

MAGNIFICENT PENNY HOLIDAY NUMBER FOR BOYS!

The BOYS' FRIEND 1d.

(WITH WHICH IS AMALGAMATED "THE DREADNOUGHT.")

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ONE PENNY.

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POLICE-CONSTABLE JIMMY SILVER ARRESTS ROOKWOOD'S GERMAN MASTER!

POLICE-CONSTABLE JIMMY SILVER!

A Magnificent New Long Complete School Story, introducing JIMMY SILVER & Co. at Rookwood.

BY OWEN CONQUEST.

The 1st Chapter.
The Heavy-handed Hun.

"Oh, dear!"
"Oh, crumbs!"
"Oh, crickey!"
Three juniors of the Modern side at Rookwood School uttered those joyful exclamations in a sort of chorus. They were Tommy Dodd and Tommy Cook and Tommy Doyle. Generally the three Tommies bore the lickings that came their way with

fortitude, for they were hard as nails. But on this occasion it was evident that they had been "through it" with unusual severity.

They were wriggling in the passage, squeezing their hands, and grunting, and murmuring sad lamentations, when the Classical Fourth came out of their Form-room.

"Oh, dear! My hands!"
"Oh, jiminy! My paws!"
"Oh! Ow-wow!"

Thus the three Tommies, Jimmy Silver & Co., the Classical four, halted, with sympathetic looks. Jimmy Silver & Co. were "down" on Moderns, on principle, but they could sympathise with them at a time like this. The wriggling and writhing and twisting of the three Tommies moved their compassion. They knew what this kind of thing was like—they had "been there" themselves!
"Had it bad?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"Wow!" said Tommy Dodd.
"Licked?" asked Lovell.
Tommy Dodd, who seemed to be trying to coil himself up into a sailor's knot, uncurled himself and glared at the questioner.
"You silly ass! Of course I've been licked! Do you think I'm doing gymnastics?"
"Well, don't jump down a fellow's throat," said Lovell good-naturedly. "I'm sorry, really. I dare say you deserved it; you Modern kids want a lot of licking, but—"
"Fathead!" groaned Tommy Dodd. "Go away! You face worries me!"
"Ow-wow!" said Cook. "I feel as if I've been skinned, you know! And just to think that there's a silly law against knocking Germans on the head! Wow! Why can't they put the beast in a concentration-camp? Yow! What are camps for, excepting to shove rotten Huns in? Grooooh!"
"Herr Kinkel again?" asked Jimmy Silver sympathetically.
"Yow! Yes! Wow!"

"That's what comes of being on your rotten Modern side!" remarked Raby, with a shake of the head.
"Now, on the Classic side we don't have German, and we don't have Herr Kinkel. I should consider it unpatriotic to mug up German now."
"Wow! Wow!"
"Hard cheese!" said Jimmy Silver.
The Classical youths prided themselves on... knowing the difference between "der" and "dem" and "das." They not only escaped German on their side, but they escaped the German master—which was a great escape, for Herr Kinkel was a real Tartar. He was not popular with the masters, and he was detested by all the fellows, Classic and Modern. His temper was Hunnish—indeed, the juniors declared that they could easily imagine him massacring Belgians, like the other Huns.
At the beginning of the war the Modern juniors had joyfully anticipated the departure of Herr Kinkel.
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to an internment-camp. They were grievously disappointed when he did not depart. To get rid of German lessons and German master at one fell swoop would have been ripping. But Herr Kinkel was regarded in a different light by the Head of Rookwood. Herr Kinkel was registered as an enemy alien, and he stayed on, and was quite free within a radius of five miles of Rookwood. His pupils would have preferred him to be anywhere on the other side of the legal five-mile radius.

"The worst of it is that we didn't do anything!" moaned Tommy Dodd. "I did—well, practically nothing; and these chaps didn't do anything at all. It's simply rotten to let a savage Hun like that loose on us. One of these days I shall commit Hunnicide!"

"What was it you did?" asked Newcome. "I mean, what was it you didn't do?"

Tommy Dodd grinned feebly.

"The bees, has been giving us German this morning. I simply drew a picture in my exercise-book. Why shouldn't I draw a picture if I want to? Old Bootles would only have given me lines. But not that rotter Kinkel. He gave me the pointer—hard! And Cook and Doyle got the pointer, too, just because they looked at the picture. Perhaps they grinned a bit. It was a comic picture."

"My hat!" said Jimmy Silver. "Look here, go to Mr. Bootles about it. He's no right to lick you like that just for drawing a picture in lesson-time."

"Well, it was a picture of the Kaiser," admitted Tommy Dodd. "Oh!"

"It was only a j-joke, you know. Just a picture of the Kaiser dressed as a Red Indian, scalping the Belgians—"

"You ass! Ha, ha, ha!" "Well, the beast is worse than a Red Indian, isn't he?" demanded Tommy Dodd. "Red Indians are respectable compared with the Huns. And the Kaiser knows better, and the Red Indians don't, so he's much worse. But Kinkel got ratty for some reason—"

"Ha, ha! I wonder why?" "And then he laid into us with the pointer," growled Tommy Dodd. "That ass Doyle gave us away with his cackle, or the Hun wouldn't have seen it. They oughtn't to have a Hun here in war-time. Oh, my paws! I sha'n't be able to play cricket this afternoon. Oh, crickey!"

"The Head would be down on the beast if he knew what a beast he was!" mumbled Cook. "But the Head is always so oily to the Head—just like a sneaking Hun! Instead of being down on him, the Head would be down on us, because of silly rot about chivalry and so on to beastly Huns who happen to be here. As if Huns understand chivalry! They don't understand anything but a drive in the eye."

"The beast came sneaking behind us—you know how he creeps about like a cat," said Doyle—"we didn't see him at first—ow!" So he spotted the picture—wow! Sure, I'd give a week's pocket-money to scrag him!"

"Just like a rotten Hun!" said Jimmy Silver indignantly.

Herr Kinkel's stealthy manner of moving about quietly and catching remarks that were not intended for his ears was well known to the Fistical Four.

"Silber!" Jimmy Silver & Co. jumped as they heard the unpleasant voice close behind them. They spun round. Herr Kinkel stood blinking at them, his little light-blue eyes twinkling with rage. Jimmy Silver & Co. stood in dismay.

Just as they were discussing and condemning Herr Kinkel's stealthy manners and customs, Herr Kinkel had been indulging in them once more. Not one of the juniors had heard him come along the passage. But there he was, and he had evidently heard Jimmy Silver's complimentary remark.

"Silber! You spick of me, ain't it?"

"I—I—"

"You call me Hun, wasn't it?"

"I—I didn't know you were listening, sir," stammered Jimmy Silver.

Herr Kinkel turned purple. He did not like to hear his eavesdropping called by its right name.

"You insolent boy! You talk to me like that! Folge mir—follow me mit you, and I takes you to your Form-master!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"And you oders—Raby und Loffell und Newcome—you gum!"

"They didn't call you a Hun, sir," said Jimmy Silver. "They hadn't said what they thought, sir."

"Gum!" shouted Herr Kinkel.

He strode away to Mr. Bootles's study, and the Classical four, with lugubrious looks, followed him.

Tommy Dodd & Co. looked after them with sympathy. The Fistical Four were in for it now!

The 2nd Chapter. On the Warpath.

Mr. Bootles, the master of the Fourth, looked worried as Herr Kinkel strode into his study, followed by the four Classical juniors. Mr. Bootles was a kind-hearted man, very different from Herr Kinkel, and he was not a believer in the methods of "frightfulness" dear to the heart of the Hun. But he could not decline to listen to a complaint laid against boys in his Form.

"Herr Pootles, I complain to you—"

"Yes, what is it, Herr Kinkel?"

said Mr. Bootles, with a sigh.

"Dese boys odery insult me!"

"Dear me, I hope not!"

"Aber—but I tell you tat yes! Is it tat L, a Cherman, shall be called a Hun by dese boys?"

Mr. Bootles frowned.

"Is it possible, Silver, that you have applied that exceedingly opprobrious term to Herr Kinkel?" he exclaimed.

"I—I was speaking generally, sir," murmured Jimmy Silver. "I—I didn't know that Herr Kinkel was creeping behind me."

"Silver!"

"If I had, sir, I shouldn't have made the remark. And—and I didn't exactly call Herr Kinkel a Hun. I only said that sneaking about in a stealthy way was just like a Hun."

"You hear him, Herr Pootles!" gasped the German master, almost foaming.

"Silver! Were you referring to Herr Kinkel, or were you not?"

"Well, yes, sir."

"I shall cane you severely. You are aware, Silver, that it is absurd and very wrong to display prejudice against a nation with whom we are at war. You are aware that the Head would be very angry if any rudeness should be shown towards Herr Kinkel because he is a German. You must be aware that such prejudices are ridiculous."

"Oh, yes, sir," said Jimmy Silver. "We think that 'Hymns of Hate,' and such stuff are awful rot. I hope we've got more sense than the Huns, sir."

Herr Kinkel clenched his fat hands with fury. Mr. Bootles coughed. It was well known that Herr Kinkel had a copy of the celebrated "Hass-Gesang gegen England" in his study, and he was sometimes heard mumbling it over.

"Silver, you must not—ahem!—make such remarks—ahem!—"

"But I was only saying that I agree with you, sir," said Jimmy Silver innocently. "We know that some Germans are jolly decent chaps, but some of them are beastly Huns, sir. But we haven't any prejudices. If anybody was to write a 'Hymn of Hate' against Germany, we should think he was a silly ass, as big a silly ass as the German chap who wrote the 'Hass-Gesang,' sir. Shouldn't we, you chaps?"

"Yes, rather," said Lovell and Raby and Newcome all together.

"You hear dem, Herr Pootles?" shrieked Herr Kinkel.

"Yes, I hear them," said Mr. Bootles. "They express a very proper sentiment, Herr Kinkel—very proper indeed, to my mind—perhaps a little forcibly."

"Vat!"

"You are quite right, my boys, to be careful to avoid any feelings of bitterness or rancour towards an enemy," said Mr. Bootles. "Such feelings displayed by the enemy, as exemplified in the absurd 'Hymn of Hate,' you are right to regard with derision."

"Mein Gott!" gasped Herr Kinkel. "That was not what he wanted to hear at all."

"But your application of a—ahem!—an opprobrious epithet to Herr Kinkel, Silver, is—ahem!—impertinent, and not in keeping with the very proper views you have just expressed," said Mr. Bootles. "I shall therefore cane you severely. Kindly hold out your hand."

Swish, swish, swish!

Oh, dear! mumbled Jimmy Silver, as he tucked his hands under his arms, and proceeded to go through a series of remarkable gymnastics in imitation of Tommy Dodd's.

"And de oders, Mr. Pootles."

"What have they done, Herr Kinkel?"

"Please we haven't done anything, sir," said Raby meekly.

"Dey are as pad as Silber."

"Ahem! But what have they done?" asked Mr. Bootles coldly. He did not intend to cane his pupils simply to please the German master.

"Dey hear vat Silber say—"

"They could scarcely avoid hearing what Silver said, if he spoke in their hearing, Herr Kinkel. I hardly think it would be just to punish them simply because they heard Silver's remark."

"I tink dey say to same, but I do not hear all tat dey say."

"We hadn't said a word, sir," said Lovell indignantly. "We hadn't time to speak, we were interrupted—"

"Shurrup, you ass!" whispered Raby, treading on his foot.

"You never go!" said Mr. Bootles.

"Mein Gott! I tink, Mr. Pootles, tat—"

"I cannot administer punishment for nothing, Herr Kinkel. The offender has been punished, and the matter is now closed," said Mr. Bootles, laying down his cane. "Boys, you may go!"

The Fistical Four lost no time in going. Herr Kinkel opened his mouth, and closed it again. It was useless for him to argue with Mr. Bootles, and he knew it. But he was purple with anger as he quitted the study.

The Fistical Four had rejoined the three Tommies in the passage. Herr Kinkel gave them a scowl in passing, and strode away with a black brow.

Jimmy Silver cast a vengeful look after him.

"The awful rotter!" he muttered. "Of course, it isn't nice to be called a Hun; but he shouldn't be a Hun, should he? He wouldn't have heard me if he hadn't been sneaking behind me on tiptoe."

"Beastly sneak!" growled Tommy Dodd. "A decent man wouldn't take any notice of anything he heard like that. But it's no good expecting that Hun to be decent."

"No cricket for me this afternoon!" said Jimmy Silver, rubbing his hands dolefully. "I sha'n't be able to hold a bat! Bootles can lay it on. I don't blame old Bootles; it was up to him when the beast complained of being called a Hun. But—shouldn't I like to scrag the Kinkel bird! Oh, dear!"

"And he wanted us licked, when we hadn't even had time to say that he was a Hun," said Lovell. "Of course, he knows what we think."

"I wish we could make him sit up somehow," mumbled Tommy Dodd. "It's rotten to have to take this lying down—from a Hun, too. I don't believe in laying Germans loose at a time like this. Oh, dear! Why can't they interm him? I'd be willing to chuck German lessons till the end of the war."

"So would I," said Tommy Cook, "so would all the fellows. They needn't bother about us. We could stand it."

Jimmy Silver squeezed his hands and mumbled.

"We're going to make him sit up," he said determinedly. "Britons never shall be slaves. What's the good of licking them in Flanders if they have the upper hand of us here, on our native heath? The beast is a Hun—the Hunnest Hun of the lot. Look here, cricket's off for this afternoon, but we've got to fill up a half-holiday

somehow. I'm going to have a think."

"Draw it mild," murmured Lovell. "It's not safe to tackle a master, you know—especially a Hun."

"There are ways and means," said Jimmy Silver dully. "If we can't beat a beastly Hun, we may as well give in to the Kaiser at once, and have done with it. It's up to us. Haven't you Modern bounders any ideas in your heads?"

"We can't lynch him!" growled Tommy Dodd.

"We'd like to," mumbled Cook. "But there's a silly law against it."

"Then you leave it to me," said Jimmy Silver. "If I don't think of a wheeze, you can use my head for a footer."

"I don't think much of your Classical wheezes, as a rule," said Tommy Dodd disparagingly. "But if it's anything up against Kinkel, we'll back you up, and chance the pointer."

From that moment it might have been observed that Jimmy Silver of the Fourth wore an expression of almost owl-like reflectiveness. He moped about in the quad with his hands in his pockets, and a deep wrinkle in his brow, till dinner-time thinking.

When he came in to dinner his chums gave him inquiring looks. They had great faith in the intellectual powers of Jimmy Silver. And they would have welcomed any scheme, however harebrained, for making the obnoxious German master "sit up."

But Jimmy shook his head. He had been cudgelling his brains for an idea, but the idea had not come yet. He sat at dinner with a wrinkled brow.

The process of thinking was evidently still going on.

So preoccupied was Jimmy Silver with his weighty reflections that he did not even notice when Jones minor put salt on his pudding, and he ate the pudding without a word.

After dinner he retired to the end study.

Lovell and Raby and Newcome followed him. Never had they seen their chum so deeply engaged in the painful and unaccustomed process of thinking.

They regarded him with real solicitude as he plunged into the arm-chair and wrinkled his brows, and fixed an almost ferocious glaze on the study carpet.

"Going strong?" Lovell ventured at last.

"Don't jaw, it's coming!"

"What's coming?" asked Raby.

"The wheeze!"

"Oh, good! We'll wait for you in the tuckshop!" said Lovell. "I'm going to have some ginger-pop. Come and tell us when you've thought!"

The three juniors walked away and left Jimmy Silver in peace, to think out that problem.

He was determined that he would do it. It was up to him—his prestige was at stake now.

An old proverb tells us that where there is a will there is a way. That terrific "think" had its results at last. Suddenly Jimmy Silver's brows cleared, and he grinned. The wheeze had evidently arrived.

The 3rd Chapter. Plotting a Plot.

The Co. were in the school shop, and the three Tommies were with them. They were discussing ginger-pop—and Jimmy Silver. Lovell and Raby and Newcome were confident of their faith in Jimmy was almost unbounded. Dodd and Cook and Doyle were sceptical.

Tommy Dodd had been thinking, too. The net result was nil. So far as Tommy Dodd could see, there was simply no way of getting even with the enemy. A master could not be japed—he could not be bumped—he could not be ragged or scragged. There was no way of getting at Herr Kinkel. Tommy Dodd gave it up as hopeless, though he was very keen.

And if he was beaten, there wasn't much chance of Jimmy Silver doing any better, so Tommy Dodd declared, and the other Tommies fully agreed with him. Where a Modern chap was at a loss, what chance was there for a Classical?

That was how the Moderns looked at it. So they drank ginger-pop to the defeat and confusion of all Huns, from the Kaiser to Herr Kinkel, and had to be content with that.

Indeed, the three Moderns began to be quite merry on the subject of the "big think" that Jimmy Silver was indulging in in the end study.

"Hadh't you better go and have a squint at him?" asked Tommy

Dodd. "When one of you Classical chaps begins using his brain there's no telling what may happen."

"Might lead to an explosion or something," said Cook. "You see, he's not used to it."

"First time he's ever done any thinking, be that remarked," Tommy Doyle remarked. "Sure, it's onasy I am about him."

"Oh, don't be funny!" said Lovell, with a snort. "You just wait a bit. Hallo, here he comes! Trot in, Jimmy, and try this ginger-pop!"

Jimmy Silver looked in at the doorway of the tuckshop.

His face was serene. He beckoned.

"Come on, you fellows!"

"Can't you come in here?" demanded Tommy Dodd. "I haven't finished my ginger-beer."

"Blow your ginger-beer! Are you coming?"

"Get the wheeze?"

"Yes."

"Not much class, I expect," said Tommy Dodd, shaking his head.

"Still, we'll come. If there's anything in it, we'll stand a feed at tea-time. If there isn't we'll knock your silly head on a tree. That's a go!"

Lovell and Raby and Newcome had already joined their chums, and the three Tommies followed them out of the school shop.

Sergeant Kettle was presiding behind the counter, and Smythe of the Shell was there with Howard and Tracy, and fellows were dropping in every few minutes, so it was evident that the wheeze could not be discussed there. If there was anything in it, it certainly had to be kept extremely dark. The "powers that were" were not likely to sympathise with the juniors' desire to make Herr Kinkel sit up, desirable as that was.

Jimmy Silver led the way through the old stone archway into Little Quad, which was deserted. Most of the fellows were on the playing-fields or the river. Jimmy stopped at the fountain, and his followers stopped too. Tommy Dodd proceeded to crack nuts and eat them with a disparaging manner which would have exasperated Jimmy Silver at any other time. But just now Jimmy Silver was not to be exasperated.

"Well, what's the wheeze?" asked Lovell anxiously.

The three Classics were very anxious. They had contended that their leader would "think it out" successfully, and they did not want to be let down before the Moderns.

"I've got it," announced Jimmy Silver. "It's a bit risky—"

"Oh, we're game!" said Tommy Dodd. "Blow the risk! Anything short of collaring the beast in his study."

"We shall want some money—about ten bob—"

"That's easy enough," said Lovell. "I've got a quid."

"We'll whack out the expense," said Jimmy Silver. "It's only to pay for the hire of something in Coombe. Now, we're all in this. Herr Kinkel is going to help."

"Eh?"

"Listen, and I will a tale unfold" said Jimmy Silver impressively. "I warn you in advance that this jape is the catch of the season. It couldn't be worked on anybody but Kinkel, and it all depends on him. But he's sure to play up."

"But what the dickens—"

"First of all, you Modern chaps have got to do your bit. I've just spotted old Kinkel. He's smoking at his study window as usual. I can't see him, but there's the smoke of his blessed pipe coming out. Now, suppose you chaps were strolling along under his window discussing a smoking-party you were going to have—"

"Why, you silly ass, you know we don't smoke," said Tommy Dodd indignantly. "What are you getting at?"

"Fathead! Suppose—"

"I'm not going to suppose that we're silly smoky asses like your precious Smythe—"

"Will you let me finish?" roared Jimmy Silver, exasperated at last.

"Oh, we'd be glad to hear you finish, if that's all!"

"Suppose old Kinkel heard you jawing like that—about a smoking-party—"

"There you go again!"

"Shut up! That's arranged at a good distance from the school—say, the old abbey at Clyffe. You let him catch a few words enough to put him on the scent."

"Blessed asses if we did," said Tommy Dodd. "Why, he'd go there to catch us in the giddy act! If we wore smoky duffers like your precious Smythe and Townsend, we should be jolly careful to keep Kinkel off the grass. Why, he'd spot us if he could,



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and march us to the Head for a flogging!"

"Exactly," said Jimmy Silver. "That's the wheeze. He's such a sneak that he'd listen to anything behind a fellow's back, and act on it. That's the game."

"Oh, that's the game, is it?" snorted Tommy Dodd. "We're to hold a filthy smoking-bee at the old abbey for the pleasure of being spied on and caught by old Kinkel and flogged by the Head. Thanks awfully!"

"Isn't much good trying to get a Modern chap to understand anything, I suppose," said Jimmy Silver. "Still, I'll try. Can't you see it's only spoof? That's a little game to get old Kinkel to cut off to the abbey."

"Oh, just to give him a walk!" said Tommy Dodd. "Well, it would serve him right to have a walk of six miles for nothing. But that's not much of a wheeze. Besides, he would take the public omnibus from Coombe and ride five miles of it. He would only have a mile to walk, and he's a good walker, the beast likes walking. If that's the wheeze, you can go and boil it."

"Oh, you ass, you don't catch on!"

"No, I don't!"

"Can't you see? The old abbey is six miles away—"

"Well?"

"And the law doesn't allow Kinkel to go more than five miles from his residence without a special permit, because he's a German."

"Oh!"

"But he won't think about that—he won't care. Lots of Germans don't take any notice of the legal limit, and we know Kinkel has been to Shercliff, which is ten miles, the other week. When he goes on a long walk he does go more than five miles, and nobody takes any notice. He won't care a rap about the old abbey being outside the five mile limit, even if he knows it's so far. He'll just go there to catch the smoking-party. You can mention our names to make him keen."

"But I don't see it!" growled Tommy Dodd. "It's a lonely place, and no bobbies there. It won't hurt him."

"My idea have a bobby there."

"Great Scott!"

The juniors stared at Jimmy Silver almost aghast.

"A—a—a bobby!" said Lovell faintly. "Oh, jiminy! It—it wouldn't be quite the thing to get him into trouble with the police, though he's a beast!"

"Who's talking about getting him into trouble with the police?" demanded Jimmy Silver.

"But—but you said—"

"I said we'd have a bobby there," said Jimmy Silver. "I've got my eye on a special bobby. That's why we shall need ten bob for the hire of some things at the costumer's in Coombe."

"Eh? The costumer's?"

"Yes, ass! That's the wheeze! Kinkel goes over the five-mile limit without a permit, and he's arrested by a bobby."

"But—but what bobby?"

Jimmy Silver lowered his voice to a thrilling whisper as he replied:

"Police-Constable Silver!"

"That was a general gasp. "You wouldn't have the nerve!" shrieked Tommy Dodd.

"Bosh!"

"You—you couldn't do it!" howled Lovell.

"Rats!"

"Oh, my hat! Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Raby. "If—if it would work—but—but—"

"It would work—it will work—and it's going to work!" said Jimmy Silver determinedly. "There's the risk, but hang the risk! Our fellows out there don't think about the risk when they're hammering the Huns, do they? Well, then, we won't think about it when we're going for our Hun. If you fellows are game—"

"Oh, we're game! Ha, ha, ha!"

Classicals and Moderns joined hands in a merry circle, and danced round the fountain in sheer exuberance of

spirits. For once in the history of Rookwood Moderns and Classicals were united in happy concord—seven souls with but a single thought, seven hearts that beat as one.

The 4th Chapter.
Herr Kinkel Hears Something to His Advantage.

