the World.

The following day the blow falls. Victor Roxby has told his father a very one-sided story, accusing Will of unprovoked and brutal assault. Sir Clement makes good use of his influence, and Will's apprenticeship is cancelled, and he is given notice to leave the workhouse before the end of the week.

Will manages to enlist the interest of Mr. Reece, and the ironmaster offers him a situation, which Will readily accepts. During the following four years Will puts his heart and soul into his work, and learns every phase of the business. He takes a great interest in polities, and an impending General Election gives him plenty of scope for expanding his knowledge of the same.

Sir Clement Roxby and David Reece are

scope for expanding his knowledge of the same.

Sir Clement Roxby and David Reece are nominated as candidates. Sir Clement employs foul means to, if possible, ensure his return to Parliament, and endeavours unsuccessfully to engineer a split vote. The baronet has in his pay a surly workman who has been dismissed from Mr. Reece's employ.

The election results in Mr. Reece's return by a large majority, but on the result being announced it is discovered that the successful candidate has mysteriously disappeared. Will Briggs and a band of other lads soour the neighbourhood that night for the missing man, and on Whimford Heath Fred Jayner falls down a disused pit-shaft. Luckily he lodges on a ledge some few feet down, and there discovers, to his amazement, bound and gagged, a poor half-witted man named Job Little.

(Now read this week's instalment.)

Now read this week's instalment.)

One Mystery Leads to Another— The Discovery of Mr. Reece. HE surprise of Fred Jayner as

the light from above fell upon the small, misshapen form of Job Little was no less than that of the half-witted man himself. For a moment they gazed dazedly at one another, the crazy, frightened

one another, the crazy, frightened eyes of the bound workman blinking in the rays of the bullseye lantern.

"No, they mustn't know," he mumbled. "They'd kill me if I tell'd! It's more than my life's worth to tell."

Fred looked at the poor, demented wretch with pitying eyes. Once a strong, powerful man, his accident with the molten metal had robbed him of his manhood and sapped away his will power.

"You let me be," the man mumbled in a childish treble voice. "Never mind wout owd Job Little. Get thee on and find the gaffer. He's beyond the heath—but I mustn't tell. They'd kill me if I tell'd! Don't 'ee worrit about owd Job."

Fred went to the entrance of the cavelike aperture, and looked up the

UL VILLO

can get any."
One of the lads went racing away

down a knife and some water, if you can get any."

One of the lads went racing away to a moorland stream in the vicinity in search of water, whilst Will secured his pocket-knife to the rope with a piece of string, and lowered it down the shaft.

It was but the work of a few seconds for Jayner to sever the cords with which the cripple was bound, and he commenced rubbing vigorously at the cramped and bloodless limbs in the hope of restoring circulation. The rush of blood to the arteries, however, proved the last straw, and Job Little fainted dead away, his head lolling back and the eyes closing as his few scattered senses left him.

"Look out, Fred, I'm coming down!" sang out Will from above; and a moment or two later he was beside his chum, in his hand a cap partly filled with pure, fresh water from the brook.

The two knelt down beside the deathlike figure, and with a skill and tenderness one might have expected from a woman, attempted to bring Little from the swoon. Whilst Fred supported the head, Will pourced a little of the water between the man's lips and moistened his forehead, unloosening his shirt collar and the regged scarf he wore.

In a short time their united efforts were rewarded. The cripple opened his eyes, winking at the brightness from the lantern, and then commenced to mumble again.

"I tell 'ee thee sha'n't harm towd boss! I've watched 'ee, Dan'l Doone, and yer pal, too. No, I mustn't tell; they'd kill me if I tell'd! You can take'n there if ye wilt, but I shall know—poor owd Job'll know, and perhaps he won't always be scared."

"We must get him up into the fresh air," whispered Will. "First of all we must pull him round, and then find out what he knows about Mr. Reece. Oh, Fred, I believe they have done the guv'nor harm! Perhaps even now they may be persecuting him. There is not a minute to lose."

Job Little had lapsed again into a state of semi-consciousness, and in the slate of semi-consciousness, and in the slate of semi-consciousness, and in the slate of semi-consciousness, and in the sl

Job Little had lapsed again into a Job Little had lapsed again into a state of semi-consciousness, and in his loglike attitude it was extremely difficult to adjust the rope round his twisted frame so that he could be hauled to the surface above the shaft. As Fred slightly rolled the man over, however, Will carefully slid the noose beneath the man's shoulders, tightening it up so that when the strain came it should not jerk the rope painfully about the feeble form.

Going to the entrance to the cave,

Going to the entrance to the cave, Will

will called upwards to his companions.

"We are going to send the poor old chap up," he cried. "Several of you grip the line, and keep it from fraying against the edge of the shaft as much as you can. Now, are you ready?"

With Will and Fred carefully assisting the old man, and the others pulling from above, the lifeless body was slowly withdrawn from the aperture in the shaft, suspended for a moment over the abyss, and then gradually raised, to be tenderly lifted over the edge of the mouth

and deposited upon some warm coats that the boys had laid on the ground in readiness.

Will and Jayner were quickly hauled to the surface again, and commenced afresh their ministrations to the cripple, who slowly recovered under the influence of the fresh air and their attentions.

"Now, tell us what has become of Mr. Reece," asked Will.

"They'd kill me if I tell'd!" muttered Job weakly. "They said they'd kill me! Mr. Reece, the gaffer—
If I tell'd— Dan'l Doone and the foreign bloke— They want revenge. In the owd screenin's—
No, I won't tell the police. They'd kill me!"

kill me!"
But Will had heard enough of the old man's babblings. The mention of the screenings and the name of Reece, coupled with that of Doone and the expression "foreign bloke," raised all his old fears again, and the knowledge that his master was in danger spurred him on to fresh effort.

in danger spurred him on to fresh effort.

He knew the screenings, that part of the disused workings where the coal had been sorted, for many a time had he explored Whimford Heath, and a drearier, more desolate part it would have been difficult to find even on the lonely moor.

BUFFALO BILL

is Coming in the "B. F."

Leaving Job to the care of some half-dozen lads, with instructions to take him to his own home and to keep him from harm, Will and Fred, accompanied by the other boys, set off in the direction of the screenings.

The ground was rough, for heaps of slag and waste had been deposited haphazard over the heath in the old days before the pits were worked cut, and with only the fitful light of the moon to guide them, progress was slow.

was slow.

As they came within sight of the screenings, the gaunt mass of buildings silhouetted black against the skyline, another cry came to their ears—a wailing, long-drawn cry for

skyline, another cry came to their ears—a wailing, long-drawn cry for help.

"It's the guv'nor's voice!" cried Will; and they redoubled their efforts until it became a race between the boys as to who should reach the broken fence surrounding the workings first.

The honour fell to Fred, with Will a good second, and as they rushed through the place where the gate had once been, they raised their voices, and with all the power left in their lungs called to the captive.

"Mr. Reece! Mr. Reece!" The shouts rang uncannily across the desolate yard, to be thrown back from the rotting walls of the buildings and echo hollowly among the black, forbidding sheds.

"Help! Help!" Again the despairing cry.

"It's from the tip!" called Will, rushing to a steep, inclined way, and hurrying up it.

The sloping roadway had rails

rushing to a steep, inclined way, and hurrying up it.

The sloping roadway had rails running its entire length from the workings, and its original use had been for the tubs of coal as they came from the pit's mouth to be hauled up by an endless cable. At the top of the slope was a narrow gangway, and whilst one side of it was fenced, the other was open to the "screens," a kind of railing of different widths through which the coal passed to be sorted into various

sizes, automatically falling into the railway trucks that were placed below.

As Will reached the end of this gallery from the sloping way, he could see some distance down a dim form, and again came the weird cry for help, but in a weaker voice and with a still more bitter note of despair.

form, and again came the weird cry for help, but in a weaker voice and with a still more bitter note of despair.

It was but the work of a moment for the boy to reach the side of the figure, and at a glance he saw that it was indeed that of his master, Mr. David Reece, the newly-elected M.P. for Blackfield.

Will's heart went out to the man who had done so much for him, for surely a more terrible torture could hardly have been conceived than that to which Mr. Reece had been subjected.

There he lây in the narrow track between the rails, trussed up much as Job Little had been. His arms were secured tightly to his side, around his knees were several thicknesses of rope, and his ankles were bound in the same way. The more he struggled the worse became his position. The only motion he could make was a rolling one, and to have rolled to the right would have meant that he would go hurtling down the sloping rails of the screens to sudden death, whilst on his left was the equally terrible drop from the gallery to the ground.

Again Will's knife was used to free a bound captive, and again it required all his care and skill to bring the captive back to a state of full consciousness.

"The fiends," whispered Mr. Reece—"the inhuman fiends! But, Will, my brave boy, how did you know I had been brought here? How can I thank you?"

In a few words Will explained his presence.

"You see, sir," he said, "you have been elected M.P. for Blackfield

presence.
"You see, sir," he said, "you have been elected M.P. for Blackfield

"You see, sir," he said, "you have been elected M.P. for Blackfield

A look of honest pride came over the man's face.

"Then I have beaten Roxby?" he asked feebly

"Yes, sir," replied Will, "and by more than a thousand votes. Well, when the returning officer announced the result, there were, of course, calls for you. Sir Clement Roxby was there, and made a speech saying if that was how you were going to do your duty you had better not have been elected. Then there was a terrible accident, and the gallery of the town-hall gave way. And then, sir, you didn't come. I knew that something must have happened to you, or you would have been there to make your speech. To-day I got time off from the works, and gathered the boys together—and here we are."

"Yes; but what made you think of the screenings?"

Then Will told Mr. Reece of how they had come to find Job Little, and of the broken mutterings of the old man, and as the whole story was pieced together the face of the iron-master became distorted with rage and chagrin. Rage at the treatment that had been meted out to him, and chagrin that he had not been present to address the electors.

"I must get back, Will—get back at once. I am ill, but I must do my best. And to think of that accident and the lives lost! Dear me, dear me! That such men should be allowed to live! But how can I get back?"

"I think we can manage that, sir, as soon as you have recovered a little

me! That such men should be allowed to live! But how can I get back?"

"I think we can manage that, sir, as soon as you have recovered a little more," said Will.

"But I feel better now," said the ironmaster. He essayed to stand, and at once fell back weak and fainting. The pain and exposure for so many hours had been too much, and his shouts had diminished his strength still more.

"Get a couple of those iron bars," whispered Will to the boy nearest to him, pointing to where there were a number of these articles used for dislodging pieces of coal that became wedged in the screenings.

The bars were quickly procured, and then with a couple of coats, by passing the rods through the sleeves, quite a serviceable stretcher was formed, and upon this the newly-elected M.P. was tenderly laid.

The return across the heath was slow and laborious, but step by step the journey was accomplished, the boys carrying the improvised ambulance in relays of four at a time.

On reaching the outskirts of the

ambulance in relays of four at a time.

On reaching the outskirts of the town they quickly came upon the welcoming red light of a doctor's house, and while the ironmaster was receiving medical attention Will

hastened away to procure a carriage in which his master could be driven

m which his master could be driven home.

Fortunately there was no difficulty in this direction, for a taxi-cab happened to be returning to the railway-station empty, having brought out a local resident, and by the time Will arrived back at the surgery he found his master considerably improved in strength and spirits under the influence of medical care and a cup of warm soup and other nourishing fare.

"I am going to face the electors, Will," said the ironmaster, "to tell them of the outrage that has been

"I am going to face the electors, Will," said the ironmaster, "to tell them of the outrage that has been committed upon me, and to thank them for their confidence in me. There are sure to be crowds collected in the market-place. But before I go I want to tell you and the boys you have gathered round you that I shall never forget what I owe. This is the second time I have received belp, and I thank you and your friends from the bottom of my heart."

heart."

Assisted by the doctor, Mr. Reece entered the cab, and calling Will to take a seat beside him, for he did not care to be quite alone, started for the district where the town-hall stood. Sitting back amid the cushions of the vehicle, which had no interior light, he could not be seen from without, and as he entered the busy market-place he observed that there was indeed a crowd of people gathered there.

A man was perched upon the

gathered there.

A man was perched upon the plinth of a statue of some worthy who in bygone days had been honoured by the town, and as the taxi-cab drove upon the scene Mr. Reece caught a few sentences of his speech.

speech.
"Men of Blackfield," the orator "Men of Blackfield," the orator was saying, "the man you have elected as your Member is no more fitted for the seat than I am for the throne. Instead of publicly thanking you for electing him, he has gone away to hide some shame, of which you are in ignorance. David Reece is—"

"Here, Daniel Doone," came the mellow voice of the old ironmaster from the window of the cab—"here to defend himself from your calumnies, here to see that your deserts are meted out to you. Constable, arrest that man!"

The Escape of Doone—Belated Thanks.

F a bomb had fallen among the people they could not have been more amazed than at the clear, ringing tones that fell upon their ears. Their newly-elected member was among them again, and the tense, drawn expression on his face, the features all the whiter in the light of the electric arc-lamps, drew

light of the electric arc-lamps, drew from them pitying glances and a questioning murmur.

It was a moment of confusion, this dramatic change from the train of thought inspired by Daniel Doone to that awakened by the ironmaster's words. Attention was divided between the two, and the diversion came as a fitting close to a day of keen excitement and intense mystery. But if others were disconcerted, there was one among the throng whose head was remarkably clear, and whose presence of mind did not desert him for a moment.

That was Daniel Doone, and the sharp command, "Constable, arrest that man!" spurred him to his utmost efforts.

In a moment he had descended from the other trans turned up the coller.

sharp command, "Constable, arrest that man!" spurred him to his utmost efforts.

In a moment he had descended from the statue, turned up the collar of his coat, and pulled his slouch-hat well down over his eyes, preparatory to making a rush through the crowd.

It was Will whose quick eyes observed the movement, and he speedily left the cab and rushed pellmell in the direction of the fugitive.

"Stop him!" he cried, at the top of his voice. "Stop Daniel Doone! There he is, constable!"

Accompanied by a couple of policemen, who stood by, Will took up the chase, elbowing his way through the crowd as best he could. Daniel Doone had a good start of them, and among the throng were many of his friends who not only assisted him in his escape, but also barred the way of the pursuers and attempted to throw them off the scent.

The men at the rear of the crowd, uncertain of what was happening, pressed closer forward, and others were added to the throng each moment, making either escape or pursuit extremely difficult.

Other police, not understanding the mission of their colleagues, and thinking perhaps that a pickpocket

or sneak-thief was the quarry, gave their attention more to the fringe of the crowd.

Now, there is no worse ground in which to follow a fugitive than through a densely-packed gathering of human beings. Direction is as difficult to maintain under these circumstances as in a fog, identification becomes almost impossible, and when one's quarry has been once lost sight of, if only for a moment, all the effort imaginable will not assist one to pick up the scent again. And this was exactly what happened to Will Briggs and the constables with him. Daniel Doone had completely vanished, and they might as well seek the proverbial needle in the haystack as pursue the man further.

needle in the haystack as pursue the can further.

True, they did their best to pick up the scent again, separating in skirmishing order, and meeting again at the next electric standard, but the task was a hopeless one from the first, and Will returned dejectedly to the spot where he had left Mr. Reece.

As he chowed his way through

the first, and Will returned dejectedly to the spot where he had left Mr. Reece.

As he elbowed his way through the dense crowd, and came within sight of the statue from which Doone had been addressing the crowd, he saw that Mr. Reece was standing on the driver's seat of the taxi-cab addressing the vast crowd.

"Men of Blackfield," he was saying, as Will came upon the scene. "I have been the victim of as cruel a plot as was ever conceived. Nothing but the pluck and resource of a boy in my employ, and some companions who have already done me good service in this election, saved me from what would probably have been a slow and lingering death. Whilst personally canvassing the cottages on the fringe of Whimford Heath I was kidnapped by a ruse, bound, and driven in a cart to the old screenings, where I remained a prisoner. But I have been restored to you, shaken, though little the worse physically for the outrage, and I repeat my thanks for the honour you have done me in electing me as your representative to the House of Commons.

"I fully appreciate your confidence in me. I congratulate you upon the magnificent victory your party has won. As a Blackfield man, Blackfield will always be in my mind, and my uttermost effort shall be made to represent your interests in Parliament burgurable, whole heartedly, and justly.

"To the Returning Officer I now offer my tardy, though sincere

and justly.

"To the Returning Officer I now offer my tardy, though sincere thanks. I moure the accident hat has come upon our town by the falling of the balcony of the town hall, and all that lies in my power shall be done for the relief of the sufferers. Gentlemen, I thank you once again, and I look to you all for help in bringing to book the assailants through whom I was prevented from being among you at the declaration of the poll."

Cheers, more vociferous than any

through whom I was prevented from being among you at the declaration of the poll."

Cheers, more vociferous than any that had rent the air even on the eventful day of the election, rang out as Mr. Reece re-entered his cab and was driven away. As he passed up the hill leading to his home on the outskirts of the town, the waves of sound broke upon his ears, and even as he paid his cabman and passed into his own spacious hall distant shouts still reached him, telling him of his popularity and of the favour his election found with the people.

He passed dazedly into his study, the strain of all he had gone through causing a sudden weakness to come over him again. He staggered to a chair, and sank into its roomy depths. The servant who had admitted him hastened away to obtain the refreshment her man so sorely needed, and at that moment Mr. Reece's eyes fell upon a note that lay on the table.

Stretching out his hand, he reached it, and hastily tore open the envelope. A few lines were scribbled on an odd piece of paper, and the words sank deep into the M.P.'s mind as he read them:

"You have escaped once; next time we shall make sure of our revenge. You will never take your seat for Blackfield."

The writing was in a curious, scrawling hand, and there was no signature.

revenge. You will never take your seat for Blackfield."

The writing was in a curious, scrawling hand, and there was no signature. The address on the envelope had been penned by the same hand.

The ironmaster gazed at the writing meditatively. It was in a style he had never seen before, yet there was something un-English in the formation of the "w" and "x," and the tails of the "l's," "h's," and "d's" were tall and sloped more than is usual.

Though a self-made man, Mr. Reece had not by any means neglected his education, and he realised at once the similarity between the scrawl he held and the typical Continental writing, with its thin, cramped strokes.

"This has been written by a German, an Austrian, or a Pole, I should say," he muttered, voicing his thoughts. "It is certainly not in the English style. It must have been penned by that villain Kurski, and he is hand in glove with Doone. Anyway, I shall be on my guard now, and they may do their worst."

Weary and worn from his privations, excitements, and the cruel treatment, Mr. Reece retired to his room as soon as he had received some nourishing food, and taken some of the medicine that the doctor had sent him.

Next morning he felt distinctly better, though still weak and dazed. His first visitor was young Will Briggs, who considered the importance of the task that had fallen to him justified him in taking French leave from the works. The lad was at once shown up to his master's bed-room.

"How can I thank you, Will?"

leave from the works. The lad was at once shown up to his master's bed-room.

"How can I thank you, Will?" were the grateful words with which Mr. Reece greeted the youngster. "I shall never forget all you have done for me, my brave boy!"

