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The BOYS' FRIEND

TWELVE PAGES! TWENTY-SIXTH YEAR!

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THREE HALFPENCE.

[Week Ending November 27th, 1920.]

A NEW STORY OF ADVENTURE, WHICH IS CAUSING A SENSATION AMONG READERS!

THE BOY WITH FIFTY MILLIONS!

BY VICTOR NELSON.

Missing and Found--A Tiger!

The tiger uttered a reverberating roar as its striped body flew through the air towards Don Darrel.

As Don saw it coming he gave a gasp of mingled surprise and alarm, but acted with a presence of mind that gave him at least a temporary respite.

Quick as a flash, he flung himself sideways out of the saddle, and fell heavily and awkwardly to the tan of the circus-ring. But, although he was badly bruised, and his shoulder racked with pain, his move achieved its object.

The flying body of the tiger missed him, though only by inches, and the fiercely striking claws beat harmlessly at the empty air.

Right over the terrified horse the brute hurtled, to land with a thud upon the ground, facing Snap, who whined with fear, and scuttled behind Chuta.

The latter gave the tiger no chance to recover from its surprise. Full into its face shot a flaming naphthalene lamp, which the half-breed Indian had whipped from off a ring, where it had gone with others. The flame actually licked about the tiger's snout and chest, so accurately had been Chuta's throw, and it recoiled with a snarl of rage and pain.

In another moment the animal would doubtless have swung about and wreaked vengeance upon Don. Although he was scrambling up, he could hardly have hoped to avoid another spring from the enraged brute. Chuta, however, had seized a second lamp, and, knowing his beloved friend's life was trembling in the balance, the half-breed did a thing that looked to be akin to suicide.

Full tilt at the tiger Chuta rushed, the blazing oil-lamp held before him. The animal glared at him, and crouched for one brief moment, heating as to whether or no to leap. Then, as the flame of the lamp was thrust almost into its snarling mouth, it turned tail and fled.

Knowing that the human voice has an awe-inspiring effect on most wild beasts, Chuta had shouted at it at the top of his voice as he ran, and now he completed his rout of the animal by throwing the flaming lamp after it.

Yet again the Indian's aim was true. The lamp struck the tiger's back, singeing its coat, and causing it to scuttle madly through the gap leading out of the ring.

The terrifying fire, and the surprise of finding a man other than its trainer who was game to face it, had completely thrown the brute off its usually savage balance, and cowed it, at least, for the time being.

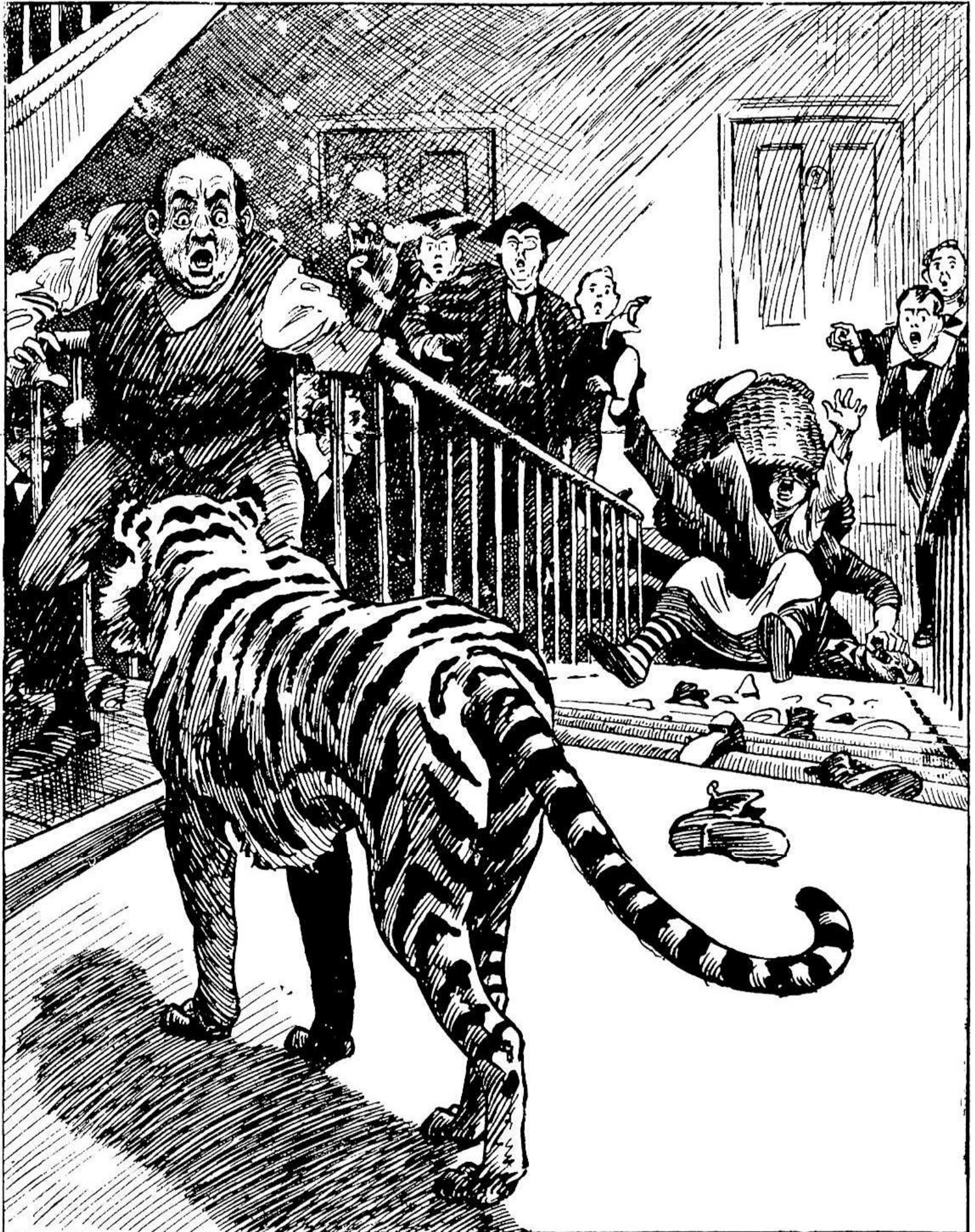
Right through the opening of the tent it went, and disappeared into the darkness; but although it had gone from the circus, many evil effects of its escape remained and had to be dealt with.

Children were crying out in terror, women were screaming and fainting. Strong men, maddened with panic, had leapt to their feet, and people of both sexes were being hurled down and trampled upon in the several wild, unreasoning rushes that were being made for the exits.

A megaphone, which had been used in one of the comic turns by the clowns, stood in the centre of the ring, against the thick main pole of the tent.

Espying it, and seeking desperately for a way to quell the panic, Don Darrel darted to it, and raised the cumbersome, trumpetlike thing to his lips.

"Play!" he shouted through it to



"TIGER! TIGER!" The great, striped brute stood leering at the unhappy Briggs. Tommy, who was coming up the stairs with a load of boots, fell backwards on to the unfortunate cook in abject fear and amazement.

the members of the band, who were ranged in a triumphal car drawn up at the farther side of the ring. "Play, you guys—something lively!" The men of the orchestra realised what Don was aiming at. One with the most presence of mind raised a cornet to his lips and started a rousing march. His companions quickly followed suit, whilst down in the ring Don Darrel leapt for his horse, and swung himself into the saddle.

The boy's shoulder was aching badly, and every movement of his right arm was agony; but he set his teeth hard, and, after shouting cheerily to the audience, went careering wildly round the ring.

"A little trick riding, ladies and gentlemen!" Don bawled; and, snatching up the megaphone, Chuta repeated the words, his voice magnified by the instrument, booming to all parts of the tent.

Mr. Farmer and Dr. Harding, who had come to their feet in excitement and horror when they had seen the tiger bound from its cage and jump for Don, could not suppress exclamations of admiration.

"It is all right, my dear," the Head declared, calming his wife, who, with trembling hands, was clutching his arm. "It is safe enough here, though Heaven help anyone whom the tiger meets outside. The madmen! Why are they still fighting for the exits?"

Mr. Farmer was attempting to calm the people occupying the seats near them.

"All danger has passed!" he cried sternly. "Keep your seats!"

A burly man, who looked like a farmer, came thrusting his way forward, his eyes dilated, and anything but savoury language issuing from his lips.

"Go back to your seat!" Mr. Farmer ordered, thrusting him in the chest. "Be careful of this lady, man! Are you insane?"

The seats the masters and Mrs. Harding were occupying were fairly high up in the tiers. A young girl who was in the fear-stricken farmer's path would have been hurled headlong down into the lower seats had not the master caught her arm in the nick of time.

As the fellow still fought and struggled to pass, Mr. Farmer showed the real stuff of which he was made. He had no sympathy with a coward who could think only of himself, and not care an iota whether he trampled women underfoot. The farmer struck savagely at the master's face, and from beneath the staid dignity of the schoolmaster momentarily flashed the man.

Frank Philips and South, who were seated not far away, afterwards declared that "old Farmer" went up in their estimation by leaps and bounds because of that which happened.

The master put his head round the blow aimed at him, then his bunched fist shot out straight from the shoulder, landed neatly upon the point of the burly man's chin, and he crashed down like a log upon his back.

Others who had been inclined to join in the panic-stricken rush he had started hesitated, wavered, and stood still. Mr. Farmer had saved the situation here, at all events, and down in the ring Don Darrel was doing his best to save it generally.

Chuta had picked up a long stock-whip, and was cracking it skillfully, not touching Don's horse, but inducing it to increase its pace to a breakneck gallop, and attracting attention by the pistol-like reports made by the thong.

Gradually the several rushes that had been made towards the various exits quietened. People paused and stared down into the ring, at first surprised to see that the performance was still in progress, then reassured and calmed.

The swinging air the band was playing did much to help. Men, boys, women, and girls began to return to their seats. Fortunately, no one was very seriously hurt, in spite of, in cases, being knocked down by the stampede.

Slowly some of the stiffness of Don's bruised shoulder wore off, and the pain of it grew less.

The lad slackened the speed of the horse a trifle, and suddenly jumped into a kneeling position on its back. Whilst it careered round and round the ring at a spanking pace he commenced to unsaddle it.

Up in the seats where Mr. Farmer had so promptly quelled all signs of panic, the discomfited countryman was rising stiffly and dazedly to his feet.

He was tenderly feeling his jaw, and abruptly the glazed look left his eyes, and they grew ugly.

"What do ye think ye be doin'—

"Iting I like that?" he demanded fiercely. "I—"

He paused, as Mr. Farmer turned and fully faced him. He had been about to bluster, and invite the master to come outside the tent and try conclusions with him, but there was a steady expression in Mr. Farmer's eyes, and much in his litho, athletic build that the yokel did not like.

"I'd 'ave the law on ye for two pins!" he snarled.

Mr. Farmer shrugged. "I am sorry, my good fellow," he said coolly, "but you were acting like a cowardly child rather than a grown man, and I simply had to hit you to stop you making a bigger fool of yourself than you had already succeeded in doing. There may have been danger for a few moments, though the tiger could scarcely have reached us up here, but it had passed, and you were letting your wits run riot when you rushed for the exit, and endangered the lives and limbs of others."

"Who the thunder be you to talk to I?" the farmer sneered truculently, feeling he must show a little courage to save his face.

But the schoolmaster merely shrugged impatiently and turned away.

Just for a second or two the countryman looked inclined to lash out at him with his fists; but he thought better of it, and, muttering darkly, went slowly back to his seat.

"You acted just in time, Farmer," the Head whispered. "I—ahem!—am not usually in favour of—er—violence; but, under the circumstances—ahem!"

"Quite so, sir," Mr. Farmer returned, smiling grimly. "The fellow needed a little steadying, otherwise he would, without doubt, have hurt other people. What splendid presence of mind that boy has!"

The Head turned his eyes quickly towards the ring, and uttered a gasp of amazement and dismay.

"Bless my soul, he will break his neck!" Darrel said.

"I fear he is too far away to hear you, sir," Mr. Farmer reminded him mildly.

"Dear me, yes, I suppose he is!" the kindly old doctor murmured agitatedly. "But, really, he ought to be stopped. If anything happened to him, I should feel I had neglected to keep him under proper supervision, and feel myself responsible."

"I fancy he is as safe on the back of a horse as he is when upon his feet," Mr. Farmer returned reassuringly, though the antics Don was cutting looked deadly dangerous.

He had unsaddled the horse, and, standing in a crouching position on its back, holding the bridle with one hand and guiding it round and round at a furious gallop, he was waving the saddle in the air with the other.

The great audience watched him, spellbound. The tent was so quiet now that the proverbial pin might have been heard to drop. All disorder was quelled, and it was mainly through the boy whose vast wealth had enabled him to own the show.

As he passed them Don had managed to give an eye to the many crippled children he had befriended. Chiefly through the calmness shown by those in charge of them, none of them had been hurt, and as he made fairly sure of this Don Darrel sighed with relief.

He saw that he had now completely averted the threatened panic; and, after bowing left and right, he guided his horse out of the tent.

Chuta sprang on the back of his and followed him with Snap, who looked crestfallen, and gave the impression that he was feeling ashamed of himself, though he could hardly have been expected to stand up to a full-grown and angry tiger, and the retirement he made was excusable.

A burst of applause, that echoed and re-echoed far over the surrounding country-side, welled up from every part of the great tent.

Those who stopped to think at all realised how magnificently Don Darrel had grappled with a desperate crisis. They looked upon him as a hero—which indeed he was—and their enthusiasm for his nerve and pluck knew no bounds.

The escape of the tiger, the threatened rush for the exits, and Don Darrel's efforts to avoid disaster, had all transpired in far less time than it takes to write.

As the Boy with Fifty Millions and his servant rode out into the open, they found that the animal's bid for freedom was only just becoming generally known amongst the members of the company.

Time, Colonel Bartlett had been told almost at once of what had happened by an excited circus-hand, who had seen the tiger running from the

tent, and himself fled for his life, and already the trainer and some half-dozen employees had set off in search of it.

Colonel Bartlett had stopped only to thrust a short, stout whip through his belt, and to snatch up a gun.

The others had armed themselves with the first available articles that would serve as weapons—crowbars, the long bars of iron that were heated, and held ready in case of emergency, whilst the trainer was in the cage of one or other of the wild animals, and putting them through their tricks—rifles, and even stout sticks.

Their chief anxiety was to come up with the brute before it had time to do any serious damage. They counted upon the sight and voice of its trainer being sufficient to cow it and bring it to submission.

A further strong search-party was being formed, and Don Darrel would have ridden at the head of it but for Frank Philips hurrying up with a stern message from the Head.

The doctor felt that Don Darrel had not as yet realised that he could not do just as he willed, but was subject to the discipline of a public school, and had sent word that he ordered him to return to the college immediately he had changed his clothes.

