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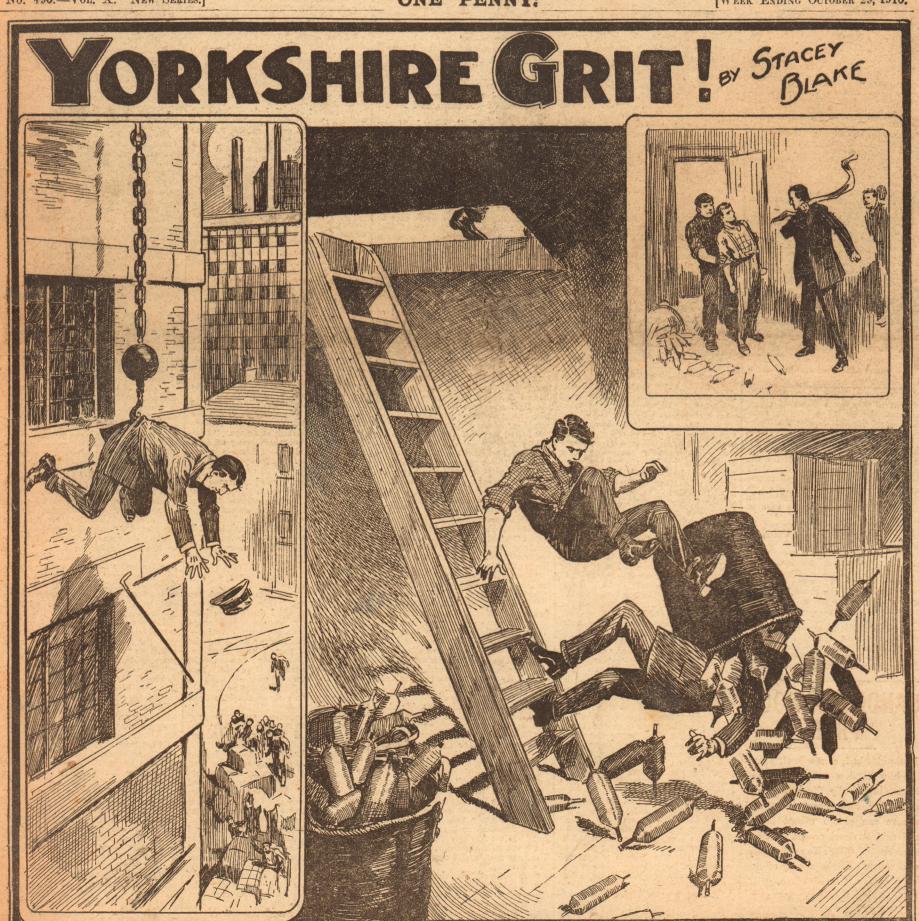


The object of THE BOYS' FRIEND is to Amuse, to Instruct, and to Advise Boys.

No. 490.—Vol. X. New Series.]

ONE PENNY:

[WEEK ENDING OCTOBER 29, 1910.



SUPERR NEW SERIAL



THE OPENING CHAPTERS IN BRIEF. |

The opening chapters of this grand serial dolck Allen, a thirteen-year-old Yorkshire lad, with his young sister Jessie, parentless and almost penniless. The boy, full of pluck, and determined not to despair, cheers up the girl, and then sets out to fight the great battle of life.

At Trimble's Mills, in Bradford, the workers are out on strike, and it is here that Dick intends to apply for a post. Men and women are gathered in front of the great mill, a nd on the gates is a notice that hands are needed. Dick pushes his way through the crowd and boldly rings the bell. Instantly the cry of "Blackleg!" is raised, and Dick is seized by the strikers, who give him a terrible battering and throw him into a filthy pond.

flithy pond.

The next morning Dick is out again,
The next morning Dick is out again,
and dedding along with other mill-workers who odding along with other mill-workers who e about to commence their long day's il. He lingers about in front of great niddings, and then galning courage, he polies for a post, but there seems no chance getting employment anywhere, and he eets curt refusals at every turn. Dick tries at Trimble's again, where Mr. rimble is fitting up new machinery that ill, when completed, turn out work at onderful rapidity. This time he gains an

in defiance of the strikers.

in defiance of the strikers, and is successful in making a start in life.

The strikers are furious, and they intend to break up the new machinery which they believe will cause the discharge of many of the hands. They hold a meeting, and even now are breaking down the huge gates of the mill to gain an entrance. The gates give way at last, and the strikers surge in. But the police intervene.

Dick is given a written document by Mr. Trimble showing that he will be entitled to a one-fourth share in the mills when he reaches the age of twenty-one.

The lad pays a visit to Mr. Trimble, who is now lying ill. While on this visit he meets James Ackroyd, a nephew of Mr. Trimble, who takes a violent dislike to Dick, and follows him down the stairs after the interview, ordering him to clear out.

He gives Dick a push through the open doorway, and bangs the door heavily after him.

(Now read this week's instalment.)

Temptation—The Moneylender OR all Dick Allen had of late been compelled to offer his cheek to the smiter, as a British boy the exercise did not come cheek to the smiter, as a British boy the exercise did not come very easy, and when he reached the bottom of the short flight of steps, hastened thither by Ackroyd's malicious kick, he felt much like turning round and making for the door again, in order to pay back the assault with interest. Indeed, after the door had banged he leaped up the steps with the impulse to open the door, and to say what was in his mind, then the wisdom of discretion intervened, and he remembered in time that sometimes it was wise to grin and bear it.

But he had found one thing out, he had got an enemy here—an enemy, he fancied, who would not be too scrupulous in showing his dislike. He could not understand the reason for it, unless it was founded on jealousy, because Henry Trimble had approved of him. At the same time, he fancied there was a certain amount of natural personal antipathy in it.

It was difficult to account for, but

in it.

It was difficult to account for, but he had, somehow, felt that he would not get on with James Ackroyd when that youth swaggered into the mill that aftermoon. Well, another enemy

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would make his fight a little harder, but he did not doubt he would win through in the end.

With these thoughts in his mind he went off down the garden-path-to run into a man, a tall, thin, seedy man, who smoked an evil-smelling pipe beside a clump of laurels.

"Hallo—wrong again!" he gurgled. "I thought it was James Ackroyd. I guess he's inside there, lad, eh?"

"I should say so," said Dick. "Do you want him?"

ackroyd. I guess he's inside there, lad, eh?"

"I should say so," said Dick. "Do you want him?"

"Ym waiting for him, lad. I want to see him very particular."

"You're a friend of his, then?" said Dick, getting a whiff of a whisky-laden breath. "If you are, you'd better knock at the door."

"Not exactly a friend—not exactly that. I'm from Mr. Pereival Paling—the Loan Office, you know, in Lumb Lane. No, I'd better not knock at the door. We always do our business with secrecy and dispatch. You may have seen that in our advertisements. And it's true. If I knocked at the door, and just mentioned to the footman, or the butler, or the blooming servant-maid that I was from Mr. Percival Paling, who lets out loans at next to no interest, on note of hand alone—why, the whole show would be given away. Ergot a match, lad?"

"What show would be given away?" asked Dick, finding a match in a corner of a pocket.

"Why, that we've got Mr. James Ackroyd on our books, and that he's better at borrowing than at paying. Are you a relation of the old man—of old Trimble as well?"

"No, I am not; I am an employee," answered Dick, moving off, because the man did not interest him.

"Confidential employee, I'll bet, or else you wouldn't be here at the old man's house like this."

"Here, what's it got to do with you, anyhow?"

"Only you might some day want a bit of accommodation—you know, a bit o' brass. You come along to our office. It's better than going to a pawnshop, when you're a nice, respectable lad, such as you are, with a cosy job at Trimble's—"

Dick turned hurriedly away. He was young, but he was old enough to know that an individual of this sort—a moneylender's tout—was best avoided.

"I say, half a mo', lad! Don't hurry off. How is the old man—

avoided.

know that an individual of this sort—a moneylender's tout—was best avoided.

"I say, half a mo', lad! Don't hurry off. How is the old man—Mr. Trimble? Is he likely to go off the hooks—cock up his toes, you know, this journey?"

"He's getting better," Dick said.
"Is that so? I'm interested, you know, simply because having Mr. James Ackroyd on our books. If the old man pegs out and leaves the mill to the young 'un— I say! Young Ackroyd does come in for the old 'un's brass, doesn't he? Here, what d'you want to run away for?"

But Dick did. He banged the gate after him and went off up Oak Avenue, leaving the shabby man cooling his heels by the laurels.

Meanwhile, the subject of this individual's interest, James Ackroyd, was engaged upon matters of moment with his uncle. He had particular reasons of his own for desiring to be on good terms with the old man, and he took opportunity to approve of the old man's liking for Dick.
"A champion kid, that, uncle," he said, when he came into the room, after kicking Dick down the front steps. "I've just shaken hands with him. I can't understand how I didn't cotton to him at first. I might have known you wouldn't have taken to him, uncle, if he hadn't been all right."

As a matter of fact, he was particularly anxious to find out to what

been all right."

As a matter of fact, he was particularly anxious to find out to what extent Dick had got in his uncle's affections. He himself was Henry Trimble's heir, and he did not suppose anyone could interpose between him and his inheritance; yet, at the same time, he did not want to run any risk, and competitors were not welcomed.

"I suppose you"!

"I suppose you'll give him a job leave in the place?"

It was on the tip of the old man's me!

start to-Day. tongue to tell what he had already done—that some day Dick was to have a share in the business, but a strand of prudence in his brain made a strand of prudence in his brain made. strand of prudence in his brain made him bite on his words, and he said only that he hoped Dick would stay in the mill as long as he liked; indeed, that it was his special desire that he should, and that he should be given his chance.

"I hope to be quite well and

that he should, and that he should be given his chance.

"I hope to be quite well and strong again soon, James," he said; "but at the same time, I am an old man, and my call may come any moment. If I go, James, while Dick Allen is still a boy, I hope you will do for him as I would have done, and give him his chance."

"I'll do that, uncle; you bet I'll do just as you want me to, and be glad to know I am taking your place in helping him. Rather! He's a decent kid."

"Thank you, dear nephew; I was sure you weuld say that. Now, about your journey. You have not told me. I hope you have picked up some good trade tips in Germany."

"Why, rather. But I hope you won't be cross with me, uncle. I've had to exceed my allowance a bit. You've no idea how dear things are in Germany."

"Is that so, boy? Well, if another twenty pounds—"

He wanted not less than a hundred to quieten a pressing demand, but he dare not say it. Instead, he blurted out that he wanted half the sum.

"I—I had to borrow it from a

sum.
"I—I had to borrow it from a friend while I was there, and I must pay it back."
"Fifty pounds?" echoed Henry

"I—I had to borrow it from a friend while I was there, and I must pay it back."

"Fifty pounds?" echoed Henry Trimble, with a shadow of suspicion crossing his face. "Have you been betting again, James?"

"Believe me, uncle, I haven't. You were good enough to show me the evils of that vice. I shall never forget your words about it. No more betting for me. The fact is—well, I didn't mean to tell you, because when I give anything away I don't care to make a song about it to anyone. But on my way out I tumbled across a poor chap in London—a man I once knew in Leeds—and he was going to have his home sold up. So I put him down thirty pounds. Perhaps hawill pay me back. He will if he can, I am sure, only I wouldn't like to depend on it."

"All right, James, it is a lot of money, though I am glad you have not made ill use of it. My chequebook is in the drawer of that writingtable over there. Just fill in the date and the amount, and I will sign it."

It will be seen that there was a

table over there. Just fill in the date and the amount, and I will sign it."

It will be seen that there was a good deal of the hypocrite about James Ackroyd, and very much of the liar, and that he was burdened with no particular scruples in the attaining of his objects.

"I had to stuff the old man up pretty much," he chuckled to himself, as he made his exit by the front door. "It's a good job he sucks it in. I couldn't tell him, anyhow, that I'd lost every cent, because Blue Bird let a rank outsider beat him in the Lincoln Handicap."

And then he ran into the tall, thin, shabby man who awaited him.

"Hallo, there you are, Mr. Ackroyd!" gurgled the man. "The guv'nor hears you are back, and he calculates, it's time he had a call from you."

"Hallo, it's you, Scrimshaw, is it?" exclaimed Ackroyd, none too pleased.
"Are you doing the sleuthhound?"

"No, no! Got a match, Mr. Ackroyd? I'm just out for the firm. The guv'nor told me to find you. Very well, I do—quietly and hunhostentatiously, like we do all our business—with secrecy and dispatch."

"Oh, chuck it! Don't talk that rot. You're a blood-sucker, Scrimshaw. So is your beastly office, and the man who owns it. I wish I had never seen the inside of it."

"Fancy talking like that, Mr. Ackroyd, after handling solid splosh like you have!"

"Yes, and paying about five hundred par neart for it" growled the

vou have!

The shabby man sucked at his pipe

The shabby man sucked at his pro-without replying.

"All right, I'll go. But I'm going alone. I'm not going with you, Scrimshaw."

"No, no; I'll just follow behind, Mr. Ackroyd, quietly and hunhosten-tationals."

"No, no; I'll just follow behind, Mr. Ackroyd, quietly and hunhostentatiously."

Off Lumb Lane is a quadrangle of smallish houses, with a block of shabby gardens in the centre, each to one house, called Southfield Square. It was in this unobtrusive spot that Mr. Pereival Paling, whose front window was labelled "Accountant, &c.," carried on business a few doors from Lumb Lane. The square was quiet, but there was also a quieter way out through a yard into a high-walled lane at the back, which was often taken advantage of by clients.

James Ackroyd took this way in himself, through the little backyard. Scrimshaw, with silent step, came after him a moment later and fastened the yard door.

Mr. Percival Paling, who had been born with quite another and more foreign-sounding name, was a smallish gentleman, who perpetually smoked big cigars, wore his black hair oiled and scented, and used the German language when he was annoyed.

"Look here, I want money," he said frankly to Ackroyd, "and I'm not going to wait any longer. Himmel! At the moment you owe me five hundred and thirty pounds."

"And three hundred of that's interest, you little sharper," cried Ackroyd.

"Donner! Shall I do pisiness for nothing?" Do I give you monish?

Ackroyd.

"Donner! Shall I do pisiness for nothing?" Do I give you monish? You have paid nothing back yet, except one twenty-five pounds."

"Well, it's safe; you know it is. I shall come into money soon."

"Soon! What do you mean?" cried the moneylender, dropping his voice. "Is it true about the old man—about old Trimble—that he is sick—very bad?"

-about old Trimble—that he is sick
-very bad?"
"I shouldn't be surprised. He
thinks he's getting better, but he
might slip off any time."
"Might — ah, might! No, that
isn't good enough. I can't wait. I've
been hard hit in more places than
one lately. Look here, you'll have to
find the money within a week. If
you don't pay I shall give your old
uncle a tip about your little games."
"What do you know about me?"
"A nice lof. I don't lend monish,
my friend, without knowing a bit beforehand."
"Very well, then, you know if you

"Very well, then, you know if you go giving me away to my uncle that I shall be quietly struck out of his will, and that in consequence you will never handle a brass farthing of what I owe you."

"Yes, mine friendt. But if I don't look like getting any, I'll see that you don't," said the money lender, with a flash of anger. "I believe you've been borrowing on false pretences. How do I know you are ever likely to handle your uncle's money?"

ever likely to handle your uncle's money?"

"Why, man," cried Ackroyd incautiously, "I've got a cheque of the old man's in my pocket now." And he drew the slip of paper out of his pocket and waved it.

"No, you don't! No snatching! I want that for pressing accounts."

"I don't think any account could be so pressing as mine. Himmel! That cheque is carelessly filled in. For fifty, eh? You could easily alter it to a hundred and fifty."

"Here, none of that! What are you getting at?"

"I tell you. If I don't get a hundred and fifty pounds within three days—and that's the least I'll take—I'll go straight to your uncle for the money. He'd pay, I know, just because it was your debt; but it would cook your goose, as it is said. You would be chucked out, eh? Not a penny would there be for you."

"I say, don't shove me into that. It would be forgery."

"I'm not shoving you into anything. I want my money. Now, you go, because I have another client waiting."

James Ackroyd went out feeling

you have!"

"Yes, and paying about five hundred per cent, for it," growled the young man.

"Such ingratitood is enough to make a chap lose his faith in huming nature," observed Scrimshaw. "I don't believe the boss would have let anybody else have money on next to no security like you have. Only, you're his favourite client, Mr. Ackroyd, and—"

"That's why he's put you on to shadow me, Scrimshaw. Look here, I'm busy now, and I can't spare time to go round."

"Very well. I shall have to knock at the door here, and just leave a message for you and a card."

"You beggar, you'd do that for me! You'd give me away?"

"I must snowing you money. Now, you go, because I have another client waiting. I want my money. Now, you go, because I have another client waiting."

James Ackroyd went out feeling between the devil and the deep sea. There was no escape, no way of getting out of it. That cheque burned in his pocket. He knew it could be altered. It was deadly easy for him to do, because it was his hand that a drink here, a drink there. It put enough evil into him to make theft not seem such a very serious crime after all. Besides, he argued—or was doing no more than realise a little before the time.

"You beggar, you'd do that for me! You'd give me away?"

"I must my money. Now, you go, no purpose. If he didn't, it was just his clumsy carelessness. Porze him wi' that lump o' old belting that hangs on t' wall there, while I hold him."

"You beggar! Now, you're his favourite dat filed it up. And yet—

He went down into the town. He had a drink here, a drink there. It put not make the the time to make it was your foot that tripped me up."

Sithee, wilta lump o' old belting that hangs on t' wall there, while I hold him."

"You beggar! Now, you're him the deep sea. There was no escape, no way of getting out of it. That cheque burned in his poket. He knew it was your foot that tripped me up."

Sithee, wilta lump o' old belting that hangs on t' wall there, will hangs on t' all lefeling to a drink large.

"You beggar! Now, you're

at his lodgings in Frizinghall, he took at his lodgings in Frizingnan, he cook out the cheque-book that night. He experimented with the fountain-pen that he had used in filling up the cheque, and finally he plunged. He altered the cheque from fifty to one hundred and fifty pounds.

The Enemy Strikes.

T would not be correct to say that
Dick rose with the lark, because
there were no larks in the smoky there were no larks in the smoky vicinity of Johnson's Fold, but he was certainly up very early on this morning that began the real work. He got his own breakfast ready, took some up to Jessie, and was out in the street by the time the night gang—the wool-combers who worked all night—were on their way home.

When the whistle shricked out he was one of the first to go through the gateway—which not long ago he had helped to defend against at least some who were now his workmates. He found, however, so far as he could tell, no ill-will against him on that account, and he was received among them with a hearty cheerfulness that is a northern characteristic. Perhaps there was one exception. There was the youth Widdop, who seemed to bear him a very solid sort of grudge. He caught from him a lowering glance expressive of no very amiable feelings, but he could afford to ignore it. As for the future, he fancied he could take care of himself.

At the same time, he found before the morning was over that there were vicinity of Johnson's Fold, but

self.

At the same time, he found before the morning was over that there were many opportunities of wreaking petty spite for one that way inclined.

His first job was bobbin-pulling, which, though not a very skilled job, at least starts the fingers into nimbleness. And nimble fingers are needed in a spinning-mill. He had to pull away and empty spoilt bobbins of the yarn that was on them. The waste yarn was heaped up in one skep and the empty bobbins in another.

When the bobbins were empty it was his job to take them in the skep—which is a big bucket-like thing made of raw hide—down below to the bobbin-liggers, half-time boys, who fill up the empty spindles with fresh bobbins as the full ones are taken off.

As he was about to descend the ladder-like stair, which went through a hole in the floor to the spinning-room below, with his skep of bobbins clasped to him with both hands, a foot was put out from somewhere with the intent to trip him up. And so it successfully, and down he went, throwing in front of him a shower of bobbins from the skep which he had to relinquish. He did not know whose dirty trick this had been, though he ceuld pretty well guess, but there must have been a very demon of ill-luck in it, for the shower of bobbins fell on someone coming up the stairs, and he himself followed the bobbins, clumsily and heavily.

It was when he picked himself up that he saw that he had collided with the last person in the world he would have desired to encounter—James Ackroyd, who was making his first run round the mill that morning.

The young man broke in wrathfully on the boy's apologies.

"You confounded little idiot, is it some sort of a lark you are trying on me? By ginger, Pill pay you for this right now, and you shall have the sack afterwards. Here, someone come and hold the little brute," reiterated Ackroyd, "while I give him something for himself!"

There responded a voice from the top of the stairs so quickly as to suggest its owner had been keeping a watch on the proceedings, and there came Widdop.

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wise to bear sometimes—discreet to put up with things, but there was a point when his British blood rebelled. "Look here," he cried, when he had broken free, smarting in mind and body, "I only want letting alone! I've got my work to do, and I want to do it. Let me alone, and I'll not tromble either of you; but if you don't. I'll get my own back somehow. You've got a down on me, both you, Mr. Ackroyd, and you, Widdop. I can stand a good lot, but I'm not going to stand this every day. And I don't want to be disrespectful to you, Mr. Ackroyd, but I want treating fairly." And he started picking up the bobbins again.

"Well, I'll be shot!" exclaimed Ackroyd. "Of all the cheek! You heard that, Widdop?"

"Yes, sir: I heard it!" said Widdop, licking his lips.

"I shall report it to Mr. Trimble. It is rank insolence. You will remember his words, Widdop?"

"I'll remember every word, sir," said Widdop.

Dick was left to himself, feeling very miserable. If this was a sample of the persecution he was going to be made to suffer upon the first day, what would it be like later on? So far as the big youth Widdop was concerned, it was merely a matter of time before he would be able to hold his own with him. In a year or two he would be growing bigger and stronger, and he fancied that. Widdop was made of the stuff that would not survive one real good personal thrashing. But the enmity of James Ackroyd was another thing. Ackroyd was another thing. Ackroyd was likely to do him in the eyes of Mr. Trimble, he would without doubt take a larger share in the management. How he would fare with Ackroyd in unchecked control, he hardly dare think. Nor did he know, either, what injury Ackroyd was likely to do him in the eyes of Mr. Trimble. He felt that his outlook, which that morning had seemed so bright, was darkening.

"Sithee, lad, you've got to laff at things like yon," observed a voice over his shoulder. He turned, and appearance, who was fat to, an absurd degree, and who wore his light-coloured hair so short that from a distance his h

is way to the gas-stove to mid-morning tea for the fetch the

women.

"Look here," he said, "you're a good sort. I like you. We're pals!"

And he went off with a laugh that somehow did Dick good. For just at that moment he had the feeling that all the world was against him, which is a feeling most people have experienced at one time or another, and this little offer of friendship was a touch of balm to his wounded feelings.

There seemed a very demon of mischief at work that day, for that afternoon fate led him up against James Ackroyd again in a way that was not likely to bring him advantage. Dick was given a job upon the top floor, which was reserved as a storeroom for yarn, warp-beams, and (which are the balls of wool or sliver all combed and ready for spinning), and all sorts of odd things. On one side was a big doorway in the wall, with an arm sticking out over it, at the end of which was a pulley. Over the pulley ran a wire cable, which, in turn, was fastened round a drum worked on a pinion-wheel inside the store-room, and actuated by a belt that came through the floor. At the all combed and ready for spinning), and all sorts of odd things. On one side was a big doorway in the wall, with an arm sticking out over it, at the end of which was a pulley. Over the pulley ran a wire cable, which, in turn, was fastened round a drum worked on a pinion-wheel inside the store-room, and actuated by a belt that came through the floor. At the

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other end of this cable was a short chain and a hook, by which goods was pulled up from the yard below. It was Dick's job to see to the hoisting of a waggonload of "tops," all fresh from the wool-combers, up to this store-room.

The balls of combed wool, each neatly wrapped up in paper, were packed in a tray below, then a shout was given to him, and he had to pull a lever to get the belt over the fixed pulley; then the drum would start winding in the cable, and up would come the tray of "tops." Then he had to stop, pull in the loaded tray, release a ratchet, and let the hook run down. So, while the fresh load was being prepared below upon another tray, he was occupied in packing away the previous one.

He had to work hard. There was no waiting between. To keep up with the demands below, he had to hurry his utmost. Almost before he had got the last ball of wool packed away they were bellowing from below for him to hoist again. And sometimes he did not understand just the moment they were ready, for the roar of the machinery below made hearing difficult to his unaccustomed ears.

This is always so to one coming fresh into the roar of loom or spinning machine. Not a word can be

Two or three voices simultaneously yelled warning to Ackroyd, but he was not quick enough. The hook somehow got entangled in his cloth-somehow got enta

hoisting-tackie, and rear specificar."

"My good James, are you hurt?"

"No, but it was the smallest chance in the world that prevented me being killed. And it was the work of that boy you have befriended."

"What do you mean? Not Dick Allen?"

"What do you mean? Not Dick Allen?"

"Yes, I mean him. I have been most friendly disposed towards that boy, because, uncle, anyone you approve of is quite good enough for me, but, curiously enough—and I am sorry to say it—he seems to have taken an unreasoning dislike to me, which he expresses in the most barefaced manner possible."

"You astound me."

"I was afraid I should. I am more disappointed than you, uncle. I would not have mentioned it to you, only, I tell you, he has as near killed me as possible, and I don't feel safe with him in the place. This morning, as I was going up the stairs into the warping-room, he was coming down. He pretended to stumble, and contrived to throw a skep of bobbins on my head. You can feel the bruises on my head now. He was impudent over it, so I thrashed him, as the lad, Widdop, who was there, will tell you.

"The only result of that was that he was more insolent than ever, and in Widdop's presence he threatened, as he expressed it, to get him own back—that is to say, to get his revenge. And so he did—in the way I have told you. There are the men in the yard to confirm what I say, and as for the incident of the morning, I wish you would have Widdop down and question him."

"Goodness gracious, you shock me beyond measure!" exclaimed the old man. "I must see into this. Will you let Widdop be called."

The clerk from the outer office came

man. "I must see into this. Will you let Widdop be called."

The clerk from the outer office came in at the ring of the bell, and he was instructed to find Widdop.

That youth came in licking his lips like a welf who sees a tender lamb in prospect, and upon the subject being mooted to him, he gave a highly-coloured description of Dick's alleged offence.

"Yes," he said, "I happared."

alleged offence.

"Yes," he said, "I happened to be looking over t' top at the time, and I'm sure he dropped t' skep on purpose—in fact, he chucked it down, and it was t' chucking of it that caused him to over-balance himself and go rolling over himself."

"Oh, he fell himself, then?" interposed Mr. Trimble.

"Yes, sir, so it seemed. But he's that nimble that he very like did it on purpose, just to leg Mr. Ackroyd down."

down."
"Well, and what else? What about this impudence?"
"Well, talk about cheek, sir," said Widdop humbly, "I never did hear owt like it. He said he'd get his cwn back. Those were his very word?"

words."

"All right. That will do. Just fetch those yard-men in, James, who saw this last accident."

The yard-men described just what happened. Dick was at the machine on the top floor, and he started it before any signal was given, and it was true enough that Mr. Ackroyd was hooked and taken up to the top of the building, and that, for the time being, he had been in a dangerous position.

Henry Trimble knitted his brows and sighed.

"I am very sorry."

and sighed.
"I am very sorry," he said—"very sorry indeed; but, I suppose, justice must be done. Let Dick Allen be cent for,"

sent for."
Widdop went on the errand to find Dick. He went with five shillings added to his worldly wealth, which had been slipped into his hands by Ackroyd outside the office door. He found Dick on the top floor storing away the last of the tops.
"You're wanted below in t' office!" he grinned. "There's t' sack waiting for thee, lad!"

(Another ripping instalment of this grand serial next Tuesday.)

now, will you? Look here, if you want to indulge in such luxuries as playing the fool with me, you'll have to pay for it."