Will coloured slightly, for praise from the ironmaster was rare indeed.

"I've come, sir," he said, when he from the ironmaster was rare indeed. "I've come, sir," he said, when he better, "to tell you that I am more convinced than ever that Kurski and Doone are responsible for the outrage upon you. I have seen Job Little this morning. He is in a delirious fever, but the doctor whom the police called says he has been raving about these two men all through the night."

"I believe the same, Will," replied Mr. Reece; "and a threatening letter I received makes me doubly sure."

He took Will into his confidence

Mr. Reece; "and a threatening letter I received makes me doubly sure."

He took Will into his confidence with regard to the letter and his suspicions, and a moment later was using the telephone that lay on a little table at his bedside to get connected with the local police-station, and speak to the inspector on duty.

"Are you there, sir?" came the inspector's voice.

"Yes, I am Mt. David Reece. Have you caught Daniel Doone?"

"No, sir, I am sorry to say we have found no trace of him at his home or in any of his usual haunts. We think he must have left the town in disguise in spite of every precaution on our part."

"Has Otto Kurski, otherwise Liggersby, been seen?"

"Yes, sir; we believe he went to London by the night mail train. Our man who was watching the station for Doone thinks he was one of three or four passengers who joined the train; but we had no cause or authority to stop him."

"Then I shall go to London, too," replied Mr. Reece, as he replaced the receiver and told Will the news.
"A splendid idea, sir, if I may say so," said young Briggs. "Do please let me come, too, sir. I believe I could help you in find this man, and no doubt Doone will join him sooner or later."

Mr. Reece pondered over the matter for a few moments.
"Yes, you shall come, Will. We will travel by the 12.15 train. In the meantime I want you to go to the General Hospital with this card-from me. Arrange for Job Little to be transferred from his own home to a private ward in the hospital, and see that he has every comfort at my expense. I will meet you at the station."

tion.

The big luncheon-car express had just drawn up in Blackfield Station, and Will Briggs, accompanied by Fred Jayner, were walking hurriedly up and down the platform, looking eagerly among the throng of passengers and officials for the ironmaster.

The train was timed to wait seven minutes at Blackfield, during which period the engines were changed, the immense locomotive that was to draw the express to London without a stop having been standing on a shunting line in readiness, the driver giving her a final oiling and adjusting. Then there were stores to be taken aboard by the luncheon-car crew, a through coach from a side line to be tacked on to the rear of the train, and the wheels to be "tapped" by the carriage-inspectors.

The time for the departure was fast approaching when Mr. Reece at last appeared, looking still frail and weak, but far more alert than he had been the evening before. He carried a handbag, and saluted the boys cheerily.

"Fred has just come down to see me off, sir," explained Will.

boys cheerily.

"Fred has just come down to see me off, sir," explained Will.

"I am glad to see you better, sir," said Fred respectfully. "I have been to the hospital with Will, and Job Little is being well looked after."

after."
Mr. Reece drew Will aside.
"Would your friend like to come
with us?" he asked. "Does he know
Kurski as well as he does Doone by
sight?"

Kurski as well as he does Doone by sight?"

"I know he is just longing to come, Mr. Reece," replied Will.
"He was only saving how much he envied me, and he knows Kurski almost as well as I do, for he has been with me right through the election time."

"Jayner," said Mr. Reece, turning to Fred, "would you like to come to London with Will and I? There is serious work to be done, and it will not by any means be a pleasure trip."

trip."

Fred Jayner showed his gratitude by the eager way in which he accepted the invitation.

"I shall be pleased to come, sir," he said, "particularly if I can be of

help to you or Briggs. I will send a message to my mother by one of the

porters here."
"Then do so," replied the iron-

message to my mother by one of the porters here."

"Then do so," replied the iron-master.

Of the swift journey to the metropolis there is no need to make mention here. Suffice it to say that in some three hours the party found themselves at St. Pancras Station, London, besieged by porters, all eager to hail a cab, to take charge of their luggage, to direct them to the underground railways.

The newly-elected M.P. ordered a cab, and instructed the driver to take them to the Hotel Augustine, an enormous building with countless floors and battalions of servants such as the two boys had never imagined in their wildest dreams.

The ironmaster engaged a couple of bed-rooms and a private sitting-room, and told the boys to go off for a stroll while he partook of an hour's rest after the fatigue of the journey.

Returning to the hotel punctually to time, they found that Mr. Reece had ordered a sumptuous high tea, to which they all did justice.

"After the meal," said the iron-master, "we will take a walk round the foreign quarter, and see if we can find any trace of our man. I will also call at Scotland Yard and ask if the police have any news of Kurski's movements. Such foreign agitators are usually keenly watched by our detectives."

At Scotland Yard they found no tidings of the man through whose agency they felt convinced such a dastardly outrage had been committed, though they learned that he was well known to the inspectors there.

They passed on up Whitehall, and he was of Charing Cross Road to

mitted, though they learned that he was well known to the inspectors there.

They passed on up Whitehall, and by way of Charing Cross Road to the district in which so much of London's foreign population settles. French and Italian restaurants abounded, and there were shops where Continental sausages, groceries, articles of apparel, and the general assortment of strange merchandise beloved of the foreigner are to be found.

Up one street and down another they went until there were few byways in the strange quarter that they had not explored on both sides of Oxford Street, and eventually they found themselves at a spot well to the north of this great thoroughfare. They were almost on the point of abandoning the search for that evening, when they came upon a nondescript-looking restaurant with notices on the windows in letters of enamel, telling that several languages were spoken within.

"Suppose we go inside, sir?" said Will. "After all, it is not much use our prying through the foreign quarter if we do not enter some of the restaurants or hotels and endeavour to obtain clues."

"You are quite right, Will," replied Mr. Reece. "I must confess I have not been taking the search very

seriously up to the present, for, after all, it is early yet for the man to have settled down in London, and for his whereabouts to have become known to anyone. However, we will go in here and order some coffee."

They approached the swing doors and a commissionaire in gaudy uniform opened the portals to admit them, bowing low and waving them to the main apartment.

As, however, they were only going to partake of coffee, they elected to go to the basement, to which some stairs led, and from which arcse the noisy strains of a string band. A dense cloud of strong tobacco smoke assailed the nostrils as the three descended the stairs, and a noisy babel of guttural talk rose from the hall below.

As they neared the base of the staircase, Mr. Reece and the boys could see that the room was different from any public room in a British restaurant. On the walls on regular series of hooks were suspended earthenware drinking mugs, each with a metal cover. Quaint fourlegged stools with tops of great thickness did duty for tables, and the chairs were equally rough and primitive.

At the tables were little groups of foreigners conducting an animated

At the tables were little groups of foreigners conducting an animated conversation in many tongues.

A little bar ran along part of the room, behind which a fat foreigner in his shirt-sleeves kept close observation of new-comers, and presided over the pots and the various drinks.

He glanced

sided over the pots and the various drinks.

He glanced up as Mr. Reece and the boys appeared on the stairway, and an angry frown came over his face. Britishers were hardly tolerated in this underground foreign beer-garden, and sometimes detectives in plain clothes appeared and nosed about.

"Otto," mumbled the man, in a low voice, motioning to the stairs.

A waiter in shabby evening dress glanced in the direction indicated. An expression of rage and hate came upon his face. Then he sprang excitedly to his feet, pointed a quivering finger at Mr. Reece and the two boys, and shouted an unintelligible warning in guttural tones.

Instantly every eye was turned upon the new-comers, the band stopped its blare, and a couple of commissionaires appeared from above.

"That is our man!" shouted Will.

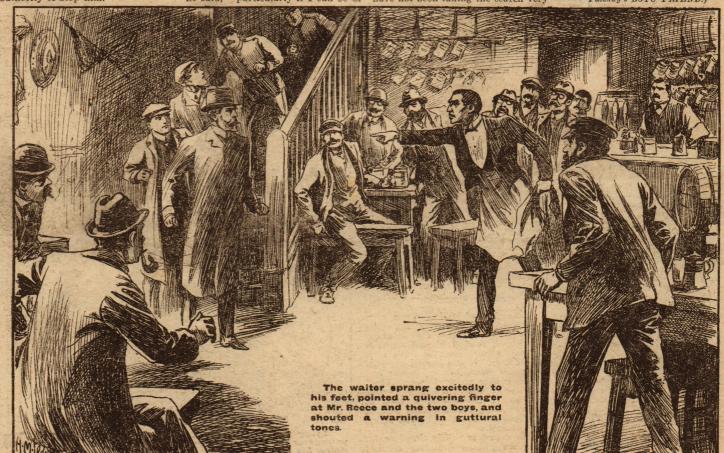
above.
"That is our man!" shouted Will. "That is our man!" shouted Will, in his excitement forgetting to be cautious, pointing to the waiter. "That is Otto Kurski, the Anarchist, otherwise Liggersby, who came to Blackfield to 'split the vote."

Many of the visitors at the tables rose and closed in at the bottom of the stairs, and the commissionaires pressed forward from behind.

Mr. Reece and the boys were between two fires.

(Another salendid instalment in meet

(Another splendid instalment in next Tuesday's BOYS' FRIEND.)





THE 1st CHAPTER. The Drummers Are Aroused to Wrath.

"YEAR, 'ear!"
"YEAR, 'ear!"
"We won't stand it!
We'll show 'em that if we are only

We'll show 'em that if we are only drummers we 'ave our rights!"

Number 2 Room, C Block, Wellington Barracks, Boltsca, was in a state of tremendous excitement. It was the drummers' room of the 2nd Downshire Regiment, and the young inmates were all gathered together in front of the fire, listening to the voice of their eloquent spokesman, Drummer Herd.

Herd was evidently qualifying for a stump orator. He was standing on one of the forms, waving his brown fists, and shouting at the top of his shrill voice.

"Fellow-drummers," he continued, "it's time we did somethin'. We're bein' trod on like—like—"

"Doormats," suggested Boy Bristow.

"Like warms" certinand Head.

"Doormats," suggested Bey Bristow.

"Like worms," continued Herd, scorning the proffered simile. "Why should we be turned out of our comfytable room? Why should we have to shift to allow a lot of staff loafers to take over the room we've decorated and cleaned for months? Will we put up with it?"

"No!"

"Will we take it lying down?"

"No! Hurrah!"

"Will we rear up?"

"No! Hurrah!"
"Will we rear up?"
"No-er-yes!" howled Bristow.
'Ear, 'ear!"

"No-er-yes!" howled Bristow.
"Ear, 'ear!"

The door of the room opened suddenly. There was a swift movement of panic among the young agitators, then, recognising the face of the new-comer, a shout went up.
"Good old Gipsy!"
"Come on, Freer! Let's hear what you've to say about it!"

Drummer Gipsy Freer, all-round athlete and keen, clever soldier, swung along the line of bedcots towards the group.
"Hallo, Herd!" he said.
"Having another spasm? What's the trouble this time?"

Half a dozen voices began to explain. Gipsy held up his hand.
"Steady on!" he cried. "One at a time, please!"

Herd reached out, and lifting a sheet of paper from the form, held it out.
"Read the bottom par. Gipsy."

Herd reached out, and lifting a sheet of paper from the form, held it out.

"Read the bottom par, Gipsy," he said, "and if it don't make your blood boil, I'm a Dutchman!"

Freer ran his eyes along the bottom of the sheet. It was the usual evening orders, written by the sergeant-drummer. The bottom paragraph ran:

"The drummers and boys in No. 2 Room will parade at breakfast roll-call, with all kit and equipment, ready for changing quarters. Number 2 Room has to be handed over to the non-commissioned officer in charge of the Staff-Employed. The drummers' room is now Number 5, D Block."

"That's pretty rotten!" Gipsy murmured, as he lowered the sheet.

"Rotten! Rotten ain't the name for it! It's awful, wicked, 'orrible!" added Herd.

Gipsy smiled.

A groan ran round the listeners. They had expected so much from Freer.

"But, 'ang it all, couldn't you go

Freer. "But, 'ang it all, couldn't you go and see the colonel—" Herd and see the colone. began.
"No fear!" said the drummer.

"I'd only get hauled over the coals if I did. Drummers are thundering important, I know, but giving in I did. Drummers are that the important, I know, but giving advice to the C.O. isn't one of their duties, old chap."

"Couldn't we—couldn't we

"Couldn't we—couldn't we strike?"

"We could," said Freer, with a laugh, "but, by hookey, somebody else would be striking as well! The birch isn't abolished for boys yet, young fellow."

else would be striking as well! The birch isn't abolished for boys yet, young fellow."

One or two of the boys wriggled reminiscently.

"No, striking is much too good," Freer continued; "but if you give me time to think, I may drop on some other plan."

"Bravo!"

"That's the talk, Gipsy!"

"But meanwhile, mum's the word. Set about packing your kits, and try to look happy. We mustn't let a soul into the know."

It certainly was a little rough on the youngsters. They had taken a pride in their long barrack-room. Over every bedcot each occupant had done his best to make a show. Picture postcards, cigarette cards, cuttings from illustrated papers—all were in evidence, and the bare walls had been transformed into a perfect pieture-callery.

Pounds of blacklead and shining-paste had been used in working up the table-trestles and teacans into a high brilliancy, the grates were miracles of lustre; indeed, it was an open secret that the drummers' room was easily the cleanest in barracks, and at kit inspections, when the commanding officer visited each room in turn, he had always a word of praise for the young fatigue men who were responsible for the room.

And now all their labours were to be wasted on interloping aliens! Staff men, who had not the time, even if they had the inclination, to keep the room up to its high standard.

"And then," said Herd, as he and Freer sat together on a bedeot.

keep the room up to its high standard.

"And then," said Herd, as he and Freer sat together on a bedcot, "what about our 'early door'? We sha'n't be able to use it any more. That's the worst of the whole business."

Freer prodded

Freer nodded.

"You're right," he said; "there'll be no more dodging in after 'Lights Out' now."

The "early door" referred to was a secret jealously guarded by the youngsters. Herd was the explorer who had discovered it. One afternoon, while engaged in touching up the grate at the far end of the room, he had slipped and fallen against the iron frame. To his surprise it gave at his touch, and putting his weight into it, he found that the whole grate moved right out on to the hearth.

Creeping inside the opening be

Creeping inside the opening he found himself inside the stout wall. Above him the chimney gap yawned, but to his right he saw a square shaft leading right down to the base-

ment.

A number of steel footrests were embedded in the wall of the shaft, and in quick time the drummer descended, to find himself standing on the ground level in front of a small door. It was barred by stout staves of wood, but a hammer and chisel swiftly removed these. Then, opening the creaking door cautiously, Herd, with a gasp of astonishment, found himself looking out into the street which ran beside the barracks.

The door was swiftly closed again, and the grimed drummer climbed

back to his room, full of the discovery.

back to his room, full of the discovery.

Behind closed doors the members of the room held a meeting, and Herd told of his adventure. The boys were all sworn to secreey, and from that time onward there was a complete cessation of "late returning to barracks" crimes in that room. The sergeant-drummer, who was in charge of the room, was married, and had his quarters in the married block, so the youngsters came and went as they pleased, much to their delight.

Freer, however, held them well in hand. If one of them stayed out too long, and thus ran risks of being pounced upon by the military police, the whole room sat in judgment on his offence, and very often a blubbering youngster would have rather been settled for his crime by the commanding officer rather than his chums. But after one or two towellings the leavetakers became more careful, and the little door in the quiet side-street promised to retain its secret for ever.

"They could have the room if we could only transfer that grate," Herd murmured pathetically.

"Do you know who they are?" Free asked.

"Most of 'em are employed at the headquarters office," Herd said. "They'll be out all day, you know. My eye, it will be filthy in a week!"

"Out all day—ch?" Gipsy murmured. "That sounds promising."

"Can't see how it does."

A plan was already commencing to form itself in the young athlete's brain.

"This is a job that wants careful handling," he said. "We will have to shift to-morrow, of course, but"—and a quiet smile flickered on his laughing face—"they may want to shift out of it shortly after."
Herd looked up swiftly.
"Are—are you in earnest?"
"I am, my son," said his chum.
"I've got an idea at the back of my head, and it's a thundering good one, too!"
"Let's have it!"
"No fear! You must wait until it's all cut and dried. But I can promise you some rare fun very soon."

Next morning a miserable cortege wound out of B Block. It was the drummers carrying their belongings out of their comfortable quarters

Next morning a miserable cortege wound out of B Block. It was the drummers carrying their belongings out of their comfortable quarters into the square.

A fat private with a kitbag under his arm grinned at them as they passed. He was one of the interlopers—Stubbs by name, employed as a cook at the headquarters—and of course he had to say a word as the lads passed.

"Allo, me lads!" he cried. "Wot are you all lookin' so appy about?" Herd turned on him. "Git out, you loafer!" he rapped. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself, driving honest duty-men out of their quarters! Wen are they goin' to wrap you in cotton-wool? Bah!" Stubbs grinned. He knew that the drummers were sore about the exodus.

"I 'ope you've left it nice and clean," he said.

"Cleaner than it'll ever be while you're there, Greasy," cried Herd. Freer nudged Herd furtively, then he turned to Stubbs.

"Herd is talking through his hat," he explained. "We're all dashed glad to get out of that beastly place, especially after what has been happening these last few nights!"

The grin died a sudden death on the cook's fat face.

"What's that?"

Freer looked very grave.

"Oh—er—nothing!" he said, moving away. "I—I don't know what I'm talking about."

He hurried off after the line of drummers. Stubbs looked after him with a curious feeling in his heart.

Gipsy was dissembling. There was something in the wind—a "something" which happened that night.

Anything more melancholy-looking than a newly-wacated barrack-room would be hard to find. As the fat cook shouldered the door open the bleak place seemed to close in on him like a tomb.

He was a nervous sort of man Stubbs, despite his round, jolly face. Like all North-countrymen, he was

him like a tomb.

He was a nervous sort of man Stubbs, despite his round, jolly face. Like all North-countrymen, he was crammed full of superstition. Gipsy's words lingered in his brain, repeating themselves over and over again like some haunting song.

THE COLOR

"Thank goodness, I'm fust!" thought the cook. "I'll keep well away from the door."

He went along the line of empty cots, and chose the one wedged in the corner of the room next to the grate.

cots, and chose the one wedged in the corner of the room next to the grate.

"If there's any bloomin' things wandering about 'ere," he thought, "they'll have plenty of men to tackle before they come to me."

He little knew that he had chosen the bed next to the place from whence all the future trouble was to start—the moyable grate.

For the next few days the drummers had to put up with a deal of chaff from the men of the battalion. It was an open secret that the youngsters were wild about the change. But it was noted that they did not seem so angry about it as they might have been.

"I thought that you fellows was goin' to rear up," Thomson, the C.O.'s orderly, remarked to Herd and Freer as they sauntered into the gym one night. "We was expecting to have a guard-room full of 'owling drummers."

"That's the worst of you rotten privates," Herd said; "you always jump at things. Why should we rear up? Beiween you and I we're dashed glad to get out of it."

