SPECIAL HOLIDAY NUMBER. New Racing Sevial.



#### THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

The opening of our story finds STANLEY GRANT, a sturdy lad of fifteen, in mouning for his mother. For some years the two had been living in reduced circumstances in the little Sussex village of Jarvis Oak, and now the lad's best friend has passed away. In all senses of the word, Stan is an orphan, for his father had disappeared mysteriously many years previously, and in circumstances about which Stan could never get his mother to speak.

mother to speak.

Before her death Mrs. Grant had made arrangements with an estate agent in the village, named Mr. BRONSON, to give

a start in life

a start in life
in his office as an apprentice, for which
she pays Bronson a large sum of money—
in fact, all she possesses. But Stan cordially
dislikes Bronson—a smug, unscrupulouslooking person—and determines to leave
Jarvis Oak, and with it all its sorrowful
recollections of happy days spent with his
dead mother.

The following day Stan sets out to walk
to London, but having a great love of
horses, and being a smart little rider, he
decides instead to make his way to Epsom,
where the races are in full swing, and
endeavour to get a situation as stable-lad
in some training stable. It is his ambition
to one day be

a famous jockey.

a famous jockey.

Stan, arriving at Epsom, mingles with the crowds on the course, and witnesses the race for the Great Metropolitan Stakes. The favourite, a horse named Black Dean, owned by the Marquis of Blanchester, is winning all the way, when at a critical point an excited press photographer topples over the rails, and lies sprawled out right in the horses' path. Stan leaps out into the course, and draws the man out of danger just as the thoroughbreds thunder past.

A Plucky Deed.

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The Marquis of Blanchester sends for Stan to thank him for his prompt action in circumstances which otherwise might have cost his horse, Black Dean, the race. He asks Stan to call at his town house the following morning. This Stan does, and upon him stating that it is his ambition to be in time a jockey, the marquis sends him down to his training stables at Stanton Dale, in Yorkshire, with an eye to future apprenticeship, reports being satisfactory.

On the morning after his arrival at Stanton Dale, Stan is handed over to the care of the head lad, a chap named Cook. Cook asks the new lad several questions, and on learning that Stan's father's name was Mortimer Grant, he exhibits great signs of excitement.

The New Stable-boy.

The New Stable-boy.

Bates, another stable-boy, takes Stan into a stall to see Prince Perold, a crack thoroughbred which is supposed to stand a big chance of winning the Derby.

Stanley, with his great love of animals, and not knowing how many high-bred horses are absolute savages with strangers, darts forward to pat the beautiful beast that is fidgeting in his stall, not noting the dilated nostrils and angry gleam in the eyes.

Two iron-shod hoofs, capable of dealing death, fly up fiercely in a flash, and the next instant the lad is on his back on the brick floor, lying motionless.

"He's killed!" shouts Bates loudly, as he dashes forward. "Hi, Williams—here, quick! The Prince has killed the new lad!"

(Now read this week's splendid instalment.)

## THE 7th CHAPTER. An Averted Tragedy — "Bravo, Grant!"

LAD who had been sweeping up the yard dropped his broom and darted for the

stable. Bates was kneeling beside Stanley Grant, who lay motionless, with pale face and closed eyes.

"He's dead," said the boy, in little more than a whisper; "the Prince has killed him, Williams. His hoofs shot out, and—"

"Shut, up!" said Williams, an older and more hardened lad. "I can feel his heart going. Run across to the house, and ask the guv'nor to fetch some brandy."

Bates rushed off across the yard, his face as pale as that of the still form in the stable. The youngster was too nervous to ever make a jockey, though a good horseman at exercising and wonderfully careful with a horse.

Meanwhile Williams had unfastened Stanley's collar, his face wearing a puzzled expression.

with a horse.

Meanwhile Williams had unfastened Stanley's collar, his face wearing a puzzled expression. There were no marks of a kick on his chest,

life, I reckon. Drink some more of this."

Stanley took a pull at the flask, and the expression on his face made the lads standing round laugh.

"It burns," said the boy chokingly.

"I-I've never taken spirits before."

"And don't be in a hurry to take 'em again, my lad," said the trainer.

"Brandy is all right as a medicine, but as a drink it doesn't do a man any good, even if it doesn't do him any harm. As for growing lads—well, it's poison, that's what it is, Grant. You take my word for it. How do you feel now?"

"Better, thanks," said Stanley, struggling to his feet, aided by Williams. "I heard Bates shout as I jumped back, but I must have slipped. I saw that chap's hoofs flash up in front of my eyes as I fell back, and I thought he'd got me."

"So did I," said Bates, "and it gave me a most awful turn. I should never have forgiven myself if the horse had killed you. I ought not to have let you go in without warning you."

Stanley put his hand to the back of

Stanley put his hand to the back of his head, and gently rubbed the bump. He still felt sick and giddy, and he glared resentfully at Prince Perold, who, with his head turned, was calmly viewing the results of his work.

was calmly viewing the results of his work.
The trainer noticed the look.
"You'll soon get friendly with the Prince, lad," he said; "he's a bit of a savage in the stable, but a perfect gentleman on the raccourse. This is what we give the Prince to put him in a good humour."
He took down a thick oak stick, liberally covered with teeth marks, and walked up to the magnificent three-year-old. The colt seized the stick greedily, and Belcher stroked his sleek neck.
"Come here, Grant," he said. And Stanley, without a moment's hesitation, walked into the stall and stood beside the horse who had so nearly ended his career on his first day in the stable.
Belcher's eyes gleamed.
"No nerves," he muttered to himself. Had Stanley hung back, he would have gone down greatly in the opinion of the trainer, for although fear after such an adventure was natural, it does not do for a jockey to know such a word—at all events, if he is to be successful in his profession. Once let it be known that a

and if Prince Perold's flying hoofs had caught the boy higher up, his face would have been battered.

Suddenly he laughed, and, rising to his feet, ran for a bucket of water, and began to splash it on Stanley's face, just as Bates, accompanied by the trainer and Cook, entered the stable.

"What's happened, Williams?" asked Mr. Belcher quietly. He had only been able to obtain a rough idea from the excited and frightened Bates.

"It's all right, sir; he's only fainted. Look he's coming round now. A drop of brandy will soon put him right."

The trainer knelt down, and forced the neck of the flask between Stanley's teeth, and then poured some of the burning spirit down the lad's threat.

"It can't understand it," he said. "If the Prince kicked him he must be—"

"That's what puzzled me, sir," said Williams quickly; "but he wasn't kicked. He must have heard Bates's warning, and, seeing his danger, thrown himself back, and then slipped on the floor and caught his head on the brickwork. There's a bump as big as a duck's egg on the back of his head."

Stanley opened his eyes, and looked dully round.

"What's the matter?" he asked. The trainer laughed.

"Stems to me it's I who should be asking that, my lad," he said; "but you've had a pretty near go for your life, I reckon. Drink some more of this."

Stanley took a pull at the flask, and the expression on his face made the lads standing round laugh.

"It burns," said the boy chokingly.

"And don't be in a hurry to take em again, my lad," said the trainer. Brandy is all 'right as a medicine, but as a drink it doesn't do him any good, even if it doesn't do him.

"No, he's an apprentice jockey, saw, from the grun role of the proposition of the prop

pleasant room, after ascending a staircase.

"No, he's an apprentice jockey, same as you're going to be, I should say, from the guv'nor's manner. He thinks himself a rare nob'cos he won six races last year at good prices, and had a quid on each of them, getting it on through his brother who works for the butcher at Carby. If it was known he'd probably lose his licence; anyway, he'd be suspended. Jockeys aren't allowed to bet, you know, though a lot of 'em do on the quiet."

As he talked, Stanley took stock of the room. A long table, with a green cloth, ran down the centre of it. There were about a dozen wooden chairs ranged up to it. Two or three comfortable wicker armchairs stood about the room, and a long cushioned-covered bench stood in the recess formed by the casement window, through which a grand view of sea and moor could be obtained. There was a bookcase in a corner, and the walls were decorated with coloured plates of famous horses and jockeys.

"It's jolly comfortable," said Stan-

"It's jolly comfortable," said Stan y, already beginning to feel a

jockeys.

"It's jolly comfortable," said Stanley, already beginning to feel at home.

"Not half bad," said Bates.
"I've a cousin in a stable at Newmarket, and he says the markiss does us like lords; but he's a chap that always grumbles over his bad luck. There's two dormitories upstairs. I'll try and get old Mother Matthews to fix you up in my dormitory. There's a bed to spare in each of 'em. as Belcher sacked a couple of fellows for gambling over cards a week or two back."

Stanley learned that Mother Matthews was the old woman who cooked the lads' food and looked after them. He also learned that they had their meals in the room, and in the evening could play chess, dominoes, and cards, or read. Then Bates, realising that he ought to be busy, bolted off, leaving the youngster to himself.

Stanley sat down on the bench by the window, and stared out. The sea breeze seemed to clear his head and relieve the dull ache. He laughed now at what might have been a

tragedy, and told himself he would be very careful with the other horses until he got to know them. Then he began to think of his forthcoming ride, and grew excited.

"I must do well," he told himself, and forgot his aching head in the anticipation of what was before him. Feeling better, he went down into the yard, and strolled about until dinnertime, having made friends with a small, shaggy-haired terrier.

He was rather dreading the ordeal of sitting with the other lads for the first time, so he entered the room between Bates and Williams, trying to look unconcerned. A portly woman, with a kind, red face was bustling round the table, and Cook had installed himself in his chair at the head of the table.

"New chap, name o' Grant," he said shortly, waving a hand in Stanley's direction by way of introducing him to those he had not met. The boy flushed, and sat down next to Williams. Bates was seated opposite, next to a cheery-looking, bulletheaded boy, who stared at him as though he were judging the points of a horse. Stanley, feeling uncomfortable, started to eat the plain but homely meal before him.

"I say," cried a squeaky voice, "you know that horses can kick, eh, youngster?"

Looking in the direction from which the voice had come, Stanley saw a had be the cooking in the direction from which the voice had come, Stanley saw a had be the cooking in the direction from which the voice had come, Stanley saw a had be the cooking in the direction from which the voice had come, Stanley saw a had be the cooking in the direction from which the voice had come, Stanley saw a had be the cooking had come, Stanley saw a had be the cooking his direction from which the voice had come, Stanley saw a had be the cooking had come, Stanley saw a had be the cooking had come, Stanley saw a had be the cooking had come, Stanley saw a had be the cooking had come, Stanley saw a had be the cooking had come, Stanley saw a had be the cooking had come, Stanley saw a had be the cooking had come, Stanley saw a had be the cook had come, Stan

youngster?"
Looking in the direction from which
the voice had come, Stanley saw a
boy of very small stature, but with a
large, unintelligent face, and somewhat watery blue eyes.
"Don't cheek him," whispered
Williams in his ear. "He's Sam
Pears, and it's no use makin' an
enemy of him."
Stanley checked the angry retort on
his lips.

Stanley checked the angry receives his lips.

"Rather," he cried, with a laugh.
"I reckon I'm lucky to be able to know anything else so soon."

The bullet-headed boy laughed.
"Good on yer!" he cried. "The new 'un's a korf drop, mates. Little Tich in disguise, that's wot 'e is. Don't tell me you ain't Little Tich," he added plaintively.

"Who is he?" asked Stanley innocently.

"Oh, come orf it!" said the little Cockney in disgust. "Where was you dragged up? Never 'eard of Little Tich, wot's a music all star of the first water. Makes you bust your sides o' laughin'. Well, all I can say is—"

first water. Makes you bust your sides o' laughin'. Well, all I can say is—"

"Not so much jaw, Pitcher!" snapped Cook. "Eat your bloomin' dinner, can't you?"

"Pardon, me lord," said Pitcher, in a subdued voice. "I always get off badly for the eatin' stakes."

"Your handicapped by too much tongue," said Williams, with a grin, as he poured himself out a glass of beer from a large jug. "What's yours, Grant—beer or water?"

Stanley asked for water, and noticed that nearly all the younger lads drank it. During the meal he learned that Dan Daltrey, the crack jockey, was coming to Stanton Dale that evening to ride Prince Perold in a trial early the next morning before going on to Stockton races.

Stanley, who had noticed a picture of the famous jockey in Lord Blanchester's colours hanging on the wall, was anxious to see him.

"It's not the Derby he's being tried for now," said the lad, "but the Two Thousand Guineas at Newmarket next week. His lordship is dead keen on him winning that as well as the Derby."

Stanley nodded, but scarcely understood what the lad was talking about. He was glad when the meal was over and Williams marched him off to the stables. He had taken a great liking for this quiet lad of eighteen or so, who seemed to be held in respect by all the other lads and the trainer himself.

"You're to ride Jacolat," said Wil-

self.

"You're to ride Jacolat," said Williams, as they entered the stable, "and I'm to be on this filly here, a real good goer, who'll be a classic horse, I reckon, as a three-year-old. She's only been out twice, and won both times. She surprised us by picking up a good race at Lincoln on the first day of the season. Get the pad, and I'll show you how to put it on."

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"The pad!" cried Stanley.

"Oh, you are a green 'un. We call the saddle a pad. There it is, hanging on the wall there. Hurry up, or the guv'nor will be waiting. He's coming with us on his hack."

Stanley flushed, and quickly brought the small saddle. As Williams showed him how to fix it, he explained where the lead weights were fixed.

"You see," he said, "you go about six-stone-three, I should say. Well,

tragedy, and told himself he would be very careful with the other horses until he got to know them. Then he began to think of his forthcoming ride, and grew excited.

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"Up you get," said williams, and

his teeth, appeared a few moments later, and swung himself into the saddle with the grace of a practised rider.

""Up you get," said Williams, and Stanley, fighting down his nervousness, jumped up neatly on to Jacolat's back, and patted his neck as he waited for instructions. Sam Pears, who had been standing at the entrance to the lads' quarters in the hope of seeing the youngster come to grief, shrugged his narrow shoulders, and strode off across the yard.

"Come on," said the trainer genially, as he rode up, and the three, passing through a small gate which Pitcher had opened, were out on the breezy Yorkshire moors. To Stanley's surprise, Jacolat was nothing like so difficult to handle as the horse he had ridden in the farmer's paddock, but his action was a little disconcerting at first.

"Feel at home, Grant?" queried Belcher, after they had traversed a few hundred yards of the soft turf.

"Yes, thank you, sir?"

"Very well," said the trainer: "you see that white rock over there? When I wave my hand, start and see who can get there first."

The two lads pulled up, and their horses remained quiet, whilst Mr. Belcher rode on ahead towards the big white rock about a mile away. Half-way towards it he stopped, took a pair of field-glasses from his pocket, and then waved his arm.

"Off you go!" cried Williams, and bent over his horse's neck. The two horses started simultaneously, and Stanley felt a delightful sense of exhilaration as Jacolat dashed alongside the beautiful, light chestnut filly. He scarcely saw Mr. Belcher as they flashed past at a pace that was astounding to the boy. Then he saw the filly beginning to draw ahead, and he urged Jacolat on.

The rock loomed up nearer and nearer, but try as he would, he could not get up with Williams. He threw himself forward as they were upon the rock, but the filly was past it first.

"A couple of lengths," said Williams casually, as they eased up.

himself forward as they were upon the rock, but the filly was past it first.

"A couple of lengths," said Williams casually, as they eased up. "By Jove, young 'un, you can ride! Anyone would think you'd been at the game for years!"

"But I was beaten," said Stanley, in a disappointed voice.

"Oh. hark at him!" cried the other lad apparently to the white rock, which, having turned their mount, they were again approaching.

"Fancy expecting to beat Queen Bess on practically level terms."

"Bravo, Grant!" said the trainer, riding up. "You brought Jacolat along as well as I've seen anyone do it yet!"

"He's sick because he didn't win, sir," said Williams, with a grin.

"My boy," said Mr. Belcher quietly, "Queen Bess was considered to be able to give Jacolat two stone and a five-lengths' beating over a mile. She only gave about ten pounds, and you got up to within a couple of length, though Williams rode a good race!"

Stanley picked up heart again. He did not understand weights and "form," but he saw that he had given satisfaction, and that was enough.

"To-morrow," said the trainer, as "the label of trainer, as the label of trainer.

given satisfaction, and that was enough.
"To-morrow," said the trainer, as they rode back. "you shall don silk, Grant. I shall want you to ride a trial at six in the morning."

THE 8th CHAPTER.

Dan Daltrey—The Early Morning
Trial.

HAT evening Dan Daltrey
arrived in his motor-car.
Stanley observed the famous jockey with great interest as he shook hands with Mr. Belcher and then went for a tour round the stables. He was a small man, with a lean, keen face, tanned by much exposure to all weathers. He was

THE FOOL OF THE COLLEGE.

well-dressed, but did not put on any "side," so far as the boy could see. At all events, this "crack," earning several thousands a year, was nothing approaching Sam Pears, the obscure apprentice, in conceit.

Stanley was bedding a horse down for the night when Belcher and the jockey came up.

"This is a new lad at the game, Dan," said the trainer; "he promises to shape well."

Stanley touched his cap.
"Expect to be another Laton—eh?" queried Daltrey, with a smile.
"No," said Stanley; "but I hope to do well in time."
"Well," said the jockey, "if you stick to your work, don't get swelled head at your first success, and keep straight, there's no reason why you shouldn't rise to the top of the tree. Beware of the sharks, boy. They nearly ruined me once. If any man has to be careful of the company he keeps, that man is a jockey. That's a nice-looking filly, Joe!"

With a nod to young Grant, he passed on with the trainer.

Grant enjoyed his first evening with his fellow-workers at the stable. He played a game of dominoes with Bates and the little Cockney, to whom he took a liking. Williams and two other lads were away, taking horses to Stockton for the next day's racing. For although it was a comparatively easy journey, the Marquis of Blanchester had a strong dislike to a horse travelling on the day he was engaged to race. Sam Pears, who was to ride the other, was motoring over to the course the next morning.

"I shouldn't have thought Daltrey would have come all this way to ride one horse," said Stanley, in astonishment; and both the other lads laughed.

"Don't you see, Grant," said Bates, "Daltrey's only retained by the marquis for him to have first call

laughed.
"Don't you see, Grant," said Bates, "Daltrey's only retained by the marquis for him to have first call on him. He rides for no end of other owners, when we haven't anything entered in a race or something below his weight. The two horses Pears is riding are in at under eight stone, and even if he wastes hard, which he doesn't like doing, Dan can't ride under eight stone four."

Stanley thanked him, and felt he

stanley thanked him, and felt he had a lot to learn from these youngsters, who had not had the benefit of the education he had.

He was roused at half-past five the next morning, and got up feeling half asleep, but after plunging his head into a basin of cold water, he slipped into the loose white buckskin riding-breeches, and then pulled the silk jacket which the trainer had given him the previous evening over his vest, taking his cue from Bates, who was also getting into colours to ride in the trial. As he donned the strange peaked cap, he had a great desire to see how he looked as a jockey, and he strode over to a small mirror.

desire to see how he looked as a jockey, and he strode over to a small mirror.

He thought he looked well. The Marquis of Blanchester's colours were illac and yellow, and although the jacket was too large for him, and was slightly faded, he thought he looked like a real jockey. He pulled the jacket down a bit—it was made large, with elastic round the waist to enable it to be "fitted" to anyone—and tried to look unconscious, when a voice called out loudly:

"Where's the pretty boy? I hope he ain't lost! Bates, 'ave a look under the beds, will you?"

"Buck up!" called Bates. "Slip your boots on! You'll soon get over fancying yourself in these togs! Put your overcoat on, or you'll be nipped to the marrow. It blows up here in the early morning!"

Cook was having Black Dean, Jacolat, and Prince Perold saddled as they entered the stable. The yard looked cold and deserted in the grey early morning light.

"Hi, you, Grant!" he said.

"You're to carry nine stone. Just go and fix 'im up, Bates. The guv'nor's goin' to weigh 'im in 'isself, so you must be sharp!"

The two boys hurried to the small room where the weighing-machine stood, and Bates helped Stanley to fix the leads into the pad which Cook had given him.

"I wonder what the game is?" said Bates. "You're carrying the Derby weight, which is the same as the Two Thousand. I suppose you're going to be put up on Black Dean, but I—"

"You lads ready?" asked Mr. Belcher, entering with Dan Daltrey, who were a heavy overceat coming

but I—"
"You lads ready?" asked Mr.
Belcher, entering with Dan Daltrey,
who wore a heavy overcoat coming
down to his ankles and had a muffler
round his throat.
"Yes, sir." said Bates; "I'm not
to carry anything, I suppose, sir?"

"No," said Belcher; "you will ride Jacolat, Mr. Daltrey is riding the Dean, and you'll be on Prince Perold, Grant."

Bates stared at his employer as though he were mad, as Stanley, obeying instructions, sat on the seat of the scales nursing his saddle on his knees.

But there was a lot of method in Mr. Belcher's madness. For one thing, he had always had a theory that Prince Perold would do better with a boy instead of a man on his back—that is, if the right boy could be obtained, so he had decided to try Grant on him as the youngster had proved his ability to ride well.

Then, again, he knew that a man named Squires, a tout and a spy, generally managed to witness any trial no matter what precautions were taken, and as from a distance Prince Perold and Black Dean looked much alike, he guessed that the tout would be sure to take it for granted that Daltrey was riding the colt engaged in the Two Thousand Guineas and the Derby.

Stanley was puzzled. He walked with the others to where the horses were standing. He was much more puzzled when the trainer told him to mount Black Dean, and Daltrey, slipping out of his coat, swung on to Prince Perold He still wore a stout overcoat over the silk, for he had to take care of himself.

Bates glanced at Stanley as they rode together behind the trainer and Daltrey.

"The guv'nor's up to some game, lad," he said, in a whisper. "I reckon he's beginning to get a bit suspicious of Cook. The only thing I wonder is that he didn't do so before. You're lucky to be up on the Prince. It means the guv'nor thinks something of you, for he's very careful who rides him at exercise, let alone in a trial."

In a few minutes Stanley found himself at a starting-gate, a model of the real thing, and Belcher, dismounting, busied himself in arranging the "tapes," which until a lever had been pulled from a barrier barred the way. In the distance was another post, and by that post Stanley saw with surprise a man and a girl on horseback.

"The markiss and his daughter."

a girl on horseback. "The markiss and his daughter," said Bates, noticing the look. "They generally come down to the winning-post to see an important trial, no matter how early it may be."

Belcher got the starting-gate right. "Now, then," he said briskly, "you get up on the Prince, Grant. The course is a mile. Take him easy for the first half, and then set him going."

for the first half, and then set him going."
"Yes, sir!" said Grant, and noticed that Dan Daltrey glanced keenly at him as he mounted. The jockey threw off his overcoat, as the lads had done, and the three horses stood at the starting-gate, the Dean patient as his rule, Prince Perold inclined to be restive, and Jacolat behaving as he usually did before the tapes, twisting round like a catharine-wheel.

Prince Perold getting tired, started

wheel.

Prince Perold getting tired, started to back. Stanley patted him.

"Keep him steady, Grant!" cried the trainer. "Now then, Bates, pull on the right, and—"

the trainer. "Now then, Bates, pull on the right, and—"."

The horses were in a line. Belcher seizing the opportunity, pressed the lever, the tapes shot up, and the horses were off towards the distant post where waited the Marquis of Blanchester and his daughter.

Stanley, being unused to the peculiar rise that a racehorse gives at the start, and the unexpectedness of the snap of the tapes, lost a little ground at the start, but, bearing in mind the trainer's orders, he made no attempt to ride out. He saw Daltrey riding easily ahead, with the grace that always characterised him. Bates on Jacolat, was beside him. The rustle of the silk and the thud of hoofs were music to his ears.

Then he judged they had done half the distance, and he started to ride hard.

"Go on. Prince," he whispered:

"Go on, Prince," he whispered; you'll do me a good turn, old

"you'll do me a good turn, old man!"

The pace was new to him, his surroundings seemed blurred. He knew that he had passed Jacolat, and was creeping up to the horse in front. He saw Daltrey turn his head and then use his whip on the Dean.

Stanley had no whip, but he rode with all his might, and the gallant three-year-old thundered along, increasing his pace as the boy called upon him to do so.

The next instant the horses were neck and neck, and the winning-post was close at hand. Stanley made one last great effort, throwing himself and his horse forward till they were past the post, and pulling up.

He was panting with exertion and excitement as he wheeled the colt round and ranged up alongside Daltrey to trot back to where the marquis was.

"I think you did it by a length," said Daltrey pleasantly. "The Dean couldn't rise to the challenge. Who taught you to ride, youngster?"

"A farmer in the village where I lived was a good rider. I think he said he'd been a jockey as a young man, but I didn't take much interest in it then, except that I loved horses. He had a beauty, and when I knew how to handle him he let me ride him."

"You should be grateful to that

I knew how to handle him he let me ride him."

"You should be grateful to that farmer," said the jockey shortly.

"Look there!" cried Stanley suddenly, pointing to some furze bushes.

"What's that chap sneaking round there for?"

"A tout," said the jockey carelessly; "but he wouldn't have learnt much this morning. Lord Blanchester gave that chap a horsewhipping once, so he's pretty careful not to come too near now."

said

not to come too near now."

"Good-merning, Daltrey!" said
Lord Blanchester, as they rode up.

"What do you think of the Prince's
chance now—eh?"

"Very good chance for the double, my lord, if he keeps as fit as he is now"

my lord, if he keeps as fit as he is now."

Then Belcher rode up with the overcoats, and Stanley was glad to get into his, for the keen air was making itself felt after the warmth induced by the exercise began to leave him.

"A great performance, my lord!" cried the trainer jubilantly. "To give the Dean eight pounds and a length's beating is something to be proud of!"

"You rode very well," said the marquis, turning to Stanley; and the lad flushed.

"You are a new lad, are you not?"

marquis, turning to Stainey; and the lad flushed.

"You are a new lad, are you not?" said the girl on the grey mare beside the marquis, whom Stanley learnt was Lady Phyllis Stanton.

"Yes, my lady!"

"But surely," said the girl, "you have ridden in races before?"

"No, my lady," said Belcher; "this was his first appearance under silk, but the man who taught him to ride evidently knew the ropes"

"See that he is given a chance in public as soon as you get his licence,

"What a serious chap you are, said. "Anyone would think then

were conspirators seeking my life."
"It wouldn't be the first tim
there have been conspirators in
racing stable," said Bates shortly. time

THE 9th CHAPTER

Mr. Mark Darke, of London.

R. WILLIAM SQUIRES
did not draw his breath
easily until he was well
away from the scene of the trial. He had an unpleasant recollection of the strength of the marquis's arm and his knowledge of how to handle a whip, and he never saw that good sportsman without feeling a horrible tingling sensation all over his body.

Therefore it gave him added pleasure to have knowledge which he

pleasure to have knowledge which he could sell at a good price.

He was a short, thin little man, and had at one time been a jockey in America. His career in the profession came to an end by his losing a big race a little too artistically, and rousing the long lingering suspicions of the stewards. His face was sallow, his eyes resembled those of a ferret, he was clean-shaven, and was disliked even by men as great blackguards as himself, who had dealings with him.

"Guess we'll fix the particulars supplied by our dear, dense friend Cook," he muttered, as he stopped suddenly beside a large oak-tree near the village, and cautiously inserted his hand into a hollow in the trunk.

"Just as I reckoned," he said complacently to himself, as he with-

serted his hand into a hollow in the trunk.

"Just as I reckoned," he said complacently to himself, as he withdrew a small piece of paper, which, after reading, he carefully tore into small pieces. "Daltrey rode the Prince, carrying eight stone six, with the new lad on Black Dean, carrying nine stone. He doesn't give the result. Perhaps he expected I should be there, and slipped out whilst Belcher was away. Well, it don't say much for the Prince's chance."

He entered a small cottage at the end of the short village street, and prepared himself an early breakfast. He had no servant or companion in this cottage, which looked about as shabby as its tenant, for Mr.

The porter apologised, and called pageboy to take the "gentleman" The porter apologised, and called a pageboy to take the "gentleman" up to Mr. Darke's private room on the first floor. Mr. Mark Darke, the millionaire owner of racehorses, was a man to be treated with respect. Even shabby individuals claiming friendship with the great man must be similarly treated, and the porter wondered if his behaviour to the shabby man would mean his discharge. charge

shabby man would mean his discharge.

But Mr. Squires had other things to think about. The pageboy took his name in to the millionaire, and presently returned, asking him to follow him, and then he found himself in the presence of the man who, it was said, had swindled poor people by shady companies, and had run horses more "crookedly" than any other man who had not seen the inside of a prison.

He nodded curtly to Squires, and leant back in his chair. Mark Darke—Abraham Rosenberg some ten years ago—was inclined to be stout, though his height helped him not to show it. His face was florid, and showed his Hebrew descent. A black meustache hid his hard mouth, but nothing could disguise the cunning in the restless dark eyes.