If the truth be told, Dr. Harding was at something of a loss how to deal at all with Don. The boy was for ever creating situations that had no precedent in the whole of Eaglehurst's annals—a fact made possible, of course, by reason of his colossal wealth.

The young multi-millionaire's buying of such a thing as a travelling circus and menagerie would have been resented at once by the doctor in ordinary circumstances. But that the Head had thought best to tolerate in view of the noble object that had prompted the purchase.

When, however, it came to the boy appearing himself as a performer, without seeing fit to ask permission, and in doing so taking many personal risks, Dr. Harding felt that his new pupil had gone too far.

Thus Don was forced to retire to a caravan, and make ready to return to the school, foregoing, much to his regret, the exciting and thrilling pastime of tiger-hunting. For the moment, however, we must leave Don, Chuta, and Snap; follow the fortunes of the tiger, and reintroduce ourselves to Briggs, the school porter.

You see, that worthy and the animal were to become closely connected, though it was certainly by no desire of Briggs.

When the tiger left the circus tent it sped across a field, and dived into a strip of forest land lying near the grounds of Eaglehurst School. It crouched amongst some bushes for some time, and was alarmed at length by hearing human voices, one of which belonged to Colonel Bartlett, its master.

The tiger's teeth were bared in a snarl; but, fierce brute though it was, it feared those deep, stern tones.

After wavering for a moment, it turned, and with the utmost stealth crept out of the wood on the other side, sped across a field and deserted roadway intervening, and darted into the grounds of Eaglehurst School.

The news of its escape sped about pretty quickly, and came to the ears of Briggs, whose duty it was in the evenings to lend a hand to one Tommy, the boot-boy.

At just about the time the stout and motherly cook was conveying the news of its escape to Briggs and Tommy in the bootshed, the tiger was stealing past the door.

As it had been born in Swiggers' menagerie, freedom was absolutely strange to the animal, and it was beginning to discover it distinctly disconcerting and unsettling, and almost wishing itself back in its den.

It heard the voices in the shed, and wondered if its trainer were with the speakers. He was the last human being the tiger wanted to meet, knowing instinctively that it had done wrong in leaving its cage, and making to attack other humans who had been near.

In case Colonel Bartlett was at

hand, the tiger made off, found a back door of the school open as the cook had left it, and took refuge in the building.

In the kitchen it found a most appetising smell.

A little investigation proved that it came from a quantity of raw steak which the cook had been about to grill for the masters' supper.

The tiger made short work of the lot, licked its chops, and passed from the kitchen on a further tour of discovery, which was most fortunate for the cook, who entered only a moment later.

A long-suffering cat belonging to the school was blamed when the good woman found, to her amazement, that the meat had vanished. She searched for "Thomas," and called him, with a short-handled brush held suggestively behind her.

"Where is the varmint, I wonder?" she muttered, as the cat failed to appear. "The wretched thief! 'E knows 'e's in for it when I catch him, an' 'e's lyin' low, I suppose. Only wait till I do get him! 'E'll fancy it's 'is birthday!"

Grumbling to herself, and muttering more dire threats against the unfortunate victim of circumstantial evidence, the cook commenced to look round for a substitute to place before the masters.

Already they were returning with the boys from the show, and she could hear them tramping into the hall by the main entrance. The boys were all immensely excited at Don Darrel's performance in the circus and the other thrilling happenings of the evening.

It being the termination of a day of amusement, the masters did not seek to chock them, and their voices made a positive babel, which reached the tiger, as it crouched in the darkness at the foot of the staircase leading to the studies of the Head and other masters.

Dazed and awed by the sounds, the tiger growled angrily, uneasily, and retired up the stairs, ascending only a few seconds before Briggs came along with a basket containing several spare pairs of boots belonging to the study occupants.

This same staircase had to be traversed to reach the Fourth and Fifth Form dormitories, and Briggs suddenly struck an idea that made him stiff a fit of mirth.

Tommy, the boot-boy, a bright-faced, cheeky urchin of fifteen, was for ever "pulling the leg" of the porter, and chaffing and scoring off him in some way, and Briggs had seen a means by which he, for once, could turn the tables.

He remembered that in Mr. Farmer's study was a rug composed of a rather fine tiger's skin, having a stuffed head, with snarling jaws and very realistic-looking eyes.

The porter had seen that Tommy was greatly awed by the cook's news of the tiger's escape, and Briggs determined to give the boy such a scare as he would remember for many a long day.

"He, he, he!" he chuckled. "I'll teach the young monkey to be more civil in future, I'll be 'anged if I won't! The masters won't be up just yet, as they're bound to let the kids 'ave a talk in the class-rooms arter a day like this 'ere afore they order 'em to bed. I'll get you guessing, Master Tommy, an' if yer 'air don't stand on bend, my name ain't Briggs!"

He was forced to hurry. Already he could hear Tommy at the foot of the stairs.

The boy was moving slowly and uncertainly, for he was carrying a huge hamper of brightly-polished boots destined for the dormitories on the next floor.

Briggs ran into Mr. Farmer's study, and snatched up the tiger's skin. He rested the formidable-looking stuffed head upon his own, drew the skin about him, and darted back to the head of the stairs.

Going down on all fours, Briggs waited. It was only with the utmost difficulty that he prevented himself from spoiling everything by giving vent to a burst of explosive laughter. Somehow, he managed to keep silent, and, because of the thick skin that

THE THREADS OF THE STORY.

DON DARREL, a lad of fifteen, inherits from a stranger, whose life he saves, the stupendous fortune of fifty million pounds. With this he intends to give up his ranch in Mexico, and come to Britain and go to school. The disinherited heir to the fortune, RANDOLPH GURNEY, is plotting to do away with Don, and so secure the money for himself. On arriving in Britain with his faithful half-caste servant CHUTA, and his dog, Snap, Don learns that at Eaglehurst School they expect him to be quite a Wild West "bad man." Don decides that it would be a pity to disappoint them! Soon after arriving at the school Don buys a circus

so that the local crippled children shall have some enjoyment. While riding on an elephant at the head of his menagerie Don is shot at by emissaries of Randolph Gurney, and falls at the headmaster's feet, wounded. The culprit gets away. Don carries on with the circus, and "does stunts," much to the amusement of the audience and the horror of the Head. During the evening show another attempt is made on Don's life. While performing with Chuta he turns in his saddle in time to see a huge man-eating tiger spring at him—let out of his cage by some unknown follower of Gurney. (Now read on.)

was muffled about his ears, he failed to become aware that there were other footfalls upon the staircase in addition to those of his intended victim."

Step by step Tommy ascended, the hamper of boots upon his head, and behind him was quite a procession.

Having lost the masters' steaks, the cook had fallen back upon cold ham, and, with eight or nine plates of this upon a tray, the buxom lady followed the boy.

Behind her, in turn, was the science master, Mr. Philby, a thin, studious-looking young man, who wore great spectacles, was villainously near-sighted, and spoke with a slight lisp.

He was not particularly popular either with masters or boys, for he hated athletic sports, in which all his colleagues were only too ready to join, and considered boys should for ever be "cramming" and poring over books. He had sneaking habits, and seemed to delight in running to the Head when he found the least excuse to get someone into trouble.

"Do hurry, my good woman!" Mr. Philby requested, blinking through his spectacles at the cook's broad back. "I am anxious to watch my thudry, have my thupper, and go to bed."

"Ow can I 'urry, sir, with this dratted boy loaded with boots in front o' me?" the cook demanded testily.

"I had no idea he wath therol! And, ploathe do he adreth me in that manner!" Mr. Philby snapped.

Though, had he but known, he was to have plenty of evidence that Tommy "wath there" in a moment.

Tommy reached the last step but one, and, with a growl that would not have disgraced a forest-bred lion, Briggs crawled round the banisters into view.

The boy's jaw dropped. For one brief moment he stood poised on the stair, staring with dilated eyes at what he took to be the escaped tiger. Then, with a cry of terror, he hurled the hamper of boots in the air, and collapsed backwards down the staircase.

He landed in a sitting position full upon the cook's tray, the astonished woman uttered a scream, and, losing her balance, collided with the emaciated figure of the science master.

Mr. Philby gasped, tried frantically to save himself by clutching at the banister-rail, but failed, and pitched down the remainder of the flight.

To say that all was chaos would be but to poorly describe what happened!

Mr. Philby's fall did not end until he reached the mat at the foot of the staircase. The cook, who must have scaled fifteen stone, fell upon him, and Tommy landed, in his turn, in her lap.

Frightened at the havoc he had caused, Briggs tossed aside the skin rug, and turned to fly; but at his back was Nemesis—in the shape of the real tiger!

The red-haired porter gasped. He could scarcely believe his eyes, yet he had to do so.

There crouched the great yellow brute, its baleful, yellow eyes fixed upon him in an unwavering glare. Probably it had grown tired of dodging human beings, and meant now boldly to come out and show fight. At all events there was no longer anything particularly retiring about it.

Briggs drew a quick, gasping breath, and his eyes stared from their sockets. His knees shook beneath him, and knocked together, and for the moment he was powerless to move.

The next, as he felt sure the tiger was about to spring, he found the power to run, swung round, and, with a banasher-like howl, took the whole flight of stairs at a jump.

"Oh, oh! The tiger!" he shrieked, as he landed, spread-eagled, upon the boot-hamper, knocking the cook and Tommy backwards, and as good as blotting out the growling Philby. "Eh, 'oip! Somebody shoot it—quick!"

"What on earth is happening here?" Dr. Harding cried, as he ran towards the struggling mass of humanity.

"Tigers is 'appening! Someone get a gun and shoot!" Briggs yelled, in terror.

"Bless my soul!" gasped the Head.

"Is the man mad?"

"Good heavens, no! Look, sir!" Mr. Farmer cried, clutching at the doctor's arm in excitement, and pointing up the staircase.

The Head raised his eyes, and fell back a step, uttering an exclamation of alarm.

Snarling deep down in its massive chest, and glaring down at them uncertainly, the tiger stood upon the landing above. (Another exciting instalment of this splendid tale in next Monday's BOYS' FRIEND.)

THE ADVENTURES OF GRANT, CHAUFFEUR DETECTIVE

By EDMUND BURTON

"The Affair of the Stolen Despatch."

The 1st Chapter.

What Happened in the Paris Hotel.

Tom Grant had just set a fare down in the West End, and was returning towards his rank, when a sudden hail attracted his attention. A tall, athletic-looking young fellow was rapidly descending the steps of one of the "swelly" clubs, carrying a Gladstone bag in one hand, whilst he signalled with the other. Grant drew in towards the kerb, and pulled up.

"Where to, sir?"

"Charing Cross, and drive like the deuce! Double fare if you catch the boat-train!"

Grant nodded, and threw in the clutch, neither he nor his fare noticing the little man who was standing by the pillar-box, or they might have wondered why he seemed to take such a furtive interest in their movements. At least, Grant saw nothing unusual until more than a third of the journey had been covered, then he began, almost unconsciously, to follow the movements of another cab close behind, the image of which was reflected in his observation mirror.

The distance between the two vehicles never seemed to alter one whit, though twice Grant was pulled up by a policeman on point duty. But on both occasions the rearmost cab halted also. Added to this, Grant could almost have sworn that, during one of those brief delays, a head was furtively thrust out of the other cab's window, and then suddenly withdrawn.

As his fare disappeared into the station entrance, the taxi-driver glanced round half-expectantly. Yes, sure enough, there was the other vehicle drawn up at the kerb a few yards away, and even as he looked the door opened, and a low-sized figure walked, with apparent nonchalance, in the same direction.

Grant's detective instinct, however, was aroused. He knew from force of practice that the man was shadowing someone, and when one person follows another in a furtive fashion something shady is usually afoot.

"Don't know whether I should warn my man or not," he muttered doubtfully. "After all, the chap may be a 'toc, though my fare certainly didn't look like a desperate criminal!"

Nevertheless, he resolved to take the bull by the horns. But he only got one more glimpse of his quarry, who was almost immediately swallowed up by the big crowd on the platform, and a few minutes later a shrill whistle announced the departure of the boat-train.

With a resigned shrug of his shoulders, Grant returned to his cab and drove off towards an eating-house which he often frequented on account of its extremely moderate tariff, considering the prevailing high prices, combined with the best of fare.

In the meantime, the young man with the Gladstone-bag had entered a carriage in the middle of the boat-train, whilst his shadower got into one further in the rear. After an uneventful run to Dover, thence to Calais and Paris, the traveller walked into one of the large hotels in that city, inquiring if rooms had been reserved for "Mr. Merrick." On being assured that they had, he made his way thither to dress for dinner.

Three minutes later the little man entered the same hotel.

"I'm expecting a friend of mine," he said casually to the clerk, in French. "A Mr. Percy Merrick. Has he arrived yet?"

"Oui, m'sieur," was the innocent reply. "M. Merrick has just come. I have given him Number Forty-seven."

The little man's eyes flickered for a moment, then his face resumed its normal wooden expression.

"Thanks!" he said. "You might give me a room near his if you have one."

"Certainly, m'sieur!" The clerk scrutinised his book rapidly. "Ah!

Here you are! We have a vacancy right opposite."

The newcomer nodded, and made his way to his apartment. Once there, he locked the door and drew a chair over.

Sitting down, he listened intently; but a quarter of an hour elapsed ere he heard Merrick's door open and close, then footsteps dying away down the corridor.

A minute later the little man was at the opposite lock, working rapidly and silently until it gave with a click. Stepping inside, he closed the door behind him, and began making a thorough search of the apartment. First, Merrick's bag claimed his attention, then his macintosh, and even the soft felt hat hanging above it were carefully examined, till, at last, with a disappointed grunt, he prepared to leave.

Switching off the light, he made for the door, stopping dead in his stride before he was half-way across the room. Someone was coming up the corridor, whether Merrick or not he couldn't say. The footsteps came nearer and nearer, until they halted right outside.

The handle was grasped and turned, then Merrick—for it was he—uttered a half-stifled exclamation of surprise at finding the door unlocked.

As he bent down to examine if the intruder seized his opportunity. A swift spring landed him on the other's stooping shoulders, and together they fell, rolling over and over on the carpet, until, with a rapid movement, the stranger managed to get his hand under his opponent's nostrils.

Merrick got a swabby, sickly smell, and struggled bravely against the fumes, but it was useless. In a couple of minutes he was lying senseless as a log.

His assailant glanced quickly up and down the corridor, then, pushing the door to, he switched on the light and began searching his unconscious victim. It was fully ten minutes ere he found what he wanted—a piece of thin, folded paper, carefully concealed behind the false back of a silver cigarette-case.

The 2nd Chapter.

What Grant Overheard—Drawn Blank!

The eating-house which Grant usually visited for his daily "snack" was one of the old-fashioned sort, each table being separated from its neighbour by a high wooden partition.

The place seemed quite deserted when he entered, and, having given his order, he leaned back with his head resting against the woodwork.

Only then did he realise that the next compartment was occupied. The partition acted as a sounding-board, and snatches of low-toned conversation at once became perfectly audible.

