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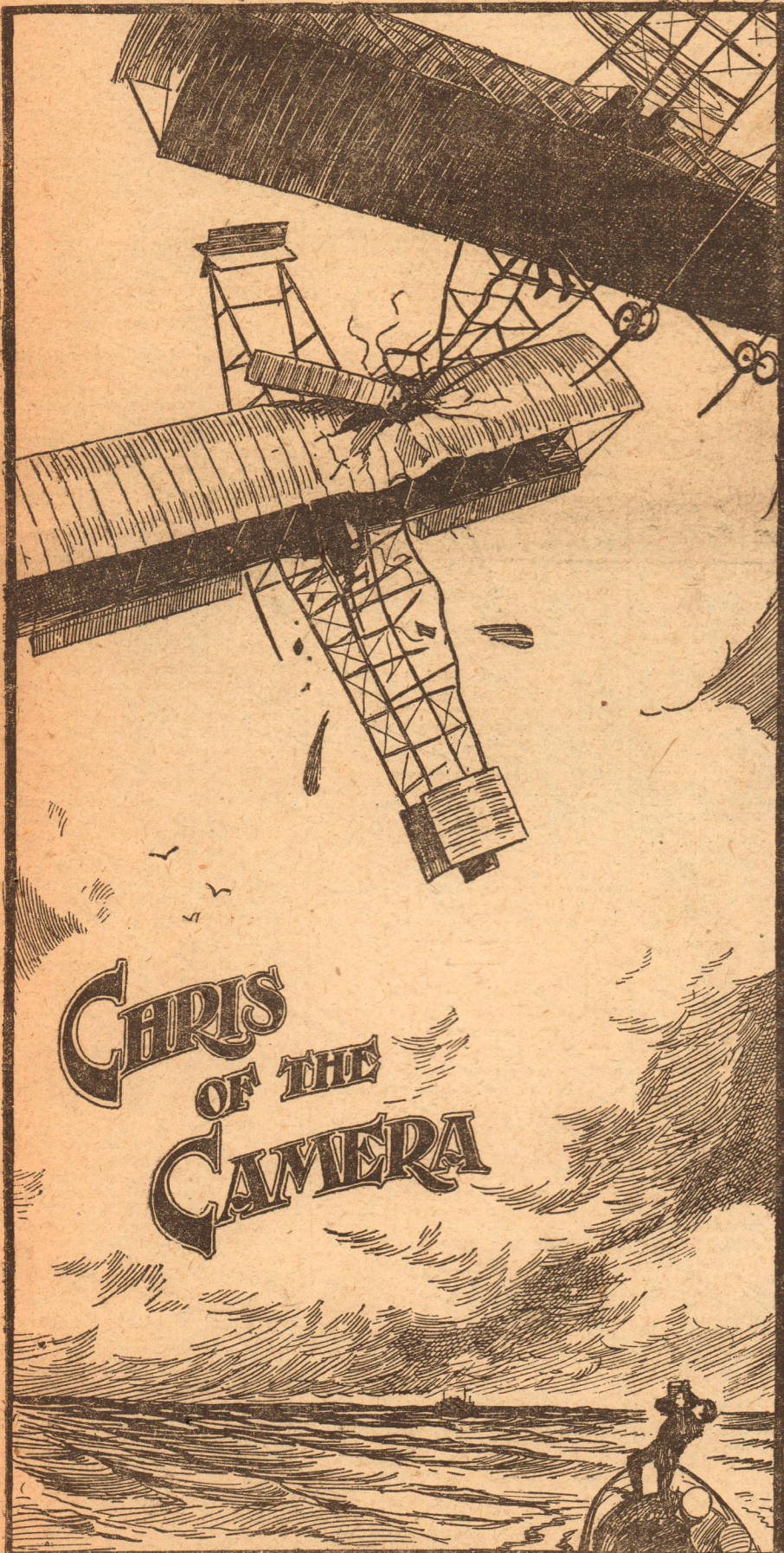
EVERY
TUESDAY.

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

No. 502.—Vol. X. NEW SERIES.]

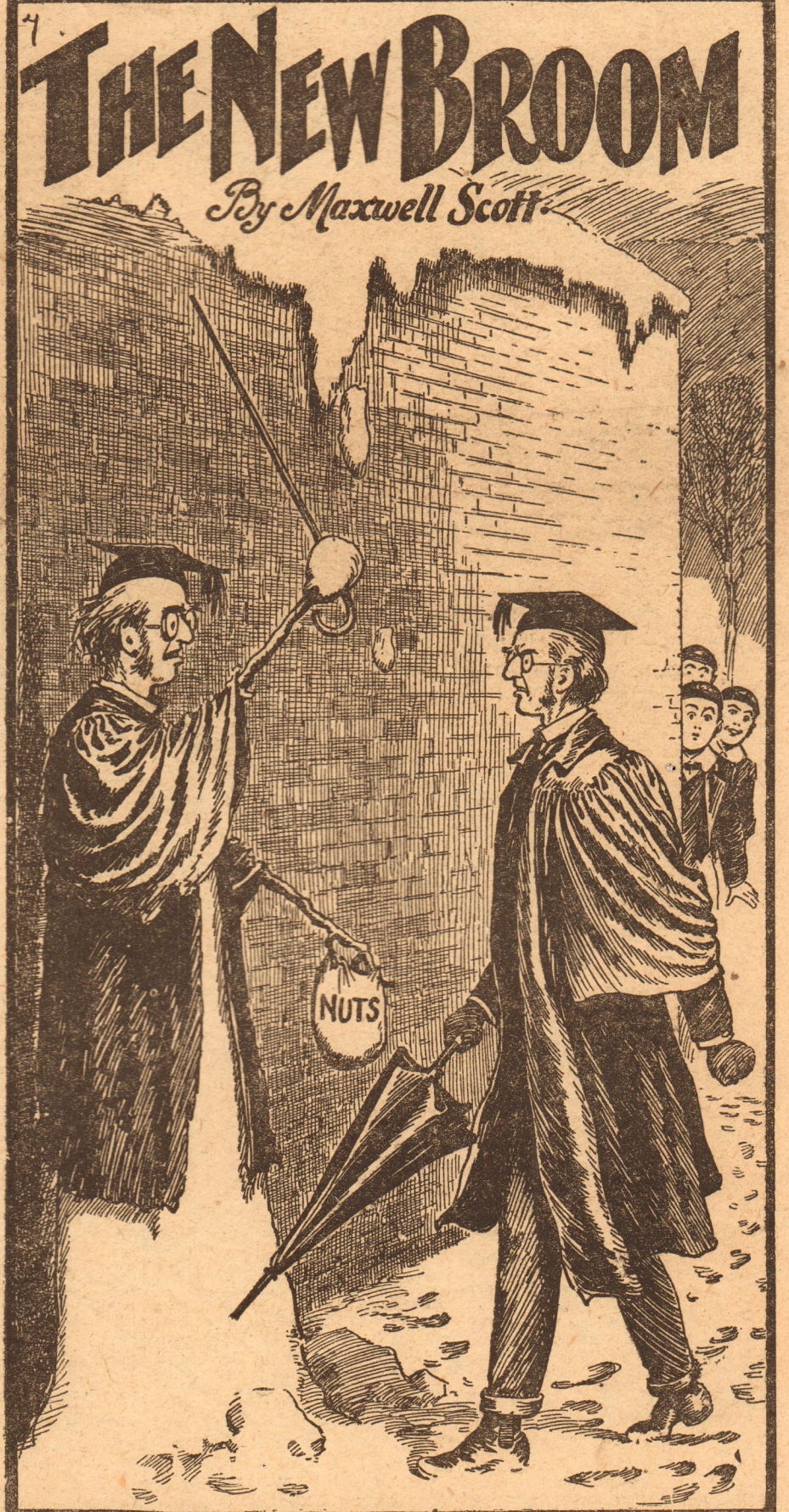
ONE PENNY.

[WEEK ENDING JANUARY 21, 1911.]



CHRIS OF THE CAMERA

The Frenchman, drawing dangerously near to his rival, crashed into him. There was a nerve-racking jar, and both machines reeled like birds wounded on the wing. (A stirring incident from our grand new Press Photographer Serial. Turn to the splendid instalment on page 555.)



The doctor came striding across the snow. Suddenly, on raising his eyes, his glance fell on the snow-man. It was evident that he recognised for whom it was meant. Gripping his umbrella, he strode up to the figure. (A screamingly funny scene from Maxwell Scott's latest and best School Serial. Now turn to next page.)



The Price of the Joke.

FOR a moment Mr. Walker gazed at the strange scene in stupefied bewilderment; then, throwing himself into the thick of the fray, he dragged Cyrus off the doctor's chest, pushed Ridden off the doctor's head, and assisted the infuriated head-master to his feet.

"Are you hurt?" he inquired anxiously.

So great was the doctor's rage that it actually deprived him of the power of speech. He opened and shut his mouth, and gesticulated wildly with his arms, but no words came.

"What has happened?" asked Mr. Walker, turning to Philip. "And why are all these birds and animals in the room?"

"They're our pets, sir," said Philip meekly. "The doctor advised us to start keeping pets, and—we've started!"

"We thought we'd like the doctor to see that we'd taken his advice," said Tubb, "and so we brought our pets with us to his lecture."

"And I'm afraid he isn't pleased with us," murmured Holcroft.

Mr. Walker turned away his head to hide a smile. But Dr. Gandy was in no smiling mood.

"I'll expel everyone of you!" he roared, finding his voice at last. "You have grossly insulted me! Never in my life have I been subjected to such insolence! It is outrageous, infamous, unparalleled!"

"Half-time!" croaked the parrot. "Draw it mild, old stick-in-the-mud!"

The doctor thought it was one of the boys who had spoken.

"Who uttered that insulting remark?" he demanded, glaring at the boys with fury in his eyes. "I insist that he steps forward at once!"

"Keep your hair on, sonny!" advised the parrot. "Don't get shirty! My word! Wha-at!"

The doctor fairly danced with rage. Mr. Walker laid his hand on his arm, and pointed to the parrot, which was dangling head downwards from one of the beams in the roof.

"It wasn't any of the boys who spoke," he said. "It was that parrot!"

"I'll soon shut him up, sir," said Tubb.

Before Mr. Walker could stop him, he picked up an ink-bottle and shied it at the parrot. It missed the parrot, and, after describing a graceful curve through the air, descended on the head of Mr. Sopworth, who at that unlucky moment opened the door and walked into the room.

Mr. Sopworth let out an ear-splitting yell, and staggered back a pace or two, while the bottle, after emptying its inky contents down his face, rebounded off his cranium, and fell to the floor.

"What—that is the meaning of this dastardly outrage?" spluttered Mr. Sopworth, wiping the ink from his eyes with his coat-sleeve. "I say, what is—"

The question ended in another yell, for at that moment the pig and the dog, seeing that the door was open, made a sudden rush for it. Somehow or other, they got mixed up with Mr. Sopworth's legs, and in far less time than it takes to tell, Mr. Sopworth and the two animals were rolling over each other on the floor, while the room rang with the howls of Mr. Sopworth, the squealing of the pig, and the barking of the dog.

Several of the seniors ran to Mr. Sopworth's assistance, and Merriek and the others, in obedience to a hint from Mr. Walker, rounded up the animals and birds, and drove them from the room.

While they were engaged on this task, Mr. Walker drew the doctor aside, and strove to soothe his ruffled feelings.

"I do not defend or excuse the juniors," said Mr. Walker. "It was extremely wrong of them, of course, to carry out your advice about keeping pets in this absurd fashion. What I wish to point out, however, is that the boys are at present in a very excitable and reckless humour. Rightly or wrongly, they consider that their rights and privileges are threatened by the reforms you have introduced, and if you proceed to

deal with them in a harsh and vindictive spirit you will almost certainly drive them into open revolt!"

"I shall expel every one of them who took part in this outrageous exhibition!" said the doctor hotly.

Mr. Walker shrugged his shoulders. "If you will pardon my saying so, that is nonsense," he said. "Over forty boys are concerned in this affair—more than half the school—and you can't expel half the school. For one thing, the governors would not allow it. It would wreck the school, and bring it to the verge of bankruptcy, to say nothing of the legal proceedings which would probably be taken against you by the parents of the boys."

"Then are the boys to be allowed to insult me with impunity?" demanded the doctor. "Are they to be allowed to go scot-free, after holding me up to ridicule before the whole school?"

"Certainly not!" said Mr. Walker. "I only wish to urge upon you that their punishment should not be too severe. I know the boys better than you do. They may be led, but they cannot be driven. If you deal with them in a spirit of leniency and moderation, you may win them over to your side. Harshness and severity will only make them more reckless and defiant than ever."

"I do not agree with Mr. Walker," said Mr. Sopworth. "I say I do not agree with Mr. Walker. Leniency and moderation would be thrown away on such insolent and rebellious young ruffians. Your authority must be vindicated at all costs, my dear doctor. I say your authority must be vindicated at all costs. The boys have deserved and should receive the severest punishment it is possible to inflict."

"That is my own opinion, too," said the doctor. "But if I cannot expel the boys, what can I do? I have already stopped their half-holiday leave, and they simply laugh at impositions. What, then, can I do to punish them?"

"Flog them!" said Mr. Sopworth eagerly.

"But flogging was abolished here some years ago," said Mr. Walker.

"I beg your pardon," murmured Mr. Sopworth. "I say I beg your pardon. It is true that flogging was allowed to fall into disuse under Dr. Paul, but it was never formally abolished. I myself have a supply of canes in my study, which I shall be only too pleased to place at the doctor's disposal."

"But you can't flog forty boys," protested Mr. Walker.

"That will not be necessary," said Mr. Sopworth. "I say that will not be necessary. It will suffice to flog the ringleaders—say half a dozen of them—as a warning to the rest of what they may expect if they persist in their rebellious conduct."

"An excellent suggestion," said the doctor—"a most excellent suggestion!"

"I hope—" began Mr. Walker. But the doctor waved him aside.

"I shall take Mr. Sopworth's advice," he said. "I am opposed to corporal punishment, as a rule, but exceptional circumstances call for exceptional treatment."

He turned his back on Mr. Walker, and peered through his spectacles at the assembled boys, none of whom had heard a word of the above discussion.

"The following boys will remain here for the present," he said—"Tubb, Ashley, Holcroft, Sharpe, Rutherford, and Carfax. The rest of you are dismissed. There will be no lecture this afternoon. Please leave the room as quietly as possible."

There was some hesitation on the part of the juniors to obey the doctor's order and leave the room, but Philip—who guessed what was coming, and was prepared to take his punishment like a man—persuaded them to go.

When the last of them had filed out of the room, leaving the six culprits alone with the three masters, the doctor turned to Mr. Sopworth.

"Will you kindly procure the—er—the things you mentioned just now," he said, "and take them to my study? We will join you there presently."

Smiling and rubbing his hands, Mr. Sopworth hurried away. After

his departure, Mr. Walker once more drew the doctor aside.

"If you will be advised by me," he began.

"But the doctor would not listen. 'You are wasting words,' he said. 'My decision is taken. Nothing you can say will have any effect.'"

"Then I wash my hands of the whole business!" said Mr. Walker. "You are taking a mistaken course, and I cannot accept any responsibility for it!"

"I have not yet asked you to accept any responsibility!" said the doctor coldly.

He turned to the six boys, all of whom, except Cyrus, were looking most aggravatingly cheerful and unconcerned.

"Follow me!" he said curtly.

"Where's he taking us?" whispered Cyrus, as they followed the doctor out of the room and across the quad.

"To his study, I expect," said Philip.

"What for?" asked Cyrus anxiously.

Philip shrugged his shoulders. "We've had our joke," he said, "and now we've got to pay the price."

"It was worth it, anyhow," said Tubb.

"No whimperin', mind," said Holcroft. "Set your teeth and take your dose like men!"

Cyrus glanced from one to the other, and the look of anxiety deepened on his face. Before he had time to ask any more questions, however, the doctor flung open the study door, and signed to them to enter.

Mr. Sopworth was already there, and one glance at the two long, supple canes which he held in his hand confirmed Cyrus's worst fears.

In extenuation of what followed, it is only fair to remind the reader that Cyrus had been brought up in an atmosphere of luxurious ease. He had been spoiled and pampered by his parents to an almost inconceivable degree, and never in his life had he suffered chastisement in any shape or form.

No wonder, then, that he turned positively sick with fear at the sight of the canes. No wonder that his knees knocked together, that his face went white, and that he broke out in a cold sweat.

"What—what are you going to do?" he stammered, addressing the doctor.

"Cane you," said the doctor grimly.

"You're not! You're not!" Cyrus shouted—almost screamed. "I won't have it! I'll cable to my poppa if you dare to lay a hand on me! My poppa is a millionaire, and I guess—"

"Silence!" thundered the doctor. "I won't be silent!" howled Cyrus. "I won't be canded! I defy you to touch me! I—I—"

He turned and bolted for the door. But Mr. Sopworth was too quick for him. Dropping the canes, he darted after Cyrus, grabbed him by the arm, and dragged him back, howling and struggling, into the middle of the room.

"Lay him across the desk!" said the doctor, picking up one of the canes. "I'll begin with him!"

"I won't be canded!" shrieked Cyrus. "Poppa! Poppa! They're killing me! Help! Help!"

He lunged out wildly with his free hand, and struck Mr. Sopworth a smashing blow in the mouth. This caused Mr. Sopworth to release his hold, and in the twinkling of an eye Cyrus lowered his head, rammed it into the pit of Mr. Sopworth's stomach, and sent him sprawling on his back.

Losing his temper, the doctor aimed a savage blow at Cyrus with the cane. But Cyrus ducked in the nick of time, and the cane, after swishing harmlessly over his head, slashed Mr. Sopworth across the cheek, and evoked a yell of anguish that might have been heard half a mile away.

AN INTRODUCTION FOR THE NEW READER OF THIS GRAND SERIAL.

Philip Ashley, a brilliant young scholar, saves the life of Sir David Rendle's only 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,

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, and he has already adopted many eccentric ideas in the school.

"I shall be disfigured for life!" moaned Mr. Sopworth, tenderly rubbing his smarting cheek. "I say I shall be disfigured for life! You should really be more careful, sir!"

The doctor paid no heed to him, but sprang at Cyrus, who was again making for the door.

"Let me go!" bellowed Cyrus, as the doctor seized him by the scruff of the neck. "I won't be canded, I tell you! I'll cable to my poppa! I'll write to our Ambassador in London! I'll run away! I won't stay here to be half-killed! Let me go!"

Without a word, the doctor swung him off his feet, and deposited him face downwards across the desk.

"Hold his legs!" he said to Mr. Sopworth.

Mr. Sopworth tried to obey, but Cyrus's legs were going like the sails of a windmill, and when Mr. Sopworth attempted to catch hold of them, one foot was planted between his eyes and the other in his bread-basket.

However, superior strength prevailed in the end; and while Mr. Sopworth held him down by the legs, and the doctor held him down by the neck, Cyrus A. Sharpe received the first licking he had ever had since he was born.

Philip was the next to receive his "dose," and after him came Tubb, Holcroft, Rutherford, and Carfax in the order named.

Needless to say, none of these made any scene, but each of them took his licking like a man, and without emitting a single sound.

"Now go!" said the doctor at the end of the performance. "And, remember, this is merely a foretaste of what you may expect if you persist in defying my authority!"

Outside, a crowd of juniors had collected, and the appearance of the six "martyrs," as Card called them, was received with a rousing cheer.

"Did it hurt very much?" asked Card.

"Not so much as I expected," said Tubb. "But the Gander had spent most of his strength on Sharpe before he started on us."

The juniors glanced at Cyrus, who was sobbing and rubbing his knuckles into his eyes. There was neither sympathy nor pity in their glances—only disgust. And they would no doubt have given forcible expression to their disgust if Philip had not tactfully intervened.

"Don't be too hard on the little chap," he whispered. "It's the first time he has ever been licked, and—well, he took all the sting out of our lickings, so we've that to thank him for, at any rate."

"Well, what about the future?" said Pettigrew. "Are we going to take this lyin' down?"

"We six are goin' to take it standin' up!" said Tubb, rubbing the seat of his trousers. "Both lyin' down and sittin' down are much too painful at present, thank you!"

"What I mean—" said Card.

"Yes, I know what you mean," said Tubb. "But we can talk about that later. In the meantime, I'm goin' to have a cold bath to cool my fevered—ahem!—brain. Come along, you chaps!"

Five minutes later the six martyrs were disporting themselves in the swimming bath, all of them—except Cyrus—as happy as if lickings had never been invented.

Dr. Gandy's Model.

THERE was a big drop in the temperature that night, and when the Raytonians rose next morning they found that the water in their wash-basins was covered with a layer of ice.

As the reader will remember, the occupants of Dormitory B had discovered that Mr. Walker had screwed their windows open in such a way that they could easily withdraw the screws and close the windows if they

wished. So far as they were concerned, therefore, they suffered little inconvenience from the freezing wind which blew all night.

Far otherwise was the lot of Holcroft and his chums, who slept in Dormitory A, in the doctor's House. They had no friendly House-master to help them secretly to evade the doctor's Spartan discipline. It was impossible for them to close their dormitory windows. They had to sleep with them open all night, and when they came down to prayers next morning, there was not one of them who was not positively blue with cold. Which, needless to say, did not improve their tempers, but only made them more determined than ever to continue their resistance to the doctor's so-called "reforms."

Shortly after breakfast it began to snow, and it was still snowing, heavily and steadily, when the boys came out of morning school at a quarter-past twelve. It cleared up during dinner, and the sun came out, but football—which should have been played from two to four—was quite impossible; for the playing-fields were covered with snow, which in places had drifted to a depth of several feet.

"This doesn't look very promising for our match on Saturday," said Philip, referring to the forthcoming match against St. Benedict's.

"It doesn't," admitted Tubb. "But it's only Thursday now, and all this may have gone by Saturday."

"We'll hope so, anyhow," said Ridden. "In the meantime, as we can't play footer this afternoon, what shall we do?"

"Let's go down to the river, and see if the ice will bear," suggested Card. "If it will, we could sweep the snow away and have some skatin'."

Philip shook his head. "There hasn't been time," he said. "It didn't begin to freeze till late last night. There'll be ice on the river, no doubt, but it'll only be the thinnest film."

"Let's go and see, anyhow," said Card.

They trudged off down to the river, which was approached from the school by a long, broad, and rather steep path lined on each side by trees. As Philip had predicted, there was ice on the river, but it was less than half an inch thick, and broke on the slightest pressure.

"We've no luck this afternoon," sighed Ridden. "Skatin's off. Footer's off. And the village is out of bounds. What shall we do?"

"Let's make a big snowball," said Tubb, "and push it up to the top of the hill—it'll be a whopper by the time it gets to the top—and then let it roll down into the river."

"Let's make two," said Philip. "Let half of us make one, and the other half another, and then let's race 'em down the hill, and see which reaches the river first."

It was not a very brilliant suggestion, but as nobody had a better to make it was finally adopted, and the boys, dividing themselves into two parties, set to work.

By way of commencing operations, Philip gathered a few handfuls of snow, and moulded it into a globe about the size of a football. When he had rolled it along the snow-clad ground for a few yards, it quickly increased in size; then he and his party started to push it up the long, steep hill.

Bigger and bigger it grew, as they pushed it up the hill, until at last, when they reached the top, it was almost as big as themselves, and took all their united strength to move it.

In the meantime Tubb and his party had been equally busy, and presently the two huge snowballs stood poised side by side on the top of the hill, requiring only a vigorous push to send them rolling down.

"Get ready," commanded Philip.

Each party ranged themselves behind their snowball and applied their hands or shoulders to it.

"Now, then, all together," said Philip. "One, two, three—go!"

Philip's snowball was the first to get off the mark, but Tubb's quickly followed suit, and a moment later the two enormous balls were rolling down the hill and gathering speed at every revolution.

"Hurrah! Our horse leads!" cried Philip. "Bet you—"

The sentence ended in a startled gasp, for at that moment Monsieur Picot, the French-master, stepped out from among the trees on one side of the path about half-way down the hill, and started to walk down to the river! As his face was turned towards the river, and his back towards the top of the hill, he saw nothing of the snowballs which were rolling down behind him.

"Monsieur Picot!" yelled Philip.

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"Look out! Prenez garde, you know?"

Monsieur Picot spun round on his heel. At the sight of the two snow-balls rolling down towards him, he seemed to lose all presence of mind; for, instead of darting back among the trees, where he would have been perfectly safe, he started to run down the path, shrieking "Murdaire!" and "P'leece!" at the top of his voice.

"Get to one side, sir!" bellowed Philip.

But the advice was too late, for at that moment the first of the snow-balls charged into Monsieur Picot from behind, and swept his legs from under him.

After turning a back somersault, the terrified Frenchman landed on his hands and knees right in the track of the second snowball, which, after knocking him flat on his face in the snow, rolled over his head and shoulders, and came to a standstill on the middle of his back.

The spectacle of Monsieur Picot lying underneath the ball of snow, with his head sticking out from under it in front, his legs sticking out behind, and his arms on each side, was so intensely ludicrous that the boys on the top of the hill went off into fits of uncontrollable laughter.

But it was no laughing matter for Monsieur Picot, for the heavy weight of snow on his back not only pinned him down and prevented him getting up, but was gradually squeezing all the breath out of his chest.

"Help! Help!" he gurgled, waving his arms and legs to and fro as if he were trying to swim. "I was be crushed to death! I cannot breathe! Help! Help!"

Restraining their laughter as best they could, the boys ran down the hill, and quickly rescued Monsieur Picot from his humiliating predicament.

To give him his due, he was not a bad sort; and after Philip had assured him that the whole affair had been an accident, and had not been deliberately planned, he accepted the boys' apologies, and hurried off to his rooms to change his dripping clothes.

"We got out of that very nicely, thank you!" said Tubb. "If it had been the Gander or Soapy Sam we should all have been gated for the rest of the term, and probably caned into the bargain."

"I wonder what Holoeroft and his pals are doing this afternoon," said Philip, as they retraced their steps up the hill.

"They're buildin' a snow-man at the back of the gym," said Rigden. "I saw them just before we started out to go down to the river."

"Let's go and challenge 'em to a snowball fight," said Philip.

The others agreeing, they made their way to the open space behind the gymnasium. There, sure enough, were Holoeroft and his chums; and there, too, was the snow-man they were building—or, rather, which they had just finished building.

The figure had been built close up to the back wall of the gymnasium. It was rather bigger than life-size, and was a ridiculous but clever caricature of Dr. Gandy, who was represented with a cane in one hand and a bag of nuts in the other. The figure was draped in an old tattered gown, and was crowned with a cast-off mortar-board. Two round tin lids had been stuck on the face to represent the doctor's goggles, and his scanty hair and scantier side-whiskers were represented by wisps of hay.

"Well, what do you think of it?" asked Holoeroft proudly.

"Topping!" said Philip.

"Bully!" said Cyrus.

"Absolutely lifelike!" said Tubb.

"I only wish the Gander could see it."

His wish was quickly granted, for the words had scarcely crossed his lips ere the figure of Dr. Gandy was seen approaching from the direction of the head-master's house.

"The Gander!" cried Holoeroft excitedly. "He's comin' this way. He's bound to see the thing. Let's hide round the corner and watch the fun."

the gymnasium roof, shot downwards through the air, dropped on the doctor, and buried him up to the waist.

"Help! Help!" bellowed the doctor, struggling in vain to extricate himself from the clinging mass. "Cruft—Mr. Walker—anybody—help! I shall be buried alive!"

In his frenzied struggles he upset the snow-man, which, after tottering for a moment on its pedestal, toppled over and fell on the top of him.

"He's fairly fixed up now!" grinned Holoeroft, peering cautiously round the corner. "Our snow-man has fallen on the top of him, and he can't possibly get out unless—

Hallo! Here comes Soapy Sam!"

Alarmed by the doctor's shouts, Mr. Sopworth came running round the other end of the gymnasium. Quick as thought, Holoeroft turned to Tubb and whispered something in his ear. Tubb passed the word to Philip, and in little more time than it takes to tell Philip climbed on to Tubb's shoulders, and Holoeroft, after climbing on to Philip's shoulders, hauled himself on to the low gymnasium roof.

"My dear doctor!" cried Mr. Sopworth, gazing at the doctor in open-mouthed amazement. "This is a most extraordinary situation in which to find you. I say this is a most extraordinary situation in which to find you. Whatever has happened?"

"Never mind what has happened," growled the doctor, trying to tear away the snow-man's gown, which had wound itself round his head.

"Don't stand there gaping like a moonstruck idiot! Help me out of this. Catch hold of my hands and pull me out."

