FREE GOUPONS FOR THE PICTURE THEATRES! See Page 435.

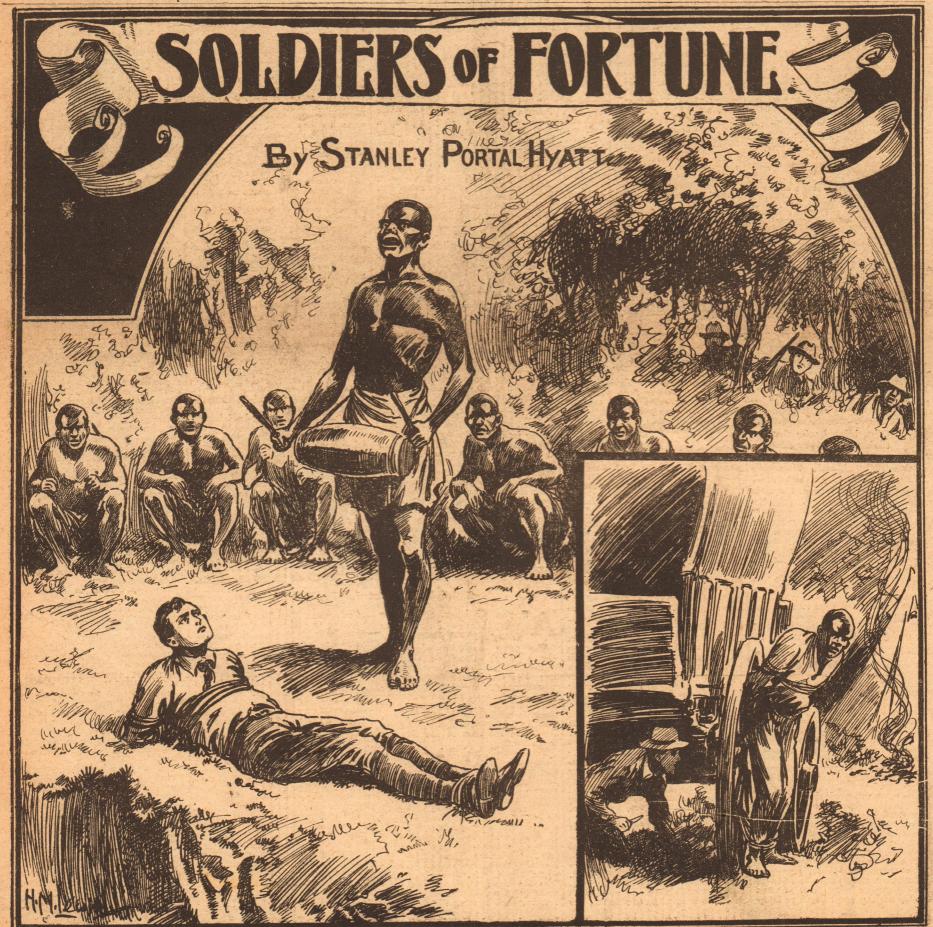


The object of THE BOYS' FRIEND is to Amuse, to Instruct, and to Advise Boys.

No. 496.—Vol. X. New Series.]

ONE PENNY:

[WEEK ENDING DECEMBER 10, 1910.



Splendid Incidents from our Grand Adventure Serial. No Boy Should Miss this Great New Story Just Starting.



Early Chapters of a Superb New Serial, Specially Written for THE BOYS' FRIEND by that Well-known Globe-trotter and Author, STANLEY PORTAL HYATT.

TO INTRODUCE TO YOU:

DUDLEY AND MARCUS SCARFIELD, two jolly young British boys who are setting out to find Mr. Donglas, a hunter, who is beyond civilisation in the wilds of Matabeleland. And they have strong motives in inding the hunter, for he was the friend of their dead father, and holds the rights of a wonderful new rifle the British War Office are taking up, and which their father invented. If they can find Douglas and prove their claim, they will share in the enormous profits from the rifle.

JOSEPH SCARFIELD is cousin to the two boys. He comes to hear of the plan to trace out Douglas, and resolves to reach the hunter first and steal the rights. He is well provided with money, whilst his cousins, after paying their passage money, have little but their adjustable bicycles. Motherless and fatherless, Dudley and Marcus have few friends to leave behind, and they sail cheerfully from Southampton on their perilous quest.

Upon arriving at Cape Town the two lads find that their cousin has taken the lead on the journey north. The boys immediately travel inland as far as Vryburg, where they come in contact with an old Basuto named Amous, who offers to guide them on their periless journey.

Still Scarfield is a long way in advance, and later Dudley and Marcus pick him up in the wide stretch of open desert in a critical condition, and treat him with all possible friendliness and human feeling.

The boys eventually take the lead, and their bicycles being damaged beyond all hope of repair they proceed on their journey to Palapye in a Cape cart. The coach gets stuck in the middle of a river, and just as it is released Dudley is carried away with the rishing stream Dudley is dashed against sharp rocks, and with his clothes torn and tattered he succeeds in landing, only just escaping the

forward cautiously to the edge of the scrub, beyond which was a small open space, ending abruptly in the cliff.

The others followed closely at the Basuto's heels, moving cautiously, with almost unnecessary caution, perhaps, for the tom tom was now going

The New Brooks, 12 to the speed of the space, and the space of the space, and the space of the space of the space of the space, and the space of a wonderful new filled the space of the space of a wonderful new filled the space of the space of a wonderful new filled the space of the space of a wonderful new filled the space of the space of a wonderful new filled the space of the space of a wonderful new filled the space of a wonderful new filled the space of the space of the wonderful new filled the space of the

being too heavy to carry away. The crocodiles were already busy below, and one of them happened to receive the tom-tom on his ugly skull. His career closed abruptly, which showed that even a tom-tom can occasionally be useful.

As soon to the control of the bodies, being the soon to the carry away. in the end that followed the bodies,

the tom-tom on his ugly skull. His career closed abruptly, which showed that even a tom-tom can occasionally be useful.

As soon as the fight was over Marcus hurried to his brother's side, and cut the thongs with which he had been bound. Then, with the help of Amous, he carried him into the shade of a big tree. Dudley was unconscious—in fact, he had fainted at the very moment when M'Zimba fell across him dead, though up to that time he had been only too well aware of what was happening.

Old Kerridge now hurried up, all his warlike fury over as quickly as it had arisen, and produced a flask of brandy from his hip-pocket.

"I brought it along in case of accident," he explained. "I had my fears as to what we might find." Though he did not add that he had expected that they might find Dudley's body caught in some tree on the river bank, and that Marcus might be the one who needed the spirit.

Dudley was not long in coming to. He was very strong, in splendid condition, and though, naturally, he was terribly exhausted and shaken, both Kerridge and Amous quickly saw that there was little cause for anxiety. They made him as comfortable as they could, forced him to take the brandy and a little food, and then waited by his side until he fell asleep. After that old Kerridge got up very quietly. "We can't leave him for some hours yet," he said to Marcus, "and there is one more thing to be done first. Lend me your rifle. I am going to kill that hippo."

Marcus flushed.

"I ought to do that."

But the prospector shook his head.

"Leave it to me, my lad. He won't allow us more than one shot at him, and I don't think your hand will be any too steady now. Besides, I have shot them before, and I know exactly where to aim. This isn't sport; it's simply justice."

Amous, who was sitting near by, heard what was said, and noted the eager look on Marcus's face.

simply justice."

Amous, who was sitting near by, heard what was said, and noted the eager look on Marcus's face.

"You go with the baas," he said.

"I will look after Baas Dudley. He will sleep for a long time yet, and when he awakens he will be quite welf again."

when he awakens he will be quite well again."

The boy followed Kerridge down to the river bank, and together they made their way along a ledge of the cliff until they were within fifty yards of the great bull's usual sleeping-place. At first they could see nothing of him; then the prospector suddenly pointed to a pair of nostrils just showing above the water.

"I must wake him up," he said, and forthwith sent a bullet into the water a few yards short of the place. As he jerked the new cartridge into the breech the huge head came above the surface, glancing round savagely.

Kerridge's next shot was a perfect one. It seemed to Marcus that he hardly had time to aim, but a second after he fired the whole of the immense body appeared clean above the water, then disappeared as quickly. Hundreds of wildfowl flew away, screaming wildly; two or three crocodiles, which had been basking in the sun, digesting their gorge of human flesh, plunged back into the water,

but the hippo himself gave no other sign of life.

sign of life.

Kerridge ejected his empty cartridge case with a deep sigh of satis-

faction.

"He is finished," he said. "I got him just under the ear. There will be no more sacrifices to him."

UDLEY rallied quickly, but, none the less, it was very late when the party got back to the mule stable. The flood in the river had gone down considerably, and the drift was now quite crossable. Amous shook his head when he heard this news from the head-boy at the stable.

"That Cape cart will be coming on now, baas," he said to Mafcus. "In fact, I wonder it' is not here already, and we shall lose the lead we gained yesterday. But I cannot take the coach on to-night. Baas Dudley could not stand the weariness of it."

Marcus nodded. He himself was terribly tired also, and he could not have faced a night's journey in the coach. However, dawn found them both fit again. They scrambled quickly out of their blankets when Amous brought them their morning coffee.

"They are inspanning the coach mules now, baas," the Basuto said. "We want to get up as quickly as possible, so as to keep ahead of that Cape cart on which your schelm cousm is."

Even as he spoke, however, there was the sound of shouting in the riverbed, and a couple of minufes later the Cape cart, containing the Deputy-Commissioner and Joseph Scarfield, came up the drift. The Commissioner's face went crimson with anger when he caught sight of the coach and of Amous standing beside the mules.

"That is the black scoundrel who lied to us," he said to Joseph. "He told us he was only going on to the next mule stable, and here he is forty miles further on."

Joseph stared at Amous, then made a gesture of astonishment.

"I know him!' he exclaimed. "He is one of the gang which robbed that same coach of the gold. He was holding the thieves' horses."

The Commissioner snorted. He was a fat man, and not a very clever one. "Then I shall arrest him at once," he answered. "I'm glad you recognised him, Mr. Scarfield. And thesefolo you know those boys at all?" pointing with his sjambok at Dudley and Marcus.

For an instant Joseph hesitated. He would have liked to see his cousins arrested, too, but he realised that their word might outweigh his own.

"No. I never saw them b

THE RULES OF FOOTBALL

A Grand New Series For Boy Players.

S you all know, one of the principal rules of Association is the following:

principal rules of Association is the following:

The game should be played by eleven players on each side, and the dimensions of the field of play shall be: Maximum length, 130 yards; minimum breadth, 100 yards; minimum breadth, 50 yards. The field of play shall be marked by boundary lines. The lines at each end are the goal-lines, and the lines at the side are touch-lines.

The touch-lines shall be drawn at right angles with the goal-lines. A flag with a staff not less than five feet high shall be placed at each corner. A half-way line shall be marked out across the field of play.

The centre of the field of play shall be indicated by a suitable mark, and a circle with a ten yards radius shall be made round it. The goals shall be upright posts fixed on the goal-lines, equi-distant from the corner flagstaffs, eight yards apart, with a bar across them eight feet from the ground. The maximum width of the goalposts and the maximum depth of the crossbar shall be five inches.

Comments: So far, these rules, generally speaking, apply to big clubs, and whilst broadly carrying them out there are one or two important particulars in which junior clubs may alter them without playing the game impropedly. Of course, to deal with the points in order, there should be eleven players a side, but the dimensions of the field can be considerably reduced to suit the accommodation at the club's disposal.

If possible, it is always advisable to have the pitch marked, and this can be done by any lad of average intelligence, who can draw a straight line, with a bucket of whitewash and a brush. The flagstaff need not be so high as five feet, and it is not necessary for the circle round the centre-mark to be of ten yards' radius.

The goalposts, too, can be reduced in height and length, but with respect to width of the goalposts and the depth of the crossbar being five inches, it is advisable to stick as closely to these measurements as possible, because it is necessary that the structures should be substantial in character.

(Another of these helpful articles thorty.)

"I see these boys know more about me than I do about them. They have evidently heard my name from someone. Still, you may take my word for it that the Basuto there was one of the thieves."

The Commissioner was satisfied. He called to his own driver and to the stable boys, who knew who he was.

"Tie that Basuto up, and put him in the cart. I will take him on to Palapye with me. I don't care if he is your nigger or no!"—to Dudley and Marcus, who; were profesting vigorously. "I'm suspicious of you as well."

is your nigger or no!"—to Dudley and Marcus, who; were profesting vigorously. "I'm suspicious of you as well."

"Don't be a fool, Mr. Woakes!" It was old Kerridge who spoke. "You're making a, big mistake here—not for the first time, either!" He had known the official, for years, and, like most men in that country, he was perfectly outspoken.

For a second or two the Commissioner, wavered; then Joseph Scarfield whispered something in his ear, and confirmed his resolution.

"I know my business, Kerridge," he said, "and I'don't want a down-atheel prospector to teach me. Here, put that Basuto in the cart!"

Amous made no resistance, though the boys continued to protest vigorously, yet just as the Cape cart was going off he whispered to Marcus, who had come up close:

"I will get away, bass, some way or other, and meet you at the Jotsam Drift, on the other side of Palapye. Look out for me there."

Joseph had not got out of the cart. He was by no means anxious actually to come within striking distance of those cousins of his, who, somehow, seemed to have grown far bigger and stronger in every way since they had been on the veldt, and he was very glad when the driver of the cart cracked his whip and the mules started off again.

"We shall catch you up yet, Joseph," Marcus called out; "and we sha'n't give you another chance. We know now what a scoundrel you are!"

The Deputy-Commissioner looked a little suspiciously at his companion.

"They seem to know you, after

Joseph, "Marcus called out; "and we sha'n't give you another chance. We know now what a scoundrel you are". The Deputy-Commissioner looked a little suspiciously at his companion. "They seem to know you, after all, Mr. Scarfield," he said.
Joseph shrugged his shoulders.
"I suppose they've heard my name somewhere. They tell me the country is full of adventurers of that type." He himself had told the official that he was going north in connection with a very important mining concession.

The boys watched the Cape cart disappear with sinking hearts. They realised how cleverly Joseph had got the better of them. He had disabled their bicycles first, and now he had deprived them of Amous, their principal helper.

Already they had told old Kerridge a good deal concerning their plans, and now, instinctively, they turned to him for advice. The prospector lit his pipe, and smoked reflectively for a while; then:

"I have been thinking of going up north myself for some time," he said. "I know most of the country from here to the Zambesi, and I can speak all the nigger lauguages. If you like we might travel together."

The boys exchanged glances. They knew by experience what sort of a man he was, and that they could have no better guide and friend; only, they knew, too, how slowly his pack donkeys would travel. Joseph would be in Palapye, the end of the journey by coach or mule-cart, days ahead of them, and they might never overtake him. Mojeover, there was Amous to be considered.

Kerridge seemed to divine their thoughts.

"It won't delay you," he said. "I shall leave my donkeys in Palapye—the old chief is a friend' of mire—and we'll go on with carriers, as your cousin will have to do. But we'want to make sure of that Basuito of yours. If you ride on after the cart you may get a chance of setting him free at tonight's outspan."

"But we've no tyres to our machines," Marcus protested.

The prospector smiled, and called to one of the local natives.

"But we've no tyres to our machines," Marcus protested.

The prospector smiled, and called to one of the local natives.

"Dongou, you schelm, go out and get some bark to make rope; take Matambouchisa with you, and bring plenty."

he done by any lad of average intelligence, who can draw a straight line, with a bucket of whitewash and a brush. The flagstaff need not be so high as five feet, and it is not necessary for the circle round the centre-mark to be of ten yards' radius. The goalposts, too, can be reduced in height and length, but with respect to width of the goalposts and the depth of the crossbar being five inches, it is advisable to stick as closely to these measurements as possible, because it is necessary that the structures should be substantial in character.

(Another of these helpful articles shortly.)

Commences Next Tuesday in Our

"The New Broom," Maxwell Scott's Latest and Best School Serial, Grand Christmas Number.

They'll outspan on the Palm River toney it outspan on the Palm River to-night. You must watch your chance, and set Amous free. Make sure they don't catch sight of you, though. Just take enough grub for the day and your rifles. I'll meet you in Palapye, at Watson's store, in about four days' time."

It was very heavy work pedalling along that road on the rope tyres, but the boys stuck to it grimly. About two o'clock they came to the place where the Cape cart had outspanned for lunch, and they found the fire still burning.

burning.

"They're not very far ahead,"
Dudley remarked. "We ought to
come up with them before dark."

They rested for an hour, then went
on again, despite the heat, but a long
stretch of heavy sand, through which
they had to wheel their machines,
delayed them considerably. Sundown
found them still plugging along, very
weary, and perhaps a little disheartened.

"We must go on." Marcus said

must go on," Marcus said y. "They can't be very far

"We must go on," Marcus said doggedly. "They can't be very far ahead now."

Yet, none the less, it was two hours after dark when they saw the gleam of a fire ahead. They dismounted, left their machines leaning against a tree, and went forward cautiously.

The cart was outspanned beside a waterhole, with the mules tied up to the trek-gear, whilst a small tent for the white men had been pitched a few yards off. The flap of the tent was up, and a light was burning on the little portable table, showing the Commissioner and Joseph having their evening meal. The driver and leader were squatting beside the fire, eating bully beef and mealie meal porridge with their fingers, but there was no sign of Amous.

"Where can be have got to?"

of Amous.
"Where can he have got to?"
Dudley whispered.
His brother shook his head.
"I can't see him. We must get

closer."
Fortunately, the ground was sandy, and they were able to creep forward without being heard; then at last they saw Amous. He was tied securely to one of the wheels of the cart, on the side nearest to the tent. It was impossible to get to him without being

seen.

The boys lay down in the long grass and held a whispered conference, but they could decide on no plan. After a while the flap of the tent was lowered, the lamp extinguished, and the two white men evidently turned in, but the natives remained beside the fire, and when, after what seemed an interminable wait, they, too, lay down, it was within a few feet of Amous.

in, but the natives remained beside the fire, and when, after what seemed an interminable wait, they, too, lay down, it was within a few feet of Amous.

Marcus sighed.

"It's no use, I'm afraid," he said. "If they see us we shall be arrested, too, sooner or later, and then it would be all up with our chances. Joseph might get weeks ahead of us."

They discussed plan after plan in whispers, but put them all aside again as hopeless. Once a lion raised his voice a couple of miles away, and the driver of the cart sat up quickly, proving that he was a very light sleeper for a native. Still, the incident gave Marcus an idea, which he explained eagerly to his brother.

Dudley frowned.

"It might act, of course. It's a bit risky, though, you know. Still—"

"Still, we'll try it." Marcus finished the sentence for him. "You get up as close as you can, whilst I work round to the other side. I'll give you a quarter of an hour before I begin."

It was fortunate for the boys that there were no dogs with the mule-cart, otherwise Dudley would never have succeeded in crawling up within ten yards of Amous. He lay down, very still, his knife in his hand, waiting. Suddenly a rifle shot rang out from the bush some fifty yards away. The driver and leader of the coach threw their blankets off and scrambled to their feet, and Dudley get two or three yards nearer. A second shot, followed by a long-drawn howl, brought the fat pyjama-clad figure of the Deputy-Commissioner to the entrance of the tent, whilst he two natives went forward to the edge of the bush. Howl followed howl in quick succession; then came other two shots.

The eyes of all the Cape cart party were now turned in the one direction and Dudley had his chance. He

two shots.

The eyes of all the Cape cart party were now turned in the one direction, and Dudley had his chance. He dived in under the cart, and with two or three cuts freed Amous's hands, and gave him the knife, so that he could free his legs. The Basuto was not in the least surprised.

"I recognised Baas Marcus's voice," he said. "Now, baas, hurry away. I will follow you."

"Help, help!" The voice sounded shriller than ever now.

"Help, help!" The voice sounded riller than ever now. The Commissioner was no coward,

and he hurried forward, followed by

driver and leader. Come along, Mr. Scarfield!" he d. "It's a white man in some sort of difficulty.

But Joseph, who was looking out through the flap of the tent, drew back quickly.

"I must find my boots," he answered the was Amous's opportunity, and be

"I must find my boots," he answered. It was Amous's opportunity, and he took it. He was very stiff from being bound, and he could not run very fast, but still he managed to get away unseen to where Dudley was waiting for him. They pulled the bicycles into the cover of a large clump of bush, and themselves lay down. Both the howls and the shots had now ceased.

howls and the shots had now ceased. Half an hour later Marcus came creeping back to them. He gave a sigh of relief when he saw Amous; then:

"They very nearly found me," he said. "That driver passed within a few yards of where I was. The Commissioner was panting and puffing, and declaring that he would go on searching till he found the wounded white man. They're still there."

"And Joseph?" Dudley asked.
His brother grinned.
"I don't think Joseph likes the cold or the dark."

In the Grip of a Foe. HAT are we going to do now?" Marcus asked.

The first thing is to get away from the main road," Dudley answered. "They are sure to go in search of Amous, and we don't want to lose him again."

Amous grinned.
"They won't find man

Amous grinned.

"They won't find me a second time, baas; besides, we are getting near Palapye now, and though I am not one of his people, Khama, the old chief, will protect me. The Commissioner does not want to offend him. I heard him saying to-day, on the cart, that the Matabele trouble is now very close at hand. Still, as Baas Dudley says, it will be wiser to get away from the main road. There is another road, an old one, nearly overgrown now, about ten miles from here. We might go by that. There are villages there, too, where we can get food. Only, we must not leave the spoor of the bicycles for them to follow."

"That is easily arranged," Marcus

That is easily arranged," Marcus

answered.

It was the first time they had occasion to make use of the fact that their bicycles would fold up, and, so far, they had never happened to mention it to Amous. It was a dark night, but still they knew the machines so well that a very few minutes sufficed for the job. Amous peered curiously at them, then gave a little grunt of amazement and satisfaction.

"Those are bicycles indeed!" he said. "Now they will leave no spoor."

That night they went about a mile It was the first time they had occa-

said. "Now they will leave no spoor."

That night they went about a mile from the road and lit a fire in a little donga, but at the first streak of dawn

donga, but at the first streak of dawn they went on again towards the abandoned road, of which Amous had spoken. They saw a good deal of game, and had they wanted meat, they could have got plenty, but, besides being in a hurry, they were anxious not to betray their whereabouts to anyone who might be following them by loud shots.

They had gone three or four miles, and the sun was already up, when they caught sight of a faint whisp of smoke rising from what appeared to be a dense clump of mimosa scrub.

"We will go to that," Amous said.

There are bushmen there, and they will probably have water, and some cooked food, too. I am hungry and thirsty now."

will probably have water, and some cooked food, too. I am hungry and thirsty now."

At first the scrub seemed practically impenetrable, a dense tangle of hooked thorns, but after a minute's search Amous found a way in. A dozen yards along what was really a narrow passage, cut out with an axe, and they came on a small clearing, littered with bones of animals and mealie cobs. In the centre a small fire was burning itself out, and close beside it a couple of strange-looking little men, stark naked, were sleeping. On a branch near by were hanging their tiny bows and sheafs of poisoned arrows.

Amous looked puzzled.

"It is not like bushmen to sleep in that way," he muttered. "Usually, they would have heard us coming long since." Then he caught sight of an object lying between the two savages and pounced on it at once. It was an empty bottle. "Cape brandy," he waid tersely. "Where can they have

water nor food. He tossed the bottle

water nor food. He tossed the bottle away, and turned to the boys. "It is not our concern after all, but we must be careful of the liquor traders; they are generally bad men from the Northern Transvaal, trek-Boers and outlaws, and they stop at nothing."

The road proved to be further away than Amous had thought, and it was midday before they struck it. As the Basuto had said, it was well-nigh overgrown, but a single glance showed that one waggon at least had gone up recently—three or four days before, according to Amous.

"A trader probably," he said. "They come down here for skins and horns. I expect he has gone right on to Palapye now, as he was plainly on his way back."

A few minutes later, however, he was proved.

his way back."

A few minutes later, however, he was proved to be wrong, for they caught sight of a span of cattle feeding in a long green olei, and almost

British and all their ways. The second was also a Boer, but of a different type, lean and blackbearded also, but cleaner and more civilised; he had come under German influence in Pretoria, and he knew how to dissemble. The third man was a Britisher, and a very bad one at that, though he came forward with a smile of welcome on his face. As a matter of fact, he was Harry Collins, highway robber, outlaw, and partner of Joseph Scarfield. The boys could not possibly have struck a worse crowd.

Neither Marcus nor Dudley liked the look of things, but it was too late to turn back now. They stood their machines against the waggon-wheel, and then shook hands with Collins and the educated Boer, Klaas van der Byl; but the trek-Boer, Adrian Bezedenhuit, merely gave them a surily nod.

There was a not of coffee beside the British and all their ways. The second

surly nod.

There was a pot of coffee beside the

Free Coupons for the Picture Theatres

HOW TO VISIT THE CINEMATOGRAPH SHOW AT HALF-PRICE.

In these days when picture theatres are so popular, and when even the smallest of our towns has one or more cinematograph palaces, it is only natural that boys should flock in their thousands to such places of entertainment. A bright programme of serious, comic, and sentimental films is indeed an attraction, and Your Editor has decided to help his readers by securing them ADMISSION AT HALF-PRICE to a great many of the best picture theatres.

On the front page of this number you will find a coupon, and below there is a list of theatres: By presenting a BOYS' FRIEND Coupon at the booking-office of any theatre mentioned you will be admitted at Half-Price to any part of the house at the performances specified.

This week's coupon is available only until Monday, December 12th, but another coupon will appear in THE BOYS' FRIEND next Tuesday, when the list of theatres will be supplemented.