At first Grant paid no attention until a few words seemed to separate themselves from the rest, rousing him to the fact that all was not quite as it should be.

"Rest assured that it will be all right," a well-bred voice was saying. "I'll be very much surprised if I'm not troubling you for a cool thousand very shortly now."

"You can trust your friend, then? You're sure there won't be any hitch?"

"Trust Tony! Why, I'd back him to follow you round London for a week without your being one whit the wiser!"

"Yes; but that's not what I meant. I was thinking it was so infernally risky to drag a third party into it. There's too much at stake. Why didn't you go yourself?"

"I? Because I'd only mess it. I'm not used to such work, and Jackson knows me too well into the bargain. Don't worry, my dear Levenstein—"

There was a sudden movement in the next compartment, and then:

"Gott in Himmel! Take care of that tongue of yours. My name is Saunders!"

Now, when anyone poses as English, yet swears in German, there is

generally something the matter, and Grant resolved to see the thing through to the end. But scarcely another word could he catch. They seemed to have grown more cautious than ever. Then, just as he was giving up in despair, something which sounded like "Barn" fell on his ears, and the cultured voice said, quite distinctly:

"We'll just catch her, if we can get a taxi quickly!"

Grant, slipping quietly into the street, and not bothering to wait for his food, jumped into his driving-seat, and drove slowly alongside the kerb, with his flag indicating that he was engaged.

Next moment, as he earnestly hoped he heard a hail, and two men—one tall and dark, the other low-sized and stout—hurried from the eating-house.

"Where to, gentlemen?"

"Paddington!" said the dark man. "As quick as you like!"

When the station was reached the pair hurried towards the booking-office; but, although Grant slipped into the crowd, and followed closely, he could not get quite near enough to overhear their destination.

Presently, however, the crush thinned, and he approached the little window.

"A tall, dark gentleman took tickets from you just now," he said. "Do you remember where he booked for, by any chance?"

"What d'you want to know for? Didn't he pay you?"

"Yes, yes; but I wish to find out where's he's gone!" said Grant testily. "The matter may be most serious! In any case, a little civility from—"

The booking-clerk flushed as red as a turkey-cock. He was very young and very self-important, and evidently resented being questioned by a "common cabman."

"None of your lip!" he stuttered. "I'm not supposed to remember the destination of every Tom, Dick, and Harry I issue a ticket to! Got back to your cab! You'll find it pay you better, Mister 'Olmes!" he added, with a snigger.

It is safe to say that if Grant could have laid hands on that self-important young man, there would have been very little starch and stiffness left in him at the end of five minutes. But, however keen the desire, a booking-office window is scarcely the thing to fight through, so Grant turned away, angry, and disappointed. There seemed to be but one hope left—North, of the C.I.D.

The 3rd Chapter.

Shafts of Light!

Detective-Inspector North drummed his fingers on the desk, as he stared fixedly at Grant.

"Yes," he said presently, "it's a curious business, and may mean much. The two incidents are possibly connected; but then, again, they may not be. Let's go over the facts once more, and correct me if I make any error."

"You pick up a fare at the Coronet Club, and drive him to Charing Cross to catch the boat-train. You notice he is followed by a small man, whom you, in turn, shadow, but lose both in the crowd. You then overhear a conversation in an eating-house between two men, one of whom is evidently a German, but who wishes to be known by the name of Saunders. They are talking about one, Tony, who is apparently following somebody named Jackson. Seemingly the issues at stake are rather big, for Levenstein—or Saunders—is to hand over a thousand pounds, presumably a bribe, if all goes well. You then hear nothing more, except a word, which sounds like 'Barn.' And, finally, you succeed by strategy in driving them to Paddington, but are unable to find out their destination. Is that correct?"

"Quite," nodded Grant. "But it doesn't help us a lot, does it?"

"Well, no," agreed North. "You see, you seem to have arrived towards the end of an interesting conversation; yet we might still have made something of it, only for the infernal uppishness of that booking-clerk; and it's no use questioning him again, since he'd probably have forgotten all about his two customers in reality by this time. Let's see, now!"

He took down a Bradshaw, and turned the page rapidly.

"'Barn' may mean a surname, the name of a house, or a town—most likely the latter. Dash it!" North suddenly threw the guide down.

"We're done again! Why, there are several places you can book to from Paddington, all commencing with 'Barn'!"

The best part of two days went by without any further result, and North was about to turn his attention to

other pressing matters, when a card was handed in.

"Captain Percival Jackson, D.S.O.," he read. "Show him in!"

The man who entered could scarcely have been more than thirty-six, yet he looked sixty, so haggard and drawn was his face. He dropped wearily into the chair, which North pushed towards him.

"Well, sir," said the inspector. "You wish to see me?"

"Mr. North," was the reply, "I'm going to trust you with something I value most in the world—my reputation!"

"No stain on that, sir!" said North emphatically, knowing the character of the man before him and the important position he held under Government. "But proceed, please!"

Jackson passed his hand across his brow.

"The other day I left for Paris by the boat-train from Charing Cross. I—What's wrong, Mr. North?"

The question was a natural one under the circumstances, for the inspector's usually mask-like face had suddenly assumed a curiously eager expression as he coupled the name "Jackson" with the Continental train, and wondered if he had struck a chance clue. He leaned forward in his chair.

"Tell me, captain. On the day you left London, did you engage a taxi outside the Coronet Club to drive you to Charing Cross?"

Jackson's eyes grew round with astonishment.

"Yes, I did. But how the deuce do you—"

North smacked his knee, and gave vent to a triumphant exclamation.

"Good, sir—good! Now, just a moment, please, before you continue!"

He scribbled something rapidly on a slip of paper, and pressed the bell.

"Have this taken instantly to Crane Street cab-rank!" he said to the official who entered. "Ask for Grant, and if he's not there, find him, if you have to search half Lon— Eh, what's that?"

"He's just called, sir," interrupted the man. "I was coming to tell you when you rang."

"Better again! Send him in, Morrison! Now we sha'n't be long, captain!"

When Grant entered he suddenly stopped dead, and stared almost rudely at Jackson, whilst the C.I.D. man glanced at them both alternately, a contented smile playing about his lips.

"Great Scott!" ejaculated the taxi-driver. "My fare!"

"That settles it!" said North crisply. "Close the door, Grant! And now, captain, let's hear your yarn, if you please. You may speak absolutely without reserve."

Captain Jackson's story did not take long in the telling. Briefly, it was as follows:

A most important despatch had to be delivered from the British to the French Government, but, owing to the extreme gravity of its contents with regard to the present European situation, it was not deemed advisable to send the message either by ordinary telegraph, even in code, or by fear of tapping and risk of deciphering.

It was, therefore, decided to deliver it in person, for which dangerous task Captain Jackson had been the man chosen—dangerous, because there was reason to believe that those who would find the information most useful knew, or at least suspected, that such a despatch would likely be sent.

Travelling incog, under the name of "Percy Merrick," the captain had reached Paris, where he had been attacked, drugged, and robbed of the precious paper shortly after his arrival. They had found him lying on the floor of his room, but his assailant had, of course, vanished by this time; and the only clue, if clue it could be called, was supplied by the hotel-clerk, who stated that a small, foxy-faced man had come in almost on M. Merrick's heels, and had requested a room as near him as possible.

"Ah!" interposed North. "That's a glimmer of light, anyway! Grant, here, told me he noticed that you were being shadowed in another cab from the Coronet Club to Charing Cross by an individual answering to that description."

"Yes, sir," said Grant, "that's right—a low-sized, foxy-faced chap he was. I followed you into the station, intending to warn you, but couldn't find you in the crowd."

"Well," resumed the captain, "I hurried back as quickly as I could, and came straight to you, Mr. North. I know your reputation, and feel sure I can't leave mine in better hands."

North bowed.

"Thank you, sir!" he said. "Rest assured everything possible will be

done. Now, if it is not asking an impossible question, what does this particular despatch bear upon?"

Jackson glanced round, then:

"Upon the Polish affair," he answered, in a low voice. "As you may have guessed, we were recently wobbling upon the brink of another European war, and only just managed to avoid plunging into it. If this intelligence leaks out—"

He shrugged his shoulders meaningly.

North inclined his head.

"I know that: it was touch and go," he said. "And a thing like that would suit Germany's books excellently. She financed Bolshevism in the first instance, and it was German money that caused chaos in Russia, just when we needed her assistance most. And German brains are at the bottom of this Polish business, too. You will probably agree with me there, captain, since you are more or less in the swim at headquarters?"

Jackson nodded.

"They're a cute lot," he replied, "and more active at the moment than one would expect a beaten nation to be. There'll be big trouble again from that quarter ere long, North."

The C.I.D. man was silent for a while.

"Yes," he muttered presently. "And now, sir, doesn't it strike you as significant that your every movement, even to the alias you travelled under, should be so well known?"

"That's not so surprising when one takes into consideration the almost uncanny perfection of the German Secret Service," the other objected. "We learned that to our cost more than once before the end of 'eighteen!"

"Yes," persisted North; "but I take it the arrangements for your mission were so cautiously made that no one beyond a chosen few at Whitehall heard even a whisper of it. Does it not seem, then, as though someone there were mixed up in the plot?"

Jackson started.

"It does," he agreed. "But who?"

"That's just the point. But wait a moment! Grant, tell the captain about those two chaps you drove to Paddington."

Jackson listened quietly almost to the end; then he suddenly leaned forward, gripping the arms of his chair tightly.

"A tall, dark man, you say? Was he very tall—almost wearily built—and had he a large mole on the right wrist near the bone, did you happen to notice?"

It was now Grant's turn to start. Yes, indeed, he had seen such a mark, as the man's cuff slipped back whilst he was handing him his fare at Paddington.

"Yes, sir," he replied vehemently, "the description fits exactly!"

Captain Jackson brought his hand down with a resounding whack on his knee.

"Then it's Murray," he cried furiously—"Murray, Oh, the infernal scoundrel—"

North held up his hand.

"Keep calm, sir, please!" he advised. "We mustn't lose our heads. We're getting along very nicely, and that seems to be another ditch crossed in safety. Now, who is Murray, and where does he hang out, when he's at home?"

"He's one of the officials at Whitehall. A good man enough at his work, but I never liked him. Got a bad reputation for loose living, though I don't suppose that's anything to do with the present case. He has rooms in the Albany, but he's been on sick leave for the past few days, so I expect he's staying at his other place in Barnham."

Grant and North exchanged a meaning glance.

"Where, captain?" the latter asked quickly. "What's the address?"

"Woodlands, Barnham. It's on a branch line, about thirty or forty miles from Paddington—"

But neither of the others seemed to be listening. The C.I.D. man was pulling on a waterproof, whilst Grant was already standing with his hand on the door-knob.

"Excellent, captain—excellent!" said the former. "Grant, that's the mystery of the Barn explained. So we've crossed another ditch. Your cab's outside, and your tank's full, I hope? Splendid! Now, good-bye, sir, and rest assured we'll do our utmost!"

"I trust you will be successful," replied Jackson fervently, as he shook hands with both. "My reputation is but a small thing compared with what may also lie in your keeping. I don't think I need be more explicit. You understand?"

"Quite," said North.

The 4th Chapter

What Took Place at Woodlands!

Darkness had fallen when a dust-covered taxi cab passed along the winding main street of Barnham, and, having halted for a couple of minutes outside the little police-station, continued its journey up the hill.

Here it drew into the shadow of the trees, two men dismounted, and the lights were switched off.

"There!" said the voice of Detective-Inspector North. "That's the place yonder, if I mistake not. Put those on, Grant."

Following the C.I.D. man's example, the chauffeur slipped a pair of rubber-soled goloshes over his boots, and the pair cautiously skirted the wall, searching for a suitable place to scale it.

Presently they were astride the top, looking towards the lighted windows of a house standing in its own grounds.

"Seems a fine place," muttered Grant. "Friend Murray must have a thumping good screw at Whitehall to run a show like this!"

"Possibly he has other sources of income," rejoined North drily. "An odd thousand or so, for services rendered," would keep the pot boiling nicely. Now, softly lad! Make for that clump of shrubs yonder."

They reached the shadow, and commenced what they fully expected would prove a tiresome vigil, until some chance presented itself to get into the house. Of course, North considered he had quite sufficient ground to demand an interview with Murray—even to have him arrested on suspicion, in fact—yet that would avail but little, unless the vital despatch were secured also; and which of the precious trio—Murray, Levenstein, or the little man Tony—had it, North did not, naturally, know just then.

But the wait wasn't so long and wearisome as they anticipated, for scarcely had they taken up their positions when a side-door opened, and two figures—one tall, the other short and stout—were silhouetted against the light. Grant nudged his companion, and whispered excitedly:



"WALLS HAVE EARS!" "Yes, and so have screens!" thought Detective North as he darted from behind his shelter. "Hands up—quick!" he snapped at the astounded trio.

"The two chaps I drove to Paddington—I'll swear to it!"

North's sole reply was a warning "Hist!" as he tried to catch what the pair were saying; but all he heard was:

"Good! I'll be back in twenty minutes."

The tall man walked rapidly away, disappearing round the corner of the house. A minute later came the flash of a bright lamp through the trees, whilst the steady hum of a motor-engine grew fainter and fainter down the drive.

Meanwhile, the other man had re-entered the door, and all the lights went out save that in a window on the first floor. North edged nearer Grant, and whispered softly in his ear:

"It's now or never, but it's too risky for more than one. You stay where you are. I'll whistle, if necessary."

He stole forward, giving the door a gentle push. To his utter amazement and delight, it swung inwards without a sound, and he crept cautiously along a dark passage until his groping fingers encountered a row of banisters.

With the position of the lighted window fixed in his mind, he mounted the stairs, and turned to the left, his rubber goloshes making no sound. Then straight before him, a

ribbon of light showed beneath a closed door.

Next moment he had flattened himself back against the wall, for the handle suddenly turned, and a stout man emerged, humming a German air as he passed, quite unconsciously, within two feet of North, and ascended the second flight to the floor above.

Then the C.I.D. man seized his opportunity. Creeping across the landing, he peered through the chink of the door. The apartment beyond was quite empty, but on the table were a decanter, a siphon, and three glasses, whilst a buff-coloured piece of flimsy paper lay beside them.

Keenly anxious to see that telegram, North entered the room, and had just time to read, "Successful. Arriving Barnham seven-forty. — Tony," when the sound of returning footsteps fell on his ears.

His retreat cut off, he glanced rapidly about him. A high screen stood in the corner, and, slipping behind it, he had barely concealed himself ere the stout man reappeared, settling himself comfortably in the armchair to await the coming of the others. Then he opened a box he had brought in on the second occasion, selected a fat cigar therefrom, and puffed at it luxuriously.

North knew that he was in a tight corner, for the odds would shortly be three to one; yet, in order to succeed in his task, he was forced to remain inactive where he was.

