BLAKE SERIAL. By GEORGE R. SIMS. PICTURE THEATRES

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No. 4. Available till Monday,



EVERY TUESDAY.

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

No. 499.-Vol. X. New Series.

ONE PENNY. [WEEK ENDING DECEMBER 31, 1910.





MEDICINE DAY AT RAYTON COLLEGE. AN INCIDENT YOU'LL ENJOY.

"PI-please, sir, I don't think I need it," faltered Holcroft. "I—I'm feelin' ever so much better now." "Drink that—at once!" said the doctor sternly. There was no help for it. Holcroft shut his eyes and gulped down the nauseous stuff with a shudder of disgust.

An Introduction for the New Resder eh?" said Mr. Walker caustically.

A Good Samaritan. WALKER was the first

R. WALKER was the first to find his tongue.
"Tubb!" he thundered.
"How—how dare you leave your dormitory at this hour of the night?

Get up at once!"

Tubb scrambled out of the bath, wrung some of the water out of his dripping pyjamas, and gazed sheep-

dripping pyjamas, and gazed sheep-ishly at the two masters.

"Now, what is the meaning of this egregious folly?" demanded Mr. Walker.

"Please, sir," said Tubb, "it was so cold in the domitory with all the

eh?" said Mr. Walker caustically.
"Was that the idea?"
"I didn't see it, sir," said Tubb.
"No," said Mr. Walker, "and I don't see the idea, either!"
"I mean I didn't see the bath, sir," said Tubb. "I stumbled over it in the dark."
"But why bed you left your dor.

"But why had you left your dormitory? Why had you come into Mr. Drummond's bed-room?"
"It was like this, sir," said Tubb.
"It was so cold in the dormitory,

"Now, what is the meaning of this egregious folly?" demanded Mr. Walker.

"Please, sir," said Tubb, "it was so cold in the dormitory with all the windows open—"

"So you came down to Mr. Drummond's bed-room, and took a cold bath to keep yourself warm,"

"It was so cold in the dormitory, with all the windows open. "

"Yes, sir," said Tubb; "but you won't let me finish. It was so cold in the dormitory, with all the windows open, and we couldn't shut the windows because they were screwed open, so I thought I'd go

to the buttery and get down screwdriver, and unscrew the windows, and then we could shut 'em. the I was on my way to the buttery when I saw you and the doctor comin', so I thought I'd hide in here, but I didn't twig the bath, and-and I stumbled over it, and sat down in

Mr. Walker tried to look stern, but the ghost of a smile hovered round the corners of his mouth. Tubb saw

the corners of his mouth. Tubb saw it, and plucked up courage.

"I hope you'll overlook it this time, sir," he said meekly.

"I'll speak to you about that later." said Mr. Walker. "In the meantime, you'll catch your death of cold if you stand there much longer in you're yet avisance. in your wet pyjamas. You hav another suit in your box, I suppose? You have "Yes, sir."

"And your box is in your cubicle?"

cubicle?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then go back to your cubicle at once," said Mr. Walker, "and dry yourself, and change your pyjamas."

"And, please, sir, may we have the windows closed?" asked Tubb.

"That is for Dr. Gandy to decide," he said. "It was by his orders that the windows were screwed open. I have no authority to interfere."

"Please, sir, may we have them shut?" asked Tubb, appealing to the doctor. "You've no idea how cold it is up there. It wouldn't be so bad, perhaps, on a calm night; but with perhaps, on a calm night; but with this wind blowin' it's simply awful." "It certainly is rather stormy to-night," admitted Mr. Walker, with

a sidelong glance at the doctor.

"Nonsense!" said Dr. Gandy, speaking for the first time. "You exaggerate when you speak of this as a storm. It is merely a bracing, health-giving breeze. Why, I myself have slept with my window open with a blizzard raging outside, and three inches of snow on the bed-room floor. You spoil the boys. They floor. You spoil the boys. They need hardening. They have been so accustomed to sleeping in a stuffy atmosphere that they do not appreciate the benefits of an abundant

supply of pure fresh air."
"We don't, on a night like this,"
said Tubb feelingly. "We can't keep
the bedclothes on the beds. There's a regular hurricane howling through the room. If you don't believe me, come upstairs, and see for yourselves

(Continued on the next page.)

"Shall we?" suggested Mr.

"Shall we?" suggested Mr. Walker.
Dr. Gandy shrugged his shoulders.
"Just as you like," he said; "but it will not alter my decision."
"Lead the way, then," said Mr. Walker, to Tubb.
As they mounted the stairs, Tubb caught a fleeting glance of Philip on the landing above. Philip was evidently coming downstairs, but seeing Tubb and the two masters coming up, he turned swiftly on his heel before the masters saw him, and darted back to the dormitory.
When Tubb and the two masters reached the dormitory, they found all the occupants standing in the alleyway which ran between the two rows of cubicles, some of them blowing on their fingers, and others swinging their arms to keep themselves warm. Through the open windows came gust after gust of whistling, ice-cold wind. "Well, I see nothing to complain of here," said Dr. Gandy. "On the contrary, I find the air of the room most exhilirating, most refreshing, most deliciously pure and fresh."
Tubb gazed at him in dismay.
"Then mayn't we have the windows closed, sir?" he asked.
"Certainly not!" said the doctor decisively.

decisively.

Tubb glanced at the other boys, expecting them to burst into a storm of protest. Now was the time, thought Tubb, to raise the standard of revolt; to strike a blow at the tyranny of the new head-master. And Tubb was quite ready—was eager and anxious—to lead the revolt if his chum's would back him up. To his disgust, however, none of them spoke or showed the smallest sign of rebellion.

Ashley, why don't you speak?" ded Tubb, turning to Philip. ou want the windows shut, don't

"You want the windows shut, don't you?"

"I should prefer them to be shut, if the doctor has no objection," said Philip humbly.

"I have the greatest objection," said the doctor. "You may possibly suffer a little inconvenience at first, but you will soon get used to it, and in after years you will thank me for having taught you to appreciate the priceless value of fresh air."

Tubb turned to Mr. Walker to make a last appeal. Mr. Walker at that moment was looking at Philip, and Tubb could have sworn that there was a twinkle in Mr. Walker's eye, and an answering twinkle in Philip's.

"Mr. Walker," said Tubb despairingly, "won't you try to per-

Philip's.

"Mr. Walker," said Tubb despairingly, "won't you try to persuade the doctor to let us have the windows shut?"

I am afraid it would not be much my trying," said Mr. Walker

decision is irrevocable. The windows will remain open. Now, go back to your beds all of you, and try to behave like grown-up boys, and not like babies. Good-night."

He strode out of the room, followed by Mr. Walker. The moment they had disappeared Tubb turned furiously on his chums.

"I've done with you now!" he declared. "I wash my hands of you. You cowards! You skunks! Bah! There isn't one of you has the spirit of a mouse!"

"What's the trouble?"

"What's the trouble?" asked Philip

sweetly.

"Why didn't you back me up?" demanded Tubb. "Why didn't you tell the Gander what you thought of him? Why didn't you mutiny? You let me get into trouble through tryin' to help you, and then you stand shiverin' like a flock of frightened sheep, and never open your mouths."

Philip laughed, and took Tubb by

'Come and examine this window,' said. "See this screw? Now

He took the head of the screw be-tween his finger and thumb, and drew it out of the woodwork as easily as drawing a pin out of a pin-

cushion.

"How—how did you loosen it?"
gasped Tubb.

gasped Tubb.

"I didn't loosen it," said Philip.
"It was never fast. Whoever screwed this window up first bored a hole in the woodwork much bigger than the screw, and then pushed the screw in. Anybody looking at the window, and not examining it closely, would think that the screw had been firmly screwed into the wood; but it hadn't. It had just been put in loosely, so that anybody could draw it out without any trouble."

"You twig the idea?" said Card.
"The chap that screwed up this window did it in such a way that we could pull the screws out and shut the window whenever we wanted."

A light began to dawn on Tubb.

the window whenever we wanted."

A light began to dawn on Tubb.

"Are all the windows screwed up like this?" he asked.

"Yes," said Philip. "We discovered that all the screws were loose just after you had gone down to hunt for a screwdriver. We pulled the screws out, and shut the windows, and I was coming down to tell you that you needn't bother about a screwdriver when I saw you and the doctor and Mr. Walker coming up." coming up."
"I saw you," said Tubb.

"I thought you did," said Philip, "But they didn't, and I'd just time to scoot back to the dormitory and open the windows again and put the screws back in the holes before you arrived.

ws shut?" 'So now you know why we didn't kick up a row when the doctor was here," he concluded. "Now you know why we didn't back you up, would not be the slightest said the doctor firmly. "My

that we could shut 'em whenever we wanted."

"I apologise," said Tubb handsomely. "But, I say, whoever fastened these windows in this way must have done it on purpose."

"Of course!" agreed Philip.

"That is to say," said Tubb, "he didn't approve of the Gander's rotten fad, and he wanted to help us, but he couldn't do it openly, so he fastened up the windows in such a way that we could easily shut 'em if we wanted. Who was the Good Samaritan, I wonder?"

"I think you can guess," said Philip meaningly.

Tubb nodded, He remembered the twinkle he had seen in Mr. Walker's eyes.

It was Mr. Walker," he de-

"It was Mr. Walker," he declared.

"Of course!" chorused the others.
"I suspected it from the first," said Philip; "but I was absolutely sure of it when I saw the look he gave me while you were talking to the doctor. Yes, it was Mr. Walker without a doubt. He had to carry out the doctor's orders and screw up the windows, but he did it in

A New Alliance.

HEN the first bell rang, at a quarter past saw a quarter past seven next morning, the boys of Dormitory B arose, opened all the Dormitory B arose, opened all the windows, and replaced the screws in their holes. They washed and dressed, and then, as there was no early school this term, Philip proposed that they should go for a stroll to get up an appetite for breakfast. Only three of the boys—Rigden, Card, and Tubb—accepted this invitation; and as these three, with Philip, were walking briskly round the quad, they saw Holeroft and Rutherford coming from the direction of the doctor's house.

Tubb had not forgotten his painful experience of the day before, when Holcroft and his chums had rolled him down the hill in the barrel; and, at the sight of two of his foes, the light of battle leaped into his eyes.

"Come on!" he cried, to his three companions. "The odds are on our side now. Let's collar the bounders and rub their noses in the mud!"

Uttering shouts of vengeance, the four boys rushed towards Holcroft

#### AN INTRODUCTION FOR THE NEW READER OF THIS GRAND SERIAL.

Philip Ashley, a brilliant young scholar, aves the life of Sir David Rendle's only laughter. In consequence of this action, sir David adopts him, sends him to Rayton collections in the state of the sends him to Rayton. daughter. In consequence of this action, Sir David adopts him, sends him to Rayton College, giving him all the benefits he intended for his unscrupulous nephew, who has deceived him, and who has now packed off to Canada to make a fresh start in life.

The new term at Rayton College is to begin, and Phil starts on his journey to Rayton. He is accompanied by Cyrus A. Sharpe.

Sharpe, an American lad,

whom you will all like.

Arriving at the school the collegers, to their great indignation, learn that Dr. Gandy, the new head-master, is a vegetarian and a great believer in fresh air,

this way, knowing that it wouldn't be long before we tumbled to the

trick."

and it is his intention to adopt many eccentric ideas in the school.

The boys find their dormitories have been partitioned off into cubicles, and that the windows are screwed open. Chilled with the cold, Tubb jumps from his bed and rushes

#### along the corridor

along the corridor
to find a serewdriver. Trying to avoid
Dr. Gandy and Mr. Walker, he rushes into
another master's room, and falls with a
mighty splash into a bath of water.
Mr. Walker and Dr. Gandy rush towards
the place of commotion, and, the lights
having been switched on, they see the
forlorn Tubb sitting in the bath.
(Now read this week's splendid chapters
commencing on the front page.)

and Rutherford. Somewhat to their surprise, Holcroft and Rutherford made no attempt to flee, but, on the contrary, continued to walk to-

made no attempt to nee, but, on the contrary, continued to walk towards them.

"I don't like the look of this," said Philip to Tubb. "It looks suspiciously as if they were luring us into some trap. What do you think?"

Before Tubb could reply, Holcroft suddenly whipped out his handkerchief, and held it, fluttering, above his head.

"Flag of truce!" he shouted.

"Well, of all the low-down tricks!" said Tubb, in disgust. "To hoist a flag of truce because they happen to be outnumbered!"

"I don't think that's the idea," said Philip. "I think I can guess what's in the wind."

"What do you want to parley about?" demanded Tubb, striding up to Holcroft.

"About open windows, among other things." said Holcroft. "Is it

be long before we tumbled to the trick."

"Good old Walker!" cried Tubb.

"We'll have one ally, at any rate, in our fight against the Gander."

"But he'll be a secret ally," said Philip. "He won't be able to side with us openly, and, of course, we'll have to pretend that we don't know he is on our add."

"Of course," said Table. "And we'll have to keep mum about these windows, too. We must open 'emevery morner,' and put the screws back in their holes before we go down to prayers. Then the Gander'll never know that they've been shut. "And now," he concluded, mimicking the doctor's voice and manner, "go back to your beds, all of you, and try to behave like grown up boys and not like babies. Good-night!"

Ten minutes later the windows had been shut. Tubb had changed into a

"About open windows, among other things," said Holcroft. "Is it

other things, a truce?"
a truce?" sold long?" asked Tubb.
"For two minutes, if we can't agree," said Holcroft. "For the rest of the term, if we can."

A truce between the Paulites and the Walkerites for the rest of the term! Tubb could hardly believe his

ears.
"This isn't a trick?" he said

ears.

"This isn't a trick?" he said suspiciously.

"Honour bright, it isn't," said Holcroft. "Rutherford and I have been sent by our fellows to make certain proposals to you—that's all."

"And if we don't agree with your proposals," said Tubb, "we are free, at the end of the parley, to rub your giddy noses in the mud? Is that understoed?"

"Yes," said Holcroft cheerfully.

"Then fire away, and cough up your proposals," said Tubb.

"When we went up to our dormitory last night," said Holcroft. "we found that all the windows had been fastened open with screws. We sent for Cruft, the new porter, and he told us he had srewed 'em up by the doctor's orders. They were never—never to be shut again, he said. Had your windows been screwed up, too?"

"They had," said Tubb, with a sly

Had your windows been screwed up, too?"

"They had," said Tubb, with a sly wink at his chums. "Beastly cold, wasn't it?"

"It was awful," said Holcroft, shivering at the recollection.

"I was simply petrified," said Rutherford. "The wind blew straight on the top of my head. I never got a wink of sleep all night."

"We sent a deputation to old Gandy," said Holcroft, "asking him if he would let Cruft unscrew the windows and shut 'em. But he wouldn't hear of it."

"So you had to sleep with the windows open all night?" said Philip sympathetically.

"Of course," said Holcroft. "So had you, hadn't you?"

"So you had to sleep with the windows open all night?" said Philip sympathetically.

"Of course," said Holcroft. "So had you, hadn't you?"

"The Gander came up to our dormitory," said Tubb evasively. "Like you, we begged him to let us have the windows shut, but he refused, and told us to go back to bed and behave like grown-up boys, and not like babies."

"Well, what are you goin' to do about it?" said Holcroft. "Are you goin' to stand it? Are you goin' to take it lyin' down, or are you goin to take it lyin' down, or are you goin to fight? That's the question. That's what Rutherford and I have come to talk about.

"Are you goin' to let this cranky old idiot kill us with his open windows," he continued, "and poison us with his vegetarian dinners, and ruin the school with his silly ideas about learnin' music and keepin' pets, or are you game to join hands with us and enter into an alliance to fight the old josser and force him to give up his idiotic fads?

"We're goin' to fight, whatever you chaps do," he concluded. "If you won't join us, we'll fight without you. But I tell you candidly, I'd rather have you with us. If you'll join us, we're willin' to shake hands, and let bygones be bygones, and we'll fight shoulder to shoulder with you till we've brought the Gander to his senses. What is your answer?"

It was a long speech for Holcroft. It was followed by a moment's (Continued on the next page.)

behind your belt, under, and up

#### THE TRIALS AND TROUBLES OF A BOY SCOUT. Our Helpful Series That Will Interest All Boys, Whether Scouts or Not.

Cold Knees. ERE'S a letter from "Clarence" this week. He finds it rather a trial having to go about in uniform this weather with his knees bare. His circulation is bad, and he feels awfully cold.

is bad, and he feels awfully cold. Can he pull his stockings up over his knees, or is that being a "muff"? Of course you can, Clarence. Lots of fellows can go about with bare knees all the winter and not feel a bit chilly, but lots of others can't, and there's no earthly reason why a chap shouldn't cover up his knees if they feel very cold.

A Scout is a fellow who knows how to make himself comfortable under any circumstances. Nobody wants him to freeze and shiver unnecessarily.

And here's a tip for you fellows with cold knees:

with cold knees:
Stitch the tops of your scouting stockings to the bottoms of the legs of your shorts, so as to make one garment of them. Let the shorts overlap a little bit so that the stitches come about an inch above the hem, and make the stitches very light so that you can unpick them in a moment when you want to wash your steckings.

It's jolly warm and comfortable, I can tell you, but, of course, it's only for really cold weather. A fellow who is afraid to go about with bare knees in decent weather is a "muff."

Don't Wear Coats.

Now, this leads me up to another

Now, this leads me up to another thing.

I see lots of Scouts going about with coats on over their uniforms, and it looks shocking! Some have grey coats and some blue ones, some have short coats and some long ones, some have coats with brass

grey coats and some blue ones, some have short coats and some long ones, some have coats with brass buttons, and some don't appear to have any buttons at all. It makes the smartest troop look the most awful lot of rag-tag and bobtail.

I don't consider Scouts should wear coats at all. Everything you want for warmth you can wear underneath your scout shirt. My fellows turn up on parade without coats at all, but I know that most of them have a sweater and an extra shirt, and possibly a couple of waistcoats under their uniforms. They're sensible chaps!

And even if you only carry your coat strapped to your belt to put on if it actually comes on to rain or snow, it is usually an untidy-looking bundle, and wobbles all over the show as you move.

#### A New Equipment.

Good-night?"

Ten minutes later the windows had been shut, Tubb had changed into a dry suit of pyjamas, and every boy in the dormitory was fast asleep, happy in the knowledge, as Tubb had expressed it, that they had one ally, at any rate, in their fight against the new head-master's cranks and fads.

Now, here's a suggestion for a new equipment. All my chaps wear it—one of them invented it—and it's the smartest, most serviceable, and most uniform rig-out of the kind I've seen for Service.

smartest, most serviceable, and most uniform rig-out of the kind I've seen for Scouts.

Instead of carrying a coat of any kind, each man has a brown Army blanket and a waterproof ground-sheet rolled up together in a tight, neat roll, the ground-sheet outside, of course.

If it comes on to rain they just unstrap the blanket and wrap it round them like Red Indians, and then put the waterproof sheet over that. It keeps them warm and perfectly dry. They could stand under a waterfall in it, and you couldn't do that in a coat without getting very wet.

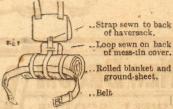
Or if they have to wait about in the cold they just put the blanket round their shoulders, and they don't have to hunt for a fence or something else dry to sit on; they just spread their ground-sheet on the ground and sit or lie down on them.

Fixed up with this equipment, they sometimes camp out in the summer without tents, provided the weather is decently warm and fine. With a ground-sheet to lie on and a blanket over him, a fellow is as snug as he would be in a tent, and can't catch cold.

#### Firm and Steady.

When we first started using this arrangement we found that the bundle hung rather heavily on the fellews' belts, and wobbled awkwardly. But we've solved that difficulty. This is the way to do it.

Sew one end of a long strap firmly to the back of your haversack near the bottom. This strap passes down through a loop sewn to the back of your mess-tin cover, then down



Loop sewn on back of mess-tin cover.

Fig. 1-Shows how the strap is fixed.



behind your belt, under, and up again round the roll of blanket and ground-sheet. Then it goes through the loop you will find already on the front of your mess-tin cover, then through the loop on the top, and buckles to a buckle sewn on the front of the haversack just below where the flap buttons down.

The sketches show clearly how it goes.

goes.
Strap this up tightly, and it makes

Strap this up tightly, and it makes everything firm and secure. It is much easier to carry, for it gives you a compact bundle, with the weight resting on the small of your back—the right place—instead of a lump of a haversack hanging on your shoulders and a lump of coat pulling your belt tight round your stomach. You should let your haversack out fairly loose, by the way.

All my fellows, as I told you, have this equipment. They say it is perfectly comfortable and convenient, and, as they all wear the same, it looks very smart.

What it Costs.

#### What it Costs.

What it Costs.

It costs a little, I confess. A ground-sheet costs one-and-ninepence or two shillings, a blanket anything from eighteenpence. Long straps you can buy for twopence-ha'penny each.

each.

But it's well worth saving up for, and if you all buy your things together you'll probably get them a lot cheaper.

If any of you want to know where to get the things drop me a line, and I'll send you the addresses of the cheapest stores.

THE SCOUTMASTER.

silence; then Tubb impulsively held out his hand.

"I'm with you, to the death!" he said: "Here's my hand on it."

"That's settled, then," said Holcroft, when the quondam rivals and enemies had shaken hands. "War to the death against the Gander, and down with all cranks."

"When do we start our campaign?" asked Philip.

"This morning," said Holcroft.
"We've thought out a plan, and we've got everything ready, but we wanted to find out first if your fellows would join us before we put our plan into execution."

"What is your plan?" asked Rigden.

"What is your plan?" asked Rigden.
"Well, the first thing to fight against is those open windows," said Holcroft. "By hook or crook we've got to force the Gander to let 'em be shut at night. When we've beaten him on that point, we'll tackle him on another."
"He'll take a lot of beatin'," said Card. "It's easy to talk about forcin' him to have the windows shut at night, but how are you goin' to do it?"
"By frightenin' him," said Hol-

at night, but how are you goin' to do it?"

"By frightenin' him," said Holcroft. "By pretendin' that we've all caught frightful colds through sleepin' with the windows open. We're all goin' into Form this mornin' in our overcoats and mufflers, and you chaps must do the same. Carfax has got a box of magic snuff—you know the stuff I mean—a pinch of it'll make you sneeze your head off. We'll give you some of it before we go into Form. Then Pettigrew has been down to the village and bought a lot of onions. We're goin' to cut 'em up in slices and hide 'em in our handkerchiefs—to make our eyes water, you know. We'll give you some of the snuff; and if we don't make old Four-eyes believe that we're all beginnin' with pneumonia, I'll eat my hat!"

The First Round of the Fight.

ORNING school began at nine o'clock. Mr. Sop-worth, who was to take the Fourth in Latin grammar, was just finishing his breakfast when the bell finishing his breakfast when the bell rang. He did not hurry, for punctuality was not one of his virtues; and by the time he had finished his breakfast, and had leisurely donned his cap and gown, and had sauntered across the quad., the boys of the Fourth had already assembled in their class-room.

The Fourth Form class-room was on the ground floor of the school buildings, and as Mr. Sopworth approached the door, which was slightly ajar, he heard several of the boys coughing, and several others sneezing.

proached the door, which was slightly ajar, he heard several of the boys coughing, and several others sneezing.

"Sounds as though some of them were beginning with bad colds," he muttered to himself.

He pushed the door open, and strode into the room.

"Good-morning, boys!" he began. Then he pulled up and stared at the scene before him in open-mouthed amazement.

Every boy in the room was wearing an overcoat or an ulster, and most of them had thick woollen mufflers round their necks.

Tubb was seated at his desk, with his head between his hands, coughing until he was black in the face.

Holcroft was holding his handkerchief, sprinkled with magic snuff, to his nose, and was sneezing and sneezing and sneezing until Mr. Sopworth really feared he would explode.

Philip was mopping his face with his handkerchief, in which was concealed a slice of onion, and streams of water were pouring from his eyes and running down his cheeks, and trickling off his chin-end.

Of the rest of the boys, some were coughing, some were sneezing, and all of them were looking as woe-begone and miserable as could be imagined.

"Good-bordigg, sir," said Philip, in answer to Mr. Sopworth's salutation. "I hope you'll excuse be cubbig idto Forb id by overceat, but—ah—atishoo! Oh, by poor head!"

"Dear me!" said Mr. Sopworth, in tones of concern. "This is most extraordinary. I say this is most extraordinary. I

Tubb stopped coughing for a moment, and gazed at Mr. Sopworth with watery eyes.

"Have you dot heard, sir?" he said. "Dr. Gaddy has bade a dew rule that all the widdows id all the dorbitories are to be kept oped all dight. Add you dow what a storby dight it was last dight."
"Dear me, yes!" said Mr. Sopworth. "A very stormy night. And you had to sleep with your windows open?"

open?"
"By Dr. Gaddy's orders," said Holcroft, in a hollow voice.
"A most unwise order," said Mr. Sopworth. "I say a most unwise order. And this is the result. I am not surprised. I say I am not surprised."

not surprised. I say I am not surprised."

"I'b afraid I sha'd't be able to do ady work this bordigg," said Tubb.

"I feel as if— Oh, oh! It's cubbig od again! Ah-ah-atishoo!"

He went off into a violent fit of sneezing which apparently left him breathless and exhausted. Holcroft followed suit, the others joined in, and the room rang with a perfect hurricane of coughing and sneezing.

"This is terrible!" said Mr. Sopworth. "Work is clearly impossible this morning. You ought all to be in bed instead of sitting here. I am not a medical man. I say I am not a medical man, but it seems to me that this is something inuch more serious than an ordinary cold."

"Perhaps it's idduodia," suggested Card.

"It beliave it's idduodia," sid Holc.

Card.
"I believe it's idfluedza," said Hol-

"I believe it's idfluedza," said Holcroft.

Mr. Sopworth started, and a look of alarm came into his face. The mere mention of influenza always sent him at once into a blue funk. He had had one attack of the disease, and was almost hysterically afraid of catching it again. Nothing would induce him to go near an influenza case if he could help it.

"I sincerely hope not," he said, in a nervous voice. "Influenza is such a frightfully infectious disease, and—and it would be dreadful if I caught it from you."

"Well, put your hadd od by head, sir, add feel how hot it is," said Holcroft, rising from his seat and walking towards Mr. Sopworth.

Mr. Sopworth sprang back with a positive scream of fear.

"Keep away! Keep away!" he shouted. "Don't come near me!

positive scream of fear.

"Keep away! Keep away!" he shouted. "Don't come near me! You might infect me! I will go and consult Dr. Gandy, and get his permission to send you to the sick-room."

As he turned to make for the door, Holcroft whipped out a pillbox, halffull of "magic snuff," and tossed the powder into the air, over Mr. Sopworth's head.

As Holfcroft was behind him, Mr. Sopworth did not see this action. But he felt the result. Just as he was about to open the door, he pulled up with a gasp and put up his hands to his head.

"I—I've caught it!" he gurgled.
"You have intected me. I—I—"
The sentence ended in a sneeze so violent that Mr. Sopworth stumbled forward, butted the door with his head, rebounded back, and sat down with a crash that shook the room. He made no attempt to get up, but sat there on the floor waving his hands limply in the air, and sneezing one sneeze after another with monotonous regularity.

"Are you feeligg ady better dow, sir?" inquired Holcroft, when at last the sneezing ceased.

The question was never answered, for before Mr. Sopworth had time to reply, the door opened, and Dr. Gandy walked in.

If Mr. Sopworth had been astonished by the scene which had greeted him when he had entered the class-room, what words can describe the doctor's amazement? Speech failed him. In dumbfounded stupefaction he peered through his enormous spectacles at Mr. Sopworth sitting on the floor, and then at the boys in their overcoats and mufflers. For a moment the boys themselves were equally taken aback by the doctor's unexpected arrival. Holcroft was the first to regain his presence of mind and at once began to cough. The others, taking their cue from him, also began to cough and sneeze, while Mr. Sopworth, after staring blankly at the doctor for a second or two, scrambled to his feet and wiped his streaming eyes.

"This is the result of making rash experiments," he said solemnly.

"Rash experiments!" exclaimed the doctor. "What do you mean, sir?"

"Rash experiments!" exclaimed the doctor. "What do you mean, sir?"
"Look at these poor innocent boys," said Mr. Sopworth, waving his hand dramatically round the room. "Witness their sufferings. I say witness their sufferings. And what is the cause?"
"That is what I wish to know," said the doctor shortly.
"Open windows, sir!" said Mr.

Sopworth tragically. "By your orders, I understand, these boys were compelled last night to sleep with all the windows in their dormitories open. Behold the result!"

A light seemed to break on Dr. Gandy

A light seemed to break on Gandy.

"Oh, that's the explanation, is it?"
he said grimly. "They have caught cold through sleeping with their windows open, eh? That is why they are wearing their overcoats and mufflers? That is the explanation of this epidemic of coughing and sneezing?"

"Yes, sir," said Mr. Sopworth.

"Yes, sir," said Mr. Sopworth.
"But I am by no means certain that
it is an ordinary cold from which they
are suffering."

are suffering. "I am su

it is an ordinary cold from which they are suffering."

"I am sure it isn't," said the doctor meaningly.

"It may be pneumonia, or it may be influenza," said Mr. Sopworth.