Herr Kinkel pricked up his ears. The fat Prussian gentleman was seated by the open window of his study enjoying the sunshine and the breeze from the quad, while he smoked his big German pipe and read his German paper.

the spiked helmets would be marching on London. Which was really absurd of him, for any fag at Rookwood could have told him that the Kaiser simply hadn't an earthly!

Once, indeed, he had caught sight of some of his beloved "Pickelhauben" on British soil—but, alas! they were only prisoners of war on their way to a concentration-camp.

Herr Kinkel was still waiting for the Day. He had been waiting quite a long time now, and perhaps he was getting a little impatient. Still, there were heaps of whacking victories in his German newspapers to console him. Indeed, if he had added up the number of all the prisoners whose capture had been reported therein, he would have discovered that the Germans had captured the whole population of Russia twice over, at least, and about three times the population of France, and half the population of the British Empire—which was really a creditable "bag."

However, Herr Kinkel's perusal of that flattering news was interrupted on this occasion. Two or three juniors, strolling past his study window, were speaking in incautious tones, and their words came to his ears. He recognised the voices, though from where he sat he could not see the juniors under the window.

"Well, if he's standing the cigarettes, too—"

"We'd better be getting off. Those Classical chaps will be there already. Come on! It will take us over an hour to get to Clyffe Abbey."

"Shush! Don't talk so loud, you duffer."

"Oh, come on!"

Footsteps died away in the quad. Herr Kinkel sat bolt upright. His eyes gleamed through his spectacles. He rose cautiously to his feet and peeped out of the window.

Tommy Dodd and Cook and Doyle were sauntering away across the quad towards the gates. He had recognised their voices under his window.

"Mein Gott!" murmured Herr Kinkel.

A very nice master with a very proper sense of duty might have called those young rascals back and spoken to them kindly but severely, pointing out the folly of such conduct. But that was not Herr Kinkel's way. The mention of Jimmy Silver and the Classicals gave him the chance he wanted, and which he had not expected to get.

Evidently, at the deserted old ruin at Clyffe there was a rascally meeting being held that half-holiday. Jimmy Silver and his friends were holding a card-and-smoking party in the safe

had called him a Hun, and stated that the author of his favourite "Hymn of Hate" was a silly ass! Jimmy Silver would be sorry for himself when he was expelled from the school for disgraceful conduct! And that would certainly be his fate if he were caught gambling and smoking.

The spiteful man did not reflect that such a thing was highly improbable—that the Fistical Four were not the kind of fellows to amuse themselves in that way. He disliked them intensely, and that was enough to make him believe any harm and evil of them. It was a German method of reasoning.

Herr Kinkel's decision was soon made. He put down his pipe and his "Zeitung," and took his hat.

It was a long way to Clyffe Abbey, but most of the distance was covered by the omnibus from Coombe, and it was a beautiful afternoon for a walk. He would have a pleasant little excursion, and catch Jimmy Silver in the act of breaking the strictest rules of the school, and then—he rubbed his fat hands at the thought—then the sack for Silver, and a flogging all round for his companions in iniquity! That was a really pleasant prospect—more pleasant even than reading about drowning fishermen.

Within ten minutes Herr Kinkel was striding out of the gates of Rookwood, and his fat legs were going at a great rate down the leafy lane of Coombe.

Little did he dream that behind a thick hedge seven juniors were in cover, watching the road, and that they grinned and nudged one another as he strode by, unseeing and unsuspecting.

"There he goes, the old duck!" murmured Tommy Dodd, as the Herr disappeared in the direction of the village. "Going to catch the wicked sinners in the act!"

"Ha, a, ha!"

"Did you spot his face?" grinned Jimmy Silver. "Did you notice the gleam in his eye? He ought to be shocked and pained by the discovery that we're so desperately wicked—"

"Oh, dear!"

"But he isn't; he's just enjoying it, because he will be able to get us the order of the boot—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And he's going to break the law himself," said Jimmy Silver. "Going out of bounds, you know. Well, well, he's going to learn that it doesn't do to break laws in this law-abiding country when there are chaps like us to look after the law. Now, it'll take him close on two hours to get to Clyffe—you know how that omnibus crawls—but we won't waste time. He may be up by then; he's so jolly keen. He'll catch the 'bus that starts at three. We'll give him time to get clear, then we'll drop into Coombe to borrow the things we want, and then scoot off on the bikes for Clyffe. We shall be miles ahead of his old omnibus. Let's go and get the bikes out."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Greatly rejoicing, the seven young rascals hurried back into the school for their bicycles. They wheeled their machines down to Coombe—they did not want to overtake Herr Kinkel.

While Jimmy Silver was busy in the costumer's shop, Tommy Dodd scouted, and from a distance he spotted the fat German master getting into the old country 'bus that ran to Clyffe. He rejoined his chums, chuckling, and reported.

A few minutes later seven merry cyclists were scorching away by country lanes, one of them with a big bundle tied on his machine.



Herr Kinkel clung wildly to the crumbling wall. Three pairs of hands were fastened on each of his legs, and the juniors were pulling their hardest. It was the first time Herr Kinkel's pupils had had a chance of handling him, and they were not gentle.

Herr Kinkel received his German paper regularly through one of those booksellers in Holland who are kept so busy in these stirring times. He revelled in accounts of bombs dropped upon women and children, and harmless fishermen sunk at sea or blown up with torpedoes, along with descriptions of whacking German victories—made in Germany! Not that Herr Kinkel was really a ferocious Hun, but he had the German way of looking at things—which is that everything Germans do is right, and everything everybody else does is wrong.

If a British submarine had sunk a German fisherman Herr Kinkel would have been horrified, but when a German submarine did those playful things Herr Kinkel rubbed his fat hands and gloated in the privacy of his study, and fervently hoped that he was nearer to the "Day," when

Herr Kinkel laid down his Deutsch paper on his fat knees, and his little eyes gleamed behind his glasses. Herr Kinkel did not cough or move to warn the reckless juniors that he was within hearing. He stilled his breath, in order to listen more carefully without giving the alarm. That was one of Herr Kinkel's pleasant little Hunnish ways.

"Has Silver got the cigarettes?"

"Yes, that's all right."

"It's a jolly long way to the old abbey at Clyffe, though!"

"Well, it wouldn't be safe nearer the school, you fathead! How would you like one of the prefects dropping in on the party?"

"Well, that's so; and if we're going to play cards—"

"Don't forget to bring your loose change. Silver's going to give us our revenge this time, and he's got lots of cash to-day."

seclusion of the old ruins miles from the school. It was impossible for them to be spotted there by master or prefect; they were quite safe, unless by chance their wicked design should be revealed.

Herr Kinkel did not even think of calling the three Tommies back and speaking kindly but severely to them. As their fault, as yet, was only in intention, they could not very well be punished; and his chief idea was to catch Jimmy Silver & Co. in the act. Mr. Bootles would not be able to let those young rascals off again if they were caught in the very act of playing cards and smoking. Evidently they were hardened offenders; it was not the first time. For had not Tommy Dodd spoken of Silver "giving them their revenge"? That showed that the young villains were in the habit of card-playing.

His eyes glittered. Jimmy Silver

The 5th Chapter.
Run Down!

"Ach!"

Herr Kinkel was smiling pleasantly. It was such a smile as might have appeared on the face of a cat when a mouse was quite safe in her paws.

The German master had stepped from the omnibus in the old town of Clyffe and taken the path out of the town to the ruins.

The ancient abbey was near the sea, in a very solitary neighbourhood, looking down from the sunny uplands upon the blue waters of the Channel.

The old ruins were seldom visited, save by tourists or picnic-parties. Herr Kinkel came rolling along the footpath through the wood that led to the abbey, and as he came closer to the massive old pile he heard the sound of merry voices from within.

His quarry was evidently there. Windows and roof had long since vanished from the old abbey, but the walls were still massive and strong, and the ancient gateway stood almost intact. From within that old gateway came the merry voices of Rook-



POLICE-CONSTABLE

(Continued from the previous page.)

JIMMY SILVER!

wood juniors, and the sound of corks popping.

Herr Kinkel knew that he would find there—at all events, he thought he did. A party of abandoned young rascals playing cards and smoking—enjoying those illicit amusements far from the ken of masters and prefects. No wonder he chuckled as he reflected that he would drop in on them like a bolt from the blue.

"Pass the tarts, Raby!" Herr Kinkel started a little. That did not sound much like gambling certainly. It sounded more like a picnic.

"Here you are, Tommy Dodd! Ginger-pop this way!"

Herr Kinkel strode in at the gateway, and came suddenly on the scene.

Six juniors were seated in the sunny old ruins among the blocks of mossy masonry, and a number of bicycles were stacked in a corner. The juniors—three Classics and three Moderns—seemed to be enjoying themselves. Paper bags were open, displaying a tempting assortment of jam tarts, cream puffs, dough nuts, and other delicacies.

There were at least a dozen bottles of ginger-beer—some of them unopened, and some lying on the ground, finished with—"dead men," they used to speak.

The six juniors did not seem to observe the fat German coming through the gateway. They went on chatting cheerily.

"Pity old Silver couldn't be here," said Lovell regretfully. "Awful pity he was detained at the last moment."

"Hard cheese!" said Tommy Dodd. "He would have enjoyed this."

"Poys!" "Dear me, it's Herr Kinkel!"

The six juniors rose to their feet, very respectfully taking off their caps or straw hats to the German-master. Herr Kinkel blinked at them in surprise and wrath. There was no sign of cards and no sign of smokes.

"Nice afternoon for a walk, sir," said Tommy Dodd affably. "May we offer you some ginger-beer, sir? You must be thirsty."

"Will you join our little picnic, sir?" said Cook politely. "Make room for Herr Kinkel to sit down, you chaps," said Lovell.

The overwhelming hospitality of the picnicers did not chase the frown from Herr Kinkel's fat brow. He guessed that the young rascals were trying to ingratiate themselves with him, to disarm his wrath. It was not much use trying to play that game with Herr Kinkel.

"You young rascals!"

"Eh?"

"Were are dose cards?"

"Cards!" said Lovell blankly.

"And dose smokes, isn't it?"

"Smokes!"

"You cannot deceive me!" exclaimed Herr Kinkel angrily. "I am perfectly aware dat you must see me to come, and dat you put dem out of sight mit yourselves. I order you at vunce to show me dem cards and dem cigarettes."

The juniors exchanged glances of blank wonder. They looked like fellows who had never even heard of the existence of such things as cards and cigarettes.

"Cards!" said Raby faintly.

"Cigarettes! Oh, Herr Kinkel!"

"We—we never smoke cards, sir," said Tommy Dodd, "and we never play cards, and—and—"

"Tell me not such lies, Dodd! I know vat you are here for. You hide dem ven you see me to come," said Herr Kinkel savagely. "I hear you speak mit one anodder at der school, and so I gum here. I hear you, Dodd, say vat you gum here to play cards and smokes."

Tommy Dodd smiled.

"But—but how could you hear us, sir? I was saying all that for a little joke, sir. Simply a joke among ourselves."

"That is nonsense."

"It's so queer, sir, that you should have heard me," said Dodd, in astonishment. "I didn't see you, sir."

"Yes, it is queer," said Tommy Cook. "But it was really only a joke, sir."

"Just blarney, sorr," said Doyle affably. "Of course, we couldn't know that you would take it seriously—if you heard us. If you'd asked us at the time, sir, we'd have told you it was only blarney."

Herr Kinkel gritted his teeth. "I do not believe van vord," he said. "I pelieve vat you have here dem cards and dem cigarettes, and you hide dem ven tat I gum."

Lovell shrugged his shoulders. "Well, if you don't believe us, sir, there's nothing more to be said. We're willing to go up to the Head about it if you like."

"I orders you to produce dem cards and cigarettes!" roared Herr Kinkel.

"But we haven't any, sir. We're just having a picnic here," said Newcome. "We're out on our bikes, you know, and we bought these things at Clyffe, as we came through, and—"

"You have dem cards and tings hidden in your pockets," said Herr Kinkel. "Turn out your pockets mit you tat I see mit meen own eyes." The junior hesitated. They did not like being ordered to turn out their pockets. But they obeyed. Six sets of pockets were turned out, and all sorts of weird things came to light—toffee, and stumps of pencils, and old pen-nibs, and buttons, and fish-hooks, and the like. But there were no smokes, and no cards. Herr Kinkel watched them with growing anger and uneasiness.

It began to dawn upon him that it was, after all, only a harmless picnic that he had surprised in the old abbey, and that he had had his journey for his pains. The three Tommies apparently had only been "talking out of their hats" when he heard their voices under his study window. If he had known the opinion of the juniors had of his steady spying ways, he might have guessed that that precious conversation had been held for his especial benefit, for no other purpose than to pull his Prussian leg. But he was far from realising the true esteem in which he was held, so he did not guess that.

He gnawed his fat lip with anger. There was simply nothing to be found fault with—nothing whatever. Not the slightest objection could be raised to the juniors cycling over to Clyffe and picnicking in the old abbey.

"Anything else you'd like us to do, sir?" asked Lovell politely, "or may we go on with our little picnic?"

"Mein Gott!"

"You wouldn't like some ginger-beer, sir?" murmured Tommy Dodd. "I would not, Dodd! I tink—"

Herr Kinkel paused as there was a ponderous step behind him.

"Hallo, a bobby!" said Tommy Dodd.

The bobby advanced ponderously into the old abbey.

The 6th Chapter. In the Name of the Law.

The juniors looked at the "bobby," but he did not look at them. All his attention was bestowed upon Herr Kinkel.

He was a very fat bobby. His uniform was old, and showed signs of wear. His boots were enormous, with extremely high heels, which were, however, concealed by his bagging trousers. Without his boots, and without his helmet, he would have looked much shorter—no taller than one of the juniors, in fact. As it was, he was taller than Herr Kinkel. His belt seemed hardly to meet round his ample extent of waist, and his tunic seemed filled almost to bursting-point. His complexion was of a brick red, natural enough in a rural policeman, and he wore a thick grey moustache and a fringe of greyish whiskers. His nose was the reddest part of his face, and seemed to testify to the excellence of the ale at the Black Horse and the Bird-in-Hand.

He looked at Herr Kinkel with a suspicious glance. He looked him up, and he looked him down, and he looked him round about. Evidently the bobby was suspicious.

"Good-afternoon, sir!" he said at last, touching his helmet.

"Goot-afternoon!" said Herr Kinkel shortly. He was not interested in a country policeman.

"Blessed if I didn't tink so!" said the constable. He spoke in a deep and guttural voice, which seemed mellowed with ale. "A Jairman, by hokey."

"Vat!"

Herr Kinkel made a movement towards the gateway. The ponderous policeman stepped ponderously into his path, and held up a big-gloved hand.

"Not so blooming fast, if you please," he said. "I 'eard you speakin', and I says to myself, says I, that's a Jairman, says I."

The juniors looked on with grave faces. Herr Kinkel flushed with annoyance. It was very irritating to be halted up like this, by a rural bobby, under the eyes of the Fourth-Formers of Rookwood.

"I am a Cherman," said Herr Kinkel. "Tat is all right, my man. I am a Cherman master at a school."

The constable shook his head slowly. "That's all werry well," he said—

"werry well indeed. But we've got horders to look arter the Jairmans, we ave. Which we know that there's 'caps and 'eaps of their filthy spics about."

"I am Cherman schoolmaster!" shouted Herr Kinkel. "Do you tink tat I am spy?"

"Ow should I know said the constable. "Vot I knows is, that you ain't goin' out of this 'ere place without givin' an account of yourself, sir."

"You me pass!"

"You don't pass out of 'ere in a 'urry, and if you cut up rusty I'll have the darbies on yer in a jiff, so I warns yer," said the constable. "You Jairmans can't do as you like in England, I can tell you." He took out a notebook and pencil. "Name, please?"

Herr Kinkel trembled with anger. "Mein name is Kinkel."

"Front name?"

"Wilhelm Kinkel."

"Well, that's as Jairman as they make 'em," said the policeman suspiciously. "Wot's your address?"

"Rookwood School."

"Rookwood! That's a good step from 'ere," said the constable, still more suspiciously. "This looks suspicious to me."

"Dese poys vill tell you," exclaimed Herr Kinkel. "Dey pelongs to tat school, and I am der Cherman-master."

"I can't take the evidence of boys. Still, if the young gentleman likes to speak up for you," said the policeman, touching his helmet to the juniors.

"It's right enough," said Tommy Dodd seriously. "He's our German master, officer."

"He lives at Rookwood?"

"Yes."

"Now are you satisfied, denn?" snapped Herr Kinkel irritably.

The policeman nodded slowly. "Which I am satisfied as you live at Rookwood," he said, "and if you've got your permit from the police at Coombe, I ain't got nothing more to say."

"Vat?"

"This 'ere place is houtside five miles from Rookwood."

"Nonsense!"

"There's a milestone 'ereabouts, which says six miles to Rookwood," said the constable, unmoved. "Ave you got a permit from the police-station allowin' you to go more'n five miles from your residence?"

"I haf not."

"Then I takes you into custody," said the constable, his manner growing aggressive. "I noticed 'ow you tried to dodge my questions at first. Oh, I knows you Jairmans! Don't you try to dodge me, you scoundrel!"

"Vat—vat! Mein Gott!" gasped Herr Kinkel.

"I'm taking you into custody, as in duty bound," said the constable. "You'll cool your 'eels in Clyffe Police Station, my fine feller! You'll git six months' ard for this, unless the magistrate lets you orf with a fine—twenty pun, p'r'aps. Which I 'ope there won't be any hoption of a fine."

Herr Kinkel gazed at the policeman in horror. It was only too true! For transgressing the law—for passing out of the radius of five miles from his residence without permission from the police—he was liable to instant arrest, and to a fine or imprisonment at the discretion of the magistrate. He had put his Prussian foot in it with a vengeance.

now. He was likely to pay dearly for that little spying expedition.

"Six months' hard labour!" He staggered at the thought.

"Mein Gott!" he muttered. "Mein Gott in Himmel!"

The policeman fumbled in his pocket, and drew out a pair of rusty old handcuffs.

Herr Kinkel's eyes dilated behind his spectacles at the sight of them.

"I'll trouble you for your 'ands, sir."

"I—I will not!" shrieked Herr Kinkel. "Ich will nicht!"

"Don't you talk Dutch to me!" said the fat constable. "I don't understand your furrin lingo. Har you going to come quietly, or har you not?"

"My man, be reasonable!" gasped Herr Kinkel, in mortal terror. "I am respectable Cherman master—"

"Vot are you doin' 'ere, on the coast, in sight of the English Channel?" said the policeman, with a snort of contemptuous disbelief. "Makin' signals to submarines! Oh, I knows yer little game!"

"I haf not! I neffer tink of such a ting—"

"Mind, wotever you says may be took down to be used in evidence agin yer."

"I am respectable Cherman master!" wailed Herr Kinkel. "You shall gum mit me to tat school, and Dr. Chihlhom he vill tell you—"

"Ave you got a permit, or ave you not?"

"Nein, nein! But—"

"'Nine!" exclaimed the constable. "Which you said as 'ow you 'ad not one, now you says you 'ave nine! I'll make a note of that! The prisoner contradicts 'isself. Now you show me some of them nine permits. You ain't come by 'em honest, I knows that."

"Nein, nein! I mean to say, no, no! I speak in Cherman."

"Ave you got nine permits, or 'ave you not?"

"No! I haf not any!"

"You young gents vill bear witness that the prisoner was prevaricating," said the constable to the juniors.

"Just he says he 'asn't no permit, then he says he has nine of 'em, and then he says agin he 'asn't, arter I warned 'im that whatever he says vill be took down to be used in evidence agin 'im. Now, sir, I'll trouble you for your 'ands. I ain't taking no chances with you. Don't you resist the lor. Young gents, I calls on you to 'elp me in the execution of my dooty, if needed."

"Oh, dear!" said Tommy Dodd. "But he's our German master!"

"That don't make no difference. I calls on you in the name of the lor. You 'elp me if I calls on you, or you'll be prosecuted."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Better go quietly, Herr Kinkel," murmured Lovell.

"Boliceman, you gums mit me to Rookwood, and mein headmaster he speak for me. He tell you tat I am respectable Cherman—"

The constable shook his head. "My bet's 'ere," he said. "Rookwood ain't on my beat. Sides, it don't make no difference. Wotever your 'eadmaster says, you've broke the lor."

"I—I gifts you a sofferin'!" faltered Herr Kinkel.

"Vot?"

"I gifts you—vat you call tip."

"I calls you young gents to witness as this 'ere Jairman is trying to bribe a bolicer from the execution of his dooty," said the constable. "I'll take down your names. You'll be wanted afore the magistrates. You'll bear witness as this man offered me a sovereign. That means an extra three months, by hokey!"

"Ach! Mein Gott! Vat shall I do?" wailed Herr Kinkel. "Todd, Loffel, speak to tat man and tell him tat I am respectable Cherman!"

In his extremity, the unhappy Hun turned to the juniors, whom he had come there to spy upon and march home to punishment. The juniors looked at one another with owl-like solemnity. It was a serious case.

"I don't see that we can say anything, sir," said Tommy Dodd. "You see, you've broken the law."

"And the law is a sacred thing," said Raby solemnly.

"The officer is only doing his duty," said Lovell. "Perhaps you may not be sent to prison, Herr Kinkel. You may be let off with a fine of fifty pounds, or so."

"Ach! I haf not feefty pound!"

"Of course, if you can't pay the fine, you'll have to go to hard labour, sir," said Cook. "Perhaps the Head might pay it for you."

"Nein, nein!"

"Perhaps, if you explain to the con-



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POLICE-CONSTABLE

(Continued from the previous page.)

JIMMY SILVER!

stable what you came here for, sir... "Spyin' and makin' signals, I'll be bound!" said the constable.

Herr Kinkel backed away, gazing round him wildly. If he could only have escaped that dreadful policeman and got back to Rookwood, he felt that the Head would be able to exert his influence and get him out of that fearful scrape.

"Don't you dodge me!" roared the constable, advancing upon him. "Now, then—" "Ich will nicht!"

"In the name of the law," shouted the constable, "collar 'im! I call on you young gents—I horders you—and if you don't obey you takes the consequences!"

The 7th Chapter. A Narrow Escape.

"Tat you let go!" "Pull, devil, pull, baker!" murmured Tommy Dodd. "Led go mit you!" shrieked Herr Kinkel.

"Against the law, sir!" "Oh, dear!" gasped Lovell. "Tat you lets me go peforo tat peastly boliceman he come—"

"Mein poy, help me tat I go! I—I am ferry sorry tat I tink you smoke. I pegs your pardon tat I have cane you mit pointer. Help me, I pegs you!"

"Oh, mein goodness! I giffs you anything tat you vill let me go!" wailed Herr Kinkel. "I am sorry tat I preaks tat law. I vill neffer, neffer do him again!"



The policeman rolled on the stone flags, and kicked up his heels with mirth. His helmet fell off—so did his grey moustache and his whiskers. Without these adornments it was quite possible to recognise the features of Jimmy Silver of the Fourth.

"Nein, nein, ich bin nicht. I am not Cherman spy!" almost sobbed Herr Kinkel. "I am ferry respectable Cherman schoolmaster! Ach, Gott! Vat can I say to tat man?"

"Har you goin' to give me your 'ands, or har you not?" The fat constable grasped the quivering Herr, who was shaking like a very fat jelly, and dragged him up.

"Resisting the law, by hokey! This'll only make it all the worse for you, you blooming Jairman!" "Old 'im, young gents!"

Herr Kinkel's face lighted up with renewed hope. If he could only, only get to Rookwood, safe under the wing of the Head!

Herr Kinkel staggered to his feet. The fat constable had turned his back while he fumbled with the handcuffs. Herr Kinkel made a wild and breathless rush for the gateway.