The clock on the mantelpiece ticked monotonously, and for a while there was no other sound in the room, until the occupant of the chair suddenly assumed a listening attitude. The steady hum of a motor came from outside, increasing in volume till it finally stopped somewhere below. Then low voices sounded on the stairs, and the tall man re-entered, closely followed by a small, foxy-faced individual.

North, who was staring through a small hole in the screen, saw Levenstein reach out and take a paper from the latter; and it was then that the scene was so dramatically interrupted.

In his eagerness to miss nothing of what was taking place, the detective had leant rather too far forward, with the result that one of his hands pressed lightly against the flimsy structure. There was a sudden exclamation from the astounded trio as the screen sagged towards them and fell flat.

"Hands up! Quick!" A determined-looking man was standing against the wall, and the muzzle of a businesslike revolver, turning from side to side, covered the three of them alternately.

Though quite as dumbfounded as his companions, Murray was the first to recover his wits, yet better for him had he not done so. For, as he sprang towards the lamp—probably with the intention of plunging the room into darkness—he came between Levenstein and North.

At that moment there was a sudden flash and a report from the former's pocket, and Murray received the bullet intended for the detective in his back. He gave a gurgling cry, and pitched forward across the table, upsetting it, and sending a pool of blazing oil flowing over the carpet. In an instant the window-curtains were alight, and the flames racing upwards and licking the woodwork and ceiling.

Levenstein, cursing savagely in his own tongue, glared wildly round, and

saw that North was between himself and the door. Taking another wild snapshot, he leaped through the crackling flames towards the casement window.

North, blowing a sharp blast on his whistle, dashed for the door, delivering a stinging right-hander on the chin of the little man who made a feeble effort to stop him, and took the stairs in a couple of bounds.

But when he got into the open the red tail-light of the motor-car was disappearing down the drive, whilst Grant was standing there, biting his lips with chagrin.

"I was watching the door when I heard the row," he explained ruefully, "and never paid much attention to the ivy. He just slipped me. And here come the two constables you told to follow us!"

The 5th Chapter.

Conclusion!

North gripped his companion's arm, and together they raced across the grounds, quickly leaving the constables far in the rear.

"It's the only chance!" gasped the Yard man. "If he once reaches London he can well snap his fingers at us, and—"

He saved his breath as they scaled the wall, reaching the top just in time to see a small car flash by at terrific speed, heading Citywards. Half a minute later they had entered the waiting taxi, and had started on what Grant afterwards remembered as the most exciting drive of his life.

Up hill and down dale the two cars tore, rushing through hamlets without daring to slacken speed; but for some time neither seemed to gain an inch on the other. A further five minutes went by, then the occupants of the taxi suddenly realised that the red tail-light ahead was perceptibly brighter and plainer.

"We're creeping up!" yelled North, striving to make his voice heard above the rush of air and the whir of wheels. "Give her every ounce!"

Grant opened the throttle to its widest, and they roared onwards. North crouched down, revolver in hand, his eyes fixed upon that red light in front.

"Crack, crack, crack!" He was aiming at the tyres, but the rocking of the taxi prevented accurate shooting. It would be only through pure chance if—

"Crack, crack!"

The red light ahead seemed to swerve violently towards the side of the road. A rending crash, a tearing sound of breaking brushwood, and Grant, shutting off power, jammed on his brakes just in time to prevent the taxi dashing full tilt into the other car, which was lying on its side against the grassy, bush-lined embankment.

As North sprang down there was a flash, followed by a sharp report, and his hat went spinning from his head. Levenstein, by some miracle apparently uninjured, was preparing to make a fight for it.

The fugitive's figure was clearly illuminated by the one powerful head-light of his own wrecked car which still remained burning, and he presented a better target than did either North or Grant, who were more or less in the shadow. Noticing this, the detective took steady aim and fired. A scream of pain and a clatter as the other's weapon dropped from his hand told him the result of his shot.

Five minutes later, with Levenstein nursing a shattered wrist, and mumbling vindictive curses in the Teutonic tongue, they were speeding back towards Barnham Police-station in the taxi, when Grant suddenly pointed towards the sky, which showed a crimson glow just beyond the town. North shook his head.

"Woodlands," he said. "And they won't put it out in a big hurry, I'm thinking!"

But whether Murray had been killed outright by Levenstein's bullet, or whether he and the little man, Tony, had perished in the flames, will never be definitely known. In any case, neither was ever seen again. The mansion was completely gutted, and the two village policemen, who had waited about for some time after the taxi's departure, saw nobody escape from the raging inferno. So it was presumed that both of Levenstein's allies had found the place their crematorium.

(Don't miss "The Affair of the Ray," Grant's next case, in next Monday's BOYS' FRIEND.)

HEALTH & EXERCISE

Conducted by PERCY LONGHURST.

(If you are in need of any advice concerning health and general fitness write to "The Health Editor," The BOYS' FRIEND, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. All queries will be personally answered by Mr. Longhurst. Seize this opportunity of securing first-rate information and advice FREE!)

Swimming and Breathing.

I have come to the conclusion that one of the reasons—perhaps the chief reason—why so many fellows "don't care about swimming," or "can't get on at it," and are generally disappointed with themselves and their performances in the water, is because of the breathing difficulty.

I say "difficulty," because there is no doubt whatever that many do find breathing difficult. They feel that they cannot get enough air into their lungs; that any breathing while in the water means a violent effort; that after a few strokes they're either half-suffocated through holding the breath, or have swallowed a few gallons of water, or are absolutely breathless. Under these conditions, of course, they can't get on; and, not being able to alter them, they chuck swimming. This is a great pity, for swimming is one of the very best of all physical exercises and recreations.

Now, there ought not to be any difficulty about breathing while in the water. If there is, depend upon it something is wrong, and that something can be cured with a little trouble.

Many chaps who can swim breathe improperly. Their breathing is short and hard. That is wrong. It ought to be easy. And the fault is caused by breathing, as a rule, at the wrong time. In all cases the breath should be taken in through the mouth. Nose breathing is right enough, but it can't be carried out while swimming. But you should exhale (breathe out) through the nose, and under water, as you can learn to do.

There is never any necessity to force the head back, so as to bring the mouth clear of the water to enable breathing to take place. A really good breast-stroke swimmer, for instance, has his mouth under water half the time. To prevent this happening, as beginners will try, the head is craned back, there is a big strain thrown on the upper part of the body, which tires quickly, the breathing becomes laboured and jerky, and the body is thrown out of position.

Now, if the novice will remember to take in breath when his arms are coming back, there'll be no need for this effort. The arms leave the body, and bring the mouth clear above the surface. That's the moment for taking in an easy, full breath. No need to scramble over it; you have plenty of time. As the arms go forward the head drops, the mouth goes under water, and then comes the time for letting out breath—through the nose for choice.

The Crawl.

Several readers have written me making inquiry about the "crawl" stroke in swimming, and I can tell you it's a stroke as difficult to describe usefully on paper as it is to learn. There's so much of it, so many movements have to be taken in the right way. Then, again, no two swimmers make the stroke exactly alike.

Briefly, the crawl is a combination of a short over-arm stroke, with which is combined a very peculiar leg-drive. This leg action was learned by the Australians from native swimmers of the South Pacific, and, having learned it, they began to create records right and left. For there's no doubt the crawl is the fastest of all swimming strokes; it's the stroke of the future. But it's not easy to learn properly. It is easy to get a bad style while learning, and to make mistakes which are not easily got rid of. When the crawl was copied by the Americans—which soon happened they began to improve upon it, with the result that there is an "American" crawl as well as an "Australian" crawl. Briefly, the difference between the two methods is that with the first the arms and legs work independently; with the second, one arm and one leg are working all the time.

The novice wanting to learn the crawl must begin by getting the right starting position. That is, flat on the face, the lower part under water. The arms should be stretched out above the head, and slightly bent at the elbow. The wrists should be just beyond the head, the hands slightly bent down. When the upper arm begins its stroke, the fingers should

catch the water with a quick snap, driving downwards and backwards until the hand reaches the hip. The arm is not straightened, the elbow remaining bent throughout the stroke. As the stroke finishes that of the under-arm starts, the hand being brought quite clear of the water, with the elbow well up in the air. There must be a good distance between the arms.

I haven't mentioned the leg-action yet, and for this reason, the novice will do well to master the arm-stroke thoroughly before beginning to worry about the legs. He should, in fact, confine himself to the arms until he can go a good fifty yards with the arms alone. If he try to learn right away the combination of the arms and legs, he'll get tied up in knots and learn no part well. More than that, he'll forget to pay attention to his breathing, and this on no account must happen.

More about the breathing, as well as the leg-action, will be dealt with next week.

Japanese Physical Training.

Here is a grand exercise for strengthening the muscles of the abdomen, back, loins, etc.

The attacker, facing his victim, throws his right arm across the small of the other's back and holds tightly. His left forearm he places across the victim's throat, resting the hand on the point of the shoulder. By pressure with the left arm upon the throat the victim is bent backwards across the other's arm. When he has gone over as far as possible, against the continued pressure of the attacker, he forces himself back to the original position. Then arms are changed, the left arm goes behind the back, the right across the throat, an intervals for deep breathing, and the whole movements are repeated, attacker and defender having changed places.

Don't forget when doing this exercise that it is complete body strengthening movement, not merely an attempt at juggling.

There is a similar exercise, only one arm, instead of being behind the back is placed across the chest, and the defender makes resistance with both hands pressing against the attacker's hips, thumbs to the front, fingers behind. Strong pressure and resistance as before.

Wrestling.

The style of wrestling known as the Cumberland and Westmoreland is one so simple, so easily learned and inexpensively practised, it has always been a matter of wonder to me why it is that the lads of other districts than those which are its birthplace do not take up the game with the same enthusiasm as is shown in the North. There the boys coming back from school will linger by the roadside, wherever there is a convenient bit of thick turf, pull off jackets and waistcoats, remove their thick boots, and set to work with the various "chips" they have learned from their fathers and elder brothers. No wonder this corner of England breeds wrestlers second to none.

No costly mat is wanted. First down to lose is the rule, and the light-weight has a better chance of "glassing" his heavier and stronger chum than any other style of wrestling allows.

The contestants stand up chest to chest, legs well apart, feet back, and take hold round the body, each right arm passing under the other left. As soon as both parties have joined hands—hooking, not interlacing, the fingers—across the other's back—and not until then—the wrestling begins, and it continued until one is on the ground or has broken his hold. To break the hand-grip is reckoned equal to losing a fall.

The buttock is similar, only your hip goes so far under his body that he is lying fairly across your back, and your vigorous twist at his body brings him over a complete somersault.

Percy Longhurst

(Another splendid Health and Exercise article in next Monday's BOYS' FRIEND.)

A SPLENDID NEW SERIES OF ROOKWOOD YARNS!



The Waif's Sacrifice!

A Grand Yarn of JIMMY SILVER, KIT ERROLL, and the "KID." By OWEN CONQUEST.

The 1st Chapter.

Erroll! No answer. Erroll, the Head repeated, glancing up. It was calling-over at Rookwood School, and Dr. Chisholm was taking the roll. All Rookwood had gathered in the dusky old Hall, with one exception. There was a place empty in the ranks of the Fourth. Kit Erroll was not there. Erroll of the Fourth, who was hardly ever known to be late for roll-call. Dr. Chisholm paused. In the ordinary course, the absent junior would have been marked down "absent," and calling-over would have continued. But now there was a pause, a long pause. Evidently, for some reason of his own, the Head of Rookwood attached some unusual significance to the absence of Erroll of the Fourth. Jimmy Silver glanced at Mornington, Erroll's chum, and Morny gave a slight shrug of the shoulders. But his face was troubled. Mr. Bootles blinked at his Form over his spectacles. He was surprised by Erroll's absence. The pause in calling the roll caused a general movement of interest in the crowded Hall. It was some moments before the Head spoke again after he had repeated Kit Erroll's name twice. "Mr. Bootles, is not Erroll of the Fourth Form present?" "Apparently not, sir," answered Mr. Bootles, blinking over his Form again. "I do not—ah—see him among my Form, sir." "You have not given him leave of absence?" "No, sir." "Has any prefect done so?" There was a buzz among the Sixth Form prefects. And the answer was in the negative. "The old scout seems to be awfully interested in Erroll!" Arthur Edward Lovell whispered to Jimmy Silver. "Erroll been up to anything?" Jimmy shook his head. "Blessed if I know! Has Erroll gone out, Morny?" Mornington nodded, but did not speak. Bulkeley of the Sixth called for silence, and the whispering among the juniors ceased. The Head spoke again. "If any boy present knows where Erroll of the Fourth is let him stand forward at once." No one stood forward. By this time the surprise was general. It was not, after all, such a very uncommon thing for a junior to be late for call-over, or even to miss it altogether. Why the Head was taking so much notice of Erroll's absence was a mystery to the Rookwood fellows. "Bulkeley!" "Yes, sir?" "Will you ascertain, if possible, whether Erroll of the Fourth is still within gates?" "Certainly, sir!" The Rookwood captain left the Hall. Then the Head resumed the roll of names, and all the fellows present congratulated themselves that they were there to answer "Adsum." By the time the roll was finished Bulkeley of the Sixth had returned. Dr. Chisholm gave him an inquiring glance. "Erroll has gone out, sir," said Bulkeley. "Mack, the porter, says that he left a few moments before the gates were locked. Mack called after him, and he did not answer." "Thank you, Bulkeley." Then the school was dismissed, and the fellows crowded out of Hall, most of them discussing Erroll of the Fourth and the Head's singular interest in his absence. Jimmy Silver & Co. were keenly interested. They ran Mornington in his study in the Fourth Form

passage. They found Morny looking very troubled and disturbed. "What's the trouble?" asked Jimmy Silver. "Is anything wrong with Erroll, Morny?" The dandy of the Fourth did not answer. "The Head seemed in a bait about it," said Raby. "Follows have cut call-over before, and no bones broken." "Something's up this time," said Newcome sapiently. "Do you know what it is, Morny? You're Erroll's pal." "I—I think so, muttered Mornington. "Oh, the ass! I—I thought he'd have more sense after what's happened—" "What's happened?" Morny clenched his hands. "What will happen now?" he muttered. "They may find him with that young villain. Inspector Sharpe may be looking for him this very

"You oughtn't have said a word—" "Do you think I don't know that?" hissed Mornington. "What's the good of telling me that now? I—I was savage! I was a fool! But—but I never dreamed—" "But Erroll—" "Can't you see?" said Mornington savagely. "He was had up on the carpet, and Sharpe questioned him, and—and now I'm certain that he's gone to warn the Kid, that young thief—" "Good heavens!" "If they're found together—and they may be—it's all up with Erroll!" groaned Mornington. "Who'll believe that he was only thinking of a silly romantic scheme of reclaiming a young thief? Who'll believe that? You know what it will look like. He's lost—lost—" Mornington threw himself into a chair.