"Whatever it is, I fear that I, too, have contracted the disease. I say I fear that I, too, have contracted the disease. I had a most violent attack of sneezing just before you arrived."

There was a moment's tense, unbroken silence; then, without a word, the doctor strode towards the door. On the threshold he paused, turned round, and glanced at the boys.

"I shall be back in a few minutes," he said shortly. "You will please remain here until I return."

After his departure the boys exchanged uneasy glances. Somehow or other they could not help feeling that their plan for frightening the doctor was not working out as well as it might have done. He hadn't looked the least bit frightened. And where had he gone? What was he going to do when he came back?

"Ugh!" he shuddered. "Of all the vile and poisonous muck—"
"What did you say?" inquired the doctor blandly.

was very nasty, sir,' spluttered Holcroft.

"Yes, it's rather nasty, I know," said the doctor; "but it will stop your coughing and sneezing, you'll see."

He handed the glass to Cruft, who rinsed it out with water from the jug and emptied it into the bucket. Then the doctor measured out another dose and handed it to Tubb.

another dose and handed it to Tubb.

"At all costs we must nip this epidemic in the bud," he said amiably. "Swallow that, my boy."

But why prolong the description? Suffice to say that every boy in the form was obliged to imbibe a dose of the horrible stuff, and though Philip poured most of his down his neck, the eagle eye of the doctor detected the trick, and Philip's reward was a double dose. double dose

"You may safely start lessons now, I think," said the doctor to Mr. Sopworth when the last boy had been dosed. "I feel sure you will have no further trouble, but I will come back in half an hour, and if any of the boys have been coughing or sneezing again, I will give them a second dose."

He came hack in half an hour,

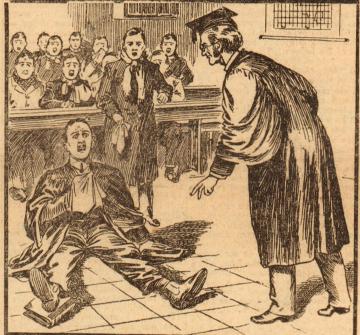
second dose."

He came back in half an hour and found the Form hard at work.

"Well, Mr. Sopworth, no sneezing?"

No, sir," said Mr. Sopworth in answer to the doctor's question.

"Your medicine acted like a charm. I say your medicine acted like a charm. We have not had a single cough or sneeze since you left."



Mr. Sopworth stumbled forward, and then sat down with a crash that shook the room. Before he had time to recover, Dr. Gandy stalked into the class-room.

The question was soon answered. At the end of five or ten minutes the doctor returned with Cruft, the new school porter, at his heels. The doctor had a big blue bottle in one hand and a medicine glass in the other. Cruft was carrying a bucket and a pitcher of water.

was carrying a bucket and a pitcher of water.

"Now, please step forward and toe this line," said the doctor, signing to the boys. "All of you."

Reluctantly the boys came forward and ranged themselves in a long line before the doctor and Cruft. In their overcoats and mufflers, and with their woebegone faces, they presented anything but a heroic spectacle.

"This is ammoniated quinine," said the doctor, tapping the blue bottle. "It is very bitter, and extremely nasty to take, but there is nothing like it for bad colds or for influenza, or for the incipient stages of pneumonia. If you caught cold last night, you must have a dose at once."

once."

He poured out a liberal dose into the medicine glass, diluted it with water from the jug, and handed it to

Take that, my boy," he said

And thus ended the first attempt of the new alliance to "bring the Gander to his senses."

How "Soccer" Came to Rayton.

ROM time immemorial "Rugger" had been the only type of football played at Rayton, and though one or two attempts had been made to start a "Soccer" team, they had all failed. During the past two years, however, the hold which Rugger had on the school had been gradually weakening. The seniors still remained loyal to the handling code, but an increasing number of juniors had joined the school—like Tubb, Holcroft, Rigden, Rutherford and Philip—who favoured the dribbling game. At the end of the summer term Philip had suggested to Tubb that the time was now ripe—or would be at the beginning of the winter term—for making another attempt to start a Soccer team. Tubb and one or two of his chums had promised to join if Philip started a club. At the end of morning school—after the scene described in our last chapter—he sounded Holcroft on the subject; and finding that Holcroft was agreeable, he put up a notice on the board announcing that a meeting would be held in the gym at six o'clock "to consider the desirability of forming an Association football club."

Including Philip, exactly twenty boys, all juniors, attended the meeting. They were all very enthusiastic—especially Cyrus, who had never kicked a football in his life—

but it is greatly to be feared that most of them knew very little of the

but it is greatly to be feared that most of them knew very little of the game.

Philip was undoubtedly the best player of the lot. Holcroft was not far behind him, and Tubb and Rigden were above the average. Rutherford and Card were fairly decent, but the rest simply didn't matter.

After a somewhat noisy discussion a resolution was proposed, seconded, and carried that a Soccer club be started with a minimum subscription of five shillings. Tubb was elected president, Holcroft vice-president, Rigden treasurer, and Philip secretary. Philip was also elected captain, and he and Holcroft were appointed a deputation to interview Merrick, the school captain, and ask for a playing pitch to be allotted to the new club.

Merrick was a staunch Rugbyite, and rather despised Soccer. He didn't like the idea either of the school being divided into two camps. At the same time, he was too good a sportsman to place any difficulties in the way of the new organisation, and at once agreed to give them the exclusive use of one of the smaller playing fields.

"When do you start operations?" he asked at the close of the interview. "To-morrow afternoon," said Philip; "to-morrow being Saturday, and, therefore, a half-holiday. Tubb has got one football and I've got another, and we're going to see the carpenter to-night and arrange for him to fix up the goals to-morrow morning. Nets and things like that will have to wait till we can get them from London."

"Later on," said Holcroft, "we shall know where we stand; and if we can fix up a fairly decent eleven out of the lot, we intend to challenge St. Benedict's, and one or two other schools."

"You're ambitious, I see," said Merrick, with a smile. "But about to-morrow—aren't you forgetting something?"

"What's that?" asked Philip and Holcroft together.

"You heard what Dr. Gandy said in his speech yesterday," said Merrick.

"What's that?" asked Philip and Holcroft together.

"You heard what Dr. Gandy said in his speech yesterday," said Merrick.

"He said a lot of silly things," said Holcroft. "Which particular silly thing do you refer to?"

"He said that he was going to institute a series of literary and scientific lectures on half-holidays," said Merrick. "And he said he hoped we'd all attend those lectures."

"Well?" said Philip, as Merrick paused.

"Well?" said Philip, as Merrick paused.
"The first lecture is to be given to-morrow afternoon," said Merrick.
"The doctor has just been talking to me about it. It's to be a lecture on 'Healthy Food for Healthy Boys."
"Healthy fiddlesticks!" said Holcroft. "Who's goin' to waste an afternoon in listenin' to rot like that?"

afternoon in listenin' to rot like that?"

"I am, for one," said Merrick.

"At the doctor's request, I've postponed a football practice which I'd arranged for to-morrow afternoon, and I think you ought to do the same. It's only respectful that we should attend the first of our newheadmaster's lectures, even if we don't attend any more."

"Blessed is he that expecteth nothing, for he shall not be disappointed!" said Holcroft with a laugh.

"There'll be trouble if you don't turn up," said Merrick warningly.

"There'd be a jolly sight more trouble if we did turn up!" said Holcroft. "Trouble for the Gander, I mean. Some day, perhaps, we'll attend one of his giddy lectures—and then he'll wish he'd never invited us!"

"Be persuaded by me—" began

us!"
"Be persuaded by me—" began

Merrick.

"It's no use, old man," interrupted Holcroft. "Tubb's little lot and mine have entered into an alliance to fight this new-fangled tyranny tooth and nail, and we're not goin' to begin by haulin' down our flag at the first blast of the Gander's trumpet! 'No surrender!' is our motto. Our half-holidays are our own, and we'll spend 'em as we like.'

em as we like."
"There'll be trouble," said Merrick

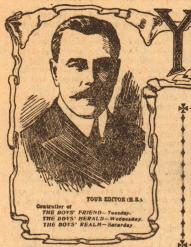
"There'll be trouble," said Merrick again.
"Were used to trouble!" said Holcroft cheerfully. "It rolls off us like water off a duck's back. In fact, we should feel uncomfy if we weren't in trouble."

"Then you are determined to have your first football practice to-morrow afternoon?" said Merrick.

"We are," said Philip firmly.
"Absolutely," said Holcroft.
"Now, Ashley, come along, and let's go and see the joiner about those goal-posts."

(Another grand instalment of this ripping

(Another grand instalment of this ripping school serial next Tuesday in the New Year and 500th number of THE BOYS FRIEND—One Penny.)



I want all my boys to look upon me as their firm friend and

I want all my boys to look upon me as their firm friend and adviser. There are few men who know boys as well as I do, and there are no little trials and troubles, perplexities and anxieties, in which I cannot help and assist my readers.

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

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

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#### OUR 500th NUMBER.

EXT week's issue of THE BOYS' FRIEND will be the five-hundredth number since it from a halfpenny to penny, and although it is nearly ten years ago since this important change was made, yet I am very glad to say that the success of the paper has continued, and has been proved beyond my wildest dreams.

tinued, and has been proved beyond my wildest dreams.

It was no light task to change a halfpenny paper into a penny one and to retain the support of the same number of readers; but I found, to my intense pleasure, that not only did we keep all our old friends, but many thousands were added to the ring of Boys' Friend readers when the price was increased to one penny.

In order properly to mark the 500th milestone on our road, I am producing a special number next week. It is, moreover, a New Year's Number, and it will contain the opening instalment of "Chris of the Camera," by Malcolm Dayle. As I told my friends last week, this is the story of a young man who starts out in life as a photographer for the illustrated Press. It is a new idea, and one which I am quite certain will interest my friends. In addition to this new serial, the number will contain two splendid complete stories and two new series of articles. The first set of articles will be entitled "A Strong Man's Secrets," and will show how to develop muscle without any special apparatus; in fact, our instructor will only use simple articles of furniture.

The second series of articles will deal with up-to-date conjuring, written by an expert, who has invented most of the tricks described. These articles will be of especial interest, because old tricks will not be dealt with, and the new ones are of an original and attractive kind.

Another new feature which will appear regularly the first week in each

and the new ones are of an original and attractive kind.

Another new feature which will appear regularly the first week in each month is a special article dealing with what to do with poultry; in the garden; with birds, rabbits, pigeons, and pets of all kinds. This feature will be of great interest to lads who make a study of gardening, in keeping chickens, in sports, or in pets.

Another regular feature of The Boys' Friend in the future will be a recitation, either comic or serious, which will be published every week.

My chums will see from these innovations that I am endeavouring to keep The Boys' Friend right in the very front rank of boys' papers, and I think that my efforts to please my friends will result in increased success for the "Green 'Un." In order to further this, I want to ask all my supporters to write to me, making suggestions for the benefit of the paper, because it is only by ascertaining from my friends what they really want that I can keep The Boys' Friend at the head of the boys' papers of this country. It is because I feel how great the necessity is for keeping in touch with my chums that I make this appeal to them to write to me and tell me what they want.

#### HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL FRIENDS

It is an old wish, but a very good one, and I certainly write this para-graph this week with a very great deal of pleasure. It is my real and earnest wish that every reader of this earnest wish that every reader of this paper during the coming year shall meet with nothing but pleasure, success, and real happiness. If any of them have had a bad time in the year which is now coming to an end, I sincerely hope that the new year may make ample amends for any unpleasant thing they have experienced. To every one of the loyal band of readers I have around me I sincerely wish that the year 1911 may prove a most enjoyable one—that it will mark an advance in their prospects and an improvement in their position in life, and in every way prove a much hap-pier time than the year now drawing to a close.

#### LETTER I "DARE NOT PUBLISH."

The following letter has been sent to me by a young man, evidently with a very high opinion of himself and of his knowledge of other lads. It is an amusing letter, because it is so very boylike, so very typical of the self-satisfied lad who thinks he knows, who imagines on the strength of his own limited experience that he is entitled to lay down the law for all the rest of his fellows. There are a good many people like this in the world, and "Disgusted, Though Amused" is one of them. one of them.

I am really very sorry for him, but I know as the years go by that he will learn wisdom, and with increasing age he will discover that at seventeen one has still a lot to learn.

age he will discover that at seventeen one has still a lot to learn.

My advice to "Disgusted, Though Amused" is just this—that there are plenty of other lads of his age who have done a great deal more than he has done, and there is no earthly reason for him to get conceited overhis little accomplishments. He is not the only boy of seventeen who has worked in a warshouse, or been to sea, or won the 9st. 7lb. boxing championship of the village from which he writes; nor is he the only lad of seventeen who smokes, and is not a tectotaller. I know lots like him, and I also know plenty of lads of seventeen who have done more than "Disgusted, Though Amused," but they don't shout about it. I am not going to deal any further with this letter save to point out that I did not say I was thirty years of age, though I did say I had been an editor for sixteen years. I am publishing it because I want my readers to read the letters which follow it.

"Onchan, Isle of Man.

"Onchan, Isle of Man,
"November 30th.
"November 30th.
"My dear Sir,—My younger brother reads your paper, and when glancing through it the other day I noticed one of your readers told you that you did not understand boys. He is quite correct—you don't. Such boys as you have for heroes don't exist at all. I am seventeen years of age. I have worked in warehouse and workshop, and have been to sea, so

custs at all. I am seventeen years of age. I have worked in warehouse and workshop, and have been to sea, so I do know a bit about the world. I hold the 9st. 7lb. boxing championship here; I smoke, and am not quite teetotal. Ain't you shocked?

"Such bloodcurdling trash as your paper ought to be stopped—men like you, who feast on little boys' Saturday pennies. Such papers as yours are responsible for much crime committed by lads. You say you are thirty years of age, and have been an editor for sixteen years. What an industrious youth you must have been! Your paper may be all right for boys of eleven and twelve, but when you try to foist it on lads of seventeen and eighteen, you go too far. I don't suppose you will publish this, but no matter.

"DISGUSTED, THOUGH AMUSED."

Here is a letter which is a complete answer to the wild bleat of seventeen-year-old "Disgusted, Though Amused," and I am following it with another letter from a friend of mine who, although he does not dwell upon the complaints made by my first correspondent, touches upon the case of a young lad to whom I referred some

weeks ago, and who was in the unhappy position of fearing that he must shortly die.

It is an extremely sincere letter, and although it deals with a topic which I do not too often enlarge upon in the columns of The Boys' Friend, yet I feel that this week I am excused for publishing it because it is well-written, and obviously penned by one who feels every word that he writes.

who feels every word that he writes.

"Dear Sir,—You said you would like to hear from the boys who take in your papers. Now, I am not a boy, but take an interest in these papers. I am taking them for my nephew, who likes them very much. I have not seen better anywhere. They are void of slang and all those things that do the boys so much harm. I am ordering one dozen of my bookseller on purpose to give away to errand-boys, &c., as I see so many reading so much of the trash that is now printed. I am so glad you take such pains in trying to make them so interesting. I wish I knew where to get some back numbers of them. I would willingly pay for them, and the carriage of them here. I would like them to be known well.—Wishing you every success in this noble work.—Believe me, yours truly,

"A. B. D."

"Dear Editor,—I have been a reader of your paper, the good old 'Green'Un,' for a very long time, and think I must write and thank you for the many happy hours you have given me through it.

"Probably this is the last time I shall be able to write to you. I am a Roman Catholic, and, by the grace of God, I am entering a monastery to lead the religious life.

"I read the pathetic letter of one of your boys, who said he had not long to live, and I can truthfully say that my heart aches for him. Dear Editor, will you think it too forward of me if I presume to ask you if you will ask all your readers, both boys and girls, to join me in raising their hearts to Almighty God in a fervent prayer for our fellow-reader's recovery to health, if it is God's will, or if it should please our Heavenly Father to take him, that he may find eternal rest in heaven?

"Will you join us, too, dear Editor? As I, too, am almost dying to the world, could I presume to add a few words of advice to your boys? I know this world is hard, and is full of snares and pitfalls of our enemy the devil, but even then it is Almighty God's blessed will that we should be tempted to try how strong our love is for Him.

"Would you ask your boys not to make a habit of telling lies? I was once so weak as to be an awful liar, but with constant prayer God has helped me.

"Also ask them not to dwell on anything that may make their hearts and minds impure, for 'Blessed are the pure in heart.' Any kind of unchaste thought should be knocked out as soon as it arises in our minds, as it is a mortal sin if we dwell upon anything unchaste.

"We should never get into bed without saying our prayers and asking God to protect us through the night, that we may be refreshed with sleep to arise and glorify His Holy Name. Also we should ask His help and guidance through the day when we arise in the morning.

"How many of us are there who are only too willing to make any excuse rather than say our morning or evening prayers? Alas! I fear there are a lot.

"Well, dear Editor,

that you give to us, your sons and daughters, every week.

"That God's blessing may rest upon you and yours, and all your readers, and that your circulation may be doubled during the coming year is the fervent prayer of one of your hove.

These two letters, following as they do on the abuse of "Disgusted, Though Amused," will be read with interest by all my friends, and will serve as a far better answer to his absurd and silly accusations than even a severe reply from myself.

#### TAIL LAMPS FOR BICYCLES.

TAIL LAMPS FOR BICYCLES.

One of my old friends says that he has a couple of bicycle-lamps, and he is thinking of using one of them as a tail-lamp; but it has a white light, and he wants to know whether red enamel paint would be any use in colouring the glass.

On this subject, I would like to say that every cyclist who rides at night, especially on country roads, should carry a red tail-light, or, at least, carry a lamp with a red back light which can be seen. Those who are not accustomed to riding in motors do not realise how difficult it often is to see a cyclist riding along the road at night-time, and I think that a good many accidents which do happen to cyclists at night might be avoided if they carried a tail-lamp.

I know a preparation is sold for painting over the white glass of a lamp and colouring it red, but I do not think this is a good plan. By far a better idea would be to get a piece of red glass inserted in the lamp. It would only cost two or three pence, and would prove very serviceable and an extra safeguard.



Showing Position when Making a

Right Arm Swing.
(See "Boxing Notes" on this page.)

#### A HEAVY BREATHER.

Another friend of mine, whose work is of a domestic character, tells me he finds himself bothered by his heavy breathing, and he wants to know a remedy for it.

The remedy is a simple one. It is just this—he must breathe through his nose and not through his open routh. In order to cultivate the habit, he must practise it by shutting his lips firmly whenever he thinks of it. Should he find a difficulty in breathing through the nose, it is probably due to some slight and simple stoppage in the narrow passage which might be remedied by a douche, or some easy thing like this. After a little while it will be found quite easy to breathe through the nose, and the trouble will disappear.

#### NERVOUS BOY.

One of my young readers tells me he suffers from nerves, and his heart sometimes beats very fast and sometimes very slowly.

This friend of mine, whose initials are G. W. H. D., says that this worries him very much; but the doctor tells him his heart is all right, and, further, does not disapprove of him smoking.

Personally, I think my friends heart trouble is due to an unfit physical condition. I should advise him to go in for moderate exercises, starting first with deep breathing.

When he first gets up in the morning, let him stand before an open window, and take in a good, deep breath, inhaling it slowly. As he breathes in let him raise his hands above his head, and as he breathes out he should bring his hands down again slowly to the sides of his body. All these movements must be slow and deliberate, and let him at first repeat them ten times night and morning, increasing the number by two or three each day.

YOUR EDITOR (H, E.).

YOUR EDITOR (H, E.).

## BOXING NOTES.

Swinging. HE very first blow that any-one attempts before they have had lessons in boxing is

have had lessons in boxing is a swing, probably given with the right hand, and this is a mistake which it generally takes a great many lessons to correct.

The swing is usually a round-arm blow; the boxer throws his right arm behind him and dashes it round towards his opponent's jaw with great force. There is no doubt at all that if a swing does land it is likely to do damage, but unless your opponent is quite dead-beat it must always be remembered that a swing is one of the very easiest of blows to guard.

always be remembered that a swing is one of the very easiest of blows to guard.

It is the greatest possible mistake to employ a swing unless you are quite certain you can do so without leaving yourself exposed. What usually happens is this: You swing violently with all your strength, your opponent sees the blow coming and steps nimbly out of the way and your arm swings out helplessly into the air. The force of the swing makes you lose your balance, and before you can recover your opponent has dashed in with short, straight blows, and knocked you out very likely. To swing is like sending your opponent a postcard saying you are going to hit him. Your arm goes back behind you, and he sees that at once and is prepared.

If you wish to hit at your opponent's head with your right, use a short hook blow, which is exceedingly valuable. There is no need to move any part of your body but the left foot, which should be advanced a little. Then, as you come close to your opponent, preferably when he is leading with his left at you, send in a short half-arm blow sideways to the point of his jaw.

Swing your body from the hips as you do this, and you will be able to get all your weight behind the blow. If your opponent swings with his right at you, remember that he cannot reach your jaw in that way if you have your left shoulder pulled well up to protect it. Besides this, however, you should extend your left arm, slightly bent. If he swings then his forearm or inside of his elbow will catch on the sharp point of yours, and he will probably have to stop boxing for the rest of the day.

#### SPORT AN ICE. Some Good Ideas-If It Freezes!

OR the satisfaction of the average boy we get for age boy we get far too little frost and snow in this country rost and snow in this country—south of the Tweed, at all events—and when there does come a good, hard winter, it usually finds our lads lacking in knowledge of the ice sports. Not for sixteen years have we had anything like a long spell of hard frost, but it may come this very winter, so you should cut out this article and keep it by you for reference.

One of the first of winter sport sliding, and though there are few b who cannot go

careering down a slide,

careering down a slide, not many of them understand the science of the art. An ordinary pond is the best possible sliding ground, and if the sides are of loose earth, some straw or sacking should be laid down to prevent the sliders from kicking the earth or stones on to the issue.

some straw or sacking should be laid down to prevent the sliders from kicking the earth or stones on to the ice.

The very best plan is for one slide to go right across the ice, and for another to return to the starting point parallel with the first. In this way the fun may be kept up fast and furious, and if the ice be occasionally swept with a birch-broom, so much the better. Hockey is

a splendid game

to play on the ice—a swift, manly game that will invigorate and buck up the players. The goals should be represented in the ordinary way, except that the poles should be supported on flat planks; certainly they should not be dug into the ice.

Curling is a typical Scottish game. It is played by skimming a heavy stone over the ice at a marked circle, all stones entering the circle counting for points. The stones, which are flat and heavy, have handles, and there are usually four players aside.

By the way, it is very easy to fasten iron or zinc-runners to an old chair so that it will go skimming over the ice like a sleigh, and there is nothing one's mother or sister would enjoy better than a spin in such a manner.

THE END.

## The Gold of the "Last Hope" Mine. A CLEVER, COMPLETE STORY.

By CAPTAIN STANLEY DACRE.

THE 1st CHAPTER.
At the River Camp.
HERE have you come from, youngster?"

Geary, the manager of the "Last Hope" Mine, spoke rather He had just stepped out of his quarters, which were at the top of the road leading down to the

pumping-station, three miles away.

Derek Southward flushed nervously. He had only been on this mine in Matabeleland a couple of weeks, and he was very anxious to please the manager, of whom he knew all the other men were greatly afraid. Geary had frowned heavily when the boy had clambered out of the weekly coach, and presented him with a letter from the director in Bulawayo.

"Another sucker, sent out from home because he isn't any good, and handed over to me to find him a job," the manager had muttered; then he had turned to Derek. "How old are you? Seventeen! Ridiculous! You're much to young for this country! Oh, well, you had better go down to the pumping-station, and help old Bill Sedley, the pump-driver. I've nothing for you to do on the mine itself."

So Derek had gone to the River Camp, as it was called, and introduced himself to his new mate, an extended the way and illiterate old man, who, when he was not busy with his big pumping-engine, was drinking whisky and reviling his niggers. Derek had taken possession of a vacant grass hut, which had a doorway, but no door, and had made himself as comfortable as possible, though that was not saying much. Old Bill offered no assistance or advice, whilst Derek quickly found that the other's ideas of food were limited to bully beef and baking-powder bread three times a day. The present occasion was the first chance he had had of going up to the store to buy himself a bedstead and one or two things he needed badly.

"Where have you come from, youngster?" Geary repeated his question. "From the River Camp? Well, why haven't you go ta rifle with you? Don't you know that no white man goes out unarmed up here? Why, only last week we had lions round our cattle, and when we started work here eleven months ago we could see the fires of the Matabele rebels all through those kopjes there, six miles away."

Derek fidgeted with the stick he was carrying, then he blurted out:

"I did think of bringing my rifle, but I was afraid it would look silly, perhaps."

The manager smil

remained a few minutes to chat to Tom Earle, the stout, good-natured storekeeper.

"Bill Sedley is a gruff old brute, isn't he?" Earle remarked. "And the River Camp is a nasty place for fever in the wet season. You're fresh from home, aren't you? Don't let old Bill get you into his ways."

Derek shook his head.

"Not much fear of that, I think. Why, he's drunk half his time!"
Earle laughed.

"And then he gets rude. Hallo, here's our other white youngster. Jack Warren, the manager's nephew! Jack, have you met Bill Sedley's understudy yet?"

The two boys shook hands. Derek was tall, fair, and lightly built, whereas the other was short, almost too short, and very square in the shoulders. He had been on the mine nearly a year, being employed underground, and had already learnt a good deal of the native languages. They stayed chatting for some time, then Derek glanced at the watch on his wrist.

"I must be going," he said. "My

then Derek granced at the his wrist.

"I must be going," he said. "My shift on the pump begins at seven o'clock."

Jack Warren walked through the mine camp with him.

"Are you going down alone?" he asked.

Derek nodded.

asked.

Derek nodded.

"Mr. Geary offered to lend me a rifle," he added. "He said there were lions around."

The other looked up eagerly.

"I know. I heard them last night beyond the compound, two at least. Look here, you go in and get the rifle whilst I fetch mine, and I'll walk part of the way down with you. I'm on night work, and I don't have to go underground till about seven o'clock." As they walked down the track towards the river, two men on horseback overtook and passed them, cantering by without a word of greeting. Jack Warren frowned.

"Dutchmen," he said—"Boers, you know. We always call them Dutchmen up here. They were down at the store at dinner-time asking for old Bill Sedley. One is Jan Bezendenhuit, who used to come down with donkey transport, and the other is called Van der Byl. I wonder what they want?" He watched them intently as they breasted the next rise in the chasing, then suddenly he halted. "Look at their horses—how they're jumping about. They've got the wind of some animal."

Derek's grip on his rifle tightened insensibly. He had never shot any game yet, and he was more than anxious for a chance to test both his nerve and his aim. He had practised at a range at home, but, as an old pioneer on board the mail steamer had assured him, it is one thing to shoot at a fixed target, but quite another matter when you do not know the range, and the target is on the move. "Target shooting is useless," the old man had said, with perfect truth. "Any fool can hit a bit of canvas, but it takes a man to use a rifle on the veldt."

The Dutchmen looked round when their horses shied; then, apparently having seen nothing, touched their beasts with their riding sjamboks, and went on again.

Jack, who had brought his rifle down from his shoulder, put it back

went on again.

Jack, who had brought his rifle down from his shoulder, put it back again with a little sigh of disappoint-

down from his shoulder, put it back again with a little sigh of disappointment.

"False alarm, after all. Well, I will go with you as far as the next kopje—the Giraffe, we call it, because my uncle shot a young giraffe bull there—then I must turn back. I say, will you come out shooting this weekend? We can get away from Saturday midday until Sunday night, or early Monday morning.

"I can get plenty of boys from the compound to carry our blankets and stuff in return for the chance of some meat, and if we camp at Pendangwe kopjes, five miles down the Bulawayo road, we are sure to shoot some klepspringer—little grey antelope, you know—and some guinea fowl, and perhaps some big buck as well. I'll fix all arrangements, if you come up on Saturday afternoon. Just bring your blankets and cartridges."

Derek assented readily. He had Saturday afternoon. Jublankets and cartridges.

blankets and cartridges."

Derek assented readily. He had been longing for some companionship other than that of old Sedley, and he had taken a great liking to his new friend. They fixed up the various details as they climbed the rise to the Giraffe Kopje, and were so interested in what they were discussing that they did not notice the first rustling in the grass a couple of yards away; but a moment later Derek heard it, and laid a hand on Jack's arm.

"Listen! There, in the grass!" he whispered. readily. He had

"Listen! There, in the grass! he whispered.

Jack leaned forward eagerly, his rifle ready; then: "Wild pigs—three or four of them," he said. "See their long tails. Shoot if you get a chance. They'll break out into the open."

An instant later both rifles came to the shoulders, and the shots rang out almost simultaneously; but instead of the scurrying away of the unwounded pigs which they had expected, there was a sudden outburst of growling, which brought Derek's heart to his mouth. For an instant he stood absolutely still, forgetting even to eject his empty cartridge case and reload; but Jack gripped him by the

reload; but Jack gripped him by the arm.

"Lions!" he cried. "Several of them, and we've hit one! Up this tree, quick!"

Then Derek understood. Looking back on the incident afterwards, he never remembered climbing that young mopani-tree or seeing Jack climb the next one; but he did remember clearly that as he reached the first branch, some four feet from the ground, having left his rifle behind him, three lions, a big male and two younger ones, came out into the open, followed more slowly by a lioness, snarling horribly, with blood streaming from a big wound in her flank.