Mr. Sopworth stooped down and caught hold of the doctor's hands. At the same moment Holoeroft, on the roof, pushed over another enormous slab of snow.

"Ow! Yow! Murder! Police!" yelled Mr. Sopworth, as the snow, alighting on his back, forced him down on the top of the doctor, and smothered them both in a fleecy avalanche.

"Get off my chest!" howled the doctor. "You're suffocating me!"

"Take your umbrella out of my eye!" bawled Mr. Sopworth. "I shall be blinded. I say I shall be blinded!"

For several minutes the two masters struggled and floundered in the snow, while the boys round the corner stuffed their handkerchiefs into their mouths, and rocked with silent laughter. Then at last, with a prodigious effort, Mr. Sopworth managed to extricate himself. To extricate the doctor, however, proved a long and tedious task, and by the time it had been accomplished, the boys had prudently beaten a retreat, and were strolling across the quad, arm-in-arm, and looking as if butter wouldn't melt in their mouths.

"Get off my chest!" howled the doctor. "You're suffocating me!"

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"If it continues to freeze at this rate," said Card, "there'll be skatin' to-morrow."

"On the other hand," said Philip gloomily, "if it continues to freeze at this rate there'll be no match on Saturday. Has anybody been down to see what the Swamp is like this afternoon?"

The Swamp, it will be remembered, was the name of the field which Merriek had allotted to the new football club.

"No," said Holoeroft; "let's go now."

"Come along, then," said Philip. Holoeroft was the only one who responded to Philip's invitation, and the two boys accordingly started off for the Swamp.

After their departure the others, for want of something better to do, started a snowball fight amongst themselves, and the battle was raging furiously, with snowballs flying in all directions, when Mr. Sopworth walked briskly through the quadrangle gate.

This must surely have been Mr. Sopworth's unlucky day, for at the moment when he turned into the quad, Tubb had just hurled a snowball at Rigden, and Rigden had ducked in the nick of time, and the snowball, continuing its flight, crashed into Mr. Sopworth's face, and plugged up his eyes and nose and mouth with snow!

"It all happened so quickly that Mr. Sopworth did not see who it was who

had thrown the snowball, and by the time he had scraped the snow out of his eyes the juniors had taken to flight, and the only boy left in the quad, was Cyrus, who, unseen by the others, had slipped and fallen, and had thus been left behind.

"Stop! Come back!" roared Mr. Sopworth, as Cyrus scrambled to his feet and broke into a run.

Cyrus hesitated for a moment, then he pulled up and faced the infuriated master.

"Was it you who threw that snowball at me?" demanded Mr. Sopworth angrily.

"No, sir," said Cyrus.

"Do you know who it was?"

"Yes, sir."

"Who was it?"

"Please, sir, I'd rather not say," said Cyrus.

Mr. Sopworth seized him by the arm and shook him as a terrier might shake a rat.

"You are lying to me!" he thun-

dered. "It was you who threw the snowball. It is useless to deny it. I say it is useless to deny it. Your face proclaims your guilt. Wretched boy! Not content with committing a dastardly assault on me, you add to the enormity of your crime by telling lies. I might have let you off with an imposition if you had told the truth, but I shall cane you now."

Cyrus had been caned once, and the prospect of being caned again made his blood run cold. He was not a bad sort at heart, but, as already mentioned, he had not the same strict code of honour that a British school-boy has, and he had never been taught that the vilest thing he could do, from a schoolboy's point of view, was to save his own skin by sneaking on a chum.

"Please, sir, it wasn't me—I swear it wasn't," he said.

"Then who was it?" demanded Mr. Sopworth again.

"Please sir, it was Tubb!" said Cyrus.

Mr. Sopworth let go his arm and pushed him away.

"Then go and find Tubb," he said, "and tell him to come to my study immediately after tea."

In the meantime Tubb and the rest had discovered that Cyrus was not with them, and they were coming back to look for him when they saw him coming out of the quad.

"Ah, here you are!" said Tubb. "We were just beginnin' to be afraid that Soapy Sam had collared you."

"He did collar me," said Cyrus, "and he told me to tell you to go to his study immediately after tea."

Tubb groaned.

"Just my luck!" he said. "I thought he hadn't twigged who it was who biffed him."

"He hadn't," said Cyrus. "He thought it was me, but I—I—"

"You told him it was me?" said Tubb fiercely.

"Ye-es!" said Cyrus.

ing water over him, and he was reaching the air with yells and shrieks for mercy, when Philip and Holoeroft returned from inspecting the Swamp.

Needless to say, Philip lost no time in rescuing Cyrus from his tormentors, after which he turned on them, and angrily demanded an explanation of "this bullying." When, however, he had heard the explanation, his anger considerably abated.

"It was contemptible of Sharpe to sneak, of course," he said; "but, hang it all, you needn't have punished him to this extent!"

Philip turned to Cyrus, who was drenched to the skin and shivering with cold.

"You'd better go and change your things," he said. "Afterwards, if you apologise to Tubb, he'll apologise to you, no doubt, and then we'll all be friends again."

"I don't want to be friends with him!" sobbed Cyrus. "What's more, I won't stay here to be bullied any longer. I'll run away!"

"Don't be an ass!" said Philip, laying a kindly hand on Cyrus's shoulder. "You're feeling very sore about it just now. I know, but it'll soon wear off. Away you go, and when you've changed your things, come down and join us in Big Room."

Cyrus, however, had not the slightest intention of joining the others in Big Room. When he had said he would run away, he had been perfectly serious. He had very nearly run away after the doctor had caned him the previous evening, and now, after this latest experience, he resolved to put his project into execution without further delay.

It was already dusk when he reached his cubicle, and by the time he had dried his hair and changed his clothes it was quite dark. Opening his box, he drew out a well-filled purse and thrust it into his pocket. Then, having donned his cap and overcoat, he stole downstairs, slipped out of the House without being seen, and started off for the village, intending to take the next train up to London and go to the American Embassy there.

Half-way between the school and the village he met Eli Hodgson, the landlord of the Blue Boar. Hodgson, as the reader will remember, was the man whom Cruft had bribed to help him to kidnap Cyrus for the purpose of extorting blackmail from Cyrus's millionaire father. As a matter of fact, at the moment when Cyrus met Hodgson, the latter was on his way to the school to tell Cruft that the hayloft was all ready for the reception of their prisoner, and that all that now remained to be done was to lure the boy into their clutches.

Hodgson had only seen Cyrus once before, but he recognised him instantly.

"The very kid I was thinkin' about!" he muttered to himself. "And he's alone. I wonder if—

Hallo! He's going to speak to me!"

"Excuse me, sir," said Cyrus, who did not know Hodgson from Adam, "can you tell me what time the next train leaves for London?"

"Eight o'clock ter-morrer mornin'," said Hodgson.

Cyrus uttered an exclamation of dismay.

"Is there no way by which I can get to London to-night?" he asked.

"There's only one way," said Hodgson. "If yer was to drive from 'ere to Barnby, yer could catch the mail. It stops at Barnby, but it doesn't stop at Rayton."

"Where can I hire a horse and trap?" asked Cyrus eagerly.

A gleam of triumph leaped into Hodgson's eyes. Here was an unexpected chance to lure Cyrus into their clutches. Here was an opportunity to get him into the stable underneath the hayloft, without overpowering him, and without exciting any suspicion in the boy's mind.

"I've a 'orse and trap," he said. "I'll be glad to drive yer to Barnby for ten bob."

"Oh, thank you—thank you!" said Cyrus joyously. "How soon can you be ready to start?"

"As soon as I've put the 'orse in the trap," said Hodgson. "My 'ouse is only a few minutes' walk from 'ere."

"Then let us go there at once," said Cyrus. "For—er—certain reasons I am anxious to get away from Rayton as quickly as possible."

"Come along, then," said Hodgson. A moment later they were trudging down the road side by side, and Hodgson was muttering softly to himself:

"Got 'im! Got 'im safe as 'ouses! Won't Cruft be pleased!"

(Another ripping instalment of this grand school serial next Tuesday in THE BOYS' FRIEND.)

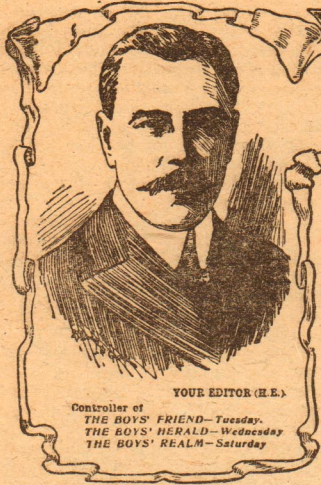
FREE COUPONS FOR THE PICTURE THEATRES.

GREAT ADDITIONS TO "THE BOYS' FRIEND" LIST THIS WEEK.

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

This week's coupon is available only until Monday, Jan. 23rd.

List of Theatres Where BOYS' FRIEND Half-Price Admission Coupons are Accepted.	When Accepted.
Electric Picture Palace, the Square, Walsall	Any day except Mons. and Sats.
Electric Picture Palaces, High Street and Paradise Street, West Bromwich	
Prince's Theatre, Horwich, Lancs.	Any performance except Sat.
Park Picture Palace, Sankey Street, Warrington	
Gymnasium Royal Pictures, Duke Street, St. Helens	Wednesday evenings.
Royal Picture Palace, Ashton-in-Makerfield	
Central Hall, Pemberton	Saturday Afternoons.
The Picture Palace, Whitehaven	
The Athenæum Picture Palace, Maryport	Tuesday Evening.
Palace Theatre, West Hartlepool	
Boro' Theatre, North Shields	Any performance excepting Saturdays.
New Picture Palace, Gateshead	
Tivoli, Laygate Circus, South Shields	Any day excepting Saturdays and Sundays.
Picture Hall, Sunderland	
Picture Hall, West Hartlepool	Wednesday Minimum 2d.
Empire Theatre, Coventry	
Cromwell Hall, Lancaster	Tuesdays.
Picturedrome, Longridge	
Temperance Hall, Preston	Weds. and Thurs. to boys not over 16 yrs. Mon. and Thurs.
Picturedrome, Preston	
West London Theatre, Church Street, Edgware Road, London, W.	Tues. and Friday.
Grand Theatre, Woodgrange Road, Forest Gate, London, E.	
Central Hall, Peckham	Wednesday
Arcadia and People's Picture Palace, Lewes Road, Brighton	
Theatre Royal, Darwen, Lancs.	Any evening.
Apollonian Hall, Snargate Street, Dover	
Co-operative Hall, Sheerness	Any performance.
The Empire, Wharf Street, Leicester	
People's Picture Palace, Penzance	Tuesdays.
Electric Empire, Woking	
The Empire, Wigan	Any day excepting Saturdays and Sundays.
Holloway Hall, Holloway Road, N.	
The Universe Picture Palace and Skating Rink, Great Harwood	Tuesdays.
Electric Theatre, Sutton, Surrey	
Electric Theatre, Epsom	Weds. and Thurs. to boys not over 16 yrs. Mon. and Thurs.
Brinkburn Picture Theatre, Brinkburn Street, Byker, Newcastle-on-Tyne	
Tyne Picture Theatre, Station Road, Wallsend	Tues. and Friday.
Royal Animated Pictures, High Street, E. Wallsend	
Abington Picture Palace, Wellingborough Road, Northampton	Wednesday
Electric Picturedrome, Scarborough	
Jefferson's Imperial Picture Hall, Bill Quay, Durham	Any evening.
Fenton's Pictures, Central Palace, Darlington	
Temperance Hall, Bradford, Yorks	Any performance.
Central Hall, Nottingham	
Picturedrome, Huddersfield	Tuesdays.
Cinema, Longroyd Bridge, Huddersfield	
Kinema Theatre, Horn Lane, Acton, W.	



YOUR EDITOR'S DEN

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.

* * * The contents of this number copyrighted in the United States of America.

ANOTHER NEW STORY.

MY friends I am sure will be glad to hear that I have arranged for another new serial. This time the topic I am choosing is boxing, as I am a great admirer of the sport, and am quite convinced that every boy should learn how to box. It sharpens him up all round, improves his muscular condition, strengthens his sight, and adds to his moral quality.

People have written to me at times abusing me for upholding the opinion that every lad—Christian or otherwise—should become proficient in boxing. I have been told by very excellent men, holding stern religious convictions, that boxing is wicked and immoral, and only tends to degrade a Christian.

Nothing of the sort. I am perfectly certain that boxing is a good thing for everyone, and my friends may look forward to a real treat in the new story, entitled "A Champion of the Ring," which starts the week after next. It will be written by Patrick Morris, author of "The Railway Waif" and other popular stories.

Another new story is in preparation by Allan Blair, an old and popular writer for our paper. This time Mr. Allan Blair is going to take on a new subject, and one which I am sure will interest every reader of the paper.

FREE ADMISSION TO PICTURE THEATRES.

The list of picture theatres accepting **BOYS' FRIEND** coupons for half-price admittance is increasing week by week. If you are fond of going to picture theatres, all you have to do is to buy a copy of **THE BOYS' FRIEND**, and get in for half-price.

If your local theatre is not included in our list, go and ask the manager all about it, and then write and tell me what he says. There is no reason why every picture theatre in the country should not be on the list of cinema shows admitting readers of **THE BOYS' FRIEND** at half the usual rates.

LETTERS FROM MY FRIENDS.

I am glad to say that lately my friends have taken on the habit of writing to me a great deal more freely than they used to. I wonder why? Are they feeling a kinder and warmer friendship for their old Editor? Are they realising that he is just as staunch and true an adviser as ever he was, that he is always glad to welcome new friends, and to give them advice and encouragement or information when they are in need of it? I am glad to see my friends rallying round me like this. It does me a lot of good. Everyone knows how nice it is when you have done a thing to hear a word of praise spoken about it, to get appreciation from those for whom you are working. And this applies to me and **THE BOYS' FRIEND**.

I try to make it the best and most popular paper in the world for boys and girls—I am awfully sorry sometimes I forget my girl friends, who are very loyal readers of our paper—and when my friends write and praise me I am delighted. But don't think that I only want letters of praise. If you don't like a thing, I would much rather you told me so frankly and straightforwardly.

You see, by so doing you give me a chance to correct any fault there is in the paper. But if you write and say, "Oh, so-and-so is not so bad!" when in your own mind you know it is not quite to your liking, then you are not helping me a scrap. So, my friends, if there is anything in our paper that you do

not like, please do not hesitate to say so. And if, on the other hand, you see something in **THE BOYS' FRIEND** which appeals to you specially, I am only too glad to hear about it.

I am particularly anxious this year to make **THE BOYS' FRIEND** a greater success than it has ever been before, and I can do it quite easily with the help of my friends—and only with their help. Whilst I can be assured of the loyal support and interest of the readers of the paper I have nothing to fear. I know, then, that criticisms of the paper will be just and fair, and that if the paper deserves increased success it will get it.

So, my dear boys and girls, this year I want you to write to me whenever you feel inclined. Don't think you will be bothering me, for I am only too glad to hear from you, and if you don't want to go to the trouble of a letter, just send me a postcard. It is wonderful what a lot of criticism you can get on a postcard if you try, and postcards are cheaper now than they have ever been before, costing only $\frac{1}{2}$ d., instead of $\frac{3}{4}$ d.

A WORD TO MY GIRLS.

One of my young friends, "Blanche," of Brighton, tells me she has just been reading the Christmas chat, and although she is only a twelve-year-old girl, she loves **THE BOYS' FRIEND** very much, and looks out for it every Tuesday morning.

She says: "I think you are very unkind when you always write about your boys. Is it fair? Why 'your boys' any more than 'your girls'? So please put something in for us next week." If I don't do this, "Blanche" says further: "I have twenty girl friends, and we shall all come up to Bouverie Street, and ask you to kiss us and buy us sweets. Now are you frightened?"

My dear "Blanche," I must offer my very humble apologies, not only to you, but to all my girl friends, for having been so neglectful. I really did not intend my Christmas greeting to go out only to my boys. This was an oversight due to the fact that I was very busy at Christmas, and my sub-editor, who should have corrected it, missed it altogether. It is always the same—if you don't do things yourself they are left undone.

However, "Blanche," be assured that I did not mean to neglect my girl readers. I have a large number of them, and I am glad of it, because if a paper is good enough for a girl to read it is sure to be good for a boy, and I am more than gratified to feel that the "Green 'Un" is appreciated by both. I shall certainly not overlook my girl friends in the future.

No, my dear "Blanche," I am not a little bit afraid of your threat. As I have often said, I wish I could welcome my friends here personally, but it is a fact that if they all came together, not only the offices of **THE BOYS' FRIEND**, but all Fleet Street and the Embankment, with its great spaces, would not hold them. Nevertheless, I am delighted to see that "Blanche" is such an enthusiastic reader of our paper. May she long remain so! I know one thing, and that is that her brothers are very lucky fellows to have such a cheerful, bright, and charming girl for a sister.

LEAVING HOME THROUGH A STEPMOTHER.

"A Welsh Reader" comes to me for advice on a question which has worried many boys. His own mother has died, and a stepmother has come to take her place, but unfortunately she makes things very, very uncomfortable. In fact, she has told him to leave.

He asks me if he could keep himself on 20s. a week.

Of course he can. Any lad of seventeen ought to be able to keep himself on a pound a week, and, what is more, save money out of it. I am sorry, of course, for the reason which compels him to leave home, but I think in the circumstances he is acting wisely. If he were to attempt to stay, the probability is that he would make trouble between himself, his stepmother, and his father, and rather than do that, were I in his place, I would leave home. He need have no fear about keeping himself on a pound a week. I know plenty of lads who do it, and do it well, and I know plenty of others who keep themselves on less.

I am really sorry for my friend in his awkward predicament, but he must face it like a man. It is simply one of those lessons which are sent to stiffen him, and to bring out what is best in his character.

Let him seek lodgings with some respectable people, and make arrangements for his principal meals, or board and lodging. He should be able to fix this up at about 14s. a week. The balance represents his spending money, out of which he has to buy clothes, and save a few shillings for emergencies. He must work hard and steadily, try to improve himself, and, above all things, keep out of public-houses, and away from the society of lads who might tempt him to gamble.

THE CASE OF W. R. H.

Most of my friends will remember the very sad story I published of a lad suffering from heart disease, who told me he was doomed to die in a very short time.

It is a fine thing to realise that the publication of this letter has brought me hundreds of letters from boys and young men, sending words of good cheer and hope to W. R. H.

I have another letter here which I am publishing this week, and I feel sure that I need no excuse for printing it. It is a plain, manly, straightforward letter, and one which I wish every one of my lads would read and think over.

"My dear Editor,—I am an invalid reader of **THE BOYS' FRIEND**. A chum of mine gives them to me two or three at a time, so consequently I didn't read W. R. H.'s sad letter until this week. I, too, am a sufferer from heart disease, and, like him, thought at first I hadn't long to live. It appealed to me as my duty to write, telling you about my own experiences, so that you might convey them to him.

Four years ago, I was suddenly taken ill, and wasn't expected to recover. However, I did, to the doctor's unaccountable amazement. Knowing my disease, I, like W. R. H., began to think all sorts of morbid things, and drawing conclusions from things the doctor said, I thought I was doomed to die young, and that he was trying to conceal the fact from me.

"Well, he did think that perhaps I should have a relapse.

"I can quite understand W. R. H.'s meaning when he says, 'boys don't think,' but when one feels that his stay in this world is short, he sees himself as he really is, and wishes he had the chance to begin life over again. In their sorrow and remorse there comes a peace which takes the place of the terror that gripped them. 'Truly the sting of death is sin.'

"I knew that no physician could save me if it was willed otherwise by a Higher Power, so I resigned myself to His will, hoping that I might live to do better. In two years I was able to take short walks, and appre-

ciate the freedom of good health as only those who have been deprived of it can.

"With returning strength, I began to get careless, and was taken bad again. I am now on the road to recovery again, and hope to take my walks next summer. You may depend that I shall be more careful. My doctors tell me that if I live until I reach the age of twenty-one—that will be in two years' time—I shall, with an ordinary amount of care, live and enjoy good health to be an old man. There is no reason why I shouldn't, he says. Why shouldn't W. R. H.?"

"My doctor at first didn't think I should recover. Doctors aren't infallible. Please convey my earnest hope to W. R. H. that he will recover, and profit by his illness, for disaster and trouble are generally a wise plan to correct a loved but erring child.

"With all good wishes for the coming season to you and fellow-readers.—Yours sincerely,

"O. N. E."

BATHING BEFORE EXERCISE.

"Bradfordian" sends me a nice little letter about our paper, and wants me to decide the question "Is it better to take a bath before exercising in the morning, or after?"

The proper and sensible plan is to have the bath after taking exercise. Exercise opens the pores of the skin, and the skin thus throws out a certain amount of waste tissue from which the body must be freed. Therefore, if the bath is taken after exercise, one of the many advantages it produces is that of washing away the dirt which works out of the skin. If a boy finds a dead-cold bath too much for him—i.e., if he feels chilly after it, let him take a tepid one.

HOW TO START A PAPER.

A Croydon reader, whose initials are C. A. R. T., wants me to tell him the best way to start a weekly paper which shall contain complete school stories.

My young friend is asking for trouble in contemplating such an undertaking. Unless he has an enormous amount of capital, it is no easy thing to start a paper of any kind, for it is an extremely expensive thing, the cost running into some thousands of pounds. Then, if you do not happen to meet with sufficient popular support, your money has disappeared, and you have absolutely nothing to show for it. It takes a long time to know exactly what the public wants, whether that public be boys or girls, men or women.

My young friend has evidently been seized with the idea because, as he says, he has pretty good brains for writing school stories. I am very glad to hear it; I hope he will send some of them along to me, so that I can publish them if they are good enough, as I always like to help my readers if I can. But for the present my advice to C. A. R. T. is to abandon his idea for starting a weekly story-paper.

IS HE TOO TALL?

One of my young friends tells me he is 15 years of age, 5ft. 6in. in height, and 7st. 8lb. in weight, and he wants to know if he is too tall for his age.

He is fairly tall, but I don't think he has anything to worry about. His weight is not so bad either for a youngster of 15. He should live plainly, and, as well as he can, take a fair amount of exercise, and he should develop into a very good specimen of a man.

My young friend also puts to me another question:

"How does one become the editor of a boys' paper?"

Well, if my correspondent wanted to choose the calling in which he would get the maximum of work and worry and the minimum of thanks, he has selected the very job which will produce that result. If I were asked my frank and honest opinion, I would say that the most difficult class to cater for are boy readers, and I will tell you why. They are the most severe critics one could possibly have, and they insist upon having exactly what they want. If you are able to give them that, and please them, you will accomplish something rather out of the common.

Still, if one wants to become an editor of a boys' paper, I should say the simplest plan would be to try and get a post on a paper of that description, and then gradually work up to an editorship by merit. That is how these things are usually achieved.

YOUR EDITOR (H. E.).

JOHNNY SUMMERS' LIFE STORY.

A Boxer who is Always Merry and Bright, & whose Fights are a Pleasure to Watch.

IN the office-window of one of the sporting papers, any day for a long time past, you will have been able to see a strikingly life-like photograph of a boxer facing an imaginary foe. The photograph is of a small, well-made man, broad and thick, and perfectly poised on his feet. His muscles show splendidly, but yet they are not too big, but loose and supple. That is Johnny Summers.

He has the very finest reputation as a straight man as well as a first-class boxer. Probably there is no one who has such a mastery of the good old-fashioned English style of boxing, and certainly no one who has so quick and true and perfect a straight left.

To write a full description of Summers' career would fill a book, and a big one at that. It is enough, however, just to glance at some of his principal performances, and then you will see how hard work and dogged perseverance pay a boxer.

First of all, Johnny Summers was born at Custom House on January 21st, 1883. To look at, he is just a jolly, frank-looking lad. Indeed, it is hard to believe that he is twenty-seven years of age. He is 5ft. 5ins. in height, and his weight is 9st. 9lb. It is wonderful the strength that can be packed up in such a small weight!

And then look at some of the men he has beaten! George Moore, Young Josephs, Boss Edwards, Seaman Hayes, Joe Fletcher, Spike Robson, the hardy and brave fighter from Newcastle—all of them first-rate men. Then came his reverse at the hands of the American champion light-weight, Jimmy Britt, a reverse which convinced no one of Britt's superiority in the ring. This was a ten-round contest, held at Wonderland on November 2nd, 1908. Three weeks' later Johnny Summers appeared at the National Sporting Club, and beat Jack Goldswain in fourteen rounds, though the latter was very much the heavier man.

On February 22nd of the following year a return match was arranged between Britt and Summers, this time held at the N.S.C. Both men were supremely confident of winning. I shall never forget talking to Summers a few nights before the fight. It was at his training quarters at Jack Straw's Castle, the famous hostelry on Hampstead Heath.

"I am not going to boast," he said quietly and modestly. "He may beat me, but I don't think he will."

There was a ring in his voice which spoke of sincerity and fixed purpose. And I was not at all surprised when I saw him easily defeat Jimmy Britt on points.

The following July—in order to show once and for all that he was the better boxer of the two—he knocked Britt out in nine rounds at Canning Town.

Summers is generally smiling and merry. He has the kindest heart imaginable, and never bears grudges. When he is boxing he has a curious trick which often disconcerts his opponents. He is constantly brushing back his hair from his forehead. His best blows are his straight left and his right hook. He boxes with

almost dazzling swiftness, and his blow is like the kick of a horse. To see him playing his left hand in an opponent's face, popping it in and out, always timing the blow exactly, and never misjudging his distance, is to see what really champion boxing is.

Once—long ago now—Summers used to lose his head, and get too excited in the ring. He did not get angry, but when he saw his antagonist dead beat he forgot everything for the moment but the need to finish off the battle once and for all.

For instance, he once knocked Spike Robson, whom he had previously beaten, almost helpless against the ropes. He followed this up with a knock-out blow, which, if he had stood still, would have ended the business. But poor Summers completely forgot what he was doing, and, rushing at Robson, hit him when he was on the ground.

Of course, he was disqualified at once, and no one was more bitterly sorry than he for doing something which is a serious "foul." It was just "loss of head." But nowadays he has learnt to keep himself well in hand, and runs right back to the farthest rope when an opponent falls.

THE END.

Write to Your Editor, and Tell Him which of Our Present Serials You Most Enjoy.

IN PERIL ON THE ICE.

A Grand Complete Story of a Young Cinematograph Operator.

RISING smartly from his seat, Gilbert Hurst answered the "ting-a-ling-a-ling" of the bell pressed by Mr. Henry Claymore, the British director of the great cinematograph firm of Pallais & Co., in Oxford Avenue, London, where at all hours of the day men who had braved innumerable perils to secure pictures, which were rapidly turned into films to be shown at thousands of picture palaces, were arriving.

The Pallais company had a large staff of operators, and amongst these none had a brighter future than Gilbert Hurst, the youngest, but not the least important of them all.

Gilbert's last place had been that of a junior clerk in the firm of Wangall & Co., merchants. He had charge of the petty cash, and from time to time small sums were missing. Gilbert was amazed, for a straighter lad never lived, and when the audit came round and the losses were discovered there was consternation in the office.

None enjoyed the sensation more than Hubert Blandey, a cunning-eyed, weak-mouthed youth, who had always been jealous of Gilbert's superior abilities, and who had subjected him to so many petty annoyances that the lad's life had been made a misery.

Blandey was always "toadying" to the chief clerks, and it was he who suggested on the fateful morning that all the juniors should be searched. His face flushing with indignation, Gilbert consented, and in the ticket-pocket of his new overcoat were found fifteen shillings in silver! Naturally, he was asked how a boy in his position came to have so much money, and being utterly at a loss to account for it, he had been dismissed, the heads of the firm refraining from prosecuting because of his previous good character.

Blandey chuckled with glee. "Got you out of it at last!" he smirked. "I think I worked that very nicely."

A look of enlightenment dawned on Gilbert's face. Instantly he realised that he had been the victim of a dirty, underhand plot. Blandey, who had access to his till, had stolen the money, and during his temporary absence placed it in his overcoat pocket. But the lad had sense enough to realise that he had no proof. The governor would not take the slightest notice of such a cock-and-bull story. So he strode from the place, thanking Heaven he had no father or mother to witness his unjust humiliation.

Days of bitter sorrow followed, but Gilbert Hurst did not give up hope. He wanted a situation, and he meant to go on looking for one. So one Saturday, hearing there was the likelihood of a job at the Streamlands aviation meeting, where some famous conquerors of the air were exhibiting their skill, he had begged his way into the reserved enclosure.

Suddenly one of the airships collapsed owing to the machinery going wrong. Turning sharply at the sound of a click, Gilbert beheld a keen-looking, clean-shaven man, with longish hair and a broad-brimmed hat, furiously turning the handle of what looked like a mahogany box. In a flash he realised that the man was taking photographs for cinematograph purposes.