But far lent Herr Kinkel wings. He went through the gateway like a deer with the hounds on the track—a very fat deer, but a very swift one. The policeman came lumbering out after him, brandishing the handcuffs.

Herr Kinkel did not stop. He rushed on like a whirlwind. His hat fell off, his spectacles slid down his nose, his fat face streamed with perspiration; but he did not slacken down for a second.

The policeman did not follow him out of the ruins. He watched him disappear at top speed into the wood, and then turned back into the gateway.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the juniors. "Oh, dear—oh, dear—oh, dear!" moaned Tommy Dodd. "He's got a six-mile run before him—ha, ha!—and he's left his hat here! Ha, ha, ha!"

Classicals were top side Rookwood. Jimmy Silver & Co. looked for Herr Kinkel when they came in.

Jimmy Silver & Co. looked for Herr Kinkel when they came in. But the German master was invisible. He was shut up in his study, quaking.

"Hook it, sir! We'll try to keep him back!" "You Modern bounders, what do you

think of a Classical wheezo now—eh?"

"Oh, don't ask me!" murmured Tommy Dodd. "Poor old Kinkel! He will neffer cane me again mit pointer after the way I stood by him!"

Lovell clambered up on the old gateway, and looked far ahead. Half a mile away in the meadows a fat form was visible, rumbling, hopping, leaping, bounding, still going at top speed.

The juniors laughed till they wept. It was a long time before they could calm down sufficiently to help Jimmy Silver out of his uniform and his extensive padding.

Seven cheery youths rode home in the falling dusk; and Tommy Dodd, in the exuberance of his satisfaction, was almost inclined to admit that the

Private Jenkins was being charged by his officer in command for neglect of duty. The fact is, Jenkins was being called over the coals for having failed to clean his rifle.

"I see you are a very old soldier," said the officer. "I suppose you joined over age? What were you charged with last?"

"Five days' C.B.!"—Sent in by L. De'Ath, Pimlico.

The old man's eldest daughter had been attending first aid classes, and had received a certificate for proficiency.

The street accident she had been waiting for at last occurred. A man had unfortunately broken his leg. Nevertheless, it was a fortunate occurrence for the old man's daughter, for it gave her a chance to show her skill.

"Well, it is most beautifully—most excellently done," said the doctor. "But you have made one little mistake. You have bandaged the wrong leg!"—Sent in by R. Bissell, Liverpool.

"Hi, taxi!" shouted the pedestrian to the passing cab. "Yessir!" said the chauffeur.

"What's your fare to the Central Station?" "One shilling, sir." "Thanks," replied the pedestrian, walking on. "I only wanted to know how much I should save by walking!"—Sent in by T. Paul, Nuneaton.

"Tom: 'Well, dad, if England is the Motherland and Germany is the Fatherland, what is Holland?'"

"Tom: 'It's 6d. a yard!'"—Sent in by A. J. Bosley, Bow.

Tom: "Dad, you good at geography?" His Father: "Well, I was when at school. But I dare say that, after all these years, I can answer correctly any question that you may ask."

Tom: "Well, my boy, I'm afraid you've got me there. I must give it up. What is Holland, then?" Tom: "It's 6d. a yard!"—Sent in by A. J. Bosley, Bow.

Tom: "Well, my boy, I'm afraid you've got me there. I must give it up. What is Holland, then?" Tom: "It's 6d. a yard!"—Sent in by A. J. Bosley, Bow.

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HIS IMPEDIMENT. Jinks: "I was sitting in a tramcar to-day, when I noticed a dumb man sitting opposite me with an impediment in his speech." Jinks: "Impediment in his speech! Impossible!"

MERELY A (T)RIFLE. Private Jenkins was being charged by his officer in command for neglect of duty. The fact is, Jenkins was being called over the coals for having failed to clean his rifle.

POOR PATIENT! The old man's eldest daughter had been attending first aid classes, and had received a certificate for proficiency.

NOTHING DOING. "Hi, taxi!" shouted the pedestrian to the passing cab. "Yessir!" said the chauffeur.

TOM'S TEASER. Tom: "Dad, you good at geography?" His Father: "Well, I was when at school. But I dare say that, after all these years, I can answer correctly any question that you may ask."

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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 readers who write to me, and enclose a stamped envelope or postcard, may be sure of receiving a prompt and kindly reply by post. All letters should be addressed: The Editor, THE BOYS' FRIEND, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.

THE HOLIDAY-MAKERS' DELIGHT!

NO holiday will be complete this summer unless the daring escapades of Jimmy Silver, the brilliant manoeuvres of Tom Belcher, and the rousing exploits of Harvey Keene, detective, play some part in it.

The fact is, these BOYS' FRIEND favourites have now firmly established themselves in the affections of my reader-friends, and, to judge by the letters of loyal chums which reach me daily, there would be a good many gloomy faces in Great Britain just now if their adventures were to cease.

At the outset of war I realised that what the boys of this country needed was not a series of stories setting forth terrible scenes on the battlefield, or thrilling cavalry charges, in which gore took a prominent part. Such stories as these I considered would only tend to make a boy's mind dwell upon the eternal topic, so I struck out in a new line entirely, and instructed my authors to write fresh and entertaining stories, so that my readers should, in spite of the sorrow, which we know and feel is in our midst, keep smiling.

It was a bold line to take, I admit, and one which a good many Editors would hesitate to launch out upon; but, thanks to the splendid support accorded me by my chums, it has repaid me a hundredfold.

"ALL THE BEST" NEXT WEEK!

On Monday next our programme will be quite up to the usual standard. The Jimmy Silver story will be entitled:

"THE SPY IN THE SCHOOL!"

and it is written in Owen Conquest's most sparkling style.

Tom Belcher, the leading light of that famous boxing-booth controlled by Ben Adams, will make a great hit in

"A LOSING GAME!"

By Arthur S. Hardy,

and Harvey Keene will do the same in

"THE CASE OF THE HIDDEN POISONER!"

By W. Murray Graydon.

Add to these three great features a long instalment of

"MYSTERY ISLAND!"

By Duncan Storm,

and the first grand long opening instalment of a thrilling new adventure serial, entitled,

"POLRUAN'S MILLIONS!"

By Maurice Everard,

and you have a number which touches the acme of perfection.

To-morrow? No, to-morrow won't do! You must remind that newsagent of yours to reserve you a copy of next week's number of THE BOYS' FRIEND, for which there is certain to be a large and almost unprecedented demand.

A BOY WHO CANNOT ENJOY LIFE.

A rather curious letter has reached me from Dorking, where resides one of my chums, who signs himself

"Friendless." He tells me that he has no companions, for he is so shy that he cannot make friends with anyone. He also says that he does not play cricket or any other games, and he fails altogether to enjoy life.

This seems to me a rather extraordinary admission for a boy of sixteen to make, and I gladly comply with my reader's request to give him some sound advice.

Now, so far as I can gather, it is only my chum's shyness that is keeping him from enjoying life with all the enthusiasm of a healthy British lad. It is not a weakness or distaste for sports that is responsible for his not playing cricket or other games; it is only his shyness.

I think "Friendless" can easily remedy that. He must play in some game; he must get into the company of good-living lads of his own age. How can he do this? Surely near his home are some youths of his own age. "Friendless" doubtless knows them by sight, if he is not on speaking terms with them.

Now, my friend must try to become acquainted with them. When he meets one of these neighbours out of doors let him wish him a cheery good-morning or good-evening.

If I know anything of human nature, this strange will welcome having a chat with "Friendless," and, as regards opening a conversation, my friend should start off by telling him something in which he is particularly interested. "Isn't the Tom Belcher yarn in this week's FRIEND a stunner?" he could say; or, "What do you think of this scheme for changing the colour of the 'Magnet' cover?"

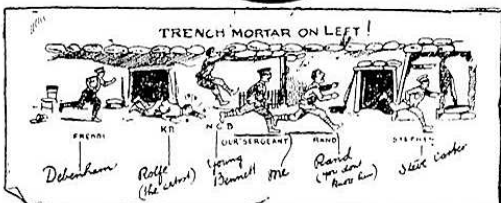
This would break the ice instantly. Another plan would be—no, I am not moralising, Jones minor!—for "Friendless" to go regularly to some place of worship on Sundays. He then could not fail to get into touch with other fellows of his own age and tastes.

Attached to most churches and chapels are cricket and football clubs, to which "Friendless" would be welcomed as a member.

THE ARTISTS OF THE FUTURE.

The notice in this week's issue to the effect that original pictures in the companion papers are offered to readers reminds me that I have lately received quite a number of letters from aspiring artists.

As a good many of these readers have sent me sketches for publication, and expressed surprise on hearing that I cannot accept same, I may as well offer an explanation.



Your Editor recently received from an old schoolfellow these very interesting sketches drawn by one of his comrades in the 20th County of London Regiment. The one above depicts an exciting scene when the look-out man coolly announced that a bomb was on its way into the trench. My friend, Sergeant Lane, assures me that he and his men are not running away from the Hun, but they are simply taking the natural precaution of getting out of the way of the bomb. The little sketch below shows my friend in a very warlike attitude. Whether he "sniped" the "sniper" or not he does not say, but the men in the 20th County of London Regiment have proved themselves fine soldiers, and have already put a very large number of Germans out of action.



The fact is, in too many cases the work is done in rather a slipshod manner. It lacks prompt and kindly reply by post. All letters should be addressed: The Editor, THE BOYS' FRIEND, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.

Take the case of Turner, the greatest landscape painter that ever lived. Did he stumble across success one day all by accident? By no means. He used to lie on his back in a punt for hours together gazing at the clouds. Doubtless, passers-by thought what a lazy man he was, but he himself knew that he was learning to paint those wonderful cloud effects which are the admiration of all the world.

This is an age of specialism. It is better to do one thing really well than to do half a dozen in an average manner.

I will give you another example of industry. Mr. Owen Conquest's stories in THE BOYS' FRIEND are the best of their kind that have ever been written. For pure, rich humour he is unbeatable. Now, how has Mr. Conquest achieved his success? Do you think he scribbled his stories off anyhow, sploshed them into an envelope, addressed them to the editor of a magazine, and expected a big cheque by return of post? Not a bit of it. Mr. Conquest admits that he takes several days to work out a plot for a Jimmy Silver story, and the tale is revised again and again before it reaches my sanctum.

The proof of the pudding is in the eating, and the result of this patient industry is that every week a huge public derives immense entertainment from Owen Conquest's tales in THE BOYS' FRIEND.

So come, ye Conquests of the future, and Macdonalds yet to be, and let your work be governed by pains and perseverance, without which no man ever yet became a genius.

ORIGINAL DRAWINGS OFFERED TO READERS.

I have been asked at various times by certain readers who take an interest in art if I could supply them with the original sketches of those artists who have made the companion papers famous. In such cases I have been pleased to allow my chums to have the illustrations they require at a very nominal sum, and it has occurred to me that others of my readers would like to enjoy the same benefit.

Accordingly, I have organised a scheme whereby my chums can obtain the original work of the following well-known draughtsmen:

- THE BOYS' FRIEND—
- J. A. Cummings,
- E. E. Briscoe,
- R. J. Macdonald,
- Harry Lane,
- G. W. Wakefield,
- "The Gem" Library—
- R. J. Macdonald,
- G. M. Dodson,
- "The Magnet" Library—
- C. H. Chapman.

The scale of charges for these drawings is as follows:
 Original Cover Pictures, 7s. 6d. each.
 Original Headings or Illustrations, 5s. each.

When applying for any of the above, readers are requested to state the number of the issue in which the drawing appears; and in the event of more than one reader requiring the same picture, the boy or girl who sends in the earliest application will be considered first.

Bearing in mind that each sketch is worth treble the value at which I offer it, I hope many of my chums will take advantage of this excellent scheme.

THE SORROWS OF SAMMY.

"Struggling Sam," a reader of THE BOYS' FRIEND living in South London, has joined a Volunteer Corps, and although he revels in the route-marching and skirmishing, which are part and parcel of a volunteer's duties, he draws the line at drill—Swedish or otherwise. "Struggling Sam," in his own crude way, is a poet, and he voices his grievance after this manner:

THE DISCOMFORTS OF DRILL.

I'm a veritable grammar,
 For I know my Latin grammar,
 And can rattle off declensions by the yard.
 I can slog with vim and vigour
 At an algebraic figure,
 And across the classics others think are hard.
 I can face the fiercest bowling
 In a manner most consoling,
 For I know the looker-on admires my skill;
 But the most detested duffer
 Never yet was wont to suffer
 All the satire heaped upon me during drill!
 The terrible trapezes
 Are as bad as dread diseases,
 For to me they oft suggest a broken neck;
 While the bars perform their duties,
 But I fail to see their beauties,
 For I land upon the top a woeful wreck!
 I've the pluck of a Dorando,
 And the strength of any Sandow,
 And can cycle many a mile without a spill;
 But, in spite of this, believe me,
 Such attainments seem to leave me
 When I drag my weary way through dreaded drill!

I would sacrifice a pension
 If the curt command "Attention!"
 Would be pushed into the shade by "Stand at ease!"
 And would be for ever grateful
 If the clubs and dumb-bells hateful
 Were submerged into the bottom of the seas!

Other modes of recreation
 I pursue with acclamation,
 And of healthy fun can always take my fill;
 For they strengthen nerve and sinew,
 And as long as they continue
 I shall evermore detest the pangs of drill!

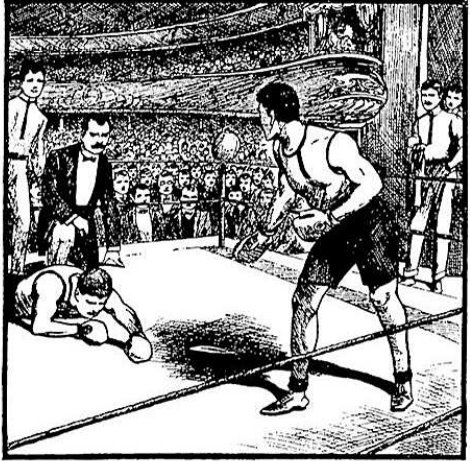
Poor old Sammy! I can feel for him in his pitiful plight. But does he not realise that that harmless and necessary practise, drill, is essential to the makings of a true British soldier? The way to the distant battlefields in France and Flanders has not been gained by desultory slacking. There are such things as training and discipline, without which a British soldier would be a pretty poor specimen. And, after all, there is nothing about drill which makes one want to commit suicide. I can only conclude that "Struggling Sam's" liver was out of order when he perpetrated the poem printed above.

YOUR EDITOR.

READ THE MASTER WHO STAYED AT HOME!

The Grand Long Complete School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co.

"THE MAGNET"—1d.—OUT TO-DAY!

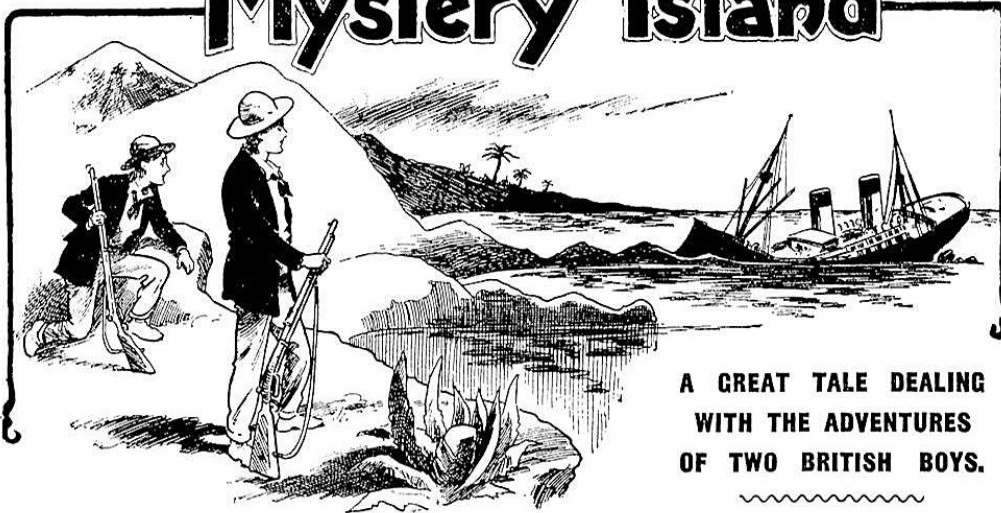


THE BOXING SCHOOLMASTER'S KNOCKOUT BLOW!
 (This is a small reproduction of the picture on the cover of "The Magnet" Library out to-day. Price one penny.)

If you want the BEST, buy Your Editor's papers. They contain the BEST reading matter for boys that can be obtained.

Our Grand New Story by Duncan Storm!

Mystery Island



A GREAT TALE DEALING
WITH THE ADVENTURES
OF TWO BRITISH BOYS.

THE FIRST CHAPTERS.

JACK and BILLY, and their mother, Mrs. BOYD, are on board a ship named the City of Benares, when a terrific storm breaks. The boys endeavour to get out of the saloon, but the doors are jammed.

The next morning, however, they force the doors open, and arriving on deck, discover that the boat has been wrecked. Very soon they come into contact with a man named PAT MURPHY, the only member of the crew to escape.

The little party realise that they are stranded, and decide to make their home on the little island near by, which they name Mystery Island.

For days they work on building their house, and at length they rescue a native, who turns out to be a really decent fellow, and whom they name BILLY SUNDAY.

One night the castaways sight a ship in the distance, and upon Sunday stating that the captain is a pirate named NICK DEATH, Mrs. Boyd informs them that the pirate is a deadly enemy of her husband's, and that he has sworn to reap a terrible revenge.

Jack and Sunday go over to the pirate ship in a canoe in order to learn the enemy's plans. They overhear these, but before they can get away Nick Death catches sight of them, and orders his crew to get into the boats and give chase.

(Now read on.)

The Welcome Storm.

On the City of Benares Pat Murphy was getting anxious. He began to think that Sunday and Jack had been away quite long enough.

He had got through several little jobs for the defence of the ship whilst they had been absent.

About twenty yards from the ship he had submerged an electric lamp, lighted by a wire from one of the electricians' storage batteries, and from the ship he could see the light of it glowing softly a couple of feet under the clear water.

Close by the light he had laid a floating mine, consisting of four sticks of dynamite, wired up to a button on the rail of the ship by the battery. This he could fire at any moment, and it was his intention to fire it directly one of the pirates' boats passed close by or over it.

Close to the ship he laid another mine of two sticks of the explosive, quite enough to sink one of the boats, should she try to rush into the submerged well deck.

And, finally, he had trained the ship's rocket tube upon another submerged electric lamp, about fifty yards from the bow of the ship on the course the pirates would take in approaching her.

He could hear the drone of talk going on over the still water. Then the flash of the lightning told him that Sunday and Jack would be discovered.

He heard the crack of the rifle, and Jack's derisive shout to the pirate captain, and he heard the splutter of shots that followed.

Then followed a few very anxious minutes for Pat. He knew that the pirates had two whalers in the water, and he made out that she had a couple more of those boats stowed on deck. South Sea schooners are well provided with whalers, as in the difficult landings on the islands boats are frequently stove in and damaged.

Presently Pat listened hard, straining his ears for all they were worth. He heard the clunk of Sunday's paddle as the canoe entered the calm lagoon, and raced hard for the ship. Not very far behind it, he heard also the thrash of ours going at a racing stroke.

The pirates were trying to overhaul the canoe before she could get to the ship.

"Are they coming, Pat?" asked Mrs. Boyd anxiously, as she stood at Pat's elbow in the darkness.

"Yes, madam," replied Pat; "and they've got a boat's crew of those scoundrels close at their heels. But I've got a thing or two ready for the rascals. Take that string, madam," continued Pat, handing Jack's mother the cord that was to fire the ship's rocket that lay in the tube. "Now, madam, don't pull it till I give the word 'Fire!' Then jerk it sharply."

Mrs. Boyd took the cord, gazing into the gloom with straining eyes. She could hear the steady plunk of Sunday's paddle, and the deep breathing, and the thrashing of the oars of the pirate crew.

Pat had the night-glasses glued to his eye, and they were fixed on the furthest electric light, that glowed like some phosphorescent fish below the surface of the water.

"You don't mind killing a man, madam?" asked Pat, under his breath.

"Not if that man is trying to kill my boy," answered Jack's mother firmly.

"Here they come, madam, whispered Pat, as the dark blur of the canoe passed across the field of his night-glasses. "Stand by to let go at the word!"

The pirate whaler was only three lengths behind the runaway canoe.

"If any man fires at the boy," shouted the voice of the pirate captain, "I'll shoot him on the spot. That boy is worth fifty thousand pounds to me!"

Pat saw the hull of the pirate whaler obscure his submerged electric light.

"Fire!" he shouted.

Mrs. Boyd, her lips firmly set, jerked at the cord. There was a bang and a roar; a sheet of sparks rushed through the air close over Jack's head, and burst in a blinding sheet of blue magnesium stars right amongst the crew of the pirate whaler, knocking men and oars together in a heap.

It was a close thing for Jack, for the bow-man of the whaler had already stretched forth his boathook to grapple the stern of the flying canoe.

For a moment Jack could not understand what had happened; but the vivid white flare, reflected on the high structure of the ship, showed him the grim, white face of his

mother, still standing behind the rocket-tube.

"Paddle away, Sunday!" shouted Jack. "Good old mother! You've stopped 'em!"

The ship's rocket had indeed stopped the pirate craft. It had burst right in the boat in a cloud of white stars and smoke, and the crew, half-stunned, blinded, and panic-stricken, were jumping out of the boat, which was already beginning to sink.

They saw the pirate captain standing in the stern-sheets, shaking his fist, as the boat sank to her gunnel, and the burning rocket fizzed out in the water.

"You shall pay for this!" he yelled.

Meanwhile, the canoe, with Jack and Sunday, had tipped in at the break in the side of the ship. They dragged her out of the water, and hurried up to the little fortress on the

other boats approaching at full speed, and he gave a whistle. These were big boats, and they contained fifteen men each.

"The rascals have got more men than I thought!" he exclaimed. "There must be a good fifty gaul-birds in Captain Death's crew!"

Then, as a scatter of shots pattered and snacked on the steel plates of the ship, Pat and Sunday picked up their rifles, and fired rapidly into the crowded whale-boat, that was burning still with a bright green light.

"Keep down, madam," cried Pat warningly to Mrs. Boyd. "Take shelter behind those flour casks! They are firing wild, but a stray bullet might get in here!"

A bullet snacked close above Pat's head as he spoke, chipping the enamel from the plates of the deck-house.

The rockets fizzled out, and they could hear curses and groans floating

up from the dark abyss beneath them.

Pat pulled a wire, and a white flare-light, that he had arranged on the fore-castle head, so that it should light the pirates, but leave them in shadow, lit up the night with a brilliant flare more searching than a searchlight.

It showed the three pirate boats grouped together, as though consulting.

"Sheer out of this!" shouted Pat. "We know all your game, Captain Death, and if you try to rush this ship you will do it at your own peril. If you don't clear off with your gang of gaul-birds, we'll shoot every mother's son of you like rats!"

For answer the three pirate boats suddenly dashed towards the opening of the ship's side.

"Now we'll let the scoundrels have it!" exclaimed Pat.

He waited, with his finger on the button, till the leading boat was well over his submarine mine. Then he touched the button, and, with a thump and a roar, the submerged dynamite exploded.

Jack, peering through a loophole in the steel plates of their little fortress, saw a weird sight by the unearthly white glare of the flarelight. The pirate boat was lifted bodily with its crew on the crest of a white spout of water that was full twenty feet high.

The spout fell, overwhelming and swamping the second boat, whilst the whole fabric of the stranded liner quivered under the shock of the near explosion.