List of Theatres Where BOYS' FRIEND Half-Admission Coupons are Accepted. Palace Theatre, West Hartlepool Boro' Theatre, North Shields New Picture Palace, Gateshead Tivoli, Laygate Circus, South Shields Picture Hall, Sunderland Picture Hall, West Hartlepool Cromwell Hall, Lancaster Picturedrome, Longridge Temperance Hall, Preston Picturedrome, Preston

West London Theatre, Church Street, Edgware Road,

West London Theatre, Church Street, Edgware Road, London, W.
Grand Theatre, Woodgrange Road, Forest Gate, London, E.
Central Hall, Peckham
Arcadia and People's Picture Palace, Lewes Road, Brighton
Theatre Royal, Darwen, Lancs.
Appolonian Hall, Snargate Street, Dover
Co-operative Hall, Sheerness
The Empire, Wharf Street, Leicester
People's Picture Palace, Penzance
Electric Empire, Woking
The Empire, Wigan
Holloway Hall, Holloway Road, N.
The Universe Picture Palace and Skating Rink, Great

The Universe Picture Palace and Skating Rink, Great Harwood

Electric Theatre, Sutton, Surrey
Electric Theatre, Epsom
Brinkburn Picture Theatre, Brinkburn Street, Byker,
Newcastle-on-Tyne
Tyne Picture Theatre, Station Road, Wallsend
Royal Animated Pictures, High Street, E. Wallsend
Abington Picture Palace, Wellingborough Road,
Northampton

Electric Picturedrome, Scarborough Jefferson's Imperial Picture Hall, Bill Quay, Durham

Fenton's Pictures, Central Palace, Darlington Temperance Hall, Bradford, Yorks Central Hall, Nottingham Picturedrome, Huddersfield Cinema, Longroyd Bridge, Huddersfield

cinema, Longroyd Bridge, Hudder immediately afterwards they saw a waggon outspanned beside the road. So far as they could see, it was an ordinary transport waggon, eighteen feet long, with a green bucksail thrown over the load. The driver was sitting beside the fire trimming a whiplash, whilst on the far side, under a kind of tent made from the flap of the bucksail, were several white men. At the sight of them Amous paused. "They are Boers," he said, "and Khama does not allow Boers in his country, therefore they can be up to no good." But Marcus had already jumped on his machine and was out of hearing. Dudley hesitated, then followed his brother.

As he got near the waggon, he looked back over his shoulder. Amous had disappeared.

object lying between the two savages and pounced on it at once. It was an empty bottle. "Cape brandy," he said tersely. "Where can they have got it? In this country there is no liquor allowed, and Khama punishes severely all the liquor traders."

He stirred the bushmen with his foot, but only elicited a grunt.
"Drunk indeed," he muttered; then he made a hurried search round the encampment, but found neither

As he got near the waggon, he looked back over his shoulder. Amous had disappeared.

A dog ran out, barking, to meet the boys, and the men under the tent-flap looked round quickly. There were three of them. One, a typical trek-Boer, born in a waggon, black-bearded, tattered, utterly illiterate, a white savage, scowled as he saw the young Britishers coming. He hated the

fire, and Collins poured some out for the boys; then he began to ask them questions very cleverly. It did not take him long to discover who they were; in fact, he suspected already, remembering what Joseph had told him. He translated their replies, or the gist of them, to the two Boers, and, watching the boys' faces care-fully, noted that they did not under-stand a word of the Cape-Dutch lan-guage.

Any day excepting Saturdays and Sundays.

Wednesday Minimum 2d.

Tuesdays.

Tuesdays.
Weds. and
Thurs. to
boys not
over 16 yrs.
Mon. and
Thura.
Tues. and
Friday.
Wednesday
Any evening
excepting
Bk. Holidays
Any performance
except

"No matter. They've seen too

"No matter. They've seen too much already."

The leaders of the natives, three rather evil-looking old men, squatted down in front of the waggon, and took snuff solemnly, then they began to talk to Van der Byl in their own language. The boys, thinking it was an ordinary deal, merely a matter of buying the cattle, watched with interest; then suddenly they understood as, at a word from Van der Byl, the trek-Boer got up and threw back the corner of the buck-sail, showing the load of the waggon. It consisted entirely of cases of liquor.

The boys exchanged glances, and Marcus got up with an uneasy look on his face.

"It's time we were getting on," he said; but Collins, who was standing

on his face.

"It's time we were getting on," he said; but Collins, who was standing behind him, laid a hand on his shoulder.

"Oh not to

said; but collins, who was standing behind him, laid a hand on his shoulder.

"Oh, no! There's no hurry, and it's far too hot to trek now. Wait until these niggers have gone."

Marcus sat down again unwillingly. He had glanced over his shoulder, and had noted with alarm that their rifles and bicycles were no longer standing against the waggon-wheel. They had been removed very quietly by the driver of the waggon, as the result of an order from Bezedenhuit.

For a moment the boys' eyes met, and Marcus saw that his brother also understood the position; then, to all outward appearances, they again became merely interested spectators.

The deal with the natives took some time. There was unlimited haggling over the price of each of the cattle, and not until several bottles of the vile spirit had been distributed was any bargain made. Then, as the brandy mounted to the heads of the savages, business with them became easier. The last two or three cattle were sold in so many minutes, and finally the natives departed, laden with cases of spirit.

Some of them were already reeling, and, even as they were disappearing round the bend of the road, one of

finally the natives departed, laden with cases of spirit.

Some of them were already reeling, and, even as they were disappearing round the bend of the road, one of the younger men tripped, and the box he was carrying fell with a crash; in stantly the others were on him, beating him, for half the bottles were broken. It was an ugly scene, and it ended only when the trek-Boer rushed forward, and drove the combatants away with his heavy hippo-hide sjambok.

The boys had said nothing all the time, but now they both got up.

"We really must be going on," Dudley said.

Collins turned to them with a sneer.

"You must, must you? Now that you have learned what is on the waggon, you want to hurry into Palapye, and get a reward from old chief Khama! I suppose you came up this road on purpose to spy. No, my young friends, you know far too much already for us to let you go!"

Dudley and Marcus were trapped, and they knew it. It was quite hopeless to think of escaping by making a dash into the bush, for both Bezedennuit and Van der Byl had rifles lying beside their stools, and the boys would have been shot long before they reached cover. They remembered only too well what Amous had said about the desperate character of these liquor smugglers.

Dudley made one last attempt.

"Supposing we give you our word not to mention what we have seen to anyone in Palapye?"

Collins translated his words to the Boers, and all three men laughed scornfully.

"Your word! What would that be worth to us? People who give their words so easily on the veldt usually

scornfully.
"Your word! What would that be worth to us? People who give their words so easily on the veldt usually break them soon afterwards. No, my lads, you are not going on to Palapye now."

As a matter of fact, Collins cared nothing about the liquor-sellers and their fate. He had met them casually and only that morning—he was really on his way up to join Joseph Scarfield—but, having known them of old, he had stayed to have a talk with them. He turned again to the two Boers.

them. He turned again to the two Boers.

"What are you going to do with the young whelps?" he asked.

Van der Byl soratched his head.

"Keep them with the waggon until we've sold our load of liquor, and then take them down to the Transvaal, I suppose."

But Buzedenbuit scoffed at the idea.

them. He turned again to the two stand a word of the Cape-Dutch language.

"Haven't you got a nigger with you?" he asked suddenly.

Marcus answered:

"Yes; at least we had one, but he seems to have run away."

Collins nodded. He had not seen Amous coming along the road, and it is a very common occurrence for natives to leave their employers in the lurch like that.

A moment later the thoughts of all were turned in a new direction, for a large party of local Kaffirs, some thirty men in all, driving about a dozen fine cattle, emerged from the bush, and came towards the waggon.

Collins and the Boers exchanged glances then the former said in Dutch:

them. He turned again to the two Boers.

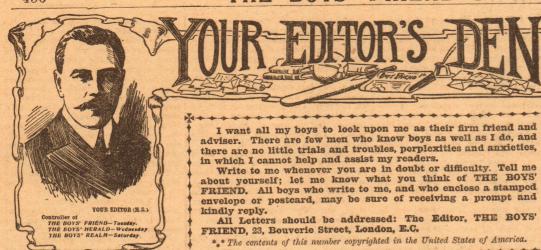
"What are you going to do with the young whelps?" he asked.

"Keep them with the waggon until we've sold our load of liquor, and then take them down to the Transval, I suppose."

But Buzedenhuit soffed at the idea.

"Do you think we can have the bother of looking after them, and feeding them all that time? You talk foolish nonsense, Van der Byl! They are only rooineks. You wait till we trek this afternoon. I'll stay behind with them, so that our niggers won't know, and shoot them both!"

(Another splendid instalment of this grand yarn in our Christmas Number next Tuesday.)



OUR SIXTEENTH CHRISTMAS DOUBLE NUMBER.

OUR SIXTEENTH CHRISTMAS DOUBLE NUMBER.

I'th the next issue of THE BOYS' FRIEND I publish Our Sixteenth Christmas Double Number. I have spent a lot of time and care on this number, and I hope my friends will think the result of my labours are satisfactory and pleasing. Of one thing they may be sure, they are going to get one of the strongest and best Christmas numbers which THE BOYS' FRIEND has turned out for many a long day. Here are some of the items which will appear in it—the full list my friends will discover on another page.

There will be a new serial story, entitled "Sexton Blake, Spy"—four big pages of the first instalment appear next week.

There will be a new school story, entitled "The New Broom," by Maxwell Scott, and this tale will form a sequel to "The Blot," which proved so very successful.

Then there will be full-length instalments of "Soldiers of Fortune" and "Yorkshire Grit."

Further, there will be a long 15,000-word novel by Allan Blair, entitled "Philip in Search of a Father," and another long complete story, by Sidney Drew, entitled "Gan-Waga's Christmas Revels."

A very great attraction in this issue will be a page of words and music of a splendid song which I think every boy knows, or would like to know. Its title is, "A Boy's Best Friend is His Mother."

And I have also arranged for the re-publication of an extremely popular recitation, by W. A. Eaton, entitled, "The Fireman's Wedding." Every lad who wants to prove an attraction at any party to which he may be going this Christmas ought to make sure of getting a copy of this number of THE BOYS' FRIEND, and of learning this recitation, which is always received with great applause.

But I could almost fill this page in describing the attractions which are in store for you next week. As I have said, full details of Our Great Christmas Number will be found on page 442.

Su

DOING HIS DUTY.

One of my young friends tells me he is a carman, and he puts to me a very searching question—"Don't you think I could do my duty in this trade as well as any other?"

My answer must be "Yes." It does not matter really what calling you are engaged in so long as you put your heart and your soul and the best that is in you into it. Be it simply driving a van and delivering goods, if you do it to the very best of your ability and with enthusiasm, you are doing your duty. You are giving to those who employ you the best you can give, and you are living up to the very highest traditions of self-respect. If a task of any kind is given to a lad to do, and he does it whole-heartedly, does it as if it were the greatest pleasure he could ever experience, he is doing the best and noblest thing it is possible for him to do, and his position can be justly as proud as that of the most important ruler of the State.

MOVING-PICTURE SHOWS.

I have no doubt that a very large number of my friends take a keen interest in cinematograph picture shows, and because I have realised this I have made arrangements with a certain number of theatres so that readers of The Boys' Friend may be admitted at half-price to any part of these picture theatres. All a reader has to do is to consult the particulars on page 435 of this issue, and to present the coupon which will be found on our front page. This coupon will entitle him to admission at half-price.

The electric picture theatre has become quite an established form of amusement in this country, and I am not at all surprised at its success. After all, the next best thing to see a photograph of it; but when you can view the whole of a particular incident, whether it is the arrival of some great person at some particular place, whether it is a scene from a theatre, or some spectacle in the open air, if the event can be seen as it actually happened with all the life and movement it possesses, in the comfort and shelter of a theatre, then it is no wonder that these places are attractive. So, knowing how very popular these theatres are, I have made arrangements so that my friends may be admitted to them at certain performances at half-price.

Of course, I do not say that they can go into any theatre with The

price.
Of course, I do not say that they can go into any theatre with THE BOYS' FRIEND coupons, but they can go into any of the theatres mentioned on page 435 at half-price at the performances indicated.

A LAD IN DOUBT.

J. C. junr. is in a difficulty. He is a healthy young lad of seventeen, over six feet in height, and he does not know what to make of himself.

Sometimes he thinks of going in for the electrical engineering profession, at other times for railway engineering, but he has been warned off both by his friends, with the result that to-day he has not made up his mind what to do. So, like a sensible lad, he comes to me and says, "Make up my mind for me." Now, this is thrusting on to my shoulders a very important and very responsible task. J. C. junr. asks me to say to him, "This shall be your future walk in life," thus depending on me to plan out his career.

It is very easy to do things on the responsibility of other people, and it is easy to throw the blame on others if the result does not turn out well; but it is the hardest thing in the world to think out for yourself a course of conduct and to follow it in defiance of the advice and opinions of your friends. It is awfully hard to make up your mind to do a thing, and to do it at the risk of losing the good opinions of others. So J. C. junr says, "I will get out of my difficulty and write to the Editor of The Boys' Friend." I do not blame him, for I would do it myself were I similarly placed, and, because I know a good deal of the world, I am willing to take the responsibility.

Let my young friend go in for civil engineering. It is to my mind one of the most fascinating callings any man can undertake, particularly when it takes one to foreign countries, where pioneer work such as bridge building and railway construction can be carried forward by the forces of civilisation unto the uttermost ends of the world.

The civil engineer finds himself one month in Siberia, another month in Patagonia, another month bordering on the North Pole, and another frizzling on the Equator. It is a pleasant life, but it means hard work to qualify for it. It is a profession full of adventure and interest; it has its disappointments and its victories, and it can produce big rewards for

SHERLOCK HOLMES AND SEXTON BLAKE.

One of my young friends who lives near Wrexham, in Wales, asks me to tell him if there ever was such a detective as Sherlock Holmes, and also if a man named Sexton Blake ever existed.

Sherlock Holmes, although he did not live under that name, was created by Conan Dovle mon the

aracteristics of a famous Dr. Bell characteristics of a famous Dr. Bell of Edinburgh. There never was an actual Sherlock Holmes, neither has there been an actual Sexton Blake. In the latter case the stories have been founded on an individual not known as Sexton Blake, but one who has accomplished many of the things described in the stories associated with this character.

A YOUNG SHAVER.

"Inquisitive" tells me he is sixteen, and has just begun to shave, and he wants to know if I think this age too early for him to start, because every morning after shaving a lot of pimples break out on his chin. He used to rub zine ointment on his chin, but it did no good, so he wants advice.

In the first place, the age when one should begin shaving depends on

the constitution of the individual; and some men ought to commence earlier than others. In "Inquisitive's" case it is obvious that he has an extremely sensitive skin, so I would advise him to adopt the following method. First secure the very best shaving soap possible; there is an excellent one made by Gibbs. Pears' soap is also good, and there are heaps of others which any chemist can recommend. Work this soap into a thick lather, and apply it to the chin vigorously. Give the chin a thorough rubbing with the lather until every hair is soft and pliable; then get a good keen razor which has been properly stropped, and shave lightly—not too closely, as this is apt to bring-up pimples. It think if my correspondent follows this advice he won't have very much more trouble with his shaving.

SANDOW EXERCISES.

It is this same friend of mine—
"Inquisitive," of Cork—who asks
me whether when a new Sandow
exercise appears, he should drop the
old ones, and adopt the new one.
No; my young friend should
practice each exercise as it comes
out, and, limiting himself to a
quarter of an hour every morning,
do a little of each exercise in succession.
In this way his body will be
developed all round, because each
exercise develops particular muscles
in different parts of the body.
Therefore my young friend should
learn each exercise and practise
them all in turn every morning.

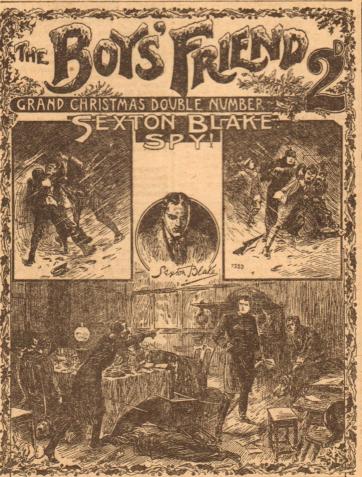
TWO DETECTIVE NOVELS

It is not often my chums have the opportunity of securing two three-and-sixpenny detective novels for the absurdly small sum of twopence! Yet to-day they have a unique chance of doing so, and I sincerely trust they will avail themselves of it. Every newsagent in the United Kingdom has now in stock the superb Christmas Double Number of the "Union Jack," which contains two powerful complete novels of the world-famous detective Sexton Blake, and his two clever assistants, Tinker and Pedro.

The first of these absorbing yarns is entitled "The Coster's Christmas," and has been specially written to appeal to readers of all ages. The title of the second is "Sexton Blake, Unemployed."

As I have already mentioned, both these novels are of the kind usually sold at three-and-sixpence each, and my chums will be making the mistake of their lives if they do not instantly call round at their newsagent's and invest twopence in this mammoth budget of Christmas literature.

YOUR EDITOR (H. E.).



not live under that name, was created by Conan Doyle upon the Agreatly reduced facsimile of "Val's" Cover for our Christmas Number.

BOXING NOTES.

By J. G. B. Lynch.

T is curious, when you come to think about it, how easy it is to

think about it, how easy it is to overbalance when you are standing awkwardly on your two feet. In boxing this is fatal.

If you follow out the rules you have been told about "position," and so forth, you won't overbalance, but it is difficult to remember these rules in the thick of a hard rally or "mix-up."

in the thick of a hard rally or "mixup."

Yet a boxer is easily liable to get into an awkward position, such as with crossed legs—that is, the right foot in front of the left, when it ought to be behind. Then quite a light tap on the head will send him to the floor, and the resulting shake-up will be far from pleasant.

If, however, the blow that sends a badly balanced boxer to the boards is a hard one, he will stand a very good chance of being seriously damaged, for he will strike

his head against the floor.

damaged, for he will strike

his head against the floor.

So the keeping of the left foot in front is a very important rule to remember always.

Never stand "square" to your antagonist. A straight blow while in such a position is liable to send you backwards with the utmost ease.

If you keep these things in mind you will not only refrain from awkward positions yourself, but you will be able to take advantage of them in the case of your opponents.

The man you are boxing with, let us say, dashes at you carelessly—charges, in fact. What should you do?

There are two ways, and both are good. Either stand quite still and let him run straight on to your extended left hand, which will give him a nasty punch without any effort of yours, or else step back. His blow will then be wasted on the air, and as his arm stretches to its utmost reach in search of your face you will step in nimbly and send home a strong left or right. Your man will not be guarding, and you will probably be able to inflict a very hard blow. Another time I shall have a lot more to say on the subject of boxers "charging."

HOW BOYS CAN

MAKE MONEY.

N my previous chats in this series I have dealt with spare time employment in two directions—the keeping of rabbits and cycle repairing. This week I am going to tell

ing. This week I am going to tell you about clerical work.

Naturally enough, in considering clerical labour, your first thought will be for envelope addressing. Now, this is one of those tasks against which I want to warn you. Generally speaking, it is ill-paid work, and it is so dreary and monotonous that unless one is well-paid, it is not worth undertaking at all. Sometimes a boy will get envelope addressing through influence from a private individual at a fair price; in this case, I would say do the work by all means.

Really handsome pay is to be earned by a bright boy who can save up and purchase himself a typewriter. The demand for skilful typists is an increasing one, and there are always good second-hand machines

good second-hand machines to be bought quite cheaply, as the advertisements in our newspapers will show. Having mastered the intricacies of typewriting, a boy should find little difficulty in obtaining work. He may be so fortunate as to get an introduction to a solicitor or author, in which case there should be a goodly batch of work forthcoming. Authors' MS. is usually charged at 9d. per thousand words, including paper. Then there are always tradesmen and others who would like their letters typed, and if you cannot get a start by influence, you should advertise. good second-hand machines

letters typed, and if you cannot get a start by influence, you should advertise.

Copying circulars by means of a hecktograph (the recipe has appeared countless times in The Boys' Friend) is a splendid spare time task, and I have heard of many smart boys with a knowledge of book-keeping putting in their leisure hours keeping tradesmen's accounts. It is surprising that there are still so many tradesmen who do not know much about the art of keeping accounts.

A quick, clear writer, a boy with a good head for figures, or a lad with a typewriter can always make pocketmoney, and there should be no dearth of clerical labour for the boy who seeks it and who can be relied upon.

THE END.

THE CHANCE OF HIS LIFE. No. 6 of Our Grand "LADS O' LONDON" Series.

ARRY FORTESCUE looked start within ten minutes to attend to very depressed as he stood before his dead father's solicitor, and learned that there was

before his dead father's solicitor, and learned that there was not a penny for his support.

"You don't seem to have learned anything useful at school," said the solicitor harshly, "so you will have to start as an office-boy at ten shillings weekly. I will give you a letter of introduction, then you must fend for yourself!"

While his father lived, Harry had often received ten shillings a week as pocket-money, and he was quite dismayed to hear how small his wages would be.

"Still, other people have been office-boys and risen to be great men," he said to himself stoutly, as he started off towards Fleet Street with the lawyer's letter in his pocket. Without difficulty he found the big building where the "Daily Pictorial" was housed.

He had to wait more than an hour before the manager sent for him. He was a tall man, with the same quick look about his face which marked everybody in the "Pictorial" building, from the office-boys up. His first keen scrutiny of Harry Fortescue seemed to satisfy him, for he asked very few questions.

"Your guardian says you are the son of the late Wilfred Fortescue," he said kindly. "He was a rich man at one time, I remember; but, you know, I expect, that he worked his way up from the bottom."

"Yes, sir," said Harry.

"Well, you will do the same, I hope."

The colour flamed to Harry's cheeks.

hope."
The colour flamed to Harry's

The colour flamed to Harry's cheeks.

"Do you think I may, sir?" he asked eagerly.

"It rests with yourself, my lad. I was an office-boy in a newspaper office, and so was the editor of this paper. We've both got on, so why shouldn't you? But you've got to be smarter than the other boys if you want to rise. You must be keen as mustard, and never miss a chance!"

as mustance chance!"

Before he had been there a week, Harry understood why everybody looked so brisk. One and all they were watching for promotion just as he was himself.

were watching for promotion just as he was himself.

All the other boys had parents to support them, but Harry had nothing but his wages. He paid seven shillings and sixpence weekly to the mother of one of the other boys to take him in, and often went hungry all day because he had not a copper to buy himself some lunch.

But he gloried in the life!

He held up his head proudly when he walked down Fleet Street past the offices of other papers, for he knew that the "Pictorial" was better than any. One day he had a fight with a boy from a rival paper, and came off victor. Unfortunately, the "Pictorial" editor passed just then, and that night he sent for Harry.

"Vac'es making a had start."

then, and that high.

Harry.

"You're making a bad start, aren't you?" he said very sternly.

"But please, sir, he had the check to say their rotten 'Daily View' was better than our paper," said Harry, with flashing eyes, "so I punched him till he took it back!"

To his relief the editor burst into a roar of laughter, and handed him a shilling.

To his relief the editor burst into a roar of laughter, and handed him a shilling.

About a fortnight later there was a row in the "Pictorial" office. It was not often they occurred, but when they did everybody trembled in their shoes. As Harry sat waiting in the messengers room, he heard the sound of hurrying feet running in all directions, next the deep, bass voice of the editor, raised like the bellow of an angry bull, came echoing through the corridors.

"Oh, lor, someone's going to get it!" said one of the lads, trembling. "I do hope he's not coming here!"

Next moment the door was flung violently open, and a long-haired man stormed in, his brow as black as thunder.

man stormed in, his brow as black as thunder.

"Where the dickens have all the photographers got to?" he demanded fiercely. "I've sent a dozen boys to find one, and they've all failed. There are twenty photographers on the staff. Where have they all got to?"

it!"
From his corner Harry listened to what was said. He fully understood that this was a great emergency. It was, in fact, a chance for a smart photographer to leap at—just such a chance as he was waiting for. With eager eyes he sprang at it.

Jumping briskly to his feet, he said quickly:
"I'm a photographer, sir. Won't I do?"

"I'm a photographer, sir. Won't I do?"
"You!"
The editor stared at him for a moment before he recognised him.
"You are the lad who fought and licked a 'Daily View' boy," he murmured. "Well, they're going to beat us now if we aren't careful. What sort of photos can you take? Dirty smudges, all over finger-marks? Is that the kind of thing you think will do for me?"

"No, sir!" said Harry, firing up indignantly. "I've used a Goertz Anschutz, and taken prizes at exhibitions for photos of horses jumping."
"The dickens you have!" said the

jumping."

"The dickens you have!" said the editor eagerly. "Then perhaps you'll do."

For a moment only he hesitated, then:

editor eagerly. "Then perhaps you'll do."
For a moment only he hesitated, then:
"Follow me!" he said.
Breathlessly, Harry listened to a wonderful and romantic story. It seemed that news had just come from the "Daily Pictorial's" correspondent in Spain that King Alfonso had been compelled to fly for safety just as King Manuel of Portugal did some time before.
"King Alfonso's bolted over the frontier into France," said the editor, "and is now on his way to England in a Havre fishing-boat. He will land at the Lizard in the morning, and it must be your business to get photographs without fail to go into to-morrow's paper."
"I will, sir!" said Harry firmly, though he had not the ghost of an idea of how he would contrive to manage it.

Five minutes later Harry ran down the stairs with a camera over his shoulders and a pocket full of gold, and entered a waiting taxicab. Speeding through the streets at a splendid pace, he just caught the 9.50 p.m. night express to Cornwall.

All night he travelled in the swiftly-moving train, and just before seven in the morning stepped out at Redruth Junction, from which he caught another train to Helston. From that point he chartered a powerful motor-car, and sped through the morning mist to the Lizard.

He did not even stop for any breakfast, but went straight to the quay. He was earning his promotion, and had no thought of hunger. "I want a tug to take me to sea at once," he said to a burly fisherman.

at once," fisherman.

"I say, isn't it jolly rough?"
Out at sea, in the squat tug he had chartered at the Lizard, Harry gazed shudderingly at the dashing breakers which foamed on the churning sea when they left harbour.