"Haw, haw! Oh, no you ain't, me bold cuckoo!" said Thomson.

"All right; 'ave it your own way."

"Yes," said Gipsy, winking

way."
Yes," "Yes," said Gipsy, winking openly at Herd, "let em think what they like. We know more than they do."

do." Herd nodded his ginger head

do."

Herd nodded his ginger head solemnly.

"But I'll tell you what I'll do with you, Thomson," he said. "F'll bet you a bob that these staff men will be applying to the colonel to be shifted out of that 'orrible place before a month has passed."

"Get out!"

"Will you bet?"

Thomson eyed the serious countenances before him dubiously.

"No, I won't," he said at last. Herd grinned.

"And you're jolly wise," he murmured, "'cos you would have lost."

When Thomson left the gym the two drummers exchanged smiles.

"We're laying the mine nicely," muttered Gipsy. "Gld Thomson is a fair gasbag, and he'll spread this little talk all round the barracks. I tell you my son, we're going to have the finer, lart out of this you ever saw."

"That's what I think," said the

saw."
"That's what I think," said the other conspirator

THE 2nd CHAPTER. In Which Private Stubbs Learns a Lesson. "NEVER thought that bricks

would be so blessed tough,"
Herd whispered, wiping the

Herd whispered, wiping the sweat from his brow.

Freer shifted the stump of candle back a little and eyed the wall. It was a rather risky business that the two lads were engaged upon.

They were in the basement of the barracks—a long, rambling cellar, given over to mice and spiders—and were toiling away with a couple of iron bars, trying to cut their way through the wall. Gipsy had measured the ground carefully, and, after careful planning, had hit upon the exact portion of the wall which, when pierced, would allow them to enter the secret shaft from the basement.

when pierced, would allow them to enter the secret shaft from the basement.

This was very necessary for their plans. They would then be able to invade the staff men's quarters from inside barracks. The boarded door in the barrack wall was much too risky an entrance.

The basement was an ideal place for their purpose. An iron grating, fixed in the passage above, could be lifted out of its place to allow the marauders to enter. The interior was damp and gloomy, and littered with debris, but they did not mind that. It was safe, and that was the main thing.

"Forward, the sappers!" said Gipsy, picking up his bar again, and attacking the solid structure. "Get down to it, sonny. The first brick will be the hardest, after that we can pick 'em out."

It was well after midnight before the two sturdy lads ceased work, and by that time they had removed a square of bricks sufficiently large to allow their slim bodies to slip through.

Freer thrust the candle through the gap, and heaved a sigh of relief as the boarded door caught his eyes. "Judged it to an inch," he said. "I ought to have been a miner."

Herd pushed his head through the gap.

Lying on his face on a cot, Freer saw Boy Bristow. The youngster had his head buried in a pillow, and was evidently doing his best to smother the sounds of his grief.

"I've a good mind to nip through and start work now," he murmured, glancing longingly at the square shadow of the shaft above his head. "Oh, no, you don't!" said Freer, catching his arm. "We've got to do this thing properly, or not at all. Come out of it!"

Herd reluctantly withdrew his head, and presently the two dusty drummers climbed up through the grating opening, and replacing the heavy iron frame, stole off to their room.

Late though the hour was, a number of their chums were still awake, waiting for the news.

"That you, Gipsy?" asked Bristow, in an excited whisper.

"Yes."

"Legis it all right?"

"Yes."

"Is—is it all right?"

"It is, my son," said Herd; "we can start whenever we like."

"Hurrah!"

"Now we'll give 'em jip!"

"Roll on to-morrow!"

"Not so loud," warned Freer.

"Save up your wind for 'Reveille."

At eight o'clock

'Reveille.'"

At eight o'clock every morning B Room was deserted by its inmates. They all had to be at their various employments by nine, and Corporal Jones, the non-commissioned officer in charge of the room, had to lock the door before leaving, hanging the key up on a peg in the battalion orderly-room.

At half-past twelve, when the staff returned to barracks for dinner, the key was brought into use again. Otherwise it was never removed from its peg unless permission to do so was obtained from the sergeantmajor.

This is the usual method adopted

This is the usual method adopted in such cases in the Service. An open door, with kits lying about, is a temptation to the many light-fingered visitors, hawkers, etc., who daily invade barracks.

On the following day Corporal Jones, having halted his party at the orderly-room, and possessed himself of the key, marched them up to tho room. He unlocked the door, and the party filed in.

A shout of astonishment went up. In front of the door a huge pile of kits stood, and the bare shelves above the cots told the astounded men that it was their own property which lay before them, all neatly tied up as though for a sudden removal.

"What does this mean?" asked Jones.

removal.

"What does this mean?" asked Jones.

"Another shift, I suppose," Grimes, a telegraphist, said. "I expect that the sergeant-major has sent somebody to pack our kits for us."

"But we've only just come here," someone grumbled. "I'm just about fed up with this rotten shifting. It's time we made a complaint about it." The corporal agreed.

"I'll go down and see the major about it now," he said. "Keep my dinner for me, somebody."

He ran down the stairs and across the square towards the warrant-officer's quarters.

Sergeant-major Berry answered his knock in person.

"Well, Jones, what's your trouble?" he asked in his usual genial style.

"It's about the shift sir." Jones

trouble?" he asked in his usual genial style.

"It's about the shift, sir," Jones began. "We-er-our fellows seem a bit upset about it."

Berry thought that the corporal was referring to the event which had occurred some weeks back.

"You must take a long time to settle down, then," he said. "What's the matter with the room?"

Jones looked up in surprise.

"Nothing, sir," he said. "We don't know why we're being shifted ugain."

"Again?"
"Yes, sir."

"Yes, sir."
"But who says that you've to shift

"Well, sir, all our kits are packed and ready for a move. We found them heaped up in the room when we came in just now, and, of course, that means we've to move, doesn't it?"

that means we've to move, doesn't it?"

"Your kits packed! Nonsense, man! I've been in the orderly-room all day," said the warrant-officer, "and the key never left the peg. You're dreaming!"

Jones had all the quick temper of his Welsh blood. He shrugged his shoulders

his Welsh blood. He shrugged his shoulders.
"Perhaps you'll come and see for yourself, sir," he retorted.
The two crossed the square together and entered the staff-room. At the sight of the piled kit Berry's eyes fairly bulged from his head. Then he looked round at the inmates suspiciously.
"This isn't some fool's game of yours. I hope," he said sternly.

The chorus of indignant protests seemed to satisfy him. He stepped up to the pile of kits and turned one or two over as though he expected to find some clue to the mystery amongst the heap.

"Some silly ass has been having a game with you," he said at last. "Put your kits back, and I'll make inquiries."

game with you, he said at least. It your kits back, and I'll make inquiries."

"We haven't to shift, sir?"

"Certainly not," said the warrant officer as he left the room.

The voice of Stubbs came down from the far end of the tables.

"It's—it's a warnin'!" he cried.

"It ain't been 'uman 'ands wot's done this thing!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good ole Stubby!"

"You would put the tin hat on it!"

"All right," said the cook; "yer can laugh away, but I know wot I know." And he wagged his round head in owl-like solemnity.

"And what do you know?" asked Jones.

Then Stubbs gave yout to the sus.

"And what do Jones.

Then Stubbs gave vent to the suspicions which Freer's strange reticence had conjured up.

"This 'ere room's 'aunted," he

said.

A perfect yell of laughter went up at this. Every man in the room had a word to say, and said it. Beneath the storm of ridicule Stubbs withdrew

Gipsy kicked Herd beneath the ble. The latter arose.
"I'll be moving, then," he said.
So-long, Freer, See you at Tattoo."

"Tattoo."
"Right-ho!" said Gipsy. Then, when his chum had gone, he turned to the cook. "Now you can fire away."
Stubbs swallowed a mouthful of the

fragrant coffee, then started questioning.

"As mate to mate," he said, "I want to know wot's wrong with No. 2

Want to an anyWant to any
Want t

The cook wagged a fat forefinger at the drummer.

"Now, then, none of your shuffin'," he murmured. "I've always thought a lot ov you, Gipsy, and expect you to treat me fair."

Gipsy hesitated for a moment. Stubbs was a decent sort of fellow, and the drummer felt that he was taking a mean advantage. But remembering that, after all, the whole affair was only a joke, and would have no serious consequences, he stifled the small voice of conscience.

"Can you keep a secret?" he asked, fixing his fine brown eyes on Stubbs' face.

The cook nodded.

"I've—I've thousands ov secrets-locked away in my bussum," he said

ing the bulging eyes of the innocent cook, "and he could hardly sleep. Chains kept rattling close beside him, and low walls would sound out almost in his ear."

in his ear."
"D-didn't you report it?" quavered

in his ear."
"D-didn't you report it?" quavered Stubbs.
"And get laughed at? No fear!" said the drummer. "We just had to put up with it. After a bit the things stopped. I suppose the—er—things got fed up with trying to scare us, and sheered off."
"Oh, that's all right!" Stubbs said, with a sigh of rehef. "They 'ave stopped, eh? Of course, mind you, I don't believe in sich things—I expect it was the wind, or somethin—but it's jist as well that they 'ave stopped. Some of the fellows in the room would be scared to death if they started again."
"And you'd be among them."

again."

"And you'd be among them,"
Gipsy thought. Aloud he said: "I
don't suppose you'll be bothered with
them, Stubbs. But we were thundering glad to get shifted out of the
room, all the same."

"Can't blame you."

"Can't blame you."
Gipsy rose to his feet.
"Of course, you'll keep what I've told you to yourself?" he said. "We don't want to be laughed at by the battalion, you know!"
"You can trust me, old chap,"

The ghost-raising apparatus was complete.
"They're all 'ere," Ginger said, with a grin, "and the sooner we start the better."

the better."

They began to remove the different appliances—Herd squeezing through the opening in the wall and receiving each one as Freer handed it out.

"We'll start with the cold hand," Freer murmured, picking up the wand. "Come on."

The two young rascals climbed up the shaft, and reached the narrow space behind the grate. Herd had fixed a catch on the wall, so that the grate could only be opened from inside.

Freer undid the catch, and inch by

Freer undid the catch, and, inch by

Freer undid the catch, and, inch by inch, pressed the iron frame out until he could pass his head through.

On the left side of the room the windows were glowing beneath the ghostly half-light of a new moon. The steady breathing of the sleepers came plainly to their ears. Freer looked at the cot nearest to him. Stubbs' round face was not more than nine feet away from him, lying peacefully on the round, hard pillow.

"I can just reach him," Freer nurmured, withdrawing his head.
"Where's the wand?"

Herd passed the thin stick over, and leaned forward to watch the result.

Given slid the long stick through

Herd passed the thin stick over, and leaned forward to watch the result.

Gipsy slid the long stick through, and when the damp, clammy glove was above the sleeper's face, he lowered it gently, and drew it across from cheek to cheek.

He had to withdraw the wand like lightning.

He had to withdraw the wand like lightning.
Stubbs started up in bed with a yell which fairly shook the walls.
"Ow! Wow! 'Elp! Murder!
Ow!'

Ow!"
Freer pulled the grate close, and, with his sleeve stuffed into his mouth, went off into a fit of helpless mirth. Herd leaned up against him, and Gipsy could feel his chum's body shaking with suppressed laughter.
"For goodness' sake keep quiet," he breathed.

"For goodness' sake keep quiet," he breathed.

"'Elp, 'clp! 'Ang it, why don't some ov you wake up?" bawled Stubbs, clutching at his bedclothes. Corporal Jones sat up, and gazed across the room.

"Who's that?" he asked.

"Me," quavered Stubbs.

A dozen forms arose, and one or two inquiries went up.

"What's the matter with you?" the corporal went on. "Got the nightmare, or wot?"

"Nightmare be 'anged!" gasped the cook. "There's a bloomin' ghost in the room!"

mare, or wot?"

"Nightmare be 'anged!" gasped the cook. "There's a bloomin' ghost in the room!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silly juggins!"

"A ghost, ch? Ha, ha!"

"I tell you there is!" yelled the cook. "It—it swiped me acrost the jaw jist now!"

"You'll get another swipe in a minit, if you don't lie down!" Grimes, who slept in the next bed to the unfortunate cook, growled. "What do you mean by waking us up with your silly howls?"

"I tell you I've had a smack on the jaw from a pore tortured ghost!" Stubbs voiced. He thought it best to allude to the ghostly visitant in gentle terms. "I'm sure it didn't mean to 'urt me—"

"Oh, rats!"

"Lit down, you fathead!" commanded."

"Lit down, you fathead!"
"Lit down, you fathead!"
"Shut up, Stubbs!" commanded
the corporal. "If I hear another
word from you I'll report you! D'you

word from you I'll report you! D'you hear?"
Muttering like a motor-engine running down, Stubbs lay back on his pillow. The icy touch on his forehead had been a fitting ending to a most terrible dream he had had. Freer's yarn and the heavy supper in combination had made him suffer. He had dreamed that he was being tortured by black-cowled men, and the wet glove had been applied just as the dream-torturer was about to apply a branding-iron to his brow. Hence the unearthly yell.

Gradually he regained his nerve. Perhaps it was only the awakening from the dream which had appeared so real.

He began to doze again, this time with his head buried in the blankets. For fifteen minutes the drummers waited in silence, then Herd seized the lamp-chimney. "Ou-u-u-u'?"

It was a most nerve recking wait.

"Oun-u-u!"

It was a most nerve-racking wail.
Even Gipsy shivered at the sound.
Ginger was an expert at modulating
his voice, and from the hollow
chimney the sound boomed out with
unearthly cadences. From a low, deep
tone, it rose to a wild, eerie shriek!
Every man in the room was aroused
this time

"Give them another," whispered
Freer.

Freer.
Again the mournful wail sounded



Grimes grabbed Stubbs, and pulled him into the centre of the room. The fat cook still clung to the bed-leg, and the cot falling in half, precipitated the unfortunate occupant to the hard floor.

like a snail into its shell, nor, despite all coaxing, would he explain the reason for his remark.

"Well," said Grimes angrily, as he picked his kit out of the heap, and started to rearrange it on the shelf above his cot, "I'd like to meet the bloomin' ghost at work, that's all. It wouldn't lay its hands on my kit again for a bit, I'll bet!"

Stubbs sniffed contemptuously.

"You can't punch a ghostes's

Stubbs sniffed contemptuously.

"You can't punch a ghostes's head," he muttered wearily.

Needless to say, Sergeant-major Berry's inquiries proved fruitless, and, taking a commonsense view of the incident, the warrant-officer put it down to some practical joke played by one of the men of the room.

In the coffee-bar that evening Freer and Herd, seated together at one of the small tables, saw Stubbs enter and make for the counter.

"Here's our first victim." whis-

"Here's our first victim," whispered Gipsy. "Let's talk to him."
"How's things, Stubbs?" Herd cried.

The cook turned, and, with his mug of coffee and plate of bread-and-butter in his hands, sauntered up to the table. Freer made room for him, and the fat fellow seated himself with a sigh of contentment.

"You're the very fellow I've been looking for," he said, turning to Freer. "I want to ask you a couple of questions."

mendaciously. "Secrets wot would make your 'air stand up and never lie down ag'in if I was to tell you about 'em."

Gipsy bit his lip to keep back the grin which this remark inspired.

"Well, listen," he said, leaning across the table. "I suppose you know that this barracks used to be a castle once?"

"I've 'eard so."

"Well, C Block was the place where they used to keep all the prisoners," Gipsy continued, calling up all his powers of imagination, "and some terrible tragedies occurred in there."

"N-no."

terrible tragedies occurred in there."

"N-no."

"Yes. Men used to be put in there in the old days, and they never saw the light again."

"'Orrible!"

"And I've been told that our room—that is to say, the room you are in now—was the place where the instruments of torture were kept—you know, thumbscrews and racks, and hot pincers."

Stubbs furtively wiped his clammy brow.

Stubbs furtively wiped his clammy brow.

"Go on!" he breathed.

"Our fellows didn't know anything about it," Gipsy continued; "but about three months ago one or two of the chaps began to hear noises in the night,"

"Lor'!"

"Ginger Herd slept in the bed next to the grate," Freer continued, avoid-

said the cook. "A secret's a secret all the world over. Are you off?"

"Yes; I've got to get ready for parade. So-long!"

Stubbs sat for a long, long time in the warm coffee-bar, and when he did at last make his way across to the barrack-room, he betrayed no indecent haste to get there.

Of course, Gipsy's story was all bunkum, and only due to the imagination of the young drummers, but—

"They might come back".

They might come back," thought

Stubbs

THE 3rd CHAPTER.

A Wail from the Land of Spooks
—Herd's Masterpiece.

HE clock above the orderly-room had just chimed the midnight hour when two lithe figures slid through the grating in C passage, and disappeared into the gloom of the basement.

Freer and Herd were on the war-

Freer and Herd were on the warpath.

"Let me see," said Gipsy, lighting a candle and holding it up—"have we got everything?"

Herd ran his eye over the strange assortment on the ground. There was a long wand, with a wet, stuffed glove attached to it, a foot or two of rusty chain, a lamp chimney, and a cage in which something flapped its wings in protest against its captivity.

out. With a cry of alarm, Jones leaped out of his bed, and, rushing to the gas, struck a match and lighted

"It came from Stubbs' direction!" he cried. "Stubbs! Stubbs!" Every head was turned towards the last bed. The cook still lay rolled up in his blankets.

The corporal stepped across the room.

in his blankets.

The corporal stepped across the room.

"I believe that it's him wot's doing ov it!" a voice cried. "Why ain't 'e sitting up like the rest?"

Jones clutched at the bottom of the blankets on Stubbs' cot, and pulled.

An agonised shrick went up.

"Let me go! Oh, Mister Ghost, let me go!" Then, catching sight of the line of tousled heads and the gas-jet flaring in the centre of the room, Stubs swung himself up to a sitting position.

"Wh-what was it?" he gasped.

Jones looked at him sternly.

"That's what we want to know," he said. "Perhaps you can explain?"

The cook blinked at him.

"Me!"

"Yes, you old humbug!" cried the corporal. "You can't kid us! How did you do it?"

"Do what?"

"That rotten noise!"

"That rotten noise!"
This was the last straw! To be half-frozen with fear, and then accused of originating the cause of that fear was too much!
"You're all up the pole!" yelled the cook, leaping out of his bed and reaching for his clothes. "I tell you this rotten room's 'aunted, and I ain't goin' to sleep in it another minit!"
He struggled into his trousers,

pulled on his boots, and began to trudge his way toward the door.

Grimes, who was one of the hardestheaded men in the room, slipped from his bed.

"Where are you off to, Stubbs?" he asked, hastening after the cook.
"I'm going to the guard-room to report this!" said Stubbs ficreely.
"I'll bring a file of the guard back with me!"