They saw the third boat stop, and help man after man from the water, till she was so packed that there was not room for another on board. Then she turned, and made for the entrance of the lagoon.

Pat and Jack gave a cheer as they saw their antagonists retiring, and Sunday gave the warcry of his tribe, which was three screams and a yelp like a scalded dog. But Mrs. Boyd hid her face in her hands, then hurried off to where Billy was sleeping profoundly through all this noise.

The pirate gang were beaten off. They heard the sullen thump of their oars in the rowlocks passing out at the dark entrance to the lagoon, and by a sudden flash of the tropic lightning they made out the boat close alongside the schooner.

(Continued on the next page.)



Sunday was made to sit in the barber's chair, and whilst Jack turned the machine brush, Pat ran it over the native's frizzy wig.

OUR COMPANION
PAPERS

THE MAGNET LIBRARY—1d.
Every Monday.

THE GEM LIBRARY—1d.
Every Wednesday.

"THE BOYS' FRIEND"—3d.
COMPLETE LIBRARY.

THE PENNY POPULAR.
Every Friday.

CHUCKLES—3d.
Every Saturday.

Mystery Island



(Continued from the
previous page.)

Then from the landward across the lagoon came a weird rushing sound that increased to a shrill wail.

"Here comes a better friend to us than rifles or rockets!" said Pat, lifting his finger. "It's the hurricane starting at last. They'll have to cut and run out of this in twenty minutes!"

A puff of hot air swept across the lagoon, whistling shrilly in the funnel stays and rigging of the stranded ship.

Then came flash after flash of lightning, till the night was as bright as day. They could see that the pirate schooner had hoisted in her boat, and that the crew were setting a small storm trysail to run before the oncoming gale.

They heard her anchor chains roar through the hawser-pipe as the shackles were knocked out to give her a chance of paying off before the first gust of the gale. There was no time for them to get up anchor.

Then Jack saw a white wall of rain and spray racing towards the ship across the lagoon.

"Here she comes!" shouted Pat cheerily, as he led the way to the lower-deck, which was brilliantly lit by the lightning. "Let us hurry down and get the boats well hauled up on deck. This is going to be a snorter!"

And Jack, looking seawards by the glimmering of the incessant lightning, saw the pirate schooner driving off to sea in a mist of a blinding rain squall.

Down on the lower deck they laboured hard, drawing the Tub and the raft and the canoe as high as possible from the water up the sloping planks.

"What a night!" exclaimed Pat, as the rain swept down in torrents and the lightning lit the decks with its blinding flashes.

They could hardly hear themselves speak for the roar of the rain on the upper decks of the ship and the thrashing of the waves of the lagoon against the side of the ship.

From end to end of the long decks the loose ropes hanging from the davits were thumping and banging. Rain water was pouring down the sloping decks in torrents, and the wind howled wildly through the funnel-ways.

At last the boats were secured, and Jack and his companions, their faces streaming with rain, turned into the snug music-room, where Mrs. Boyd, pale and anxious, was waiting them.

"Is there any danger, Mr. Murphy?" she asked anxiously.

"Not a bit, madam," replied Pat promptly. "This is going to work up to a full hurricane, but the wind is off the land, and the old ship has only got to stand the waves of the lagoon, which don't amount to much. The harder it blows and the longer it blows the better I shall like it, for it'll all help to blow that gang of scoundrels away from our island."

"If they have to run before it for three days, they'll be a good thousand miles to the south-west, and it will give them a bit of trouble to find us again. If I'm not mistaken, there's not a navigator amongst the crowd. They're nearly all gaolbirds, and no sailormen."

Mrs. Boyd was greatly reassured by Pat's cheery way of making the best of things, and it was not long before she had the kettle boiling and a second supper laid out in the music-room.

Then, whilst Jack and Pat and Sunday were partaking of this meal, she went to the grand piano and played to them.

Sunday, who had never heard such music before, could hardly eat his supper for wonderment. He could not at all understand the working of the piano, and they could only satisfy him by agreeing to his idea that there was an angel in the box.

"That's a good idea!" exclaimed Pat. "Now that we have got Sunday to help us, we will be able to shift the grand piano, and get it ashore to the new house. You and I couldn't have managed it alone, Master Jack; but old Sunday here will shift it like a feather, and we can strengthen the raft to take it safely to the land. Then we can shift it up to the house by putting another truck on the railway, and coupling 'em together."

And he explained there and then to Sunday how to take the legs off the grand piano, so that it could be shifted out on deck and rolled on to the raft.

It was some time before Sunday could be induced to go near the piano, so great was his awe for the sweet-voiced spirit which he supposed lived in it. But when the way that the music was made was explained to him he was afraid of it no longer.

He confided to Pat that he, too, was a musician, and produced from his pocket a sort of slender reed, which he had cut when he was ashore on the island. This was about the size of a penny whistle, and was cut much in the same fashion. Sunday played it, not by blowing through his mouth, but by placing it to his nose, and, so blowing down it, played several pretty and plaintive tunes.

Then he obliged the company with a native song, which made Jack roll off his chair with laughing, for it sounded like a dog howling at the moon. Sunday said that this was supposed on his island to be the prettiest song ever composed.

Then Pat sang a few sea songs in a fine bass voice, and at the conclusion of this little concert they all retired, feeling better after the upset caused by the fierce fight with the pirates and the howling of the gale outside.

All their cabins were on the lee side of the ship, and it was past midnight when they retired to them. The wind was roaring and howling, and outside the reef the sea was whipped to white foam by the fury of the gale. But the old ship lay steady on her bed of coral, only trembling slightly to the rush and roar of the storm.

And Jack, going into the cabin which he shared with Billy, found his brother still fast asleep. Billy had slept soundly all through the noise of the pirate attack, and he was now sleeping as soundly through the roar of a full hurricane.

For that was Billy's way. He never allowed anything to interfere with his eating or his sleeping.

The Voice in the Dark.

When Jack awoke the next morning it was still blowing great guns, and raining in torrents. It was im-

possible to get to the shore, for the lagoon was whipped into a whirl of white waves, whilst the shore, only half a mile away, was only visible now and then through the rain storms.

Jack had hoped that he would get a holiday, but Pat found lots of work to do.

Lighting lamps, they descended into the flooded engine-room, where the water lay black and treacherously amongst the great, silent engines.

Sunday was really frightened when they first showed him the inside of this great hall and explained to him that it was here that the steam "debble" lived which drove the great ship along.

"The steam devil is drowned out now, poor old chap," said Pat; "but that need not prevent us from taking down the engine-room clock, and clearing out the lathe and all the tools. They'll come in useful, maybe, when we get ashore."

And all that morning they were busy in collecting all the stores in the engineer's department that were within reach. These included two handy lathes, a forge and an anvil, two spare dynamos, and over fifteen hundred spare electric lamps, besides several miles of wiring.

They also cleared out the barber's shop, which was situated in one of the alleyways of the main deck.

They had found nothing more useful than the barber's shop on the ship, for the barber on board a big ocean liner keeps something of everything in stock. There were stacks of hairbrushes, razors, and pomatums, with so many pots of brilliantine and hair-restorer that Pat declared that they need never fear that they would go bald, even if they had to stay on the island for a hundred years.

They made Sunday sit in the barber's chair, and Jack turned the machine-brush whilst Pat ran it over his frizzy wig. At first Sunday was frightened to death of the rattling machine-brush, but after a while he laughed all over his face at what he called the debble-brush, and if Jack would have gone on turning, he would have been glad to sit in the chair all the morning having his frizzy wig brushed on end.

But Pat set him to packing up all the bottles and goods in the barber's shop, giving him a dozen bottles of jasmine-scented brilliantine for himself.

At first Sunday thought that this was something good to eat, for he had seen Jack hooking bulleeyes out of the bottles of sweets which were part of the barber's stock. But he did not like the first taste of the brilliantine, though he was highly delighted when Pat showed him how to rub it on his frizzy hair.

Sunday did more than brilliantine his hair, for he rubbed the brilliantine all over his face till he shone like a new penny with grease and contentment.

"That's the way with all these South Sea Islanders, Master Jack," said Pat. "They love greasing themselves all over with cocoanut-oil and that sort of stuff. That is why they have such beautiful clear skins, and maybe it is why they can stay in the water swimming for such a long time."

"Sunday was telling me last night of a Samoan woman who swam for twelve hours with the body of her husband in her arms. It is nothing to them to stop all day in the water when they are pearl-diving."

They put all the barber's stock in boxes ready to take ashore when the weather should moderate, and out of this single cabin there came a good load of all sorts of fancy goods, sweets, and wearing apparel—enough to stock a couple of shops.

There were caps, braces, razors, sponges, soap, and towels. There were also cigarettes in tins, which Pat said would come in very useful till they could grow their own tobacco.

There were even a couple of suits of dress clothes, with a lot of white shirts and collars, which Pat said might do when he and Sunday turned waiters up at the grand new house they were building ashore.

Sunday did not pack very quickly, for he was in a state of amazement at all these wonderful riches. When he found the barber's store of silver hand-mirrors, which were supposed to be given away as ladies' prizes when there were deck sports, his joy knew no bounds, and he sat on the floor of the cabin admiring himself till Pat called him away to shift coals from the lower bunkers to the donkey-engine on deck.

At first Sunday was afraid to go down those long flights of steel ladders which led to the dark coal-bunkers right down at the bottom of the ship.

"What are you waiting for?" asked Jack, as Sunday hesitated.

"Mo' fraid!" said Sunday frankly. Jack was surprised. He could not understand Sunday being afraid of anything, for in the adventure with the giant cuttlefish and with the pirates he had shown himself the bravest of men."

"Aitu down there!" said Sunday, trembling. "Plenty bad spirit!"

"What's an aitu, Pat?" asked Jack. "Ghosts, Master Jack," replied Pat, with a grin. "These Islanders are powerful afraid o' ghosts of all sorts, and you can't get one of them to walk past a graveyard after dark for love or money. They are superstitious, that's what they are, an' one of these days, if you get old Sunday on to tellin' you ghost stories, he'll make your blood run cold."

"You see, Master Jack, it wasn't so very many years ago that the people in these islands were all cannibals. I expect that Sunday's own father has had a taste o' what they call 'long pig' in his time. And it's that there cannibalism has got sort o' on their consciences."

"You see, they don't have much to do on these islands but to sit around and frighten each other with ghost stories after dark. And Sunday here, he knows that all the crew, poor chaps, were drowned when the ship struck. He's afraid of their spirits haunting the ship."

"Yes," said Sunday, as he caught the word spirit. "Plenty bad spirit on dis ship."

"Don't you be afraid, Sunday," said Pat, encouragingly. "All the bad spirits are still locked up in the smoke-room bar, and their names are Gin, an' Whisky, an' Brandy, an' Rum. Those are the only bad spirits we keep on the old City o' Benares."

But Sunday shook his head, and was afraid to go down into the coal-bunkers till Pat had tied one of the barber's hand-mirrors round his neck by way of a charm.

Then, comforted, he climbed down into No. 1 Bunker and set to work shovelling the coal into baskets which Jack and Pat hauled up and carried out on deck handy for the boiler of the donkey-engine.

Sunday, once he was used to the darkness, worked like a Trojan, and it still wanted an hour to lunch-time when he had emptied out the bunker.

Then Pat opened the hatches to the bunker on the other side of the ship, for he wanted to get a good heap of coal in store upon the deck. There was a ventilator passing right through the six floors of the ship into this bunker, and the three workers, climbing up to the boat-deck, struggled with the cowl in the wind and the lashing torrents of rain till they had unshipped it, revealing a

shaft three feet in diameter, up which they could hoist the coal with the aid of a small derrick and a long rope which Pat made fast to a hand-winch.

"Now, boys," said Pat, "I'll stay up on topside here and hoist the coal up the shaft, and you, Master Jack, can stay below in the bunker with Sunday and fill the baskets. We shall get it up five times as quick that way instead of carrying every basket up the ladders."

So Jack led the way down into the depths of the ship, followed by Sunday, who was now very brave about the bad spirits, for had not Pat explained that all the bad spirits in the ship were corked up in bottles and locked up in the smoke-room bar?

"Mo' not a bit' fraid now," said Sunday, as he shovelled in darkness and filled the coal-basket which Pat had lowered down the ventilator-shaft. "Dark all the same as light. But why for don't Mr. Pat makeo light candle down here?"

"He's afraid that there may be gas in the bunker," said Jack. "When there's a lot of coal piled up like this there's often a bit of gas, and if we lit a candle we might get an explosion."

"Pllosion!" exclaimed Sunday.

"What's pllosion?" asked Sunday. "You'd soon know if we had one," answered Jack. "It's a great big bang, same as the bang which Pat made last night with the devil-sticks—dynamite—when the pirates tried to rush the ship."

"Gas—him bad spirit?" asked Sunday, in an awed whisper.

"No, you stupid old duffer!" replied Jack, laughing. "Gas is all right if you use it all right. In England they send it through pipes and use it to light the houses, and they use it for driving engines."

Sunday gave an exclamation of wonderment, and said that he would much like to see this wonderful country of England, where there were thousands and thousands of lights, and where they did not use lamps for cocoanut-oil.

"Plenty cocoanut in England?" he asked as he filled the coal-basket and rattled with his shovel in the ventilator as a signal to Pat to hoist away.

"There are cocoanuts in England," answered Jack, "but they only use them for cocoanut-shies there. They throw balls at 'em on holidays and they change all bad 'uns."

"Any bad spirits in England?" asked Sunday, greatly interested.

"Not that I've heard of," answered Jack. "There's too many railways an' motor-cars and noises in England for spirits, I guess. Spirits like lonely, dark places, and I don't suppose there are any more spirits in England than there are in this ship."

"Chuck it!" What are you tellin' him?" said a voice from the darkness in clear, distinct tones.

Jack's heart stood still, and the shovel dropped from his nerveless hands. There was somebody in the coal-bunker!

Sunday, at the sound of the mysterious voice had dropped on his face amongst the coals.

"Who's that?" asked Jack, in a shaky voice.

"It's George—poor old George!" answered the voice. Then it broke off in a shrill whistle that, echoed through the dark coal-bunker like the cry of a lost soul.

Jack's heart went to his boots.

"It must be one of the stokers who had been shut in the bunker when the ship had struck by some fall of coal which had cut him off from the stokehold. The poor chap has gone mad!"

"Who-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-oop!" shouted the voice from the darkness. "Play up, 'Spurs! Who-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-oop!"

Sunday groaned and tried to dig his frizzy head in the coals in a frenzy of fear.

"Wow—wow!" he groaned. "Um bad spirit, Massa Jack! We all die now! 'Um aitu from barber-man! 'Um all velly cross 'cause we take 'um hair-oil—nice hair-oil! Oh, Mister spirit, don't you be cross with poor old Sunday!"

Jack felt his knees trembling under him. The basket came clattering down the ventilator-shaft.

"Below there!" whistled the voice. Jack's tongue clove to the roof of his mouth like a dry sponge, as, out of the darkness, came a white shape fluttering through the air.

Sunday gave a yell of fear.

"Now 'e come to eat us all up!" he wailed. "Good-bye, Massa Jacky! Oh! Ta-ta! We goners dis time!"

(This great adventure story will be continued in next Monday's great issue of THE BOYS' FRIEND. Do not fail to order your copy in advance.)

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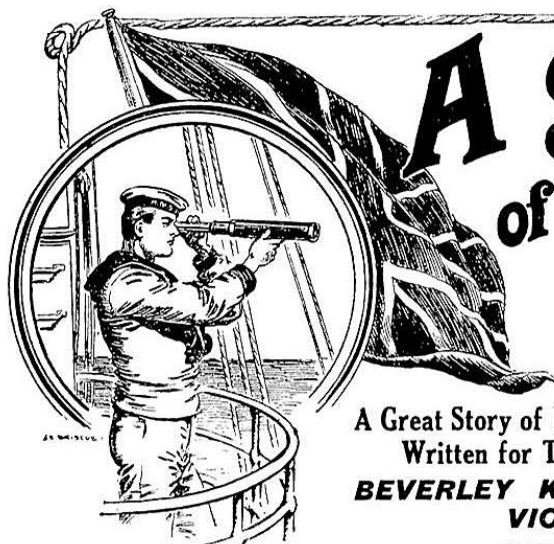
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A Son of the Sea

A Great Story of Life in the Navy. Specially Written for THE BOYS' FRIEND by BEVERLEY KENT and VICTOR DARING, R.N.

THE FIRST CHAPTERS.

BOB DANVERS, ex-midshipman of the Royal Navy, has been turned out of the service on the charge of theft. He pleads innocence, but neither his mother nor his stepfather, CHARLES GREFTON, will believe him. The taunts become unbearable, and when war is declared Bob longs to serve his King and country.

He visits his friend, PHIL HALLOWS. The latter is an A.B. in the Navy, but, owing to a weak chest, he is home on sick leave. Bob arranges to join the Service in Phil's name.

He goes on board the Diadem, a new cruiser. Ere long he is on the verge of being exposed by a bully named PITT, when ARMSTRONG steps in and saves the situation. Bob chums up with Armstrong, and learns that Stephen Grefton is also an enemy of the latter.

Stephen Grefton does his utmost to get Bob into disgrace, but his plots meet with failure. The villain is prevented from denouncing Bob, as Armstrong has a hold over him.

A British merchant ship is torpedoed, and the Diadem goes to the rescue. Amongst the rescued is the real Phil Hallows. In consequence Bob is compelled to tell his secret to LIEUTENANT GREY, but the latter, good hearted fellow that he is, promises to help Bob.

Later Grefton is found seriously injured, if not murdered, and Bob is taken before the captain on the charge of having committed the crime. Bob states that he is innocent, and, pointing to Pitt, exclaims: "That man is the murderer!"

(Now read on.)

"Fate is Against Me!"

As Bob, in ringing accents, asserted his innocence and accused Pitt his eyes flashed, his figure grew taut, he looked as if he was about to attack the scoundrel. His guard closed in upon him.

Pitt laughed again. "Ho murdered Lieutenant Grefton!" he cried. "He can't deny I saw him running from the cabin. What has he to say to that?"

"It's a lie!" Bob thundered. "I saw the lieutenant lying on the floor! I was sent to summon him! He had been attacked, before I got to his cabin, and—"

"Let no one believe him!" Pitt

bawled. "He's not to be trusted; his word is no use. He's a thief, and I can prove it!"

So rapid had been the interchange between Bob and the scoundrel that none had had time to interfere. But now the captain's voice cut in sharp and cold as a knife.

"Silence! Remove the prisoner in custody. Also arrest that man who dared to interfere!"

Pitt at once was seized. His ugly face went livid, his mouth twitched convulsively. Perhaps the thought that his malice had betrayed him into an action fatal to himself flashed into his mind.

Bob, with head erect and eyes still flashing, marched off with his guard, and the other sailors grouped together quietly slipped away.

The captain wheeled about, and, followed by the doctor, he entered Grefton's cabin again. He looked carefully around in silence. Presently the doctor spoke.

"There is a great deal, sir, that makes me very suspicious," he said. "The lieutenant was attacked fully half an hour ago; I can tell that as a medical man. But a half-hour has not passed since you began to summon the officers to your cabin to meet the German commander, and the sailor Philip Hallows says he came here by command to summon Grefton. If that be true, then he cannot be the man who attacked him."

The captain looked sharply at the doctor, his face was wrinkled in perplexity and annoyance.

"That would increase the mystery," he said.

"And I think it is a big mystery," the doctor replied, with a touch of nervousness.

The captain gazed at him piercingly.

"Are you keeping anything from me?" he asked. "Do you know more than you care to say?"

The doctor drew a deep breath.

"I'm afraid I do, sir," he answered.

"Is that fair to me?" the captain asked, with a touch of sternness. "Is that consistent with discipline and with your duty as an officer? I tell you I won't have it. During the last few weeks much that is very strange has occurred aboard this ship, and as the commanding officer I am held responsible. I look to the officers to stand by me; instead, I am being kept in the dark. I will, however, continue to talk to you, not as your captain, but as a friend. What

reason can you have for declining to give me your confidence?"

"Sometimes one cannot talk with-

out betraying another person's confidence," the doctor said sadly. "This is one of those cases. Quite unexpectedly I have been drawn into this. I do wish I could tell you all; I hope before long that I may be able to do so. I must ask you to let the matter rest at that point for the present. But there is one suggestion I should like to make."

"And what is that?"

"Commander Aestein has said that he recognised one of the officers to-night as a man he has met already. Lots of us have gone to your cabin, and he has failed to identify any of us. Will you bring him here?"

"The captain started. "Wait here!" he said. "I will get him along."

In a couple of minutes he returned with the German.

"Commander Aestein, even though we are at war, we are both naval officers, and we both can be true to the unwritten law between sailors," the captain began. "You see for yourself that a great breach of discipline has occurred here. You will no doubt keep that matter a secret, as it only affects me as captain of this ship."

"Certainly," Aestein agreed. "I can give you that undertaking with pleasure. But why have you invited me here?"

"Look at that man on the bunk. That's what I want you to do."

Aestein stepped forward and gazed at Grefton lying white and still. A look of recognition sprang into his eyes.

"Why, that is the officer of whom I have spoken; that is the man I have met," he said. "How very curious! As I came on to your deck to-night I saw him again; he has met with a very serious accident since then. And— Ah, now I remember where I saw him!"

"And where was that?"

"Some time ago I had a curious experience on my submarine. You had caught one of our merchant vessels, had put a prize crew aboard, and were trying to take the vessel into British waters. She was laden with cargo that would be very valuable to you. As we had lost the ship it was better that we should sink it than let you have it. So I sent it to the bottom. And that officer was in charge of it."

"But how do you recognise him? You didn't capture him, did you?"

"No; but I happened to get a good look at him," he said.

"I don't yet understand," the captain explained.

"I can't explain further," Aestein replied deliberately. "I must ask you not to question me any more."

"All right! I don't want to cross-examine a prisoner," the captain said.

He turned with Aestein to conduct the latter out of the cabin. As they stepped out to the deck the German uttered a cry.

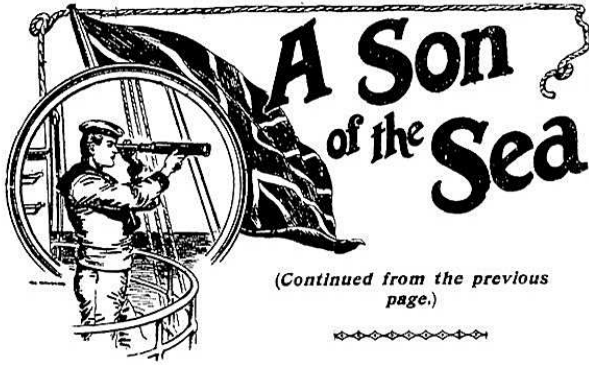
"That man!" he gasped, pointing to a sailor. "I know him, too! I'm sure I do! Can I be awake, or is all this a nightmare?"

"What is his name?" the captain demanded.

(Continued on the next page.)



A contingent of Britain's "contemptible little army" route-marching in the home country. Every man among them is a volunteer—some having made supreme sacrifices for the great cause, and although Territorials, they will acquit themselves in the trenches, when the call comes, as bravely and as nobly as our regular troops. The retired colonel in the roadway looks on with an approving eye, and raises his hat by way of salutation.



(Continued from the previous page.)

"I can't tell you that, but I can never forget his face. He was going to his doom when I saw him."

The captain beckoned to the sailor, who advanced and saluted.

"Your name?" he asked.

"Alce Armstrong, sir."

"This gentleman says he knows you."

Armstrong looked at the German.

"He has the advantage of me, then, sir," he replied; "for, to the best of my recollection, I never saw him before."

"Were you not on the prize ship Basbergh when she was torpedoed in the North Sea?" Acestin asked.