"Yes, it's rough enough ahead there, in all conscience," replied the weatherbeaten skipper. "Do you see those dark patches which just show when the waves go down a bit? Those are rocks on which a dozen vessels have been wrecked. They're right in the fairway, too. It's an awkward part for strangers."

Harry looked at them, and a shiver ran through him. But just then something further out at sea attracted his attention. It was a bright red sail.

"What's that?" he demanded excitedly.

"If my old eves don't fail me

"If my old eyes don't fail me that's a Froggy," replied the skipper. "By the lines of her I should say that she came from St.

should say that she can Malo."

He was standing on the bridge of the tug, with the clever lad beside him, wrapped in an oilskin jacket, for the wind was bitter and a heavy sea kept the sturdy tug awash.

guessed that he was in the red-sailed boat.

Greatly excited, he kept his eyes glued on it.

"Bring the tug up closer to her," he begged, "and I can get a snap as she sails past."

But the skipper's face was grim as he surveyed the course of the French boat.

"There's some lubber at the helm who doesn't know this coast," he murmured. "They're heading straight for Suaken Rock."

There was that in his tone which made Harry shiver.

"Are they in danger, then?" he queried.

"Are they in danger, then?" he queried.

"Follow my finger," replied the skipper, pointing to a place where the waves were crested with white foam. "That is the Sunken Rock. It is barely two feet beneath the water, and the ship which strikes on it is lost. I must warn those Froggies, or it will be too late."

Unslinging his megaphone from the rail on the bridge where it hung, he put it to his lips and sent words of hoarse command ringing over the water.

But the whistle of the wind drowned his voice, or else those aboard the little vessel failed to understand, for the red-sailed boat continued upon its course.

Through a pair of binoculars Harry studied the figures on the other boat. To his amazement he saw that there was a lady on board. As they drew nearer he recognised the English face of Queen Ena herself.

the English face of Queen Ena her-self.

"Merciful Heavens! The Queen of Spain, who was an English princess, is there as well!" he cried out.

"What can we do to save them?"

Once more the skipper's roar rang

out. "Breakers ahead!"

But on the Frenchman they evidently thought that the English tug merely wished to offer them a tow, for a raucous voice shouted back:

"Ve know the vay. Ve not vant any heln"

"Ye know the vay. Ve not vant any help."
"Yes you do, you confounded Froggy!" growled the skipper. "And I must manage to give it you some-bow!"

how!"

With a sharp turn of the wheel he changed the tug's direction, and headed her straight for Sunken

Rock.

"Good heavens, you'll sink us!" gasped Harry.

"I hope not," replied the skipper grimly; "but I've got to take the risk, or there'll be no hope of saving a soul on board that boat."

Cool and calm, in the face of possible death, the skipper headed towards the rocks and signalled down to the engine-room: "Full speed ahead!" Harry realised then that he intended to try and head off the French boat before she struck the rocks.

It was a despoyate viel.

rocks.
It was a desperate risk.
But Harry felt no thril! of fear. It seemed to him a fine thing to take part in such a thrilding adventure.
Through his binoculars he studied the other boat, and saw that they were getting excited, for there seemed every prospect of a collision.
The French skipper was in the bow

of his boat making himself hoarse with rage as he stormed at the tug's commander. "You'll get a cold bath to cool

with rage as he stormed at the tug's commander.

"You'll get a cold bath to cool your rage presently," said the tug's captain grimly, "if you don't bring up pretty soon."

Through his glasses Harry could see that King Alfonso was standing holding on to the rigging, and gazing towards the tug with puzzled eyes. Beside him was Queen Ena, and behind them again two queerly-dressed nurses in charge of three little children.

With a shudder he realised that the boat was still heading straight for the rock. Unless something happened soon nothing could save all aboard the French boat from destruction.

"New then!" savaged the kinney.

aboard the French boat from destruction.

"Now, then!" snapped the skipper when the rocks were only a cable's length ahead.

With a sharp twist of the wheel he cut right across the sailing-boat's course.

cours Sacre!" screamed the French

With a snarp twist of the wheel he cut right across the sailing-boat's course.

"Sacre!" screamed the French skipper.

Like monkeys, his men leapt at the sail and brought it crashing to the deck. Nevertheless, the boat had so much way on her that she coursed on and struck the tug's side with a resounding crash. Just in time, however, the hands had got fenders out, so that little harm was done.

"What is the meaning of this outrage?" demanded the King of Spain, leaping aboard the tug at the moment of impact, and shaking his fist at the skipper.

"It means," said the latter, pointing to the churning sea between them and the land, "that I have saved you and all on board from a horrible death."

When the king understood the awful peril in which he and his queen had stood, he turned very pale. Then he clasped their hands in turn.

"You have saved our lives!" exclaimed King Alfonso, gripping Harry's hand tightly. "How can I reward you both?"

Harry's eyes burned bright with excitement. Here was another chance, and he was quick to take it.

"So far as I am concerned, your Majesty," said he, "if you will give me a message to the people of England, to be published in the 'Daily Pictorial,' that will be the finest reward you could possibly give me!"

For a moment only the king hesitated, then he said heartily:

"Yery well; you may tell my good friends the English that I have not run away from the Revolutionaries. I am coming only to put the queen and children in safe hands, before going to Wood Norton. I mean to arrange with King Manoel of Portugal that he and I shall join forces, and fight to regain our kingdoms, or die in the attempt."

Harry had been long enough in a newspaper office to know how pleased the editor would be. His heart beat high with excitement.

"If your Majesty would deign to write that message," he said timidly, encouraged by Queen Ena's kind smile.

"Certainly," said the king, and did so.

Then King Alfonso decided to nay

smile. "Certainly," said the king, and

did so. Then King Alfonso decided to pay



they ate up the ground and landed him at Redruth in good time for his train.

After sending a telegram to the editor stating that he had succeeded, he entered the luncheon-car, and did justice to a hearty meal. It was the best he had had for a month, and he had earned it.

Never in his life had a journey seemed so long to Harry. Long before reaching London he had written down every detail of his experience.

Through the busy streets he buzzed, and down brightly-lighted Fleet Street. It was twenty to eleven, however, before Harry stood in the presence of the editor. Before doing anything else the head of the paper sent the photos to be developed in the proper department.

"Hurry up," he said, "we go to press at twelve!"

Then he found time to glance through what Harry had written before it went to the printer. When he saw the message, which the king himself had written, he laid his hand on Harry's shoulder.

"You're a journalist born, my lad," he said, in a ringing voice.
"This shall be reproduced in the king's own writing. How much money d'you think you've earned for yourself to-day?"

"I don't know, sir."

"Twenty-five pounds. Work such as this is worth paying well for. Report to me in the morning, and you shall be put on the photographers' staff, with a twelve months' agreement."

Almost in a dream, Harry left the editorial sanctum. Then another

shall be put on the photographers' staff, with a twelve months' agreement."

Almost in a dream, Harry left the editorial sanctum. Then another journalist took possession of him, and took him to the room where blocks were being made for printing pictures. Already his plates had been developed and dried in methylated spirit. There was a brilliant violet light in the room, more powerful than daylight. With eager interest Harry watched the process.

"Hurry up—hurry up! The paper's waiting for you!" called the master printer to those who were making Harry's blocks. "If you're not quick we shall miss our trains."

It seemed marvellous to the boy that a great paper should be kept waiting till his own work was ready to go through.

"Just ready," said the artist, who was engaged on the fine work of trimming off the blocks. "They're beauties, too."

"Can I see them printed?" Harry asked eagerly.

"Certainly."

The machines had just started when they entered. With a roar like thunder the great rollers turned, and miles of paper began to whiz between them. At one end of the room they saw the blank paper go in, and at the other the "Daily Pictorial" issued forth, beautifully printed and counted out in dozens.

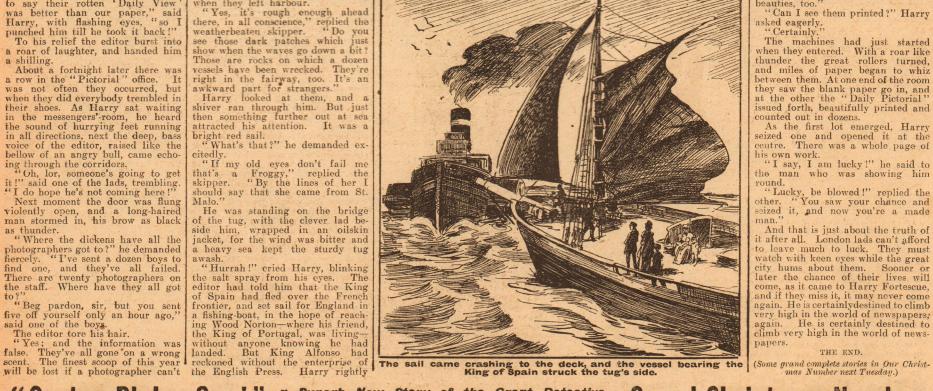
As the first lot emerged, Harry seized one and opened it at the centre. There was a whole page of his own work.

"I say, I am lucky!" he said to the man who was showing him round.

"Lucky, be blowed!" replied the other. "You saw your chance and seized it, and now you're a made

"Lucky, be blowed!" replied the other. "You saw your chance and seized it, and now you're a made

And that is just about the truth of it after all. London lads can't afford to leave much to luck. They must watch with keen eyes while the great city hums about them. Sooner or later the chance of their lives will come, as it came to Harry Fortescue, and if they miss it, it may never come again. He is certainlydestined to climb very high in the world of newspapers, again. He is certainly destined to climb very high in the world of newspapers.





Concluding Chapters of our Grand Serial of the Great Detective, and His Assistants Tinker and Pedro.

How Sexton Blake Mastered the Mob.

TOP!" With the clearness of a clarion's note Blake's voice rang out—so loud and commanding that the foremost men, who had already mounted the steps to assail him, paused, and the great mob at their backs swayed and came to a standstill.

to a standstill.

Like some lonely tower upon a sea-girt rock, defying the element that threatened its destruction, stood the great detective. And never did he show his amazing power over the passions of men so well as in that moment of dire peril.

His very presence, his tall, athletic figure—noble and commanding, in spite of the humble garb he wore—riveted the eyes of all upon him in a sort of awestruck fascination; making the most reckless and most thoughtless there feel that this was no common man, but a being superior to themselves, born with the right to guide or command.

He raised his hand aloft, and a hush fell upon the crowd, so noisily clamouring for violence but the instant before.

Then came his clear, rich voice

again:
"Stop! In the name of Heaven
let us have no more violence! You

have seen how a few fiery words, the first rash blow—like the spark that sets a great city in flames, and levels it to ashes—can start a riot that has finally quenched in blood. What! Have you so soon forgotten that Have you so soon forgotten that terrible Sunday night? So soon when the earth is still freshly-turned upon the graves of those who fell in that mad outbreak?"

fell in that mad outbreak?"

He paused, and a muffled murmur ran through the great crowd.

"If you have indeed forgotten the awful lesson of that night, look upon this building at my back, and think what has just passed within its walls. Upwards of thirty men—your neighbours, and but a few short days ago as free as you are now—will go from hence to fetters; to pass years—precious years—of their lives in gaol. And for what?"

"Because of you an' your tribe,

"Because of you an' your tribe, an' those works up yonder!" cried a man from the rear of the crowd.

The mob began a swelling roar of assent, but Sexton Blake's voice rang out above it:

"No. It

out above it:

"No. It was a fool or a rogue who said that. These men will go to gaol, like those others went to their graves, because a few scoundrels — with one greater scoundrel than all to guide them—led them on, step by step, to that mad night's work just to gain an evil end of their own."

He paused again, and this time the crowd was silent. His words were going home.

He paused again, and this time the crowd was silent. His words were going home.

"Think what blind, misguided fools you have been," he said. "Look back, and recall how often, when the winter frosts locked up the river and the streams, and your wheels stood still, you have sat idle by your fireless grates, starving, and seeing your wives and children starve, because you could work no more until the thaw came and the waters ran again."

"That's a true word," came a voice from the throng, followed by an assenting murmur.

"Then think again," continued Blake; "think how, when the long hot, rainless summer days had made the river run low and foul, and the brooks had vanished, and your buckets rattled in dry wells; when the rich bought water at the price of wine, and the poor were glad to gather the last few drops from a stinking ditch; and how disease always followed, and thinned you out like cattle in the time of plague. Think of all that!"

"It's all true! It's all true!" declared another voice from the crowd. And again that murmur of assent arose.

"And these new waterworks are

"And these new waterworks to change all that—put an end these old-time evils for ever!" s

Blake. "New mills will be built, that will run the whole year round, in spite of Nature's changes. There need be no more men out of work in the winter-time; no more women and children sobbing in cold, fireless rooms for the food that their husbands cannot earn."

A bit of cheering followed this; but Blake raised his hand, speaking again whilst he had the tide with him:

nim:

"And in hot, dry summers there will be no more draining of water from filthy ditches. For, all the year round, month in and month out, rain or draught, frost or heat, there will be an ample supply—pure and constant—in the homes of the poorest among you."

among you."

There was more cheering at this—louder, and only ceasing when Blake's upraised hand was seen

Blake's upraised hand was seen again.

"All this, the new water scheme—which you have reviled, and some of you even helped in a mad attempt to destroy—all this it will bring about, and that at no distant day. Now, choose between us," he said, making his powerful voice ring wide over the market-place; "we, who are striving to bring all this good to your doors, and the lying villains who would poison your ears against us, and whose falsehoods have led you to the violence—that ends in this."

He paused suddenly, for his quick ear had caught the sound first—the solemn notes of the Funeral March, coming from afar.

The crowd became hushed to absolute stillness, awe spread over the face of every man.

Louder and louder it swelled, that grand, and mournfully-familiar strain.

The brass instruments gave it forth like the veiges of strong men crying.

strain.

The brass instruments gave it forth like the voices of strong men crying aloud in their grief; the flutes and fifes with an undertone like the wailing of women. Then the drum—the deep, measured boom of the drum, that seemed to throb again in the heart of each who heard it.

The crowd parted of its own accord, making a broad lane across the

Then the head of the

square. Then the head of the funeral procession appeared.

Another echo of that dreadful Sunday night.

It was the funeral of a mounted constable, who had been wounded in the riot, and lingered long, only to die at last. Having been an Army Reservist, he was given full military begongs.

Reservist, he was given full military honours.

A troop of mounted police rode first, their horses stepping slowly to the solemn notes of the band that followed—the full band of the regiment quartered at Slagford barracks. Then came the hearse, with a file of soldiers, their arms reversed, marching on either side.

After this came the dead man's horse, the empty riding-boots reversed in the stirrups. The animal, led by a constable, went past with drooping head, as if it knew that the familiar rider would never spring into the saddle again.

Then came another body of police, and then the mournful procession slowly marched between the living walls formed by the great hushed crowd, the head of every man uncovered as it passed.

It had no sooner left the market-place and the solemn mysic still re-

overed as it passed.

It had no sooner left the marketplace, and the solemn music still reverberated in the air, when three
prison-vans came out of the courthouse yard and were driven swiftly
down the living lane.

They bore the convicted rioters to
gaol.

gaol

They bore the convicted rioters to gaol.

Thus Sexton Blake's impressive words were doubly driven home, and the lesson was not lost.

The great crowd broke up in silence and rapidly dispersed. The market-place was almost deserted when Sexton Blake came down the steps and made his way across it.

Then, from the shadow of a portico under which he had lurked after picking himself up, Squire Ardoise came forth. He shook his fist at the diminishing figure of the detective, and muttered, or rather hissed between his set teeth:

"Yes, you have defeated me once again. But the end is not yet. Look (Continued on the next page.)

A Superb Series of Articles Specially Written for the BOYS' FRIEND by EUGEN SANDOW.

HIS week, "by request"-as the niggers say at the seaside

—I address a few words to you on the subjects of boxing and wrestling. I suppose every boy at some period of his youth aspires to become a clever boxer, and most boys make some attempt to realise their ambition.

some period of his youth aspires to become a clever boxer, and most boys make some attempt to realise their ambition.

Either sport calls for pluck and endurance, and the boy who has fought has way—to use a popular phrase—at either of these healthy exercises will, nine times out of ten, be a better man in every way than his more timorous fellow.

It is, of course, impossible for me in this short article to give you any teaching in these arts, and even if it were, you would find that an hour "in the ring" would teach you far more and the knowledge would be more permanent than studying the written word for a week.

A healthy skin-action is one of the most necessary ends to secure when training, and the best way to ensure this is by systematic exercise, which not only opens the sweat-glands in a natural manner and works all impurities out of the system, but improves the strength and fitness of the muscles. A "grand perspiration" is a fine cleanser, but it should be secured by natural means.

Twenty minutes' exercise in the morning, an hour's walking, running, skipping, or boxing during the day, followed by a quick cold bath and a brisk rub down, will cause a wonderful improvement in condition in a very short time.

With reference to diet, let this be of a plain character.

Alcohol should be taken sparingly, and there must be no smoking.

Get all the fresh air you can, and all the outdoor exercise also. When walking make the most of it by inhaling—through the nose and exhaling make the most of it by inhaling—through the nose and exhaling make the most of it by inhaling—through the nose and exhaling make the most of its, grand act on it, perform the exercises here given six days a week, and at the

conclusion of your training you will be in a far fitter condition than you have ever been before in your life.

Below I give you an exercise which is much more powerful than it looks at the first glance. It greatly strengthens the shoulder muscles, also the chest and upper abdominal muscles, so is a very fitting one for the present article.

Keep the arms stretched to their fullest extent, put plenty of "go" into the movement, as if you were raising a heavy weight with one hand, and had to overcome consider-



able resistance in lowering the other hand.

EXERCISE 13.—READY POSITION. Same as Exercise 2.

Same as Exercise 2.

MOVEMENT: Raise the right hand forward to the level of the shoulder, reaching forward as far as possible without moving the body. Lower the bells to original position (bells must not touch thighs, and at the same time raise the left arm. Avoid swing.

same time raise the local swing.

Note.—The action is that of placing the bell on a shelf just beyond the reach. Muscles: Deltoid, serratus magnus, and upper pectorals.

(Another splendid "Sandow" article in our Christmas Number Next Tuesday.

THINGS A BOY SHOULD KNOW.

HERE is nothing more likely to injure a boy's eyesight than to read in bed at night. The smallest bird in the world is no Brazilian humming-bird. It is but little larger than a bee.

but little larger than a bee.

A locomotive consists of nearly 6,000 separate pieces.

When Scotland was invaded by the Danes, a night surprise was attempted. To make a success of the manœuvre, the Danish soldiers marched barefooted until one of them happened to tread on a thistle. This caused him to cry out, and his yell gave away the surprise attack. The Scots at once took to arms and defeated their enemy, and from that day the thistle has been the national emblem.

The greatest height ever reached

emblem.
The greatest height ever reached by a balloon was 26,000 feet. Two of the three aeronauts who made this ascent were suffocated.
The oldest League football clubs are Notts County, Notts Forest, and Sheffield Wednesday.
The exiled King of Portugal has only lately celebrated his twenty-first birthday.

It costs £10 a week to run a highpowered touring motor-car, including
the driver's wages.

This is the week when poultry
fanciers like to make their first settings of eggs. In this way the chicks
will be hatched about January 1st,
and so may be entered at shows as
birds of the new year.

An apple-tree is practically worn
out at thirty years, but a cherry will
bear for more than sixty years, whilst
mulberries will remain fruitful for a
couple of centuries.

Here is a splendid recipe for

Here is a splendid recipe for squeaky boots: Fill a shallow dish with boiled linseed-oil, and stand the boots in it for a couple of days so that the soles may become thoroughly saturated.

Only one boy in about three hundred grows to be six feet in height.

The late Prince Consort was the first to introduce Christmas-trees into this country.

Many years ago the choir-boys of Ripon enjoyed the privilege of selling apples at twopence apiece to the members of the congregation after the service on Christmas morning. THE END.

THE TRIALS AND TROUBLES OF A BOY SCOUT.

Our Helpful Series That Will Interest All Boys, Whether Scouts or Not.

To Get the Pathfinder's Badge.

NE of the most important badges for you fellows to aim

badges for you fellows to aim at is the Pathfinder's.

In the first place, until you've won it, you can't be a King's Scout. And in the second place, pathfinding and knowledge of the country is just the very thing that a scout ought to "shine" in above everything else. Here are one or two hints on how to get it:

A Good Game.

The boys in my troop start training for this badge by playing map-games in the evenings and on wet afternoons.

We get a large scale-map of the district round about our head-quarters, and mark on it the two-mile circle inside which the path-finder has to know every road, lane, and footpath. If youre in a town, you know, it is only one mile.

The map is laid

you know, it is only one mile.

The map is laid on the table, and the fellows get round it so that they can all see it comfortably.

Then the first chap looks at the map and calls out the name of a street or road somewhere within the circle. The other chaps have to try and find it within a minute. The first one to find it scores a point, and it is his turn to "call." If nobody finds it, the fellow who called scores a point and has another call. At he end of the game—we play for half an hour at a time—the points are added up, and the man with the most, of course, wins.

This is a splendid way of learning the neighbourhood. You will be surprised to find how quickly you get to know all the different roads, until it is practically impossible for anybody to catch you napping.

How to Get There.

How to Get There.

Then we go on to another game on the same lines.

Each scout has a slip of paper and a pencil. They all get round the map in the same way as before, and the Scoutmaster or another fellow acts as they learn them from the guidemap.

When a fellow can do all that, he is a pretty good pathfinder.

THE SCOUTMASTER.

He calls out two different points—say, High Street to Oak Lane—the pelice-station to the old mill. The other chaps look at the map and write down on their slips of paper the names of the roads they would pass through on their way from one of the places to the other. The fellow who puts down the best and quickest way in the shortest time scores a point. And so on.

When the fellows know their own bit of district well, we get a bigger map and mark in the five and twenty-five mile circles.

We play just the same games with these, but only the principal roads and places in the five-mile radius and the principal towns in the twenty-five one count.

On fine Saturdays we go out, and each fellow in turn has to lead the

count.

On fine Saturdays we go out, and each fellow in turn has to lead the troop the nearest way to a particular place given him somewhere within the two-mile circle. You can go on like this for a whole afternoon and have a jolly time.

The Secuts Guide-Map.

The Secuts Guide-Mar.

Now, of course, the budding pathfinder has to find out how many hayricks, strawricks, waggons, horses, cattle, sheep, and pigs there are on the neighbouring farms; or, in a town, where the butchers, bakers, cornchandlers, forage-merchants, and the like are. And, in town or country, where the police-stations, hospitals, doctors, telegraph and telephone-offices, fire-engines, turncocks, blacksmiths, and jobmasters are.

This is a bit of a job for one fellow to tackle singlehanded, so what we do is this:

We make a big map, and enter on it all the different places mentioned. Then we send out patrols to find out the information wanted—the number of horses at a farm, and so on. This is all entered up on the map.

Then all the chaps training for their Pathfinder's Badge gather their information from this map. They draw a similar map of their own from memory or from the ground, and enter all their particulars on it just as they learn them from the guidemap.

When a fellow can do all that, he

"The New Broom,"

Maxwell Scott's Latest and Best School Serial, Commences Next Tuesday in Our

to it, my fine fellow! I vowed to ruin Sidney Temple, and I'll achieve it yet, for all your watchfulness and skill! I have another card to play, and it is a trump!"

In the Great Reservoir—A Terrible Mistake.

HE river which, bridled by the great dam, was to fill the mighty reservoir and furnish the three towns with a constant supply of water, sprang from a lake in the hills about ten miles beyond Redcliffe Dale.

This lake formed an important item in Sexton Blake's carefully-worked-out scheme for partly filling the unfinished reservoir, and giving an early supply of water to the towns.

an early supply of water to the towns.

Gathering, as it did, all the rainfall on the surrounding hills, it was liable to rise rapidly after storms, or in winter, when melted snow poured into it off the hillsides.

At such times the river swept down into the dale, a mighty foaming torrent of thrice its ordinary volume. For this to happen now would, of course, mean the destruction of the unfinished reservoir, and the letting loose of an overwhelming flood down Redoliff Dale, with awful consequences to every homestead, town, and village within it.

To guard against this had been Sexton Blake's greatest care; it had formed the most difficult part of his daring plan.

Under his direction a temporary lock

formed the most difficult part of his daring plan.
Under his direction a temporary lock had been built across the river just below where it emerged from the lake. At the lake itself he had a signal-station communicating with the lock, so that the men on watch there might give instant notice to those on duty at the lock of a rise in the lake's layer

day of the trials in Slagford doubly momentous one for

The day of the trials in Siagrord was a doubly momentous one for him.

For upon that day it was his intention to let the water into the reservoir for the first time — an anxious experiment indeed.

After returning from the town, he mounted a horse lent him by Sir Richard Blaise, and rode out to the hills to inspect the lock and signal-station. Before leaving the works he told Tinker—whom, boy though he was, he left in charge as the one he could trust best of all—to open the great valve and let the water into the reservoir at a certain hour. Proud of the trust reposed in him by his great master, Tinker took every precaution to guard against the least mischance.

The enormous valve, situated in the bottom of the reservoir near the centre, was operated by a chain passing over a series of pulleys to a drum in the engine-house at the far end of the great dam.

The engineer in charge had been told at what moment precisely to raise the valve, and about half an hour before that time Tinker thought he would make a complete tour of the works to see that everything was in order down to the least detail.

Taking a lantern with him—for it was now late in the evening, and quite dark—he started off on his rounds.

His chief care was the great valve

was now late in the evening, and quite dark—he started off on his rounds.

His chief care was the great valve itself—to see that the chain was free, and the lifting-gear in perfect order at the lower part. To ascertain this, he had to descend into the reservoir itself—some fifty feet deep—by the iron ladder at the side.

It was a weird place the bed of that huge reservoir by night.

Above—far, far above—shone the wan night sky—a vast oblong patch of lightish grey that seemed to actually rest upon the towering black walls of that stupendous tank. For such it was—by far the most enormous ever built by man.

The light, iron bridge which spanned it from side to side, seemed from that depth to be but a thing of packthread, a frail thing that a crow, alighting upon it might have broken with his weight.