"I'll bring a file of the guard back with me!"
Grimes reached out and gripped the cook's shirtband.
"You stay where you are!" he said.
"Do you want the whole battalion to take a rise out of us?"
"Blow the battalion!" snapped the cook, struggling to free himself.
"Lemme go!"
"Hang on to him, Grimes!" Jones called, from the other end of the room. "E's balmy—that's what's the matter with him! Don't let him get out!"
Grimes tightened his grasp.
"You hear what the corporal—"
"Bust the corporal, and you!" howled Stubbs. "I'm going out of this!"
R-r-rip!

R-r-rip!

R-r-rip!
There was a sharp, tearing sound, and the cook's shirt split right up the back. Freed from the restraint, Stubbs shot forward, with Grimes after him. The telegraphist, a Rugby player, collared his man low, and they rolled over and over on the floor, snarling and wrestling like a couple of wild cats.

"You fat ass!"

"I'll bust you!"

"Ouch!"
The swirl of battle carried them

The swirl of battle carried them both against a cot. Army bedcots

are made in two portions, which may be pulled out or in, as the owner desires. Stubbs grabbed one of the iron legs close to his head, and held on like grim death.

Grimes, with a tremendous effort, succeeded in pulling the cook into the centre of the floor again; but the fat fellow brought the end portion of the bed with him, and the unfortunate occupier found himself and his blankets thrown like coal from a coalshute out on to the floor.

"Let me get a 'it at 'im!" the man bawled, struggling up out of the blankets. "I'll knock 'is fat 'ead off!"

off!"
With two stalwart foes against him,
Stubbs' hope of success vanished.
Nevertheless, he put up a mighty
resistance, and it was not until
Grimes and the other staffman had
spreadeagled the fat fellow out facedownwards that the riotous fight

"Carry him back to his little bed, chaps!" Jones cried. "And if he won't lie still, we'll have to tie him

down!"
Half a dozen willing assistants laid hold of Stubbs, and he was carted ignominiously down the room, and placed on his cot.
"Are you going to behave your silly self, or must we tie you down?" the corporal asked.
Panting like a stranded fish, Stubbs waved his hand limply in token of surrender.

waved his hand imply in token of surrender.

"All—right!" he gasped. "But—if—I'm—dead—to-morrow, I'll know 'oo to blame!"

Inside the grate, the two drummers had heard the din of the struggle,

and although they had not been able to follow all that occurred, they knew that it was time to call a halt. "Retire," Gipsy murmured to Herd. "We can't risk any more to-night"

"Retire, Gipsy murmared to Herd. "We can't risk any more tonight."

Herd carefully lifted the cage, with its covered occupant, and backed down the footrests until he reached the bottom of the shaft. Gipsy followed him, and when they were safely inside the basement again the chums gave vent to their pent-up mirth.

"I sha'n't be able to go up there again!" Herd breathed. "I nearly killed myself trying to 'old my breath! He, he, he! That lamp-chimney's worth quids!"

"Ha, ha! And they blamed poor old Stubbs! What a lark!"

"I'll bet the poor beggar doesn't close his eyes to-night!"

They had their laugh out, and then, having extinguished the candle and placed it ready for their next visit, the young rascals retired.

"We'll be back in our old room before the week's out, I'll bet!" was Herd's final remark, as he laid his ginger head back on the pillow, with a sigh of satisfaction.

But alas! he was to prove a poor prophet.

prophet.

THE 4th CHAPTER.

in Which Clegg Makes an Important Discovery.

"OW big did you say it was, Stubbs?" Freer asked.
He and Herd were again He and Herd were again

in the coffee-bar eating their supper, and the cook sat opposite them

MASTERS', LTD.,

Stubbs was busy harrowing the souls of his hearers by a clear account of the ghostly visitant.

"Goodness only knows!" said the cook. "But it's head was agin the

"Goodness only knows!" said the cook. "But it's head was agin the roof!"

"And it tried to strangle you?"

"It's hicy 'and gripped my throat." continued Stubbs, the veracious, "and it's 'orrible eyes—eyes as big as cab-lamps, mind you—glared at me. So then, ov course, I ups with my bayonet and let's it 'ave one in the ribs. My word! You ought to 'ave 'eard it 'owl!"

Herd lifted his mug of coffee hurriedly and spluttered for a few moments. The cook glared at him. "What's the matter with 'you, sonny?" he asked.

Ginger's red face came out from behind the mug.

"Oh—er—nothing, Stubbs!" he gasped. "Only—only you frighten me to death! It might have been me what was in that cot, instead of you."

Stubbs waved a thick slab of breadand-butter at the drummer.

"You can thank your lucky stars you wasn't there!" he said. "It—it took me all my time to master it:

Feeling that if they did not escape from the cook they would burst out laughing in his face, Gipsy rose.

"Well, I'm much obliged to you for telling us about this thing," he said; "and, of course, we'll keep it a secret."

Herd leaned over and gripped the cook's fat paw solemnly.

Herd leaned over and gripped the cook's fat paw solemnly.

"I must shake 'ands with you before I go," he said. "You're just the sort of fellow to tackle ghosts,

(Continued on the next page.)





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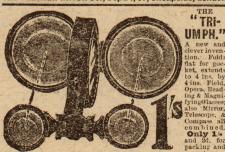
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DEADWOOD DICK SALOON AIR PISTOL.





They don't get much t of you. What did the you are. change out of you. howl sound like?"

As manipulator of the lamp-chimney, Ginger had a personal motive for that question. "Awful!" said the cook, with a slight shiver. "Fair froze the blood, it did! A lot of the chaps was quite frightened!"

frightened!"

"Isn't he a gem? What!" Gipsy murmured, when the chums were outside the bar. "I don't know what we'd do without old Stubbs! So they are going to lock the door and keep watch to-night, are they? It's a good job for us we found out about that!"

"And Jones has taken over Stubbs' bed," Herd continued. "I don't think we ought to risk the clammy-hand business with him!"

"No fear," said Gipsy, "if he didn't twig us the sentry might."

"And wouldn't we get a blessed towelling if they were to catch us?" Herd added thoughtfully.

A few minutes before the drummers formed up for "Tattoo" that night Gipsy ran up to his barrack-room. The room seemed unoccupied as the drummer entered, but as he bent over his kit he heard a subdued sobbing sounding from the far end.

Freer went down along the row of

Freer went down along the row of cots to investigate.
Lying on his face on a cot he saw Boy Bristow. The youngster had his head buried in his pillow, and was evidently doing his best to another the sounds of his grief.

"Hallo, sonny!" Freer said, laying his hands gently on the youngster's shoulders. "What's the trouble?"

"No nothing" Bristow replied

"No-nothing," Bristow replied, keeping his head turned away.
"Nonsense!" cried Gipsy. "Let's have a look at you."
He lifted the slim little chap round. Bristow's face was bruised and swollen. Freer gasped at the sight

round. Bristow's face was bruised and swollen. Freer gasped at the sight.

"You've been fighting!" he cried. The boy remained silent.
Freer remembered then that Bristow was one of the pluckiest youngsters in the room. He could more than hold his own with the rest of the boys, and it was not likely that he would snivel at a licking given to him by one of his own size.

"Look here, Bristow, old chap," Gipsy said, "tell me what this means. Who's been knocking you about?"

Bristow shook his head.

"I'm not going to sneak, Gipsy," he murmured.

"Yes, but hang it all, you're in an awful mess," said the drummer carnestly; "no fist could have raised those marks."

"It—it was a drumstick."

Gipsy leaped to his feet with a cry of anger.

"It—It was
Gipsy leaped to his reccry of anger.

"A drumstick—eh?" he cried.

"Then, by Jove, I know who it was!
That beast, Clegg, has been up to his
hullying games again."

Glegg, a hulking sixhig drum

Drummer Clegg, a hulking six-footer, who was the big drum player, was a notorious bully. He and Gipsy had never been friends. The pain of the red weals on the boy's face made him wince, then he told the truth.

"It was Clegg," he burst out.

"He—he came in here about an hour ago and ordered me to clean his belt. I wouldn't do it. He'd no right to order me as he did."

"Certainly not!" said Freer.

"I—I was alone in the room, and he jumped on me, and—and used his drumstick—the cowardly beast that he is! I wish I was four or five years older. I'd have given him something."

There was no doubting the

There was no doubting the courage in the youngster. Freer smiled as he patted Bristow on the

"Good, my son!" he said. "Your turn will come some day; but, meanwhile, I'll take a hand in this business."

"You!"
"Yes. You're in my room, and
I'm not going to see you knocked
about," Freer said, his jaw tightening. "I'll have a word with Mr.
Clegg after 'Tattoo'."

Bristow tried to persuade Freer

Clegg after 'Tattoo'."

Bristow tried to persuade Freer to give up his project, but Gipsy stood firm.

"It's all right, Bristow," he said, "you can rest easy. You didn't sneak, you know, I wormed the truth out of you."

The bugle called them on parade at that moment, and they found the circle of fifes and drums waiting forthem.

After "Tattoo," was finished, and the long notes of the "Last Post" had died away, the drummers began

Parameter and the same of

to file off towards their respective

quarters.

With the big drum under one arm Clegg was striding across the square when Freer, accompanied by Herd, approached him.

"I want a word with you,

approached him.

"I want a word with you, Clegg," Gipsy said quietly.

The long drummer stopped short.

"What is it?" he snapped in his usual surly voice.

Gipsy went up to him.

"You've been knocking one of the youngsters of my room about," he said sternly; "a little fellow not half your size. You big, hulking coward, what do you mean by it?"

Coward, what do you mean by it?"

Clegg's breath went through his teeth with a curious hissing sound. He lowered the drum on to the ground and drew back a pace.

"It served him right," he said.
"He was cheeky, and I whacked him. Besides, what have you got to do with it?"

Gipsy slipped his flute into Herd's hand, then, with a quick pace forward, he laid his open palm with a resounding smack on the big pasty face.

ward, he laid his open pain. The resounding smack on the big pasty face.

"That's what I've got to do with it," he said.

With a strangled roar Clegg dashed forward, swinging his huge fists around like flails.

"I'll smash you! I'll murder you for this, you cub!" he howled.

A quick side step carried Gipsy clean out of the blind rush. Then as Clegg's great body swung past him, the drummer doubled his right arm and sent his fist thudding into Clegg's side.

It was almost a kidney punch, and Clegg fairly howled with the pain of it. He turned round and leaped at his young opponent again.

of it. He turned round and leaped at his young opponent again.
His swinging fist caught Gipsy on the temple, making him reel back for a moment. Clegg bellowed out a fierce growl and tried to follow up his advantage.

"I'll squeeze the life out of you!" he raged.

But Gipsy knew better than to

"I'll squeeze the life out of you!" he raged.

But Gipsy knew better than to allow his powerful opponent to come to grips. As Clegg closed with him, Freer dropped on one knee, and the big drummer, unable to check himself, went sprawling over his antagonist, rasping his hands on the gravel of the square.

"Bravo, Gipsy!" Herd yelled, peering at the battle through the half-light on the square.

With a light laugh Freer leaped to his feet and turned to face his rival again. The shock of the heavy fall had jarred Clegg, and he was in no hurry to rise.

"If you want to fight, let's go where there's some light," he snarled.

"If you want to fight, let's go where there's some light," he snarled.

"Right you are," said Freer.
"Come across to the practice-room. It will be empty just now."

In silence the three drummers crossed the square and entered the room which was set apart for storing the band instruments, and also served as a pactice-room. Once inside the door, Herd turned the key in the lock.

"Nuthin' like being comfytable," he grinned. "We won't be disturbed now, and you can fight away until all's blue."

Clegg threw aside his tunic and turned up his sleeves. Gipsy followed his example, and they were soon facing each other again. Herd grinned again as he watched the faces of the rivals. Gipsy's was calm and a steady, masterful light glinted in the clear brown eye. Clegg's heavy, puffy countenance was wrinkled with lines of hate.

"Time!" bawled Herd.

Another blind rush from the big drummer followed the word. But, with the light to help him now, Freer was ready. He made no attempt to leap aside. Clegg's fist swung forward to be countered neatly by the young drummer's ready left; then, as the big drummer came on, Gipsy lunged out, driving his right fist straight between the ugly eyes.

Crack!

ugly eyes.

Crack!

Herd knew that Freer was a model of physical development and strength, but he had no idea of the power which lay beneath the white sating skin of the arms.

Circy did not soon to put any

Gipsy did not seem to put any extraordinary force behind his blow, yet, as Clegg met it, he seemed to be lifted clean off his feet. The crash with which he went down on the hard boards made Herd gasp. "You—you've killed him!" he cried.

cried.

Cipsy stepped back. He knew that that well-placed blow had practically settled the fight as far as Clegg was concerned.

There was a pause of a second or

THILING OF THE PARTY OF THE PAR

so, then the big drummer raised himself on his elbow. Already his eyes were puffing up, and threatened to develop into a pair of real "black 'uns."

The malignant glare which shot from them made Herd grin again. "Come on, Cleggy," he murmured, "it'll be 'Lights Out' in a minit, and we ain't half done yet!"

"You shut your trap!" growled the big drummer, making no attempt to rise, however. Gipsy stepped up to him.

"Have you had enough?" he asked sternly.

"You—you caught me unawares," Clegg babbled; "but, by Jove, I'll be even with you for this!".

Gipsy smiled.

"Right you are," he said, turning away and picking up his tunic; "I'm ready for you at any time. But, don't forget, keep your hands off the kiddies in future. You'll find plenty of men about willing to 'ave a go with you, big though you are."

The two chums left the room, and

The two chums left the room, and when they had gone Clegg rose stiffly to his feet and staggered across to the wide mirror which hung above the mantelpiece. The sight of his bruised eyes seemed to drive him mad.

"Hang him—hang him!" he hissed. "I'll get my own back for this! I'll have him and his chum out of barracks. I know the game they're up to with the staff-room! Thought that they could keep it a secret—eh? It didn't take me long to ferret it out."

Clegg's method of discovering the

clegg's method of discovering the secret had been peculiarly his own. One of the youngsters in the room had been subjected to a severe arm-twisting until the poor little chap had blubbered out the truth; or, at least, as much as he knew about it.

"I must get to work at once," the hulking drummer thought, as he slipped into his tunic and left the practice-room. "What did young Parker say? Herd and Gipsy sneak out of the room about twelve o'clock every night and don't come back for hours? Well, to-night they'll 'ave somebody be'ind them. I'll find out their little game, then it'll be my turn."

somebody be ind them. I'll find out their little game, then it'll be my turn."

A visit to the cookhouse, in which he succeeded in persuading the cook on duty to give him a piece of raw steak for his swollen eyes, followed, then Clegg, with a perfect storm of hate and wrath in his heart, sneaked into his barrack-room to await the coming of the appointed time.

At twelve o'clock he was crouching in the shadows at the end of the passage, listening intently, Presently he heard a door creak, and then the two slim forms glided out and down the stairs. The moon was full now, and he had no difficulty in following their shadowy forms.

Keeping well in the shadow of the high blocks of barracks, he followed his enemies until they vanished in the entry of C Block. Stealing up as near as he dared, he threw himself flat on his face and peered into the passage. The outline of the raised grating caught his eye, and the body of the rear ghost-raiser vanished beneath it even as he watched.

"In the basement—eh?" Clegg thought, a triumphant smile cross-

the body of the rear glust-raiser vanished beneath it even as he watched.

"In the basement—eh?" Clegg thought, a triumphant smile crossing his face. "That's a crime to commence with."

Herd, who was last to enter the cellar, had drawn the grating close again, but Clegg found no difficulty in raising it. After listening to make sure that the two drummers were out of earshot, he let himself down through the grating, and landed softly on the paved stones below.

Creeping forward on tiptoe he caught the faint glow of a light in front of him. With burglar-like caution he advanced until he saw the faces of the two drummers. Then, sinking down on one knee he watched their movements.

Herd was holding what appeared to be a bundle of feathers in his hands, while Gipsy, armed with a brush, was daubing the bundle with some mixture from a tin by his side. A sudden movement from the bundle was followed by a low cry of pain from Herd.

"Steady, you old beggar!" the drummer muttered, slipping his hand up to the owl's neck. "My finger ain't a little titbit."

"We've been feeding it too well, Ginger," Gipsy murmured; "it's

finger ain't a little titbit."

"We've been feeding it too well, Ginger," Gipsy murmured; "it's getting frisky."

He continued plying his brush for a few seconds longer, then, dropping it, he blew the light out. Immediately the bird in Herd's hand glowed out in a ball of yellow radiance.

"Luminous paint," Clegg thought.
"It's another scare, for a quid."
The shuffling of feet in front brought him on the alert. Guided by the glowing body of the owl, he followed the two lads, saw them disappear through the opening in a wall, and heard the slight rasping of their feet on the steel footrests of the chimney shaft.

Creeping up to the wall, he thrust his head through and listened.

"I'll catch 'em red-handed," he decided, grinning at the thought.

THE 5th CHAPTER.
The Biter Bit.

"AY when!" Herd whispered.
Gipsy, kneeling beside the grate, was pressing it forward

the grate, slowly.

He had to move cautiously now. The staff-room was now like a miniature fort. The door was locked and bolted, and—according to Stubbs's statement—an armed sentry lay on his bed, listening for the first statement—an armed sentry lay on his bed, listening for the first ghostly sound.

At last there was a space between the grate and the wall wide enough to admit the big barn owl.

"Give it a good start, Herd," Gipsy murmured.

Leaning forward, Herd poised the creature for a second, then threw it into the air.

Gipsy pulled the grate in sharply. As he did so a yell sounded from the room.

As he did so a yell sounded from the room.

"Oh—oh!" bawled the sentry, leaping to his feet in terror, as the great shining body with the round, awful eyes floated down the room.

Up jumped the startled sleepers. There was no need for the sentry to explain. The luminous thing swaying gently above drew every eye.

Stubbs awoke just as the owl fluttered across his cot. Half-asleep, the cook sat up, caught sight of the round face coming straight towards him, and opened his mouth to shriek.

Tap! Tap!

him, and opened his mouth to shriek.

Tap! Tap!

The soft, downy wings struck him twice on the cheek as the bird swooped past. A cold sweat started cut from the fat forehead, and Stubbs shot out of his bed and disappeared underneath it.

"It 'it me! It 'it me!" he wailed. "That's a summons. I'm a dead man! Ow! Wow! Help me, somebody!"

Instantly there was a panic in the room. Man after man leaped for sanctuary below his iron cot. On its second bewildered circle of the room, the owl found itself floating over a vista of rumpled blankets and emptied beds.

Suddenly above the din sounding

room, the owl found itself floating over a vista of rumpled blankets and emptied beds.

Suddenly above the din sounding from the room, Gipsy heard another noise. The soft scraping of a foot on the rests beneath.

"Listen, Herd!" he breathed, clutching his chum's sleeve.
"There's someone in the shaft!"

A panting breath came to their ears, and they heard a boot scrape. "We're done!" gasped Herd, shivering. "What shall we do?"

For a moment Gipsy paused, then a bright idea flashed into his mind. "Quick!" he whispered. "Get up into the chimney above the grate. Go on, man, hurry up!"

In an instant Herd had found the ledge of the chimney and had drawn himself up into the sooty interior. Wedging himself against one side, he helped Gipsy to climb.