Armstrong at once became alert.

"Yes, I was," he replied, showing his surprise at being asked the question.

"There!" Acestin continued. "I knew I was not mistaken. When I saw you, you were standing at a porthole too small to allow of you to escape. The ship was sinking fast; your death seemed certain. And I admired and respected you for the way you faced it."

"Then how did you escape?" the captain asked.

"A chum swam back and saved me, sir," Armstrong explained.

"But how could that be? If he could get to you, why could you not have cleared out without his help?"

"The door of the cabin was locked on the outside," Armstrong answered.

"And I couldn't force the door. I hadn't any weapon handy."

"Who locked the door?"

Armstrong did not reply. He was thinking of Bob. He had promised Grefton that he would not inform against him on condition that the latter did not strike at Bob.

"Who locked the door?" the captain insisted.

"I didn't see anyone lock it, sir," Armstrong replied guardedly.

"Who rescued you?"

"Able-Seaman Philip Hallows, sir."

"The man I have just put under arrest!" the captain cried. "He risked his life to save yours, and he succeeded, and his bravery was not reported to me. Who was your commanding officer?"

Lieutenant Grefton, sir."

"Ah! Of course! I had forgotten!"

A wry smile came over the captain's face. Now he fully realised that very much indeed had occurred on the ship of which he had been kept in complete darkness. The doctor knew of some secret, and had not told him; Armstrong evidently had an inkling of this mystery; he could see that in his face at this moment.

Pitt, too, knew something; he had called another sailor a thief, and had said that he could prove it. And even this German commander knew of something, and had declined to disclose his knowledge.

"All right; you can go," he said to Armstrong; and, in deep thought, he walked away.

Meantime, Bob was sitting in his cell, shaking with indignation and trembling alternatively.

Suddenly the door was thrown open, and the doctor stepped in. Bob stood up and saluted. The doctor's face was very grave.

"Danvers, I've come to talk to you," he said.

"You know my name!" Bob gasped.

"Yes. Lieutenant Grey told me all before he went ashore. You made a full confession to him, and as I have been working with him to clear up this mystery, he explained everything before he left. I am your friend, and am very sorry for you, but I won't conceal the fact that you are in desperate peril. You are charged with this assault on Lieutenant Grefton, and all must come out."

"How is he, sir?" Bob asked.

"He will recover. I've had another look at him, and he is coming round. Do you think it possible that he will tell the truth?"

"No."

"Not even to save an innocent man?"

"Not to save me," Bob said grimly. "Besides, he can't tell the story; it is so much against himself. He would be ruined if he did. Yes, it has come to that now. Either he or I must go down."

"You accused Pitt of the crime," the doctor said, passing his hand across his forehead in his anxiety. "What proof have you against him?"

"I'm certain he's guilty, but I feel I'm crushed and done for. Nothing can save me."

The doctor sighed.

"There is such a terrible lot to be cleared up," he said. "Nothing but complete vindication of your character could satisfy a court-martial, and then there is against you that fearful charge on the Flyaway! You were a midshipman then, and you were kicked out of the Navy for theft. You came aboard this ship personating another, and you are charged with attacking a man who is your relation by marriage and who knows all about the scandal in your past. That theft on the Flyaway will come against you most. Cannot you help me about it?"

"When we resumed the fugitives from the torpedoed merchant vessel the other day there was a man aboard her called Wilson who said he could clear me, but we didn't save him," Bob replied gloomily. "He's been drowned, and that he might have been rescued brought me new hope, and even that is gone now. No, sir, I am afraid there's nothing to be done, and I'm almost tired of putting up a fight to prove my honour."

"Fate is against me, and I must take the knock-out blow, and I don't care if it ends in a bullet. Better to die young and be forgotten than to live to old age in misery and scorn. I'm one of the unlucky ones, and that's all there is to be said. But I thank you for your kindness. It's little of it I have ever had."

Quite exhausted he sat down. The doctor looked at him for some seconds. Then he walked to the door.

"Whilst there's life there's hope," he replied. "And one thing is certain. I'll work and fight for you to the end."

Taken by Force.

Lieutenant Grey, sitting in the inn with Kenford, the Chatham solicitor, dropped his knife and fork in his amazement as the other spoke, and stared across the table.

"You say you had the proofs that Charles Grefton and his son, Lieutenant Stephen Grefton, are villains, and that the proofs have been stolen in the last two days?" he gasped.

"Yes, and I believe that old Charles Grefton is the thief," Kenford replied coolly. "That is why I am down here, within a few miles of his house."

Grey's face grew dark.

"And you have just told me that you are here on business, too," Kenford continued. "May I ask what do you seek?"

"I, too, seek the proof that they are villains," Grey replied. "I am very interested, as I have said, in young Robert Danvers whom they have treated very badly."

"Ah, this is certainly very strange," Kenford replied, pushing back his chair preparatory to rising from the table. "I have not heard of this man Danvers."

"Have you heard of a man named Phil Hallows?"

"Yes, and I have met him. He came once to my office with Armstrong."

"His true name is Robert Danvers; he took the name of his foster

brother, Phil Hallows, an A.B. in his Majesty's service, and thus got aboard the Diadem. He was a midshipman some years ago on the Flyaway, and got cashiered on the charge of theft."

"He wanted to redeem his character, or, rather, he was seeking a chance to prove his innocence and win back all he had lost. I need hardly tell you that I have heard all this very recently. I believe all he has told me, for he has proved himself straightforward and plucky, and I want to help him."

"Also I have grave reasons for believing that Stephen Grefton is a very bad lot. So now I think I have fully explained why I called on you at Chatham, and, finding you were absent, came on here to make inquiries on my own account. My leave is short; the Diadem will be back in Chatham in two days or less, and I must then rejoin at once."

Kenford had listened intently whilst Grey was speaking. He stood up, lit a cigar, and with his back to the mantelpiece, he puffed thoughtfully for several moments.

"What is the story about Danvers's theft on the Flyaway?" he asked presently.

"It's rather an interesting story," Grey explained. "There had been some mysterious thefts in the gun-room, and a good deal of uneasiness on that account. Danvers had a friend, another midshipman named Barber, and it was Barber's things that had mostly been stolen."

"Some plans were laid to catch the thief, and for a long time they all failed. Then one day Danvers was seen leaving the gun-room after being there alone."

"The gun-room steward reported that he had seen Danvers acting suspiciously; his locker was searched, and in it were found some silver coins belonging to Barber that had been purposely marked."

"Humph! And the name of the gun-room steward?" Kenford asked, with legal brevity.

"His name was Smetch?"

"Smetch?" he said.

"Yes. Danvers feels certain to this day that Smetch plotted against him," Grey went on.

"Why should he think that?"

"Because Smetch was an acquaintance of Stephen Grefton. It was to Grefton's interest to ruin Danvers. Old Charles Grefton is married to Danvers's mother, and they want to influence her against the lad, and so persuade her to make her will in favour of Stephen Grefton."

"I can quite believe them capable of any villainy," Kenford remarked.

"What you have told me is more interesting to me than perhaps you can realise. For I know this man Smetch."

"You do?"

"Yes. In point of fact I have been having him watched for a considerable time now. He has been down at heel for months and hanging around Chatham, and that crafty old fox Charles Grefton has seen him there. It's my opinion that Smetch stole the paper from my office and passed them on to old Grefton. But, of course, even if we showed Smetch up as a rogue, yet I am afraid that would not clear Robert Danvers of the charge for which he was cashiered from the Flyaway. Still—"

"There was a man named Wilson who was on a vessel torpedoed by the Germans the other day," Grey interjected. "Wilson said he could prove the lad's innocence. But I am afraid he is not amongst the rescued. He didn't come aboard the Diadem."

Kenford kept on smoking thoughtfully. Grey rose from the table.

"And now I should like in my turn to know what evidence you have in this affair between the Greftons and Armstrong," he suggested. "That is if you do not think it best—"

"Oh, I've no hesitation whatever in telling you," Kenford answered lightly. "Old Grefton was the trustee of Armstrong's fortune, and bit by bit the money was lost in unfortunate speculations. That was the story, and it looked plausible enough. But in point of fact Grefton was getting hold of the money all the time under another name."

"The difficulty was to prove that there wasn't another man named Jackson. I had to show that Grefton and Jackson were one and the same, and hard work I had to do it. I traced up a lot of Grefton's old associates, and, working step by step, at last I got the clue."

"I followed up this with the result that I came upon his accomplice, who confessed all, and signed a document. That is the document that has been stolen, together with other proofs that

leave no doubt whatever of Grefton's guilt."

"And you still hope to find it?" Grey asked quickly.

"Well, I am in the hands of the police, and they hold out good hopes," Kenford replied. "I have another appointment with the sergeant here in half an hour."

They spoke together for some minutes longer, and then Grey strolled out of the inn. His meeting with Kenford had at first raised his spirits, but with reflection they began to sink again. The time he had for work was very short, and so far he had not been able to do anything.

The whole business was in the hands of the police, and police proceedings were usually very slow. And Grey could not afford to wait. Restless and uneasy in mind, he stood on the road, gazing out at sea, and around feeling an eager desire to get to work, and yet not knowing what to do.

At last he strolled away, and went up the hillside. Out of curiosity, if for nothing else, he would visit Bob's old home, he decided, and perhaps he might have a chance of getting a glimpse at old Grefton. That of itself might be of use some day. Anyhow, it was better to put in the time thus, than to go to bed and lose about unable to sleep.

The night was balmy, the air soft, and the sky spangled with stars as he climbed the hill and came to the gate leading to the house. Pushing it open, he sauntered along until he saw the long weather-beaten house in front. He paused and gazed at it.

Almost all the rooms were in darkness. On the ground floor, however, one was lit on either side of the hall. Grey approached the nearest and looked in. A stout, elderly man, with a bloated face, was lying back in an armchair, stretched comfortably, a big cigar between his teeth, and his small eyes fixed on a newspaper.

So this was the old scoundrel, Grefton, the young officer felt certain. This was the villain who had ruined two young lives so that he could lead his lazy life in luxury. Grey's instinct was to dash into the room, seize him by the neck, and make him admit his guilt. But of course that was impossible. Anyhow, he would know him again from this on.

He turned to walk back to the village, and then, remembering there was a light in the room on the other side of the hall, he crossed over, and looked in. Never was he more surprised. A beautiful young girl was standing there. But it was not her beauty only, or mostly, that appealed to him. To his amazement he saw that she was in great distress.

On a table were some papers; one was in her hand, and she was sobbing violently whilst reading it. At last she seemed unable to suppress her grief any longer. She dropped the paper and began to cry aloud.

As Grey stood, his heart full of pity, the door was flung open. He saw an evil face, the ugly face of old Grefton, and he saw his crafty eyes flash, his cruel mouth draw tight. The old scoundrel rushed across the room, gripped the girl, and raised his fists to strike her.

The young officer did not hesitate; he did not stop to think. With a quick movement he flung up the window, he crossed the threshold in a thrice, and sprang to her rescue. Seizing the old villain by the throat he flung him away.

"Stand off!" he thundered. "Don't dare to lay a hand on that lady again as you value your life!"

Grefton recoiled back. But next moment he rushed forward again and clutched at the papers on the table. The girl cried out.

"Don't! Don't let him get them!" she urged. "He is a wicked old man, and I didn't know it until now. They are the proofs of a young sailor's innocence!"

Now Grey understood, in fact. He caught Grefton again, and they swayed and staggered together. Then the young officer, having secured his grip, tripped Grefton, and the latter, falling heavily, lay still. Grey bent over him for a moment, and then addressed the girl.

"Who are you?" he asked.

"My name is Grace Silchester," she explained, between her sobs. "I have a great friend from childhood; his name is Robert Danvers. He has been shamefully treated, and—"

"I know Danvers," Grey said.

"And those papers! I came here to-night to see Bob's mother, as I often do. When I opened the door, I saw those papers lying in the hall. I picked them up, and came in here expecting to find Mrs. Danvers. One of the papers fell out, and as I looked

at it, I saw something that made me suspect that old man. I couldn't help it; I read on. And then—then

"Then he came in, and I turned up, too, and your trouble is all over now," Grey cut in cheerily, as he swept up the papers together, and bundled them into his pocket. "Come along out of this, and I will escort you home."

"But is he badly injured? Will he live?" she asked.

"He's coming round, and he'll live to do time for his crimes," Grey replied. "Let us clear off before he can make a fuss."

He saw Grace home, and then he went down to the inn, chuckling heartily.

"What a joke!" he gurgled.

"Kenford is still with the sergeant. I suppose, talking about all sorts of legal ways of getting the proofs, and they are in my pocket! I took them by force, and that old scoundrel Grefton doesn't even know who I am. Ha, ha, ha! Well, this has been a great night and no mistake!"

Vindicating his Character.

The Diadem had returned to Chatham, and lay swinging at anchorage. Except that there was an unusual stir of pinnacles between her and the wharf, few ashore knew that anything of an unusual character prevailed on board. Yet a sailor was on trial, and before the sun set he might have forfeited his life.

At noon the court-martial assembled. Officers of high rank took their seats in the court arranged for the trial, and Bob was led in to face them. The lad was very pale, but carried himself bravely.

Since his arrest he had weighed everything unflinchingly, and had come to the conclusion that there was no hope. At least he could die like a man. He made up his mind that he would be found guilty, and that he would take his sentence without the slightest sign of fear.

It was a scene to touch the heart and mind of the most dull. The array of judges clad in blue and gold, the severity on every face, the tension and the tense silence as Bob marched between two of his comrades to the table, the splash of colour all around the court, and in the centre the young prisoner the centre of it all. He saluted and stood to attention.

Every eye scanned him narrowly. Here was the last man as far as they could see who would be guilty of such a crime, and of such a terrible breach of discipline. But appearances are deceptive, and the evidence against him was almost insurmountable. For much had come out about his past.

"Are you guilty or not guilty of the charge of assaulting Lieutenant Grefton?" came the question in icy tones.

"Not guilty!" Bob replied firmly.

The Court settled down to hear the case, and Lieutenant Beddle, the officer appointed to prosecute, arose.

"Your name?" he asked sharply.

Bob gazed steadily at his interlocutor.

"Robert Danvers," he replied.

Some gasped. The judges remained impassive. The reply did not seem to come as a surprise to Beddle.

"You have been brought into court under the name of Philip Hallows!" he said. "Do you admit that you took this name?"

"Yes, sir," Bob replied.

"Then you came on the Diadem as a sailor under false pretences?"

"I did!"

Beddle looked at the judges.

"I must ask for instructions," he said. "The prisoner has made a very serious admission. I am not sure that it would be fair on my part to follow it up."

"We will get over the difficulty by calling the witnesses," the judge suggested. "This admission by the prisoner has not come as a surprise to the court."

"Very good. I will call Richard Pitt."

Pitt lumbered forward, his evil face grave and apparently indifferent.

"You saw the prisoner hurrying from Lieutenant Grefton's cabin?" Beddle inquired.

"I did, sir."

"What did you do?"

"As he had left the door open, I went to close it, and I saw the lieutenant lying on the floor. At once I gave the alarm."

"What do you know about the prisoner?"

"I know he is not Philip Hallows. I know Hallows."

"Do you know who he is?"

"He has admitted that he is Robert Danvers, the midshipman who

was kicked out of the Navy for a theft on the Flyaway."

Grey, having returned to the Diadem, had asked and been given leave to defend Bob, and now he sprang to his feet.

"When did he admit that he committed a theft on the Flyaway?" he demanded.

"Well, he says he is Robert Danvers, and it was him who committed the theft," Pitt answered sulkily.

"Were you on the Flyaway at that time?"

"No."

"Then how do you know all this?"

"Through a man named Smetch who was."

"You have no enmity against the prisoner?"

"No."

"And you never met Lieutenant Grefton until you came aboard the Diadem?"

Pitt started. He had not expected this. He lied again.

"No," he said.

"And you say to the court that you and Lieutenant Grefton and Smetch have not continually plotted to ruin the prisoner?" Grey continued.

"Mr. Grey!" the president protested.

"That is my case," Grey said hotly. "I ask you to call Lieutenant Grefton without further delay."

Grefton arose and entered the witness-box. His head was still bandaged, his face was ghastly, and his mouth was twitching.

"Lieutenant Grefton, have you known Robert Danvers for long?" Grey began.

"Yes, for many years," Grefton had to admit.

"Therefore, when you saw him here as Philip Hallows you knew he was under a false name. Why did you not report the fact?"

Grefton tried to look at his ease. "I held my tongue out of sympathy for him," he said.

"And you did not do your duty?"

"Yes. I am afraid that is true."

The judges were staring at Grefton and Bob. The case had taken an extraordinary turn.

"You also know Alec Armstrong, an A.B. aboard the Diadem?" Grey went on.

"Yes?"

"You and your father never tried to defraud him?"

"Certainly not!"

"If I prove that you and your father swindled Armstrong, then you will admit that your evidence is not to be believed?" Grey thundered.

"Of course!" Grefton scoffed.

"But you can't."

For answer Grey pulled a bundle of papers from his pocket and handed them to the president.

"There is the proof that this man is a scoundrel," he said. "These papers were stolen from a Mr. Kenford, a solicitor, who had a warrant out for his arrest. Read them, and you will see that Pitt is a scoundrel, too, and also Smetch, and that they have all been conspiring together to ruin the prisoner."

An immense sensation ran round the court. The judges quickly bent over the documents. Stephen Grefton shrank back. And at that moment there was a stir behind. A group of men were entering the court. Kenford advanced first, with Grace and a stranger; behind him came old Charles Grefton, more dead than alive, in the custody of the police, and behind him again staggered Smetch, firmly held by two constables.

Kenford pushed his way forward.

"I am a solicitor," he said, "and I have important evidence to prove that Robert Danvers never committed the theft on the Flyaway."

The judges looked up. Pitt had turned and had recognised Smetch. He saw the terror on that scoundrel's

face, and his own went livid. He sprang to his feet.

"I'll tell all!" he said. "I was dragged into this."

"Sit down!" the judge commanded sternly. "What is your name?" he inquired of the solicitor.

"Harold Kenford."

"Then it is you to whom these documents belong?"

"Yes, it is. The police have already arrested Charles Grefton, as you see, and whatever the verdict in this case may be, they mean to arrest Stephen Grefton yonder before he leaves this court. This man Smetch has signed a written confession, which I hand up."

"And before you proceed further I should like to put in the evidence of this stranger. His name is Wilson. He was aboard the Flyaway with midshipman Robert Danvers and Smetch. Smetch has admitted that he was the thief, and that he was instigated to the crime by Stephen Grefton. Lieutenant Grey told me the other night about Wilson, and I have managed to find him."

All eyes were turned on Stephen Grefton. He was swaying from side to side. Pitt had risen again and was glaring at him.

"I'll tell all," he repeated hoarsely. "He put me up to kill the lad. He played me false, and turned upon me in his cabin. It was I who struck him, and I didn't give him half that he deserved."

Grefton tried to speak. His mouth opened, and his tongue clicked. Then with a groan he slid to the floor.

Half an hour later Bob left the court a free man, Armstrong on one side of him and Grace on the other. The crowd had lined up, and ringing cheers greeted him; officers pressed forward to shake his hand. He had been acquitted, but his future was still uncertain. The president of the court was in consultation with the Admiralty.

Bob turned to Grey.

"How can I thank you? And you, too, Mr. Kenford?" he asked earnestly. "But for you both I would have died in disgrace. And Armstrong. But for you, too—"

"Ay!" Armstrong cut in. "But for Mr. Kenford I would be a struggling sailor all my life. He has got me back my money. But that is nothing compared to the fact that you are safe, Bob. And now we'll soon hear, I hope, that—"

"That won't happen," Bob said sadly. "But my honour is vindicated, and I am quite content with that."

There was a stir, and Grey who had moved a few steps apart returned. In his hand was a buff piece of paper.

"Midshipman Robert Danvers!" he cried, in ringing accents.

Bob's face flushed scarlet.

"This is to notify that the Lords of the Admiralty have appointed Midshipman Robert Danvers to the Diadem."

Grey's strong voice carried far and wide. The crew had been waiting for the message.

Such cheers broke forth as never before had been heard on the stout cruiser. As if by magic Bob of a sudden was in a seething joyous crowd. He was lifted up and carried around the deck, and dropped at the ground-room door. There the senior sub-lieutenant and the midshipmen were waiting.

"Welcome to the gun-room, Danvers!" the sub-lieutenant cried heartily. "Welcome back to your old life after your gallant fight. We're proud to have you in our mess. Boys, altogether! Three times three for Danvers!"

Again the cheering rang out. And thus it was that Bob passed from the lower deck to his old rank to win fame in the service of his King.

THE END.

A HOLIDAY SCOOP!

A Magnificent New Long Complete Story of Thrilling Adventure, introducing

TOM BELCHER, THE BOY BOXER.

BY ARTHUR S. HARDY.



Tom felt his head swim and his brain reel. His heart seemed about to burst. The tap was close at hand. He hurled himself at it, and then—

The 1st Chapter.

Catching a Thief.

"Stop, thief! Stop him! There he goes! That's the man! Stop, thief!"

The words were uttered at the full strength of a man's lungs. Many persons heard the cries, but few took in the situation.

Tom Belcher was one of the few. It all happened as Tom was walking along the front at Whitpool with Sam Walcott, the coloured boxer, one bright summer morning.

On their left shimmered the sea. Overhead shone a merciless sun. The glare was terrific, and the conditions trying even by the seaside, save for the very fit.

Tom and Sam were discussing the affairs of Ben Adams's Boxing Booth, for times were bad. The boxers and their gun'vor, as a matter of fact, scarcely knew where the next meal was coming from, when Tom, happening to have his attention attracted by the sudden spring of the pickpocket to the side of his intended victim, saw the crime committed.

The thief was a tall, slender, athletic-looking man, very shabbily dressed.

The victim was a middle-aged gentleman clad in a flannel suit, with gold chain festooned on his capacious waistcoat, and whose prosperous appearance had doubtless attracted the pickpocket.

At the moment when the theft was committed the prosperous-looking visitor to Whitpool had paused to admire the sea. He was blinking contentedly in the blaze of sunlight,

and leaning on his walking-stick for support.

The pickpocket, who had doubtless been following him, looked swiftly up and down the front, and then, deeming the time right, leapt forward, stretched out his right hand, seized the chain, tugged the watch out of its owner's pocket, and with a deft twist, broke the ring away.

His hand retained the watch. The chain fell down, minus the precious timepiece, and off went the thief with the speed of the wind.

It was then that the unfortunate owner of the watch raised the alarm, as he clapped his hand in dismay over the place where the precious watch had lately rested.

He even attempted to run, or rather to waddle, for his running days were over. And his deep-toned voice awakened the echoes of the street.

Men turned round and looked. Cabmen idling away their time on the rank close by, blinked and stared. But nobody attempted to stop the rascal. It looked as if the pickpocket would get clear away.

Even Sam Walcott was slow-witted. He merely stared.

"Why, Mistah Tom Belcher—" he began, but Tom was off.

He, at any rate, realised the necessity for swift action.

He leapt from his stand like a deer. He was into his running with the rapidity of lightning.

He was only a little chap, but his stride was good to see.

His arms swung backwards and forwards with a perfect rhythm.

His movement when going full speed was perfection, nothing being

done to check his pace. He just glided along.

Sam Walcott then made after him, shouting.

But he couldn't catch Tom. They'd tested pace against pace before, to Sam's disadvantage, and so Sam stopped at length, and left Tom to it, staring big-eyed after the little boxer as he went flashing along the road.

"Golly, it's a race!" muttered Sam. And a race it was. The pickpocket was wonderfully fast. He covered the first hundred yards in magic time, but after going another fifty, when he might well have considered himself safe, he began to tire.