But for some reason or another a few rowdies seemed to resent the stranger's behaviour. They made towards him, intent on smashing his instrument. Nothing roused the blood of Gilbert Hurst so much as the sight of one man fighting against unfair odds. Too open to do an underhand action himself, he hated to see despicable conduct in others.

In a moment his mind was made up. Running to the operator, he almost snatched the machine from his hand, and with the quickly-jerked words, "I'll take care of it for you," he managed to show a clean pair of heels, while the operator was manfully defending himself against the cowardly rush, engineered, as it subsequently turned out, by a rival firm in order to bring the Pallais company into discredit, and prevent their representatives securing admission to the enclosure again.

On the instrument Gilbert found the address of the company in Oxford Avenue, London, and having just enough money to pay the railway fare, he decided to take it there.

Up the long, winding hill leading to the railway-station he sped, when suddenly behind him he caught the patter of pursuing footsteps, and the cry of "Stop thief!" Gilbert turned in amazement. There was not a soul about except his pursuer, a youth with a loud check cap pulled over his eyes, and wearing a long light overcoat.

"I know you, Gilbert Hurst, you young thief!" said the new-comer, dashing up. "You are not content with stealing the petty cash from Wangall's, but you've stolen a man's camera. I was down here on business for the governor, and I was standing at the exit to the enclosure when you dashed out. Now, if there's a policeman about I'm going to give you into custody."

That voice! That face! There could be no mistake. Gilbert Hurst was face to face with his old enemy, Hubert Blandey!

He had recovered his wind, and his eyes flashed danger.

"You miserable cur!" he said, putting down the camera. "Don't think I have forgotten the fact that you got me dismissed when I was innocent. I know all about your dirty trick, but I can't prove it. Now you call me a thief again when I'm trying to help a poor chap who has been attacked by a set of bullies. If there's a thief on this hill, Blandey, it's you, not I, and I'm going to give you the biggest hiding you ever had in your life. Up with your fists, you cur!"

Blandey looked round uneasily. Like all bullies, he was an arrant coward, and there was no one within call. He made a feeble effort to defend himself, but in each of the rain of blows which fell thick and fast from Gilbert Hurst's fists there was righteous indignation. Soon the craven coward was shrieking for mercy, and hearing a whistle in the distance, Gilbert knew that the London train was coming, and that he would have to hurry to catch it.

With one final blow he sent Blandey sprawling in the dust, caught up the camera, and ran to the station, jumped into the train, and eventually placed safely in the hands of Mr. Henry Claymore the happily undamaged plates.

And as a reward for his pluck and enterprise Mr. Claymore then and there offered him a situation at eighteen shillings a week.

In his new position Gilbert got on splendidly. It took him but a short while to master the elementary rules of taking photographs for reproduction, and presently he became trusted to execute small jobs on his own account.

A warm greeting awaited Gilbert, as he faced Mr. Claymore over the big American roll-top desk.

"Good-morning, Gilbert!" said the director. "I see the frost has lasted, and I have just had a telephone message to say that there is skating on the Serpentine, in Hyde Park. No subject could be more reasonable, so I want you to go down and get a good set of pictures. I will send round to the various palaces, telling them that the films will be ready to-night, so you had better look slippy."

Gilbert hurried off. But if he thought he had done with Hubert Blandey he was mistaken.

The famous Serpentine lake was crowded with skaters. And as he gazed on the animated scene of bright, flushed, healthy faces before him, Gilbert Hurst almost yearned to cast his camera aside, hire a pair of skates, and join the merry throng.

But he was there to do his duty. That night in scores of picture palaces hundreds upon hundreds of pairs of eyes would be riveted on the wonderful moving panorama, under the title of "London on Skates. This morning's scene on the Serpentine." And Gilbert was far too conscientious a workman to allow his own desire for pleasure to prevent him giving joy to others.

Fixing up his expensive apparatus, he secured picture after picture, which he knew would give the liveliest satisfaction to Mr. Claymore.

"Now I must be thinking about getting back," murmured Gilbert. "I've had a jolly good morning, and

"Crack!" The ominous sound came from the glassy-like sheet with its human burden.

"Crack!" Again the noise cut through the morning air like the snap of a whip. "Crack!"

The skaters had noticed that the ice was giving, and the more cautious of them hurried to the banks without delay.

Gilbert Hurst unstrapped his camera, and the scene of the people hurrying to safety was faithfully recorded.

"Now for just one final snap, which I will call 'The Deserted Lake,'" muttered the young operator, "and then a sharp run to the office."

Slinging his camera into position, he was about to grasp the handle, when a picture arose before his gaze which sent the blood rushing to his face and caused him to stay his hand.

He was puzzled to understand what it meant, but, trained to act on the instant, he realised instinctively that human lives were in peril.

When the ice was being cleared a shout of "Stop, thief!" arose, and with one accord people and keepers rushed to the bank, where a rough-looking fellow, who had snatched a lady's handbag, was being held by a skater.

And, unnoticed by the crowd, four girls were still on the ice a considerable distance away. Their presence was easily accounted for. In order to enliven the pleasures of ordinary skating they had sought a quiet corner of the lake, and blindfolding themselves with pocket-handkerchiefs, were indulging in a game of "Blind Hookey"—that is, placing a shilling on the ice, skating a hundred yards away, blindfolding themselves, and then trying to find the coin without removing the bandages from their eyes.

Grasping the situation in an instant, Gilbert left his camera on the bank and dashed at full speed round the side of the lake to where the four girls were enjoying the fun, little realising that death lurked menacingly near.

Again and again the ice cracked, but the excitement of their sport had gripped the girls, blinding them to their danger.

"Come off quickly; the ice is going!" shouted Gilbert, as he ran breathlessly up to the spot.

But the girls took no heed of him.

Again and again he shouted, and as he was about to start crossing the ice to their rescue the bandage accidentally slipped from the eyes of one of the skaters. In a dazed fashion she looked over the deserted ice towards the crowd still round the pick-pocket on the bank.

Then again that ominous crack rang out.

"Enid! Ada! Lily! Come quickly! We're in danger!" she shouted. "Skate for your lives!"

They were about a hundred and fifty yards from where Gilbert Hurst stood, every muscle taut, ready to dash to their aid should occasion arise.

The note of fear in their companion's voice had been effective. Snatching the handkerchiefs from their eyes, they made towards

Gilbert, the terrible cracking sound becoming more ominous with the weight of four people skating along together.

Gilbert watched with bated breath as they sped on, seized with a mad frenzy to reach the bank.

Then came the time for action, and the young operator responded nobly to the call.

The youngest of the girls was not such a good skater as her companions, and catching her foot in a projecting weed, she went down with a sickening crash. In their excitement the other skaters did not notice the accident, but Gilbert Hurst had seen it, and he meant to save her or lose his own life in the attempt.

Over the cracking ice he ran, removing his overcoat as he went. Three times he slipped and fell, but he was up again in an instant, and, panting and breathless, he reached the place where the girl had fallen. Her fall had broken the ice, and already she had sunk once.

Checking himself, the lad flung himself flat on the ice, and then disappeared into the cold, freezing water.

For two or three dreadful seconds he groped about, then his hand touched the drowning girl's clothing, and with a prayer he rose to the surface.

How Gilbert Hurst battled his way back to the bank with his unconscious burden he never knew, but, cut and bleeding, he eventually managed to reach land just as the keepers, who had been fetched by the other girls, dashed up. Fortunately the distance was a short one, or he must have given in.

"I'm sorry I cannot stop," he said, handing his business card to the head-keeper, "but this young lady will revive in a few minutes, and you can then put her into a cab and see her home."

And hurrying away to where he had left his machine, Gilbert Hurst gazed in blind stupefaction at the spot.

The camera had disappeared!

The scene in Mr. Claymore's office when Gilbert Hurst described the loss of his apparatus was a painful one. Not only was the machine valuable, but the pictures taken had been promised to scores of halls for that night.

"I cannot think that you are wholly to blame," said Mr. Claymore, "but it will mean breaking faith with our clients, and until the camera is found you will be under a cloud. You are due at the Pantheon Hall at two o'clock, and you must take another camera and go there, then do your best to trace the thing. Even yet we may be in time."

Gilbert Hurst's task at the Pantheon was an easy one. A company of amateurs were giving a performance of Dickens's immortal work, "A Christmas Carol," and the proceeds were to be devoted to providing a New Year's feast for the poorest of London slum children.

The Pallais company had undertaken to supply each picture palace

in London with a set of films of the production free, and the proprietors had, in turn, consented to give a percentage of their takings to swell the fund.

The work, which had been adapted for stage purposes with a special view to cinematograph reproduction, was splendidly performed, and at the close the applause was loud and long.

There was to be a "Scrooge" dance to follow, and of this Gilbert secured some excellent pictures, and as there was no necessity for him to stay for the remaining portion of the programme, he prepared to depart. The missing camera, too, was worrying him dreadfully.

In order to reach the door he had to pass through the crowd of artistes assembled on the stage behind the lowered curtain, and suddenly he was nearly jerked off his feet by a girl with flushed features, who was hurrying across the stage.

She muttered an apology. Then her eyes opened wide in amazement.

"Surely—surely," she gasped, "you must be the boy who saved my sister's life on the Serpentine this morning? Thank Heaven I have found you! I had to come here to take my part in 'A Christmas Carol,' but I have been unutterably miserable all the time. But, of course"—seeing Gilbert's look of bewilderment—"you don't understand!"

"No, I'm afraid I don't," murmured the lad. "Your sister, is she—"

"Oh, my sister is all right," answered the girl hastily, "but I have a very sad story to tell you. I wonder if you would come at once to my home with me in a cab? I can put your mind at rest by saying that your missing camera has been found. It was stolen!"

Gilbert's heart gave a great bound.

Hurrying the girl to a cab, he heard her story as they drove to her home.

"After you disappeared," she said, in a low, shamed voice, "I asked the head-keeper if he knew you, and he handed me your card. We got my sister home, and told the story of your heroism to my brother Hubert, bidding him go and find you and bring you back."

"He looked at the card, and then turned very white. We could not understand it, and asked for an explanation. Then he burst into tears."

"The lad who saved my sister," he sobbed, "is the lad I have most bitterly wronged!"

"Then he confessed to having placed stolen money in your pocket and getting you dismissed from your first place, fighting you down at Streamlands, and finally stealing your camera from the side of the Serpentine, where he had gone this morning, and where he saw you running, without knowing that you were dashing to the rescue of his favourite sister. He has wronged you very bitterly, but if you could find it in your heart to forgive him I would do anything for you. He is very penitent."

For a time Gilbert sat silent. Thoughts of the beautiful play he had just witnessed came into his mind, and when the cab reached its destination he had resolved on his course of action.

"Let me see your brother alone. Miss Blandey," he requested; and the girl acquiesced.

And in a few minutes the two lads stood face to face. Hubert Blandey's head was soon bowed in shame.

But Gilbert thrust out his hand.

"Look here, Blandey, old chap," he said quietly, "I'm not one to preach, but it's the straight game that pays. Now let us forget what has happened, and never refer to it again. I can hurry back to the office with my camera, and the films of the skating will be in time for to-night. Mr. Claymore will forgive me, and as I have a good job Wangall's can still think me a thief, and you can go on as you were, and I hope we shall both be better lads for it. Now I must be off."

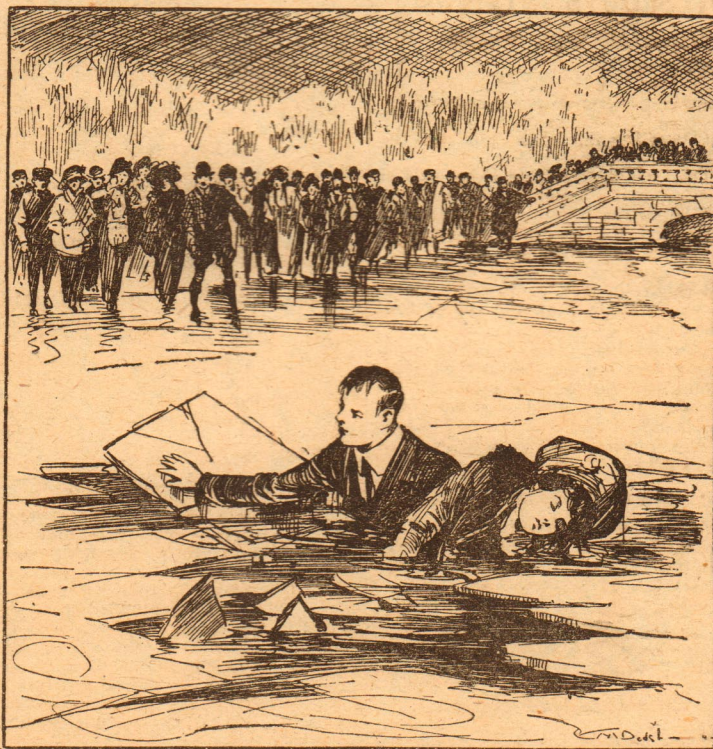
Hubert Blandey hid his face in his hands.

"You're a white man!" was all he could say.

But his sister, entering the room at that moment, added her grateful thanks, and seizing the opportunity, made Gilbert promise to return when he had been to the office.

THE END.

(Patrick Morris, author of "The Railway Waif," is writing a grand new Boxing Serial for THE BOYS' FRIEND.



For two or three dreadful seconds Gilbert groped about, then his hand touched the drowning girl's clothing, and with a prayer he rose to the surface.

Patrick Morris, Author of "The Railway Waif," "Sunken Millions," etc., is Writing "A Champion of the Ring," a Grand New Boxing Serial for THE BOYS' FRIEND, entitled

CONJURING UP-TO-DATE.

Some Bright New Tricks Clearly Described for Boy Performers.

Egg Production Trick.

TIME occupied: From five to ten minutes.

Effect: Performer borrows a box hat and exhibits a small silk flag or handkerchief, which he proves to be perfectly empty. Showing hat also to be empty, he places it on table, and taking flag, he screws it up into a ball and stamps on it. On opening it, he finds an egg inside. This he throws into hat; then again taking handkerchief, he shakes it out, proving it to be perfectly empty, but on again screwing up to a ball, another egg mysteriously appears from among the folds. This may be kept up till any number of eggs have been placed in the hat. At the conclusion, all these eggs mysteriously disappear from the hat at word of command.

Requisites and Preparation: The flag or handkerchief should be about 18 inches square, and of a dark colour. The egg, which, for safety sake, should be blown, must be attached by means of a pellet of wax to a piece of black thread about a foot long; the other end of this thread should be tied to a small pin, and this pin securely stuck into the hem of the flag, about mid-way along one of its sides, in such a way that if the flag is held by its two corners, the egg will remain suspended behind the

flag out of sight. Any ordinary silk or bowler hat will do.

Presentation: Borrow a hat and place it on the table on which the flag is lying with egg hidden underneath. Pick up the flag and secure the egg in your hand so that both sides may be shown; then squeeze flag up into a ball, still retaining egg in hand, and stamp on flag to prove it is empty. Now shake flag out, holding it by two corners, and allow egg to drop from hand behind flag. Hands may now be held so that audience can see they are empty, and attention should be called to this fact.

On screwing flag up again, the egg should be retained inside, and eventually produced from amongst its folds. The flag should then be carelessly thrown over side of hat, and egg dropped in. Hat may now be tilted to show egg inside. The flag should now be lifted by its two corners and again shaken out. In doing this the egg is, of course, invisibly withdrawn from the hat, and the above production may be continued ad lib. To conclude, the pin should be withdrawn from the flag and egg dropped into servante on table. The hat may then be shown empty, and flag examined.

When the performer has become expert enough, instead of using his own flag, he may borrow a hand-

kerchief and attach the egg to it, and continue as above—this, of course, heightening the effect.

Egg Balancing Extraordinary.

Time occupied: Two minutes.

Effect: Performer takes an ordinary playing card, and with apparent difficulty, balances an egg on the corner of it; then, taking the wand, and holding it horizontally in front of him, he finally balances both the card and the egg on it.

Secret: Take two playing cards and paste them together with a fine darning needle lying diagonally (from corner to corner) between. Both ends of the needle should be pointed, and they should protrude about an eighth of an inch either end of the card. The egg should be a hollow wooden one. One end of the wire should be stuck into the end of the egg, and the other in the wand, which, of course, fixes them together.

A very effective finish to one of the above egg tricks would be

The Egg and Confetti Trick.

Effect: Performer takes the egg in his left hand and borrows a fan from a lady. Immediately on fanning the egg it dissolves itself into a shower of confetti, with a charming effect.

Secret: Blow a white egg, making the hole at one end rather larger; then wash it out and dry it. When dry, fill it with confetti, and seal over the hole with a small piece of stamp paper. While fanning the egg it is crunched, and the confetti wafted in the air, the fragments of eggshell falling to the ground with it.

(Some more Conjuring Tricks will be described in THE BOYS' FRIEND next Tuesday.)

A STRONG MAN'S SECRETS.

Some Capital Exercises with Ordinary Tables.

IN continuation of my table movements, I will now give you

Exercise No. 11.

Stand close up to and facing table. Take a firm grip of edge, palms inward, thumbs on top, arms close into sides, hands at distance of width of shoulders apart. Bend forward, and gradually take weight of the body on the arms by rising on to the toes. Bending still further over table, raise the feet and legs completely off the ground, stiffen legs, and slowly assume a horizontal position with the weight of the body entirely on the arms, which must be kept close to the sides. Keep the head well up, and body rigid, and endeavour to raise the legs as high up as possible, preserving the balance all the time.

This will be found somewhat difficult at first, and is a severe test of the strength of the wrists and forearms; but constant practice will soon make perfect, and when this trick can be performed accurately, and the balance maintained for a short length of time, it is very effective, and one which it will puzzle your untrained friends very much to imitate. A splendid exercise for the wrists and muscles of the back and forearms, besides being an excellent test of balance.

Exercise No. 12.

This exercise should be performed with the assistance of a friend, and will be found to provide much amusement and entertainment among a party, each member putting his strength against that of his companions.

The two competitors sit facing one another on either side of a small table. Each places his right elbow on the table in line with his opponent's. The elbows resting on the table, the forearms perpendicular, the competitors then clasp hands, and the exercise or test consists in endeavouring to force your opponent's arm down (sideways) on to the table until his knuckles touch the latter.

When not being performed in competition, it will be found an excellent exercise, if you get a friend to assist you by resisting the downward pressure of your arm just sufficiently to make it difficult for you to force his down, while in reversing the movement you will resist his arm coming up and over, and forcing your arm down.

This is splendid practice for the muscles of the arms and wrists. Needless to say, body weight should not be employed, the arms only being used.

(Another of these grand articles next Tuesday in THE BOYS' FRIEND.)



The sun was shining brightly, excitement reigned supreme— It was a great eventful day for the Muddlecombe football team. They were playing the Battersea Bashers, a club as yet unlicked, and Muddlecombe relied upon the gallant men they'd picked.

Armed to the teeth were the Muddlecombits, their colours blue-and-white: As they came from the refreshment tent it was a glorious sight. No wonder their opponents stood and trembled in their shoes. For something told the Bashers that they would surely lose.

For Muggins was centre-forward, and Jones was centre-back; All the half-backs, humpbacks, and drawbacks got the sack. Billy Biffham was inside-out, with Slosher Sam mid-on, While keeping wicket—I should say, goal—was Jimmy Robinson.

Muddlecombe were two men short, the rest of them were long— Their outside-left was left outside, and their inside-right was wrong. The skipper said, "As we're all here, we may as well begin. But the man at the wheel had burst his pants, and hadn't got a pin.

Then everybody knew that Muddlecombe would win the game. When Jones he broke his record, and Tomkins did the same. "Ha, ha! We'll beat 'em yet, boys," the Basher captain said. When Brown pulled up a goal-post, and struck him on the head.

"Well hit, sir!" cried the lookers-on—well hit it was, indeed. The Bashers made a sudden rush, crying, "We'll have their blood!"

But Muddlecombe were ready, waiting for them, brave and cool, For Jenkins held the ace of spades, and calmly snapped the pool.

"Give them one more broadside, boys!" cried the captain in high glee. "Just get your pistols loaded, and then we'll let 'em see." They fired, and two more Bashers were wounded in the rear; The referee called, "Fifty up; Muddlecombe wins, it's clear!"

A hush fell on the assembled throng, and every sound was stilled. While the waiters travelled round to tend the wounded and the killed. One man had lost an arm or two, another one, 'twas found, Had had his head knocked off, and left it lying on the ground.

Jim Robinson was wounded in the parallelogram; Charley Brown lost half-a-crown, but he didn't care a bit; Tommy Jones was kicked in the neck, with a force that gave him "jip," Slosher Sam got four black eyes, and Jenkins got the pip.

Then up spake a brave old veteran, who'd never been to war, "Joe Jackson's put his nose out of joint, and can't play any more." The call-boy came on the quarter-deck, and called, "Beginners, please." But the referee cried, "Kindly wait a minute while I sneeze!"

At last the troops were marshalled, and ready for the fray. When the umpire shouted, "Foul! There's a chicken in the way!" He drew his glittering dagger, and stabbed it to the heart, And then said, "As the ground is clear, we'd better make a start!"

"Charge!" cried the Muddlecombe captain, and they charged them twopence more;

When Tomkins fell and trod on his face, and was given out leg-before. The fall backs lost their compass, and got into a fix. But Muggins hit a boundary, and scored the double-six.

The game proceeded briskly, the crowd began to shout. When Billy Biffham punctured the ball, and all the wind came out. Once again the charge was made—the Bashers said, "Don't push!" When Smith just made an off-side break, and cannoned off the "cush."

The Bashers stood dumbfounded to see such brilliant play. Their cover-point had done a guy, their long-stop ran away; Their left-hand full back for the nearest exit made a track. But the referee ran after him, and gently pulled him back.

Their off-side right-hand centre-back was looking very queer. They'd got their square-leg in a sling, their right-wing couldn't steer; The wicket-keeper lost an eye, their inside-left a rib, While their two-and-three-quarter-back fell down, and nearly cracked his crib.

The Muddlecombe centre-transept lost his boots and half his coat. Their off-side drawback got a lemon pip stuck in his throat. But the Battersea Bashers had lost the day, without the slightest doubt. They scored a duck, while Muddlecombe were fifty-six, not out.

The spectators one and all agreed it had been splendid sport— Never had such a game been seen or such a battle fought; Everyone considered it a famous victoire, So they gave three cheers for Muddlecombe, and all went home to tea.

H. A. STAPLETON.

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THE USES OF THE BOY SCOUTS' STAFF.

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

Staffs in First-Aid.

I WAS talking last week about the many different ways in which you can use your staffs.

They are most useful in First Aid. For one thing, with a couple of staffs and two coats, you can make a first-rate stretcher.

Turn the sleeves of each coat inside out, but not the coat itself, pass the staffs down the sleeves, and button the coats over.

You can carry a chap comfortably on a stretcher made like this. If he is rather tall, and the coats are not long enough to take all of him, tie a scarf across at one end for his head to rest on, and another at the other end for his feet.

But be careful to tie them very firmly with two or three knots on top of one another, because the stuff scarves are made of is not like string, and it slips—unless, indeed, it is made of silk. Silk will never slip.

Splints.

Then, staffs make excellent splints if a fellow has fractured himself anywhere—his leg, for instance.

First of all, tie his feet together to keep the injured leg stretched well

out, until you have put on the splints.

Then put a staff down either side of the leg, and tie tightly across above and below the fracture with triangular bandages, if you have them, and scarves if you haven't.

Tie again at the ankle and across the thigh—in fact, in as many places as you need to keep the splints firm and secure.

Be careful that the end of the inside splint does not press into the chap's groin, nor the outside one into his armpit. It is a good plan to fold a handkerchief and put it over the tops of the splints to act as a soft pad in these places.

An Ambulance Race.

At one of our displays we had an ambulance race in which the chaps had to use their staffs in this way, and it was a huge success.



The Improved Stretcher.

They went in for it in teams of four, and fell in at one end of the field with just their staffs, scarves, and

one or two bandages. Each team had a patient at the other end of the field. At the word "Go," they had to race to the patient, splint and bandage his fracture, improvise a stretcher with their staffs and coats, and carry the "injured" man back to the starting point.

Points were awarded for the quickest time for good bandaging, splinting, and for general handling of the patient.

One team bumped their patient into the stretcher like a sack of coals, and then dropped him through when they were half-way back. They were disqualified altogether. It was rough, too, on the patient.

You've no idea how well this event "went down" with the spectators. And our honorary-surgeon told me he considered it a most useful and interesting sort of thing for the chaps to go in for.

Next week I'll tell you of some other useful things you can do with your staffs.

A Good Winter Game.

Here's a good game for the winter, when the afternoons are short and the fields are too wet for sham fights and scouting games.

I call it the "Transport Competition." This is how my chaps play it. Divide the troop into two—or, if you like, into three or four—equal parties. They assemble at a given point, and each is given an equal amount of baggage to transport to another given point—say, a village a couple of miles off.

The baggage should be fairly heavy, and in boxes and bundles of different

sizes and shapes. Each party should have an equal amount, of course, and be provided with the same means of carrying it.

For instance, let the fellows just have their staffs and so much rope. Then they have to find out the easiest and best way of carrying their bundles between them.

They may make use of anything they can pick up on the way which will help them—old perambulator wheels, poles, rope, anything they can find. Only, of course, they mustn't buy anything.

You'll find that you can invent all



How to use staffs as splints.

sorts of ingenious ways of carrying the stuff. And, of course, the fellows who arrange their carrying best get there first and win the game.

Here are one or two hints that may come in useful:

When carrying a bundle alone get the weight on the small of your back, not on your shoulders. You won't find it half so tiring.

If you are in command of one of these transport parties you will often find it a good plan to let only half your men be carrying at a time. Let the others relieve them when they begin to feel fagged, and so on in "shifts."

If two fellows hang their bundles on a staff or pole, and each carry one end on his shoulder, they can shift an

astonishingly heavy load. You change shoulders every now and then, of course, and break step. If you march in step, the bundles will swing and tire you horribly.

And I suggest that your scoutmaster gives the winning team ginger-beer all round when they come in.

To Clean a Drumhead.

"Drummer" finds that the skin of his sidrum has got very dirty and wants to know how to clean it.

Well, "Drummer," you can wash the drumhead with a sponge dipped in warm soapy water—but be careful you don't make it too wet—or else rub it with a piece of dry bread-crumbs. This acts like indiarubber on paper, and will clean off most marks.

But whichever you do, be very careful to slack the drum down well before you start. If you try to clean a drumhead while it is braced up you'll probably split the skin.

Do You Want Help?

If any of you fellows want help or advice about anything to do with scouting, I shall be only too pleased to do anything I can for you. Don't be too shy to write to me, or think you "don't want to trouble" me. I'm delighted to answer the smallest question.

If it is something that will interest all scouts, I'll answer it in these columns. If not, or if you want an immediate answer, enclose a stamped addressed envelope.

THE SCOUTMASTER.

Write to Your Editor, and Tell Him which of Our Present Serials You Most Enjoy.

Sexton Blake: Spy.

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 for 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 Derrington 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,

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 escapes.

In their hurried flight to evade the German soldiers and police, the famous detective and his assistant seek shelter in a motor-car belonging to Professor Bruns, an old acquaintance of Blake's. Arriving at Berlin, they find the police engaged in an attack against gangs of violent strikers. The motor-car is crippled, and the German police are dragging it along the streets to Professor Bruns' residence.

Pedro, whose presence would immediately expose their identity, is hidden beneath the seat of the vehicle, and every moment Sexton Blake and Tinker feel that they are nearer the inevitable time when they must be suspected and denounced.

(Now read this week's splendid chapters.)

Safe Into Hiding—The Forthcoming Dinner.

A GAIN they were in the shadow of the avenging Nemesis their daring acts had invoked, in the shadow of prison walls.

As for the genial Professor Bruns, he was evidently in no less a state of trepidation. There was a grey pallor on his face, and he kept his eyes fixed on Inspector Jager, who was striding ahead.

"This is sickening," the lad groaned inwardly. "I wonder how much farther we have to go?"

A distance of a quarter of a mile had been traversed, and a few moments later the car reached the corner of the Gobenstrasse, and turned into that street, where a line of armed policemen broke apart to let it pass. And a little later, before it had gone a dozen yards more, it bore to the left, and rolled through an open archway into a paved courtyard that formed the well of the pile of residential buildings known as Moabit Mansions. It was brought to a halt in front of a doorway, and the police, straightening up, took deep breaths after their exertions. Would they withdraw at once? No, it did not look like it.