"I hadn't the faintest idea, Mr. Ackroyd, believe me, I hadn't."

"Believe you? I don't believe you. You'll hear about this in pretty short time, you snivelling little humbug!"

Leaving Dick not a little perturbed and apprehensive, James Ackroyd went down into the office where Mr. Trimble, still a little weak and feeble, was occupied over some invoices. The young man dropped into a chair with a groan and a long breath.

"I've nearly been killed, uncle," he gasped—"in fact, I might say I've nearly been murdered!"

"Eh, what's that?"

"I've been hooked up by the hoisting-tackle, and run up to the top floor."

"My good James, are you hurt?"

THE TRIALS AND TROUBLES OF A BOY SCOUT.

THE TRIALS AND TROUBLES OF A BOY SCOUT.

THE TRIALS AND TROUBLES OF A BOY SCOUT.

"Endurance.

Scouts who walked from Cardiff to London is almost ancient history.

It was a splendid feat, however. They did two hundred and fifteen miles in five days—an average of forty-three miles a day. And they walked the last eighty-five miles without a break. It was a piece of work that all Scouts may feel proud of.

I believe that all you chaps should try hard and train yourselves to endurance. I see too many pasty-faced Scouts who may be clever enough in winning badges and all that, but who would drop if they walked ton miles in five days—an average of forty-three miles a day. And they walked the last eighty-five miles without a break. It was a piece of work that all Scouts may feel proud of.

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I believe that all you chaps should try hard and train yourselves to endurance. I see too many pasty-faced Scouts who may be clever enough in winning badges and all that, but who would drop if they walked ten miles or ran ten yards.

It's a Scout's duty to keep "fit."

Go in for taking good long walks. Start out first thing in the morning, and map out a course of as many miles as you think you can tackle. And do it. Make up your mind that you'll get through that distance, and don't give in, however tired you get.

You will most likely find that after five or six miles you begin to feel tired. And if you rest then, you'll go on feeling tired for the rest of the day.

But if you grit your teeth and press on, all that tired feeling will go away, and you'll feel fresh for another twenty miles.

I'm talking particularly about walking, because I find over and over again that fellows—men as well asboys—who are strong and athletic, and can box and swim and play footer, get absolutely "done" if they have to do a steady fifteen-mile tramp.

Another thing to keep you fit is running. Try to run as far as you can without having to stop or break into a walk. Start with a mile, say, and gradually increase it, doing a little more every day.

Gymnastics, too, is a splendid thing. If, during the winter months, you get a chance to join a good gymnasium, take it. It will keep you in fine trim for the open country work of the coming summer.

Advance Guard.

This is a good game for brushing you up in observation and reporting—two of the most important things that a scout should be proficient in.

Play it when you are out on the march. Half a dozen of you get ahead and string out in a line, one behind the other, at just speaking distance.

The first man must send a message down the line, giving

thus:

"Mofor-car—red—No. L. C. 4032—two men in it."

"Farmer's cart loaded with vegetables—drawn by one horse—grey—man and women in it."

"Cyclist—wearing grey suit—bicycle painted green—dog running behind."

The last man should jot down the messages in a book as he gets them, and when the vehicle reported comes in sight should check it and see if the description is correct.

What Use is Signalling?

What Use is Signalling?

What Use is Signalling?

By the way, there's a letter for me this week about signalling.

"Eagle" has a friend who laughs at the scouts, like a lot of people who don't understand them. This friend asks satirically what earthly good signalling is going to be to a chap unless he intends to be a soldier or a telegraphist? And "Eagle" doesn't quite know what to say to him.

doesn't quite know what him.

Well, "Eagle," you can tell your friend that signalling is one of the finest things out for making a fellow smart and alert and intelligent, and it teaches him to make people understand what he means quickly, briefly, and clearly. I think your friend will admit that, quite apart from scouting, signalling has a very valuable use from the business point of view and in life generally. Don't you?

Matches

Matches

Once you can shoot a little bit—of course, shooting is a splendid sport—you can have no end of fun by getting up competitions and teammatches

matches.

The best plan is to arrange things on handicap points, so as to give everybody a chance. There's nothing better than this for improving your shooting, or making a rattling fine

sport.

If any of you care to write to me,
I'll give you a system of arranging
handicaps or advice about anything you want to know in scouting. THE SCOUTMASTER.

"Soldiers of Fortune," a Superb Serial, by Stanley Portal Hyatt—a New and Powerful Author—Commences the Week After Next in THE BOYS' FRIEND.

happened.

It so happened that Mr. James Ackroyd, who was hustling about the mill in pursuance of the idea that the more the hands were watched the better they would work, stopped beside the waggon in the yard, and began to criticise the way in which the tops were being loaded. His precise observations do not matter. He stood up against the cable, fapping the hook—which lay on the ground with the chain coiled about it—impatiently with his foot.

At that moment the horse in the

distinguished unless it is yelled in the ear, though an old hand can hear quite distinctly in the noisiest roar of nachinery words spoken in an ordinary voice. So, because Dick was, as yet, unused to the clatter and whirr, he was a little confused at times in his management of this hoisting-gear, which fact doubtless contributed to the accident that happened.

seen i' Peel Park at t' gala. didn't I laff!"

didn't I laff!"

But Dick found no amusement in it at all. The first consciousness of his hideous mistake came like a blow to him. His hand was on the lever ready to pull off the belt as the expected tray of tops came into view. His eyes opened in wide amazement as the struggling figure came up instead.

instead.

He was quick to act. He stopped the machine instantly, and rushed forward to seize the suspended man. He pulled him in, unloosed the hook, and dragged him out of danger.

It took Ackroyd several seconds to realise, firstly, that he was out of danger, and, secondly, that the machine had been under the control of Dick Allen, and that his humiliating and dangerous rise in the world had been at the hands of that youngster.

youngster.

"So this is what you promised—the getting your own back—eh?" he rapped out. "Now, you've just about cooked your goose this time."

"It was an accident, sir," protested Dick. "I swear it was not intentional. I had no idea what had happened."

"You young rotter! You'll lie



I want all my boys to look upon me as their firm friend and viser. There are few men who know boys as well as I do, and

advisor. There are few men who know boys as well as I do, and there are no little trials and troubles, perplexities and anxieties, in which I cannot help and assist my readers.

Write to me whonever you are in doubt or difficulty. Tell me about yourself; let me know what you think of THE BOYS' FRIEND. All boys who write to me, and who enclose a stamped envelope or posteard, may be sure of receiving a prompt and kindly reply.

All Letters should be addressed. The Editor, THE BOYS'

All Letters should be addressed: The Editor, THE BOYS' FRIEND, 23, Bouverie Street, London, E.C.

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LETTERS FROM MY FRIENDS.

AM glad to find that my friends are writing to me much more fully than they used to. I am because it shows that they have

fully than they used to. I am glad because it shows that they have confidence in me, that they really do appreciate, and act up to, the advice which I give them.

I am induced to refer to this matter because of a letter which I have had from a young friend to whom I replied a few weeks ago. I dare say that my chums will remember that R. H. E. wrote to me and said his father had told him that instead of wasting his money on The Boys' Friend he should save it up.

I gave that boy the advice which I always give in such cases—that if his father really insisted on his giving up the paper, he should do so.

I am glad, however, to learn from my friend this week that he showed my answer to his father, who thereupon took back his condemnation of our paper, saying he was very sorry for what he had said, and gave the lad permission to remain a reader.

This is a case in which I not only sincerely congratulate myself, but also my young friend and his father.

OUR PROGRAMME.

The week after next I am going to publish another new serial story for my boys. It is entitled "Soldiers of Fortune," and it is a story of adventure in South Africa, dealing with the veldt, lions, hippopotami, the koodoe, and all the wild animals that inhabit this great continent.

The story is an extremely attractive one, and is written by a man who has travelled absolutely all through Africa, and knows it perfectly well, who has shot big game, who has prospected for gold and minerals, and who, at the same time, is one of our

who, at the same time, is one of our best-known novelists. This is the treat in store for my friends the week

after next.

In our next number will start a new series of short stories, entitled "The Lads o' London."

MORE ARTICLES FOR "THE

Some of my friends have been writing to me to say that there are not enough articles in THE BOYS' FRIEND.

I am doing my best to meet this criticism because my friends will find

I am doing my best to meet this criticism, because my friends will find that Mr. George P. Moon, who is an old and popular contributor to The Boys' Friend, is resuming his series of "How To Make" articles J. G. B. Lynch, who was once captain of the Oxford University Boxing Club, will contribute short articles every week. I am glad to say that the articles on scouting are also proving very popular.

My chums may rest assured that in this section of The Boys' Friend I am leaving no stone unturned to make the paper as attractive and instructive as possible.

BAD LANGUAGE.

BAD LANGUAGE.

If there is one thing I loathe hearing from the lips of a boy, or from anyone for that matter, it is bad language. Unfortunately, it seems to be an extremely common practice—one cannot walk in the street without having one's ears offended by totally unnecessary and brutal exclamations from some thoughtless individual.

One of my friends, E. T., tells me he is working on a wharf where the men's language is awful, and he does not like it at all. All the same, it is a good job, and he doesn't want to leave it because there are so many lads out of work in his part of the country.

job because he doesn't like to listen to the bad language; but, on the other hand, he is afraid to give it up because he may be out of work, and the money which he now hands to his mother would not be forthcoming every week.

Frankly, I must tell my young friend that I think he ought to stick to his job. His natural horror of bad language will, I hope, safeguard him against its evil influences. Let him always be on his guard in this respect, and let him never be tempted to use bad language himself. It is a silly, stupid practice, very, very unnecessary, and extremely vicious.

My young friend mentions another matter which is of interest to boys. He says that when he first went to work, he followed a practice which he found that lots of other lads did—that of keeping back a certain amount of his wages. But he became rather ashamed of this, and told his mother, with the result that he, very properly, got a good dressing-down from her, and now he has given up the practice.

I am glad to hear it. E. T. seems

ractice.

I am glad to hear it. E. T. seems to be a very sensible sort of lad, and I only hope that his example will be followed by many others. After all, I have every confidence in recom-



The First Folds. (See the paragraph, Baggy Trousers," on this page.)

mending this boy's example to others, because there is absolutely nothing priggish in being ashamed to use bad language, and in being ashamed of dishonesty. Other boys may think it clever to keep back part of their wages from their parents, but it is not really so, for it is a petty deception which may lead to worse and more dishonest practices.

HOW TO BECOME A CHEMIST.

How to become a chemist.

One of my young friends, who signs himself "Rex," wants me to tell him how to become a chemist. Here is the information which my young friend desires.

Before being apprenticed to a registered chemist, the student should pass a preliminary examination, such as is recognised by the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, 17; Bloomsbury Square, London, W.C. The subjects include English grammar and composition, arithmetic, algebra, Euclid, Latin, and a modern foreign language. The candidate should then become an apprentice. An indentured apprentice often has to pay a premium of from £50 to £100. The term generally covers from three to five years. He could then pass the minor examination (fee £10 10s.), which gives registration as a chemist and druggist.

The subjects are a practical knowledge of botany, chemistry, and physics (theoretical and practical), materia medica, pharmacy (theoretical and practical), materia medica, pharmacy (theoretical and practical), materia medica, pharmacy (theoretical and practical), the major examination (fee £5 5s.) gives the title pharmaceutical chemist. The subjects are the same as for the minor, but the knowledge must be more thorough. The higher post, Fellowship of the Institute of Chemists, is very desirable.

Posts of public analysts, special analysts, and expert adviser to manuf

studious. In the latter departments German chemists occupy most of the well-paid posts.

The post of assistant-chemist, Woolwich (War Office) is open to junior chemists. Age limit, 20—25. Examination fee £2. Subjects: English composition, chemistry (with skill in manipulation), physics. Successful candidates must qualify as Associates or Fellows of the Institute of Chemists.

Chemists.

A person who has passed the minor examination can start business on his own account. A capital of from £100 to £400 would be necessary, which would include fitting-up the shop and buying stock. Qualified chemists' assistants can get from £60 to £120 per year indoors, and from £2 to £3 10s, outdoors per week.

A LETTER FROM AN OLD FRIEND.

I am indeed awfully pleased to get the following letter from an old friend—pleased because it shows the wonderful influence of our paper; and I am glad, too, to think that its influence is so great that even when my boys grow up into manhood they still keep up their associations with it. Needless to say, I am delighted to hear that my friend still likes the stories which are published.

"25, Lynedoch Street, Greenock.

"My Baar Editor,—It is now a number of years since I last wrote you, and so I hope you will excuse the liberty I am taking in penning these few lines to you now.

"I have been a reader of the good old 'B. F.' for a considerable time now. The first serial I read was 'The Twins of Littlebury,' and a splendid story it was. I have not missed a number of the 'Green'Un' since that time, as that was, if I am not mistaken, one of the first

missed a number of the 'Green' Un' since that time, as that was, if I am not mistaken, one of the first stories you published. I may be pardoned if I consider myself one of your oldest readers. I was at school then; now I am a married man, bordering on thirty years of age, and I can safely say the 'B. F.' is still my favourite paper, and I anxiously await each Tuesday so that I can again peruse my old friend. I must congratulate you on



A Well-folded Pair of Trousers

the serials now running, particularly 'The Blot,' which is a splendid tale, and 'The Railway Waif.'

the serials now running, particularly 'The Blot,' which is a splendid tale, and 'The Railway Waif.'
"I may add that I still heartily enjoy the old paper, and I wish it every success. One request I would make, and that is that you will soon give us another 'Nelson Lee' tale.
"I suppose your time will be too

give us another 'Nelson Lee' tale.

"I suppose your time will be too much taken up to bother much with a long epistle, but I would like the author of the article on 'Running' to contribute a few more in the same strain. As a Scottish League footballer, I heartily endorse his statement that 'Tobacco is a ruination to the wind,' and would add that alcohol is even more deadly. I also take in 'The Boys' Herald,' and have done so since the first number. I was delighted to see the old favourite 'Boys of St. Basil's' appearing, and hope you will often reproduce more of the old favourites.

lads out of work in his part of the country.

Evidently my young friend has in his mind the idea of giving up this reactions of the country o

BAGGY TROUSERS.

"An Old Reader" is a clerk in an office, and naturally being a bright, intelligent boy, he wants to keep up a smart, trim appearance. But he finds that his trousers are always baggy at the knees, and he wants me to give him a little tip on the subject

ject.

I can do so because I, too, was once a clerk in an office, and baggy trousers were one of my great troubles. There are two ways out of the difficulty.

If my young friend has two working suits of clothes, he can rely upon keeping a pretty smart appearance. If, however, he has only one, this is the plan he should follow:

Every night before he goes to bed he should carefully fold his trousers in the proper way, which is in the

he should carefully fold his trousers in the proper way, which is in the following fashion: Lay the trousers on a flat table, and bring the seams at the back and front level, doubling up the waistband where there is a fulness in front. Now bring the ends of the trousers up to the top of the waistband. Then take the back part of the trousers and tuck it in under the order of the season. waistband. Then take the back part of the trousers and tuck it in under the ends of the legs so that the trousers, now folded in two, are almost a perfect oblong. I am putting in two diagrams to show exactly how it is done.

Now my young friend should put his trousers between an old newspaper and slip them in between the palliasse and the mattress, or put them on a flat surface under a heavy weight, such as a coal-box, or any other handy thing.

This will prevent the trousers from bagging, and keep them smart.

A QUESTION OF ETIQUETTE.

One of my young friends, who lives in Tottenham, says; "Will you please tell me if, after I am introduced to a young lady, I am at liberty to go up and speak to her the next time I see her?"

Most certainly, yes. My young

to go up and speak to her the next time I see her?"

Most certainly, yes. My young friend has another question to put. The case is this: After having been introduced to a young lady he meets her with a friend, and is duly acknowledged by her. If he later meets the young lady, should he acknowledge her?

No; not unless the lady in question

No; not unless the lady in question first acknowledges my correspondent.

TO MEND A MIRROR.

"Horace" is a Leicester chum who writes to congratulate me upon the excellence of our Sexton Blake serial, and to tell me that he thinks the "B. F." is making rapid strides. He tells me also that he is doing all in his power to help the "B. F." to gain still more friends, and I am most grateful for his kindly interest. Towards the end of his letter "Horace" tells me that he has a mirror that through dampness has become spotted, and the material at the back is coming off in patches. My chum wants to repair his mirror, and asks me to tell him how to do the work.

In reply to this query, the re-silvering of mirrors is work that can

In reply to this query, the re-silvering of mirrors is work that can hardly be done by amateurs, partly owing to the experience necessary, and mainly through lack of the necessary appliances. "Horace" should have the work done by an experienced workman, and he will probably not find it a very expensive matter.

A BOOK FOR YOUR SISTERS AND MOTHERS.

Once more I am going to ask my chums to spread the news of a wonderful book which should be in the possession of every woman, whether she be a girl, grown-up young lady, or a married woman. The title of this work is "Every Woman's Encyclopædia," and it will contain information upon everything that a woman wants to knoweverything. Just think of it! This

woman's Encyclopædia," and it will contain information upon everything that a woman wants to know-everything. Just think of it! This work will be the first serious attempt to provide for women a book of reference to which, if they are in doubt upon any question affecting women, they can refer and discover the answer, whether it be a legal query, or a question with regard to love, marriage, cooking, dressmaking, servants or mistresses, gardening; in fact, if it is a question on anything which has to do with women, it will be dealt with in "Every Woman's Encyclopædia." The first part will be published on November 3rd, price 7d. As I am very much interested in this book, I want my friends to talk to their mothers and sisters about it, and I shall have some more to tell you about the work next Tuesday.

shall have some more to t about the work next Tuesday

YOUR EDITOR (H. E.).

BOXING NOTES.

Boxing Weights.

HE recognised weights in boxing are as follows:
Bantam-weights, 8st. 4lb.

Bantam-weights, 8st. 4lb. and under; feather-weights, 9st. and under; light-weights, 10st. and under; middle-weights, 11st. 4lb. and under; and heavy-weights, any weight.

If at your club, or among the circle of friends with whom you box, there are several people well under 8st. 4lb., then a limit can be settled for the purposes of a competition among yourselves.

Very often in professional bouts

yourselves.

Very often in professional bouts the men agree to box at a particular weight—say, 9st. 8lb., or at 11st. But for amateur purposes it is always best to stick to the recognised

always best to stick to the recognised figures.

When practising at your club, or elsewhere, it is much better to box with boys of about your own weight, for this is the fairest test of your capabilities in a competition. It is bad practice to box with anyone much smaller than yourself, or bigger; though if you are in the heavy-weight class the former only applies.

Some people have a mistaken idea that the lighter weights must necessarily be weaker than the heavier ones. This is not so. It is almost incredible sometimes what a mass of hard muscle and bone can be packed into eight stone. Joe

almost incredible sometimes what a mass of hard muscle and bone can be packed into eight stone. Joe Bowker when at his best looked like a big man in the ring, so beautifully was he developed, and he understood the science of hitting hard so well that he hit like a big man.

As I have said before, weight is everything in a blow. The strength of the arm cannot make a blow very hard, but the weight of the body must be thrown behind it, like an engine behind a buffer. It is safe to say that a little man, who puts everyounce of his weight into blows driven exactly to the right spots, would make his punches "tell" more effectually than a big man who slogged with back-handers and swings without weight behind them.

Talking of weight, remember always to increase your poundage rather than to lower it. Nothing is so terribly weakening as getting off weight you cannot afford to lose; and instead of winning a competition by getting off five or six pounds, you will find yourself beaten by a smaller and worse boxer.

THE END.

YOUR DOG.

How to Treat Distemper.

ERE are some further signs, following those mentioned last week, in regard to indications of distemper.

The creature goes off its appetite, and loses weight as the complaint gets a firmer grip, and the dog will lie in its kennel or bed absolutely sick at heart, like a child, and listless.

will lie in its kennel or bed absolutely sick at heart, like a child, and listless.

No one knows the real cause of distemper in dogs, but the experts attribute it to the presence of a microbe, and there is really no sure cure. The disease must be treated immediately the dog begins to show such indications as already explained.

First of all, give a dose of castoroil, according to the size of the animal. A teaspoonful should be given to a small dog of the foxterrier type, and a tablespoonful to a large animal like the St. Bernard. When this has done its work, entice the dog to take a little warm and nourishing food, such as broth or gruel. Keep its house clean, but do not disturb the animal more than you can help. You cannot do better than give the sufferer a dose of this oil, say, once every ten days. Salts on no account should be administered.

If the animal goes off its food, and will not eat anything of its own accord, it must be forced to take something nourishing, such as eggs and milk, or an egg beaten up in a dessert spoonful of whisky.

If you can manage it, hold the dog's head down a little, and clip the hair from around

hold the dog's head down

hold the dog's head down
a little, and clip the hair from around
the eyes, and then bathe them in
warm water. If sores break out upon
the body apply diluted Condy's Fluid
every two days. Then, supposing the
trouble continues to get worse, give a
powder or pill, which can be obtained
from any live-stock dealer; and then
if your efforts, after perseverance,
have no effect, it is far the best plan
to consult a veterinary surgeon
regarding your pet, if you wish to
save its life. The last stages of the
disease generally prove fatal.

(Another dog article next Tuesday.)



Our Grand Series of Complete Stories.

THE ROAD TO FORTUNE.

ITH interest—to cont." close

Jack Carton wrote in

words on the Savings Bank

the words on the Savings Bank withdrawal form with a heavy sigh and a slight twitching of the lips, thinking with what pride he had opened the account that he was now closing by drawing two pounds and a few shillings interest.

Things had gone from bad to worse with him; it was useless to ask for a character at his last two places, and Mr. Gaythorpe, the grocer, who would have spoken well of him, had moved, and he did not know his address. For six months he had gone on drawing on his dwindling balance, greatly depleted by the gambling into which Lewis had tempted him, until now even that had come to an end.

And what was going to happen

The money he would obtain in a day or so would keep the home together for another two or three weeks, but unless he could obtain em-

weeks, but unless he could obtain employment of some description by then, he could see nothing for it but for his mother to enter the dreaded workhouse, and for him to go tramping from city to city in the hope of finding casual employment.

Certainly Mr. Paulos, of Park Lane, the mysterious millionaire, who had sworn to ruin him, to hound him from each situation he obtained, had accomplished his threat, and he felt that even if he obtained a situation, he would not be able to keep it for long.

he would not be all long.

"It's cruel!" he muttered, as he descended the many stairs from the top floor of Dewson's Dwellings to go out and post the withdrawal form. "Everything seems to be against me, and I stand no chance of getting on."

getting on."

He had confessed to his mother the

He had confessed to his mother the whole story of his friendship with Lewis, and the money he had lost at gambling; she had spoken no reproach, but the look on her face had gone to Jack's heart.

As he walked back, he stopped to listen to a man singing at the corner of a road leading off the High Street. A shabby woman accompanied him on a portable harmonium, terribly out of tune, but the man's voice was good, and the words of the song came clearly to the boy's ears as he stood at the edge of the little crowd. "Never look for trouble or for

"Never look for trouble sorrow,
Never, never quarrel with your

job; Put off all your troubles till tomorrow,

morrow,

'And remember that to-morrow never comes."

Jack drew in a deep breath.

"By Jove," he said, "the song's right! What's the use of meeting trouble half-way? They used to call me Ever-Ready Jack, and I'll live up to the title. I'm not beaten yet, not by a long way."

He was whistling the tune of the song when he ran up the steps of Dewson's Dwellings.

A week later Jack Carton, with his

coat collar turned up and his hands

coat collar turned up and his hands deep in his pockets, was walking briskly towards Piccadilly Circus through the cold, drizzling rain.

He had seen an advertisement for a lad to do odd jobs at an hotel in Piccadilly, and after applying at two places in the City, had tramped westwards as a forlorn hope. His position was becoming desperate, his boots were down at heel, and his clothes becoming shabby, and yet he dared not spend any of his little store of money in replenishing his outfit.

He was sorry now that he had stopped to try the two places in the City, for it was nearly eleven o'clock, and he felt that many lads must have reached the hotel long before him.

He passed the front of the hotel where a porter in a gorgeous uniform stood just outside the lobby, and turned down a narrow street that led to the staff entrance where the advertisement had said applicants for the post were to attend.

There was no crowd at the door. Only a greengrocer's cart was standing outside, whilst a young fair-haired German stood checking the baskets as they were taken in.

Jack went up to him.

"Where do I apply for the job that—"

"Job," laughed the German—"

"Job," laughed the German—
"job! Vy he was gone long ago!
Twenty, forty, oh, more zan that
come here before nine o'clock. Ze
manager pick one quick!"

come here before nine o'clock. Ze manager pick one quick!"

Jack thanked him for his information in a dull voice, and walked back into Piccadilly again.

Another day was wasted! It was useless to apply anywhere now until the next day; the only thing to do was to tramp home on the off-chance that during the long walk he might see some building being constructed at which temporary hands were wanted, although he knew that, inexperienced as he was in hard, manual labour, he would stand little or no chance of getting taken on.

As he reached Piccadilly Circus, he heard a sudden cry of alarm in a woman's voice, and saw a little girl of about eleven or twelve dart from the side of a lady and gentleman that she had been walking with, and start to run across the road, apparently to look in the window of a large draper's shop that was filled with toys.

Then, almost at the same moment.

Then, almost at the same moment, came the harsh clang of a bell, and a motor fire-engine was seen coming down Shaftesbury Avenue at a great

pace.
Clang, clang, clang!
Traffic pulled to the sides of the road, the magic, awe-inspiring cry of "Fire!" was heard on every side. Policemen stopped the traffic from the side roads, and the great bustling, traffic-congested circus was sprung into confusion.
But Jack was not looking at the fire-engine, or paying attention to the

But Jack was not looking at the fire-engine, or paying attention to the shouts around him. He had seen the little girl jump back to avoid a quickly-moving taxi-cab, then apparently lose her head by the many shouts, half run forward, then turn back, and as she turned, slip on the greasy roadway and fall heavily right

in front of the great motor fireengine that was almost upon her.

There was a cry of horror from the
spectators, immediately followed by a
slight, nervous sheer, for Jack, seeing
that if the girl was to be saved, it
must be done immediately, for it was
madness to expect the driver of the
fire-engine to be able to stop in time
on such a slippery road, had sprung
from the pavement, and dashed towards her.

Then it was all over in a for-

from the pavement, and dashed towards her.

Then it was all over in a few seconds. The boy reached the side of the pale-faced, frightened child, who was struggling to her feet, caught her round the waist, jumped backwards, and swung both himself and the girlear just as the fire-engine, with brakes applied, skidded past.

He had a vision of a white-faced, brass-helmeted driver and a huge red vehicle, and then a woman had taken the girl in her arms, and a little crowd had collected round them.

A man, evidently the father of the child, turned round to thank her rescuer, and as he did so, he reeled, and stared blankly at the boy before him.

him.

And Jack felt his heart beat quicker and the colour surge to his face, for the man whose child he had saved from certain death was the millionaire who had tried to ruin him and send his mother to the workhouse—Mr. Paulos, of Park Lane!

The millionaire, seeing the crowd staring at him, pulled himself together, and took a card from his pocket.

"Call on me at three o'clock this afternoon," he said, in a hoarse voice. "I—I can't thank you here. Policeman, call a cab, please. Don't forget, boy—three o'clock this afternoon."

Jack stood etaring the contraction of the call of th

Jack stood staring blankly at the ard, whilst a constable assisted

afternoon."

Jack stood staring blankly at the card, whilst a constable assisted Paulos, his wife, and child, into a taxi-cab, and then the crowd began to melt away to go to their business, or to follow in the track of the fireengine in the hope of getting a free entertainment.

"You'll get a fiver over that job with any luck," said a loafer. "Prosperous-lookin' bloke."