He did not realise that he was being followed, and so into a side street he turned.

A big crowd was following after now, but very much after.

They took their time. They wanted to see the pickpocket caught, but they didn't want to catch him. They left that to the police, whose duty it was to deal with men of the pickpocket's class, the slow-footed police of Whitpool.

Having gained what he considered a position of safety the pickpocket fell into a walk, thrust his hands into his pockets, mixed with the crowd of pedestrians, who covered the pavement, and tried to appear unconcerned.

He meant to turn into another by-way the first chance he got, and thence to gain a place of safety at his ease.

He reckoned without Tom Belcher. It was not until he heard the swift pitter-patter of fast-speeding feet behind him that the rascal became

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A HOLIDAY SCOOP!

(Continued from the previous page.)

alarmed. Then he turned, saw Tom Belcher coming, and fled.

He'd had a rest, Tom hadn't! He'd got a big stride, Tom hadn't! He stood nearly six feet in his shoes, whereas Tom was only a little fellow. But he was a little fellow with a wonderfully big heart.

Tom set his teeth, and went for his man.

Then the fellow, realising that the danger was great, put every ounce of energy he possessed into his running. He took to the road so that the pedestrians on either side of the thoroughfare should not balk him.

And what a race it was. Tom needed every ounce of breath he could store up for his work. He'd none to spare for shouting. And so the on-lookers did not understand what was the matter. They turned and watched the race, though.

The thief had, perhaps, five yards start of little Tom Belcher when he got his stride fully going again. He increased the distance to seven, then ten in a flash.

And with this separating them, they sped on, and on.

They had nearly got to the end of the street before Tom, who'd by this time covered a full three hundred yards, began to make an impression.

The pickpocket then began to come back to him.

Tom felt as if his head and his heart were about to burst, for his exertions had been tremendous, but even then he did not falter.

He had his eyes fixed on his quarry. At last, just as he felt he must stop, he saw the man avert and falter.

He gained at every stride, and reached out his hand to grasp the rascal by the shoulder.

The man felt the touch, dodged aside, mounted the pavement, and set his back against a shop front.

And there he stood at bay, glaring at Tom. His chest was heaving from his exertions. He was breathless, run to a standstill.

So was Tom.

They eyed each other fixedly.

"Let me go!" hissed the man, at last. "If you don't it'll be the worse for you."

"Give me the watch, then," panted Tom. "I don't want to send any man to prison. But the old gentleman must have his property back."

The thief laughed.

"I don't know what you mean," he cried.

"Give me the watch," said Tom, feeling a bit easier.

By way of reply, the man made a spring at him, and launched a heavy right-handed blow full and hard at Tom's jaw.

Tom ducked, and the blow missed.

"Ah! Would you?" cried the little boy boxer.

The man repeated the blow, and Tom retaliated with a punch full upon the mouth.

The next moment they were fighting furiously. Tom discovered that the pickpocket was fairly well versed in the science. His blows hurt, too. But Tom Belcher was used to that, and he danced this way and that, hitting with left and right until he'd marked his man badly.

Finding he'd caught a tartar, the fellow then closed with Tom, and tried to wrestle him down. Tom accepted the challenge, and, fast-locked in a tight embrace, they swayed this way and that as they floundered off the pavement into the road, whilst an excited crowd gathered to see the fun, ignorant as yet as to what it meant.

Tom had studied wrestling. In his daily work at Ben Adams's Boxing Booth he'd become accustomed to fighting men who infringed the rules of fair play to a most alarming extent. And often he'd had to wrestle to save or protect himself.

And amongst the showmen on the fair grounds there were many, especially the circus men, who knew a lot about catch-as-catch-can, and Greco-Roman styles.

And so Tom did not find himself at a disadvantage.

Indeed, after a while he felt that he'd got the measure of his man, and applying the simple chip known as the backheel, which even a novice ought to have known how to counter, he brought his man down heavily on his back.

The pickpocket fell with a thud, and

all the breath was knocked out of his body. He lay there blinking in the dust, and Tom, having got him down, kept him down.

At that moment the owner of the watch, accompanied by Sam Walcott and a couple of Whitpool policemen, burst through the ring.

They saw Tom sitting astride his prisoner.

"I've got him, sir!" panted Tom, and a smile curved his lips. "I offered him a chance, if he'd return the watch, but he wouldn't, and so I had to hold him."

"Serve the scoundrel right!" cried the middle-aged man. "Serve him right! He'll get three months for this, and he deserves it! Constable, there's the man. I give him in charge!"

"All right!" growled the chagrined thief. "I'm done! I give in. But it is hard lines!"

Tom leapt to his feet. The policemen pounced on their prisoner.

And one of them feeling in the rascal's pockets, found not only the one gold watch, but several others in that precious metal, or in silver, there also.

"Which is yours, sir?" asked one of the bobbies.

"This one!" said the owner. "It's got my name inside it. 'Charles Williams.'"

"You'd better come along with me to the station, sir," said the policeman.

"I'll do that with pleasure," said the delighted seaside visitor, "and the boy will, of course, come too?"

"Certainly, sir!" said Tom.

And so they marched in a body along the streets, followed by an excited and curious crowd.

"Mah grashus, Mistah Belcher," said Sambo, eyeing Tom in blank amazement, "I never knew yoh could run like that. The pickpocket, he flew like the wind, and you flew—more so."

Tom merely smiled.

The 2nd Chapter.

Tom's Reward.

The following morning the pickpocket was brought up before the magistrate. He gave the name of George Jenkinson, and stated that he was a professional pedestrian.

Asked whether he pleaded guilty or not guilty, he hesitated, and then answered "Not guilty."

He'd no solicitor to represent him, and listened sullenly while the evidence was being given.

The owner of the watch, Charles Williams, told his story in simple and direct language.

The case against the prisoner was as clear as daylight, for the stolen watches were produced in court, and the owners of the other ones were present to identify them, and give their evidence too.

Tom Belcher was presently called upon to state what he knew about the case.

In the court were Ben Adams, the showman, Sam Walcott, Joe Clouette, Mrs. Adams, Jim Robinson, Bob Saunders, Sam Whittaker, and some of their friends.

They listened with all their ears, and as Tom told his story it became more and more evident that his capture of the prisoner had been something quite out of the ordinary.

The magistrate said as much.

At the conclusion of the evidence, he said:

"The case against the prisoner Jenkinson has been clearly made out. Now, Jenkinson, will you be summarily dealt with in this court, or shall I commit you?"

"I plead guilty, sir!" growled Jenkinson, fully realising that he had nothing to gain by having sentence deferred.

"Only I was hard up. When a man's starving he doesn't care what happens. I stole the watches for the sake of the money."

The magistrate asked whether there were any previous convictions against the prisoner. There were none that the authorities of that court knew of.

"Very well," said the magistrate. "Jenkinson, you are a rogue and a vagabond, and I sentence you to six months' hard labour!"

Jenkinson glared at him, and then shook his fist at Tom.

"I've got you to thank for this,

Tom Belcher!" he shouted. "And I'll get even with you when I come out, make up your mind about that!"

Tom paid no attention to him, but rejoined his friends.

Then the magistrate congratulated Mr. Williams upon the recovery of his watch.

"You have the lad Belcher to thank for it," he said. "He seems to have behaved most pluckily. And not the least remarkable thing about his capture of the prisoner was the way in which he ran him down. Jenkinson, it seems, is a professional pedestrian. He is the winner of many prizes. I think you are very lucky to have got your watch back. Mr. Williams, and Whitpool ought to congratulate itself upon being rid of a public pest."

The prisoner was then removed, and Charles Williams, once more in possession of his much-prized watch, left the court.

Outside the sun was shining, as it usually shone in Whitpool.

He saw Ben Adams and the group of boxers standing near, Tom Belcher amongst them. He went straight up to the boy, and thanked him most heartily.

"I never hope to see a more plucky act!" he cried. "And I shall be glad if you will accept this little gift as an earnest of my gratitude."

He pressed a sovereign into Tom's hand as he spoke.

"I don't want any money, sir!" protested Tom Belcher, and a flush suffused his cheeks.

"Never mind. Keep it," said Mr. Williams. "I dare say you can do with it!"

And then he stayed for some minutes talking to Ben Adams and the boys, asking them a hundred-and-one questions about themselves and their booth and their work.

When he left them he promised to come and see them perform.

"I have always had an aversion against boxing," he said. "But if all boxers act like you, the country ought to be proud of them. I see I shall have to alter my opinion."

And with a nod and a smile he walked away.

Tom returned to Ben and his comrades with a bright smile.

"The booth is doing very badly, Ben," he said. "We're not even paying expenses. But, at least, we'll have some wholesome grub to-day. Let's get along to the market, and lay in a store of supplies."

This they did, and there was precious little change left out of the sovereign when they had finished.

They had a real good tuck-in, though, all round, and Tom's health was drunk-in ginger-beer—most heartily that day.

"Bless you, Tom!" said Ben. "You're always coming to the rescue. Goodness knows what we'd do at times if we hadn't got you to rely upon. You're our mascot, there's no doubt about that!"

"All the same, Ben, said Tom, with a thoughtful frown and a shake of the head, "I almost wish that chap Jenkinson hadn't been sent to prison."

"Why, boy?"

"Because—well, he might have been hard up, as he said, and—"

"Hard up, be blowed!" said Ben, in disgust. "Don't you run away with that idea. Look at our boys. They're all hard up, ain't they? So'm I. So are you. But we don't go round Whitpool snatching watches and picking pockets."

"If he was hard up, as he said he was, or starving, he could have done some honest work, couldn't he? But he didn't want to. No, Jenkinson was a rascal, and stole for preference. So let him go; prison's the best place for a man like that."

The 3rd Chapter.

The Bank Holiday Handicap.

After Tom Belcher's gallant capture of the pickpocket Jenkinson, Ben and the boys hoped that business at the boxing-booth, which had found a pitch at Whitpool for the summer holidays, would improve.

But not a bit of it. The weather continued to be so brilliantly fine, and the merry-makers and holiday-makers who swarmed to the famous seaside resort patronised the theatres, the music-halls, the winter gardens, and the tower, or flocked to the magnificent dancing-saloons in shoals. If not that, they lounged about on the piers or along the front.

Pierrot troupes did big business. Everyone seemed to do wonderfully well, but Ben and the boys struck

a bad patch, and looked like keeping it to till the end of their stay.

"You'd think there were sufficient sportsmen and lovers of the game in Whitpool to keep one poor boxing-booth going!" growled Ben dejectedly, after a terrible night's business.

"But no, these holiday folk don't seem to want boxing—"

"Or else, guv'nor, they don't believe our show is genuine," observed surlily Joe Clouette.

"Maybe it's that, boys," said Ben. "But here we are, and here we've got to stay. I'm pledged to hold the pitch. I can't get out of it. And it looks like spelling ruin."

"It's not as bad as that, Mistah Adams," said Sam Walcott sympathetically.

"Isn't it, you black coon?" cried the dejected showman. "It is, take my word for it! I shall probably have to leave the old booth behind to pay the rent before we're through!"

Next day the business was as bad as ever. Even though Tom Belcher, the "boxing wonder," as Ben called him on the posters, set up on the front of the booth, had received a free and gratuitous advertisement over the Jenkinson exploit, nobody came.

There was nothing doing. The spirits of the boys were down at zero, much as they tried to disguise their feelings.

One afternoon, as Sam Walcott, Joe Clouette, and Tom Belcher were taking a walk round the town, they happened to pass the Belle Vue Grounds and Gardens.

And there on the big announcement-boards, set beside the entrance-gates, they saw a bill posted up, referring to a great athletic attraction for Bank Holiday.

PEDESTRIANISM!

Great £100 130 yards Handicap. Open to the World. First Prize, £60. Second Prize £20. Third Prize, £10. Ten Other Prizes of £1 each.

Great One Mile Handicap for £50. £35 First Prize, £10 Second, £5 Third.

Two Miles Walking Handicap for £20.

Prices of admission, 1s. Reserved enclosure, 2s. 6d. Grand stand, 5s.

Entries for various events can be made at Belle Vue Ground Offices. Forms can be obtained from Secretary when applied for. Competitors must give full and complete particulars on pain of disqualification.

The word PEDESTRIANISM, printed in huge black capitals, caught Sam Walcott's eye as he was passing, and he stopped at once.

"Look, Mistah Tom!" he cried.

"Isn't that sumfin in your line?"

Tom stopped, looked, and read. Joe did the same.

They then glanced at one another.

"Well, Tom," said Joe, "upon my word, it wouldn't be bad trying it, would it? I always knew you could move a bit, but I never dreamt you were such a flyer until you ran that fellow Jenkinson down. You should say the money prizes are quite genuine, seeing that they're being given by the Athletic Syndicate who's taken over the Belle Vue Grounds for this special occasion. And the distance ought to suit. What do you say to having a shy?"

Tom Belcher shook his head.

"It'd be no good, Joe," he answered. "You see, a man wants to be trained to the very minute to stand any chance in these affairs. Besides, I've never run in a race. I should be no good whatever."

"No good, be blowed, boy!" growled Joe Clouette. "I dare say you thought the same about your boxing until you entered a ring and tried. At any rate, I know George Jenkinson has won a few of these events in his time. He was reckoned to be the best man we'd got in England a year or so ago. And you ran him down!"

Tom Belcher was still unconvinced.

"It's no good, Joe!" he cried.

"You're talking rot! Let's get along!"

He would have walked away, but Joe caught him by the arm.

"No, you don't, my lad!" said he. "You're coming inside. You're going to fill in one of those forms. I don't know what the entry fee is, but I guess it won't be more than five bob. Come and see!"

He refused to take no for an

answer, and so Tom was hauled through the gates and taken to the offices.

He found the place deserted, save for a broad-shouldered, professional-looking man, who, smoking a cigar, sat rocking himself backwards on a stool.

The man had a face which was not to be trusted. Its expression of low cunning was an indication as to the character of the man.

However, Joe didn't bother about that.

"Is the secretary in?" he asked.

"I am the secretary," answered the man. "I'm Jim Atkinson."

"Is it you who is running the Bank Holiday handicaps?" asked Joe.

"The Athletic Syndicate is," answered the man. "Why?"

"My pal here," said Joe, pulling Tom Belcher forward, "wants to enter."

"Bah!" said Jim Atkinson, with a disparaging smile. "He'd never stand a chance. He's too small!"

"Small or not," returned Joe indignantly, "he can't move a bit. And it's a handicap, isn't it?"

"Sure! Has the kid ever run before?"

"No."

The man, who had picked up a bundle of entry-forms, tossed them back on the counter again.

"It's no ro, I tell yer," he cried. "I don't want any duffers in my handicap. We shall 'ave a critical crowd 'ere. And they like tight racing. It gives the betting-men a chance. I can't take him."

"There you are, Joe," said Tom, not without a feeling of relief, for he had no confidence in himself as a runner, in spite of his speed.

"Now, let's come along!"

"Half a mo," said Joe. "Now, looko here, mister, don't you reckon that George Jenkinson could move a bit?"

"George? Sure! He's the best lad I've ever had run in any of my handicaps."

"Well, Tom Belcher here has beaten him."

Atkinson's eyes nearly fell out of his head.

"What?" he almost screamed. Then he ran the rule over Tom again. "I don't believe it," he said. "It's not true."

"It is. You read about Jenkinson being sent to goal for picking pockets, the other day, didn't you?"

"I did. Poor Jack! That was his only failing. He never could let other people's property alone. And he'd quite a mania for sneakin' watches. I wasn't 'ere at the time, but I 'eard a bit of a boxing kid: ran him down."

Joe clapped his hand firmly on Tom's shoulder.

"This is the kid," he said.

The athletic promoter began to relent.

"You don't say?" he cried. "Well, in that case, the kid can have a run for his money if he likes. Now, then, what are the particulars?"

Tom Belcher gave in his name, his height, his weight.

He declared that he was a professional boxer. He stated that he was a novice, never having run in any race either as an amateur or a professional.

Tom had read it through to see that it was all correct. Joe handed over five shillings on Tom's behalf, and a minute later they had passed out of the office, Joe with the receipt for the money in his pocket.

"You'll receive notification of what handicap the committee have allotted you in due course, my lad," said Jim Atkinson, as they passed the office door. "But being a novice makes your task all the harder. The committee always take care of a lad until they find out what he can do. You might get ten yards, or you might not; I can't say. Anyway, you'll 'ear."

"There, that's done with, Tom," said Joe Clouette, as they made a round of the town and headed for the front. "You're entered for the One Hundred Pounds Bank Holiday Handicap, and you might win it, perhaps. You never know your luck."

"Don't talk rubbish, Joe!" said Tom. "I don't think a ghost of a chance."

"Perhaps not. Anyway, I fancied entering you. And even if you only win your heat, me and the boys will have an opportunity of making a bit on you, for you'll win your heat, anyway."

"I don't think I could win anything," Tom replied; "but I'll do my best. I'll buy a pair of spiked shoes to-morrow, and I'll start training on the road in the morning, for the least I can do is to try."

Joe nodded and grinned. He was

A HOLIDAY SCOOP!

(Continued from the previous page.)

satisfied. A trier is always worth backing, for he's bound to get there some day.

Tom Belcher was as good as his word. He and the other boys began to practise starts and to sprint upon the level roads of Whitpool the very next morning. The time for training was limited, and Ben Adams, who was experienced in all that sort of work, advised moderation.

"We must get you into the knack of rising swiftly from your holes, boy," said he, "and getting quickly into your stride. We can't do much more. And as you're a born natural runner, with a good style, maybe you'll give some of 'em a run for their money. And at the worst, Joe will only lose his five bob."

Two days passed, and they a post-card came. It bore the signature of Jim Atkinson, secretary of the Athletic Syndicate, and it conveyed the following information:

"The committee of the above syndicate beg to inform Mr. Tom Belcher—the name was written, the rest of the matter printed—"that he has been allotted a handicap of 10½ yards, the handicap having been framed as from Donaldson, world's champion."

Tom made a grimace. "Only ten and a half yards from Donaldson!" he cried. "I don't stand a dog's chance!"

But it made no difference to his earnestness. He went to work as if he were going to win that handicap outright.

And the other boys, taking to running in earnest too, tried their paces against him.

To the astonishment of everybody, Tom Belcher left them standing still. In every trial they ran he won with ease, and Ben Adams began to feel quite excited.

"My word, Tom!" he cried. "I never knew you could move like that! Joe Clouette wasn't such a mug after all when he sported that five bob and entered you for the Bank Holiday Handicap!"

Bank Holiday came, and with it a closing of the boxing-booth till night-fall. That was really no deprivation to Ben or the boys, for the public showed not the slightest disposition to patronise the boxing show.

Overhead blazed the glorious sun—the sun which had knocked the bottom clean out of the boxing business.

The crowds flocked to the front, or to the Winter Gardens, or to the Tower. They filled the pleasure-boats and crowded the piers. The hotels, restaurants, public-houses, and shops did a roaring trade.

It was reckoned that 150,000 excursionists entered the town that day. And as the afternoon wore on great crowds flocked to the entrances of the Belle Vue Grounds, and paid their money at the turnstiles.

The stand filled up, the enclosure was soon packed, and round the ground the thousands congregated.

Jim Atkinson, the promoter of the venture, chuckled with delight as he watched them and raked in the cash. He had run these handicaps in various parts of the country—in the Midlands and the North—for years, but never had he exploited a Bank Holiday show which had been so flattered by the weather as this.

He didn't care a rap who won the race now, for it wasn't necessary for him to "cook" any of the heats for the sake of making a bit out of the betting.

He left the runners and their trainers and backers to do that, if they chose. He, for once in his life determined to remain honest.

There was a band within the ground, and this blazed away at their brass instruments until the air cracked.

At three o'clock, the time set for the commencement of the proceedings, the walkers turned out for the two miles' race, and amidst considerable excitement the professors waddled round the cinder-track, all jerks and wriggles, with hands and elbows flying and faces distorted, what time the huge crowd yelled.

There was a fair amount of betting, but the scratch man, an ex-amateur, and a real good walker, was generally believed to be capable of pulling off the event, and so it proved.

He broke the worsted twenty yards from the second man, and the crowd

was put in a good humour for the heats of the 130 yards race, which immediately followed.

Tom Belcher arrived at the ground at two o'clock. He'd eaten an early lunch, and was ready to race even at that hour.

He went to the dressing-room, left his bag there, then put on his spiked shoes, knickers, and vest, and went out to try the track.

He found this firm to the tread, level, and well tended and rolled. He felt free of limb.

He liked the feel of the track beneath his spiked shoes, and surprised himself even by the pace he managed to develop.

After his spin he went back to the dressing-room, slipped on an over-

coat, and then went out to see the walkers disport themselves.

Then back to the crowded dressing-room he made his way again. He found it filled with a clamorous, shouting, laughing collection of professional runners. Some of them looked rather fine-drawn. Some were in the pink of condition. All believed that they were going to win.

Tom Belcher kept himself in the background, and being a little fellow, nobody took any notice of him.

His number was 33, and he was down to run in heat 7.

He'd not the slightest idea who he was to meet, and even if the names of the runners had been mentioned, he would have been none the wiser.

Jack Kellerway was on the virtual scratch mark, 2½ yards, and from the awed way in which the other runners referred to him, Tom reckoned he would win the big event.

Others who were fancied were a man named Green and another named Rosser. There were others, too, of course, but Tom didn't hear anything about them.

After the whip had been round to

call them out, and as the bell rang violently, Tom left the dressing-room with the others.

He made his way across the well-out grass plot in the middle of the circular track to the broad 150 yards straight, over which the 130 yards handicap was to be run.

There were the strings, nicely set out, with runs for six competitors at a time.

The first heat was run in good time, and a bunch of runners seemed to break the tape simultaneously. However, the judges managed to separate them, and the winner's number evoked a cheer when it was set up, for he had been much fancied and well backed.

Then came the other heats, none of which was remarkable save the fifth, when Kellerway managed to land the race from the back mark amidst a storm of cheering.

The time, 13 4-5th seconds, wasn't bad.

Tom watched the favourite run with critical eyes, and was greatly impressed with the ease with which he disposed of his opponents.

The boy strained at his holes. Every nerve and sinew was tense. He clenched his teeth. His eyes were fixed on the tape which looked ever so far away.

"They're off!"

Tom was up quickly, but with a rush another runner came by. Tom conjured up his best speed. He flung himself along the track. His feet literally flew over the splendid surface.

He'd eyes for nobody. He simply pounded right ahead. He heard a roar. It sounded very much like a roar of consternation.

"Belcher wins! Belcher wins!"

"No! Caxton! Caxton!"

The tape was close at hand. Tom threw up his arms, and then turned out to the grass with the worsted entwined about him.

He was panting and excited. He didn't know whether he'd won or lost. His eyes turned towards the number-board. There was a pause, and then the square was set in its place and the board raised so that all could see.

Number 33! He'd won!



Tom Belcher and his opponent circled round each other, hitting out and stopping in approved fashion. "You'll not run in the final to-day," said Caxton. "I'm going to smash you!"

And then came heat seven. Here was Tom's chance.

Tom had Ben Adams and all the boys to help him. They were as excited as they well could be. As Tom went to his mark he could hear the bookies yelling:

"Two to one, Caxton! Three to one, Cawdry! Four to one, Brown and Jarvis! Ten to one, Belcher!"

Tom smiled as he dug some holes from which to start in the surface of the track.

"They don't seem to fancy me, Ben," he remarked.

"Fancy or not," answered Ben Adams, "the boys and I have all backed you."

The runners took a long time setting. Caxton, the favourite, who had 12 yards, was so eager to make a move that he twice left his holes before a start could be made, and was penalised, much to his chagrin.

At last Tom Belcher heard the "Get ready!" of the starter, and from the steadiness of the other runners he knew that this time business only was meant. There would be no beating the pistol.