"I've got some news, sir," said the little tout, sitting down and twisting his cap in his hands.

"That's what I pay you for," said the millionaire shortly. "What is it?"

"I was at the Stanton Dale trial this morning, sir, and saw it perfectly. Prince Perold was beaten a length by Black Dean, who received eight pounds. The other runner was never in it. Daltrey rode the Prince, and a new kid was up on the Dean."

Mr. Darke's eyebrows slightly elevated. He wrote something on a pad which lay on the table before him.

"You're sure of this, Squires? Remember, if you play me false, I can give you—" "I was at the Stanton Dale trial

can give you—"
"Oh, 'ush, sir!" gasped the little
man, his face paling. "Don't go
into it, guv'nor. I tell you I saw
the trial myself, and I had a note
from the head lad confirming it."

Darke nodded.

Darke nodded.

"They've got a new lad there," went on Squires quickly; "a mug, I'm told, but a wonder in the saddle. I reckon 'e might be useful to us."

"Catch him young, Squires," said the millionaire, with a gleam in his eyes, "then you've got him for ever." He paused for a moment, and then said slowly: "It might be worth a hundred pounds to you to get that boy under your thumb. He might be useful to me later on."

"Take it as done!" cried the little tout excitedly. "If I can't manage to—"

"Take it as done!" cried the little tout excitedly. "If I can't manage to—"

"Don't shout, you fool!" snapped Darke angrily. "It's bad enough having a wreck like you coming here to see me at all, without your shouting out like a bookmaker in the ring. Next time I must see you somewhere else. Is that fellow Cook doing as I suggested?"

"Yes, sir. There won't be no racin' in Black Dean at—"

"No names," interrupted the millionaire, producing his pocketbook, and taking out two five-pound notes, which he tossed to the man opposite him, as anyone tosses a bone—to a hungry dog. "Don't forget that if Black Dean loses at Newmarket, you'll get fifty pounds; and don't forget about that boy. You can go."

Squires rose, and thrust the notes deep into the breast-pocket of his

uires rose, and thrust the notes into the breast-pocket of his

deep into the breast-pocket of his coat.

The crackle they made was music to his ears, and his face was flushed as he went out of the room.

Usually after an interview with Mr. Mark Darke he went back to Stanton Dale helplessly drunk. To-day, when he reached the little village after his walk from Carby, he was almost sober.

He glanced in the direction of the Blanchester stables away up on the hill, as he stood outside the shabby cottage with the neglected garden.

"Bill Squires," he said to himself, "there's the easiest 'undred pounds you ever earnt up there. Won't I talk like a Dutch uncle to the pore little innocent mug? It will be gettin' one back on the markiss and ol' Joe Belcher, too!"

He was smiling contentedly as he entered the cottage, and produced a bottle of whisky.

"I'll drink to the success of Bill Squires," he muttered.

And he kept on drinking until he

A LAUGHABLE TALE OF FRED FROLIC AND BEN BOLD

(See This Week's "Boys' Herald." Now on Sale, 1d.)

Belcher," said the marquis; and then with a nod he started his horse, and, followed by the girl, rode off in the direction of the house.

"Lucky beggar you are!" said Bates to Stanley, as he rode back to the stables. The latter was now on Black Dean, for the trainer, was determined to keep the trial a secret, and had therefore threatened both lads with terrible punishment if they spoke to anyone of the true state of affairs.

"I think I am, Bates; but everybody is jolly good to me."

"You be on the look-out," said Bates quietly. "You'll make plenty of enemies as you get on. Keep your eyes an Cook and on Sam Pears. They've brought trouble to other lads that have been here. Belcher's pushing you on, you know, and a lot of the lads won't like it. Don't stick on side, and keep your eyes open for mischief."

William Squires liked absolute privacy in his home.

He only stopped to eat the meal; then, lighting his pipe, he strolled leisurely down to the station and caught the nine o'clock train to York. The journey occupied nearly two hours, and he spent the time in reading the sporting news in his paper, and thinking something which, by the occasional frown on his face, caused him some trouble.

Leaving the great, rambling station at York, he set off in the manner of a man who is familiar with the great place towards the Minster, and presently entered an hotel close to that grand old building. The porter stared at him suspiciously.

"New then?" he said should

He was smiling contentedly as he entered the cottage, and produced a bottle of whisky.

"Now then!" he said shortly.

"What do you want?"

"I want to see my friend, Mr. Mark Darke, who is staying here," said Squires shortly—"that is, if you ain't no objection."

He was smiling contentedly as he entered the cottage, and produced a bottle of whisky.

"I'll drink to the success of Bill Squires," he muttered.

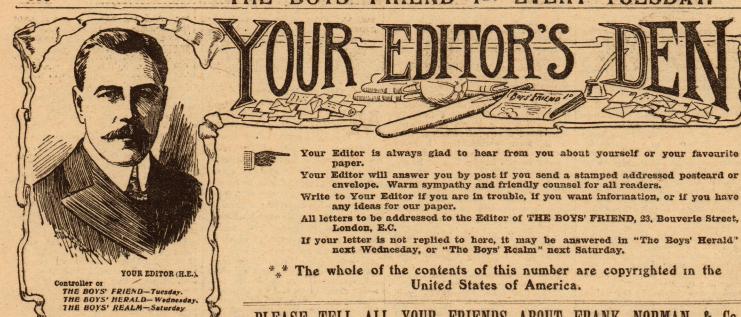
And he kept on drinking until he fell asleep in his chair.

(Continued at foot of the next page.)

THE FOOL OF THE COLLEGE.

**NEXT TUESDAY IN THE** 

A SUPERB NEW SCHOOL SERIAL BY CLAUDE HEATHCOTE. AUTHOR OF "VAL, THE BOY ACROBAT," ETC.



PLEASE TELL ALL YOUR FRIENDS ABOUT FRANK NORMAN & Co.

"THE FOOL OF THE COLLEGE."

ETTER than ever!" I fancy I can hear my readers say-ing as they go through this our Holiday Number, and I certainly do not think I have ever produced

do not think I have ever produced a finer issue—what with its two fine complete tales, the long second instalment of "The Odds Against Him," and all the other splendid features.

As my boys know, it is my continual aim to make The Boys' FRIEND always better and always brighter, and from the countless cheery letters I receive, and our growing circulation, I am evidently achieving my purpose with every success.

achieving my purpose with every success.

This week I have great pleasure in announcing a superb new school serial, which will commence in the pages of our next issue. Like all other good things, even school serials must come to a conclusion, but though I am sorry "School and Mill" has ended, I can safely promise my boys a serial quite as good, if not indeed better, in "The Fool of the Collego," as my new tale is called.

This grand new serial has been

mise my boys a serial quite as good, if not indeed better, in "The Fool of the College," as my new tale is called.

This grand new serial has been specially written by Claude Heathcote, the clever author of "Val, the Boy Acrobat," "The Scapegrace of Swishall School," and many other popular favourites. His work appeared in the very first issue of The Boys' Friend, more than fifteen years ago, and in the whole history of the paper there have been very few occasions when Claude Heathcote has been out of our pages for any length of time.

"The Fool of the College" is a ripping school serial, full of new ideas, and with a setting different entirely from that of any school yarn you have ever read. It will be illustrated by T. W. Holmes, and you must not forget that it positively commences in the next number of The Boys' Friend.

#### BOYS' FRIEND" STORY IN MOVING PICTURES.

I think I may say, without being accused of blowing my ewn trumpet too freely, that I am continually

showing enterprise in the way I control The Boys' Friend and its kindred papers. I do not think, however, I have ever been more enterprising than to have one of our fine stories cinematographed and sent round the country so that all my boys can not only read the yarn in our pages, but can also go and see it acted in living, moving pictures.

The story in question is entitled "From Gipsy Hands," and will appear in the next issue of The Boys' Friend. Directly I first read the yarn in MS. I said to myself: "What a fine cinematograph film this story, would make!" And forthwith I placed it in the hands of one of the leading firms.

This firm was as enthusiastic as myself, and, having read the tale, they set about arranging for the film to be prepared. First of all, there were suitable actors to be engaged to play the many parts in the story, and after that scenery and setting had to be planned, and among other things a ruined windmill had to be discovered to fit in with the author's conception of the story.

All these matters were settled finally, however, and then the photographs were taken, section by



Fig. 2.—Another good arm lock. (See "Ju-jitsu for Boys" on page 810.)

section, and the films made. The work of getting together the many scenes and subjects of the yarn has been simply enormous, but both the author and myself are delighted with the results.

Commencing on Monday next, the film "From Gipsy Hands" will be on show at all the leading electric

theatres up and down the country, and on Saturday next (Whit-Saturday) THE BOYS' FRIEND will appear with the story itself. If the manager of your local electric theatre is not showing the film "From Gipsy Hands" next week, you should ask him to do so.

#### BOY WHO HAS DISAPPEARED.

A BCY WHO HAS DISAPPEARED.

I am asked by the parents of one of my London boys to insert the following notice, and this I gladly do. I sincerely hope that the boy in question will return to his parents speedily. He is certain to see these lines, for he is a diligent reader of THE BOYS' FRIEND, and I can assure him that the reason he left home was all the outcome of a misunderstanding.

This is the notice:

"Will G. C. come and see dad and mum? We are anxious about you.—33 D.C."

#### SUFFERS FROM BRAIN-FAG.

I have just received a letter from a boy of mine, whose initials are A. A. W., and who tells me that he is the victim of brain-fag. I am indeed sorry to hear of this trouble, for it is not often that boys suffer from this complaint, and I expect A. A. W. has been studying too much, or reading more than is good for him.

him.

I am afraid there is only one remedy for brain-fag, yet it is a very simple one, and consists solely of giving the brain a rest. For some time to come A. A. W. must not study heavily, and he ought to read very little, and then merely for short spells.

very little, and then merely for short spells.

Then, again, people who are suffering from brain-fag need as much sleep as they can possibly obtain, and plenty of fresh air into the bargain. Some Phospherine, or other good tonic, obtainable from a chemist, should also be taken, and for some time to come A. A. W. must take every care to keep himself in sound physical health, and in good form in every possible way.

I hope that A. A. W. will speedily get over his brain-fag, and that he will write and let me know how he progresses.

WANTS TO BE A STEWARDESS.

"Cumberland Lassie" is one of my many girl readers, and in the course of a long letter, full of praise for THE BOYS' FRIEND, she asks me to tell her the duties of a stewardess, and how she can obtain such a situation.

and how she can obtain such a situation.

In reply to this inquiry, the work of a stewardess is to wait upon lady passengers, and generally act as a kind of maid in the ladies' cabins. The work is rather hard, and the wages none too good; but, of course, food and accommodation are found, and often there are substantial tips to be picked up at the close of a voyage.

and often there are substantial tips to be picked up at the close of a voyage.

"Cumberland Lassie" should do all she can to obtain influence on her behalf with shipowners, for by this means are appointments usually secured. Failing this, my girl reader should write to the general manager of the steamship line by which she would wish to be employed at the office of the company. The address of this office she can obtain from a directory at the nearest free library. Yet another plan is to make personal application on board the boats when they lie in dock, and this latter is usually a very satisfactory plan.

I wish "Cumberland Lassie" every success, and hope it will not be long before she writes to me again, for I am always pleased to hear from my girl chums.

UNHAPPY HOME LIFE.

H. MacD. is a Scots boy friend of mine for whom I am sincerely and genuinely sorry, and his case is one of those that quite touch the heart. I doubt indeed if I have ever handled a sadder letter in all my long experience, and I only wish there was more I could do to comfort my chum.

there was more I could do to comfort my chum.

H. MacD.'s trouble and sorrow is in his home life. Now, I always think that so long as one is happy at home very little else matters, for a happy home life means so much to us all. In the case of H. MacD., however, his home is ruined by an unnatural father. My boy's mother is not very strong, and there are seven children altogether. All day long the father sits at home grumbling, and sometimes he even

strikes his wife, whilst one of the daughters was sent away from home because she could not find work to

daughters was sent away from home because she could not find work to do.

Poor H. MacD. is now getting desperate. Like the manly boy. I take him to be, he cannot stand about and see his mother abused and ill-treated, but on the one occasion when he turned on his father he was knocked senseless for his pains.

How sorry I am for my chum, and how sorry all my boys will be for their fellow-reader. I only wish I were nearer, when I would indeed call personally, and see what I could do to put things right. As it is, I am afraid H. MacD's only course is to take the matter to his clergyman or minister, explaining the circumstances just as he has done to me.

I feel sure that the minister will know just what is best to be done, and I shall be very much surprised if he does not call at this unhappy home and make a brave effort to bring happiness and sunshine into it.

That such may be the case is my earnest wish, and I sincerely hope H. MacD. will write and let me know how he gets on.

#### A KINDLY LETTER OF THANKS.

I don't suppose there is a single man living who has written so many letters of advice to boys as I have done, nor one who has received more kindly letters of thanks. The following is just a typical example, taken haphazard from my basket this morning, and I am printing it because I am sure it will interest my chums.

"Liverpool."

because I am sure it will interest my chums.

"Liverpool.

"Dear Editor,—You will remember me writing to you in December last with regard to my bad habits. You were good enough to answer my letter, and through your kindness I am quite reformed of these habits. I do not know how to thank you for the great trouble you took to answer my letter, and the good and encouraging advice you gave me. I only wish I could do something towards repaying you. — Yours sincerely, S. C. G."

Very many thanks, S. C. G. I am so glad to hear that my advice has borne good fruit, and as for repaying me—well, there is always one way in which my boys can show their appreciation, and that is by doing their level best to gain me new friends and readers.

### STRICTNESS IN THE NAVY.

W. A. is one of my chums who has been greatly struck by the strictness in the Navy, and particularly by the way in which boys were expected to obey orders like lightning. He asks me if I do not think the discipline too strict and firm.

No. W. A. Candidly, I do not think Navy discipline too strict. After all, what is it compared with the state of affairs a hundred years ago, when the dreaded cat-o'-nine tails was brought into play for the slightest offence?

offence?

If discipline were not firm in the Navy, I am afraid the men and boys would speedily get out of hand with their superiors; and another point is that boys who learn to obey well, will also be able to take command with distinction when called upon to do so. By the way, I am glad to notice that more and more Navy boys are becoming readers of The Boys' FRIEND, and to them, one and all, I extend the hand of welcome.

YOUR EDITOR (H. E.)

YOUR EDITOR (H. E.).

쯍쯍쯍쯍쯍쯍쯍쯍쯍쯍쯍쯍<u>쯍</u> THE ODDS AGAINST HIM. (Continued from the previous page.)

## THE 10th CHAPTER.

The Encounter in the Stable.

HE following evening Stanley, who had been given some who had been given some letters to post by the trainer, walked rapidly towards the little hamlet at the foot of the hill, for the post went at eight o'clock, and he had no time to spare. He was wonderfully happy, and the country road along which he was walking seemed a fit accompaniment for his

seemed a ht accompanies.

He loved his new work. That morning he had had a gallop with the "string" over the moor. He felt that Bates, Williams, and Pitcher were his friends, and if Cook and Pears were against him, the most they did was to ignore him. The pretty girl he had met on his first morning at Stanton Dale,

Violet Belcher, had only a few minutes ago told him that she was pleased to hear he was getting on so well, and everyone had been kind

so well, and everyone had been kind to him.

The day after to morrow he was to go to Newmarket with some of the other lads in charge of horses, and if his license was granted by the Jockey Club in time, he was to ride at the meeting.

He posted his letters just in time, and, whistling cheerfully, started on his walk back to the stables. At the dirty-looking cottage with the untidy garden a man was leaning over the gate.

"Hallo, young 'un!" he cried.

untidy garden a man was leaning over the gate.

"Hallo, young 'un!" he cried.

"You're the comin' champion jockey, aren't you?"

"No," said Stanley shortly. He had taken a dislike to the look of the man, and did not want to enter into conversation with him.

"Oh, don't get huffy, lad! I'm an old jockey myself, and thought I might be able to give you some advice."

"Oh, thanks!" said Stanley, stop-

"Oh, thanks!" said Stanley, stop-ng and walking up to the gate. ping and

"It's very kind of you, and I should be very much obliged to you if—"
"Hallo, Grant! Come along, and I'll give you a lift home."
Stanley turned to see Williams in the dogcart driving back from Carby, where he had been on business for the trainer.
"Frame we" be said to the man

"Excuse me," he said to the rat the gate, and swung himself into the trap.

"What were you talking to that chap about?" asked Williams sharply, as he whipped up the cob.
"He was going to give me some advice," said Stanley, surprised at his friend's tone of voice. "He stopped me as I was coming back from the post."
"Well know clear of him in the

"Well, keep clear of him in the future," said Williams. "If Belcher had seen you talking to him you'd probably have been sacked. That chap was Bill Squires the tout."

"Thanks for telling me," said Stanley; but it was not until long afterwards he knew how much he owed to Williams for interrupting the conversation that night.

After he had helped unharness the

horse, he remembered that he had left a paper he wanted to read in the pocket of a coat he used in the stable, and he went to get it. As he approached the building in the dark,

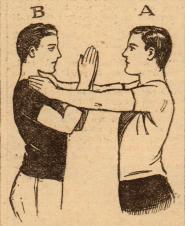


Fig. 3.—Breaking a grip on the throat. (See "Ju-jitsu for Boys" on page 810.)

he fancied he saw a light, and heard voices as he walked up quietly.

"Drink it all up, my old Dean. Another dose, and you won't feel like racing for a bit. I'm glad you've took so well to it. No more to-night, my beauty. You 'ave to be careful with these 'ere drugs, you know."

be careful with these 'ere drugs, you know."

The voice was Cook's, and Stanley burst into the stable.

"What are you doing, you cad?" he cried impetuously.

Cook, his face livid, dropped a saucer he had been holding to Black Dean's mouth, and then as he leapt from the stall towards the youngster, upset the lantern he had placed on the floor.

Stanley felt a couple of hands at his throat, and Cook's gleaming eyes gazing into his. He struggled and gasped for breath, trying to shake off those terrible hands that were choking him.

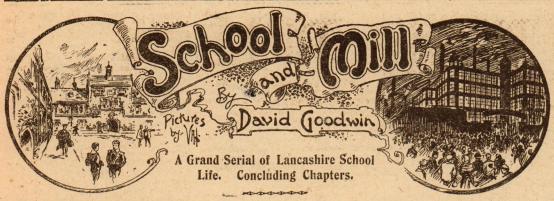
off those terrible hands that were choking him.

"Don't you blab, or you're done for!" panted Cook. "A chap with it! father doin' ten years at Dartmoor can't preach to me!" (Another enthralling long instalment next, week.)

THE FOOL OF THE COLLEGE.

**NEXT TUESDAY IN THE** 

A SUPERB NEW SCHOOL SERIAL BY CLAUDE HEATHCOTE. AUTHOR OF "VAL, THE BOY ACROBAT," ETC



## NEW READERS START HERE.

SAM OLROYD, our hero, a breezy young mill-hand of Boltham. Sam is an

orphan.
CECIL LATIMER, a bright, typically
British boy, without pride or prejudice. Cecil is the nephew of
NEVILLE LATIMER, the millionaire
millowner, in whose employ Sam

MEVILLE MANAGE EMPLOY SAIN Olroyd is.

JERROLD LATIMER, the millowner's second nephew. Jerrold is the opposite in temperament to his cousin Cecil, is mean-spirited, snobbish, and old for his years. Cecil and Jerrold are both pupils at Canterfield College, a very proud and wealthy educational establishment.

Cecil and Jerrold visit the mill where Sam Olroyd works, and Jerrold maliciously sets light to the mill-hand's loom. The finnes spread like lightning, and soon the entire annexe is ablaze. Thanks to Sam's bravery, the fire is prevented from spreading to the main building. Mr. Latimer, who is on the scene, is knocked down by a falling beam, and carried in a dying condition to a cottage near by.

#### From Mill-boy to Millionaire.

From Mill-boy to Millionaire.

Then, learning of Jerrold's treacherous action, he revokes his former will dividing his property between Jerrold and Cecil, and makes a fresh one, leaving a half share in the mill to Sam Olroyd, and also providing for the lad to be sent to Canterfield College with Cecil.

Jerrold's rage and chagrin are terrible, and he yows to wreak his vengeance on Sam. To do this he enlists the aid of an unscrupulous foreman in the mill named Elim Stott.

Cecil later returns to Canterfield, taking Sam with him. Jerrold has gathered a little band of toadies around him, and Sam meets with a hotly adverse reception.

Jerrold visits Latimer's Mill to interview Elim Stott. It is his intention to seek the aid of the rascally overseer in the concoction of a plot that will bring about Sam Olroyd's disgrace. A suitable suggestion is speedily put forward, and on the next occasion Sam visits the mill, accompanied by Cecil, an unscrupulous little piecer, who is in Jerrold's pay, steals a wad of banknotes from the mill manager's pocket, and transfers them to Sam's person.

Later, the manager discovers his loss, a search is made, and the notes are found in Sam's pocket.

A warrant for Sam's arrest is issued, and the lad is taken in charge, and marched to the police station.

Cecil and Cospatrick are at their wits

the lad is taken in charge, and marched to the police station.

Cecil and Cospatrick are at their wits' end what to do. They secure the services of an astute solicitor named Mr. Dodds to take up Sam's defence.

The next day the case is heard at the local court, and the evidence is all against Sam, Elim Stott and his accomplice vowing that they had seen him take the notes. Just when it seems certain that the ex-mill lad will be committed for trial, Cecil rushes up to Mr. Dodds, and whispers excitedly in his ear.

(Nam read this week's instalment.)

(Now read this week's instalment.)

# The Thumb-prints and the Tale They Told.

HE excitement in the policecourt was intense. Every eye was upon Cecil Latimer, and the magistrate fidgeted nervously and

the magistrate fidgeted fiervously and impatiently.

"Come along, please," he said brusquely to Mr. Dodds, the solicitor.

"I can't stay here all day, you know. I'm only waiting for you before committing prisoner."

"Just one moment, sir," replied the solicitor, bending down again to listen to Cecil, who was whispering rapidly in his ear.

Mr. Dodds kept nodding enigmatically, and then turned to the prosecuting lawyer.

ally, and then turned to the prosecuting lawyer.

"Will you kindly permit me to see the stolen notes again?" he asked calmly. "I have a special reason for making the request."

The solicitor for the prosecution, rather nettled and perplexed at the question, passed over the notes grudgingly, the magistrate fuming and fretting more and more at the prolonged delay.

Mr. Dodds almost snatched at the incriminating papers, and turned

Mr. Dodds almost snatched at the incriminating papers, and turned them over in his hands, scrutinising them carefully the while.

"There! What are those marks, Mr. Dodds?" whispered Cecil, pointing to some oily thumb-prints that showed up plainly at the corner of one of the notes. "The thought just crossed my mind that there might be some slight

trace of a mark. Can these imprints be used on Sam's behalf in any way?"
Cecil spoke hurriedly, and in a low tone of voice. He was tense, and drawn with excitement. As in a flash, the inspiration had come to him to he the notes carefully examined, and now that marks had been found upon them, tell-tale thumb-prints, he realised that they must be either those of Sam Olroyd, the manager, Stott, or the little piecer, Pyke. Pyke's fingers from the nature of his work would naturally be greasy and oily, and a thrill came over Cecil as this thought crossed his mind. Would this be sufficient evidence upon which to secure Sam's release?

By this time even the magistrate was becoming curious as to what was taking place between the solicitor and Cecil. He craned forward beyond his desk, and again asked peremptorily the reason for the delay.

Mr. Dodds then begged to recall one of the witnesses, and receiving the required permission, requested the manager to step into the box.

As soon as the witness had been resworn, the solicitor passed the notes to him.

"Can you tell the court," he asked, drawn with excitement. As in a flash, the inspiration had come to him to high the notes carefully examined, and now that marks had been found upon them, tell-tale thumb-prints, he realised that they must be either those of Sam Olroyd, the manager, Stott, or the little piecer, Pyke. Pyke's fingers from the nature of him work would naturally be greasy and oily, and a thrill came over Cecil as this thought crossed his mind. Would this be sufficient evidence upon which to secure Sam's release?

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As soon as the witness had been resonance of the fact that the state in any two persons, dead of the notes to him the state of the notes to him the fact that the prisoner from the militory and wondering that he had not himself observed the prints

neither grease nor oil, and his hands would have been perfectly clean."

The magistrate picked up the notes, and glanced closely at them whilst Mr. Dodds had been speaking. He even examined the thumb-prints through a reading-glass that lay upon his desk.

ink, and some pieces of stout white paper. He took his place at his desk, and nodded to the magistrate, signifying that all was ready for the test.

"Now, if you please," said Mr. Dodds to the manager, who then stepped forward and dabbed his thumb into the ink, afterwards pressing it firmly on a sheet of the white paper. The inspector thereupon wrote the manager's name upon the sheet, and called for the prisoner. Accompanied by the gaoler, Sam then crossed the court to the inspector's desk, and made the imprint of his thumb upon another sheet of paper, which was duly marked with his name, and put aside.

The overlooker Stott followed, and Pyke was then called upon to go through a similar ordeal, but sullenly refused to comply with the request of Mr. Dodds.

"Ah've never touched the notes," he said sullenly. "No one ever thowt Ah'd stole 'em! Why, I hadn't even seen 'em. Why should—"

"Now, no nonsense there!" interrupted the magistrate sternly. "Do as you are told instantly."

Grumblingly, Pyke came forward and crossed the well of the court, gingerly making his thumb-print as the others had done on a clean piece of paper, which was inscribed with his name.

Pyke had hardly resumed his seat

of paper, which was inscribed with his name.

Pyke had hardly resumed his seat before the inspector had compared the four thumb-prints with those upon the stolen notes. He us no glass, but holding the notes in one hand, with the other took up the special sheets, and carefully compared the marks. Hardly had he concluded his examination, when the magistrate interposed with a brisk question.

"And what do the thumb-prints tell, inspector?" he asked.

"The thumb-print on the stolen notes and that of the witness Pyke are one and the same," came the stern reply.

are one and the same," came the stern reply.

Mr. Dodds was on his feet in a moment, bristling with eagerness.

"Then I accuse the witness Pyke of stealing the notes and placing them in the prisoner's pocket!"

If the police-inspector's pronouncement had caused sensation and excitement in the court, the lawyer's rapped-out charge added to it tenfold. One could almost feel the tense, dramatic grip that held all present. The magistrate, no longer bored by an everyday case, looked piercingly at the piecer Pyke.

For some seconds there was complete silence in the court. It was all so sudden, so unexpected. It needed thinking over. Then a shrill treble voice rang out from the back of the court.

"He did take 'em, sir! He did

He did take 'em, sir! He did

take 'em,"

"What's that?" roared out Mr.

Dodds. "Stand up there!"

A diminutive youngster rose shyly—
one of Latimer's half-timers.

"Come here!" snapped the solici-

tor. And the boy, clambering over the benches, approached, and was promptly put into the witness-box and sworn by the usher.

"Now, boy," said Mr. Dodds, who was in rare fighting form, "remember you are on your solemn oath. Tell us exactly what you know."

Nervously at first, and then gradually overcoming his reserve, the lad declared that he had actually seen Pyke pick the manager's pocket and place the stolen notes in Sam's.

"And why didn't you mention this before?" asked the magistrate suspiciously.

"Ah were afeard, yer worship," replied the boy. "Pyke were the bully of the room, an' thrashed and chivived us no end. He wor the overlooker's favourite, too, sir, and we all feared 'un. If Ah'd tell'd, Ah'd ha' bin sacked."

The magistrate turned sternly upon Pyke, glaring at him fiercely over the rims of his glasses.

"Is this true?" he snapped at the trembling lad.

In an instant Pyke had commenced to weep, stuffing his knuckles into his eyes. Not a sound came from him but choking sobs.

"Stop that foolery!" commanded the magistrate angrily. In cases like this he had a heart of stone and showed no mercy. "Come, answer my question, boy, or I shall find some way of making you!"

"It wor all Stott's fault," Pyke blubbered out, each word interspersed with a sob that seemed to shake his whole frame. "He paid me to do it, and Jerrold Latimer too. Ah only did as Ah wor told. It worn't my fault. Ah wor t' victim."

At the mention of Jerrold Latimer's name everyone in court turned to the bench where he had sat at the beginning of the trial. It had been supposed that he had attended out of currosity, and perhaps as a representative of the Latimer had gone, and Stott with him. In the excitement of the first suspicion and the making of the thumb-prints this precious pair of rascals had grown alarmed and anxious, and had at once decamped, leaving their tool to his fate.

"I can plainly see the truth of this

of rascals had grown alarmed and anxious, and had at once decamped, leaving their tool to his fate.