Jack laughed grimly, and moved away, thrusting the card into the breast-pocket of his jacket. What a strange irony of fate that he should have saved the life of his enemy's child—should have placed the man who had done his best to rain him, under an obligation to him!

He went to a cheap cating-house and had some bread-and-butter and a cup of cocoa, then, after sitting there for some time reading a paper that a previous customer had left behind, he set out for Park Lane to interview the strange millionaire.

A supercilious footman with a powdered wig admitted him, and conducted him to a door at the end of the long, wide, thickly-carpeted hall, at which he knocked softly.

"In you go," he said to Jack, "and remember your manners, young shaver!"

Then Jack was in a luxurious study

facing the millionaire, who was seated at a desk close to a great roaring fire. "Come here," said Mr. Paulos, in

"Come here," said Mr. Paulos, in a strange, hoarse voice. "Fate has played a strange trick upon me, boy. I find myself under as great an obligation as man can be, to one whom I have done my best to ruin, one whom I hated as greatly as I love my daughter, whose life you saved. What do you want me to do for you, Carton?" Carton '

Carton?"

"Nothing," said Jack quietly. "I will accept no favour from you; you have played a cowardly game, but with all your millions you have not won yet. I'm glad I saved your daughter's life for her sake, and for her mother's sake. I want nothing from you, and I only came to tell you that you have not won vet."

from you, and I only came to tell you that you have not won yet."

Anger leapt into the millionaire's eyes for a moment, and then died away, leaving a look of great sorrow "Boy," he said softly, with a strange note of tenderness in his voice, "you heap coals of fire upon my head. I tell you I no longer wish you ill; your conduct this morning has wiped away all the bitterness I felt against you, and—and your mother. Let us be friends, for as I was a powerful enemy, so I can be a still more powerful friend, Carton. I can never repay you for what you have done, but let me do what I can. Won't you shake hands?"

But Jack stood stubbornly in the

But Jack stood stubbornly in the centre of the room, thinking only of the distress this man had caused him. His impulse was to defy the man and walk out into the streets to renew the battle, but, thinking of his mother, he fought down his own desire.

We can never be friends, sir," he "We can never be friends, sir," he said, in a low, strained voice. "I said I would take nothing from you, and I won't, except this—give me a fair chance, cease to persecute me, and let me try to earn my living."

"Very well," said Mr. Paulos quietly, "I wish you no harm now—in fact, my great desire is for you to get on, so that I may atone for what I have done to handicap you. Won't you—"

I have done to name by you you "That is all I want, thank you, sir," said Jack, and the next moment was out of the room.

"A boy of spirit," said the millionaire softly to himself. "A smart, intelligent youngster. I must see that I don't lose sight of him."

He picked up the telephone on his desk, and summoned his private secretary.

"Mother," cried Jack, two mornings later, "listen to this! It sounds likely, at least!"

He had been looking down the advertisement columns in the "Daily Telegraph," which he had borrowed from a man in one of the flats below, and this advertisement among the "Situations Vacant" had caught his eye:

eye:
"A smart lad wanted for grocery
department of large stores. One who
has had previous experience in both

the wholesale and retail trade preferred. Must have good appearance and address. Apply in person between 10 and 12 to-day, at the offices of the Empire Stores, High Street, Kensington.'

"By Jove," cried Jack, as he hurried into his overcoat, "it looks as though my luck has turned at last!"

"Don't build on it too much, Jack," said his mother, for although Mrs. Carton was relieved to find that her boy no longer had a powerful enemy in the shape of the millionaire, she had begun to lose heart after his many failures to obtain work.

Jack had little money left now, but he felt to walk to Kensington would be false economy, even if he could do it in the time, so he travelled by 'bus and tube, and reached the huge stores about half-past ten, and, after asking his way to the office, found himself in a large waiting-room which was already full of lads and young men.

Jack's heart fell. Surely out of this great crowd someone would be found with better qualifications than himself, and with good references. For a moment he thought of going away, but a clerk had taken his name down, so he determined to wait his turn.

Every few minutes someone went

his turn. Every few minutes someone went into the inner office to reappear at varying intervals with looks of disappointment on their faces.

"Carton!"

Jack, with a quickly-beating heart, went into the office to be interviewed by a short, businesslike man with a writing-pad before him, upon which he from time to time made some note.

he from time to time made some note.

Jack told his story simply, explained his experience, and how he came to have no reference from his last two places, showed the manager a letter from Mr. Gaythorpe, and then sat watching the man anxiously as he tapped the pad absently for a moment or so with his pencil.

"Chambers!" he shouted.

A clerk appeared from another office.

"Tell the others the vacancy is filled," he said shortly; then, turning to Jack: "You can start on Monday for a month's trial, wages to commence a pound a week. Good-day!"

Jack thanked him hoarsely, and stumbled rather than walked from the room, his brain reeling with delight and relief.

A fortnight after Jack had been engaged at the stores, and was already doing well, he received a visit from a sprucely-dressed, clean-shaven little man with "lawyer" written all

little man with "lawyer" written all over him.

"My client," he said, after introducing himself, "is Mr. Paulos, and he wishes you to accept a sum of money—a large sum of money; no, don't interrupt—not for your own sake, but to move your mother into better quarters. It is absurd to let pride stand in the way of bettering your condition; besides, Mr. Paulos has already proved himself to be a good friend to you."

"Friend!" said Jack, with some bitterness.

good friend to you."

"Friend!" said Jack, with some bitterness.

"Yes," said the lawyer; "perhaps I ought not to tell you this, but at the same time, I think you should know it. Mr. Paulos is the man behind the Empire Stores. Seeing that you would take nothing from him directly, he caused the advertisement to be inserted in every London paper, and the manager had instructions to engage none but you. That gave you your chance, and, so far, you have most credibly availed yourself of it. My client is deeply interested in you, and you are a lucky young fellow; you will rise, Carton, and rise rapidly, but meanwhile your mother has not the comforts that should be hers. Mr. Paulos wants to remedy it. Do you refuse?"

Jack sat staring blankly at the lawyer, astounded at what he had learned.

"Mr. Paulos, strange as it may seem in view of the great difference.

lawyer, astounded at what he had learned.

"Mr. Paulos, strange as it may seem in view of the great difference in your positions," added the lawyer, "wants to feel that you forgive him for some wrong he tells me he did you and your mother."

"I forgive him," said Jack, in a very low voice, fighting down pride and hate, "and I—I accept his offer to help my mother."

The lawyer clapped him on the shoulder.

The lawyer clapped numer shoulder.

"My lad," he said, "I'm delighted to the said, "I'm told success. I'm told success. I'm told success. I'm told success. "My lad," he said, "I'm delighted to hear you say that, for you are well on the road to success. I'm told you're nicknamed Ever-Ready Jack. Live up to that title, lad, for it's as proud a one as any peer's in Great Britain."

THE END.

("LADS O' LONDON," cur grand new series of complete stories, commences Tuesday in THE BOYS' FRIEND.)



There was a cry of horror from the spectators. The girl had slipped immediately in the path of the rushing engine. Jack seeing the need for instant action, ran to where the child lay.

By the Clever Author of "Sunken Millions," etc., etc.



Our Stirring Poor Boy Serial. Commence To-day.

FOR NEW READERS.

This is our superb new poor boy and railway story, in which you read of JACK POSTERN, otherwise "The Dodger," who, through lack of parents and home, has become a railway waif, hanging about stations, carrying bags, and doing any odd job to earn an honest penny.

MRS BRISTOWE, the widow of an unscrupulous railway clerk, who lost his life under tragic circumstances. He was the accomplice of "RIP" KELLY, a real bad lot, who, with Bristowe's aid, attempts to rob the North Briton express of specie.

The Dodger becomes a van-boy on the Great Provincial Railway, and goes to live with Mrs. Bristowe.

As time goes on Jack earns promotion, until he eventually has charge of a parcels

As time goes on Jack earns promotion, until he eventually has charge of a parcels office.

One day, however, an insured parcel is lost, and Jack, almost demented, goes in search of it. His quest takes him to a lonely moorland cottage, and there he falls into the clutches of Rip Kelly.

The Dodger receives fearful injuries in the wreck of the boat-train, and is not expected to live.

He recovers, however, and is sent by the railway authorities in search of the Duke of Dublin's daughter, who is missing. The girl is discovered.

Sir John Willet, the manager of the railway, blames Jack Postern for the lost parcel, and refuses to pay him the £1,000 reward for the recovery of the duke's daughter. Owing to this injustice, the Dodger claims the reward, and in consequence of this he is dismissed from the service, and Mrs. Bristowe is also removed. This action causes a great stir among the railway workers, who set fire to the depot. Then the Dodger induces the men to accept the terms of the railway authorities.

Jack is taken back on the railway as traffic superintendent.

He is sent by the general manager to make a systematic inspection of the whole company's system. He is also anxious to track Rip Kelly, and is chatting with the station-master of Cowden with reference to a gentleman who pays friendly visits there.

"When did he go away?" he asks somewhat sharply of the station-master.

(Now read this week's instalment.)

A Strange Visit.

"THIS morning," Clayton replied, "just after you arrived; he was called away suddenly."

you can lock up the key-box every time you go out."

"Oh, but I do, Mr. Postern! I assure you that I do."

"I am very glad to hear it. Well, I must be off; that's the 9.50 coming in now. You'll be busy. Think over what I've said." And the Dodger made as if to catch the incoming train, but as soon as he saw the station-master's attention was engaged, ran the length of the platform, and slipped out of the station and across the metals.

He engaged a room at a neighbour-

gaged, ran the length of the station and across the metals.

He engaged a room at a neighbouring inn, and, locking himself in, carefully examined the two specimens of hair he had found in a bed-room at the station-master's house. There could be no doubt about them. Those from the pillow were a man's natural hair, clipped short, and from the texture and colour they might easily be Rip Kelly's. The hairs from the brush were undoubtedly exactly the kind of which a wig would be made.

"Whoever Clayton's friend is," Jack decided, "he wears a wig of a different colour from his hair."

It was past ten o'clock.

"I'll have a look at him," commented the Dodger to himself, and, leaving his hotel, started to make his way to the back of the station. The windows of the station master's office, as he knew, looked out on to the cabyard. The lower halves of them were of clouded glass, but above they were clear, and one, if he remembered rightly, was in a secluded angle, where he would be screened from observation whilst looking in.

"I hate playing a trick like this on Clayton, but there's nothing for it. Whoever his friend is, there is something funny about him, and I must have a look at him."

He checked himself suddenly on his way. An idea had occurred to him.

He checked himself suddenly on his He checked himself suddenly on his way. An idea had occurred to him. He looked at his watch. Clayton's friend was to return at 11.0. The slow train from Calworth, Braxted, and Kenley was due in at 10.58. The man had left that morning just before 10 o'clock. There was a slow up local, stopping at both Kenley and Braxted, out of Cowden at 10.5 in the morning.

arrived; he was called away suddenly."

"Do you happen to know if he saw me?"

"Not that I am aware of—Oh, I don't know, though; he was sitting in my room when you came in the other way to the office. Why?"

"Oh, I was just wondering!" replied the Dodger; his suspicions were all alert now. "Did you mention that I was going back this afternoon?"

"As a matter of fact, I did. I told him I thought you would be getting back to Calworth by the 9.50."

"Well, I suppose I ought to." answered Jack, simultaneously making a mental resolve to stay the night in the town. "So I am afraid I shall have to put off the pleasure of meeting your friend. Just one other thing. Don't think I am inquisitive. Does your friend spend much time in your office? Do you ever leave him there when you are out?"

"Oh, yes; he stays there if he wants to!"

"Oh, it never occurred to me; but now that you mention it, I see that it might. I won't do it again. I am much obliged to you for the hint, Mr. Postern."

"That's all right. As you know, I am the last man to want to get you into trouble, but there are a good many private keys that ought to be kept in your office. I don't suppose

station-master had already come out, and was busy with his many duties on the platform.

on the platform.

The Dodger had not long to wait before he saw a tall, stalwart figure in a smart travelling-coat, with a long, flaxen beard, making its way to the door he watched. In his hand the person in question was carrying a considerable-sized gladstone bag—a bag the sight of which sent a thrill through every nerve in the Dodger's body.

body.

In a flash it had recalled another scene in the station-master's office at Cowden—a scene in which a similar gladstone bag had played so dramatic a part. Was it possible that history was going to repeat itself, and that the Rip was going to be arrested in the selfsame spot as on that other occasion? occasion?

vet Jack felt doubtful. It was impossible for him at that distance, and in the uncertain light, positively to identify the bearer of the bag. He had no means of knowing even that the individual in question was Clayton's guest. He might be any customer of the railway who had business to transact with the station-

master.

Several other persons came and went by the door, and Jack dare not leave his post for fear that during his absence the bearer of the bag might leave again unseen, and some other person turn out to be Clayton's guest and arrive.

The propentary confusion attendance of the person turn of th

guest and arrive.

The momentary confusion attending the arrival of a train subsided again. There was the well-known cry of "Take your seats, please!" preparatory to its restarting. Doors were slammed, and the invariable late traveller dashed up breathless. The whistle sounded, a lantern waved, and the train drew out again, and all the time the fair-bearded man had not left the station-master's office.

and an the time the larred action had not left the station-master's office.

So far as the Dodger had been able to note, everyone else who had visited it had left again. The man in question must surely be Clayton's guest. He was evidently not leaving at the present. At length the Dodger tore himself away, darted across the bridge, down the steps to the platform, and made his way with as much calmness as he could command across the station-yard to the projecting corner from which he knew he could gain a glimose into the interior of the station-master's office.

Softly, swiftly he elambered on to to the whidow-sill, and careful not to approach his face too near, looked into the brightly-lit apartment.

There, sure enough, the tall man sat with his back towards the window, and by his side reposed that gladstone bag which recalled so many memories. The man was apparently deeply engrossed in an evening paper. The station-master had not yet reentered. But Jack had only a few moments to wait before he did so, by the door immediately facing the window.

The tall man looked up, and Jack had only a few mides.

The tall man looked up, and Jack could hear the mumble of their

3

NEW NUMBERS OF

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greeting as the two met, but his ears failed to catch the voice.

"If only he would turn round; if I could just catch a glimpse of even his side face, I should know!" Jack thought to himself.

Rip Kelly at Work.

HE station-master threw down a bundle of service papers and unlocked his desk, and, evi-dently still talking to his guest, began to sort out his papers, and to lock up for the night. He walked across the room, unlocked his safe, and put the key-box in it, and was then about to lock the safe again when apparently he remembered that he still required some key. Without taking the key-box from the safe, he undid it, abstracted a key, and hurriedly passed into the outer office. He had evidently gone to lock the counter drawer.

evidently gone to lock the counter drawer.

Barely had the dividing door swung to behind him than the stranger sprang noiselessly to his feet, and with one stride reached the safe. The next moment Jack saw him abstract two keys from the key-box and press them into the palm of his left hand for a second, then replace them and dart back to his seat.

The whole thing was the work of an instant, but the Dodger knew that in that instant Clayton's visitor, whoever he might be, had taken an impress of some of the company's private keys on a ball of wax which he evidently carried constantly in his left hand. Even at that moment Jack could not restrain a feeling of admiration for the man, as he heavels of the months of patient. left hand. Even at that moment Jack could not restrain a feeling of admiration for the man, as he thought of the months of patient labour he had devoted to gaining favour with the station-master, gradually winning his confidence, worming his way into Clayton's private office, and watching day after day, hour after hour, the wax always ready for the one moment of forgetfulness on Clayton's part which should give him an opportunity of getting an impression of the keys.

But there was no time to waste on a clever criminal. Some plot was on foot which threatened the company. If it were to be defeated, Jack knew that he must proceed not only with promptness, but with caution. Such a man as the stranger had proved to be would not risk keeping that wax impression about him for a second longer than was necessary. By now, no doubt, he had already disposed of it in some way.

The first step was to discover which keys he had been so anxious to reproduce, and instantly have the locks they belonged to altered. Swiftly, silently, the Dodger sprang from his perch to make his way round to Clayton's office. As he did so, he was conscious of someone else moving stealthily in the dark close to him. He started round just in time to be able to make out in the shadow a square-set, hunchbacked figure with a heavy, protruding head.

Almost before he had grasped the

He started round just in time to be able to make out in the shadow a square-set, hunchbacked figure with a heavy, protruding head.

Almost before he had grasped the meaning of what he saw, even as he turned, a crashing blow sent him sprawling on his back. In an instant he was on his feet again. With a rush he closed with his adversary, who awaited his onslaught like some hideous, crouching monster.

Jack knew instantly with whom he had to deal. Whoever Clayton's mysterious visitor might be, this was none other than Kelly's hunchbacked accomplice, Hepwick. Never, Jack knew, would that horribly distorted creature let him escape alive were it possible to prevent it!

As Jack fell upon him, Hepwick shot out both hands. With one he grasped the Dodger by the throat in a vice-like clutch; with the other covered his face, preventing Jack from giving utterance to a sound, and gradually forcing his head backwards. For all his monstrous shape the hunchback was' possessed of brute-like strength. Jack felt a mere pigmy in his huge hands. Struggle and wriggle as he might, there was no relaxing that suffocating hold. Blindy he struck out with hands and feet alike. But his assailant only tightened his grip, and with irressistible pressure forced his head further and further back. He held the Dodger at the full length of his ape-like arms. Jack was powerless to reach his adversary effectively.

He felt himself lifted bodily off his feet. Gradually the strangling pressure on his windpipe began to suffocate him. Sparks and flashes danced before his eyes. This way and that the hunchback swayed him, shaking him as a terrier shakes a rat. The Dodger's strength was ebbing rapidly away. His face swelled up and turned a hideous, livid blue.

How long the struggle lasted Jack never knew. It was probably the work of a minute only. He was dimly conscious of being hurled violently on the paved yard; and then he knew no more until, what seemed to him hours afterwards, his senses gradually returned to him. It was many minutes before he could even sit up. Every breath he drew was an agony. To swallow was excruciating pain. His head throbbed as if it would burst. For some time the whole world seemed to swim about him in a reeling mist.

As he slowly recovered consciousness, a full recollection of what had occurred swept over him. There was no time to be lost. How long had passed he knew not. Something must be done, and that something at once. He staggered to his feet, and stood for a moment supporting himself against the wall. Then, painfully, he made his way round to the station-master's office. He scarcely knew what he was doing.

As if he had been in some dream, he heard a clerk on night duty exclaim:

"Good heavens! What's up?"

he heard a clerk on night duty exclaim:

"Good heavens! What's up?"

He realised that in all probability he would not be readily recognised.

"I am Postern," he gasped.

"Where's Mr. Clayton? I have been attacked."

"Here, sit down a moment," exclaimed the clerk, offering him a chair. "Mr. Clayton's just turned in. I will fetch him."

And the other raced off to summon

in. I will fetch him."

And the other raced off to summon the station-master.

In a few moments Clayton was at

hand.
"What is it, Mr. Postern?" he
exclaimed anxiously.
"What's hap-

pened?"

"Never mind now," answered the Dodger, struggling with an effort to form each word, "Where's your friend?"

"Who? Peterson?" replied Clayton. "He was called hurriedly away just after he got back, and left by the 11.15."

"I thought it," answered the

thought it," answered the r. "How did he get the Dodger. message?"

message?"
"I don't know, Mr. Postern. I was out for a few moments on the platform, and when I came back Peterson had left a note to say he had been called away. The 11.15 was just starting, and I did not see him."

For some moments the Dodger sate midway between consciousness and collapse. The station-master fetched him some water, and little by little he revived. Quickly he explained all that had happened.

he revived. Quickly he explained all that had happened.

"Not a word of this to a living soul," he added to Clayton. "Your friend is the Rip, or I am very much mistaken. What keys were in the key-box that he could possibly want?"

The wretched station-master, as he had heard Jack's story, turned a hideous green. He was trembling in every limb, and his parched, white lips quivered nervously. He could scarcely frame the words to reply. "There's all the station keys, Mr. Postern, as you know—the safes and desks and the letter-boxes, and all the pass keys to the offices."

"Send for a locksmith and see that men you can trust are on duty all night in every office. Under no pretext is any safe or desk to be opened for a moment unwatched, or to be left open except by my express orders. The moment the locksmith comes, every lock in the place is to be changed. He is to start on it at once, and to work until the job is finished. Let him begin with your office."

"It shall be done at once," the

office."
"It shall be done at once," the other replied, and went hurrying off to give the necessary instructions.
"Stop!" cried Jack. "Are you sure there were no other keys?"
Clayton paused a moment, considering.

ing.
"Yes," he finally answered,
trombling tones; "there'll be

"Yes," he finally answered, in trembling tones; "there'll be the two keys of the Liverpool-London strong boxes."

Jack knew all too well what this meant. Great safe-like cases travelled between London and Liverpool for the conveyance of bullion and specie when shipments of valuables were passing between this country and America. There were two, sets of these in strong rooms fitted to special vans communicating with the front guard's van on the boat trains.

fitted to special vans communicating with the front guard's van on the boat trains.

After valuables had been deposited in them at either end, they were locked by the station-master at the terminus with keys which were never for a moment accessible to anyone else. Since the Liverpool expresses

(Continued on the next page.)

No. 1 The New Story-book = The New "Empire" Library.

any time it might be possible to inspect the strong boxes en route, and make sure of the safety of their contents. Otherwise, they were not opened again until they reached their destination.

"Those are what he was after," Jack replied at once, as the facts flashed through his mind. Then an idea suddenly occurred to him.

"Tell me," he went on, "did Peterson ever hear you and the traffic inspector discussing this idea for holding up the Liverpool trains at Molton instead of here?"

Once again the wretched Clayton paused.

"Now you mention it. Mr. Pos.

paused.

"Now you mention it, Mr. Postern, he did," at length he answered.

"He took part in the discussion, too, I suppose?"

"Yes; we used to talk it over together."

"Now, tell me the truth, Clayton. Did not the suggestion first come from him?"

"I can't say. I am not sure.
P'r'aps it did."

"Think!" urged the Dodger.

"The first idea—the first suggestion

P'r'aps it did."
"Think!" urged the Dodger.
"The first idea—the first suggestion
that set you thinking about the proposal, was not it a remark of your
friend, Peterson?"
"I believe you are right. I believe
it was."

it was."
"I thought as much. Clayton, you are one of

"I thought as much. Clayton, you are not a knave, but you are one of the biggest fools that ever existed. Do you see what he was after?"

"I can't say that I do," the other replied, sinking helplessly into a chair. He was weak and sick with fright at what the consequences of his indiscretions might be.

"Why, of course," the Dodger said. "a soon as he got possession of

fright at what the consequences of his indiscretions might be.

"Why, of course," the Dodger said, "as soon as he got possession of those keys, or of duplicates of them from the impressions that he's got, he will make an attempt to rob the strong boxes in transit. To throw off suspicion, he will not make that attempt until after the new arrangement comes into force and the keys have been transferred from here to Molton. He knows that suspicion will then centre round Molton and not round Cowden. Also, he is now too well known to everyone about the

station here in his present get-up for it to be safe for him to risk having to leave the train here after the robbery. At Molton he will probably not be recognised, and would not attract the same attention. If he knows for certain that the service is going to be altered, he will wait until the alterations come into effect. Did you tell him that I thought well of the idea?"

"Yes, Mr. Postern; as a matter of fact, he asked."

"Yes, Mr. Postern; as a matter of fact, he asked."

"Of course. That was the one piece of information he had to get

fact, he asked."

"Of course. That was the one piece of information he had to get before deciding on his plans."

The Dodger was weak and ill, but he had no time to think of himself. His brain had to work quickly. Two objects had to be achieved—the one to frustrate the robbery that he knew was imminent; the other, if possible, to catch red-handed both those who were engaged in it. Quickly his were engaged in it. Quickly his mind was made up. He must get to Calworth at once, report matters there, and obtain sanction for the steps that he proposed to take. A service engine was quickly in readiness.

service engine was quickly in readiness.

"Now, Clayton," he said, as he was leaving, "try for once in your life to be a little less of a fool. See that everything I have told you is carried out to the letter. No one, no matter how well you know him, no matter how well you know him, no matter who it is, not even the most trusted of the company's servants, must have a single opportunity of once getting near any safes or books of the company until the locks have been changed. I am afraid you will suffer for your partin this affair. There is no helping it. I am honestly sorry for you. Try to make amends by helping to lessen the consequences of your stupidity."

He sank back, tired and beaten, with aching head and torturing throat, against the back of the cab, as the engine pulled out to make the short run to Calworth.

One fear possessed him above all others. The Rip, if it was the Rip, would probably know by now from his accomplice that he had been observed taking the wax impression of the strong box keys. This, no doubt, would alter his plans. There was no saying, therefore, how soon he might be driven to make a desperate attempt to effect the robbery. An unremitting watchfulness would be necessary to prevent his success. So well did the Dodger know and appreciate the man's extraordinary skill, his sunning, his plausibility, that he felt he could "Now, Clayton," he said, as he

trust no one but himself to deal with

riust no one but himself to deal with him.

Time and time again Kelly had tricked those to whom he himself had been well known by sight, who were only too anxiously and eagerly on the look-out for some trace of him. Jack recalled that first occasion at Cowden, when even the company's skilled detectives had failed to see through his disguise. He thought of the way in which, day after day. Kelly had obviously been in close and intimate contact with Clayton, who, above all men, should have been quick to recognise him without being detected. Yet how could the Dodger himself single-handed maintain the sleepless watch which would be necessary?

If, as Jack hoped, Kelly had made

If, as Jack hoped, Kelly had made his bolt unpremeditated, on the spur of the moment, it was quite likely that it had been impossible for Hepwick to communicate with him, and in that case the original plan would no doubt be carried out.

It was full morning when Jack reached Calworth. There was no standing on ceremony on such an occasion. With his face disfigured, discoloured, and blood-stained, his clothes dishevelled and begrimed, he made straight for the trafficmanager's house, and briefly reported the facts of the case. A few

moments later, and they were both on their way to the general-manager. A hurried consultation was held, as a result of which later that day the

A hurried consultation was held, as a result of which later that day the announcement was made that the next week an alteration in the London-Liverpool train service would come into force—namely, that all expresses between London and Liverpool which had hitherto called at Cowden would in future call at Molton instead, and then followed details of the times and of the supplemental services for Cowden necessitated by the alteration.

Unknown to any but the station-masters at Liverpool and London, different strong boxes were substituted for those generally in use. The guards of both Liverpool boattrains were diverted to other duties, and their places taken by old and tried servants of the company. Detectives were instructed to travel in relays upon each train until further orders. Hastily and secretly these arrangements were carried out. Each official affected was told as little as possible of the reasons for the changes, and was ordered, under threat of instant dismissal, to give no inkling to anyone else of the changes that had been effected.

So perfect is the organisation of a great modern railway that before the

So perfect is the organisation of a great modern railway that before the 10.50 train for Liverpool had left

London that morning, the necessary steps had been taken, and so complete is the hold of the company over its individual servants that even the driver of the train, and the very inspectors who examined it preparatory to its start, had no inkling of what had occurred.

It was obvious that Jack himself was in no fit state that day, at least, to take any further active part in catching the train-robbers. So as soon as the machinery had been set in motion to give effect to the course that had been decided upon, he had placed himself in the doctor's hands. His hurts, though severe, were not placed himself in the doctor's hands. His harts, though severe, were not serious, but rest was imperatively necessary, and still sore and aching, he made his way to Calgate Street and went to bed. The down boattrain, carrying a large consignment of bullion for shipment to the United States reached its destination with

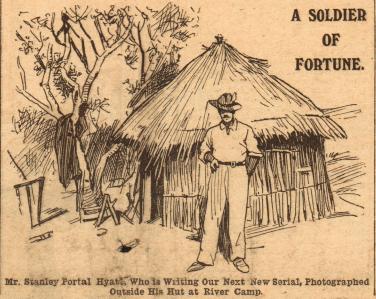
and went to bed. The down boattrain, carrying a large consignment of bullion for shipment to the United States, reached its destination without incident. The up express in the evening carried no valuables. On the following day there was no sailing.