Yet Tinker knew that it was strong enough to bear a score of men.

The floor of the reservoir, evenly

strong enough to bear a score of men.

The floor of the reservoir, evenly spread with pure white sand, reminded Tinker—as he tramped across it lantern in hand—of part of the Great Desert, over which he had travelled with Sexton Blake some time ago—it was so vast, so grey, and so lonely.

But he did not let such dreamy thoughts interfere with the duty he had come there to fulfil.

He went from one pulley to another along the length of the great

He went from one pulley to another along the length of the great chain as it passed across the bed of the reservoir on short iron pillars

until it reached the huge valve in the middle. He found all as it should be, and

the middle.

He found all as it should be, and the valve itself—shut now—seemed to be in perfect order.

He leant over, lantern in hand, to examine if the lid of the valve was free of stones or loose, forgotten bolts. As he was thus engaged, standing close to the rim of the valve, with the chain lying in slack coils at his feet, he was startled by a distant, clanking sound, followed by a sharp, rattling noise.

The chain was in motion! The engineer had forgotten, or misunderstood, the precise moment when he was to start the lifting gear!

Anyway, it was an error with fearful consequences for Tinker.

He had no time to leap aside. A coil of the chain closed round his ankles, and he was helplessly dragged along until the first pulley was reached. There it pinned him against the upright iron pillar in which the pulley worked, and finally stopped.

Tinker managed to get upon his feet, and tried, until his fingers bled with the effort, to loosen the coil of the chain from round his legs.

In vain. Had it been a solid iron manacle riveted there his efforts could not have been more unavailing.

He desisted at last, knowing it to be hopeless, and leant, exhausted, the blood streaming

blood streaming from his torn fingers, against from his torn fingers, against the iron pillar, like a helpless captive chained to the stake. Hark! What was that?

was that?

was that?

A rumbling sound, like the fall of a cataract—the gush of a mighty mass of water. The valve was open, and the water pouring in!

ing in!

The reservoir would fill. The water would rise, as he knew all too well, at the rate of several inches a minute. And he was a helpless prisoner at its lowest depth!

He shouted and shouted again, until his voice broke and he could shout no more.

more.

It was useless.
The lofty walls
threw back his
despairing cry as
if in mockery.
But he knew no
human voice
would answer;
none were near
enough to hear
him.

enough to hear him.

And then—then
— Ah, merciful Heaven! He saw a glistening circle appear

around him; afar as yet, but creeping nearer, near, over the dull grey sand

It was the slow, but certain, closing in of death!

A Noble Atonement

O see death stealthily approaching, creeping on and on, inch by inch, and to be powerless to avert it—that is indeed a bitter thing! Yet such was Tinker's appalling situation now.

The middle portion of the great reservoir's bed, where the pair of pulley-bearings to which he was thus hopelessly chained happened to be placed, was slightly higher than the surrounding parts, and thus he got a brief respite. brief respite

was brief indeed!

The inlet valve by which the water was now entering was of great size, made so purposely, because otherwise the reservoir, owing to its immense capacity, would have taken weeks to fill.

The water therefore poured in at the rate of hundreds of gallons per minute—an enormous stream fully six feet in diameter.

Tinker could hear it gushing over the rim of the valve, rising to the height of several feet, and falling upon the bed of the reservoir with a crush-ing sound, mingled with the hiss of

s own spray. But the crashing sharpness of the

sound rapidly grew less and less, and was succeeded by a dull, booming noise, like that made by the fall of a cataract into a mountain pool locked in by surrounding rocks.

And as those rocks would have beaten back the roar of the fall in a thousand echoes, so did the lofty walls of the reservoir repeat that hollow boom, until it became one mighty roar, like unbroken peals of loudest thunder—a deafening, maddening sound that made the boy's head throb as though some giant hand was showering blows upon it.

But the noise became gradually muffled, and finally ceased. The water had risen to the level of the valve's rim—had, in fact, covered it.

Tinker well knew what that meant.

The rim of the valve was about four feet above the surface of the reservoir's bed at its lowest part; that would be almost exactly level with his feet, where he stood, the helpless captive of an evil chance, upon the higher portion.

It could only be a matter of minutes now ere the water reached him!

nigher portion.

It could only be a matter of minutes now ere the water reached him!

He stooped, and once more battled with the chain to unloose its deadly grip. It defied his mangled fingers as before, and he was compelled to desist. That at least was hopeless.

He tried once more to raise a shout for help. But his price help.

l once more to raise a sho But his voice broke in

CHRISTMAS

is Presented with the

This pen-and-ink

ANSWERS

reproduction gives only a faint idea of the beauties of the picture, which measures 10} in. wide

by 7½ in. deep, and when framed makes a beautiful picture 18 in. wide by 11 in. deep. It is NOT a coloured plate, but a photogravure printed in an artistic

shade of brown.

Other features of

"Can 'Oo Mend My Dolly?"

The Photogravure which is Taking the Country by Storm

"ANSWERS."

It was answered!
He heard a voice—a voice that sounded queerly familiar, like one out of a dream—calling in response from the distant edge of the reservoir; then came the pat, pat of running feet upon the granite wall, at last ringing on the slender iron bridge above his head.

He looked up. A dark form was bending over the rail, a face—an indistinct blur in the gloom—was looking down.

"Anybody below there?" came the voice again. And he knew it now; it was the voice of Sam Bleek—Slimy Sam! His old enemy!

Sam! His old enemy!

But enemy or dearest friend, the voice was music to him now.

"Yes, yes!" he shouted back, making his now cracked voice as strong as he could. "It is I—Ted Packer! The valve-chain has got me by the foot! I can't get away, and the water will soon be over me!"

"Ted Packer!" he heard the name ejaculated from above. And his heart sank. What if Slimy Sam, learning who it was, turned away and left him to his fate! This terrible doubt was soon solved.

"Throw up one of yer hands so's I can make out where yer are!" cried the lad above. "Then look out, 'cos I'm comin'!"

NUMBER

and the strain, as with sheer muscular strength Sam hauled the rigid chain back far enough to slacken it.

The well-nigh fatal circle of links around his ankles fell away, and he was free. He let his legs rise, and floated, just as Sam Bleek came to the surface.

was free. He let his legs fise, and floated, just as Sam Bleek came to the surface.

"Think yer can swim to the iron ladder, Ted?" he spluttered.

"I'll try!" answered Tinker.

But he never could have managed it without Sam's help, for his legs were so cramped as to be nearly useless. Nor could he have mounted the almost-perpendicular ladder without the strong arm of his once inveterate enemy to aid him.

"Now yer've got to run like mad or yer'll catch cold," said Sam, when they had gained the top of the granite wall. "Wot's the nearest place where yer can peel an' git a rub down?"

"There's the office," said Tinker.

"It isn't far, and I've got plenty of dry togs there—enough for both. Come on!"

"No, I ain't comin'," said the other lad, turning away his face, and speaking in a strange, husky voice. "You cut off alone. I'll do all right. I'm a tough 'un, I am!"

But he shivered as he said it.

"You're coming with me!" declared Tinker. "I want your help. I couldn't walk it alone!"

Sam yielded at that, and helped Tinker to hobble along, the latter wondering as they went how Sam came to turn up at that opportune moment, for he had not been seen at the works or anywhere in the neighhourhood since that memorable Saturday afternoon of the "badger hunt." hourhood since that memorable Saturday afternoon of the "badger

Saturday afternoon of the badger hunt."

When they reached the office Tinker had almost to force Sam to enter. But he had his way.

There was a good fire burning in the little room at the back, and Tinker, as he said, had a plentiful supply of clothes there, for latterly he and Sexton Blake had entirely shifted their quarters to the iron shanty in which the office was situated, so as to be constantly present at the works night and day.

The two boys soon stripped, had a rub down, and changed into dry garments.

ments.

Just then Sexton Blake came in, having just ridden back from his visit of inspection at the hills. The detective stared, as well he might, at seeing Slimy Sam there, and an ominous frown gathered on his face.

Sam tried to make a bolt of it, but Tinker held his arm.

In rapid, vivid style he told Blake-of his grim mishap in the reservoir, ending by grasping his late enemy's hand, and exclaiming in fervent tones:

hand, and exclaiming in fervent tones:

"He saved my life, sir—he saved my life! Isn't he a brick?"

"It's nothin'," faltered Sam, hanging his head—" it ain't nothin', seein' as I went near to gittin' yer murdered up in them woods!"

And he would have bolted through the doorway, but Sexton Blake caught him by the hand, wringing it warmly, as he said:

"A last good deed wipes out many bad ones! The fellow who would risk his life for another must be sound at heart! Sam Bleck, there's the makings of a fine fellow in you. You only want your chance!"

And in after days he saw that Sam had it.

The Great Storm.

The Great Storm.

HE days that followed were busy ones for Sexton Blake and Tinker. There were a thousand things, great and small, still to be completed in preparation for the crowning event of all—the hour when the water should be let into the huge conduit on its way to the three towns.

For, Sidney Temple having taken a trip to the Continent for the benefit of his health, the great detective was still in sole command of the works, and Tinker had naturally become his lieutenant.

And right well both did their parts. The men liked "Mr. Packer," as Blake was now called, and worked cheerfully under him, for his orders were always clear and direct. He got a thing done promptly to time, yet he never hurried them.

And "Ted Packer" was just as popular with both men and boys.

One great responsibility was now

yet he never hurried them.

And "Ted Packer" was just as popular with both men and boys.

One great responsibility was now off Sexton Blake's hands. The stupendous bridge across the valley was completed at last, and thrown open to the public.

That splendid feat of engineering elicited a tremendous outburst of admiration throughout the country-indeed its fame soon spread to other lands. But in reality it was less of a

Are a Wonderful Christmas Story, by GUY THORNE (the Author of "When It Was Dark"), and a Magnificent New Serial Story, Entitled, "THE POWER OF GOLD."

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feeble croak, and again the echoes came back in cruel mockery.

Looking up, he searched with straining eyes the far-stretching brim of the huge reservoir, hoping to see some figure passing along its edge. But no; the hard, clear-cut line lay ruled unbroken against the cold grey sky.

No help was there.

No help was there.

In dread he turned his gaze downward again. He shuddered. That darkly-glistening circle—advancing rapidly once the higher portion of the bed was reached—was now within six feet of where he stood!

bed was reached—was now within six feet of where he stood!

In a spell of fascination as horrible as it was intense, he began to watch that fast-diminishing circle of dull white sand, then left that and fell to watching the portion of the chain that stretched before him, counting each link as it vanished as a moment of his fleeting respite—told off and gone.

He tore his eyes from it at last, thinking to fix them on the stars, because they are always calm, and speak of hope. But the stars were gone, the sky had clouded fast.

Then he felt an icy chill at his feet—the first little wave lapped over them!

After that the water seemed to rise with fearful rapidity. It was soon level with his knees, then with his waist. It reached his armpits, and childishly he beat at it with his hands—as if that would keep it down!

It covered his shoulders, and then he managed, with the last effort of sheer despair, to raise a loud hoarse shout.

Tinker held up a hand, which showing whitish, served to indicate his whereabouts. Then, looking upwards, he saw the dark figure mount upon the almost-invisible handrail of the bridge, remain poised there erect for a single second, then leave it to shoot downwards almost as a stone might drop.

CHRISTMAS NUMBER

A splash, so close that it sent the water surging over his head, an interval that seemed to him hours long, then the face of Sam Bleek appeared within a few inches of his own.

It had been a beautiful dive, neat, daring, and well directed. But then, as Tinker afterwards remembered, Sam Bleek was an expert in the art of swimming and diving; it was his one great accomplishment.

For another second he held on to the iron bearings of the pulley at Tinker's side to recover his breath. Then he panted out:

"Hold on another jiff or so; I'm going under agen to feel where the chain's got yer!"

And with a little upward jump, and a bob like a moorhen, down he went.

And with a little upward jump, and a bob like a moorhen, down he went.

"He'll never do it—he'll never do it!" murmured Tinker, closing his mouth and drawing his breath, for the water was now level with his lips.

But he was out in his dismal fore-boding.

But he was out in his dismai fore-boding.
Sam Bleek was a powerfully-built lad with a strength beyond his years.
His sinewy hands, once they got a grip upon the kink in the chain, were not to be denied. Tinker felt the tug

"Sexton Blake, Spy!" a Superb New Story of the Great Detective, Commences Next Tuesday in Our

marvel than the gigantic water scheme of which it formed a part. His hands thus set free, Sexton Blake was able to devote his un-divided attention to the water-works, and they rapidly approached com-pletion.

and they rapidly approached completion.

One morning—as often—he made a complete round of the works, and saw that but little remained to be done. It was with some excusable-pride, not unmingled with a sense of relief, that he saw the end of his labours in Redeliff Dale well in sight.

The great dam was finished; the

The great dam was finished; the filter-beds, the pumping-stations, the miles-long conduit with its far-spreading system of pipes—all were completed.

completed.
So, too, was the vast reservoir, although the tons of cement in the upper part would take months of hardening yet ere the water dare be allowed to reach its full height.
But although only half filled, the vast sheet of water already looked like an inland sea, so immense was its extent.

like an inland sea, so immense was its extent.

"What if that stupendous mass broke the walls that hold it, and poured down the valley?" said Blake to Tinker, as they stood and surveyed it. "An awful thought!"

For in spite of all the precautions he had taken, dark doubts would still invade his mind at times.

But Tinker was not troubled with any doubts at all. Sexton Blake had the thing in hand, therefore it couldn't go wrong! For Tinker's faith in hs great master was unbounded.

"It couldn't happen, guy'nor—

bounded.
"It couldn't happen, guv'nor—simply couldn't happen!" he declared. "You're fixed it all a jolly sight too well! And we haven't any plots to fear now. The Gipsy Squire and his gang are knocked out. We're not likely to hear from them again!"

But the detective had his doubts. e was by no means so sure about

But the detective had his doubts. He was by no means so sure about that!

Yet the days passed and nothing went amiss. No hint of farther plotting was discovered. Ralph Ardoise might have been dead, or gone from the country, or, at least, have abandoned his plot against Sidney Temple, for he gave no more signs of evil activity.

The unrest that followed the riots gradually died down. The discontent in the towns, no longer fostered by the agents of the Gipsy Squire, began to burn out for want of fanning. Tranquillity once more returned to Redeliff Dale.

Then, as though man having tired of violence, Nature was bent upon taking her turn, there came the day of the great storm—the mid-winter storm which will be remembered in Redeliff Dale and all that part of England for many a long year to come!

come!
Nature seemed to have thrown all her forces into the field that day.
In the still hours of the night before a fog crept over the hills, where fogs were not often seen. A sharp frost came with the dawn, and the surface of the water in the great reservoir was shot across with lances of thin ice.

the surface of the water in the great reservoir was shot across with lances of thin ice.

Then the wind rose and blew the fog away, revealing a sullen copper-coloured sky, where the clouds were so thick as to have no separate

coloured sky, where the clouds were so thick as to have no separate shape.

The wind quickly increased in violence, and came roaring over the hills, driving through the lattice of the great bridge across the valley with a wild chorus of shrieks and screams, as though a troop of witches had ridden on the gale, and were clinging to the iron fabric, bent on tearing it down if they could.

Then, as suddenly as the wind had come, came the snow.

There were no "first few flakes of the fall"—it seemed to burst out of the lowering sky in a mass that darkened the air like a premature night, and in a few minutes the earth was whitened far as the eye could reach, covered many inches deep upon the level, and piled in the drifts to the height of a man's waist.

Then it suddenly lulled, and even the gale seemed to hold its breath, as a jagged line of livid blue fire shot across the blackness of the heavens, and made what had been darkness light too intense for human eye to endure.

It was followed by a crash of thunder that shook the solid earth. Then came the rain!

It was mingled with the snow at first, but that soon ceased, and the rain fell alone. It fell not in drops, but in heavy streams, and the snow, rapidly as it had covered the earth, was far more rapidly swept away, until not a vestige remained.

The lightning and the thunder, like the snow, did not last long; but the

rain, though abating somewhat in violence, continued to fall throughout the whole of that memorable day. And the darkness remained, so that evening came on with nothing to mark the change but the passing of the house.

with nothing to the hours.

Little labour was done that day at the works. The men crowded into the shanties of Ginger Town, and passed the time as best they could, with the incessant deluge keeping up a maddening clatter on the iron roofs above their heads, and the wind threatening with each fresh gust to uproot every one of the little buildings bodily and carry it away.

Sexton Blake and Tinker alone braved the storm.

They made the round of the works at intervals all day long to see that everything was safe. The great dam Blake visital from hour to hour, anxious to hour if the water showed any signs of rising beyond the level he had calculated as the utmost limit of safety.

of safety.

It seemed to keep at that level in spite of the floods that he knew must be pouring down the hillsides into the lake from whence the river

the lake from whence the river flowed.

On his last visit in the evening he could detect no change, and he turned back to the office-shanty with a sigh of relief, feeling that all was secure; the lock he had built below the lake was doing its work well.

When he got back, Tinker had also returned from his round in the opposite direction, and, stripping off their drenched oilskins, they sat down by the fire for a talk before turning in. Suddenly Blake broke off in the midst of a remark, listening with a startled look.

He had detected another sound above the turnoil of the wind and rain. Tinker had heard it too.

"What's that, guv'nor?" he said.

"The river is rising!" exclaimed Blake, springing to his feet.

"Can't be—can't be!" cried Tinker. "The man at the lock would telegraph on the office wall, which communicated with the lock-house in the hills. The needle was perfectly steady. The warning bell had not been rung.

the must steady. The warning steady. The warning been rung.

Sexton Blake went over to the instrument and rang up the lock-keeper. There was no response. Again and again! There came no awing ring.

Again and again! There as answering ring.
"There is something evil in this!" cried Blake. "Tinker, I am going to ride up to the lock! Either it has been swept away, house and all, and the man with it, or this is the work of our enemies!"

"I'm going with you, guv'nor!" declared Tinker. And Blake did not say him nay, for it was likely enough that he might sorely need his help.

Success at Last.

HEY did not wait to resume their oilskins, but dashed out just as they were, save for storm-caps, pulled well down and secured with strings.

secured with strings.

Blake had a couple of horses—the finest in Sir Richard Blaise's stud—kept in a temporary stable ready for an emergency like this. They soon had the animals saddled, and were mounted and away.

They made a slight detour to take a look at the dam. To his horror, Blake saw that the water had already mounted several feet above the safety level, and was evidently rising fast.

"Ride—ride, Tinker!" he cried.
"Upon our speed depends the lives of thousands to-night! If that dam bursts, Heaven help the folks in Redeliff Dale!"

Tinker needed no urging. He

Redcliff Dale!"
Tinker needed no urging. He knew the awful peril far too well.
They had neither whip nor spur, nor did they need them. The noble animals they bestrode seemed to understand that this was no common errand, but one of life or death. At a touch of the heel, a word, they bounded forward, and that awful ride began.

bounded forward, and that awful rice began.

For awful indeed it was?

The rain beat down upon them in sheets, blinding man and steed; the terrific wind roared at them as if it would dispute every inch of their advance

advance.

They rode upon the turfy bank at the river's side because it was the nearest way, and they had nothing but the roar of the swellen torrent to guide them, the darkness being so intense that eyes were useless.

At ordinary times that bank stood some twenty feet above the stream. Now the water washed over it in foamy wayes.

The horses splashed through it knee-deep, and thrice were nearly

swept away with their riders. Yet Blake and Tinker dare not go farther from the torrent. It was their only guide. They did not exchange a word.

guide.

They did not exchange a word.
They had no breath for speech.

With each mile they rode the awful evidences of the effects of the storm became-more apparent. Huge portions of the river's bank had been engulfed and swept down in the rushing flood. Solid ground over which Blake had ridden but the day before was now buried under a broad sheet of roaring, foaming water.

Once only did they draw rein during that wild ride:

This was to rest the panting horses before beginning the last steep ascent towards the lock.

Blake had brought a powerful storm-lantern, wrapped in a bit of oilskin. This he now uncovered, and, holding it aloft, threw its light over the maddened swirl of waters. He looked for wreckage from the lock-house floating down.

He saw none. Uprooted trees sweet past, and now and again he

He saw none. Uprooted trees swept past, and now and again he caught sight of the carcasses of sheep, washed out of some fold upon the hillsides. But that was all. There was nothing to suggest that the lockhouse had been swept away.

again, and, passing the lock, rode to a spot close to where the river left the lake. There its banks were of sandstone rock, and upon one side overhung a wild ravine, of great depth, and with another stream flowing through its rugged bed.

At a point on the river's bank just above it Sexton Blake—with a thought for every emergency—had caused a mine to be excavated and kept charged with explosives. The little iron shanty, to which the electric firing-line led, was placed at a safe distance, concealed among the bush-grown rocks.

But Sexton Blake knew where to find it even in that pitchy darkness.

"Lead the horses away, Tinker," he said, "and stand by them in case they try to stampede when the shock comes."

Tinker led the animals some two

comes."

Tinker led the animals some two or three hundred yards back from the river's bank, and there waited; holding the bridles firmly in his hand. Sexton Blake disappeared into

hand. Sexton Blake disappeared into the iron shanty.

An interval of one or two seconds.
Then the earth seemed to sway and throb under Tinker's feet. The horses screamed and plunged. It needed all his strength to hold them.

A dull, sustained roar followed, and

thought meself a bad 'un, but I'm an angel alongside o' you! To kill thousands jest to wreak yer hate on one man! Give me my money tonight an' let me go! T've had enough of you!"

Ardoise laughed again.

"Come back to my house, and you shall have it," he said. "You're welcome to go. I have no further use for you. I have played the last round of the game—and won!"

"Look! There's a light comin' yonder!" exclaimed Bates, pointing ahead. "Someone's riding our way with a lantern!"

It was the light of Blake's stormlantern they saw down the track they were riding, and not a great distance away.

lantern they saw down the track they were riding, and not a great distance away.

Ardoise growled out a savage imprecation. It little suited him to be seen in the neighbourhood of the lock upon that night—so likely to be followed by one of the most awful disasters that England had ever known. known.

known.

"A plague upon them, whoever they be!" he hissed between his teeth. Then, to Bates: "Come, we must not be encountered here! There is a track close here down into the is a track close here down into the ravine; we can strike for home through the woods. I know every inch of the way. Follow me. And, mind, the descent is steep. Give your horse his head: He will take better care of you than you can of him?"

him."

He turned off the river bank and rode boldly down a rugged, narrow path, little more than a sheep-track, which descended into the ravine

which descended into the ravine below.

It was steep indeed. But the well-trained hunters they bestrode, given a slack bridle, picked their way down without mishap.

"Now," said Ardoise, when they had safely reached the bottom of the ravine, "we have but to follow this stream, and it leads us to the woods. Careful! It is tricky going!"

Riding cautiously among the boulders and wild undergrowth which covered the bed of the ravine, they followed as best they could the crawling stream that ran through its entire extent. entire extent.

crawling stream that ran through its entire extent.

There was no path here, for seldom indeed did a human being visit that wild and almost inaccessible spot.

It was slow riding, and they had gone but a third of the way down the ravine when the roar of the exploding mine smote upon their cars.

"What is that?" cried Bates, keeping his seat with difficulty upon his rearing horse.

The Gipsy Squire's answer was lost in a yet louder, and far more appalling roar, as the pent-up waters of the river above poured, a mighty torrent, into the ravine.

In an instant—for it seemed no more—men and horses were engulfed in a swirling flood that filled the narrow gorge from end to end, and from side to side, to a depth of twenty feet.

It was a honeless structed and

from side to side, to a depth of twenty feet.

It was a hopeless struggle, and soon over. The flood washed the lifeless bodies of riders and steeds out at the far end of the ravine, and there left them, to stare with glassy eyes at the coming dawn.

we have no space to tell of all the glories of that great day, when, with a golden key, Maggie Blaise turned the mechanism which let the water into the huge conduit, and her father, Sir Richard, in a neat and telling speech, declared the whole vast enterprise brought to a triumphant finish. Sidney Temple was there, quite recovered now, and looking very proud and happy, not merely on account of his great professional success, but because fair Maggie Blaise had that very morning given him what, in his eyes, was the greatest reward of all—her hand. Flags fluttered from every part of the works. A mighty crowd cheered all the speeches.

Many who had long opposed and reviled the great water scheme were loudest in their praises now, in this its hour of completion and success.

Two figures stood a little apart from the crowd, smiling on all these triumphs.

They were "Bob Packer" and

from the crowd, smiling on all these triumphs.

They were "Bob Packer" and "Ted."

Very quietly they slipped away when the gay scene was at its height, and the train was soon bearing them to London.

And the world at large, loud in its praises of the Redcliff Dale water scheme, little knew how much of that great success was owing to Sexton Blake, Foreman.

THE END.

(Another superb Sexton Blake Serial starts next week in our Grand Christmas Number.)



A coil of chain closed round Tinker's ankles and pinned him to the upright pillar. He tried in vain to get free, and the water was stealthily creeping up, inch by inch.

"No; this is treachery!" he mut-tered. "Our enemies have been at work here! Ride on, Tinker—ride

on!'
They urged their horses up the last steep ascent, and the lock came in

steep ascent, and the lock cannot steep ascent, and the lock wide open, and the flood was pouring through like a mighty cataract!

It was impossible to close them now—the machinery would have been powerless to force the gates against that tremendous rush of water!

"I knew it! I knew it!" cried Blake. "To the lock-house, Tinker wick!"

"I knew it! I knew it!" cried Blake. "To the lock-house, Tinker—quick!"

The little building of iron and wood was speedily reached. Dismounting under shelter of its wall, they entered, for the door stood open. The first object which met their eyes, as the detective flashed the light of his lamp around the room, was the lock-keeper, lying bound hand and foot upon the floor.

"It was two men in masks as done it!" he gasped, as Tinker cut his bonds and released him. "Came upon me sudden, just as I was going to ring you up about the flood. But I'd shut the lock-gates directly the storm began, so the water can't have got down to the works, and—"

Blake did not stay to enlighten him as to the terrible truth.

"Come, Tinker!" he cried.