"Here we are," the inspector said cheerfully. "Your troubles are over, herr professor. You have nothing to fear, since the police will continue to guard both the Rokenstrasse and the Gobenstrasse. You can go to your precious mummy."

"I—I have no doubt that it is all right," stammered Professor Bruns.

"I am sure it is. These mansions have not been pillaged, as were some others in the neighbourhood. But most of the occupants have been frightened away by the strike. I can see only three lighted windows."

"I—I can see four, Herr Jager."

"Ah, so there are! I missed one. But don't let me detain you, herr professor. You and your friends must be tired after your long journey."

"No, no, we are not very tired," said the professor, in a flurried tone. "We—we are in no hurry. I have been thinking about the car. It ought to be sent to the garage, but—"

"You can leave it where it is with perfect safety," interrupted Inspector Jager. "I am going to post two of my men here for the night, as a precaution against attempts at thieving."

"Is it necessary to go to that trouble?"

"It will be no trouble, herr professor."

The conversation flagged, and silence fell. Professor Bruns mopped a perspiring brow, and stole a furtive glance at Sexton Blake and the lad, whose hearts were thumping like

trip-hammers. The silence continued for a few seconds, while their suspense became almost unendurable; and then, as they were yielding to the ghastly conviction that they were lost, a providential thing happened.

There was a sudden shout not far off, then the crack of a pistol, and then a loud clatter of hoofs mingled with more shouts. Away went the inspector at a run, followed by all of his men, and they had no more than dashed out of the courtyard when Blake tore open the door of the motor-car and called to Pedro, who, having jumped out with a whine of joy, leapt first on his master and then on the lad. And Tinker, at a sign from the professor, seized the dog by the collar, dragged him into the dark hall of the building, and made him lie down at the foot of the staircase. And by then Sexton Blake had shut the door of the car.

It was all done quickly, and with a little time to spare. The tumult had ceased when the lad rejoined his companions, and shortly afterwards Inspector Jager came back with his men.

"What was the alarm about?" asked Professor Bruns, in a voice that slightly shook.

"It was nothing much," the inspector replied. "A rascally fellow popped out of a doorway where he had been lurking and fired at the mounted police, who chased and caught him. I must be off now," he added, "for I have plenty to do. I hope, Herr Treptow, that you will give me an opportunity of seeing you again. How long do you expect to be in Berlin?"

"For several days at least," said Blake.

"Then you and your friend and the herr professor must dine with me to-morrow. I insist upon it."

"I should not like to promise, but if possible—"

"I shall take no denial, Herr Treptow. I desire to improve my acquaintance with the brave man who saved my life."

"Very well," assented Sexton Blake, who felt that it might be imprudent to refuse. "My friend and I will accept with pleasure. As for Professor Bruns—"

"I also will be glad to come," put in the professor.

"It is settled, then," said Inspector Jager. "Meet me at the Rheingold at seven o'clock to-morrow evening. I will have a table reserved, and it is likely that we shall be joined by the young lady to whom I am shortly to be married. But I must not detain you any longer. Good-night, all of you!"

With that the inspector bowed and departed, taking with him all of his men except two, who remained on duty in the courtyard. The danger was over, much to the relief of Blake and the lad, who had come within an ace of being betrayed by the hound. They and Pedro followed the professor, who led the way to the first floor of the building, and unlocked and opened the door of his flat, and ushered his companions into a very comfortable sitting-room on one side of the narrow hall.

"Here we are," he said, when he had switched on the electric light. "The first thing is to have some supper, and it won't take me long to prepare it. A woman comes daily to clean, but I don't keep a regular servant, as I have but few meals at home."

Professor Bruns bustled in and out, fetching various things, until the table, on which he had spread a white cloth, made a brave show of bottled beer and sausages, a lobster, a salad, a loaf of bread, and some strong-smelling cheese, that seemed to worry the bloodhound from the way he wrinkled his nose.

"You have snug quarters," said Sexton Blake, after all had sat down, and had taken the edge off their appetites.

"It is a good port after the Johannsberger Cabinet," atrociously punned Tinker, with a sigh of content.

"Yes, it is a nice little flat," replied the professor, as he handed a sausage to Pedro, "though it might be larger. However, I have two bed-chambers and a dressing-room on the other side of the hall, so that I can entertain a guest when I like. This is the apartment that I use most, and in the one adjoining it, beyond that curtained doorway, I have many rare and valuable curios that I have picked

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up in different parts of the world. And I also keep there my mummy, which I will show to you later. It is in a special case that I had made for it, in order to protect the original shell while I am engaged in my investigations, by which I hope to infallibly prove that the mummy is what I suspect it to be—namely, the embalmed corpse of the great Egyptian king, Rameses XVII. There can be no doubt that it is, in my own mind. And if I can only convince the world of that—"

Professor Bruns paused, and beamed through his spectacles.

"I must not so much of my own affairs talk," he went on. "I forget the duties of hospitality. It is good to behold you here, and to know that you are protected from your enemies. I don't want to be rid of you, but I feel that you will want to get back to your own country as soon as possible."

"Yes, that is our wish," assented Blake.

"Very well, it shall be so," declared the professor. "In a day or two, when these mad rioters have ceased to riot, and I can safely leave my treasures, I will drive you in my car to Hamburg, and from there you shall take ship for England. And nobody will suspect, it is certain, that I have in my car the fugitive British spies. Ha, ha! How neatly to fool the police! And it was even so to-night, though we were once in great peril over the dog."

"You are right," said the detective. "It looked for a time as if Pedro was going to betray us. I agree with you, however, that there should be nothing to fear during our run to Hamburg."

"But how about this dinner at the Rheingold to-morrow evening?" put in Tinker, in a tone that suggested uneasiness. "Won't that be a bit risky?"

"No, I don't think so," Sexton Blake replied. "As we are well disguised, and as we are believed to be hidden somewhere in the neighbourhood of Volstein, I feel that we can show ourselves publicly in Berlin with perfect safety. Moreover, it is likely that Herr Jager would even dream that I could have the temerity to dine with him?"

"What a joke that you should do so!" exclaimed Professor Bruns. "All goes well, and we will let nothing worry us," he added, as he refilled the three glasses. "Mine friends, here is good luck to you!"

He raised his glass, and Blake and the lad doing the same, expressed their gratitude to the worthy man, and realised how much they had to be thankful for.

After supper they had the privilege of taking a peep at the mummy, which was in a cedarwood case in a corner of the adjoining room, in company with a telephone, some antique furniture, and hundreds of curios that were ranged on shelves and in cabinets. And an hour later, when the professor's guests retired for the night, they felt a sense of real security for the first time since their escape from the Island of Tarkum.

The Dinner—Herr Jager's Fiancee—A Night of Pleasure.

THERE was a renewal of the rioting on the following day,

but it did not amount to much, and scarcely an echo of it penetrated to the block of flats in the Gobenstrasse, where the time dragged monotonously for Sexton Blake and Tinker, who concluded that it would be wisest for them to remain indoors. They enjoyed very little of the society of Professor Bruns, who, after breakfast, sent word to his charwoman that he would not need her for a few days, and then went off to his duties at the Imperial Museum, and was not seen again until late in the afternoon, when he returned with a large parcel that proved to contain complete outfits of evening-dress for his guests.

"I bought them at Wertheim's," he said, with a chuckle, "so that you should not be lacking in respect to Herr Jager."

"It was very thoughtful of you," Blake told him. "I was thinking that the inspector might be offended by the rough tweeds that you purchased for us at Hanover. Is there any news?" he added.

"None of importance," the professor replied. "The strikers are

quiet at present, though they will probably break out again. As for yourselves, police and soldiers are still searching for you near Volstein, scouring the country for miles around."

"And it has not been suggested that we may be hiding in Berlin?"

"No, my friend, nobody has thought of that."

It was now a few minutes past six o'clock, and in the course of half an hour the little party were ready to start. They locked Pedro in the farthest bedchamber of the flat, his master enjoining strict silence upon him; and then, leaving Moabit Mansions, they walked boldly through cordons of police to a street near the Rokenstrasse, where they picked up a taxi-cab, and were driven across Berlin by way of the Tiergarten. They did not touch any of the busy parts of the city until they had got to the Potsdamerplatz, where was the restaurant for which they were bound, and here Blake and the lad were secretly amused, and a little alarmed as well, by perceiving that their names were printed in big letters on the placards that the newsboys were displaying, and that people were eagerly buying the papers and stopping to read them.

"Ah, those cunning Britishers!" one Prussian officer cried fiercely to another, in the hearing of the spies themselves as the cab stopped before the entrance to the restaurant. "But they will be caught sooner or later, and then it will go hard with them!"

Sexton Blake glanced at Tinker, and lifted his eyebrows.

"We are in the lions' den, my boy," he said, in a low tone; "and we could not be safer anywhere, barring our own country."

"We shall soon be there," murmured the lad, "unless something unforeseen should occur."

The three got out of the cab, and were met by their host in the vestibule of the Rheingold, which might be called the Trocadero of Berlin. Having shaken hands with his guests, Inspector Jager led them along the main dining-hall, where hundreds of people were seated, and thence to an alcove at one side, in which their reserved table was waiting for them, lighted by an electric lamp with a green shade.

"You are sharp on time," said the police official. "The young lady to whom I am engaged has not yet arrived, but she has promised to be here, and no doubt will—"

He paused abruptly, and added: "Ah, here she comes now!"

And the next instant there glided over to the little group a tall, graceful young woman, fashionably dressed, who wore a veil that partly obscured, but could not hide, the extreme beauty of her face.

"Good-evening, Bertha!" exclaimed the inspector. "I have just been speaking of you. Permit me to introduce you to my friends, Professor Bruns, Herr Paul Rixdorf, and Herr Kasper Treptow, Gentlemen, I have the honour to present to you Fraulein Bertha Becker."

As the name was uttered Sexton Blake and the lad involuntarily glanced at each other. It is doubtful if at any time they had encountered a more staggering, bewildering surprise. For the fraction of a second, perhaps, they felt that they were lost; their hearts thumped against their ribs, and the room seemed to be spinning around them. And then, having quickly regained their self-possession, they bowed to the young lady, who smiled on them graciously.

"I am glad to meet you all," she said, "and you in particular, Herr Treptow, for I have heard of the brave service you rendered to my friend last night."

"It was what any man would have done," Blake answered coolly. "Herr Jager gives me too much credit."

"Not at all," put in the inspector. "You showed uncommon pluck, and saved my life at the risk of your own."

The waiter was standing near, and the party seated themselves at the table. Tinker and the detective were outwardly calm, but they shrank from the ordeal that was before them, from the prospect of spending an hour or so in the company of a person with whom they were well acquainted. They would never have dreamed of accepting the invitation had they known that they would meet here Fraulein Bertha Becker, who was in the service of the Prussian Secret Service Bureau, and was the most daring, dangerous, and cunning female spy that had ever practised that calling.

Tinker had once been pitted against her alone, the result being to his disadvantage; and again and again she had matched craft with Sexton Blake,

who had not always won. The two had met in strange places, and had faced common peril together, and had on these occasions helped each other. Several years ago the young woman would have been arrested in England on a serious charge had she not at the last moment contrived to slip through Blake's fingers, and the latter, not long afterwards, had narrowly escaped from German soil and from a German prison, with Fraulein Becker hot on his track. They had last met in a cafe in the West-End of London, when they had exchanged compliments and badinage; and now they were face to face in the Rheingold, under circumstances that offered to the female spy such a chance of getting square with her old enemy as she had never had before, and would probably never have again.

It was a nerve-racking situation, and at first Blake and the lad were on tenterhooks of anxiety, but by degrees, as they remembered how well disguised they were, and how unlikely it was that they would be recognised their fears vanished, and they keenly relished the thought that they were scoring over Fraulein Becker.

"I should like to let her know about this some day," the detective said to himself; "but I could not do that while the professor is alive, or I should get him into trouble."

It was a charming dinner that was served, and during the course of it, while the champagne foamed in the out glasses, the conversation turned on the subject of the British spies, who were spoken of in terms that made their ears burn. Fortunately, however, neither Herr Jager nor the girl knew anything about Volstein, and therefore Blake and Tinker, who were supposed to belong to that town, were not asked any questions which would have betrayed their ignorance of the place.

Between eight and nine o'clock, when liqueurs had succeeded coffee, and cigarettes had been lighted, the waiter brought a sealed envelope to Fraulein Becker, who tore it open, and read the slip of paper that it contained, and passed it over to the inspector.

"Ah, your chance at last!" he murmured.

"Yes, it looks like it," the girl replied. "I hope I shall not be disappointed this time. I beg that you will all excuse me," she added, as she rose from the table. "I am sorry to leave such good company, but I have received a message that calls me away."

Blake and the lad gently kicked each other, and their eyes met.

Though they could not well believe that their identities had been discovered, they were alarmed by what had occurred. They were miserable after Fraulein Becker's departure, and it was all they could do to appear cheerful in the presence of the police-official, who at length asked for the bill, and paid it, and gave the signal for departure by rising.

The party strolled out of the restaurant, and Tinker and the detective would not have been in the least surprised if they had walked into a trap. They saw no sign of one, however, and their fears were banished when they had stood for a few seconds at the corner of the Bellevuestrasse.

"I am going to tell you something in strict confidence," said Herr Jager, who had drunk just enough champagne to make him indiscreet. "You have been dining with a young lady who is connected with the Secret Service Bureau, and is the cleverest spy who has ever served the Government. Bertha Becker has done some wonderful things, I can assure you. If she had been put on the track of those infernal Britishers as soon as they escaped from Tarkum, she would have had them in prison long ago. But her work is mostly confined to Berlin. She has now gone to her apartments to disguise herself, and she will then go to the Moabit quarter, where for several days she has been shadowing a rascal named August Muller, and trying to obtain proof that he is what the police believe him to be, the leader of a few revolutionists who have instigated the strike for their own ends. She has just learned that he is—"

The inspector paused, and beckoned to a cab that was crawling along the other side of the street.

"I must leave you, my friends," he continued, "for Fraulein Becker may need me. We have had a very pleasant evening, and I regret that it is over. Farewell for the present. I trust that I shall see you again, Herr Treptow, before you depart from the capital."

With that Herr Jager stepped into the waiting cab, and was borne

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swiftly away, much to the relief of Blake and the lad. They had been deeply worried, and now that their apprehensions had proved to be unfounded, and the weight was off their minds, they were in the lightest of spirits. They were in the heart of the enemy's country, but they felt as safe as they could have felt in London.

"I should like to make an evening of it," declared Tinker. "What do you say, guv'nor?"

"It wouldn't be a bad idea," assented Blake, with a smile. "But we must leave that to the professor, my boy."

"I am agreeable to your wishes," said Professor Bruns. "I should be delighted to take you to some museum of antiquities, and show you some fossils of the Pliocene Age. The museums are all closed at this hour, however, so I suggest that we go to the place called 'Wein in Berlin,' where we shall drink the beer of Vienna, and listen to some singers from that city."

His companions jumped at this offer, and the three were soon in a taxi-cab, spinning along the Leipzigerstrasse.

The Secret of the Mummy.

THE strike disturbances had broken out afresh, and fighting was going on in different streets, when Professor Bruns and his companions reached the Moabit quarter between eleven and twelve o'clock that night. More than once they were held up, and for a time it looked as if they would be compelled to turn back; but the cab in which they were riding was passed from point to point by the police, and in the end, after running the gauntlet of a fusillade of stones and flower-pots, they arrived in the Gobenstrasse, and here they paused for a moment to speak to Herr Jager, whom they perceived standing on the pavement, with a rather worried expression.

"Are the strikers getting out of hand?" the professor inquired of him.

"No, we are keeping them in check," the inspector answered. "But I am anxious about Fraulein Becker. She is not shadowing August Muller, for I have seen him twice in the last hour."

"I hope she has not got into trouble, herr."

"I hope not, but I am very much afraid that her identity has been discovered, and that a trap has been set for her."

With that remark, Herr Jager turned away, a mounted policeman having just called to him. The cab slid on to Moabit Mansions, and put down its occupants, who were soon in the cosy sitting-room of the flat. They were hungry again, as they had not eaten anything since dinner, so Professor Bruns brought out some cold viands and a couple of bottles of beer, which he placed on the table. Meanwhile, Tinker had slipped off, and he now returned with the bloodhound, who was so glad to be released from the bed-chamber that he pranced about like a puppy, and whimpered, and leapt upon his master.

Appetites having been appeased, and Pedro having gulped down a big sausage, Sexton Blake leaned back in his chair, and set a cigar alight. He was in a very cheerful frame of mind, and for a quarter of an hour he and his companions discussed the events of the evening, which had been a most enjoyable one.

"I trust it will not be long," Blake said to his host, "until we have an opportunity of repaying the heavy debt we owe to you."

"You shall do so when I come to London," replied the professor. "I 'ove your city, in spite of its fogs and its bleak climate."

"It is a fine place, and I wish I was there now."

"You soon will be, Herr Blake. You are not in the slightest danger, and there is nothing to prevent you from going back to your own country."

"Perhaps not. I have been free from care to-night, except for a couple of short intervals, and I feel that I am quite safe under your roof. But one never knows what will happen. Our mysterious disappearance in the neighbourhood of Volstein may lead the police to suspect that—"

"Hark!" interrupted Tinker. "I thought I heard somebody talking."

"I did, myself," Professor Bruns answered, "but it was only the people in the next flat. The partition walls are rather thin."

"Then the people can hear us, can they?"

"They can't distinguish what we are saying," was the reply, "so you need not be alarmed."

There was a brief pause, while all listened, but nothing was to be heard now. The conversation was resumed in lower tones, and presently Pedro, who had been lying at his master's feet, concluded to go on a tour of investigation. He rose, and wandered about the room, and then disappeared through the curtained doorway that led to the adjoining apartment. His exit was not observed, for Blake and the professor were laughing at a remark made by the lad, who had been describing his feelings when he was introduced to Fraulein Becker.

"You could have knocked me down with a feather," he went on. "My knees were shaking under me, and I was afraid I wouldn't be able to speak, but I pulled through somehow. My word, guv'nor, what would the girl think if she knew she had been dining with the British spies?"

"I can imagine what her feelings would be," said Sexton Blake. "I was frightened myself, and I had another fright later, when Fraulein Becker received the message that took her away. I half believed that she had spotted our identities. This habit of mixing with people we have known in the past is too risky. My nerves have been shaken, and I shall be heartily glad when I feel the waves of the North Sea heaving beneath me."

"I understand your anxiety," replied the professor, "and I won't try to keep you here against your will. The police no longer guard the court below, so to-morrow evening, after dark, I will smuggle all of you into my motor-car, and drive you straight through to Hamburg, where you should be able to get a boat for—"

Professor Bruns stopped abruptly, and looked at the detective, who glanced from one to the other of his companions. Somebody or something, not far off, had suddenly begun to make extraordinary noises. Dull thuds, and scraping, and wheezing could be heard, mingled with a weird rattling, and a sound like linen being torn.

"What can that be?" asked Blake.

"It must be rats in the next room," said the professor, in a doubtful tone.

"It is too loud for rats," declared Tinker. "I'll bet Pedro is in there, and up to some mischief," he added. "Yes, he is not here."

Alarmed by the thought that the dog might be doing damage

to his treasures, Professor Bruns jumped up, and hastened through the curtained doorway to the adjoining apartment. The others close followed him, and when the electric-light had been switched on they beheld a sight that utterly amazed them, and for several seconds deprived them of the power of speech.

A long, coffin-shaped box of painted wood had been hauled partly from under a large couch, and evidently by the bloodhound, who had dragged from it a big object, which he was pushing to and fro, worrying it as a terrier might worry a rat. He was growling in a low key, and flopping clumsily about, as he shook the thing, which was fast going to pieces, and had already strewn the floor with a litter of splinters, and brown dust, and fragments of yellow cloth of the texture of canvas.

"By heavens, it is my mummy!" cried the professor, finding his voice.

"Your mummy!" echoed Blake and the lad, in one gasping breath.

"It is indeed! Yes, it is Rameses XVII! What sacrilege, what desecration! That an ancient king of Egypt should come to such an end! Ah, that dog! Let me get at him! Let me—"

As Professor Bruns spoke, he seized a stool, and hurled it at Pedro, who dodged the missile, and took refuge under a table on the other side of the room, whence he peered furtively and penitently at his master, in readi-

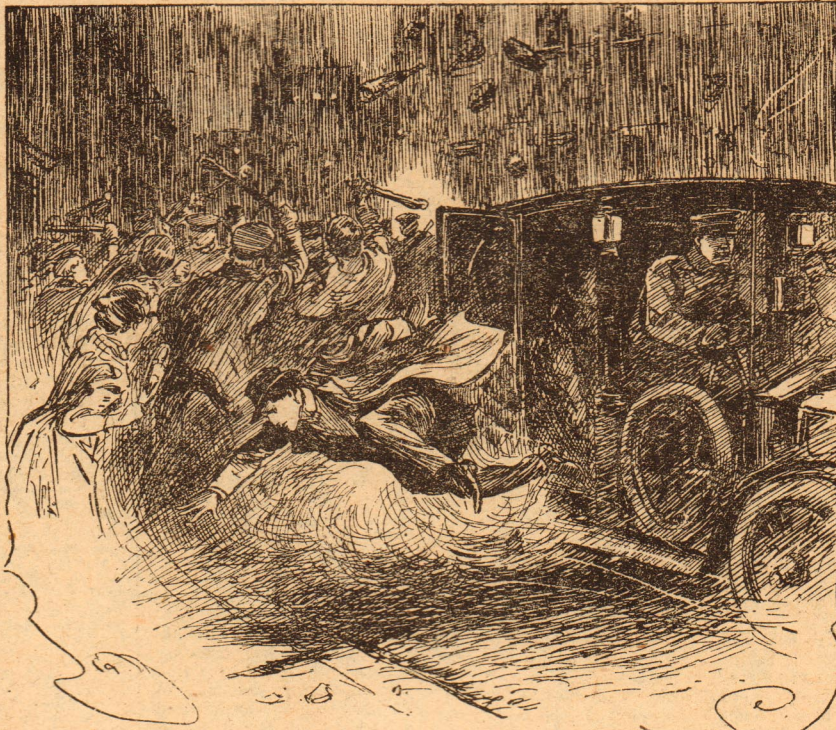
ness for a further fight, should it be necessary. Both Blake and Tinker were horrified by the irreparable mischief that had been wrought, and they could only gaze in consternation and sympathy at the German savant who was dancing about like a madman, now wringing his hands, and now plucking fiercely at his bushy mop of hair.

"What a blow!" he raved. "What ruin to my hopes! My precious mummy! King Rameses XVII, who ruled in the land of the Pharaohs more than 4,000 years ago! Behold him now, torn to fragments by the teeth of that wretched vandal of a beast! I am heart-broken! I have been robbed of my place in the temple of fame! I will have damages for this, Herr Blake, and heavy ones! You will pay me not less than—"

"My dear sir, words cannot express my grief!" Sexton Blake broke in. "I wish I could have prevented this. Calm yourself, and be assured that I will make what amends are in my power. I will gladly pay you whatever sum of money you may demand in compensation for your loss!"

"I don't think they are going to break you, guv'nor," put in the lad, who had just picked up something that had been mixed with the debris on the floor, and had caught his attention.

And with that, with a broad grin on his face, he handed a slip of paper to the professor, who, looking at it, read a brief inscription that was printed in blue letters, and ran as follows:



As the vehicle rushed along Sexton Blake decided to alight. He threw open the door and literally hurled himself into the roadway, in spite of the motion of the car.

"This mummy made in Germany, 1909."

What a shock it was to the savant! He gasped, and rolled his eyes, and spluttered incoherently. Made in Germany! Rameses XVII, supposed to have been 4,500 years old, was a product of the Fatherland, turned out of some German factory a few months ago! Professor Bruns could not doubt that such was the case, since he knew that his countrymen make pretty nearly everything under the sun. His rage and consternation were succeeded by a sense of relief, as he realised that it was not a genuine king of Egypt that had been destroyed; and then, seized by a fresh spasm of fury, he danced about the room again, shaking his fists.

He jumped on poor Rameses, grinding the spurious remains to powder, and crushing the wooden shell under his heels. And Blake and the lad, seeing the ludicrous side of the situation, shook with laughter, and kept on laughing until their sides ached.

"It is nothing to laugh at!" screamed the professor, glaring at them. "I have been deceived. I have been made one big fool of. Day by day I study my Rameses, and he is not Rameses! Some villains manufacture the mummy in Germany, and send him out to Egypt, and he is bought there by my friend the explorer, who brings him home, and presents him to me for a joke! I'll

joke him! He laugh in his sleeve at me, but not much longer will he laugh. No! I will wreak my vengeance on that wicked, perfidious Heinrich Schmidt, who pretend to be my friend. Ah, when once I get on him my hands—"

Professor Bruns paused for want of breath. He scowled at Pedro, and scowled at Tinker and the detective, and then flung himself into a chair, and mopped his perspiring brow.

"I am foolish to lose my temper now," he panted. "I will wait until I meet that Heinrich Schmidt. But there is here something that I do not understand."

"There is," said Sexton Blake. "How did the mummy get under the couch?"

"It was not there," answered the professor. "Your dog must have dragged it from the case to where it now is."

"No, I am sure it was beneath the couch, and somebody must have put it there."

"That cannot be true, Herr Blake. The mummy was in the case when we looked at it last night. I have not been near it since, nor has any person been in this room. I repeat that your mischievous dog must have—"

"You are wrong, professor. If Pedro had dragged the mummy from the case, it would be open."

"Ah, so it would. What can this mean?"

The three exchanged glances, and looked at the tall cedarwood-case that stood upright in one corner of the room. It had a hinged door to it, and the door was tightly shut. The affair was indeed mysterious, and

seconds there was silence save for Pedro's low growling, and then Professor Bruns clapped his hands to his brow in despair, and reeled against the table with a dismal groan.

"Your dog does not appear to like me, Herr Blake," said the girl. "Will you kindly call him off?"

Sexton Blake spoke to Pedro, who reluctantly turned away, and crouched at his master's feet.

"Thank you!" Fraulein Becker said sweetly. "I was unwilling to harm your pet, knowing how fond of him you are. I am afraid, however, that you are going to be separated from him for a long time."

"Don't be too sure of that," Blake told her. "We may not be inclined to let you have your own way, fraulein. There is many a slip between the cup and the lip."

"There will be no slip in this case," the girl answered. "I am not afraid that you will get away from me. I had an idea, Herr Blake, that you might have taken refuge in Berlin. I have been wishing that you might fall into my hands, for it is time for one of us to win the game that we have been playing for several years. And now I have won it, as you must admit. I shall have nothing to fear from you in future when I slip over to your country to learn what they are doing in Army and Navy circles."

A rippling laugh burst from her pretty lips as she saw that the detective was chafing and writhing under her stinging irony.

"So the valiant British spies have been trapped at last, and by a woman!" she went on, her eyes dancing merrily. "How all Germany will laugh! To think that I dined with you at the Rheingold this evening without in the least suspecting who you were! It is true. I was completely deceived. But for something that happened afterwards I might never have known that—"

There was a sharp cry, followed by a shot from one of the revolvers, and by the "phut!" of a bullet as it embedded itself in the wall. Tinker had leapt suddenly at Fraulein Becker, and she had fired at him and missed. She had no chance to fire again, for the lad was now clinging to one of her arms, and Blake had seized the other.

"Don't struggle, fraulein," he said. "Make it easy for us. We don't want to hurt you."

The girl offered a desperate resistance, however, and displayed no little strength. She fought like a wild cat, screaming and scratching, and kicking at her assailants, but she was soon overcome, and when a handkerchief had been bound across her mouth, and her slender wrists and ankles had been tied, she was gently placed on the couch, with a cushion under her head.

"I told you not to be too sure that you were going to have your own way," the detective said to her, with a grim smile.

He turned to his companions, and the three looked at one another, exchanging glances that spoke more eloquently than words. They listened for a short time, and then, as the silence remained unbroken, they concluded that the pistol-shot and the scuffle had not been heard by anybody in the adjoining flat.

"Your generosity to us is going to cost you dear, professor," said Blake, moistening his dry lips.

"Yes, I know that!" hoarsely cried Professor Bruns, who fully realised the position he was in. "My long and honourable career is at an end. I shall be sent to prison for years."

"And it is my fault. I would have parted with my right arm rather than have had this happen!"

"Do not reproach yourself, Herr Blake. You did me a great service in Egypt, and it was only right that I should repay the debt, no matter what the cost might be. But why should I go to prison? Surely we have a chance of escape? It will be hard indeed for me to flee from the Fatherland, but will be better than to—"

The professor paused at a warning sign from the detective. The three withdrew to the adjoining apartment, followed by the dog, and Blake closed the door between the two rooms.