It was certain that whoever had been clever enough and persistent enough to plan the robbery upon the lines which it was clear had been thought out, would be informed on all these points. The third day—a Saturday—a further shipment of gold bars and minted coin was due to travel over the G.P.R. As a further precaution, the consignment was secretly diverted and carried in apparently innocent cement bags in the living-van of a goods express.

It was secretly guarded by a group of detectives disguised as navvies and platelayers. A similar precaution was taken with valuables travelling on the Monday, when for the first time the new train-service came into operation. Jack was now well enough to resume work, and at his own request was himself allowed to accompany the train, under the pretext that it was necessary for the traffic-inspector to see how the new system worked. That an attempt would be made on the strong boxes in the course of a day or two after the commencement of the new service he felt certain.

To precipitate matters, he allowed it apparently accidentally to leak out that a considerable amount of bullion was travelling by the G.P.R. on the following Wednesday. If the would-be thief was Kelly, the Dodger knew that he would know every item of information current at the railway, and so he ostentatiously gave it out that he was obliged to go to Bristol that day on urgent company business,

(Continued on the next page.)



FORTUNE. A SOLDIER OF

Being Some Adventures of Stanley Portal Hyatt, Author of the New BOYS' FRIEND Serial That Starts The Week After Next.

Your Editor's Den a grand new serial, entitled "Sol-diers of Fortune," will be com-mencing next Tuesday week in The Boys' FRIEND. It is a story of stirring adventure and wild life in Rhodesia and other parts of the great African continent, and it has been written specially for our boys by Mr. Stanley Portal Hyatt.

Portal Hyatt.

It was a very happy idea on your Editor's part that led to this grand new serial being written. A short time ago there was published a somewhat expensive book entitled "The Diary of a Soldier of Their was the "The Diary of a Soldier of Fortune."* Mr. Hyatt was the author, and in the book he gave his

experiences as an engineer,

sheep station hand, nigger driver, hunter, trader, transport rider, explorer, blockade runner, and a host of other side-lines in human activity. On reading the book, your Editor was so impressed by the splendid matter it contained that he wrote to Mr. Hyatt, and the outcome of a subsequent interview was the grand new serial now about to commence in our pages.

new serial now about to commence in our pages.

The following extracts from Mr. Hyatt's splendid book, reproduced with his permission, will show what an adventurous career he has lad. The first experience deals with a journey of two hundred miles that took six weeks to accomplish.

"We followed the old Pioneers' Road as far as Macloutsie, but from that point onwards we had to cut our own track. The abandoned waggons were the main point of in-

wn track. . . . The abandoned raggons were the main point of in-

* "The Diary of a Soldier of Fortune," by Stanley Portal Hyatt. T. Werner Laurie, London.

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powder.

"And here were the black embers of a fire, all the white ash having been carried away by the summer rains; and a rusted iron pot over some bits of half-burned mopani log, which the white ants had attacked in vain. Some empty bully-beef tins off which the paper had long since peeled, a few pages of an illustrated paper—torn, yellow, and barely legible—a bottle or two, also without labels,

oxen; and when you tried to drink that water it gave you a queer, sickly feeling, and you thought perhaps more of the ruined transport rider than of the possible enteric; but, still, you had to drink it, even though it stank. You would gladly have walked ten miles to another pool, certainly, but for the fact that you knew it would reek as badly as, or even worse than, the one you were leaving."

"I wonder how many men have ever been thirsty? I do not use the word in the sense the cyclist, or the athlete, or the soaker does, but crudely, going back to elemental things. Hunger is bad. I have been hungry in civilisation, when I was dead broke, more than once. In the Far East I have lived for a whole month on boiled bats, and that is getting near the limit; but I would sooner

be hungry a hundred times

than thirsty once. Hunger is a slow and lowering thing; you lose strength and you lose heart, but it rouses no violent passions; its action is too prolonged for that, and the physical pain from it is comparatively small. It is a longing, rather than a suffering. Thirst is different. In a few hours it grows from a discomfort to an agony, and madness and murder are the natural, the inevitable results. I have seen a man shot for the sake of the basket of clams he was carrying on his back,

labels,

an oven in an ant hill,
and a rotten whip-stick showed where
the transport rider had camped before the awful scourge caught him,
and in a few short hours wrecked the
work of a lifetime. They were intensely human, and therefore bitterly
sad, those relies of the great disease.

"If the water were near to the
stranded waggons, you would find
the pool full of great, slimy fish, and
it you were curious enough, or rash
enough to strip and go in, you could
grub out of the mud the skulls and
bones of what had once been trek

evaluate restus. I have seen a that the sake of the basket of
clams he was carrying on his back,
and, starving though I was, reckoned
when I was really thirsty, I would
have shot a man for a cup of water.
"The incident occurred about
twenty miles south of the Tuli
River. The waggons were getting
on with deadly slowness, and from
the outspan where we were to the
river itself there was not a drop of
water. Twenty miles may not seem
much in England; it would seem
very little to me now, but then there
was a handful of us youngsters, raw,
soft, totally unacclimatised, and

whilst the Colonials, and those who had adopted Colonial ways, insisted on our trekking on ahead, alleging that the waggons could not carry water for us, they remained behind with the waggons—and the water of the Tuli River, I can taste it still! Not only did it with the waggons—and the water of the Tuli River, I can taste it still! Not only did it with the waggons—and the water of the Tuli River, I can taste it still! Not only did it with the waggons—and the water bags. We were told to start at dawn, and to follow a cart spoor to the Tuli, where we were to await the waggons. No white man ever a shally as, or even worse than, the ne you were leaving."

The Horrors of Real Thirst.

"I wonder how many men have ver been thirsty? I do not use the food, and water—and we had been little more than three weeks on the verb cord in the sense the cyclist, or the start water had adopted Colonials, and those who had adopted Colonials, and those who had adopted Colonials, and those who had adopted Colonial ways, insisted on our trekking on ahead, alleging make him get up and come along.

"The water of the Tuli River, I can taste it still! Not only did it put a stop to the abominable agony bags. We were told to start at dawn, and to follow a cart spoor to the Tuli, where we were to await the waggons. No white man ever carries a pack in Africa; even a seasoned old prospector will not try it, yet we had to take rifles, blankets, food, and water—and we had been little more than three weeks on the verb were no water-bags.

there were no water-bags,

there were no water-bags, and we had to be content with vulcanite bottles, holding a pint each. We—my brother and myself—got on about five miles without a drink, then we opened his water-bottle, to find that, whilst it had been hanging on the buck rail of the waggon, someone had stolen half its contents. We got along another five miles fairly well; but the weight of our packs and rifles and the heavy sand underfoot was telling.
"It was about ten o'clock then, and the thirst began. Our pace was slackening down, and by midday we had added only a couple of miles, and though we had fought hard against the temptation, the water-bottles were empty. There were eight miles more to do, theoretically, really

and though we had fought hard against the temptation, the water-bottles were empty. There were eight miles more to do, theoretically, really about twelve,

the most ghastly trek

of my life. We had to go on; we had to stick to our packs and rifles, and yet, with every step, the pain of the thirst increased. We were raw, and that was the main trouble; yet even an experienced man would have found it hard going under the conditions. conditions

By three o'clock the pain had "By three o'clock the pain had become positive agony. I would have killed a man for a drink then. We stuck to it, just because we had to, because the only chance of relief was the water ahead. At about the sixteenth mile we came on another youngster who had started before us. The way we went off, in ones and twos, shows how raw we were.

A Lion on the Veidt.

"Night after night the lions kept us awake by patrolling round the little hill, and growling. In some ways the training was good for those who, like myself, were raw to Africa. After a week or two of it, our point of view changed. Anger—or, rather, hatred—took the place of fear, and we grew to regard the pseudo king of beasts as a pest instead of as a danger.

"For some time our visitors got nothing bigger than a fowl, but at last a horse belonging to an Afrikander was left out after dark, and the lions made short work of it. The following night

a trap-gun was set

a trap-gun was set

a trap-gun was set
over the little that remained,
and when a party, consisting of
about half a dozen white men, went
out next morning they found a big
male lion, wounded through the intestines, but still full of fight.
"I was not in the firing-party. If
I had been, perhaps I should not be
writing now, for it seems that
bullets flew, mostly unaimed, in
every direction. For a few moments
the position was critical—a charging
lion and empty carfridge-cases—but
before anyone was hurt, the brute
fell to the rifles of the two men who
kept their heads. Then the carcass
was borne back in triumph. I photographed it, and the Afrikanders told
us how the great deed had been
done."

(Another of these splendid descriptive

(Another of these splendid descriptive articles next Tuesday in THE BOYS' FRIEND. "Soldiers of Fortune," our grand new serial, by Stanley Portal Hyatt. commences the week after next)

"Soldiers of Fortune," a Superb Serial, by Stanley Portal Hyatt a New and Powerful Author—Commences the Week After Next in THE BOYS' FRIEND.

and then joined the train by stopping it by signal just past Bushey. Immediately following the engine came a locked baggage-van, in a partitioned compartment of which were deposited the strong boxes, the remainder being occupied by mailbags and baskets. Following that was a composite coach, consisting of the leading guard's-van and a baggage compartment. Communicating by vestibule was the first of the long line of corridor coaches and saloons making up the train. In order not to excite suspicion the guard, in complete ignorance of the precautions that were being taken, travelled as usual alone in his van. In the leading compartment of the first passenger-coach travelled four armed detectives. Jack, on joining the train, took his place in the engine-cab.

The train was due to make one stop on the run, at Knightley, and as prearranged, at that point one of the detectives posing as an inquisitive passenger, strolled casually forward to the engine as if to examine the monster locomotive, and stood for a moment surveying it, long enough to give by preconcerted signal the information to Jack that the Rip had not apparently boarded the train in London, nor any man answering the description of Peterson. Meanwhile, another detective was carefully scrutinising the passengers who joined the train at the Midland city. Without incident the train resumed

joined the train at the Midland city. Without incident the train resumed its journey and started on its final dash to the western port. It searcely slackened speed until it reached the incline to the riverside station. Then it became obvious to those on the engine that something was amiss. The driver whistled for the brakes as he shut off steam at the head of the down grade. There was no response from the leading van.

van.

"That's what comes of always shifting our guards about," mumbled the driver as he sounded the whistle again. "It's impossible to run a train with strangers as guards." And he released the Westinghouse brakes gradually, pulling the train up with a jolt and a rattle several feet beyond her appointed station.

a joit and a rattle several feet beyond her appointed station.

In an instant Jack was on the platform. He darted along to where the detectives sat, and springing into the compartment, cried:

"There's something amiss in the leading van! Come on!"

In a moment all five were tumbling through the vestibule in the guard's compartment. There they found the unfortunate man lying full length upon the floor, gagged and bound, with an ugly gash at the back of his head—a clear indication that he had been stricken down from behind before he could offer any resistance.

They pushed through to the mail-

"They've borrowed the poor fellow's keys," the Dodger said, as he noticed that the communicating door was unlocked, and swinging

he noticed that the communicating door was unlocked, and swinging freely.

In the mail-van a scene of utter confusion met their eyes. Bags and baskets were scattered this way and that; the door of the strong-room compartment had been forcibly prised open, and an obvious attempt made to break into the strong boxes.

"They were scared off, at any rate!" exclaimed Jack, with glee, as he saw that the attempt had been futile. "Now to examining every passenger."

Their inspection had been the work of an instant. Whilst two of the detectives remained behind in the guard's-van, Jack and the other two took up their stations at the gangway of the steamer. A couple of inspectors were told off to see that no one was permitted to pass from the platform, either by the road approach, or by the landing-stage. But not a soul in the least resembling Hepwick or "Peterson," or Rip Kelly, could be detected. Every step that could be thought of to insure each passenger by the train coming under supervision was adopted, and finally an exhaustive search was made throughout the large liner lying alongside.

Not a passenger, not a deck hand,

adopted, and finally an exhaustive search was made throughout the large liner lying alongside.

Not a passenger, not a deck hand, not a stoker, cook, or steward but either consciously or unconsciously came under the examination of the Dodger before the great ship was allowed to depart. It was with a groan of disappointment that Jack began to realise that once again the miscreants had got clear away.

When the guard came to, he could throw little light upon the occurrence. He remembered giving the starting signal at Knightley, and reentering his van. What had happened afterwards he had no very

clear recollection of. It appeared obvious that the would-be robbers had been secreted all along either in the guard's van or in the baggage car, and had taken the first favourable opportunity after passing able opportunity after passing Knightley to strike the wretched man

able opportunity after passing. Knightley to strike the wretched man down.

How or where the scoundrel, or scoundrels, had gained access to the train appeared a mystery. They must have taken their places before it had even pulled into the station in London. Access must have been gained through the connivance—probably unwittingly—of some servant of the company in the cleaning dock; of that Jack was certain.

Again, how, when, and where had they left the train? The only solution appeared to be a wild leap from the off-side of the van at the entrance to the tunnel heading the incline down to the riverside station. The speed at that point would not be more than fifteen or eighteen miles an hour, and a daring and reckless criminal would not hesitate to take the risk. At the worst he would be caught, as inevitably as he would be at the terminus, if he remained in the train; if he were successful he would be swallowed up in the slums of Liverpool before the alarm was raised.

This, to Jack, was the one clue worth following. Together with two of the detectives, he returned to the point at which it was obvious the thief must have left the train. There, sure enough, they found plain signs, in the disturbed metaling of the road-bed, that someone had jumped and fallen.

"He won't remain in Liverpool an hour," commented the Dodger. "He knows that we will be hot on his heels, and he will take no risks. He's probably left by the 2.5 from Edgehill on the North-Western, or else on the 2.0 from the Central by the Cheshire lines to Manchester. There's no saying where he may be now."

It was with a sick and heavy heart that the Dodger finally made up his

There's no saying where he may be now."

It was with a sick and heavy heart that the Dodger finally made up his mind to return defeated to Calworth.

"It's a million to one," he thought, "that the Rip, now he knows we're on his track, will not make a second attempt. He's been foiled after months of work, and he won't run the risk again."

This view was shared by the general manager, and little by little the careful watch on the Liverpool trains was relaxed. Some weeks had elapsed, when one day the Dodger was sent for by the G. M.

"This I think is your friend's handywork," exclaimed the latter, as the Dodger entered. He threw across a cable from the compiany's agents in New York as he spoke.

"On arrival Maurania here today," it ran, "sealed bullion bags found to contain lead shot only; all bullion missing. Inquire your end. Claim lodged."

The Dodger stood aghast as he

bullion missing.

Claim lodged."

The Dodger stood aghast as he

all bullion missing. Inquire yourend. Claim lodged."

The Dodger stood aghast as he read fine message.

"How in fortune's name has he done it?" he exclaimed.

"Probably with the connivance of the guard," replied the G. M. "I have had him put under strict watch already. The bullion referred to travelled by last Wednesday's boat train, and the bags were taken from the strong-boxes, apparently intact, at Liverpool, and deposited by our own porters in the ship's strong-room. They must have been changed before that, though, of course, we take up the attitude that they were probably changed on board ship. To me it is obvious that the robbery was effected between London and Liverpool, and in all probability between Knightley and Liverpool."

"Well, we have something to go on this time," answered the Dodger. "First of all, the man could not get seven or eight half-hundredweight bags aboard a train without attracting attention. Secondly, he must

on this time, answered the Dodger. "First of all, the man could not get seven or eight half-hundredweight bags aboard a train without attracting attention. Secondly, he must have had long enough to effect a substitution. Thirdly, he must have had an opportunity of copying the seal and of getting at the keys. And fourthly, he must have had an accomplice. We ought to be able to trace the sale of the bags or the shot, or the making of the seals and keys, at any rate."

"And if we do," answered the G. M., "I do not see that we are much better off. We all know that it must have been the Rip who did it, and we can hang him if we catch him without the necessity of bringing this home to him. The question is to catch him, and I do not see that we are any nearer that than we everwere."

It was true, but the Dodger's in-

It was true, but the Dodger's in-domitable spirits came to the rescue. "Well, at any rate, we will show

that we are not any less persistent than he is," he answered. "May I see what I can do to catch him?" "Certainly," answered the other, "if the traffic manager can spare

Face to Face. O once again Jack started off on the apparently end-less pursuit of his life-One question constantly him. What had become long foe. recurred to him. What had become of the gladstone-bag which he had seen at Cowden Station, and which he was certain contained Lady Helen's bag? Clayton had been positive that Peterson had taken it with him. On the other hand, there had been no word from any pawn-broker or dealer, either in this country or on the Continent, of a transaction in precious stones cor-responding with those lost by Lady Helen. The Rip was not a man to keep such condemning evidence in his possession for longer than he could help. He would not be likely to destroy them either, as he must have been in urgent need of funds. The contents of the bag were

finally made his way through the ill-lit streets of the squalid Midland town to his hotel. Suddenly he was conscious of peculiar, shuffling footsteps following him. They sounded strangely familiar. Once he looked round, but only caught a glimpse of a short, squat figure darting into the obscurity of a courtyard entry.

In a moment Jack was on the alert. There was something about the build of that dimly-seen figure, even in the fleeting glimpse he had had, that reminded him of the hunchbacked innkeeper of Thoston. He slowed down his pace, and strained his ears for the least sound. In a moment or two he was rewarded. Distinctly he made out the sound of someone stealthily approaching behind. He walked on a few paces, as if he had heard nothing. Then when he judged that whoever was following was within a yard or two, at a point where they were passing a high factory wall, affording no chance of shelter, he spun round suddenly.

He was face to face with Hepwick, and he was unarmed, alone in a dimly-lit back street of a sleeping town. For a fraction of a second the horror of the situation possessed him. But next moment a great joy seized him that now at

"Perhaps," replied the hunchback; "if I was to let you catch me, but I am not such a fool."

Jack, his eyes riveted upon his opponent, weighed up the situation.
"Lead on, then," he said. "I promise not to do anything myself before you have shown me where to find Kelly. But I warn you fairly that you take your risk of anyone else catching you, and that once I have got Kelly, I shall do my best to get you too."
"I'm not afraid," sneered the other; "so long as you make that swine swing for it, I'll look after myself."
The Dodger noticed that Hepwick

The Dodger noticed that Hepwick was reduced to little more than skin and bone, and was clothed in the poorest of rags. There could be no doubt that the wretched creature had been existing in the direst poverty. He had been afraid, of course, to show himself in the light of day, or to appeal for assistance. The veriest stranger might have recognised him as one upon whose head was set a price.

"This means," thought Jack, "that Kelly has played him false, as he has done everyone else, and the miserable creature is going to have his revenge." Aloud he asked: "Do you agree?"

"Yes!" snarled the other; and, turning, led the way down the street.

"Do you agree?"

"Yes!" snarled the other; and, turning, led the way down the street they were in, round a corner into a narrow back street, across a main thozoughfare, down another sordid little alley, and out on to a great open space, ill-kept, ill-lit and untidy, on to which was shot the refuse and the waste from the factories in the neighbourhood. Here and there in the uncertain light pools of dirty water glinted between great heaps of rubble, mountains of ash, broad plateaus of alkali waste. The broken ruins of a tumbledown cottage, roofless and gutted, stood up against the sky, half buried in refuse.

"Hold on!" said the Dodger.

refuse.

"Hold on!" said the Dodger.

"Where are you taking me?"

The hunchback stopped abruptly and turned round.

"I am taking you to Rip Kelly's," he said surlily.

he said surlily.

Even in that dim light the Dodger could make out the almost fiendish expression of hate which distorted his countenance as he spoke.

"But there are no houses out here," protested the Dodger.

"Do you want me to take you to him, or would you like to find him yourself?" snarled Hepwick. "If you think you know better than I do, you had better find your own way."

Jack did not at all like the

way."

Jack did not at all like the prospect of passing longer than necessary in the company of this unscrupulous creature at so lonely a spot, but he saw the reasonableness of the ex-publican's arguments. His natural caution told him that he might easily be falling into a trap. His anxiety to leave no stone unturned to run the Rip to earth urged him on.

him on.

"All right, drive ahead!" he said, after considering the matter a moment; and as they walked he continued: "By the way, what has happened to Captain King?"

"What's that got to do with you?" retorted the hunchback, without looking round.

"A good deal. I should think"

"A good deal, I should think," replied the Dodger, "seeing the scoundrel tried to do for me! Is he with Kelly?"

"No, he ain't!" answered the other.

"No, he ain't!" answered the other.
"Oh, he got away with you, I suppose?"
"You can suppose what you like. I said I'd show you Rip Kelly. I didn't undertake to do any more of your dirty work for you."
"All right—all right! Keep your hair on!" answered Jack. "I thought you might have a little grudge against Captain King as well."

well."
The hunchback did not reply.
They were now halfway across the great waste space, stumbling at almost every step over obstructions and rubbish in the dark. They blundered on noisily, clattering through collections of old tin cans or over stacks of shifting brick

" "How much further is it?" asked the Dodger.
"You'll see when you get there," replied the other.

(Another splendid long instalment of "The Railway Waif" Tuesday in THE E FRIEND.)



Jack, looking through the window, saw the man abstract two keys from the safe and press them into the palm of his left hand. He was taking a wax impression.

principally jewellery, whose value lay in the precious stones. It was not a case of silver or gold ornaments that could readily be melted down beyond recognition. The stones, of course, would be torn from their settings before being disposed of; but, even so, some word ought to have been received of them.

The more he thought over matter the more he regretted that had not long ago inspected in detail every unclaimed article of luggage every uncl

"It would be just like the Rip," he thought, "to deposit his ill-gotten gains in the safe custody of the very company from which he had robbed them."

Clayton, he remembered, had not Clayton, he remembered, had not seen Peterson actually leave; all that he knew was that he had gone and that the bag had gone also. In the confusion attending the departure of an important train like the 11.15 night mail for the north, it would have been easy for Peterson to deposit a bag in the cloak-room without attracting much attention. There were probably dozens depositing and withdrawing articles of baggage.

Full of this idea, the Dodger

baggage.
Full of this idea, the Dodger started first for Cowden. He made a most exhaustive search through both the cloak-room and the parcels office, but found no trace of the missing bag.
It was late at night when Jack

least he was face to face with one of the two scoundrels.

To his astonishment the hunchback stopped dead in his tracks, and made no attempt to attack him. made no attempt to attack him. With lightning rapidity Jack's brain

worked.

"He's waiting for me to make the first move," he thought. Out loud he said: "I've got you now, you seoundrel, I think!"

soundrel, I think!"

"Not quite," answered Hepwick, with a snarl. "You have got to take me yet, and I could break you like a stick if I wanted to, you wretched little spud! If you have got any sense in your silly head you won't play the fool; you will listen to me a minute. Do you want to know where Rip Kelly is?"

"I do," answered the Dodger, perfectly frankly, but relaxing none of his cautious watchfulness. He would not be taken off his guard a second time.

"Then give me your word to try no tricks, and I'll show you."

"And how am I to know," answered the Dodger, "that you will try no tricks on me?"

"You have got to trust me, same

"You have got to trust me, same as I've to trust you," answered the other. There was a vicious snarl in his voice, a wicked glint in his eye that told of deadly hatred.

"Why, pray," asked the Dodger, "should you so kindly assist me? It will be a hanging matter for you too."

YOU CAN START READING BELOW.



INTRODUCTION FOR THE NEW READER.

Philip Ashley is a brilliant lad at the Council School, but has declined an offer of a scholarship because of his mother, who is so poor that she has to char for her living.

But one day comes Phil's opportunity.

Bravely he stops the maddened horses in Sir David Rendle's carriage, and saves the life of Elsie, his only child. It is the turning point in Philip's career, for by way of reward Sir David sends him to Rayton College, equipping him down to the smallest detail, and also engaging the lad's mother as a well-paid housekeeper.

Phil starts, light-hearted and jubilant, on the journey to Rayton; but on the way

a terrible revelation

a terrible revolation

Is made to him. Sir David's nephew, Godfrey Mortimer, who, in the presence of Phil's benefactor, has promised to shepherd him in his new surroundings, and show him every kindness possible between one schoolboy and another, turns out to be a humbig and a hypocrite.

No sooner is the train clear of Highfield than Mortimer stirs up trouble; but Phil sets upon him, and holds him in check till at the next station some more Raytonians enter the compartment.

The newcomers are friends of Mortimer, and when they hear Phil's story they christen him "The Blot."

After being treated with much snobbishness, Phil arrives at Rayton College, and is made Mortimer's fag.

From the time he enters the school plots of dishonesty, etc., are laid for him, and Mortimer does all he can to get Phil disgraced.

Mortimer tells his uncle that Ashley

Mortimer does all he can to get Phil disgraced.

Mortimer tells his uncle that Ashley plays cards for money, and relates to him the facts of the missing banknote which Phil is supposed to have stolen. Thus Sir David is most indifferent to Phil.

Jim Cocker is a bookmaker, and is blackmailing Dr. Paul, the head-master of Rayton College. The demands for money from Cocker are becoming so frequent that the head-master finds it necessary to disappear from the college.

On the afternoon of the head-master's disappearance Philip is pulled into a publichouse by Jim Cocker, and is seen in this establishment by Mr. Sopworth. Philip is taken before Mr. Walker, and is to be isolated from the other boys until Dr. Paul's return.

"You can now go back to your dormitory, and I will send for you as soon as the isolation-room has been prepared for you," says Mr. Walker to Phil.

(Now read the splendid chapters below.)

Ragging the "R. A. T. S. WOULD said C OULD you believe it?" said Carfax. "I wouldn't!" said the ever-ready Holcroft. "I don't

know what you're talkin' about, but I wouldn't believe it!"

I wouldn't believe it!"

It was Wednesday afternoon. Holcroft, in flannels, was lying on his back in the shadow of one of the trees on the edge of the lawn. Carfax had just joined him, coming from the direction of the school-buildings. He was also in flannels.

"What do you think?" said Carfax.

Carfax.

"Nothing," yawned Holcroft, fanning himself with his cap. "It's too hot to think this afternoon."

"You might let a chap tell his news," growled Carfax, in an aggrieved voice.

"Who's preventin' you?" said Holcroft sweetly. "I'm simply dyin' to hear it. Cough it up!"

"The 'Rats' are goin' to give another show," said Carfax impressively.

The "Rats," it will be remembered, were the R. A. T. S.—in other words, the Rayton Amateur Theatrical Society—of which Tubb was president, playwright, stagemanager, leading actor, and several other things.

Holcroft sat up and became interested at once.

foolishness on the head when we smashed up their performance of 'The Pirates' Revenge.'"

their performance of 'The Pirates' Revenge.'"

"Well, you thought wrong." said Carfax.

"They're goin' to give an other show, and they're goin' to take jolly good care, they say, that none of our crowd get in this time."

"Another performance of 'The Pirates' Revenge?'"

"Oh, no! It's to be a new play this time—a historical play, written by Tubb, with a king in it, and a knight in armour, and a fat old friar, and goodness knows what besides!"

"Who told you all this?"

"Who told you all this?"

"You know that room behind the gym., where Hogan keeps his garden tools? Well, I was passin' that way just room. Tubb was one that was speakin' and Rigden was another, and I heard 'em say something about 'scenery' and 'footlights.' So, of course, I wanted to see what they were doin'."

"Of course," said Holcroft should have

"Of course," said Holcroft. should have felt like that n

should have level. Should have should have should have should have should have should have level. Should have have been should have level. Should have have here the should have have here level. Should have have here have here.

new piece?"