They were not a second too soon. Clegg's hands reached the small platform behind the grate, and the next instant the long drummer was standing in the place vacated by the two drummers.

Scarcely daring to breathe, the lads listened as the unknown new-comer scrambled about beneath them.

Suddenly Clegg found the grate, and, not knowing what it was pressed against it.

The iron frame swung out—a blaze of yellow light revealed the interior, and Clegg heard a howl of wrath sound.

Corporal Jones, more plucky than the rest, had dered the passage across the floor and lighted a gasjet. The identity of the owl had been revealed at once, and then, just as the wrathful staffman were wondering from whence the bird had come, Clegg's blind gropping had revealed the secret.

"There 'e is, boys! Collar the beggar!" yelled Grimes.

There was a rush for the grate, Clegg was hauled out, and a dozen fists began to hammer at him together.

"There, stop it! It wasn't me!" he howled. "I—I—"

The grate had swung back for a rest of the care of the c

gether.

"Here, stop it! It wasn't me!"
he howled. "I—I—"

The grate had swung back for a moment. The concealed drummers

were not slow to take advantage of the opportunity. They dropped on the rrow shelf, and simply threw themselves down the shaft.

"Come on, Herd!" Gipsy cried.
"We must nip to the baths at once. We'll have to wash this muck off us, or it'll give the whole show away."

The door of the big bath was never shut, and in a few moments the two drummers stripped and plunged into the ice-cold water. Then, after a thorough scrubbing and a hasty rub down, they bundled their dirty clothes together, hid them in a safe hiding-place, and, stark naked, pelted across to their barrack-room. In five seconds they had garbed themselves in a clean shirt each, and were snuggled beneath the blankets.

Meanwhile, Clegg was having what is known in the Service as a "Rough House."

"I tell you I ain't got nothin' to do with it," he wailed. "It's Freer and Herd wot's to blame."

"Well, where are they?" Jones demanded.

"In the chimney, of course, "the big drummer replied.

A hasty search was made, and Clegg's story, of course, was found to be false. Then the staffmen settled down to a real rag.

Clegg fought nobly and well, but he hadn't the ghost of a chance. In the first place, there were twenty to fight against, and each of the staffmen was a host in himself. Stubbs, for instance, having crawled out from his ignominious retreat, displayed a wonderful ferocity.

"I knew it was you," he bawled: "you long swab, you! It's a good job for us we wasn'ts nervous! Might ave frightened us to death!"

But in the midst of the din and uproar a loud knock sounded on the door. Someone ran to it, opened it and fell back with a cry of dismay.

Colonel Willoughby and the adjutant, dressed in evening clothes,

may.
Colonel Willoughby and the adjutant, dressed in evening clothes, came into the room.
Instantly the ragging ceased, and Clegg sat up gasping.
"Disgraceful! Monstrous!" the colonel said. He had been at a mayoral reception and dance, and had been crossing the barracks towards his own quarters when the din

mayoral reception and dance, and had been crossing the barracks towards his own quarters when the din from No. 2 Room came to his ears, calling for immediate investigation. "Who's in charge of this room?" Corporal Jones saluted.
"I am, sir."
"Then perhaps you'll explain what this means?"

From a long, rambling statement about ghosts and horrible noises, the colonel drew sufficient information to enable him to form an opinion on the affair. Then Clegg told his story, and, accompanied by a number of staffmen, the two officers went down the shaft and into the basement.
What they discovered these

What they discovered there surprised them considerably, and Clegg, feeling that justice was about to be done at last, led the way across to the room in which the two drummers

He nearly had a fit when the lads rose up from their beds and stared sleepily at the crowd of visitors.

"I—I swear I saw 'em, sir!" he

sleepily at the crowd of visitors.

"I—I swear I saw 'em, sir!" he cried.

Even the colonel of a battalion has his weaknesses. Colonel Willoughby eyed the handsome face of Gipsy for a moment, then a quiet smile flickered beneath his heavy moustache.

"You must have been mistaken, Clegg," he said; "anyhow, I've had enough of this. Go back to your beds, everyone of you, and I'll see that the pioneers fill in that shaft to-morrow morning!"

Clegg and the staffmen filed out of the room, then the colonel turned to Gipsy:

"You and Herd will be confined to barracks for six days," he said grinly. Then, as the two drummers coloured disconfitedly, he pointed to Gipsy's shining hair. "And the next time you have a bath, Freer—which no doubt was very necessary after the soot—you will, perhaps, remember to dry your hair!"

The adjutant chuckled to himself, then the two officers left the room.

There was a long, long silence. Then, suddenly, Herd went off into a fit of laughter.

"My word, but he's a corker! What!"

Gipsy passed his hand over his damp curls regretfully.

What!"
Gipsy passed his hand over his damp curls regretfully.
"Six days C. B. for not drying my mop!" he murmured. "It's beastly hard lines!"
"Never mind," said Herd reminiscently; "we've had a rare jape, and it was worth the price we paid."
And the only over the said over the said over the said over the said.

And the only one who did not hold with that statement was Clegg.

THE END.



OUR STIRRING NEW COAL-MINE SERIAL. DON'T MISS A LINE OF IT!

THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

"Mother, mother, I've won it! Isn't it

"Mother, mother, a poor pitboy, who lives with his mother in Silversanton, holds up the splendid silver cup he has won in a local shooting contest. In addition to the trophy he has also won a money prize of five pounds.

trophy lie has also won a silve pounds.

Later Don journeys down to the yillage on a shopping expedition, and meets his great chum, Archie Hope. Archie is also a pitboy in the Silversanton Colliery.

The Red-bearded Stranger.

The Red-bearded Stranger.

On his return, Don finds a strange man in the house conversing with his mother. This person makes a hurried departure on Don's arrival, and when his mother has gone to bed Don discovers, to his amazement and doubt, that three of his five pounds have disappeared. It is obvious that his mother must have given them to the red-bearded stranger. But why? To this mental query the lad can find no answer, and his mother does not seek to enlighten him.

The following day, on going to work at the mine, Don is the victim of a terrible explosion, the origin of which is a mystery. To his horror, on recovering consciousness, Don finds that he is stone blind—that he has lost his precious sight.

Blind!

A specialist is called down from London but can do nothing but substantiate the fact that the pitboy will never see again.

Weeks drift by, and slowly Don cultivates that sixth sense—the sense of acute instinctive location of things and recognition of people, the sense which only blind people possess. Money is getting very low in the Anderson home, and Don, determined to do something to aid his mother, applies for and gets a job in the mine again as trapper-boy, his job being to open and shut the doors behind the coal-waggons. Some weeks later Silversanton is swept by a deluge of rain, and the colliery is flooded. Don, Mr. Wray, the underground manager, and several miners, are caught by the rush of water, and are cut off from the shaft and imprisoned hundreds of feet down in the bowls of the earth, shut in like rats in a trap. Bob Deakin, one of the miners, holding a lamp above his head, swims out into the flooded passage to see whether there is any chance of escape.

(Now read this week's instalment.)

(Now read this week's instalment.)

The Blind Boy's Song.

HAFT No. 1 had only been worked three times since the alarm had been raised. time the cage had been crowded with terrified boys and stern-faced men. After that the engineer's signals remained unanswered from below. and the rope slackened with a back-ward jerk as he lowered it un-signalled. The cage had encountered some obstacle before sinking down on buffer-springs-water.

some obstacle before sinking down on its buffer-springs—water.

The second cage, however, was working well. No trace of water was reported from that portion of the mine. The men had been summoned from the workings, and the cage came up, not crowded, but carrying the regulation number. Everything was quiet and orderly. The finest drilled troops in the world could not have behaved better than the rugged miners of Silversanton.

Luckily the accident had come at a quiet time, when less than a hundred men and boys were underground.

In the rain the shivering women started each time the guard gates rose, and strained their eyes in search of the faces of those they loved as the cage emptied. Now and again came a fervent cry of joy, and a woman would dash forward and throw her arms round the neck of husband, son, brother, or sweetheart. Others would compress their lips and draw their shawls more tightly round them when the one they sought for was not there.

"Clear a way, there—clear a way, there!" cried the manager of the colliery, not unkindly. "You'll have plenty of time for kissing when you get your lads home. Now, my lads, pass along, and report yourselves, and then stand by, for we shall want volunteers. There's nothing much the matter, after all."

He stepped into the cage. The timekeeper and two clerks were kept writing furiously. The timekeeper rushed to the door of his office, and put his hands to his mouth.

"A hundred safe!" he bellowed. "There's only about twenty or less to come!"

A faint cheer answered the good news. Two women were standing together, hand clasped in hand, with half a dozen bedraggled curs surrounding them. To them it was the last throw of the dice, the last stake. Only twenty souls or less than that remained down there in that vast black vault. The great wheel above was spinning, and they watched it revolve as a gambler who has staked his all watches the spinning disc of the roulette-table.

Ting! sounded the bell. The cage reached the surface, the guard gates rose, and nine men stepped out. Shrill and piercing rang a woman's cry. A woman was lying face downwards on the dirty bedplates. She had fainted.

"Who is it, poor thing?" asked a dozen pitying voices.

"Wildow Anderson. Happen that blind lad of hers ain't come oop. A cryin' shame they should ever 'ave sent him down. Poor thing—poor thing! Her only lad, too, and him blind!" answered other voices.

"She'll ne'er get o'er it if he's lost! It'll break her 'art, for sure!"

Half an hour later the following was pinned on the door of the office, and read by the anxious crowd:

"SILVERSANTON COLLIERY.

OPETICIAL NOTICE

"SILVERSANTON COLLIERY. OFFICIAL NOTICE.

"There has been a serious flooding in No. 1 Gallery of the mine, but the extent of it has not yet been ascertained. All work underground is suspended until further notice. All those who were in the mine at the time of the accident have been accounted for and are safe, with the exception of the subjoined:

"Frank Wray, underground manager.

"Frank Wray,
manager.

"Robert Deakin, miner.

"George French, miner.

"Bert Savage, miner.

"Arthur Stattleworth, miner.

"Edward Beames, miner.

"John Harris, miner.

"John Truman, miner.

"Donald Anderson, trapper-boy.

"Archibald Hope, pony-driver.

"Search-parties have been sent down, and pumping operations are already in progress. Further reports will be issued at frequent intervals.

For the present no one will be per-

pass. "(Signed) Humphrey Gateson, "Manager."

The crowd parted to allow a motor-car to pass. It was Dr. Ferguson's-car, and those who caught a glimpse of the occupants through the rain-

although I may have been in the wrong. Well, blame me, if you like!"

"I'm not blaming you! There it is, and there it stands. Those two women have frightened me. Poor Wray ought never to have taken on young Anderson. It was a mistake, and a cruel mistake. We ought never to have employed the poor lad. We were wrong."

"I'm not so sure, Gateson," said the doctor. "If anyone is to blame, I am, not Wray. I made a foolish wager and won. I agree with you that, in Mrs. Anderson's case, the situation is cruel; and the most unfortunate part of the whole thing is that there can be no reparation. An ordinary woman—Oh, why do we waste time discussing it? Let us go below!"

The manager and the doctor left the office together, and walked to the pithrow. Then they extend the reach the

The manager and the doctor left the office together, and walked to the pitbrow. Then they entered the cage of the second shaft, and descended. When they stepped out of the cage they came face to face with two members of the search-party.

"Well?"

bers of the search-party.

"Well?"

"We can't get through, sir. The mine is full of water. It's all over."

"Oh!" said Dr. Ferguson. "Then I may as well go home, Gateson; and I'll go home with a heavy heart! Good-day, old man!"

"Wait a moment!" said the manager. "You have your own business to attend to, I know, but don't be in a hurry! Hallo! Who's calling there? Yes—yes! What do you want?"

The manager dashed to the telephone. He listened for a moment, and then turned sorrowfully to the doctor.

"Your chauffeur, Ferguson," he said, "and you're wanted! He thinks Mrs. Anderson is going to die! Come and speak to him!"

Long Bob Deakin swam slowly away into the darkness. The watchers saw the light dwindle and dwindle until it became a yellow speck, and then vanished. The water was icy cold, freezingly cold. At last the lamp tilted, and only by a quick and clever grasp, as it grazed the roof of the tunnel, did Bob

Deakin save it from being ex-tinguished. There was no passage

He turned and swam back.
The watchers saw the speck of light grow larger and larger, and shine yellow on the ripples of the dark and dirty water. Bob Deakin stepped out, and shook himself. There was no need for words.

The miner dried himself with his big handkerchief, and dressed.
"No room!" he said, and the others nodded. "It's full to the top!"

They went back quietly. Don Anderson was still asleep. They sat down, only burning one dim lamp. "What do you think of it. Deakin?" asked the underground manager in a whisper.

Long Bob Deakin shrugged his shouldess.

Long Bob Deakin shrugged his shoulders.

"Better than it might 'ave been, sir,' he answered. "I expect they're all safe, barring the nine of us, and we ain't dead yet, sir."

"No," said Mr. Wray thoughtfully; "not yet! I'm not a rich man, Deakin, but I'd give all I own never to have had that lad here!"

"Young Don Anderson, sir? Ay, that's a sad thing, sir. I'm o' the same mind there, sir; but we can't undo it now."

For a long time not another word was spoken. The owl stared solemnly at them.

was spoken. The owl stared solemnly at them.

"I'd like to twist the neck of that owl!" said Shuttleworth. "Why does it keep on starin' at me? Starin' and starin' and starin'."

Don stirred and opened his eyes, and yawned. His blind eyes could not see the dim glimmer of the safety lamp reflecting its poor light on blackened faces, but he knew he was not alone, and remembered very slowly. He rubbed his eyes, for he was still very tired and very lazy. It was minutes before he really understood.

"We can't get out, then, sir?" he

"We can't get out, then, sir?" he said suddenly.

The underground manager gave a start, and the others also started.
"So you're awake? How on earth did you know I was here?" asked

"So you're awake? How on earth did you know I was here?" asked Mr. Wray.

"I can't tell you, sir," said Don.
"I suppose I must have heard you speak when I was half asleep."
"Are you tired?" asked the underground manager, peering at the youngster in a queer, puzzled way.
"Only sightly, sir. I was tired, but I don't seem to need so much sleep now as I used to need. I haven't been asleep long, have I?"
Mr. Wray took the flint and steel from his pocket, and replaced it there without answering Don.
Then he asked a question himself:

"Did you try the loop, my boy?"
"No, sir; I had to run for it!"
said Don. "I think it was the heat
that knocked me over. You mean
we can't get out, sir, I suppose? Is
that it?"

that knocked me over. You mean we can't get out, sir, I suppose? Is that it?"

The underground manager gave a laugh that brough a flush into Don's cheeks, and made him stammer out:
"I—I beg your pardon, sir!"

He had just remembered that a trapper-boy was not exactly the person to cross-question the underground manager. But Mr. Wray merely laughed again, and Long Bob Deakin turned in the faint light, and looked at him in the queer, puzzled way that he had been looking at Donny Anderson.

"I want to speak to you, Anderson. Come with me for a moment."

Don rose and followed Mr. Wray into the dense shadow.

The underground manager put both hands on the boy's shoulders and spoke very softly.

"However it goes, laddie," he said, "you'll keep what I'm going to say to yourself. I may seem a very great man to you, but, after all, I'm only a servant just as you are. We're in a mess, and how it will end I can't tell. You've worked your job well, and, except for accidents, you'd have been as safe in this mine as the best of us. This is what I want to say. I only tried you to win a miserable bet, and I'd give my right hand not to have!"

"Is it so bad, sir? No, no, no! Don't talk like that, sir!" said Don eagerly. "We should have starved if you hadn't employed me! I'm grateful, and I'm proud to know I've satisfied you. I don't know what you mean about the bet, and I don't want to know, sir. Is there anything else, sir?"

Mr. Wray muttered something under his breath, and knitted his

would have given his own gladly. To save the life of the trapper-boy he would have given it twenty times, for the responsibility was his, and his alone. He ought never to have employed Don Anderson, and the inspector had told him so that very day.

day.
"If ever we get out of this, Anderson," he said, after a pause, "something will have to be done. My right hand! Great Scott! I'd give my head!"

head!"
Then, after giving Don a pat on the back, he walked into the workings and sat down beside Bob Deakin.

ings and sat down beside Bob Deakin.

Again there was silence. The air was fresh and cool. Deakin threw an arm round Don, and told him that all was well. And the owl gave a hoot that sounded like a laugh of mockery, and stared at them as if in cruel derision. And in the silence he could hear his own watch and Mr. Wray's ticking quite loudly.

"They're pumping, sir!" said Don suddenly. "I'm sure of it!"

No one else had heard a sound. Don sprang up and hurried away into the darkness. He soon returned, certain that he had made no mistake. The pumps were at work already at the foot of Shaft No. 1. They believed him, but the news did not cheer them, although they knew that the water was not increasing. Compared with the millions and millions of gallons that filled the galleries, the most powerful pumps in the world had a poor chance for days. And who could tell whether or no there might be another inrush?

"Sing us summat, lad!" said Harris. "It's main dismal doin'

most powerful pumps in the world had a poor chance for days. And who could tell whether or no there might be another inrush?

"Sing as summat, lad!" said Harris. "It's main dismal dein' nowt! Give us some owd song, Bob—or maybe a hymn would be better."

"I ain't in the mood," answered Bob, "and I've gotten a bit of a sore throat. Ask young Donny, Donny, my best o' lads, sing to us, for I know you can."

Don sang his own favourite hymn and his mother's—"Lead, kindly Light." The young miner, Shuttleworth, gulped back a sob at the first notes of the clear, boyish voice. Don began somewhat quaveringly, but it was only at the beginning, then his voice rang out clear and brave.

Mr. Wray never took his eyes off the trapper-boy's face. He seemed like a man hypnotised. The wretched gleam of the gauze-covered lamp did little. more than make darkness visible. But all at once, as Don's voice failed, the manager leapt up and seized him almost fiercely.

"The lamp—the lamp, Deakin!" he cried. "You little traitor! Hold the light up to his face, Deakin! He can see, or I'm a fool! Which is it?"

Don was startled, and the owl gave another derisive hoot. Quick as thought. Bob Deakin's powerful arm swept Mr. Wray back.

"We're all equal now, sir," he said, his chin squared and grim. "Happen you'll think again, sir. Nay, I'll not ave that—not about Don Anderson."

"I'm sorry, Deakin. Don, I didn't mean it, my boy," said Mr. Wray. But his brow was knitted once more. He was thinking of old Rube, the maniac—thinking of mal Rube, the maniac—thinking of mal Rube, the streets in broad daylight. Perhaps the old lunatic was not such a lunatic after all in one way—perhaps, by some amazing chance, he could see in, the dark like a bat, while daylight blinded him. Could such a thing be?

"One of the horses is squealing," said Don. "Don't you hear it, Bob' And there's somebody shouting. The horse is at it again. Don't you hear?"

Bob could only shake his head, for he could not hear a sound. Don left the workings for the second time, and

hear?"