Derek glanced upwards. The mopani was very slender; but he calculated it would still bear his weight if he went two feet higher, and he got on to the third bough, just as the old lion, having stooped to sniff at his rifle, came to the very foot of the tree, and, halting, gazed up at him.

"Hallo! This is a cheerful game, isn't it?"

isn't it?"
Jack's voice came from behind him, and, looking round, Derek saw his new friend in a similar position to himself, just out of reach of the great brutes on the ground.
"I had to drop mine as well." Jack pointed ruefully at his rifle, which was just below him. "Isn't that a huge animal just below you? The two young ones seem to fancy me Ugh, you brutes! If I only had a gun! I wonder how long they'll keep us here?"

annah Just below your. The two young ones seem to fancy me Ugh, you brutes! If I only had a gun! I wonder how long they'll keep us here?"

He was speaking so cheerfully, as if being besieged by three lions and loness were a most ordinary occurrence that Derek's nerve came back, and he laughed too.

"'S-sh! Go away! Scat!" he called out. "I wish I had something to throw. It's worse than being treed by a buildog in an orchard, isn't it? Is she badly hit?" And he nodded towards the lioness, who was now lying down, licking her wounded flank.

Jack shook his head.

"Only a flesh hit Do you know, I could have sworn they were wild pigs; but I've heard of other men making the same mistake. They looked quite small, didn't they?"

The two boys had managed to get into fairly comfortable and secure positions, and the lions, realising they could not reach them, had drawn off a few yards, and were now lying down at the edge of the clearing watching.

For a while the boys talked, treating the adventure as a joke, but when the sun went down and the evening chill began to creep round them, they grew silent, and Derek found himself wondering how cold he would be before their enemies allowed them to descend.

At the end of the third hour he called to Jack:

"How are you? I'm all in a shiver! I never thought it could be so cold in the Tropics."

Jack tried to laugh as he answered:

"Well, you knew now! Oh, you big brutes, do go away! Thank Heaven, there's a good moon, so that we can watch them! Why can't you go away, you lions, and try to get a bullock or those Dutchmen's horse?"

A moment later, as though in answer to his request, the big lion

A moment later, as though in answer to his request, the big lion stood up, stretched himself, went over to the lioness and sniffed her gently, then slowly turned towards the bush, and stalked off, followed by the others.

and stalked off, followed by the others.

Derek gave a sigh of relief.

"At least we can get our rifles now," he said; and slid down the tree hurriedly.

Jack followed his example. Both were very stiff, and the hands which

picked up the firearms were shaking with the cold.

"Stay where you are a moment," Jack said. "We must see if they're coming back first. Give them five minutes' grace, and then we'll make a bolt for it. If we stay here much longer we shall be half dead with fever in the morning."

At the end of the five minutes Jack spoke again.

"We'll risk it now, and hurry for all we're worth to the River Camp. That's half a mile nearer than the mine, and it's downhill all the way. Don't run, or you'll get too winded to shoot straight. Just walk fast and keep a sharp look-out."

It is curious how many noises one hears on the veldt at night, and how loud everything sounds in the still air. Twice rats, scurrying amongst the dead leaves, made Derek's heart beat at what seemed a furious pace. Once both boys halted abruntly, as

the dead leaves, made Derek's heart beat at what seemed a furious pace. Once both boys halted abruptly, as some animal—probably a jackal—trotted away through the scrub, and they did the same thing again when a reed-buck started up out of some long grass ahead.

To Derek the road seemed almost interminable. Every step he expected to see the lions breaking cover ahead of him, or to hear their horrible growls close beside him in the bush.

Those hours spent up the tree had

Those hours spent up the tree had Those hours spent up the tree had impressed him with a sense of their tremendous size and strength, and he realised how little chance he and his companion would have against four of them. At last, however, he caught a gleam of light, apparently amongst the treetops, and a couple of minutes afterwards they were in view of the little kopie on which stood the River Camp.

Jack gave a deep sigh of relief.

of minutes afterwards they were in view of the little kopje on which stood the River Camp.

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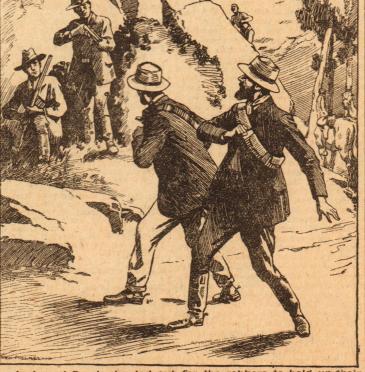
"Oh, I won't say I'm not glad! It's been a big tug, hasn't it? Something to remember—ch? I see old Bill is still up, probably swearing at you for not being at work. The pump is not going, though, but it doesn't matter much, as the mine reservoir is pretty full. I wonder if the Dutchmen are here? Let's go up quietly and give them a fright."

Old Sedley's hut, like Derek's, had no door, though a tattered piece of sack had been hung in the doorway, covering the entrance.

Jack went forward quietly and peered through one of the holes, then beckoned to Derek. The two Dutchmen were sitting on upturned cases with a bottle on another case in front of them, whilst Sedley himself was sprawling on his frowsy bed, a glass in his hand.

"Yes," he was saying, "that'll do fine. Hide the spare horses between those two kopjes beyond the Pendangwe Hills; that's six miles from the mine, up the stony kloof. No nigger ever goes there. You will have plenty of time, and once you are across the border into the Transvaal old Kruger will never give you up."

Jack laid an unsteady hand on Derek's arm and pulled him away, never speaking a word until they had reached the foot of the kopje again. Then:



Jack and Derek shouted out for the robbers to hold up their hands. The Dutchmen, taking in the situation at a glance, and seeing that they were only boys, turned back for their horses.

"If they knew we had heard they would kill us," he said. "No; never mind. I'll explain by-and-by when. I've thought it all out. Now we'll let them know we're here." And he gave a shout which brought one of the Dutchmen, burriedly to the gave a shout which brought on the Dutchmen hurriedly to the canvas curtain of the hut.
"'Hallo!" he called out. "Who's there? What are you doing out at

Old Sedley received them with his usual surliness, which did not abate even when he heard of their narrow

escape.
"Youngsters like you shouldn't come out to a country like this!" he growled. "You want nurses, you do!"

o!"
The Dutchmen, on the other hand, listened with interest, and Byl remarked:

"Ja, I remember the horses shying. Those lions must have been near then. You had some good pluck in coming on after they had gone."

Bill Sedley helped himself to another whisky. He was obviously annoyed at their arrival.

"Why didn't you go back to the remember the horses

annoyed at their arrival.

"Why didn't you go back to the mine?" he demanded. "The manager will be worrying his life out when he finds young Jack there is missing. Well, it's not worth while starting the pump now. I told the niggers not to keep up steam. You'll find some grub in the skoff-hut."

Jack made no remark about what they had overheard until they had finished their food and gone across to Derek's own hut; then, after making sure that no one was within earshot.

they had overheard until they had finished their food and gone across to Derek's own hut; then, after making sure that no one was within earshot, he whispered:

"Do you understand what those fellows are plotting?"

Derek shook his head.

"No, I can't say I do."

Jack smiled.

"It's the gold; they're going to steal the gold from the mine. It goes into Bulawayo once a month on the coach—about two thousand ounces of it—and they mean to hold up the coach, which only has a driver and one nigger on it. Then they're going to put the boxes on the pack-horses they have hidden in the hills, and they've only got to take it seventy miles into the Transvaal, where they'll be safe. It's awfully easy, really. When they've cut the telegraph wires to the police fort on the border, there's no chance of stopping them."

Derek': eyes were blazing with excitement.

"What will you do," he began—"tell your uncle, or—" He stopped, as if unwilling to make a suggestion.

The other boy understood, however, and he supplied the missing

suggestion.

The other boy understood, however, and he supplied the missing words:

"Or capture them ourselves afterwards in the kopjes? That's the thing to do; then we get them redhanded. I say! You are game for a new-comer." He looked at the other admiringly. "There'll be only the of us and I'll. a new-comer." He looked at the other admiringly. "There'll be only two of them and two of us, and I'll get four Matabele boys from the compound—some of Lobengula's best regiment—and they can help with the prisoners. But mind you don't breathe a word to anyone. The coach leaves the store at four on Saturday next with the gold, and we can be at the kopjes by then without anyone wondering where we are off to."

off to."

They had made all their plans before they lay down to sleep. Derek, the more level-headed of the two, knew perfectly well that the right course would be to warn the managers and prevent a crime being committed at all, but Jack waved his objections aside.

managers and prevent a crime being committed at all, but Jack waved his objections aside.

"They would send the Mounted Police, who would make a muddle of it all. The sergeant is always drunk, you know—besides, the coachdriver is a Dutchman, and so these fellows won't hurt him. Then only last week my uncle was awfully down on me for being no good, and I want to show him I can do something after all."

So in the end Derek gave in, and rolled himself up in his blankets to dream that he was driving a coach drawn by four lions through a snowstorm in pursuit of two Dutchmen mounted on giraffes.

On Saturday afternoon Derek found Jack waiting for him behind the native compound. As arranged, there were half a dozen ordinary working boys to carry the food and blankets, but in addition to these Jack had managed to get leave for four of the mine police, stalwart Matabele, each armed with a couple of most formidable-looking knobkerries.

They had asked no questions as to

They had asked no questions as to their errand, being quite sure in their own minds that anyone who

#### THE "LAST HOPE" MINE. (Continued from the previous page.)

were able to shoot as well as Jack could must be a reliable leader, and they set out to follow the two white boys without making a single remark,

they set out to follow the two white boys without making a single remark, except to revile the carriers for their slowness in getting their loads together. "I saw them screwing down the boxes of gold in the assay-office this morning," Jack said, as they got into the line of bush beyond the mine clearing, "and I heard from Tom Earle at breakfast this morning that Van der Byl and Bezendenhuit left the store about midday yesterday. Now, those are the kopjes they've got the horses hidden in. Not the near lot—that's Pendangwe, where there's several Kaffir kraals—but the other lot beyond them. Oh, we've heaps of time! I know every inch of the veldt round here luckily, and I know the exact kloof they were talking about. We'll go in at the top end, over the nek itself, and then we can look right down and make sure they've started before we lay our ambush."

The climb up the kopje to the head of the kloof left Derek breathless and

The climb up the kopje to the head of the kloof left Derek breathless and perspiring, but when the party actually reached the nek and looked down into the ravine below them he forgot all about this, for there were the two Dutchmen just riding out on their way to hold up the coach, which would pass within a mile and a half of the place, whilst the neigh of a horse coming from a little clump of bush showed where the pack animals were tied.

Jack had left the carriers a little way behind, bringing on only the four Matabele, to whom he now explained matters. The eyes of Lobengula's former warriors flashed. They hated Boers as much as they loved any sort of excitement, and, moreover, they reckoned shrewdly that success would mean big rewards from the great chief of the mine.

As soon as the Dutchmen were out of sight, the party hurried down to where the four horses were tethered. The original plan had been to lie in ambush and rush out on the highwaymen whilst they were busy arranging the boxes of gold in the pack saddles, and to this proposal the Matabele agreed cordially; but at the last moment Derek proposed another scheme.

"Lie in wait in that bush, certainly," he said; "you and I on this side, the four Matabele there. But let two of the horses loose—those two restive ones—as though they had broken away; then the Dutchmen will have to go after them, leaving their rifles, and we shall have them without any sort of fighting."

Jack looked at him with admiration.

"By Jove, that's a good idea! As you say, we shall have them properly." And he explained the new scheme to the Matabele, who agreed, making only one suggestion about it.

"One of us will get where he can watch those Dutch thieves coming back, baas," they said. "Then he will give a signal, and we can slip the horses loose at the last moment without being seen. Otherwise, they might stray too far out of the kloof, and spoil it all."

As they lay, hidden behind a clump of bush, waiting for their prey, it was difficult to say which was the more excited, Dere

shots, we shall know they ve succeeded."

The time seemed to drag terribly. Minutes appeared to consist of at least five hundred seconds, and they were just beginning to whisper doubts to one another when the Matabele on the hillside gave the prearranged signal. Instantly one of the other Matabele slipped out, loosed two of the horses, and crawled back to cover, unseen by the Dutchmen, whose voices could already be heard. Nothing could have seemed more unlikely than that anyone would be waiting for them in that kloof. The mine was the only white settlement within twenty miles, and the men who worked there did not

wander about the veldt much, being usually too tired at the end of their week's toil.

As they came in view of their horses, Van der Byl gave vent to an exclamation of annoyance.

They were leading their horses, which were weighted down with the boxes of gold, and, obviously, they had no suspicion of anything being wrong, for they immediately tied these animals up, laid their rifles down against a tree, and started after the straying beasts, which had turned down towards the entrance of the kloof. A moment later Jack gave the signal, and the watchers rushed out, two of the Matabele immediately seizing the Dutchman's rifles, whilst the boys shouted out for the highwaymen to hold up their hands.

The Dutchmen looked back, and took in the situation at a glance. They did not waste any time in hesitation. It mattered little that Jack and Derek were mere boys. The important point was that their adversaries consisted of four with rifles and two with knobsticks, whilst they themselves were unarmed. They risked the chance of the boys or the Matabele trying to stop their flight, dashed at the two loose horses, caught them, mounted as best they could on the pack saddles, and a minute later were lost to view.

Jack heaved a big sigh of relief.

"It was the best thing that could happen. They have left the gold, their rifles, and four good horses, and they'll have to flee the country, so they're not going unpunished. And now we'll get this gold back to the Last Hope as quickly as we can. What do you say, Derek?"

As they led their pack horses through the bush on their way homewards, Derek remarked suddenly:

"It meanager called me a sucker."

Jack nodded sympathetically.

"It know; and he called me a silly young waster."

Nothing more was said until they came in sight of the store, where an unusual number of men were congregated, talking excitedly. A travelling native had found the coach driver lying bound in the road, and, after releasing him, had run in with the news, having arrived about a quarter of an hour before.

of an hour before.

The boys were so overwhelmed with questions that they found it easy, to avoid giving any explanation. They had determined to reserve that for the manager; and now the adventure was over, both were wondering rather anxiously whether they ought not to have warned him, after all. They certainly had risked the loss of the gold, to say nothing of their own lives. Men like Van der Byl and Bezedenhuit, trek-Boers of the lowest type, would have shot them without mercy had the ambush failed.

As they came up to the store

Bezedenhuit, trek-Boers of the lowest type, would have shot them without mercy had the ambush failed.

As they came up to the store Derek had caught a glimpse of old Bill Sedley on the stoop; but when he looked again the man had vanished, and the little crowd had clustered round him before he could warn Tom Earle, the storekeeper, to detain the other. A minute later, Tom himself cried:

"There's old Bill off on my horse, I say, Bill," he shouted. "Come back. I want to ride out to the coach myself. This is beyond a joke."

But Sedley was already round the first bend before the boys could explain, and though a couple of men started in pursuit, he had turned off across the veldt, and they quickly lost his spoor on the hard ground. After that, Matabeleland knew him no more.

When the gold had been restored to the safe, Geary, the manager, asked the boys for the full story. He listened with intense interest, and, greatly to their relief, said not a word about their having omitted to warn him. Only, when they had finished, he laughed quietly.

"What did I call you? A sucker? And you, Jack? A waster? Well, I'll take that back, and see the mine rewards you properly, because you've got the sort of grit men need in a new country. Only, I'll tell you a secret, which no one but the consulting engineer and myself knows "—he gave the same laugh again—"that wasn't gold at all you saved, only boxes of lead—dummies, in fact. The real gold always goes in by the consulting-engineer's mule cart, a box at a time." Then, seeing the boys' faces fall, he added kindly: "Still, the credit to you is as great, and the company will reward you just the same. And now, is there any special favour you want at the moment? It was Jack who answered.

"Will you give us a fortnight's holiday to go shooting? We want to find those lions and pay them out for the other night?"



HOW is the boy this morning? Why do you shake your head?

Ah! I can see what's happened—there's a screen drawn round the bed.

So poor little Mike is sleeping the last long sleep of all?

I'm sorry—but who could wonder, after that dreadful fall?

Let me look at him, doctor—poor little
London waif!
His frail barque's out of the tempest, and
lies in God's harbour safe;
It's better he died in the ward here, better
a thousand times,
Than have wandered back to the Alley,
with its squalor and nameless crimes.

Too young for the slum to sully, he's gone to the Wonderland,
To look on the thousand marvels that he scarce could understand.
Poor little baby outcast, poor little waif of sin!

He has gone, and the pitying angels have carried the cripple in.

Didn't you know his story? Ah, you weren't here, I believe,
When they brought the poor little fellow to the hospital, Christmas Eve.
It was I who came here with him, it was I who saw him go
Over the bridge that evening, into the Thames below.

'Twas a raw, cold air that evening—a biting Christmassy frost—I was looking about for a collie—a favourite dog I'd lost.

Some regged boys, so they told me, had been seen with one that night

In one of the bridge recesses, so I hunted left and right.

You know the stone recesses, with the long, broad bench of stone—
To many a weary outcast as welcome as monarch's throne?
On the fiercest night you may see them, as, crouched in the dark they lie.
Like the hunted vermin, striving to hide from the hounds in cry.

The seats that night were empty, for the merrow was Christmas Day.
And even the outcast loafers seemed to have slunk away;
They had found a warmer shelter—some assual ward, maybe—
They'd manage a morning's labour for the sake of the meat and tea.

I fancied the seats were empty, but as
I passed along
Out of the darkness floated the words of
a Christmas song.
Sung in a childish treble—'twas a boy's voice,
hoarse with cold,
Quavering out the anthem of angels and
harps of gold.

I stood where the shadows hid me, and peered about until
I could see two ragged urchins, blue with the icy chill,
Cuddling close together, crouched on a big stone seat—
Two little homeless arabs, waifs of the London street.

One was singing the carol, while the other, with big round eyes—
It was Mike—looked up in wonder, and said. "Jack, when we dies,
Is that the place as we goes to—that place where yer dressed in white?
And has golding 'arps to play on, and it's warm and jolly and bright?

"Is that what they mean by 'eaven, as the misshun coves talks about, Where the children's always happy, and nobody kicks 'em out?"

Jack nodded his head, assenting, and then I listened and heard

The talk of the little arabs—listened to every word.

Jack was a Sunday scholar, so I gathered from what he said.

But he sang in the road for a living—his father and mother were dead;

And he had a drunken granny, who turned him into the street;

She drank what he earned, and often he hadn't a crust to eat.

He told little Mike of heaven in his rough, untutored way,
He made it a land of glory where the children
sing all day.
And Mike, he shivered and listened, and told
his tale to his friend,
How he was starved and beaten—'twas a
tale one's heart to rend.

Recitation. He'da drunken father and mother, who sent him out to beg,
Though he'd just got over a fever, and was lame with a withered leg.
He told how he daren't crawl homeward, because he had begged in vain,
And his parents' brutal fury haunted his baby brain.

I came here on Christmas morning, the ward was all bright and gay
With mistletoe, green, and holly, in honour of Christmas Day;
And the patients had clean white garments, and a few in the room out there
Had joined in a Christmas service—they were singing a Christmas air.

RECITER

THE ROAD TO HEAVEN.

GEORGE R. SIMS' Great Christmas

"I wish I could go to 'eaven,' he cried, as he shook with fright;
"If I thought as they'd only take me, why, I'd go this very night.
Which is the way to 'eaven? How d'ye get there, Jack?"
Jack climbed on the bridge's coping, and looked at the water black.

"That there's one road to 'eaven," he said, as he pointed down
To where the cold Thames water surged muddy and thick and brown.
"If we was to fall in there. Mike, we'd be dead; and right through there Is the place where it's always sunshine, and the angels has crowns to wear."

Mike rose and looked at the water; he peered in the big broad stream,
Perhaps with a childish notion he might catch the golden gleam
Of the far-off land of glory. He leaned right over and cried:
"If them are the gates of 'eaven, how I'd like to be inside!"

He'd stood but a moment looking—how it happened I cannot tell—
When he seemed to lose his balance, gave a short, shrill cry, and fell—
Fell o'er fhe narrow coping, and I heard his poor head strike
With a thud on the stonework under; then splash in the Thames went Mike.

We brought him here that evening, for help
I had managed to shout.
A boat put off from the landing, and they
dragged his body out.
His forehead was cut and bleeding, but a
vestige of life wie found;
When they brought him here he was senseless, but slowly the child came round.

They were singing a Christmas carol when
Mike from his stupor woke,
And dim on his wandering senses the strange
surroundings broke.
Half dreamily he remembered the tale he
had heard from Jack—
The song, and the white-robed angels, the
warm, bright heaven came back.

"I'm in heaven," he whispered faintly,
"Yes, Jack must have told me true!"
And, as he looked about him, came the kind
old surgeon through.
Mike gazed at his face a moment, put his
hand to his fevered head,
Then to the kind old doctor: "Please, are
you God?" he said.

Poor little Mike! 'Twas heaven, this hospital ward to him—
A heaven of warmth and comfort, till the flickering lamp grow dim;
And he lay like a tired baby in a dreamless, gentle rest.
And now he is safe for ever where such as he are best.

This is the day of scoffers, but who shall say

that night.
When Mike asked the road to heaven, that
Jack didn't tell him right?
'Twas the children's Jesus pointed the way
to the kingdom come
For the poor little tired arab, the waif of a
London slum.

THE END.

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A Grand Recitation Appears Every Tuesday in THE BOYS' FRIEND.

#### HINTS TO RECITERS.

ertainment.

Most boys are terribly nervous of reciting in public, and this feeling is only natural. After one or two public appearances, however, this so-called "stage-fright" vanishes, and full confidence takes its place. So

T is not every boy who is musical and can amuse his friends by contributing a song or solo to the evening's entertainment. Most boys, however, are capable of rendering a recitation, if only they will spend sufficient time in practising and making themselves proficient.

There is now appearing in The Boys' Friend the finest series of recitations that has ever been prepared for boy reciters, and either of them would be certain to find great favour with an audience, whether one in a public hall or at a drawing-room entertainment.

I is not every boy who is musical by heart and can face his hearers by heart and can face his hearers by heart and can face his hearers without any nervous symptoms he has not much to fear.

Personally, I advise all boys who can do so to attend an evening class in elocution. Such classes are held in all our towns, and the fees are usually very low. Elocution is the art of speaking correctly; it teaches one the to raise or modify the voice. It is not sufficient to merely stand up like an image and recite verses; one must work up the audience by the use of gesture and pose.

The boy reciter should practise his part in front of a large mirror, so that he may see the effect of his actions. It is the best thing he can do to gain confidence.

Our Grand New Year and 500th Number out next Tuesday. One Penny only:
Glorious New Features.

# Sexton Blake: Sp

NEW READERS START HERE.

NEW READERS START HERE.

In the opening chapters of this grand new serial we read how two Britishers are captured in the fortifications on the Island of Tarkum, off the German coast, while a couple of days later two Germans are seen making plans of Fort Ridley, in the East of England. One German is arrested, while the other escapes with his plans. The news is abroad like wildfire. The Britishers have lost their plans, while one of the Germans has succeeded in making his escape with plans of the British fortification in his possession.

Sexton Blake, the famous detective, is summoned to Lord Dorrington at the War Office, and is at length employed in the Secret Service. Now that Germany is in possession of knowledge of one of Britain's most valuable strongholds,

most valuable strongholds,

most valuable strongholds, so must Britain be upon equal terms with Germany. Sexton Blake is aware that the one German who is captured is none other than Prince Gunther, son of the Kaiser. The famous detective, with his assistants, Tinker and Pedro, are to repair the unsuccessful attempt to obtain plans of the Tarkum fortifications.

Disguised as Baron Rudolf Steiner, chief of the Prussian Secret Service, Sexton Blake gains an entrance to the Tarkum fortifications, succeeds in securing the plans of Fort Tarkum, and with Tinker he scapes on a skiff; but the owner of this fishing-craft is a loyal subject to his Kaiser, and steers Sexton Blake back to the German coast.

fishing-craft is a Kaiser, and steers Sexton Blake back to the German coast.

Reaching land again, the famous detective and his assistant travel over miles of open and wooded country, taking every precaution of not being recognised by the German police. Sexton Blake at last discards the military uniform he is wearing and done the

rags of a scarecrow.

They proceed on their journey across country, and looking back they see far behind them a mass of moving objects. "German cavalry!" mutters Tinker, trawing a deep breath.

(Now read this week's splendid chapters.)

#### THE 13th CHAPTER. A Hot Chase—A German Town— The Wrong Turn.

FES, no doubt they are," plied Blake. "But we have nothing to fear from them, for they are not coming this way. We must soon find a place to spend the night," he added. "It will be safe to do so, I think, considering the precautions we have taken. Clever though Pedro is, I believe that we have effectively baffled him."

have effectively baffled him."

They had eaten nothing since their flight from the Hotel Kronprinz, but an hour later they found some frost-bitten turnips in a field, and devoured them with a keen relish. Shortly afterwards, in the chill dusk of the evening, they warily approached a small farmhouse, and slipped unobserved into the stable. By a ladder they mounted to a loft in which was a huge stack of hay, and when they had burrowed deep under this, they fell asleep at once, overcome by utter exhaustion.

It was between eight and nine o'clock in the morning when there was a movement under the stack of hay, and from it emerged Tinker, dusty and dishevelled. He rose to his feet, and as he looked about him, he yawned, and stretched his arms. "My word, if it isn't morning!" he said to himself, half aloud. "And the sun is up! What a sleep we have had! And the guv'nor isn't awake yet! Another day has begun, and I wonder how it will end? Well, we are all right so far, and there is no reason why we shouldn't escape from Germany in a day or so. But what about food? That is the first thing to be thought of. I have been hungry before, but I don't believe I was ever so ravenous as I am now. I feel as if something was gnawing me inside. If I was a redskin I would hitch my belt tighter, but as I am not one, and as I haven't got a belt—"

would hitch my bett tighter, but as I am not one, and as I haven't got a belt—"

The lad cut short his reflections, as if an answer to the problem other than the remedy he had mentioned had suddenly occurred to him. He disappeared down the ladder that led to the stable beneath, and was absent for about ten minutes; and when he returned there was an expression on his face that startled Sexton Blake, who had meanwhile awakened from his slumber, and crawled out from the hay. He was looking uncommonly glum, for a flood of memory had just deluged him with his troubles.

Tinker replied. "At least, I went down for that, but I forgot all about it as soon as I reached the stable-vard."

""

"What was it?"

"A printed poster that has been stuck up on one side of the gateway. It has the imperial arms on it, and it gives descriptions of you and I, and warns people not to harbour us, and offers a reward of five thousand marks for our apprehension."

"There was no poster on the gate last evening," declared Blake.

"I know there wasn't," the lad said gravely. "It must have been put up in the night by soldiers who were here while we slept."

"That was quick work. The

were here while we slept."

"That was quick work. The posters must have been printed at Hemsden yesterday, and by now they are probably scattered all over this part of the country. What did you say the reward was? Five thousand marks? I should have thought I was worth more than that."

"So should I," murmured Tinker, with a smile that brightened his haggard face. "More than that has been offered for you in Siberia. The sun has been our for a couple of hours," he added. "Hadn't we better be on our travels?"

"Yes, we'll be off without delay," answered the detective, "and we must contrive to get some breakfast somehow or other. If we can't find any more turnips, we shall have to—"

"Hark!" interrupted the lad.

must contrive to get some breakfast somehow or other. If we can't find any more turnips, we shall have to—"
"Hark!" interrupted the lad.
"What is that? Do you hear it?"
Blake nodded, and for an instant he and Tinker glanced at each other. Then, with one impulse, they hastened to a small window that was near them, and pressed their faces to the grimy panes, and at once they saw something that sent a thrill to their hearts, and caused them mingled relief and apprehension.

All the craft that had been practised by the fugitives, all the precautions they had taken, had proved to be utterly useless. The danger that they had dreaded was upon them. In the driection from which they had come, within considerably less than half a mile, a little group of men were moving across an open field, led by a big dog. The dog was Pedro, and he was steadily approaching with his muzzle to the earth, following the trail that he must have lost repeatedly, and as often discovered again, after making a detour. He was held in leash by an officer in a blue uniform, behind whom were three or four officers, and as many soldiers armed with carbines.

"By heavens, what a misfortune!" exclaimed Sexton Blake, when he had gazed in silence for a moment. "And what sharp work! Pedro is even more intelligent than I gave him credit for being."

"If we were to call to him, guv'nor, he might break loose, and join us, and we could all try to give the soldiers the slip."

"If we were to break away he would be fired at, and presumably killed. I won't risk that, my boy. We will slip away unperceived, if we can, and make for the nearest cover. We are in great peril, but we may escape from it."

The sound that had drawn them to the window had been a loud bay

from it."

The sound that had drawn them to the window had been a loud bay from Pedro, who, it could not be doubted, was well aware that his beloved master was not far off. His voice now rang out again, fraught with a mournful, quavering note that was almost human, and at the same moment, as Tinker and the detective left their point of view and glided across the floor, they heard footsteps below them, and then the rattling of a chain.

a chain.
"The farmer is down there!"
gasped the lad. "Our escape is cut
off!"