"No. They weren't rehearsin';
they were makin' things for the

play."
"How many of 'em were there in

"How many of 'em were there in the room?"
"Only four. Tubb, Card, Rigden and Pritchard."
"Did they see you?"
"You bet they didn't! I took good care of that. I watched 'em for a minute or two, and listened to 'em talkin' about the new play, and then. I came to tell you, because I thought—"
He paused and grinned.

thought—
He paused and grinned.
"I think so, too!" said Holcroft, jumping to his feet. "I quite agree with you. Where are Rutherford and Pettigreey?"

with you. Where are Rutherford and Pettigrew?"

"Gone down to the village. They won't be back for hours."

"Any other of our chaps about?"

"I don't think so. Most of 'em are on the river."

Holcroft sighed.

"That's a pity," he said. "Two of us can't do much, at such short notice, too. However, we'll do what we can. Come on!"

In the meantime, all unsuspicious of the trouble that was brewing, Tubb and his three companions were hard at work preparing for their forthcoming play.

Tubb, with the aid of a large

bottle of gum and several sheets of coloured paper, was manufacturing bottle of gum and several sheets of coloured paper, was manufacturing a paper crown. Card, who was to be the "fat old friar" of the piece, had sneaked a pillow from his dormitory, had ripped it open, and was stuffing the feathers into an artificial "corporation." Rigden and Pritchard were wrestling with a tin bowl, which they were trying to convert into a helmet.

helmet.
"There!" said Tubb presently.
"That's about finished, I think. How does it look?"
He placed the paper crown on his head, and assumed what he fondly imagined to be a "regal" expression of seventuance.

"It looks all right," said Card,
"but it's a pity it hurts so much.
However, you'll get used to that, I
expect, when you've worn it a time
or two."

two."
'What do you mean?" demanded
bb. "It doesn't hurt at all."

"What do you mean?" demanded Tubb. "It doesn't hurt at all."
"Then why are you pullin' such a horrible face?" inquired Card. "You look as if you were in awful pain."
"As if you had the toothache," said Rigden.
"Or as if you'd eaten a sour apple," said Pritchard.
"Kings always look like that, I expect," said Card. "That's what Shakespeare meant when he said, 'Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown."

crown.'"

Tubb glared at him.

"I'll make your head uneasy if you don't shut up!" he growled.

"How's the helmet comin' along?"

"It isn't coming along at all," said Rigden. "The beastly thing won't bend into shape a bit. Why didn't you order a helmet along with the other things?"

"Want of funds, dear boy," said Tubb. "We can't afford to hire everything. We've got to make some of the things ourselves; but, talkin' about the other things, isn't it time that Hepworth and Jackson were back?"

Henworth and Jackson it should

back?"

Hepworth and Jackson, it should be explained, had gone down to the station for a basket of costumes and other properties which the "Rats" had hired from a London theatrical outfitter, and which were expected to arrive that afternoon.

"Yes, they ought to be here before long," said Card. "Unless the train is late."

"Listen!" said Rivsley. "Little"

is late."
"Listen!" said Riction. "I think
I hear them comin."
"I don't hear caything," said

"I don't near Tubb.
"I heard footsteps, I'm sure," said

"I heard footsteps, I'm sure," said Rigden.

He was right. But the footsteps were not those of Hepworth and Jackson. They were those of Holcroft and Carfax.

"Go to the door and see if you see any sign of them," said Tubb.

Rigden walked over to the door and turned the handle.

"Hallo! What's up?" he exclaimed. "The door won't open!"

"It does stick sometimes," said Tubb. "Give it a good, hard pull."

Rigden pulled his very hardest.

The door yielded an inch or two, and, on peering through the chink, Rigden saw that a rope had been looped round the outside handle and tied to one of the iron railings at the back of the gymnasium.

tooped round the outside handle and tied to one of the iron railings at the back of the gymnasium.

"Somebody's tied up the door!" he gasped.

There was a burst of mocking laughter outside. Tubb sprang to his feet with a cry of dismay, and even as he did so, the grinning faces of Holcroft and Carfax appeared at the open window.

In Holcroft's hand was the end of a garden hose-pipe which he and Carfax had fixed to a neighbouring hydrant. In each of Carfax's hands was a paper bag full of soot.

"Four little rats sat down to spin!" said Holcroft. "Pussy passed by, and she looked in! Hope we're not disturbin' you, dear boys! Ah! Would you?"

Rigden had snatched up a pair

by, and she looked in! Hope we're not disturbin' you, dear boys! Ah! Would you?"

Rigden had snatched up a pair of Hogan's garden-shears, and had pushed the long, thin blades through the chink of the door, with the intention of trying to cut the rope. But Holeroft was too quick for him Thrusting the nozzle of the hosepipe through the window, he pointed it at Rigden and turned on the tap.

Swish! A foaming jet of water hissed across the room and swotted Rigden on the side of the head, nearly knocking him off his feet and causing him to drop the shears with a howl of mingled rage and pain.

"No you don't!"

Card had made a dash for the window. Quick as thought Holeroft turned the jet in his direction. It smote him fair and square between the eyes, and sent him reeling back into Pritchard's arms. Down went Pritchard, with Card on the top of him; and the next instant the two boys were floundering and writhing on the floor, trying in vain to dodge the stream of water with which Holcroft, with many gibes and taunts, mercilessly bombarded them.

Of course, while Holcroft was attending to Pritchard and Card and Rigden, he could not keep watch on Tubb at the same time. Hoping to take advantage of this fact, Tubb clenched his fists and sprang towards the window. But if Holcroft was not watching him, Carfax was.

Whizz! Carfax hurled one of the paper bags at Tubb. It struck him in the face, bursting as it did so, and enveloping him in a cloud of soot, of which many particles found their way into his eyes, and up his nose, and down his throat.

in the face, bursting as it did so, and enveloping him in a cloud of soot, of which many particles found their way into his eyes, and up his nose, and down his throat.

Half-blinded and half-choked, Tubb danced and gesticulated, and coughed, and spluttered like one demented.

"Poor 'ickle fing!' jeered Holcroft. "Didums have a bad cough? Have a drink, darlin'!"

He turned the hose on Tubb, who instantly executed a lightning back-somersault that would certainly have earned him a double encore on any music-hall stage in the kingdom.

"Now, who'll have this?" inquired Carfax, holding up the second soot-

bag, while Holcroft played on each of the four boys in turn with the four boys in turn with the e. "Don't all speak at hosepipe.

or the four boys in turn with the hosepipe. "Don't all speak at once."

"If you dare—" began Rigden, when the gushing torrent struck him in the mouth and rendered further speech impossible.

"You howling cads! We'll pay you—" began Pritchard, but before he could say more the jet of water smacked him on the side of the head and spun him round like a teetotum. By this time the floor was nearly ankle-deep in sooty water, on which Tubb's paper crown, now limp and sodden, floated like a forsaken derelict. Raging, but helpless, the four boys took cover behind an empty corn-bin, which stood in a corner of the room. Here they held a hurried council of war, as the result of which they suddenly sprang from behind the bin and made a concerted rush for the window.

"The enemy charge!" roared Hol-

they state they state they state they bin and made a concerted rush for the window.

"The enemy charge!" roared Holcroft. "Prepare to repel boarders! Man the guns! Fire!"

The second soot-bag burst in Card's face, and Card, after staggering back a step or two, sat down on the floor with a howl and a splash.

The jet from the hosepipe oscillated swiftly from side to side, now spouting into Pritchard's face, now into Rigden's, now into Tubb's. To make headway against it was impossible. Gasping and spluttering, the four boys beat a hasty retreat, and once more took cover behind the bin.

bin.

Holcroft turned off the jet, and he and Carfax, leaning their elbows on the sill, thrust their heads and shoulders through the window. But Holcroft kept his hand on the tap, ready to turn it on again at an instant's notice.

"Dismal sort of place, isn't it?" he murmured, glancing round the room. "Dismal, damp, and dirty," said Carfax.

Carfax.

"Just the sort of place for rats," said Holcroft. "I wonder if any of 'em are at home?"

He rapped on the window-ledge with his knuckles.

"Anybody in?" he called out, "Is this the box-office where you book your seats for the next performance of the performin' rats? My friend and I—"

The sentence were

and I——"
The sentence was never completed, for at that moment Holcroft's ankles were seized in a vice-like grip, whilst at the same instant another pair of hands clutched Carfax's ankles.
The owners of the hands were Hepworth and Jackson. As already stated, they had been to the station for a hanner of costumes and other

stated, they had been to the station for a hamper of costumes and other things from London. The hamper had not arrived, and the two boys had returned to the school just in time to see Holcroft and Carfax, after turning off the hose, lean their elbows on the window-sill and thrust their heads and shoulders into the room.

their neads and shoulders the reader room.

What happened next the reader can doubtless guess. With a stealth that would not have disgraced a couple of Red Indians, Hepworth and Jackson crept up behind their unsuspecting victims; then Hepworth made a grab at Holcroft's ankles, and Jackson made a grab at Carfax's.

fax's.

Never was a surprise attack more neatly planned or more successfully carried out. Almost before Holcroft and Carfax realised what was happening, their feet were dragged off the round, their legs were swung into the air, and they were shot headforemost through the window into the room.

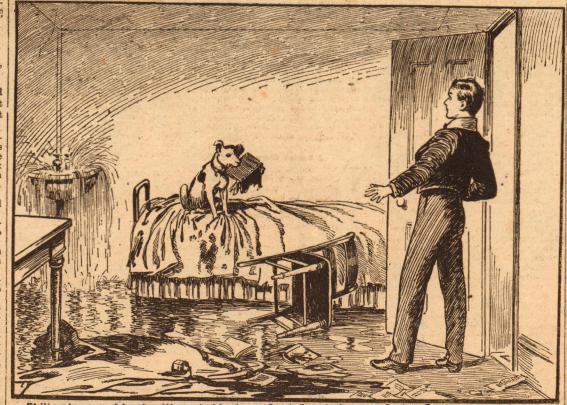
foremost through the window into the room.

Ere they could scramble to their feet, Tubb and his three companions dashed from behind the bin and flung themselves upon them with shouts of gloating triumph. Hepworth and Jackson hurriedly climbed through the window and sprang to their chum's assistance.

Fighting and struggling, and scattering sooty water in all directions, Holcroft and Carfax battled gamely to regain their freedom; but the odds were too many for them, and in little more time than it takes to tell the tables were completely turned, and Holcroft and Carfax were prisoners in their rivals' hands.

The "R. A. T. S." Revenge.

OW, what shall we do with 'em?" said Tubb, when they had unfastened the door and used the rope to bind their prisoners. "There's no hurry. We've all the rest of the afternoon to play with them. Rutherford and Pettigrew are down in the village, and the rest of the Paulite insects are up the river, so there's no four of our bein'



Holcroft sat up and became interested at once.

"Never!" he said.

"I thought Rutherford and I had knocked that the floor in an ever-widening stream.

"Never!" he said.

"I thought knocked that the floor in an ever-widening stream.

interrupted. What shall we begin

interrupted. What shall we begin with?"

"We might give 'em a dose of their own physic to start off with," suggested Card.

"Meanin' the hosepipe," said Tubb. "A feeble suggestion, my boy, not worthy of you. However, it'll do to be goin' on with; so man the hose and play upon their fevered brows while I rack my massive brain in search of something tastier."

When Holcroft and Carfax had been soused with the hosepipe until they howled for mercy, Rigden objected that they looked too clean.

"You see," he explained, "they're not accustomed to wash themselves, and it gives me quite a creepy feelin' to see them with clean faces. They don't look natural somehow."

"Well, there's plenty of soot about," said Tubb. "You can easily restore their natural complexions."

Rigden groped in the water on the floor, and fished out a sticky mass of sodden soot. He rubbed it carefully over Holcroft's face, repeated the performance on Carfax, and washed his hands at the hosepipe.

"There! They look much more natural now, don't they?" he said.

"Decidedly more natural," said Pritchard. "More like the Holcroft and the Carfax that we know and love. Now, let us take 'em outside and make 'em run the gauntlet."

"Good idea!" said Card. "But we'll have to untie their legs first."

"We needn't untie 'em gauntlet."

"Good idea!" said Card. "But we'll have to untie their legs first."

"We needn't untie 'em altogether," said Rigden. "Let's tie one of Holcroft's legs to one of Carfax's like they do in a three-legged race, and make 'em run the gauntlet in that way."

"Rippin!" chuckled Pritchard. "What do you say, Tubb?"

Tubb did not answer for a moment. He was still "racking his massive brain in search of something tasty!"

Drenching his rivals with the hosepipe, and rubbing soot on their faces, and making them run the gauntlet, were all very well in their way, but they didn't quite satisfy Tubb. He wanted his revenge with a capital "R"—something that would pay off old scores and leave a good balance to his credit.

Suddenly his glance fell o

old scores and leave a good balance to his credit.
Suddenly his glance fell on the bottle of gum and the pillow which Card had ripped open. He leaped into the air with a whoop of triumph, and his eyes lit up with unholy glee.
"Eureka!" he cried.
"Reek her yourself!" growled Pritchard.
"Sorry, old man!" said Tubb. "I forgot you don't speak French. Or is it German? However, whatever it is, it means 'I have found it!"
"Found what?" demanded his chums.

is, it means 'I have found it!'

"Found what?" demanded his chums.

"The idea for which I've been rackin' my massive brain!" said Tubb. "Behold!"

He snatched up the big bottle of gum, which was more than three-parts full, and poured half its contents over Holcroft's head and the other half over Carfax's.

"I don't think much of that idea," said Rigden, in a disappointed voice. "If that's all your massive brain—" "Wait a bit," interrupted Tubb. "Give a chap time!"

He picked up the pillow and turned it upside down over Holcroft's head and shoulders, he emptied the remainder over Carfax.

The result may be imagined. In the case of both boys, their heads and faces were covered with a sticky coating of gum, some of which had streamed down their necks and over their shoulders. Wherever there was any gum, there the downy feathers stuck, so that by the time Tubb had concluded his operations Holcroft and Carfax, so far as the upper part of their bodies was concerned, bore a most ridiculous resemblance to a pair of gigantic birds with coal-black skins and snow-white plumage!

So ludicrous was their appearance—especially in the case of Carfax, who had a roguish little tuft of feathers perched on the very tip of his nose—that Tubb and his chums rolled about the room in an ecstasy of helpless merriment.

"This is too big a treat to keep to ourselves!" sobbed Rigden, wiping

the room in an ecstasy of helpless merriment.

"This is too big a treat to keep to ourselves!" sobbed Rigden, wiping the tears from his eyes. "We must—we really must trot 'em round the grounds and let the other fellows see 'em! They'd never forgive us if we didn't!"

"Why, certainly!" said Tubb. "That's part of my idea. We'll make 'em run the gauntlet first—three-legged—and then we'll rope 'em round the grounds. After that, we'll take a snapshot of 'em for the benefit of posterity; and then we'll take 'em

"Alas for their hopes! Mrs. Walker, the assistant-master's wife, was giving a garden-party, and the lawn was

down to the river and see if they are swimmin' birds, or only land birds!"

Card, having fetched six towels from the House, and these having been knotted at the ends in the approved fashion, Holcroft and Carfax were dragged to their feet and led cutside.

were dragged to their feet and led outside.

After Holcroft's left leg had been tied to Carfax's right, the rest of their bonds were removed. Then the six boys formed a double line, with Tubb, Card, and Rigden on one side, and Pritchard, Hepworth, and Jackson on the other.

"Ready?" said Tubb. He swung his knotted towel round his head.

"One, two, three—go!" he cried; and he brought the knotted end down on the top of Holcroft's head.

For a moment, but only for a moment, Holcroft and Carfax seemed inclined to resist, to stand and show fight, now that their arms were free. But a knotted towel is a great persuader. Two more blows from Tubb, and a couple from Pritchard, were enough.

A moment, later the three-legged

A moment later the three-legged A moment later the three-legged racers were running—only it wasn't exactly running, it was a sort of hop-skip-and-hobble—along the back of the gymnasium, their tormentors keeping pace with them, three on one side and three on the other, and belabouring them unceasingly with their knotted towels.

Suddenly Holgroft stumbled and

knotted towels.

Suddenly Holcroft stumbled and fell, dragging Carfax down with him. As they fell, in some way or other the cord which bound their legs to gether came untied.

"Collar 'em!" yelled Tubb ex citedly. "Sit on 'em! Quick Holcroft stumbled and

gether came unfied.

"Collar 'em!" yelled Tubb excitedly. "Sit on 'em! Quick! They've come untied!"

As he spoke, he flung himself at Holcroft, but the latter nimbly eluded him and sprang to his feet. Card and Rigden hurled themselves on Carfax, but he, too, wriggled out of their grasp, and the next instant the two "feathered bipeds," as Tubb had christened them, were pelting back towards the north end of the gymnasium buildings with their six pursuers in full cry after them.

In an ordinary way Holcroft and

In an ordinary way Holcroft and Carfax were no better runners than Tubb and his chums. On this occasion, however, fear lent wings to their feet, and they reached the end of the block a dozen yards or more ahead of their pursuers.

As luck would have it, Hogan, the school porter, was just round the corner. He had heard the shouting at the back of the gymnasium, and was hurrying to ascertain its meaning, and had just reached the end of the building, when Holcroft and Carfax came tearing round the corner.

At the sight of the two weird objects, Hogan let out a startled yell of terror, which had scarcely crossed his lips ere the two boys, unable to pull up, charged into him and toppled him head-over-heels.

There was no time for explanations or apologies. Half crazy with excitement, Holcroft and Carfax, who had gone down at the same time as Hogan, hurriedly scrambled to their feet. And even as they did so, a sudden roar of laughter, mingled with shouts of hilarious delight, fell on their startled ears.

shouts of hilarious delight, fell on their startled ears.

The laughter and the shouts came from Atkin and six or seven other Walkerite juniors, who were returning from a spin on the river, and had just caught sight of the two comical-looking figures at the end of the gymnasium.

"This is some inne of Tubb's for

gymnasium.

"This is some jape of Tubb's, for a thousand pounds!" cried Atkin, breaking into a run. "Come on, you chaps! We must be in at this. I don't know who the giddy ostriches are, but— Why, I do believe it's Holcroft and Carfax!"

His belief was speedily confirmed, for a moment later Tubb, and his

Holcroft and Carfax!"

His belief was speedily confirmed, for a moment later Tubb and his chums came racing round the corner.

"Hurrah! Now we've got 'em!" yelled Tubb, when his eyes fell on his fellow-Walkerites. "Atkin, Smith, Cartwright—stop 'em! Don't let 'em escape! It's Holcroft and Carfax! Head 'em off! Drive 'em back! Surround 'em! Collar 'em if they try to break through!"

The fugitives were now between

thronged with a gaily-dressed crowd of fashionable men and women, including Colonel Goldie and his

thronged with a gaily-dressed crowd of fashionable men and women, including Colonel Goldie and his daughter.

Owing to the fact that the lawn was surrounded by a tall hedge, Holcroft and Carfax did not discover this fact until they opened the gate, when a shout of amazement from the colonel and a series of terrified shrieks from the ladies awoke them to a sense of their-mistake.

"Great Scott! We've blundered on to a garden-party!" gasped Holcroft. "Back, man, back, before they recognise us!"

It was all very well to say "Back!" but by this time their pursuers were close behind them, and the only avenue of escape that was open to them was the drive.

"The drive!" panted Holcroft. "It's our only chance!"

Down the drive, with their yelling pursuers after them, fled the "feathered bipeds." What they intended to do or where they intended to go, when they reached the gates

"feathered bipeds." What they intended to do or where they intended to go, when they reached the gates at the end of the drive, they did not pause to think. They were past thinking now. Their only object was to escape from their tormentors.

In the road outside the gates a procession was slowly wending its way towards the village. It was the annual "walk out" of the Rayton branch of the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes.

At the head of the procession strode two men, carrying a large silk banner supported by two poles. Behind them came the village brass band. Behind that marched the members of the order, three abreast.

behind that marches the members of the order, three abreast.

The head of the procession was just passing the school gates when Hol-croft and Carfax rushed out. One glance at the uncanny-looking mon-strosities, half bird and half boy, was enough for the men who carried the banner.

glance at the uncanny-looking monstrosities, half bird and half boy, was enough for the men who carried the banner.

With howls of terror they staggered back, the poles slipped from their grasp, and the banner, swooping earthwards, fell on the top of the two boys, enveloping them in its clinging folds, and bore them to the ground. At the same moment, several members of the band dropped their instruments and took to their heels, while those behind them, not knowing what had happened, literally fell over each other in their haste to press forward and discover what was wrong. The result of all this was that when Tubb and his comrades reached the gates they say Holcroft and Carfax kicking and struggling underneath the banner, with four men trying to hold them down, under the impression that they were freaks who had escaped from some menagerie!

Round them was gathered a jostling crowd of excited and rather frightened villagers, whilst further down the road Rutherford and Pettigrew, accompanied by about a dozen Paulite juniors, could be seen running towards the school gates to see what had happened.

"This is where we declare our innings, dear boyst" murmured Tubb, pointing to the rapidly-approaching Paulites. "We will now execute a strategic movement to the rear before the reinforcements arrive!

"The sorry we didn't get a snapshot of 'em,' he added, as they fled back up the drive. "But that's the only fly in the giddy ointment. Generally, when we try to get a bit of our own back out of Holcroft and his crowd, something always happens to rub some of the gilt off the ginger-bread. But to-day, dear pals, we've helped ourselves to a noble revenge, and all the gilt is still on the ginger!"

A Bitter Blow.

EXT morning, after early school, Mr. Walker summoned the other masters to his His face wore an anxious, troubled look, which told them at

troubled look, which told them at once that something was wrong.
"I have bad news for you this morning," he said. "Dr. Paul has fallen ill, and has been taken to a nursing home."
"He ees in London, ees it not?" asked Monsieur Picot, when he and the others had expressed their symmethy.

the others had expressed their sympathy.
"Yes," said Mr. Walker. "As you know, he went up to London rather hurriedly last Saturday morning. On Monday he was taken ill at his hotel. On Tuesday he was worse, and this morning I have received a letter to say that he was removed to a nursing home yesterday afternoon."

"What is the nature of his ailment?" asked Mr. Sopworth. "I say what is the nature of his ailment?"

"Nervous breakdown, the doctors

Mr. Drummond, the science-master, nodded.

"I'm not surprised," he said. "He has been on the verge of a nervous breakdown all this term. I never knew a man so changed. Formerly he was all jollity and cheerfulness, but ever since the beginning of this term he has been so glum and miserable-looking that I have sometimes thought that—that—well, I have wondered if he had some private trouble preying on his mind."

"The same thought has occurred to me," said Mr. Sopworth. "I say the same thought has occurred to

me."

"It has occurred to all of us, I think," said Mr. Walker. "Needless to say, I have never aftempted to pry into his private affairs, and he has never told me anything, but I feel quite sure, as Drummond says, that some private trouble is worrying him."

that some private trouble is worrying him."

"Have you any notion how long
he is likely to be away?" asked
another master.

"The doctors say, if all goes well,
he may be back in a week or two.
On the other hand, he may not be
able to return before the end of the
term."

able to return before the end of the term."

"In the meantime," said Mr. Sopworth, "what about Ashley? I say what about Ashley? Will you expel him?"

Mr. Walker shook his head.

"Not at present, anyhow," he said. "Although I am now in charge of the school, I am not invested with all the powers of a head-master. Besides, I hesitate to take the responsibility of expelling a boy."

"But the boy was found in a low public-house. I caught him there myself. I say I caught him there myself." I know I am not attempting to

myself."
"I know. I am not attempting to minimise the boy's offence. He richly deserves to be expelled, and I have little doubt that he will be. But I prefer to let Dr. Paul expel

"Then you will simply continue to keep him isolated from the other boys till Dr. Paul returns?"
"Yes."

"Yes."

"Will you allow him to compete for the Beresford prize?"

"Oh, I hope Dr. Paul will have returned before the examination takes place," said Mr. Walker. "If he doesn't—well, I don't quite see how I can prevent Ashley sitting for the exam. However, as I said just now, I hope the doctor will return before then."

then."

After morning school Mr. Walker called the two head monitors, Merrick and Mortimer, to his study and told them of the doctor's illness. Merrick was full of sympathy for the doctor, but Mortimer was only eager to know if Philip would now be expelled forthwith. He asked the same questions that Mr. Sopworth had asked both about Philip and the Beresford, and received the same replies.

In his study that evening, while the juniors were at prep. in Big

In his study that evening, while the juniors were at prep. in Big Room, Mortimer communicated the news to his three chums, Jordan, Heath, and Sadler.

"So the Blot is not to be expelled till the doctor returns?" said Sadler gloomily.

Before Mortimer could reply, a

Before Mortimer could reply, a plaintive whine was heard outside the study door.
"That's Jinks," said Heath.
"Shall I let him in?"
Jinks was a young and mischievous fox-terrier, belonging to Mr.
Walker.
"You may as well," said Mor-

fox-terrier, belonging to Mr. Walker.

"You may as well," said Mortimer. "He'll keep that whinin' up all night if you don't."
Heath opened the door, and Jinks ran in. Mortimer tossed him a golf ball to play with; then he turned to Sadler.

"What were you saying, old man?" he asked.

"I was saying," said Sadler.

"that the Blot is not to be expelled till Dr. Paul returns."

"That's so," said Mortimer.

"And if the doctor doesn't return before the examination for the

before the examination for the Beresford," said Sadler, "the Blot

Beresford," said Sadler, "the Blot is to be allowed to compete?"
"That's what Walker said."
"Then it's all up with my chances," said Sadler, who, it will be remembered, was desperately anxious for various reasons to win the prize.
"All up with your chances!" said Mortimer. "How do you make that out?"

out?"
"The Blot is shut up in the isolation-room, where there's nothing

and nobody to disturb him," said Sadler. "He has all his books and papers there. He hasn't to go into Form, and he hasn't any impositions to do, and he isn't allowed outside the school grounds. Then what do you suppose he does with Form, and he hasn't any impositions to do, and he isn't allowed outside the school grounds. Then what do you suppose he does with himself all day? I know! Ho simply swots all day at mathematics. In fact, he does nothing all day, and day after day, but work for the Beresford.

"It would have taken me all my time to beat him if this hadn't happened," concluded Sadler. "Now that he has nething to do all day but work for the prize, I haven't an earthly chance."

"By Jove! I hadn't thought of that!" said Heath. "But you're quite right. The rotten little cad will be swotting night and day for the Beresford now."

"Let's get up a petition to Walker," suggested Jordan, "protesting against the Blot bein' allowed to enter for the exam."

Mortimer shook his head.

"It wouldn't be any use," he said.
"Walker told me himself that if the exam. comes on before the doctor returned, he didn't see how he could stop the Blot competin."

"How would it be," said Heath, "to bribe some of the kids to kick up a row outside the door of the isolation-room? That would prevent him workin'."

"Only for an odd half-hour now and then," said 'Mortimer. "It wouldn't stop him workin' while the rest of the school is in Form. No! A better idea would be to destroy the rotter's books. That'd prevent him working fast enough."

"He'd only buy fresh books," said Sadler.

"He couldn't," said Mortimer.
"He hasn't the money. See? There

Sadler.

"He couldn't," said Mortimer.

"He hasn't the money. See? There the beast is!"

He pointed through the study window. Philip—who was only permitted to take open-air exercise when the rest of the boys were in Form, or at prep.—was walking

when the rest of the boys were in Form, or at prep.—was walking slowly across the quad.

"The isolation-room will be deserted frow," said Mortimer excitedly. "Let's go up, while the Blot is out, and make hay of his books and papers!"