"Where is your car?" he asked, in a low tone.

"At a garage in the Mahlerstrasse," Professor Bruns replied.

"How far is that from here?"

"Within five minutes' walk."

"So much the better. We must escape if we can, and that without delay. You will come with us, will you not?"

"Yes, yes, most gladly!"

"Very well. The first thing is to get out of Berlin."

(Another grand long instalment next Tuesday in THE BOYS' FRIEND.)

Sexton Blake Plans Escape.

IT was such a startling, staggering surprise that at first Sexton Blake and his companions were struck dumb. They could only gape in consternation at the beautiful girl spy, who stood there with a mocking gleam of triumph in her lovely dark eyes, keeping her pistols levelled. She was dressed like a child of the people, but the greasy old cap that she wore did not spoil the poise of her dainty head, nor could her ragged gown hide the grace of her figure. For a few



SOLDIERS OF FORTUNE.

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 Marcus 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

to gain his ends.

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

Travelling with a prospector, the boys reach Fort Busi, where they have a terrible encounter with Matabele savages and Trek Boers who are making an attack upon the British fort. When at last the battle on the veldt is over, and the savages and Boers retire, Dudley and Marcus proceed on their journey, and reaching another lonely station, find that Joseph is still leading in the great race to reach Douglas first.

The boys proceed on their journey northwards, and through the haunts of the dreaded M'Chopi bushmen. Suddenly, one of the carriers springs to his feet with an arrow fixed between his shoulder-blades. The bushmen have found them.

(Now read the splendid chapters below.)

Deserted by Their Carriers.

PEOPLE at home fall into some curious errors regarding African words. Many, most perhaps, look on "the veldt" as meaning simply the plains of the interior. As a matter of fact, however, it means the country, as distinct from the towns, and though, as a rule, after crossing into Portuguese territory one speaks of the "jungle," it would be quite correct still to call it veldt.

It is the same with that word "Kaffir," or "Kafir." I have met hundreds of people who imagine that the Kaffirs are a separate tribe somewhere in Cape Colony; yet such is certainly not the case. "Kaffir" is a Turkish word, meaning a stranger, and has now been adopted to apply to all the negro races south of the Zambesi River, though it is not used to include Hottentots and Bushmen, tribes of a totally different character.

As you go eastwards from the Great Central Plateau, every day's trek brings you nearer the sea-level. You are going down all the time. At Vryburg and Mafeking the boys had been on the barren, wind-swept plains beloved of the Boer; then they had been through the dreary, useless bush-veldt of Bechuanaland, the high bush-veldt; after leaving Fort Busi, they had dropped down into the granite country, the land of lovely scenery and malarial fever. The granite country had ended abruptly, and a few miles of what was practically scrambling down kopje-sides, had brought them into the low bush-veldt, a grey and dreary land; then another stage, and they were in the Portuguese jungle, which extends practically unbroken to the sea, a horrible tract, breathless, sweltering, overpowering in its gloomy silence.

For a moment after the archer had loosed his fatal arrow, the carriers stood as though paralysed with fear; then, like one man, they flung down their packs and fled back along the path. Another arrow missed the last of them by a hair's-breadth.

The instant they saw the carrier fall, the boys had pushed back the safety-catches of their rifles, and had begun to scan the tree-tops eagerly; but not a sign of the assailant or assailants could they see. Kerridge, on the other hand, had rushed forward to pick up the dead man's pack. "We've got to get out of this,

quick!" he cried. Then he saw the rest of the packs on the ground, and groaned. "Take what you can, and bolt!" he shouted to the boys.

The latter obeyed instantly. Each picked up one load, and then the three of them hurried down the path after their carriers. A hundred yards farther on Kerridge halted, choosing a position under a very thick shrub.

"This is a lovely game," he grumbled. "We shall never see those carriers again; they won't stop till they're back in their own country now. There're three packs lying there, which we aren't fetch, and—" He glanced up quickly. "Where's Amous? Surely those little fiends didn't get him, too!"

The boys looked round with startled eyes. In the rush they had forgotten the Basuto, and now there was no sign of him. From where they were they could see the three other packs and the body of the carrier, but that was all. There was apparently nothing moving in either the bush or the tree-tops. Yet they dare not go forward again, knowing now what the effect of those tiny little arrows was.

Kerridge ran his hands through his hair, as was his way when he was unusually worried.

"It's a bad fix," he muttered. "The pick of our foodstuffs are in those three packs, and, practically speaking, the Bushmen have got them already. They will slip down as soon as it's dark, and loot the lot. It's more than our lives are worth now to try and get the things."

The three packs they had saved were really those they could have spared best. Their tea and sugar, their flour, and almost all their ammunition were in those which the archers would presently get.

Kerridge pulled out his pipe and began to smoke, whilst the boys drew themselves up, well under the shelter of their bush, and wondered what was going to happen next.

After a while:

"Poisoned arrows are the one thing I really funk," Kerridge remarked. "I can face assegais and bullets, but not those little bits of reed with a barbed point. There isn't enough

money in Africa to tempt me to go forward now to where those loads are lying."

"How many archers are there up in those trees?" Dudley asked.

Kerridge shook his head.

"You can't tell. There may be one, there may be a dozen. You see—"

A rifle-shot cut his words short; a shot fired, not from the ground, but amongst the tree themselves. An instant later there was a crashing of branches, and a little apelike man, some four feet in height, and stark naked, fell heavily to the ground, twitched convulsively for a few seconds, then lay perfectly still.

"Amous is up there!" the boys exclaimed together; and even as they spoke the Basuto's face appeared amongst the leaves, grinning with triumph.

"It is all right, baas!" he cried to Kerridge. "There was only one archer, after all. Now we are safe again." Then he slid to the ground and explained matters. "When the carriers fled I ran, too, to one side, and looked for a tree I could climb. I knew that up there the rifle is far better than the arrow. I went from branch to branch, like one of those monkey-folk, keeping a very careful look-out, but seeing nothing. Soon I was sure there could be only one, because there was no talking, and after you and the carriers had run away, two or more would certainly have talked. At last I saw that carrier"—he pointed to the dead archer—"saw him just as he saw me. Still, I was first with my shot."

They held a council of war over the packs. It was Dudley who suggested the course they should take.

"Unfold the bicycles again, and put the loads on them. We can get them along that way, even through this heavy sand."

Kerridge laughed.

"Well, I never thought of that. You see what it is to have grown old on the veldt without anything like bicycles about."

As it turned out, they had not a great distance to go, only some four miles. Then they came into native fields again, and knew that the horror of the Bushmen was behind them.

At first it seemed as though the village they had reached consisted merely of three or four large huts in a fenced-in clearing, then, through the trees, they could see another clearing, and beyond that another, and yet another—many of them.

The headman, an upstanding, youngish man, greeted them with grave cordiality.

"We are glad to see Britishers," he said, "though you are the first who have ever been here. But Portuguese we do not want. They are women only. They cannot walk, but must be carried in litters like women. Bah! Portuguese! They are not men at all."

He gave them such things as he had—native beer, and meal, and fowls, but, as he explained, there was no milk.

"The tsetse-fly killed all our cattle last year. Formerly there were none here, but the buffalo shifted up from the river, and the fly came with them. It is always so—no buffalo, no fly," he sighed, and took snuff copiously.

"What is the river ahead?" Kerridge asked.

The answer made him look up quickly.

"It is the great Sabi, chief."

"The great Sabi?" Kerridge echoed. "Why, I thought we were still three days' march from the nearest point on that!"

The headman smiled.

"The Sabi takes a great bend towards the south, chief; that is why you are mistaken. Four hours' march from here will bring you to the great river."

Kerridge turned to the boys.

"He says we're quite near the great Sabi now—the river on which we heard Douglas was hunting. Of course, Douglas himself is probably a couple of hundred miles from here still, but it is something to have reached the river, and we ought to get news of him within the next five or six days."

When they had finished their evening meal, which, as usual, consisted of cold boiled guinea-fowl, bread, sweet potatoes, and tea, Kerridge sent again for the headman.

"What is there on the other side of the river?" he asked.

The native put on a blank expression.

"There is nothing particular, chief—jungle and so on."

"Where is the N'Dandine?"

The question came so suddenly that the headman was flurried and gave himself away.

"The N'Dandine is there, across the river," he answered.

The prospector nodded.

"I thought it was." Then he explained to the boys. "I felt sure we must be close to what they call the 'N'Dandine,' which means 'The place of N'Dande, or indiarubber.' I have often heard rumours of a large belt of rubber creepers near the Sabi, and I know the Portuguese have sent several parties to look for it, but only scattered patches of creepers have been found. These Kaffirs hide the secret too well. Very likely the big belt is in the middle of the almost impenetrable thorn jungle, which we shall skirt round on the north bank."

"But why should they want to hide it?" Dudley asked.

Kerridge laughed a little harshly. "Because they don't want to be made to collect the rubber. The Portuguese run the rubber industry entirely by forced labour—slave labour, really—and, naturally, these savages hate the very name of the creepers. They are 'tagatewe,' that is, they have been cursed by witch doctors, and anyone showing them to a white man would be killed promptly."

"I thought rubber came out of a big tree," Marcus said. "But you speak of creepers."

"There are some forty different plants whose sap contains rubber," the prospector answered. "Even those aloe we used to find on the kopjes yield a little. The big Para rubber tree is, of course, the most important one. It is a native of South America, though it is now being planted largely in the East. But this East African creeper is very valuable, yielding splendid rubber." Dudley sighed.

"I wish we could find the belt of creepers. We might make a fortune out of it."

Kerridge shook his head.

"The Portuguese would grant us a provisional concession for the area, then, as soon as they found out exactly where it was, they would discover some reason for taking it away again, and working it themselves. That is their system."

"Perhaps there is no creeper belt, after all. It may be only a Kaffir yarn." It was Marcus who spoke.

"I'm sure there is such a belt," the prospector answered. "I'll tell you why. The Arabs from Zanzibar come right up the Sabi trading rubber. I have heard of their dhows being seen as far inland as this, so there must be plenty of rubber."

The headman supplied them with new carriers, and they made an early start next morning. Before they had gone a mile, they came on the fresh spoor of an elephant, then more, and yet more spoor. Great paths, or, rather, small lanes, led through the jungle on either side of them; whilst the bushes and smaller trees looked as though a cyclone had caught them. Many had been uprooted and tossed to one side merely in sport, not a leaf of them had been eaten. Great boughs had been pulled off the larger trees, partially devoured, and then thrown away. The elephants seemed to have been in their most mischievous moods. After a while, they came to a spot where the great brutes had been but a few minutes before, as was evident from the smoking piles of dung. There must have been about ten of them, and they seemed to have turned into the bush in single file, beating down a regular road.

"Can't we follow them, and get one?" Marcus asked eagerly.

Kerridge shook his head decisively.

"It's sheer suicide to try elephant shooting in this type of jungle. You follow them, and they run away as long as they can. Then, at last, they get to the thorn jungle, through which they can't break a way, and in their terror they turn back, and charge right over you, trampling you to pieces. No; if we come on a good tusker you can try and shoot him, but you mustn't follow them blindly into the jungle."

"There must be an awful lot of ivory down here," Dudley said. "There are, literally, thousands of elephants, and, even if the natives never killed any, they would probably find the ivory in the jungle sooner or later. Yet, with the exception of one very small cow's tusk in the last kraal, we have seen no ivory about."

"The Kaffirs say they never find dead ivory," the prospector replied. "They declare that the elephants have some secret 'dying ground,' up in the thickest part of the jungle, and that, when an animal feels himself doomed, he treks out for there at once, and dies amongst the bones of his ancestors."

Marcus' eyes flashed.

"If only we could find the place. There might be thousands of pounds' worth of ivory there."

"Our present business is to find John Douglas," Kerridge answered drily. "I wonder how many hare-brained quests you lads would have gone off on had you come up alone?"

About midday they came to a village, which drew its water from the great Sabi itself. It was a place of some fifty huts, well-built and clean. A quarter of a mile beyond it a line of deep-green thorn trees showed where the river itself must be.

At one end of the village was a large, square grass hut, which immediately attracted the boys' attention, for no East African native ever builds a hut of that shape. Old Kerridge was busy talking to the local chief, inquiring about the depth of water in the river and the general direction of the footpaths on the other bank, so the boys strolled across to the square building. There was no one there, and the door was open, so they entered.

One glance round was enough for



There was a crash in the bush ahead, and a moment later a huge elephant bounded towards them. The four rifles cracked out almost together.

Soldiers of Fortune.

(Continued from the previous page.)

them. The brass cooking-pots and the filthy blankets on the rough stretcher-bed could belong to none but an Oriental. In one corner was a large stock of raw rubber, in the form of tiny rolls of about an inch and a half in diameter. In the opposite corner, on some crazy shelves, was a stock of shoddy trading goods. It was an Arab trading station.

Even as they came out again, the trader himself, a particularly villainous-looking example of the breed, hurried up from the river. He scowled at them fiercely, saluted them in grudging style, then turned aside to speak to the chief, M'Tchavi, who had just left Kerridge. For a minute he talked with almost savage intemperance, saying things which M'Tchavi evidently did not like. Then he turned abruptly, and went back towards the river.

Meanwhile the boys had joined Kerridge, who was looking very worried. He nodded when they told him about their discovery.

"M'Tchavi has already explained it to me," he said. "Curiously enough, I used to know him years ago, when he was on a mission to Lobengula, at Buluwayo, and he recognised me at once. He's very much disturbed about these Arabs."

"Why should he be?" Marcus asked.

"Because the Zanzibar Arab is little better than a fiend," the prospector answered. "He is as cruel as he is cunning, as dishonest as he is brave. These 'traders' are breaking the Portuguese law by being here at all. They pay no licences, and they smuggle the rubber out, evading the export duty of twenty-five reis a pound; and M'Tchavi knows that by-and-by the Portuguese will come along, and jump on him for harbouring these brutes."

"Still, it is no concern of ours," Dudley remarked.

"I'm not so sure, Dudley," Kerridge retorted. "They say that there is a dhow sailing up the reach just now, and her crew may take a fancy to our rifles, which means cutting our throats first. Our business is to get on at once, and cross the river. M'Tchavi is going to help us. He says the stream is only about four feet deep."

"Four feet! That'll be nearly neck deep for you, Marcus," Dudley said. "It sounds a bit rough. Can't we make a raft?"

"It'll be rougher still if those chaps catch us," Kerridge retorted. "They'll want our kit, and, what is more, they'll want to stop us from telling the Portuguese about them. Here come M'Tchavi's men. The sooner we are off the better."

A Chase Through the Jungle.

HALF a dozen of M'Tchavi's best men, big, upstanding youngsters, picked up the loads, and started towards the river. Then the chief himself came to say good-bye.

"I am sorry that you should have to hurry away," he said to Kerridge; "but, between the Ma'Coolie—Arabs—and the Portuguese, what can I do? One or the other will eat us up before long."

He walked with them to the edge of the clearing, in which the kraal stood, then he turned back sorrowfully.

It was a lovely spot. More than half the trees consisted of palms of various sorts. Everything looked green, everything fresh and bright. The natives' fields, stretching away up the river bank, suggested fertility and peace. The guinea-fowl had gone to roost until evening, but a stray dinker bounded across the path in front of them. Surely it was a fair land, where Nature had intended her sons to dream their lives away.

Then suddenly tragedy came. The Arab storekeeper appeared round a bend in the path. He was carrying a rifle carelessly in the crook of his arm, stalking along with all the insolent pride of his race in his gait; but when he saw Kerridge he halted abruptly, and an instant later the rifle was at his shoulder. The bullet from that rifle, however, whizzed away harmlessly amongst the palms, for Kerridge had been the quicker, and had shot him between the eyes.

The boys went a little pale—it had all happened so suddenly—but Kerridge merely ejected his empty cartridge-case and reloaded, then coolly with his foot he pushed the body out of the path.

"Habit," he muttered. "I swore I would kill you, Abdulla—swore it after you had murdered those two native girls, and now I've been able to make my oath good!" He turned suddenly to the boys: "Never say there is no justice in this world, lads. This was one of the greatest scoundrels who ever stepped, and Fate sends him right up against my rifle-barrel. The hyenas will eat him to-night, and he had not even time to call on the name of his prophet."

The boys exchanged rapid glances. They had learned to know Kerridge in his fierce fits, when human life was absolutely nothing to him, when he looked on himself as an instrument of justice, destined to strike down the criminal.

Once or twice already men—Captain Railton amongst others—had hinted to them that the prospector was a little mad, and at times they were inclined to believe the statement. He was the kindest, most patient, most sympathetic of men to his friends, even to his own natives; but where his enemies were concerned it was a case of "kill or be killed." He gave no quarter, and, as the boys realised, he would ask none. He had taken his own life in his hands for so long that he had ceased to worry about it. All he cared for—at least, all he had really cared for until he met the boys—was to meet his wife, whom the Matabele had killed, on the Other Side.

It was a weary task waiting, but, as he had once said, he intended to have a hundred native ghosts of his own making to follow him as far as heaven's gate. And the total was now mounting up rapidly.

Brutal? Yes; all killing of men is brutal. I admit that, and I have seen much killing. On the other hand, if you have seen your dead, especially if you have seen the dead women of your own race, after the savages have finished with them, you would no longer talk of brutality, but only of justice—justice which did not go half far enough, because it was too speedy.

The carriers looked at Kerridge with a new respect in their eyes; they had no cause to love the Arabs. One of them pounced on the dead man's rifle and cartridges; then they hurried forward again towards the river.

The early rains had already brought the stream down bank to bank, and they had over a mile of water to wade through. Still, it had to be done, and, as M'Tchavi had explained, this was by far the best ford for many miles.

They went into the water just as they were—boots, trousers, and all. "It'll take from an hour to an hour and a half," Kerridge remarked. "It's a slow job forcing your way through water."

Fortunately, the water was warm, and the sand underfoot fairly hard, consequently their task was not as unpleasant as it might have been.

They had gone perhaps a quarter of the way, Dudley leading, followed closely by the others, when one of the natives suddenly gave a cry, and pointed down the river. There, coming round the bend, sailing slowly up stream, thanks to the aid of the prevailing south-east breeze, was the expected Arab dhow—ugly, high-sterned, with a single, raking mast.

Kerridge took her in at one glance, then he called to the boys: "Hurry all you can, or she'll be on top of us, and we need expect no mercy from those fellows. They'll be afraid of our telling the Portuguese about them."

The carriers needed no urging to make them hurry. They had to go on, because they dared not risk the wrath of M'Tchavi by turning back; but they went on with the fear of the Arab bullets in their hearts, fighting their way ahead frenziedly, until they were all ahead of the white men.

The latter kept together. Marcus was several inches shorter than the other two, and his task was correspondingly harder. Six hundred yards from the shore they came to the deepest part of the stream, and the water was up to Marcus's armpits.

Dudley held out his hand. "Get a grip on this, Marcus," he said. "I've had one experience of being swept away in an African river, and I don't want you to try it, too."

The dhow was soon within half a mile of them, and they could see her crew clearly, some twenty men at

least, clustered in her towering stern.

"It's a regular pirate gang," Kerridge muttered. "They don't bring a crowd like that merely to fetch rubber. She's coming up on us far quicker than I like, and they're steering over towards the north bank, evidently to cut us off."

The deep part of the river was a good two hundred yards in width, and they waded through it with what seemed deadly slowness. Although they were in the water the perspiration was pouring down their faces, almost blinding them; and every moment that dhow was creeping closer to them.

The wind had stiffened slightly, and the ungainly craft was making good headway.

They were still six hundred yards from the northern bank, with the stream still up to Marcus's heart, when the first shot from the Arabs struck the water in front of them. Then came another, and another, and another, all fired very wide, while the great puffs of smoke from the dhow showed that the weapons used must be old-fashioned muskets.

Kerridge gave a little grunt. "You'll have to shoot straighter than that, my friends," he growled.

Then he stopped, and put a bullet nicely into the middle of the crowd in the poop.

The boys fired, too, and each of their shots went home; but still the dhow came on steadily. Dudley made a rapid mental calculation.

"At this rate, she will be on us when we are still a hundred yards from shore," he said.

The prospector nodded.

"It's touch and go," he answered.

Then he paused to fire another shot, and pushed on again.

The bullets from the dhow were coming fast now. True, most of them fell short, but one actually passed through a carrier's pack, and then another knocked Dudley's hat off, whereupon Dudley stopped for a moment, and put a bullet through the right hand of the man who had fired.

Four hundred yards from the shore, and the dhow now within two hundred yards!

"Push on!" Kerridge cried. "Don't wait to shoot. It won't stop her; and there'll be enough of them left to kill us."

The aim of the Arabs was better now, and, though no one was actually hit, the bullets were falling uncomfortably close.

Dudley was still ahead of the other two. Suddenly they saw him rise a foot out of the water. He had reached the edge of the deep channel. A minute later the stream was only up to their knees.

Marcus glanced back, then gave a yell of delight. The dhow was aground.

In his joy he could not refrain from stopping to fire another shot, and the pause nearly cost him his life, for an Arab bullet clipped a piece of skin out of his side; a shade more to the right, and it would have got his heart.

That was, however, the only wound which any of them received. They reached the bank utterly exhausted, yet well pleased with themselves. The carriers were especially delighted. The Arabs had been the bane of their lives for years, and this was the first check the unwelcome visitors had received.

For a while the little party lay in a clump of bush, whence they could watch the dhow without themselves being seen. Kerridge bandaged Marcus's side.

"That will soon heal," he said. "It will be stiff, of course, and you'll have to take care; but you've had a lucky escape—we've all had lucky escapes, in fact. Now, where's Dudley got to?"

A moment later a rifle-shot answered the question. Dudley had gone some twenty yards down the bank, and had taken up a position behind an anthill, whence he could command a splendid view of the stranded dhow.

There were half a dozen men, apparently Zanzibari Arabs and Swahilis, on the poop when he fired, and one toppled backwards into the water at his shot, then the others hurried to cover. They had already had enough of the white men's rifles.

"You've spoilt the game now, Dudley," Marcus said regretfully. "They won't show up again until after dark."

"By which time we should be miles away," Kerridge interposed. "We have had quite enough of those gentlemen already. Our luck has held marvellously so far, but it won't go on for ever."

"What do you suppose that crowd has come up after?" Dudley asked as they set off again. "Slave-raiding."

The prospector shook his head.

"No; that's too dangerous right up the river like this. It would bring thousands of natives down on them at once. They've some totally different game on hand, though I can't imagine what it can be. There is quite a big crowd on that dhow, and they must have some special object in bringing so many. Still"—and he shrugged his shoulders—"they don't concern us any more now."

They went on steadily, trending now north-west, a course which, if the path held good, should bring them to the Sabi again in about forty miles. The track was by no means a bad one, and for a while the jungle was fairly open—huge forest trees, with brush and dry, crackling grass between them.

Once Kerridge halted and pointed to a little bright-green shrub.

"That's the N'Dandi—the rubber," he said. "Of course, it's not the right soil, so it won't develop into a creeper, but it shows that there is N'Dandi about here. A stray seed must have been dropped here."

There was a good deal of game about, as was evident from the spoor—water-buck, n'yala bushbuck, a few buffalo, and many elephants.

Kerridge shook his head over the latter.

"There must be hundreds on the Sabi now," he said. "When we've found John Douglas we must get him to come back here with us. We could get tons of ivory. I've never seen elephant spoor so thick."

The words were hardly out of his mouth when there was a crashing in the bush ahead, and a huge bull elephant, carrying a magnificent pair of tusks, appeared at about forty yards' range. The carriers flung down their packs and fled, but the boys and Kerridge and Amous brought their rifles to their shoulders instantly.

The bull paused a moment, looking at them out of wicked eyes. Evidently he was in a very bad temper at being disturbed. The four rifles cracked out almost together. The elephant took a few steps forward, as though intending to charge, then halted, lurched to one side, and came down on to his knees.

The boys gave shouts of delight, but almost before they knew what had happened the giant was up again, and had started to bolt directly away from them through the jungle.

The Elephant's Death-Bed.

THE carriers had only gone a hundred yards or so, and they were back as soon as they saw that the wounded elephant had blundered off. Still, they did not get a very pleasant reception from Amous.

"Ho, jungle folk!" he growled. "Is this the way you treat the goods of the white man, throwing them down because a foolish elephant appears and asks us to kill him? You want my sjambok, and surely you shall feel it by-and-by, when we camp down for the night. You might have known we should have killed the great bull!"

"But you haven't killed him," one of the men was overheard to remark. "He has gone away, after all."

The Basuto snorted.

"You are jungle folk indeed, and I do not wonder that the Portuguese and the Arabs treat you like dogs. Really, they are in the right. Of course, we shall find the elephant. Look at the blood spoor! Bucketsful all the way! He cannot go far!"

As Amous said, the blood spoor was easy to follow, although the track which the great brute had made through the jungle was a path in itself.

"He is very hard hit," Kerridge said. "I'm sure he can't go far. Probably we shall find him dead."

At the end of an hour, however, they were still toiling on after their prey. He had struck due north, up the rise of the watershed, and though the slope was gradual, it tried them all sorely.

Already the carriers were out of sight in the rear. The heat was appalling—only those who have actually been in those breathless East Coast jungles can understand what the climate is like—and the boys constantly had to stop and wipe the smarting perspiration out of their eyes.

The jungle was changing in character now, growing denser all the

time, the bush interlaced with tiny creepers having sharp-hooked thorns on them. One sleeve of Kerridge's shirt was ripped clean off, and one of Dudley's trousers-legs was split as far up as the knee, but there was no question of abandoning the chase—in fact, the prospector was as keen on it as were the boys and the Basuto.

"The finest pair of tusks I ever saw!" he said. "It would be an absolute sin to leave them! He can't keep on very long. See the amount of blood he is losing!"

Still, at the end of another hour they had not come on the bull. All four were terribly thirsty, and there was no sign of water about. As for the carriers, they seemed to have dropped out of the chase entirely.

They were through the thorn-jungle now, and had entered a country of a type none of them had ever seen before. The trees were small, the bush fairly open, but every branch, every bough was covered with an extraordinary light-green fungus quite unlike any other fungus in the world, for it hung in festoons from one tree to the next, it twisted round the trunks, it covered the masses of dead wood on the ground. It was everywhere, killing everything. The very air seemed to have a light-green tint.

Marcus shuddered. "What an unwholesome place! It gives one the shivers! And oh, I wish we could find some water!"

On and on again through the fungus belt, a couple of miles of it, and then in front of them they saw the real jungle, that absolutely impenetrable wall of vegetation—impenetrable not only because it is so dense, but also because of the indescribable network of small creepers which bind it all together.

"He must have turned to one side here," Kerridge said.

The bull was now walking slowly, and most of the bleeding had stopped; consequently it was a question of following the spoor more carefully. He had turned to one side when he came to the wall of bush, as Kerridge had predicted, and for a while he had followed along it.

"He will make down towards the river again," Amous said, but a moment later he was proved to be wrong, for the bull had plunged right into the jungle, up a narrow, tunnel-like passage, well-marked, and worn smooth underfoot by the passage of many of his kind.

The Basuto shook his head.

"This is very strange—strange indeed! We seem to be coming to the home of the elephant!" Then he went forward cautiously, followed closely by the others.

The tunnel was perhaps half a mile in length. The light in it was quite dim, owing to the dense screen of vegetation overhead and around it. It was a nervous task going down it, for they did not know but that the bull might turn and come back towards them; consequently it was with intense relief that they saw an opening ahead.

They emerged suddenly into what seemed like a clearing several acres in extent. In the middle of it the elephant they had followed for so many weary miles lay dead. But it was not the thing which brought them all to an abrupt standstill, and left them all for a space of many seconds absolutely bereft of speech.

It was this—just beyond the body of the bull was a huge pile of ivory, hundreds of tusks, worth thousands of pounds, stacked neatly, whilst all around were the remains of hundreds of elephants. The place was a veritable boneyard.

"It's the Dying Ground of which the Kaffirs talk," Dudley said at last.

"I can see that," Kerridge answered. "But what I want to know is: Who stacked that ivory?"

Amous supplied the reply. He stooped down and picked up a little brass pot which had been lying in the grass.

"It was the Arabs, baas," he said. "This is what they came to fetch."

(Another splendid instalment of this thrilling Adventure Serial next Tuesday in THE BOYS' FRIEND.)

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THE 1st CHAPTER.

'Midst the Wrack of the Ocean.