"A dozen farmers sha'n't stop us!"
Blake whispered fiercely, as he drew his revolver from the pocket of his ragged coat. "We have nothing to fear from the man. Come along, and be as quiet as you can."
More footsteps were heard, mingled with a clatter of hoofs; but the noise had grown fainter by the time the fugitives began to descend the ladder, and when they had got to the bottom of it, and had crept to the open door of the stable, they beheld a sight that was not quite what they had expected to see.

memory had just deluged him with his troubles.

"Where have you been?" he asked.

"Trying to find something to eat," trough, and at an equal distance from

A Superb New Serial of the Great Detective's Secret Service in Britain and Germany. START READING IT NOW.

the animal, with her back towards the doorway, was a tall, lean woman, poorly dressed, who was apparently reading the poster that had been affixed to one of the gateposts.

"Ah, here is a chance for us!" muttered the detective. "We shall have a ride now!"

a ride now!"

"Be quick!" urged Tinker, in a low tone. "There is no time to be lost!"

ow tone. There is no time to be lost!"
Noiselessly they stole forward over the litter-strewn yard, and they had taken no more than three strides when the woman turned, revealing a hard, sour face. For a couple of seconds she was struck dumb with amazement, and before she had recovered Sexton Blake had swung himself on to the back of the horse and grabbed the reins, and the lad had vaulted nimbly up behind his master and clutched him around the waist.

With an angry yell the startled female seized a hayfork that was within her reach, and would have used it to good effect had not Blake levelled his revolver at her, and shouted to

female seized a hayfork that was within her reach, and would have used it to good effect had not Blake levelled his revolver at her, and shouted to her to get out of the way.

She staggered back in terror, dropping the fork, and the next instant the horse, with his double burden, had trotted through the gateway, and swerved into a narrow road that led to the left.

"Help, Jonker, help!" the woman bawled lustily, as she ran out of the yard. "The spies! The British spies from Tarkum! Stop them! Shoot them! Five thousand marks reward, Jonker! You'll be a rich man if you can—"

Her voice was drowned in a ciamour that seemed to come from all quarters. The lowing of cattle and the shrill barking of a terrier blended with shouts that were at no great distance, and a deep-throated bay from Pedro. Off to the right the dog could be seen tearing across the field, straining at his leash, with officers and soldiers at his heels. To the left of the road was a small house, from which there now rushed, wildly excited, an elderly German farmer, who carried a long-barrelled gun of antique pattern.

"British spies!" he yelled. "Stop, stop, or I fire!"

As he uttered the threat he raised the weapon to his shoulder, and he had no more than done so when it went off with a thunderous report, probably by accident. The charge of shot passed harmlessly over the heads of the fugitives, and the recoil of the gun stretched the farmer on his back, where he lay raving like a madman.

"We are safe now," said Tinker.

"We shall throw Pedro off the scent lagain, and get a long way from here before we—"

"I doubt if we shall get very far!" broke in Blake.

"Why not, guv'nor? What do you mean?"

"Look and see, my boy!"

The lad glanced to the right, and

"Why not, guv'nor? What do you mean?"

"Look and see, my boy!"

The lad glanced to the right, and his heart sank. Over the crest of a low hill that was within a quarter of a mile, and beyond the field in which were the bloodhound and his companions, there had just appeared a group of mounted men, who must have been following up the tracking party in case their services should be called for. They were Prussian cavalry, and they numbered fully a score.

cavarry, and they numbered fully a score.

There was a frenzied howl from poor Pedro, another, and another, and for a little time the shouting of officers and soldiers was heard; then the clamour faded, and was presently lost in the drumming of hoofs as the big horse drew farther away from the farmhouse. The narrow road soon led into a larger one that was evidently a highway, and here the detective bore to the left with a jerk that nearly unseated Tinker.

"All clear in front," said the lad, in a tone of satisfaction. "That is something to be thankful for."

The situation was bad, but it might have been worse. On both sides rolled pretty country, consisting for

The situation was bad, but it might have been worse. On both sides rolled pretty country, consisting for the most part of fields and clumps of trees, with here and there a cottage, and straight ahead, at a distance of some few miles, the view was bounded by a dense line of woods that stretched far along the horizon in both directions.

stretched far along the horizon in both directions.

Blake was an expert rider, and the lad was the same. For a couple of miles the horse tore on at a gallop, passing several cottages from which women and children stared in wonder; and from time to time, as the fugitives glanced back, they had a glimpse

of the Prussian cavalry, who were in hot pursuit, with pennons waving and equipments flashing in the sunlight. But they were at least not gaining; on the contrary, they appeared to be losing ground a little.

"I believe we shall shake them off in the end," declared Tinker, "if nothing happens to us."

"We ought to do so," replied Blake, "for they have no doubt been riding all night, and their horses are tired."

"We ought to do so," replied Blake, "for they have no doubt been riding all night, and their horses are tired."

"It seems to me, guv'nor, that we could get rid of them more easily if we were to leave the road."

"I won't risk that, my boy. I don't know the country, and we might get stuck in marshy ground, or be held up by streams. No; we will keep to the highway—at least, until we are on the other side of those woods yonder. And then, if we find it advisable, we will abandon our steed and take to cover."

Two more miles fell swiftly behind, and now the woods were within a short distance. The pursuers were about a half-mile in the rear, and they still appeared to be losing when, a few moments later, the fugitives reached the dark line of timber, and plunged into welcome shade. For two or three hundred yards the road led straight through the trees, under a canopy of foliage, and then it emerged opposite to the gates of a large mansion, where it made a sharp turn to the right.

And as the horse swung round this turn, and Blake and the lad saw what lay ahead, they perceived within less than a quarter of a mile, at the foot of a gentle hill which the road descended, what had been invisible to them until now—a maze of houses and cottages, with smoking chimneys and several church-spires rising above them. It was evidently a small town, not a village.

It was a startling, staggering surprise. What was to be done? On one side of the road were the deep woods, impossible of access for a horse, and on the other side were gardens shut in by high brick walls. To turn back was not to be thought of.

"We are in a trap, and no mistake!" exclaimed Tinker. "Our only

of.
"We are in a trap, and no mistake!" exclaimed Tinker. "Our only chance is to jump off and hide in the woods!"
"It would be madness!" gried

"It would be madness!" cried Blake. "There is no safety for us there. The soldiers would draw a cordon around the woods, and in the end we should be found and dragged

there. The soldiers would draw a cordon around the woods, and in the end we should be found and dragged out."

"Then what shall we—"

"We'll go straight ahead, my boy, and trust to luck!"

"Right you are, guv'nor! Let her rip! Take the place at a gallop, and don't stop for anything or anybody! Here goes for the British lion against the Prussian eagles!"

There had been no halt during this brief conversation. The horse was now half-way down the hill, and a few seconds later it entered the main street of the little town, with a clatter of hoofs that electrified the inhabitants, who, wondering what could be the matter, ran to their doors and windows, and gaped in bewilderment at the two dirty, disreputable looking riders, one bare-headed, and the other wearing a ragged straw hat that a beggar would have scorned.

People appeared from all directions, and those who were behind ran after the horse. Dogs barked, and women and children screamed, and men called to one another. Cottages gave way to small houses, and houses to rows of shops. The post-office flashed by, displaying a notice-board on which was the name Lemburg, and now came a market-place, in which some farmers' carts were standing.

Rapidly on went the fugitives, still following the main street, and now a fat German butcher, who had waddled to his door, shrewly guessed the street, but they quickly jumped back as the galloping steed bore down on them. Louder and louder swelled the clamour. Whistles were blown, and a church-bell began to clang madly.

"Stop the spies! Stop them!"
One deafening roar went up, fiere and threatening. It seemed as if ten thousand people were thirsting for the blood of Germany's foes.

But the way was still open for the the Superb New Serial, THE BOYS'

daring fugitives, and they were now more than half through the town. For another brief interval the big horse struck sparks from the cobblestones, and shops, and houses, and faces slid by in a blur. Then Tinker gave a start, and almost let go his grip of the detective.

"We're done for!" he said huskily.
"Look out, guv'nor!"
"I see," Blake answered quietly. He had at once perceived what had caught the lad's eyes. From a building that was close ahead, within forty or fifty yards, there had issued a dozen stalwart men in blue uniforms, who wore white-metal helmets, and were armed with short swords. They were Prussian policemen, and the building was, of course, the police-station. But between it and the fugitives, as it happened, was a turning to the left, and Sexton Blake, prompt to meet the emergency, swung his steed into this turning, and thus eluded the threatened peril.

"A disappointment for those fellows—eh?" he said.
"Yes, we have dodged them," replied Tinker.

"A disappointment for those fellows—eh?" he said.
"Yes, we have dodged them," replied Tinker.
"And yet they are shouting as if they are pleased."
"They may have some reason to be. Where are we going, guv'nor?"
Sexton Blake did not know, and did not care. He had swerved into a narrow passage that ran for twenty yards or so, between blank walls, to the verge of an open space that appeared to be one of the town squares. But it was not that. At a furious puce the horse tore along the passage and into the space beyond, and as the detective looked about him, he felt as if an icy hand was tickling his spine.
"By heavens it is a harracks!" he

spine.
"By heavens, it is a barracks!" he exclaimed

THE 14th CHAPTER.

A Daring Dash — Swimming the River—Safe Shelter.

T was a case of out of the frying-pan into the fire with a venge-ance. The fugitives had eluded the police, but in so doing they had blundered into the enclosure of a large barracks, in which was quartered a regiment of Prussian Lancers, many of whom were at the time standing about in groups discussing the cause of the uproar in the town. The shout of "Stop the spies!" had just floated to their ears, and they grasped the situation as soon as they got sight of Blake and the lad, whose feelings, as they realised the mistake they had made, can be more easily imagined than described.

"We're trapped," Tinker said bitterly, "We may as well surrender."

"Not while there is a chance left!"

bitterly. "We may as not render."

"Not while there is a chance left!" yowed Blake. "And there is one, my boy! Yonder is an exit!"

"We'll never get that far, guy'nor."

"Keep up your cour-

guy'nor."
"We must! Keep up your cour-

"We must! Keep up your courage, my boy."

They had entered by one gateway, and they could see another on the opposite side of the enclosure. It was very doubtful if they would be able to reach it, however, for already attempts were being made to cut off their escape. A hue-and-cry had been raised, and the soldiers were running from different directions, and swarming from the buildings that lay to the left. Officers were unsheathing swords as they ran, and a trumpeter was blowing his instrument for all he was worth.

swords as they ran, and a trumpeter was blowing his instrument for all he was worth.

"The Tarkum spies! Stop them, stop them!"

The clamour swelled to a frenzied pitch, but it did not frighten the bold invaders of the Kaiser's barracks. They had scarcely any time, indeed, to think of their danger. A pistolshot missed them, as did a slash from a sword. The good and trusty steed scattered the men who tried to barhis way, and jumped over several who tripped and fell, and thundered on across the enclosure until he was within a dozen yards of the gate, when a young soldier sprang from one side, and thrust at the detective with a lance.

But by a lightning-like movement, Blake dodged the murderous stroke, and as quickly he seized the weapon, and wrenched it from the soldier's grasp; and a moment later the horse went pounding through the open gateway—there was no sentry there, for some reason—and emerged in a little street that was almost deserted. The only person in sight was a baker's boy, who was standing a short distance off at the edge of the pavement, with a tray heaped up with loaves of bread balanced on his head. "My word, if we haven't done it!" exclaimed Tinker. "I neverthought

we would, guy'nor. That was about the warmest place I was ever in."
"We shall be in a few more warm places, I imagine, before our adven-tures are over," replied Blake.

tures are over," replied Blake.

"Only so we are not caught."

"It will be the next thing to a miracle if we succeed in escaping from German soil. But we have been lucky, so far, my boy, and we will keep our liberty as long as we can. And now to get clear of the town. If we can do that, and find hiding—" hiding-

If we can do that, and find hiding—"

The sentence was left unfinished. Just then the baker's boy, who had been gaping in open-mouthed wonder at the fugitives, concluded that he had better shift to a safer place, and stepped back so quickly that the tray fell off his head, and the contents were scattered on the pavement; and the next instant, as the horse passed the spot, Sexton Blake jabbed downward with the lance he had taken from the soldier, and impaled one of the long, crisp loaves of bread on the point of the weapon. And then, turning in the saddle, he threw a coin to the boy.

"It's an ill wind that blows nobody good, Tinker," he cried, as he removed the loaf and thrust it into his pocket. "I have been wondering where our breakfast was to come from. We will have a feast presently."

"It will be a banquet!" declared

sently."

from. We will have a feast presently."

"It will be a banquet!" declared Tinker. "I have never been so hungry in my life."

They were both famished, but in the excitement of their flight they had almost forgotten the pangs of starvation. Now that they had obtained food, and had escaped from so tight a place, they were inclined to take a more cheerful view of the situation; they felt that if they could elude pursuit for some time longer, and get into wooded cover, they might ultimately be able to escape from the country where every man's hand was against them.

The hue-and-cry behind them rang fainter in their ears, mingled with and

The hue-and-cry behind them rang fainter in their ears, mingled with the clanging of the church-bells and trumpet-peals from the barracks, as they galloped on from street to street. They were shouted at and threatened by the people whom they met—every one seemed to understand that they were the spies from the island of Tarkum—but nobody molested them, and before they had gone far they were out of the little town.

'Good-bye to Lemburg,' said the lad. "You can bet I won't forget that name in a hurry. And where to now?' he asked.

"As straight as we can go," re-

"Good-bye to Lemburg," said the lad. "You can bet I won't forget that name in a hurry. And where to now?" he asked.

"As straight as we can go," replied Blake.

"I wonder when we'll be able to have a feed?"

"Probably not for hours yet, my boy. Unless we see signs of danger ahead we will ride until the horse can't carry us any farther."

Their ride was to be shortly curtailed, however, for when they had gone for about half a finile beyond the town, and had topped a low hill, they saw within another half-mile a river of considerable width, on the opposite side of which were dense woods that extended a long way to right and left; and when they had come to within twenty yards of the bank of the stream, at a point where the road turned sharply to the left, they looked back from the saddle, and saw what they had been expecting to see at any minute. Some of the regiment of Lancers had mounted and turned out in haste to pursue the fugitives, and the foremost troopers were now visible on the crest of the hill that lay in the rear. The brazen notes of a trumpet, harsh and menacing, floated on the air.

"Our goose is cooked!" declared Tinker, in a tone of despair. "Here they come. Their animals are fresh, and they will be up with us before we have gone two miles."

"We are not going to let them come up with us," said the detective. "We must take to cover."

"There is none anywhere near, gur'nor. At least, not on this side of the river. If we were only on the other side we could hide from our enemies in those deep woods."

"That is just what I propose to do. my boy. The soldiers will be baffled for the time-being, for there is no bridge in sight in either direction, and I am pretty sure that they will be afraid to try to swim the stream in their accourrements and heavy uniforms."

"And what of ourselves? It will be every bit as dangerous, but we must run the risk. It is our only chance of escaping capture."

"It will be dangerous, but we must run the risk. It is our only chance of escaping capture."

won't it?"
"It will be dangerous, but we must run the risk. It is our only chance of escaping capture."
There was no time to hesitate. The

Prussian cavalry were now all on the near slope of the hill, and rapidly approaching. Drawing tight rein, Sexton Blake urged the horse over a low hedge, and across a strip of sward, and thence into the icy waters of the river, which was about three hundred yards in width. The water was black and deep, and the current appeared to be strong.

"Here we go," the lad said cheerfully.

fully.

But he did not like the prospect, nor did Blake. They at first remained on the back of their steed, who struck out gallantly, and seemed to understand the need of what he was doing. He forged steadily across with his double burden, yard by yard; but his efforts were not sufficient to overcome the strength of the current, which swept him on a diagonal course—taking him a yard out of the way for every yard that he gained—towards a small island, thickly covered with bushes, that was in the middle of the stream.

"The troopers are riding like the

in the middle of the stream.

"The troopers are riding like the wind," said Tinker, as he glanced over his shoulder. "They will soon be on the part of the road that skirts the bank, and they will have a chance to riddle us with bullets if we are carried down on this side of the island. And it looks as if we would be."

to riddle us with bullet.
carried down on this side of the island. And it looks as if we would be."

"Yes, if we rely on the horse," assented Blake, who was alarmed by the danger that the lad had suggested. "We had better get off," he added. "He will be able to go faster then."

added. "He will be able to go faster then."

They at once slid off the animal's back, one on each side; and now, as they clung to the saddle and kicked lustily, they made faster progress. But before they had gone much farther they perceived that the horse was showing signs of distress, and as it was evident that he could not do much more for them, and that only their own efforts could avert the threatened peril, they let go their hold. They were sorry for the faithful animal, who was breathing hard, and fighting against exhaustion.

"I hope he won't be drowned!" gasped the lad.

"It will be a great pity if he is," replied Blake. "He has served us

"It will be a great pity if he is," replied Blake. "He has served us

replied Blake. "He has served us nobly."

Their own safety was at stake, and it was nip and tuck with them for a time; the current sucked at them, and they were chilled to the bone. But their desperate struggles enabled them to reach the upper point of the island, and as they swung round it, into an eddy on the farther side, an unexpected sight met their eyes.

Here was a boat like a punt, moored to a couple of poles; and seated in it, with his back to the swimmers, was a fat, elderly German, who wore spectacles. In one hand was a fishing-rod, and in the other he held a large red sausage, which he was munching with a relish. Having put the sausage down, he raised a bottle of beer to his lips; and then, as his attention was attracted by a splash, he looked around and saw Tinker and the detective.

Tinker and the detective.

He either took them for amphibious monsters of some kind, or else he jumped to the conclusion that only lunatics would be in the water at this season of the year. At all events, he dropped the bottle, and sprang to his feet, and uttered a yell of fright that was enough to have wakened the dead. And the next instant, as the craft lurched and nearly capsized, the startled man lost his balance, and

was enough to have wakened the dead. And the next instant, as the craft lurched and nearly capsized, the startled man lost his balance, and plumped headforemost into the stream. A moment later his head bobbed to the surface, and with another yell, he struck out for the island, which was close to him.

"Here's a fine chance for us, guv'nor!" panted the lad. "Shall we take it?"

"Rather!" assented Blake.

He at once scrambled into the boat, and was followed by Tinker, who had, meanwhile, made a grab at the floating sausage, and secured it. In a trice they had shipped the cars, and cast-off the mooring-lines, and were skimming across the other half of the river. The exasperated German had gained the shore of the island, and was shaking his fists and raving like a madman, and by now the Lancers had galloped to the point where the road turned along the stream. They had stopped there—as could be seen by looking beyond the upper end of the island—and it was not at all likely that they would take to the water.

"This is a bit of luck, isn't it?" water

This is a bit of luck, isn't it?" I Tinker. "We are all right said Tinker.

"We are not all right, by any means," Sexton Blake answered, as he bent hard to the oars; "but we have

got rid of our pursuers for the

got rid of our pursuers present."

The Prussian soldiers were still halted, and in the saddle, shouting with rage. Some of them let fly with revolvers, but they failed to hit the fugitives, who swung rapidly on, and soon landed on the other side of the river. As they tumbled out of the boat, they glanced over to the island, and saw, to their relief, that the horse who had served them so well was quietly grazing there. Then, having waved their hands to the baffled quietly grazing there. Then, having waved their hands to the baffled troopers, they plunged into the dark woods, and ran until they had infused troopers, they plunged into the dark woods, and ran until they had infused a warm glow into their chilled limbs, when they stopped to make a meal off the purloined sausage and the loaf of bread, which was but little the worse for its wetting.

THE 16th CHAPTER. Tired Out—Snug for the Night—The Awakening.
"TAVEN'T we had about

"AVEN'T we had about enough of this sort of thing, guv'nor? I am so tired that I feel as if I couldn't go

any farther."
"I am tired myself, Tinker, but I don't want to stop. I am not satisfied that our precautions have been sufficient."

"Surely Pedro won't be able to follow us as far as this, will he?"

of evening was falling, they were still in the water, wading knee-deep among slippery stones and over gravel bars. On each side of them were trees and undergrowth, and through the canopied foliage overhead they could see the leaden clouds that had overcast the sky. In the gloomy wood no bird chirped. There was no sound but the ripple of the water and the mournful sighing of the wind. It was a wild and lonely place, and reminded the fugitives of many parts of their own beloved country. How far away from them England was! Would they ever behold it again, or were they fated to end their days in a German prison? It was difficult for them to realise that only a few days had gone by since they left the roar of London, and dined in a luxurious railway-carriage that was bearing them down to Parkeston Quay. How much had happened since then!

Blake glanced at the lad, and a twinge of remorse stabbed him to the heart; a lump came into his throat, and a mist swam before his eyes.

"Poor boy!" he murmured, speaking louder than he had meant to.

"Here, none of that!" said Tinker, with a forced laugh. "Don't get sentimental. I don't want your pity, and I dou't need it. I haven't complained, have I?"

with a forced laugh. Don't get sentimental. I don't want your pity, and I don't need it. I haven't complained, have I?"

"No, you are too plucky for that.

"Come down, Herr Blake!" shouted a voice that could be recognised as that of Colonel Wenzel. "You need not try to deceive us! We know that you are up there!"

"It would be unwise to count on that. We have had an example of what he can do, and he may be capable of even greater intelligence. But if we can leave the water without betraying our scent, and continue to hide it for some distance, I shall be inclined to believe that we are safe from the dog."

"We haven't seen any suitable place yet, guv'nor, and I doubt if we will find one."

"We must persevere, my boy. Keep up your spirits."

Many hours had elapsed since Sexton Blake and the lad had put the river between themselves and the Prussian Lancers. It had then been no more than the middle of the morning, and they had pressed on during the rest of the day, for mile after mile, keeping for the most part to wooded cover. No peril had come near them, though more than once they had faintly heard, in the distance, the fanfare of trumpets and the muffled clatter of hoofs on hard roads. In different ways, again and again, they had temporarily concealed their trail; for they did not doubt that the bloodhound had been brought by some conveyance from the farm to the town of Lemburg, and that he had been searching for them while they were wandering lover the country.

Towards the close of the afternoon that he dat the search and the last remains the sad taken to a saller.

Towards the close of the afternoon straight they had taken to a shallow, swift-flowing stream, and now, as the dusk Tinker.

country.

But the courage you have shown hurts me more than reproaches would. I had no right to bring you with me. I should have foreseen the perils to which you would be ex-posed. I would give anything to have you safe at home."

posed. I would give any you safe at home."

"We shall both be there before long," replied the lad. "I feel sure that our luck will hold good, and that we shall be able to get over the German frontier, or to escape from seaport."

German frontier, or to escape from some seaport."

"I hope so," said Blake, in a doubtful tone. "But you must remember what tremendous odds are against us. Those posters have been circulated throughout the whole country. circulated throughout the whole country, every railway-station and port will be watched, and every road will be patrolled. How are we to get food and clothes? If we could disguise our features, and get decent attire, there might be a chance of——"

He paused abruptly, and for a moment both were silent, interested in a discovery they had just made. While talking they had waded round a bend of the channel, and in front of them, within a few yards, was the angle of a high brick wall that was clothed with ivy and capped with stone. In one direction it led back into the woods, and in the other it skirted the edge of the stream, rising straight above the water.

"I wonder what that is?" said Tinker.

"I have no doubt that it marks the limits of some wealthy gentle-man's estate," declared the detective. "At all events, it offers us such an opportunity as we have been seeking for."

for."
"An opportunity of baffling Pedro

for good for good?"
"I think so, my boy. We can ascend the wall, as you observe, without treading on any spot that would retain our scent."
"I see guy'nor. If we climb over.

out treading on any spot that would retain our scent."

"I see, guy nor. If we climb over, our pursuers will go by here—if they trace us this far—and continue their search beyond. They won't suspect what has become of us, and the dog won't be able to betray us. It is a jolly good idea."

It obviously was, and the hope of completely deceiving their foes put the fugitives in better spirits. Without delay they waded forward to the wall, and, having chosen a place where there was no ivy, they drew themselves to the top by means of the crevices between the bricks; and when they had swung over the coping, and climbed down on the other side, they perceived that they were in an extensive and well-wooded park. They crept through it for some distance, in the gathering gloom, and then stopped to put on their socks and boots, and pull down the legs of their trousers.

"We had better be careful," said the lad. "There must be a house somewhere about."

"We won't go any farther," replied Blake. "We will spend the night in one of these big trees—we shall thus be safe from gamekeepers—and in the morning we will discuss our plans for the future. We might

and in the morning we will discuss our plans for the future. We might be worse off, my boy," he added. "We have had a good meal to-day, and the wind and exercise has dried our clothes."

They chose a large, wide-girthed tree that appeared to be very old, and when they had climbed into it, to a height of twenty feet or so above the ground, they found a crutch among the branches that was sufficient to shelter both of them, and

sufficient to shelter both of them, and was so shaped as to prevent them from falling.

It was a relief to rest after their long and arduous tramp. They made themselves as comfortable as possible, snuggling close together for warmth, and for some minutes neither spoke. The blackness of night gradually shrouded them. shrouded them.

shrouded them.

"Are you awake, my boy?" the detective presently inquired.

"Yes, I—I think I am," Tinker answered, with a start. "But I had forgotten where I was. I imagined that I was in London in a beautiful restaurant, and a waiter had just brought me a juicy chop, when you—"

"When I spoilt your feast—eh? I am sorry. Go on, and finish your dream."

I am sorry. Go on, and finish your dream."

"It wasn't exactly a dream, guv'nor. It was as if I was in two places at once. I knew you were here, and I was wondering why—".

The lad's drowsy voice sank lower, and trailed into incoherency. He remembered nothing more. He had fallen asleep, and Blake was not long in following him. For several hours they slumbered peacefully, Tinker with his head on the detective's shoulder; and then both suddenly awoke, and sat erect, listening to a sound that was ringing in their ears. "Some noise roused me," said the lad. "I wonder what it was?"

"I thought I heard something myself," muttered Blake; "but it may have been only imagination."

"No, there it is again," declared Tinker, as a sound like a shrill whine floated from no great distance. "By heavens, it must be Pedro!"

"It can't be, my boy! I won't believe it! It is impossible that the dog could have—"

"The soldiers would have brought him up the stream, and he might have found our scent at the base of the wall."

"I won't believe it!" repeated

have found our scent at the base of the wall."

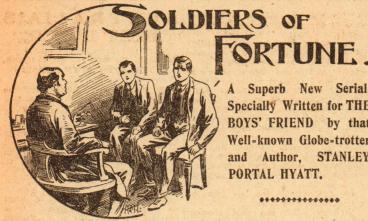
"I won't believe it.!" repeated Blake, almost fiercely. "A dozen times to-day we hid our trail, and it is incredible that—"

"Hush!" interrupted the lad, in a gasping voice. "Somebody is coming! Do you see?"

As he spoke he pointed to a light that had begun to glimmer in the darkness It was the light of a lantern, and a few moments later, when it had approached to within twenty yards, and was moving over an open space that was visible to Blake and Tinker through a rift in the foliage, they saw what dispelled all doubt. There was Pedro, straining at his leash, and behind him were the dusky figures of many men in uniform.

(Another splendid instalment in our New

(Another splendid instalment in our New Year and 500th Number next Tuesday. 1d.)



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

JUST TO INTRODUCE TO YOU

Dudley and Marous Scarfield, who are travelling northwards in Africa on the track of Mr. Douglas, a hunter, who is beyond the pale of civilisation, and who holds the papers referring to an invaluable invention their father has left to them.

By getting these papers they become immensely rich, whilst if they fail to recover them they will remain poor, so that they are straining every nerve to reach their father's old friend.

Joseph Scarfield is their cousin, who by fair means or foul is also trying to find Douglas. Up to the present he has mostly employed foul means—in fact he leaves no stone unturned

leaves no stone unturned

to gain his ends.

Amous is a native who has attached himself to the brothers, and he is a friend indeed.

Inmself to the brothers, and he is a friend indeed.

Travelling with a prospector, the boys are held up at Palajye, owing to the rising of the Matabeles against the British. They learn of an attack to be made upon Fort Busi, and with the intention of preventing any disturbance they proceed in the direction of the fort.

They are now only about eighteen miles from Fort Busi, and so that one at least may have a chance of reaching the destination, Marcus and Dudley travel by different roads.

tion, Marcus and Dudley travel by different roads.

Marcus, accompanied by Kerridge, a prospector, takes part in a terrible fight with an impl of Matabele savages, and succeeds in rescuing a white woman from their clutches. Proceeding on their journey once again, they meet another tribe of Matabeles, of several hundreds strong. They are seen by the natives, and flee for their lives, but suddenly the prospector's horse puts its foot in a hole, and falls heavily to the ground. A moment later the savages are all reund them.

(Now read the splendid chapters below.)

#### The Raid on the Fort.

soon as he reached the drift Dudley gave the appointed signal—struck two matches; then he and Amous rode into the water, and crossed as quickly as pos-

The police were fully on the alert now, and Captain Railton came for

ward to meet them.
"Well, what news?" he asked.
"The raiders will be at the drift in about five minutes," Dudley answered. "They are coming on ahead of their waggens?"

swered. "They are coming on ahead of their waggons."