Bob could only shake his head, for he could not hear a sound. Don left the workings for the second time, and then there was more head-shaking.

"He's dreamin', poor lad!" said Shuttleworth. "They ne'er could 'ave got the pumps goin', and there ain't a pony that ain't drowned long since."



run, only to reappear at once.
"Sing something noisy!" he said,
in tones of command. "Make a row in tones of command. "Make a row—the biggest row you can make!
Sing—yell!"

Sing—yell!"

Long Bob Deakin struck up the chorus of a popular song, and the others chimed in and did their best to keep pace with him.

"And keep on singing!" bawled the underground manager. "Howl, I tell you! All I want is a row!"

Then he was gone. He almost ran at first, and then went more cautiously, while the imprisoned ones roared their best, though they did not know why.

roared their best, though they did not know why.

The manager tiptoed forward, and put down the lamp. Then he gave a swift spring. On the edge of the black and filthy water that had swamped that portion of the mine was Don Anderson, stripped to the waist. Mr. Wray seized him, and held him fast. Don shrieked in appeal:

"Let me go! I must go, sir! It's Archie Hope who's calling! I'm a good swimmer. I can hear him, sir, and I must go to help him. Oh, let me go, sir!"

me go, sir!?'

"No, put on your clothes! Put on your clothes, Anderson! What! Are you forgetting who I am? Put on your clothes, and go back to the work-

your clothes, and go back to the workings!"

"But it's Archie Hope, sir,"
pleaded Don; "I know it is! Please
let me go to him, sir. I'm not afraid
of a swim. Don't you hear, sir?"

"Put on your clothes! You'll try
no swimming tricks here so long as I
am your master! Put on your
clothes!"

Don obeyed, but he turned his back

clothes!"
Don obeyed, but he turned his back on Mr. Wray. And all at once his grief-stricken and anxious face, that he had kept concealed from the underground manager, lighted up. He had heard another sound. Don smiled. He had heard a sound that filled his heart with joy.

The Avalanche.
RCHIBALD HOPE, Esquire, Pony-driver in Silversanton Colliery, reclined in a very excellent manger of white pottery, and wondered what it was all about. His pony, standing rather deep in water, munched its chaff without wondering anything about it.
Other ponies squealed and splashed
and splodged in different stalls, but
Archie's, being a tame old sheep,
went on eating, and did not seem to
mind the cold bath at all.
Probably Archie would have spread

mind the cold bath at all.

Probably Archie would have cared less had the electric light not failed. It had gone all at once. All he could recollect was that he had been giving his pony an extra polish and waiting for Don Anderson. Then came the water, and out went the light. And there he was, and very much alone.

"That's done it," he said, as the light went; "and I ain't going to stop in the wet. And don't you take a chew out o' one of my legs in mistake, Billy!"

The pony munched away, regardless of Archie's feet, which were in its fodder to some extent. Then the light flashed up, only to dwindle out almost at once, but it gave Archie a good hint.

The stall was deep in water, which

light flashed up, only to dwindle out almost at once, but it gave Archie a good hint.

The stall was deep in water, which was covered with floating sawdust. The water was not deep enough to be a danger, but it was very unpleasant. He had shouted and shouted until his throat was sore, and for the sake of company he was only too happy to feel the old pony nosing there at his feet. If there had been a light, he would hardly have minded.

It was all very well at first—for the first half-hour. Then Archibald Hope, Esquire, pony-driver, began to think. He began to wonder what had happened to Don Anderson—to every-body. He began to wonder whether he had any chance of seeing daylight again—or any other kind of light. He tried to go to sleep, but that attempt was a failure at first and at last. It was impossible, for the other ponies kept on plunging and kicking, and splashing and squealing.

The boy swung his legs out of the manger finally, and found himself nearly up to the knees in water. By running his hand over the pony and grasping its tail, he obtained a very good guess of which way to go. He waded out of the stall, and waded on, as blind as poor Don Anderson was on that dreadful afternoon of snow when his sight failed.

"That's done it!" said Archie, as he nearly slipped; and almost in the same breath he repeated his favourite remark.

All was not darkness. In the lamp-

All was not darkness. In the lamproom there was a glimmer of light. It came from a safety-lamp, and there

hundreds of other lamps there, led and ready. The lighted lamp were hundreds of other lamps there, all filled and ready. The lighted lamp was locked, but a quick search revealed a pair of pliers, and he soon had the lamp open. He took four other lamps with him, and went back. Archie retired to the manger again, and began to whistle. "Wonder 'ow long a chap can live on hoss-beans and maize?" he thought. "There's plenty o' that about. Oh, do shut oop there! I'll come and larrup you!"

He was addressing a noisy pony. As his own pony had finished its meal, Archie padded the manger with hay from the rack, and, feeling that he could do nothing more for himself, he made himself as comfortable as he could, and went to sleep.

When he awoke he heard the suck-

could, and went to sleep.

When he awoke he heard the sucking noise of the pumps, and shouted with all the strength he could. There was no response. Master Hope gave it up as hopeless, and produced a musical instrument of very small value from his pocket. It was the strains of Archie's mouth-organ that Donny Anderson had heard.

"Anderson," said Mr. Wray, "do you suffer from delusions? It is quite probable that poor little Hope is shut in, but this must be pure fancy, my lad."

"It isn't any fancy, sir," answered

"It isn't any fancy, sir," answered Don, as he pulled on his shirt, "or else I must suffer from delusions. Hope is there, sir, so things aren't so bad.

not obey exactly. He passed the workings where the men sat. Instinctively he stopped at the very brink of the water, and put down his hand. It was still at the same level.

There was no fancy about it with Don now. He could hear Archie Hope's mouth-organ, or else he was suffering from a delusion, as Mr. Wray had suggested.

He threw off his coat and shirt, heedless of the consequences. Archie

Wray had suggested.

He threw off his coat and shirt, heedless of the consequences. Archie was there. Then, on noiseless wings, the owl flew through the darkness, and perched on his naked shoulder. Don was so surprised that he nearly screamed.

"Tu-whit, tu-whoo!" Fluff had

Don tried to catch the sound of its wing-beats, to learn in what direction the bird had flown, but even his splendid ears were at fault for a time. Then, with another hoot, the owl returned to his shoulder.

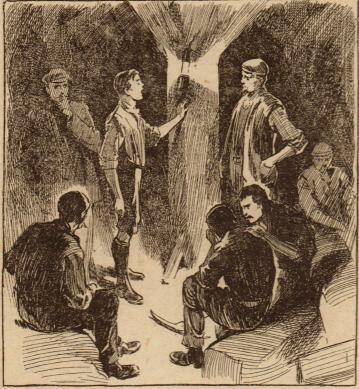
Don knew, or thought he knew, what Bob Deakin had already proved—for Fluff had flown in that direction and returned—that it was impossible to reach Archie by swimming.

His face was very solemn when he

ming.

His face was very solemn when he rejoined the others. Mr. Wray was there, as Don knew by the ticking of his watch. He did not sit down, but waited, and then made a gesture.

The underground manager did not notice it, but Bob Deakin did, and the tall miner leaned over to whisper.



Standing upright amongst the group or disconsolate miners the dim light of the lantern flickering on his white face, Do sang in a clear voice the cheering hymn, "Lead, Kindly Light."

the dim light of the lantern flie sang in a clear voice the cheering.

Mr. Wray helped him on with his dusty coat. Bob Deakin's rule did not show that the water had increased or diminished. It was stationary.

"You are tired," said the underground manager. "I was going to ask you to do something, but it would not be fair. I was going to—"

"I'll do anything, sir. I'm not a bit tired, really. Perhaps you want me to go down to the Loop, sir?"

"How did the boy guess that?" thought Mr. Wray, for it was the very thing he did want.

At the workings he obtained his boots. Don went on before him without a stumble or a doubt. Mr. Wray's hand was outstretched at the verge of the water to save him, but Don stopped on the very brink. He turned his head and listened, and the underground manager watched him.

"It must be deep here, sir," said Don. "This is a big dip. I'm certain that they're all safe, except ourselves and Archie Hope. Is that it, sir?"

"That was something like it. Go back and have a rest, or sing to those fellows again. You're no fool, Anderson. Clear off!"

He spoke almost roughly. Don walked away through the dense black tunnel, the underground manager remaining behind.

"Curious—curious!" he murmured to himself. "If the boy is right about the ponies— But that's impossible—oh, it's impossible! There should be six feet of water in the stables at the very least. He must dream these things—and yet—yet I don't find him making mistakes. It's ridiculous—absurd!"

But this time Don Anderson did

"What is it, owd Donny?" he asked. "Say owt to me, for I'll fright nobody. What's the matter? Pull your face straight, or you'll scare 'em. What be it?"

"There's going to be a big cave," said Don hoarsely. "All the gallery is creaking. It's coming, Bob—it's coming. I'm not dreaming this time, Bob. Ah!"

It came, as he spoke, with a rumb

Bob. Ah!"
It came, as he spoke, with a rumbling, splashing sound. Not far away the props had given, and the roof had fallen in. Other similar sounds came in quick succession.

Mr. Wray jumped up, lamp in hand. The others sprang up also, only to stand limp and hopeless as the black water gushed round their feet.

only to stand limp and hopeless as the black water gushed round their feet.

Whether they lived or died, it was plain enough that Silversanton Colliery was in a bad way. Thousands of tons of roof must have fallen to displace so much water.

Long Bob Deakin had snatched up their little store of provisions.

A crash followed, louder than all the rest, and the filthy water surged in again. It was all over now.

"It's a cave in the Loop, sir," said Don; "a smasher!"

Mr. Wray coughed, and Don stroked his owl.

The water was up to their ankles.
Then came a crash louder than all the rest, and Don was swept off his feet and chilled to the bone. He only knew that some strong hand dragged him out of the choking smother, and that was all.

(Another powerful long instalment next

TOM CREEN'S SCHOOLDA

Concluding Chapters of This Grand School Tale By HENRY ST. JOHN.

Bingley on the Sick List.

"Udid jolly well, sir," said Lister—"jolly well!"
"Oh, rot!" said Tom.
"We had to get out of it somehow,

you know."

The Fourth Form agreed with Lister that Green had done jolly well. The Fifth Form said Green of the Fourth wasn't half a bad plucked an. The Sixth Form made no reference to the matter at all.

"Decent, plucky young beggar," Grierson of the Sixth said in the

"Decent, plucky young beggar,"
Grierson of the Sixth said in the privacy of his own apartment.
"But can't say much, you know, or he'll be putting on side. Still, he's the right sort!"
And so the matter ended, very much to Tom Green's relief.
Meanwhile, Bingley lay in bed engaged in the occupation of mending his arm.
"I'm about fed up with this!" he grunted. "Hang, I'd sooner be swotting away in class again. It's getting on my nerves, Green. And I'm sick to death of squish! Fed up on it, old son! Squish for breakfast, squish for dinner, squish for tea! Rotten luck breaking my blinking arm, wasn't it! Darn silly, I call it! Why the dickens did I break my arm? I want to know where's the sense of it?"
"It might have been worse," Tom said seriously.
Bingley lay quiet for some moments.
"I say, Green, I ain't one to say much," he began.
"Then don't say it," said Tom.
"You might hurt your mouth."
Bingley lay quiet for another minute, then he made a fresh start.
"Green, I'm a bit of a mug, old man, at speechifying. I'm like the blinking parrot, think a lot and can't say much, you know."
"Oh, I say, I forgot!" Tom said.
"Caswell Hall beat our chaps this afternoon two goals to nix. Pretty rotten!"
"Rotten!" said Bingley. "Green, shout that fire..."

Rotten!" said Bingley. "Green,

"Tes out!" said Tom abruptly.
"So was I jolly nearly. Should have been if it hadn't been for you."
Tom kicked his heels against the

floor.
"Heard about Burchell?" he

Tom kicked his heels against the ficor.

"Heard about Burchell?" he asked.

"No. What?"

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The water was up to their ankles. Then came a crash louder than all the rest, and bon was swept off his feet and chilled to the bone. He only knew that some strong hand dragged him out of the choking smother, and that was all.

(Another powerful long instalment next veek.)

"Jolly well for me!" said Bingley.
"Did the Head ever say anything to you about that snuff business?" Lister inquired.
"Yes; he chatted a bit about it when I was in bed," said Bingley.
"Said I'd been a silly ass, or something, and I said I had. He said he hoped I wouldn't act the goat that way again, and, of course, as things turned out, it didn't matter, but next time he'd fall on me like a load of bricks. Those weren't his exact words, but it's the sentiment of what he said."

"Let you off, then?" said Lister. Bingley nodded.
"Said he thought I'd been punished sufficiently. He would have thought so too if he'd had to suck squish for a week! Gruel—oh!" Bingley pulled a face. "Never had it a week on end, did you, Lister?"
"Not lately," said Lister."
"Hallo! There's the dinner-bell!"
"Good luck to it!" said Bingley.
They went in to dinner, and Bingley sat scolding while his next door neighbour cut his meat up for him.
"Wish my rotten arm would

door neighbour cut his meat up for him.

"Wish my rotten arm would mend. I suppose it'll be all right presently. Thanks, old chap! Sorry to bother you. Do as much for you one day, I hope."

Just before dinner was quite over, the Head rose in his place, and cleared his throat in a manner that suggested a speech.

cleared his throat in a manner manuscript and suggested a speech.

Silence fell; the clatter of spoons ended abruptly.

"I have," said the Head—"I have a very pleasureable—I may say a very gratifying and pleasureable piece of news for you all."

Everyone drew a breath of relief.

"Thank goodness!" muttered Bingley. "I thought there was more trouble coming."

"Unfortunately," the Head said—"unfortunately, there has been for a very long time past a feeling that I may describe as being the reverse of friendly existing between the members of this school and the scholars of the college."

"That's drawing it a bit mildly," muttered Bingley.

"It is a matter of intense pleasure to me to announce that, once and for all, for good and all, the feeling of—of enmity, if I may use so strong a term, is now entirely at an end."

"I don't think!" Bingley growled under his breath.

"During the recent calamity that befell this school, Mr. Potter of the college, his masters, and many of his boys, acted in a manner that has earned my intense gratitude and admiration. I have received greatest sympathy from Mr. Potter, and his assistance on that memorable night I am never likely to forget. Mr. Potter, I am glad to say, is as anxious as I am that a better feeling shall prevail between his boys and mine. There is no reason on earth why it should not be so."

"Hear, hear!" said Grierson, of the Sixth. Other members of the Sixth muttered "Hear, hear!" also.

"I am very pleased to hear that you agree with me. It is only in times of distress and calamity that we come to know our friends. On the night of our great trial Mr. Potter proved himself to be a friend indeed, and now on behalf of his establishment he offers us the olivebranch of friendship. As I say, he is auxious, as I also am, that between the boys of Crewick College and the boys of St. Stephen's there shall exist a friendship, a kindly regard and liking—a rivalry worthy of good sportsmen, as I know you all to be."

This was kitting the right nail on the college and the college

This was hitting the right nail on the head, and the boys cheered with a will.

a will.

"A rivalry without jealousy and ill-feeling, and to further this plan Mr. Potter has made a suggestion to me with which I agree most heartily. Mr. Potter proposes to do honour to certain boys of this school, now and at future times whenever the occasion demands it, by offering them the freedom of the college—we on our side to reciprocate by offering (Continued on the next mage.)

(Continued on the next page.)

the freedom of St. Stephen's to the college boys who in our opinion have earned this mark of our esteem. Out of class hours boys having received this freedom will be at liberty to go and mix with boys of the other school as freely as though he was on his own ground. I think that this plan will increase and cement the friendly feelings between the two schools.

friendly feelings between the two schools.

"I have only described the plan very briefly to you, so as not to detain you now. Mr. Magee and Mr. Wigfull are both in full possession of the scheme, and they, I am sure, will give you any further explanation you may like to ask them for. One thing more, and I have finished. Mr. Potter has very kindly and generously asked every boy and every master belonging to St. Stephen's to—to—ahem!—to partake of his hospitality this afternoon. There will be only an hour's class this afternoon, from two until three. At three you will change and wash, and be ready to start for the college at half-past three. That is all."

The Head sat down amidst a tempest of cheers, and then the boys rose and filed out.

"I say, Green, d'you mind pinching me on the off arm?" Bingley asked.

"What for?" Tom asked.

"Just been having a beautiful dream, and it's time to wake up," said Bingley. "I dreamed that we all had to go and kiss old Potter at the college, or something, and that he was going to stand tea."

"That's all right," said Tom.

"It's too beautiful to be true," said Bingley. "Fancy us all sitting down to tea—the little lions and the little lambs! My hat! And old Pot standing up with his arms held out blessing us. What a picture!"

"Or Pot and the Head, with their arms around one another's waists," said Lister. "What's going to be the end of it? We'll have to start calling each other 'dear,' like they do in the girls' school."

"I can see a lovely future before us all," said Bingley; "a beautiful, peaceful future. Look here, it won't wash; it's no good, it won't wash! If anyone thinks I'm going to suck round and hug that rotten outsider Riddle, he's off the mark. Freedom of the college. Freedom of—Oh, take a run; I feel tired!"

"Anyhow, we've only got an hour's class this afternoon, and that's something," said Tom cheerfully. have only described the plan briefly to you, so as not to

"Anyhow, we've only got an hour's class this afternoon, and that's something," said Tom cheerfully. "And, after all, why not? If old Pot wants to be decent, why shouldn't he? You can't get away from the fact that we are a jolly nice lot of chaps."

from the fact that we are a jolly nice lot of chaps."

The proposal was being discussed warmly. The Sixth was strongly in favour of the proposed alliance.

"There's been too much senseless ragging and annoying one another," Grierson said. "I dare say the sollege chaps are all right when you know 'em. Why shouldn't they be? They can't all be rotters simply because they belong to the college. It's only a fluke that they are there instead of here."

The school-bell rang, and the boys

instead of here."

The school-bell rang, and the boys went to their class-rooms and took their places.

"Thank goodness, only for an hour!" said Lister.

The door opened, and Peters of the Fifth came in.

"You chaps, I've come to ask you something," he said seriously.

"We've been discussing it, and the Sixth chaps are rather keen about it."

"What's that?" Lister asked.
"Well, it's rather a serious, and at the same time a delicate matter," said Peters. "But after all we've got to study appearances, ain't we?"

Lister nodded. He had not the faintest idea what Peters was talking about. "I suppose so," he said. "What is it?"
"Well the Sixth E

"What is it?"

"Well, the Sixth Form and the Fifth think that, as this is rather an unusual affair—I mean to say, as it is a bit out of the common, you chaps might stretch a point just for to-day—the Fourth chaps I mean."

Lister nodded.

"Yes, I suppose so," he said wonderingly.

The Fourth Form was deeply interested.

ested. "What's it all about?" Lister

"What's it an asked.
"I'm coming to that," Peters said.
"Of course, we are all in favour of what the Head says. After all, why shouldn't we be on good terms with the college?"

the college?"
Lister nodded.
"And we've got to create a good impression. The Sixth feel the same as the Fifth does about it. And

it only rests with you chaps of the Fourth."