ARRESTED FOR ANOTHER'S CRIME! As the Kid disappeared among the trees a cold, acid voice broke in upon Erroll. It was the Rookham inspector. "So I've got you, my man, have I?"

minute. It's certain, considering what he suspects—" "What the thump are you talking about?" exclaimed Lovell, in amazement. "What's old Sharpe got to do with Erroll?" Morny snapped his teeth. "The old fool suspects him of being mixed up in the robbery at the school the other night." "Great Scott!" "Impossible!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver, aghast. "He suspects him," muttered Mornington. "Erroll told me. It's all through his own folly. You remember the day Erroll cut the Bagshot match? Well, he had an upset in his canoe on the river, and a fellow pulled him out, a ragged young rascal called the Kid, some nameless waif, and that's the rotter who robbed the school—" "Morny!" "And Erroll has a mad idea of reclaiming him, because the kid saved his life." Mornington clenched his hands. "I—I—I told the Head—" "You did?" "I—I wanted to save Erroll making a fool of himself, but—but it's made that idiot of an inspector think that Erroll is in league with the young thief."

"It's my fault! Erroll's ruined, and I've ruined him! And I'd—I'd do anything to save him." Jimmy Silver & Co. stared at Mornington. Morny, usually so proud and reckless, seemed utterly crushed, bowed down by the disaster his jealous temper had brought upon his best chum. He did not speak again. He did not answer the juniors when they spoke to him, and the Fistical Four left the study quietly.

The 2nd Chapter.

Inspector Sharpe Makes a Capture! "Kid!" Kit Erroll of the Fourth Form at Rookwood stood under the trees in the gloom, and called softly. Round him was deep shadow. Heavy branches overhung the narrow footpath through the wood by the river. "Kid!" Erroll waited and listened. He knew that the waif was in the wood, that he was within call. More than once, since the day when the Kid had risked his life to save him from death in the river, Erroll had met him and talked with him in the depths of the brown autumn woods. And he believed, he felt, that he was prevailing; that the task he had set

himself was to be a success; that the boy, little more than a child, trained to crime by Baldwin Sleath and his rascally associates, would be saved by him. And if that was the result of his efforts Erroll would not regret the risks he had run, if he could repay the saving of his life by saving his rescuer from crime and shame. It was the generous thought of a generous heart, but Erroll did not know how terribly close the danger was. He knew that Inspector Sharpe suspected him of acting in collusion with the boy cracksmen who had robbed the school. He guessed that the Rookham inspector was on the alert. But he did not know that his steps had been dogged from the moment he left the school—that Mr. Sharpe was close on his track, hidden in the shadows, and listening, with a grim smile, to his voice as he called: "Kid!" There was a rustle in the under-woods. In the dimness a little figure became faintly visible—the figure of a boy a couple of years younger than Erroll, clad in tatters, with a rag of a cap on the back of his curly head. "Is that you, guv'nor?" "Yes, yes!" muttered Erroll. The boy peered at him in the gloom. "What's the game now?" he asked. "It ain't two hours since you was here before, guv'nor." "I've come to warn you." The words were spoken low, but they floated on the still air to the listening ears close at hand. Inspector Sharpe smiled again. The Head of Rookwood had scorned the bare suggestion that Erroll of the Fourth was in league

"Quiet!" whispered the Kid. He laid his hand on Erroll's arm. "Come along with me, and quiet." He drew the Rookwood junior away into the shadows by a hidden track through the tangled under-woods. A shadow moved on the footpath; the unseen watcher muttered a curse. Had he allowed his prey to escape him, after all? Silently, savagely, the Rookham inspector sought in the darkness for the way the two boys had gone. Erroll submitted silently to the Kid's guidance. The waif was evidently quite at home in the dim woods. For many days he had been camped there in the heart of the wood—unseen, unsuspected. By winding ways through the under-woods and the shadowing trees he led Erroll on, until they stopped at last under a towering beech. In the thickets tangled round the big tree there was a rude hut of branches and twigs, the den in which the outcast had slept in the lonely nights. "Here we are!" the Kid chuckled softly. "This is my home, ject at present, guv'nor. Can't ask you to sit down." Erroll panted. The Kid was quite cool, quite collected. Young as he was, danger had often shadowed his path before. It did not shake his nerve now. Erroll leaned on the tree, panting, and peered at him in the gloom. "Kid, this is the last time I can see you. You must run for it!" he said breathlessly. "If you're still in these woods in the morning you'll be taken. Listen to me. You saved my life, and I want to save you from crime and prison. You must do as I tell you. You robbed the school?" "Yes, guv'nor." The Kid's answer was quite cool, and Erroll shivered. The wretched waif had no understanding of what he had done. He was what he had been taught to be by Baldwin Sleath. "You have your plunder here?" "Yes, guv'nor; pretty safe hidden under these here branches." "Oh, Heaven!" muttered Erroll. "Don't you understand, Kid, that you've made me a party to the theft now? If you don't give back what you've stolen I'm as bad as a thief for helping you!" "You did it, guv'nor," answered the Kid coolly. "I never asked you to come 'ere looking for me." "Never mind that. Kid, won't you listen to me?" breathed Erroll. "You must give up this awful life, you must learn better things than this. You say yourself that that villain Baldwin Sleath has deserted you." "He ain't showed up since the crib was cracked," said the Kid, with a nod. "You owe him nothing. He has been a villain to you. Kid, listen to me. If the stolen property is given back you can start fresh." "How can I start fresh?" muttered the Kid. "I ain't got any friends—only Baldwin Sleath and his gang." "You have a friend—you have me. I will stand by you." "What can you do, guv'nor?" "I can help you. I will help you!" said Erroll earnestly. "I will help you to begin a new life. If my father were in England he would help, I know. But there is my headmaster. He is a kindhearted man. Only let me take the stolen property back to him, as a proof of good faith, and I am certain he will help you to begin a better life. I will answer for it, Kid." The Kid made a restless movement. "Don't you want to, Kid?" asked Erroll, almost in despair. The waif nodded slowly. "I never thought about it till you talked to me, guv'nor," he said. "I was taught to do what I does. I never knowed anything else. Since you have talked to me I don't say—but—" Erroll laid a hand on his arm. "Trust to me, Kid. I give you my word of honour that I will see you through. Am I not a better friend than Baldwin Sleath?" "I reckon you are, guv'nor." "Trust to me. Let me save you. Give me what you have stolen from the school, and let me take it to the Head. Kid, it's the only way. And it may be the only way to save you, for you may be taken yet." The Kid chuckled. "I reckon not. They won't take me easy. But—but you're a good sort, you are, guv'nor. You're a real good sort. If I'd knowed you before I'd never have come to this. That's gospel truth! I never had a chance yet." "I'm giving you a chance now, Kid. Take it." "I'm your man!" said the Kid,

After a brief pause. "I'll do as you say, gov'nor. I'm chancing it. And here's the stuff!"

He pulled aside a heap of twigs and leaves, and revealed an excavation in the ground. A large bag lay there; and Erroll, panting with relief, caught it up. The Kid eyed it, perhaps regretfully. But his resolution was taken.

"That's the swag, gov'nor—all of it, so help me!" said the Kid. "I hand it over to you—Hark!"

There was a heavy step, a crash in the underwoods. The Kid sprang back like a startled stag.

"Look it, gov'nor!" he gasped. "The cops!"

In an instant he had vanished into the blackness of the wood. Erroll made a startled step, but he had no time to flee. A heavy hand dropped on his shoulder.

"I've got you, my man!" said the cold, acid voice of the Rookham inspector. "Swag and all, by gad! You'll come with me!"

"I—I—"

"You can talk later. Come!"

Inspector Sharpe jerked the heavy bag from Erroll's hand. Then, with a grasp of iron on the junior's shoulder, he marched him away through the shadowy woods. And Erroll walked by his side, dumb, in utter despair!

The 3rd Chapter.

In the Grip of the Law!

"It's Erroll!"

"My hat!"

"And—old Sharpe!"

A group of startled juniors on the steps of the School House looked on as they came in. There had been a loud ring at the gate, and old Mack had opened it, staring blankly at the sight of Kit Erroll in charge of the tail, portly inspector. Old Mack's eyes almost bulged from his head as he blinked after them, crossing towards the School House. On the steps, in the light from within, a dozen fellows had gathered, and Erroll's face was pale and downcast; he looked neither to the right nor to the left as he walked by the inspector's side.

In the doorway, Mornington made a stride towards him, his hand outstretched, his lips parted.

Inspector Sharpe pushed him back. "Keep back there!" he snapped.

"Erroll!" panted Mornington.

Erroll gave his chum a haggard look. There was no reproach in his face even now. Mornington's burden of remorse was heavy enough, without his adding to it.

The inspector's grasp was still on his shoulder. Mr. Sharpe seemed to have a lurking fear that his prisoner might escape him yet, if he was not very careful. That Erroll was a prisoner was clear to all—a prisoner in the hands of a police-inspector! It was a stunning surprise to the Rookwood fellows looking on.

With a heavy tread, Mr. Sharpe marched on with his prisoner, and knocked at the door of the Head's study.

The door opened to admit him, with Erroll, and closed behind him again.

A buzz broke out in the crowd of Rookwood fellows, thickening every moment.

"Erroll—poor old Erroll!" said Putty of the Fourth. "What's happened—do you know, Morny?"

Mornington did not answer.

He walked away unsteadily, his face like chalk.

Jimmy Silver & Co. knew what had happened—what must have happened. Their hearts were heavy for poor Erroll.

"But—but they can't believe he's a thief!" whispered Lovell, in a scared voice. "They can't think that—"

Jimmy compressed his lips.

"If they found him with the thief, what can they believe? Poor old Erroll! He's as innocent as a baby—I know that!"

"I'm sure of it!"

Among Erroll's comrades of the Fourth Form there was faith—unshaken faith. But it was likely to serve the hapless junior little. It was not by them that he was to be judged.

In the Head's study the junior stood silent and downcast while the inspector explained to Dr. Chisholm. He laid the bag on the Head's table, and opened it.

The contents were turned out—gleaming silver-plate, and a bundle of banknotes and currency-notes; the plunder that had been taken from the Head's safe on the night of the robbery.

The Head looked over it, with his hands trembling, and identified the stolen property. Erroll did not speak. He was in utter despair now, and he felt a strange numbness of mind and body.

"And—and you found this?" the Head faltered.

"I found this boy with the bag in his hand, in the woods by the river," said the Rookham inspector coldly. "He had been talking to his confederate, who, unluckily, got away. We shall have him later."

"His—his confederate?"

"Yes—the young cracksmen called the Kid."

The Head's lip quivered.

"Erroll, what have you to say to this?" he asked; and his voice faltered.

Erroll groaned.

"I am innocent, sir—surely you must know that I am innocent! You could not believe that I had a hand in robbing you?"

Inspector Sharpe thrust a hand into his pocket, and there was a clink of metal.

Erroll started back.

"Stop, Mr. Sharpe!" said the Head, with quiet dignity. "There is no need to handcuff this boy. I am responsible for him."

"He is responsible now to the law, sir."

"He must say what he can for himself. That the case looks black against him, I know. Erroll, my boy, what can you have to say in your defence?"

"What am I accused of?" said Erroll, raising his head proudly. "Of helping a cracksmen to rob the school? Is it possible, sir, that you could believe such a thing for one moment? Mr. Sharpe found this bag in my hands; I had just taken it from—"

"From where you had hidden it," said the inspector gruffly.

"From where the thief had hidden it," said Erroll calmly. "He had agreed to allow me to restore the stolen property to you, sir."

"Erroll!"

"It is true, sir!" panted Erroll. "Oh, if you do not believe me, what am I to do? Who will believe me, if you do not? If the inspector heard me speaking to the Kid, he must know that it is true."

"I heard a few words, and then you eluded me," said Mr. Sharpe. "I do not believe one word of this cock-and-bull story! Dr. Chisholm, I have here one of the thieves—"

"How dare you say so?" exclaimed Erroll passionately. "Dr. Chisholm, listen to me! I will tell you all that has happened, and you will—you must—believe me!"

"Speak, my boy."

Inspector Sharpe gave an impatient shrug of the shoulders. But he was silent as Erroll hurried on.

In breathless words, Erroll told his story—how the Kid had saved him from the river, and how, in return, he had resolved to save the unhappy waif from crime and criminal associates.

"Perhaps I have done wrong, sir," he went on; "but—but I thought that if the stolen property was returned, and the poor boy tried to lead a new life, then I should not be to blame. And I had succeeded sir—I tell you that I had succeeded! The Kid handed me these things to bring back to you. I should have brought them directly to you, but then the inspector seized me. I swear, sir, that every word I have told you is the truth! I should have come to you, sir, to ask your help for this poor lad. He is the victim of others—"

"He is a thief!"

"He was taught by a wretch—a villain—a dastard named Baldwin Sleath—"

The Head started violently.

"Baldwin Sleath?" he repeated.

"Yes, sir."

"What do you know of that man?"

"He was one of the gang of rascals who had me, sir, when I was a child, before my father found me. It was because of what I remembered of that time that I could understand and pity the Kid. And he has repented, sir—the Kid has—I know it! Now that he has a friend to stand by him, he will keep to what is right, if he is given a chance!"

Erroll panted. "Oh, sir, surely you believe what I am telling you?"

Dr. Chisholm nodded his head.

"I do believe you, Erroll. You have acted recklessly, foolishly, but that your intent was good, I am assured. You have run into danger of disgrace and shame in your quixotic resolve to help this boy, but I believe you—I believe you!"

"Thank Heaven!" whispered Erroll.

There was a sound from the inspector that suspiciously resembled a snort.

"Really, Dr. Chisholm—" he began.

The Head looked at him.

"I believe every word the boy has uttered, Mr. Sharpe," he said.

"Does that mean that you will not charge him with the theft, sir?"

"Most undoubtedly."

The inspector bit his lip.

"But, sir, this is folly—"

"I believe the boy, Mr. Sharpe. He has acted quixotically, but he has done no worse," said the Head steadily. "If you feel bound to proceed with the charge, I shall act in Erroll's defence—I shall appear in court to state my implicit faith in him!"

"But, sir—" exclaimed the inspector.

"You know what I have told you, Mr. Sharpe—of my boy—of my own son," said the Head, in a trembling voice. "My Cyril." He seemed forgetful of Erroll's presence for the moment. "My child was stolen from me by that dastard, Baldwin Sleath, in revenge for a fancied wrong. He was trained to crime. Under a false name he now lies in a juvenile prison."

"But—" muttered the inspector.

Erroll stared blankly at the Head.

"Even now I am having inquiries made at Borsal, in the hope of tracing him out," said the Head, in a broken voice. "If he had found a friend in his hour of need—a friend like this noble boy—he might have been saved—saved to be a comfort to me in my age! Alas, that there was no one to help my poor boy, as Erroll has tried to help another unhappy victim of a conscienceless villain!"

His voice choked, and he passed his hand across his eyes.

The inspector coughed.

He was not naturally an unsympathetic man, but the business of his life had not given him a soft heart or a trusting mind.