"I can plainly see the truth of this matter," said the magistrate. "It has been a deep and cunning plot, and I should not be surprised if we hear a great deal more about it. Samuel Olroyd, you are, of course, discharged, and happily without a stain upon your character. You were nearly the victim of as dastardly a plot as has ever come before my notice. I congratulate you upon your escape. You ought to get on in the world, and I only hope that the time will come when you may indeed be a part owner of the great mills that are so widely known."

The cheers that burst out in court were greater in volume and intensity than those that had been heard earlier in the inquiry, and even the solicitors and police joined in the enthusiastic reception of Sam as he left the dock and walked towards Cecil and Cospatrick. No effort was made to check the uproar, amid which the magistrate left his desk, and judiciously disappeared through the door at the back of the dais.

Over the benches trooped the mill boys, surrounding their hero in a glad-hearted, merry throng.

"Good owd Sam!"

"Three cheers for our owd Sam!"

"Shake hands, lad!"

"Thee's aw reight!"

These and many other shouts assailed Sam Olroyd. His hands were worked like pump handles, his clothes were almost torn off him in the excitement. He was jostled and hustled, patted on the back, and thumped in the ribs till he had hardly enough breath left with which to speak.

Seeing an opening at last, however, he made a bold dash towards the main door of the court, dragring Cecil

hardly enough breath left with which to speak.

Seeing an opening at last, however, he made a bold dash towards the main door of the court, dragging Cecil with him. The mill boys followed closely in his rear, yelling themselves hoarse, and it was a wonder that there was not a serious accident as they flung themselves upon the exit, and strenuously endeavoured to all squeeze through at once.

Outside the court, however, matters for Sam were as bad, if not worse, than inside. It was the dinner-hour, and a crowd of piecers and other workers from the mill were gathered in the streets, yelling and cheering as the result of the case was passed from one to another.

And when Sam appeared their enthusiasm knew no bounds. The outside contingent swarmed forward to meet Sam, and those inside were pressing hard upon their idol. Police came rushing up to save him from his countless friends. Certainly such



THE FOOL OF THE COLLEGE.

NEXT TUESDAY IN THE A SUPERB NEW SCHOOL SERIAL BY CLAUDE HEATHCOTE AUTHOR OF "VAL, THE BOY ACROBAT," ETC.

## 學是學學學學學學學學學學 SCHOOL AND MILL.

(Continued from the previous page). 

a scene had never been witnessed before in grim, grey Boltham.

Sam, standing upon the steps of the court-house, looked hopelessly round. There was a gleam of triumph on his face, and a smile of contentment. Here was compliment indeed, yet something deeper than mere compliment—something that amounted almost to hero-worship.

Standing at the kerb, hemmed in by the crowd, was a pony and trap. To whom it belonged he did not care, but as Sam's eye fell upon the turnout, it seemed to present some faint hope of escape. Gripping Cecil tightly, he sprang forward and made for the trap. Elbowing and shouldering his way, he gained the vehicle and mounted, Cecil close behind. He seized the whip and reins, and made as if to drive off, but the effort was fruitless.

The workers closed in still tighter round the near and trap veiling and

fruitless.

The workers closed in still tighter round the pony and trap, yelling and cheering continuously, and many of them calling lustily for a speech. Both contingents were now mingled, and the ringleaders who had been inside the court pressed forward and quickly unharnessed the pony from the trap, giving the animal in the charge of a loafer who had become mixed up in the throng.

Then the piecers and half-timers

mixed up in the throng.

Then the piecers and half-timers seized the shafts, the wheels, the body, any part of the trap to which they could cling, and dragged it frem the police-court and up the steep hill that led towards Canterfield College.

Yelling at the top of their voices, cheering frantically, bawling snatches of heroic songs, the boy mill-workers dragged Sam Olroyd and Cecil Latimer along, working in relays, so that as quickly as one party became tired and winded another was ready to take its place.

Sam kept up a running fire of thanks, and Cecil sat joyfully chaffing the mill boys, cheering Sam, and trying to make a speech alter-postelly speech alter-

nately.

All along the road people turned out from the houses to witness the strange procession. One or two horses, to whom steam-lorries and traction-engines were as mere toys, bolted at the sight of such a strange spectacle, and the throng was increased each moment by fresh recruits.

All along the road to Canterfield passed the procession, the keenness increasing rather than diminishing. News spreads quickly nowadays, and within a quarter of a mile of the college a regular regiment of Sam's adherents among the Collegers came hurrying forward to meet the band, adding their welcome, and falling in with the grimy workers.

As the gates of the college were reached the worthy doctor himself hastened forward as though to ascertain the meaning of the unusual

uproar on the comparatively quiet road. The noise had reached him as he was picking roses in his garden, and he held a bunch in his hand.

garden, and he held a bunch in his hand.

At the sight of his capped and gowned figure barring the entranceway, the procession slowed down, the boys drawing the trap halting, as it were, automatically, for the moment nonplussed.

The doctor's eyes fell upon Sam and Cecil, and then upon Cospatrick and the other Collegers.

He adjusted his eyeglass and quizzed round upon the scene, as though he could hardly believe his eyes. Yet there were a number of his own scholars, returning to the college with such a motley procession as he had never seen. Their Etons were jostling with the greasy, grimy clothes of the boy workers.

"What is the meaning of this?"

"What is the meaning of this?" he asked sternly, his eye full upon Cecil Latimer in his exalted position in the trap.

The Record "Brew" at Canterfield.

HAT is the meaning of all this?" asked the doctor again more peremptorily, though there was a merry twinkle in his eyes. "Is it the hometwinkle in his eyes. "Is it the hor coming of a hero, or merely pageant of the Boltham Mills?"

Cecil looked keenly at the worthy Head, trying his hardest to pierce the inscrutable expression, feeling his way for a suggestion that it was on the tip of his tongue to make.
"Olroyd has been discharged with-

out a stain upon his character, sir said Cecil, looking down proudly upon the mixed throng gathered upon the mixed throng gathered round him, as if he were the stately figure of Britannia in her chariot. "The whole affair was a dastardly plot to ruin Olroyd, but the johnnie—er—the person, sir, who planned it will get it hot—er—will be booked to brought—er—brooked to brought—er—you know, sir!"

The doctor looked smilingly at Cecil.

Cecil.
"Lucid—wonderfully lucid!" he remarked drily. "But I suppose Olroyd was discharged, and that he is free to return to his fellows?"

"Yes, sir; and the magistrate complimented him and rounded on those who got up the charge. These lads, sir, are piecers, half-timers, and other workers in the Latimer Mills. They love their Sam, sir, and have dragged him back to college. Er—I suppose we couldn't invite them into the gymnasium, could we, sir?"

Cecil looked sheepishly at the doctor, half-fearing a stern rebuke for his request.

"I am afraid we could not!" snapped the Head. "That is to say, you could not! I could, though!"

Cecil could not take his eyes from

see through the deception or fathom the riddle.
Suddenly the doctor flung his reserve to the wind. The expression on his face changed, and throwing back his gown, he stepped quickly forward, thrusting his way through the throng of mill-boys, and extending his hand to Sam Olroyd, who had remained speechless through the conversation chronicled above.
"Olroyd," said the doctor warmly, "welcome back to Canterfield! I have received a private report of the case by telephone. I congratulate you, and am proud to have you at the college!"
"Three cheers for the doctor!"

"Three cheers for the doctor!" yelled out Cecil in his enthusiasm.

And they were given by the Collegers and the mill-boys with a three-times-three, caps being threwn into the air till the scene resembled an Irish fair.

"And, Latimer, you have my permission to invite the boys into the gymnasium," added the doctor quietly.

And then, with a hitch of his

quietly.

And then, with a hitch of his gown, he turned and strode away, chuckling to himself as though enjoying his joke.

The scene that followed baffles all description. A contingent of mill-boys collared Sam and mounted him on their shoulders, whilst as many Canterfielders as possible laid hold of Cecil, and treated him in the same way.

way.

Then, with Cospatrick leading the way, after the fashion of a drummajor, and whistling to the tune of "See the Conquering Hero Comes!" the whole of the mill-boys and the assembled Canterfielders passed into the spacious gymnasium, the trap being left in the road, where it was afterwards retrieved by its unfortunate owner, who took the matter very calmly on its being explained to him the joyful reason for the commandeering.

to him the joyful reason for the commandeering.

Now, it is a peculiar thing, but wherever you get a mixed body of human beings, if you leave them sufficiently long they will gradually sort themselves out and shake down into something like order and method.

This was processly what herpered

into something 'like order and method.

This was precisely what happened in the gym. At first the mill-boys were shy and reserved, and not a few of them were very much inclined to make a bolt from the room. Gradually, however, they were split up into little knots of threes and fours, and with each party was a similar number of Canterfielders.

Some of the Collegers certainly did regard the presence of the mill-boys as an outrage upon their dignity, and threatened to write home "to their guv'nors, don't you know"; but there were very few of these snobs and toadies, and the great majority of the Canterfielders came forward eagerly to do the honours in the hour of Sam's triumph.

The masters kept judiciously out of the way and in a short time the

triumph.

The masters kept judiciously out of the way, and in a short time the ringleaders of the Canterfielders had passed quietly through the gymnasium, taking toll of their fellows to as large a tune as possible.

In this quiet way a goodly sum of

money was raised, which, being pooled, was at once despatched to the tuckshop, where, to the amazement and delight of Mrs. Miggs, the whole of her stock was seized and whisked away, lock, stock, and barrel, including the available crockery.

Even the Canterfielders had never had such a mighty "brees" before, and to the mill-boys it was a positive revelation of high living.

There was plenty of tea, coffee, and mineral waters by way of drinkables, and the more solid portions of the menu consisted of sausage-rolls, cakes, pastries, biscuits, doughnuts, queen cakes, puffs, buns, currant rolls, sardines, tinned fruits, and bread-and-butter.

During the progress of the brew

bread-and-butter.

During the progress of the brew the whole room buzzed with merry banter, the popping of mineral water stoppers, and the efforts of several excitable boys to make stump speeches. The rough Lancashire dialect mingled merrily with the more cultured tones of the Canterfielders. Everyone was happy, all were having a downright good time. There was all-sufficient for the mighty feast.

But even colossal brews must come

an were having a downing good time. There was all-sufficient for the mighty feast.

But even colossal brews must come to an end some time. One after another, at least half a dozen of the mill-boys endeavoured to mount a form and offer a few words of thanks, but so soon as they opened their mouths they were dragged down by Canterfielders. However grateful they might be, they were given no chance of showing their feelings.

At last Cecil Latimer climbed up beside Sam Olroyd, with Cospatrick on the opposite side of the guest of honour. The point of vantage was the high back of a vaulting-horse, and it served its rurpose well.

"Boys," commenced Cecil, amid a burst of cheers—"boys from the mill, that is to say—Sam ('Good owd Sam!') asks me to thank you all for coming here this afternoon. He'd speak himself ('Speech! Speech!') but he's a bit husky, and doesn't know what to say. ('Book oop, Sam!') He's been through a bad time, and it's left him a bit sore, you know. But he thanks you all again, and he'll never forget that he was once a piecer, too, or how you stood by him in the court!"

There were more roars of cheering at this, and then Cospatrick impediately.

There were more roars of cheering at this, and then Cospatrick jumped to his feet, waving a hand enthusiastically. His position was somewhat precarious, but he maintained an even balance. For a second he looked at Sam, and then glanced round at the boys.

"Now, chaps!" he cried. "I'm no giddy speech merchant, so 'For he's a—""

no glddy speech incentary, in In a flash one of the seniors had rushed to the piano that stood in the corner of the gymnasium and snatched off its baize jacket, lifting the cover to the keys, and taking his seat all in one swift motion.

And then, at the top of their voices, mill-boys and Canterfielders alike yelled and yelled again:

"'For he's a jolly good fellow,
He's a jolly good fellow,
For he's a jolly good fell-ow-ow,
And so say all of us—us—us!""

Latimer, Olroyd & Co.—Conclu-

HERE is but little more to

Jerrold Latimer and Elim Stott fled the country, and were never seen again in Boltham. They knew that they were liable to arrest and probably to hard labour in one of his Majesty's prisons for conspiracy, and made themselves scarce accordingly. Whether Jerrold continued to receive his private income is a matter of doubt.

Though nominally arrested, the piecer Pyke was never actually charged with his crime of taking the notes from the manager's pocket, for Sam Olroyd, generous to a fault, refused point-blank to prosecute, deeming that the loss of employment and the stern words of the magistrate had been sufficient to teach the lad a life-long lesson. Jerrold Latimer and Elim

and the stern words of the magistrate had been sufficient to teach the lad a life-long lesson.

That Sam's confidence was misplaced was proved when a few weeks later Pyke came to grief again, and received first a sound birching at the hands of a burly police-sergeant, and then a long term at a reformatory, where, let it be hoped, he will be educated to a better sense of right and wrong.

Sam Olroyd, the hero of Canterfield, was none the worse for the hard gruelling of his early days. He got on both at the classes and the sports, and though he never lost the brogue of his mill-boy days, he was always a popular favourite with masters and school-fellows alike.

But do not run away with the idea

masters and school-fellows alike.

But do not run away with the idea that Sam managed to keep out of scrapes or that he was a namby-pamby. He was far too manly a boy to have held back when there was a jape or a shindy going forward, and his popularity was earned as much through his energy for organising pranks as for his other qualities.

Some couple or three years later both Cecil and Sam left Canterfield, and shared their time between the mills at Boltham and a school of business training, so that they might be thoroughly fitted to become the actual owners and masters of the

mills at Boltham and a school of business training, so that they might be thoroughly fitted to become the actual owners and masters of the property they had inherited.

Eventually, Sam Olroyd was fully confirmed in his rights to a share in the business under the will of Neville Latimer, and if you should ever be in Boltham you will find, occupying a prominent place in the town, the gigantic premises of Latimer, Olroyd & Co. The little piecers employed there are the happiest in the town, their rights and privileges being jealously guarded by the new masters, and though a full hour's work is expected for a full hour's pay, they are not subjected either to bullying or to the tyranny of brutal overlookers, their superiors being carefully and wisely selected for the duty by Sam Olroyd himself.

As for Grace Latimer and the Wilde Street boy who had saved her life one Christmas Eve—well, that is quite another story, and is beyond the confines of "School and Mill."

THE END.

THE END.

("The "Fool of the College" starts next week.)

# JU-JITSU FOR BOYS.

A Grand New Series, Specially Written by a Professor of Japanese Self-defence.

SHORT time ago a prisoner before a magistrate, who had been handed over to the police by a young tramcar conductor, after a brief struggle, stated that he objected to anyone trying "amateur on him.

By amateur tricks he meant the locks and holds placed on him by his captor, who happened to be a ju-jitsu enthusiast. The amateur tricks came in particularly useful, even though the conductor's assailant was an individual greatly his superior in bulk and physical strength.

Therein lies the extreme value of ju-jitsu. A knowledge of it places the weak person, not only on an equality with a much stronger one, but far superior to him.

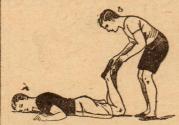
Moreover, it is a magnificent physical exercise, developing the power of the muscles, the quickness of the hand, eye, and brain, and general activity, and it is not difficult to learn. But it must be remembered that proficiency comes only with practice. By amateur tricks he meant the

with practice.

It is not enough to know how to make the holds, throws, etc., but the ability to get them into use quickly

and cleanly, which comes from frequent repetition, is requisite. When gained, the value of the knowledge cannot be better demonstrated than by the fact that Yu Kio Tani has defeated the mighty Hackenschmidt by ju-jitsu.

Here is a ju-jitsu trick performed on a person who may seize your coatcollar or lappet with his right hand—a common preliminary of attack. His palm will naturally be undermost. Immediately seize his wrist with both hands, turn your back to him, and draw the captured arm over your left shoulder—it is your left side you turn in to him—thus the palm of his hand will be brought uppermost.



As you now hold him, exerting a little pressure downward on his wrist, he will be absolutely helpless. Don't stoop, and don't press down too violently. Very little pressure will convince him that he is in a hopeless position. He is. He cannot release his arm; he cannot reach you with his other hand. But he is not



Fig. 4-A Sharp Counter-attack.

being hurt, though in such a position that, were he a desperate character, it would be possible. Remember that your shoulder must be between his wrist and elbow (Fig. 1).

his wrist and elbow (Fig. 1).

Again. Take your opponent's right hand or wrist as he faces you, either when he has gripped your coat or you have caught his arm as he was about to strike. Swing to his right side, turning the inside of his hand up; draw his arm across your chest, at the same time thrusting your left arm beneath it, under his armpit—your left arm is across

his chest, his right over your left arm. Downward pressure on the hand will hold him in a position from which there is no escape, and he can do nothing with his free hand (Fig. 2).

The breaking of a grip of the throat, even made with both hands, is very simply performed by one knowing ju-jitsu.

Bring your book

throat, even made with both hands, is very simply performed by one knowing ju-jitsu.

Bring your hands and wrists between your assailant's forearms, and shoot them quickly upward to full stretch of the arms; separate the hands, and throw them apart sideways, and as though by magic the throat hold will be broken, no matter how large or strong-handed the aggressor may be. It is the quickest known method of breaking a throatgrip, though others nearly as good are in existence (Fig. 3).

This trick frees you, and it may be followed up by a counter attack which will surprise your opponent. Immediately the grip is broken throw your hands around his head, joining hands by interlacing the fingers at the base of his skull. Then jerk the head forward and downward—it will go down all right—and you can bear him to the ground, withdrawing your own feet as you make the jerk (Fig. 4).

If for any reason you want to complete the business by keeping the presson where he has fallen julitisu

the jerk (Fig. 4).

If for any reason you want to complete the business by keeping the person where he has fallen, ju-jitsu provides a safe, simple, and effective method. Spring to your adversary's feet as he lies asprawl, bring them

together, and push the heels back as far as possible towards the thighs, after crossing one ankle over the other (Fig. 5).

The biggest and strongest man can be held thus until the cows come home, if you so desire. A very little exercise of your strength will suffice to keep his feet bent as you wish; he is not being hurt—though sensible, he is not quite comfortable. He can't possibly get up or kick or wriggle or do anything, in short, unless you choose to release him.

(Another splendid ju-jitsu article next Tuesday.)



THE FOOL OF THE COLLEGE.

NEXT TUESDAY IN THE "B.F."

A SUPERB NEW SCHOOL SERIAL BY CLAUDE HEATHCOTE, AUTHOR OF "VAL. THE BOY ACROBAT." ETC.

MERRY HOLIDAY TALE



THE 1st CHAPTER.
The Coming of Septimus Wartle.
OE, Hugh, and Tom Towley,
whose larks and pranks, made
possible by the great resemblance they bore to each other, have
earned them a world-wide reputation, were perhaps for the first time in their lives down in the dumps.
And well they might be.

And well they might be.

By dint of hard work, sterling honesty, unfailing good-humour, and civility, they had secured early promotion. But if, as Joe put it with a lugubrious smile, "they had gone up like a rocket, they had come down like the stick," owing to the fact that one of the directors, whom the Towleys had not recognised in time, was unable to join in a laugh at his own expense, with the result that we find them once more reduced to the rank of porters at Trafalgar, the terminus of the Great Southern Railway.

"It's no go, you fellows," said Joe, shaking his head despairingly. "We'll never be out of mischief so long as we keep together. We must separate."

ong as we keep together. We must separate."

The brothers looked at him in consternation. Never in their most indigestion-haunted dreams had they deemed it possible that they should not live and work together.

"Don't be an ass, Joe! Life wouldn't be worth living unless we were together to extract fun from suffering humanity," said Hugh.

"Suffering humanity," said Hugh.

"Suffering humanity is good," grinned Tom. "But come along; here's the boat-mail just coming into the station." And he dashed off in the direction of a platform where several porters were already awaiting the mail-train from the Continental steamer.

But as others on the look-out for tips were before them, they had to remain in the background.

As the train came to a standstill an old gentleman, with a long, flowing beard, a bronzed face, iron-grey eyebrows, bright, shining eyes, and a prominent Roman nose, cast a swift glance over the heads of the porters near him, and turning from a porter who had opened the carriage door, said:

"No, not you; that chap over there."

"That chap" was none other than Loe Towley, who as his comrade.

luggage—ch? You're mighty quick, anyhow," he remarked.

"We have to be at this station, sir," replied Tom good-humouredly.

The old gentleman gazed at him with an intensity calculated to make even a Towley feel uneasy.

In the meantime, Joe, carrying the dressing-case, reached the cab-rank, and handed his load over to the driver of a hansom, who was arranging it against the iron guard-rail, when a loud "Here you are, cabby; catch hold!" caused him to look down, to find Hugh holding the gladstone on the other side of the vehicle.

"Well bless would here's right

webicle.

"Well, bless my old hoss's right ear! What are you—a bloomin' reflection of the other chap, or his shadow?" he demanded, swaying his body as he turned his head first to right, then to left, to gaze down at the grinning porter.

right, then to left, to gaze down at the grinning porter.

"Now then, cabby, shift your reins on one side," said a voice, in similiar tones to those used by the men who had already addressed him. Instinctively he obeyed. Then, dropping into his dickey, gazed at Tom in open-mouthed astonishment.

"Here, I say, do all the porters on this station belong to one family?" he gasped at last.

But Hugh and Joe had dis-

on this station belong to one family?" he gasped at last.

But Hugh and Joe had disappeared, for they had seen an inspector gazing suspiciously at the driver's astounded face, and, dearly though they loved a lark, they realised that they must keep quiet, and not allow their jokes to be too public for a little while.

Tom had to hide his griming face in the cab whilst he arranged the parcel of wraps, then withdrew it, to find the old gentleman gazing at him with the same mocking smile in his eyes that he had noticed before.

"What's your name?" demanded the old gentleman.

Tom told him.

"Oh—ah! Well now, Mr. Tom Towley, I suppose you are not any too well paid at this job?" was the next question.

"Well, we're not all millionaires, but we manage to knock along," admitted Tom.

"I suppose it wouldn't be any good offering you three pounds a week to wait on me—eh? I am an old man, and have only just arrived in England from abroad, so there'll be no one in my house but an old house-keeper and myself."

Tom hesitated. The offer was a splendid one, yet, on the

"No, not you; that chap over there."

"That chap" was none other than Joe Towley, who, as his comrade turned away with a grunt of disgust, sprang forward and took a dressing-case from the old gentleman's hand.

"Get a hansom, porter," ordered the traveller, turning to draw a gladstone-bag from under the seat.

Wicking at Hugh, Joe made off.
"Here you are; catch hold," said the old gentleman, shoving the bag along with his foot, then reached for a bundle of wraps from the rack.

Without a word Hugh obeyed, and followed Joe with the bag, giving place to Tom, who, taking the wraps from the old gentleman, flung them on his shoulder, and was about to make off when the passenger cried:
"Here! Where's the dressing-case and gladstone?"

"You told me to put them on a hansom," replied Tom cheerily.

The old man looked at the porter, and Tom noticed a half-laughing, half-mocking twinkle in his eye.
"What are you—a new kind of wireless telegraphy adapted for

"Well, Tom, how much was it? It ought to be half-a-crown, considering how friendly you were," asked his brothers, coming up behind him. Rather shamefacedly—for he had an unpleasant idea at the back of his head that he had been duped—Tom showed the card, and told his tale. Loud and long laughed his brothers.

"Poor old Tom! Bilked again!"

"Poor old Tom! Bilked again!" cried Hugh.

But for his brothers' laughter, Tom would probably have torn up the card and forgotten about the matter, for he quite shared their belief that it was all a trick of the old gentleman's to escrpe giving tips, and had probably been practised with more or less success for years.

As it was, he thrust the card into his pocket, and, being off duty the following morning, tidied himself up a bit, and presented himself at the address given.

He was rather surprised to find that the old gentleman really lived there, but was more surprised still when, after putting a few questions to which he scarcely awaited the answers, Septimus Wartle hired him as indoor servant, companion, and bodyguard, at the handsome wages he had promised.

Tom found the place an ideal one in all respects. The food was good, the work light, the latter being to accompany the old gentleman on his walks, and to read or talk to him, as he felt disposed.

Now, it was characteristic of the Towleys that one could never keep a good thing from the others, consequently, after he had been in the house three days, Tom made some excuse to go out, and when half an hour later Mr. Wartle rang his bell it was Joe whe answered it.

The old gentleman cast a keen, swift glance at the young fellow, and dropped at once into conversation with him. Evidently the subject was one which had been discussed the previous day, for Mr. Wartle referred to several arguments Tom had made use of to Joe's utter dismay and confusion.

However, the old gentleman did not seem to notice Joe's stammering answers. On the contrary, he was in the highest spirits, and laughed uproariously at the smallest withcism on the part of his servant or companion—Joe was not certain in which light to consider himself.

The next day Hugh took Joe's place, and Mr. Wartle was more hilarious than ever. However, he did not show in the slightest degree that he had detected the change, and it was a capital break from their work as porters, so as Tom had resigned, and

ruption or detection for several weeks.

At last it became evident to the three Towleys that their eccentric old friend was far from well. Tom at length ventured to ask him if he was feeling quite himself.

He seemed gratified at his servant's interest, but evaded the question, though a day or two later Joe accompanied him to the house of a great doctor in Harley Street, from whence the old gentleman emerged subdued, and, for a little while, almost morose, but he rallied later in the day.

However, he was never quite himself after the visit to the Harley Street doctor, although he grew more kind and considerate to the Towleys every day, until at length Joe declared that it was a shame to go on deceiving him, and that Tom must remain always with one whom they began to look upon as their benefactor.

But, strangely enough, with their change of plan. Septimus Warrle's

they began to look upon as their benefactor.

But, strangely enough, with their change of plan, Septimus Wartle's character semed to change too. He lost his former good spirits, and grew every day more silent and morose, until, realising that probably the change in companionship—though he knew not what was taking place—had done him good, they determined to proceed on the same lines as before.

Immediately the old man picked up, and though he had lost a great deal of his former high spirits, seemed greatly pleased with something or other, for he would now and again burst out laughing, and rub his thin, wasted hands together as one enjoying some huge, secret joke to himself.

One evening Joe relieved Tom as usual, who, hastening to his lodgings, donned his porter's clothes, and went on night-duty at Trafalgar.

Joe, who had not seen Mr. Wartle for a couple of days, was shocked by the alteration in him. He was paler, thinner, yet he seemed in higher spirits than usual. But instead of getting up to breakfast the following morning, he requested Joe to bring it up to him, and when they went for their afternoon walk he seemed to lean more heavily on his young friend's arm.

"You'll excuse me speaking plainly, sir," said Joe, as they sat before the open window of Mr. Wartle's dining-room with a tea-table between them.

"Certainly, my boy! What is it?"

"Certainly, my boy! What is it?"
"I don't want to alarm you, sir, but I really think you ought to see a doctor. You are not as strong as you used to be."

A dark shadow fell over the old gentleman's face.
"I leave it Town." he will a like

A dark shadow fell over the old gentleman's face.

"I know it, Tom," he said sadly; and Joe felt guilty of deceit in listening to words intended for his brother.

"To tell you the truth, my boy, the old man's spell of life is nearly ended. I have known it for years; I knew it before I visited the Harley Street man, and he could only confirm my previous knowledge. However, if I have only a short time before me, all the more reason I should enjoy it. Tell me some more tales of those three friends of yours who were so exactly alike that no one could tell which was which. Ha, ha, ha! He, he, he!" And the old chap lapsed into a series of chuckles.

Joe complied until his friend's head began to nod, and he was about to leave him to his evening sleep, when Mr. Wartle, shaking off the drowsiness which was growing upon him, said:

"Give me your arm, Tom, You have often asked."

said:

"Give me your arm, Tom, You have often asked me what is in the locked room on the second floor; I'll show you to night, then you can go for your evening walk."

The last words were accompanied by a strange, triumphant chuckle, which caused Joe to wonder what he meant.

meant.

Slowly the two mounted the stairs, and when Septimus Wartle descended them some ten minutes later he was alone, and leaning heavily on the balustrade.

At the usual time Hugh put in his appearance, and played the usual game of cribbage with him before he retired to rest, then, tired out, for he had had a heavy day, went to bed in a room adjoining that of the old man.

In the meantime Tom had been astonished and a little alarmed at Joe's failure to turn up to work at the station as was his wont. As the day drew on, and his brother did not appear, his alarm increased tenfold.

As soon as he was off duty he hastened to his lodgings to change from his porter's uniform into the clothes he wore when attending upon Mr. Wartle, and also to find out from his landlady if Joe had returned.

No, she had not seen his brother; nor was there a letter or telegram from him. And Tom, uneasiness turning to alarm, waited impatiently for Hugh's return from Mr. Wartle's house.

for Hugh's return from Mr. Wartle's house.