It was now Sadler's turn to shake his head.

his head.
"He'd guess in a minute who had done it," he said. "He'd report us to Walker, an inquiry would be held,

"Not at all!" interrupted Mortimer. "We'll take Jinks with us, and leave him in the room. Everybody knows what a destructive little demon he is."

This cunning proposal met with the cordial approval of Mortimer's chums, and a moment later the four boys were on their way to the isola-tion-room, Mortimer carrying Jinks under his arm

tion-room, Mortimer carrying Jinks under his arm.

The isolation-room was a rather large room on the top landing. As it was originally intended for the reception of boys who were suffering from infectious diseases, it was furnished as a bed-room and sitting-room combined. It had a bed, a table, a couple of chairs, and a lavatory-basin with hot and cold water taps.

table, a couple of chairs, and a lavatory-basin with hot and cold water taps.

The table was littered with Philip's books and papers, the latter including many sheets of foolscap, covered with writing and figures which represented days of work on Philip's part. There were more books on one of the chairs.

"We'll begin with these," said Mortimer, picking up the sheets of foolscap and distributing them amongst his chums. "Tear 'em up into little bits and scatter 'em about the floor."

When this dastardly work had been accomplished, the four cads set to work on Philip's books, ripping the backs off some and tearing out all the important pages.

"The idea is this!" said Mortimer with a grin. "Jinks got into the room, seized the corner of the table-cloth with his teeth, and dragged it off the table!"

As he uttered these words, he pulled the cloth off the table, with the result, of course, that the books and the inkstand crashed to the floor. Ink flew and flowed in all directions, so that any books which had not been mutilated were covered with inkstains and rendered more or less illegible.

"Now, Jinks, old man, you sail in and complete the work of destruction!" said Mortimer, releasing the terrier.

(Another grand, long instalment next Tuesday "Saldiers of Footwee" start the

(Another grand, long instalment next Tuesday. "Soldiers of Fortune" starts to week after next.)



A Splendid Long, Complete Story by the Author of "The Black Canyon."

THE 1st CHAPTER. The Night Alarm. ICHARD GRANT, manager of the bank at Verecaster, had one skeleton in his cupboard. This was his brother. He had heard but little of him for several years, though rumours had come to his ears. The existence of this relative was, however, brought sharply to his mind a letter.

Before going to bed that October night, he took out the letter and read it again:

"Dear Dick,—You are a prize idiot to refuse me the loan of the Manton jewels. It is a mere fancy on mypart, but I must have them. You are my brother, and the fool of the family. Don't deny it, old man. If you were not, you would have taken my offer long ago, instead of drudging on for a contemptible pittance. Why, you are a piffling idiot to be content as you are, when I could make your fortune by a stroke of my pen. You should come up to see me in London. I'd show you what's what!"

Grant put the letter back in his pocket, and then dropped into a saddleback chair.

"I wonder what game old Ted is up to now?" he mused. "It is five years since I saw him, and he was so furious because I would not let him have any more money. Well, he seems to have fallen on his feet somehow. But what does he mean by saying all that about those jewels? The black sheep of the family—that is what poor Ted was. If I had gone on putting my hand into my savings for him, what was my boy Tom to do when I go? I wonder what Mary, if she were still with us, would have had me do?"

He sighed deeply as he thought of

she were still with us, would have had me do?"
He sighed deeply as he thought of his dead wife. She had always counselled him to help the wastrel Ted to the utmost, so that he might turn over a new leaf.

"Bah! I won't think of all this to night?" he muttered half angrily as he rose. "It is years ago. He does not mean what he says. It's only bluff. Why should he want the jewels if he is as wealthy as he makes out?"

out?"

He shook his head and walked to the door. The wind was blowing a hurricane, and the house, well-built as it was, seemed to be shaken by every blast. Grant lived in the same block of buildings as that in which the bank was situated.

When he gained his room, he went to the window and looked out over the sleeping city. The sky was torn and dotted with woolly masses of clouds which temporarily ebscured the moon.

clouds which temporarily ebscured the moon.

It seemed to him that long after he had lain down somebody was trying to speak to him from out of a great distance. Then he tried to reason with himself, telling himself that it was a foolish dream. It was the wind which sounded so strangely, whistling as a gale alone can whistle. And then he knew that that something so charged with haunting mystery was no vague creation of an overwrought brain.

He sat up in bed trembling. Yet again he tried to persuade himself that it was a dream. He struck a match, but it flashed miserably, and went out ere he could reach the wick of the candle. Ah, at last—better luck with the second! Yes, he knew it now; someone was trying to break into the bank—someone who must have known of the priceless Manton

jewels left in the bank's custody quite recently by the wrinkled, withered old countess, who had told Grant that she was going to Cannes for the winter.

He sat thinking. A feeling of paralysis held him, stifling his energies. No coward was Richard Grant, but he could not get away from the spell of helplessness.

Tick, tick, tick went the watch on the table by the bed.

Then the spell was broken. Crack! A revolver shot, and a hoarse cry. Grant was out of bed in a flash. As he jerked on his dressing-gown and dashed to the door, there was another crack, and the pungent smell of smoke came to his nostrils as he hurried past the door of the room where his son Tom was sleeping.

He dashed down the stairs which led from his own apartments right into the bank premises. There was a faint light from the barred windows. He passed rapidly through the hall into the main bank offices, and then gave a cry; on turning into the corridor which led to the strong-room his foot tripped on something soft. There was a faint light from the strong-room, Grant nearly fell; then, recovering himself, he peered down. Harrison, the night watchman, lay at his feet at the last gasp.

"Not my fault, sir," he said faintly. "not—not—" He never spoke again, but rolled over to lie still.

Dazed and horrorstruck, Grant paused the fraction of a second. Then he pulled himself together, and his slippered feet not making a sound, he hastened on. There was a hammering—a hammering as on velvet. Another moment, and he was at the iron-studded door of the strong-room, and the scene he saw was for ever photographed on his brain.

Vivid as one of those memory in a crape mask busy at the steel safe. The light of a lantern was focused brilliantly on the lock; the man's hands were thrown into curious shadow, dark and sinewy, like the fingers under the X rays.

Grant pushed the door, which moved back on its well-oiled hinges, and he was about to spring at the

about to spring at the thief, when a man who had been on the watch behind the door was upon him, his left hand gripping the manager's throat with a grasp which nearly choked the life out of him, while with his right he pressed the cold rim of a revolver barrel on his forehead.

"None of that!"

mask the other wore, he made out the features of his brother

"Let me go!" he shouted, and he made another prodigious effort to free himself from the hold of his captor, who was wellnigh strangling him.
"Not much, I don't think!" was the answer. "You don't play any of your games here. Me and my mate's busy—see? What shall I do with him, Ted?"

As he spoke, he drove his knee into

my mate's busy—see?
What shall I do with him, Ted?"
As he spoke, he drove his knee into Grant's chest, and brought him down heavily on the concrete floor. The man at the safe gave a growl as he thrust his hand into the recesses of the now open safe, and drew out package after package.
"My brother!" murmured Grant faintly, and the cry reached the other man, who had risen from the safe door, and now came towards the two.
"Well," he said, as he kicked the prostrate man, "so you are surprised to see me? You always were a mug, Dick. Well, you see, I have come to get what I wanted. I was an outcast for years. Now it is my turn. I suffered once. Do you hear?" He kicked the other again. "I told you then I should come back some day. I have come. That's all. I'm top dog. I possess more of the wealth of the world than ever you had with all your righteous pretences. But I wanted those diamonds. There! I am not going to waste time with you." The elder Grant looked up at him. "Ted," he said, "I always did what I could for you. You would not listen. But now this is the end. It's murder. Don't you understand?" "Oh, yes, I understand right enough, but I should like to see the 'tec, who would tackle me. I am ready for them all. Don't you be afraid—for me!"
"Ted, you must escape!"
"You leave that to me. I know my business all right?"
There was a reckless look on the handsome face, and the careless laugh the scoundiel gave awakened some tender old remembrance in Richard's brain, for he tried to speak, and in place of words there only came a sob. "Escape!" he said, and then he fainted dead away.
Edward Grant shrugged his shoulders. "The said to his companion."
"We had better tie him up and make

Shoulders.
"There!" he said to his companion.
"We had better tie him up and make all safe!"

all safe!"

He spoke in a haughty, angry tone.

He pulled some strong rope out of
the bag lying near the safe, and
Grant was speedily trussed so securely
that he could not move. But the

prisoner, though he had come to, did not resist. He lay there looking up at the man called Ted as the lantern was flashed in his face.

"Raise the alarm, and you know what to expect!" said the man who had sprung at him. The speaker toyed with his revolver.

"I am not going to raise the alarm."

Ted Grant gave a piggish grunt of satisfaction as he gazed down at the captive.

satisfaction as he gazed down at the captive.

"That's right," he said. "You are behaving sensibly. There! Come along, Morris. No time to lose. Ah, what's that?"

He 'turned with a savage cry, as his arm was caught, and, taken unawares, he was swung round to face Tom Grant, a boy of sixteen. The surprise was momentary. He grabbed the lad by the shoulder, and slung him to the other end of the room.

the lad by the shoulder, and slung him to the other end of the room.

"Now," he said, "come!"

The two men glided to the window just as there was heard a sound which caused Ted Grant to start back.

"Trapped!" he cried.

Tom was scrambling to his feet, and looking in a dazed way at the men.

"What do you mean?" said Morris thickly.

thickly.

"The police. That's what I mean! Hallo, you! What do you want?" This was to the helpless captive who was straining at his bonds.

"Listen," said Richard Grant.

"Ted, you must run for it. It would be a hanging matter. But don't go that way. You would be taken. Go by that door. It leads to a courtyard shut off from the street. Quick, man! Quick! You haven't a second to lose!"

There came a thunderous knocking at the door, and a voice said:

"Open, in the name of the law!"
Ted Grant stooped over his brother.

"I will take your tip," he said;
"but if you are leading me into a trap, mind, I will come back and finish you!"

They was a green. The two men.

finish you!"

There was a groan. The two men darted to the door indicated by the prisoner, but Tom, who had shaken off his dizziness, was ready for them, and as Ted Grant was about to pass through, he caught him by the arm. "Father," he cried, "you are not going to let this man-get away? Shout. The police will be here in a minute."

Ere the elder Grant could speak

Shout. The police will be here in a minute."

Ere the elder Grant could speak, the boy was sent flying with a heavy blow on the chin, but in a moment he was up again, and at his father's side trying to unloose the ropes. There was a resonant banging at the door, but it was quite ineffectual if the idea of those without was to break in. Tom wrestled with the cords, and at the same time tried to shake off a sense of numbness.

Then he shivered, for he saw that his father was not in his right senses. He kept on saying absurd things.

"The police," came half incoherently—" yes, the police! But we don't want them, my boy. You must not say anything of all this. I

will save him for my mother's sake. There, cut that cord. Ah, at last?' Richard Grant stood up and looked wildly round. He was thinking of something which had happened a very long time ago in the days when Ted and he were real chums, not merely brothers.

and he were real chums, not merely brothers.

"Father, don't you want the police to come? They will find the man."

He turned upon his son almost savagely, and gripped his shoulder.

"No!" he roared. "They must not take him! Do you understand, my boy? They must not take him! I won't have it—I won't have it! Better anything than that! Do you hear? Not a word of this to the police—not a word!" He staggered to the door. "I am not going to remain to be questioned. You can stay!"

hear? Not a word of this to the police—not a word!" He staggered to the door. "I am not going to remain to be questioned. You can stay!"

Tom had one thought—namely, that his father had taken leave of his senses. Not denounce the thieves to the police! Why, it was rank hunacy! He stood listening. The police had forced an entry through the submanager's room. There were hoarse orders, and the heavy tramp of feet. Somebody was saying, "Light the gas!" The boy stood as if turned to stone. What would the police think? They would say that he was in collusion with the gang. Then he was no longer alone, for a big sergeant was looking at him, and behind the sergeant was a keen-looking man in a dark blue suit, who was carrying himself as if he had just happened to stroll into a pleasure-party.

"Hallo, youngster!" said the sergeant. "I—" Then his eye caught sight of the dead body of the night watchman, and he stooped and made a quick examination. "Bad," he said, turning once more to the boy. "Where's Mr. Grant?"

Tom was silent.

He was conscious that the man in the blue serge suit was looking at him searchingly. Then the heavy hand of the sergeant came down on the boy's shoulder.

"Well," he said rather harshly, "did you hear me? Sharp's the word, my lad!" He turned, and still keeping hold of the boy, gave a few orders to his men.

Still Tom was silent. What was his duty now? It was not like his father, who was the soul of honour, to try and shield a criminal. That was his main idea. Then he wriggled out of the sergeant's clutch and dashed to the door through which his father had passed, for he saw one of the officers go towards it.

"Not that way!" shouted Tom.

"Where's Mr. Grant?" roared the sergeant.

"He—he's coming back!" faltered Tom, as he dashed aside the hand

the sergeant.

"He—he's coming back!" faltered Tom, as he dashed aside the hand of the policeman on the door.

"Oh, that won't do for me!" said the sergeant caustically, as he strode up to the door. "Here, get out of the way!" There were sounds of hurried footsteps on the other side.

"You don't pass here!" said Tom stoutly. "Get out of the way yourset!"

"Young jackanapes!" said the

self!"

"Young jackanapes!" said the sergeant. "Confound the boy! Here, get out of it!" He seized the lad by the collar and tried to jerk him on one side without making any effort, but like all those bad tacticians who go in for despising the strength of the foe, he was foiled. Tom held his ground, and by means of exerting all his powers he forced the officer to retire a pace to the rear. But it was only for a second. The others dashed forward, and Tom was roughly hustled on one side.

The police hurried through. Another office here; against the opposite door some heavy pieces of furniture had been piled.

Two of the policemen demolished the improvised barricade. "That's it!" said the sergeant. "Nowefor that door!"

It was locked. One of the men placed his shoulder against it, and the panels were sent splintering. The police scrambled through the broken framework. Tom followed. It seemed to him that his presence had been, forgotten.

The door led out into a little courtyard. Beyond were some public gardens faintly illuminated by the October moon. As the boy looked he saw his father standing a hundred yards away talking excitedly to a man who was hurriedly doing something to a motor-car.

"Mind That Bark!"

THE 2nd CHAPTER.

T was a run across the gardens, and the puffing sergeant gave a grunt as a whirring sound came from the big motor, indicative of its readiness to start.



The man had caught sight of Tom's head protruding just over the line of the hood of the motor-car. He raised his revolver and fired point-blank at it.

a Superb Serial, by Stanley Portal Hyatt—a New and Powerful Author—Commences the Week After Next in THE BOYS' FRIEND. "Soldiers of Fortune."

Tom ran on, his heart beating strangely as he saw how damaging everything looked. But though he outdistanced the sergeant, the muscular-looking man in civilian blue was not far behind.

It was a nightmare to the boy—his father talking excitedly to the men in the car, for the other had clambered in. That showed that he must be in league with the thieves.

"Look here, my lad," said the man in blue serge as he raced on by the boy's side, "I am Ruggles, of Scotland Yard. I am going to take this matter on, although I was down in Verecaster for something quite different. Maybe it's all one. You take my advice. It is sometimes quite sound. I have been at the game a long time. You won't do Scotland Yard. I am going to take this matter on, although I was down in Verecaster for something quite different. Maybe it's all one. You take my advice. It is sometimes quite sound. I have been at the game a long time. You won't do your father any good by holding things back. Whatever there is to come out, will come out sure drough. Rely on that. Much better make a clean breast of it."

"Got nothing to make a clean breast of," said Tom as he ran on. Ahead of them glared, like the fierce eye of some evil spirit of the night, the brilliant acetylene lamp of the Mercedes car. As the boy made a spurt and reached the car, he saw his father lean towards the man whose hand was already on the driving-wheel.

"Cut the country, Ted!" he said in an excited whisper.

"I can take care of myself!" was the contemptuous reply. The man who spoke turned half-round and dropped a word to his companion, who was crouching in the back of the car, and who had covered the oncoming police with two revolvers.

"Stand back, or I fire!" he yelled. The sergeant leaped at him. One revolver spat out its message of death, and the officer fell, while Ruggles aimed a blow at the car as it had the contempts of the car as it is the said to the car a

arm. Phut, phut, phut! went the car as it began to glide away into the night. Two of the policemen dashed at it, striking at the man on guard. Crack, crack! went the second revolver, and one of the constables fell, pitching forward right into Tom's arms. The lad dodged, letting the wounded man fall on to the soft earth.

Tom saw Ruggles run forward and try to seize the man who was driving by the collar, but he was hurled

by the collar, but he was hurled back.

The car had begun to move swiftly. Tom made an effort that was scarcely human, racing along the road as he had never raced before. Then he made a flying leap—a leap which nearly cost him his life, but he was on the motor, one foot on the top of the red tail-lamp, clinging for dear life.

"Near thing!" he heard one man say.

clinging for dear life.

"Near thing!" he heard one man say.

"Yes," came back from the man at the driving wheel. "But we are all right. Look here, Pete, better put on your goggles and the coat. Then come and sit by me and take the wheel while I do the same. We don't want to seem in a hurry."

Tom secured a firmer grip of the loose folds of the hood, and listened as the man called Pete did as he was told. The pace at which they were travelling was modified.

"I have had about enough of it, Pete!" he heard the man who was driving say in a low growl. "I should not have taken on this business without your persuasion. We might retire now, I think."

"Gammon! There's lots more good work yet. It may be all very well for you, but what about me? I am only your assistant, you know. I haven't made my pile."

"You know you can have all you want by asking me. What's that?"

He turned his head.

"I heard nothing. It's your nerves."

"I suppose so. I'll take a drop of brandy." He pulled out his flask.

nerves."

"I suppose so. I'll take a drop of brandy." He pulled out his flask.
"Ah, that's better! Well, I am not going back to the Square, but shall drive straight on to Southampton. I am due in Paris to-morrow night. Masters has a new scheme over the notes. I'll drop you at Oxford. You can lie low for a bit while you get rid of the haul. I only want the diamonds."

"Right you are, my lord—There!"

"Right you are,
There!"
They were spinning now through
the flat country near Banbury, the
hedges flying past them in a fantastic pattern. That "there" was
an exclamation of anger and fear,
for the man had caught sight of an exclamation of anger and fear, for the man had caught sight of Tom's head, and, as it is not usual for a motor-car to wear a boy's head protruding just over the line of the hood, he raised his revolver and fired point-blank at it. "You fool! Have you gone mad?"
"Nearly. Did you not see?"
"No."

"That boy. He is on the car. You had better stop."
"And have the whole countryside

round us."

Nevertheless, the car was brought to a stand, and the man who had fired jumped down just as Tom, half dead with pain, dropped off the back to lie motionless in the road. The shot had injured his head. He was able to see the man stooping over him with an electric lamp in his hand.

"Well?" shouted it

"Well?" shouted the other.
"It's that boy right enough, and
I've hit him. Serve him right!"
"Dead?"

There was a hasty examination.
"Yes, dead; sure as palm-trees!"
"Then roll him into the ditch and ome on."

"Yes, dead; sure as palm-trees;"
"Then roll him into the ditch and come on."

Tom recalled a jerk, but the shot had nearly deprived him of his senses. The man pushed him with his foot, and he was soon lying at the bottom of the ditch by the side of the road. A moment later the ruffian had climbed up by the side of his companion, and the car was rushing on once more along the great artery which leads from the morth, quite independent of London, to the southern coast.

As Ted Grant—or, rather, Mr. George Trenton, to give him the name by which he was known in London—had said, Pete Morris was dropped at Oxford, where that worthy passed as a gentleman much given to motoring and other sports; Trenton spun south through Andover to the great port. Here he put up at a large hotel where he was well known and highly respected. Time has no meaning for the enthusiastic motorist, and no surprise was evinced by the management when he arrived and left his car to be run into the roomy garage, while he strolled into the coffee-room and ordered a stiff brandy-and-soda.

"I wanted that badly," he said to

brandy-and-soda.

"I wanted that badly," he said to Franz, the waiter, who had forgotten his sleepiness in the presence of so rich a client.

"Come from far, sir?"

"From the north. Now, look here, Franz, I am going to bed now. I suppose I can have my usual room?"

"Oh, yes, sir."
"Good! I want to be called at twelve. It is, let me see"—he pulled out a diamond encrusted watch with his monogram on the back—"three. Yes, that will do. I am going on by the evening boat to France."

Trance."
The waiter bowed, as one does, of curse, to one of the richest men of

the day.

Trenton lit a cigarette, and tossed off the rest of his brandy-and-soda, and even went to the length of helping himself to another generous one, for the waiter had brought a siphon and a bottle of the spirit.

"At twelve, sir?" said the waiter.

"Yes; and I will have a steak and a pint of champagne brought up to me."

me."

Then he went off to bed without a thought for the lad whom he knew to be his own nephew, and who was lying for dead in a ditch in faraway Warwickshire.

The Third Chapter.
The Man Who Taps the Wires.

DELIGHTFUL dawn in October. The fragrance of the waking earth seemed finer even than in the glory time of summer. On the road along which the motor-car containing two of the

cow looked at the early worker from over a hedge.

The man went some distance down the road, and then came to a stop by the side of one of the tall black poles the side of one of the tall black poles which carry a couple of dozen wires. He set down his bag, and was preparing to fix his climbing irons, when his dog set up a fierce barking, and made a dash for a ditch.

"What is it, old fellow—rats?"

The dog barked, and scrambled into the ditch. Then it come bounding out again, and dashed up at its master.

Well, I don't want a rat. You

"Well, I don't want a rat. You go and catch him."

The dog made a run for the ditch, and then came back once more.

"If I must come and look, all right. Here goes," said the man, and he followed the animal to the side of the ditch.

He gave a low whistle, and jumped down.

He gave a low whistle, and jumped down.

The side of the ditch was up to his shoulders, and he had some difficulty in making out exactly what it was down there. Something dark—a bundle? No, not a bundle. He had whistled because of a red stain on the grass by the edge. He gently raised that something. A boy—and dead! Bourke laid his burden down on the grass and scrambled out, while the dog sniffed round the unconscious form.

Poor lad! Poor lad!"

"Poor lad! Poor lad!"
He stood for a second thinking. The next moment he had picked up the boy and was trudging back to the cottage, the dog at his heels.
The door was open by the time he had reached the garden-gate, and a jolly-looking woman in a blue cotton dress was coming down the path with a pail in her hand.
"Martha," he said sharply, "here's a job for you. Get a bed ready, quick!"

"The woman gave a cry.
"John, the lad's dead!"
"I don't think so. I felt his heart
eat. Look sharp there!"

Martha was not one of the hysterical sort. She helped her hus-band to lay the boy down on some

band to lay the boy down on some cushions.

"He's been shot," she said, as she busied herself in getting a basin of water and a towel. "Get him a drop of that brandy the superintendent gave you," she said.

The man cheved and as a few

The man obeyed, and as a few drops of the powerful stimulant were trickled through his teeth the patient opened his eyes. Then he sighed.

The woman gave a little cry of hap-

The woman gave a little cry of happiness.

"And I thought he was going off," she said, with a sob.

"Not he, Martha, old girl. He's young and tough. I'll get the doctor from Crossgates. It's a nasty business. There! He's opening his eyes again."

"Ah!"

Tom Grant tried to struggle up, but a kindly band was laid on his shoulder, and he was pressed back

shoulder, and he was pressed back again.

"Where am I?" he said faintly.

"You are all right, anyway," said the telegraph repairer. "Don't you fret yourself. You lie still!"

The boy obeyed, feeling weak and ill, and after he had swallowed some of the coffee the woman brought him he went off into a sound sleep. He was roused up by another man—the doctor, who examined the wound.

"Nothing serious." The words came dully to the lad.

Bourke went off to his work. When he reached home in the evening he found his visitor waiting to question him.

him.
"I can't remember everything,"

summer. On the road along which the motor-car containing two of the most desperate men known more or less—generally less—to the police had sped the might before there stood a cottage.

The mists were wreathing themselves into filmy clouds before the coming of the sun when John Bourke, who lived in that cottage, rose, and without waking his wife, made himself a cup of coffee prior to starting on his work. He was one of the vast army of workers who a labour in those strange times which are disregarded by the majority. Yet their work means the peace and security of thousands.

Bourke was a repairer of telegraph wires for the Post Office, and such work is never done.

He opened the door and sniffed the pleasant air. Then he went to the shed where his tools were kept, took up a bag, and walked down the garden. There was a rush behind him, and a big Irish terrier came datting up.

The doop followed him out into the main road. Not a soul about. A

was about to tell these new-found friends the truth when the casement windows of the room were shaken by the wind. "What a storm!" said Bourke, as

"What a storm!" said Bourke, as he went over to the window, and, drawing the curtain, looked out.

He remained standing at the window, and Tom joined him. Outside across the fields there was to be seen a tumbled mass of clouds scudding before the autumn gale. Close to the watchers were the thin black lines of the telegraph-wires standing out clearly against the storm-swept sky.

Then a lightning flash. It was one of many. The thunder broke the stillness caused by a momentary lull of the tempest.

Bourke gave a cry as suddenly, just

stillness caused by a momentary lull of the tempest.

Bourke gave a cry as suddenly, just after another blinding flash of lightning, some of the wires opposite began to buckle up.

"I must go," he said. "I shall be able to do something. Why, it is cutting them up as if they were cotton!"

He seized his bag, which he had for a wonder brought into the cottage, and made for the door.

Tom was at his side, the dazed feeling which he had experienced slipping away from him. But for the bandage on his head and a slight smarting pain, he felt well again.

"You keep back, boy!" said Bourke. "You stop with Martha. Tell her what you haven't told us yet—how you came to your accident."

"No, no; let me come with you! I may be able to help," said Tom, feeling a relief that he would not have to explain, at any rate, for a time.

"As you will; come on!"

I may be able to help," said Tom, feeling a relief that he would not have to explain, at any rate, for a time.

"As you will; come on!"

Martha began to protest, but Bourke and his companion were already outside the cottage in the wind-wrecked garden.

Bourke dashed across the road, and began to busy himself with the wreckage of the wires. One was cut right through as keenly as if done with a knife. This he began to tackle, looping a stretch of wire on to the severed ends and placing a fresh conductor.

"It will serve for to-night," he said hoarsely. "There! As you have offered to help, catch hold of the conductor, and see if it is firm."

He handed the little white receiver to the lad while he set about repairing the next wire.

Tom took the instrument, and something prompted him to place it to his ear. He knew the code. A message was going through.

"All right?" shouted Bourke.

Tom did not hear. He was reading off the message: "Pete wires Trenton remain Paris. Landor, Grosvenor Square."

To Tom the keyword was Pete.

remain Paris. Landor, Grosvenor Square."

To Tom the keyword was Pete. All that he had been trying to remember came back on the instant. Pete was the man in the car. Pete had turned and shot him like a dog. In that message lay the truth. If his father admitted that he was guilty, it was to save that man who had driven the car.

was to save that man who had driven the car.

And he lived in Grosvenor Square.

"All right?" came again.

"Yes!" shouted Tom.

"Well, I sha'n't do anything more now. It will mean heavy work tomorrow. I shall send for help. Come along!"

Tom followed Bourke back to the

Tom followed Bourke back to the Tom followed Bourke back to the cottage. He had only one thought. Pulsating through the night there had come that message to him for him to act upon. It was fraught with life and honour and death. What was he to do? But one thing—to go to London and denounce that man. That night he told Bourke how matters stood so far as he knew them, and the following day, armed with enough money to enable him to reach London, he set off, taking a warm farewell of his new friend.

was selling laces. It seemed a futile trade in Grosvenor Square. He was a mean-looking man, with a stoop, and a shabby affectation of a beard. He had been trying to get rid of his stock at the next house, for he was just coming up from the area entrance as Tom took notice of him. He did not look at the boy, but went straight to the door of Mr. Trenton's house.