"You understand?" faltered the Head. "Can I be hard upon this lad, who has tried to save another victim of that dastard? I tell you, I believe every word Erroll has uttered. He has acted recklessly, perhaps lawlessly, but I would give all I possess if someone could have been found to act so towards my own unhappy son in like circumstances. I honour him for what he has done, and he shall not suffer!"

There was a long pause.

Inspector Sharpe took two or three turns up and down the study, his brows knitted.

He was evidently in a state of perplexity.

Erroll waited in silence, his eyes on the floor. The Head watched the inspector anxiously.

Mr. Sharpe stopped at last, before the headmaster's desk. His expression was grim.

"I am sorry, sir," he said. "But I have my duty to do. This boy must leave Rookwood in my charge."

"In custody?"

"Yes."

"Inspector Sharpe, I have already said that I shall make no charge—that I shall—"

"The matter is out of your hands now, sir," said the inspector. "I am sorry, but there is the law, and the law must take its course. This boy was found in possession of stolen property, in company with a young cracksmen wanted by the police. There is only one step for me to take, sir, and certainly I never dreamed of opposition from you. But—"

"But in spite of my opposition, you intend to take this boy into custody?" said the Head, with a catch of his breath.

"I have no alternative, sir."

"But, for Heaven's sake—"

Knock!

The Head was interrupted by a sharp knock at the door of the study.

The 4th Chapter.

For Erroll's Sake.

"Who the thump—"

Jimmy Silver uttered that startled exclamation.

The Fistical Four of the Fourth were on the School House steps, dimly discussing what was going on in the Head's study. Jimmy Silver & Co. felt their hearts ache for poor Erroll. Their faith in him never wavered, but they knew what must happen. He would go, leaving his comrades firmly believing in his honour—but he would go, with the inspector's hand on his shoulder, to the police-station at Rookham. They knew it must be so. After what Mornington had told them, they knew how Erroll must have been found—with the Kid—and they could guess what was in the bag that the inspector carried so carefully.

They wanted to see Erroll again—to assure him, even as he was taken away by the inspector, of their unbroken faith in him. That was all they could do. It was little enough, but it was all. The sight of a face peering from the shadows of the quadrangle startled Jimmy Silver suddenly, and caused his ejaculation.

It was a good-looking face, though not over-clean, and scared in its expression. The Fistical Four stared at the stranger, wondering how he had come into the Rookwood quadrangle after the gates were locked.

"What the dickens!" ejaculated Arthur Edward Lovell.

"It's the kid we saw talking to Erroll by the river," muttered Raby. Jimmy caught his breath.

"The Kid!"

He leaped down the steps.

The little waif made a backward movement, as if to flee to the shadows; but he changed his mind, and stood his ground.

"Hands off, gov'nor!" he muttered.

"I'm not going to touch you," said Jimmy Silver quietly. "What are you doing here?"

"You know him—Master Erroll?"

"Erroll? Yes."

"He's here?"

"Yes; in the Head's study," said Jimmy Silver, in wonder. "Have you come—?"

The Kid laid a grimy hand on his sleeve. His dark eyes looked up searchingly into Jimmy's face.

"I've got to know," he muttered. "What are they doin' to him, gov'nor? P'raps you're a friend of Master Erroll—"

"Yes, yes!"

"He's been a good friend to me," said the Kid. "I'm afraid he's got himself lagged because of me. What are they doing to him?"

"I—I'm afraid—" Jimmy faltered. "You are the Kid?" he asked quickly.

"Yes."

"Then it was you who—who—"

The waif smiled bitterly.

"Who cracked the crib at this here school," he said. "Get it off your chest. Yes, it was me, gov'nor—"

"A nipper like you!" said Jimmy, in wonder mingled with horror.

"I've cracked cribs before," said the Kid grimly. "That's why I was so useful to Baldwin Sleath, being small, and able to get into any little winder, you see. I done the job here, and if the gov'nor is getting into trouble for it, I'm 'ere to see him through."

Jimmy Silver caught his breath.

He understood now why the waif was lurking in the Rookwood quadrangle in the darkness.

"You—you—" he said.

"I thought at first he'd got clear, when that cop came down on us," said the Kid. "But he never did. He ain't so smart as a bloke that's dodged cops since he was old enough to walk. I follered them. I saw them come in here at the gates, and I nipped over the wall. Gov'nor, tell me what they're doin' to him. He's been a good friend to me, and I ain't going to see him come to harm!"

"I'm afraid he's going to be taken away by the police!" said Jimmy, in a low voice.

"I reckoned so. They think he had a hand in it?"

"Yes."

"Then it's the stone jug for him!" muttered the Kid. "I reckoned it was so, but I wanted to be sure afore I give in. Where are they now, gov'nor? You take me in, and I'll see him through!"

Jimmy's glance, as it dwelt on the little outcast's face, was full of pity and compassion.

The boy was a thief, on his own confession; and yet he had come there to give up his liberty—to save the junior who had befriended him.

There was good somewhere in the little waif, the unhappy pupil of a villain.

"You're a good sort, Kid, whatever

else you are!" said Jimmy Silver. "You can save Erroll, if anybody can."

"I'm here to save him," said the Kid steadily. "Take me to him now, and I tell you I'll see him clear!"

"Come on!" said Jimmy Silver.

He led the Kid into the lighted hall of the School House. Lovell and Raby and Newcome looked on in silence.

There were exclamations on all sides as the Kid blinked in the light, staring round him.

Valentine Mornington came up. He caught Jimmy Silver eagerly by the arm.

"Jimmy, who's this? Is it—is it—"

"It's the Kid, and he's come here to save Erroll!" answered Jimmy Silver quietly.

"Good heavens!" breathed Mornington.

Jimmy Silver took the little waif's arm, and led him down the corridor towards the Head's study. Mornington stood looking after them, sick at heart. He was glad—glad that the waif had come, to save Erroll, when nothing else could have saved him. But this was the boy Erroll would have helped—the boy he had been bitterly angry with his chum for befriending. And he had come to give up his liberty for his benefactor! If he would do that, he was worth helping—he was worth saving. And Erroll had been right!

Mornington's conscience tortured him at that moment.

Jimmy Silver stopped at the Head's door, and knocked. The Kid stood quietly by his side.

Jimmy did not wait to be told to come in. He opened the door after knocking, and entered.

The Kid followed him.

There was a grim, bitter resignation in the Kid's look, but there was no fear. He was prepared for what he had to face.

"Silver!" exclaimed the Head angrily. "You—"

He was interrupted.

"By gad, the Kid!" ejaculated Inspector Sharpe.

The portly inspector stared blankly at the boy.

"The Kid!" repeated Erroll dazedly.

Dr. Chisholm looked at the waif. "Who—what—" he began.

Jimmy Silver explained hurriedly. "It's the Kid, sir—the boy Erroll saw. He's come to confess. I thought I ought to bring him at once."

The Head drew a deep breath of relief.

"I understand! You have done right, Silver!"

The Kid gave Erroll a faint grin. "All serene, gov'nor!" he said. "I wasn't going to let you in for it. As soon as I knowed you was copped, I made up my mind." He turned to Inspector Sharpe, in whose hand the "dabbies" were clinking. "I'm ready, sir! You seem to know me!"

"I think I know you well enough!" said the inspector grimly. "Your photograph is pretty widely circulated, my boy! Why have you come here?"

The Kid nodded his head towards Erroll.

"To see the gov'nor clear," he answered. "He hadn't nothing to do with it. He wanted to help me, because I pulled him out of the river. He wanted to bring the swag back, and I let him. He reckoned I was going to have a chance to be something better than a thief!" His voice shook for a moment. "But that ain't no go! You got me now, sir—you got me, and I know what it means! But I don't care, if the gov'nor don't suffer for helping me!"

"Why did you come here, my poor Kid?" muttered Erroll miserably.

The Kid grinned.

"It ain't so hard for me as it would be for you, sir," he said. "Besides, I'm the thief, and you ain't! I sha'n't never forget what you tried to do for me, gov'nor! Now I'm ready, Mister Cop!"

He held out his hands, and there was a clink of metal. Without another glance at Erroll, the inspector led his prisoner away. The Head gave a deep sigh, and signed to Jimmy Silver and Erroll to leave the study.

"Heaven help him!" whispered the Head. "The poor boy must have a noble heart to do this—he must! But his fate is sealed—even as my own poor boy's fate is sealed!"

He must suffer, though more sinned against than sinning—even as his own son had suffered.

Erroll was safe—saved by the waif's sacrifice.

THE END.

(Make a point of reading next Monday's topping Rookwood, entitled "Mornington's Moment!")

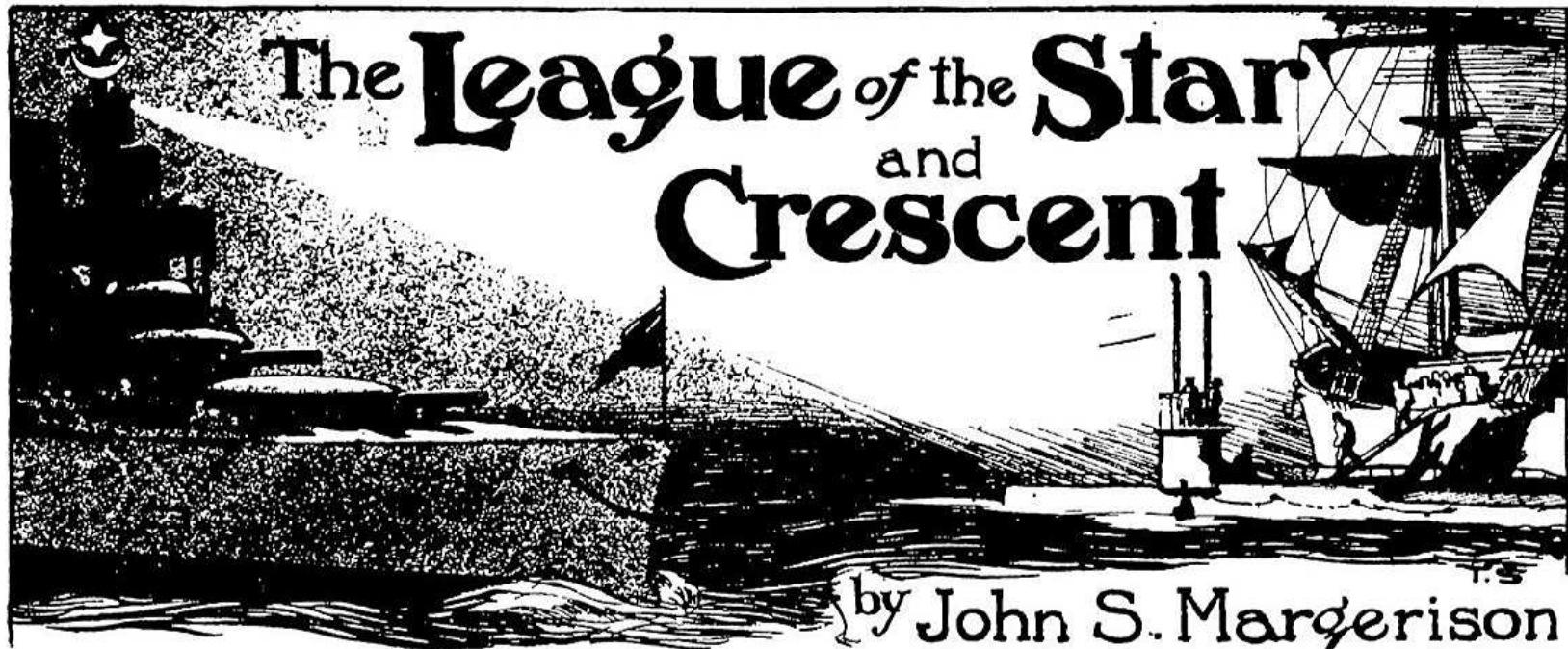


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INTRODUCTION.
 DICK MURRAY, midshipman on board H.M.S. Fir, an orders to bring a despatch boat to Gibraltar. With him second Irishman of the name CASEY, a crew of some eighteen British sailors, he man the salvaged vessel, the Maria Dolorosa. They find some plan, a set board of money, deposited the Kaiser in the late war, which documents are eagerly sought after by a secret society whose sign is the Star and Crescent. As the crew of the Maria Dolorosa are bidding farewell to some visitors in a submarine, a cruiser in the pay of the League of the Star and Crescent opens fire on them. The crew of the Maria Dolorosa manage to escape, and land on the coast of Africa, where they discover is situated the headquarters of the League they are trying to avoid. The enemy makes a point of showing them how impossible it is for them to escape alive, and declares that with their help he hopes to find the secret papers for which the league waits so impatiently.

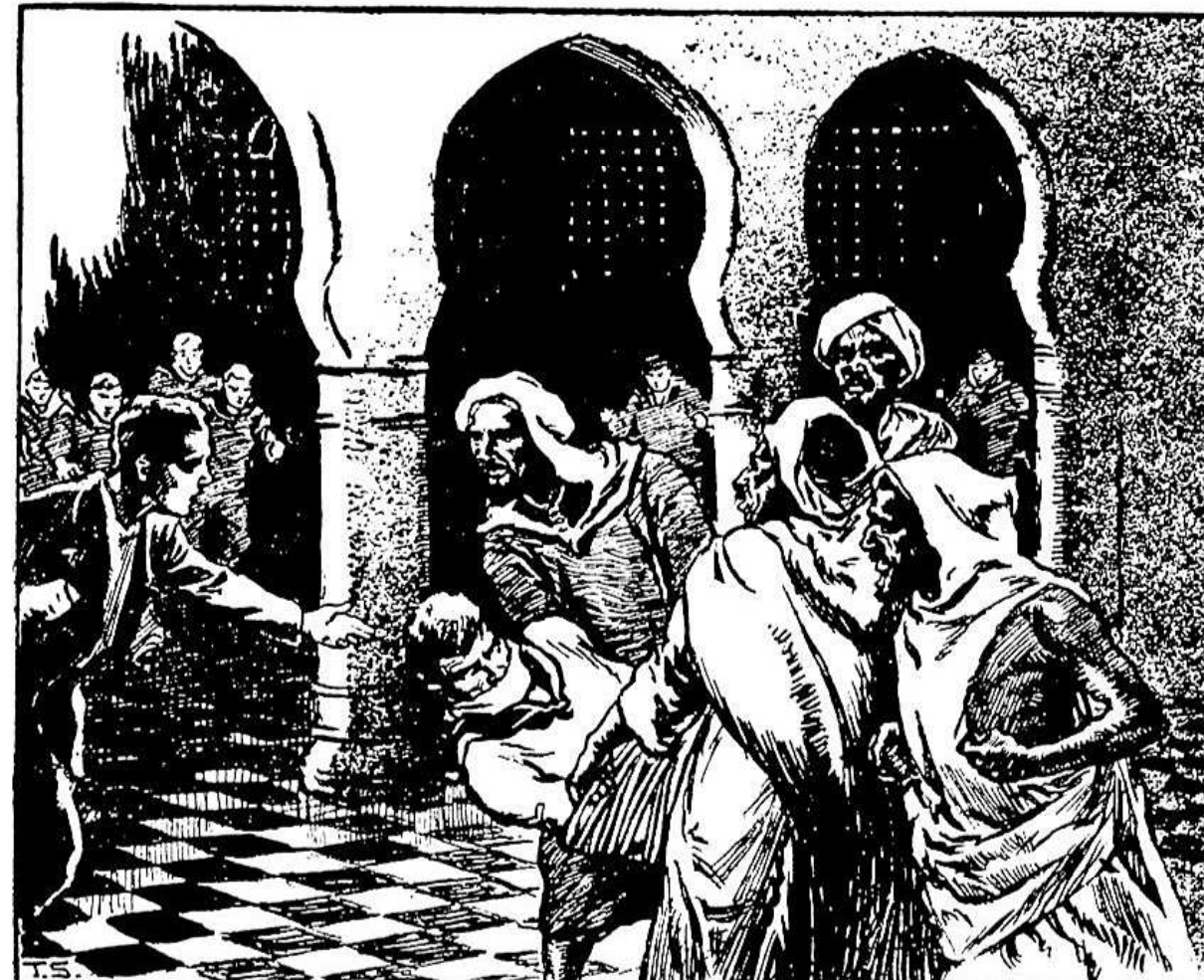
rebuke, and looked most humble as he stepped back and saluted.
 "Nay, be not angry with thy servant, Midshipman Effendi," said the aid. "Since I myself have already forgiven him his fiery talk, and I myself sincerely crave his pardon in that I miscalled the Service of which he is so able a representative. Nay, I like his courageous manner and his fearless speech, and would fain offer him employment as my personal bodyguard."