But when an hour had flown by and Hugh had not returned, he left the house, determined to ask Mr. Wartle for leave of absence whilst he searched for his brother, even if, to obtain the desired leave, he would have to confess the harmless deceit that had been practised upon the kindly old man.

As in response to Tom's knock Mr. Wartle's housekeeper let him in, he saw that her face was pale and seamed with anxiety.

"Oh, Mr. Towley, I am so glad you have come!" was her greeting.

"What ever has made you so late? I found the master insensible on the landing outside the locked door on the second floor. He must have dropped down almost directly after you had gone for your evening walk, for I heard you talking to him as you went upstairs together."

More puzzled than ever, Tom rushed past the housekeeper and flew upstairs to his employer's room.

He found the old man stretched on the bed. Consciousness had returned, and though he was evidently very

weak, his eyes smiled a welcome to his young visitor.

"Yon're late, Tom," he said, in a low voice. "I began to fear you'd be too late. It's come, my boy, rather more quickly than I anticipated."

As he spoke he was fumbling with his pillow, from which he drew a key.

"Open the locked door," he added, in a weak, uncertain tone.

Wonderingly, Tom took the key from the wasted old hand, and as he turned in obedience to the command he fancied he heard a low, dry chuckle escape Mr. Wartle's lips.

Wondering what secret the room hid the younger of the Towley Triplets turned the key in the lock, then threw open the door.

The next moment he started back in surprise, for he found himself face to face with his brothers.

"Good gracious, chaps! What are you doing here?" gasped Tom.

"Joe, I thought—well, I didn't know what to think had become of you."

"Well, I didn't know what had become of myself!" laughed Joe.

"Mr. Wartle brought me to the door. unlocked it, shoved me in, and closed and locked the door behind me. As you see, although the windows are barred and fastened with iron shutters impossible to open without proper tools, he did not intend to starve me."

As Joe spoke he pointed to a table on which still stood a sumptuous repast, although he and his brother had made gallant inroads into the viands.

Hugh's tale was practically the same, except that, of course, he had

repast, although he and his brother had made gallant inroads into the viands.

Hugh's tale was practically the same, except that, of course, he had found Joe a prisoner in the room before him.

"What on earth does it all mean?" gasped Tom.

"It can only be that Mr. Wartle detected the trick we were playing on him, and has taken this means to turn the tables on us. I wonder if he will overlook it, or if you will be kicked out?" queried Joe pensively.

"I am afraid not. I wish the poor old chap could. He sent me here, I suppose, to bring you to his side. I am afraid he is dying," replied Tom solemnly.

"Dying!" ejaculated Joe and Hugh in a breath.

"Yes, I'll tell you more presently."
Quiet and subdued, for the three brothers had grown fond of their eccentric old friend, they entered the room where Septimus Wartle, supported by his housekeeper, was sitting up in bed.

His lined face lit up in a smile as the brothers made a shamefaced entry.

"Ha, ha, ha!" he chuckled, rub-

His lined face lit up in a smile as the brothers made a shamefaced entry.

"Ha, ha, ha!" he chuckled, rubbing his hands weakly together.

"You thought you'd play a trick on the old man—eh, boys? But he saw through it from the first. He'd have kept the joke on longer, but the curtain is about to fall on the comedy."

"Oh, sir, forgive us; we didn't mean any harm!" pleaded Tomtaking the old man's hand.

"No, no, it's all right; you had your joke, I had mine! And the old man scored at last—eh?"

The weak laugh that followed was broken by a suffocating cough, which caused the three to crowd anxiously round the bed.

"Keep by him, chaps; I'll run for a doctor," whispered Joe.

"No, no, not yet! Didn't your mother ever tell you of a good-fornothing scapegrace brother she had in Australia?" asked Mr. Wartle, looking anxiously from one to the other.

Joe, as the elder by a few minutes,

other.

other.
Joe, as the elder by a few minutes, took upon himself to reply.
"Yes, sir; and he seems to have been her favourite. To the last she would not believe him dead, and hoped to see him before she passed away."

away."
"Poor Polly! It was just like her
—loyal to the end!" mused the old

—loyal to the end!" mused the old man.

"Then you are our uncle?" cried Joe, trembling with excitement.

The old man nodded.

"Yes, lads. I went to Australia and flourished. My great dream was to come home a rich man and fill my sister's declining years with happiness. But I delayed too late. The news that she was dead almost broke my heart. Her death caused me to change my plans. I remained a few years longer in Australia. When the fame of the Towley Triplets reached me, even in the Antipodes, I guessed at once that you must be my nephews, and at once determined to come to England and find out for myself what kind of lads you had grown. I heard good reports of you everywhere, and, realising that you could not possibly remember me, I determined to make your acquaintance.

THE FOOL OF THE COLLEGE.

NEXT TUESDAY IN THE

.A SUPERB NEW SCHOOL SERIAL BY CLAUDE HEATHCOIL. AUTHOR OF "VAL, THE BOY ACROBAT," ETC.

in the way I did, deeming it probable that you would not be able to resist playing a joke on the old man by changing places, and so I would learn to know the three of you. Well, you have had your joke, and I have had mine. Now, Joe, you can run for the doctor, though it won't be any good, for my complaint is incurable."

And so it proved: and ere the sun.

curable."

And so it proved; and ere the sun had risen the following morning the old man, with a last loving look at his nephews, had passed away.

Then came the funeral, and after the funeral the reading of Septimus Wartle's will, by which the Towley Triplets found themselves their runcle's sole heir, save for a handsome annuity to the housekeeper.

Simply though their uncle had lived, he proved to be a rich man, and when the estate was wound up the Towleys found themselves the possessors of an income of ten thousand a year.

the Towleys found themselves the possessors of an income of ten thousand a year.

But Septimus Wartle had carried his eccentricities beyond the grave, for he had added a condition to his bequest that the money should belong to the Towleys collectively, and not separately. In other words, whilst they could enjoy the whole income, they were not allowed to divide it up in any way, and consequently could not touch the capital.

THE 3rd CHAPTER.
The Towleys Hire a Houseboat.

NE glorious June day, three months after the Towley Triplets had come into the handsome income which had made them independent of railway or any other work, Joe, Hugh, and Tom, clad in flannels, were strolling along the towing path by the side of the

Thames. Moored to the opposite bank was a magnificent houseboat, bearing the boards of three different house-agents—to wit, "Messrs. Benham & Son," "George Tooting," and "Alfred Boat."

Beck."
"The very thing," declared Joe.
"It's about the size we wanted, and
not in a crowded part of the river.
What do you say—shall we go to
Messrs. Benham and get full particulars?"
"You may go to Berham if you

"You may go to Benham if you like," said Hugh, with a grin. "I'm going to Tooting"

going to Tooting."
"Oh, go to Jericho as well!" interposed Tom. "I'm going to Beck."

The three exchanged glances, then broad grins parted their lips, and,

The three exchanged glances, then broad grins parted their lips, and, retracing their steps down the towing path, they made their way to the riverside village in which the rival estate agents lived.

Mr. Benham, of Benham & Son, was short, stout, and choleric; Mr. Tooting was long and thin. An important part of his education had been neglected, for he had never been learned to laugh. Beck, on the other hand, had never been known to remain serioùs five minutes at a ormain serious five minutes at a time; he had even been seen to break out into broad smiles in church, and it was reported on good authority that he laughed uproariously in his

The respective offices of the estate

that he laughed uproanously in his sleep.

The respective offices of the estate agents were situated in three different parts of the village—Beck's at the extreme end, to catch travellers coming down the highway; Tooting's in the middle of the village, for no particular reason save that he could not get offices elsewhere; and Benham's near the station.

Mr. Benham was in anything but a sweet state of mind when Joe Towley appeared in the office. As a matter of fact, a tenant occupying one of the houses in his care had neglected to pay his rent, for the good, though unsatisfactory reason, that he hadn't any money.

Fifty minutes before the house-agent had given him an hour in which to bring the rent, or find security for the same, and he had spent the intervening time in venting the vials of his anger upon an aged clerk, who had got so accustomed to being his employer's "whipping boy" that all that was said went in at one ear and out of the other.

At the moment Joe entered his office he was making anything but complimentary references to his clerk's remote ancestors.

He heard a deferential knock at the door, and roared out a stentorian "Come in!"

Believing it to be his defalcating client, Mr. Benham did not deign to look up from the papers upon which he pretended to be engaged, but growled out:

"It's no use bringing excuses here! Von know what I told you an hour

growled out:

"It's no use bringing excuses here!
You know what I told you an hour
ago! Cash down or a reasonable
security, or I'll seize your goods!
No, no; I won't listen to excuses!"

he went on, as Joe uttered an exclamation of astonishment. "You're six weeks behind-hand now, and it's men like you who— Oh. I beg your pardon, sir; I thought it was a rascally client who thinks he can live rent free! What can I do for you?" he said, looking up and seeing a stranger instead of the unfortunate householder.

"I came to make inquiries about the houseboat Orchid," said Joe; "but as you seem otherwise occupied, I will go elsewhere!"

In a moment the anger vanished from Mr. Benham's face.

It was wonderful what a good-humoured, deferential, not to say servile, house-agent he became in a moment, for the commission on the letting of the Orchid would bring in a sum not to be sneezed at. "Certainly, sir! It's the finest houseboat on the river; furnished with elegance, luxury, and taste!" he cried. "Simkins, my hat! I will put everything else aside, my dear sir, and show you over it this very moment!"

"Not just yet, Mr. Benham, if

moment!"
"Not just yet, Mr. Benham, if you'll excuse me," interposed Joe.
"It is now three o'clock. Will you meet me on the houseboat at four precisely?"
"We'll the proceed of placement."

precisely?" "With the greatest of pleasure, Mr.-er

than ever, probably at the implied suspicion in the other's request. Then he turned over his books, as, with an impressive face, he made mental calculations as to the commis-sion he could draw over the trans-

Eighteen pounds a month is, "Highteen pounds a month is, I find, the sum the owner desires to obtain by the letting of the houseboat Orchid," he declared solemnly. Hugh nodded.

"All right; if the boat is satisfactory, I'll take it. Meet me on the Orchid at four o'clock."

"I will be there, sir. Will you favour me with your name."

Hugh gave it, and left Mr. Tooting entering it in his ledger.

In the meantime Tom had approached Mr. Beck's office.

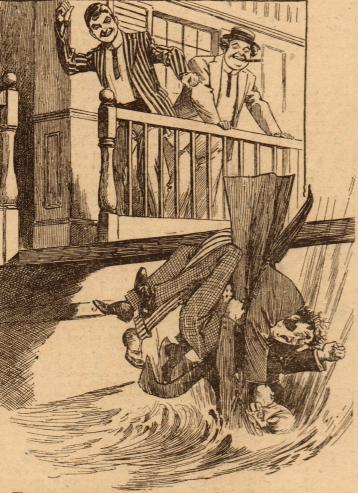
He found that gentleman standing in his doorway, his hands in his lockets, his hat on the back of his lead, and a broad smile on his

features.

"How do, my dear sir? Pleased to meet you! Glorious day, isn't it? What can I do for you?" he cried, taking Tom's hand, as though he had been some long-lost friend.

"I would like to have particulars of the houseboat Orchid," explained Towley.

"Ah, the Orchid! I know! The



The narrow gangway was not a fit battle-ground for so strenuous a struggle, and a minute later, locked in each other's arms, Mr. Benham and Mr. Tooting fell headlong into the river.

"Towley," replied Joe, supplying the name. "By the by, what rent are you asking?"

Mr. Benham hesitated. The larger the rent the bigger the commission; so, after turning over the leaves of a book, as though looking through the entries therein, he said:

"Ah—hum—yes! You see, no expense at all has been spared on furniture or fittings, and it occupies one of the finest sites on the river. My client has directed me not to take a penny less than twenty pounds a month."

Joe nodded.

Joe nodded.

Joe nodded.

"Oh, all right; we can discuss terms later! Good-bye, Mr. Benham! See you at four o'clock!"

At the exact moment Joe Towley entered Benham's office Hugh visited Mr. Tooting, who looked up with a sigh, as though the cares of the whole world were upon his shoulders, as his visitor entered.

"Ah, you want to hire the Orchid!" he said lugubriously when Hugh had declared his errand.

"For those who like such places, it would prove an exceedingly desirable acquisition. How much money do you feel disposed to give for it?"

"On the contrary, I would ask how much money you have been instructed to ask?" reforted Hugh.

Mr. Tooting sighed more deeply

best boat on the river—magnificent; good enough for a duke or king! Ha, ha, ha!" roared Mr. Beck. "And it's cheap, too—dirt cheap at sixteen pounds a month! Here, take the key and look over it yourself! I'd trust you with the Bank of England on your face!"

England on your face!"

And again the hilarious agent burst into a loud roar of laughter as he took a labelled key from a number on a board on the wall of the office and handed it to Tom.

"Thanks, but I have an engagement which will occupy the next hour. Would it be troubling you too much to meet me on the Orchid at four o'clock?"

"Certainly not, my dear sir! It's never a trouble to me to take money!"

And, with the hearty laughter of the agent ringing in his ears. Tow

And, with the hearty laughter of the agent ringing in his ears, Tom Towley moved off, taking care not to go near the offices of the other two agents.

An Unexpected Meeting.
UNCTUAL to the hour named two boats approach. two boats approached the houseboat from the opposite shore on which the village of Tenton Lock was situated. They were rowed by watermen, and in the stern of each sat a house-agent, so absorbed in the papers in their hands as to be utterly unconscious of the other's presence until the boats came to rest alongside the Orchid's land-

ing-stage.

Mr. Tooting was the first to notice his rival's presence, and a slight flush suffused his sallow cheeks. The low-voiced exclamation of surprise that burst from his lips attracted Mr. Benham's attention, who, seeing his rival there, bounced in his boat so abruptly as to almost overturn it; in fact, had he not thrown himself on board the landing-stage, and thus boarded the Orchid in a most undignified manner, his fierce temper would probably have been cooled in the limpid waters of the Thames. Slowly and deliberately, as became his accustomed gravity of demeanour, Mr. Tooting stepped on board.

"Hallo, Tooting! What in the name of all that's wonderful are you doing here?" roared Benham, struggling inelegantly to his feet.

"I might ask the same of you if I thought a reply would interest me in the slightest," returned Tooting; "but as it wouldn't, I'll tell you that I've come to look over the houseboat to assure myself that intruders, unauthorised or otherwise, have done it no injury!" Mr. Tooting was the first to notice

no injury!"
With difficulty Mr. Benham, who realised that above all things he must get his rival off the houseboat before Towley turned up, restrained his anger, and said carelessly:
"Oh, all right; have your look round by all means if you like! I want to take the measurements of the rooms, but it will do after you have gone."

gone."

Mr. Tooting deliberately seated himself on a balustrade running round the houseboat.

"I'm in no hurry! You take your measurements!" he declared.

"I'll see you hanged first! I have as much right here as you!" exploded Benham, "Get your spying done and go!"

What retort Mr Tooting would have made it is impossible to say, for at that moment "A Pirate's Life for Me," sung in loud, cheery tones from the towing path, fell upon their

The house-agents exchanged glances, then looked towards where Mr. Beck was boarding the narrow gangway which connected the Orchid with the land.

"Ahem! Benham, to tell you the honest truth, I am expecting to see an applicant for the Orchid! Leave it to me, and we'll share commission!" whispered Tooting.

Mr. Benham looked suspiciously at his rival, then he growled:

"What's that fellow Beck doing here? He'll spoil it all with his small profits and quick returns!"

"Hallo, you fellows! Why, it's quite a pleasant little informal gathering!" roared Beck, as the landing-stage shook beneath his heavy tread.

"Beg your pardon, Mr. Beck, but Mr. Benham and I are here on business!" said Tooting gravely.

"Well—ha, ha!—that's good! So am I! Fellow of the name of Towley—"" circular!" signaled the others. "Ahem! Benham, to tell you the

am I! Fellow of the name of Towley—"
"Towley!" ejaculated the others in the same breath. "Why, he came to me exactly at three o'clock!" added Mr. Benham.
"I am afraid your clocks are not quite dependable! He was in my office at three! I took careful note of the time!" asserted Mr. Tooting.

Beck looked from one to the other of the two men.

Beck looked from one to the other of the two men.

"If I were you two I'd sell my clocks and watches, and buy a sundial! It was three o'clock when Towley entered my door by this old turnip!" he declared emphatically, pulling out a large gold repeater as he spoke.

"Confound it, gentlemen, do you

he spoke.

"Confound it, gentlemen, do you think I am a liar?" roared Mr. Benham, tapping on the face of his watch with his knuckles. "I tell you he—was—with—me—at—three o'clock! One—two—three! Hang you both. I've broken the glass and cut my finger!" he cried, dancing about with his injured knuckle in his mouth.

Mr. Tooting shrugged his shoulders.

Mr. Tooting shrugged his shoulders.
"I don't know anything about it, except that it was three o'clock when he was in my place!" he insisted obstinately.

winked at the grinning boat-

men.
"Settle it between you! Anyhow, he came to my place first, and I've a prior right to him!" he declared, laughing as though he would never

Whereupon the others fell upon him with their tongues, and were on the point of annihilating him,

figuratively speaking, when all three stopped in their heated argument and made towards the bows of the boat, for Joe Towley had just popped his head round the cerner.

Struggling and pushing along the narrow gangway, they had almost reached the spot where they had seen their client, when they were brought to a sudden halt by a calm voice in their rear saying:

"Good-evening, Mr. Tooting! You're here to time, I see!"

The three men turned and gazed in open-mouthed amazement at the flannelled figure standing in the stern of the boat.

"Yos Mr. Towley sire Law boxe."

in open-mouthed amazement at the flannelled figure standing in the stern of the boat.

"Yes, Mr. Towley, sir; I am here to appointment!" said Tooting, hastening towards Hugh, who disappeared at that moment through the kitchen door.

"'Afternoon, Mr. Beck! Come up here! We can settle terms seated in these comfortable chairs."

All three men looked upward, and Beck's red face grew as pale as nature would allow it to turn as he saw the man he had seen a moment before disappear into the house, leaning over the rail of the houseboat on the upper deck.

"Mr. Benham, are you going to keep me waiting all day?"

"Mr. Tooting, are you going to keep me waiting all day?" came simultaneously from the bows and stern.

The two men addressed turned

keep me waiting all day?" came simultaneously from the bows and stern.

The two men addressed turned their heads from Joe to Hugh like stiff China mandarins, then raised their eyes to Tom, who was gazing solemnly at them from overhead.

Paralysed with terror, it is impossible to say how long the estateagents would have remained looking from one to the other of the Towleys, when a splashing of oars broke the spell, and they looked round to see their boatmen, white faced with terror, rowing as fast as their cars would carry them in the direction of the riverside village.

When they looked back again the three Towleys had disappeared.

Mr. Benham mopped his pale face, on which drops of perspiration was standing in big beads, and looked inquiringly at his rivals.

"What does it mean?" he gasped.

"Are we mad, or is the place haunted?"

Mr. Tooting shook his head lugubriously.

"It's a warning; we've been summoned to the bourne from which no houseboat ever returns!" he returned solemnly.

The laughter had faded even from Mr. Beck's jolly face.

"Seems to me, gentlemen, as how we're being made fun of by some chaps. I vote we search the houseboat!" he suggested.

"A capital idea, Beck," admitted his rivals in business, "the very

boat!" he suggested.

"A capital idea, Beck," admitted his rivals in business, "the very thing."

But-neither of them seemed inclined to be the first to enter the haunted rooms. However, after a little persuasion, Beck entered the tiny hall, and then made his way to the dining-room door. The next moment the three started back as a calm voice from within bade them enter.

moment the three started back as a calm voice from within bade them enter.

Taking his courage in both hands, as the French say, Beck, with Benham and Tooting peering over his shoulders, entered the snug, well-furnished little dining-room, to see Joe Towley calmly smoking in an armchair by the table.

"Good-afternoon, gentlemen," was Joe's greeting, as he drew out his watch. "I cannot congratulate you on your punctuality. I said four, and it is already ten minutes past. Cosy quarters," he went on, for the three men were too astounded to speak. "The rooms open into each other so conveniently. If we come to terms, I have decided that as that door leads into the hall, and this into the drawing-room "—he pointed to the one by which the three men had entered, and one immediately opposite it—"I will use this as my bedroom. Excuse me a moment."

Rising, he passed through the door he had last mentioned. Barely had it closed behind him ere he reappeared at the drawing-room door, smiled benevolently upon the agents, and closed it again.

Barely had the three men time to wonder how on earth he could have passed through so quickly before a loud cough in their rear caused them to turn round, and, behold! the man they could have sworn before a hundred judges and a thousand juries was in the bed-room, if not in the drawing-room, appeared at the hall-door.

Mr. Benham dropped down in a chair that creaked beneath his weight, muttering:

"Well, I'm jiggered!"

muttering:
"Well, I'm jiggered!"

Mr. Benham and Mr. Tooting clung to each other trembling in every limb.

ching to each other trembling in every limb.

First at one door, then at another, in rapid succession, the three Towleys appeared and vanished. For quite five minutes this bewidering succession of appearances and disappearances continued, until the three men, but more particularly Benham and Tooting, were reduced to a state of terror almost bordering on imbecility. Then, as though nothing out of the common had occurred, Joe Towley advanced into the room, saying as solemnly as he could, for he was nearly exploding with laughter:

"Now, gentlemen, as I am anxious to get the business over, what about terms?"

I-I-I don't think I feel quite up

to business this afternoon. I want to go home!" almost blubbered to go home!" almost blubbered Tooting. Joe looked inquiringly at Mr. Ben-

Joe looked inquiringly at Mr. Benham.

"Don't appeal to me, sir!" cried that gentleman, recovering his habitual bullying self a little. "I'm not going to let any tenement or houseboat entrusted to me to a lot of ghosts, hanged if I do!"

"I fail to understand you, sir," said Joe calmly. "Of what have you to complain?"

"Complain! Why, it's enough to make a man complain when a client dances about in two or three places at once like a mad will o' the wisp."

Joe looked appealingly at the fat one's companions.

"I give you my word that I did not recross the threshold after I entered it."

Mr. Tooting looked quickly up.
"Perhaps you'll say you didn't
come to my office at three o'clock?"
"I emphatically declare I did not!"
declared Joe.
"Norming ith office."

declared Joe.

"Nor mine either?" said Mr. Beck.
Joe shook his head.
"Then you must be Benham's
client, so I'll take my leave," said
Tooting, moving quickly towards the

"Then you must be Benham's client, so I'll take my leave," said Tooting, moving quickly towards the door.

"Oh, Beck can have him. I won't have anything to do with such a jack-in-the-box," returned Benham, hastily following his companion.

But barely had they reached the hall ere, to their horror, they saw the man they had just left standing at the entrance to the tiny kitchen.

This was more than flesh and blood could stand. With a loud yell, the two men turned to flee. Tooting, longer legged, was the first to reach the gangway at the Orchid's bows, but only to come to an abrupt halt as he found himself face to face with Tom Towley, who, smiling sweetly, raised his hat in mocking salute.

With a moan of terror, Tooting wheeled round, his frightened face turned over his shoulder as he did so.

The next moment he and Benham, whose eyes even as he ran were fixed on Hugh, came into collision; then each believing the other to be one of the uncanny occupants who had already taken possession of the Orchid, and driven desperate by terror, they began belahouring each other with all their might.

"Oh!" ejaculated Tooting, as Benham's fist alighted full on his prominent nasal organ.

"Ugh!" roared Benham, as his opponent's elbow came in violent contact with his extended "little mary."

"Ah!" came in a sudden jerk from both pairs of lips, as, lunging forward, their heads crashed together.

"Go it, you cripples! Two to one on the fat 'un!" yelled Hugh Towley, dancing about in his excitement.

"Give him beans, Benham!" echoed Tom from the side of the combatants.

But the fight ended as suddenly as it had commenced. The narrow

ecnoed from from the side of the com-batants.

But the fight ended as suddenly as it had commenced. The narrow gangway was not a fit battle-ground for so Homeric a struggle, and a minute later, locked in each other's arms, the two fell headlong into the

arms, the two fell headlong into the river.

Fortunately, the water was not deep, and, their ardour cooled by their involuntary bath, the two men rose to their feet.

But their troubles were not yet over. Alarmed at the termination of their joke, the three Towleys rushed forward, and, leaning over the side of the houseboat, held rescuing hands towards them.

If the three seen separately had filled the agents' hearts with terror, the three kneeling side by side in almost exactly the same attitude filled their cup to overflowing.

Tumbling over and over in their mad flight, the house-agents made for the bank, and scrambling from the water, raced along the towing path as though all the witches and wizards that had ever haunted the Thames Valley were close upon their heels,

Laughing heartily at the comical sight presented by the fleeing men, the Towleys were about to return to the dining-room, when a loud guffaw reminded them that there was one more agent to be settled with guffaw

with.

"Ha, ha, ha! I know you now, gentlemen; you're the Towley Triplets, or I'm a Dutchman!"

"You're not a Dutchman, then, that's certain!" asserted Joe; "just as certain as it is that we are the men you say."

"What a mug I must have been not to have tumbled to it from the first. Ha, he! Wasn't old Benham and Tootin scared just a few!" roared Beck.

"I quite admired how cool and collected you were, Mr. Beck," said Joe.

Joe.

For a moment the house-agent hung his head.

"To tell the truth, I'd have given the commission on a dozen house-boats to have been well out of this at one time. But now to biz. What did those fellows ask you for this place?"

place?"
Joe shock his head.
"I called on one, my brother Tom
on another, and Hugh on the other.
Mr. Benham asked £20 a month," he
explained, "and Tooting £18."

him walking on their hands,

The keeper's hair stood straight up on end as one after another the three Towleys passed

clad in pyjamas, with towels slung over their shoulders, they jumped into the Orchid's dingby, and rowed to an island two hundred yards up stream, at the further end of which Beck had told them of a good stream, at the further end of which Beck had told them of a good bathing-place, with ample depth of water for diving He had also promised to call on the owner of the island, and obtain permission for them to use it, for the little eyot was private nymerty.

island, and obtain permission for them to use it, for the little eyot was private property.

But so full of the Towley Triplets' exploits was the jovial estate-agent that he forgot all about it. Having left their boat tied to the gnarled roots of a willow, which formed an ideal landing-place, Tom and Hugh made their way to a thatched summerhouse that had been erected for the convenience of bathers, whilst Joe strolled along a path to the tiny landing-stage, on which he was standing enjoying the fresh morning beauty of the scene when he was hailed from the bank by a stalwart gamekeeper.

"Hi, what are you doing there?" yelled the man across the stream.

"I was admiring the beauties of Nature till you appeared on the scene and spoiled it!" retorted Joe.

"I mean, what business have you on that 'ere island?" shouted back the man.

"Oh, I'm not in business at all—I've

through the trees the keeper untying a ramshackle old skiff from a post driven into the bank a hundred yards down the river.

"He comes to his doom!" cried Tom, folding his arms and gazing tragically at the labouring man. "Fool that he be."

"Oh, dry up, Tom!" interposed Hugh. "This would be a precious dull old world if it wasn't for the fools."

"You'd feel fairly lonesome, Hugh," retorted Joe, whereupon his brother smote him hip and thigh, principally hip, until a second glance down the stream showed them the keeper rowing frantically towards the island, his red, angry face now and again turned over his shoulder towards them.

When the worthy guardian of the island landed, he found Tom shivering by the side of the deep hole that had gained the island its reputation as a bathing-place. He was gazing half fearfully at the water as though he did not quite relish the

plunge.

"Hi! Didn't I tell you to get off it? There aren't no bathing allowed here, only by special permission of Captain Hickman," announced the

keeper.
Tom looked timidly at the speaker.

do, he fixed his eyes on the water ahead, consequently did not see the youngest Towley, who, like all his brothers, was nearly as much at home in the water as on land, turn beneath the surface, and rising in the shadow of some overhanging boughs a few yards to the keeper's left, commenced swimming silently down stream.

left, commenced swimming silently down stream.

"Lor', what a time he is gone! Pr'aps he's struck his head against the bottom. I rather wish—"

"If you please, sir!"

The polite accents came from behind him. He turned and stood open-mouthed as the very man he had seen disappear beneath the surface a minute ago, clad in identically the same striped bathing-dress, stepped swiftly past him and plunged into the stream.

Barely had Hugh, following the same path as Tom had taken, disappeared, and the keeper was still rubing his eyes to assure himself that he was really awake, when soft footsteps by his side fell on his ears.

He looked up, then sat down with a jar that—so Joe afterwards solemnly declared—shook the island to its very foundations. Hearing a slight sound behind him, the elder Towley paused to enjoy the keeper's confusion no longer, but in turn dived from the bank.

The keeper was sitting, his lips wide appart his eyes almost hulging

dived from the bank.