The captain nodded, and went back to his Maxim-gun. That was their most important weapon, and he intended to work it himself. True, it is not easy to aim accurately in the darkness, but when you can get out six hundred shots a minute, you may be sure some of them will get home, especially when the range is short, and the enemy is moving slowly through water in more or less close formation.

through water in more or less close formation.

The sergeant was working the seven-pounder. He had once held a commission in the Royal Artillery—you found a strange mixture in the police in those days—and he knew his job thoroughly. He had got his gun trained on the other slope of the drift towards the bottom just where the crowd would be thickest, as the horses slowed down before actually entering the water, and he had set the fuses of his little shells to burst at that range. He, at least, was perfectly confident, and perfectly happy.

"The bounders are coming to get my gun, are they?" he remarked to a corporal, who was squatting beside him, finishing a mug of coffee, which had been made in the donga where the horses were. "Well, I guess I can show them exactly where it is—with a shell. Perhaps they won't be quite so keen on it then."

Meanwhile, Captain Railton was saying to Dudley:

"No; I shall not challenge them at all. I have a perfect right to assume they are a hostile party, and I know

all. I have a perfect right to assume they are a hostile party, and I know Boer 'slimness' too well to parley with them. From what you say, they are the riff-raff of the Northern Transvaal, far more savage and degraded than many of the natives. Honour is a word which has no meaning for them. Ah, here they come at last!"

Half a dozen of the raiders, the advance guard, appeared on the other side of the drift, silhouetted against the sky. They paused for several minutes, peering across the river, apparently fearing an ambush; but the guns were well masked, the police lay perfectly still, and the enemy's suspicions seemed to be allayed, for one of the scouts rode back to the main body, whilst the others came down to the water's edge, where they waited.

"I'm glad they're not seemed to the discounter of the scout strong the seemed to the same down to the water's edge, where they waited.

"I'm glad they're not crossing,"
Captain Railton whispered. "That would have upset our plans, as we should have had to shoot them, and so give warning to the others. Hallo, here comes the main body! Now, be ready, you fellows!"

so give warning to the others. Hallo, here comes the main body! Now, be ready, you fellows!"

The police officer's plans had been well laid. He had arranged that, as soon as the guns opened fire, the troopers not actually required for working them should go down close to the water's edge and endeavour to pick off any Boers who might be bold enough to push on. Dudley and Amous had agreed to join this section.

The Boers came down the drift more or less in a clump. They did not fancy the darkness any more than do the natives, many of whose superstitions they have picked up. The slope down to the drift was a long one; consequently, practically the whole force of raiders was in view when Captain Railton started his Maxim six hundred shots a minute. An instant later, the seven-pounder roared out, its shells bursting right in the thick of the enemy, disabling a dozen men and horses.

The captain worked his Maxim scientifically. He had got the sighting now—the shouts and groans showed him that—and he moved it slightly all the time, literally peppering the raiders with bullets. Meanwhile, at the edge of the water, Dudley and the handful of police were waiting for those who might escape the hail of Maxim bullets or the splinters of seven-pounder shell.

The Boers had been taken utterly

by surprise. Nine out of ten of them had never seen or heard a Maxim or a seven-pounder before, and from the hail of bullets they judged that a large force must be opposed to them. They halted, huddled up into a heap, then, when the sergeant placed a nicely-timed shell into the middle of that same heap, they turned and fled over the rise, where those abominable guns could not reach them.

A score or so of the leaders, however, went on into the water. They knew how small the police force must be, and they judged rightly that once they were in the stream the guns could not be depressed to cover them. What they had not reckoned on, though, was the little party at the water's edge.

Dudley and his companions saw them coming, but held their fire until the raiders were in midstream, where the current was strong; then they blazed out, several bullets getting home into either men or horses. The second volley was even more effective, so effective that the Boers turned quickly, and made for their own bank again, the survivors landing well below the drift itself.

The Maxim had stopped now, and Captain Railton heaved a sigh of relief.

"We've stopped them, or, at least, the death of the content of the service of the service of the service of the service of them, or, at least, the service of them, or, at least, the service of the service of them, or, at least, the service of the service of them, or, at least, the service of the service of them, or, at least, the service of the service of them, or, at least, the service of the service of

The Maxim had stopped now, and Captain Railton heaved a sigh of relief.

"We've stopped them, or, at least, checked them. They'll come on again, of course. You don't turn Boers back as easily as that, though they must have lost pretty heavily already. They may try another attack in the daylight, or they may cross at the Lower Drift twenty miles down, or attack us from the rear, in which case we should have no chance. Some way or another, they'll get through, I'm afraid. If we lose two or three men we're done, and I can't wire to any of the other forts, as either these raiders or the Matabele have cut all the lines. Still, we've put up a good fight, and they won't forget it in a hurry."

Now that the excitement was over, Dudley had time to think of his brother again. It seemed useless to speculate as to whether Marcus and old Kerridge were still alive—the only question appeared to be at whose hands they had fallen. If they were in the land of the living, they would certainly have reached the fort long since, for Kerridge had mentioned another ford, ten miles upstream, where they could have crossed had they been afraid of meeting the raiders at the drift itself.

Dudley sat down behind the provision-case rampart, and stared miserably towards the eastern sky, where the dawn was already beginning to appear. Marcus was not watching that dawn; very likely he himself would not see the next. Then he fell to wondering where Joseph was—how he had fared in the fight. He smiled scornfully to himself at the thought. It was quite safe to assume that Joseph had remained behind

with the waggons; he could not picture his cousin facing that ghastly trail of Maxim bullets and the added horror of the splinters of seven-pounder shell.

trail of Maxim bullets and the horror of the splinters of seven-pounder shell.

Dawn was coming very quickly—or, at least, it seemed so. That red glow had sprung up quite suddenly, and was growing redder every moment; moreover, it was smoking, too— He jumped to his feet suddenly.

denly.
"Captain Railton!" he cried.
"What is that fire?"
The police-officer had been dozing, his head on an empty ammunition-case, but he rose instantly at the boy's words. One look sufficed for him.

him.

"It's the fort! Someone—those treacherous Matabele, I suppose—are burning the grass huts there. Now we're in for it properly—Boers one side, Matabele the other!"

burning the grass hus there. Now we're in for it properly—Boers one side, Matabele the other!"

He was a man who had failed for Sandhurst; in fact, he had failed in every examination he had ever attempted, yet none the less he was a splendid soldier. He was "up against it," and he was fully aware of the fact. They were going to be wiped out, he and his men, either by the Boers or by the savages; but they were going to die game. They were in a miserable position so far as attack from the northern side was concerned—he had sacrificed everything else in order to check the Boers—but he had the Maxim and the seven-pounder swung round, and then, from the pockets of his tunic, which Dudley had already noticed were bulging out, he produced a couple of dozen dynamite cartridges, in each of which was a short length of fuse and a detonator. He handed a couple out to each man.

"These are the last resource," he said grimly. "When we're absolutely licked, I trust you fellows who are left to shove one of these into the seven-pounder, and one into the mechanism of the Maxim. Neither niggers nor Boers are to get those guns, you understand?"

The men grunted, and made sure that the matches in their pockets were

niggers nor Boers are to get those guns, you understand?"

The men grunted, and made sure that the matches in their pockets were dry. If they had to die, it was no bad thing to die in company with a man like John Railton.

A battle, or an engagement, or a fight—call it which you like—is nothing, so far as its nerve-trying effects are concerned. Nine men out of ten, ninety-nine out of a hundred perhaps can be brave enough when the bullets are flying, and there is the smell of blood, human blood in the air, when someone else is trying to kill them, and it is a question of who shall get his blow, or his bullet, home first. But waiting for a fight to begin is quite another matter, especially at about daybreak, when one's vital energy is always at the lowest ebb. In those circumstances most men shiver, and wonder why they ever got into such a fix, and

revile their own luck, and wish it were revile their own luck, and wish it were all over. It is not cowardice, it is anything but that. It is simply the natural instinct of a man which bids him go on living as long as possible, and makes him resent the mere idea of dying at the hands of someone else. When the fight has begun, it is different. Then, instead of thinking of living himself, he thinks of killing the other man. The sense of personal fear is lost entirely in the lust of blood.

It is safe to say that, as they waited

fear is lost entirely in the lust of blood.

It is safe to say that, as they waited in the growing light for the coming of the match, every one of the little party round the guns was conscious of a certain measure of dread. They were anxious to get it all over—to know the worst. As before, they had thought only of the Boers, now they thought only of their black foes.

True, from time to time they glanced behind them across the river at the dread men and horses lying on the slope of the drift—twenty men, perhaps, and thirty horses—for both the Maxim and the seven-pounder had been well aimed, despite the darkness: but their thoughts now were really with the enemy on their own side of the river—the hideous savages who would soon be charging down with their great stabbing assegais.

The buildings on the fort were blazing merrily. Evidently the Mata-

The buildings on the fort were blazing merrily. Evidently the Matabele had quickly cleared out the few contents which were of any value to them; but then, as Captain Railton whispered to the sergeant. "Why don't they come at us, Austin? The fiends must know where we are."

The sergeant shrugged his shoulders. He was, perhaps, the only man present who was utterly careless of the issue so far as he himself, was concerned.

"Austin" was not his real name, as Railton knew—he could tack the word "baronet" on to the name he had inherited from his father—but a woman had ruined his career in the Army, and he had come out here to Africa deliberately seeking a grave to cover a disgrace which was not his own.

own.
"They will come soon enough,
Jack," the sergeant answered, "and
they'll get me for one. I'm sure of
that. If you get clear, don't forget
the messages I gave you once, and
don't forget me. It was all my fault;
I simply had to lie to screen that
woman." woman.

woman."

The captain muttered under his breath, then their hands met in a final clasp, and they never spoke to one another again; for a moment later the Matabele war-cry sounded out clear and evil, and the Matabele were racing down on them.

#### The Battle on the Veldt

HEY had brought the seven-pounder close to the Maxim, knowing it would be of little or no use at close quarters, and had

or no use at close quarters, and had thrown up a very crude breastwork of provision cases and logs on the side from which the Matabele would come.

The sergeant fired one shell from his gun—a shell which ripped through solid flesh in the forefront of the attacking force, and then, bursting, put half a dozen men out of action—but he did not reload. Instead, he picked up his rifle and began to fire rapidly.

picked up his rifle and began to are rapidly.

On the other hand, the captain started his Maxim, sweeping the bush with its hail of lead. For a moment the onslaught was checked; then the Matabele came on again, hundreds of them apparently, regking nothing of

Matabele came on again, hundreds of them apparently, recking nothing of their dead, yelling, screaming even, in their fury. Many of them had rifles, though the bullets from these were all timed too high; but their throwing assegais proved more effective.

One trooper went down, a spear clean through his heart, another staggered back, vainly trying to tug a long, jagged blade out of his stomach, alternately groaning and sobbing in his agony. But all the time the survivors stood firm. They were up against it, and they were going to die game.

against it, and they were going to die game.

Dudley, kneeling behind a pile of bully-beef boxes, suddenly became aware that his rifle barrel was so hot that it was burning his fingers. He whipped out a handkerchief, wrapped it round his left hand, then went on shooting. It was light enough to see the rifle-sights now, and every cartridge he used lessened the number of the enemy by one.

The attack surged up to the very foot of the breastwork. Another moment, it seemed, and all must be over. Then it melted away under the terrible fire of the Maxim and the rifles, rolled back, and for a space of minutes only a few haphazard shots showed that the enemy was still.



The attack surged up to the very foot of the breastwork. Another moment, it seemed, and all must be over. One of the few troopers went down, and on came hundreds of savages.

there; but two more troopers were

dead.

The sergeant, who had been kneeling behind the breastwork, sprang to his feet, reloaded his seven-pounder, and sent a shell hurtling through the bush. The yells which followed its passage and explosion showed the work it had done.

He turned to Captain Railton with a look of triumph on his powdergrimed face.

"That's something like artillery

grimed face.
"That's something like artillery practice," he began, but before he could finish a bullet from the scrub took him square in the forehead, and he stumbled forward, the back blown out of his skull.

he stumbled forward, the back blown out of his skull.
Captain Railton gave a choking sob.
"Oh, Tommy, Tommy!" he cried as he stooped over the dead man; but a moment later he had forgotten his dead subordinate and friend, for Dudley had shouted:
"The Boers! They are coming down the drift again!"
It was only too true. The raiders.

down the drift again!"

It was only too true. The raiders, taking advantage of the Matabele onslaught, were preparing to attack the little party of police from the other side. Captain Railton and his men were now literally between two fires. The police officer groaned. He was sure it was the end now. He would have swung round his Maxim and have wreaked vengeance on the real cause of all the trouble, but before he could do so the Matabele had broken cover again.

With a wave of his arm. Railton

broken cover again.

With a wave of his arm, Railton told Dudley and those beside him to open fire on the Boers, whilst he himself tried to hold off the savages.

The Matabele attack came on, more furious than ever, but once more that pitiless Maxim proved too much for it. Nothing could stand against that hail of lead; yet, as the captain knew well, he was using his last case of cartridges, whilst, counting Dudley, he had only seven white men left now.

knew well, he was using his last case of cartridges, whilst, counting Dudley, he had only seven white men left now.

Seven Britishers! And there were some hundred and fifty Boers, and hundreds of Matabele.

Seven Britishers and one Basuto!

The Matabele attack wilted away again, the savages going back to cover like snarling dogs who have been driven off by a kick, and when they have regained their wind intend to make another rush. There were scores of their own dead lying between them and that little breastwork; and the Matabele of those days were not used to defeat or to leaving their dead on the field.

On the other side, Dudley and his companions were shooting rapidly and carefully at the Boers. There was a good light now, and most of their shots got home.

The Boers were coming more cautiously this time—in open order—but they were evidently determined, and recked little of the tiny force opposed to them so long as that abominable Maxim was kept busy driving off the Matabele.

"It is all over now, baas. Still, we are going to die like warriors. They will sing about this great fight for years to come in the kraals. Huh! A great fight indeed." There was a note of something very nearly akin to triumph in Amous' voice. "I must kill one or two more Boers, for the Boers killed my mother."

He took his aim very carefully, and shot Dr. Schultz, who was not a Boer but a German, through the liver; then, reloading rapidly, he got Hendrik Smuts, a real Pretoria Boer this time, through the mouth.

Still, a score of Boers had already reached the middle of the stream, and the others were coming on fast.

As Amous said, it seemed to be all over. Two more of the police had fallen. Five Britishers and one Basuto!

And the Matabele were coming on again, and the captain was fast using

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up his last belt of Maxim cartridges! Moreover, every second brought the Boers nearer, and the rifles of the little group on the bank were now too hot for accurate service. The haze rising from the barrels obscured the form circles.

haze rising from the barrels obscured the fore sights.

It was all over; yet Dudley felt a kind of grim satisfaction. Either Boers or Matabele had killed his brother, and he had been helping to levy a grim tribute from both races. It had, as Amous said, been a great fight, and the name of every man who had taken part in it would be remembered.

Another man—the corporal this time—went down, and after quivering for a couple of seconds, lay very still.

ing for a couple of seconds, lay very still.

Four Britishers and one Basuto!
Certainly, it was all over.

Then suddenly there was firing on the other bank of the river—not individual shots, but volleys, as if from many rifles—firing, and shouts of dismay from the Boers' rearguard, which faced round quickly, yelling to the other Boers. Volleys, and yet more volleys—hundreds of rifles speaking out!

The Boers in the river halted, and both Dudley and Amous scored one more each. The Boers coming down the drift turned their horses round and galloped back wildly.

Then, from the direction of the fort, or what had been the fort, came the report of rifles, followed by a war-cry which Dudley had never heard before, and answered by the war-cry of the Matabele.

The Boers in the river had now turned their horses' heads, and were

The Boers in the river had now turned their horses' heads, and were hurrying to the assistance of their comrades.

comrades.

Amous used his last cartridge, and because of the haze from his rifle barrel, merely killed the horse. Then, after ejecting the case:

"It is Khama's people," he remarked calmly. "One of Khama's regiments. They are attacking the Boers on one side, and the Matabele on the other. We are saved, after all!"

The Retreat of the Boers and Matabele.

HEN Marcus found his horse surrounded by the natives from the encampment into which they had blundered, his first feeling was one of utter despair. He let go the reins—he was holding the girl with his left arm—pulled his rifle out of the bucket, intending to fulfil his promise to kill her sooner than let her fall into the hands of savages again. But a shout from Kerridge

again. But a shout from made him pause.

"Marcus, it's all right," the old prospector cried. "These are not Matabele. They're Khama's people, our friends. We're safe enough

prospector cried. "These are not Matabele. They're Khama's people, our friends. We're safe enough now."

The boy heaved a sigh of relief, and helped his companion to the ground. A moment later their Matabele pursuers came in view, and then he realised something of what African tribal warfare meant.

Khama's men were ten to one, so far as the Matabele were concerned; but still the Matabele came on. They belonged to the bragging, boasting, useless Zulu race—the Matabele were just an off-shoot of the Zulu—and they were not going to be baulked of their prey by mere Bamangwater. They came on, and Khama's Bamangwater iterally surged round them, surged over them, and in the next few minutes many a blood fued was settled. When it was over, there was not a Matabele left alive.

Kerridge, looking on, laughed harshly.

"Don't say there's no justice in

Kerridge, looking on, harshly.

"Don't say there's no justice in this world, boy. This is not war; it's just an execution." Then, with one of those sudden changes of his, he went up to the girl they had rescued, and passed his arm round her. "My dear, my dear," he said. "Don't worry now. You're absolutely safe. We're amongst friends."

She looked up bravely into his face

word of their language he could only shake his head.

It was a big force—a couple of thousand men, perhaps—and every man was armed with a modern rifle. Moreover, they were not Palapye natives, diseased, educated, and effeminate, but hardy warriors from the cattle-posts and outlying kraals, men after Khama's own heart, with only two ideas in their minds—hatred of the Boers and hatred of the Matabele.

A headman, clad in a well-fitting khaki suit, and wearing a slouch-hat, with a pugaree of wild cats' tails, came forward to meet Marcus.

"It was lucky you rode into our

came forward to meet Marcus.

"It was lucky you rode into our camp, baas," he said. "I see my men have finished with those Matabele dogs. Another white man came in this morning. Ah, here he is!"

A tall, haggard-looking man, dressed in a shooting jacket and breeches, eame forward to meet the boy.

breeches, eame forward to meet the boy.

"I am glad someone else has escaped from those Matabele fiends," he said, as he held out an unsteady hand. "I don't know myself that I wouldn't sooner have had them get me, except that I want to kill some of them first. They got my daughter to-day—" He broke off suddenly, as he saw Kerridge coming up, supporting the girl. "Clare!" he cried. "Clare!"

'Clare!'
She looked at him with wide-open eyes, then ran forward into his arms.
Kerridge coughed, apparently to choke back a lump in his throat, then

Kerridge coughed, apparently to choke back a lump in his throat, then he turned to the head-man.

"Hallo, Radi-Mandi! Glad to see you again. It's the second time you've saved my life."

The head-man beamed.

"You saved mine first," he answered, "and that is a debt one can never pay off. You remember the lion on the Tuli River? Ah!"—he looked at the old white man affectionately. "You and I, M'Hwaba"—that was Kerridge's native name—"you and I, M'Hwaba, have seen many things together since the days when we were young men in Shoshong, when Khama had just become chief, and John Mackenzie, the missionary, was teaching us wisdom—how to keep away the Beers and the Matabele." Suddenly his old eyes flashed. They have killed those Matabele who were pursuing you—eh?"

Kerridge nodded gravely, and pointed to some vultures circling over-

en?"

Kerridge nodded gravely, and pointed to some vultures circling overhead.

"They have killed them all, Radi-Mandi," he answered quietly.

The prospector and Marcus went into the head-man's own shelter, where Radi-Mandi gave them the best he had—coffee and Boer-meal bread and sour milk and grilled eland steak, whilst he waited patiently, as a great chief, and a cousin of Khama's, the greatest of all chiefs, should, for their story.

Kerridge told him what there was to say, briefly and concisely. Marcus, of course, could not understand a word of it, for the prospector was using the native dialect; but the old head-man's flashing eyes explained a good deal to him. As the prospector finished, Radi-Mandi got up and clapped his hands; then, as one of his orderlies appeared:

"We shall march at once," he said. "March, taking only one day's provisions. Everything else is to be burned, with the camp itself."

A minute later, the other white man came up. He held out his hand, and shook hands first with Kerridge, then with Marcus.

"It's no use my saying anything to you," he muttered. "There are things one can't say, you know. My debt to you is too great. Clare, my daughter, has told me how splendidly you fought. Still, I sha'n't forget"—his voice broke a little—"how could I forget after what I have been through?" He sat down on a three-legged stool, and covered his face with his hands.

After a while Kerridge looked towards the old head-man.

legged stool, and covered his face with his hands.

After a while Kerridge looked towards the old head-man.

"Can you send them back to Palapye?" he asked.

Radi-Mandi nodded.

"I can spare a hundred good men to go with them. I have over two thousand here, and I know where all the Matabele are. They will get through safely."

The prospector translated his words, and the other man looked up quickly.

"I don't think I told you my name, did I? It is Watson—Francis Watson. I suppose I shall see you again soon—at any rate, hear from you." He was still a little dazed, and he did not seem to realise in the least what the condition of the country was.

Kerridge nodded.

"Oh, yes, we shall be in Palapye oon, I expect," he remarked cheer-

soon, I expect, he remarked cheerfully.

But Marcus was fuming inwardly. He wanted to see Miss Watson once again before she left the camp.

Still, he had his chance, after all. Radi-Mandi told off a hundred men to return to Palapye, and provided Mr. Watson with a horse, but the girl, he said, must be carried in a litter. She was far too shaken to ride. It was whilst this litter—a hammock slung on a pole—was being prepared that Marcus saw her. She was looking much better now. The terrified expression had gone out of her eyes, and some of her colour had come back.

She came up to the boy frankly,

eyes, and some of her colour had come back.

She came up to the boy frankly, with outstretched hands.

"Thank you," she said simply.

"It is all I can say, isn't it? Father tells me you are going one way, whilst we are going another; you are going into danger, whilst we are going into danger, whilst we are going into danger, whilst we are going to safety. It doesn't seem right; but I know we shall meet again soon, so I will only say, 'Au revoir,' not 'Good-bye.'"

Marcus took her hand, and, perhaps because there was no one looking on, bent down and kissed it.

A quarter of an hour later, the Watsons and their escort had disappeared into the bush, heading for Palapye, and the main body was on its way towards Fort Busi.

Radi-Mandi was, above everything, a cautious commander. He did not intend to run into either the Boers or the Matabele sooner than was necessary; consequently, Marcus chafed considerably at the delays.

"We sha'n't be there to-night!" he exclaimed to Kerridge.

The prospector shrugged his shoulders.

"What can we do by ourselves?"

The prospector shoulders.

"I was worth and made him see stars, "What can we do by ourselves" Our horses are crocked up, as you know, and it is simply madeness for us to try and puish on alone.

The prospector shruged his shoulders. "What can we do by ourselves" Our horses are crocked up, as you know, and it is simply madeness for us to try and puish on alone.

In the form of the ment on again through the might, slowly and cautiously. About minight Radia Mandi halted them again, and held a consultation with Kernige, which resulted in the prospector taking five hundred me across the upper force to the provision of the provision of the provision of the provision of the second fight, against both Boers and Matabele, and hurried on heard of the second fight, against both Boers and Matabele, and hurried wen more, with the result that they came in just as the provision of the second fight, he provision of the provision of the

### AUSTRALIA'S BEST BOXER.

Bill Lang, the Heavyweight Champion, Talks to THE BOYS' FRIEND.

Talks to THE BOYS' FRIEND.

"ES," said Bill Lang, the champion heavyweight boxer of Australia, to a special representative of THE BOYS' FRIEND, who called on him shortly after he arrived in London, "I shall be delighted to give you a little information about myself, and to furnish your numerous readers with one or two hints on the making of a great boxer.

"But let me say first of all," went on the burly champion from beyond the seas, "that I do not recommend the career of a professional boxer for everyone.

"I recollect that from my first professional fight I received thirty shillings, but when I had paid my trainer, manager, and a few other persons I had exactly twopence left, and for that I was knocked about considerably. For my next fight I received £4 10s., but again expenses swallowed up all but eight shillings, and I had to pay the doctor's bill for a broken nose. The doctor got my nose into something like shape, and then I took part in a football match—I am passionately fond of leather-chasing—during which a man in the crowd set about one of our halfbacks, who had played a particularly fine game.

"I went for this individual for all

ine game.
"I went for this individual for all I was worth and made him see stars,

but his friends attacked me, and I then found that fighting a crowd is very different to fighting a man in a ring. The consequence was that I got my nose broken once more, and the doctor was so cross that he refused to straighten it again, and it is as you now see it—not exactly a

the doctor was so cross that he refused to straighten it again, and it is as you now see it—not exactly a thing of beauty!

"But coming back to the money aspect. The sums I have mentioned as having received for my early fights were, it is true, not very large, but they formed the first steps on the way to fame, and that pugilism has paid me is proved by the fact that five of my fights, under the management of Mr. Hugh D. McIntosh, who is searching for a white champion good enough to challenge Jack Johnson, the black, yielded me £4,000.

"Still, in spite of this, it always makes me feel sorry when I hear of a youth taking up pugilism as a profession, but I should like to see every lad in the land proficient in the art of boxing. There is no time like the present for commencing to learn. Boxing clubs will be springing up all over the country, and in my opinion there will be such a boom as has not been known for years—if ever before.

"Now, my advice to readers of The Boys' Friend is to go in for the noble art hot and strong. Boxing-gloves are cheap enough, and if a few youths subscribe, and pool their money, they can soon obtain a set. Then, by making a small charge per week to each lad using them, the gloves can be kept in repair and new ones bought when the occasion arises.

(Part 2 of this splendid article will appear in the art of the country when the occasion arises.

# DICK DORNE'S NIGHT FI

A LAUGHABLE LONG, COMPLETE TALE OF THE BOY INVENTOR.

THE 1st CHAPTER.

THE 1st CHAPTER.

How the Night Hawk Assisted at a Political Meeting.

ITH the modesty of true genius Dick Dorne, the boy inventor, hated notoriety, and the exploits of the Night Hawk. his airship, having formed the subject of conversation far and wide, he thought it healthier to rest on his laurels for a few days.

Like everything else, it was but a nine-days' wonder—it literally was, for on the tenth, when the excitement had calmed down a bit, Dick Dorne and Tom Tooms sallied forth once more eager to take part, and a prominent part, in the reception of a local politician by his "Yellow" supporters.

Now Dick Dorne was "Blue" to

Porters.

Now, Dick Dorne was "Blue" to the core. For all that, he was willing to do his little best towards promoting the harmony of his political oppo-

The demonstration was to be held in a meadow a few miles from Little Brampton, on the outskirts of their county town, through which old-time place the Yellows had arranged a torchlight procession that night.

Now, Dick, being unable to attend the afternoon festivities, was determined to make up for lost time during the evening.

Accordingly, after tea he made his way towards the ruined tower, on the top of which the Night Hawk remained safely hidden from prying eyes.

way towards the ruined tower, on the fop of which the Night Hawk remained safely hidden from prying eyes.

On the way they met Mr. Fence, one of the prefects, who, the reader will remember, had discovered Dick Dorne secret.

On the way they met Mr. Fence, one of the prefects, who, the reader will remember, had discovered Dick Dorne secret.

On it is well to the the well of the rain-drops fell upon the torches they control the procession was opening in a most crashe fashion from one was the procession was opening in a most crashe fashion from one was the procession was opening in a most crashe fashion from one was the procession was opening in a most crashe fashion from one was the procession was opening in a most crashe fashion from one was the procession was opening in a most crashe fashion from one was the procession was opening in a most crashe fashion from one was the procession was opening in a most crashe fashion from one was the procession was opening in a most crashe fashion from one was the procession was opening in a most crashe fashion from one was the procession was opening in a most crashe fashion from one was the procession was opening in a most crashe fashion from one was the procession was opening in a most crashe fashion from one was the procession was opening in a most crashe fashion from one was the procession was opening in a most crashe fashion from one was the procession was opening in a most crashe fashion from one was the procession was opening in a most crashe fashion from one was the procession was opening in a most crashe fashion from one was the procession was opening in a most crashe fashion from one was the procession was opening in a most crashe fashion from one was the procession was opening in a most crashe fashion from one was the procession was opening in a most crashe fashion from one was the procession was opening in a most crashe fashion from one was the procession was opening in a most crashe fashion from one was the procession was opening in a most crashe fashion from one

the Government must fall, for Haxley Cross had spoken with no uncertain sound, and its verdict would echo from one corner of the Empire to the other.

Stewards having been stationed at the gates to the meadow to keep out all Blues, the meeting had passed off with great unanimity, and as the marshals fussed about amongst the crowd, arranging them in ranks for the procession, each one congratulated himself upon the success of the meeting, especially as it had been a beautiful day, the rain clouds which had threatened having kept off until just as the meeting broke up.

Haxley Cross was a Blue centre, and consequently the Yellows had determined to march through that town with the torches shining upon as much yellow ribbon and as many paper rosettes as they could muster.