"What!" Lister roared. "What rests with us?"

"Well, it's like this. If you chaps wouldn't mind, just for once in a way—" Peters paused. Mr. Magee was coming. "Wouldn't mind just giving your necks a rub round when you—"

you—" With a bellow of rage, Lister hurled "Hume's History of Eng-

land."
Peters ducked. And Mr. Magee, coming in at this moment, received the history on the chest.
"What's this?" he demanded.
"Lister, this is not the way to treat books. Come here, and pick it up at once."

At three books were put away; at half past, nicely washed and dressed, with clean collars and well-brushed hair, the St. Stephen's boys linea up. It was just four when they entered the college gates, where Mr. Potter, in full rig, was waiting to receive them, with a staff of masters and prefects around him.

them, with a staff of masters and prefects around him.

'It was a beautiful and historical' sight. The Head of St. Stephen's and Mr. Potter shook hands, Mr. Wigfull and Mr. Wibley shook hands, so did Mr. Magee and Monsieur Leblanc.

'I've got a rum sort of feeling that I ain't quite right," said Bingley. "An aunt of my mater's thought she was Queen Elizabeth, and carried on fearfully. I expect I've inherited it. Here, I say, Green, is this all right? Am I here, or am I not here? Is that Potter shaking hands with the Head, or is it a diseased mind?"

"It's right enough," Tom said cheerily. "He's shaking hands all right."

"I'm glad," said Bingley. "I was getting to feel nervous. It's an

"I'm glad," said Bingley. "I was getting to feel nervous. It's an awful thing to have had a great-aunt who thought she was Queen Elizabeth. You never feel quite certain of yourself. Jingo! Here's that howler Riddle prancing up!"

Riddle came up.
"Hallo!" he said. "How are you?"

you!

you?"

"Alive," said Bingley.
"Didn't think you were going to be one time," said Riddle.
"More did I," said Bingley.
"Hum!" said Riddle. "Rather a nice building—eh, don't you think?"
"Not bad"—Bingley looked the college up and down—"not bad for a new sort of place."
Riddle scowied.
"You ain't been here before," he said.

"Once or twice," Tom said. He looked up thoughtfully at the weather-cock. "Nice thing. That shows which way the wind blows, don't it?"

don't it?"

"Come in, and I'll show you round the class-rooms," said Riddle.

By this time the St. Stephen's boys and the college boys were all mixed.

Certainly the college boys did the honours of their establishment with some grace. They were at home, and felt more comfortable than the St. Stephen's boys did, who were not at home.

"This is the E

at home.

"This is the Fourth Form classroom," said Riddle.

"Class-room! Oh, yes, I see, of
course! How foolish of me!" said
Bingley. "Silly idea of mine. I
thought this was where you cleaned
your boots."

thought this was where you cleaned your boots."

"I don't clean my boots," said Riddle shortly.

Bingley glanced thoughtfully at Riddle's feet.

"No, I see you don't; my mistake," he said. "Yes, quite a nice little place," he added patronisingly. "Pity you broke your arm," said Riddle suggestively.

But matters were going better else-

But matters were going better elsewhere, all things considered. The boys from the two schools mixed well. Old ill-feeling was forgotten, and the new and better feeling of friendliness that the two headmasters hoped for was becoming evident.

Even Bingley and Riddle made up their differences presently, and seemed to be on the best of terms when the bell rang for tea.

Mr. Potter was not usually a lavish man, but this was an event; and, besides, he wished the college to appear well in the eyes of his visitors. At any rate, whatever the cause, the tea was a credit to him.

Tea took some considerable time, and when at last the meal was ended, Mr. Potter, looking redder and more nervous than usual, rose to his feet.

It was Grierson who started the

taken up, and the noise was deafen-

ing.

Mr. Wibley had a small piece of paper, which he held concealed under the table. The paper was the notes of the speech that Mr. Potter proposed to deliver, and with which Mr. Wibley, on his left, had to prompt him

him.
"Er-I-ero-"
"My friends," whispered Mr.

"My friends," whispered Mr. Wibley.
"My friends," said Mr. Potter—
"my—my friends, I—"
"I can hardly express," Mr. Wibley prompted.
"I can hardly express the feeling of pleasure that I feel when I—I—that is to say, when I—I—"
Mr. Potter touched Mr. Wibley with his foot.

Mr. Potter touched Mr. Wibley with his foot.

"Oh—oh, yes," Mr. Wibley said nervously, "to be sure—"

"To be sure," said Mr. Potter.

"No, I mean—"
He glared at Mr. Wibley, which finished Mr. Wibley off. He lost his place, then dropped the paper, and disappeared under the table.

"Ass!" growled Mr. Potter under his breath.
As an orator Mr. Potter did not

his breath.

As an orator Mr. Potter did not shine, but he evidently meant well, and he perspired freely.

"The pleasure that it gives me to see around my hospitable board—I should say, the—the pleasure I feel when I witness—"

"The pleasure!" groaned Mr. Wibley.

"The pleasure!" groaned Mr. Wibley.

"When I witness the pleasure that I feel," Mr. Potter went on.

"You are all wrong," Mr. Wibley groaned.

"You are all wrong—no, I am wrong—" Mr. Potter dashed the perspiration from his brow. "Be careful, Mr. Wibley," he muttered, in an undertone.

"I am indeed—indeed I am. I said the pleasure that I feel "—Mr. Wibley did not look as if he felt any pleasure at all; nor, for the matter of that, did Mr. Potter—"to welcome you all here; to feel that any little misunderstandings between our two schools are now things of the past."

"Hear, hear! Bravo!" Loud

"Hear, hear! Bravo!" Loud cheers gave Mr. Potter breathing

cheers gave Mr. Potter breathing space.

"Can't you read those notes?" he growled ferociously.

"I—Ir can't; they are so indistinct. I see something about Caractacus," Mr. Wibley muttered.

"It's the back—the back, you idiot! The other side! Oh, never mind! Put it down; I will manage alone. I thank you all the same—I thank you, Mr. Wibley."

"Don't—don't speak of it," said Mr. Wibley feebly.

"It is said," went on Mr. Potter, "that everything that happens to us is a blessing in disguise. The terrible event of three weeks ago—I allude to the fire at St. Stephen's—"

"Hear, hear!" said Bingley.

"To the fire at St. Stephen's—I—er—to the fire at St. Stephen's—is, as I say, a blessing in disguise. In other words, every lining has a silver cloud. This disaster was—ahem!—as I say, a silver blessing is a blessing in disguise. Had it not occurred, the probability is we should not be here tonight enjoying ourselves—enjoying ourselves as—as we are."

The expression on Mr. Potter's face did not suggest enjoyment.

"To see our two schools united by the bonds of friendship is my dear wish, to know that the college and St. Stephen's are friends—great friends, dear friends is a—ahem!—er—is my wish."

More cheers, during which Mr. Potter collected himself.

"I am glad to say that my friend—my neighbour and greatly esteemed friend—the head-master of St. Stephen's has nobly—er—expressed timed in favour—in favour of what I say, which gives me great pleasure. And now I come to—to what is to me the most pleasant part of my-task."

"Thank goodness!" Bingley muttered. "His sufferings have been

of my-task."
"Thank goodness!" Bingley muttered. "His sufferings have been

what is to me the most pleasant part of my task."

"Thank goodness!" Bingley muttered. "His sufferings have been awful."

"I have explained to the boys of the college, as Dr. Crawshaw has to the boys of St. Stephen's, an idea of mine which I am now going to put into practice. In each school Dr. Crawshaw and I are going to introduce a roll of honour, and on this roll of honour will appear only the names of boys belonging to the other school. Boys of the college who are in Dr. Crawshaw's opinion and in the opinion of the St. Stephen's boys worthy by reason of their skill, their genius, their good sportsmanship, their courage, or any other virtue that they may possess, of having their names inscribed thereon. The roll of honour that will occupy a prominent place in this college will contain the names of those masters and boys of St. Stephen's School to whom we of the college wish to honour. Such a roll has already been prepared by me, and on it I have already, with the consent and the entire approval of all the boys and masters of the college, inscribed three names."

Mr. Potter paused.

"The roll, Mr. Wibley—"
Mr. Wibley floundered about helplessly.

"The roll," swid Mr. Potter.

"Ob to—to be sure the roll."

"The roll," said Mr. Potter.
"Oh, to—to be sure, the roll!'
aid Mr. Wibley. "Ah! Yes, 1

said Mr. Wibley. "An! Yes, 1 forgot!"

He rose and dashed out of the room, and returned in a few minutes with a legal-looking document, which he unrolled and placed in Mr. Potter's hands.
"The first name that appears on

"The first name that appears on this roll of honour," said Mr. Potter, "is that of my esteemed, my valued friend and confrere the head-master of St. Stephen's."

Even Dr. Crawshaw blushed at the volley of cheers that rent the air.

For some moments the noise prevented Mr. Potter from continuing, then the cheers died down.

vented Mr. Potter from continuing, then the cheers died down.

"Two other names appear on this list at the present moment. To these two will be added many others; but at present there appears here the names of two boys who three weeks ago to-day, facing death, acted with courage and heroism that is deserving of all admiration.

"Two boys," Mr. Potter went on fluently, "of the possession of whom I envy Dr. Crawshaw. Courage always commands the respect of Britons; true courage is always admirable, and never more so than when it is displayed by the young. These two boys whose names are written here behaved as heroes. I saw all that passed. I saw how, face to face with an awful death, they mastered the terror that must have possessed them, and made a bold and brave bid for their own lives, and, thank Heaven, won! The two names written here are those of Thomas Green and James Bingley — No, not yet—not yet!"

Mr. Potter raised his hand for silence.

"Thomas Green."

Mr. Potter raised his hand for silence.

"Thomas Green."
Red, confused, with a singing noise in his ears, Tom staggered to his feet.

"Thomas Green, I was one of many who saw you three weeks ago this night act with the cool courage and skill worthy of one twice or thrice your years. I saw how you saved not only yourself, but your companion from a terrible death. I saw, and I was moved perhaps more than I have ever been in my life before. On this sheet, which will presently be framed and hung in this dining-hall, is written not only your name, but an account of your brave action, so that not only this generation of boys may read and remember it, but the generations who will follow us here. I see that like all brave men and boys you are modest, and I do not wish to discomfort you by saying what I could say about your conduct that night. I will only ask you now to accept this little token. Mr. Wibley, the medal, if you please."

Mr. Wibley hunted frantically through his pockets, and with a gasp of relief brought out a couple of small bexes.

"I ask you, Thomas Green, to accept this small gold medal, in

"I ask you, Thomas Green, to accept this small gold medal, in memory of your conduct that night, and in token of the esteem, admiration, and friendship of Crewick College."

and in token of the esteem, admiration, and friendship of Crewick College."

Tom stumbled back to his seat half dazed with the sound of roaring in his ears. It was no effort of the imagination, the roaring was very real. St. Stephen's wied with Crewick College, and both shouted themselves hoarse.

And then it was Bingley's turn! And if the cheers were not quite so uproarious for Bingley as they had been for Tom Green, it was because the boys were a little too hoarse to do full justice to the subject.

What happened after that neither Tom nor Bingley very clearly remembered. There were more speeches. Dr. Crawshaw made one in his best style. Grierson, of St. Stephen's, made a small, neat one Soper, the show boy of the college, made one in Latin which no one bothered to understand.

An hour or two later they walked back to St. Stephen's through the quiet village street with the silver sea on their right, and came at last to St. Stephen's, and the ruined east wing that stood out bare and gaunt against the night sky.

"Jolly medal?" said Bingley.
"Beastly decent of him; but I never felt such a fool in my life!"

"Looked it!" said Lister.

Tom Green said nothing. He had been unusually silent all the evening. He was one who when he felt most spoke least. He was thinking of a pair of kindly eyes that would shine with the light of pride and joy one day soon, when he showed this little medal of his at home.

Thinking of that dear, brave old face, and of those two strong hands, for the touch of which, in his heart, he so often longed, and never so much as to night. But it would be soon now—very soon.

Mr. Magee came into the Fourth class-room and looked about him.
"Now, then, boys," he cried

Mr. Magee came into the Fourth class-room and looked about him.
"Now, then, boys," he cried cheerily. "Now, then, form up; the last bell is just going to ring!"

THE END.

(Don't forget to tell all your chums about our splendid new serial, "School and Mill," which commences this week,)

GRAND OPENING CHAPTERS IN TO-MORROW'S

"BOYS' HERALD."



Read how the sea broke into the quad of Danesdyke School. Order this fine issue It was Grierson who started the applause, and in a moment it was of "The Boys' Herald" to-day.



NEW READERS START HERE.

RALPH ROYLE, the hero of this powerdul new human interest story, with its novel music-hall setting, is a young trick yeglist of no mean ability, and for many years past has been keeping his good-for-nothing uncle on his seanty earnings. In return for this, HORATIUS VANDALEUR treats the lad like a dog.

return for this, HORATIUS VANDALLUAR treats the lad like a dog.

Vandaleur, in reality, has no claim over Ralph at all, for he had stolen the lad many years previously from a Hindu named thunder Rao, who had in turn stolen the child from a British officer in India.

Ralph falls in with an American who is in the same line as himself. He is a member of the Dakota Duo of trick cyclists, and struck by Ralph's evident cleverness, offers him a billet with them.

Ralph accepts this offer, and immediately starts for Blackpool, where Budd Barker and Johnnie Barr are due to appear that night.

Might.

Meanwhile, Vandaleur, left behind in London, falls in with Chunder Rao, and is terrified out of his life. Learning, however, that there is a reward of a thousand pounds offered for the return of Ralph to his real parents, he sets out for Blackpool to, if possible, get the lad back into his clutches.

There Vandaleur falls in with a man named Mowbray, who seems to take more than a passing interest in Ralph. These two put their heads together, and the conference results in Vandaleur journeying to Manchester, where he gets a job at the Apollo Theatre, knowing that the Dakota Duo have secured an engagement there.

A few days later Budd Barker loses his valuable diamond ring, and the missing article is found in the lining of Ralph's coat,

coat,
Appearances are all against the lad, and
Budd turns him out into the street, reviling
him for a thief.

The Students' Proposal.

OOK here!" said Blackstone.
"You're the cyclist chap

"You're the cyclist chap that was on at the Apollo, aren't you?"
"Yes," replied Ralph, flushing slightly. "I have told you that."
"Why, of course you have! I'm an idiot to mention it, I suppose! But, you see, some of our chaps that you see here night recognised you. were here last night recognised you, and that's what really gave me and O'Dade the idea. We want you to help us, if you will."

Ralph smiled.
"Help you!" he cried impulsively.
Why, of course I will! I should

Johnnie Barr, however, believes in Ralph's innocence, and offers the lad employment as manager of a travelling cinematograph show which he intends putting on the road. Ralph accepts this generous offer gladly, and travels to Bolton, where he is to open his tour. With him is Chunder Rao, who has recognised Ralph by a scar on the lad's shoulder.

Ralph shares a hall in Bolton with a bogus mesmerist named Montgomery. On the first night Montgomery is ragged by a large band of students from Manchester, and decamps, taking with him all the gatemoney. Ralph is left in a sorry fix, but manages to extricate himself, thanks to the kindly aid of the students.

The following day the students come over to Bolton again, and, calling in on Ralph, tell him that they have a great scheme in hand, and require his assistance.

(Now read this week's instalment.) you've done for me, if I refused you anything it was in my power to give!"

"Sphoken like a man, me darlint!" cried O'Dade.

"Well, then," continued Blackstone, "we want you to give us a show. We're holding a big rinking carnival at the Excelsior Rink on Monday in aid of charity. Fancydress affair, you know. O'Dade and I are on the committee, and we want you to come and do some cycling tricks on the floor during the interval. Anything you like—we leave it to you. What d'you say? Will you help us?"

"Why, of course I will!" cried Ralph eagerly. "I'm only too glad to be able to! That is, of course, in case Johnnie Barr doesn't object, and I think I can answer for him."

"Bravo!" cried Blackstone and O'Dade in a breath.

"Bedad, and I'll back ve for a sovereign to race wid Blackstone here—you on a bike and him on skates! Will ye do ut?"

Ralph laughed heartily.

"Certainly!" he said. "But you needn't lay any money, Mr. O'Dade. I'm willing, if Mr. Blackstone is."

"Right! I'm on!" cried Blackstone eagerly. "By Jove, that'll make a stunning turn! Look here, you come over to Manchester tomorrow! We can practice in the college quad. To-day's Thursday. That'll give us a couple of days."

"Arrah, now, that's a bargain!"

put in the Irishman. "Come and see us at the college in the mornin', for 'tis getting mighty late, and this omadhaun of a Blackstone will be afther makin' us miss the last train back, wid his talking."

"You shut up, Barney! We've got three minute; we shall just do it!" replied Blackstone, laughing. "Well, we'll consider it settled, Royle. And look here! As to this rotten yarn about you taking a ring at the Apollo, we want you to understand we don't believe a single word of it! And if ever you want a pal to stand by you and back you up you come to me!"

He and the Irishman held out their hands, and Ralph took them and shook them impulsively.

"By Harry," he cried, "you're real bricks! I begin to know what it really means to have friends for the first time in my life!"

The students turned away, and with a cheery wave of their hands darted through the stage-door, with a bare three minutes in which to cover something over a quarter of a mile.

"By Jove!" cried Ralph, his eyes

By Jove!" cried Ralph, his eyes "By Jove?" cred Raiph, his eyes lighting and a smile coming back into his lips. "With you, Jimmy, and those two and Johnnie Barr, I feel fit to face the world again and defy the villains who have slandered me!"

Ralph's New Venture.

S may be imagined, Ralph was not sorry to sever his con-nection with Bradfield Hall. He lost no time on the morrow in removing his apparatus, and as he drove off with his traps piled high on a hired cart it was almost with a feeling of relief that he turned his back upon a place which had brought him to the verge of

With the aid of Chunder Rao and Jimmy Waite, he soon got the gear stowed away in a loft which he had rented for the purpose, and then, leaving the others to settle the final details, he hurried off to telephone to Johnnie Barr.

It was with mindled feelings that

to Johnnie Barr.

It was with mingled feelings that
Ralph found himself pouring into the
astonished ears of his partner the
whole tale of his adventures, but the

roar of laughter that greeted their

roar of laughter that greeted their conclusion soon reassured him.

Johnnie Barr had too vivid recollections of his own early struggles to expect too much wisdom from his young partner!

He delivered a few quaint words of advice on the subject of dealing with "slim galoots," "greasy-tongued skunks," and so on, and then gave Ralph the welcome intelligence that he had practically concluded a contract for him for a month from the following Monday week.

It was quickly arranged that Ralph and his little company should take up their quarters in Bolton for the present. They were to spend the time in working up a first-class show, and rehearsing it thoroughly, and Ralph, if he wished, was to come to Manchester for the week-end so as to take part in the carnival.