The keeper was sitting, his lips wide apart, his eyes almost bulging from his head, gazing at the spot where Joe had been a moment before, when, with a loud, laughing yell, Tom, who had by this time scrambled ashore, came running past him, squatted, grinning in front of the bewildered keeper for a moment, then springing in the air, turned a somersault and disappeared into the river.

somersault and disappeared into the river.

Barely had he gone ere Hugh, dripping from his swim, took his place and copied his every antic; then came Joe, whilst the keeper growing more terrified with each repetition of the apparition, waved his hands as though trying to thrust aside some unwelcome visitant.

The next time the Towleys appeared they passed the keeper walking on their hands, and then plunged head-first into the pool.

Again and again the laughing trio cireled round and round the keeper, whose face grew red and pale in turn, until, unable to stand it longer, and believing that he had to deal with a species of grown-up water fairy, he rolled over on to his chest, then crawled on hands and knees into a thicket near the hut to the great delight of his tormentors, who stood with their arms round each other's necks like so many graces, making the riverside re-echo with their hearty laughter.

Rapidly regaining the hut, they dressed, then taking care to avoid

the riverside re-echo with their hearty laughter.

Rapidly regaining the hut, they dressed, then taking care to avoid the thicket in which the keeper lay, scarce daring to breathe, Tom and Joe crept softly away, whilst Hugh, seating himself on a fallen tree, lit a cigarette and commenced enjoying a smoke after his swim.

In the meantime it had slowly dawned upon the agitated keeper that the laughter, which at the time had sounded like peals of elfin mirth, had something very human about it indeed. Then the aroma of an Egyptian cigarette greeted his nostrils, and, rising on his knees, he gazed cautiously through his leafy screen.

nostrils, and, rising on his knees, he gazed cautiously through his leafy screen.

His eyes fell upon an everyday, commonplace-looking young man, clad in flannels, a wet bathing-dress lying by his side and a half-dried towel over his shoulder.

Right and left peered the game-keeper, then gazed his fill at Hugh.

"I must have been dreaming, or perhaps it's what that author chap as was camping down the river a week or so ago said he was suffering from—overwork. I do work precious hard, that's certain. Anyhow, he ain't no fairy. I'll try him again," he muttered.

Rising to his feet, he clutched his stout oak stick with a tighter grasp, and advanced towards where Hugh was sitting.

It was a very different gamekeeper who addressed Hugh on this occasion. He had lost his former 'hectoring manner, and though still surly, said with more respect than before:

"Didn't I tell you you weren't to bathe here, sir?"

Hugh removed his cigarette, blew a cloud of smoke into the clear, almost cloudless air, and watched the blue curling wreathes mounting amongst the boughs ere he condescended to look in the direction of

almost cloudless air, and watched the blue curling wreathes mounting amongst the boughs ere he con-descended to look in the direction of the speaker and drawl: "Certainly not, my good man. So-far as I can recall I have not had the pleasure of your acquaintance be-fore."

As Tom quite anticipated he would

"The sharks! And the owner only asked three guineas a week," interposed Beck, his usual hearty laugh ringing in the air.
"But you asked £16," declared

"But you asked £16," declared Tom.

"Oh, that was only a little margin in case you wanted to knock me down in price," confessed the other; "but you can have the place for twelve guineas a month if you like. Won't old Benham be furious when he discovers the truth!"

#### THE 5th CHAPTER.

THE 5th CHAPTER.

An Interrupted Bath.

HE Towleys found that the agents had not exaggerated the attractions of the Orchid more than fifty per cent. Though perhaps not luxuriously, the houseboat was well furnished, and as conveniently arranged as such places

generally are.

Not yet used to the novelty of possessing a large income, the Towleys had decided to wait upon themselves until they could find a man with sufficient knowledge of cookery for their simple wants.

That night they slept on the houseboat. Early the following morning,

retired," replied Joe. "I've come here for a swim."
"You can't!" yelled the keeper.
"Can't I! I'll swim you for what you like!" retorted Joe indignantly.
"I mean, you can't swim there!" roared back the man.
"Of course I can't swim here; but I can swim in the water," was the reply that caused the keeper to dance about as though he was mad, and shake his stick threateningly at the speaker.

shake his stick threateningly at the speaker.

"Get off the island!" he roared as soon as he could calm himself sufficiently to speak.

"My dear fellow, don't get excited. I'm going to get off the island when I go into the water," explained Joe.

"And you won't get on it again. I'll see to that!" growled the man, setting off at a lumbering trot up stream.

Joe joined his brothers in the bathing-shed, and anyone who knew the Towleys of old would have been inclined to stake long odds that the keeper, if he made good his threat and tried to put them off the island, would be sorry he had ever ventured to interfere with them.

As, clad in bathing-dresses, they emerged from the hut, they saw

"I am sorry, I didn't know; but who may Captain Hickman be?"
"He is my master, and the owner of the ground on which you stand."
Tom carefully moved about a foot, and looked curiously down at the spot he had just left.

"Thank you for telling me. I never like to trespass. But isn't it funny I should have taken my stand upon the very identical piece of ground belonging to the captain?"
"But you're on it now," thundered the keeper.
Tom sidled a couple of feet further.
"Now, is it all right?" he demanded innocently.
The keeper nearly tore his hair.
"Well, of all the idiots I ever struck you take the cake! He owns the whole island—do ye understand now?"

Tom looked round him with an air

Tom dooked round him with an air of innocent bewilderment.

"What! All of it; every inch of this big island? Then I'm off!" And ere the keeper could prevent him he placed his hands above his head and dived.

"Here, come back; you can't bathe here!" thundered the keeper, bending over and gazing into the limpid stream.

The denial raised the keeper's

ready wrath.
"It's a lie, and you know it!
Where are the others?"
"Ask me an easier one," replied

Hugh.
"Look here," fumed the keeper,
"I've just about had enough of it.

"Look here," fumed the keeper,
"I've just about had enough of it.
Clear, can't ye?"
Hugh rose, yawned, and threw his
almost completed cigarette into the
river; then with a cheery:
"Certainly!" strode to the dinghy
and rowed off.
The keeper breathed more freely
when he had watched the trespasser
disappear round a bend in the river,
then shaking his head as one who
could not make head or tail of his
late experiences, walked towards his
boat.

then shaking his head as one who could not make head or tail of his late experiences, walked towards his boat.

A sound of oars being thrust into rusty rowlocks caused him to quicken his pace. To late! A young man clad in flannels with a straw hat on his bowed head was calmly rowing away in the keeper's boat.

"Hi, you impudent thief! Bring that boat back—do ye hear?"

The rower did not answer, but loked up, disclosing the face of the man he had just seen leave the island in the dinghy.

Speechless with astonishment, trembling in every limb, the guardian of the island staggered back, and, his heel catching an an heap, he fell on to mother earth in a sitting position.

But he did not remain there long. The blackberry-bush which had received his somewhat portly frame made its presence felt in a way which caused him to spring to his feet, yelling at the top of his voice.

Mad with rage, the keeper executed an impromptu war-dance on the bank, flourishing his cudgel threateningly at Joe Towley, and yelling after him all manner of possible and impossible threats, until he was suddenly turned into a not bad semblance of a statue in velveteen and corduroys by hearing an appreciative, "Well done! Capitally danced! Encore!" close behind him.

He looked round, and his upstanding hair nearly lifted the cap from his head, for leaning in a graceful attitude against the slender trunk of a white birch was Tom Towley.

One glance at Tom's grinning face, another at the rapidly dwindling form of Joe in the stolen boat, and, clasping his hands to his eyes, the tormented keeper plunged headlong into the river.

With a cry of alarm, for he feared lest they had carried the joke too far and the unfortunate man would be drowned, Tom sprang to the river he found that the keeper had

be drowned, Tom sprang to the bank.

But ere he could jump into the river he found that the keeper had half swum, half struggled across the deep channel, and clambering up the epposite bank, was fleeing at a pace which would have turned Shrubb green with envy across the field.

Seeing the keeper's departure, Joe rowed back and took his brother on board his boat. In imminent danger of being swamped each minute, for they could scarcely sit on the seat for laughing, they rowed the boat to the stake from which the keeper had untied it, fastened it up securely, and walked along the bank until they came to where Tom was waiting ing them round a bend of the river.

It is wonderful the keeper did not hear the shouts of laughter with which the brothers lightened their row back to the Orchid and breakfast.

"I always did love the Thames."

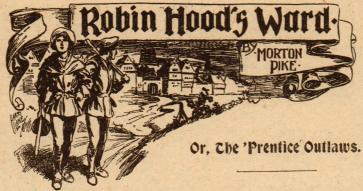
fast.
"I always did love the Thames,"
declared Joe half an hour later,
his mouth full of eggs and bacon.
"but I had no idea it contained such
ossibilities of fun. Hurrah! The
Orchid and the Towley Triplets for
aver!"

THE END.

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#### OPENING CHAPTERS IN BRIEF.

JACK PATCH, a merry apprentice of old London town. Jack is apprenticed

MASTER KNIGHTON, a cutler, as also is

Jack's great chum,
LIONEL. Lionel is a lad of obvious
good breeding, and there is some
mystery connected with his birth and
parentage. Master Knighton is in
possession of the secret, but is pledged
not to reveal the same to Lionel until
he has reached his twenty-first year.

possession of the secret, but is piedged not to reveal the same to Lionel until he has reached his twenty-first year.

Unknown to Lionel, his father is alive, a prisoner in the hands of King John. The scoundrelly monarch, for some strange reason, is also anxious to get Lionel into his clutches, and sends a dozen men-atarms to capture the lad. In the nick of time Robin Hood, the famous outlaw, comes to the lad's aid, and puts King John's myrmidons to flight.

Master Knighton, fearing that Lionel will ultimately fall into the King's hands, sends the lad, in company with Jack Patch, up to Nottingham to seek refuge with his brother, Rolfe Knighton.

Instead of carrying out this project to the letter, Jack and Lionel fall in with Robin Hood and his merry band again, and take up their quarters with them in Sherwood Forest.

Robin Hood learns that Lionel's father, Sir Jocelyn, is kept a prisoner at the eastle of Sir Humphrey de Basingstoke, in Derbyshire, and the whole band of outlaws set out to effect his rescue.

In this they are successful, and after razing the castle keep to the ground, they return to Sherwood with Sir Jocelyn, only to learn that Master Knighton, at the King's orders, has been made a prisoner in Nottingham.

Disguised as peasants, the outlaws repair to Nottingham, and Lionel and Robin Hood succeed in aiding Master Knighton to escape.

The outlaws then return to Sherwood Forest, which they find swarming with bands of the sheriff's men-at-arms, who are in search of Robin's camp.

One patrol of the searchers are made prisoners, and Friar Tuck offers them their liberty should one of their number, Bardolf of Newark, defeat him in a bout with the quarter-staff.

While matters are being arranged, one of the men-at-arms creeps away unobserved to fetch assistance.

(Now read this week's instalment.)

### The Sheriff's Rage.

The Sheriff's Rage.

T was not until he was well out of earshot that he began to run, and coming to another patrol, despatched two messengers upon the spur to recall FitzAlwyn, the sheriff, who by that time was a couple of leagues on his way to couple of leagues on his way to

Nottingham town.

Now, Alwyn Fitz-Alwyn was in high ill-humour, for not only had he signally failed again, but his guide, John o' Mims, who was as slippery as an eel, had escaped, although the rogue had been tied by one wrist to the stirrup of a stalwart man-atarms.

arms.

John o' Mims, however, had concealed a sharp whittle in the sleeve of his jerkin, and choosing his opportunity where the wood was thick, he had drawn the knife, cut himself free, and buried the blade up to the hilt in his guard's armpit, so Fitz-Alwyn lost the satisfaction of stringing him to the nearest tree, and was gnawing his moustache with vexation when the two messengers overtook him.

"Ho!" said the sheriff, when he heard their tale. "We have them at

"Ho!" said the sheriff, when he heard their tale. "We have them at last! But the King himself shall forsake the pleasures of the torture chamber, in which he takes such delight, and come to our assistance." And turning to one of his men, who was well mounted, he bade him ride with all speed to Nottingham Castle, and come out forestward with his Italian crossbows and his Norman rabble.

When John heard the news he was tearing his crimson surcoat to shreds, enraged to the point of madness at the sight that met his eyes, when they broke open the door of the torture-tower to find the Jew gone, and the tormentor dead as a herring; and having burned Absolom's house to the ground, he, without a moment's hesitation,

ordered his troops to horse, and rode down the castle hill to join Fitz-

down the castle hill to join Fitz-Alwyn.

And thus it fell that while our friends played quarter-staff by the light of the moon, a net of steel was being drawn stealthily round them, guided to the spot by the lusty shouts that greeted each lucky hit, whether the dealer were Friar Tuck or Bardolf of Newark.

How Ulf Saved the Situation, and Peter of Lincoln Appeared on the Scene.

ARDOLF indeed proved himself no mean antagonist, and deeming themselves secure from interruption, the outlaws entered into the rough sport with considerable zest.

siderable zest.

Bardolf was as active as a cat, which fact alone enabled him to stand so long before the terriffic onslaughts of the burly friar.

The sheriff's man had rid himself of his jacket, retaining only his steel cap by general consent, as it equalised somewhat the disparity between the friar's gigantic wapon and his own lighter staff.

With all the skill in the world he avoided blows that would have felled

somewhat the disparity between the friar's gigantic wapon and his own lighter staff.

With all the skill in the world he avoided blows that would have felled an ox, hitting his opponent several times across the thigh, and even once upon the shaven crown.

But now Bardolf's breath came thick and short, and several times as they fell back to rest he threw an anxious glance into the trees for the help that was so slow in coming.

Friar Tuck took a long pull at his precious wine-jar, and handed it back to one of his companions.

"Now, varlet," said he, wiping his mouth on one of his huge hands, "thou hast given me some very pretty play, let us see how you shape when I set about thee in earnest?"

"In earnest, quotha!" cried Bardolf of Newark. "And pray, what hast thou been doing all this time? I warrant me thou wilt ache tomorrow from all this pretty play, as thou callest it. Look to thyself!" And, springing forward, he aimed a swift blow at the Friar's pate, which the friar guarded by an upward toss of his weapon.

He saved his head, but Bardolf's staff slid down with such force upon the worthy man's knuckles that he wrung, his fingers and gave a whistle of pain.

"So, my rat!" roared Friar Tuck;

of pain.

wrung his fingers and gave a whistle of pain.

"So, my rat!" roared Friar Tuck; "and now have at thee!" And pushing resolutely forward, he drove Bardolf round and round the ring, for the good man's temper was at last fairly roused.

Faster and faster they went, Bardolf finding it difficult to keep his feet, as he warded and twisted, now this way, and now that.

But just as he was on the point of calling a truce, Friar Tuck leapt upon him with a bound like a tiger, and breaking down Bardolf's guard by sheer force of arm, he shore clean through staff and all with a blow that drove the steel cap home about his ears, and laid him motionless upon the turf.

"Gravevery" gaid Fries Truck his

through staff and all with a blow that drove the steel cap home about his ears, and laid him motionless upon the turf.

"Gramercy!" cried Friar Tuck, his rage instantly vanishing. "I warrant me his skull is split in twain and will fall asunder when you take his helmet off."

But that they were not destined to do, for the glade suddenly rang with the shout of "Down with the dogs!"

Every man's hand went to bow or sword as they saw the moonlight glittering on the chain-mail of a bevy of men-at-arms, headed by FitzAlwyn, the sheriff, and the King himself.

"Trapped, by St. Hubert!—trapped!" cried Robin, looking round to see another line of horsemen spurring to encircle them in the rear, and lifting his bugle-horn to his lips, he blew a well-known blast, the signal for every man to take to the woods.

Had they seen their danger a few moments before the thing had been easy enough, but now the difficulty was that their way was barred, and in

an instant they were fighting for their lives, and the glade was filled with a surging mass of battling men, hewing and prodding desperately at each

surging mass of battling men, hewing and prodding desperately at each other.

Even in the midst of their deadly peril, Robin Hood's wits did not desert him, and as he bent his bow he said to Lionel, who chanced to stand beside him:

"Thou and Jack Patch take each a horse. You will pass for a pair of the enemy in the confusion, and, once outside the fray, see if one or both of you can find your way back to the Willow Creek on Trent side, for we shall need help. I see by thine eye, boy, that thou would rather stay and fight, but thou wilt serve me better by obeying my words."

He loosed a shaft as he spoke, and pausing only to see it quiver in the sheriff's shield, Lionel and Jack ran to the horses of the captured patrol, and mounting, Lionel a strong roan courser and Jack Patch a black, they drew out of the press ere it hemmed them in, and rode like the wind.

Poor Jack, who had scarce been astride a horse in his life, would have speedily come to the ground had it not been that the cradle-like saddle kept him in his place, and in a few moments the sounds of blows and shouting died away behind them.

A prominent landmark, one solitary tree, stricken by lightning years before, stood upon a hill, and for that they headed, a strong wind blowing in their faces, and as the ground beyond it dipped down considerably, they did not see the unexpected thing that happened behind them.

Now Ulf, son of Gammel Goosefoot, who was a thoughtful youth, well versed in woodcraft and the habits of all beasts and living creatures, saw that unless something very unexpected could be brought about, it was likely to go hard with those thirty gallant outlaws, of whom already some five or six had been speared and trampled underfoot by the exultant riders.

He had marked the wide stretch of dry heath that lay to the south of the forest, and the forest and the fore

He had marked the wide stretch of dry heath that lay to the south of the forest, and the force of the wind, and, slipping aside, he ran like a hare in the direction which our two friends

the direction which our two friends had taken.

Any one seeing him might have imagined that he was leaving the rest to their fate, and thinking only of himself; but nothing was farther from Ulf's mind. And when he had traversed some thirty odd yards from the scene of the conflict, he flung himself down on the turf on the windward side of a patch of dry gorse, and got out his tinder-box.

He could hear the shouts and the clash of arms just out of sight down the slope as he plied flint and steel until he had procured a spark; some dead leaves, a wisp of dry herbage, and a little flame had soon sprung up, and this he guided carefully into the dead brown furze, which caught like touchwood.

Tearing off a branch, he spread the flame in a dozen different in the steel in the steel in a dozen different in the steel in the

and this he guided carefully into the dead brown furze, which caught like touchwood.

Tearing off a branch, he spread the flame in a dozen different places, laughing to himself as the wind caught it and sent the scarlet tongues crackling fiercely among the thick mat of last year's bracken; and persisting in his work, he was rewarded by the spectacle of a fierce conflagration, a veritable prairie fire, gathering power and heat as it rolled towards the dell where Friar Tuck's unfortunate quarter-staff play had caused that fatal delay.

"No living horse will face that," laughed Ulf to himself, and he spoke truly, for as the roaring flames, preceded by the pungent blue smoke, swept across the moorland, the terrified beasts became unmanageable, and those of their riders who had no mind to be roasted in their armour plied the cruel dagger-like spur and scattered right and left.

Again and again he heard Robin's horn wind fainter and fainter, and knew that they were taking advantage of that timely relief, for the fire would not follow them into the green freshness of the forest, nor could the discomforted followers of King or sheriff.

Still, the danger was by no means past, for the spot was less than a league from Long Harry's Oak, and FitzAlwyn was well acquainted with the tracks and byeways of Merrie Sherwood.

Frustrated for the moment, the enemy would hang on Robin's heals.

Frustrated for the moment, the enemy would hang on Robin's heels, and Ulf, grimy from his work, rubbed his chin thoughtfully, and wished from the bottom of his heart that he could see the end of this business.

business.
Robin's horn had died away, and in its place John's trumpets sounded, calling the scattered horsemen together, and in the moonlight which was now waning before the approach

of dawn he could see the Italian crossbowmen and the Norman spears dashing across the fringe of fire which was dying out where the green spring grass checked it.

Suddenly, from a hollow that had concealed them, the Toad emerged, bearing Peter of Lincoln upon his shoulders, and the misshapen brute ran as hard as his legs could carry them in the direction of the band of horsemen, whose angry voices could be heard as they mustered like the murmur of the distant sea.

So absorbed were they in their own affairs that they did not see Ulf, although they passed within a few paces of him; but he heard the voice of Peter of Lincoln raised to an exultant shriek as they went.

"Quicker, quicker, thou earthworm!" cried the lame man, buffeting his companion with both fists.

"Twill be worth a capful of money to us when we tell the sheriff that we have found their camp at Long Harry's Oak!"

Ulf, son of Gammel Goosefoot, groaned aloud, for he had left his bow yonder under the oak-tree, and already the nimble toad-man was halfway down the slope, pounding straight for the men-at-arms.

"Now, St. Hubert, aid us!" exclaimed the young forester, "for the sheriff will reach the camp as soon as Robin, and what can we do against five hundred ruffians, and the dawn breaking."

## How a Happy Thought Came to Lionel.

THE day was breaking greyly, and a white mist filled the hollows as Lionel and Jack Patch drew rein again at the solitary tree on the hill-top, and looked about

tree on the hill-top, and looked about them.

"I wonder why my saddle feels red-hot?" groaned Jack. "And I am that stiff that I doubt me if I could walk a yard."

"Yet must you walk full many a one," said a voice from the other side of the tree, as Dick Quintain came from his concealment. "Where are the others?"

"They follow us," said Lionel. "We pushed on to see how things had been going whilst we were away."

away."
Some of you may remember that Dick Quintain, like themselves, had been a London apprentice, who found shelter and home with Robin Hood and his Merrie Men; but Dick's face was grave enough now.
"Things have gone ill," he said, "for spies have told the sheriff the whereabouts of our camp."
"Spies!" replied both boys in a breath.

breath

whereabouts of our camp."

"Spies!" replied both boys in a breath.

"Even so," was the reply, and Dick pointed down the slope. "One of them, a lame man, is hanging on an oak yonder for his pains; but his companion, whom Ulf says is more like a huge frog than a man, was away with a hop, skip, and a jump before they could lay hands on him."

"I'faith, Jack, we have met those knaves before," said Lionel. "But what of Robin and the rest?"

Dick Quintain shook his head gravely as he told them what had happened. "Ulf bade me stay here to bring help, but I fear unless these laggards come quickly, Maid Marian and her women will be in bad case, for 'tis an hour since FitzAlwyn and the King rode for Long Harry's Oak."

While he was speaking, several foresters came through the mist, winded by their long run, but full of eager questioning, and in a few moments the rest struggled up the hill in twos and threes.

Every eye was bent in the direction of the forest where the vapour still hung, only the tops of the highest trees looming out of it like islands in a silver sea.

Each man looked to his quiver, saw

hung, only the tops of the highest trees looming out of it like islands in a silver sea.

Each man looked to his quiver, saw that his shoe latchets were tied, and every flushed, perspiring face was dark with an anxious frown.

By a common impulse they moved down to the grove of oaks, passing over the blackened heath that Ulf's fire had devastated, and there they found abundant traces of the fray, for the dead men lay there—six lads in Lincoln green, and eleven of John's mercenaries—while steel caps and spears, and here and there a broken sword, bore evidence to the ferocity of the fight.

Lionel sprang down from his horse,

of the fight.

Lionel sprang down from his horse, and picking up a steel cap, put it on.

"Help me to strip this fellow of his surcoat?" he cried to Jack Patch, who had been only too glad to dismount also

When the outlaws who had been identifying their dead comrades looked round, it was to see Lionel arrayed

THE FOOL OF THE COLLEGE.

NEXT TUESDAY IN THE

A SUPERB NEW SCHOOL SERIAL BY CLAUDE HEATHCOTE, AUTHOR OF "VAL, THE BOY ACROBAT." ETC.

in the green garment, with a white heart painted upon the breast.

"This is no time, youngster, for fool's play!" said one of them, in an angry tone that brought an answering flush to Lionel's cheek.

"If thou hast a better plan than mine, put it in action, my friend," said Lionel. "In this guise can I ride among the enemy, and, perchance, set them upon a false scent, or, may be, warn goodman Robin."

"He says well!" cried Dick Quintain. "Lend me thy horse, Jack, and I will go with him."

"That will I and welcome," said Jack Patch, who was wondrous sore. And quickly donning another surcoat, and picking out a helmet from the score that littered the sward, Dick climbed up into the saddle of the black horse as the others trailed off into the trees.

It was very still in the forest, and

climbed up into the saddle of the black horse as the others trailed off into the trees.

It was very still in the forest, and a heavy dew lay over everything. "Tis nigh upon a league," said Dick, "and yonder lies the path."

He pointed to an opening in the bushes, where the ground had been recently trodden by the passage of many horses, and, keeping their eyes and ears wide open, the pair got the tired animals to a trot, bending low now and again to escape the overhanging branches.

"Listen for the blackbird's whistle," said Dick Quintain. "He is a true friend to the forester."

It was weird and spectral as they passed down the long aisles of the woodland through which the path wound, now plunging into some gloomy bottom where a stream brawled, again traversing a wide savanna, where the trees seemed to have fallen back to form a natural amphitheatre.

No mottled deer trooped across the glades, for the recent march of the men-at-arms had scared all living things, and hushed the waking birds to silence.

Overhead, through the maryellous

Overhead, through the marvellous lacework of bough and twig, the sky was flushing rosy as the sun rose, and several times they reined in and listened for the sound of conflict.

"Tis strange," said Dick Quintain, as they rode abreast up a steep hillside, "we are scarce two bowshots from the camp now."

As they gained the top, and met the cool, sweet air that brought with it a thousand woodland scents and a fragrant freshness unknown to your town-dweller, a low murmur reached them, and the two lads locked at each other.

It was the hum of many wices.

other.

It was the hum of many voices, mellowed by the width of the valley aver which they gazed.

"What shall we see, I wonder?" muttered Dick Quintain. "Twere best to turn aside here, for by skirting the hawthorn shade we shall come in sight of the camp in a few moments."

Lionel loosened the heavy sword

Moments."

Lionel loosened the heavy sword which he had taken from the dead man's shoulders, and followed his companion along the southern ridge of the valley, but they had scarce ridden fifty paces when a voice cried: "Hold! Another step forward and you die!"

Lionel here or him

Lionel bore on his reins, and the sword was half out of its sheath when a low laugh from Dick Quintain reassured him.

snug hid on the island in the middle of the marsh."
"Bravo! Bravo!" cried Dick and Lionel. "Thou art a true outlaw's

wife!"
And then they told her, while they watched the glitter of armour round about Long Harry's Oak, how Robin himself, with five-and-twenty stout men of the band, had made for the camp a good hour ago, and how thirty more were even then within hail somewhere in the woods behind them.

hail somewhere in the woods behind them.
"'Tis pity," said Dick Quintain, chewing his underlip, "to let yonder dogs go free."
"Gramercy!" cried Lionel. "But the King and the sheriff have nigh upon five hundred armed and mounted knaves with them. What can less than a hundred do against such an array?"

than a hundred do against such an array?"

Maid Marian and Dick exchanged a meaning glance, and both laughed.

"Robin Hood's ward has much to learn," said Maid Marian, "and 'twill irk me sore if there be not dead men in the forest ere it is high noon."

While she was speaking a woodpigeon's note floated through the trees, and Dick swung round on his heel, for he had dismounted.

"If ever I heard Alana-Dale, I hear him now," he said, and he imitated the call of the wood bird.

They had not long to wait, for Alana-Dale came stealing quickly through the bushes, making straight

plan? Let you and I ride to the King with news that the French Prince has landed to join the barons. I warrant me he will not linger for all the outlaws in the world when he hears that!"

Maid Marian clapped her hands.
"Boy, boy!" she cried. "Tis a thought worthy of an older head than thine! Give me but time to warn Robin yonder, and then dig in the spurs." And without waiting for Dick Quintain to speak, she plunged through the hawthorns and made her way down the valley side.
"By my halidom, thou art a bold rogue!" laughed Dick, as her green kirtle disappeared amongst the trees; "but we will risk it. Marian can thread the forest with the best of us, and she and Alan will reach Robin together."

And so they waited in the shadow of the hawthorns, listening to the murmur of the distant voices and the shrill neighing of the horses until Dick Quintain should judge that sufficient time had elapsed for Robin to get the news.

get the news.

The False Messengers. "ELL, FitzAlwyn," said
King John, "so it seems
we have come upon a
fool's errand once more." And he threw a side glance at the sheriff that boded him no good.

FitzAlwyn intercepted the glance "Thou art over-soft for thy post, FitzAlwyn i." he hissed. "Thou

"By my halidom!" cried John, who saw it at the same moment. "Where the cub is, the she wolf is not far off. The outlaws are yonder. Look, man, what make you of that?" FitzAlwyn bit his lip the harder as a woman ran out into the sedgy grass, and snatching up the child, darted back with it into the trees.

darted back with it into the trees.