Headed by the town band, which with admirable impartiality officiated at every meeting of every shade of opinion, the torchbearers, dropping flaming sparks down each other's backs, and indiscriminately over the heads of their comrades, the procession moved on.

But barely had they left the meadow behind them ere it seemed as though their luck had deserted them, for a fine drizzling rain descended upon their heads, causing the torches to splutter, and in many instances die out.

A strange thing also was that as the rain-drops fall upon the torches

them, for a fine drizzling rain descended upon their heads, causing the torches to splutter, and in many instances die out.

A strange thing also was that as the rain-drops fell upon the torches they emitted an odour that rendered the crowd anxious to move from the vicinity of their bearers.

Still the rain continued, wandering in a most erratic fashion from one end of the line to the other. It was afterwards remembered that when the head of the procession was opening its umbrellas and turning up its coat-collars, the rear was putting them down, thanking goodness that the shower had passed off.

A stranger thing than any was that not a drop of water had fallen upon Dick Dorne and Tom Tooms, whose ears, as they flew backwards and forwards just above the procession, were assailed by alternate growls at the weather, and congratulations that the shower was passing.

Once, it is true, some men amongst the crowd looked up as a peculiar hissing noise reached their ears.

"Work that valve slower, you idiot!" cried Dick to Tom Tooms, who was letting some of the gas out of the body to counterbalance the loss of weight in another direction.

Right-ho!" returned Tom; then:

"Hang it!" The ejaculation was called forth by his dropping his cap over the side of the balloon.

It was a heavy cap for its size, and it fell as though aimed upon the upturned face of no less a person than the member for Haxley Cross, who, drawn in a landau by his faithful adherents, was just remarking that he thought it was coming on to rain again, when the cap struck him over the eyes, and hurling him, not from the force of the blow so much as astonishment, back into his seat.

But the next moment he was on his feet, waving the cap angrily above his head.

Member, wiping some clinging stuff off his face. "It rained a minute ago, now the dust is really quite annoying."

ago, now the dust is really quite annoying."

Alderman Snubbins, chairman of the Parliamentary Committee, made the same remark, only in stronger language, and with fewer "h's," whilst taking out his handkerchief, he also tried to wipe off the clinging dust from his expansive countenance.

Much the same thing was going on through the length and breadth of the procession. Now it rained, now came a cloud of dust, whilst above simultaneously the two aeronauts in their flying bird let out gas to counterbalance the loss of liquid from their indiarubber tanks, and scattered the paper bags of ballast right and left.

At lest the confines of Hayley Cross

the paper bags of ballast right and left.

At last the confines of Haxley Cross was reached.

At that moment Dick happened to be immediately over the band, a bag of ballast in his hand; his finger had already made a hole in the paper preparatory to tearing it open, when he saw, shining brightly by the light of an unextinguished torch, the round brass mouth of a French horn.

Succumbing to the sudden temptation, he dropped the bag just as it was with unerring aim right into the mouth of the horn, which had just blown the strident opening to "See the Conquering Hero Comes."

There was a sudden cessation of the deep, blaring note, then, wondering what had happened to his instrument, the player instinctively blew harder, almost bursting his cheeks as he puffed through the mouthpiece of his instrument.

For some moments there was no

For some moments there was no result, and the rest of the band had to play without its French horn, but the obstruction was suddenly removed, as, in a shower of fine, powdery matter, the contents of the bag was blown gracefully into the air, and, scattering in all directions, fell upon the astounded bandsmen.

The marshal in common band had

astounded bandsmen.
The marshal in command of the band had ordered that "See the Conquering Hero Comes" should be played just as the procession entered

Haxley Cross market-place. This they tried to do, and had failed, but worse. Haxley Cross was, as we have said, a Blue centre, and the market-place was occupied by a huge Blue crowd, who were prepared to break up the procession if possible.

But not a Blue moved forward to attack their hereditary foes. For a moment they gazed at the oncoming crowd in mute astonishment, then a roar of laughter went up from every throat, intermixed with:

"Good old turncoats! Blue for ever! Hurrah! Blue, blue, blue, blue!" from every side.

The Yellows looked at each other in indignant amazement: then, as they came under the bright glare of the electric light with which the market-place was dotted, a groan of amazement and despair burst from their lips, for they had started out with yellow ribbons which had in some mysterious way turned blue; their faces, their coats, their umbrellas, were all coated thick with a clinging bluish powder. Even the very rain that had fallen upon them during their march was blue. It was indeed a blue outlook, and blue appeared the faces of the committeemen.

For a moment consternation held

appeared the faces of the committeemen.

For a moment consternation held the Yellows dumb, then somebody remembered how a fountain of blue powder had been seen emerging from the French horn. The mystery was solved. Only the previous week the band had played at a most successful Blue gathering. They had been bought by the Yellows' opponents, and had been bribed to paint their present employers the hated blue.

"Traitors! Scoundrels! Rogues! Villains!" came from a hundred blue lips. "We'll teach you to play tricks on us! We'll make you blow our tune, not your own!" they shouted hoarsely, as they rushed towards the astonished and devoted band.

In vain the bandmaster waved his cornet above his head, and shook his head; the mob surged round him, and, to emphasise his declaration that he knew nothing about the calamity that had befallen those he played for, he

brought his cornet down with crush-

brought his cornet down with crushing force upon the red, angry visage of Alderman Snubbins.

That blow was the signal for a tremendous onslaught upon the astounded bandsmen, who, however, true Britishers to the core, preferred to fight rather than take their licking tamely, and, gathering back to back, trombone advanced. French horn waving above their heads, drumsticks rattling upon their foemen's skulls as energetically as they ever drummed sheepskin, the band held their own for some minutes against the utmost endeavours of the Yellows.

"I command you to stop! Bandsmen, put up your instruments!" cried the candidate for the division, thrusting his way through the crowd.

"Oh, go in out of the wet!" growled the big drummer, who was mad with fury because a well-directed kick had severed the sheepskin of his big drum.

"Who are you speaking to, you

kick had severed the sheepskin of his big drum.

"Who are you speaking to, you low, common red-nosed drummer?" returned the indignant member.

"Oh, I'm all that, am I? Then drum yourself!" retorted the other; and, lifting his now ruined instrument in both hands, he brought it down on the Member's head with such force that that gentleman's head and shoulders the next moment appeared surrounded by an ill-fitting halo!

Dazed by the blow, the Member fell

halo!
Dazed by the blow, the Member fell forward, and rolled on the ground, striving in vain to wriggle out of the encompassing rim of the drum! Alas! he was a portly gentleman, and if the drum had been made for him it could not have fitted his rotund figure better.

drum had been made for him it could not have fitted his rotund figure better.

But help was at hand. From somewhere—to the present day none of that fighting, excited crowd can tell whence it came—a rope, with a big grappling arrangement at the end—in reality a balloon's anchor—alighted for a moment amongst the cords which held the rim of the drum's sheepskin in place, then there was a whir of beating wings, a panting of hardworked boys doing their utmost, and the fighting mob remained as though turned to stone, with upraised fists and stones, gazing in wonder and amazement to see the Yellow Member for Haxley Cross filling the air with loud, 'frightened yells, as he was carried into the dark, lowering clouds above his head.

When some twenty feet from the ground the upward movement ceased, and he was borne along, just over the heads of the crowd, until suddenly Dick and Tom were nearly hurled from their seats by a sudden jerk, as the Night Hawk, freed from the unwonted weight on its anchor, mounted suddenly upwards.

For a brief moment the aeronauts feared that their flying bird would smash itself to pieces against the chimney-pots on every side, but at last it regained its equilibrium, and floated steadily above the houses.

Then Dick looked down.

"Good gracious, the stupid idiot has fallen out of the drum!" he cried, in consternation, turning, with a white face, to his comrade. "He'll be killed sure and we'll be haved."

"Good gracious, the stupid idiot has fallen out of the drum!" he cried, in consternation, turning, with a white face, to his comrade. "He'll be killed sure, and we'll be hanged as his murderers!"

"Oh, you can't kill a Yellow!" returned Tom confidently. "Besides, didn't you hear the splash?"

"What splash?"

"Why, when he fell into the drinking-trough at the bottom of the market. He's all right! Look, they're just pulling him out!"

Turning the Night Hawk round, Dick looked down upon the excited scene below, and there, sure enough, was the respected member of Haxley Cross being hauled, trembling and pale, but unharmed, from the deep water-trough, into which good luck had decreed he should fall.

Then, lest they should be seen. Dick turned the Night Hawk's head homewards.

THE 2nd CHAPTER.

Getting a Meal.

HE fly through the air to Haxley Cross had been fairly easy, because the wind had been behind them all the way, but now it was different. Not only was the wind against them, but it was in-

the wind against them, but it was increasing in force each moment.

Bending over their handles, they pedalled as quickly as they could, but swiftly though the wings of their flying machine moved, they seemed to be making little progress.

To add to their discomfort also, the stormclouds, which had gathered at sunset, rendered all around as dark as nitch.

as pitch.
Fortunately, beyond Little Bramp ton was a revolving-light on board a lightship, and, keeping this well in



The fighting mob remained as though turned to stone, gaz-ing in wonder and amazement, as they saw their respected candidate disappear upward into darkness.

view, they continued to pedal until their legs and backs ached again.
Still the light got no nearer.
"Confound it, Dick, I'm nearly done! I can't keep this on much longer!"
"If we alight in this wind we'll years health to the transfer of the state of t

longer!"

"If we alight in this wind we'll never be able to start again. Keep up your pecker, old chap," returned Dick encouragingly, although, truth to tell, he was obliged to own to himself that he had had nearly enough of it.

For another ten minutes the boys continued working their hardest, the perspiration rolling down their faces in large drops.

"Oh, hang it, Dick, never mind about getting up again! Let's get down! I'll leave off pedalling in a minute!"

"Keep on another five minutes. I

"Keep on another five minutes. I believe the light is growing bigger!" cried Dick Dorne, straining his eyes through the darkness towards the appearing and disappearing speck of light. "Hanged if I believe we've moved an inch!" he continued the next moment. "That light seems as small as ever it was!"

"I don't care if we upset the whole jolly cart, Dorne, I can't keep on any longer!" cried Tom, after a few minutes' silence, during which nothing was heard but the beat of the Night Hawk's wings and the whirr of her wheels.

Hawk's wings and the whirr of her wheels.

"I never knew her fly like this!" panted Dick. "It's all jerk and start, jerk and start; we don't seem to advance an inch. I'll just look out for a handy lighting place, and descend."

He touched a button, and the Night Hawk's eyes became bright with the electric light concealed within them. Then, by an ingenious arrangement, he turned them so that they cast their beams downwards.

As he did so a cry of horror and paniestricken fear arose from beneath. He looked down. Few words escaped his lips; but he had not thought so fiercely or so quickly for many a long day.

fiercely or so quickly for many a long day.

For twenty minutes they had been pedalling with all the force they could muster, whilst the Night Hawk had been trying to fly away with Haxley Cross Town Hall, for now the reason that the lightship's light had not grown any nearer was plain. The rim of the drum had caught on the town-hall vane, and, although working at their hardest, they had been stationary since shortly after leaving the Yellow candidate in the horse-trough.

stationary since snortly after leaving the Yellow candidate in the horse-trough.

From below the crowd gazed with terror-stricken eyes at the fierce, wildeyed winged monster hovering over their town-hall. They could not see the rope which held it prisoner, and it looked as though it was hovering in the air, ready to pounce upon them at any moment.

Then it turned round, and the crowd scattered in all directions as a many-coloured, broad-banded hoop rolled down the steep roof of the town-hall, and, bounding over the parapet, crashed across the street, through the large plateglass window of a chemist's shop, scattering the bottles it contained in every direction.

tion.
"What is it? What has happened?" the crowd asked each other in awestricken tones.
"A thunderbolt! Didn't you see the fire flashing from it as it fell?"

"A thunderbolt! Didn't you, see the fire flashing from it as it fell?"

"That was no thunderbolt; it was a ghostie!" cried P.-c. Parsons, who was one of the crowd. "It's that 'ere bird that's been flying over Little Brampton; I recognised it in a moment." And from mouth to mouth passed the fearful intelligence that the terrible apparition which had plunged the neighbouring village into a panic ten days before had made its resting place on Haxley Cross Town Hall.

In the meantime, Dick Dorne, hav-

In the meantime, Dick Dorne, having got rid of the detaining drum by the simple process of flying in the opposite direction, dropped to earth in a field adjoining a farmhouse some half-mile out of the town.

we go and get something!" cried Dick, springing to his feet.

The next moment the two boys were hastening towards where a light appeared in the windows of a substantial-looking, cosy old farmhouse.

As they approached, a savoury odour greeted them, and they quickened their steps, until they arrived at a side door just as a substantial-looking old woman was emerging from it, carrying in her hands the remains of a beefsteak-pudding, which had just formed the main dish of her own and her husband's supper.

"I beg your pardon, madam; we have lost our way. Could you let us have a little bread and cheese, or something? We will willingly pay for

How was Dick to know that the farmer's wife and her better half had just been having one of their periodical flare-ups; and the good lady, having got the worst of the quarrel, was only too glad to have somebody on whom she could vent her ill-humour.

"Then you don't get anything there, for I don't never give anything to tramps; and as to selling, I'd like to see the colour of yer money first! Get away with yer, or I'll set the dog on yer!" she added angrily; and Dick, not caring to enter into an argument,

on yer!" she added angrily; and Dick, not caring to enter into an argument, stood on one side to allow her to pass.

Presently, by the light of a lantern the good lady carried, they saw her approach a hanging-safe, into which she put the remains of the beefsteak-pudding, and then drew it up by means of a rope and pulley to a beam of wood stretched from one tree to another.

Dick said no more, his mind was made up; and, nudging Tom in the

Dick said no more, his mind was made up; and, nudging Tom in the ribs, retraced his steps to the Night

Hawk.

Ten minutes later he was back again, hovering above the safe in which the coveted pudding reposed.

But now a difficulty presented itself. In broad daylight he would have been unwilling to risk his Night Hawk in that wind by taking her too close to the wood which supported the safe, in the dark it was not to be thought of

to the wood which supported the safe, in the dark it was not to be thought of.

However, the savoury odour of that beefsteak-pudding still lingered in their nostrils, and after a moment's consultation it was arranged that Tom should slide down the anchor-rope on to the beam, and rifle the safe as best he could.

It was not an easy task, either, for Tom or Dick; for whilst the former had to pass from the swaying rope to the wooden beam, Dick would have as much as he could do to keep the Night Hawk in place by pedalling, whilst Tom was procuring the viands. However, the youngster reached the beam all right, and, holding on to the top of the pole, managed to open the safe door, and draw the contents into a bag he carried with him for the purpose.

"But, alas! doubtless in her anger, the farmer's wife had not fastened the rope which bore the safe securely, for just as Tom was calling, in a low whisper, to let the anchor-rope come near him, he felt the safe give way, and the next moment alighted on the ground with a jar that not only demolished the safe, but also knocked every bit of breath out of his body!

Still he clung to the bag, and was looking upwards for the Night Hawk, when the farmhouse door opened, and alarmed by the noises without, the good dame came rushing on the scene.

"You thieving young rasca!! I've caught you have 12" she cried.

alarmed by the noises without, the good dame came rushing on the scene.

"You thieving young rascal! I've caught you, have I?" she cried.
"Here, 'Thomas, here's a tramp stealing our vittles!" as the yellow beams of her lantern fell upon the boy and his well-filled bag.

Tom turned to flee, but even as he did something came scraping along the ground towards him, and the next moment, taking the mouth of the bag which swung from his shoulder in his teeth, he was clambering, hand over hand, towards the car of the Night Hawk, and before the good woman could do more than gasp a word, was safely back on his saddle.

Then they started to pedal once more, but, alas! again they were held fast by the anchor, which had got entangled against the roots of a neighbouring tree! They were so close to earth that they could see now that they were not moving; therefore, Dick turned on the electric eyes to see what it was that held them down.

With a yell of terror the farmer's wife turned towards the door from which her husband was emerging just as the Night Hawk shook her anchor free.

"Pedal, Tom, pedal, for all you're

ma field adjoining a farmhouse some half-mile out of the town.

"Phew! Tom, how would you like to work hard for a living?" asked Dick, as he flung himself from his saddle on to the soft grass.

"I've done sufficient work to last a healthy boy the rest of his natural life, I reckon. What a one-eyed old idiot you were not to know we couldn't carry the town-hall about with us! You'll be trying to tow England into the middle of the Atlantic next!"

"Oh, dry up, and suck oranges!" returned Dick disgustedly.

"I wish I could suck something; I'm getting hungry enough to eat resurrection-pie!" returned Tom.

"There's a house near here. I vote" the farmer's among the chimneys else!"

"Hawk, and before the good woman could do more than gasp a word, was safely back on his saddle.

Then they started to pedal once more, but, alas! again they were held fast by the anchor, which had got entangled against the roots of a neighbouring tree! They were so close to earth that they could see now that they were not moving; therefore, Dick turned on the electric eyes to see what it was that held them down.

With a yell of terror the farmer's wife turned towards the door from which her husband was emerging just as the Night Hawk shook her anchor.

"I wish I could suck something; I'm getting hungry enough to eat resurrection-pie!" returned Tom.

"There's a house near here. I vote" every him."

They did so. There was a sudden jerk, a loud, shrill scream, and, looking down, a sight met the boys' eyes which made it almost impossible for them to continue pedalling for laughter, for just as the farmer's wife had fallen into her husband's arms, the swaying anchor caught her clothes, and she was obliged to cling with more than wifely devotion to her spouse's neck to keep herself from being borne heavenwards.

Fortunately, her clothes could not stand the strain, and as the Night Hawk, released from the extra weight, sprung upwards, the last thing the boys saw was the astonished farmer and his wife rolling on the doorstep of their happy home.

THE 3rd CHAPTER.

All on Account of a Coat.

Y this time the clouds had dispersed from over the face of the rising moon, and, despite the strong wind which strove to beat There was not a moment to be lost if Dick Dorne would preserve the junior master from an unpleasant quarter of an hour with his sweetheart's father. Leaning over the handle of his flying bird, he groped about the wickerwork bottom in search of something to hurl at the unsuspecting clergyman but in vain. He

search of something to hurl at the unsuspecting clergyman, but in vain. He had used up every missle in his attack on the "Yellows" of Haxley Cross. But, grown desperate as he saw the clergyman aproaching nearer the unsuspecting couple, he snatched off his coat, and dropping it well over the clergyman's head with one hand, squeezed the bulb of a large motorhorn, with which the Night Hawk was provided, with all his might.

The motor-horn belonged to Dick

was provided, with all his might.

The motor-horn belonged to Dick Dorne, therefore, needless to say, it was no common motor-horn, but had been specially constructed by the young inventor to emit noises so ghastly that it seemed impossible for any earthly contrivance to send forth.

Unfortunately, he had not timed the movements of his hands simul-

Any per-formance except Sat. and Bk. H's.

Tuesday

Evening.
Any performance excepting Saturdays and Bank Holidays.

Any day excepting Saturdays and Sundays.

Tuesdays.

Weds. and Thurs. to boys not over 16 yrs. Mon. and Thurs. Tues. and Friday. Wednesday Any evening

Mednesday
Any evening
excepting
Bk. Holidays
Any performance
except
Christmas
Day.
Tuesdays-

so much consternation and discussion in the village disappearing above the tops of the neighbouring trees.

But somehow he was not so frightened as he had been when he first saw it. A suspicion was gradually form

But somehow he was not so frightened as he had been when he first saw it. A suspicion was gradually forming in his mind. He looked vaguely around him, settled his spectacles, which had got on one side, firmly on the bridge of his nose, then glancing towards where he had last seen the Night Hawk, emitted a second "Good gracious me!"

Then his hands fell upon Dick's coat. He took it up, turned it upside down, in and out, smelt it, and then a flush of anger crept over his pale face.

"It is some unconscionable, evildisposed wretch who is playing a practical joke on myself and the rest of the village!" he muttered. "I have a clue, and I will follow it until I have tracked the villain down."

Thus saying, he tucked the coat under his arm, felt about until he had recovered his soft black felt hat, and retired to the privacy of his study, where he speedily found, tacked just under the collar of the tell-tale garment the written name, "Richard Dorne."

"Ho! So it is the young inventor!

under the collar of the tell-tale garment the written name, "Richard Dorne."

"Ho! So it is the young inventor! I might have known it! Well, well, to-morow morning he shall learn that if we cannot appreciate his new-fangled ideas, we are at least adepts in the old way of correcting too cheeky boys."

It was not until the Night Hawk was nearing the shelter of the tower that Dick realised that in leaving his coat behind him he had provided the rector of Little Brampton with an unsistakable clue to the originator of the Night Hawk.

"What a juggins you were, Dick!" cried Tom angrily. "It'll be the end of all our jokes."

"Well, old boy, what about your cap, eh? That's somewhere in Haxley Cross."

Tom put his hand to his head, and was silent. Presently he said:

"The best thing we can do is to go back to the tower, take the Night Hawk to pieces as quickly as we can, and hide her."

"Not until I have got my coat, anyhow," returned Dick. "Come back to the rectory, and I'll see if Mr. Henry was too frightened to take it indoors with him."

A minute later the Night Hawk's head was turned once more to Little

Henry was too frightened to take it indoors with him."

A minute later the Night Hawk's head was turned once more to Little Brampton's rectory, and ere long alighted—not intentionally on Dick's part, but he could not see where he was going—in the centre of Mr. Henry's pet bed of calceolarias and geraniums.

"Keep mounted, Tom; we may have to leave in a hurry," whispered Dick, as he slid off his bicycle-saddle, and, springing from the car, hastened towards the garden path along which Mr. Henry was proceeding when his onward career was so unexpectedly checked.

But, of course, Dick's errand was fruitless, and, seeing a light in Mr. Henry's study, moved towards it.

It was a mild night, and the window was open. Cautiously peering through, Dick saw his lost garment carefully folded up on the clergyman's writing-table. It was temptingly easy to enter the window, and procure what he sought, except that Mr. Henry was lying back in an armchair, reading. Besides, even if he succeeded in obtaining the coat, doubtless Mr. Henry had already found the tell-tale tab with which, in common with every coat in the school, his was ornamented.

doubtless Mr Henry had already found the tell-tale tab with which, in common with every coat in the school, his was ornamented.

Presently Dick dodged back, as, yawning, Mr. Henry rose from his chair. Then his eye fell upon the coat, and going to a cupboard, he drew out some brown paper and string, in which he proceeded to wrap the garment, until it lay once more upon his table neatly encased in a brown-paper wrapper.

Then he looked at his watch, and rang the bell. From his point of vantage outside, Dick saw a servant enter, bearing a syphon of lemonade, which was placed by her master's side. Pouring out a glass of the refreshing beverage, he took up his book again, and recommenced reading. Dick was in despair. Whilst the clergyman remained in the room, he could not recover his coat; but just as he was on the point of abandoning the task as hopeless, a sound fell on his ears sweeter than dinner-bell to a hungry boy. It was a low, deep, trombonelike snore, proceeding from the reverend gentleman's nasal organ.

Dick could scarcely believe his good

the reverend gentieman's organ.

Dick could scarcely believe his good luck. Pushing the window gently back, he crept into the room.

As he did so, his eyes fell upon the open cupboard door, in which was some drab paper of the same shade

# Free Coupons for the Picture Theatres.

GREAT ADDITIONS TO "THE BOYS' FRIEND" LIST THIS WEEK.

In these days when picture theatres are so popular, it is only natural that boys should flock in their thousands to such places of entertainment, and Your Editor has decided to help his readers by securing them ADMISSION AT HALF-PRICE to a great many of the best halls.

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 Tuesday, Jan. 3rd.

List of Theatres Where BOYS' FRIEND Half-Admission Coupons are Accepted. Park Picture Palace, Sankey Street, Warrington Gymnasium Royal Pictures, Duke Street, St. Helens Royal Picture Palace, Ashton-in-Makerfield Central Hall, Femberton The Picture Palace, Whitehaven The Athenæum Picture Palace, Maryport The Athenseum Picture Palace, Mary Palace Theatre, West Hartlepool Boro' Theatre, North Shielda New Picture Palace, Gateshead Tivoli, Laygate Circus, South Shields Picture Hall, West Hartlepool Empire Theatre, Coventry Cromwell Hall, Lancast Picturedrome, Longridg Temperance Hall, Prest 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, Greet

The Universe Picture Palace and Skating Rink, Great Harwood

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

Central Hall, Nottingham Picturedrome, Huddersfield Cinema, Longroyd Bridge, Huddersfield Kinema Theatre, Horn Lane, Acton, W.

them back, they flew swiftly home-

They were just flying over the rectory grounds, near Little Brampton's new church, when a whispered "Steady, Tom!" came from Dick's

taneously; the horn sounded moment or two before the cloak fe

taneously; the horn sounded a moment or two before the cloak fell.

"Good gracious me, what on earth is that?" cried Mr. Henry, looking up. He just caught a brief glimpse of the Night Hawk, then it seemed as though a dark cloud fell on him, and he dropped to the earth, yelling loudly for help, and striking fiercely at Dick's coat, which completely covered his head, for the moment blinding him.

Dick looked towards where the lovers had been; he was just in time to see Mr. Rence jump over an adjoining wall, and the young lady glide swiftly towards the house, when Mr. Henry shook himself free from the enveloping garment.

"Pedal for your life, Tom! Double, forward, charge!" cried Dick, in a hoarse whisper, and Mr. Henry, looking up, saw the fearful apparition which had already caused

Our Grand New Year and 500th Number out next Tuesday. One Penny only. Glorious New Features.

as that the clergyman had just been using, some string, and also, hanging at the back of the door, the reverend gentleman's cassock.

No one could accuse Dick Dorne of having a small mind, and yet, large though it was, it was quickly made up when he saw an opportunity before him.

though it was, in up when he saw an opportunity before him.

Stealthily he removed the cassock from its peg, then, securing paper and string in his hand, carried his prize from the room.

A minute later he returned with a parcel the exact counterpart of the one Mr. Henry had made in his hand.

Greeping on tiptoe to the table, he snatched up one parcel, and substituted the other in its place. Alas, at the very moment victory came, disaster would befall him! Sleeping calmly beneath the table, was Mr. Henry's pet poodle, and inadvertently Dick stepped upon the sleeping animal's tail.

The howl which arose from the injured dog's throat would have wakened the Seven Sleepers, let alone one sleeping clergyman, and with "Good gracious me!" his favourite expression on his lips, the reverend gentleman seized the arms of his chair with both hands, and sat bolt upright. Creeping on tiptoe to the table,

of his chair with both hands, and sat bolt upright.

The next moment he fell back, gasping for breath, and with countless streams of lemonade running down his face on to his spotless choker, as Dick, with that resource for which he was famed, seized the lemonade syphon, and, pressing the lever, hurled its contents with unering aim straight at the awakening man's face. Then, ere his victim could see the source from which the liquid had come, he turned and fled, but not alone—clinging tightly to the place where his coat-tails would have been had he worn that garment inbut not alone—clinging tightly to the place where his coat-tails would have been had he worn that garment instead of carrying it in the parcel under his arm was the faithful poodle, which, as he flew through the window, clung to him with the tenacity of a bulldog.

The dog acted as a brake to Dick's movements, so reaching behind, he grasped the animal by the tail, and continued his flight towards the Night Hawk. Still the poodle held on, and even when Dick blundered through the flower-bed on to his saddle, it clung growling to his pants. Fortunately a cloud hid the face of the moon at that moment, and the two boys were enabled to leave the vicinity of the rectory undetected.

"Hang this beast! Pull it off, can't you?" oried Dick, as soon as they were safe from pursuit. "I can't see anything to laugh at, anybow," he added, for Tom's constant giggling worried him.

"Oh, don't get shirty, old man! I'll soon release you. Come off, you brute!" cried Tom, and, reaching forward, he seized the poodle by the long hair and its shoulders.

Probably the animal's jaw was aching by this time; at any rate, he let go, and, snapping round, caught Tom's fingers in his mouth.

With a howl of pain, the boy hurled the dog from him, careless of where it fell; but had he done so with fell intent, he could not have made a better shot.

At that moment they were flying

better shot.

At that moment they were flying over the village hostelry, which the reader will remember boasted the sign of The Jolly Cabbage, and the yelping dog, doubtless wondering where it was going, fell straight down the public house kitchen chimney.

down the public house kitchen chimney.

At that moment, as it happened. the kitchen was packed with a wrangling crowd, composed of Blues and Yellows, who had just returned from Haxley Cross, the former laughing and triumphant, the latter surly and discomfited.

But over all there hung a feeling of awe, for many present had caught a brief glance of the Night Hawk, whose supernatural origin few ventured to dispute.

awe, for many present had caught a brief glance of the Night Hawk, whose supernatural origin few ventured to dispute.

"I tell yer it aren't no human invention," declared one from an adjoining village emphatically. "D'yerthink anything mortal would had dared to ha' struck a great man like our Member into a drum, and to ha' carried him away? Go on wi' yer!"

"Ye're mad, Bill Price," declared the gardener from the rectory, who was indulging in a final pint of beer before turning in, all unconscious of the stirring scenes being enacted at the rectory. "There aren't no sich things as ghosties and spiritses—parson says so."