The railings on either side of the door had just been painted, and the man's ragged coatsleeve rubbed a patch on the shining green surface. Then the door opened, and a very important manservant looked with mingled indignation and contempt at the down-at-heel specimen who had dared to ring. The expression on his plump, stupid face was quite comic.

dared to ring. The expression of plump, stupid face was quite comic "What do you want?" he st

sharply.

"To sell you some bootlaces, governor!" was the mild reply.
"Don't say as you wear buttons or

'lastics!' 'Get away, and mind you don't ring this bell again. We don't want

ring this bell again. We don't want laces here."

"Don't be hard on a fellow who only wants to make a honest living. Don't shut the door like that. Just tell me, is Mr. Trenton at home?"

"No, he is not," was the reply. "Now, clear, before I get a policeman to you!"

"Oh, draw it mild, governor!" said the man, with a whine. "I aren't doing any 'arm!"

The footman shook his head, and then Tom stepped forward to speak to the servant in his turn.

But a curious thing happened. The footman was gazing serenely up the square to see if the lady's maid at No. 5 was in sight. The deplorable-looking man nudged the boy.

"Don't take any notice," he said, in a quiet voice. "What are you doing here?"

in a quiet voice. "What are you doing here?"

Tom started. He knew the voice.

Tom started. He like the like it was—it was—it was—"Yes, I am Ruggles of the Yard right enough," said the shabby man. "What are you going to do?" "I am going into that house to denounce the man who robbed the bank."

denounce the man who robbed the bank."

"You are not going to do anything of the kind. When I move away follow me. Do you hear?"

There was something in the tone which compelled obedience.

"I have a lot to say to you," came in the same low tone.

The footman was still looking for the sunny-haired Marie from up the street. Tom had drawn back, and the man with the laces made a move towards the high-class menial.

When the man turned to look again at the unsavoury article of human goods, his expression suggested absolute wrath.

"Did I not tell you to be off?"

goods, his expression suggested absolute wrath.

"Did I not tell you to be off?" he asked, with some asperity.

"You will break my heart, indeed you will, if you talk to me so unkindly," came the reply. "I only wanted to sell you or Mr. Trenton a pair of laces. Come, now, my lord, just tell me when you expect Mr. Trenton back?"

"He won't see you when he does come back," said the footman, shutting the door, or, rather, trying to, for the exclusive move was ineffectual. The unwholesome-looking person had placed a battered boot between the portal and the door.

The footman was really quite angry now, and in his anger he forgot ordinary prudence, as so often happens. He also forgot that the paint on the railings next door had not yet

pens. He also forgot that the paint on the railings next door had not yet dried up.

pens. He also forgot that the paint on the railings next door had not yet dried up.

Thinking to get rid of the intruder with a sudden coup, he caught the offending vendor by the collar, and tried to shoot him out of this abode of high society into which he had squeezed himself.

But he had under-estimated the strength of the street merchant. The latter was guite a match for the pampered footman, for he was jerked out into the street, and his new coat was rubbed against the railings.

The bewildered manservant tried to say something, but he was left painty and incoherent outside his own door, while the merchant with his laces darted inside.

"Open this door, you miserable varmint!" cried the enraged footman. There was no response, and the man rang the bell sayardly.

varmint!" cried the enraged footman. There was no response, and the man rang the bell savagely.

He looked up the square and down, but no one was to be seen.

Then the door opened so suddenly that the man was taken unawares, and ere he could wreak vengeance upon the invader the shabby man had executed a clever movement which placed him out of reach of the manservant.

manservant.
"Not this time, my lord," he said pleasantly, as he gained the middle of

The footman decided not to follow the audacious villain, but instead retreated, to swallow the sense of defeat as best he might, and apply benzine to his coat-tails.

Tom could not help but smile, though his attention was speedily taken off the subject of the servant's discomfiture by the seller of laces.

"Well, my lad," he said, "I want you. I have been looking for you. Just follow me a little way behind. Don't say anything now. I will explain." The footman decided not to follow

Tom did as he was told.

The man led the way out of Grosvenor Square and into a rather mean street in Mayfair. He turned down a street which was mostly given up to mews and garages, and then stopped before the door of a house next to a tobacco shop. Here he inserted a key in the lock, and motioned for the boy to enter.

Tom stepped inside. There was a narrow passage, and all was dark. He locked round. His conductor had disappeared.

disappeared.

THE 5th CHAPTER.

The Methods of Ruggles.

The was only for a moment that he was nonplussed, for a cheery voice, which had nothing in common with the tones of the streetseller, called out to him from a room on the left.

on the left.
"Excuse me leaving you in such a but time presses, and I have

"Excuse me leaving you in such a hurry, but time presses, and I have to get back into my proper form as quickly as I can. Come in here."

Tom followed the voice, and made his way down the passage towards a room, which he now saw clearly. He entered, to see his friend performing a toilet which would have done credit to a lightning-change artist. His shabby garments were on the floor, and he was washing. As he dressed in a suit of black he talked.

"I am glad to see you, Tom Grant," he said. "Now, tell me," he went on, as he fastened his tie, "what happened that night?"

Tom explained.

"And you tapped the wires and came on to London. Ah, well, it is

went on, as he fastened his tie, "what happened that night?"
Tom explained.
"And you tapped the wires and came on to London. Ah, well, it is a pity!"
"What's a pity?" asked Tom.
"Why, that we shall not have you with us. You would make a first-rate detective. But, of course, you will follow in your father's footsteps. No matter. You have behaved like a trump. You deserve my confidence, and I will give it to you. Not all—I can't—but some of it. See here. I was down in your part of the country after the same man as the one who entered the bank."
"Then you knew—"
"That he was going for the Verecaster Bank? I did nothing of the kind. I want him for something far worse than that, my lad, and that's what I can't tell you. But I have found out something. I am sorry he has been warned. I was long enough in the house, though, to see how the land lay. He won't escape us. Now, about your father?"
Tom was silent.
"He has confessed, or it comes to the same thing. Why? Has Trenton some hold on him? No, impossible. Yet there is something in the man's past life that I have never understood."
"Then you will arrest him, sir?"
"Gently. Trenton is one of the most

"Then you will arrest him, sir?"
"Gently. Trenton is one of the most powerful men in London, and he is well served. But his time is near, or my name's not Ruggles. What I pro-

well served. But his time is near, or my name's not Ruggles. What I propose is this—that you make this place your headquarters while you stay in London. You made a mistake in going to the house. You may have been watched by some of his people. Now, I'm off to the Yard. I'll tell the landlady to bring you some lunch. What do you say?"

"I will remain gladly," said Tom, who saw that his presence was troubling the detective.

"Right-ho!" Ruggles seized a light overcoat from off a chair, and then turned to the boy.

"Good-bye for an hour or two. We will see London, or some part of it to-night, if you are agreeable."

He turned and hurried out of the room, leaving Tom to his thoughts. The room was fairly comfortable, a mixture of sitting-room and bed-room. There were a few books on a table, and Tom picked up one of these, but he could not read. There seemed to be no one in the house. Then, as he was looking out of the window on to a dingy mews, there came a sharp rat-tat at the door. He went into the passage to listen. Was nobody going to answer the summons?

It was not his place to answer doors, but he did so on this occasion.

A man was standing on the step with tter in his hand. Are you Mr. Tom Grant?" he

said.

The boy nodded.

"Mr. Ruggles told me to give you this. He said that you would be returning with me. The car is just round the corner."

Tom opened the letter.

"Dear Tom Grant,—I find that I want your aid sooner than I expected. Come along at once with my messenger?—WILLIAM RUGGLES."

"Shall I bring the car round, sir?" said the man.

"Shall I bring the car round, sires aid the man.
"Oh, no!" said the boy. "I'll come with you."
He took up his hat, and accompanied the messenger down the little street and into the main road, where a stylish car was awaiting them. The man held open the door, and Tom got in.

The moment the lad stepped inside The moment the lad stepped inside the man leaped to his seat, and the car darted off. Nobody heard Tom's cry The second the boy entered the car he was seized, and a moist bandage was clapped over his face. He made a frantic effort to free himself, but it was unavailing, and gradually the wish to resist left him, and he lay back dead to all around. The drive took only a few minutes; the car was stowed into a courtyard, and the boy was lifted out.

He was carried into a spacious room

the car was stowed into a courtyard, and the boy was lifted out.

He was carried into a spacious room lighted by electricity. From the other side of a curtained wall there came a sound of hammering.

In this room were two men, besides the couple of servants who had brought in the unconscious boy and laid him down on a couch.

Trenton, for one of the men in the apartment was he, looked at the lad, and as the servants left the chamber at a sign from him, he turned to his companion, saying:

"Well, Landor, this source of danger is removed. This boy must be looked after, for he saw me that night." He gazed scrutinisingly at the lad. "I had the wire that fool Pete Morris sent me. Ass to use the wires like that! Is there anything more?"

wires like that! Is there anything more?"

"No, sir."

Trenton clapped the other on the shoulder.

"You are a good fellow Landor. I can always rely on you. They are turning out more than ever in Paris, and the imitation is perfection itself. I am floating that new rubber company. It was, as you said, ridiculous to take that evening's amusement in the North because of a few jewels for Cora, but, there, I brought it off. I shall finish with all that kind of thing now, and shall send Pete abroad. Then he will not trouble me."

The great man nodded to his faithful henchman, and walked out of the apartment, proceeding to his library.

The man of genius will always be superior to his age, and able to go one better than the scientists. There was the mark of power and of that magical quality of leadership on every hand.

He sat down, but only to start up

again.

"My brother!" he gasped. "Ah, but it is maddening! He must not suffer. The old days—how they seem to rise up and revile me!"

He again rose, and took a glance at a crystal that lay on a table, only to tremble and change colour at what he say there.

he saw there.

There was a cordon of police round

the house.

At the same moment there was a discreet tap at the door, and the footman entered bearing a card on a tray. It was quite a simple, unaffected card, and yet the man who had conquered the world felt a shiver pass through him, for it meant the end.

"I will see Chief Detective Ruggles in the smoking-rdom," he said.

The servant retired, and Trenton turned like a tiger at bay.

He dashed to the bookcase, and touched a spring. The wall opened. Yes, the house was watched—he saw that from the crystal—but there was time. He spoke down a speaking-tube to Landor.

"The tube—put it in position. I

"The tube—put it in position. I

"The tube—put it in position. I will see to the rest."

The answer came back satisfactorily, and Trenton quickly adjusted a contrivance on the floor. There was a faint sizzling. Then the room was empty. He had gone; the row of dummy books continued their lie.

Trenton slipped out of the house by a side door, and without being seen in the square, made his way to the entrance of a house, which was really close at hand when reached by the route he had selected.

He entered this house as if thoroughly familiar with it, and made

his way to a room where a lady came

his way to a room where a lady came to meet him.

"Cora," he said, "you once did me the honour of telling me that you would marry me if I asked you. I have thrown away my chances of happiness. And now I come to you for help in my hour of need."

"Help! You?"

"Yes. Send your maid out in the car. I will sit back in it, and thus escape those who would end my life."

Cora went white.

life."
Cora went white.
"Rosalie is just about to go to Selfridge's." She rang the bell, and a maid appeared.
"Rosalie" she said, "this gentleman will ride in the car. Obey him in every particular."
Cora turned to Trenton.
"Jem," she said, "I am sorry. It ought not to have come to this with a man like you. Is there no way out?"

out?"
He shook his head as he took her

hand.
"None. I have played too boldly, and the time to give up my place

and the time to give up my place has come."

She accompanied him to the door. He slipped down to the courtyard, and dived into the waiting car, which glided out into the square, with an air of childish interest at the cordon of police round a certain house—the house which belonged to the man at her side.

Then, as they gained Piccadilly, there was a chorus of half-frenzied shouts behind them, and a tremendous column of smoke shot upwards. The next moment, a sullen roar and a frightful explosion.

Trenton slipped out of the car in the Strand, feeling half reluctant to continue a flight, so humiliating to a man such as he. He could still scarcely believe that the time was come for him to quit the stage, and that the streets of London were no longer safe for him.

THE 6th CHAPTER. The Running Sands.

UGGLES followed a magnificent footman to the smoking-room.

"Mr. Trenton said he would see

"Mr. Trenton said he would see you here," said the servant.

Ruggles nodded, but he was not disposed to talk, for the interview he had just had with certain chiefs had placed the matter beyond doubt. Trenton, whatever he had done besides, was the leader of the most gigantic swindle perpetrated for many, many years indeed detection almost impossible.

ing system which andered detection almost impossible.

Both in London and in Paris he fabricated notes on the leading banks of the world. Scotland Yard was determined to act.

Ruggles had been busy since his interview with Tom, and he was about to go in search of the man whom he "wanted," for other facts had been brought to his notice that morning, when the door was dashed open, and Tom appeared. The boy gave a cry.

ave a cry.
Ruggles gripped the lad by the

arm.
"You here!"

"Yes."
In a few words Tom explained how he had been trapped and brought away from the detective's home to the very house of the enemy. "But quick, sir!" said Tom. "There's no time to lose. The place is on fire! Come!"
The detective was ready to obey. They hastened out into the hall, where frightened servants were hurrying past.

where frightened hurrying past.
"Frantic shouts of "Fire!" were being raised on all hands.
Ruggles gave a groan.
"That's his answer to me," he said aloud. "His crimes will be buried here."

aloud. "His crimes will be buried here."

They were in the great gallery. The hall below them was already filled with dense smoke. Several of the menservants tore past them, trying to make for the main entrance, and Ruggles and the boy were left behind. Tom dashed forward, thinking that the detective was following. He gained the door, through which firemen were coming, and he was borne out with the press. But Ruggles was not there. Quick as thought he made to rush back, but a policeman laid his hand on his arm. Tom thrust aside the man's restraining hand, and bolted for the chief entrance, fighting his way along the hall. The smoke was blinding, but he struggled on, trying to discover where he had last seen his friend.

"Mr. Ruggles?" he called acrain.

struck against something, and he dropped on his knees. Yes, it was the detective, who, at the lad's touch, began to move.

The boy tried to raise him, and the effort he made caused the man to stir again.

"Yes, yes! I'll come!" he said.
Leaning on the boy, he made a movement towards the entrance, and had advanced a step or two, when a second tremendous explosion shook the huge mansion to its foundation. A volume of lurid flames shot up from a gulf which had been rent in the flooring at their feet, and from this chasm the wreathing smoke curled upwards amongst the fluted, ornamental pillars of the hall.

Where the two stood they were cut off from help. On the other side Tom could dimly make out the figures of the firemen who were directing streams of water on to the burning mass, but there seemed no possibility of reaching safety.

Ruggles shook himself together, and shouted. The shout was heard, and the firemen ran an escape through the smoke right through the

and shouted. The shout was heard, and the firemen ran an escape through the smoke right through the lofty hall up to the spot where the boy and the detective stood on the remains of the gallery.

A husky voice told them to come on. Tom took hold of the ladder and gained the second rung, waiting there for his companion. But the

and gained the second rung, waiting there for his companion. But the latter was not so fortunate. His foot slipped, and he pitched headlong right forward into the fiery gulf at his feet. Tom was down the ladder in a flash, and it was he who helped a fireman—one of the daily heroes of the mighty metropolis—to raise Ruggles and bear him out of the house.

Ruggles and bear him out of the house.

Again Ruggles came to. He looked up at Tom. He was lying on the pavement, which was kept clear by a strong force of police.

"Look here, Tom Grant." he said faintly. "Tell a policeman to get me into a cab. You come back with me. I have failed—for the time."

Half an hour later Tom and the detective were in the little house off Mayfair, and the detective was drinking a cup of cocoa which the landlady had brought him.

"That man will be laid by the heels soon," he said, as he lit his pipe. He stopped suddenly, motioning to Tom to be silent while he placed his ear to the wall.

"We have him!" he said, turning exultantly to Tom, but speaking in a whisper.

"The man?"

exultantly to Tom, but speaking in a whisper.

"The man?"

"Yes. I thought that at one time he used certain rooms in this building for purposes of his own. Now I know. I shall be able to arrest him to-night. It has only meant a few hours delay. He would never dare to show himself in the streets, and as for trying to cross the Channel—well, it would be too great a risk. Just come here."

Tom listened, and could hear voices, now angry, now low and remonstrant, and the angry one he recognised at once as that of the man called Trenton.

The detective made a move to-

called Trenton.

The detective made a move towards the door. Tom followed.

"No, no! This is not a business for a boy. It is too dangerous. I must do it alone. He will not be here long. By the time I could let them know at the Yard he would have flown."

"I will come with you," said Tom firmly.

firmly.

Ruggles made no further protest, and he and the boy slipped out of the room. Then he made a sign to the boy, and led the way along a passage to the foot of a small staircase. At the top of this staircase there was a window of opaque glass. Ruggles tried it gently, and sighed.

"It must go in a good cause," he said; and he placed his shoulder on the glass, forcing it away from the woodwork, which was in an advanced state of dry rot.

"They will hear," said Tom.

"No; we are too far away for that."

Trance, and Ruggles and the boy were left behind. Tom dashed forward, thinking that the detective was following. He gained the door, through which firemen were coming, and he was borne out with the press. But Ruggles was not there. Quick as thought he made to rush back, but a policeman laid his hand on his arm. Tom thrust aside the man's restraining hand, and bolted for the chief entrance, fighting his way along the hall. The smoke was blinding, but he struggled on, trying to discover where he had last seen his friend.

"Mr. Ruggles!" he called again

"No; we are too far away for that."

As the detective spoke, he was squeezing his way through the aperture he had made. The lad followed with much less difficulty, and they found themselves on another landing. Ruggles was feeling about with his right hand at something on the ground. Then he gave a grunt of satisfaction.

"I know this place by heart," he said, as he gently pulled up a trapdoor and looked through.

"I know this place by heart," he said, as he gently pulled up a trapdoor and looked through.

"I know there was followed with much less difficulty, and they found themselves on another landing. Ruggles signed to the first taxi he saw. It was long past midnight, then.

The messenger had disappeared, and Ruggles turned quickly to Tom.

"Come along!" he said.

The two set off rapidly, and they found themselves on another landing. Ruggles signed to the first taxi he saw It was long past midnight, then.

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The messenger had disappeared, and Ruggles land Ruggles land Ruggles land Ruggles land Ruggles land Ruggles land Ruggles la

and again, though the smoke nearly suffocated him.

There was no reply. Then his foot struck against something, and he dropped on his knees. Yes, it was the detective, who, at the lad's touch, began to move.

The boy tried to raise him, and the effort he made caused the man to stir again.

"Yes, yes! I'll come!" he said.

Ruggles did not look, but he knew that Tom was there.

He made a step towards the door, taking a revolver from his pocket as he did so.

Then he made a quick movement and threw open the door, and, revolver in hand, covered the two men who were there. Trenton was standing by a table, with his hat and coat on, while his secretary, Landor, was seated writing.

Trenton gave a cry.

"Hands up!" cried Ruggles.

"Trenton, I hold a warrant for your arrest!"

He got no further, for the seated

"Trenton, I hold a warrant for your arrest!"

He got no further, for the seated man made a dash at him. The revolver cracked, and Trenton clapped his hand to his breast. Then the room was plunged in darkness, and Tom was slung back against a heavy piece of furniture as two swaying forms struggled and fought. The boy tried to get up. It seemed a long time after. Then he knew that he could not move, for his arms and legs were tied. From a window a faint light was illuminating the room.

He made out the form of Ruggles lying a few feet away.

"They got away, then?" he asked faintly.

"They got away, then?" he asked faintly.

"Yes," growled the detective. "It is all my fault. I might have known. But I will have that scoundrel yet, or my name's not Ruggles!"

As he spoke he bit through one of the cords which tied him, and the rest was fairly easy sailing. A few minutes later he was helping Tom to get free.

"Got clear off!" said Ruggles mournfully, as he gazed round the room.

mournfully, as he gazed round the room.

In the fireplace a heap of ashes showed that a mass of papers had been burned.

They returned to Ruggles' room, where they had a substantial breakfast, but not before the detective had spoken through the telephone.

"I shall do him!" he said. "I have seen to it that he does not get away by his yacht."

A week slipped by, and then another. Ruggles tried to withhold the news from the North from the boy, for he had kept him with him. But it was hopeless.

Richard Grant had persisted in his course of self-accusal until he seemed to really believe that he was guilty. He had been committed for trial on the capital charge at the Leeds Assizes. Assizes.

THE 7th CHAPTER. The Final Coup.

UGGLES searched the shabby quarters of the city, but for long without success. Then one morning in a street off Whitechapel he ran into the man he was looking for. Trenton turned and doubled back, and in the maze of mean streets he was lost to view.

When Ruggles went home late that night, Tom was talking to a man who had left a note.
"Are you Mr. Ruggles?" said the

messenger, as the detective ran up

"Yes. What is it?"
"You are wanted at once in Mary
Street—Number Four."
"Right!" said Ruggles. "Who
wants me?"

"Right! said Ruggles.
wants me?"
"Trenton!" was the reply.
"Here's the letter," said Tom, handing the note to Ruggles, who took it, and read:
"I acknowledge that the game is up, and I have something to say to you.—EDWARD GRANT (otherwise George Trenton)."
The messenger had disappeared,

The messenger had disappeared, and Ruggles turned quickly to Tom.

him from a smart and dashing man of the world into a shambling wreck. He was seated on a shabby horsehair couch, and was fumbling with a handsome ring he wore, one of the few relics of his vanished grandeur.

of the few relics of his vanished grandeur.

"Well, Mr. Ruggles," he said, trying to speak jauntily, "I am glad you came. You see that I win, for I sent to you. But that does not signify. I want to tell you something about the Verecaster case. I do not wish the man who is my brother to suffer for my crime. You should take this down."

He need not have said that, for the detective's fountain pen was already flying across the pages of a notebook.

notebook.

"I planned the attack on the Verecaster Bank. I shot the night-watchman, poor chap! It was all my doing, and Dick, who is standing his trial for murder down at Leeds, is shielding me because I am his brother. Put it all down, and I will sign."

Then Ruggles was holding out the page for him to sign.

will sign."

Then Ruggles was holding out.

The man signed, and then, ere he could be prevented, he deftly turned the stone—a big ruby—of the ring he wore. It was done in a second. He placed the ring to his lips, and had swallowed something which lay in the tiny cavity.

He was smiling at the detective then.

Land. Nephew Tom," he Mr. Ruggles,

He was smiling at the detective then.

"Your hand, Nephew Tom," he said quietly. "Ah, Mr. Ruggles, you did not think that I was going to allow you to take me, did you—I who have had kings for my friends? Portland or the rope! Oh, no! But I was weary of the chase. You prevented me leaving England, but—well, I'm away now. Au revoir!"

His head sank back, and Ruggles leaned over him. The poison in the ring, one of the subtle products of South America, had done its work. The man was dead. Ruggles touched the boy's arm.

"Come! We have much to do."

The new day had begun, and, as Ruggles knew, that day would see the end of the trial of the man at Leeds. It was for him to remove the shadow of the rope which hung over the elder Grant's life.

The two hurried back to the detective's lodgings. Tom was very silent. Ruggles and he went north by the newspaper train which glided out of King's Cross into the darkness.

The scene in the court-room as they squeezed themselves in was one of painful excitement. The jury had just returned into court, and had delivered a verdict of guilty. How could they do otherwise? The prisoner was his own accuser. Amidst a tense hush the judge placed the black cap on his head. And then Ruggles spoke. The police on duty had made a way for him.

"My lord," he said, in ringing tones, "I have here the confession of the criminal! The man in the dock is innocent!"

A thrill passed through all present. Ruggles was beckoned up

A thrill passed through all present. Ruggles was beckoned up to the bench. There was a hasty whispered colloquy. Then his lord-ship was addressing the prisoner with some emotion.

with some emotion.

"Mr. Grant," he said, "you are free! It is not for me at this moment to press inquiry into the reasons which have prompted you to act as you have done. Noble motives are sometimes likely to lead a man astray. You can leave the court, sir."

A few minutes later Mr. Grant was seated in a private room at a large hotel listening to what Ruggles was telling him.

telling him.

"And my secret, Mr. Ruggles?"

"And my secret, Mr. Ruggles?"
he asked.
"It shall be respected, sir, by
Scotland Yard."
Mr. Grant breathed a sigh of
relief.

Mr. Grant breathed a sigh of relief.

"I felt I had to save him," he began. Then he stopped, for a servant tapped at the door and handed in a letter.

"For Mr. Grant," he said.
Tom's father released his son's hand which he had been holding, and opened the note, to give a gasp of pleasure.

"It is from the directors," he said, "expressing their unabated confidence in me."

"They are right, sir," said Ruggles quietly.
The death, amidst squalid surroundings, and deprived of all his old power, of the man who had magnetised Europe was a nine days' wonder. Then even his career, and the astonishing discovery in the charred ruins of the house in Grosvenor Square of a number of printing presses by means of which the banks had been flooded with imitation notes, faded from the public mind.

A Superb Series of Articles Specially Written for the BOYS' FRIEND by the World-Famed EUGEN SANDOW.

N my mind's eye, I can see the great majority of The Boys' FRIEND readers going through their exercises regularly six mornings a week, and performing them as con-scientiously as if I were there directing their movements. I hope, and feel sure, that this mental picture of mine is correct, for I have almost invariably found that youthful physical culturists are the most enthusiastic.

Enthusiasm is a grand thing; it lightens labour, smooths the hard, rough road to success, and brings out all the good qualities of mankind. If there were no "tryers" there would be no successes, and if there were no enthusiasts in the world, what a dull place it would be!

place it would be!
So, if you are to be successful in your search for strength, you must put all your heart and soul into the work, aim high, make up your mind to be the strongest and best-developed fellow in your school, or office, or place of business, set about your self-imposed task—it will be a comparatively light one—with energy and vim, and success will not be denied you.

It was just such a task which I set myself when I was a delicate lad, and my success should be a beacon to guide you on your way. You, however, start under happier auspices than I did, for I had to find out every inch of the way, whilst here, in these pages, you have the route well mapped out for you, which it took me years to discover.

This week I am giving you what appears to be an unnecessary exercise at first glance, but which really is a most necessary one, from the fact that it is devoted to the strengthening of the wrist. The wrist is very often one of the weakest parts of the body, and quite as often the most neglected.

Heavy-weight lifting, and many

Heavy-weight lifting, and many feats of strength, depend upon great strength of weist, and the movements I give you here will strengthen the

wrist quicker than anything I know—and I have a fairly extensive know-ledge of the subject.

ledge of the subject.

To perform this movement correctly, and obtain the proper benefit from it, it is necessary that you have some fairly weighty article to grip, and you will find the Grip Dumbbell the best for the purpose, as it demands stronger gripping to keep the halves together, and it is the best weight to practise with.



EXERCISE 5.—READY POSITION.
Stand erect, extend both arms in a line with the shoulders.
MOVEMENT: (a) Bend the hands backward and forward upon the wrists, grinding the muscles well in.
(b) Rotate each hand simultaneously and quickly on the axis of the wrist.
Muscles: (a) Flexors and extensors of the forearm. (b) The-pronators and supinators. supinators.

supinators.

Try and make the hands almost touch the forearm when bending them forward, and get them at right angles to the arm when bending them backward in the first part of the movement. Do this for about a dozen times, and then practise the other movement by making the hands perform a complete revolution. Start with the palms unwards, and rotate them forwards until the palms are upwards again. Then bring them back to the original position.

Quite tiring work, isn't it?
Give the wrists a minute's rest, and then hold the dumbbells with the end of the palm of the hand and the fore-finger stretched along the handle as shown in the second illustration.



EXERCISE 6.—READY POSITION.