Perhaps he was thinking how once on a time Robin Hood had saved his own child from destruction, for Fitz-Alwyn had a heart beneath his chain-mail, and he knew that John had neither heart nor nity for any living thing that crossed his path.

"Ho, there—to horse!" cried the King. "And ride some of you round the edge of the water! We have them in a trap. Is there no way by which we can cross to the island, FitzAlwyn? Is the ground hard enough to bear the weight of a horse and its rider?"

"There is one spot," replied the

"There is one spot," replied the sheriff gloomily—"a gravel ridge, along which a man may wade with the water to his middle. But those yonder be but women and children, for have we not seen the men ourselves in the forest?"

John gave a hitter recorded to

John gave a bitter, scornful laugh as his Italian mercenaries swung themselves into their saddles and trotted away round the ragged edge of the marshy lake.

THE STATE

Friar Tuck's staff shore clean through wood and all; and, with a blow that drove the steel cap home about his ears, laid Bardolf motionless upon the turf.

Lionel bore on his reins, and the sword was half out of its sheath when a low laugh from Dick Quintain reasured him.

"Nay, now, good dame," he said. "I should know the music of thy speech anywhere." And he took off the helmet he was wearing.

"Saint Hubert be praised!" cried the voice again, only this time there was a glad ring in it. "Where is my Robin, Dick?" And Maid Marian, long bow in hand, ran from behind a spreading beech-tree.

Her hair was all dishevelled and her kirtle of Lincoln green torn by thorns.

"Robin is safe!" said the two lads in chorus. "But what of the camp?" Maid Marian stepped back a pace, and pointed to an opening in the hawthorn-trees.

"The King is there, and the sheriff with him," she said, "which no doubt you know already; but they have found nothing save our huts and the ashes of the fire, for yesterday we spied an evil visage peering into the dell. Of men we had but three, and two of those lame, so I did e'en stalk our visitor myself; yet he eluded me and made off to southward."

"And thou, Marian?" said Dick Quintain.

"Pardie, that was enough for Robin's spouse!" said the fearless young woman with a flash of her magnificent eyes. "I marked where the varlet had lain half the day long, and knew that boded no good to us and my man away, so straightway we did get the boat, placed the sick and the little ones within it, and they be the same the safe of the little ones within it, and they be the little ones wi

without seeming to see it, and bit his

"You saw the outlaws for yourself, my liege," he said; "'twas scarce
our fault that they escaped us by a
clever ruse, and that this has been
their camp 'tis right easy to see.
Here is their burrow in the sandbank; there is the fire still smouldering."

bank; there is the high ing." Of what use is the nest when the birds have flown? You are warden of this forest, and yet these scurvy loons defy thee and make a laughing-stock of us all."

They had walked side by side past

defy thee and make a laughing-stock of us all."

They had walked side by side past Long Harry's Oak to the spot where the little stream found entrance to the broad marsh, and the reedy shore still bore the print of the fugitives' feet where they had pushed out the rude boat that had carried them to their hiding-place.

"Come, man," snarled the King, "I will ride in pursuit till doomsday, but it is for thee to say which way the dogs have gone!"

The sheriff's eye swept the dense forest in vain, but as it travelled over the marsh, it suddenly became riveted, and FitzAlwyn made an involuntary start.

A long, low island, on which some willows and stunted alders grew, stood rather more than a bowshot off, and out of the bushes ran a little child. clapping its hands at the great red sum that had now risen above the forest top.

shalt change thy sheriff's mantle for a monk's hood!"

"My sword is at your service," said FitzAlwyn, laying his hand upon it; "but not for the slaughter of babes and innocents!" But John only laughed the louder.

He would have liked to have cut FitzAlwyn down, save for the fact that the sheriff was a taller and stronger man than himself, and had, moreover, half a score of his own fellows behind him.

One of these, who had overheard his master speak of the gravel-ridge that led to the island, pointed to a silver birch stem a yard or two away, and said:

"There is the ford, my lord, and one has but to keep rather to the right than to the left to come yonder."

"So be it," said the King. "Then lead on, fellow, and three-score knaves shall follow thee."

John sprang into his saddle, and though FitzAlwyn folded his arms and stood haughtily aloof, his men obeyed the King's orders with alacrity, and as crossbows and spearmen rode along the spongy margin to intercept any fugitives, a party of dismounted ruffians waded out in the wake of their guide.

The air resounded with loud shouts and triumphant laughter.

The air resounded with loud shouts and triumphant laughter. 'Twas rare sport this hounding down of the defenceless, but scarce had the leading man gone twenty yards out from the shore than the thud of

hoofs and the sound of approaching voices coming from the southward made everyone turn his head in that direction, and they saw two mounted figures spurring their horses into the dell.

"Ill news—ill news for the King's ear!" cried the new-comers, who were none other than Lionel and Dick Quintain. And as John checked his charger, the messengers flung themselves from their panting steeds and ran to his stirrup.

"My liege," cried Lionel, "we bring thee woeful tidings indeed! Prince Louis of France hath landed on the coast of Norfolk with a great army, and is to march on London as soon as his men be all gotten from the ships. He who brought this evil word lies dead beside his horse in the forest yonder, and with his last breath bade us seek you out with all speed."

John's face flushed crimson, and then grew pale as carven ivory.

"By my father's bones," he muttered, "hath it come to this?"

"Nay, more, my liege," said Dick Quintain, who made a very presentable man-at-arms in steel cap and surcoat. "We understood the messenger to say that twenty of the barons rode forth from London two days since to meet the French prince, led by the Lord FitzWalter."

At the mention of his bitterest foe John's anger flamed, and he swore an impious oath.

"Hearest thou this, FitzAlwyn?" he shouted. "These rebel dogs have drawn their swords with a vengeance, but do I vow that I will lay England waste and the grass shall no more grow where my horse hath set his hoofs. To me, De Bottefort, and you, Messire Pisa! To me, Simon of Wark and Claude of Avranches! Ho, sound the trumpets there!"

While the tyrant was yet speaking, those who were on foot ran to their horses, and at the first blare of the trumpets Messire Pisa's mounted crossbowmen came galloping back with a mighty splashing, as, clapping his spurs to his horse's side with a force that made the poor brute leap forward, King John sped up the dell into the narrow track.

Jostling each other in their eagerness to be first, bowmen and spearmen and burly men-at-arms dashed across the brook, and followed in single file, for the path there was narrow and bordered on either side by great bushes of prickly holly.

But ere little more than half the cavalcade had left

who had brought these strange tidings.

Their horses were there, but Lionel and Dick had vanished.

The two rascals had stolen into the sandy cave under the oak-tree, where they lay watching the successful outcome of Lionel's plan through a crevice among the roots.

"FitzAlwyn suspects something," whispered Lionel. "If they seek us here we are lost."

"Not so," replied Dick, scarce able to restrain his laughter. "The oak above us is hollow as an empty nut."

to restrain his laughter. "The oak above us is hollow as an empty nut."

They heard FitzAlwyn bid his men beat the bushes without avail, and as a distant note from a bugle-horn came faintly to their ears, they saw by the start he made that he had heard it, too, and guessed its import. "Beshrew me!" cried the Sheriff of Nottingham. "I was right! 'Twas an outlaw ruse, and the King is like to remember this day ere he and his following draw out of the forest!"

But though he gave the word to march, a curious smile played about his handsome face, and the watchers knew that the sheriff's heart was not in the King's cause, despite the office that he held.

"For all his threats, yonder brave gentleman is more our friend than our enemy," said Dick Quintain. "Mark you how slow he rides, and the backward glance he throws at the island. He cares not if he comes up with the King—not he; and, for my part, I hope he does not."

They saw the last of FitzAlwyn's

They saw the last of FitzAlwyn's men ride out of the dell, and then Dick Quintain, thrusting his arm into the sandy bank, drew out a couple of longbows and a quiver full

couple of longbows and a quire of arrows.

"Come, friend Lionel, we may be yet in time!" he cried, tearing off the surcoat and tossing the steel cap on to the ground. "Do thou as I do, and I will take thee by a short cut to the spot where I divine Robin will be in ambush."

(Another thrilling instalment on Tuesday next.)

THE FOOL OF THE COLLEGE.

NEXT TUESDAY IN THE "B.F."

A SUPERB NEW SCHOOL SERIAL BY CLAUDE HEATHCOTE, AUTHOR OF "VAL THE BUY ACROBAT." FTC.

A GRAND TREASURE ISLAND SERIAL OF = NELSON LEE AND . NIPPER.

# HE GOLDEN

WRITTEN BY - MAXWELL SCOTT, AUTHOR OF SO MANY - POPULAR SERIALS.

NEW READERS START HERE.

Our story opens on a hot August afternoon in the year 1909.

NELSON LEE, the famous detective.
JACK HARTLEY, a well-known
amateur footballer and cricketer, and
RALPH WELFORD, the only son of
General Welford, of Bollington Towers,
Surrey, are strolling by the banks of the
River Tor, in Devon. Nelson Lee and
Ralph are stopping at Hartley's country
seat, Torby Manor.

Ralph Welford is engaged to be married
to Ethel Gordon, an orphan, who is in the
care of her guardian.

care of her guardian.

FELIX BRANDER, a swindling company promoter, who has inveigled Ralph's father into investing all his money in a gimerack, worthless scheme.

pany promoter, who has inverged Raiph s ginter into investing all his money in a gimerack, worthless scheme.

On the death of his father, Raiph Welford is left practically penniless. In the hilt of an old sword which he purchases at an auction, he discovers a fragment of parchment which turns out to be a plan to the hiding-place of a fabulous treasure hidden many years before by Benito, the last of the pirates. Arrangements are made for Raiph, Jack Hartley, Nelson Lee, and Nipper to journey in Hartley's yacht, the Comet, in search of the treasure. Unluckily, a copy of Benito's letter falls into the hands of Felix Brander, who sets out at once in his yacht, the Panther, for Jamaica, where the treasure is concealed. Brander and his party reach Jamaica well in advance of Jack and Raiph, only to discover that one half of the treasure has already been found, while an ivory crucifix, within which is hidden a chart giving instructions as to finding the other half of the treasure, is in the possession of a Peruvian named Garcia, who has gone to Callao in Peru.

Brander and his companions immediately set out for Callao by way of the Panama Isthmus, and, owing to an unforseen piece of luck, obtain a long start over Jack Hartley and his party.

Learning the whereabouts of the ivory crucifix, and in whose possession it is, Nelson Lee sends a cablegram to Garcia, warning him not to give it up to Brander.

Brander on his arrival at Callao, calls at the post-office and inquires whether Garcia has been there of late. On receiving a reply in the negative, he leaves instructions with the clerk to send Garcia up to the Hotel International, should he turn up. No sooner has Brander gone than Garcia it to the hotel International, should he turn up. No sooner has Brander gone than Garcia it to the hotel after Garcia. Will it reach him in time?

(Now read this week's instatment.)

(Now read this week's instalment.)

The Intercepted Cablegram

BOUT five minutes after the messenger-boy had left the post-office, Bra and Vadillo walked in. Brander, Noel,

Any news of Garcia yet?" asked Vadillo.

Vadillo.

"Yes," said the clerk. "He arrived about a quarter of an hour ago. I gave him your message and sent him to your hotel."

Vadillo, his face aglow with triumph, translated this news to his companious.

companions.

"So Garcia is now at our hotel?"
said Brander delightedly.

"Yes," said Vadillo. "Come

"Yes," said Vadillo. "Come along!"
"By the way," said the clerk, as they were leaving the office, "a tablegram arrived for Garcia shortly after he left here."
Vadillo started as if he had been stung. The look of triumph on his face gave place to one of consternation.

"I sent a boy with it to the hotel," added the clerk.
"How long ago?" asked Vadillo.
"The boy left here about five minutes since."
Without another word, Vadillo walked quickly out of the office, signing to his two companions to follow him.

"Something's wrong!" said Brander as soon as they were out-side. "I see it by your face: What is

"The clerk tells me," said Vadillo, "that shortly after Garcia called at the office a cablegram arrived for him."

"From Nelson Lee!" gasped Brander. "Lee wasn't killed, after all. He has cabled to Garcia, putting him on his guard against us, and instructing him not to part with the crucifix!"

"That's what I fear," said Vadillo. "But Garcia hasn't got the cablegram yet. He had just left the office when it arrived. The clerk sent a boy with it to the International. The boy-left five minutes ago. If we hurry, we may catch him before he reaches the hotel, and persuade him to give us the cablegram; or, 'failing that, we may be able to intercept the cablegram before Garcia receives it."

White with excitement, the three men quickened their pace. As they neared the hotel, they saw a messenger-boy turn in at the front entrance. They broke into a run, and turned into the hotel just in time to see the boy hand the cablegram to the manager.

"Ah, here you are!" said the manager to Vadillo. "The man you want to see—Miguel Garcia—arrived about a quarter of an hour ago. I told him you were out, but would be back in a few minutes."

"Where is he now?" asked Vadillo, with an eye on the cablegram in the manager's hand.

"I showed him up to your private sitting-room," said the manager.

"You will be going to see him now, I suppose?"

"I showed him up to your private sitting-room," said the manager. "You will be going to see him now, I suppose?"

"At once," said Vadillo.

"Then perhaps, you wouldn't mind taking him this telegram," said the manager. "It has just arrived for him."

"I will take it with pleasure," said Vadillo.

He took—almost snatched—the cablegram from the manager's hand, and led the way upstairs, with Brander and Noel at his heels. On reaching the first-floor landing, instead of proceeding to their private sitting-room, they turned into Brander's bed-room, where, after locking the door, Vadillo tore open the envelope and drew out the cablegram, which, as the reader may remember, ran as follows:

"Miguel Garcia, Post Office, Oroya, Department of Lima, Peru.—Coming to see you re crucifix given you by Mr. Oxley last June. Arrive Oroya April 23. If you receive this before I arrive, wait for me at my expense at best hotel in town, and leave name of hotel at post-office. Beware of other men who will question you about crucifix. Tell them nothing, and on no account part with crucifix till I see you. Will explain all when I arrive. This message is sent with full approval of Mr. Oxley, who asks you to obey my instructions.—Nelson Lee, Detective."

"Our guns would have been spiked with a vengeance if Garcia bed got their "said Brander with a vengeance if Garcia bed got their "said Brander with a vengeance if Garcia bed got their "said Brander with a vengeance if Garcia bed got their "said Brander with a vengeance if Garcia bed got their "said Brander with a vengeance if Garcia bed got their "said Brander with a vengeance if Garcia bed got their "said Brander with a vengeance if Garcia bed got their "said Brander with a vengeance if Garcia bed got their "said Brander with a vengeance if Garcia bed got their "said Brander with a vengeance if Garcia bed got their "said Brander with a vengeance if Garcia bed got their "said Brander with a vengeance if Garcia bed got their "said Brander with a vengeance if Garcia bed got their "said Brande

Detective."

"Our guns would have been spiked with a vengeance if Garcia had got this!" said Brander, with a nervous laugh.

"Carajo—yes!" said Vadillo.

"How lucky we happened to call at the post-office when we did! Five minutes later, and all would have been lost."

"I wonder how Nelson Lee escaped." said Nool.

minutes later, and all would have been lost."

"I wonder how Nelson Lee escaped," said Noel. "I made sure that he and Welford and Thornton had been killed by that fall of rock."

"So did I," said Vadillo. "Welford and Thornton may have been killed, but it's evident that Nelson Lee wasn't."

"And it's equally evident," said Brander, "that he has had an interview with Oxley. But what I don't quite understand is this: That fall of rock took place three weeks ago, yet this cablegram was only sent off from Jamaica this morning. Why didn't Nelson Lee cable to Garcia before?"

"He may have been injured by

didn't Nelson Lee cable to Garcia before?"

"He may have been injured by the fall of rock, and unable to wire until to-day," said Vadillo; "but we needn't worry about that. The great thing is that we've prevented Garcia getting Nelson Lee's warning."

"He says in his cablegram," said Noel, "coming to see you... Arrive Oroya April 23.' I wonder if he's coming alone, or if the others are coming with him?"

"Let 'em all come!" said Vadillo. "It's now the 12th, and however many of them come, they can't arrive here before the 23rd. That gives us eleven days, and long before the end of that time the crucifix will be ours."

He tore the cablegram and the envelope into tiny fragments, applied a lighted match to them, and watched them shrivel into a little heap of grey-white ash.

"And now let's go and talk to Garcia," he said.

Miguel Garcia, a sturdy, honest-looking Peruvian, rose to his feet when the three men entered the private sitting-room and respectfully saluted.

"Which of you gentlemen is Senor Vadillo?" he asked, speaking in Spanish.

"I am," said Vadillo. "You are

Spanish.
"I am," said Vadillo. "You are
Miguel Garcia, formerly in the employ of Mr. Oxley, of Myrtle Grove,
Jamaica?"

"I am," said Garcia. "They told me at the post-office that you wished

to see me"
"I do," said Vadillo. "You speak
English, I believe? In fact, if I
remember rightly, Mr. Oxley told us
that you spoke the language
fluently."

"That is so," said Garcia simply.
"Then, as my two friends here do not speak Spanish," said Vadillo, "we will, with your permission, conduct our business in English."

He signed to Garcia to be seated, and, after he had introduced Brander and Noel—by their proper rames—he rattled off the lying yarn which he and his confederates had agreed upon beforehand.
"Mr. Brander." he began, "is an

which he and his confederates had agreed upon beforehand.

"Mr. Brander," he began, "is an extremely wealthy and well-connected English gentleman, whose great-grandfather, General Brander, was at one time Governor of Jamaica. During the general's governorship of the island his house was broken into, and amongst other things that were stolen was an ivory crucifix. This crucifix was of no great value in itself, but it had formerly belonged to the general's favourite brother, who was a Catholic priest. For that reason the general prized it most highly, and was greatly distressed when it was stolen.

"A few weeks ago," continued

was greatly distressed when it was stolen.

"A few weeks ago," continued Vadillo, "Mr. Brander and his son and I were in Jamaica, where we made the acquaintance of Mr. Oxley, of Myrtle Grove. Over dinner one evening Mr. Brander was telling Mr. Oxley about his ancestor's stolen crucifix when Mr. Oxley exclaimed that an ivory crucifix, exactly like the one which Mr. Brander had described, had been found about three years ago in a cave near Seaview Pen."

Garcia nodded.

"It was I who discovered the cave," he said. "The crucifix was hanging on the wall opposite the entrance."

"So Mr. Oxley told us," said

hanging on the wall opposite the entrance."

"So Mr. Oxley told us," said Brander. "I asked him to describe the crucifix, and from his description I have not the smallest doubt that the crucifix you found three years ago is the one which was stolen from my great-grandfather."

"My father asked Mr. Oxley what he had done with the crucifix," said Noel, "and Mr. Oxley said that he had given it to you last June. He also told us that you were now in Peru. He said he didn't know your address, but a letter addressed to you at the post-office here would be sure to find you."

"As I have already told you," said Vadillo, taking up the tale again, "Mr. Brander is very rich. Money is no object to him when he wants anything. And he very much wants to recover that crucifix, not for its own value, which is small, but because it belonged to his distinguished ancestor. Therefore, instead of writing to you, as Mr. Oxley suggested, he has come all the way from Jamaica to Peru for the sole purpose of seeing you, and asking you if you will sell the crucifix to him."

"That is, of course, if it is still in my possession," said Garcia. "It hangs on the wall of my hut above my bed."

"And you will sell it to me?" said Brander eagerly. "I will give you

"And you will sell it to me?" said Brander eagerly. "I will give you fifty pounds for it." Garcia shook his head.

Garcia shook his head.

"I am a poor man, senor," he said, "but I have a conscience! It would be robbery to take fifty pounds for a crucifix that is not worth fifty shillings. If the crucifix belonged to your ancestor, it is yours for nothing. I will give it to you."

Brander, nearly beside himself with delight, wrung the Peruvian's hand and overwhelmed him with thanks. Then Vadillo turned to the practical side of affairs.

"How far is your hut from here?" he asked.

"Four days' journey," replied Garcia.

Four days' journey," replied

"Four days' journey," replied Garcia.

"By train?" said Noel innocently. Garcia laughed, and explained that his hut was away upon the other side of the Andes, in a remote and almost unexplored region, far beyond the pale of railways and other adjuncts of civilisation.

"And do you live all alone in that desolate region?" asked Brander.

"Not alone," said Garcia. "I have a partner, named Camacho, who works with me and shares my hut. He is there now."

"You rode down into Oroya, I suppose," said Vadillo.
"Yes," said Garcia. "I have two mules, one for myself and one for my baggage. I stabled them at one of the inns here before I went to the post-office."
"Can we hire mules in Oroya?"

or the miss here before I went to the post-office."

"Can we hire mules in Oroya?" asked Brander.

"Certainly, senor. But why do you ask? You do not propose to go to my hut for the crucifix? There is no need to do that. Give me your English address, and the next time I come to Oroya I will bring the crucifix with me and send it to you by post."

"No, no!" said Brander. "Now that I know where the crucifix is, I am all impatience to recover it at the earliest possible moment. We will hire mules and whatever else may be needed, and when you return to your hut, we will go with you."

you."
"By the way, when do you intend to return?" asked Vadillo. "To-

morrow?"

'Oh, no!" said Garcia. "Remember, I only arrived this afternoon. I shall be busy all to-morrow and Thursday purchasing stores and powder and tools. On Friday I must go to Lima to transact some business for Camacho. That will occupy the whole of Saturday. On Sunday I return to Oroya, and on Monday morning I start back for my hut."

my hut."

Brander made a rapid mental calculation. It was then Tuesday night, the 12th of April. Monday would be the 18th. And Nelson Lee was due to arrive at Oroya on the 23rd. That was cutting it rather finer than Brander liked.

"Can't you possibly be ready to start before Monday?" he asked.

"I cannot, senor," said Garcia.

"After all, a few days more or less are surely of no consequence, are they?"

Brander saw that to press the

are surely of no consequence, are they?"

Brander saw that to press the point would only excite Garcia's suspicions. Moreover, if they left Oroya on the morning of the 18th, and the hut was only four days' journey away, they would arrive there and secure the crucifix on the night of the 21st. And Nelson Lee could not reach Oroya before the night of the 23rd at the very earliest. "You had better let me send the crucifix by post next time I come to Oroya," said Garcia.

Needless to say Brander would not listen to this suggestion.

"No," he said. "We will wait here until Monday, and then we'll go back with you to your hut. While you are transacting your business, we can be hiring mules and so forth."

we can be hiring mules and so forth."

"If you are bent on going with me to my hut," said Garcia, "there is one word of warning I would give you. Do not take much money with you. Leave the bulk of your money at the hotel, and take only enough to pay for your lodging at the inns where we shall put up on the way."

"Why?" asked Brander.

"There are bad men in the mountains," said Garcia simply. "Men who have fled from justice, men who have deserted from the Army, men who would rather steal than work."

"Brigands, in fact?" said Brander.

"Yes," said Garcia. "I myself have never been molested by them, but I have heard of those who have."

"All right," said Brander. "We'll bear your warning in mind. We'll leave most of our money here, and we'll not forget our guns."

we'll not forget our guns."

They saw little of Garcia during the next two days, for his time was wholly occupied in purchasing the stores and so forth that he needed for himself and Camacho. On Friday he left for Lima, and on Sunday evening he returned.

In the meantime Vadillo had purchased a mule apiece for himself and his two companions and another for their baggage, together with three rifles and a supply of ammunition.

And at daybreak on Monday, Miguel Garcia leading the way, the four men rode out of Oroya, and set off on their four days' journey to Garcia's hut.

Held to Ransom.

Y the end of the first day the four men had crossed the plateau on which Oroya stands, and had reached the little village of La Cruz, which nestles at

the foot of the eastern range of the

SAN TOTAL

the foot of the eastern range of the Peruvian Andes.

The second day's journey was one long climb from beginning to end. Rugged as was the road, however, it was dotted with several villages, at one of which—Huantulco—the party spent the night.

During the course of the third day's journey they crossed the range by means of a little-known pass, and began their descent on the other side. By this time they had practically left all signs of civilisation behind them, and had entered a desolate mountainous region, which is marked on many maps as "Unexplored."

Shortly before support they came to a startly before support they are support they came to a startly before support they are support they are support to a

explored."
Shortly before sunset they came to the village of Tacamini, which consisted of an inn and a cluster of wooden huts, mostly occupied by

miners.

"These are the last houses you will see, senor, before you see my hut," said Garcia to Brander.

"There is no village after this. Tonight we rest at the inn; to-morrow we descend to the plain and reach my hut."

The landland of the inn Governor.

my hut."

The landlord of the inn—Gonzalez by name—came hurrying out to greet them. He nodded to Garcia—who had stayed at the inn before—and glanced inquiringly at his companions.

Friends of mine," said Garcia. hey desire to rest here till the "They

"They desire to rest here till the morning."
Gonzalez bowed obsequiously.
"Such poor accommodation as my inn provides is at your service, senors," he said.
He assisted them to dismount, and conducted them into a small room on the ground floor of the inn.
Then, accompanied by Garcia, he went back to the mules, and led them round to the stables.
Garcia, a trifle boastfully, ex-

cound to the stables.

Garcia, a trifle boastfully, explained that Brander was a "very rich and highborn Englishman"; that Noel was his son, and that Vadillo was his private secretary.

"They are prospecting for silver, no doubt?" suggested Gonzalez. "Or maybe they are planning to bring a railway across the mountains? Or maybe they are merely touring the country after the manner of rich and highborn Englishmen?"

"Their business is none of thine!"

"Their business is none of thine!" said Garcia. "Thy sole concern is to set the best thou hast before them. Rest assured thou wilt be well paid, for money is no object with Senor Brander." Brander.

for money is no object with Senor Brander."

Leaving Garcia to stable the mules for the night, Gonzalez returned to the inn and set supper before his guests. He waited until Garcia had joined them; then he stole upstairs to one of the bed-rooms and shook by the shoulder a big, powerfullooking man, who was lying asleepfully dressed, with a bloodstained bandage round his head.

"Zapata, wake! I have news for thee!" he whispered.

Zapata—such was the man's name—sat up with a startled oath and plucked a pistol from his belt.

"'S-sh! It is only I—Gonzalez!" said the landlord, clapping his hand over the other's mouth.

Zapata laughed, and thrust the pistol back into his belt.

"I thought it was the troopers!" he said. "Thou shouldst not startle me like this! Why hast thou waked me?"

Gonzalez whispered something in

Gonzalez whispered something in is ear. Zapata became all attention

Gonzalez whish his ear. Zapata became all attention at once.

"How many are there altogether?" he asked.

"Four," said Gonzalez—"the highborn Englishman and his son, the secretary, and Garcia."

"Thou hast only Garcia's word for it that they are rich?"

"I have my eyes! Their linen is of the finest. They have rings on their fingers. Their mules and baggage are of the best. Oh, they are rich beyond a doubt!"

"How long do they stay here?"

"They leave at sunrise to-morrow for Garcia's hut."

Zapata nodded.

"There would be plenty of time," he said; "and I know the very spot."

"They have guns," said Gonzalez.

"So have we!" said Zapata grimly. "And we shall be twelve to

"So have we!" said Zapata grimly. "And we shall be twelve to four! Let me see them!"

They crept downstairs, and Zapata, peering through a crack in the wooden wall of the room, took stock of Brander and his three com-

THE FOOL OF THE COLLEGE.

NEXT TUESDAY IN THE "B.F."

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"Thou art right!" he whispered.
"They have the look of rich men.
Caust thou get at their guns in the night and remove the balls from the cartridges?"
Gonzalez grinned.
"What I have done before I can do again!" he said.
"Good!" said Zapata. "Not that it matters much if thou failest, for we shall be twelve to four. My mule is in the stable?"
"Yes."

"Then I will go and make ready."
They crossed the yard to the stables, and Zapata saddled his

stables, and Zapata saddled his mule.

"Thou wilt not forget that it was I who told thee of these men?" said Gonzalez, as Zapata mounted.

"No," said Zapata; "thou shalt have the same share as each of my men! Adios!"

He shook the bridle, and a moment later he was cantering away through the rapidly-deepening darkness.

At daybreak next morning—Thursday—the four men resumed their journey. By noon they had covered half the distance between Tacamini and Garcia's hut, and were riding down a rocky gorge, when suddenly Garcia, who was leading the way, pulled up.

"There's a party of men in front of us," he said. "They are crouching behind those boulders."

"Where?" asked Brander. "I don't see—"

Where "asked Brander. "I don't see—"
The sentence was never completed, for at that moment a dozen men sprang up from behind the boulders, and a dozen rifles were levelled at the four travellers.
One of the men was a big, powerful-looking ruffian, with a bloodstained bandage round his head. Garcia recognised him instantly, not by sight, but from the police descriptions. It was Jose Zapata, a former private in the Peruvian army, who had fled to the mountains after murdering an officer, and was now the leader of one of the most-dreaded bands of brigands in the country.