"There is but one thing now—to explode the mine!"

They were soon in the saddle

from the spot where the mine had been laid a column of fire shot up into the air, crested with a balloon-shaped cloud of whitish smoke, in which huge masses of the displaced rocks and earth could be distinctly Then followed a terrific, thunderous

Then followed a terrific, thunderous sound, as the swollen river, seizing eagerly upon its new vent, streamed through the rent in its banks, and plunged into the ravine below.

When Sexton Blake rejoined Tinker for the return ride along its margin, the water was already falling rapidly to its normal level.

The awful peril was past.

The awful peril was past.

A little earlier than this, two men came out of the lock-house, each having a black mask covering the upper portion of his face.

Having toiled at the windlass until the lock-gates stood wide, letting the flood-water gush through in a mighty torrent, they mounted a couple of horses that were tethered near, and rode rapidly down the river's bank.

"It's done! It's done!" cried the foremost, with a laugh of triumph.

"Yes, it's done, Squire Ardoise," said the other, in the guttural tones of Bates, the ex-groom. "But have yer thought wot it means?"

"It means the ruin of Sidney Temple!" cried the Gipsy Squire, with another exultant laugh.

"Ay that, an' the death of 'most every soul in them three towns yonder!" said Bates. "Squire, I

YOU CAN START READING BELOW.



INTRODUCTION FOR THE NEW READER.

Philip Ashley, a poor, but brilliant, lad at a Council school, risks his life in saving the only daughter of Sir David Rendle. In recognition of this brave action, Sir David Rodfrey Mortimer, his nephew.

Mortimer turns out to be nothing but a humbug and hypocrite, and from the time Philip enters the school plots of dishemesty, etc., are laid for him, and Mortimer does all he can to get Ehil disgraced. So far he is most successful, and Ashley is placed in the isolation room until Dr. Paul's return to the college, when it is expected he will be expelled.

Dr. Paul suddenly returns from London, and on the way to the college he overhears a conversation bearing upon the plot to get Philip expelled.

It appears that Jim Cocker is the possessor of certain letters belonging to Dr. Paul, and to keep the contents of these letters from becoming public property the master of the college had had to pay several sums of money to Cocker. Unable at last to meet with the demands of Cocker, Dr. Paul decides

to resign his position

at Rayton.

In a curious fashion Philip learns that
the letters are hidden under the floor of
Cocker's house, and so he and Dr. Paul
make a journey to Highfield, and recover
them

them.

Dr. Paul meets Sir David Rendle at Highfield, and Ashley makes his way back to Rayton, while the master of the college remains behind to expose the whole truth of Mortimer's wrongdoing to his uncle.

(Now read this week's instalment.)

The Beginning of the End.

FTER breakfast next morning
Mr. Walker went up to the Mr. Walker went up to the room where his youngest daughter, Gertie, was recovering from her recent attack of pneumonia.

"Well, my dear," he said, kissing her, "I'm afraid you had a bad night last night."

"I had," she confessed. "The storm kept me awake until after three, and then, just after I had fallen asleep, I was wakened again by a ring at the front-door bell. Nurse says it was one of the boys."

"It was Ashley," said her father. "He and the doctor went to Highfield yesterday on private business. The doctor remained there, but Ashley came back and arrived here about four o'dock this morning."

"Speaking of Ashley," said Gertie nervously, "do you remember what you said on the night I fell ill? You said that Ashley would be expelled when the doctor came back from London."

"I did," said her father. "Since

said that Ashley would be expelled when the doctor came back from London."

"I did," said her father. "Since then, however, the doctor has discovered that one of the charges against Ashley—that of visiting the Blue Boar—is a wicked invention on the part of Mortimer and Heath."

"Then Ashley won't be expelled?"

"I don't think so. But there is another serious charge against him which hasn't been dealt with yet. He is accused of having stolen a five-pound note belonging to Heath."

"That's what I want to hear about," said Gertie. "I think perhaps I—I might be able to throw some light on the subject."

"You!" exclaimed her father, in amazement.

"You!" exclaimed her father, in amazement.

She nodded.
"Please tell me about it," she said.
"Ashley was seen to go into Heath's study and take something off the mantelpiece and put it into his pocket," said Mr. Walker. "Later, Heath missed a letter containing a five-pound note which he had left on the mantelpiece. He charged Ashley with having stolen the note, but although Ashley denied the charge, he wouldn't say why he went into

the study or what it was that he took off the mantelpiece. That's the whole story in a nut-shell. But why are you

whole story in a nutshell. But why are you crying?"

"Because it is I who have got Ashley into all this trouble!" sobbed Gertie. "It is all my fault."

And then, through her tears, she told her father how she had persuaded Philip to go to Heath's study and get her the photograph of herself which she had given to Heath, and which Heath had refused to return when they had quarrelled.

"Ashley could have cleared himself at any time by betraying my secret," she said, "but for my sake he held his tongue and allowed himself to be branded as a thief." rose to his feet.

himself to be branded as a thief."

Mr. Walker rose to his feet.

"And I believed him guilty!" he said. "How I have misjudged the boy! I will go to him at once and..." boy! I will go and—'' and—'' There was a knock at the door. A housemaid entered.

"If you please, sir," she said, arturned. He

housemaid entered.

"If you please, sir," she said,
"Dr. Paul has just returned. He
has brought Sir David Rendle with
him. They are now in the doctor's
study, and the doctor says will you
please go to them, and will you
please bring Mortimer and Heath
and Ashley with you?"

Mr. Welker glaves of at Gavine

Mr. Walker glanced at Gertie.

"Now, at last, we shall know the truth!" he said.

truth!" he said.

He turned to the housemaid.

"While I go up to the isolation room for Ashley," he said, "will you please go to Big Room and tell Mortimer and Heath I wish to see them? Tell them to meet me at the foot of the stairs."

The housemaid hurried off to Big Room, where the boys had just

The houseman nurried on to hig Room, where the boys had just finished breakfast.

"Master Heath and Master Mor-timer, Mr. Walker wants you," she

Where is he?" asked Heath

said.

"Where is he?" asked Heath.

"He has gone up to the isolationroom," she answered. "He told me
to tell you to wait for him at the
bottom of the stairs."

"Do you know what he wants to
see us about?" inquired Mortimer.

"Dr. Paul has come back," she
said, "and he sent me to tell Mr.
Walker to bring you two and Master
Ashley to his study at once."

"Hurrah! The Blot's goin' to be
tried at last!" cried Jordan.

"And expelled, I hope!" said
Sadler vindictively.

"Not much doubt about that!"
said Heath, winking at Mortimer.

"We'll see to that, won't we, old man?"
"You bet!" said Mortimer, with a

grin "By the way," said the housemaid,
"your uncle came back with Dr.
Paul, and is now in the doctor's
study."

study."

An uneasy look came into Mortimer's face, but it vanished almost

mer's face, but it vanished almost immediately.

"I expect the doctor has told my uncle that he's goin' to expel the Blot," he said, "and my uncle has come to take him away."

"That's it, no doubt," said Heath. "Come on."

"Come on."
Little suspecting what was in store for them, Heath and Mortimer made their way to the foot of the stairs.
Mr. Walker and Philip were just

Mr. Walker and Philip were just coming down.

"I say, old chap," whispered Heath uneasily, "the Blot looks jolly cheerful for a fellow that's expectin' to be expelled, doesn't he?"

"He does," admitted Mortimer.

"And Walker is glarin' at us as if it were we who were in disgrace."

"I—I hope there isn't goin' to be any hitch if we stick to our tale," said Mortimer. "We're two to one, and if we only lie hard enough we're bound to win."

A moment later they were joined

if we only lie hard enough we're bound to win."

A moment later they were joined by Philip and Mr. Walker.

"You will remember," said Mr. Walker coldly, "that when it was reported to me that Ashley had been seen to go into the Blue Boar, and when I was afterwards informed that he had been guilty of theft, I decided that, instead of dealing with the charges myself, I would leave them to be dealt with by Dr. Paul when he returned from London.

"As you know," he continued, "Dr. Paul returned from London yesterday, but important business, which called him away to Highfield, prevented him dealing with the matter then. He has now returned from Highfield, and he has requested me to take you three boys to his study in order that he may investigate the charges and deliver his verdict. You have finished breakfast?"

"Yes, sir," answered Heath and Mortimer, in the same breath.

"Then follow me," said Mr. Walker briefly.

"Then follo Walker briefly.

The Truth Prevails.

R. PAUL sat at his desk with R. PAUL sat at his desk with an open letter in his hand. On his left sat Mr. Sopworth, on his right stood at empty chair for Mr. Walker. In front of the desk stood three more empty chairs. Over by the fireplace, one elbow resting on the mantelpiece, steed Sir David Rendle, his face white, his hips tightly compressed, and his whole appearance that of one who had received a crushing blow.

The door opened, and Mr. Walker came in, followed by Philip, Mortimer, and Heath. At the sight of

Sir David, Mortimer uttered an exclamation of well-feigned surprise, and hurried across the room with outstretched hand.

"My dear uncle, this is indeed a pleasant surprise!" he purred. "I had no idea that you were here!" Sir David neither spoke nor moved. His face twitched with suppressed emotion. He dared not trust himself to speak.

"Why do you look at me like that?" asked Mortimer. "Why will you not shake hands with me? I trust I have done nothing to forfeit your esteem?"

"Nothing to forfeit my esteem!"
blurted out Sir David, finding his
tongue at last. "You whom I trusted
—you whom I believed to be the soul
of honour—you whom—""

of honour—you whom——"
Grief and indignation choked his utterance. He pushed Mortimer from him roughly, almost fiercely. Then he turned to Dr. Paul.
"Is it your wish that I should tell my nephew what you told me last night?" he asked.
"No," replied the doctor; "I prefer to deal with the matter in my own way."

He signed to Mr. Walker to take the vacant chair beside him; then, addressing himself to the three boys, he pointed to the row of chairs in front of the desk.

front of the desk.

"Please sit down," he said shortly.
The three boys sat down—Philip pale but calm, Mortimer and Heath in a fluster of bewilderment, not un-

pale but calm, Mortimer and Heath in a fluster of bewilderment, not unmixed with fear.

"I have sent for you," began the doctor, "in order to inquire into certain charges which have been made against Ashley. Before I deal with that unpleasant matter, however, I have an announcement to make which one, at least, of you will be pleased to hear."

He glanced at the letter which he

to hear."

He glanced at the letter which he held in his hand.

"This is Professor Hardwick's report on the papers sent in by the competitors for the Beresford Prize," he said. "It arrived by this morning's post. There is no need for me to read the whole report, which will be posted on the notice-board later. For the present it is enough to say that Professor Hardwick has awarded the prize to Ashley, who obtained 56 marks out of a maximum of 60. This, I may tell you, is the highest number of marks ever obtained by any candidate since the examination was instituted."

Philip's pale face flushed with

Philip's pale face flushed with pleasure. He had realised his dearest ambition. In spite of the machinations of his enemies, he had won the Beresford Prize—the blue riband of the school—and in doing so he had achieved a threefold record.

In the first place, he was the youngest boy who had ever carried off the prize; in the second place, he was the only boy who had ever won it in his first term at the school, and, in

the third place, as the doctor had said, he had obtained more marks than any other previous winner.

"Ashley, I congratulate you!" said

the doctor simply.
"I, too," said Mr. Walker—"most

Mr. Sopworth coughed behind his hand, and leaned towards the doctor.

"Is not your announcement rather premature?" he murmured. "I say,

premature?" he murmured. "I say, premature?"
"What do you mean?" demanded the doctor sharply.
"If you decide to expel Ashley," said Mr. Sopworth, "he can hardly be permitted to retain the prize, can he?"

he?"

"It will be time enough to discuss that question when I have decided to expel him," said the doctor grimly. He folded up the report, and replaced it in the envelope.

"And now I have to deal with a far less pleasant matter," he resumed. "I am informed that on the afternoon of the thirtieth of July, during my absence in London, Ashley was seen to go into one of the public-houses in the village—or, at any rate, was found there by Mr. Sopworth. Perhaps Mr. Sopworth will kindly tell us what happened on that occasion?"

Mr. Sopworth, only too eager,

Sopworth will kindly tell us what happened on that occasion?"

Mr. Sopworth, only too eager, described how Heath had met him in the village street, and had told him that he had just seen Philip enter the Blue Bear. He related how he and Heath had hurried to the door of the inn, and had found both Philip and Mortimer in the passage.

"Ashley's story was that he had been dragged into the house by a man named Cocker," said Mr. Sopworth. "This, however, was denied, not only by the man Cocker, but, also by the landlord. Both these persons said—and their story was confirmed by Heath and Mortimer—that Ashley had walked into the public-house of his own free will, and that Mortimer had followed him, and tried to persuade him to leave."

The doctor glanced at Heath.

"What is your version?" he asked.

"Just what Mr. Sopworth has told you, sir," said Heath boldly. "I was walking down the street, when I saw Ashley go into the public-house. He had hardly got inside before I saw Mortimer dart across the road and go in after him to fetch him out. I was just goin' to follow Mortimer, and help him, when I saw Mr. Sopworth comin' down the street, so I at once went up to him and told him what I had seen."

"Your assertion is that Ashley was not devesed into the howse?" asked

"Your assertion is that Ashley was not dragged into the house?" asked the doctor.
"Certainly not, sir," said Heath.
"Nothing of the kind. He just walked in."
"And you also assert that you saw

'And you also assert that you saw

"Nothing of the kind. He just walked in."

"And you also assert that you saw Mortimer run in after him?"

"Yes, sir."

The doctor turned to Mortimer.

"You have heard that Ashley says that you were in the Blue Boar at the time he was dragged in," he said.

"Ashley says that you came out, of one of the rooms while he was struggling to get away from Cocker. You deny that?"

"Most emphatically, sir!" said Mortimer. "What Heath has told you is the absolute truth. I was comin' out of the post-office, and I saw Ashley walk into the publichouse. Actin' on the impulse of the moment, I ran in after him; and while I was tryin' to drag him out, Mr. Sopworth and Heath appeared at the door."

"Had you ever been in the Blue Boar before?" asked the doctor.

"Never! I am not in the habit of frequentin' public-houses!"

"Have you ever been there since?"

"Certainly not," said Mortimer.

"That is false," said the doctor quietly. "I myself saw you come out of the Blue Boar about half-past four yesterday afternoon."

"You—you saw me come out of the Blue Boar?" he stammered.

"I did," said the doctor sternly. "What is more, I afterwards heard the landlord tell Mr. Mytton that you were one of his best customers, that you were in the habit of making bets with him, and that you owed him several pounds.

"That, however, was not all I heard," continued the doctor. "I heard the landlord explain to Mr. Mytton how Ashley was dragged into the public-house, how you were in the bar-parlour at the time—exactly as Ashley says—and how you and Heath and the landlord conspired together to deny Ashley's story, and to make Mr. Sopworth believe that Ashley had walked into the house of his own free will."

By this time Heath's face was as white as Mortimer's. Their dastardly plot had recoiled on their own heads.



A rush was made for Philip, and he found himself surrounded by a jostling crowd of boys, each

In trying to ruin Philip they had brought overwhelming ruin on themselves—for Heath knew before the doctor spoke what was coming next.

"If I hadn't heard all this myself," said Dr. Paul, "I would never have believed that two of my boys could have been guilty of such despicable wickedness. Needless to say, I cannot allow either of you to remain at the school another day."

"You are goin' to expel us?" said Heath sullenly.

"Of course," said the doctor. "Sir David will take Mortimer away this morning, and I have wired to your father to fetch you away this afternoon."

"And is the Blot goin' to be expelled, too?" demanded Heath.
"If you refer to Ashley, he is not. He has done nothing to merit expulsion"

"He has!" shouted Heath, carried "He has!" shouted Heath, carried away by a gust of vindictive fury.
"If we are expelled, it's only right that he should be expelled too! He's a thief! He stole a five-pound note out of my study!"

"That is another falsehood," said Mr. Walker quietly.

"It isn't!" cried Heath. "He went into my study while I was out, and took the fiver off the mantelpiece. Afterwards he was caught in the act of trying to hide it in Card's box!"

box!"
"I say it is false," said Mr. Walker.
"And I can prove it."
He turned to Philip.
"You admit that you went into Heath's study that evening and took something off the mantelpiece?" he said.

"Yes," said Philip, in a low voice.
"But Heath knows what it was."
"Of course I do!" jeered Heath.
"It was a letter from my guv'nor, enclosin' a five-pound note!"
"It was not," said Philip.
"What was it, then?" asked Dr.

"Yes, what was it?" said Mr. Sopworth.

Philip hung his head.

"I cannot tell you," he said. "My lips are sealed. I cannot explain."

"But I can," said Mr. Walker.

"It was a photograph of my daughter, Gertie. She has just told me the whole story. Unknown to me, the silly girl had given Heath one of her photographs, and had written across it: "With tove, from Gertie."

When they quarrelled, he took a mean and caddish revenge by sticking the photograph on his mantelpiece for all the boys to see. Gertie asked Ashley to get her the photograph, and he did so. Afterwards, sooner than betray the girl's secret, he refused to say what he had taken, and allowed himself to be branded as a thief."

"You contemptible cad!" cried Dr. Paul, regarding Heath with a glance

Paul,

not have descended to such depths of meanness as that."

"Wouldn't he?" snarled Heath.

"That shows how much you know! Mortimer knew all about it. He was as bad as I was."

"No, I wasn't," retorted Mortimer, stung to retaliation. "You didn't tell me anything about it until after you had hidden the fiver in Card's box."

"Ah!" said the doctor. "Now we're getting at the truth! So it was Heath who put the note in Card's box?"

Heath who put the note in Card's box?"

"Yes," said Mortimer. "When he found that the Blot had taken Gertie's photo, he thought he saw a chance of makin' it out that he was a thief, so he took the fiver out of his desk, and ran up to Dormitory B. He meant to put it in the Blot's box, but he made a mistake, and put it in Card's. When he discovered his mistake, he went up to the dormitory again in the middle of the night, intendin' to take the fiver out of Card's box, and say that Ashley had returned it. He was disturbed while he was fumblin' in Card's box, but he made his escape in the darkness, and afterwards the boys thought it was Ashley who was fumblin' in Card's box."

"You treacherous brute!" hissed

it was Ashley who was fumblin' in Card's box."

"You treacherous brute!" hissed Heath, glaring at Mortimer. "But I'll be even with you!"

He turned to Sir David.

"You remember takin' Mortimer and the Blot for a ride in your motorcar?" he said. "Some cards fell out of the Blot's pocket, and afterwards Mortimer told you that the Blot was in the habit of playin' cards for money with the villagers. All that was a lie. The cards were Mortimer's. We were playin' cards in his study when the Blot ran up and told him you had just arrived. Mortimer told him to clear away the cards, and the Blot had just time to thrust 'em into his pocket before you walked into the study."

Sir David walked quickly across

"It has 't stable," aid Mr. Walker,
"And I can prove it."
"You renember takin Morimer, were absent Interest to the study that creating and took omething of the Blot for a riote and the Blot for an

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"No, I wasn't," retorted Mortimer, stung to retaliation. "You didn't tell me anything about it until after

The Blot's Triumph.

N an ordinary way, at the con-clusion of breakfast, the boys repaired to their various class-rooms for morning school. They were about to do so on this particular morning, when a message arrived from the doctor, requesting all the boys to assemble at once in Big

boys to assemble at once in Big Room.

There were many speculations as to the meaning of this summons. Some conjectured that Philip was about to be publicly expelled. Others surmised that the result of the Beresford examination was about to be announced.

As the boys flocked into Big Room, it was at once perceived that the first of these conjectures was incorrect. Philip was not going to be expelled—that was evident, for he was sitting at the end of the room, looking very happy, and chatting volubly to Mr. Walker and Mr. Drummond.

When the last of the boys had filed into the room, it was discovered that Heath and Mortimer were absent. This again gave rise to further speculation, in the midst of which Dr. Paul entered the room, and mounted the dais.

Dr. Paul was immensely popular

Philip Ashley, who has beaten all records by obtaining 56 marks out of a possible 60. In honour of his success, I follow the usual custom, and grant you to-day as a whole boliday."

and grant you to-day as a whole holiday."

In former years the announcement of the winner's name had always been the signal for a burst of cheering. But there were no cheers on this occasion. There was a moment's ominous silence, then several of the boys began to hiss.

The doctor turned sharply to that quarter of the room from which the hissing proceeded.

"Who dares to hiss?" he demanded. Sadler, white with rage and disappointment, sprang to his feet. As the reader will remember, he had been one of the candidates for the Beresford, and it was on his behalf that Mortimer and his cronies had destroyed Philip's books and had done their best to prevent him working for the prize.

"It isn't fair!" said Sadler hotly, amid a murmur of approving cheers.

"What isn't fair?" inquired the doctor calmly.

"The Blot is a thief," said Sadler, "and it isn't fair—it's outrageous that the Beresford should be awarded to a thief!"

Loud cheers followed this bold pronouncement. The doctor waited

Loud cheers followed this bold pronouncement. The doctor waited quietly until they had subsided; then he signed to Sadler to resume his

ments to make to you this morning," he continued. "Two of them you have heard, and after listening to the story which I have just told you, you will not be surprised to learn that my third announcement is that Heath and Mortimer have been expelled. Mortimer has already left, and Heath leaves this afternoon.

"And now, before I dismiss you, I want to make an earnest appeal to you," he concluded. "You are all young, some of you are thoughtless, and some of you, perhaps, are cruel without meaning to be so, but you are all, I hope and believe, gentlemen at heart. Now that you know how unjustly you have judged Ashley, now that you know how little he has deserved your unfriendly treatment, will you not, like honest British gentlemen, acknowledge your mistake and make amends?"

British gentlemen, acknowledge your mistake and make amends?"
Tubb leapt to his feet.
"I will, for one!" he cried.
"So will I!" shouted Holcroft.
"Three cheers for the Blot!" yelled Rigden.
The cheers were given with hearty good will. Then as the doctor, with a happy smile on his face, announced that the proceedings were over, a rush was made for Philip, and he found himself surrounded by a jostling crowd of boys, each more eager than the other to shake him by the hand, to congratulate him on his success, to apologise for the past, and to vow eternal friendship for the future.

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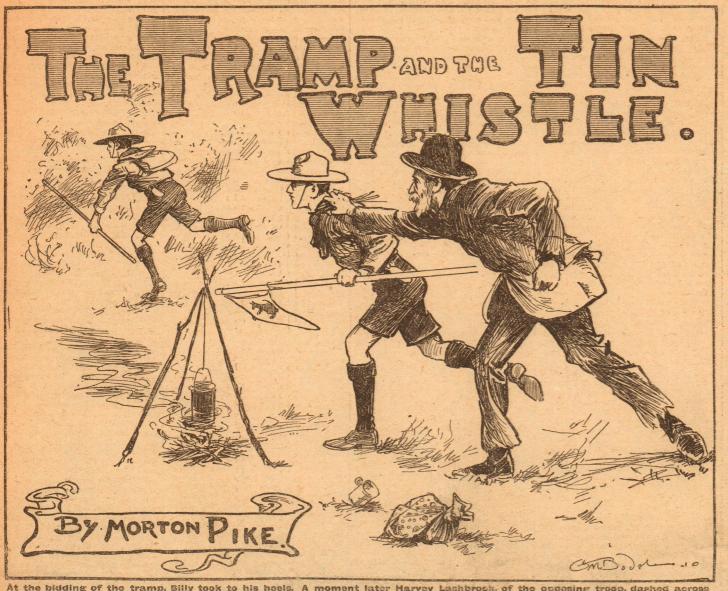
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At the bidding of the tramp, Billy took to his heels. A moment later Harvey Lashbrook, of the opposing troop, dashed across the hollow, and to his surprise was caught between the shoulders in a powerful grip.

THE 1st CHAPTER. The Jackal Patrol.

ILLY stood on the stile, looking under the flat brim of his B.-P. hat for the other B.-P. hat for the other members of the patrol, and Billy was in two minds—whether he should continue along the lane or cross the

members of the patrol, and Billy was in two minds—whether he should continue along the lane or cross the stile and take the field-path.

The Boy Scout's eyes had scanned the ground carefully without finding any sign for his guidance.

"That's Jones all over!" he muttered. "Why they ever made that conceited prig patrol leader licks me! He thinks he knows everything, and he has actually got the badge through scaping round the scoutmaster! I reckon if Mr. Buckley knew Jones as well as we do, he would not be in the Scouts at all!"

From which it may be gathered that all was not well with the Jackal Patrol of the 2nd Beeminster Troop.

From his point of vantage, Billy could see the lane winding away uphill, to quickly lose itself among the high nut-hedges; but across the meadow in front of him he knew that another road lay, out of sight, in the hollow beyond Poverty Farm, whose barn-roofs and chimneys were visible.

He had had a pebble in his shoe, which made him fall behind the patrol, and, as haste is always the worst speed, he had broken the shoelace, so that his comrades had got well on ahead before he reached the spot where he now stood.

It was very annoying, because, you know, the 2nd Beeminsters were keen rivals of the 1st Beeminsters, who, being all members of the well-known school, gave themselves no end of airs, and looked down very much on the town lads' troop.

There is a good deal of human nature, my readers, even among the Boy Scouts, which is quite the grandest movement ever set on foot, unless the sectarians ruin it, which they will if they are not watched.

He had lost enough time already, and thirteen-year-old Billy had nothing but his own common-sense to guide him in the choice of ways.

He thought a moment, and jumped down into the field-path.

The hay grass on either hand was knee high, and gemmed with dog-daisies, and as the fresh wind hurried

the cloud shadows over the meadow, the grass bent and rippled like a

the crous shadows over the headow, the grass bent and rippled like a green sea.

Billy sprinted until he reached the next stile, and then took his way more soberly, for Bagot, the farmer, was a surly man, who resented intruders, and the path itself was disputed as a public right-of-way.

The farm was a lonely place, and justified its name by the air of neglect which surrounded it.