MOVEMENT: Circle the bells to the front by a circular motion of the wrist, with a slow, steady movement, keeping the free end of the bell pressed in as close to the forearm as possible. Muscles: Supinators, flexors and extensors of the forearm.

EXERCISE 7.—READY POSITION.

EXERCISE 7.—READY POSITION.

As in Exercise 6.

MOVEMENT: As in Exercise 6, but circle the bells in the reverse direction. Then, holding the bells in the same position, circle them in the reverse direction.

I think you will find this quite sufficient for one week, but do not "scamp" the work because you feel fired for the first day or so.

In a few weeks' time your grip will be so strengthened that you will become a "demon handshaker," and possess the hold of a bulldog.

EUGEN SANDOW

Please tell all your friends that EUGEN SANDOW'

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Being a Grand New Serial of the Great Detective, and His Assistants Tinker and Pedro.

NEW READERS START HERE.

The opening of this story finds Sexton Blake, the famous detective, with his young assistant Tinker, on the night previous to their embarkation to East Africa on a pleasure shooting trip. At the very last moment this long anticipated holiday is abandoned.

Sidney Temple is a young engineer, at Sidney Temple is a young engineer, at present engaged in a large undertaking at Redeliff Dale to construct a scheme of supplying three neighbouring towns with water from a broad, swift river. This clever young engineer will make his name famous in the engineering world if he can only successfully finish the job in the contracted time. Everything goes well for six months, but now some unknown enemy is destraying all his plans and completed

Sexton Blake and Tinker,

disguised as navvies, .

obtain employment in the workings of this great scheme at Redcliffe Dale. This village is better known by the famey name of "Ginger Town," and the famous detective and his assistant get lodgings at the cottage of Job Peckchaff some distance away from the workings.

the workings.

Black Jock is an exceedingly harsh and suspicious foreman, under whom Tinker is working. In the night the work of months is mysteriously made a complete wreck, and the mac inery put in a dishevelled condition.

So far, Sexton Blake has not struck

the slightest clue to the mystery he has come to solve, and nothing but ruin stares Sidney Temple in the face. The detective, now known as Bob Packer, is promoted to ganger, or sort of petty fore-man.

one Sunday Sexton Blake pays a visit to Sir Richard Blaise. There being insufficient water to enable the grinders to work, they threaten to put an end to this great engineering scheme. The gang is being led by Black Jock, who had been dismissed from the works for making a merciless

attack upon the great detective and fils assistant.

Blake departs from Sir Richard's house, and is most unmercifully attacked by a gang of grinders and placed in a lonely hut in the woods, where Tinker finds and releases him. Sexton Blake afterwards makes his way to the workings, which he expects the ruffians are going to raid.

Tinker is sent to the military barracks, some distance away, to obtain assistance. He rides the journey by cycle, and is pursued by Bates upon a powerful black horse. Tinker is chased at break-neck speed along the road, but at last Bates comes abreast with the detective's assistant and hurls him clean over a bridge on the road into the river.

Tinker at the Barracks.

BATES gave a hoarse laugh of triumph. He evidently took the action for a spill, and thinking further trouble well taken off his hands, he turned his horse and rade away. and rode away.

They'll find him somewhere a mile or two down the river to-morrow," the villain chuckled, "but

morrow," the villam chuckled, "but his message 'ud come a bit too late then! The soldiers aren't likely to trouble us to-night!" And the hardened ruffian rode on.

Tinker's wild plunge had been no accident, as the reader may have guessed. It was a deliberate and daring act—desperate, but the sole chance of escape that offered.

He struck the water anyhow, for he had no chance of shaping himself for a dive.

The bridge was high and the im-

The bridge was high, and the impact with the water knocked the remaining breath clean out of him.

He sank like a stone. But the chilly plunge cleared his brain and revived him magically. Rising to the surface, he struck out for the bank. But it was no easy matter to reach it, spent as his strength still was, for there was an outlet, or sluice, not far away to relieve the pressure of the pent-up river, and the water, making for this, formed a powerful current along the bank he had to reach.

Again and again the swift eddy mastered his tired limbs and threatened to sweep him down into the sluice.

mastered his tired limbs and threatened to sweep him down into the sluice.

But he battled through it somehow, and, gaining the bank at last, seized a strong bush that grew there, and hauled himself out.

A moment's pause to recover breath, then, shaking some of the water out of his clothes, he set off at a run towards the barracks—happily, now close at hand. The gates were not yet closed when he arrived there. For the crowded events of that evening, long as they take to relate, had all passed within a couple of hours, and it was now only about nine o'clock.

The sentry at the gate halted in his stride, and tried to stop him, but Tinker dodged past.

He had no time for explanations!

Luckily he knew the run of the barracks fairly well, for Mrs. Peckchaff had a brother, a sergeant, in the regiment quartered there, and making his acquaintance, Tinker had been shown over the building, and,

with his trained memory, did not forget the general plan of it.

He made straight for the officers' quarters—for the mess-room, in fact, where he knew he was most likely to find the colonel at that hour.

A second sentry at the entrance to

where he knew he was most likely to find the colonel at that hour.

A second sentry at the entrance to the passage also tried to stop him. Tinker dodged him too.

A third, at the very door of the mess-room, hearing his comrade call out, and seeing the wild figure dashing towards him, threw his rifle across the passage to bar the way.

Tinker dodged under it, threw open the mess-room door, and darted in.

A blaze of light, a blurr of scarlet uniforms met his eyes. He heard cries of amazement as every officer started from his chair at the queer apparition that burst upon them.

Several hands were thrust out to seize him. But Tinker avoided them all, and dashed to the head of the table, where Colonel Carson, the greyheaded commander of the regiment, was seated.

was seated.

Then Tinker stopped in sudden

dismay.

Beside the colonel sat the gipsy

Ordered Under Arms.

F Ardoise, who was there as a guest, knew Tinker, he did not betray the fact by anything in his glance, merely staring at the boy with a half-amused smile as though he had been the regimental pet monkey who had got loose and burst into the room.

"What, in the name of amazement, is this?" exclaimed Colonel Carson, half rising from his chair.

Tinker quickly recovered his wits.
"I have a letter for you, sir," he

"I have a letter for you, sir," he said.

And he drew out the scaled letter, which, having been in an inner pocket, was luckily not saturated, although it was decidedly moist.

"A letter!" said the colonel sharply, looking at the boy as though he thought him an escaped lunatic or the victim of some practical joke. "How came you here in this state? How on earth did you get past the guard?"

"It is from Sir Richard Blaise, and is most important, sir!" said Tinker, holding out the letter.

Tinker, who had the gift of seeing much without apparently looking anywhere in particular, noticed a

sudden gleam in Ardoise's dark eyes at the mention of Sir Richard's name.

That name, too, or the boy's earnest tone, seemed to impress the colonel. He took the letter, broke the seal, and read the blurred lines. He gave a slight ejaculation as he finished its perusal.

"No bad news, I trust, colonel?" asked Ardoise suavely.

"Judge for yourself, sir," said the officer, laying the letter before him.

Then, rising and glancing around the table at his officers, he said:

"Gentlemen, I require you all to remain in quarters to-night. Major Clarke, order the entire Second Battalion under arms! Two companies to parade immediately in light marching order, each man with five rounds of blank, except the rear ranks, who will carry ten rounds of ball."

The major saluted, and left the room, the officers of the battalion under orders following.

Ardoise laid the letter down, laughed, and said:

"Really, colonel, the whole thing is a mare's-nest! Sir Richard Blaise has grown nervous with increasing years. He exaggerates this trivial affair. I know these terrible malcontents well—poor wretches!—and would guarantee to disperse the whole the of them with helf a degree relies. would guarantee to disperse the whole lot of them with half a dozen police-

lot of them with half a dozen policemen!"

The colonel's face stiffened.
Although Ardoise, from his position in the district was occasionally invited to the regimental mess, the old officer, for some reason he could not define, had never liked him.

"That is no concern of mine, sir," he said coldly. "As a justice of the peace, Sir Richard has a right to call upon a King's officer for assistance if he deems it necessary."

And he turned away.

"But I protest against any display of military force as needless and likely to create mischief where none need have been!" said the Gipsy Squire.

"And recollect, Colonel Carson, that I, too, am a magistrate!"

"Then, sir, your duties lie elsewhere to-night!" said the old efficer, bowing stiffly.

Ardoise bowed as stiffly in return, and with a smile upon his lips but an evil light in his eyes, walked calmly out of the room.

The colonel turned to Tinker, and said:

"Tell Sir Richard that I have

Tell Sir Richard that I have "Tell Sir Richard that I have ordered a strong detachment under arms, but that I shall keep them in barracks until I receive a further message from him.
"But stay, lad!" he added quickly, as Tinker was about to hurry away. "Your clothes are drenched! How came that?"
Tinker told him that an attempt

Tinker told him that an attempt had been made to stop him on the road, and that he had got away by a leap into the river and a swim

a leap into the river and a swim across it.

"A lad of pluck and dash! Pity he doesn't wear the King's scarlet!" muttered the colonel under his grey moustache. "So the road was actually picketed—eh? Proof enough that Sir Richard's fears are wellgrounded." Then, aloud to Tinker:

"But you are shivering, lad. Drink this before you go!"

It was a glass of wine he offered. At any other time Tinker would have refused it, for he never touched strong drink. But his sodden clothes struck deadly chill to his limbs. He took the wine and drank it off, and, unused as he was to such stuff, it instantly sent a fiery glow through his veins.

He felt almost himself again, and

the hurried out into the barrack-yard.

The broad parade-ground—deserted when he crossed it but a few minutes ago—was now astir with martial ago—was now astir with martia activity, and made a stirring pictur even in the dim light of the wa

moon.

Bugles rang out, the drums throbbed in short, sharp rolls, and their imperative summons was answered by the hurrying tread of the men as they poured from the buildings at the trot and fell in with the beautiful precision of British infantry, their arms glancing in the moonlight, and their searlet coats lending a sudden flash of colour to the scene.

It was a gallant sight, but Tinker

It was a gallant sight, but Tinker gave it only a passing glance as he hurried by.

hurried by.

At the gate he halted and drew back, for Ardoise was there in the act of mounting a fiery and mettle-some horse. Tinker waited only until he was in the saddle and had dashed out through the open gate, then he followed.

The Gipsy Squire was just visible, trotting down the road towards Slagford at a sharp pace. Tinker turned the other way—towards the bridge over the river.

over the river.

He found his bicycle where he had left it beside the parapet of the bridge, and found it, too, not much the worse, beyond a slightly bent handle-bar. He was soon mounted and riding away at top speed, making for Job Peckehaff's cottage, where he meant to pull up and change into some dry clothes.

This would not cost many minutes, as the cottage lay on his road to the works.

Job himself was at the garden gate

works.

Job himself was at the garden gate as he rode up, smoking a final pipe before turning in.

"What's this, lad? Where 'a' ye coom from?" he wanted to know.
"What's all that stir yonder? Doan't Oie hear the drooms an' troompets going oop at the barracks? What's amiss?" Tinker hastily told him of the threatened riot and attack on the

threatened riot and attack on the works.

"By goom, Oia must have a hand in that!" exclaimed the big Yorkshireman. "The woife's been going it summat awful with her tongue to-day. She's gone to bed with a headache, an' small wonder. It'll do me a woarld o' good to let off me feelings on these varmints with me fists! Oie'll coom with thee, lad."

"Look sharp, then!" said Tinker. "I shall be off in a jiff."

He made his change with amazing speed, and soon came out ready to start.

(Continued on the next page.)

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"I'll take Pedro along," he said; "he's as good as half a dozen men in a scrum. You'd better follow, Job; I'm going to ride."

He was soon mounted and bowling along the rough road towards the works, the bloodhound—delighted at the chance of an outing, whatever the object might be—bounding gaily beside his wheel.

As he drew near the works, Tinker listened eagerly for any sounds hinting that the attack had begun.

But the air seemed strangely quiet. There was, in fact, a Sabbath night stillness over all.

"Is it all over? Am I too late?" he asked himself. "Great pip, I'll be mad if I get there to find the bust-up finished and nothing to do but sweep up the pieces!"

And he cracked on speed.

up the pieces!"
And he cracked on speed.

Sexton Blake Takes Command.

the meantime, Sexton Blake had been putting things through with the vigour and activity marked everything he under

Took.

On his arrival at the works he found things in a rare state of bustle and confusion.

Sidney Temple, who had got there shortly before with Sir Richard Blaise, proceeded at once to rouse out the men quartered in Ginger Town. But the young engineer, though possessed of plenty of pluck, hadn't the least knack of handling a situation of this kind.

Nor was Sir Richard much better.

situation of this kind.

Nor was Sir Richard much better.

Both were excited and flurried, and were likely enough to throw the men into a similar state.

But the arrival of Foreman Bob Packer soon changed all that. He took over command, naturally, as the strongest man always comes to the front in an emergency.

Front in an emergency.

His first act was to call the men together in a clear space behind the iron shanties, and to have a sort of

together in a clear space behind the iron shanties, and to have a sort of call-over.

He found them woefully short in number. They mustered little more than a hundred all told; for it being Sunday, many whose homes were near enough had gone there, and would not return until working time in the morning.

But those who remained were the pick of the lot. They were old and tried hands, who had worked under Sidney Temple before. There was quite a military esprit de corps among them and a strong feeling of loyalty to their employer. Not being natives of that part, there was no risk of any sympathy with the enemy.

Sexton Blake made them a speech—brief, and very much to the point:

"Now, look here, lads, those chaps they call the grinders and a lot of toughs from the towns are coming here to-night to try and smash up the works. Are they to have a walkover?"

"Not much! Let 'em come an'.

works. Are they to have a walkover?"
"Not much! Let 'em come an'
try! We'll give 'em a hot time!"
was the response in chorus.
"There's a rare lot of them, I'm
told," Blake continued, "so it will be
a tough fight if we're to beat 'em
off. And you're not soldiers or
policemen; you're not paid to fight.
So that if any man among you likes
to pack his traps and get away before
the scrapping begins, he's got a perfect right to go. Let any such man
fall out now."

feet right to go. Lee any state fall out now."

Not one of them stirred.

"Good!" cried Blake, delighted.

"I knew I could count on every manjack of you! Now, are you game to take your orders from me?"

"Ay, ay!" was the shouted response.

take your orders from me?"

"Ay, ay!" was the shouted response.

"We'll follow that ugly ole blue muzzled mug of yourn anywheres, Bob!" cried a burly fellow from the North. And there was a laugh and a general chorus of:

"Bob Packer's our man! Three cheers for old Bob!"

Blake laughed himself. His rugged face beamed with delight.

The prospect of a fight, with a knot of stout fellows to back him, elated him. Hang the odds! That was the spice of it all.

The great detective was a born strategist, and his plans for the defence were masterly. He made the most of the few men at his disposal. He left Ginger Town to take care of itself. It was too big and straggling to be defended, and, anyhow, the rioters could do no harm there. The engine-houses with their costly plant, the magazine where a large supply of blasting-powder was stored, and lastly, the great dam itself would, he knew, be the chief object, of attack.

It was a big space to cover with a mere handful of men, but Blake was

It was a big space to cover with a mere handful of men, but Blake was equal to the task.

The dam, the great pump-house, and all the chief works were well protected in the rear by the huge, unfinished reservoir which, by slowing down the big pump, Blake caused to be flooded to a depth of several feet.

This left the front of the dam, nearly a mile in length, to be defended.

But luckily the flood, in which Tinker had so nearly lost his life a few days previously, had converted a wide stretch of the valley into an impassable morass, leaving only a stretch of dry ground some five or six hundred yards in breadth by which the works could be approached. six hundred works count which the works count proached.
Sexton Blake took full advantage f this.

Sexton Blake took full advantage of this.

He set the men hard at it to build a sort of breastwork, with overturned carts, timber, and piled earth right across this exposed place like a temporary fort.

It was soon done, for the men worked with a will, Blake himself, with Temple, and even Sir Richard Blaise, toiling with the best of them.

The thing was just about completed when Tinker arrived on the scene, and delivered the colonel's message to Sir Richard.

"Heaven forbid that we should need the soldiers' help!" said the magistrate gravely. "Did you see any signs of these fellows as you came along, my boy?"

"No, sir," answered Tinker. "Everything seemed unusually quiet hereabouts, I thought."

"Then perhaps they have thought better of it and dispersed to their

"Then perhaps they have thought better of it and dispersed to their homes after all," said Temple.
"Maybe," remarked Sexton Blake; "but you say you saw Mr. Ardoise riding towards the towns, eh?"

"Yes," said Tinker.

"Yes," said Tinker.

"Then we will go on with our preparations just the same," said Blake grimly. "Where he goes mischief follows. It is only a lult. The storm will break later, that is all—and be the worse for the longer brewing," he added in an aside to Tinker. Tinker nodded. That was just his own view.

Tinker nodded. That was just his own view.

But the lull contined. An hour—two hours passed, and there was no sign of the enemy.

Some of the sharper lads, whom Blake had sent out to reconnoitre on the hills that surrounded the valley, and even into the woods, came back to report that everything was quiet. The roads towards the towns seemed deserted, not a man had been seen in the woods.

Never had Redcliff Dale seemed more tranquil and peaceful than on that memorable Sunday night.

Still Blake went on with his work. His only reply to Temple's hopeful remark "that the whole thing would end in a fizzle," was to send for all the new pick-handles in the store, and serve them out to his men.

Then a young officer from the harroal's rode, up-having narrowly

the new pick-handles in the store, and serve them out to his men.

Then a young officer from the barracks rode up—having narrowly escaped getting a crack on the head from one of the outposts Blake had placed round the line of defence.

This was Lieutenant Halford, a handsome, happy-go-lucky young fellow, as fond of a bit of "fun" as Tinker himself, and nearly as reckless. He was a personal friend of Sir Richard's.

"Ah, Halford, you've brought news of the enemy, eh?" said the latter anxiously.

"Deuce a bit!" was the reply.

"It's all a frost, Sir Dick. These beggars won't fight! No such luck! Thought it was a bit too good to hope for a break in this ditchwater barrack-life!"

"You mean that they have dispursed?" said Temple eagerly.

"Gone home to bed, every mother's son of them!" laughed the young officer. "Some of our officers have been out riding around by the colonel's orders, and things are as quiet as a Quaker's funeral all over the countryside."

"Glad to hear it!" said Sir

quiet as a Quaker's funeral all over the countryside."

"Glad to hear it!" said Sir Richard fervently.

"Colonel Carson sent word that he should dismiss all the men but one company, which he would keep under arms throughout the night," con-tinued the lieutenant. "Should you need help after all, show a flare from some high place; a look-out will be kept, and the men shall march at once."

at once."
"A light on the top of yonder pump-tower could be easily seen,"

"A light on the top of yonder pump-tower could be easily seen," said Blake.
"Capital!" said Halford. "And by Mars, the god of war, I'll look for it with both eyes, for the company under arms is my own, and I'm longing for a bit of a scrum, if it's only

brush with knife-grinders and

a brush with knife grinders and tinkers."

And his clear, boyish laugh rang gaily as he rode away.

Sir Richard and Sidney Temple had a brief talk together, then the latter came to Blake and said:

"I think we might send the men back to their quarters. There will be no trouble to-night, Blake."

"Not yet—not yet," said the detective quietly. And he turned to resume a low-toned conference with Tinker.

"If you would only take care not

sume a low-toned conference with Tinker.

"If you would only take care not to do anything wild or rash, Tinker," he said doubtfully.

"Oh, I'll be awfully careful, sir!" pleaded Tinker. "You won't let the boys into the fighting-line, and they're just mad to take a hand! And they'll be quite safe with me. I'm so very careful, you know, sir." Blake laughed.

"Yes, very!" he said. "Well, it's a wild idea, but it is not a bad one. Carry it out. But mind," he added, with a grim smile, "if you get your neck broken, or anything foolish like that—"

"I'll keep it to myself, guv'nor," laughed the boy. "You sha'n't hear of it."

And he gleefully hurried off to put

of it."

And he gleefully hurried off to put his mysterious plan into operation.

It grew near to midnight now, and that strange air of Sabbath night quiet was still unbroken. Blake's preparations were all completed,

Far down beyond the valley a faint, tawny band of light, blotched here and there with the redder glare of some factory shaft or furnace, showed where the three great towns

lay.

But nearer all was in darkness.

A few lights glimmered in the cluster of iron shanties on the hill-side, or gleamed from the windows of the engine-houses along the works, but by Blake's orders no other

the engine-houses along the works, but by Blake's orders no other lights were shown.

Looking down, he could dimly see the line of his improvised defences, but there was nothing to reveal that upwards of a hundred men lay behind them, awake and alert.

"Ready to receive them when they come," he muttered.

"When they come!" But surely he heard nothing, saw nothing, in the silence and darkness of that stilly night?

Yet he stared alert, listening intently, for the dog beside him had given a low, uneasy growl, his ears pricking and his mane beginning to bristle.

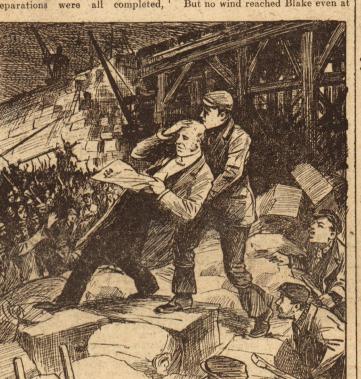
"Quiet boy! Quiet!" he whispered "I hear it old share.

bristle.

"Quiet boy! Quiet!" he whispered. "I hear it, old sharpears, as well as you!"

And yet it was nothing but a murmur coming from the distant woods that lay like a huge black blot upon one side of the valley. It might have been a sudden breath of wind, stirring the tree-tops as it passed.

But no wind reached Blake even at



Then a heavy stone was thrown, and the magistrate reeled back into Blake's arms. With a chorus of shouts and yells, the entire mass swept down upon the barricade! (For this stirring incident see next week's splendid chapters.)

and the men walked about or sat

and the men walked about or sat around in silence.

They began to look glum. Willing enough to fight they were, but the long waiting made them restless. A big Irish navvy put their feelings into words:

"Begob!" he grunted. "As this sitting around an' doing nothing isn't the worst bit av work that Oiv'e iver had to stand up to!"

He spat on his horny palm, and grasped his pick-handle anew.
"Here, Oi've an illegant bit av a sthick in me hand an' niver a head to crack wid it!"

"Patience, my friend!" said Sexton Blake, as he passed. "There will be hard knocks enough and to spare going presently."

And he was a true prophet.

The Lull Before the Storm.

AKING Pedro with him—for Tinker, having his hands full with his secret plan, whatever it might be, had left the blood hound in his charge—Sexton Blake quietly left the works and mounted

quiety left the works and mounted to the top of the great dam.

From that height he took a long, searching survey around.

The night had grown dark again.
The moon, shining faintly but a little while before, was now entirely ob-scured by a heavy canopy of cloud.

the height where he stood. And he smiled grimly.

"That fellow Ardoise is the very Napoleon of villains!" he muttered. "He has held them back to lull us into fancied security. A clever move! But they'll not exactly catch us sleeping. There will be work for those pick-handles yet—and maybe for rifles, too! For there's many a hundred men astir in yonder woods, and this night's work will be long remembered in Redcliff Dale!"

Yet the sound had hushed again, perhaps carried away on some light current of air.

Another sound, much nearer—just

Another sound, much nearer—ja slight stir—made Blake look do below.

below.

"Ah!" he said. "Master Tinker preparing his little surprise!"

Just below the dam a light railway on wooden trestles had been lately built to carry a train of small trucks across the swamped ground before mentioned.

It was almost a toy affair, with a miniature, but powerful locomotive, and it was Tinker's delight to drive that engine when he got the chame.

He was about to make a queer se of it now.

use of it now.

Blake could see a number of thy black specks, looking very like ants from that height, trecking towards the iron shed at that end of the little railway inside the works, where the

engine and trucks were housed when not in use.

It was Tinker and his boys.

Then a red glow appeared inside the dark shed; they were firing-up.

"It is only a boyish freak, and is not likely to help us much," murmured the detective, with a smile; "but, at least, it will keep the youngsters out of the act al fighting. Hark! There is that sound again!"

Pedro repeated that low, angry growl.

Pedro repeated that low, angry growl.

"Quiet, boy!" said Blake. "Time we warned them below. The storm is about to break!"

He descended from the dam, and as he approached the waiting men, Sir Richard Blaise and Temple came towards him.

"Really, Packer, it is no use our keeping the men from their rest any longer," said the former. "It is quite apparent that these fellows don't intend to trouble us, after all."

"Hark!" said Blake. "Do you hear that sound?"

"Hark!" said hear that sound?"
"I thought I heard it before," said "I thought I heard it is only the "Comple listening; "but it is only the

"I thought I heard it before, said Temple, listening; "but it is only the wind, I fancy."
"It is no wind," said Blake. "It is the coming of our friends, the enemy. And they are not less than a thousand strong."
"Good heavens!" exclaimed Temple. "Then let us signal for the troops at once!"

Temple. "Then let us signal for the troops at once!"
"Ay, we're likely to need them!" said the detective grimly, as he hurried away. Sir Richard hastened after him, gripping tightly a Zulu knobkerrie he had brought as a handy weapon.

knobkerrie he had brought as a handy weapon.

"Show me my place, Packer," cried the stout old fellow, "and I'll do my bit with the best of them."

"Keep by me, then, Sir Richard," said Blake. "As a magistrate, your services may be needed. We must not be the first to begin the fighting."

"You are right, my man, of course," said the warm-blooded old fellow. "We must try peaceful methods first. I'll try a few words with them. And then—I've got the Riot Act in my pocket."

The men roused up eagerly as Blake strode towards them. They read his news in the keener glance of his eye.

The men roused up eagerly as Blake strode towards them. They read his news in the keener glance of his eye.

"Begorra, the spalpeens are comin', afther all!" yelled the big Tipperary man, leaping up and making his pick-handle sing round his head with a true Donnybrook whirl.

"Is it true, Bob? Is it true they're coming—ch, lad?" cried Job Peck-chaff eagerly.

He had armed himself before he left home with the turned leg of a kitchen table that had retired from business and been "scrapped."

It was a homely sort of weapon, but held by the thin end, and wielded by an arm like Job's, it was likely to be an efficient one, Blake thought, as he viewed it.

"Yes, they're coming, boys," he said. "And there's enough of them to keep us busy. Stop—no noise!" For the lusty fellows wanted to break into a cheer. "Every man to his place, and never a sound or sign till you get the word."

"Faith, an' this is a great toime entoirely!" coold Tipperary Tim, in a rapturous whisper. "If Oie don't get knocked on the head, Oie'll die av the fun av it!"

Accustomed to obey, and almost as well drilled as soldiers, the men silently filed off and took their places behind the barricade, lying down well out of sight as Blake had ordered.

It was but a thin line at the best, and Blake looked at it with some misgivings.

Then he glanced in the distance, where upon the lafty ton of the

Then he glanced in the distance, where, upon the lofty top of the pump-tower, the signal light was

pump-tower, the signal light was burning.

"We shall need them sorely ere long," he muttered. "Will they come in time?"

He strengthened the line with some of the best of his men at that point nearest the magazine where the explosives were kept, knowing from Black Jock's words that the first object of the rioters would be to raid that and get at the blasting-powder, with a view to blowing up the unfinished dam.

At that point he remained himself, with Sir Richard Blaise and Sidney Temple.

Tipperary Tim he placed at one end

Tipperary Tim he placed at one end the line and Job Peckchaff at the other.

other.

Temple, like Sir Richard, was armed with a Zulu war-club. Sexton Blake had only his fists. They were the weapons he loved best of all, like the true Britisher he was.

Then, all being ready, they waited in silence and darkness for the coming of the attack.

(Another grand instalment of this powerful detective serial next Tuesday.)