"Zapata!" gasped Garcia, hastily unslinging his rifle.
Crack!

A bullet from Zapeta's rifle struck Carcia in the chest. With a cheking cry he threw up his arms, recled out of the saddle, and fell lifeless to the

of the saddle, and fell lifeless to the ground.

"Let that be a lesson to you!" shouted Zapata in Spanish. "You are all covered. Resistance is useless. Unless you wish to share your comrade's fate, put up your hands! Quick, or we fire!"

Vadillo was the only one of the party who understood this speech. Shaking with fear, he raised his hands, and called to Brander and Noel to do the same.

"That's better!" said Zapata coolly. "Now dismount, and turn your backs on us!"

Vadillo translated this order to Brander and Noel. The three men dismounted and turned their backs on the brigands. The latter, still covering them with their rifles, then ran up the gorge, disarmed their victims, and bound them hand and foot.

"Why do you hind us?" asked."

"Why do you bind us?" asked Vadillo, who had expected that the brigands, after robbing them, would have turned them adrift. "You shall learn in good time!" replied Zapata. "Do your friends not speak our language?" "No."

"No."
"Then say to them from me that they have nothing to fear if they act like sensible and reasonable men. I would not have shot your comrade if he had not been so hasty with his gun. It is not your lives I want"

want."

"No; it's our money and baggage, of course," said Vadillo bitterly. "But you can get those without binding us. Why do you bind us?"

"All in good time, as I said before!" replied Zapata.

He turned to his men.

"Now, blindfold them!" he said.

"Blindfold us!" gasped Vadillo.
"Why?"

"Because," said Zapata, "it is not good that you should see the way

"Blindfold us!" gasped Vadillo.
"Why?"
"Because," said Zapata, "it is not good that you should see the way you go. But have no fear. No harm will come to you, unless you are more foolish than I think."
When the three men had been blindfolded, they were each of them hoisted on to the back of a mule; and then began a long and weary ride for Brander and his allies.
Zapata led the way, mounted on Garcia's mule. Three of the brigands followed next, leading the mules on which their prisoners were seated. The rest of the brigands brought up the rear with the two baggage mules. Garcia's body, it may be mentioned, was left in the

gorge, his pockets having first been thoroughly searched and rifled.

In and out amongst the mountains wound the little cavalcade until at last, shortly before sunset, it arrived at the headquarters of Zapata and his band—a cluster of wooden huts hidden away in a bowl-shaped hollow of the hills.

Outside one of the huts the procession halted, and Brander and his companions were ordered to dismount. When they had complied with this order, they were led into the hut and left alone for a few minutes, while the brigands unloaded and examined the baggage and stabled the mules.

It was the first opportunity the three men had had of talking to each other since their capture, and they hastened to take advantage of it.

"Where do you suppose we are?"

"Where do you suppose we are?" asked Brander.
"At the brigands' secret lair, I expect," said Vadillo.
"I expect so, too. But why have they brought us here? What do they mean to de with us?"
"I can't imagine," said Vadillo; "unless—unless—Yes; that must be it!"

be it!"
"What?"

"What?"
"Ransom!" said Vadillo.
Brander started.
"You mean," he said, "that they atend to keep us prisoners here in the hope that the Government will be soon we?" ransom us?"
"Not the Government," said

Nelson Lee. Have you forgotten that Garcia is dead?"
"So much the better!" retorted Brander. "Nelson Lee won't be able to interview him, and, consequently, he won't be able to find out where the crucifix is."
"And neither shall we!" said Vadillo.

Vadillo.

"We know where it is. It's hanging over the bed in Garcia's hut."

"And do we know where Garcia's

"No."

"Exactly! And now that Garcia is dead, how are we to find out where the hut is?"

Before Brander could reply the door opened, and Zapata came in, followed by two of his men. The latter unbound their prisoners and removed the bandages from their eyes. And then, in a few short sentences, Zapata stated his terms, which were just what Vadillo had predicted.

In other words, the brigand chief

predicted.

In other words, the brigand chief proposed that Brander should write a letter to "some of his rich friends in Peru" informing them that he was a prisoner, and that his captors demanded ten thousand solsroughly speaking, about a thousand pounds—as the price of his ransom.

"One of my men shall take the letter to your friend," he said. "If he returns with the money, I swear to set you free. If you refuse my terms, or if your friends will not ransom you, you will be shot."

will be set at liberty. If you have played us false, both you and your friends will be shot."

To make a long story short, this plan was ultimately agreed upon, and at sunrise next morning, Vadillo, blindfolded and mounted on a mule, left the brigands' secret lair, escorted by two of his captors, and started off on his journey to Oreya.

In the small hours of Saturday morning, the twenty-third of April, they reached Callao; and by nine o'clock the same night they were inscribing their names in the visitors' book at the Hotel Sul Americano at Oroya.

The post-office was then closed, but as soon as it opened on Sunday morning they interviewed the head clerk.

You speak English?" began Nelson Lee.

T was at two o'clock on the morning of Tuesday, the twelfth of April, as elsewhere recorded, that the Comet, with Nelson Lee and his friends aboard, left Benito Bay.

Everything had been decided on in such a hurry, after hearing Mr. Oxley's statement, that nothing definite had been settled except that Nelson Lee should disembark at Colon, cross by rail to Panama, and take steamer to Callao; while the Comet, after recoaling at Colon, should proceed to Callao via Cape

should proceed to Callao via Cape Horn.

It had not been decided, for instance, whether Nelson Lee should go alone, or whether one or more of his friends should go with him. This question formed the subject of a council of war after breakfast on Tuesday morning, as a result of which it was decided that Jack and Ralph should go with Nelson Lee, while the rest, including Nipper and

The post-office was then closed, but as soon as it opened on Sunday morning they interviewed the head clerk.

"You speak English?" began Nelson Lee.

"Yes, senor," replied the clerk.

"We are seeking a man named Miguel Garcia. He doesn't live in Oroya, but he comes into the town, I am told, from time to time, and he calls here to see if there are any, letters for him. Do you know the man to whom I refer?"

"Yes, senor."

"Has he been here lately?"

"Yes, senor. He was here—let me see—a week ago last Tuesday."

"A week ago last Tuesday. That yould be the twelfth. I cabled to him from Jamaica on that date. Do you remember?"

"I remember that a cablegram arrived for him on that day, but I did not know it came from Jamaica, and I never saw its contents. It was taken off the wire by one of tho other clerks."

"Did it arrive before Garcia called here, or after?"

"Just after. Perhaps a quarter of an hour after he had left the office. Perhaps less."

"Then he never received it?"

"Oh, yes, senor. I sent it after him to the Hotel International."

"Was he staying there?"

"No, senor. It was like this. A gentleman named Vadillo was staying at the hotel, and had called here several times to ask if Garcia had been. He said he wished to see Garcia on urgent and important business, and he asked me, when Garcia arrived, to send him round to the hotel."

"Was this man Vadillo alone?"

"No, senor. There were two gentlemen with him—Britishers by their appearance."

Nelson Lee glanced at Jack and Ralph.

"We were right," he said.

"Vadillo and the Branders evi-

Nelson Lee glanced at Ralph.

"We were right," he said.

"Vadillo and the Branders evidently did what we have done—that is to say, they went from Jamaica to Colon, from Colon to Panama, and from Panama to Oroya. In all probability they arrived here, and put up at the Hotel International, a fortnight ago last night."

up at the Hotel International, a fortnight ago last night."

"And interviewed Garcia on the following Tuesday," said Jack, "Twelve days ago. We are beaten!"

"Not if Garcia got my cablegram before they interviewed him," said Nelson Lee.

He turned to the clerk again, "Garcia called at this office a week ago last Tuesday, you say," he said. "What time did he call?"

"About a quarter to six in the evening."

"About a quarter to six in the evening."

"You gave him Senor Vadillo's message and sent him to the Hotel International?"

"Yes, senor."

"Shortly after he had left the office, my cablegram arrived. Knowing that Garcia had gone to the International, you sent the cablegram there?"

"Yes, senor."

"Was it delivered to him?"

"It must have been, otherwise the boy would have brought it back."

"Will you ask the boy?"

The clerk beckoned to one of the messenger-boys, and questioned him in Spaish,

"The boy says," he said, "that he gave the telegram to the manager of the hote!, who said that Garcia was there, and he would give it to him."

"Thank you. Have you ever seen

of the hotel, who said that Garcia was there, and he would give it to him."

"Thank you. Have you ever seen Garcia since?"

"No, senor."

"Have you seen Senor Vadillo and his two English friends since Garcia was here?"

"Only once, senor. As I have told you, Garcia called here about at quarter to six. I sent him to the hotel. A quarter of an hour later the cablegram arrived. I sent it also to the hotel. Five minutes afterwards Senor Vadillo and his friends came in to ask if Garcia had been. I told them I had sent him to the hotel. I also told them that a cablegram had just arrived for him, and that I had sent it after him."

The detective groaned. He began to fear the worst.

"In my cablegram," he said, "I asked Garcia to wait for me at the best hotel in the town, and to leave the rame of the hotel at the post-office He did not do so?"

(Another powerful long installment next week).

HMELLIN

Comacho flung open the shutter, and as the daylight flooded in a cry of alarm broke from Nelson Lec. Advancing threateningly on the little hut was a horde of shouting Yunca Indians.

Vadillo. "They would hardly dare to approach the Government. But they probably think we have rich friends in Peru who would be willing

friends in Peru who would be willing to ransom us."

"If you're right," said Brander, "what do you suppose they'll do when they discover that we haven't a single friend, rich or poor, on this side of the world?"

"Slit our throats, in all probability!" said Vadillo gloomily.

They discussed this unpleasant possibility for a little while; then Noel suddenly remembered that, acting on Garcia's advice, they had left the bulk of their money behind at the hotel at Oroya.

"Look here!" he said. "Couldn't we buy the brigands off and purchase our lives by offering to give them that money we left at the hotel? We could cable to England for more after they had set us free."

"Yes, we might do that," said Vadille hearsfully. "That'," not at

Brander—Vadillo acting as inter-preter—explained that he had not a single friend or acquaintance in Peru, or in South America for that matter. He admitted, however, that Peru, or in South.

matter. He admitted, however, that he had left a sum of about four hundred pounds at the hotel at Oroya, and he expressed his willingness to give the brigands that.

"More than that we cannot do," he said. "If you agree to this, you will get four hundred pounds at any rate. If you shoot us, you will get nothing."

They discussed this unpleasant possibility for a little while; then Noel suddenly remembered that, acting on Garcia's advice, they had left the bulk of their money behind at the hotel at Oroya.

"Look here!" he said. "Couldn't we buy the brigands off and purchase our lives by offering to give them that money we left at the hotel? We could cable to England for more after they had set us free."

"Yes, we might do that," said Vadillo hopefully. "That's not at all a bad idea. But you quite understand that this affair has killed our last hope of getting the crucifx?"

"You mean," said Brander, "that Nelson Lee will have arrived at Oroya on Saturday. But, as a matter of fact, I wasn't thinking of

Herr Hentig, should go round the Cape in the Comet.

This decision was a tremendous disappointment to Nipper; but, as Nelson Lee pointed out, they could not take Nipper without taking Herr Hentig, and five were too many.

Herr Hentig, and five were too many.

"Besides," he said, "my object in bringing you abroad was to give you the benefit—as the doctors advised—of a long sea voyage. And what better sea voyage could you have than a voyage round Cape Horn?"

There is no need to describe the trip from Benito Bay to Colon. The only incident worth reporting happened on Wednesday, when, the sea being rather rough, Mooney, the Irish steward, while handing round the soup at dinner-time, lost his balance, owing to the rolling of the yacht, emptied one plate of soup down Herr Hentig's neck, and, in his agitation, dropped the other into Nipper's lap!

Colon was reached on Thursday morning. Here the detective and Jack and Ralph disembarked, while the Comet, after taking a fresh supply of coal on board, started off on the long trip to Callao round the Cape.

From Colon the detective and his two companions proceeded by rail to Panama, which was reached in ample time to catch the weekly steamer to Callao. Nine days later,

THE FOOL OF THE COLLEGE.

NEXT TUESDAY IN THE "B.F."

A SUPERB NEW SCHOOL SERIAL BY CLAUDE HEATHCOTE AUTHOR OF "VAL, THE BOY ACROBAT," ETC.

# GRAND NEW SCHOOL SERIES.

A GRAND TALE OF FRANK NORMAN & CO.

THE 1st CHAPTER

Mr. Thorpe and the Tortoise.

AROLD GUARD took one sip of the thin, burnt, washy coffee his fag had just brought him, and then put down the cup with a gesture of disgust. The captain of Langdale was in bed, and though he was by no means lazy, he followed the old custom of the school, followed the old custom of the school, employing a fag to bring him an early cup of coffee and perform other light duties in his bed-room and study. Little Sidford was supposed to be the best fag at Langdale. Melliship, who had handed him over to Guard, had pronounced him a treasure. He was always punctual, could make coffee like a Frenchman, never grumbled, and was willing and attentive.

never grumbled, and was willing and attentive.

"What has gone wrong with you lately, Sidford?" asked the captam.
"I can't drink this horrible mash. And look at the toast, all dry and scorched, and as hard as a brick. Do you want a tanning, or are you playing this game because you want to get the sack? Has somebody been baiting you to leave me, young 'un?" Guard rather suspected that one of the prefects was trying to secure the fag, for several of them would have liked Sidford.

"I—I don't know what it is, Guard," said Sidford lamely." Nothing seems to go right. I—I don't want to leave you, really. Guard. Perhaps I'm not very well."

"Pull up the blind and stand where I can have a look at you," said the captain kindly. "Turn round and hold your head up!"

Sidford was small for his age, sandy-haired and freekled. Neither wealth nor titles counted for much at Langdale, but it was pretty well known that little Sidford was heir to an enormous fortune left to him by his dead mother, and that he was a ward in Chancery. A flush came into his cheeks as Guard looked at him.

"Out with your tongue," said the

into his cheeks as Guard looked at him.

"Out with your tongue," said the captain, with a professional air.

"Myes; not as pink as it might be. I'll give you a pass, and you can run off and see Dr. Hallick after breakfast. And you needn't attend early class for a day or two, so have an extra hour in bed. And I say, tell the first kid you meet who isn't fagging that I want him!"

"Thanks very much, Guard!" said Sidford gratefully. "I'm not shamming and I don't feel ill, but I can't do anything properly. I—I don't know what's the matter with me."

"Dr. Hallick will attend to you, and I don't want to have him treating me for slow poison. Run away and send somebody else to me."

As luck would have it, the first unattached junior Sidford encountered was Master Frank Norman, captain of Mr. Thorpe's juniors.

"Please, Norman," said Sidford, who always carried out his instruc-

tions to the very letter, "Guard wants to see you at once."
"What for?"
"He's given me a holiday. I'm not very well, you know," answered Sidford. "I think he wants you to fag for him-in my place for a morning or two."

or two."
"What!" yelled Frank, who
detested fagging. "Fag for him!
Did he ask for me by name? Did he

detested fagging. "Fag for him! Did he ask for me by name? Did he mean me?"

"He—he didn't exactly say you," faltered Sidford. "He told me to send the first junior I met who wasn't fagging. I met Whitworth first, but he fags for Austen. Then I met you. Let me go, Norman. Don't hit me, please. I only did what I was told, and I'm— Oh, I'm so miserable!" Frank had seized Sidford, but he released his grasp on the boy's collar. Tears were trickling down Sidford's freckled cheeks, and he looked a picture of woe.

"Wait till you're hit before you start snivelling," said Frank. "Why couldn't you have picked somebody else out, you little beast? You're too feeble to kick. Hop it!"

In no pleasant temper, Frank Norman knocked at the captain's door. He was in the room before he remembered what a fool he was making of himself. He bolted out again, hoping that Guard had not seen him. Rather than become a maid-of-all-work, a polisher of boots, and a brewer of tea and coffee, Frank would have sacrificed the junior captaincy. He stiffed a grin. Freddie Goss was walking towards him reading a letter. Goss had so far escaped the sorrows of fagdom.

"Guard wants you, sharp, Goss," said Frank. "He's in bed, and you'll know it if you keep him waiting."

Frank did not wait for a reply nor to enter into any explanation. He

you'll know it it you need ing."

Frank did not wait for a reply nor to enter into any explanation. He did not think the captain of Langdale would be particular whom he selected, but Frank did not want to be the chosen one. He grinned again as he peeped out and saw Goss enter the captain's bed-room, and the grin became a snigger when he saw Goss come out again.

"What's your face that shape for, Frank?" inquired Tony Wise. "Has

became a snigger when he saw Goss come out again.

"What's your face that shape for, Frank?" inquired Tony Wise. "Has somebody sent you a five-pound note? Don't keep the joy all to yourself, old man. Why that smile?"

"That's the giddy smile that won't scrape off, kid. You only get a smile like that when you've done a fellow-creature—I mean a fellow-creature—I mean a fellow-creature—I mean a fellow-dand framed. Tony, I'm happy. I've found a poor, starving unemployed and framed. Tony, I'm happy. I've found a poor, starving unemployed chap a job as housemaid. I know he's got the job all right, for I noticed his rapture. His manly face, with a nose in the middle of it, was as long as a yard of pump-water. I've made Freddy Goss a fearsome and frisky fag!"

"Done what?" asked the fat junior. "You've made Goss a fag?"

Thorpe arrived. Then Harold Guard came in and spoke a few words to Mr. Thorpe in a low tone.

"Very good, Cuard," said the House-master. "You are—er—very thoughtful. Probably he has eaten some atrocious substance that has disagreed with him. It seems to be a kind of instinct with boys to—er—to devour indigestible garbage. You are quite right. I will hear what Hallick has to say over the telephone."

The boys settled down to their books, and the sun began to stream windows. Its warmest rays fell on the waste-paper basket, which stood wh. Thorpe diligently corrected a few exercises, and then stifled a yawn. Frank Norman had been playing cricket at the nets with Hatfield until it was too dark to see the ball, and he

How? What are you talking about?"
The captain of the Junior Fourth explained the brilliant manner in which he had managed to clude bondage himself and enslave the enemy in his place, and Tony roared. "Ha, ha, ha, ha!" he laughed. "That's one to us, Frank, and all so early in the morning, too. Lovely! Goss hates fagging like poison. Poor old bounder! Wouldn't he be pleased if we clubbed together and bought him a nice apron, and a cap with ribbons down his back! Kid, it was cruel, but it was rather smart of you."

was cruel, but it was rather smart of you."

The first bell for class sounded. They discovered Fred Goss informing Wilson and the Honourable Billy White of what had happened.

"Cheero, Goss! I—oh, Mary, of course!" said Tony Wise. "I'm glad you've got a situation at last. Mary. Keep the doorstep nice and clean, Mary, and polish up the grates. And we don't allow any followers, Mary. You mustn't give away beer or pies to the policemen, Mary; and don't leave any brooms or dustpans on the stairs, Mary!"

Goss turned purple, and made a dash at the fat boy, who brandished an ebony ruler.

"No, Mary—no; you must not show tempah," he grinned, "when I am pointing out your duties. Be a good girl, Mary, and dust the pianola."

"I'll give you a thick ear when I get you outside," said Goss—" see if I don't! Who told you I was fagging, you pig?"

"A little bird, Mary—a sweet

I don't! Who, told you I was fagging, you pig?"

"A little bird, Mary—a sweet
little dicky-bird. But don't be so
proud about it, Mary. And you must
do your hair differently if you intend
to stay with us. We do not allow
fringes. You must brush it back and
wear a cap. Back, Mary—back!
Back, or I'll spike thee to the
midriff!"

Tony made a road with the

Back, or I'll spike thee to the midriff!"

Tony made a prod with the ruler, and the next moment they were on the floor. With some difficulty Frank and Billy White separated the two, and brushed them down before Mr. Thorpe arrived. Then Harold Guard came in and spoke a few words to Mr. Thorpe in a low tone.

"Very good, Guard," said the House-master. "You are-er-very thoughtful. Probably he has eaten some atrocious substance that has disagreed with him. It seems to be a kind of instinct with boys to-er-to devour indigestible garbage. You are quite right. I will hear what Hallick has to say over the telephone."

The boys settled down to their

had handed in an unfinished exercise. If Mr. Thorpe did not reach it before the breakfast bell rang, Frank intended to come back and complete it. He had managed to place his book near the bottom of the pile, but Mr. Thorpe's speed made him nervous.

"Go up and ask him a giddy question, Frank," said Hatfield, who was in the same anxious position. "Do something to waste time, or we shall both catch it!"

Frank glanced despairingly at the clock. He tried to think of some question, however idiotic, that would distract Mr. Thorpe's attention, but Mr. Thorpe saved him the trouble.

"Hatfield, Norman, and Wise will—er—remain behind," said the House-master tartly. "The rest of the class need not wait for the bell."

The victims sighed dismally. Mr. Thorpe was very tidy, in his habits, and he insisted on tidiness. He glanced round to see that no books had been left lying about. Then first time he caught sight of the waste-paper basket. Being of too filmsy a nature to be used as a seat, a waste-paper basket is of little use when upside-down.

"Good gracious!" said Mr. Thorpe, taking off his glasses, wiping

"Good gracious!" said Mr. Thorpe, taking off his glasses, wiping them, and putting them on again. "Good— Extraordinary! I really believe—yes, actually, it is—it is moving!"

"Good—Extraordinary! I really believe—yes, actually, it is—it is moving!"

The basket was certainly moving. It was sliding slowly across the floor. Frank, Hatfield, and Tony Wise saw it too with no little astonishment. Mr. Thorpe leaned over his desk. The amazing basket continued to advance. Then it wobbled and began to move in the opposite direction. Mr. Thorpe breathed hard.

"What the thump is inside?" gasped Frank. "I'm going to see." Without asking for permission, Frank sprang from his seat and whisked away the basket. Then he flopped down on the floor and laughed, for it was only Napoleon's tortoise. As Frank held it by the tail Mr. Thorpe bent over it. On the reptile's shell was written in red chalk, and very distinctly:

"Hallo, Thorpe! We're both reptiles, so shake flippers!"

"Aha!" said Mr. Thorpe "Oho!
So we are both reptiles, are we? Very good! Do you three boys know anything about this? Nothing—eh? Very good! Oho!"

"It's Barker's tortoise, sir," said Frank; "but Napoleon wouldn't—ha, ha, ha!—wouldn't—excuse my cough, sir. Napoleon wouldn't—ha, ha, ha! I can't help—"

Tony and Hatfield had their heads inside their desks, and their shoulders were shaking. Mr. Thorpe edged along the wall on tiptoe cane in hand. Then he wrenched open the door and made a clutch. It was a successful clutch, for he dragged in Reggie Wilson, who had been listening at the keyhole.

"A reptile, Wilson," said Mr. Thorpe, as he used the cane. "is a

the keyhole.

"A reptile, Wilson," said Mr.
Thorpe, as he used the cane, "is a

cold-blooded animal. I am not, nor are you. If you are—er—all the better for you, for I shall not hurt you much. (Swish, swish, swish!) It is an unusual thing at Langdale to (swish!) inflict (swish, swish!) corporal punishment, but I consider (swish, swish, swish!) I am more than justified on this (swish, swish!) occasion. Good-morning, Wilson! I hope you will enjoy your breakfast!"

Mr. Thorpe closed the door, and there was a smile on his face like the smile of a man who has found halfasovereign in a cast-off waistcoat.

"Norman," he said, "you will kindly wash that tortoise and restore it to its—er—owner with my compliments. You may assure the owner that if I discover the creature within the school precincts again, I will make him skip with no tortoiselike agility, but—er—with the agility of—er—a startled wild rabbit."

"HE 2nd CHAPTER.

Missing Money.

"HAT a studious chap you are, Guard!" cried Dr.
Hallick breezily. "I knocked twice. Hallo! Is this the Bank of England? What fabulous wealth!"

wealth!"

The captain of Langdale turned and held out his hand. On the table before him was a heap of gold and silver, and a collection of bills and

before him was a heap of gold and silver, and a collection of bills and other papers.

"Yes. I'm settling up the accounts for the Head's inspection, doctor," said Guard. "It's a bit of a bother to get all the subscriptions and things in. I pay all the expenses for out-matches out of a special account, you see, and I have to get all that back—some of it for last term—and in a big school like this it comes to a lot of money."

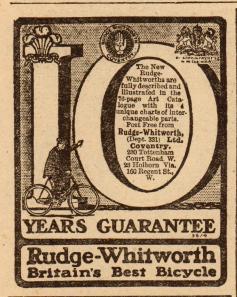
"So it seems, and a lot of work, too. That's one of the penalties of greatness. I was motoring past, so I thought I'd come in. I couldn't find Thorpe. There seems nothing wrong with the youngster you sent down, except nerves. He seems to be fretting about something. Has he lost any of his relatives recently, or is he bullied?"

"I think we've about stopped bullying at Langdale," answered Guard. "Plenty of ragging goes on, but it's honest, good-natured ragging, and I think the youngsters are too manly to bully a little chap like Sidford. He's a decent little fellow. There was trouble, as you know, but he was too young to remember that."

"Yes," said the doctor. "His father was a blackguard. You'd

that."
"Yes," said the doctor. "His father was a blackguard. You'd think a man who married a woman with a couple of millions would have kept straight, but nothing could keep Jack Sidford straight. He cleared out of the country after that card-sharping swindle, and joined the Boers, didn't he? That was the rumour."

was the rumour."
(Continued on the next page.)



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THE FOOL OF THE COLLEGE.

**NEXT TUESDAY IN THE "B.F."** 

"He was shot at Paardeburg," said Guard, "and serve the renegade and traitor right. Poor little Sidford! It's not always joy to be born a millionaire, doctor."

Left to himself, Harold Guard went on with his accounts. The figures would not come right. Try as he would, he was three pounds on the wrong side.

"What have I done with that money?" he thought. "It was all straight to a penny when I totted it up before It's there right enough, so I'll leave it."

Guard was in no mood for figures, so he erammed the money and papers into the cashbox, and locked the box in the drawer of his wardrobe. It was a large sum, over a hundred pounds in all. But there were no pickpockets or burglars at Langdale, and both drawer and cashbox had excellent locks

Frank Norman, Ned Bryant, and Tony Wise were leaning out of the window of their study. There was not a great deal to lock at except Mr. Bunn's cat trying to stalk a sparrow. And then a shadow fell on the gravel, and Griff, the raven, swooped down.

"Exit cat, for pots of money," said Tony. "Hustle her up and tell her to get a move on, Griff!"

The raven and the cat were not on friendly terms. With his great, glossy wings spread out, and his powerful beak open, Griff made for his foe. The cat swarmed up the ivy-grown wall and took refuge in the thick ornamental shrubs of the Head's garden, where the bird could not follow. Then, picking up some object, the bird flew away.

"What's that white thing he's got in his beak?" cried Frank. "Look, he's dropped it. It's a ball, isn't it? There's Napoleon trying to bag it. Bravo, Griff!"

The raven was too quick for Napoleon. Swooping down again, Griff recaptured his prize, and stood over it like a dog, daring Napoleon

There's Napoleon trying to bag it. Bravo, Griff!"
The raven was too quick for Napoleon. Swooping down again, Griff recaptured his prize, and stood over it like a dog, daring Napoleon to touch it.

Then Griff winged his way up to his haunt in the clock-tower, carrying a golf ball with him, and causing an uproar among the jackdaws who also lived up there.

"What had the old fool got, Nap?" shouted Frank, as the naturalist approached. "Why didn't you bag it if it was any good?"

"It was a golf ball, and almost a new one," said Napoleon, glancing up. "I did not attempt to take it, for I once endeavoured to rescue a poor sparrow from him, and he pecked my ankles and wrist so viciously and severely that he caused me extreme pain for several days. He is an amusing bird, but most ferocious and coarse in his language."

"You don't expect him to kiss you and sing love songs to you, do you, Nap?" grinned Frank. He shaded his eves and stared at the narrow slit.

ferocious and coarse in his language."

"You don't expect him to kiss you and sing love songs to you, do you, Nap?" grinned Frank. He shaded his eyes and stared at the narrow slit in the lofty tower, through which the raven had vanished. "I'll be up there one of these giddy fine days or dark nights, kids," he added, "and burgle his bank. You don't know what stuff the old thief has got hidden away. He's been collecting things for donkey's years. My hat! I'll try one day, if I break my neck. Funny nobody tried before."

"Why, Crosland went up a few terms ago," said Bryant. "It's easy enough, only they keep the trapdoor locked. You see those things that look like pinheads on the spire? Well, they're copper rivets, and they stick out so that you can walk up 'em like a ladder. But he only found a few spoons and a lot of bones and rubbish in Griff's den."