The barns were old, and falling to pieces; the hedges round about it were untrimmed; the horse-pond was half-covered with duckweed, and there was no sign of movement or evidence of stock about the place, if you excepted some fowls that scratched and clucked in the yard, and some lean pigs in one corner, which could be smelt and heard, but not seen.

and some lean pigs in one corner, which could be smelt and heard, but not seen.

"I-don't believe there is anybody at home," thought Billy, who knew that the footpath went on for some distance. "I'll chance it, and take a short cut behind the barns here."

He turned aside, opened and closed a dilapidated gate, and ran noiselessly along a red-brick wall, which the swallows and martens had pecked until it looked as though it were pitted with small-pox.

Behind the wall was a neglected, unkempt orchard, and at the northern angle of it the bank dipped steeply down into the road.

It was a very pretty road, tree-shaded and winding, like all the roads in the vicinity of Beeminster, and its banks were hollowed here and there, and fringed with hawthorn bushes.

Those hollows were excellent places wherein half a dozen patrols might have lain unknown to the enemy on the road beneath, and approaching the ragged hedge, half-expecting to find his own fellews concealed in one of them, Billy peeped over, and met a man's eyes looking full into his own. The man was lying on his back, a short black pipe in his mouth, and his hands beneath his head, while close beside him a tin mug was suspended over a fire of sticks from a rough tripod.

"Hallo, Buffalo Bill!" said the tramp. "And what's your little

"Hallo, Buffalo Bill!" said the tramp. "And what's your little

to guide him in the choice of ways.

He thought a moment, and jumped down into the field-path.

The hay grass on either hand was knee high, and gemmed with dogdaisies, and as the fresh wind hurried

The man did not speak roughly, although he was an unshaven, ragged-looking rascal, and Billy, accepting

the question as more or less an invitation to approach, slid through the hedge into the hollow.

"Have you seen our fellows pass this way?" he asked.

"There ain't been no circus along here since I came," replied the man, with a smile. "They don't overdo you in the matter of trousers!" And he looked at the expanse of bare knee that showed beneath Billy's short blue drawers. "I reckon you're enjoying yourself, nipper—having a good time—ain't you?"

"Rather!" said Billy, leaning a moment en his broom-stick and surveying the little camp and its occupier with a critical eye.

"So am I," said the man, blowing out a great cloud to mingle with the upright column of smoke from the wood-fire. "If you like to wait a few minutes, I'll give you a drink of tea!"

Billy paused and squatted down on his broomstick.

"It's very kind of you," said the lad. "Would you like an apple?" And pulling one out of his shirt, he offered it to his new acquaintance, who grabbed it without ceremony.

"I never refuse anything," laughed the vagrant; "it wouldn't do in my line of life."

Billy, like a true scout, had taken in every detail of the man's appearance, from his shabby boots to his broken billycock, and he had seen, moreover, that the palms of his hands were soft and smooth as those of a fine gentleman.

"What is your trade?" said the boy, seeing no tools of any description—nothing but a small sack and a freshly-cut walking-stick.

"Haven't got any trade, sonnie, though I dare say I could teach a good many folk a good many things they never knew before."

"But don't you do any work?" inquired the lad.

The man's teeth were white and regular, and he threw back his head and laughed aloud.

"Oh, I work in the winter!" he replied. "But what's the good of working this weather? Give me the blue sky, and the fresh air, and the open road—that's what I like! I can always pick up a bob at the first town I come to, and it's astonishing how far a bob will go if you spread it out thin."

He laid his black clay carefully

beside him on the grass, produced an ordinary tin whistle from a slit in his patched jacket, and ran his fingers up and down the holes with marvellous dexterity and real feeling.

"Like music?" he said, raising his eyebrows; and Billy nodded, and the man began to play.

It was only an ordinary air of the clap-trap, popular sort, but he played it so exquisitely that he made real music of it, adding variations of his own that held his listener entranced.

He would not have stopped when he did had not the tea boiled over; and rescuing it from the tripod, the tattered genius produced a clean mug from the sack, poured a liberal quantity into it, and handed it to Billy.

"Ah, they teach you to make a fire

Billy.

"Ah, they teach you to make a fire with three pieces of stick, but not to make tea like that!" said the tramp.
"I learned the secret in—never mind where I learnt it. Goes down all right, eh?"

"Delicious!" said Billy. "But I'm robbing you!"

"Oh, no, you're not—I'll watch it! There's plenty more where that came from, sonnie! Would you like to hear

a hornpipe?"

Billy, alternately blowing and sipping the beverage, which was certainly like no tea he had ever tasted before, nodded delightedly, and the man struck up such a fascinating lift that Billy's toes began to work in his shoes, and his whole body to keep time.

his shoes, and his whole body to keep time.

He had forgotten all about his duties, or where the Jackals might be, when on a sudden, from round the bush behind the musician's head, there peered the face of a well-grown lad of sixteen, dressed like himself in scouts' attire, but wearing the spotted blue handkerchief of the opposition troop, whose position the 2nd Beeminsters had come out to discover.

It was Harvey Lashbrook, the champion of Beeminster College, who instantly gave a loud "Coo-ee!"—the signal of his patrol—and made a dart across the hollow to capture Billy.

"Come on, you fellows! I've got one of the beggars!" shouted Lashbrook. And so astonished was the Jackal that he would inevitably have been taken had not Master Harvey reekoned without his host.

The musician, however, seeing how

the land lay, caught him by the

the land lay, caught him by the middle in a powerful grip.

"Half a mo', cokie!" he laughed.
"Hook it, nipper!! I'll give you a fair start!" And, needing no second bidding, Billy vanished through the broken hedge.

"Let me go, you beast!" exclaimed the college boy hotly, his aristocratic feelings terribly ruffled to find himself in the embrace of a tattered tramp.
"I'll make you pay for this! My father's a magistrate!"
"Lor', now! I shouldn't have been surprised to hear he was the Emperor of China!" And he cleverly mimicked young Lashbrook's tone. "Really, Bertie, you mustn't struggle so—it's quite too vulgar!" Then, seeing that the Jackal had gained sufficient start, he released the enemy's patrol-leader, who was scarlet with rage—the more so as the rest of the Kangaroo Patrol had come up the bank by that time.

Up went the broomstick with its fluttering flag, but before the blow could descend the staff had been snatched from its owner's hands and broken across the tramp's knee.
"Gently, my friend!" said the man.
"I like your spirit, but I don't want to hurt you! Take my advice, and get on with your game. I want to finish my tea."
"You dirty hound!" exclaimed Lashbrook. "Don't think you've heard the last of this!" And for a moment the infuriated lad had wild ideas of nustering his companions and falling on the man.

Luckily fer the self-respect of the Kangaroo Patrol—to say nothing of the wat hought, better of it.

Luckily for the self-respect of the Kangaroo Patrol—to say nothing of their skins—he thought better of it, and with one backward flash of his dark eyes that meant volunes, he sprang up the bank after the flying Billy, and left the tramp in peace.

An amused smile lingered for a moment on the tramp's unshaven face, and then he sat thoughtfully down, drew some pieces of bread and butter, wrapped up in a bit of newspaper, from the bundle, and applied himself to his interrupted meal.

"I suppose it was my fault," he muttered: "but I didn't think the young toff would take it so seriously. I enly meant it in fun. But there! Whatever I do seems to be wrong. I've never had any luck since I was born, and that's a fact!"

A shadow fell over the wanderer's countenance, but it soon departed.
"I wonder if I ought to clear?" he thought. "I'd half a mind to have dossed in yonder barn to-night—and I reckon I will, too! That youngster has too much grit to come sneaking back here with a copper, if I know anything about his sort!" And the strange smile that chased away the shadow seemed to imply that the tramp had once had more intimate dealings with the better classes than he was likely to have in his present guise.

Meanwhile Harvey Lashbrook and his companions raced their hardest after the flying figure in the distance; nor did they give up the chase for close upon a mile, until they saw him join his own patrol on the railway-bridge, where two other patrols of the 2nd Troop had gathered—a force too strong for the Kangaroos, who retired gracefully while there was yet time.

Friendly rivalry is an excellent thing, and the two troops of Beeminster Scouts had probably got more fun and profit out of it in consequence than any association I know.

Every Saturday they had a field-day of some sort—stalking each other for miles, and learning a great deal of their particular Saturday.

Hot and dusty, tired and very happy, they mustered in the evening, and marched back to headquarters, and the sun went down fiery red behind the woods bey

16 Sexton Blake, Spy!" a Superb New Story of the Great Detective, Commences Next Tuesday in Our

evidently expecting someone long

overdue.

"There's trouble there," thought the tramp to himself. "Farm gone to rack and ruin—farmer probably drinks. Ha, ha! The best day's work I ever did in my life was the day I took to the road!"

The distant sound of the shutting of a door came to his ears, and, getting up, he stretched his powerful arms to their full extent, and yawned luxuriously.

arms to their full extent, and yawned luxuriously.

"Think I'll have a look at that barn," he said, half-aloud, "and fix up my bed in daylight. I wonder if they've got any dogs about?"

In spite of his tattered jacket and generally disreputable appearance, one could not help feeling that if he had only been washed and shaved and decently dressed, he would have been a smart-looking fellow; but habits of incurable laziness had set their stamp upon him, and he was just content to drift along the tide of life, following the line of least resistance—often going cold and hungry, but joying in the fact that he was his own master, without realising that in reality he was his own slave."

He went away, slouching lazily along the walf, presently returning to

without realising that in reality he was his own slave!

He went away, slouching lazily along the wall, presently returning to the hollow for his sack.

He had found the place he wanted in a barn-loft, where there was some sweet-smelling hay, dry as a bone; and ascending the rickety ladder, he burrowed snugly, with the sack that contained all his earthly possessions for his pillow.

"Better not smoke," he thought. "Hallo! Somebody coming!" And trolling noiselessly over, he peered through a chink in the broken floor as quick footsteps entered the barn.

His first thought was that another tramp had found the same shelter, for the new-comer also carried a sack upon his shoulder, and looked back through the big door across the fagmyard, as though he did not wish to be seen.

The watcher above saw in the

The watcher above saw in the fading light that the man's trousers were gathered together at the ankles by bicycle-clips, and that he evidently knew the place and was there for a set purpose.

The sact

The sack was heavy, and as he laid it down it gave forth the chink as of metal.

The watcher

laid it down it gave forth the chink as of metal.

The watcher overhead became interested, and as the man squared his shoulders and gave a breath of relief at getting rid of his load, he was struck by the very evil, hangdog look on his face and the way he stood listening.

After a moment the man stole to the doorway, and peered out across the yard, and then, with a low chuckle, stepped softly to the far end of the barn, where he evidently knew he would find the fork, which he brought back with him.

Then he began to dig among the refuse and litter, and was depositing his sack in the hole that he had made when he turned sharply, with a muttered oath.

the broken hedge stood in the doorway, and the two looked at each

"Always the same, George," she aid. "You promised to be back at inner-time. What are you doing

dinner-time. What are you there?"

"What's that got to do with you?"
replied the man sullenly, moving to cover the hole he had dug, that she should not see it.

"I think it's a great deal to do with me," she teplied, in a tired, listless voice. "P know you're after no good. You are out all day, and everything is going to rack and ruin."

the sack, and emptied its contents on to the floor.

A chalice, a ewer, a pair of massive candlesticks, and several large silver dishes shone in the lantern-light, and the tramp's face grew almost as white as Bagot's own.

"By Jupiter, that's church plate, if ever I saw it!" said the tramp's large grew almost as white as Bagot's own.

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angrily. "What do you want to come prowling about and spying on me like this for? I won't have it, I tell you! Go you in and get the supper ready! I sha'n't be long."

"You ditn't talk that way, George, when you married me," said the woman. "Are you poaching? Have you got pheasants in that bag?"

"What the thunder has that got to do with you?" snarled Bagot. "You want the cartwhip round your shoulders again, that's what you want, and you'll get it jolly soon if you're not careful!"

Her thin hands clutched at her

want, and you'll get it jolly soon if you're not careful!"

Her thin hands clutched at her throat as if to restrain the pent-up grief that was choking her.

"I thought you'd like to know they've been again about the rent," she said. "There's two quarters owing, and the agent says he will only give you till Friday, and then he'll put us out. And this will be the third home you've broken up! And you out all day drinking! I can smell you from here."

"And if you are not off pretty sharp, you'll feel me from here, too!" exclaimed the man. "Don't you try me too far. I'll pay the rent right enough; don't you worry about that." And he grasped the fork so threateningly that she shrank back, and disappeared in the dusk, with a sob.

Bagot stood watching her until

Bagot stood watching her until her footsteps died away in the distance, and then he covered up the hole, muttering, and went out him-

self.

"I should like to be upsides with you, you brute!" thought the tramp in the loft. "I wonder what he has buried there?" But the thing being none of his business, he curled himself in the hay again, only starting up as a couple of piercing screams came from the direction of the farmhouse. He sat listening for a little while, clenching his fists, with a strong desire to interview the wife-beater and put him through it, but the screams were not repeated, and he settled himself comfortably down again.

"They must settle their own affairs in their own way," he argued. He might only make matters worse if he interfered. Besides, he was very comfortable where he was, and a pattering rain was falling outside now, threatening a wet night.

His eyelids closed, and how long he slept he did not know, but he was wakened by a sound beneath him—the ring of the fork on the floor of the barn—and peeping down, he saw a stable lantern casting a circle of yellow light in the opposite corner, and the same man with the evil face digging another hole.

Into this he flung something that

and the same man with the evil face digging another hole.

Into this he flung something that clanged, shovelled the earth quickly in, stamped it down with his feet, spread the litter over the spot, afterwards holding the lantern above it and looking at it first from this side and then from the other to make sure that what he had hidden would not easily be found.

"Now, what in the name of patience, is going on?" thought the tramp to himself, for the man had closed the great barn door to, and kept looking towards it in a startled fashion a dozen times or more.

When he came back along the barn, the watcher saw that his face was very white, and his interest redoubled as Bagot commenced clearing away the litter at the place where he had buried the sack.

A few strong rakes with the three-pronged fork revealed it, and going down on one knee, the farmer untied the sack, and emptied its contents on to the floor.

A chalice, a ewer, a pair of massive candlesticks, and several large

The vagrant heard the opening of a garden gate, and when all was still he seized his belongings, climbed down the ladder, and went out into

down the ladder, and went out into the rain.

No dog barked, there was no light in the house. Poverty Farm seemed as silent and deserted as when he had first seen it the previous afternoon, and stealing along the wall and down the bank into the hollow road, the wandering musician abandoned the slouching gait that was peculiar to him, and went on his way.

The sergeant in charge of Beeminster Police Station stood in the doorway of that establishment, looking out upon the silent street, which was more than usually deserted that evening because there was an entertainment at the Town Hall, and all the world and his wife had gone thither.

the world and his wife had gone thither.

The pavements were damp, but the threatening rain had cleared away, and the stars, like the sergeant in charge, had come out.

The 'sergeant, who, by the way, was Billy's father, was smoking a surreptitious pipe, there being no one about, and lamenting to himself that he had been transferred to Beeminster from a brighter and more populous town.

"Dead-alive hole!" was the sergeant's mental reflection, "Nothing doing; only five charges in six months. It's enough to make the grass grow on one's boots!"

When the telephone-bell rang noisily in the inner room, he turned his head with a look of surprise, and the thing was so unusual that he did not stir for the space of five seconds.

Then he stepped briskly into the office, and took down the receiver.

"Hallo! Who are you?" said Billy's father.

And the answer came:

And the answer came:
"We are Police Station, Sloptoncum-Muckflat. Just found the church
has been broken into, and all the
communion plate stolen. Two
strangers in a spring cart drove
through the village in your direction.
That's the only clue we've got, so
far."

The sergeant's lip curled with scorn, Slopton being a village thirty miles away, on the opposite side of the county.

"What do you mean by our direction?" he asked.
"Wellk they took the southern

tion?" he asked.

"Welf? they took the southern road."

"Not very promising that," said the sergeant. "You had better look out for footprints and finger-marks. What's missing? Wait a minute; I'll take it down."

He reached out for a scribbling-pad, and wrote the various items, with his ear to the receiver.

He had just got down the last of the stolen property—"two silver candlesticks, seventeenth century workmanship"—when there was a quick step in the outer room, and Bagot entered, breathing hard.

"Quick!" he cried. "When I returned on my cycle from Barford, I found my wife lying on the kitchen floor with her head stove in!"

"Good heavens! Is she dead?"

"Dead as a herring!" panted the distracted husband, sinking on to one of the windsor chairs and burying his face in his hands.

"Halle!" called the sergeant into

of the windsor chairs and burying his face in his hands.

"Hallo!" called the sergeant into the telephone. "You must ring us up later. Can't attend to you now; we've got another job on here. Now, Mr. Bagot, pull yourself together! Our men are most of them at the Town Hall. I'll send for someone to take charge here, and then I'll come over with you at once. Have you any reason to suspect anyone?"

"No one in the world," said the farmer, looking up with a haggard face. "But there's been a tramp on the bank behind the house, for his fire is still smouldering there."

"That's good enough for a start," said Sergeant Stevenson. And as he

said Sergeant Stevenson. And as he put on his helmet he felt that life was not going to prove so monotonous the sleepy little town after all; fact, that on the whole things we looking up.

Constable Heath Has His Suspicions.

EEMINSTER Town Hall was crowded to the uttermost when Sergeant Stevenson entered, leaving Bagot outside.

The sergeant was looking for two of his men, on whom he knew he could thoroughly rely, but who, being off duty that night, had taken their wives to the entertainment. It was like searching for a needle in a stack of hay, and as he did not wish to raise an alarm—which would

mean that half the audience would betake themselves to Poverty Farm forthwith—he was casting about how best to find where they sat when his eye fell on his son Billy, a smile of happy delight on his fresh young

By a strange coincidence, someone

By a strange coincidence, someone was singing the very air which the musical tramp had played that afternoon, and Billy was entranced.

"Nudge my boy in the ribs, Mr. Simmonds, will you?" whispered the sergeant, bending over to the local ironmonger. And Billy, roused out of himself by the knob of an umbrella, turned round in his seat, and saw his father beckoning to him.

"What is it, dad?" said Billy anxiously, when he had wriggled his lithe young body out of the press.

"I want Heath and Edwards," said the sergeant, in a low voice.
"Can you find them for me, laddie? It's very urgent!"

th's very urgent!"

Billy nodded, already knowing the whereabouts of his father's right-hand men, and in a few minutes two stalwart figures might have been seen sidling their way out of the shilling seets.

seats.
"Something wrong, sir?" said
Heath, who was a youngish man with
a brown beard, and a pair of very

a brown beard, and a pair of very intelligent eyes.

"Yes; very wrong," replied the sergeant. "Mrs. Bagot, at Poverty Farm, has been killed!"

Constable Heath nodded his head without expressing much surprise as far as his features went, and he contented himself with asking the stereotyped question, "Any clue, sir?" as his fellow-constable joined the group. "Only that a tramp was camping in the hollow behind the farm, and has disappeared," said the sergeant. And Billy gasped as he heard the words."

And Billy gasped as he heard the words.

"I'll swear he never did it, father!" exclaimed the boy, instantly championing the man who had played so delightfully, with all the eagerness and unthinking honesty of boyhood.

"Why, what do you know about the tramp? Did you see him?"

"I not only saw him, but I had tea with him," said Billy, "when I was out on patrol."

"Then, you'd know him again?" said all three, in a breath.

"I should think I would!" answered Billy stoutly. "And so would young Lashbrook; he saw him, too."

The moment Billy had said these words he regretted them, for he remembered that Harvey Lashbrook; recollections of his tramp friend would be the reverse of pleasant. But the thing was done, and, sure enough, Harvey and his father, Colonel Lashbrook, J.P., came out of the hall, the first of the audience to leave.

The colonel received the police

the hall, the first of the audience to leave.

The colonel received the police officers' salutes with a nod of his head, and was passing on when Sergeant Stevenson stopped him, and told him of the terrible occurrence.

"What! Killed! You don't say so!" said the colonel quickly.
"Why, they are tenants of mine, and very bad tenants, too. I don't like the man, and his wife always struck me as a complaining, nagging sort of individual. But there! The poor thing has gone, and I won't say anything about that."

We are just going up there now, sir," said the sergeant.
"Then you had better get into my car," was the colonel's prompt response.

car, was the coloners prompt response.

The sergeant beckoned Bagot, and they all got in, a strangely assorted company, and rather a tight squeeze, although the car was commodious

enough.

Billy sat on one of Constable Heath's knees, while Master Harvey Lashbrook, with his nose rather in the air, tried to look dignified, squashed between the colonel and the chanffeur, as the bright head-lamps gleamed on the leafy hedges as the car left the town.

Poverty Farm was a good two miles out, and lay on the road to Lashbrook Hall. And as they whirred through the soft, starlight night, Constable Heath plied Bagot with a good many questions, the trend of which was to appear later.

Heath plied Bagot with a good many questions, the trend of which was to appear later.

They turned the car into the farmyard, and unshipped one of the headlights, while Bagot unlocked the kitchen door.

It was an ugly sight, and Billy's curiosity having been quickly satisfied, he slipped out into the open air, where he was joined almost immediately by young Lashbrook, with a face as white as Bagot's own.

"There's no doubt who's done it," said the college boy. "It's that tramp you were with this afternoon!"

"It isn't!" said Billy.

"None of your cheek, youngster!" said Master Lashbrook. "He had got villainy written all over him. But, of course, I forgot; you didn't see what happened after you bolted. Was he a pal of yours? You seemed to be pretty chummy." And the champion of Beeminster College threw a world of withering contempt into his tone, deeming it, as he did, a condescension on his part to exchange words with the son of a common police-sergeant.

words with the son of a common police-sergeant.

"I don't know what you mean about being chummy," said Billy hotly, "but I do know that man was no murderer, and you'll see I'm wight".

right."
Meanwhile, their elders in the farm
kitchen were holding a grim consultation.

"Yes, it's all right," was the reply; but there's not much oil in the lamp."

the lamp.
"That

"That won't matter for once," said Heath, and wheeling it out through the door, he rode off to the

town.

When he returned with the doctor and the stretcher from the police-station, the colonel and the others were at the hollow on the bank, and the bank was empty.

were at the hollow on the bank, and the kitchen was empty.

"No doubt about it being murder, sir?" said Tom Heath, but the doctor looked up at him with half a smile.

"It will be murder if the woman dies, Heath—she is not dead yet," he replied.

Tom Heath looked over his shoulder at the kitchen door, and bent down.

Tom Heath looked over his shoulder at the kitchen door, and bent down.

"Would it be possible, sir, to keep that fact quiet until you see whether you can pull her round?" he said in a low voice. "I've got my own reasons for asking the question."

"Why, yes, not that I've much hopes of her recovery, mind you," replied the doctor. "It is very doubtful whether she will recover consciousness, but she might; we can take her to the Cottage Hospital instead of the mortuary, and no one need be any the wiser. Have you got some suspicions, then?"

"I have, sir," said Tom Heath, "and whether they are right or wrong, which only time will show, it would help me very much if the woman were thought to be dead for a day or two."

"I can work that all right for you, especially as the coroner is on the Continent, and I'm his deputy—you and I can lift her on to the stretcher before the others come back."

"And what are you going to do,

stretcher before the others come back."

"And what are you going to do, Bagot?" said Colonel Lashbrook, when they had completed their investigations and returned to the farm to find the body gone. "You can't stop here all by yourself, man."

"You had better come along with me, Bagot," said the sergeant, "we can put you up at the station." And the broken man, who continued to sob convulsively into his handkerchief, nodded and locked the kitchen door as they left the scene of the tragedy. In less than an hour the description of the tramp, furnished by the exultant Harvey, and reluctantly corroborated by Billy Stevenson, had been telephoned through the length and breadth of the county, and the sergeant's last words as the colonel got into his car were: "That will be all right, sir; you can take my word for it that the man will be arrested before noon to-morrow."

OON came, but no news, in spite of the sergeant's anxious telephoning, and by that time, the tragedy having leaked out, the sleepy little town was

out, the sleepy little town was stirred to its very core.

Half Beeminster abandoned its daily avocations, and rushed off pellmell to Poverty Farm, only to find a cordon of police there who resolutely barred the way.

As it was, they had to take two persistent investigators into custody, before the disappointed crowd retired, and Sergeant Stevenson began to look glum.

It was Sunday, and seeing that an improvised search-party had started out, the sergeant felt the necessity of doing something official; it was no use trusting to chance, and unless the

"The New Broom," Maxwell Scott's Latest and Best School Serial, Commences Next Tuesday in Our

man was hiding somewhere every hour was carrying him farther and farther from justice.

Constable Heath was the only member of the local force who did not wear a worried look, and he it was who suggested to Billy that they should scour the road on their machines.

Just as they were starting out Harvey Lashbrook arrived on the brand-new bicycle that was the envy of all the Beeminster boys, and they were joined by a dozen of the town scouts, which swelled Tom Heath's command into quite a considerable force.

Heath had had an interview with the doctor earlier in the morning, and learned that the injured woman was still wavering on the threshold, but the doctor's report was a little more hopeful, and Constable Heath smiled in his brown beard.

It had rained very heavily in the earlier part of the morning, and some of the roads were flooded, but the only thing they had to go upon, the print of a much-cobbled shoe, remained on the road immediately beneath the little hollow where the tramp had made his fire.

The toe pointed northward, and taking up the clue from that spot the constable and the scouts rode with great caution, noting that every now and then prints of the same shoe occurred, showing clearly that the man had struck along the road in the first instance.

Harvey Lashbrook was riding at the head of the band when he gave a shout and jumped from his machine "Here it is again!" he cried, pointing to the unmistakable trail which left the high road at a stile.

Whoever he was, the miscreant had evidently turned off there, into a right-of-way path that led across an angle of Lashbrook? sestate was of considerable extent, and one of the show-places of the neighbourhood; there was the Home Park and the Deer Park, the Italian Garden, and the grass terraces, a quarter of a mile of them, leading down to a vast sheet of ornamental water, but it was through an angle of the Deer Park that the footpath led.