And now up went the time.

And now up went the time.

Tom could hardly believe his eyes, and the next moment Ben had got his arms around him.

"Bravo, Tom boy!" said the delighted showman. "We've won! We've won! And yours is the fastest run heat so far. My dear boy, didn't you fly along! Repeat that form in the final, and the race is yours!"

Tom struggled with Ben's arms with a laugh of joy.

"Oh, no!" he said.

Just then Jim Atkinson, the promoter, came up.

"Boy," he said, "I apologise for saying you couldn't run. For a midget, you're a marvel! And you've been chucked in by the handicappers. You'll make old Kellerway go, I tell you!"

But there was no trace of malice in his remarks.

But there was in those of Caxton, whom Tom had beaten. That runner, who had backed himself heavily for the heat, glared at Tom as if he could eat him.

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yourself!" he cried. "Call yourself a novice? For two pins I'd set about you!"

Tom faced the fellow defiantly. "It wouldn't be well for you if you did," he retorted, "for I can fight as well as run!"

Caxton glowered at Tom, muttered an oath, and walked away.

The 4th Chapter. Lamed.

Ben Adams's boys were now all agog to see how Tom Belcher would shape in the second round. He had run the fastest heat. He had shown stirring form, and he had disposed of the much-fancied Caxton. And there was no reason for them to fear that the lad would fail very badly, even if he were pitted against Kellerway himself.

He had his start to help him through. And he could run. His turn up with Jenkinson, accidental though it had been, looked like bearing fruit.

Tom took things easily after his first race, and Ben Adams, full of admiration and enthusiasm for the plucky lad, massaged his limbs, and did his best to help the boy.

Tom kept to his dressing-room until it was time for the second round heats to be run, and then out he went, and with his heart beating fast, awaited his turn.

He was drawn to run in the second heat of this round, and had the second berth from the grass edge.

The runners were all of fairly good class in this race, but he missed being drawn against Kellerway, or Green, or Rosser, whose chances were fancied more than any of the others.

Tom Belcher took his place on the cinder-track, and made his holes somewhat nervously. He was strung up, anxious. He knew that he would have to run his very best, and he doubted whether he could repeat his first effort.

Caxton came along to jeer. "You'll finish last!" said the ill-natured fellow. "You don't stand a ghost of a chance, Belcher! And if you win, look out!"

Tom took no notice of his enemy. He talked to his chums until told to get ready by the official starter. Then he heard the bookmakers calling the odds.

"Evens, Turdock! Two to one, Belcher! Three to one, Hargreaves! Ten to one, Howles and Smith!"

It didn't seem as if they despised the diminutive pedestrian, at any rate, and as he heard them shouting Caxton's face clouded.

"Set!" cried the starter, and his eagle eyes were bent on the runners as they crouched on hands and knees. The word was followed by the bang of the pistol, and the athletes rose from their holes as if strung together.

Tom leapt into his stride in a twinkling. He dashed along the cinder-path on his toes, his eyes fixed ahead. He'd filled his lungs before starting, and literally hurled himself along. From behind came the fast-pitter-patter of the others' shoes.

He paid no heed; or, if he did, subconsciously increased his effort.

And then, after what seemed an age, his breast broke the worsted, and he turned on to the grass, with the soft stuff clinging to him.

A yell went up from the crowd. Many of them had won money on him. No. 33 went up again. And, as before, Tom had done even time. Good boy!

Kellerway and Green were standing near the finishing-post.

Kellerway had won his heat in the second round. Green was going in the last of the series. They'd stayed to see this race run, and both, though they did not say so, were impressed by the style and speed of the little novice.

Kellerway gave the boy a bright nod.

"Well run, my lad!" said he. "Then up rushed Ben. His face was ablaze. His eyes fairly danced.

"You're in the final, at any rate, boy!" he cried. Bravo—bravo!"

He put his arm round Tom's shoulder and led him away.

"What a kid you are!" said he. "You're a prize, Tom, boy! I've never known your equal, and I feel sure, barring accidents, that you'll get a place, even if you don't win. For you've done a fifth better time than Kellerway, so far."

"He's not been going all out, maybe," observed Tom Belcher.

"H'm! He won by a clear yard, looking round, last heat," admitted Ben. "But the time was poor—two-fifths longer than you took, boy. Can you find a bit more running for the final?"

"I'm afraid not, Ben," said Tom, with a shake of the head.

A HOLIDAY SCOOP!

(Continued from the previous page.)

"Well, no matter. We've all backed you both heats, Tom, and so we're a lot in," cried Ben, and he gave vent to a chuckle of keen delight. He already saw visions of better times than they'd experienced so far at Whitpool.

And then Caxton stood before them. "Here," said the angry runner, who'd not recovered from his chagrin at being beaten, "I've protested against your entry, Belcher, to Mr. Atkinson, so even if you get a place, I reckon you'll be disqualified. You filled up your entry-form falsely, I'll swear! You're no novice! You're a dirty fraud! That's what you are!" Tom wriggled out of Ben's arms. His face blazed. This man angered him.

"You've no right to say that!" he said. "I told the truth! I made no false entry! It's a pity you can't take your beating like a sportsman!" Caxton grinned. It was a malicious grin at that.

"P'raps I can't," he cried. "But it ain't only that. I owe you one for sending Jenkinson to goal. He was a pal of mine."

Tom Belcher smiled sarcastically. "Oh," said he, "I'd do you 'pick pockets in your spare time, too?" "Perhaps he ought not to have said it, but he couldn't help himself. The words were out before he could check them. And Caxton deserved them, too."

However, the fellow made them an excuse for attacking Tom. He rapped out an oath, leapt at the boy, and before Tom was even prepared to defend himself, he'd sent left and right hard home on the migrant's dial.

That was more than flesh and blood could stand. Tom fought back instantly. The two of them circled round each other, hitting and stopping in approved fashion, whilst the officials stared, and the crowd yelled.

"You'll not run in the final to-day," said Caxton, with a fierce glare. "I'm going to smash you!"

"Come away, Tom, boy!" cried Ben Adams, trying in vain to part them. "Don't ruin your chance in the Hundred-pound Handicap!"

But Tom Belcher wasn't thinking of that. He was bent on giving his enemy as good as he gave. Caxton soon discovered that he'd caught a tartar. Lithe and active though he was, he found Tom much too quick for him. And the clever little boxer dashed his left again and again into Caxton's face without reply, until the fast recurring blows painted the professional runner's dial red.

Then Caxton, with a roar, closed with Tom, entwined his arms around him, lifted him bodily, and dashed him to the turf.

Tom fell heavily, but luckily the grass was soft and his body light.

But even so, the breath was shaken out of him for a moment, and he lay there a little, too dazed to rise.

Caxton saw his chance. He meant to cripple the boy, whose running had been the revelation and surprise of the Belle Vue Bank Holiday Meeting.

"Take that!" he cried, as he kicked at the prostrate youngster. "It's a bit on account for Jenkinson and me!"

The kick was aimed at Tom's body; but Tom, seeing that the racial meant mischief, half turned, and received the full force of it on the calf of his left leg.

Caxton hadn't removed his spiked shoes. The spikes penetrated the white flesh, and blood showed instantly.

Tom uttered a cry of agony, and then, as the officials came running up, Ben Adams set about the coward.

"You villain!" said the old showman, trembling with just anger, and before he knew where he was Caxton found himself being hit all over the grass by Ben's doughy fists.

He tried to ward off the blows, but the old boxer was too much for him.

Ben hit him with straight lefts, with hooks and jabs, and hammered him about the face and body, completing his work with a magnificently-timed upper-cut on the jaw, the runner tried to wrestle with him, that stretched Tom's enemy on his back on the grass.

Then up came Atkinson.

"Ere," he cried, "what's all the row about? I can't ave this, you know! This is a running-ground, not a prize-ring!"

"He set on Tom Belcher! He kicked him! He's lamed the boy!" cried Ben, hardly able to speak owing to the indignation which consumed him. "It's not playing the game!"

"Lamed the plucky lad, has he?" growled the sports promoter. "Here, let's have a look at that leg, boy!"

Tom had got up, breathing hard. He showed the injured limb. Atkinson shook his head dubiously. "It looks pretty bad," he remarked as Tom limped painfully, "and it means good-bye to your chance in the final. I'm sorry, kid, for you put up a plucky show. But Caxton's going outside."

Caxton had risen, bruised and bleeding from the ground. He looked sorry for himself, but there were none who had any compassion for him. Atkinson beckoned to some of the ground's men.

"Here, chuck that chap outside!" he cried.

In vain did Caxton threaten, and protest. The men seized him and hustled him off the track towards the gates. Policemen came to take charge of him. He asked to be allowed to go and fetch his clothes, but they wouldn't listen to him, and so he was put outside the enclosure just as he stood in his running-things.

And Ben took poor Tom to the dressing-rooms. Tom was feeling very blue. His leg ached tremendously. The muscles were bruised, and he felt that it was all up with his chance now.

Sam Walcott hardly knew how to hide his grief. "Oh, Mistah Tom," he cried, "it's too bad—it's too bad! And jess when we were counting on your winning the Hundred-pound Handicap! It's a shame! My word, wouldn't I like to have a go at that Caxton fellow!"

"I have had a go at him, Sambo," said Ben, with a grimace. "I don't think he wants any more." And then he set to work with hot water and some rag to try and ease the pain Tom suffered.

The next heat was now run, and Rosser scored cleverly right on the tape.

Then there was an interval, during which the bookmakers and backers got busy over Green's heat.

Green was a powerfully-built and wonderfully strong sprinter. He'd won more than one handicap. He was a runner with a big, raking stride, and was much feared. The crowd backed him to a man for his heat, and Green justified their confidence in him by winning by a clear yard with apparent ease, from five and a half yards, in thirteen seconds dead.

A mighty cheer greeted his victory. It was reckoned that he would win the handicap now. He'd done as fast time as Tom Belcher; but Belcher, much fancied until the crowd saw Caxton attack him and kick him, had been lamed, and some of the knowing ones declared that he would not even start in the final.

Bookmakers reflected the general opinion by offering to lay six to one, whereas immediately after Tom had won his second heat he was at as short a price as three.

Green, having won his heat, put on a coat, and walked off to the dressing-room.

At once made his way to the locker on which Tom was sitting.

"How are you feeling, boy?" he asked, in a breezy, natural voice, accompanied by a nod and a smile, which showed that the inquiry was dictated by sheer good nature. "I hope that brute didn't hurt you?"

"I'm afraid he did," answered Tom, smiling ruefully. "My leg's beginning to swell."

Green looked at it. "Well, that's sheer hard luck, boy," he said; "for, to tell you the truth, I was beginning to feel honestly afraid of you."

Ben Adams now rubbed some embrocation into the muscles, kneading and chafing them to reduce the swelling and relieve the pain.

"We'll manage to patch you up somehow, boy," he cried. "But I'm afraid you stand no chance of winning now!"

"Are you going to let him run?" inquired Green, in a tone of surprise, whilst Kellaway and Rosser joined the group of athletes who formed a ring round Tom.

"It's for Tom to decide," said Ben,

looking thoughtfully into young Belcher's face.

"Of course I'm going to run, Ben," answered Tom. "I'll never dream of backing out. And perhaps I shall be all right. You never know!"

Ben sighed, and went on with his work. "At any rate, Tom," he said, "if grit and pluck could pull you through you'd win all right enough, and you've got plenty of that!"

The bell now rang the runners out for the mile race. There were swarms of them—literally swarms. It took some minutes to arrange them on their marks, and verify their numbers and their starts by the programme.

Tom didn't go out to see the race. He preferred to remain resting in the dressing-room until the call came for him to turn out for the final of the big £100 Handicap, which was to be run late in the day.

Up to the time of his injury he'd been as serious as a judge. Now he suddenly became light-hearted, probably because he wanted to prevent his thoughts from dwelling on the possibility of failure.

Ben, who understood, humoured him, and to hear Tom laugh and talk one would have imagined that there was nothing the matter with him.

After a lapse of some minutes the panting runners who'd taken part in the mile race came back into the dressing-room.

Most of them looked disappointed. The prize-winners were outside receiving the congratulations of their pals.

Then followed another interval, which was finally put an end to by the loud ringing of a bell, the summons for the runners in the final of the One Hundred Pounds' sprint to make their way on to the track.

Tom got up then. On putting his foot to the ground he winced, and a spasm of pain flashed across his pale, earnest face.

As he moved across the dressing-room floor he limped, in spite of himself.

"Oh, Ben," he cried, "I wish I could meet that brute Caxton, and fight him to a finish! I'd pay him out for this!"

Ben plucked him by the arm. "Perhaps you'd better not urn out, boy," said he.

"Oh, yes, I'm going to run, if it kills me, Ben!" answered Tom, forcing a smile. "But I reckon I stand no chance now!"

The 5th Chapter. A Rousing Final.

As the runners turned out, the crowd gave them a rousing cheer. Their numbers were up on the board, with the exception of Tom's. Evidently the official in charge of the board had made up his mind that Tom wouldn't run.

On seeing the little fellow emerge on to the track, however, he put up No. 35.

A roar of excited comment greeted Tom's appearance.

"Bravo, Belcher!" shouted some of those who had backed him from the start.

It was something, they reckoned, for them to be given even a sporting chance, in view of what had happened.

Tom turned along the track, and ran some thirty yards or so to see how his leg would stand it. He was conscious of an exquisite pain, and he ran as lame as an old duck.

The bookmakers noticed this, and roared:

"Evens Kellaway and Green, two to one Rosser, three to one Bailey, four to one Forbes, ten to one Belcher!"

Tom was now reckoned to be an outsider, and, indeed, to look at him as he limped painfully down to the starting-post it looked like one hundred to one against him.

The preliminaries took some time. Kellaway and the others wanted to case and stretch their legs, to loosen their muscles, and even when they went to their marks, much precious time was cut to waste in drawing for positions, and preparing the holes in the track.

Tom, who was feeling pretty miserable hereabouts, hardly knew what to do.

He didn't like to run any more, and yet he felt that he ought to try and loosen the limb if he could. The muscles felt so painful, so stiff and cramped.

He finally decided to do nothing, but to run the race without further preliminaries.

He drew the berth next the rails.

As he made his holes the crowd called out sympathetically to him.

"Hard luck, Belcher lad!" they said.

Most of the betting was on Green and Kellaway, with Rosser much fancied for a place. It was odds on the first two in this respect.

At last everything was in readiness for the big struggle. "Get ready!" said the starter, as he examined the percussion-cap on his pistol.

Tom went down on his hands and his left knee.

"Set!" said the starter. The runners, with every muscle strained, their bodies nicely poised, prepared for the start.

In their effort to get a run on the gun, Rosser, Green, and Kellaway went flying away once, only to be called back. They returned to their places smiling. All the bets had been made, and the excited crowd watched the men with bated breath.

Tom Belcher was as steady as a rock in his holes, but his leg pained him worse than ever.

At last, a favourable moment having come, the starter fired the pistol, and at the sound of the report the runners went flying along between the strings.

Tom Belcher, to the surprise of most of the onlookers, was almost first away. He gained almost a full yard thereby. And now that the moment of the actual race had come he seemed to shed his lameness, and to speed along as if there were nothing whatever the matter with him.

He'd got a good start, and for quite fifty yards none of the others seemed to make any impression on him.

At eighty yards Kellaway, Green, and Rosser were in a bunch, as level as level could be. Bailey and Forbes had already been passed, and Tom was now only a strido ahead.

He half-turned his head, a thing no sprint runner ought ever to do, and in that fatal moment the champion reared up alongside him.

"Kellaway wins! Kellaway wins!" Kellaway for a hundred pounds!" came in a mighty yell from all sides, and the race seemed over.

Then a demon seemed to take possession of little Tom.

The boy hated being beaten, though he was good sportsman enough to accept defeat with a good grace if it came to him justly and naturally.

He set his teeth hard, and, forgetting everything but the tape, flung himself along. His twinkling toes spurred the cinders, and the pair paced along the track as if locked together.

Tom felt his head swim, his brain reel; his heart seemed about to burst. The tape was close at hand. He hurried himself at it; it broke, and then—well, he just pulled up in a few strides, and limped painfully on to the grass, hardly knowing what had happened.

He couldn't have told you if he'd won or lost, or finished third, or anything. He heard the crowd cheering. Somebody came up and slapped him on the shoulder. He heard Ben saying something. He felt black-faced Sam Walcott seize him by the hand.

Then he was pulled along the grass. Everything was blurred before his eyes, and it was some time before his eyes cleared.

Then he saw the number-board in front of him, with his number—35—at the top, Kellaway's next it, and Green's below that.

"What—what's it mean, Ben?" gasped the bewildered boy.

"Mean? Mean? Mean?" shouted Ben, dancing a hornpipe. "Why, you young rascal, you've won! It was a close race. There was only six inches between you and Kellaway, but you managed to land it!"

And then Tom looked at the time. He'd won the 130 yards £100 Handicap from 10½ yards in 12 4-5ths seconds.

They were good sportsmen, those pros, for, despite the bitterness of defeat—and it meant a lot to them—they all came up and congratulated the remarkable boy who'd beaten them.

And even Jim Atkinson, when he gave Tom the first prize money, seemed pleased.

And so, with sixty pounds in his pocket, Tom left the ground with Ben and the boys.

And, strange to relate—good fortune, like misfortune, never comes singly—there was a big crowd at the boxing-booth that night.

Maybe the public came along to see whether Tom Belcher could box as well as he could run.

THE END.

TALES TO TELL.

Our weekly prize-winning. Look out for YOUR winners storyette.

TIME FLIES.

They were two blacksmiths, and yet they were not like ordinary blacksmiths. They both stuttered, and, as if this was not sufficient affliction in itself, one of them suffered from defective hearing.

"N-n-now, J-J-Joe," stuttered the first blacksmith—he who could hear properly—"str-str-strike t-t-the sh-sh-shoe qu-u-u-ick!"

"W-w-what d-d-did y-y-you s-s-s-say?" stammered the deaf one.

"I-I-I s-s-said str-strike t-t-the sh-sh-shoe qu-u-u-ick!"

"Oh! W-w-w-where sh-sh-shall I-I-I str-strike i-i-it?"

The first blacksmith allowed the shoe to drop to the floor.

"N-n-never m-m-mind!" he jerked out. "I-I-I't's c-c-c-old n-n-now!"—(Sent in by S. Clark, Eastleigh.)

WELL, WHAT OF IT?

First Comedian: "Have you heard the story of the three holes in the ground, Cholly, old chap?"

Second Comedian: "No, old fellow."

First Comedian: "Well, well, well!"

Second Comedian: "Oh! Well, have you heard the story of the dirty window?"

First Comedian: "No. What is it?"

Second Comedian: "Oh, I won't tell you, because you can't see through it."—(Sent in by G. Adams, Purton.)

SHORT, YET LONG.

"It says here that the longest sentence in the English language contains one hundred and forty words," said the man who sat in the corner of the railway-carriage, looking up from his book.

"That's wrong," replied his companion. "The longest sentence contains one word."

"What is that?" inquired the cornerman.

"Life," came the reply quickly.—(Sent in by J. E. Halford, Ayr.)

A POOR MEAL.

Medical Officer: "I'm sorry, my man, but I must reject you on account of your teeth."

Would-be Recruit: "Sure, sir, you're making a great mistake. I'm no wanting to eat the Germans; I want to shoot 'em!"—(Sent in by A. Barrow, Blackpool.)

GERMAN FRIGHTFULNESS.

General von Kluck (to officer): "I want twenty thousand Uhlands as quickly as possible."

Officer: "You shall have them."

Officer (two days later): "I have got the twenty thousand Uhlands, but they are half an hour's march from here."

General von Kluck: "Donner and Blitzen! Why don't you bring them forward?"

Officer: "Well, you see, there are two Dublin Fusiliers hiding round the corner, and they won't let us pass."—(Sent in by A. Dale, Liverpool.)

NOT HAVING ANY.

An Irishman went into a post-office and handed to the clerk in charge a telegram addressed to a friend of his who lived in a remote part of the country.

"The charge will be one-and-six-pence," said the clerk.

"How do you make that?" inquired Pat.

"Sixpence for the wire, and a shilling for portage and delivery outside the radius," explained the clerk.

"Then he hanged to ye!" roared the son of Erin. "You send the telegram, and I'll write and ask me friend to fetch it."—(Sent in by N. McGregor, Stirling.)

MONEY PRIZES OFFERED!

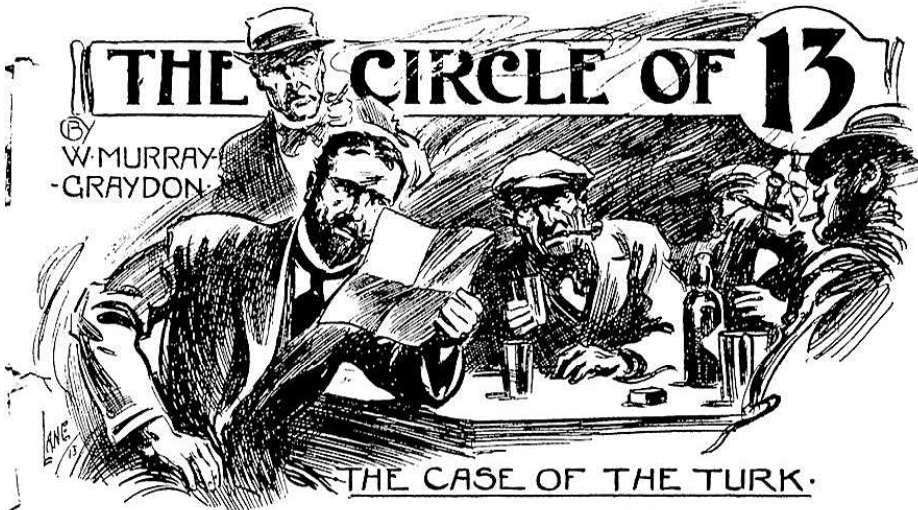
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GREAT NEW STORY OF HARVEY KEENE, DETECTIVE.

THE CIRCLE OF 13

BY
W. MURRAY
GRAYDON



THE CASE OF THE TURK.

PART I.

HARVEY KEENE, the prince of investigators, goes with INSPECTOR DRAKE to the Hotel Orient, and there finds the murdered body of a man, whom the proprietor states to be an Italian. Keene, however, informs him that he is a Turk, and proves that the man who committed the crime desired to obtain some papers which were in the Turk's room.

Keene is unable, however, to lay hands on the murderer, but he has a faint clue. He sends his assistant, OLIVER, to find the chauffeur who drove this Turk to the hotel. Oliver is successful in this, and when Keene asks that the chauffeur picked the Turk up outside the War Office in Whitehall, he tells the lad that he orders to go at once to the War

Office. He gets into a taxi-cab, but when he is nearing Trafalgar Square, his chauffeur collapses, and pitches headlong into the street. The cab swerves to one side, and crashes into the thick of the traffic.

PART II.

The 1st Chapter.

Clearing up the Mystery.

As by a miracle, Harvey Keene was saved from death. The taxi-cab, no longer under control, smashed its way into the tide of traffic, and came to an abrupt halt. The detective was pitched from the seat before he had time to realise what had happened, and when he awoke to a sense of the position, as it were, shouts of men and the screams of women were ringing in his ears, blended with a clatter of hoofs. A hansom had been overturned. A wheel had been torn off a dray, and a motor-bus had been damaged. These vehicles, and the one that had crashed into them, were entangled with the others.

Strangely enough, however, nobody had been really hurt. Keene had been severely shaken, and had sustained one or two trifling bruises. The recoil had flung him back on the seat, and he was imprisoned in the wrecked cab, shut in by a bristling network of splintered wood and glass.