"You're wrong there, Mr. Jones," declared the landlord. "I saw this big bird, or whatever it is, a-flying over the village myself, and it chucked me into my own duckpond too."

"Ye'd been drinking too much o'

"Ye'd been drinking too much o'

yer own beer, man, that's what it was," persisted the obstinate gardener. "I'll believe there's sich things when the Old 'Un hisself comes down that 'ere chimper." down that 'ere chimney."
Barely had the words left his lips

Barely had the words left his lips ere there was a noise as of miniature thunder, and, preceded by a volume of soot which shot from the chimney, covering everybody in the room, Mr. Henry's poodle dropped on to the smouldering fire, then, with a howl, made for the door, only to find the exit blocked by the guests of the Jolly Cabbage, who, shrieking out that the Evil One was upon them, had made a rush for the open air, with the consequence that the gardener and the outsider had collided in the doorway, mine host's rubicund visage pressed between their struggling bodies.

Mad with terror, the poodle jumped on the landlord's prostrate body, then over the two men's shoulders into the open air.

"He's gone! He's gone!" cried the others.

"Lor' wasn't it awful! Did ver

the others.

"Lor', wasn't it awful! Did yer see his flaming eyes?" asked one.

"Yes, and his big horns and long spiked tail," put in another; then, finding their host in danger of suffocation, two or three rushed to his assistance, whilst the gardener and outsider allowed themselves to be dragged, panting, breathless, and with torn clothes, into the room, looking at each other with startled,

else, with unerring instincts, and as Tom clambered over a gate and en-tered the orchard, he was rejoiced to find the trees laden with red, ripe, early fruit.

tered the orchard, he was rejoiced to find the trees laden with red, ripe, early fruit.

It did not take Tom long to collect a heap of luscious apples; then, with a cry of dismay, he remembered that he had nothing to carry them in.

However, he would not deserve to have been Dick Dorne's chum and constant companion had he not been a lad of resource. It was night, as we know, and nobody about; consequently the exhibition of his bare legs would shock no one's feelings. In a moment he had discarded his knickers, and tying up the bottoms, filled them with the spoil.

He had just put the last apple in, and had grasped the trousers ready to sling them on to his shoulder, when a grasp of another kind took place—a strong, painful, vice-like grasp on his shoulders, and, looking up, he saw the lowering face of an angry farmer frowning upon him.

"So I have caught you, yer young varmint, have I? It's you who've been robbing my orchard, is it? I'll give yer something to remember my apples by! You'll wish yer'd never taken off your trousers to carry 'em away in before I've done with yer."

The farmer spoke nothing but the pure, unadulterated truth. A second later, Tom was very sorry indeed that he had discarded his nether garments. They would have come in

an exclamation of annoyance, for far away, rising black and distinct in the moonlight, appeared the ruined tower. But that was not what had brought forth Dick's exclamation of dismay. It was that the moonbeams were reflected back from the glittering blades of sythes and the points of forks, interspersed here and there by the brown barrels of shot-guns, borne in the hands of a large crowd who had assembled round the old tower. Dick knew not what had happened, but he guessed that the villagers had assembled to drive out the demon who had terrorised their village so long. Anyhow, whatever the cause, there they were, and so long as they maintained their position the boys dare not return.

maintained their position the boys dare not return.

Rising high amongst the clouds, Dick surveyed the scene. Presently he noticed that, standing as it did on the verge of a cliff, the crowd did not think it necessary to guard the seaward side. If he could get round that way, he might gain the tower unnoticed. But to do so, it would be necessary to fly a good distance out to sea.

to sea.

Tired as they were, it was an unwelcome expedient, but no other presented itself, and, communicating his resolve to his companion, Dick turned the Night Hawk seawards.

But no sooner had he left the shelter of the inland heights than he repented his decision, for here the Night Hawk felt the full force of

on them, quickly succeeded by others, until they were in the midst of a drenching shower, whilst overhead the thunder rattled continuously, and bright flashes of lightning momentarily illuminated the scene.

It was a fearful situation, and one which both hove soon wished them.

arily illuminated the scene.

It was a fearful situation, and one which both boys soon wished themselves well out of; but although now and again lightning flashes revealed some steamer ploughing her way through the waves, or fishing boat flying before the gale for safety, they had no means of communicating with those on board.

Presently the light wings which bore the Night Hawk became sodden by the downpour, and a lightning flash revealed to the terror-stricken boys the fact that they were sinking swiftly towards the sea.

"Pedal, Tom—pedal for all you are worth!" gasped Dick, between his clenched teeth, as he leaned over the handles.

It was all in vain. By this time

It was all in vain. By this time their utmost endeavours scarcely sufficed to move the heavy wings. Suddenly they felt their aerial craft sinking beneath their feet, and the next moment they were plunged headlong into the angry waves.

Fortunately, the gas-filled skin of the huge imitation bird acted as a lifebuoy, and to this they clung until the light of coming day fell upon the scene. Cold and numbed and hungry, the two boys looked despairingly around. Not a sail was in sight. The sea was rising rapidly, and at any moment a broken wingrod might pierce her silken skin, then the gas would fly out, and the sodden silk would sink beneath the waves, leaving them almost exhausted to leaving them almost exhausted to swim helplessly for a few yards ere sinking to a watery grave beneath the waves.

THE 5th CHAPTER.

A Mass of Evidence.

LOWLY the sun rose above the horizon, but the two boys scarcely noted it. They were growing numbed with cold and despair

spair.
Suddenly Dick looked up, and a ud cry burst from his lips, for about the rolls away a steam-trawler was loud cry burst from ms manufacture half a mile away a steam-trawler bloughing her way through

plougning her way through the water towards them.

"Look, Tom—look! A sail! We are saved!" he cried.

Tom raised his head, and gazed with glassy eyes in the direction Dick indicated.

"It's no good Dick old her. I

"It's no good, Dick, old boy. I can't hold on until she reaches us; I'm nearly done!" he cried.
"Oh, dry up that rot!" returned Dick warmly. "Here, I have got

t!" returned I have strength enough for two; hold on

strength enough for two; hold on to me."

"And drag you down with me?"

"If you don't do it, you young idiot, I'll smack your head!" was the answer, and without waiting for Tom to reply, he threw his arm round him, and held him up.

But whilst this saved Tom's life, it also made it impossible for Dick Dorne to signal the craft. However, as luck would have it, there was no need. A shout borne over the waves told that they were seen, and ten minutes later they were dragged into a boat, and rowed swiftly towards the trawler, where they soon found themselves ministered to by rough, but kindly hands wrapped in flannel blankets, and laid in warm, cosy bunks.

cosy bunks.

A few hours' sleep served to put fresh life into their exhausted bodies, and Diek, springing from his bunk, hastened on deck.

and Dick, springing from his bunk, hastened on deck.

As he did so an exclamation of astonishment and joy burst from his lips, for right in front of them was the tiny harbour of Little Brampton, towards which the trawler was hastening with the week's catch stowed safely away in her hold.

"Well, my lad, you, anyhow, seem little the worse for your ducking. How is your friend?"

"He is still sleeping," returned Dick. "But I say, it was awfully good of you to rescue us. We'd have been food for the fishes if you hadn't turned up so opportunely. You might be a good fellow, and keep it dark about having picked us up."

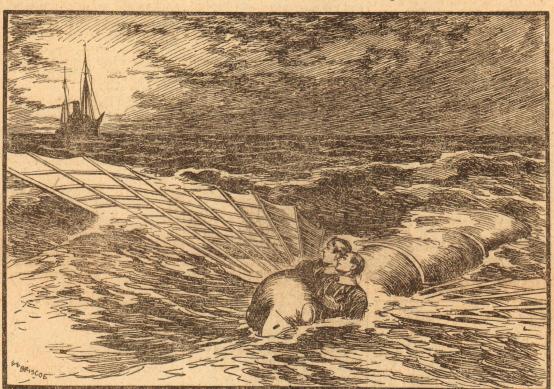
keep it dark about up."

""Why, what do you mean? You haven't been up to anything wrong, have you?" asked the captain.

Dick hesitated, then determined to make a clean breast of it.

"You've heard of the huge bird that has been flying about the last week or two?"

"You've heard of the huge bird that has been flying about the last week or two?"
"Yes. What of that?"
"Well, it's only a lark me and my friend were having. It was a kind of balloon." And then Dick, finding



Suddenly Dick looked up, and a loud cry burst from his lips, steam-trawler was ploughing her A sail! We are saved!" he cried. through the her way

frightened eyes and faces that would have been paler had they not been plentifully sprinkled with soot from the chimney

#### THE 4th CHAPTER.

N the meantime, to Dick Dorne's disgust, the noise disgust, the noise around the Jolly Cabbage had called men and women to their cottage doors, and the moon, having burst through the clouds, the Night Hawk was seen

and the moon, having burst through the clouds, the Night Hawk was seen flying swiftly through the air; so, not wishing to draw attention to his vessel's resting-place, Dick steered in a southerly direction.

By this time they had done a good bit of pedalling, and would fain have alighted. Besides, they were very hungry, so, seeing an open meadow in the rear of a farmhouse a little distance away, they alighted, and eagerly devoured some of the farmer's good things.

"What are those trees over there, Tom?" said Dick, after a time.

"Apple-trees, for a dollar. I could do with a few apples now!" cried Tom.

"Same here. We might take some home, too," suggested Dick.

"All right, come on; let's see if we can get any!" cried Tom.

"No, old boy; you get as many as you can, whilst I oil the machine, and tighten its bearings. I heard them squeaking just before we alighted."

"All right; I won't be long!" agreed Tom, and away he went.

Boys recognise apple-trees, es-

"All right; I won't be long!" agreed Tom, and away he went.

Boys recognise apple-trees, especially if they belong to somebody

very handy, and have saved his naked flesh from immediate contact with the enraged farmer's stick.

However, the castigation did not last long. Twiddling round, Tom managed to plant his head firmly in his captor's portly stomach, doubling him up, and hurling him, gasping, to the ground; then, snatching himself free, fled in the direction of the Night Hawk.

But, alas! like the Lowlander in the Scotch tale, "he left his breeks behind him," and, what was worse, on the band of those unmentionable garments was sewn the name Thomas Tooms.

"Mount Dick quick! I'm

ments was sewn the name Thomas Tooms.

"Mount, Dick—quick! I'm pursued!" roared Tom; and Dick, who was already mounted, get the Night Hawk's wings in motion.

Tom sprang to his saddle, and, adding his efforts to those of his friend, the Night Hawk soared upwards, leaving the astonished farmer soratching his head, and looking after them in speechless amazement.

For a few minutes neither spoke. Then Dick loeked round.

"Hoot, mon, but the kilt suits ye!"

Then Dick looked round.

"Hoot, mon, but the kilt suits ye!"
he grinned.

Tom, who was feeling somewhat cold about the legs, replied by an

cold about the legs, replied by an angry growl.
"We'd better be getting home, Tom," continued Dick, laughing.
"At the rate we are shedding our wardrobe, we will soon be without a garment at all."
"The sooner the better," replied Tom. "It's mighty cold up here." And Dick turned the Night Hawk's head homewards once more.
Presently he stopped pedalling with

wind.

But as though ill-luck was pursuing them, in their immediate front they saw dark storm clouds coming up against the wind, which soon hid the light of the moon and stars from view. All was dark. They could not tell where they were, but still, although a fearful dread weighed down their hearts, they pedalled steadily onwards.

Then a few big drops of rain fell

the wind, and they found that,

as they might, their bird was being carried each moment further out to

But it was not until the distant land vanished entirely from their view that they realised the possibility of disaster.

So long as they could work their pedals, all well and good, but they had travelled a long way that night, and were already very tired.

and were already very tired.

"By Jove, Tom, old boy, I don't like the look of it much," said Dick, at last. "I wonder if there would be any chance of our reaching the Continent? We're only wasting our labour trying to fight against this wind."

wind."
"Can't we beat against it?" sug-

"Anyhow, we'll try!" cried his companion.

But they soon found that although it is true the Night Hawk made a little advance in the required direction, it would take them too long to reach shore that way.

"There's no help for it, old boy; it's seaward or nothing," declared Dick, and the next moment the Night Hawk was running swiftly before the wind.

Anyhow, we'll try!" cried his

half measures would be no good, made a clean breast of everything to the good-hearted skipper of the steam

How the man laughed! His crew,

How the man laughed! His crew, looking up at the bridge, joined in in sympathy with his loud guffaws, as Dick related one after the other his many experiences.

"So, you see, I want to slip ashore without letting anybody know what has become of this bird that has frightened the good people of Little Brampton half out of their wits."

has frightened the good people of Little Brampton half out of their wits."

"Oh, I see, you young dog; and, by Jove, I'll help you!" Then he paused. "Doesn't your chum ever wear breeches?" he continued.

"Oh, I forgot that!" cried Dick.
"That's all right. I have a boy of about his age. I'll slip ashore, and get him a pair. Now, hurry below, for we will be alongside the wharf in half an hour, and I suppose you don't want to be seen on deck."

The skipper was as good as his word, and some twenty minutes after the steam trawler had been made fast to the Little Brampton wharf, appeared below with a pair of his son's Sunday best trousers, into which Tom, who was by this time fully recovered from his recent experiences, managed to squeeze with difficulty.

But not only did the skipper provide covering for Tom's lower limbs,

difficulty.

But not only did the skipper provide covering for Tom's lower limbs, he also swore his crew to secrecy, and with their aid the two boys managed to get ashore unperceived, then headed straight for the school, engrossed in serious confab, for ingenious though they were, they could not think of any tale which would save them from a thrashing for being out all night.

They might have saved themselves

being out all night.

They might have saved themselves that trouble, for there were already those on their way to the Manor School who were piling up caning upon caning for them.

"Now, Tom, what are we to say?" asked Dick, pausing at the gate leading up to the school.

"Is this a Missing Word Competition? Then I give it up," returned Tom. "Can't we copy George Washington, and say we cannot tell a lie—we don't know where we've been?"

"Oh dry up Town and this

a he—we don't know where we've been?"

"Oh, dry up, Tom, and think of something sensible, can't you?" cried Dick angrily; but ere the other could reply from out a laurel-lined path loomed the fearful form of Dr. Allerton.

"So, young gentlemen, you have condescended to return at last!" cried the doctor in that fearfully humourous voice which told Dick he had already made up his mind to use the cane vigourously. "Now, speak up. Where have you been?"

"Well, sir, the fact is we wanted to see the fun at Haxley Cross, and went there last night," returned Dick, who was nothing unless he was truthful.

"Oh, indeed! And lost your way

truthful.

"Oh, indeed! And lost your way coming home, I suppose?"

"That's just what we did do, sir," returned Dick.

"And slept in a hedgerow, eh?" continued the doctor in the half joking tone his pupils dreaded so much.

"We didn't sleep at all last night, sir, although we were so tired that we dropped off after the sun was

'Indeed! Nice, respectable young "Indeed! Nice, respectable young gentlemen you are, I must say. I don't believe a word you have been telling me. It is lies, all lies! Go to the schoolroom, and wait until I come. I will make an example of you—an example. Do you hear? Go!"

There was not even pretence in the doctor's voice now, as he stormed out the last few words, and, figuratively speaking, with their tails between their legs the two boys approached the school.

"Phew! Tom, can't you feel it coming? Can't you hear it hissing through the air?" cried Dick lugulariously.

briously.

"I've had my share, and am still tender," retorted Tom. "But, I say, I hope the doctor won't hurt the skipper's kid's Sunday best."

"He'll cut 'em to ribbons," returned Dick calmly, as though gloating over the prospect in front of them.

The change of the two boys had

The absence of the two boys had caused no little discussion amongst the scholars and anxiety to the doctor and the masters; consequently, a hum of excitement arose when, pulling themselves together, they entered the room, nodding to their chums as though they had only overslept themselves, and had not broken bounds the previous night.

The masters frowned at the two boys, all except Mr. Fence, and there was a grateful twinkle in his eye as his glance met that of Dick Dorne's, which told the young inventor that he knew who had saved him from detection by the Rev. Henry the pre-

vious night, and also that he had a

rious night, and also that he had a friend at court.

However, barely had the two boys taken their places at their desks ere the doctor, his gown tucked under his arm, a favourite cane clasped tightly in his good right hand, strode into the room.

"Richard Dorne, Tom Tooms, come forward!" he cried, standing by the second master's desk.

"Farewell, chaps! We'll die like heroes!" whispered Tom as he moved from his place.

"Farewell, chaps! We'll die like heroes!" whispered Tom as he moved from his place.

"Now, Richard Dorne, you will kindly tell me where you and Thomas Tooms passed last night."

"Speak up, Dorne, and tell everything—you can't hide it now," whispered Mr. Fence, who was standing near; but Dick, already thinking out plans for the building of a larger and better Night Hawk, remained obstinately silent.

"If you do not speak, boys, I will be obliged to put the worst construction on your obstinacy, and it will be a question whether I will cane or expel you. Now, Thomas, have you anything to say?"

Tom looked at his comrade, and was about to reply, when the old

anything to say?"

Tom looked at his comrade, and was about to reply, when the old hall porter hobbled in and, touching his hat, said:

"If you please, sir, Mr. Jelleton, M.P., wants to see you."

"Show him into the study, and tell him I will not be a moment," replied the schoolmaster; then he turned to the boys, but ere he could speak, the door was again opened, and the Member for Haxley Cross entered the room.

"Dr. Allerton, I believe?" he said,

"Dr. Allerton, I believe?" he said, addressing that gentleman.

The doctor bowed.

"I have come to lodge a formal complaint against one or more of your boys. Some miscreant—some unpardonable scoundrel—deluged my meeting last night with liquid and powder, painting the gorgeous yellow ribbons and rosettes worn by my supporters a hideous blue. Respect for you, sir, has alone kept me from putting this affair into the hands of my solicitors. I have reason to believe that the miscreants hail from your school. Here is one of their caps. And Tom squirmed, for there was a feeling as though lively lumps of ice were coursing up and down his back, as he recognised, held between the finger and thumb of the Member of Parliament, his own cap.

The doctor took it, and looked in the lining.

"Thomas Tooms" he read out.

the lining.
"Thomas Tooms," he read out.

"Ah, I am glad you boys told the truth so far; and you were at Hax-

"Ah, I am glad you boys told the truth so far; and you were at Haxley Cross."

Then he turned to the Member, apologised for his boys' ill behaviour, and promised a searching enquiry into the matter.

But, with the apology still on his lips, he turned as the door was again thrust violently open, and a tall, stout man, clad in velveteen and corduroy breeches and leggings, stumped into the room.

"Are you Mr. Allerton, the master of this 'ere school?" he asked of that gentleman.

"I am," returned Dr. Allerton, wondering what was coming next.

"And yer got a boy called Thomas Tooms, have yer?"

"This is the graceless youngster. What has he been up to now?"

"Last night I caught the boy who these knickers belongs to in my orchard. I walloped him, but he butted me in the stomach and bolted, so I want you either to finish that walloping, or let me; then pay for the apples, and I'll go."

"Oh, indeed, Master Tooms, you were stealing apples last night, were you? And, doubtless, Master Dorne was helping you."

"Dick Dorne wasn't anywhere near, sir!" cried Tom pluckily. "I was all alone."

"Tut, tut, tut!" returned the doctor, fingering his cane lovingly. "Lay yourself over that form!"

Tom Tooms was about to obey, when the door was once more opened, and Dr. Allerton, annoyed at the interruption, turned round to find himself confronted by the Rev. Josiah Henry.

"Morning, Henry. Pardon me, I am rather busy just now; I have

terruption, the self confronted by the Rev. Josian Henry.

"Morning, Henry. Pardon me, I am rather busy just now; I have to attend to an obstreperous boy. I will be with you in a moment."

"I have also come to complain of oue of your boys—Allerton," returned Mr. Henry, who was evidently labouring under great excitement. "Last night, whilst walking in my garden, a young scoundrel, who I have discovered was no other than Richard Dorne, flung his coat over my head as I was hastening to—"

"Ahem!" interrupted Dick.

"Quite so."

The clergyman stopped and glared

"Quite so." Interrupted Dick.
"Quite so." The clergyman stopped and glared at Dick, although in reality he was rather grateful for the interruption, as he had no intention of making his daughter's love for the young usher public if he could help it.

"Are you sure it was my coat, sir?" pleaded Dick.

"It has your name on it, at any rate," declared the clergyman confidently. "I hope that a boyish joke is all I have to accuse you of; I would be very sorry to add theft to my accusation."

"Theft, sir?"

"Yes, theft. Some scoundrel last night, whilst I was still suffering from the effects of your brutal assault, entered my study, drenched me with my own lemonade, and laid sacriligious hands upon my cassock."

"But, sir, of course I did not steal your cassock, and I am sure that you have not my coat there."

"If it is not your coat, Richard Dorne, I will take it as a personal favour if Dr. Allerton will thrash me instead of you," returned the clergyman with grim humour. "You say it is not your coat, ch?" he continued, untying the string, "then what do you call this?" he added, holding up the garment from the parcel.

Then a gasp of astonishment burst from his lips, a roar of laughter from the boys, and a double-barrelled exclamation of wonderment from Dr. Allerton and Mr. Jelleton, for it was no boy's coat which the clergyman held proudly in front of all, but his own stolen cassock.

For a moment nobody spoke, then, flushed with rage, the clergyman,

sown stolen cassock.

For a moment nobody spoke, then, flushed with rage, the clergyman, with a very unclerical expression on his lips, turned to leave the school.

"But, Mr. Henry, sir, don't forget your promise!"

Mr. Henry stopped dead and glared at Dick as though he would eath him. But his sense of humour would not allow him to hold out. Everyone was laughing; and, throwing the cassock over his shoulder, he turned to the head-master, saying:

"Well, Allerton, I must be as good as my word. Let these young beggars off."

as my word. Let these gars off."

"What do you say, Mr. Jelleton?"

asked the M.P. well, boys will be that gen-

"What do you say, Mr. Jelleton?" he asked the M.P.

"Er—er—hum—well, boys will be boys, I suppose," returned that gentleman doubtfully.

"And you, Mr. Wilkins?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Ho, ho, ho! Did the parson down proper! Wouldn't have 'em thrashed for the world! He can keep the apples. Ha, ha, ha! Ho, ho, ho!" roared the farmer, and the chorus of "Ha, ha, ha! Ho, ho,!" being taken up all round, he doctor, unwilling to laugh before his boys, signed the culprits to their seats, and beckoning the three complainants to follow him, left the room.

THE END.

# Tricks for the Dark Evenings.

### Described and Illustrated by GEO. P. MOON.

The Egg Mystery.

HIS is an excellent little illusion, which seems a 150 sion, which seems a difficult piece of sleight of hand, but really is not so at all. It is indeed very easy of execution, and requires just a trifle of rehearsal, though the more practice you have in presenting your tricks, the better they will

your tricks, the better they appear.
To the audience this feat seems something like the following:
You bring forward an egg, or, better still, magically produce it in some manner or other, and demonstrate its genuineness by holding it before the flame of the candle burning on your table. For this purpose

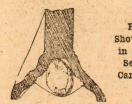


Fig. 1.-Showing Egg in Place in Section of Candlestick.

you lift the candlestick, which is one

you lift the candlestick, which is one having a large base—large enough to hold an egg. You replace the candlestick on the table at one end, and put the egg at the other.

"It is my intention," you say, "to make this egg"—here you place both hands round the latter and lift it—"pass completely through the candle and candlestick. To do this, I must squeeze the egg till it is reduced to a microscopic size—in this way." You work your hands together as though you were really squeezing the egg you were really squeezing the eginto smaller bulk, and finally make into smaller bulk, and finally make a downward movement over the candle, opening your hands as you do so and showing them empty. You then lift the candlestick and display the egg underneath.

The solution of this little drawing-room trick is very simple. In the first place, the egg which appears under the candlestick has been in that place before the beginning of the illustrations.

sion, being held in the hollow base by means of a linen thread crossing from one side of the cavity to the other, as shown in Fig. 1.

Any candlestick will do if it has the necessary hollow beneath it to hold the egg. Get two little pieces of brass or tin, similar to Fig. 2, and let a tinsmith solder them to the base at opposite points. The piece marked A is simply a bit of metal with a hole in it, to which is tied one end of the linen thread; that marked B is a one-inch long strip bent as shown, and bored for a piece of wire bent as shown, which pierces both wings and holds the loop into which the other end of the thread is formed. (Fig. 3.) To the bend of the wire attach a piece of strong black silk, which passes through one of the holes in the brass and runs halfway up the candlestick and is tied there. The egg rests upon the linen thread till the withdrawal of the wire removes its support.

But what about the disappearance

But what about the disappearance of the egg? This is quite simple, too. All you have to do is to place the egg a few inches from the rear of the table, which has either a padded box fixed there, or has the tablecloth pinned up to form a bag. You place your hands round the egg and give it a sharp blow with the little finger of the inner hand as you apparently left it. This causes the egg to fall into the receptacle arranged for it. Without pause, lift your hands, and go through the appropriate business of squeezing the egg till it vanishes.

The Demon Square of Silk.

## The Demon Square of Silk.

This trick may follow the other, for the same egg may be used.

"I have here," you say, "an egg, and a red silk handkerchief. Both, as you can see, are of the most ordinary description—or, rather, they appear to you to be so, for, in reality,

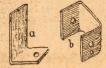


Fig. 2.-The Brass Attachment to candlestick.

they have got magical properties, as I shall now show you.

"I place the egg upon the table here, and I am going to attempt to send this silk handkerchief into it. If you watch me very carefully, you will perhaps see the silk flying from my hands."

speaking thus, you begin to wave your hands."

Speaking thus, you begin to wave your hands up and down, letting the handkerchief fall down between your palms. Little by little the silk is gathered up into your hands, and all at once you open your palms and show that the handkerchief has vanished completely.

"So far so good," you go on to say. "The silk has taken its flight, and I think we shall find it in the interior of this egg."

You lift the egg and break it, and the handkerchief is discovered inside. I need scarcely say that two hand-

I need scarcely say that two hand-kerchiefs are used in this feat—both identical in size and colour. Beforehand, you make a small hole



in the side of an egg and extract its contents—or at least the yolk. In its place you put one of the silk squares, and glue over the hole a piece of eggshell. At a little distance no one will be able to detect the fact that it has been tampered with. So much for the egg part of the trick.

The disappearance of the handkerchief is brought about by a little piece of apparatus—a metal ring, about 1½-in. in diameter, tied to strong elastic long enough to run from your elbow to one of your bracebuttons— underneath your coat, of course. Before the trick get the ring down and slip it over your thumb. As the silk square—Japanese silk, by the way—is held in that hand, the presence of the ring won't be remarked by your audience.

To make the handkerchief disappear, stand with the ring hand towards the company, and under cover of the handkerchief and movement of the handke, get the ring off your finger and commence to pass the silk several times through it. When it is



Fig. 4.-The Scarf to Blindfold.

all tucked up let the ring go, and it flies up your sleeve, the action being concealed by the arm nearest the company

#### Divination Extraordinary.

You will need a partner for this trick which, by the way, is original; and a fair amount of practice will be necessary to get it up to that pitch of perfection in which it should be pre-

perfection in which it should be presented.

Your partner takes a seat at the back of the "stage," and is blindfolded with a piece of fabric which the audience have proved to be impenetrable.

You then introduce a pack of play.

You then introduce a pack of playing-cards which you give to the company to examine and thoroughly shuffle. When this has been done, when all are satisfied that there is nothing tricky about the cards, and that there is no possibility of them being arranged in a particular order, you hold up a card from the pack which has been returned to you, and your partner immediately names it, though its back is to his blindfolded eyes, and you stand at such a distance from him that even if he could see it would be impossible for him to distinguish any tell-tale marking upon the cards. In this manner most of You then introduce a pack of play-



Fig. 5.—The Manner of Indi-cating Three of Hearts. Fig. 6.—The
Way of Indicating Three of

the cards of the pack are named, taken from any part of it.

The secret of this feat depends upon two facts—your partner can see, in spite of the blindfolding, and your manner of holding up the card gives him its name.

With regard to the first, the scarf, of thin black silk, has two eyeholes made through all the layers but one, the outer, and this feature is concealed by the inner layer, which falls just as you are about to blindfold him. Fig. 4 will illustrate what is meant.

The suit—whether the particular

fold him. Fig. 4 will mustrate what is meant.

The suit—whether the particular card is clubs, diamonds, hearts, or spades—is indicated by the position of the hand holding it; level with the top of the head and close to it signifies clubs, at the same level but further away, diamonds, and these positions at the level of the shoulder or ear indicate respectively—hearts

and spades. For example, Fig. 5 shows that the

example, and the shows that the card held up is hearts, Fig. 6 spades.

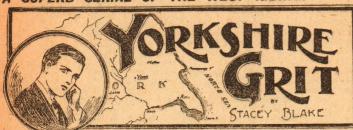
The number of pips on the card, or its value, is indicated by the position of the fingers holding the card. Thirteen such positions are proposed to the card that the card the



the card. Thir-Fig. 7.—Indicating the teen such positions are necessary. Let me enumerate those that appeal to me: 1, holding one corner of the card between the finger and thumb, with the thumb at the back: 2, ditto, opposite corner; 3, middle; 4, holding the long edges of the card between the thumb and fingers; 5, ditto, with the forefinger resting against the middle of the card; 6, ditto, with the forefinger doubled down between the card and the palm. All these have the card verticle—i.e., the long edges up and down. Holding the card slanting will give us six more positions. One more only is needed, and this may be got by holding the card by its short edges. Numbers 11, 12, 13 will represent the knave, queen, and king. Fig. 7 indicates an ace.