While they were lifting their machines over the stile, something like a cheer on the road behind them made them all turn, and they saw a fresh contingent of the scouts, who, having got wind of their intentions, had put on their uniforms with the full determination of being "in it."

Billy set his teeth hard; his sympathies were all with the hunted man, in whose innocence he firmly believed, and he was only hoping that he might come up with him alone and warn him of the threatening danger.

This was now impossible, and he rode with the rest along the wet footpath where the pools showed how heavy last night's rain had bee

heavy last night's rain had been.
When they reached the park proper, where magnificent chestnuts hung their broad leaves over the wall that surrounded it, it was agreed upon that they should open out to forty paces, and sweep across from one side to the other, afterwards, searching the woods that fringed the ornamental water beyond it.

The dappled deer and a flock of

wards, searching the woods that fringed the ornamental water beyond it.

The dappled deer and a flock of sheep scampered away at the unexpected appearance of that line of eager lads, led by the constable, but no human figure did they see, nor was the print of the mended shoe again visible.

"I'm afraid it is a wildgoose chase," said Heath.

"Never mind, it's jolly good fun, anyway," said several of them, as they carried their machines up the wooden steps that led over the wall. Billy had lagged behind, and was the last to get over, but as he paused to draw breath, he saw something bright in the grass at the edge of the path not half a dozen strides off.

When he had carried his machine down on to the level again, he went towards the object, and started, for it was the tin whistle on which his acquaintance of the day before had discoursed those mellifluous strains.

The boy stopped and looked after the others; Harvey Lashbrook, who had taken upon himself to usurp the command of those volunteer helpers, was ordering them to stack their machines and follow him into the wood.

Billy knelt down, pretending there

machines and follow him into the wood.

Billy knelt down, pretending there was something wrong with his chain, and his heart beat wildly, for close to the whistle was another impression of that mended shoe, whose wearer had evidently proceeded down a little avenue of birches that penetrated the wood there.

Through the trees the sunlight glinted on an arm of the lake, and the little avenue led to an old boathouse on the bank—an ornamental pagoda with a thatched roof, which he knew was not used now.

The tramp had met the rain and turned into the wood for shelter, and Billy was prepared to bet his best boots that he would find him there.

The boys had disappeared now, and were beating up the wood in a semicirele—it would be ten minutes before they reached the boathouse at the very least, and leaving his machine in the grass, he ran as hard as he could pelt with the whistle in his hand.

With startling suddenness an unshaven face, crowned by a battered billycock, peered out through the door, and responded to the boy's brandished arm by a wave of his ragged sleeve, and the next minute Billy, panting hard, was inside the pagoda trying to recover his breath.

"Quick—quick!" he whispered.

"You must clear out; the police are after you for the murder of Mrs. Bagot up at the farm yonder."

The tramp's greeting had consisted of an amused grin, but he started now and turned very white.

"What like a woman was she?" he said eagerly, slipping the whistle into his pocket. "Thin, pale-faced, with a screw of black hair done up anyhow, and a shabby gown?"

"Yes—yes; don't wait, or you'll be taken. They're in the wood now!"

"Just my luck," said the tramp, "I ricked my knee in the dark on the way here when the rain came, and I couldn't run a yard to save my life. You're a good little chap to take all this trouble, but I want you to do something more for me and keep your mouth shut until I tell you to open it. Where was she found?"

"In the farm-kitchen," replied Billy. to open it. Where was she found?"
"In the farm-kitchen," replied

"In the farm-kitchen," replied Billy.
"I thought so," said the tramp thoughtfully. "Now look here"—and taking up his stick he drew a rough parallelogram on the floor of the boathouse—"that's the plan of the big black barn up at the farm, there's the door, and there's the ladder leading up into the loft."

Then he dug the point of his stick in two places on the plan, one near the foot of the ladder, the other in the far corner, Billy wondering all the while what on earth he was driving at.

far corner, Billy wondering all the while what on earth he was driving at.

"You must go to the barn when no one sees you," said the tramp, "and clear away the litter at these places I have marked 'A' and 'B.' At A, you'll find a sack full of silver, about three feet from the wall; at B—well, I don't know what it is, but you must find it, and tell nobody, and you must bring the things into Court when I'm examined before the magistrates—it may mean a great deal to me."

Billy was utterly nonplussed at these strange directions, and not a little frightened, and while he was committing them to memory, they both heard the sound of voices drawing nearer and nearer.

"You wouldn't be here, youngster, if you didn't believe me innocent," said his strange companion, "and you're right. I mayn't be much good in the world, but I'm not a murderer, and I never stole anyanything. You had better not be found here. Run out and give a yell as though you had just discovered me." And he pushed him towards the door of the pagoda, which was on the opposite side to the advancing cordon.

Billy sprang into the open air, and

Billy sprang into the open air, and his "Wah—wah—wah—wah!" was instantly answered by the members of the Jackal Patrol, to the great disgust of Harvey Lashbrook, and a

disgust of Harvey Lashbrook, and a Kangaroo or two who happened to be with him.

"You don't mean to say you have found anything, young Stevenson?" cried Harvey, as he and Constable Heath dashed up.

"Yes, he's there," said Billy, and flinging the door wide open, the constable stepped in.

"Oh, it's you, is it?" said Heath.

"You were playing a whistle in the High Street on Friday night, weren't you?"

"That's me," said the tramp, with a smile that might have meant anything, as he touched his battered hat

"That's me, said the train, the said that might have meant anything, as he touched his battered hat with mock civility to Harvey Lashbrook. "My respects to your

brook. "My respects to your Majesty!"
"Don't be insolent, fellow!" said young Lashbrook haughtily. "That's the man, Heath!"
"You'll have to come with me to the station," said the intelligent officer; "it's my duty to arrest you on the serious charge of murder, but

I must caution you that anything you say may be used against you."

"Right-ho, mate! You needn't bother about the darbies, Pll go quiet enough!" And looking out through the door at the patch of sunlight that played among the treetops, he smiled to himself as he limped into the open.

Harvey Lashbrook lined up on the other side of him, with an idea of rendering assistance to the Law, if it were necessary. He even went so far as to make a movement with his hand, as though he would have grasped the tramp's arm.

"If you'll take my advice, young man," said the suspect, "you'll keep your hands to yourself, or else I shall treat you like a shilling rabbit. I'm the constable's prisoner and not layour's."

Harvey coloured and glared at the laddels, who hed the raddinger the

Harvey coloured and glared at the Jackals, who had the indelicacy to grin, and then they went back across the Deer Park, and up the lane past the farm, where the tramp looked once at Billy, but otherwise maintained a stolid silence until they reached the police-station.

The prisoner gave his name as "John Smith, London," and stuck to it, and when he had been formally charged and searched, he was consigned to a cell, pending his examination next day.

"Of course," said Constable Heath, as he left him to his own re-

tion next day.

"Of course," said Constable
Heath, as he left him to his own reflections, "you'll have every opportunity of proving your innocence; in

constable. "You've been hanging round here for the last three hours watching your opportunity to come into the barn, and looking as guilty as though you had done the thing yourself. What did the prisoner say to you in Colonel Lashbrook's boathouse before we came up?"

Billy's face was a great deal too honest to deceive Tom Heath, although he made a desperate attempt to stick to his guns.

"Now, you had better make a clean breast of it," said the constable confidentially, "and I'll tell you this much to help you. Your pal, the tramp, is not the man we want for this job, but if you go poking about under our noses you'll find yourself in very hot water before you're done. Did he leave something behind him?"

"I don't know," said Billy, with perfect truth; "but he told me that there are two things hidden in the barn, and I was going to look for them."

"Come on, then, and we'll search "You've been hanging constable.

"Come on, then, and we'll search together," said the constable, who had very pronounced ideas of his own which he had not yet communicated to

which he had not yet communicated to his superiors.

Billy, fairly cornered, told him what the tramp had said, and, seizing the pitchfork, Heath had very soon cleared away the litter by the ladder's foot, and, cutting the string that tied the mouth of the sack, gave a cry of astonishment when he saw the silver.

"Great James!" he exclaimed.

"This is the church plate of Slopton-

Georgian windows on one side, through which the morning sun slanted in broad beams, in which the motes danced merrily.

The tramp, considerably improved in appearance by a wash and a brushup, lounged in the dock, and the first witness to be examined was the husband of the murdered woman.

The doctor had been excused attendance until twelve o'clock on the plea of an urgent case—a matter of life and death—and Constable Heath kept his eye anxiously on the clock at the far end of the room, apparently chafing at the slow progress of the legal formalities.

The moment Bagot saw the prisoner he leaned over the witness-box and pointed to him, crying excitedly:

"That man was hanging round my house the whole of Friday afternoon. I turned him off the farm twice."

To everyone's astonishment the prisoner laughed.

"This is a very serious matter, prisoner," said the magistrates' clerk reprovingly; "this is no time for merriment!"

"All right, guv'nor," said "John

"All right, guv'nor," said "John Smith," still with a broad grin on his face; "only that man is a liar, that's face; all!"

Bagot, whose haggard face and bowed shoulders had excited considerable sympathy among the public assembled at the back of the court, turned a shade whiter, if that were possible, and looked at the magistrates.

possible, and trates.
"What time did you cycle over to Barford, Bagot?" said Colonel Lash-

brook.
"I started out, sir, as near as I can remember, about half-past six," replied the farmer, after a mental cal-

plied the farmer, after a mental calculation.

"Do any business there?" interrogated the prisoner.

"Silence, please!" said the clerk.

"You'll have an opportunity of putting any questions at the close of this witness's evidence."

"Oh, all right!" said the prisoner cheerily. "Only that's lie number two; he says he got back to the farm at nine o'clock, and it's eighteen miles to Barford if it's an inch. I've tramped it more than once!"

Bagot ignored the interruption, and told with much detail how he returned home to find that hideous thing waiting for him.

When he had finished the clerk nodded to the prisoner.

"Now, if you have anything to say, you can say it," he said rather sharply.

"I've nothing more to say, governor," was the reply. "I admit being on the bank behind the farm

say, you can say to, he said rather sharply.

"I've nothing more to say, governor," was the reply. "I admit being on the bank behind the farm all day, but that that man saw me I deny absolutely. The poor woman who was murdered gave me some water for my tea about three o'clock in the afternoon, and about six she looked over the hedge into the road as though she was expecting someone. Of course, I don't expect you to take my word, but I think the constable yonder has something to say!" And he looked at Tom Heath.

Heath's eves had sought the clock

he looked at Tom Heath.

Heath's eyes had sought the clock again and again, and it was now ten minutes to twelve.

"I should like to ask Mr. Bagot a few questions, your Worship, if I might be allowed," he said.

"Certainly, Heath!" assented the colonel, and the townsfolk craned their necks forward, one old farmer saying to his neighbour: "He be a smart chap Tom Heath, he be!"

"Silence in court!" cried the magistrates' clerk.

smart chap Tom Heath, he be!"

"Silence in court!" cried the magistrates' clerk.

Tom Heath cleared his throat.

"Tell me, Bagot," said the young constable, "when was the last time you saw these things?" And, stooping down, he took a pair of candlesticks, some platters, and a ewer from a portmanteau, and laid them on the clerk's table.

Bagot started, and said:

"I—I never saw them before! What are they?" And as he leaned over the witness-box the beads of perspiration dropped on to his tightly-clasped hands.

"This is the church plate, your Worship, that was stolen from Slopton-cum-Muckfat, some time on Saturday afternoon," said Tom Heath. "From certain information received, I found them in one of Bagot's barns under some litter in a corner done up in this sack." And he held it up.

"I don't quite understand your inference, constable," said Colonel Lashbrook, looking rather confused. "What has stolen plate got to do with the present charge?"

"Well, sir," replied Heath, "Bagot's initials are on the sack, and, of course, sir, as you know, Sloptone

It was a quaint room, with tall of course, sir, as you know, Sloptone



The tramp in the loft was awakened by a sound beneath him, and peeping down, he saw by the light of a stable lantern, a man digging a hole, and a bundle laid beside him.

the meantime, you've got to keep your pecker up. I'll bring you some tea presently." And he bestowed upon him a nod which, somehow, was almost friendly.

Billy was at his wit's ends. He had a mission to perform, but with half Beeminster buzzing round the farm, in spite of the efforts of a dozen constables to keep them off the premises, there seemed no chance of his doing anything, much less digging.

He roamed about the place like an unquiet spirit, but at last he saw his opportunity, and slipped, as he thought, unseen into the dim vastness of the great barn.

It was very old, and the timbers that supported the floor of the loft had whitened with age until they looked like the ribs of some antediluvian monster.

To Billy's joy he saw a fork in one corner, and was just crossing over to it, when Constable Heath came noise-

lessly in.

"What's your little game now,
Billy?" said Tom Heath; and Billy
crimsoned to the roots of his hair.

"Nothing particular," faltered the
boy, for Heath spoke sharply, and
Billy felt guilty.

"Oh, yes, there is!" persisted the

THE 5th CHAPTER. Gallant Vagabond.

HE court-room was packed, and there was a full Bench of magistrates, Colonel Lashbrook presiding.

cum-Muckflat, that was stolen on Saturday, about three o'clock in the afternoon!"

afternoon!"

"Well, John Smith, as he calls himself, could not have stolen it, because he was in the hollow over there at that time!" cried Billy.

"Oute with a sonia. I never said

that time!" cried Billy.

"Quite right, sonnie. I never said he did!" said Tom Heath. "And now let's dig in the other place. Phew!" he whistled, as he unearthed a wood chopper, to which adhered several long black hairs. "We are on hot scent now. That's the thing the deed was done with. I want you to keep your mouth shut, Billy; not a word—even to your father—until tomorrow!"

word—even to your father—until to-morrow!"

"What time is the examination?"
asked Billy, in a hushed voice.

"The magistrates sit at eleven c'clock sharp," replied the constable, "and unless I'm very much mistaken we'll spring a few surprises on two or three persons concerned!"

"Sexton Blake, Spy!" a Superb New Story of the Great Detective, Commences Next Tuesday in Our

THE TRAMP AND THE TIN WHISTLE.

(Continued from the previous page.)

is the only place in the county where we find red clay; I've got Bagot's bicycle outside, and the rims are covered with it; which is pretty clear proof that he must have been there, and could not possibly have visited Barford at the time he says he did."
"This is nonsense!" exclaimed the

farmer, leaning heavily on the rail of the witness-box. "I appeal to you,

"This is nonzense!" exclaimed the farmer, leaning heavily on the rail of the witness-box. "I appeal to you, Colonel Lashbrook, am I being tried, or is that man there the prisoner!" "Don't lose your temper, Bagot, "said the presiding magistrate. "Of course, it does not follow from that, Heath, that Bagot was at Slopton on Saturday." "No, sir!" interrupted the farmer, in a triumphaot voice, accompanied by a look at Tom Heath that would have slaim. "I attended market at Slopton last Wednesday, and have not cleaned my bicycle since." "No, sir!" said the doctor sternly, looking at him with a glance of withering contempt. "But sufficiently well to make a very important statement, and to accuse you as her sailant!" Bagot's face turned purple, and, eaging out of the box, he made a dash for one of the doors immediately being the cyclist who begrede a light for his lamp a mile this side of Slopton at dusk or Saturday, and I have something else here which I found in the barn." And as he held up the chopper it was a question which of the two men made the wilder start—Bagot, to whom it belonged, or the prisoner in the dock, who looked at it for an instant, and then turned his eyes upon his accuser.

"That was on the wood pile when I left the farm," said Bagot, in a shaking voice, "and that man hid it there, or else how would he know all about these things!" hid it after he killed my poor wife, the wicked hound!" And he made as though he

would have sprung over the rail and rushed towards the prisoner.
One or two constables stepped forward to restrain him, but there was no need, for at that moment a new arrival appeared in the court-room in the person of Dr. Antrobus, who walked quickly up to the clerk's table and bowed to the Bench.
"I think, Colonel Lashbrook," said the doctor, who was a person of considerable importance in Beeminster, "you will have to amend the charge altogether from one of murder "—and

"you will have to amend the charge altogether from one of murder "—and he glanced significantly at Constable Heath. "The unfortunate woman is not dead after all; in fact, she has recovered consciousness. I have removed a piece of fractured bone from the brain, and it is more than likely she will recover."

A laud murmur ran through the

momentary pause, "Your face has been strangely familiar to me all the morning. Where have I seen it?"

"Often enough in the orderly-room, sir, I'm afraid," replied the wandering minstrel. "I wish I had as many shillings, colonel, as I have had C.B.'s and 'cells' from your lips, when we were both in the 30th Hussars—the good old 'Scarlet Runners'!"

JUST OUT:

3

NEW NUMBERS OF

The colonel adjusted his eyeglass and scrutinised the speaker closely. There was a familiarity in his voice that was not in any way insolent, and his heart warmed to one who had been a member of his own regiment.

"Your name is not Smith," he said.
"What was it?"
"I'd rather not say sir," said the

"I'd rather not say, sir," said the tramp; "but do you remember one afternoon, about five miles out of Snarlersdorp, when we got jammed between two commandoes, and your horse was shot, in the middle of the barbed wire?"

horse was shot, in the middle of the barbed wire?"

"Yes, yes—go on!"

"There's not much more, sir, except that a man stopped behind and got you clear just as the pom-pom opened on us from a little kopje on the right—"

"Stop! You are forgetting one thing, Private Gregory!" exclaimed the colonel, starting to his feet and bending towards the prisoner. "You ought to add that that man, finding me badly cut about by the wire, hoisted me on to his own pony, started it off, and stayed behind, covering my retreat with his rifle, and most assuredly saving my life. Do you know that I recommended you for the Victoria Cross for that action, and that you would have got it if you had not deserted in the meantime?"

A flush passed over Private Gregory's face.

"I stuck it, sir, as long as we were before the enemy," he said, in a low voice. "Peace was declared when I bolted."

There was a dead silence in court; even the scoundrel Bagot, held in the

bolted."

There was a dead silence in court; even the scoundrel Bagot, held in the grip of Sergeant Stevenson, listened with all his ears to that strange inci-

with all his ears to that strange incident.

"What on earth possessed you to take that false step, Gregory?" said the colonel at last. "You were a changed man from the moment the war broke out; it seemed to stiffen you, and from being a perfect waster, you were perhaps the smartest soldier in B Squadron."

"I don't know, sir," said the tramp. "I think I must have a lazy bone somewhere in my composition, and I hated the restraint."

The colonel looked at his brother magistrates, among whom were three or four retired officers, and his face assumed a look of sorrowful regret.

"I fear you are incorrigible, Gregory," he said. "I am sorry for you, but it is my duty to remand you in custody pending the arrival of an escort to take you back to the regiment at York."

"I always said I never had any luck!" sighed the tramp, instantly losing all trace of his military bearing as he slouched from the dock to make room for the man Bagot.

No one quite understoed how it came about, but when a corporal and two privates of the "Scarlet Runners" arrived in all their glory of yellow braid and red Hussar caps, the deserter's cell was empty!

I know that Harvey Lashbrook was out very late on the London Road the night before, and that five pounds which he had saved disappeared at the same time as the man who had saved his father's life.

It has also struck me as somewhat strange that the colonel's son and the police-sergeant's son are occasionally seen in conversation when there is no one about, and that a very intelligent

seen in conversation when there is no one about, and that a very intelligent smile mantled the features of Constable Heath when he came upon them thus on one occasion—but the constable said nothing, and neither do I. Still, the fact remains that Billy has attained wonderful proficiency on the tin whistle, and the instrument on which he plays is one which I believe will be familiar to you, my readers.

THE END.

(The best Christmas Double Number of THE BOYS' FRIEND ever published will appear next Tuesday. It is full of Christmas stories and articles. Tell all your chums about this record number.)

A MODEL DERRICK CRANE,

By GEO. P. MOON. And How to Make It.

GENERAL view is given in Fig. 1 of a model derrick crane which is worked by hand. It has several movements—all the movements, indeed, which the original possesses. The jib can be raised towards the perpendicular or lowered towards, the horizontal position, the whole concern swinging by a couple of standards to take the windlasses, etc.

If you inspect Figs. 1, 2, and 3—will get a good idea of the mechanism of the affair. For one thing you will note that there are a couple of windlasses, one to lift the load, and the other to raise or lower the jib. Both these windlasses have ratchets so that each remains at rest when you remove your hand from the crank. And both have friction brakes to enable you to lower away gradually when the ratchet levers are moved.

Let us begin with the base. This

Fig. 1. - The Side View of the Steam Crane.

desired, or to return for fresh stuff, and, of course, the end of the cable descends or ascends at

I have let the model repre-sent a steam crane for the sake of appearance. Obvi-ously, if you want comething

more simple, you can easily leave out the boiler and the house, and replace the latter

Let us begin with the base. To

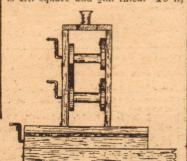


Fig. 3.—The Front View of the Crane (jib removed).

in the middle, is to be attached by an absolutely central screw the Jin. by §in. disc which bears the mechanism, etc. (Fig. 4.) A hole must be bored in the base for the screw, so that the disc may rotate, but not too freely. Fig. 5 shows how the disc is made to rotate. A piece of thin cord goes round the disc and is nailed at one point; the ends are wrapped about a roller im. in diameter and 5in. long, in opposite ways, so that when the roller is turned the cord at one extremity is wound up while the other is unwound. To secure the ends of the

cord, they are passed through holes in the roller and knotted. Two



pieces of stout wire, one lin. long and the other Jin., have an end flattened by beating, and this flattened end is driven into the extremities of the roller to provide axles, and, in the case of the longer



longer, make an enclosure round the disc, Showing the Method of Rotating the Disc.

Showing the Disc.

They are glued to the base, and further secured by screws inserted in further secured by screws inserted in their lower edge through the base, holes



which it is bent Fig. 6.—Showing the is passed method of Screwing through its the Wood to the Base. bearing hole.

The "house" is formed of two

The "house" is formed of two side pieces, 2½ in. wide and 4in. long, a back piece, 1½ in. wide and 4in. long, a roof piece 2in. wide and 2½ in. long, and a lower part, [which carries the boiler also, 4in. by 2½ in. all of ½ in. wood. The roof piece is shaped as Fig. 7 long, and a lower part, which earries the boiler also, tin. by 2½ in. all of ½ in. wood. The roof piece is shaped as Fig. 7 indicates, the Fig. 7.—The Top of the cut away portion providing long, ¼ in. thick, and ¾ in. wide; its about 3 in. long and 1 in. wide; its as shown, to enable it to come in contact with the top and bottom flange as desired. Fig. 12 illustrates the other side of the house, showing the ratchet and pawl levers, the latter being 3 in. long, ¼ in. thick, and ¾ in. wide at

room for the jib stay when the jib approaches the vertical. The back is also cut as shown in Fig. 8, the position and extent of the parts being governed by



trates, for the House.
flanges, which
are 3-16in. in thickness and
lin. in diameter. One of them is
shaped as Fig. 9 shows, the ratchet
being cut with a sharp penknife.
Fig. 11 gives a view of the inside
of the house nearest to us in Fig. 1,

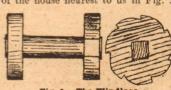


Fig. 9 .- The Windlass.

the ratchet flanges, which occupy the furthest position in Fig. 1, being removed for the sake of clearness. This diagram shows us the brake which acts upon the flanges of the windlasses; the top one when the lever is depressed, the bottom one when it is pushed up, the elastic band keeping the brake out of action till its operation is required.

The windlasses are supported and worked by wire driven into each end of the barrel, as in the case of that which rotates the whole crane. And these wires pierce the sides of the house in the situation shown in Fig. 11.

The brake lever, seen in Fig. 11, is



their widest point. The illustration is so clear that further explanation is not needed. Glue and screw the sides and back to the bottom, and add the top piece when the bottom has been screwed to the disc.

We come now to the boiler. This measures about 5in. in height and lin. in diameter. It can be cut from one piece of wood, but it will be better to let the chimney be a later addition. Fig. 2 shows its position; it must not be in the way of the brake or the pawl



not be in the way of the brake or the pawl levers, which, of course, project at the rear of the engine-house.

The jib is our final task. Fig. 13 gives a good idea of this part, which is made up of two pieces of 3-16in. wood—fretwood would be very suitable—10in. long, and merging from \$\frac{2}{3}\$in. in width, and joined by a couple of blocks as shown. The pulley, \$\frac{2}{2}\$in. in diameter and \$\frac{2}{3}\$in. thick, is cut out with a fretsaw, and grooved with a round file. Its axle, a piece of sufficiently stout wire, turns in holes bored in the brass plates screwed to the end of the jib, as Fig. 15 depicts.

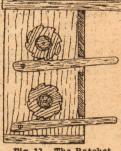
The jib is hinged to the sides of the engine-house by means of screws inserted into the block at its wider end.

The cable

twine or thread-holding the jib is attached to a small eye-screw

other end

as well as



12.—The Ratchet Arrangement.

other cable is wrapped round the barrel of barrel of the windlass and terminates in a small tack hammered into the barrel at one side. The hauling cable passes through an eye-screw into the lowest block on its way to the barrel. Paint to taste.



Fig. 13.—The Jib of the Steam Crane.

"The New Broom,

Fig. 2.-Plan of the Steam Crane.

0

Maxwell Scott's Latest and Best School Serial, Commences Next Tuesday In Our

SUPERB NEW SERIAL.

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New Readers Start Here.

Mr. Trimble is the owner of a great cotton mill in Vulcan Street, Bradford, where all the employees are on strike. At Trimble's mills new machinery is being fitted up which will when completed turn out work with wonderful rapidity? The workers fail to see what advantage it will be to them, and they are under the impression that this machinery will cause the discharge of many hands.

Dick Allen, a plucky and determined thirteen-year-old Yorkshire lad, is left to fight the great battle of life parentless and almost penniless. He resolves to get on in the world, to cheer up his young sister Jessie, and to provide for her. He will live a life of poverty no longer.

defiance of the strikers

plucky little fellow succeeds in gettin loyment to help fit up the machiner rimble's mills.

in Trimble's mills.