"THE Elfin Boy—the Elfin Boy!" screamed a shrill woman's voice. "Quick, lads, with the stones! Drive him away, or else the grip of the 'Evil Eye' will be on ye all!" And, obedient to her outcry, a dozen stalwart men came rushing up, crunching the beach beneath their heavy boots, and gathering stones as they ran.

"Where be he, mother?" shouted one.

"Can ye no see, ye gawking idiot?" responded the old crone, as she extended a skinny arm over the waves, that, dyed with the setting sun, broke almost at her feet. "Can ye no see? Then ye must be daft!"

"Ay, I see him now, mother!" answered the man, as a shout from his companions assured him that those who had accompanied him had also caught sight of the small object upon the waters.

Nearer and nearer it came, as the old hag who had first called attention to it continually waved her arms in the air, and hurled imprecations upon the evening breezes, till those on shore could plainly distinguish that it was a species of boat propelled by a solitary figure, and then a mighty shout arose from the men: "The Elfin Boy! Ay, 'tis the Elfin Boy!"

In truth it was a strange sight, as, first rising on the crest of a wave, then almost disappearing from view, came what at first glance would have been described as a sea monster, but which more careful scrutiny would have revealed to have been only a weird-looking craft, low in stern, but with huge upstanding prow that terminated in a long, swanlike neck surmounted with a hideous carved head.

It was not, however, only the appearance of this strange craft that riveted the attention of those upon the beach. It was the human being—if human being it was—who occupied the curious vessel, and who, with vigorous strokes, propelled it through the seething waters.

Clad in garments that to the simple fisher-folk savoured of the diabolical, and with long fair hair lashed by the sea breeze, with head surmounted by a glittering helmet that reflected back a thousandfold the rays of the setting sun, it is little wonder that the half-educated, rough-handed band of men again emitted the shout:

"The Elfin Boy!"

"Now," cried he who presumably had some sort of authority over the rest—"now!"

And in response a dozen lusty arms were in a moment busy hurling showers of stones, which, fortunately for the occupant of the boat, fell short of the mark, only to dive into the waves with a mighty splash.

The weird-looking occupant of the boat, evidently realising that his reception, had he attempted to land, would be a hostile one, suddenly turned his boat's prow, and proceeded to follow the coastline, though taking care to keep well out of the range of possible missiles.

"After him, ye lads," shrieked the old woman—"after him, I say! He may land somewhere else, and if he does a blight will be on your fishing for many a long day!"

With loud shouts the men were preparing to follow her advice, when they were suddenly arrested by the appearance of three strangers, who, rounding a large rock, caused the natives to stare in open-mouthed astonishment, for in those out-of-the-way islands of the Hebrides a stranger was a curiosity indeed.

The new arrivals, who consisted of an elderly man and two youths, apparently of the ages of sixteen or seventeen, evidently belonged to a superior class of society, for their clothes, though homely, and in perfect keeping with their surroundings, were made in a fashion that was unknown to the rough men before them.

"Good-evening!" said the elderly man, as he noticed the excited group of men before him. "Anything unusual happened—eh?"

For one second the fishermen remained silent, till one of them, act-

ing as spokesman for the rest, touched his hat, as he replied:

"Ay, there be something happened, but it beant altogether unusual. We've had to drive away that fiend's child, the Elfin Boy!"

"The Elfin Boy!" replied the gentleman, with a smile. "Pray, who is he?"

"You ain't never heard, sir?"

"No, I must say I have not."

"Why, it's he who reviles our nets and our work! It was he who showed hisself just afore old Jimmy McGarth was drowned!"

"Yes, and just afore old Mother McAlister's cow fell over the cliffs," interrupted another.

"Ay," chimed in the old woman, "he always brings us bad luck, sir, and 'tis said if he lands the whole island will sink into the sea!"

"I should rather doubt that," remarked the first speaker, smiling.

"Well, sir, you may be more larned nor us, but old Granny, the wise woman, who lives on the top of the Peak of Car, she says so, and she ought to know, 'cause she can read the stars."

The above-recorded scene occurred upon the wild, wind-swept coast of one of the islands of the Outer Hebrides, where Dr. Rayner, together with Marcus Glendale, the son of Colonel Horace Glendale, and his cousin, Harry Waters, were spending a week's holiday, the doctor having visited the spot in order to look after some property that had promised to yield a good crop of coal, and it was upon the evening of their arrival that when taking a stroll they had suddenly encountered the excited group of fishermen.

For some little time the whole party were engaged in an animated conversation, as wild legends were poured into the ears of the doctor and the two lads—how the Elfin Boy resided in a cave beneath the waters, and how sometimes he could be heard riding upon the wings of the storm, and it was not until the simple folk had exhausted their various yarns that the doctor, with a friendly nod, and accompanied by the lads, turned aside.

"I think it's time we went back now, boys," said Dr. Rayner, after they had proceeded some little distance over the shell-strewn beach.

"One moment, doctor," interposed Marcus. "There's an awfully jolly clump of seaweed over there! I never saw any like it! I'm going to collar it!"

"Mind where you're going to!" called out Harry, as his companion darted forward. "They say these sands are funny things to walk on when the tide is coming in."

"All right, stupid!" called back Marcus. "D'you think I don't know how to take care of myself!"

But he had not gone many yards ere he threw up his hands and uttered a cry of dismay.

"What's the matter?" called Dr. Rayner.

"I don't know, but my feet have gone through somewhere, and I can't get them out!" And with excited cries the boy began to struggle violently.

"Heavens! He's in one of those quicksands!" shouted Harry; and he, too, was dashing forward to his cousin's aid till restrained by the strong arm of the doctor. "Not that way—not that way!" cried the latter. "Quick! Round here by the boulders!"

Although neither paused to think of bruises nor cut hands, their progress over the slippery rocks was necessarily slow, and every instant the cries of Marcus sounded more shrilly in their ears. Still, panting and bruised, they turned a corner, and reached the spot where the frantic lad was now engulfed up to his waist, whilst the oncoming rollers, which seemed to have rushed up with inconceivable rapidity, saturated all of them with drenching spray.

A single glance assured them that instant action was necessary, for Marcus was in momentary danger of being sucked under.

"Give me your hand, doctor!" cried Harry. "I'm a lighter weight; I'll go first! Here! Your stick!" And the lad snatched it up. "I

think he can reach it! Keep up—keep up, Marcus!" he shouted.

"We'll have you out in half a jiff!"

And holding tight on the doctor's arm with one hand, he lowered himself upon the wet, shining sand, and held out the stick towards his cousin.

"He'll reach it—he'll reach it!" shouted the doctor.

But no. Strain as they would, the stick would not come within a foot of the struggling boy.

"Don't give way, Marcus!" shouted Harry bravely. "I'm coming nearer!" And with a desperate effort he lunged forward.

But in doing so his hand slipped from that of the doctor, and in trying to recover his balance, he, too, became engulfed in the quicksand.

Scarcely knowing what to do, Dr. Rayner flung off his coat, and throwing it on the sands as a support, threw himself at full length upon it, and, after several struggles, managed to reach Harry's hand, who, in turn, by means of the stick he still grasped, obtained a grip of his cousin, who was by that time up to his armpits, and then all three involuntarily paused in their struggles for a moment to pant for breath.

A frantic shout from Dr. Rayner caused the boys to glance behind them. A new danger threatened them. The tide had swept round the pile of rocks on which they had been standing, and was surrounding them in every direction.

All hope seemed gone. They were too far from human aid to shout, and almost holding their breath, they glanced into each other's white faces.

What was that? A strange cry rang out above the booming of the sea, and with bated breath they all listened.

What could it be? Then suddenly Harry uttered a terrific shout.

"Look—look!" he cried, and his upraised arm pointed seawards.

"Look! The Elfin Boy!"

In response to his cry they all turned their haggard eyes in the direction indicated, and, sure enough, with his strange boat poised upon the

crest of a huge wave, came the strangely-garbed lad with whom our readers have already made acquaintance.

"Grant this boy, or fiend, whichever he be," muttered the doctor, "bring us help! If not we are all lost!"

Again the strange cry rang out, and this time it was evident it emanated from the so-called elfin boy, as, springing to the prow of his boat, he seized a coil of rope, and deftly flung it across the heads of the little party struggling in the quicksand.

It would be needless to relate the full details—how one after another of the unfortunate party secured the rope, and, aided by the strong arms of their strange visitor, were hauled from the jaws of death, to find themselves lying panting but safe at the bottom of the extraordinary-looking craft.

THE 2nd CHAPTER.

The Spanish Galleon.

BARELY had Dr. Rayner and the boys been rescued from what would have undoubtedly proved their grave than one of those unaccountable changes in the weather took place. Almost in a moment the sky became overcast, a stiff breeze whistled round them with an icy chill that sent wreaths of spume flying over their heads, and they seemed only rescued from one death to meet it again in another form.

What, however, cared the Elfin Boy? Again and again, uttering his strange cry, he sprang about his frail vessel with the agility of a mountain goat. A torn and patched sail was speedily hoisted, and then, seizing the tiller, he, with the hand of a practised seaman, swung her bows round and headed for the open water.

"Heavens! Where's he taking us?" shrieked Marcus, as he tried to scramble to his feet; but Harry gripped his arm and pulled him down again.

"Keep still!" shouted the lad. "Depend on it, he knows what he's doing. He would never have come to our rescue and dragged us out of the quicksand if he had meant any harm to us."

So for quite the space of half an hour the party crouched in the bottom of the boat holding on for dear life as the fair-haired lad in charge carefully guided her amongst the giant billows. Then Harry

managed to raise himself, and glancing ahead amidst the blinding spray, caught sight of an object that caused even his stout young heart to quail.

Straight in their track lay two pointed rocks, up the sides of which huge breakers dashed as though seeking to drag them from their foundations, and all the while the frail boat was tearing towards them with the speed of a racehorse.

He tried to shout, but his voice was carried far away. Then, frantically waving his arms, he caught the eyes of the lad, who held the tiller as calmly as if he had been engaged in a pleasure trip on a land-locked lake.

A reassuring nod answered his movements. A swift spring forward. The torn sail fell with a clatter. A deft manipulation of the rudder. The boat heeled over, then righted herself, swung round, and, still rocking violently, glided between a cleft in the rocks, and lay floating in smooth water, and grounded on a sandy beach.

It did not take long for the party to land, and the first to grasp their rescuer's hand was Harry Waters, who was followed in turn by Dr. Rayner and Marcus Glendale, but although the Elfin Boy gripped each hand heartily enough, he refrained from speaking, and only uttered a queer, guttural sound.

"Is he dumb?" whispered Harry to Dr. Rayner, as, following their guide, they began to scramble over the uneven rocks.

"I should think he's wrong in the upper story," snorted Marcus.

"Maybe he is," retorted his cousin; "but if it hadn't been for him you'd have been unable to think at all by this time. Hallo!" And one and all came to an abrupt halt.

"Well, I'm blessed!" ejaculated the doctor, whilst the two cousins stared open-mouthed with astonishment, for, tightly wedged between the upper portion of the two huge rocks, could be seen the stern portion of an ancient ship—one of those quaint, high-pooped, hideously carved structures, undoubtedly a portion of an old Spanish galleon, and up the side of which the Elfin Boy, as we will continue to describe him, was nimbly clambering.

"He's beckoning us to follow!" shouted Harry. "Come on!" And suiting the action to the word, he darted forward, followed by his companions, and in a very short space of time they found themselves upon the deck of a vessel that probably, with the exception of their host, had never been trodden by human feet for hundreds of years.

Night had fallen, and a thousand stars glittered in the firmament, though the wind still shrieked and howled around the rugged peaks, at whose base lay the remains of the old Spanish galleon. Utterly exhausted with the exertions of the day, Dr. Rayner and the two lads lay asleep in what had evidently been the stateroom of the proud old Spaniard who had once commanded the vessel.

But not so the Elfin Boy, for, having regaled his guests upon a supper of fresh fish and curious-looking cakes, the like of which they had never tasted before, and having dried their clothes before a blazing pile of driftwood that he had ignited by means of sparks from the flint lock of an old musketoon, part of the original armament of the ill-fated vessel, he once more crept up the worm-eaten stairs, and finding himself alone under the clear vault of heaven, took to pacing rapidly up and down the slanting deck.

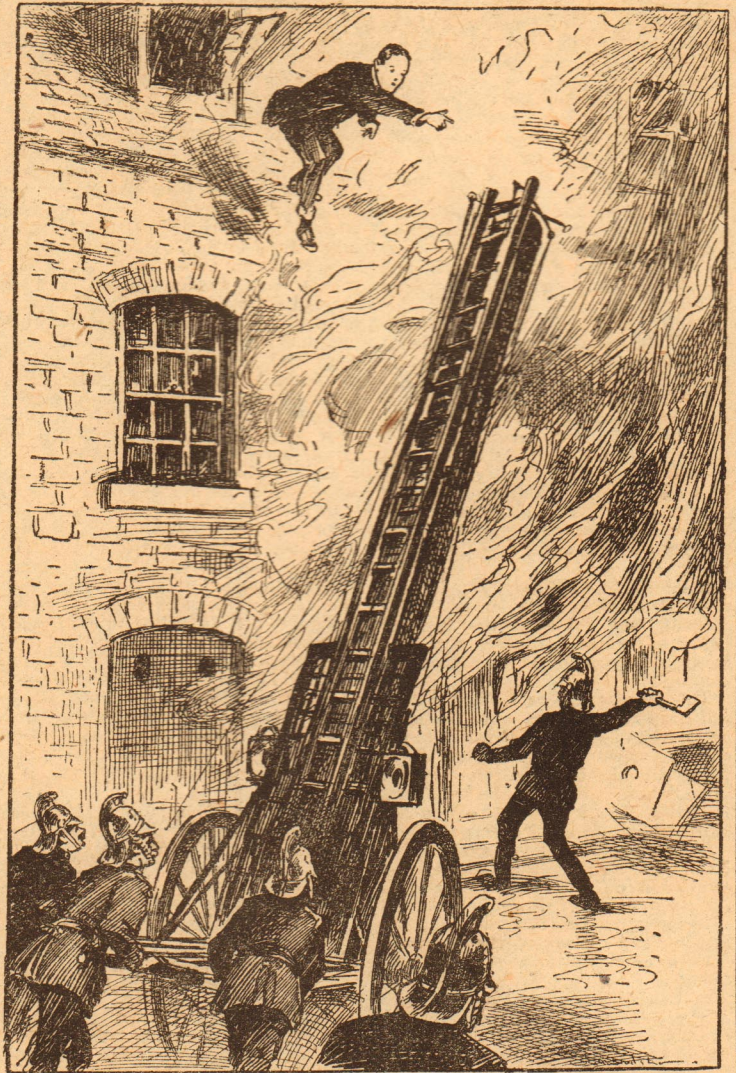
Nor was it till a dim light in the east heralded the approach of another day that he paused and ceased his perambulations, just as Harry Waters, refreshed by his rest, emerged from the portals of the ancient cabin in the poop of the vessel.

By means of signs—for somehow or other there seemed to be a mutual understanding between the lads—the Elfin Boy speedily understood that the others were still asleep, when, leading his companion by the arm, he pointed upwards to where one of the twin rocks towered many hundreds of feet above their heads.

Harry, without exactly understanding his companion's meaning, nodded, when the Elfin Boy, with a bright smile, sprang upon the mouldering bulwarks of the vessel, and with one quick leap reached an almost imperceptible ledge in the rocks, where, pausing, he beckoned his new friend to follow him.

The prospect was not altogether an inviting one, but Harry was made of stout material.

"Hang it all," he said to himself,



With a violent effort, Harry wrenched himself free from the restraining clasp, and, with a spring, launched himself into space towards the moving escape, which rocked and swayed from side to side.

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"I'm not going to show the white feather!" So without further comment he mounted the undoubtedly shaky structure, and then, after carefully measuring his distance, took the required spring, landing safe and sound by the side of his strange companion.

A nod rewarded his efforts, when the fair-haired lad proceeded to scramble upwards by means of, as Harry soon ascertained, small holes that had been cut, with an immense expenditure of labour, out of the solid rock, spaces that were only just sufficient for them to obtain a precarious foothold. Then just as the rising sun flashed its welcome rays, flooding the scene with golden light, they reached the summit, where, uttering out of breath, Harry threw himself down upon what, to his intense surprise, proved to be a plateau of some considerable extent.

Nor was his surprise diminished when, after a moment's rest, he sat up and glanced round, for, ranged in a half-circle, were a number of objects that bore a close resemblance to roughly-made hencoops, and which, judging by the discordant cries that emanated from them, were evidently not without their occupants.

He had, however, not much time to reflect upon these matters, for the Elfin Boy was gravely making a tour of inspection, and gathering in a goodly crop of eggs, that he carefully deposited in a bag slung over his shoulders.

Then once more this strange lad emitted the peculiar cry we have before mentioned, and as he did so some minute specks that had been hovering apparently miles above their heads took shape and form, and darting downwards resolved themselves into sea birds, which whirled around and even alighted upon the hands, arms, and shoulders of the lad.

From a receptacle beneath a loose rock he quickly produced some mixture of food, which he proceeded to scatter broadcast, and then, having fed his feathered friends, the Elfin Boy, followed by Harry, once again began their somewhat perilous descent.

Upon reaching the deck of the old galleon they were instantly greeted by shouts from Dr. Rayner and Marcus Glendale, who, having shaken off their heavy slumbers, had emerged into the crisp, bracing air, wondering where the two lads had gone to.

"Why, wherever have you been?" demanded the doctor, as he regarded Harry's stained hands and, needless to say, somewhat soiled clothes. "Up there?" as the lad pointed to the apex of the peak. "Impossible! Why, a cat couldn't even climb that rock!"

"True enough, though, doctor," replied Harry, laughing. "We've been to the top, and, what is more, we've brought you back a jolly fine breakfast! See!" And touching his companion on the arm, he caused him to open his bag, displaying to the astonished eyes of those present the accumulation of eggs that lay therein.

"Well, I'm blessed!" exclaimed the doctor. "I thought I'd seen a few strange things in my life, but, bother me, this caps everything I have gone through during the course of a somewhat lengthy life!"

While this conversation had been going on their quaint host had entered the cabin, and after piling more wood upon the fire that smouldered in the hearth, produced an antique helmet, which he proceeded to fill with water from an equally ancient water-but.

In doing so he apparently found it necessary to roll up his sleeves, when Marcus Glendale, who happened to be standing at his side regarding him in a quizzical manner, suddenly noticed a peculiar mark upon the lad's right arm.

Reeling back as if he had been shot, he gazed in open-mouthed astonishment at his host. His lips moved as though he was trying to frame a speech, but with a convulsive shudder passing over his frame he closed them again as tight as a steel trap.

What he would have said in the excitement of that moment will never be known, for with a tremendous effort he pulled himself together, as, assuming a nonchalant air, he strolled out once more upon the deck of the ancient ship, making a miserable attempt at whistling the refrain to a popular melody.

THE 3rd CHAPTER. The s.s. Rocket, and What Happened on Board.

UTTERLY unconscious that he had aroused any feelings of enmity in the bosom of one of his guests, the Elfin Boy calmly

proceeded to produce a quantity of dried seaweed, which, with the aid of two flat stones, he pounded up, and then kneading into a mass with a little water, speedily formed them into cakes similar to those he had offered his friends upon the previous evening, and whilst the eggs were cooking in their extemporised receptacle, he placed them close to the embers, where in a few moments they assumed a delicious brown colour and emitted a most appetising aroma.

"Well, I'm blessed!" exclaimed Dr. Rayner. "Strange how this lad discovered how to arrange matters so well! What a pity he's dumb! Who on earth can he be, do you think, Harry?"

"I'm sure I can't say, sir. All I know is that he's a jolly fine brick, and when we get away from here we must take him back with us to uncle. Eh, what say you, Marcus?" as his cousin strolled up.

"What's that you're talking about?" demanded that youth.

"Why, we were saying that whatever happens we must take this lad back with us to your father. You know as well as I do how welcome he would make him."

An ugly scowl overspread Marcus Glendale's features.

"Hang me if I know!" he replied. "The chap's half daft. What good would come of taking him back to civilisation? He can get on jolly well as he is here with his birds, eggs, and messy cakes."

An angry retort from Harry was about to follow, a retort that was, however, interrupted by the Elfin Boy touching the doctor on the arm, and intimating that the early morning meal was ready.

The meal had barely been finished when Dr. Rayner, who had once more proceeded to the deck of the galleon, suddenly raised a shout that instantly brought his companions to his side, as, pointing between a cleft in the rocks, he cried:

"Look—look!"

Beating up against the wind, and with bows continually awash, came labouring on a small steamer. Evidently driven out of her course by stress of weather, she rolled heavily, but what matter that? Now they had once seen her their entire thoughts were centred upon gaining her decks, and being landed at any port for which she was bound.

"D'you think we could make them see us?" queried Harry.

"I'm afraid not," answered the doctor. "And even if we could, they would not put off a boat in this weather."

Unheeding his remarks, Harry turned to the Elfin Boy, and, grasping him by the arm, pointed to the passing vessel, and by means of signs made him understand how they wished to reach her.

One swift glance the lad gave aloft, noting the course of the clouds as they scurried over the twin-rock peaks; then he sprang down the side of the galleon, and almost before the onlookers were aware what he was doing had loosened the strange craft on which he had first been seen, and with oar in hand was beckoning them to follow.

"Why, he's mad—mad as a March hare!" shouted Marcus, holding back. "You'll never be such idiots as to go!"

"I'm sure I don't know what to do," remarked the doctor.

"Never mind, doctor; come along!" shouted Harry. "He brought us safely here, and I'm going with him. Come along, Marcus, old man! You won't? Well, all right. We'll send a man-of-war for you when the sea goes down, but I'm going, anyhow!"

Somewhat unwillingly, Dr. Rayner descended from the wreck, and Marcus, not relishing the idea of being left alone, with many a hard word, slowly followed in their footsteps.

The painter was cast off, the torn sail hoisted, and once more the little craft was tossing like a cork on the stormy waves as the wind drove them directly towards the steamer, upon whose stern, as she rose and fell, they could soon make out her name, the Rocket, of Liverpool.

Once alongside, and a rope having been thrown them, they one by one scrambled on to her decks, and it almost seemed as if the Elfin Boy was severing all connection with his old life, for as he mounted the steamer's deck a huge wave caught the boat that had so often bravely borne him, and dashing it against the iron sides of the modern vessel stove it in. For one second it seemed to struggle as the waters rushed in; then the swan-like neck on the prow reared itself upright, there was a deep roll, and the craft of a past age had gone to

join many if its companions in the fathomless caves of the ocean bed.

Needless to say, the crew of the Rocket, from the skipper down to the donkey-man, were intensely curious to know the history of the castaways they had picked up. Nor was their curiosity diminished by the strange garb worn by one of them.

"Lumme, Bill!" remarked a sailor. "Blow me, if I don't think we've picked up a half-hatched egg of a sea serpent!" as he regarded the stranger's quaint attire, but Captain Nolan, the skipper, soon packed them about their business as the voyagers were escorted to the cosy little saloon in the stern, where hot coffee was quickly handed round, and where our hero's outlandish garments were exchanged for a bad-fitting, if comfortable, suit of modern make.

Then mutual explanations followed, and it was found that the Rocket, having, as Harry had supposed, been driven out of its course, was making for Liverpool, where old Skipper Nolan promised to put them on shore.

It was a few hours later that the little party, together with Captain Nolan, were leaning over the port-side rail gazing at the slow heave of the ocean, for the wind having gone down, had left behind it a long, uneven swell.

"When do you think we shall reach Liverpool, captain?" suddenly queried Marcus.

"Well, I should say, on a dead reckoning, 'bout this time to-morrow, if all goes well," answered the skipper, glancing aloft as he spoke. "How's she making now, Smith?" he queried, as a grimy face was thrust through the engine hatchway.

"Not more than ten knots," replied the individual. "The bearings got a bit overheated, and I had to slow down a peg or two, but if you'd only see that lubber at the wheel kept her head up a bit more, we'd be making better speed."

A few short words were rapped out by Captain Nolan. The boat's nose came a couple of points nearer east, when further conversation was cut short by Tim, who acted in the capacity of captain's boy, chief steward, and valet-in-chief, announcing that what by courtesy was called dinner was ready, and, with appetites like the proverbial hunter, the little party hastened below just as Sambo, the black man who officiated as cook, came aft from the galley bearing a pile of steaming dishes in his arms.

No sooner was the meal over than the three lads were sent aft to occupy the berths allotted to them, Dr. Rayner and the skipper being left alone to enjoy the luxury of a choice cigar.

But for some reason or other, which in after years he was never able to explain, Harry Walters could not sleep. Try as he would, first turning to one side and then the other, the drowsy god refused to be courted. So at length, slipping on his clothes, he made his way on deck, where, clambering into one of the boats slung to the davits on the port-side, he threw himself down.

It was a glorious night, and a myriad stars twinkled over the lad's head as he stretched himself at full length in the boat, where he was completely hidden from view of all on deck, the only sound being the ceaseless throb, throb of the engines, varied by an occasional swish as the boat drove her broad bows into a larger wave than usual. And so he remained till the sound of soft footsteps caught his ear.

In the ordinary way he would not have paid any attention to them, but on that particular night he felt nervous and worried, and without exactly knowing why, he raised his head above the gunwale to instantly recognise the Elfin Boy and Marcus Glendale coming along the narrow alleyway towards him.

"Hallo!" thought Harry. "Seems to me we're all alike to-night. None of us can sleep." And he was preparing to give them a hail, when they paused, and leaning over the bulwarks, gazed out over the moonlit waves.

"I'll wait a minute," laughed Harry softly to himself. "When they come further aft I'll give them a shout. My word! Won't they be astonished?"

But what he anticipated never came off, for suddenly Marcus left his companion and dived into the shade of the deckhouse.

"Wonder where he's gone to?" thought Harry. "But, by jingo, what's that?" For out of the shade a dim form suddenly rose which seemed to lurch against the boy leaning over the rail.

Then a shrill cry broke upon the night air, as the Elfin Boy went

hurtling through the air, and with a terrific splash disappeared beneath the dark and oily-looking waters.

For a moment, almost paralysed with dread, Harry clutched at the slings supporting the boat as Marcus, darting backwards with a ringing cry of "Man overboard!" snatched up a lifebelt, which, to the watcher's intense astonishment, he hurled far into the waters, but in absolutely the opposite direction to that in which the Elfin Boy had disappeared.

Instantly all was confusion. The engine-room bell tinkled as the mate on the bridge sent down an order to reverse the engines, whilst Skipper Nolan, rushing on deck, shouted out hurried orders to have a boat lowered.

It takes some time to relate, but in reality the various instructions were carried out with a promptitude that barely exceeded a few seconds, though even in that brief space of time another change had taken place on the little vessel, for Harry, with upraised hands, had flung himself from the vessel's side, and with vigorous overhand strokes was plunging his way towards where the Elfin Boy was struggling in the white wake of the steamer.

Manned by willing hands, a boat was soon lowered, and just as Harry reached his companion a welcome shout came across the waves, assuring him that rough but kindhearted men were straining sinew and nerve to come to his assistance, and thankful he was to hear the shout, for on reaching the lad's side he at once saw he had a task before him that would require all his skill, for the Elfin Boy was but a poor swimmer, and instead of husbanding all his strength, had almost exhausted it in his vain endeavours to keep afloat. So, avoiding a deadly grip made at him, Harry seized his comrade under the armpits, and then, by treading water, managed to keep their heads above the waves.

Nearer and nearer came the boat, urged on by shouts from the steamer, whilst a blue flare that burst upon the deck lighted up the scene for some hundred yards around, and gave a ghastly hue to the faces of the lads fighting death in the cold waters.

"Keep up," panted Harry—"keep up, old chap! There! Go more steady! Look—look! The boat is nearly here! See! That's it—that's—"

But they were the last words he uttered. A shiver came over him. The blue flare seemed to fade from his sight. A rushing noise filled his ears, and then—blank.

"Back water—back water!" shouted old Tom, the mate of the Rocket. "Thank goodness, we got here in time!" as, bending low till the long boat heeled over, he grasped each lad by the collar.

THE 4th CHAPTER.

Harry Overhears a Vile Compact.

THE s.s. Rocket had been safely wharfed alongside the landing-stage at Liverpool, and with many a hearty grip of the hand Dr. Rayner and the three boys had parted company with the hospitable skipper, who had proved such a friend in need.

The first business on landing was to at once send off a long telegram to Colonel Glendale informing him of the whereabouts of the party, and stating that they would be proceeding to Pendle Hall—the colonel's estate on the borders of Lancashire—early on the following day, and also informing him that they were bringing a guest with them; but without going into further particulars.