In the space of a few seconds, after he had collected his confused wits, a shrewd suspicion flashed to his mind. He was certain that another attempt on his life had been made by the Circle of 13, and it naturally occurred to him that the object had been to prevent him from going to the War Office. Be that as it might, he could not doubt that he had been followed from Prince's Street, by one of the gang. Quickly he thought of these things, and as quickly he foresaw what it would be wise to do under the circumstances.

"I must let that scoundrel believe that his attempt has succeeded," he said to himself. "It may be greatly to my advantage."

Two hands were pulling at the battered cab. A gap was made in the debris, and the familiar face of a constable appeared.

"Mr. Keene!" he exclaimed, in surprise and consternation.

"Hallo, Martin!" the detective calmly replied. "You are just the man I want."

"I hope you aren't injured, sir?" "No; not at all. I wish it to be supposed, though, that I have been badly hurt. You must have me carried off to Charing Cross Hospital. Do you understand?"

"I am not sure that I do, sir," said the constable. "If you have not been hurt—"

"Somebody tried to kill me," Keene interrupted, "and I want to deceive him. Did you see what happened?"

"I saw your driver fall from the seat, and I thought that he had been taken suddenly ill."

"Possibly he was, but I am pretty certain that he was shot from another cab. And probably with an air-pistol, for I did not hear any report. Where is the man?"

"He is lying yonder, by the refuge. I don't know if he is dead or not."

"Ascertain for me, and come back at once."

Constable Martin hurried away, and returned in less than a minute, looking very grave.

"You were quite right," he declared. "Your chauffeur was fired at and hit. But the bullet only grazed his skull, and he wasn't injured by the fall. He has pulled round already."

"I am glad of that," Keene replied. "Did he see the scoundrel who shot at him?"

"He did not, sir, nor did anybody else. I have made inquiries."

"Very well, Martin. Let the matter drop. And now do what I have told you. I will do the rest."

A large crowd had gathered, and the excitement had increased. Constable Martin promptly sent for an ambulance, and then, assisted by two other constables, he set to work at the damaged taxi-cab. It was a slow and difficult task. The door was finally wrenched open, and Harvey Keene, feigning unconsciousness, was gently lifted out. He was placed in the ambulance, which had meanwhile arrived. And with closed eyes, to all appearances a corpse, he was trundled off from the scene of the accident.

He was careful not to show any sign of life, since it was to be presumed that the man who had tried to murder him was in the throng of curious spectators through which he was wheeled.

"I must play a wary game," he reflected. "I may be wrong in regard to the motive for the attempt. Very likely I am. But I don't doubt that the man who fired the shot was a member of the Circle of Thirteen, and if he desired to prevent me from visiting the War Office, it means that it was one of the gang who strangled the Turk. I wonder if I am going to get on their track again?"

It was a short distance to the Charing Cross Hospital. Keene was carried into the big building off the Strand, and ten minutes later, after he had explained the situation to the house-surgeon, he departed by the exit at the top of Chandos Street.

He was none the worse for his rough experience. He slipped into a cab at the corner of St. Martin's Lane, and drove to Whitehall. He boldly entered the War Office, judging that he was not under observa-

tion; and, after a brief delay, he was conducted upstairs, and ushered into a private room.

He had inquired for Lord Francis Verne, the chief. But his lordship was absent, and the person who received Keene was his secretary, Sir Miles Trentham. He was acquainted with the detective. He greeted him cordially, and bade him sit down.

"What can I do for you?" he said. "It is something important, I imagine, that has brought you here."

"It is," Harvey Keene replied. "I have come for information which I think you can give to me. A brutal

interview with him, Mr. Keene. You are quite right. He is a Turk, not an Italian. His name is Hadji Nessim, and he held the rank of major in the Turkish Army."

"Can you throw any light on the crime?" asked Keene.

"None whatever," the secretary answered. "It is a mystery to me."

"But you can supply the motive, I am sure. The murderer made a thorough search of his victim's bed-chamber, and it is my belief that he was looking for papers of some kind, which he may or may not have found. Am I right?"

Sir Miles Trentham hesitated. He leaned back in his chair, with knitted brows, and stroked his blonde moustache.

"I will confide in you," he said. "It will be under pledge of secrecy, of course. This Hadji Nessim has turned traitor to his country for the sake of gold. Tempted by an opportunity that chance threw in his way, he stole certain documents, and fled with them from Constantinople. He arrived in London last evening in the guise of an Italian, and came straight to the War Office to dispose of the papers."

"What is the nature of them?" Harvey Keene inquired.

"They are most valuable from a military point of view," replied the secretary. "They show the sight of every gun, every fortification, with which the Turks have prepared to resist our advance in the Dardanelles."

"Ah, they are indeed of the greatest value! But can you depend on their accuracy?"

"I am sure that I can. That was my opinion as soon as I had glanced at them. They will enable the expeditionary force to get through to Constantinople."

"You kept them in your possession, Sir Miles?"

"Yes, the man wished me to do so. He did not name any price, but he intimated that he wanted a large sum.

he had come to London with the documents." "Yes, there can be no doubt of that."

"He must have been followed from Constantinople."

"Possibly I have a different theory, though."

"What is it?"

"I think that a message relating to the papers was by some means sent to London, Sir Miles."

"Then the assassin is probably a Turk."

Harvey Keene shook his head. He was silent for a short interval, pondering what he had learned. Knowing as he did that the Circle of 13 had channels through which they obtained information from all parts of Europe, he now strongly believed that one of the gang had committed the murder. And he was also inclined to believe, as he had at first suspected, that the attempt on his life had been made to prevent him from visiting the War Office. But why? What reason could the band of criminals have had for being afraid of him? The question puzzled him. He could not find a satisfactory answer to it.

"I am glad you have given me your confidence," he said. "You have to a great extent cleared up the mystery. But I have no clue that is of any value. The murderer's object has been frustrated, and very fortunately. I see little or no chance of getting on his track, however, unless he should try to—"

The detective paused, interrupted by a rap at the door. A clerk entered, and handed a card to Sir Miles Trentham, who glanced at it, and looked in bewilderment at Keene. "By heavens, you are wrong!" he exclaimed.

"Wrong!" Harvey Keene echoed.

"What do you mean?"

"It could not have been Hadji Nessim who was murdered at the Hotel Orient."

"Why not?"

"Because he has just arrived. This



A hand was dropped on Charles Mole's shoulders. He swung round with a start, and looked into the faces of Harvey Keene, Inspector Ruyter, and two Dutch policemen.

murder was committed last night at the Hotel Orient, in Greek Street. A Turk, who represented himself as being an Italian of the name of Torino, was strangled in his bed-chamber. The assassin, who occupied an adjoining room, disappeared after the crime, and nothing is known of him."

"By heavens, what a terrible thing!" exclaimed Sir Miles Trentham. "I hadn't heard of it!"

"No; it has been kept out of the newspapers. I am working on the case, and I have found a cab-driver who states that about five o'clock last evening, he drove the murdered man from the War Office to the Hotel Orient."

"Yes, the man was here. I had an

I told him to call again to-day, and gave him a card that would have admitted him without any delay. When he left he stated that he was going to the Hotel Orient, and subsequently I handed the papers to my chief. He took them home with him, so that he could examine them at his leisure. And he has not yet brought them back."

"I dare say the Turk was afraid to keep them himself," Keene suggested.

"Very likely he was," Sir Miles Trentham answered.

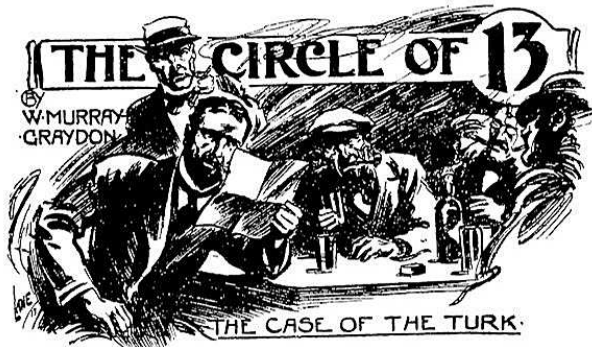
"Did he say anything to lead you to think that he was afraid of being robbed?"

"Not a word, Mr. Keene. It is obvious, however, that he was murdered by somebody who knew that

is the card of admission that I gave to him yesterday."

Keene's eyes sparkled with excitement. The truth had flashed upon him. He knew now why his life had been attempted as he was on the way to the War Office.

"It is the assassin who has come," he declared, in an eager whisper. "It must be. He is aware that the murder has not yet got into the newspapers, and he trusts that you are ignorant of it. He is doubtless made up to resemble Hadji Nessim, and he proposes to bargain with you for the sale of the Dardanelles plans. Don't keep him waiting," he added, "or his suspicions may be roused. Receive him promptly. I will deal with him."



(Continued from previous page.)

The 2nd Chapter.
The Bogus Turk.

Sir Miles nodded. He spoke to the clerk, who at once withdrew. And by then Harvey Keene had slipped behind a large screen that was at one side of the apartment.

Charles Mole had not boasted when he spoke to the chief of the Circle of 13 of his retentive memory for faces, nor had he shown any mean skill in the art of impersonation. The man who was ushered into the room bore a most striking resemblance in every respect to the murdered Turk. He was so extremely like him, indeed, that the detective, though he was of course not deceived, was stirred to grudging admiration.

The impostor stepped forward as soon as the door had swung shut behind him, and Keene, peering at him from a tiny slit in the screen, still supposed that his object was to strike a bargain. But a bewildering surprise was in store for him. Before a word had been uttered the visitor whipped a revolver from his pocket, and pointed it straight at the head of Sir Miles Trentham.

"Be careful!" he bade, in a low tone. "If you speak above a whisper you will be a dead man. I mean it."

The secretary had not been prepared for anything like this. He was no coward, but the shock blanched his cheeks, and robbed him of his presence of mind.

"I want the plans of the Dardanelles that were left with you last evening," the bogus Turk continued, as he stepped nearer. "Give them to me at once!"

"The—plans?" Sir Miles Trentham gasped in confusion.

"That is what I said, sir. Be quick about it."

"But I haven't got them."

"Where are they, then?" demanded the visitor, in a snarling voice.

"My chief has them. He took them home with him last night."

"He would have brought them back this morning. He must be here."

"No, he is not. He has not been to the War Office to-day because of a slight—"

At that instant Harvey Keene intervened, unarmed though he was. He hurled the screen to the floor with a crash, and sprang over it. And as quickly he leapt at the impostor, and struck the weapon from his grasp as he was in the act of discharging it at him.

"You scoundrel, I've got you!" he cried.

They came to grips, and at once they swayed and fell. For a very short interval they fought desperately, clutching at each other's throats, while Sir Miles Trentham looked on, too dazed to call for help. By a strenuous effort the man broke Keene's hold, and jumped up.

His revolver had dropped behind a chair, and he dared not waste time in searching for it. With his clenched fist he dealt the secretary a blow that sent him sprawling. He then swung round on the detective, who had meanwhile scrambled to his feet, and as promptly he knocked him down also.

"I'll settle with you later, Keene!" he cried. "You are always blocking our games, hang you!"

What these words meant was obvious. They had no more than been spoken when Harvey Keene knew to a certainty that he had once more crossed the path of the Circle of 13, and that he had been fighting with a member of the gang. He rose as quickly as he could, but by then the bogus Turk had darted from the room.

"Stop him!" shouted Keene. "Stop him!"

He gave chase without an instant's delay. He dashed at full speed down the staircase at the risk of breaking his neck. He was too late, however. In the lower hall he stumbled over an attendant, who had received a stunning blow, and lying in the open doorway, half-conscious, was another attendant who had been felled like a log.

But the impostor had disappeared. No trace of him could be seen in Whitehall. Either he had mingled with the people who thronged the pavements, or he was in one of the cabs that were moving swiftly through the traffic.

"By heavens, what infernal luck!" muttered the detective.

It would have been useless for him to seek for the man. He knew that. He gave a brief explanation to a constable who had been drawn by the shouting, and then, bitterly disappointed, he went upstairs again to the secretary's room. Sir Miles Trentham was nursing a bruised jaw and relating what had occurred to several startled clerks.

"Have you got him?" he exclaimed, as Keene entered.

"No, he has escaped," Harvey Keene replied. "He was out of sight when I reached the street. He has not hurt you, I hope."

"Not much. We might both have been murdered, though."

"We probably should have been," Sir Miles, if the scoundrel had not lost his revolver. He deceived me. I had no suspicion of what he meant to do until he levelled the weapon at you."

The secretary sat down in his chair. He had recovered from his fright, and was now merely curious in regard to the motive for the daring attempt to get possession of the plans of the Dardanelles fortifications.

"Why has your chief not been to the War Office to-day?" asked Keene abruptly.

"He has a slight cold," Sir Miles Trentham replied, "and his physician advised him to stay at home."

"His private residence is in Eaton Square, is it not?"

"Yes, he lives at No. 76a. But why do you want to know? You surely don't suppose that there is any likelihood of his being robbed of the papers."

"I think it is very probable that such an attempt will be made, Sir Miles. At all events, I must put Lord Francis Verne on his guard."

"I can telephone to him," suggested the secretary.

"No, I will go to see him," Harvey Keene replied. "That will be best. Don't worry," he added. "Leave the matter to me. If the scoundrel who was here pays a visit to his lordship's house to-night he will fall into a trap."

The detective was in no great hurry. He held some further conversation with Sir Miles Trentham, and then, trusting that he would have another opportunity of catching one of the Circle of 13, he departed from the building, and hailed a taxicab in Whitehall.

"Eaton Square No. 76a," he said, to the chauffeur. "Go by the shortest route."

The 3rd Chapter.
The Stolen Plans.

It was with a tranquil mind, little dreaming that the time he had wasted had been of precious value, that Keene rang the bell of the War Minister's palatial residence in the Belgravia district.

"I wish to see Lord Verne," he said to the elderly butler who opened the door.

"I am afraid you can't see him now, sir," the servant replied.

"My business is important. He is at home, I understand."

"Yes, sir, he is. But he is engaged at present. He has a visitor."

"Who is it?" inquired Harvey Keene, as a sudden suspicion gripped him.

"His secretary is with him," the servant answered.

"His secretary! You don't mean Sir Miles Trentham?"

"Yes, sir, I do!" was the startling reply.

"How long has he been with his lordship?"

"Not more than five minutes. Perhaps if you will wait—"

"Take me to your master at once. Where is he?"

"He is in the library, sir," the servant stated. "But you cannot see him until—"

"I must see him immediately," Keene interrupted, in a low voice. "His life is in danger."

With that he brushed the butler aside, and hurried past him. He had been to the house before, and he knew that the library was at the end of the hall. Swiftly and noiselessly he darted to it. He threw open the door, sprang over the threshold, and beheld a scene that filled him with dismay. He was too late. Prostrate on the floor, apparently lifeless, lay Lord Francis Verne. The lid of a roll-top desk was raised, and a French window was open.

"By heavens, this is the very limit of audacity!" exclaimed the detective, as he knelt in alarm by the motionless form.

"Has he been murdered, sir?" gasped the servant, who had followed the detective. "Is he dead?"

"No, there isn't much wrong with him," Harvey Keene replied. "He has merely been stunned by a blow on the head."

"Shall I send for a physician, sir?"

"That won't be necessary, I think. Fetch some water and some brandy. Be quick about it."

It was easy to judge what had occurred up to a certain point. In the comparatively short interval that had elapsed since the flight of the impostor from the War Office he had altered his disguise, transformed himself into the double of Sir Miles Trentham, and driven in a cab to the residence of the chief. And it could not be doubted that he had achieved his daring purpose. He must have carried off the papers that had tempted him to such a daring deed.

Keene stepped through the French window to a garden at the rear of the house. He found footprints on a flower-bed, and similar prints on a patch of soft earth at the base of a wall that could be scaled without difficulty. And then, having learned how the thief had escaped, he returned to the library.

Lord Francis Verne had meanwhile been picked up and placed on a couch, and several agitated servants were gathered around him. Water had been sprinkled on his face, and some brandy had been forced between his lips. He was now showing signs of consciousness. Presently his eyes opened, and he raised himself on his elbow, gazing around him in bewilderment. He recognised the detective, with whom he was acquainted.

"Mr. Keene," he murmured, pressing his hand to his brow, "how do you come to be here? What has happened?"

"You should know," Harvey Keene replied. "Think for a moment."

"I am trying to. Memory is beginning to return. Yes, I can recall that—that I was talking to—"

Lord Verne paused and sat up. He was intensely agitated. "I have been assaulted and robbed," he cried, "and by my own secretary! By Sir Miles Trentham! He has stolen valuable papers from me! It is incredible that he could have been such a villain!"

"Your secretary is not a villain. It was not he who robbed you."

"Don't be so stupid, my dear Mr. Keene! I am in my right mind."

"So am I, my lord. You have been deceived. The person who was here was an impostor, cleverly made up to resemble Sir Miles Trentham."

"An impostor!" exclaimed the War Minister. "Can I believe that?"

"Most certainly you can," said Keene. "I can easily convince you if you are still doubtful."

He seated himself by the couch and related briefly and clearly all that had occurred, beginning with the discovery of the murder at the Hotel Orient.

"And now tell me," he continued, "exactly what passed between you after the man was ushered into the library."

"It was a very short interview," Lord Francis Verne replied. "As

soon as my supposed secretary entered he stated that he had been led to believe that the plans of the Dardanelles fortifications were forgeries, and that he wished to see them at once, and I had no more than taken them from my desk when he snatched them from my hand and struck me on the head with his stick. I staggered and fell, and that is all I remember."

Lord Verne stopped, his features haggard with anxiety. He looked appealingly at the detective.

"Those papers are of the greatest value," he added. "They would have ensured a speedy success for the British and French forces in the Dardanelles. I hope that you will be able to recover them."

"I will do my best," Harvey Keene answered. "You may be sure of that."

It was all the encouragement he could offer. He was inclined to think, however, that he had a fairly strong chance of success.

He went from Eaton Square to the War Office, where he told Sir Miles Trentham what had happened at his chief's residence, and spoke of the hopes he entertained. And when he returned to his chambers in Princes Street he made clear to Oliver, his boy assistant, what his view of the situation was.

"The Circle of Thirteen won't make any overtures to the British Government for the purchase of the plans," he said. "That may be taken for granted. The plans would be equally valuable to the French Government, of course, and the gang may try to negotiate with them. It is very likely that they will."

"On the other hand, and if so, I am pretty certain that they will adopt the only safe method, which will be to send one of their men to Holland. In that case, it is to be assumed that the man will deal with a German agent, Zarker by name, who has been living in Amsterdam since the beginning of the war. He is there to buy secret information, and he cannot be molested, since Holland is a neutral country."

"I know something of him, and I have no doubt that he will consent to make an arrangement with the German Government, who will be glad to purchase the papers in order to prevent the Allies from getting them. I shall have to wait for a time until I hear something that will give me a lead. And meanwhile the boat trains from London and the Channel ports will be carefully watched."

Keene paused, and stared into vacancy for a moment.

"It is a very serious business, my boy," he added. "I am as anxious to recover the stolen plans as I am to catch one of the members of the Circle of Thirteen."

The 4th Chapter.
In the Toils of the Law.

Four days dragged by, and during that interval no overtures regarding the papers were made to the French Government, else the War Office in London would have been promptly informed of the fact. It was possible that such overtures would yet be made.

The Circle of 13 might be waiting for some reason. But Harvey Keene was more disposed to believe that they would try to sell their plunder to the German Government. So, instead of waiting for a lead, he decided to go to Holland without further delay, and this step appealed to him the more because he knew that it would not have been a difficult matter for one of the gang to have got out of the country by means of a forged passport.

"If one is in Amsterdam now," he reflected, "I will have time to frustrate his object. It would require at least a week for the German agent Zarker to negotiate a deal with his Government."

Keene left Liverpool Street one evening by the boat express, and a couple of hours later he embarked at Parkenton Quay for the Continent. Though his features were disguised, he judged it best that he should not pay any attention to the people on the train or scrutinise the passengers on the Great Eastern steamer.

He went straight to the little cabin that had been reserved for him, and slept until five o'clock in the morning, when he was roused by a warning bugle.

From his port-hole he could see the low, sandy shores of the Hook of Holland. By the time he had crossed the boat was alongside the quay, and as he was walking along the platform of the railway-station a few minutes later he observed in front of him a tall, well-dressed man, with a grey moustache. His heart gave a throb

of excitement. The man's build and gait were familiar to him.

"By Jove, I believe that is the fellow who stole the plans!" he said to himself, as he saw the suspected person enter a compartment of the Amsterdam train. "I am pretty sure that it is. I shall keep an eye on him, and if he holds any communication with the German agent I will know that I am right. And then to trap for him. My friend Inspector Ruyter will give me what assistance I may need."

On the evening of that same day, after darkness had fallen, Charles Mole left the Hotel de l'Europe in Amsterdam.

He walked to the Rembrandt Plein, and entered the Cafe Kroon, where he gazed about him for a few seconds. He then made his way across the crowded room amongst the customers, and stopped by a table, at which sat an elderly bearded man, who was obviously a German. The latter looked up and nodded.

"Is it with you I have an appointment?" he asked.

"Yes—if you are Herr Zarker."

"I am," the other assented. "That is right. I received the message you sent to me this afternoon."

"And I got your reply stating how I would recognise you."

"I am glad to meet you. And now to explain your business. What is it?"

"It is of a private nature, Herr Zarker. I have some papers to show you, but I do not care to produce them here. Let us go to some quiet place where we can—"

A hand was dropped on to Charles Mole's shoulder. He swung round with a start, and looked into the faces of Harvey Keene, Inspector Ruyter, and two Dutch policemen.

"You must come with us," Keene said quietly. "You are under arrest, and you will be charged with a murder committed in London at the Hotel Orient."

A savage imprecation burst from Charles Mole's lips. Before he could draw his revolver or attempt to escape the four men threw themselves upon him. He resisted desperately, and there was a scene of wild excitement. Tables were overturned, and the customers sprang to their feet, clamouring loudly. After a brief struggle a pair of fetters were locked on Charles Mole's wrists, and meanwhile the German, who was not wanted, had discreetly slipped off.

The prisoner was furiously protesting against his arrest. He was hurried out of the cafe, and taken by his captors in a closed vehicle to the central police-station, where he was searched.

The first thing brought to light was an envelope containing the plans of the Dardanelles fortifications, and there were also found in his pockets papers which disclosed his name and showed that he was a member of the Circle of 13. Moreover, his false moustache having been lost in the struggle, the detective had recognised him as the man who had visited the War Office.

Charles Mole's temper had cooled. He was now quite calm, and in a defiant mood.

"You will have had your trouble for nothing," he said to Keene, with an insolent smile. "I am willing to admit that I stole the plans, since the Dutch Government won't grant my extradition on such a charge. As for the charge of murder, I defy you to prove it. You can't do it. You have no evidence to offer."

"I have none at present," Harvey Keene replied, "but I soon will have. You may be sure of that. You can lock the fellow up, Ruyter," he added. "We have finished with him for the present."

What Keene's confident statement meant Charles Mole learned three days later. His features were stained brown, and a dark beard and moustache were put on him, and he was led to the presence of Mr. Fagani, the proprietor of the Hotel Orient, who had arrived from London. And as soon as he had glanced at the prisoner he positively identified him as the man who had occupied, in the name of Martinez, the room next to the bed-chamber of the murdered Turk.

Mr. Fagani's evidence satisfied the Dutch authorities. Charles Mole was taken back to England with the certainty of being hanged. And Harvey Keene, having caught another member of the Circle of 13, renewed his efforts to land the remaining members of the gang in the toils of the law.

THE END.

(Another grand new story of Harvey Keene next Monday. Ours THE BOYS' FRIEND in advance.)