(Another "Tricks" article next Tuesday.)

A SUPERB SERIAL OF THE WEST RIDING.



Dick Wins Through

IEN Dick climbed the ladder to the scaffolding in response to the pitiful whine of the dog that had been fastened up there, he little thought that a treacherous hand had cut the plank by which he must cross. The falling snow more or less concealed the foot-marks of the villain who had gone

Dick quickly located the dog's cry He came to a plank that crossed an open cavity. The dog was over there without a doubt. He caught hold of the handrail and started to cross.

He had not gone three steps when of a sudden the plank he was on, and the handrail which he clutched, gave out a loud crack. The next instant he experienced the horror of a plunge down into nothing, a terrible shock, and then a darkness and an insensi-bility that was like death.

bility that was like death.

But it was not death. He opened his eyes a long time after, conscious first of a dull pain at his head, and afterwards of a sense of extreme cold. Perhaps it was the cold that aroused him to action both mental and physical. He found the snowflakes falling on his face, which was all wet where they had melted. His body was white. He looked up, and dimly saw, amid the eddying white, the shape of walls with scatfolding about them.

Then came to his ears the howl of a dog, and he suddenly remembered it all. He remembered the breaking of the plank and handrail, and the sickening plunge down upon—what? He put his hand out, and fell about him. He knew instantly. He had fallen upon a stretched tarpaulin that was spread roof-like over the lower floor to protect it from falling plaster and fragments of stone.

His hand searched around and

and fragments of stone.

His hand searched around, and touched a square of building stone. Doubtless his head had grazed this in his fall, which would account for his long unconsciousness. He had no means of judging the length of time he had been there save from the fact that he was covered with snow. On the snow where his head had rested he saw something dark. It was blood.

He put his hand to his head at

He put his hand to his head where He put his hand to his head where it hurt, and there came a little smear of blood on his fingers, so he got out his handkerchief and fastened it tightly round his head. Then he climbed to his feet and took stock of his surroundings.

his surroundings.

He found he was not more than ten feet from the ground floor. He slipped down over the edge of the kindly tarpaulin, but then he found he could not get out, and he had to climb back again. In the end he crawled out by one of the windows, which were as yet without glass. It was a good drop to the ground outside, but the snow had drifted under the wall, and it made a soft cushion for him to fall on.

He did not linger many seconds.

He did not linger many seconds. He went again up the ladder to make a second effort to do what he had come for. He was not the sort to be lightly discouraged—to be easily turned back. He was in grim earnest over this task.

The dog was whining pitifully. He called out a word of encouragement, and the whine was turned to a sharp bark of joy.

All right, Tykey, I'm not going eave you!" he cried. "I'm coming

along soon!"

But that was easier said than done. He reached the scaffolding, and went along the platform till he got to where the clean-cut edge of a plank stuck out—clean-cut save for one jagged splinter. He put his hand along the edge. He understood instantly that it had been cut. Ideas and probabilities crowded in his mind as to the author of the outrage, but for the moment he put them aside because there was this work to be done.

done.

The gap lay before him, and how

to cross it now that the plank was gone was a problem that seemed be-yond solving. After infinite labour he got loose another plank from the scaffolding, and, bearing it on his shoulder, tried to bridge the opening with it

But he could not get it across by his own unaided strength. He pushed it out two-thirds of the way, and then the weight became too great, and it toppled over. He had to let it go to save himself from falling.

save himself from falling.

So he was as before, and he could think of no way to cross over. He again foraged round, and he came upon a rope lying under the protection of a bit of tarpaulin. It was there evidently to be used for lashing a higher platform to the poles as the building progressed. He took it with not very much hope of being able to do anything with it, yet the determination to try. He tested the length, and then made a running noose in it.

noose in it.

He made the first cast to try to loop a projecting end of scaffolding that showed up distinctly against the dark wall, because there was a white edge of snow on the top of it, but he was a long way out. There is an art in casting a rope, and he was not proficient in it. But he was stubbornly persevering. He threw, and threw again. Once it caught, but slipped off again. At about the thirtieth cast the loop hooked neatly on. He drew it tight, and then fastened his near end securely. curely.

ing to move either way. He balanced in his mind whether he should go back and try to secure the rope pro-perly, or whether he should keep on. It was his movement that gave it the It was his movement that gave it the tendency to slip, and as he was in the middle there was not much choice in the two alternatives. So he went for-ward, but very carefully, a bit at a time, so that he should not agitate the

Now he was but a yard away. Now a foot. His heart was beating like a sledgehammer. He could not see the other end of the rope now, but he knew it must be very near the edge. Would it hold?

Now he was but a foot from safety. The dog somehow got an awkward position and began to struggle. Every moment he expected the rope

Every moment he expected the rope would go.

And it did—the very moment he gripped his arm round a plank upon the other side. He dragged himself up to safety, and sat there a moment while he recovered strength and breath. Then he descended the ladder and made for the gateway.

If Scrimshaw had returned with the timekeeper as he had promised, he had gone away again. But had he been? In the yard he could see some half-snowed-up tracks leading from the gate and back, so he concluded that they must have come—probably during the time he was lying insensible—which was what had happened, though Dick did not know what Scrimshaw's motive had been, nor of of the share he had had in the plot. Widdop he suspected, and possibly Ackroyd. There was no doubt in his mind as to the feeling that pair had for him.

In the end he got out of the yard

for him.

In the end he got out of the yard by reaching the top of the wall up a short builder's ladder, and dropped down the other side.

He went straight home to Johnson's Fold. He arrived there to find the door unfastened and no one there. The new lodger had either not returned, or had gone out again. He called upstairs, but there was no reply.

The rest was easy. He swarmed monkeylike along the rope. He safely reached the other side, and a moment later Tykey, the mongrel terrier pup, was frantically licking his face.

"But we've got to get back, Tykey," he said. "You can't walk on a rope, nor yet cling to one. Now, how is it to be done? Someone has fastened you up pretty tightly here. You had better be fastened to me in the same way. And don't struggle, Tykey, or it'll hurt."

So Dick started back again across the rope with the pup tied to him. Half-way across he had a shock. He was going, of course, head first.

Happening to glance back, he saw with a thrill of apprehension that the slip-knot was none too secure; indeed, that the loop was, as he put the pressure on it, slowly working itself to the end of the scaffold-pole.

For a moment he stayed still, fear-

"It looks like it," Dick answered, puzzled at the aspect of the man. "But I've had a bit of time since I went up that ladder."

Scrimshaw's cunning came back with the sudden lifting of the load of fear from his mind.

with the sudden lifting of the load of fear from his mind.

"I've been in a fair fright for you, lad," he said. "I came back with the timekeeper. We shouted for you. There was no answer. We didn't know where you had gone. Do you say you went up a ladder? I was on the other side of the wall, you will remember, and I couldn't see. When you didn't answer, we both thought you must have gone away again. But when I got back here and found you were not at home, I began to get nervous. I went out again, but could not find you. I say, lad, you've given me a fair startler. But I thank 'Eaven you are safe. Tell me about it, lad. What has happened?"

Dick was impressed by the sympathy shown. He told Scrimshaw the details of his misadventure.

"But someone's done it." he said finally. "Someone stole Tykey, and someone sawed that plank. I'm going to find out. I'm not going to stand this any longer. I know this—someone wants to murder me."

"Dick, lad—Dick, don't say that! It would be hawful to think of anyone so wicked!"

"Yes, I know. It's awful to think about, but it's worse to be in it. Look

"Yes, I know. It's awful to think about, but it's worse to be in it. Look here, someone wants me out of the way, and if you want to know who it is, it's Mr. Ackroyd."

"You don't say so! My dear lad, what makes you think so? How can that be?"

"That's just what I've done," said Dick, off his guard—"at least, not in my pocket. But I've sewn it up somewhere where no one would guess."
"That's right—that's

one would guess."
"That's right—that's right!" exclaimed Scrimshaw, with the idea in his brain warming flame, shaw, with the idea in his brain warming up into a living flame. "Only don't tell me where it is! You shouldn't trust anyone, you know!" And he pressed his elbows into his narrow chest as he rasped his hands together, and crackled the stiff envelope in his breast-pocket—the envelope that contained a cheque for a thousand pounds. "No, don't tell anybody."

body.

And Dick didn't, a little to Scrimshaw's disappoint-ment, though he considered the hint good enough to indicate that the document was in the house—and well, much can be found whe the search is carefu careful

Nemesis.

OW, Scrimshaw went to bed with a management of the second seco He was genuinely glad that Dick was not dead. He was scoundrel enough, but he would not touch or approach that worst crime of all any more.

At the moment he was in possession of a cheque for a thousand pounds, which he earnestly wanted to turn into hard cash at the earliest possible moment. It was payment for a deed he had tried to commit, but the hand of Heaven had saved him from.

short, it was payment for the death of Dick Allen. But when James Ackroyd discovered that Dick was alive, what then? As sure as fate he would stop payment of the cheque, unless it could be cashed before he found out that the boy still fived.

There was the problem—to keep Dick Allen and Ackroyd from meeting till after the bank was open, and he had got his cheque through. He at first thought that likely enough Dick would stay in bed the following morning, at least, to nurse his wound, but he did not calculate quite on the stern stuff that the boy was made of.

At five o'clock Dick was stirring as usual. Scrimshaw got up to protest.

"Fair madness, my lad, going to work this morning!" he said. "You look a bit bad, I can tell you! You'll be knocking yourself up altogether if you're not careful. You take my tip and go back to bed for a bit!"

"No, I must go!" said Dick. "I want to call attention to that sawn plank before it gets moved away. I tell you, I'm going to find out who's been at the bottom of this!"

"What a boy you are for not taking advice!" sighed Scrimshaw. "It was just the same when you went over the mill wall last night. I told you to be careful—them was my last words to you; but there you go running into danger straight off."

So Dick went off, with Scrimshaw breathing hope into his ears that he would come to no harm.

"At least," he said to himself, when he was alone, "I don't much mind what happens to you so long as I don't have anything to do with it.

what makes you think so? How can that be?"

"Because, if I live, I am going to have, according to Mr. Trimble's will, a share in the mill. If I live, do you see? If I don't live, I don't get it. I've got a paper that makes my claim good."

"You've got a paper, have you?" echoed Scrimshaw, with a new interest glimmering at the back of his brain. "A paper—eh? That's good. But you keep a tight hand on that paper, because it's valuable. Don't you keep it in any of them lawyer's offices, which is allus running the risk of being burgled. If it was my paper, and if it said I was to have a share in the Bank of England, what should I do with it? I should never let go of it, sleeping or waking. I should sew it up in my pocket and just live with it."

"That's just what I've done." said Disk of the can be a good for the lawy?"

THE "LITTLE SPITFIRE" AIR RIFLE.

(Continued on the next page.) mind what happens to you so long as





most accurate air gua. Shoots slugs, darts, or sh , and is guaranteed to kill at long range. Specia en or saloon practice, bird and rabbit shooting, all t practice. Securely packed, with sample of ab. Illustrated List, Id.—B. FRANNS & CO., 8. Knipler Works. Caroline Strate. Historian-hors



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# THE RULES OF FOOTBALL.

Explained and Simplified for the Boy Player.

HEN the ball is in touch, a player of the a player of the opposite side to that which played it out shall throw it from the point on the touch-line where it left the field of play. The player throwing the ball must stand the touch-line facing the field the touch-line facing the neid of play, and shall throw the ball in over his head with both hands in any direction, and it shall be in play when thrown in. A goal shall not be scored from a throw in, and the thrower shall not again play until the ball has been played by another player.

Comment: This law is complied with if the player has any part of both feet on the line when he throws

both feet on the line when he throws the ball in.

When is the ball out of play? Turn to the next rule, and you will find it set out as plainly as possible:

When a player plays the ball, or throws it in from touch, any player of the same side who at such moment of playing or throwing in is nearer to his

opponents' goal-line

opponents' goal-line

is out of play, and may not touch the ball himself nor in any way interfere with an opponent or with the play until the ball has been again played, unless there are, at such moment of playing or throwing in, at least three of his opponents nearer their own goal-line. A player is not out of play when the ball is kicked off from goal, when a corner-kick is taken,

when the ball has been last

when the ball has been last played by an opponent, or when he himself is within his own half of the field of play at the moment the ball is played or thrown in from touch by any player of the same side.

Comment: A flag may be placed opposite the half-way line on each side of the field of play, but it must be at least one yard from the touchline and on a staff not less than five feet high.

The goalkeeper, as many imagine,

The goalkeeper, as many imagine,

not the only man

can take a goal-kick. For

when the ball is played behind the goal-line by a player of the opposite side, it shall be kicked off by any one of the players behind whose goal-line it went within that half of the line it went within that half of the goal area nearest the point where the ball left the field of play; but if played behind by anyone of the side whose goal-line it is, a player of the opposite side shall kick it from within one yard of the nearest corner flagstaff. In either case an opponent shall not be allowed within six yards of the ball until it is kicked off.

Comments: The corner flag must not be removed when a corner-kick

Comments: The corner flag must not be removed when a corner-kick is taken. The defending side should see, when a corner is being taken, that every man on the opposite side is covered, and that the goalkeeper is not in any way impeded, in chance of a stray shot.

(Another of these grand articles next Tuesday.)

쯍퍉쏡<u>뜡</u>캶뀵캶뀵캶캶캶캶 YORKSHIRE GRIT. (Continued from the previous page.)

the search after Dick's precious document that he judged was concealed somewhere in the house—"sewn up somewhere," as Dick had said.

He ran an astute eye over the contents of the cottage first of all. His choice for first examination fell on the bedding—that in Dick's room—for a start. He carefully examined the pillows, stroking, pressing, and feeling every inch. He followed with the bolster. Nothing rewarded him. Then he went on to the flock bed, going over every inch of it with scrupulous care. Presently he felt something that made his eyes open wide with exultant anticipation. He could feel something that crackled like paper. Careful examination of the ticking also showed that it had been cut at that place and carefully stitched up again.

He pulled out his penkmife and cut the stitches, and, putting his hand inside the slit, he pulled out a long envelope. A glance at its contents showed him that it was the document he sought. He hid it away in his pocket at once, and, taking a folded newspaper, he slipped it into the bed where the long envelope had been, then he looked about for a needle and thread, which he eventually discovered in Jessie's room, and with it he carefully sewed up the slit again, and afterwards put the bed as he had found it.

Between then and ten o'clook, at

Between then and ten o'clock, at which hour the bank opened, he spent an anxious time. At half-past nine he started out. He would be on the steps of the bank when the doors were opened.

His heart beat wildly as he stood there, and the town-hall chimes broke on his ears. One minute after the doors were flung open he walked within. He went up to the paycounter and put down the cheque, together with Ackroyd's letter, confirming its genuineness. The cashier took it, turned it over with provoking deliberation, and cast his eyes down the letter. He paised a moment and went behind a screen to consult another cashier. It seemed to Scrimshaw a century before he came back. It was really about half a minute.

"How will you have it?" asked

"How will you have it?" asked the cashier.
"Half notes, half gold," murmured Scrimshaw, in a voice that he hardly

"Half notes, half goid, initinated Scrimshaw, in a voice that he hardly knew for his own.

"No, you won't do anything of the kind!" said a voice, over his shoulder. "I stop that cheque being paid!"

Looking round he saw Ackroyd, with eyes blazing out of a white face, looking fiendishly at him. But Scrimshaw was not going to give up, without a struggle what he had so nearly won.

By Jove," he said aloud so that "By Jove," he said aloud so that the cashier could hear him, "you don't look well, Mr. Ackroyd! You look ill, in fact! You have a look on your face very much like your uncle—Mr. Trimble—had before he died! You remember, I was there when he passed away, and—"
"The blow got home. James Ack-

The blow got home. James Ackroyd was seized with a sudden panic. He thought this other was going to divulge the dread secret that would put the rope round his neck. He pulled up with an icy terror laying hold of him.

hold of him.

"Yes, yes, I am not very well!" he gasped, looking into Scrimshaw's eyes and reading the threat there.

"It's all right, cashier. I was—er— That cheque is perfectly good!" "Put the gold into this bag, please," said Scrimshaw coolly, pushing a leather bag on to the counter. They went out of the bank togather, Scrimshaw feeling jubilant.

"But if you had given me away, I'd have done the same for you!" Ackroyd hissed in his ear.

"What about? What can you tell about me?"

"About last night."

"But it didn't come off."

what about: What can you ten about me?"

"About last night."

"But it didn't come off."

"I know. I've seen him this morning. But I suppose you tried?"

"How do you know? I might have been kidding you. In fact, I was. I didn't try to do for Dick Allen, and I don't intend to. The game's too risky. Mr. Ackroyd."

"You cunning hound! Anyhow, the lad is at work this morning with a bandage round his head, and there's a tale going round about a sawn plank."

"I don't know anything about it, Mr. Ackroyd, except what the boy's told me kimself. He's a friend of

mine. I am lodging with him. He knows I am all right."

"You're lodging with him?" gasped Ackroyd, startled at the man's cool impudence

gasped Ackroyd, startled at the man's cool impudence.

"Yes, rather! And I'm in his confidence! Look here, I can tell you something else! It is a silly game trying to put him away, because that sort of thing always gets found out. I'm not going to do it because I have a better thing on."

"What?"

"What?"
"Blackmailing you!" chuckled
Scrimshaw, who was enjoying the

"Blackmailing you!" chuckled Scrimshaw, who was enjoying the position.

Dark thoughts surged through Ackroyd's brain. He could see he was in this man's power. He could foresee that he would never be able to satisfy him; that his own ill-gotten gains were in danger of slipping away into Scrimshaw's hands.

"But, look here," continued the tout, "let that go for a minute. Instead of running the risk of clearing the lad off the map, why not simply collar his document? That would clip his wings, it would pluck him to the bone—what! Now, I can lay my hands on that paper in no time at all, and I am open to trade."

"What is that, eh? Do you mean it, really?" exclaimed Ackroyd, under his breath.

"By gum I do! I'll sell it for two thousand pounds! It'll be the end of the lad's claims altogether!"

"Look here, I'll give you that, if it is the genuine thing!"

"It wouldn't be likely that I should try to pass off a wrong 'un on you. You'll be able to judge for yourself. But I should want hard cash. No more of your cheques, thank you! You get the money out of the bank ready in your safe, and I'll come round this afternoon."

"Better be to-night," Ackroyd said. "I shall be there alone. There are too many long ears about during work hours for my fancy."

"Right-oh! I'll be there!" Scrimshaw said.

James Ackroyd did a lot of hard thinking that day. It was thinking that gave him no pleasure, but a lot of uneasiness. It did not take much reasoning out to discover that he was in an uncomfortable position. He was more. He was as a rat in a trap. And the trap was in the hands of Scrimshaw held him under his thumb, because Scrimshaw could put

trap. And the trap was in the later of Scrimshaw held him under his thumb, because Scrimshaw could put a rope round his neck. Scrimshaw would fasten on him like a leech while there was a penny left. He would suck him dry like an orange, and, then, in the end, probably betray him.

then, in the end, probably betray him.

What was to be done? How could he rid himself of this man who knew too much? He thought hard, and he thought darkly. Scrimshaw was coming to the mill to-night—after dark—when no one would be there!

When night came, full of confidence and exultant to the brim. Scrimshaw came along to Trimble's mill to complete the great coup that was going to set him up for life. It was his life's habit to be seenetive and cantious, and he looked carefully about him as he entered the mill yard. There was no one to be seen. Vulcan Street was quite deserted, though some way off he could hear a chorus of boyish voices singing carels. For this was Christmas Eve.

We are not daily beggars that beg from door to door; We are your neighbour's children that you have seen before."

Thus the old Yorkshire carel. Scrimshaw rubbed his hands. Yes, it was going to be a merry Christmas for him with this fortune in his hands. The future was very golden, too. With that knowledge in his brain he could be always sure of a substantial pension while James Ackroyd lived. He carried a bag with him. That was to put the money in that he was going to receive now.

So he went up the stairs, quietly pushed open the office door, and went inside. Ackroyd's voice called him into the inner office.

"Ha, good-evening, Mr. Ackroyd! A real, good old-fashioned Christmas, eh?"

eh?"
He rasped his hands together and leered across at Acknoyd. The latter was in little mood for pleasantries. He had been drinking heavily; his flushed face and bloodshot eyes showed that. Moreover, his mind was heavy, with a mingling of uneasiness and desperate resolve.

"Where's that paper?" he said sullenly.

"Where's your money?" asked Scrimshaw. "Fair, fair, you know! Show me that, as a evidence of good faith, and I'll show the paper!"

Ackroyd opened the safe. He took out a big, japanned cashbox, having contents of some weight.

"Some is in gold; some in paper."

"Lemme look!" cried Scrimshaw.

"That might only be coppers inside."

side."

"Can't you trust me, eh?"

"Not a penn'orth. Lemme look."
The box was opened. He gloated over its contents.

"Righto! Now I'll show you the paper—only keep your 'ands off it. You can look, but you aren't to touch. Look here, you put your hands in your trousers' pockets while I spread it on the table for you to read."

"My jacket pocket will do as well."

I spread it on the table for you to read."

"My jacket pocket will do as well, I suppose?" said Ackroyd grimly. There was something bulgy and heavy in one jacket pocket which Scrimshaw had not noticed. He nodded and pulled out the long envelope and took from it the folded paper within. This he spread out on the writing-table, and held it there, framed in his lean hands, while Ackroyd read it greedily.

All at once, from the pocket in which something bulged, Ackroyd jerked his hand. In the fingers were gripped a revolver, and he clapped it of a sudden to Scrimshaw's head.

"Hands off that paper, you beggar! I'm going to kill you!"

Scrimshaw's jaw dropped. He went

gave him a moment's chance of free-dom, and he took it. He darted out at the doorway, crashing it to after him, leaped through the outer office and down the dark stairs, feeling the way with one hand, and grasping the precious paper, that meant fortune to Dick Allen, in the other.

precious paper, that meant fortune to Dick Allen, in the other.

But Ackroyd, wild, desperate, drink-maddened, was on his heels.

Scrimshaw tried to get into the street, but he suddenly realised that a straight run across the yard would bring him within range of his pursuer's weapon, which he would not scruple to use, so he turned sharply to one side, and sought to dodge Ackroyd round the in-and-out shape of the building. Hidden by a corner, he got an advantage for a moment or two; and at that instant he saw a chance of hiding. Some building planks were reared up against a wall. He slipped behind them. A moment later he saw Ackroyd race by. He was out again, swiftly calculating his chances of getting through the yard. In a fatal moment he decided against the chances of a bold rush, for his eyes caught on another avenue of escape.

Reared up against some scaffolding, not a dezen pages away was a ladder

Reared up against some scaffolding, not a dozen paces away, was a ladder. He made a dash for it and quickly mounted the rungs. He could hide securely above—Ackroyd would not think of looking for him there. He

He approached the edge, gripping the stone, looked over and saw Ackroyd not a dozen rungs away. He saw the pistol hand go up and he flung down the stone as the fire leapt out of the muzzle. His missile reached its mark, though he never knew it, for the bullet bit into his brain, and with no more than a low groan he threw up his arms and fell a limp, human thing down into the yard far below.

For a moment Ackroyd clung to the ladder with a shrill shriek of agony coming from his lips, and then he, too, lost hold, and followed the man whose life he had taken.

It was fated that Dick Allen, whose destiny was so intermingled with this tragedy, should be witness—at least, in some degree of it.

He, with Bulgy Fry and some of their chums, were carol-singing in some of the streets that run between Vulcan Street and Manchester Road. They were coming round the corner of Duncan Street into Vulcan Street, almost opposite Trimble's, when of a sudden they heard the report of firearms. They all turned towards the mill, whence the sound seemed to come, and with one impulse started running thither. Two or three seconds after came another report, and this time Dick distinctly saw the flash high up against the chimney-stack. Almost the next instant there broke out an agonised shriek which was maintained for a moment, and then there came silence.

"Something's happened!" he cried in alarm. "I don't know what; but we ought to go and see."

"Be goy, t' little door's open!" cried Fry, pushing forward the small entrance in the big gates.

They ran in.

They found what lay at the bottom of the big chimney.

"It's awful!" gasped Dick under

They found what lay at the bottom of the big chimney.

"It's awful!" gasped Dick under his breath. "I—I don't know what it means. I suppose we ought to fetch the police—and a doctor."

"Yes, yes; only a doctor won't be able to do anything here. Be goy, and this is Christmas Eve, and we've been singing while this, whatever it was, has been going on. What we heard was only the finish."

Fry suddenly stooped and picked a grunpled piece of paper up from the snow, and he saw there was writing on it. He flashed upon it for a moment the light of the little fourpenny bullseye that he carried at his waist belt.

bullseye that he carried at his waist belt.
"Sithee, there's thy name on it, Dick!" he exclaimed.
Dick glanced hastily at the paper. He saw that it was the paper given to him on that wild night by Mr. Trimble, which was to make him partner in this mill.

over Dick Allen's Christmas lay the shadow of this tragedy. In a dim sort of way he knew that his troubles were ended—in so far as troubles were ended—in so far as troubles ever do end. He knew, at least, that the way of his life lay open, and that no more would he be the victim of the malice and hatred that had before dogged every step he made. And yet, for all this knowledge, he could not feel joyful. For death is so dreadful a thing, and the sudden ending of two lives, although they were worthless ones, in this grim fashion shadowed the joy of Christmas with sadness.

But the time passed. Clever brains pieced together the whole train of circumstances as they have been recorded here. The executors of the late Henry Trimble, of whom Mr. Sylvester, the lawyer, was one, stepped in and took possession of the mill on behalf of some distant relatives. Dick Allen's claim was taken care of by Mr. Sylvester, junior. A reliable manager was found to look after the mill till such time as the new working junior partner, Dick Allen, should be fit to take charge.

That will not be quite yet, because

Dick Allen, should be fit to take charge.

That will not be quite yet, because Dick means to thoroughly master the business before venturing to promote himself.

He has left Scotland Street and Johnson's Fold, and has taken a jolly little house in Southfield Square, off Lumb Lane, where there is a pretty patch of garden for Jessie to play and plant flowers in. He is able to afford this now, because he is getting a better wage.

a better wage.

So we leave him with a fair life spread before him after the battle which he won with his own good courage and his Yorkshire grit.

("Chris of the Camera," the story of a young Press photographer, commences next Tuesday in the 500th and New Year Number of THE BOYS' FRIEND. Id. only.)



Glancing forward, Dick saw with a thrill of apprehension that the slip-knot was none too secure; indeed, the loop was slowly working itself to the end of the scaffold-pole.

white to the lips. In that swift moment he understood why he had been brought here at a time when they two were alone in the building. For an instant he could utter no words. Then he gasped out words quick and fearful.

"You'll get nothing out of it. If you kill me it will be found out; and I've written down and hidden away in a place where it will be found if I die a paper showing how your uncle met his death. It is among my things. It will be found right enough!"

my things. It will be found right enough!"

"No it won't," retorted Ackroyd, enjoying the man's fear, "because no one will know you are dead. You'll just disappear, that's all. There'll be no one at work here for four days. I can put you safely out of sight in that time. You'll just have disappeared, that's all. And then I shall take measures to get hold of your belongings myself and get hold of this paper you speak of."

"Someone will hear the report outside," gasped Scrimshaw. "You'll not escape."

not escape—"

Then he made a desperate bid for life, because he saw no mercy in the other's eyes. He shot up his hand, and made a grab for the weapon.

Ackroyd pulled the trigger simultaneously. Scrimshaw, ducked his

Ackroyd pulled the trigger simulational and the sounded his head as his hand went up, but the report sounded heavily in his ears, though the bullet missed him. He somehow grabbed hold of an office stool, and flung it at Ackroyd. It office It

swarmed over the edge of the plank platform above. Just as he did so his pursuer, realising that he had missed him, came bolting back round the corner, and by chance cast his eyes upwards.
"All right! All right!" chuckled

upwards.

"All right! All right!" chuckled Ackroyd. "I've got you now, and he ran to the base of the ladder and swiftly pulled himself up.

Scrimshaw, with fear giving him wings, raced round the narrow scaffolding. He scrambled over an edge of uncompleted wall, and reached another stretch of narrow planking. He glanced fearfully backwards; he was still followed. Where should he go? If there was only another ladder down!

But there was no way below—no

But there was no way below-no

But there was no way below—no escape!
Stay; but there was the high chimney-stack rising up just beyond. It, too, was enveloped in scaffolding, for it was under repair as well. Dare Ackroyd follow him up there?
He could hold his own there, anyhow. There was but one way up, and on the top platform there was plenty of ammumition in the shape of loose builder's stones.
He clutched the almost perpendicular ledder and swarmed up swiftly. He was half way up when Ackroyd fired. The bullet tugged at his coat, almost making him fall with fright, but somehow he got over the edge—tumbled there—and, frantic with fear, seized upon one of the brick-shaped stones with which the chimney was being repaired.