The strikers become furious, and in their rage they attempt to force a way into the mill and break up the machinery. In the fight between mill-owner and idle employees, Dick Allen saves the life of Mr. Trimble, and in recognition of this brave deed he is given a written document showing that he will be entitled to a one-fourth share in the mill when he attains the age of twenty-one.

Dick meets a great enemy when he is introduced to James Ackroyd, the unscrupulous nephew of Mr. Trimble. Ackroyd has a power in the management of the mill, and does all he can to get Dick from his uncle's favour.

Ackroyd owes a certain money-lender a large sum of money, and in order to clear this debt he forges a cheque for £150. Later, Mr. Trimble discovers this deliberate alteration, and so overwhelmed is he at finding his nephew to be a rogue and thief that he is suddenly taken ill with heart trouble.

Thinking of what will be left him at come furious, and in their

Thinking of what will be left him at his uncle's death, James Ackroyd withholds Mr. Trimble's medicine, and so the great mill-owner passes away, death being caused by his nephew.

Ackroyd is anxious to destroy Dick's caim to a one-fourth share of the mill, and prevents him from gaining any knowledge of the working of the business. He does not wish the lad to be exactly out of his sight, as he hopes to work some dastardly plot as soon as the opportunity arrives.

arrives.

The chance comes, and Widdop, a nasty youth in the employ of Ackroyd, is used as the instrument of the attack.

(Now read this week's instalment.)

ICK worked with a will at the job that was given to him. He began to have a glimmer of the fact that he was being kept out of the work-rooms.

Still that did not trouble him at present, for he kept his eyes open and his brain alive. He noticed the kinds of goods he had to handle, the skeps of goods he had to handle, the skeps of full bobbins and empty ones, the balls of wool called tops, the empty beams that were come to have the warp wound on them. All these different objects going up to the higher floors or to the basement below

he noted, argued the reasons for their movement and the purposes to which they were to be put, and in this way storing in his mind much useful knowledge.

Now, Widdop had watched him at work there some time, on and off, for he had had occasion to visit the lift himself with loads of bobbins to go down to the store. In Trimble's the filled bobbins were packed into skeps, which are not to be confused with the buffalo skeps made of hide, but are tall, square baskets with lids. These when filled are then wheeled out on long-handled, two wheeled sackcarts.

carts.
On this floor Wddop was jobberlad—that is to say, a sort of foreman over a number of boys, half-timers for the most part, employed in laying on and the like. Therefore, he had only himself to consult in choosing the job of conveying the filled skeps to the lift.

Ha had first of all to run along a

to the lift.

He had first of all to run along a passage of a dozen yards or so, then to turn a corner, and to let his load down three steps to the level of the landing. Lights were burning in the spinning-room, but the passages and stairs were dusky with the gloom of the winter afternoon.

He came down the passage at a

He came down the passage at a run, twisted round the corner with skill, and came, the next moment, to the top of the steps, where a few yards away on a lower level he saw Dick bending over his task of putting something into the lift.

something into the lift.

He was seized at the moment with a blind, vicious hatred of the boy. There came upon him the mad impulse to do him injury there and then. He was moving quickly. He did not stay his impetus at the edge of the steps. He let his cart leap the three steps. It ran on the remaining few feet of its own velocity, breaking away from Widdop's controlling hand, twisted round, and upset violently against Dick, just as he was stepping back from the ascending lift.

lift.
How shall words express quickly enough what he saw and what he realised? The weight of the blow sent him tottering towards the open lift-shaft. It was open, for the lift was already his own height above him. He had a momentary glimpse of the dark depths, the thought of a sudden crushing out of his life at the bottom of the shaft, and then he did the only thing possible to save himself. lift-shaft. It was open, for the lift was already his own height above him. He had a momentary glimpse of the dark depths, the thought of a sudden crushing out of his life at the bottom of the shaft, and then he did the only thing possible to save himself.

He shot up his hands, and grasped the edge of the rising lift above him. He could not push off again. He had to grip it hard to save himself. And then, somehow, before he could reason out what to do, he was dragged up off his feet by the ascending lift.

In an instant he was in a ghastly

quandary. There was no swinging outwards to jump to safety. An acrobat might have done it, but no one less skilled. Dick knew, with that swiftness of thought that comes in such dreadful circumstances, that such an attempt would mean a drop down the open shaft. On the other land, the alternative was not less dreadful.

In another moment, he would be

frand, the alternative was not less-dreadful.

In another moment he would be trapped between the bottom of the lift and the next floor. His hands would be chopped off. He would fall just the same down the yawning hole that awaited him.

And then in this moment of supreme agony he saw underneath the lift a big ring-bolt that had evidently been used at some time or other for a connection of some sort. He held by the ledge with one hand for a ghastly fraction of a second, while he gripped the ring-bolt with the other. The next moment he relinquished the ledge, and swung over upon the ring with only a breath of time to spare.

The ring did not afford good hold.

upon the ring with only a breath of time to spare.

The ring did not afford good hold. It was big enough for one hand to get in, but not for two, and the gauge of metal being thin, it felt almost as though it would cut his fingers in two. But he hung on, yelling out warning as he came up level with the next floor, hoping that someone might be there to stop the lift. Then demon chance took a turn at his undoing.

doing.

The lift stopped, but not where he expected. It came to rest with a loud grinding noise a foot or so below the level of the next floor. He guessed it had jammed. His head was up in darkness. He knew from below no more than his feet would be visible.

"T" blooming lift's fast; it's jammed!" he heard a voice shout somewhere above. He yelled loudly for help. The thin ring was cutting into the only hand he cold get effectively into it. There came a quick reply, and an excited shout questioning where he was.

Dick answered in an agonised voice.

reply, and an excited shout questioning where he was.

Dick answered in an agonised voice.

"I can't see thee, lad. Where ista?
Oh, be goy, is those thy feet hanging theer? Oh, Heaven, hae mercy!
Cansta hold there a minute, lad? I dunno what to do. If I could get t' lift up a bit or down a bit. I can't get at thee up theer!"

"I can't stick on here long!" Dick gasped. "I'll have to let go directly. It's cutting my hand off. I shall have to get hold of the guide rope and chance sliding to the bottom."

"By goy, lad, tha'lt go over fast!
Sithee, I've got a lot o' bags o' soft stuff here. I'll chuck 'em down to t' bottom. They're bound, some on 'em, to drop where thy feet'll come."
And with no more ado he cast down the lift shaft a big pile of stuffed bags.
Dick heard them reach the bottom

ankles. He flashed by the next floor, and the next. He caught a momentary sight of Widdop standing in a strange attitude of strained fear, and then he was gone.

tary sight of Widdop standing in a strange attitude of strained fear, and then he was gone.

His hands seemed to be going suddenly ored-hot, for he clutched so tightly to try and stay his rapid fall. Happily, the cable was good and smooth, with no bits of wire sticking out from it to tear his hands, but it was as though he held a hot bar that was burning him to the bone.

Then all at once his feet came up sharply upon something that, although soft and yielding, gave him a jerk that he felt to his neck. But he understood that he was upon the bottom, though he was in dead darkness, and he let go and groped his way outwards, with thankfulness welling up out of his heart. And then, all at once he got another thrill as he picked himself up from the bags upon which he had at first sunk. A voice shrieked down to him.

"Look out! T' lift is coming down by itself, and I can't stop it. It's off t' guide, and—"

Dick heard a rumbling, scraping sound above, and he had no need to be told of the necessity of haste, He sprang towards the dark opening, and came up violently with a blow that nearly stunned him against the wooden door that an evil chance had made shut.

He cried out with the awful agony.

made shut,

He cried out with the awful agony of the thing, and beat his hands against the door. He was fast in a trap. In a moment he would be crushed by the descending lift that was coming down out of all control. He threw himself against the wood. It was no good. Death was coming down to him. There was no escape this time.

Then down in that nit of darkness.

Then down in that pit of darkness Then down in that pit of darkness. He got one glimmering inspiration. He seized one of the stoffed bags that had broken his fall, and put it upon another, and then threw still a further one upon that, till at one side there was a high rampart of stuff that would squeeze down a little, and yet give a solid resistance beyond a certain pressure.

give a solid resistance begins tain pressure.

Then he flung himself down beside them, as the lift came groaning down and settled itself upon the top.

At that he must have fainted, for when he opened his eyes he was lying in the cellar among the hampers, with someone holding a light overhim, and someone else bathing his face with cold water.

There were swift questions put to

face with cold water.

There were swift questions put to him after the expressions of relief at his safety had died down. How had he got into the lift shaft? Was it his own carelessness or what?

He could only answer what he knew. Someone had let a skep come tumbling down the steps upon him. He did not know who, unless—yes, it was Widdop, of course. Widdop had been wheeling out the skeps all the time from there.

"And another thing," he said, "it was not an accident. It was done on purpose. He's got a down on me.

And another thing," he said, "it was not an accident. It was done on purpose. He's got a down on me. He preatened only this afternoon to smash my face for me. I'm not afraid of that, but this is a blow from behind."

behind."
There were half a dozen men there who had come running down when the accident occurred, expecting to find Dick crushed and dead.

"Look here," said one, "we're all down here alone. I reckon we'd better fetch this Widdop lad down and hear what he has to say. Let him stand a fair trial, and if he can't clear hisself, just do the proper thing. Hammer him well in Yorkshire fashion, and then hand him over to t' police!"

"Right-ho!" cried another, and all nodded acquiescence. So a couple went up to fetch Widdop.

Tried by His Mates.

IDDOP was fetched down into the hasement into the basement with no excess of politeness. hesitated, and the messengers seeing in the hesitation a sign of g threatened to knock his head off. guilt Widdop went down to the cellar to

happens so that he won't gre you't sack."

Now, this was a very unskilful move on the part of Widdop, because if there is anything a Yorkshireman is proud of, it is his sturdy independance. The imputation was, therefore, very much of an insult.

"By goy, that's quite enough to earn thee a whacking!" said one.

"We know nowt about this lad in that way. And we don't know whether he's a wrong 'un or a reet 'un; but, anyhow, he's got to have fair play. Tha'lt have a belting first for acting suspicious, and second for cheeking tha elders. Get hold on him, Bill. I'll do the beltin' masen'."

masen'."

A leather waist-belt in the hands of an expert can be made to give real good punishment, and held down over a bobbin-skep, he got a first-class application of this Yorkshire medicine. He yelled hard. Being a bully, he was a coward, and he could not bear pain quietly. Luck, however, was with him, for his yells brought assistance. brought assistance.

(Continued on the next page.)

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While the punishment was in progress, James Ackroyd happened to be crossing the yard, and the lusty shouts coming up through one of the gratings, he paused on his way to the office, and descended into the basement to see what was happening.

"By gad, is this how you waste your time?" he cried. "Is this a new sort of game—a game that I have to pay for? You beggars, what do you mean by it?"

"They set on me for nowt!" whimpered Widdop. "That little rotter there has been tellin' lies about me!"

"We're porzin' him, sir, because he's very nigh killed this lad by tumbling him into t' lift shaft, and again, because he's given us some lip."

"You're holding a sort of magistrate's court, are you?" said Ackroyd sarcastically. "You are judges and chief floggers rolled in one. And you're playing the game in my time. Look here, my lads, you must be off. This is a work-place, not a playground. If there's trouble here, it's my job to settle it, not yours, and if anybody's got to be punished, I'll see about it."

"All right, sir. But you can't ex-

"All right, sir. But you can't expect us to come and complain in the office whenever a lad gives lip? We've just got to porze him."

"This is different. Half a dozen of you wasting time that's not your own."

own."

The men cleared off, at least comfortable in their minds that they had administered the belt remedy well and truly, and Ackroyd himself shut the door at the bottom of the steps after them. And he also closed the lift door, so that no sounds might escape immediately above, and fastened up the window that received light through the yard grating.

"Now, what's it all about?" he said harshly, lighting a cigarette at the gas jet.

the gas-jet.

"The lies this little brute tells about me is right awful," began Widdop.

"A pal I've been to him, really. And yet everything that happens to him he puts on to me. Fancy me wanting to chuck him down to lift!"

me wanting to chuck him down t'liftt!"

A sardonic smile crossed Ackroyd's face. The barefaced defence of the big youth was certainly amusing.

"I can't take sides in this matter," said Ackroyd; "but I certainly know he doesn't stick at much. What have you got to say, you little rat!"

"What I have already said, sir," returned Dick respectfully, yet fearlessly. "He threatened me early this afternoon. He was going to half kill me, or something, when he got the chance. If he'd come at me from the front, I shouldn't mind. But he threw me down the lift-shaft by letting go of his skep on the trolley at the top of the steps by the lift, so that it came tumbling down against me."

"A wicked lie!" cried, Widdon.

"A wicked lie!" cried Widdop.
"He fell down because he's so blamed careless, tha knaws, and then he lays it on to me."
"You'll never let me alone!" cried Dick fiercely, for he knew on which side Ackroyd's sympathy lay.
"You're always bullying me. I never get a day's peace from you."
"There he goes, sir. Listen to him."

"There he goes, sir. Listen to him."

"And there's never been a day's peace in the mill since you've been here!" snapped Aokroyd. "You've always got some complaint. There's always some trouble in which you are at the bottom. You're not safe to have about the place. By gad, how long are you going to stop here worrying me?"

"You're doing your best to drive me off, sir," said Dick, throwing off all pretence of supposing the other was judging fairly; "but I'm going to stop!"

all pretence of supposing the other was judging fairly; "but I'm going to stop!" "You little worm, you're going to stop!" exclaimed Ackroyd, biting his cigarette in two wish anger. "You mean taking advantage of that old idiot's will, do you! Very well; I'll make you change your mind before long!" Then all at once he stopped, pulling himself up as it were.

"Of course, I must judge fairly between you. I dare say you've both been to blame. We've got to have order in the place, and we can't go to the police for everything. You've had your punishment, Widdop. Now, we'll give this young rat something to remember it by. Is that a coil of rope lying under the hoist? Just hand it to me. And roll over that big pack of waste. If he's tied to that face downwards, he'll not be able to make such a howling."

The waste pack in question was a hore sack filled tightly with woollen

The waste pack in question was a huge sack filled tightly with woollen waste. It was difficult to move, rather by reason of its unwieldy size than its weight. To be tied down to

that was to be in a far from pleasant

that was to be in a far from pleasant position.

Dick was no longer in the state of mind to tamely submit to any more outrages of this kind, and, anticipating what was coming, he made an attempt to get away. He reached the door that guarded the steps, but Widdop interposed, catching him brutally by the neck, and swinging him away. Dick, momentarily losing his balance, tottered over towards Ackroyd. The mill-owner thrust out a spiteful fist, catching Dick a blow behind the ear that sent his senses whirring. He struggled in their strong grip. He fought furiously, but his feet were kicked from under him, he was thrown down, and the rope made fast about him.

kicked from under him, he was thrown down, and the rope made fast about him.

He was pitched on the wool-pack. The rope was wound round it, and round him times and times quite tightly, so that, for all the resistance he could make, he became a part of the bulging sack of wool-waste.

"Here, drag him up nearer the light," said Ackroyd.

"I'll roll him up, sir!" chuckled Widdop brutally, and he turned over the big pack till Dick was on the ground, with the pack suffocatingly on the top of him. Up he was pushed again to the top, then down again, as the weight rolled over and up again under the light. One coil of the rope went round his neck, pressing his face into the side of the sack. He could hardly breathe. He felt half-suffocated. And when they began to thrash him with a rope-end each, the cries that he could not keep in were half-stifed at their utterance.

The pair of ruffians kept on at their dastardly work. The rope-ends rose and fell mercilessly. The boy writhed in agony against the coils of rope that held him. He forced his head away from the entrance of the wool-pack, and gave voice to one piercing scream. Then he was silent, and his struggles ceased.

"He's fainted, that's all," Ackroyd

scream. Then to struggles ceased. "He's fainted, that's all," Ackroyd "He's fainted, that's all," Ackroyd said, as he gave one last spiteful blow. "He'll come round in a bit. And I hope it will have done him good. I recken he'll want to find another situation after this. Here, just slack away that rope, and then chuck the contents of a fire-bucket over his head."

"You'll leave him here, then, sir?" suggested Widdop. "Fasten him up a bit?"

"Ay, a good idea. It'll give him a chance of making up his mind that he's had enough of Trimble's. Er—and if there are any inquiries upstairs, you can say I have given you both a hammering. Now, turn that gas out when you have emptied the water on him."

These gentla attentions were com-

you can say I have given you both a hammering. Now, turn that gas out when you have emptied the water on him."

These gentle attentions were completed, and the door at the bottom of the stairs bolted upon the other side, and so Dick was left.

He came to his senses—he did not know how long after—like one waking up out of a dreadful dream. He could not understand. He was in dead darkness, actual and physical. He could not tell where he was. With a feeling of utter bewilderment he sat up. Then the sense of discomfort, which had at first assailed him developed into actual pain, and of a sudden his bruised body reminded him of what, for the moment, his memory had been robbed of.

He remembered it all.

Every nuscle of his body ached; every inch of him felt bruised. And he felt horribly cold and shivery. He found the cause for that when he discovered that he was all wet. And then the full realisation of the brutality he had suffered came surging upon him, and, kneeling down beside the wool-pack to which he had been fastened, he gave way to a flood of scalding tears. He sobbed his heart out there. He felt that the world was too much for him.

Then all at once courage came again. There came the memory to him of that wild night when he had defended the mill and Henry Trimble against the fury of the strikers, and someone had-said that he had grit. The word fastened on his mind. Yes, he would still have grit. He would still have courage. He would fight against all these odds that crowded against him.

First of all, he stood up and exercised himself to try and get rid of some of the stiffness. He thrust out his arms, swung them round, bent his back; and worked his legs. He kept at it till the feeling of chill had disappeared, then he set himself to find his way out.

Very little searching revealed to him that he was a prisoner, and then all at once he became aware—which he had not noticed before—that the

Very little searching revealed to him that he was a prisoner, and then all at once he became aware—which he had not noticed before—that the familiar hum of the overhead machinery was not there. There was

a dead silence. It was quite evident that the machinery was stopped, therefore that the place was closed, and that not only had he been there a long time, but that, unless he could force his way out, he would be there much longer.

Of the hour he had no ideatheter it was early or late, but he felt a significant emptiness in the stomach that seemed to suggest it was long past his usual time for eating, so from that he argued that it was not very early, and that he must have been there some hours.

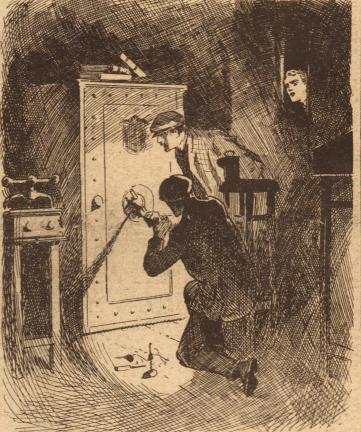
How was he to get out? The only way open was up the lift shaft, where at the bottom still lay the lift that had so nearly crushed cut his life; but after the dreadful experience he had undergone there, he shrank from any attempt at egress by that way. But after an abortive attempt to open the well-bolted door at the bottom of the steps, the conclusion was forced upon him that either it was to be an attempt by way of the lift shaft, or that he would have to spend the night in this cellar.

The latter choice did not recommend itself to him. He badly wanted to get out. He was greatly handicapped by the fact that he was in total darkness, though, fortunately, the place was familiar to him, and he was able to find his way about with tolerable accuracy.

He found the rope slipping through his hands. He was going down again, and he had not strength to hold on. He reached the bottom quite spent. He lay back on the top of the lift strength came back. Then he climbed up again, and finally got out upon the first floor.

So far, so good. But he was still locked in the place, and his had not strength there. What time was it? he wondered. He felt atrociously hungry, so that he was able to find his way about with tolerable accuracy.

He found the rope slipping through his hands. He was going down again, and he had not strength to hold on. He reached the bottom quite spent his hands. He was going down again, and he had not strength to had not strength to lead to find he had not strength to had not strength to life the first had not st



The office door was ajar, and, pushing it open another couple of inches, Dick peered in. He could see two men drilling and working hard to force open the safe.

of inches, Dick peered in. He working hard to force open the stallen lift, though after much manœuvring he found a little space between the wall and the lift top which he could creep through. He managed it after much struggling, though he had one little fright. The lift, which lay unequally on some filled bags at the bottom, tilted over with his weight on one side, pinning him between a sharp edge of it and the stone wall. The pressure caught him in the waist and small of the back. For a moment it almost pressed the breath out of him, then by good luck his hands caught the controlling-rope that hung above him, and pulling all his might, he was able to take his weight off and to push back the tilted lift. So he wriggled through, and got upon the top of the lift.

The question was now how to get up. The greasy guide-eables would offer no hold. There remained the control rope, which might or might not hold him. He decided to risk it at last, and he started up with ankles and knees gripping the rope, while he pulled himself up with his hands.

The intense darkness was a difficulty, for he could not tell how far he had ascended, nor when he had reached the first floor. But at intervals he kicked out his legs, so that by touching the wall he could tell whether it was stone-work or wood. Presently the hollow sounding of the door met his foot. It was shut. He

him to a sudden standstill. It was a "tap, tap, tap," broken by an occasional "click, click, click" with now and then a "fr-r" sort of noise that suggested a drill working against metal.

and then a "fr-r" sort of noise that suggested a drill working against metal.

He listened to these sounds wonderingly, trying to imagine in his mind what they meant. They seemed to come from the office. He could not understand it at all, and he crept quietly up the stairs to find out.

The office door was ajar. He pushed it open a couple of inches. What he saw made his eyes open wide with amazement, and his heart to beat fast. On a high office-stool in the middle of the room stood a bull's-eye lantern, probably electric, to judge from its brilliancy. The light from it was directed full on the safe, which stood on the ground against one wall. At this safe two men were working-manifestly at the task of breaking it open.

Burglars, of course. Doubtless, there was money in that safe. Dick remembered, with a start, that it was Friday night, and that the wages to be paid out on the morrow would be in there.

Then the old thought came to him that had entered his mind during the fire. This was not all James Ackroyd's mill. It was partly his. It was going to be his some day. He must defend his own.

He thought rapidly. He must find

*Magazine Postal Rates, Agents for Australia; Stream of the coming on "Gordan & Gordan & Gord

a way out, and go and give the alary. He paused there still a module longer. One of the men gave an exclamation of relief. He appeared to have been successful. He was bending over the front of the safe. Then came a clicking and breaking sound. The next moment the safe door came open, and there came an exultant chuckle from the two men and he saw their hands thrust into the safe.

He leaned forward to get a better view, clasping the door-handle for support. Then all at once his hand, which was oily from his climb of the lift-shaft, slipped from its grasp, and he fell forward noisily on the floor.

The two men turned angrily

he fell forward noisily on the floor.

The two men turned angrily towards the door. One darted forward to seize the interrupter. By the width of a hand Dick escaped. He dashed on to the steps, and ran up. It was his thought that inside one of the spinning-rooms he could elude pursuit among the machinery. He ranbadly, for he was stiff from his recent ill-treatment, and the man on his heels was both active and swift. recent ill-treatment, and the man on his heels was both active and swift. Once the hand all but gripped on his collar. Then the pursuer slipped on the edge of a stair, and fell forward on his hands. Dick paused a moment, and thrust his leg backwards. His heel got home painfully, to judge by the exclamation of rage that followed, but he did not linger to learn particulars, and he leaped up the stairs, only stopping when he was satisfied that the pursuit had ceased. Waiting in a corner on a heap of empty bags, Dick got his breath again, and at the same time worried his brain to know what to do.

His own safety was not the only

his brain to know what to do.

His own safety was not the only consideration. He wanted to get out of the mill to give the alarm. But how was it to be done? He went on tiptoe to the top of the stairs, and listened. There was no sound. They were doubtless waiting for him to go down. Then they would fall upon him, and—— He shuddered. He was frankly afraid. He was reaching the limits of endurance. And yet he must! He must go down. He must face it.

He went back to the empty bags. From one he tore a couple of squares

face it.

He went back to the empty bags. From one he tore a couple of squares of stuff, and with some string from his pocket he wrapped a piece round the bottom of each boot, and tied it about his ankles. Thus with his boots padded he went silently down the steps.

His heart beat against his ribs. At every step he anticipated a blow out-of the dark. He suffered torture in descending the stairs. He had suspicion of the silence. Surely this was to deceive him—to lure him on. Half a dozen steps above the office he paused with beating heart. Dare he go by that door?

He crept by, holding his breath. Then all at once there broke on his ears such a noise—compounded of sc many elements; the noisy crashing open of a door, the stamp of feet, the cry of voices, threats, cries of pain—that he came to a standstill with sheer hair-raising fear rooting him to the snot.

that he came to a standstill with sheer hair-raising fear rooting him to

He saw a light flash below, a figure dart through the light, blocking it out for a moment, another figure after it.

after it.

A half-seen struggle in the dark, with noise of scuffling and voices coming out of the shapeless, moving mass of the combatants, then a sharp metallic click like the snapping of a steel lock, with a passionate mutter coming on the heels of it.

"Got him!" said a gruff voice. And below came an answer!

And below came an answer:

"The other one's here all safe. Is
this the lot, or are there any more of
'em? By gosh, there's one on the
stairs there just above you! Cop
him, quick!"

Dick shut his eyes before a sudden
brilliant gleam of light that struck
him. The next moment a powerful
hand got him by the arm, and
another crooked about his body.

Before he could say a word, his

Before he could say a word, his hands were jerked round to the front of him, something was clipped over one wrist, and then over the other.

"Quite a young 'un, be gum! And he's got his feet padded up to walk quietly. Oh, he's a professional!"

"Oh, you're the police!" gasped

"Oh, you're the police!" gasped Dick, as his eyes rested on three burly, uniformed officers of the law. "I'm glad! Only you've made a mistake. I'm not a burglar. I was trying to get out to fetch you."
"What, with those rags round your feet? It looks like it!"

(Another ripping instaiment of this grand serial next Tuesday in THE BOYS'