"There's a golf ball in it now, and that's worth eighteenpence or a couple of bob if it's a good one," said Frank. "And Griff might have shifted most of his loot before Crosland got there. Things are slow, and I've got a little idea that I'll like to perch on that roof. If I could only get hold of the keys, I'd perch quick enough."

"Watch old Bunn out of the way, and you'll easily get the keys," said Tony. "Watch old Bunn out of the way, and you'll easily get the keys, said Tony. "He's got 'em all hanging up and labelled. But it won't come off, old son, this side of Christmas."

"Fifty-nine billion pounds, no shillings, and one penny three-farthings!" said Tony. "Will you take it by cheque, or in halfreeny

"Fifty-nine billion pounds, no shillings, and one penny three-farthings!" said Tony. "Will you take it by cheque, or in halfpenny stamps? Or shall I send a boy round to your house with it on a skewer." Frank took another look at the tower through Hatfield's field-glasses. "I'm going up there," he said, "and when Grandpa Frank says so, he means so. I'm going to burgle that thieves' den of Griff's. I mean it. So 'nuff said."

"In the sweet by and by when the igs begin to fly," warbled Bryant. Tell us when you're going,

pigs begin to fly," warbled Bryant.
"Tell us when you're going,
Frankie, and we'll come with you."
"And when he does go," said
Tony Wise, "the giddy weathercock up there will grow feathers and
start to fly. Let's go and have a pull
on the river."
"I'm game, kids, only you can do
the rowing part," said Frank. "I'm
going to do the steering and have a
big head thunk, a regular thunking
think."

his tense voice made Tony start and glance at him.

his tense voice made Tony start and glance at him.

"One hundred and fif— No, no! What am I talking about? Let's make sure. Ninety-seven pounds fifteen shillings and a measly three-penny bit," said Tony.

"Right! Now take a pencil, young 'un, and tot these up. I'll read them out first. Watch each one as I read it. Well, how much? Ninety-seven fifteen—ch?"

"Yes, with three pounds on the top of it," said Tony. "One hundred pounds fifteen shillings and three. That's the total, Guard. Blow your whistle, Guard, 'cos I want the train to start. Anything else I can do for you? You can spare me a quid out of it— Here, you look jolly sick. Do you feel queer?"

"No, I'm all right," said the captain, forcing a smile. "Thanks very much. I've got a tooth that's worry-

tain, forcing a smile. "Thanks very much. I've got a tooth that's worrying a bit. Thanks again, young'un."

ing a bit. Thanks again, young 'un."

Tony was no fool.

"Got the accounts messed up," he thought, "and the exact sum is three quid. He's paid somebody, and lost the receipt or something."

But it was worse than that. Guard had been robbed, and he knew it. There was a thief in Langdale, and in Thorpe's House. Guard was generous and careless with his own money, but he was careful enough with money that was not his. He had always kept the drawer of the wardrobe and the cashbox religiously locked. The housekeeper and the servants were all to be trusted. And more than that, he had kept the keys on a chain in his pocket. Whom could he suspect? Only little Sidford.

"No I can't believe it." muttered.

on a chain in his pocket. Whom could he suspect? Only little Sidford.

"No, I can't believe it," muttered the captain, pacing up and down.
"But nobody else had a chance of getting at the keys. He could have done it easily enough when he was brushing my clothes. And—Great Scott! He must have read that note from the Head asking me for the accounts. He knew I'd find out. Is that why he shammed? No, he wasn't shamming. What did the doctor say? Nervous? The little fcol! Bred in the bone—ch?"

Like father, like son. Guard liked Sidford. He could not accuse the lad, for suspicions are not proofs, and Sidford was not well. He could only wait and watch. Guard telegraphed to his own father for five pounds to be sent so as to reach him in the morning without fail.

The Tower and its Secret.

ITTLE Sidford had been sent to the "Swanker's Parlour," as the Langdalians called it. Boys not ill enough to go to the sanatorium were banished to those rather pleasant quarters, where they could remain quiet and be looked

after by the matron. After tea, the lads of Langdale sought the cricket-field, gymnasium, quadrangte, er river according to taste. In the case of Frank Norman, Tony Wise, and Hatfield, however, Mr. Thorpe had had something to say. Boys who neglected lessons in lesson-time had to make up for it in their own time, and the three juniors sat at the table in the study writing busily.

"I'm through," said Frank, who was a quick worker. "The ghastly deed is done, so I'll stretch my legs a bit. You'll find me down at the boathouse, kids."

Hatfield was the next to fling down his pen and close the book with a sigh of relief. The gloaming had come before Tony had succeeded in puzzling out a complicated problem in arithmetic.

To soothe his tortured brain, Tony took out his concertina and played softly to himself in the deepening twilight. He could play very tunefully when he chose, and nobody was near to throw things at him. Then feeling better, he put the concertina away, and thought he would go and look for his chums. Mr. Bunn had not been round to light the gas as yet, and the corridor was rather gloomy. Tony saw a figure emerge from Harold Guard's room, and glide away with noiseless tread.

"Hallo! Guard has soon got sick of Fred Goss, and taken Sidford on again," thought Tony. "I shouldn't like to take Goss on as a fag myself. Sidford must have got well again

"Let him alone; he's not hurt," said Frank Norman. "Oh, oh, Antonio! I've been and done it this go, you know. Kid, what's them and what's theses?"

Frank triumphantly held up two keys, to which faded parchment labels were tied. One key was large and bright, the other much smaller and very rusty.

keys, to which faded parchment labels were tied. One key was large and bright, the other much smaller and very rusty.

"Not—not the keys of the grabjous tower?" gasped the fat junior.

"Absolutely, my bouncing beauty! We watched old Bunn off the premises, and then I gaily cantered into the lodge and hooked 'em off the hook," chuckled Frank. "It's Bunn's night off, and this night the deed must be did. To-night I scale the dizzy tower and rob the raven. Well, what do you think of it?"

"I think you'll get into a merry row, my son," said Tony. "Of course, I'll pay you that nineteen million edd when I've got it. M'yes—you'll do!"

The night had promised to be fine, but when Hatfield looked out the sky had clouded over and a dismal wind was blowing, driving a cold rain before it.

Harold Guard was taking prefectduty. He put out the lights in the Fourth-Form dormitory, and turned into Pantley's study for a chat with his fellow-prefect before going to bed. Guard did not mention the missing money. His father had telegraphed that he had posted the five-pound note, so there would be no difficulty about the accounts. At last

window, and looking out he saw that the moon was shining and that the rain had ceased.

rain had ceased.

Hatfield, Bryant, and Stout Wise were also out of bed. Bundling their clothes together, they made their way to the study.

"You're going after all, then, Frank?" asked Hatfield.

"You're going after all, then, Frank?" asked Hatfield.

"You bet! It's drying up fast," said Frank, pulling on an old pair of trousers. "I said I would, and I will. Don't forget matches."

"Hallo! The front door isn't bolted," whispered Tony Wise.

"Thorpe hasn't come in yet."

If Mr. Thorpe had not come in, the whole plan fell through, for he would bolt the door on his return and shut them out for the night. Frank looked up at the master's window. A light was burning there. Suddenly it vanished. Evidently Mr. Thorpe had forgotten the bolts, for nobody else would be out at such an hour. The moon shone clearly, and Frank's courage rose. He knew, as they all did, that the game was not worth the candle, but he would not turn back now. Their rubber shoes made no noise. In the shadow cast by the tall grey towers, Tony Wise struck a match and lighted a bullseye lantern, and Frank took out the ponderous key. The clock began to chime, and boomed out eleven deep, quivering notes. Tony flashed the light on the iron-studded door. Quick as thought he turned the slide of the lantern.

"It's—it's open," he said hoarsely.

"It's—it's open," he said hoarsely.
"What does it mean? Why ain't it locked as it always is?"

"I suppose Bunn forgot it, just as Thorpe forgot the other door," whispered Frank, rather startled. "It's a bit rummy. What's that row?"
"Only an owl with a sore throat," said Hatfield, "and the ivy rustling. Hide the light till we're inside in case anybody's looking to see what the weather's like."

The next moment they were in

The next moment they were in comparative darkness. The moon beams flickering in showed them the bellropes dangling down like huge snakes and part of the ladder. Above all was dark and mysterious and ghastly. They thought of their cosy beds and of the mad old bell-ringer who was said to have hanged himself in the tower. It was very cold, too, and smelt damp and gravelike. No one spoke for a long time. Then Frank took a candle out of the satchel, and stood dumbfounded like the others.

"Is that you?" asked a voice from

Frank took a candle out of the satchel, and stood dumbfounded like the others.

"Is that you?" asked a voice from the gloom. "You cursed brat! Why have you kept me shivering here so long? Have you got it?"

"Ye-es," faltered another voice, and a sob followed. "Ye-es, I've got it and—and you'll go—go away now and never c-come back. You—you promised you would."

"Stop snivelling—can't you? Of course I'll go away if I don't break my neck on these steps. Why didn't you bring a light?"

The ladder creaked. The four juniors remained breathless and aghast. Then Tony, unable to restrain himself, turned back the slide, and the yellow light of the bullseye lantern revealed a ragged, unshorn, evil-faced man, who was clinging to the ladder. Then there was a shriek. It came from little Sidford. The boy's mouth was open, and his eyes were staring wildly. Something fell from his hands with a crash and a jingle. A cashbox!

And then another figure leapt in, and Harold Guard had the man by the throat.

"Don't—don't—don't,—don't, Guard!" cried little Sidford piteously. "It's my father!"

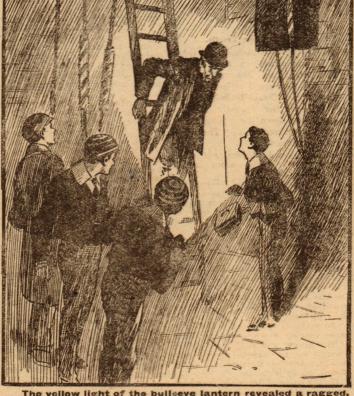
Guard, his eyes ablaze, flung the man against the wall.

"Say you're not his father—say you're an impostor and a rogue! Say his father's dead, and that you know it," hissed the captain.

The man, cowed and shivering, slunk away into the night. Griff's den was not robbed that night. After putting little Sidford to bed Guard came back.

"Not a word of this," he said to the subdued juniors. "The brute has been blackmailing the kid for money. We know the hound is his father, but the poor kid thinks now that he's an impostor. He'll worry Sidford no more. I'm not going to punish you, but not a whisper of to-night's work, on your honour."

"Not till pigs fly, Guard," said Frank. "Poor little Sidford! We'll look after him, kids. You can trust us to keep mum, Guard. Goodnight, old sport!"



The yellow light of the bullseye lantern revealed a ragged, evil-faced man, who was clinging to the ladder. Sidford gave a shriek, and the cashbox fell from his hands,

jolly quick. I expect the matron wanted to stick a mustard plaster on him, and that cured him. Well, little Willy Wilson, how's the giddy tortois?"

him, and that cured him. Well, little Willy Wilson, how's the giddy tortoise?"

Wilson, who was climbing the stairs with painful steps and slow, gave a sickly kind of grin.

"I only wish I'd had its shell when Thorpe started on me!" he answered. "The silly trousers I had on were pretty well worn out. Coh! It was a good jape, but I give in that Thorpe got the best of it."

Tony advised him to line his trousers with tin the next time he attempted a similar joke, and went on his way. He saw Mr. Bunn light the lamp over the gateway, and other lights began to appear in the windows of the different houses. It was almost dark by this time, and the boys were struggling back. Tony asked several of them if they had seen Frank Norman. Then his cap was suddenly pushed down over his eyes, and his arms were seized from behind. Fancying that he was in the hands of the Gossites, Tony kicked out, and a yell followed.

"Oh, you little beast! You've chipped all the bark off my shin!" howled Bryant, dancing on one leg and nursing the other. "You've lamed me!"

"Bark—eh?" grinned Tony. "I thought there was a dog about; that's why I hoofed out. How did I know? What made you bonnet me like that?"

the captain returned to his own room. He threw himself down on his bed without undressing, and tossed about restlessly. He could not leave the matter where it was. He must find the thief and trap him. Then, seized by a sudden impulse, Guard put on his slippers, and taking a candle, went out. He was going to Sidford.

Meanwhile, three of the four juniors who were lying awake in their little cots were beginning to lose their enthusiasm as they listened to the wail of the night wind and the patter of the rain against the windows. Even Frank Norman felt less eager. The leads of the spire would be cold up there as well as dark. The others hoped that he had gone to sleep and forgotten all about it. In fact, the captain of the juniors was inclined to do so himself.

"It sounded all very nice in daylight," he thought, "but it doesn't seem half so nice now. I don't like it. Bother the weather! Those keys must be shoved in old Bunn's letterbox, anyhow, for when he misses' em there'll be a shindy. Friday—tomorrow, the very day he winds the clock up. Oh, rotten!"

It was Frank's turn to hope that his comrades were asleep. If they were, he had made up his mind to slip out, push the keys into Bunn's letter-box, and creep back to his warm bed. He waited for another ten minutes. Then he stole to the

THE FOOL OF THE COLLEGE.

NEXT TUESDAY IN THE

A SUPERB NEW SCHOOL SERIAL BY CLAUDE HEATHCOTE, AUTHOR OF "VAL, THE BUY ACROBAT," ETC.



S Buffalo Bill stood like a rock, A trying to cover his friends as they dashed forward, it seemed even to the iron nerve of the King of Scouts as if the end had come.

They had gained the fresh spot, ut it was a poor substitute for that which they had quitted. Here they were completely surrounded by the relentless Indians, who surged round them, aiming blows with tomahawk

relentless Indians, who surged round them, aiming blows with tomahawk and spear, and as a circle was formed about the women and the child, Buffalo Bill blazed out a cry.

"Say, you fellows," he said, "let's give one cheer for good old Uncle Sam and John Bull."

The appeal met with all the response that might have been expected. It was a cheer, but that was about all that could be said for it. To Field all the rest was misty and confused, consequent upon a crack he had received on the head. He knew there was a sort of nightmare of blows raining, blows taken and received, with the scout's shoulder touching his, and with his father on the other side, set of face, and looking as a brave man looks when death is pressing him close.

And he knew, too, that it was only a question of minutes ere, with the pressure on all sides but one, the little party would be swept from their footing, and that then they would be the easy prey of the victors, who would 'sind them and carry them off to their villages for torture. The idea maddened him. It seemed to give him renewed strength, and he pulled himself together, sealing out such blows at the dusky mass in front that for a short space the attack weakened.

"Good lad!" said the scout.

"That's your sort! We aren't going to be beaten." He winced as a spear grazed his shoulder; but, then, he shook off the effects as a charger drives off a fly.

Back they were driven, and the men the sheriff had brought were breathing hard. Grace gave a little gashing cry as the wall of defenders.

charger drives off a fly.

Back they were driven, and the men the sheriff had brought were breathing hard. Grace gave a little gasping cry as the wall of defenders was broken and she saw a huge Indian dash in.

Then from far away came a wild, harsh, weirdly appealing cry—a cry which went echoing through the valley and then sounded again and again.

which went echoing through the valley and then sounded again and again.

The effect this had upon the Apaches was electrical. They turned and faced about, as if trying to place the new enemy, for, long ere the scout and his devoted friends had gauged the truth, the Indians were cognisant of what that cry meant, and of the fresh danger which was sweeping up to them from out of the further west like the angry waves of the mighty sea.

It was the Dacotah host from out of the land of the setting sun. The sky was dotted now with the shadowy ghosts of the paling stars. The deep sense of the night was giving place to the new day, and shafts of rosy light shot up the eastern heavens.

The Apaches waited, a prey to a dread of the unseen, for not only would the new-comers deprive them of their revenge upon the whites, but they were depleted by the fight, and between them and the Dacotahs existed a hatred which spelt extermination. Buffalo Bill thought hard during the dense interval while the enemy stood at bay. He knew that the old blood fury of the race was reused now, and that not even Trapper Malton with his seminystical powers over the red race could avail.

As for the cry which was heard again and again, he attributed it to the coming of reinforcements who would help in the annihilation of the whites. Then, as the attack was not renewed, hope came again.

His attention was taken off these gloomy thoughts for a second by the strange action of the dog, which

suddenly darted out at

had suddenly darted out at the Indians. A spear thrust sent him howling back, but ere he reached the rock shelter he turned and barked at something he saw, but which the whites did not discern.

Again that cry, sounding much nearer now. Broad day had come, and as the sun touched the mountain heights it fell on the gay plumes waving, and the glistening spears of a vast troop of Indians.

There was a resounding warwhoop, and the new-comers came charging down. There were hundreds and hundreds of them, and always more behind. It was then that the truth came in a flash to Buffalo Bill. He turned excitedly and shouted something to the trapper. In the clamour the words were dim, but the other heard. What Buffalo Bill did say was this:

"Look! Fleetfoot! He is ordering them to charge!"

#### The Welcome Truth.

THE Apaches turned, and there was panic in their movements, as, like rats caught in a trap, they stood at bay.
"It's grand!" said Buffalo Bill, as

he watched the friendly Indians come racing down the grassy slopes in the bright sunlight. "The finest in the bright sunlight. sight I ever saw!"

sight I ever saw!"

Russell looked at him, not quite understanding. The scout seized him by the hand.

"Don't you savvy, old fellow?" he said huskily. "The Dacotahs are the sworn enemies of all this crowd, and young Fleetfoot has breught them to our help. Ah, he has dene his duty well!"

Russell gave a cry of heartfelt relief. By this time the wind had tossed the smoke clouds away, sending them drifting down the valley, and the white party saw a prodigious sight which seemed to them for the moment as if it were some grandiose spectacle arranged for their pleasure.

In myriads the hosts of Dacotahs came tearing down the steep sides

their pleasure.

In myriads the hosts of Dacotahs came tearing down the steep sides of the gorge, and they shouted exultantly as they came, for they saw that the Apaches were at last in the hollow of their hand.

With a roar of triumph, in which was the pent-up longing for revenge of years, they threw themselves upon their old-time foes. As Field gazed, fascinated by what he saw, Fleetfoot, standing upon a rocky eminence shouted to his followers. But it was not the Fleetfoot whom Field and Jock had known. He was no longer the young Indian lad whom they had found half-starved long prior to these events, but the proud chieftain of his great tribe. He was attired in all the brilliant panoply of war, and standing near him were others who looked to him for orders.

The Apaches were brave, but as they faced the impact it was plain enough to the onlookers that there could be only one end to the struggle. It was not a rout, not a surrender. For the Apaches there was no escape. The result was a satinghter to a man.

The Apaches had come down into the ravine little dreaming that their old enemies were so near. When they tried to flee they were met on every hand by foes who had vowed undying hate. From every direction the Dacotahs came pouring down upon them, pitiless in their thirst for blood, for had not the Apaches captured and made a slave of their chief?

Buffalo Bill and his friends, worn out with the unequal contest, they

Buffalo Bill and his friends, worn Buffalo Bill and his friends, worn out with the unequal contest they had waged for so long, looked on as the Indians who had tried to destroy them were themselves cut down.

Had they been able, the scout and the trapper would have tried to stay the slaughter, that awful work of destruction in which none were

spared, but anything of the kind was absolutely beyond their powers. This was an affair of tribal jealousy, and the fierce Dacotahs who had found their young chief at last and learned from him the story of the cruelties practised upon him, would allow of no quarter.

And when finally the baffled remnants of the foe tried with the courage of despair to break out of the ring of spears and gain the precipitous sides of the mountains, they were hewn down one by one.

Fleetfoot stood aloof, giving his instructions, the born leader, his eyes flashing fire, and every gesture betokening the confidence of one who is chosen for command.

It was some time later that he approached the scout and the others. Ere that time something had been effected by the whites. They had recovered their stores, for these, luckily, had not been touched by the fire, and when the young chief came up, the trapper was asking what was the best thing to be done.

Buffalo Bill gripped the young Indian by the hand, but as words of thanks were uttered, Fleetfoot drew himself up proudly in the attitude of one who is merely liquidating a debt. There was in his look humility as well as pride.

"You, my friends, saved me," he said. "This—this is nothing. It is merely an old revenge," he went on gravely. "I am the head of the Dacotah race, for my father died while I was in captivity. They stole me away. I tried for many moons, as you know, to return to my people, but could not. The Apache dogs would have slain me long ago but for you." He looked at Jock and Field. "Them last night the message came to me from out of the forest. I learned that my people were near at hand. I went to them, and they welcomed me as their chief, and I told them that the Apaches were about to press you hard. That is all."

"The notch on the tree?" said Field quickly.

"Yes," was the reply.

Buffalo Bill gave the young chief a nod, which, to a man such as himself, meant more than it does with many people. The light had come to him about the shadow he had seen creeping away when h

guard.

"Hear that, Malton?" he cried.

He turned sharply, for he thought
that the trapper was at his side, but
he was there no longer.

Field followed the scout's glance,
and he saw his father stooping over
a man who was lying prone a few

and he saw his father stooping over a man who was lying prone a few yards away.

The lad went softly up, to see his father bend lower over the stricken man. He was musmuring a word of forgiveness to the brother who had sinned so deeply. Buffalo Bill looked on with passionless eyes, grave and calm. Just then the trapper looked round, and, seeing his son, called to him. When the lad approached the two, the man who seemed on the point of death, except for a gleam in his eyes, tried to struggle up.

"Lie still," said the trapper quietly. His hand took that of the wounded man. "Field, my son," he said, "you and I have a good deal to pardon, but we do so, do we not? We can forgive, although—" He did not finish, for he was thinking of that tale of lives sacrificed indirectly to the other's greed.

There was a murmur of thanks, and then the young Malton glanced furtively round. The trapper rose and came over to where Buffalo Bill was standing talking to Fleetfoot, who was now chatting easily since the scout said no more about thanks.

The trapper did not see the sheriff so up to where his brother lay, as he thought, at the point of death. The trapper wanted to persuade the scout to say something to the miserable man.

The sheriff was not out for sentiment, and he looked keenly and

scent to say something to the miserable man.

The sheriff was not out for sentiment, and he looked keenly and critically down at the author of so much mischief. It took him only a fraction of time to divine the truth. The man was shamming in order to escape his punishment. What that punishment was none knew better than he.

As a matter of fact, there was nothing much the matter with himmerely a superficial wound in the shoulder.

shoulder.

"Trying to humbug us—eh, you dirty dog?" said the sheriff.

The scoundrel gave a snarl, and sprang to his feet. He would have made a dash for the forest, but the sheriff was too quick for him. As he felt the other's hand descend upon him, the ruffian seized the sheriff by

the throat. But the sheriff knew something of the art of wrestling, and the next moment he had thrown the man off, and was holding him, pinioned.

pinioned.

"Hi, you Starling and Grainger!"
he called to his men.
The two followers hurried up, and
the sheriff tossed his prisoner to

The two followers hurried up, and the sheriff tossed his prisoner to them.

"Tie the beggar up!" he said.

"He isn't safe. I shall have a good deal of business with him later. I am here representing the law of the Dominion, and he has much to answer for. Besides, it will be merciful to keep him under guard. If we let him go back to the township now, the boys there would tearnim limb from limb for this night's work—bringing the Indians down on us. You will have to hang, my fine fellow, but that is better than lynch law, anyway. There isn't a tough who wouldn't feel he was doing his duty by knifing you!"

The captive gave a yell of terror, and jerked himself free from the grasp of the sheriff's guards. Then before anyone could interfere, and with the certain knowledge that the lowest scum of a western township would turn from him with loathing.

with the certain knowledge that the lowest scum of a western township would turn from him with loathing, he did that which a baffled, hunted, and despairing wretch has done before—he pulled out a revolver and pressed the barrel to his forehead, fired, and fell dead, for the bullet went true.

In Honour of the Victors.

LEETFOOT gathered his warriors together and addressed them, telling them that now they had achieved a victory over their enemies they should return to ways of peace. The leading men

over their enemies they should return to ways of peace. The leading men were brought forward and presented to the whites.

At Fleetfoot's bidding, they gravely saluted Colonel Cody as a great white chief.

The sun rose higher and lit up a melancholy scene. Then followed a sad work which had to be performed.

Two days elapsed ere Buffalo Bill and the others could attempt to do anything at the mine. These days had been passed in establishing a new camp in the midst of a smiling valley at a considerable distance from the reef.

Then work began in earnest, but it was interrupted by Fleetfoot, who had retired with his braves, and who now came back to the camp in full state for a special purpose.

"I am here," he said, "to ask you all to come to the great war-dance in honour of the victory. Will you attend?"

The invitation was gladly accepted by all but the sheriff, who shook his

all to come to the great war-dance in honour of the victory. Will you attend?"

The invitation was gladly accepted by all but the sheriff, who shook his head when asked if he could be there. "I am afraid not," he said. "I have to send my two fellows off at once. I am going to have a posse of our men up here, for, now that we have fixed you up comfortably, I should like to finish the job. I mean to clear those ruffians of Neil Watson's gang out of Rock Valley."

But the sheriff was able to attend the festival, after all, for the reinforcements did not arrive so soon as he had thought. When they did come a start was made for the head-quarters of the dangerous gang. Buffalo Bill riding with the sheriff and his numerous following.

In that interval Fleetfoot had provided a fete for his white friends which was marvellous to a degree. The grand triumphal dance with which the Dacotahs celebrated their victory was a sight which for wild heroic grandeur could scarcely have been surpassed.

On the torchlit plateau, where the

heroic grandeur could scarcely have been surpassed.
On the torchlit plateau, where the festivities took place, the dark masses of the Indians moved forward to the accompaniment of haunting, fantastic music which was descriptive of the splendid deeds of the warriors on the battlefield.

Afterwards came the sword dance and the snake dance with all their remarkable ceremonial and superb dignity.

dignity.

Through all the display Fleetfoot sat grave and thoughtful, but now and then his eyes flashed with pleasure as the leading men of the tribe came forward to do obeisance to the King of Scouts.

"It is a farewell," he said to Field. "We return to the villages at the dawn."

dawn."

When the lads bade their young comrade good-bye Fleetfoot grasped their hands.

"Promise." he said, "to come out and see me in the future. I will provide you with a hunt such as you have never seen."

"Oh, yes, we will come!" was the reply.

Edinburgh Again.

HE sheriff and his party, with Buffalo Bill, were gone two weeks, and during that time the trapper and his friends had done wonders. They had already amassed enough gold to make them rich beyond their wildest dreams Communication had been opened up with Silverville, and much of the treasure had been transmitted to the strongrooms of the bank in that town.

rooms of the bank in that town.

Moreover, the trapper had so regularised his position that now he could safely delegate some considerable part of the work at the mine.

In this part of the business Marriott, who, with Grace, had remained at the camp, was of great assistance, so that when three weeks later Buffalo Bill and the sheriff rode into the camp to report the wiping out of the nest of rascality at Rock Valley, it was to find that Malton and Russell were thinking of home.

home.

Russell had been given a third share in the mine, and the future was rosy indeed for the Scots settler and his family.

"I will come out again," said the trapper, "and so will you, Russell, shall you not?"

"Oh, yes!" was the reply. "But I should like to see the old place. And you, colonel, you will come with us?"

"No," said the famous scout, with a dry laugh. "This is my home—the Wild West. You will find me here when you want me."

So it was arranged that the settlers should have a brief holiday in the old land. The Marriotts went with them. It became more and more evident that Field and Grace Marriott had formed one of those friendships which last a lifetime, and it was also plain that the trapper was quite ready to accept Grace as a daughter-in-law when the time came. On the long journey back it was arranged that the happy event should take place in Edinburgh before they all returned to the West.

Mrs. Russell could hardly believe her eyes when she saw the old Cowgate again. The place looked so small, and even Jock laughed at the thought of the runaway cow which had carried off Mollie.

"But all that is so long ago," said Russell. "It seems to me that it might be many, many years instead of, let me see, barely three."

Edinburgh was a very different place to them now. They stopped at Macgregor's Royal Hotel in Prince's Street, and were looked apon with very kindly interest and even admiration as people who had passed through almost incredible dangers, and had come back safe and sound. Russell and Malton had decided to take their friend Marriott's advice and do a tour of Europe before they returned to the wilds.

"You see," said Marriott, "the young people will be married by then and will be having their trip, and we can pick them up at one of the southern ports."

Naturally, the wealth of Trapper Malton was the talk of the country. He did not seem a bit overwhelped by the rush and hurry of civilisation, for the man who has lived in the wilds is trained for anything.

He looked just as noble and dignified in his tweed travelling suit as he had done in the picturesque garb of the hunter who has been an exile for long years.

Meanwhile, in Edinburgh, Russell had not been idle. He and his wife sought out the good-hearted minister, they recounted all their adventures, and Russell asked to be allowed to subscribe to the fun

(Don't forget to tell all your chums about "The Odds Against Him," our great new racing-stable story that has just commenced.)