ready for ye, or on their way to this place for your use. In the meantime, Effendi, I give you salaams and farewell."
 He bowed till his long beard almost swept the ground, and Dick, smartly calling his men to attention, stood at the salute till the Moor's back was again straightened. Then, following their guides, the sailormen made their way up one of the long, wide, straight streets, while the cad and his bodyguard walked the next thoroughfare.
 "Rum old bird that said Able-Seaman Mann to his chum Rile, "I

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The attendants led the Britishers onward till they came to a big bungalowlike edifice set back from the road in a well-tended garden.
 "The cad's second best residence," said the attendant who had attached himself to Dick, and who seemed the leader-in-charge of all the others. "This I have reserved myself for you, Effendi, as it is quiet and cool, and altogether very pleasant."
 "Thanks," said Dick. "It's very good of you. And what might your name be?"
 "Your excellency will call me Yussuf when he requires his slave," came the answer. And Dick thought he saw a smile on the man's brown features as he bowed low before the midshipman. But he said nothing, as he entered the big bungalow. It was as big inside as out. A large saloon ran from one end to the other, surrounded, as the men discovered by opening doors, by a series of bedrooms, each one furnished tastefully and cleanly, though plainly. Dick, as was his right, selected his room first, his choice being largely affected by Yussuf's recommendations, that swarthy individual seeming to be well acquainted with the place. Later, Dick knew the reason for the attendant's persistence, though he smiled inwardly at the time.
 Casey took up his abode in a room from whose open door he could see into the midshipman's apartment, and sent his attendant scurrying for water, since, as he said, he hadn't had decent wash since the old Mary started to take her header. The others grouped themselves round the walls until every room save one was occupied, and this, as Yussuf explained, would be the apartment in which the attendants off duty would sleep at night, with the Effendis gracious permission.
 The Moor spoke excellent English. "Too perfect, Dick thought, for a true native."
 "Yes, Effendi, I have been in England many times," said Yussuf, when Dick questioned him. It was there that I learned to speak your so beautiful language, and if it will help me to serve so honourable a master as yourself, it will have been very useful. Believe me, Effendi, I am yours to command in all things—save one."
 "And I suppose that one is helping me and my men to escape from this city of yours, eh?" remarked Dick; whereat the Moor grinned, showing his white teeth. "I wonder if it would be any use offering you money at the other end; I have heard you chaps will do anything if the price is only enough."
 "If you could offer me all the money in the English Treasury, Effendi," said Yussuf, "I could not help you to get away—no, not even though you were to give me the papers that say where lies buried the treasure the League is seeking."
 "Look here, Yussuf, what do you mean?" demanded Dick. "Ever since I've been in Elcazar I've heard nothing but 'papers—papers.' I'm getting sick of it. I haven't got the papers, and if I had them I shouldn't give them away—but please don't let me hear the word again while I'm under your care, nor let me hear of the men being pestered about them. That's all."
 "To hear is to obey, Effendi," said Yussuf, and again Dick fancied he saw that winning smile cross his attendant's features, but couldn't swear to it.
 But he was destined to hear more about the papers, for, shortly after they had all turned in, weary and worn out, that night, he heard a cry, and, rising, saw one of his men being carried out of the door of his sleeping apartment, gagged and bound, by four of the attendants.
 "What's the meaning of this?" shouted Dick, hoping that the sound of his voice would rouse the other men. It did, and they came tumbling from their rooms, and fell upon the four Moors, bearing them to the ground, and tearing their prisoner from their hands. The attendants turned and drew their concealed automatics, and it would have gone hard with the Britishers had not Yussuf suddenly appeared, apparently from nowhere, and leapt between the two opposing parties.
 "You fools!" he told the Moors in their own language. Do ye desire to give the Feringhees an alarim, so that they will be afraid to give us the opportunity we put up those weapons, lest ye go to the cad, and say what ye are doing here."
 They hid their automatics in the folds of their garments, and glowered at Yussuf. Dick noticed that one of the four who had been struggling with Sullivan constantly wiped the

Casey to the Rescue!
 For the second time that day Casey's quick wit, aided to his intense pride of race, saved the situation. Though he had heard all the old Moor words, three only had struck hard in his brain—the English Navy. And as Dick and the rest of the bluejackets fell back in amazement at Ahmed Ben Adeem's words, the burly Irishman flung himself forward till he glared deep into the very eyes of the ruler of this secret city.
 "There's no such thing!" he stormed, his fist shaking under the Moor's nose. "If you was a younger man it's backing your eyes I'd be for calling it the English Navy," when for the most part it's made up of Irishmen, Scotchmen, and Welshmen, as well as a few from the Channel Islands. And a chap like you, that pretends to know something about the world, calls it the English Navy! Ben, me lad, if ye make a silly mistake like that again, I'll get cross with ye. And, furthermore, what d'ye mean by saying we're shortly going to help ye put your hands on the dirty papers that'll help ye to start your murdering games? D'ye mean to infer that we've got 'em—eh?"
 Ahmed Ben Adeem signed to the attendants to fall back a pace, and these, with their teeth and scimitars gleaming, and automatic pistols in their hands, waited but for the sign to make dog's food of the intrepid Irishman, who so forgot himself as to shake his fist under their chief's nose. As Casey's bull voice had roared out they had stepped up, and had he but touched one hair of the cad's head they would immediately have pistolled him on the spot. Dick put out his hand and pulled the Irishman back.
 "You forget yourself, Casey," he said sternly. "You and I are the guests of this Moorish gentleman, and because he happens to make a slight mistake in pronouncing the title of our Navy we have no right to resent it. Besides, I rather think that I am the senior officer of this expedition, and that as such it is I who should make any remarks as to this gentleman's aspersions, if aspersions they be. Please remain silent, and do not forget the common courtesy due from us to our host again!"
 He winked ever so slightly at the petty-officer as he spoke, for he was most prodigiously grateful to him for creating a diversion at the moment things seemed to be in a very bad way. Casey flushed at the



AT DEAD OF NIGHT! Dick could just discern some half-dozen dark forms—moving stealthily towards the door. They carried amongst them one of his men, gagged and bound—probably to a terrible death!

As for your offer, I'm already a personal bodyguard, since the captain of my ship told me to look after Mr. Murray here, and I can't leave that job, that duty, till the captain himself orders me to do so."
 "Who serves Midshipman Murray Effendi serves, also, Ahmed Ben Adeem," said the Moor, with a bow, which Dick returned. "And my honour is content. As for the latter part of thy question, oh Casey of the loose tongue, is it too true that thou and thy comrades are to attempt the salvage of the schooner Maria Dolorosa? Is it not equally true that in a certain secret panel in one of that ship's fittings there lie the papers that I have spoken of, placed thither for safekeeping by the traitorous Spaniard, who stole them from the emissary of the League, who was bringing them to Elcazar? There-

was calling us thieves, and it wasn't me that was sitting down quiet under such a false accusation. But if ye're satisfied, so am I, and here's me hand on it. If salvaging the old Maria will help ye to get the papers, it's Mike Casey himself will work like ten devils to get the old tub on top of the water again for ye."
 "That is good!" said the Moor. "And now that the day is drawing to a close will ye not go with your guides and attendants to see the lodgings that have been prepared for ye? I have many things—affairs of state and other matters—to attend to, and I would not weary ye with my presence longer. When the sun is well risen on the morrow I will send to ye them that shall take note of your requirements for the salvage of your schooner, and by high noon all those things shall be at the water's edge

thought he'd got us when he mentioned them things what we don't know nothin' about. He'd have slit our throats one time if we'd been fools enough to hand 'em over, even if we knew where they were."
 "We'd ha' been in a hole if Casey hadn't jumped at the only chance of puttin' the old buffer off the scent," answered Rile. "He's a smart Alec, is Mike, and I, for one, would follow him anywhere, even into that blinkin' fort the old chap showed us when it was full o' these cut-throat Leaguers."
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blood from his nose on his sleeve, and that a second could hardly see out of one eye. Yusuf stormed at them again, and very suddenly they filed out. Yusuf's knife severed Sullivan's bonds swiftly, and the seaman stood up.

"Blinkin' lot of perishers!" he stormed. "They couldn't buy me, though they offered me any amount of gold and jewels and me life and liberty in the bargain if I'd tell 'em where the papers were, and when I told them I didn't know, and what's more, wouldn't tell 'em if they flayed me alive, they said they'd test it by putting me to the torture. Said it was old Ben Adeem's orders. I can't say as I've liked that Ben of yours, sir, since I put me eyes on him. He looks too much like a crafty old German chap I once knew. Anyhow, I give 'em a bit of a rough house, and got well home in one clay's eye, and on another chap's nose afore they managed to tie me up, and I was hoping as the row would wake you all up so's we could have a pukka scrimmage. But they didn't get anything out of me about the papers, 'cause I don't know where they are. By the way, sir, where are they? Did they go down in the old tub?"

Dick was about to shake his head when somebody thumped him in the ribs, and, turning round, he caught Casey's eye. With a slight inclination of his head the Irishman indicated Yusuf hovering about in the background, his ears obviously wide open.

"I think you must have got a tap on the head in that little scrimmage, Sullivan, me lad," interposed the Irishman. "'Cause you're talking through a hole in your skull. You're peepin' mad. You've heard 'em say papers, papers, till, like me, you're beginning to think we do know something about 'em, while, if they ever did exist, they're lying in the old Maria on the sea bottom. Get back to bed, and if they tries any more monkey tricks with you, sing out for me to come and join in the scrap, and I'll guarantee, guns or no guns, there'll be a twisted neck or two before we're through!"

He winked prodigiously, and everybody knew he was talking thus for Yusuf's benefit, though could he have seen the grin on that worthy's dark features, Casey might have been inclined to try a fall with the big native there and then. And, as Dick desired, Yusuf carried the news of his words to the other attendants, and they modified their plans accordingly. But, all the same, before they returned to their respective couches that night Dick insisted on Casey's handing over the papers lest they be stolen from his sea-boot.

"These papers are going to get somebody into trouble if I don't look well after them," said Dick to himself, prising up a loose stone in the floor with his pocket-knife, and, folding the papers very small, placed the precious package into the cavity thus exposed. Very carefully the midshipman replaced the cobbles, and made a small mark on the plaster of the wall, counting the cobbles outward till he found the disturbed one. Then he tramped the stone back till it was more or less level with the remainder, and smiled, as he thought that neither Ahmed Ben Adeem nor any of the attendant gofers could possibly discover the secret plans without his help.

A Tight Corner!

Next morning Ahmed Ben Adeem sent to inform Dick that the first of the salvage gear was waiting down upon the beach for his inspection. Yusuf, it appeared, was to guide the party down to the place where the operations were to begin, and one of the electric motor-launches was to act as tender to the salvage party while they were working.

"To see that we don't attempt to run away," said Dick, with a grin. "As if we were all bally submarines or able to swim the Atlantic!"

They used the lifts and the trains to get down to the pier, and everywhere they found armed men standing on guard. There were, it appeared, places where the Britishers were not to go—that being the cad's order—and though the sailormen could not help wondering what was in these guarded places, they never attempted to pry. They were wholly concerned in regaining their freedom, and they promised themselves that, whether the cad meant them to use the schooner or not, it would go hard with anybody who attempted to interfere when the time was ripe for them to attempt to escape.

Casey looked with longing eyes on the slim black hull of the motor-boat, which steamed easily up and down beyond the point where the project-

ing masts told of Maria Doloresa's bed.

"Be jabers, sir," he said. "If we could only lay our hands on that little hooker, it's a clean pair of heels we'd be showing these folks in less than no time. And do ye notice that the little ship's got a gun in position this morning—that's to make the old Maria heave to, I suppose, if we perform a miracle and raise her in less than a day."

"More likely to bluff us with a show of force, Casey," said Dick. "I don't think they'd fire on the schooner, even if she was running away—not with intention to sink her in deep water or to set her on fire, anyhow. They'd aim principally at the masts and sails as the cruiser did, hoping to stop her. You mustn't forget that the papers are still supposed to be aboard her."

"And it looks to me, sir," replied the petty-officer, "that the cad's sent somebody to see if they are or not already."

He pointed out over the water, and Dick was just able to make out a couple of brown figures clinging to the sunken schooner's mast. One of these suddenly threw up his heels and dived, remaining down a couple of minutes, and when he reappeared his companion made a trip under water.

Dick grinned, and nodded. "I hope they don't feel very disappointed," he remarked. "Really, if I'd thought there was going to be all this trouble, I'd have faked a copy of the documents and left 'em in the secret panel, so that they should find something to keep 'em quiet for a time."

"That would have been exceedingly kind of thee, Effendi," said a quiet voice at Dick's elbow; and, turning, he peered into the sneering eyes of the cad. "But if the papers are not in thy possession, and thou hast not handled them, how would it have been possible for thee to copy them? And how dost thou know of the secret panel?"

Dick shrugged his shoulders. The surprise of finding the crafty old chief at his shoulder had been momentary.