"Budd and I are off to Preston on Sunday," concluded the little Yankee. "We reckon to fix a shop there till the end of the month, when the Voss tour starts. So I guess ye won't see us; but ef you send raound to the theatre on Toosday mornin' to say where ye're stoppin', I'll come and laugh at you properly for a doggorned tenderfoot!"

Ralph promised to do so, and, with his usual abrupt way of doing things, Johnnie rang off.

Ralph lost no time in conveying the welcome news to his companions, and the rest of that day they spent with their heads together, concocting and arranging a rough programme for their show.

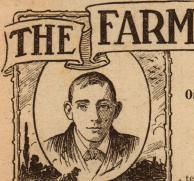
It was Saturday afternoon, therefore, before Ralph found himself in Manchester, and he made his way straight to the college.

Already special bills announcing "Ralph Royle" as the "star turn" of the carnival had been posted in all the conspicuous places in the town, and the first thing that caught his eye as he emerged from the railway-station was a huge banner stretched across the street with his name upon it in big blue letters.

"Mudeav war a ning Rleekstone."

his eye as he emerged from the rail-way-station was a huge banner stretched across the street with his name upon it in big blue letters.

"My dear man," cried Blackstone enthusiastically, "the committee's simply delighted you're coming! Your name's just given the show the buck up it needed! Tickets are going like hot cakes! And, by Jove, I nearly forgot it again! You're to (Continued on the next page.)



Our Splendid New Series, Telling of a Boy's Life on a Small Holding.

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Vour Editor's Introduction.

As all my boys know so mell, I receive every day a great number of letters from readers asking for advice. Many of the writers are town boys, who ask about emigration to Canadia, about getting posts on larms as assistant poultry-keepers, and so on.

I have certainly been quite Surprised, and not a little pleased, to see what a deep interest my boys take in country pursuits; and, as you all understand, it is my constant aim to give in The Boys. Freeze, it is not a syou all understand, it is my constant aim to give in The Boys. For the chief delight.

With this in my mind, therefore, I have arranged with Fred Garnham to verite the story of his life on a farm. He is as happy as any boy could be, and simply lores his work, and I am sure there could be no better example of a farmer's boy—what I am state the week young Garnham will till you of my lores his work will be read, with the greatest keennes and enthusiasm by cach one of you.

Your Editor's Introduction.

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school—and I could feed the pigs or make up their "swill" that they used to gobble up from the trough quite well.

This is really how I made a start at the work I am now doing, and I am sure I must have liked it, for I was always ready to help in this way, and, of course, I had a little bit of garden of my own that I used to dig and sow.

Mother, you see, had a small

and sow.

Mother, you see, had a small grocer's shop in Grimsby, and my stepfather was a clerk with the Great Central Railway, and when I wasn't helping in the garden there were errands to be run and jobs to do in the shop.

the shop.

We Go to Grantham.

Well, I had left school about a year when father—as I always call him—first heard about the "Daily Mail" farm, and I tell you there was some excitement in our house when we learned one day that he had been chosen as the man to run it. Of course, father knew that he could not manage the farm all by himself, and yet on a new small holding you can't afford to pay for labour, so he relied upon me to help him all I could. "Dick," he said to me one day, "when we get to the farm you will have to be a man and buck up all you can."

At any rate, in April,

whole tale of his adventures, but the i whole tale of his adventures, but the i helped him fence it in with wirenetting and hurdles. And isn't wirenetting and hurdles. And isn't wirenetting nasty stuff to put up? Every time you go to hit one of the little staples you seem to strike your finger, and I know I was jolly glad when that job was finished.

When father was digging the ground I helped with the weeds and stones, and had all I could do to cart them away and keep pace with him. Then came the sowing of seed, and I helped a good bit with this; but, after all, it was something like the gardening I had done in Grimsby, and I knew just what to do.

How tired I used to get during those first days on the farm—the air on the hill upon which we are perched is so strong and fresh, and I was mot used to being out of doors so much. I can remember how glad I was when the time to knock off came round, and we walked into Grantham to our lodgings, or rode, if we could get a lift.

A few days after we started father bought the big mare we still have. Her name is Beauty, and without her harness she looked to me like a huge elephant. I was not afraid of her,



The farmer's boy takes a turn with the plough.

of course, but it took me some time to get used to going into her stable to feed and water her, though now we are great pals, and I am sure she is as fond of me as I am of her.

Directly we had Beauty father commenced ploughing the land. He had never used a plough before, but he did not let it beat him, and soon found out the way to cut a furrow. I used to lead the mare now and again, and fetch her from or take her back to the stable where we housed her till our own was built.

After the ploughing came the "dragging" of the ground and the harrowing. The mare would pull the drags or harrows up and down the plot we were at work upon to break up and level the ground that was ploughed, and it made me think of how I used to rake in my own little garden at Grimsby.

Then came the sowing of barley,

was ploughed, and it made me think of how I used to rake in my own little garden at Grimsby.

Then came the sowing of barley, oats, and tares. Tares, you know, are mentioned in the Bible, and they are a food plant on which we feed our stock. Lucerne is a sort of grass that has very deep roots, so deep indeed that when other crops are almost dried up in summer it is always moist and green. Lucerne we had to sow, too, and there was grass seed to get in to make our paddock or meadow.

I helped as best I could with all these jobs, and often would I glance at the builders at work to see how they were getting on. There was our cottage to build, the cowsheds, piggeries, and so on, and one day the barn was really finished.

To save the walk to and from Grantham we decided to sleep in the barn at once, and father purchased a couple of hammocks, in which we slept. I tell you, it is jolly funny sleeping in a hammock for the first few nights, and if you are not careful you have to look out for a fall. As soon as we slept on our farm I had to become head-cook and bottle-washer, and I used to get most of the meals, do the washing-up, and so on I did not do much of the cooking, of course, but, at the same time, I did many of the jobs that mother now looks after.

Next week I will tell you how I learned to milk a cow.

Next week I will tell you how I learned to milk a cow.

(Another of this novel and interesting new series will appear on Tuesday next.)

come here and take dinner with us on Monday before the show!"
Ralph thanked him for the invitation, and then, to the cheers and shouts of an excited audience of a hundred students, he and the stalwart young medical spent a couple of hours careering madly round the big quadrangle.

It was dark when he took his leave, and armed with an address which Jimmy Waite had given him, he went off and secured some modest lodgings.

lodgings.

As may be imagined, Ralph, after all the excitement of the last few

which similarly water had given tank, he went off and secured some modest lodgings.

As may be imagined, Ralph, after all the excitement of the last few days, felt himself entitled to a quiet week-end.

He decided to stay indoors on the following day, which, as it was Sunday, and therefore the actor's holiday all the world over, did not demand his energies for tedious rehearsals.

It was late when Ralph rose the following morning, and he hurriedly dressed himself, and took his way downstairs into the street in search of breakfast.

His steps led him along Deansgate, to a modest eating-house that he knew of in a side turning near the town hall. Everywhere the bills announcing the great hospital fete at the Excelsior Rink for the evening caught his eye, and the sight of his own name in big, bold type filled him with pardonable pride.

He quickened his steps, for he felt hungry; then, as he turned into John Dalton Street, a sight met his eyes that sent the blood suddenly surging to his cheeks, to ebb again, leaving them deathly pale!

A row of carnival bills occupied a bold position upon a temporary hoarding, and a man was slowly pasting strips of paper across his name, one by one, completely obliterating it!

Ralph stared in dumb astonishment as the fellow coolly went on with his work. What on earth could it mean? One after another the bill-poster, with deft strokes of his pasto-brush, obscured the name on the bills, leaving an unsightly blank where a moment before the words "Ralph Royle" had flaunted in bold type.

Then, as he fixed the last blank on the boards, he picked up his paste-bucket, and without so much as a look at Ralph, trotted off.

Full of foreboding, Ralph took his way to the coffee-shop. Everywhere, as he passed, he could see that the carnival bills had all been similarly treated. He made a meagre breakfast, for a sickening sensation of impending disaster banished all his appetite.

Yet he knew it was of no use going to the college to seek out Blackstone, as the student had told him

yet he knew it was of no use going to the college to seek out Blackstone, as the student had told him he would not be there till three o'clock in the afternoon. He was forced to possess his soul in such patience as he could muster.

He half thought, indeed, of telegraphing to the secretary of the committee and demanding an explanation, but on second thoughts he decided to see Blackstone and O'Dade first, and learn from them the truth.

the truth.

What the truth was, he had a dawning suspicion already. The suspicion grew to a presentiment during the morning, and when three o'clock found him at the college gates the surly attitude of the porter almost confirmed it in his mind.

"Oh, yes, Mr. Blackstone's in," said the man in response to Ralph's inquiry. "But in my opinion 'tain't likely as he'll see you, though!" "Indeed!" said Ralph coldly. "I

"Indeed!" said Ralph coldly. "I didn't ask for your opinion, my man. Be good enough to take up my name."

Ralph was not kept waiting for long. A hurried clatter of footsteps announced the arrival of his friends, and in a moment Blackstone, O'Dade, and half a dozen others made their appearance.

Their angry faces quickly showed Ralph that something serious had occurred, but before he could speak, Blackstone broke out hotly with:

"You've seen them, I suppose? You've seen the beastly bills—eh, Royle?"

"Yes," replied Ralph, as quietly

Royle?"

"Yes," replied Ralph, as quietly as he could. "Of course. I've come round to see what has happened."

"It's that dirty, scrimshanking secretary!" roared Blackstone, pulling a letter from his pocket and handing it to Ralph. "Says he's acting on direct orders from the governors! But we'll jolly soon show show 'em!"

Ralph tore open the letter, and read it through. It was couched in polite terms, and while thanking Ralph for the offer of his services,

regretted that the governors of the hospital could not accept them. It gave no explanation of their refusal.

Ralph looked at Blackstone, and for a moment there was silence.

"Of course, you guess what it's all about," blurted out the student at last. "They've got hold of this beastly yarn!"

Ralph reddened hotly. It was what he had dreaded, and, although he was prepared to hear the unpleasant truth, it hurt him none the

"I suspected it," he said, speaking as steadily as he could. "Do you know from what source they got the

story?"
"Haven't the faintest idea," replied Blackstone savagely.
Ralph read the note through again in silence. Then he raised his head and looked steadily at the little group of angry faces.
"I have at least the right to know

group of angry faces.

"I have at least the right to know who my accuser is," he said quietly. "I shall go to the carnival to-night, and publicly demand his name!"

There was a second's dead silence, and then a perfect yell of delight, that must have been heard all over the college buildings, went up from the students.

"Bravo!" shouted Blackstone.
"We said you would! By Harry, and we'll stick by you, too!"

The young fellows crowded round

parties, Ralph, with mingled feelings, took his leave.

He was taking a bold course, he knew, and perhaps, too, it was in doubtful good taste. But his enemies left him no alternative.

"We Will Call the Police!

T was close upon nine o'clock when the little party left the college gates. It had ben specially arranged not to start too soon, but to reach the rink just in time to effect an entrance, and appear at the

commencement of the interval.

Should they arrive too early, it would give the enemy an opportunity to muster their forces and eject them.

The success of the scheme de-pended upon the surprise that would be created among the governors and committee, and the other big wigs by Ralph's sudden and unexpected

by Ralph's sudden and unexpected appearance.

Three taxi-cabs took them to the Excelsior Rink, the students inside keeping up a running volley of cheers as they rolled along, for to them the whole thing, apart from the way in which it affected Ralph, was a giorious rag, and they meant to make things hum.

The foremost taxi, containing Ralph and O'Dade and Blackstone, drew up at the door with a wild warwhoop from the Irishman.

medical students' rag on other occa-

medical students rag on other occasions.

"I'm very sorry, of course, sir," said the big man again; "but you wouldn't want me to disobey my orders, would you, sir? They was very definite about it—very. If Mr. Royle comes, they says, tell 'im as 'ow your werry sorry, but the committee 'as dispensed with his services, an' 'e can't come in."

The other attendant, meanwhile, had made for the door to secure assistance, but instantly he found his passage barred by a laughing line of students, who each insisted in affectionately shaking hands with him in turn.

The man looked round him in bewilderment. He tried to force a
pasage through the cordon, and make
good his retreat into the building,
but he was pushed back and jostled
from hand to hand until, breathless
and panting, he gave up the attempt.
It was the exact moment. Blacktone and O'Dade had been carrying
on a pretended expostulation with
the big man, who had remained firm
in his intention to obey his orders.
Now, however, Blackstone uttered
a shrill whistle, and with a united
yell of: The man looked round him in be-

yell of:
"College! College! College!"
the encircling band of students
surged suddenly forward. Ralph
ducked beneath the attendant's arms,
and the next instant the two doorkeepers were swept off their feet,

"The governors!" whispered Blackstone. "Let's make straight for them. Jimminy! Won't they be shocked!"

Blackstone. "Let's make straight for them. Jimminy! Won't they be shocked!"

Ralph would have hesitated to take such a bold course, which certainly struck him as not being in particularly good taste, but he soon found he had no choice in the matter. A roar of applause burst from the students massed at either end of the hall, and the next instant, led by O'Dade, the handful of young fellows that had obtained his entrance swept him forward.

A flutter of excitement went through the group in the centre of the floor, while the bewildered crowd at the sides stared in amazement first at Ralph and then at their programmes, in which a slip had been inserted announcing Ralph's "inability to attend."

Ralph saw all this at a glance, and the next instant he found himself face to face with a gentleman in evening-dress, whose face was purple with anger.

"Sir!" roared this individual furiously. "What is the meaning of this? Did you not get my letter?"

"Old Robson, the secretary! Now we're off!" whispered Blackstone cheerfully.

Ralph sprang lightly from his machine, and faced the secretary, with head erect.

"Yes," he replied coldly. "I received your letter, sir, at the hands of a college porter. It is for an explanation of that letter that I have come here to-night."

The secretary gasped. This stern rejoinder was hardly what he had expected.

"Explanation!" he spluttered angrily. "Explanation Mr Royle!"

The secretary gasped. This stern rejoinder was hardly what he had expected.

"Explanation!" he spluttered angrily. "Explanation, Mr. Royle! Do you pretend that you are not as fully aware as I of the reason the governors have for declining your services? Surely you will not wish so unpleasant an affair to be revived in such a place as this."

Ralph flushed hotly at the sneering words, but he kept himself in hand. The astonished group of governors had closed round him in front, and O'Dade and his friends were behind him. Ralph found himself the centre of the little knot of men.

The thought flashed through his mind that he would have given any thing to have had Johnnie Barr at his side. But that was impossible, and he must face the music alone.

Here a tall, military-looking man stepped suddenly forward, his handsome face, with its iron-grey mous tache and deeply furrowed forehead, puckered into a perplexed frown.

"Gentlemen," he said in a tone of cool authority, "let us have no unpleasant scene, I beg. Mr. Royle surely..."

He turned and looked full at Ralph, and suddenly he stopped

surely—". He turned and looked full at Ralph, and suddenly he stopped dead.

For a moment he gazed full upon the lad's face, his eyes distended, his lips moving convulsively. Then he passed his hand slowly across his

passed his hand slowly across his brow.

"Ralph Royle! Ralph Royle!" he muttered brokenly. "Surely it is impossible!"

The group of men fell back in astonishment as they gazed upon the speaker. But Ralph had no heed for them. He, too, was staring at the tall, handsome figure, and suddenly his heart began to beat painfully, and he trembled where he stood.

Where had he seen such a face? Where had he heard that voice before?



Swinging Ralph up on to their shoulders, the wildly cheering students swept down the rink in triumph. (See next week's splendid instalment.)

him in excited attempts to thump him on the back and shower con-gratulations on his plucky deter-mination, so that it was some minutes before Ralph was able to

speak.

"I can only thank you heartily," he managed to say at last; "but I do not want to drag you into my quarrels. Still, if you will help me to vindicate my honour, I need not tell you I shall be grateful. You see how it is. I cannot allow this slander to go unchallenged any lenger!"

stander to go unchallenged any longer!"

"Sphoken like a man, begob!" shouted O'Dade, executing a wild Irish jig halfway down the quad. "We'll stick by yez, me darlint! Don't ye fear for that!"

The leaders of the students quickly put their heads together, and evolved a rough plan of campaign. It was decided that no more than a dozen, so as to avoid exciting suspicion, should accompany Ralph to the artistes' entrance of the big rink, while the remainder of the medicals should mass in two solid phalanxes, one at either end of the floor.

floor.

Thus, if any attempt was made to exclude Ralph at the door, his party would be strong enough to insist on admittance, while those inside the rink would enforce a fair hearing for him when the proper time came.

The arrangements were not long in the making, and as Blackstone and O'Dade undertook the selection and organisation of the various

A couple of attendants, thinking

A couple of attendants, thinking they were some late roysterers, darted to the door of the cab and flung it open with obsequious bows. In a moment O'Dade and Blackstone were in the street, but no sooner did Ralph set his foot on the pavement than a burly doorkeeper flung out his arms to bar his passage.

sage.
"'Allo!" he gasped. "You, is it!
'Old 'ard a minute, please! We've
got orders as you ain't to be allowed
in."

Old and a minute, please! We've got orders as you ain't to be allowed in."

It was the first check, but Ralph was prepared for it; he drew back a little, and Blackstone, with a well-feigned air of astonishment, stepped forward.

"What's all this about?" he demanded haughtily. "Allow this gentlehan to pass, please!"

"Beg pardon, sir," replied the attendant, fixing an uncertain eye on Blackstone's committee badge, which he took care to display ostentatiously. "Orders is orders, sir! I bin told as 'ow Mr. Royle ain't to come in. From the seketerry, sir."

"Stuff and nonsense!" replied Blackstone. "You've made a mistake, my man. You take it from me as a committeeman, Mr Royle is going in!"

The other cabs had emptied their burdens by now, and the chauffeurs sat waiting expectantly for a prearranged signal. The two attendants glanced uneasily at the growing crowd of students, and began to edge furtively towards the doorway. They had had experience of a

lifted clean from the ground, and flung pell-mell each into a separate

speaker. But Ralph had no heed for them. He, too, was staring at the tall, handsome figure, and suddenly his heart began to beat painfully, and a wild "toot-toot" on the horn the taxis started off at full bat.

A shriek of laughter went up from the medicals. The unfortunate attendants would be some seconds in recovering their legs in the wildly swaying cabs, and the chauffeurs had strict orders not to slacken speed on any account until they had covered at least a mile from the rink. But there was no time to waste. "Come on!" shouted Blackstone excitedly. "Get your overcoat off Royle, and trundle that machine along, Barney!"

Ralph was already dressed in tights, and he whipped off his overcoat, and as Blackstone, who was also dressed in running shorts, quickly adjusted his skates, Ralph rapidly overhauled the machine. In half a minute they were ready, and then, as O'Dade swung open the big doors that separated them from the rink, Ralph, with Blackstone skating close behind him, rode coolly on to the shining, blackleaded floor. The gaily-dressed skaters were already moving to the sides of the big rink for the interval, and in their centre of the floor stood a group of men in sober evening-dress, their white shirt-fronts showing up against the brilliant background of colour of the fancy costumes.

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