This important piece of business having been transacted, rooms were secured at a hotel close to Lime Street Station, where, after some necessary purchases had been made, the little party settled down to a comfortable dinner.

The meal was over. Dr. Rayner had retired to his room to write numerous long letters, and the Elfin Boy, having shown signs of fatigue, had been comfortably tucked in by Harry Waters.

Returning to the coffee-room, Harry found his cousin eagerly reading the contents of a somewhat dirty-looking note, which, as he tapped him on the shoulder, was hastily thrust into his pocket.

"Hallo, Marcus!" cried Harry, apparently not noticing the action. "I'm thinking of having a stroll round. Never been in Liverpool before, and I should like to have a squirt at the place. Coming with me—eh?"

"Not me!" growled his cousin.

"I've got a beastly headache! I shall go to bed soon!"

"All serene, old man, only I thought—"

"Bother your thoughts!" snapped Marcus. "If you're going out, go, only I'm not coming!"

Harry laughed as he picked up his hat. "So-long, old chap! I'm off!" And without further comment he moved from the room.

As Harry left the hotel a few spots of rain began to fall.

"Hang it all!" muttered the boy. "Hope it isn't going to be a wet night. That would be a beastly shame! But there! I sha'n't melt!" And turning up the collar of his jacket, he made his way along the crowded thoroughfare.

Pausing every now and then, he admired the brilliantly-lighted shops, whilst the ceaseless stream of vehicles and pedestrians gave him ample food for reflection, till, passing a narrow turning, he caught at the end a glimpse of water and the lights of the shipping.

"Think I'll just go down there and have a peep," he remarked to himself. "By jingo, isn't it coming down!" for at that moment the rain, which had been drizzling before, came teeming down, causing him to quicken his steps as he glanced on either side for a temporary shelter.

At length he spied an old-fashioned house with one of those overhanging porticoes that one occasionally meets with.

"Any port in a storm," remarked Harry, as he dived under the gloomy shelter and crouched close against the door, for the wind was driving the rain in huge swirling sheets along the now deserted street.

"Jove, this is wretched, and it's turned jolly cold too! I wonder if—"

The sentence was, however, never finished, for in leaning more heavily against the door, it suddenly opened, and Harry, without even time to cry out, fell backwards into the apparently deserted house, whilst the door, evidently acting upon a spring, closed with a bang just as a peal of thunder rang out overhead.

Picking himself up as well as he could in the darkness, he fumbled about trying to find the catch of the door in order to get out again.

But, fumble as he could, not being aided with any light, he was unable to ascertain how the door was secured, and he was ruminating upon his best plan of action when another door at the rear of the house opened, and a voice that seemed strangely familiar shouted:

"D'you take me for a blooming fool? I tell you I see'd him chuck the other youngster overboard, and what's more I've found out who he is from the people at the hotel where they're a-staying. Ha, ha! I ain't the fool you takes me for. Not me. I'm going to get a hundred quid out of this job, or my name ain't—"

"Stow your jaw, you silly idiot!" replied another voice. "One of these days you'll get strung up if you can't keep your clacker still."

Harry's heart seemed to almost stop beating as he clutched at the wall behind him.

"I saw him chuck the other overboard." The words burnt into his brain.

"Anyhow, you ain't got the hundred quid yet, and don't seem likely to see the glimmer of it," went on the original speaker.

"No, I knows I ain't; but if I don't get it to-night, I'm a-going to have it writ down on a piece of paper, and you're a-going to witness it, that it's to be paid me in a week's time, else I ups and blabs the whole yarn."

Then followed the scrape of a match, and a small glow, as if someone was lighting a pipe, but, small as the glow was, it was sufficient for Harry to at once recognise the dark-bearded visage of one of the deckhands on the Rocket.

As the light flickered low a half-formed idea in Harry's brain became a certainty. He had heard a few words that had aroused more than a passing curiosity. For many days past his suspicions regarding the manner in which the Elfin Boy had fallen from the deck of the steamer had been gradually converging to a point that seemed to allow of no other explanation than that of a premeditated crime, and here, possibly, was the chance of a solution.

He had not long, however, in which to formulate his plans, for almost at that instant a ring came at the outer door, and one of the men in the inner room instantly rose.

Shrinking back as close to the wall as he could, Harry held his breath,

for he expected to be momentarily discovered; but, although the man passed him so close as to brush his garments, thanks to the entire absence of light he remained unnoticed.

The door was flung open, and a flash of lightning revealed to the lad's gaze what he almost expected, yet dreaded to see—the form of his Cousin Marcus standing outside.

A few brief words, then the door closed with a bang, and once again Harry had to hold his breath, as the two figures stumbled along the passage.

Entering the inner room, a light was once more struck, with which a smoky oil lamp was ignited, though, fortunately for Harry, the door of the room was in such a position that the passage remained in deep gloom.

It will not be necessary to go into all the details of how Harry gradually approached the open door, nor how, with beating heart, he listened to the conversation carried on inside. Suffice it to say, he soon learned that, as he had already more than half guessed, his cousin Marcus had deliberately pushed the Elfin Boy from the deck of the Rocket, with the full intention of causing him to lose his life.

There was, however, more to follow, and Harry felt sick at heart, as he listened to the conversation, for not only did he discover that his cousin unblushingly admitted the crime, but what was still worse, at the instigation of those present, even went so far as to promise them an additional hundred pounds if the Elfin Boy could be decoyed from Pendle Hall, to which place they were bound, provided that he should meet with a death that would appear as if purely accidental.

Harry's blood ran cold as he listened to this recital of villainy, especially as, for the first time, he became aware of the reason of his cousin's hatred of the lad who had rescued him from the quicksands of the Hebrides.

"What can I do?" thought the lad. "Oh, it's awful! What can I do? I must, at all risks, get back, and tell Dr. Rayner all about it. He will advise me what is best." And feeling faint and ill with the terrible knowledge he bore, he cautiously made his way towards the door of the house, when, by a lucky chance, his hand came in contact with a wire, which when slightly pulled, released a catch, and the door came partly open.

He stepped rapidly out, only to be confronted by a man who was entering, and who, without a moment's hesitation, seized him by the throat, at the same time giving vent to a peculiar whistle, that brought the other two men rushing out. A light was procured, and he was once more conveyed inside.

"By gosh!" remarked the man, whom Harry had recognised as a deck-hand on the Rocket, and whom he had heard addressed as Shorter. "By gosh! Blow me, if this ain't another of the cubs. Here, pinch his throat, and stop his squeaking!" for Harry had begun to call out lustily. Then, despite his struggles, a scarf was quickly bound over his mouth, and after a few moments' muttered conversation, he was carried up several flights of stairs, when, with hands and feet securely tied, he was flung into the corner of an attic, the door of which was locked, and he was left to ruminate upon his unpleasant position and the awful knowledge he had obtained.

The sun rose, and glinted through the narrow window that gave light to the tiny room, and once again was sinking in the west, and during the whole of that time Harry had not once caught sight of his captors. Did they mean to leave him to starve? He could only guess. But what was that curious glow in the sky, and Harry almost unconsciously thought that it must be a strange sunset, but brighter and brighter grew the glow, and then sparks began to fly upwards as a subdued shout from the street below reached the lad's ears.

"Heavens! It is a fire!" And the awful thought flashed across his brain that the desperadoes who had entrapped him had purposely set fire to the building in order to conceal all traces of their crime.

The thought maddened him. With a desperate effort he scrambled to his feet, and shuffled towards the small window, when, raising his tethered hands he brought them down with all his force upon the small pane of glass, which was shattered into a thousand fragments.

Then an inspiration seized him. One piece of pointed glass remained

fixed in the frame. It would cut, and, despite the fact that his hands were lacerated and bleeding, he dragged the cords that bound them backwards and forwards over the sharp edge till they were frayed through.

The rest was easy. Once his hands were free the handkerchief was torn off, and by means of another piece of glass, his feet were liberated; then, panting and gasping for breath, he crawled through the little window, and gained the narrow parapet.

Meanwhile, volumes of smoke and sparks were being hurled into the air, and above the roar of the flames came the clattering of hoofs and the shouts of excited crowds, as a fire-escape came rushing up, and owing to some obstruction in the street, paused just opposite where the lad was perched in his perilous position.

One glance sufficed to assure Harry that the fire did not emanate from the building in which he was confined, and to a certain extent he was congratulating himself upon the fact, when a heavy hand fell upon his shoulder, and the face of Shorter, looking terrible in the glow of the flames, was thrust through the window behind him.

The plucky lad almost gave himself up for lost, when a fresh shout attracted his attention. The fire-escape was being moved onward. The

to the lads, and great was his surprise to find them both absent.

"Wherever can they be?" he queried, as he fretted up and down the room. "Ah, here you are!" he exclaimed, as Marcus, looking very flushed and wet through, suddenly appeared. "But—but where's Harry?"

"Hanged if I know, doctor! I believe he went out to have a look round; but what's become of him I can't say."

"Annoying—very annoying! Here, listen! I've just received a telegram from your father's medical adviser, stating that he has had another seizure, and that it would be as well for us to return to the Hall at once."

"Indeed, doctor! Surely it can't be serious?"

"I can't say, but the summons must be obeyed. There, run upstairs, and get some dry clothes on. We shall have to wake up our friend of the Hebrides, and as soon as Harry returns we must start at once." And as Marcus, only too glad to escape further questioning, left the room, the doctor procured time-tables, which he eagerly consulted.

Ten o'clock! Eleven! Then eleven-thirty, and still Harry did not return as promised, till at last, not knowing what to do in the position they were placed, the doctor rushed

upon receipt of a telegram, Dr. Rayner and his companions had left on the previous night.

What was he to do? Without friends, and, as ill-luck would have it, absolutely without money.

His first thought was to apply to the proprietor of the hotel for aid, when a heavy step resounded on the tiled pavement of the entrance hall, and a hearty voice cried:

"Why, hang it all, if it beant' young Harry Waters! What be ye a-doing, lad, up here in the great town?"

"Mr. Meachen!" cried Harry, facing round. "Indeed, I am glad to see you!" For Josh Meachen rented a farm close to Pendle Hall, and many a day had the farmer and the lad spent together when out after rabbits. "Indeed I am glad to see you, because I know you will believe me." And, drawing the farmer on one side, he rapidly narrated the adventures he had gone through, winding up with an account of the plot he had overheard to lure his late companion to a spot called Conie's Hole, on Pendle Heath.

"Now, what am I to do, Mr. Meachen?" inquired the lad.

"Do! Why, hang it all, lad, I'll tell 'ee wot we'll do. I've got the gig and the old mare put up at the Blue Lion. Just you wait till I finish a little bit o' business o' mine, then we'll have her put in the shafts, and

through the hedge, closely followed by young Waters, the pair cautiously approached where a faint light could be seen glinting between the trunks of some stunted pine-trees.

"The Conie's Hole sure enough!" grunted the farmer. "Come on, lad. We'll precious soon find out who is inside!" And he dashed into the opening, followed by Harry, causing two men, who were in earnest conversation, to spring to their feet with an oath.

THE 6th CHAPTER.
Villainy Meets its Due Reward.

"HALLO, Jim Badger! What be you a-doing here this time o' night?" demanded Farmer Meachen, recognising one of the occupants of the cavernous space as he spoke. "What be you a-doing? You ain't a-looking for poachers on the colonel's estates, 'cause this 'ere bit o' ground don't belong to him. Now, then, young Harry, wot be you a-tugging at my sleeve for?"

"See, Mr. Meachen!" cried the lad, pointing to the gamekeeper's companion. "See that man with the black beard? He's the man who locked me up in the house at Liverpool—the man they call Shorter—the man I told you about."

"You skulking liar!" roared the individual alluded to. "Take that, you cub!" And he sprang at the lad; but a heavy blow from the stout fist of the farmer sent him sprawling back. "Now," cried old Josh Meachen, "you're both of you up to no good, and as for you, Shorter, I reckon our local police won't be sorry to see you again. You're not new to this part, I'm thinking."

The man scowled as he picked himself up, wiping the blood from his mouth as he did so.

"You interfering old fool!" he snarled, as he regained his feet. "I'll teach you to mind your own business." And snatching up the gamekeeper's gun, which was resting in a corner of the cave, he aimed deliberately at the farmer's head.

There was a bright flash, a sharp report, whilst at the same time a shrill, boyish shout rang out as Harry launched himself forward, and, seizing the man's arm, dragged the gun down. Then, with a cry of pain, he released his hold. Farmer Meachen was saved, but part of the charge had entered the brave lad's arm, and as he staggered back, it fell limply to his side.

It would be almost impossible to describe the events of the few following moments. Maddened by the treacherous act, old Josh flung himself at Shorter, but, being intercepted by the gamekeeper, landed him a left hander straight between the eyes that coiled him up in an inanimate mass in the corner, whilst the treacherous Shorter, taking advantage of this diversion in his favour, dashed past his foes, and, giving vent to a triumphant shout, disappeared in the darkness of the night.

The echoes of his shout had, however, barely died away before a piercing scream rang out, followed by a tremendous crash of falling stones.

"He's gone over the quarry!" shouted the farmer in his excitement; and, snatching up the lantern with which the cave had been lighted, he, too, dashed out.

It was, as the farmer had imagined, for the wretched man, catching his feet in some brambles, had plunged headlong into the disused quarry, a portion of the workings of which formed the so-called Conie's Hole, a fall which the farmer well knew would result in certain death.

Returning at once to Harry, Farmer Meachen, aided by the gamekeeper, who was now thoroughly cowed, lifted the boy tenderly into the trap, and with as much speed as possible set off for the Hall, where the first one to rush to his aid was his old friend the Elfin Boy.

But what was Harry's intense surprise as his friend grasped him by the hand, to hear him say:

"Thank Heaven, old man, you've come back!"

Harry, wounded as he was, half rose.

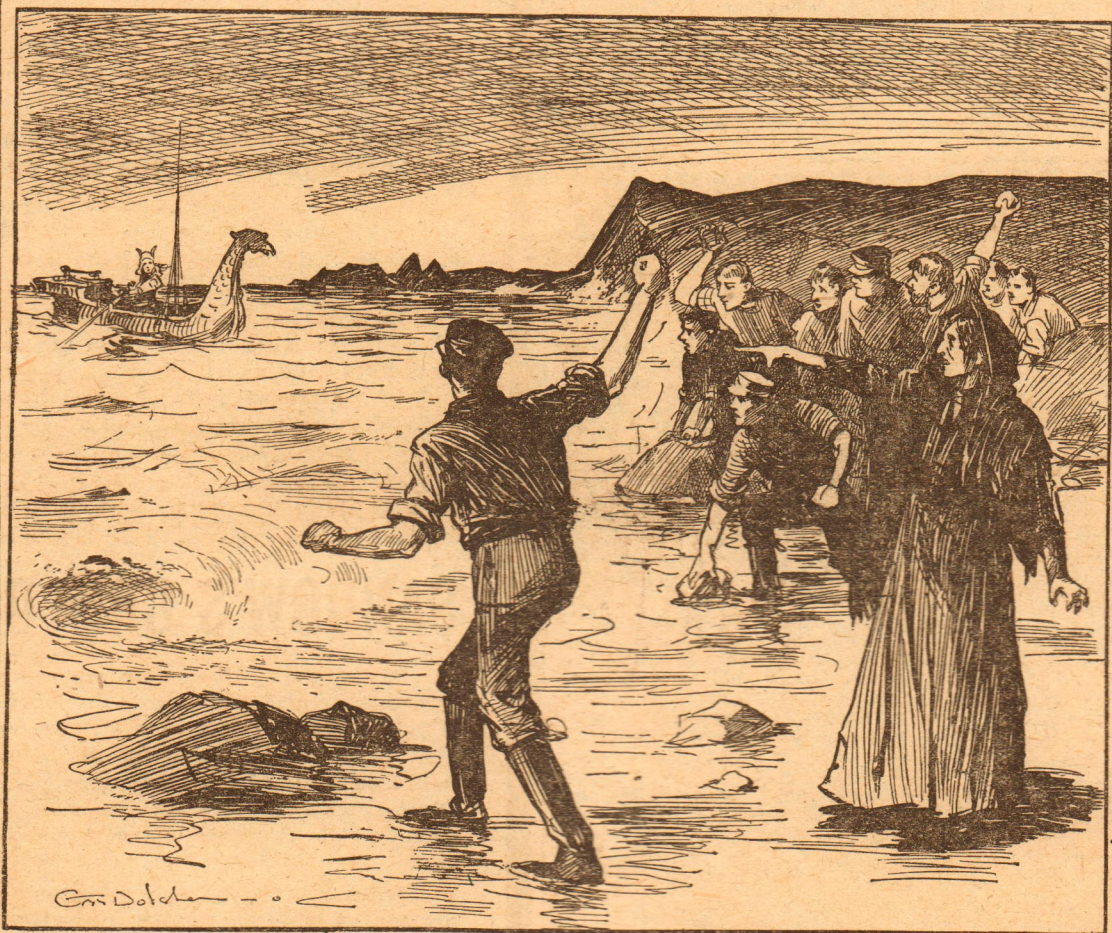
"Why—why?" he exclaimed, almost aghast. "You can speak!"

"Yes, old chum, I can speak now. I don't know how it was, but when I came here the old scenes, the familiar faces, seemed to break the bonds that held my tongue." And he laughed aloud.

"Old scenes, familiar faces. I don't understand!" faintly said the lad.

"No, of course you don't, old man; but you must know the news. Think who I am.

(Continued on the next page.)



"The Elfin Boy!" shrieked the old woman in her excitement. Instantly a dozen lusty arms were busy hurling showers of stones at the occupant of the peculiar boat that approached the shore.

top of it was not more than six feet away from him, though below lay a terrible chasm. However, it was neck or nothing. With a violent effort, he wrenched himself free from the restraining clasp, and, with a spring, launched himself into space, reaching, by a miracle, the moving escape, which rocked and swayed with the sudden impact. For one second he hung by a single hand, and a yell arose from those below who had witnessed the feat. Then he recovered his balance, and before the astonished firemen could hardly realise the fact, was nimbly climbing down the ladder.

THE 5th CHAPTER.
The Conie's Hole.

WE must, for a short space of time, leave Harry Waters as, amidst the shouts of an excited crowd, he scrambled down the fire-escape, and returned to the North-Western Hotel, where Dr. Rayner had fixed his temporary home.

An hour had barely elapsed since Harry had left the portals of the hotel to be, as we now know, closely followed by his cousin, than a waiter handed the doctor a telegram from Pendle Hall, the contents of which were so important that he at once rushed down to communicate them

off to the headquarters of police in the city, and gave them a full description of Harry's appearance and all further particulars he could think of. Then, leaving the address to which he was going, he tore back to Lime Street Station, and arrived there just in time to, with the two lads, board the midnight train en route for Pendle.

Quickly as Harry discerned the rungs of the escape, his mind was working even more rapidly, and he determined, anyhow for the present, to refrain from giving any account of what had happened to himself, for the circumstances were so strange, and savoured so much of romance, that he feared he would not be believed, and, therefore, to the inquiries made by the astonished firemen in charge of the escape, he briefly stated he was afraid the building from which he had escaped would catch alight, and on the impulse of the moment had sprung from it.

Then a fresh roar rose from the crowd. The obstructions had been removed, and at a brisk trot the escape once more moved forward, when, in the confusion, Harry mixed with the crowd, and was soon lost to view.

He at once set off to the hotel where he had stayed, and upon his arrival discovered, to his dismay, that

we'll drive right straight away home. 'Tis after all only a matter o' some fifteen miles as the crow flies, and, bust me, if we don't have a look at the Conie's Hole on our way! But you look half starved, and I were a-forgetting you ain't had no grub. Come along, lad—come along!" And the good-natured farmer seized Harry by the arm, and hustled him off, and a few minutes later they were both sitting down to a substantial meal.

"Whoa, mare! Steady! Whoa!" came from the farmer's deep voice a few hours later, as he and Harry, well wrapped up in rugs, were briskly driving along a bleak country road leading from Liverpool in the direction of Pendle Moor, that great stretch of waste ground that bordered the estate of Pendle Hall.

"Whoa, mare! Steady! There! Did ye see that lad?" And Farmer Meachen pointed with his whip. "My eyes must be getting funny if it warnt a light moving 'mongst the bracken, and right ag'in the Conie's Hole, too. Here, bustle up, lad; we'll have a look into this!" And, springing out of the trap, the farmer proceeded to tie the reins to a convenient branch of a tree.

"Come on, Harry," he continued. "It looks as though there was some queer mischief brewing over there. Anyhow, we'll find out what's up!" And thrusting his burly form

LOST IN THE HEBRIDES.

(Continued from the previous page.)

Harry's lips refused to frame a reply as the other went on.

"I'm your cousin, George Glendale!"
"My Cousin George! George, who was stolen many years ago by Mat Hinds, the gipsy? Then thank Heaven we were not too late! Oh, it's horrible—too horrible, for all I heard in that dreadful house in Liverpool was true!"

"What was true? What do you mean?"
Harry, however, did not reply. Covering his face with his hands as if to shut out some terrible mental picture, he sank back and lay silent. Overcome with pain and excitement, the brave lad had fainted.

For the rest, ample proof of the treachery of Marcus was found in the pockets of Shorter when his body was ultimately recovered. Evidently the wretched lad had discovered the Elfin Boy's identity by means of the strange scar he had noticed upon his arm on that never-to-be forgotten morning on the old Spanish galleon.

At once he had realised that the stranger before him was his elder brother, whom everyone had long thought dead, but he also recognised the fact that in that case the Pendle estates, of which he presumed he was the heir, would pass from him, hence the diabolical intrigues in which he had subsequently steeped himself.

Colonel Glendale, thanks to careful medical treatment, aided by the joy of once more seeing his long-lost son, soon recovered from his serious relapse, when it became necessary to relate to him the part his younger son had played in that drama of life.

Also George explained how he came to be found on the old Spanish ship. How, when originally decoyed away by Mat Hinds, in revenge for the colonel having sentenced him to a long term of imprisonment for poaching, they had embarked on a boat bound for an Irish port. How the boat was wrecked, and how, clinging to some of the wreckage, he had received a blow on the head from falling timbers that caused him to become unconscious, and also deprived him of his power of speech, and how he eventually found himself drifted up against the island home where he had for so many years resided.

As for Marcus, he is now in South Africa, where he receives a small allowance from home, and where he will have to remain for many a long year, though the latest reports received from a private source point to the fact that he is making strenuous efforts to blot out his past, and prove himself worthy of the good old British name he bears.

One item more. Some six months after the incidents related in this story, a large marquee, erected in the grounds of Pendle Hall, was filled to overflowing with the tenants on Colonel Glendale's estate, whilst at the head of the board the old veteran himself had been wheeled in a bath-chair, and grouped around him were our old friends, George Glendale, Harry Waters—the latter entirely recovered from his gunshot wound—Dr. Rayner, and last, but not least, Farmer Meachen.

"Friends," said the old colonel, rising, "I want you to fill your glasses to the brim to honour a toast I am to propose."

"Long life and good health to my son, George, the future master of Pendle Hall."

"One moment, dad," interrupted the lad, laughing. "Hadn't you better say, 'The Elfin Boy of the Hebrides'?"

(Another grand, long, complete story next Tuesday in THE BOYS' FRIEND.)

ENTERTAINING AT PARTIES.

How to Make-up—What to Sing—Hints on Style.

At a party one will invariably find that the comedian or humorist is the most popular person of the company who has kindly "obliged."

In this article it is the intention of the writer to give a few general hints to the aspiring comedian.

The first thing to be settled is, of course, the choice of songs. Songs suitable for the amateur can be purchased at the very moderate price of fourpence-halfpenny per copy.

My readers may have seen a comedian work at a party, and find that his songs are encored, and that every grimace and witty remark is received with a laugh. The comedian is a great success, and it looks so very easy.

But I must firmly impress upon my readers that to be a success as a comedian it is necessary for one to have more than ordinary ability in the art of being funny.

Personality counts for everything. One person may sing a song and find favour—genuine favour. Another may sing exactly the same song, and yet not get a laugh. That is an instance of personality.

Whilst singing or patterning, a comedian should be thoroughly "at home." If the entertainer has ability for singing "lively" songs, he should purchase songs that are worked by such men as Harry Champion, Dan Crawley, Will Evans, or Mark Sheridan.

However, should the comedian be of a less boisterous nature, songs sung by Wilkie Bard or Sam Mayo will be eminently suitable. Sam Mayo has a very original style. He shuffles on to the stage, and, having reached the centre, he stands perfectly still, with his shoulders bent somewhat. He then sings his song, wakes up, and shuffles off again.

This style is very suitable for party entertaining, and songs sung by Mayo are for ever being published.

There are many styles of comedian. The most popular are the dame, the character comedian, the eccentric, and the light.

The dame is a species of person who is blessed with "the gift of the gab," but who makes a point of asserting that it is not so. "She" never wants to say a word about Mrs. Smith, mind you, but, despite the fact, she continues to "pick her to pieces" for ten minutes or so.

This style, in the hands of a capable comedian, is a sure winner. The performer should imagine that he is the dame, and should air "her" grievances in a manner truly calling for sympathy—for the dame always has a grievance.

As for the make-up for the character, that should not prove a great difficulty. Either mother or sister will find the blouse and skirt—if they are asked for in a nice, polite manner. The wig for the dame should be made of crape-hair, which can be bought very cheaply. The hair should be unravelled and shaped into something resembling a wig, and then sewn into the bonnet, leaving a fringe upon the forehead, of course.

But to return to the ordinary comedian. A really good make-up for him is the following:

The face should be smeared with cocoanut butter first of all. Then dark flesh paint should be applied. Afterwards the neck should also re-

ceive its share of colour, by the way. The inevitable red nose should then be painted, working the "blush" well out upon the cheeks. The natural eyebrows should be covered with light flesh paint, and with the black "stick" thick, arched eyebrows should be made.

A line of blue should be marked round the bottom lid of each eye, and crowsfeet should be painted at the far corners. Red paint should then be added to the lips, and a line drawn from the nostrils to the corners of the mouth will tend to improve the make-up. Powder should then be added to the work of art, and the party comedian has an excellent make-up.

Needless to say, this make-up would be quite unsuitable for a light comedian. Songs worked by the light comedian are of a semi-sentimental nature. Such men as Whit Cunliffe, George Lashwood, and Charles Whittle sing excellent light songs, that are frequently being published.

The Double Turn.

A new phase of party entertaining that is rapidly "catching-on" amongst amateur comedians is that of the double-turn.

A double-turn is an act in which two comedians take part, or "work" together, and it is almost impossible to conceive anything more amusing than a really good turn of this description.

As to the class of gags, or jokes, a double-turn should work, this depends entirely upon their style. For there are many styles that can be adopted.

Perhaps the most popular of party "doubles" is the tramp turn. Both the comedians make-up as Weary Willies, with very old and seen-better-days trousers and coats—frock-coats for preference. The more patches and tears in the clothes the better will be the effect. Both the partners should wear gloves, of course, although perhaps two or three fingers of each glove may be missing!

Both the partners should wear a ginger wig and a beard, with a nose of rosy-red and a blue chin.

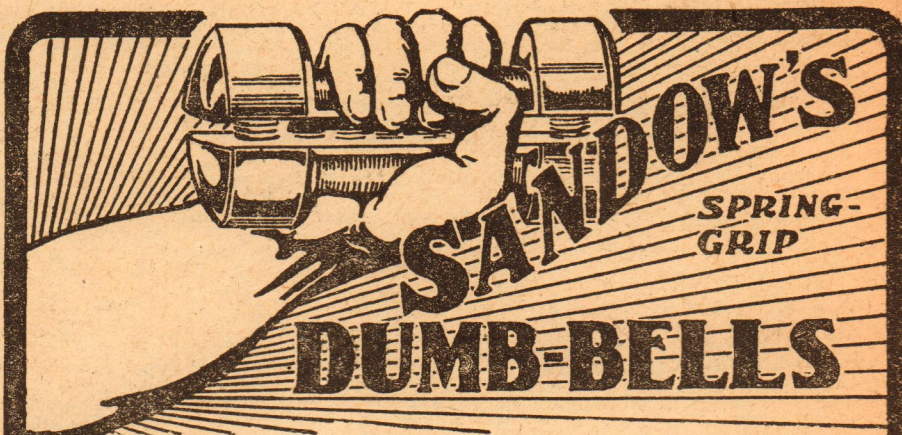
Their patter takes the form of a conversation, in which they relate their doings in society. They will probably also mention the great times they have had with Lord Soapsuds and Lady Maude Spring-Onion. And, needless to say, they both possess a motor-car, and usually do a hundred miles or so every morning before breakfast. But motoring is becoming so beastly common that they contemplate taking up flying, and showing Graham-White a thing or two.

Both partners should possess such names as Clarence, Percy, or Harold, and they should emphasise them as much as possible during the conversation. A tramp with such a name as Clarence always seems to strike an audience as being very funny.

In the hands of a couple of smart amateur comedians, a tramp turn can be worked with great success.

The turn is usually concluded with a song, in which the singers inform the world at large that they are millionaires, dukes in disguise, and so on.

THE END.



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Written by MALCOLM DAYLE,

Author of that Popular Story, "The Odds Against Him," etc.

THE GIST OF OUR NEW SERIAL.

Christopher Mayne, a young photographer living at Forest Gate, an eastern suburb of London, is out of employment, and by strange good fortune secures an excellent picture of the capture of two Anarchists, which he sells as a great scoop to the editor of the "Morning Mercury."

Later Chris receives an appointment on the staff of the "Mercury," owing to the dismissal of another photographer named Parker. The latter becomes most malignant, and unable to withstand his insults; Chris strikes him a nasty blow, an act of which he was perfectly justified. Parker, who is now in the employ of the "Daily Herald," threatens to have his revenge upon the boy photographer, and so the two become bitter rivals.

Chris is sent to Glasgow to photograph the launching of a new Dreadnought, and while sleeping in the train Parker steals his police-pass. Chris manages to board the great warship, however, and witnesses his unscrupulous rival taking a flashlight photo of the secret armoury. They are immediately confronted by an angry policeman, and the cowering Parker, seeing his awkward position, blames Chris for having taken the flashlight photograph.

The policeman is about to arrest the latter, and Chris knows well that if he is detained his pictures will not reach the "Mercury" offices in time, and he will lose his chance.

He makes his escape, followed by the yelling police, and taking a terrible chance he leaps from the side of the gigantic battleship to the yard-arm of a passing vessel.

(Now read the splendid chapters below.)

A Race Against Time.

UT into space!
Chris felt a rush of wind in his ears, and a mist rose before his eyes. All the breath seemed to go from his body, and the few people who saw the incident gave a cry of horror, expecting to see the daring young photographer either fall between the sailing vessel and the great battleship or else be dashed to a shapeless mass on the deck so far below him.

But Chris Mayne, always a good gymnast, had judged his desperate spring beautifully. For one brief second it appeared that he would not reach the yardarm; then, with a great feeling of thankfulness welling up in his heart, his hands clutched the big spar, and he swung to and fro, feeling that his arms were being pulled from their sockets, gasping for breath, and with his camera hitting him violently on the back as it swung out in mid-air with him.

The youngster wanted to see what was happening on the battleship, but he dared not look down. Gradually he got his breath, and slowly began to work his way along the arm to the mast. Once there, he told himself, he would have no difficulty, for it would be easy to descend to the deck by the rope-ladder.

"The old man's compliments," said a hoarse voice close to him, "and

he'd be glad to know who you are and what the Davy Jones you mean doin' circs acts on his ship?"

Chris glanced round. A sailor had swarmed up, and was waiting to help him down to the deck. The man's dirty face wore a look of blank astonishment, and his eyes were twinkling over the skipper's message as he stretched out a huge hand and assisted Chris into safety just as he felt he could hang on no longer.

"Get hold of this rope-ladder," commanded the sailor; "but if I was you I'd throw myself overboard. Our old man's a terror when he's roused." "What's he grumbling about?" asked Chris, with a faint smile, as he cautiously began the descent to the deck. "He saw a circus act, as he calls it, for nothing, so he ought to be obliged."

"You tell him so!" said the man grimly.

But Chris's brain was working at a great pace as he went down the ladder. Evidently the captain of the ship, being so far below the Ever Ready, had not seen the policeman, or he would have sent up a very different kind of message. It was probable that his sudden and unexpected leap from the deck of the battleship had so taken the constable by surprise that he had been too startled to cry out until the other vessel was well clear and being tugged rapidly up the Clyde.

"If I play my part all right," he murmured to himself, as he swung himself on to the deck, "I ought to make certain of getting away all right."

Then, as his feet touched the deck, and he heaved a sigh of relief to find himself there, a burly, red-bearded man in a shabby blue suit, with an old gold-laced peak cap stuck well on the back of his head, rolled rather than walked up to him.

Chris raised his cap. "I'm sorry if I've annoyed you," he said politely, "but I was in a terrible hurry, and I thought by getting on this ship I'd just be able to catch my train at the Central Station. It goes at twelve, and I've no time to spare."

The anger died from the captain's face, and he stared dazedly at the youngster from beneath his shaggy eyebrows.

"Laddie," he said solemnly, "I canna mak' up my mind as to whether ye're a lunatic or a verra brave young man, but whatever you are, you've no right on my ship."

"I know," cried Chris; "but I'm sure you're a good sportsman, and will help me to get to London in time. You see, I'm a Press photographer, and—"

"Gosh," ejaculated the Scottish skipper; "then that explains it! There's nae knowin' what you news-

paper fellows will be up to next. But it was a mad thing to do, laddie. You gave me a nasty turn when I saw you come flyin' through the air from yon battleship. I'll land ye all right. We ought to make Springfield Quay in about ten minutes."

Chris looked at his watch. It was twenty to twelve. In twenty minutes the London express left the Central Station. Only twenty minutes in which to catch his train, and he had not the vaguest idea where Springfield Quay was.

"Is the quay near the station?" he asked anxiously.

"Weel," said the captain, "I wouldna call it near, but I wouldna call it far. It's opposite Broomielaw. Ye'll just have to cross the bridge and run up Jamaica Street. It will be a near go—a very near go, laddie."

Chris's heart sank. Was his desperate leap, his luck in having talked over the angry old captain, and his escape from the policeman to be in vain? Was he, after all, to lose the train that meant so much to him and so much to his paper?

He stood by the side of the captain, who was obviously almost as anxious for the berthing of the ship as Chris himself, being a good sportsman and a great admirer of pluck and daring. And whilst Chris, with peering eyes, stared anxiously at the noisy little tug that was pulling them through the crowd of shipping to the side of the quay, the crew stared at him blankly, wondering what spell he had worked on their fierce "old man."

Boom!
A distant clock struck the quarter-hour. It was a quarter to twelve; in a quarter of an hour the London express would leave Glasgow. Would it leave without him?

The tug's siren rang out as she came off Springfield Quay, and slowly—terribly slowly, it seemed to Chris—she came alongside, and then, without waiting for her to be made fast, the young photographer, with a few words of thanks to the captain, jumped to the quay and darted for the roadway. It was five minutes to twelve when he ran across Glasgow Bridge, and it was one minute to when he dashed up the steps into the Central Station and made for the platform where the express was standing.

He sprang into a rear coach, and then stood looking out of the window. Suppose his description should have been given to the station officials? Suppose—

A green flag fluttered, a whistle screamed out from the front of the train, and then the great express began to glide from the platform.

"Stand back there!" Chris jerked his head in hastily, for he did not want to be seen by the man who was racing along the platform in a desperate endeavour to catch the train.

For the man was Parker, his rival, who might find some way of detaining him if he knew he was on the train.

"Stand away, I say!" James Parker, who, in his anxiety to assist the constable to recapture Chris, had lost count of time, and only realised that unless he was careful he would suffer the fate he had designed for his young rival, was tearing madly up the platform after the train.

Chris was looking out of the win-

dow again, anxious to see if Parker succeeded or not. People on the platform turned to stare at him; an old man was knocked down, and the Press photographer was almost level with the guard's van.

And at that moment a big inspector jumped in front of him and threw his arms round him, and Chris, looking behind as the train drew clear of the platform, saw both men struggling on the platform, Parker pale with rage, and hitting out wildly at the official who had prevented him risking his neck.

And so the "Herald's" photographer was left at Glasgow, with the knowledge that he would be unable to get to London in time for his photographs to be used, whilst the youngster whom he had tried, by any sort of mean method, to delay was seated comfortably in the London express.

Chris enjoyed the journey back to London far more than he had done the one up to Glasgow. For one thing it was daylight, and after his exciting experiences of the morning it was delightful to sit in the comfortable dining-car, eating a good meal and looking at the scenery as he was whirled along at nearly sixty miles an hour.

After the lunch he had a four hours' sleep, and woke up refreshed, and feeling as fit as a fiddle, the only thing that troubled him being the fact that he still had the feeling that his arms were nearly out of their sockets.

At seven dinner was served, and soon after the meal was over—the finest meal that Chris could remember having eaten—the train approached the metropolis, and the pace began to decrease. Chris looked at his watch as they passed through Willesden Junction—it was twenty-five past eight.

"We sha'n't be more than a minute or two late," he said, as he buttoned up his overcoat. And scarcely were the words out of his mouth before the train came to a sudden, sharp stop.

"Something wrong outside the terminus, I reckon," said the little man on the opposite seat.

Chris craned his head out of the window. A red light was twinkling through the darkness ahead, and the great express stopped, panting impatiently, in front of it, whistling shrilly, as though in protest at the time of her long run being spoilt.

Then the red light changed to a green one, and the train went on at a snail's pace, to be stopped again before it had proceeded many hundred yards.

Chris fidgeted impatiently in his seat. He knew that every moment was of the greatest importance, and that a big delay would mean that he would have had all his trouble for nothing, but he was helpless, and all he could do was to stare out of the window at the warning red light or discuss what had happened with his equally impatient fellow-passenger in the carriage.

Then at last the train moved off at a better pace. A tunnel was cleared, many lights appeared ahead, and at twenty minutes to nine the express, delayed by a shunting engine fouling some points, glided into Euston Station.

And Chris was out long before it

had come to a stop, and dashed across the platform to a waiting taxi-cab.

"The 'Mercury' office, Fleet Street!" he cried as he jumped in.

Honk, honk, honk!
Through the great grey archway dashed the taxi-cab, with Chris fidgeting in his seat and casting anxious eyes at every clock that was passed, down quiet roads at a terrific pace, with continual work for the hooter, sudden disconcerting jerks in the busier roads, and then at five minutes to nine came to a stop outside the "Mercury" office.

Chris paid the man liberally, and dashed up into the news editor's room. Mr. Rolands had gone off duty, and the night editor was in charge.

"Are you from Glasgow?" he asked sharply, as Chris entered, for he had not had anything to do with the paper's new photographer up to that moment.

"Yes, sir," said Chris. "Very well, get the stuff out as soon as you possibly can. We've kept a man here to print them. It's going to be a close thing."

And Chris, tired as he was, had to dash off upstairs to his dark-room and develop the plates he had brought four hundred miles. It was only twenty-four hours since he had left the office to go on what had proved such an adventurous journey. Certainly the life of a Press photographer would not commend itself to a lazy man.

But it was with a feeling of great satisfaction that Chris, after getting the prints down to the night editor in record time, and being complimented on his smartness, set off for his lodgings.

And as he got into bed that night he wondered if Parker would seek revenge upon him again, or whether, after having had two lessons on the subject of honesty being the best policy, he would be content to play the game fairly.

"I should think he would now," he muttered sleepily, as he rolled over, trying to forget past events and to get to sleep.

But he had yet a lot to learn about Mr. James Parker, photographer to the "Herald," and occasional correspondent with a high-placed official in Berlin.

Special Duty—Too Late!

CHRIS bought a copy of the "Mercury" the next morning, for the novelty of seeing his photographs in print had as yet by no means worn off, and as he journeyed to the City he gazed with pride at the front page, which contained the four photographs he had secured at Glasgow, and as he looked at them he thought with a shudder of the desperate leap into space that he had taken in order to get them to London in time.

When he entered the photographers' room, Mr. Larter, who had just arrived, and was listening to a recital of the little Cockney's woes in tramping about the Kentish village where for the past two days he had been securing photographs in connection with a murder case that had aroused public excitement, expressed surprise at seeing him.

"I didn't expect you to-day, (Continued on the next page.)

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Applications with regard to Advertisement Space in this paper should be addressed; Stanley H. Bowerman, Advertisement Manager, THE BOYS' FRIEND, 6, Bouverie Street, London, E.C.

Mayne," he said. "You were entitled to a day off after your rush to Glasgow. You needn't stop unless you like."

"Oh, I'm fit enough, sir," said Chris, "and I'd sooner be working than idling about! Can I speak to you for a moment?"

"Certainly!" said his chief, with a quick glance at him. "Come into my room."

And then in the little office Chris told him of his adventures at Glasgow, and how he had nearly been detained until his photographs would be of little or no use.

Larter's face flushed angrily, and he brought his fist down on to his desk with a crash.

"This is getting too much!" he cried. "Why, good heavens, Mayne, you might have lost your life in that leap—in fact, it's a miracle you didn't! I don't know what we can do, but something ought to be done. This man Parker should be drummed out of Fleet Street! I'll tell Mr. Rolands, and—"

"Please don't tell him, sir!" said Chris quickly. "It might do me a lot of harm, because, after all, it was careless of me to go to sleep and leave my police pass where it was easily stolen. Then he might think that if I was always going to be in rows with Parker he'd better sack me and get someone else. I think I can hold my own all right, sir, and one of these days I may catch him red-handed in some dirty game and get him exposed. So far, he has done himself no good. It was a sight to see his face when he was left behind in Glasgow!"

Mr. Larter chuckled. "I'll bet the 'Herald' people are sick!" he said. "They've got the rottenest front they've ever had this morning. Three mixed photos that were evidently processed at the last minute, so Parker either didn't wire them or else they hung on expecting agency stuff which didn't turn up in time. We've got the scoop of the launching, and it will do you good with Rolands, Mayne. Perhaps it will be as well to say nothing about what happened at Glasgow, though your pluck deserves mention."

Chris flushed. "I wonder if there'll be a row?" he said. "I expect the police are on my track, and—"

"Well, you'll be all right, anyhow," said Larter. "You can prove your identity, and our friend Parker wouldn't turn up to give evidence against you when it could be proved that he knew perfectly well who you were. You might go down and look at the files. There may be something in the Glasgow daily papers, which should be in by now."

Chris thanked him, and went off to the room known as the library, where works of reference and the current magazines, periodicals, and newspapers were kept.

Mr. Larter stared after him, and then turned to his desk and started to put a border round a photograph destined for the next day's fashion page.

"I wonder," he muttered to himself, as his pen went rapidly over the cardboard on which the photo was mounted, tracing the neat scroll work for which he was famous in Fleet Street—"I wonder what Parker took that flashlight photo for? There's something very suspicious about it, and I shouldn't be surprised if a good many people in high places are more than a little worried. It's strange, very strange, but I can scarcely believe that the 'Herald's' photographer was taking that photograph of the Ever Ready's armour-plating for use in the 'Herald'!"

Meanwhile Chris had been carefully through the files of the daily papers, reading many accounts of the launching without seeing anything about this desperate leap, until he turned to the "Daily Herald," the Glasgow paper that came in just as he had been through the others, and there was little enough in that.

At the end of a column and a half describing the ceremony were these lines:

"Some time after the Ever Ready had been launched a young man, believed to be a Press photographer, leapt from the deck of the battleship into the rigging of a passing sailing vessel. No reason can be ascertained for this suicidal act."

Chris stared at the short paragraph, surprise written large upon his face. There was no mention of his having been in the part of the vessel in which he had no right to be, no mention of his escape from the constable, or particulars of any sort. Why?

Mr. Larter, to whom he showed the paragraph, might have explained a

good deal, but he thought it wiser not to do so. The paragraph confirmed his vague suspicions. He knew that the authorities found it advisable to be very reticent at times, especially in cases of "spy scares," and he felt certain that men in high positions were convinced that someone had photographed a part of the ship that they had no right to photograph for a treacherous purpose, and that the paragraph had been inserted to account for the leap that a good many people must have seen without going into details.

"I wonder if Parker is playing a big game?" he said to himself, as Chris went off on an important mission. "If young Mayne disturbed his underhand work he certainly won't love him any the more."

"Mayne," said Mr. Larter, putting his head out of the door of his office, "Mr. Rolands wants to see you at once."

Chris, who was sitting reading, envying Brown, the little Cockney, who had just left for Dublin, where an important personage was to open a new public building, sprang to his feet and hurried down the stairs to the news editor's office.

It was three days since his adventure at Glasgow, and he had quite dropped into his work on the paper. His salary, though it did not seem so great to him now as it had been on his first appointment, had enabled him to move into lodgings in a street off Gray's Inn Road, so that he was handy for the office, and his shabby suit had given place to a new and serviceable blue one, with an overcoat that kept him both dry and warm whatever weather he had to be out in.

"Oh, Mayne," said Mr. Rolands, glancing up as he entered, and nodding dismissal to a reporter to whom he had been talking, "I'm going to entrust you with a special duty which I should have considerable hesitation in doing had you not done so well in the short time you have been with us!"

Chris flushed proudly, and determined to keep the news editor's good opinion, a fact which shows that praise where praise is due is a great encouragement to a young (or old) worker. Mr. Rolands made it a rule to praise good work, just as he blamed bad work, not going on the principle of blaming when anything was wrong and saying nothing if things were done well.

"You've heard of our aviation prize, of course?" went on the news editor, searching for a paper on his desk.

"Oh, yes, sir!" cried Chris. "It was indeed but few people in Great Britain who had not heard of the 'Mercury's' sensational prize of five thousand pounds to the aviator who, starting from the south coast of England, flew the farthest over France, keeping a direct southern course. No stops were permitted, and a man getting driven out of his course by the wind would be disqualified."

"Well," continued Mr. Rolands, "M. Perone and Mr. Loriston arrive at Sandsend, a little village between Dover and Folkestone, to-morrow, and will await a suitable time for the flight. Naturally, we want to secure good photographs of the start and of the whole race. You will go down to Sandsend this afternoon and stay at the Marine Hotel. A motor-boat is at your disposal there, and a motor-car will await you in France should the aviators succeed in crossing the Channel. They may start immediately, or they may be detained for some days. You must always be ready. The chief will be terribly sick if some other paper should get a scoop over our own. You understand that?"

"Oh, yes, sir!" said Chris, feeling elated at the prospect of a few days at the seaside with a probable visit to France at the end of it. "I won't let them out of my sight."

Mr. Rolands smiled grimly as he handed the youngster an order to the cashier for ten pounds for any extra expenses he might be put to, the paper having already arranged for accommodation at the hotel.

"By the way, Mayne," he added, as Chris turned towards the door, "we're not sending a reporter down, so you'd better take this card and Press telegram forms and wire us a short description of anything of importance that occurs. Make it as brief and concise as you can. We only want the barest facts that can be worked up in the office."

He turned quickly to the tape machine, which had commenced to tick off the news of a hill fight in India, and Chris, seeing that he had

finished with him, hurried out of the office.

"Hurrah!" he cried, outside in the corridor, and then rushed up the stairs two steps at a time to fill up his dark slides and get his camera before drawing the money at the cashier's office, and going to his lodgings for his bag.

Neglect of Duty.

WELL, this is a dull hole!" Chris Mayne, standing on the muddy road that the inhabitants of Sandsend proudly called the promenade, was staring out across the tossing, crested grey sea, which broke in white clouds of foam below him, and wondering if the wind would ever drop—the wind that shrieked round the corners of the streets, and buffeted him as he hurried on to the rusty iron railing that ran for a short distance down the promenade.

Chris had been at Sandsend a week, and save for the first two days, when both aviators had made attempts, and found that there was something wrong with their machines, a terrific wind had raged along the South Coast, making any attempt at flying out of the question. It would have been suicidal to have attempted the flight, and the small crowd that had invaded Sandsend, a crowd composed chiefly of reporters and Press photographers, had departed in disgust.

But Chris had to stay on. There was no knowing when the wind would drop, and it would never do for the "Mercury" to lose the pictures of the over-sensational aerial contest. In the first few days he had thoroughly enjoyed his stay at the little seaside village, taking short rambles along the coast, had chatted to the man in charge of his motor-boat, now hauled up well on the shore away from the rough sea, to the two rival flying men and the coastguards, but now he found it terribly monotonous.

He had sent up pictures to the "Mercury" of the rivals gazing out anxiously over the wind-swept sea, of the sheds where their aeroplanes were stored, and each day he had sent the same telegram, the message that he was sick of writing, "Wind prevents a start."

Chris turned from the dismal scene before him, and walked back to the hotel, flourishing enough in the summer, but now on this bleak January morning looking gloomy and deserted. It was twelve o'clock when he entered the deserted smoke-room, to find Monsieur Perone standing with his back to the fire, staring moodily across at the big window which overlooked the tempestuous Channel.

"Bah!" he cried, as Chris entered the room, "your English weather; eet is vile. Eet is no weather at all; eet is vind, vind, vind—nuzzing but ze vind from morning to the night."

"It must drop soon, monsieur," said Chris, trying to cheer up both himself and the disappointed aviator.

Chris left him, and found Mr. Loriston, the Britisher, who was also attempting to win the "Mercury's" prize, playing a game of billiards with the landlord of the hotel. He was in no better temper than his French rival, and Chris, seating himself on one of the settees, gloomily watched the game, about which he knew little or nothing, but from Mr. Loriston's unceasingly gloomy face, he judged that the landlord was winning.

"I've a good mind to telephone to the 'Mercury,' and ask them to let me go back," he muttered to himself, as he watched the landlord compiling cannons with monotonous regularity.

Then he dismissed the thought, as he had dismissed it before. It was his duty to stop at Sandsend until his paper recalled him.

"I think I'll go and photograph the coastguardman—or something," he muttered, as he rose from his seat. "I must do something; it's terrible idling about here."

Then his eyes fell upon a bill stuck upon the wall at the end of the billiard-room, and he went across to read it. It was an announcement of a new skating-rink that had just been opened at Folkestone, and Chris's eyes gleamed as he noticed there was an afternoon session from two to five.

"By Jove," he said, looking at his watch, "it's only half-past twelve now! If I have lunch at once I can catch the half-past one train, and have a few hours' amusement. It will be better than hanging about here with nothing to do."

Then an uneasy feeling that he was neglecting his duty evidently struck him, and he walked over to the window.

The wind whistled past, rattling the

sashes; great clouds of spray were being thrown over the breakwater, and the sea looked leaden save where it was broken by the white ridges of surf.

"Great Scott," he said, "there'll certainly be no flying to-day! Why, it's worse than it was yesterday, and that's saying a good deal!"

He ordered his lunch, and then, despite the weather, that made flying an impossibility, he made for the station with the guilty feeling of a schoolboy playing truant.

Once in the rink at Folkestone, though, he forgot all about the weather and the aviators who were impatiently waiting to cross the Channel. The floor was perfect, and Chris, who had picked up the rudiments of rinking at Forest Gate before his uncle's mysterious disappearance, enjoyed it to the full. For the first half-hour he had it almost to himself, and by the time the crowd began to come in he was whirling gracefully round, and the whirr of the skates on the wooden floor was music in his ears, and the crash of the band, and the hum of the voices seemed delightful after the dull days at Sandsend.

He was going round with the whole crowd, keeping in a ring of swiftly moving people, when he suddenly came to a sharp stop, nearly pitched forward, and a nasty collision was only just prevented by a man who had been following him turning sharply on one side.

"Silly young fool!" growled that individual, as he flashed past him, and a crowd of skaters went by glaring angrily at him.

But Chris did not hear the rebuke, did not see the angry glares as he hurried to the side. In the middle of his joyous swing round the rink, he had heard a remark that had caused him to come to the sudden stop, his heart surging, and his face going very white.

"Rum thing how the wind's dropped," he heard a well-dressed youth remark to his companion. "A quarter of an hour ago it was raging like mad, and now it's dropped completely, and the sea's as calm as a mill-pond."

The wind dropped!

The dropping of the wind was the thing the two aviators had been waiting for, the thing that he himself had been waiting for, and now, when it had occurred, he was neglecting his duty, enjoying himself at Folkestone, a full hour's journey from Sandsend even if trains fitted in.

"They'll have started!" he groaned miserably, as he tore off his skates. "They are almost certain to have started, and if they've started I'm done!"

A Collision in Mid-Channel.

IT was a white-faced young fellow gasping for breath who dashed into the Central Station, Folkestone just after three o'clock, five minutes after the little local train for Sandsend should have left.

"Has the Sandsend train gone?" he cried.

"No, she ain't," said the ticket-collector; "she's a bit late, just coming in now."

Chris darted to the platform, and sank panting for breath in the nearest carriage as the train came in. The short but very slow journey was torture to him, the weak, wintry sun was shining, and it seemed to mock him. Away in Sandsend the two aviators had either started, or were about to start on their race across the Channel and over France, whilst he who should have been in his motor-boat, ready to follow them across and secure a good set of pictures for his paper—the paper which had expended so much money to keep him on the spot—was travelling back to Sandsend conscious of having neglected his duty and kicking himself in his remorse.

He was out of the train immediately it stopped at the little station, and running as hard as he could for the hotel.

The little sandy-haired waiter was standing in the porch of the hotel.

"Hurry up, sir," he called; "them flying coves is making a start. There's been a rare to-do because you wasn't here. It is high tide, so they've had to take their machines along the beach."

The last part of the waiter's remarks were shouted after Chris as he dashed up the stairs to his room to get his camera.

So there might be time, after all, for him to secure a photograph of the start, though, unless they were off very soon, the light would be poor.

As he reached the beach, he saw Williams a couple of yards out from the shore.

"I can't come any nearer, sir," he shouted, "and there's no time to lose. The Frenchman's just ready to go!"

Without hesitation Chris plunged nearly up to his waist in the icy-cold water, and scrambled into the boat, which promptly made for the long strip of sand on which both aeroplanes were standing, with the aviators and their mechanics busy overhauling them, and just as the motor came opposite the stretch of firm sand, M. Perone took his place.

Chris, who had unpacked his camera and put in a dark slide, raised it to his eyes and got the aeroplane in focus, and as he did so a cheer arose from the little group on shore, and the machine, running a little way along the sand, ascended into the air, looking like a great, awkward bird.

Click!

Chris took out his pencil, wrote "Perone starting" on the piece of stamp paper he had stuck on the slide, and reversed it ready to take Mr. Loriston when he followed his rival into the air.

He was only just getting his breath back after his desperate, despairing rush from Folkestone. Had it been low water, they could have started almost opposite to the sheds, and he would have been too late.

"It's a lesson to me!" he muttered, as he took out his pocket-book and wrote on a Press telegraph form a message to the "Mercury," saying that Perone had started and that Loriston was about to do so.

Then the Englishman went up gracefully into the air. Chris secured a photograph of the start, hastily put down his camera, added "Loriston starting" to his message to the "Mercury," wrapped the form round a half-crown, told Williams to get nearer to the shore, and called to the little waiter from the Marine Hotel, who had run down to see the start.

"Send that off for me, will you?" he shouted, as he threw the message on to the beach, "and keep the change." Then quickly to Williams he added, "Let her rip now. We must be after them!"

And with the excited shouts of the crowd on the shore, and the whirring of the propeller ringing in his ears, Chris, having loaded his camera again, kept his eyes fixed on the two aeroplanes travelling along just in front of him.

Neither of the men was flying at any great height, and the light was exceptionally good.

"Now, they're in a good position for a photo," he muttered, as the two aeroplanes came closer together; "it looks like a race now."

He secured the photo, and was reversing the plate, when a sudden exclamation from Williams, the boatman, startled him.

"Look, sir! There'll be an accident. Perone is—"

But Chris did not hear the remainder of his sentence. His journalistic instinct made him raise his camera, and even as he glanced at the aeroplane through his focussing screen, the Frenchman, who had apparently had some mishap with his steering apparatus, was drawing dangerously near to his rival, then crashed into him.

There was a nerve-racking jar, and both machines reeled like birds wounded on the wing. Loriston recovered in some miraculous way, and steadied himself, but the other plane came crashing down into the sea.

Chris was pale as he placed down his camera. He had got a photograph of the accident, but he was anxious about Perone. If only he fell clear of his machine he would be all right.

Then, with a terrific splash, the aeroplane fell into the sea a hopeless wreck, and Chris saw the aviator clear away from it, but struggling wildly, and shouting out something in French.

"Quick!" cried the young photographer sharply. "All the speed you can get, man. A little to the right. Quicker, man; he can't swim, and he's going under!"

Pale to the lips, with a boat-hook in his hands, Chris bent over the bow of the motor-boat, his eyes fixed on the spot where a moment before the aviator had disappeared.

Then he came up a little further away, and Chris yelled out sharply to the man at the wheel. The boat was tearing through the water, but there was still a terribly long stretch of sea between them and the drowning man.

"We must save him!" he muttered, setting his teeth—"we must!"

And with the water breaking over him and drenching him to the skin, the boat flew on.

(Another ripping instalment of this grand Press-Photographer Serial next Tuesday in THE BOYS' FRIEND.)