"I see I must guard my words, or else speak not in parables, O Ahmed," he replied quickly. "The inner meaning of my words is that it is a shame for thee to take so much trouble when there are no papers. And as for the secret panel—why, when a ship is mysteriously raided, and her crew killed and spirited away, and a hole in a deck beam left open for all to see, how can one help speaking of a secret panel? But it is consistent with thy dignity, and the dignity of us, thy guests, that thou shouldst spy upon us in this manner, coming and going with no more noise than the cat? I tell thee, Ahmed Ben Adeem, it will profit thee nothing, whereas to treat us as we should be treated will perhaps be beneficial to thee and to the League."

The old Moor blinked rapidly. Dick's attitude was hardly what he had expected. What he wanted was to see the lad blushing, and hear his tongue tripping through some more or less plausible explanation. To be thus bearded was not at all to his liking. Still, he had to swallow many things till the all-important papers were found. When they were safely in the possession of the League his time would come, and these insolent foreigners should pay for all the dirt he had eaten.

"Moreover," went on Dick, seeing that he had the Moor guessing, "I do not like the way you go to work, Ben Adeem. Last night your attendants attempted to bribe one of my men; and when they found he knew nothing of what they wanted, they tried to carry him off with violence to the torture. And when we interposed they threatened us with arms."

He was about to add that had it not been for the timely intervention of Yusuf they would most likely have been shot, when he felt a sudden clutch at his arm, and, glancing out of the corner of his eye, saw Yusuf himself standing behind him.

"They acted, doubtless, under your instructions, chief," he went on. "And I really must say I don't care for your methods. If you and I are to remain friends, as you said in the first hour of our meeting, you will have to play the game square with me and my men, or we shall make trouble for you."

"That is as may be, Midshipman Effendi," returned the cad. "But you English have a saying that all is fair in love and war, and by that saying must I stand excused."

"Meaning that it is war between us?" ejaculated Dick. "Love—that is a sweeter term, and more pleasant to the ears," said the

Moor, with a grin. "And, further, it is written that only when one loves can one be hurt by the doings or sayings of another. But, see, let us put that apart. Here is some of the gear for the task of making that schooner float once more upon the waters. Will the Midshipman Effendi and his men be pleased to look over it, and see if it is good?"

Dick favoured the crafty old man with a long look; but, seeing that there was nothing to be gained by a prolongation of the discussion, shrugged his shoulders, and turned to inspect the gear piled up on the shore.

Salvage Preparations!

It was singularly complete. Electric cables run from the overhead wires of the electric railway, and were connected to drills and saws and hammers, all fitted out wonderfully for working under water. Stout steel cables, six inches thick, were neatly coiled to one side—a perfect cradle for the raising of a ship ten times the size of the Maria Doloresa. Here, also, were stout sheets of copper sheathing, with holes already bored, so that rivets could be easily driven. These were intended to cover the leaky seams which had sent the schooner to the bottom with the weight of water which had percolated through them. Also, there were long steel ladders, up and down which divers could ascend and descend, lead-lines for their guidance, and shot-ropes to help them stem any current which might be running under water. There was more than enough gear for the job.

And even as the men turned it over and examined it, knowing full well their lives might depend upon its soundness during the tricky operation they were about to commence, there appeared a huge squad of natives, bearing between them a great packing-case, which Dick started to see was branded on the outside with the name of a famous British firm of engineers.

"An electric submersible pump," said the cad, with a bow. "That is the thing which will help you raise the schooner in rather less than half the time hand-pumps would take. You see, Effendi, if I may be allowed to pass an opinion upon a task which so evidently falls within your province as a sailorman, I have an idea that it will be best for you, and quickest for me, if your divers descend under the waves, and affix the copper all around the bows of the

schooner. Then these wire cables can be passed underneath her hull, and the ends made fast to buoyant lighters, one on each side, so that she might be lifted higher and higher as the electric submersible pumps take all the water out of her, and at last float, whole and sound, on the surface, where I can personally inspect her, and get what I require, in spite of your story of an open secret panel."

"That's exactly what will have to be done to her, cad," replied Dick, a little nettled at the landsman who dared to give him instruction on how to perform a job he was quite familiar with. "But there's two things missing. The first is the diving gear. We don't seem to have any equipment here."

"Things are not always what they seem on the surface," quoth the Moor.

He turned and spat out an order in his own language; and again Dick thought he had surprised that amused gleam in Yusuf's eyes as his attendant stood behind the cad.

Half a score of men disappeared into one of the caves, and presently returned, bearing between them the full equipment of four divers—suits of the latest type, that carry their own air supply, and are not dependent upon pumps on the surface; helmets fitted with electric lamps on the top; belts equipped with all the tools necessary for salvage, even down to the great leaden boots with their rope laces.

"Itom one," reported the chief. "And the next, permit me to anticipate. The next is the lighters to lift the schooner. When all is ready these will be ready also, for I have already requested that they shall be sent to this harbour from another that I know of."

"You could use those two motor-launches for the work without the slightest difficulty," said Dick artlessly. "When the pump is going, and all Maria's hatches are closed down, she'll rise of herself, and only need something to keep her steady. The launches would do the work admirably."

The Moor throw back his head and laughed sarcastically.

"And they would also suit thy plans of running away admirably, my son," he replied. "Is that not it? Nay, but it ill becomes thee to lecture me on my duty towards my guests, when thou so far forget thy own duty towards thy host as to plan to terminate thy visit as abruptly as may be. Nor am I a fool, though my skin differs from thine in colour. Know that if the lighters arrive not, then the launches will be lent thee to use; but know also that before thou touchest one the motors will be bodily removed, so that the ship is but a shell floating on the water, so slowly that a strong swimmer may overhaul her. And, behold, her fate!"

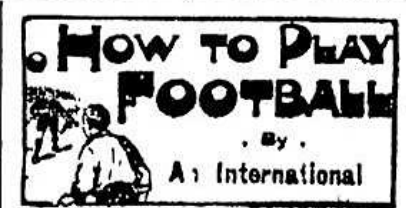
He turned and gave a second order in Moorish, and there suddenly appeared on the surface of the little bay a long trail of broken white water, bubbling up from below. Then almost as suddenly, a torpedo broke surface a couple of miles away, and the long, black motor-launch threw in her top gear, and cruised over to retrieve it.

"Tubes in the rock, near the surface," said the Moor. "They were never made to stop thee escaping in my boats, but they will serve, if needed. Nay, frown not! I am an old man, and I must enjoin wisdom upon thee. Get to work and raise thy schooner, and maybe when she again floats on the water we will talk further. And if thou art troubled any more in the night—or any of thy men let me have word, and they that trouble thee shall taste of my displeasure. Salams, Effendi—salams, and farewell!"

Dick stood gazing after the old Moor with wondering eyes. He was such a queer mixture of Eastern fatalism and splendour and Western shrewdness and efficiency that the lad hardly knew how to treat him. Finally, he decided that it wasn't any use worrying or trying to anticipate trouble, so he set his men to overhauling the gear, while the three divers who happened to form part of Firecat's cutter's crew took aside as many more of their comrades, and initiated them into the art of using the Fluess dresses.

That night Dick's rest was untroubled, and as he lay on his bed over the stone which concealed his papers, he knew they could not be taken whilst he slept.

(Make a point of reading next week's exciting instalment of this stupendous tale of adventure in the BOYS' FRIEND.)



How to Play Football
By A. International
Help Each Other.
Still keeping to the necessity for understanding between the members of the defence, the full-backs can often help the goalkeeper just as the goalkeeper can often lend assistance to his full-backs. It very frequently happens that when the goalkeeper catches a shot, his opponents are right on the spot ready to charge him and the ball into the net if he does not get rid of it quickly.

The Aston Villa Way.
If you watch the Aston Villa defenders you would see how they treat a situation like this. When Hardy, the Aston Villa goalkeeper, catches a ball, and is hard pressed, one of his full-backs invariably puts himself into such a position that the goalkeeper just throws the ball over the heads of the onrushing forwards to the full-back, who is able to clear quite easily.

This method of Aston Villa's is really on the principle which should guide all defensive play, namely, safety first.

The Goalkeeper.
If I were asked to say in what direction young goalkeepers make the greatest number of mistakes, I should say that it was in running too many risks. Yet it should be fairly obvious that from the nature of his position the goalkeeper really cannot afford to run these risks. He is the last line of defence—the hope of his side, as it were, when every other department has failed.

If the half-backs and the full-backs have been beaten, it is up to the goalkeeper to keep the ball from being forced into the net, and, in doing this, he must always remember that there is no one to cover him should he make a mistake. One blunder by the goalkeeper may mean a lost match. In this respect the man between the posts differs considerably from the other members of the team.

If the half-back fails to get in his tackle, for instance, there is a possibility that the full-back will stop the forward from going too far. If, in his turn, the full-back should miss his kick, there is a sporting chance that the goalkeeper may dash out and retrieve the situation. But for the goalkeeper to make a mistake is generally fatal.

Flying Kicks!
Many a time I have seen young goalkeepers taking a flying kick at a rolling ball. If the kick comes off it looks all right, of course, and if the ball is pursuing a steady course, there does not seem to be much risk in the goalkeeper kicking at it. Probably nine times out of ten that goalkeeper will succeed in booting the ball down the field, but on the tenth occasion something may happen to the ball—it may swerve, or something, at the last minute, and the result will be that the goalkeeper will miss his kick, and the goal be recorded against his side. The laws of the game give the man between the posts the privilege of using his hands, and whenever possible he should make full use of this privilege.

I do not mean to suggest, of course, that the occasion will never arise when the goalkeeper must, out of sheer necessity, run a risk by kicking at the ball, say. If the situation is desperate, it will demand a desperate remedy. For example; suppose the opposing centre-forward has got clear past the backs, and it is a race for possession of the ball between him and the goalkeeper. If the goalkeeper gets there just a second before the centre-forward he will not, of course, have a chance to get his hands to the ball, and on an occasion like this he will be justified in kicking clear.

Punching Out.
The point I have made in regard to kicking at the ball applies in just the same way to punching at a shot which comes through the air. A good hefty punch, which sends the ball well down the field, will always be greeted with a good hearty round of applause, and there are several First League goalkeepers who do not seem to be able to resist the temptation to punch.

(More instructions and advice on how to play your favourite winter sport in next Monday's issue of the BOYS' FRIEND. Make a point of reading it and improving your

OUR TELEPHONE COMPETITION.

- Number Four.
- "Hallo! Is that Sutton, 101—"
 - "Brown speaking. Is Jack there—"
 - "Right—"
 - "Hallo! That you, Jack? How goes it—"
 - "I should think so. Haven't you heard of the new competition in the—"
 - "Yes, rather! Aren't you—"
 - "What do you think it is—"
 - "Oh, I thought it was more than that. About a million and five hundred thousand more probably—"
 - "But it was more than that last month, and it goes up every week."
 - "No; I don't think so. That was some time ago, and you know they were in the right all through the argument. That's why they wouldn't accept the £10,000 challenge."
 - "Do by all means; but I think you're hopelessly out—"
 - "Oh, I'll come along some time—any time you like—"
 - "Thanks, I will! Give my regards to her, will you? About half-past four do—"
 - "Right! I'll be along. Cheerio, old man—"
- Here is a novel whoeze which will amuse and, we hope, puzzle you. As you see, the above represents one side of a telephone conversation. Can you fill in the other side? If so, write down what you think will be the replies of the man at the other end of the wire. There is no need to cut this out—simply number each "answer" to correspond with the number of the "question."
- For the effort which completes the telephone conversation the best and nearest in the opinion of the Editor—whose judgment must be accepted as final—a cash prize of ten shillings will be awarded. All entries are to be sent in not later than Monday, November 29th, and addressed, The Editor, The BOYS' FRIEND, Gough House, Gough Square, E.C. 4, and the envelopes marked "Telephone Competition No. 4."

A GRAND NEW SERIES OF BACKWOODS STORIES!



THE FLIGHT OF THE RUSTLERS!

A Splendid Tale of Frank Richards & Co. amid the Rustlers.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

The 1st Chapter.

O the Trail!

"I guess it's the rustlers!" Westward, the sun was sinking low towards the Fraser River and the far Pacific.

On a grassy knoll, under the branches of a clump of trees, a few miles north of Cedar Creek, a group of horsemen stood halted.

They wore the scarlet coats of the Canadian North West Mounted Police, with one exception. That was Rancher Lawless, who was riding with the troopers as guide. The rancher, sitting his horse as motionless as a statue, had a pair of rolling glasses to his eyes, watching the dimming plains in the north-west.

"It's the rustlers!" he repeated. The glasses revealed the moving figures in the distance—a bunch of riders at a gallop through the thick grass.

"Sure?" asked Sergeant Scott. "I reckon so! And one of them's Handsome Alf, the leader. I guess I can see the glint of his earrings, and I reckon he's the only man in the Thompson Valley with gold earrings!" said the rancher.

The sergeant and the dozen troopers stared across the expanse of rolling plain, darkening as the sun sank lower. The distant figures on the horizon were a faint blur to the naked eye.

"How many, rancher?" "One, two, three, six, seven men," said Rancher Lawless, counting as he watched, "and—and three boys."

"Boys!" repeated the sergeant, in astonishment. "I reckon Handsome Alf's crowd of rustlers ain't where I should look for boys!"

Rancher Lawless did not answer. His bronzed, bearded face had changed colour a little, as he stared across the plain through the glasses.

His lips came together in a hard line. "Good heavens!" he muttered, at last. "I guess—I'm sure Bob and Frank—"

"What's that?" The rancher lowered the glasses, his eyes glinting.

"There's been a raid at Cedar Creek School!" he said, between his teeth. "They're the rustlers right enough, and they've got three prisoners tied to their horses, three boys of Cedar Creek School."

"I guess Handsome Alf has been wasting his time, if that's so," said the sergeant, in astonishment. "What does he want—"

"My son Bob, my nephew Frank Richards, and Vere Beauclerc," said the rancher. "They were at the backwoods school to-day, and now they are in the hands of the rustlers. There must have been a raid at the school."

"But why—"

"It was the boys found out Handsome Alf's retreat in the Wapiti Hills, and led the sheriff's outfit there to break up the gang," said Mr. Lawless. "This is Alf Carson's revenge. I never reckoned— But there's no time to lose."

"Give me the glasses!" The rancher handed the glasses to the sergeant, and put spurs to his horse, dashing down the knoll.

His bronzed face was pale and set. Sergeant Scott stared grimly at the distant moving figures, dimmer and dimmer as the sun sank lower over the Fraser River.

He closed the glasses at last, and gave the signal to his men to ride on. They galloped down the declivity for the rancher.

Mr. Lawless was riding at a fierce gallop, unheeding whether the troopers were following him or not.

The dim figures in the distance were riding north, and the rancher was heading to cut across their path.

He unslung his rifle as he rode. That there had been a raid at the backwoods school, on the bank of Cedar Creek, was evident. By the aid of the glasses he had recognised Frank Richards & Co. bound to their horses in the midst of the retreating rustlers.

Handsome Alf was heading in the direction of the upper waters of the Fraser, which looked as if the

With set teeth and gloaming eyes the rancher drove on his horse, and behind him, galloping, came the dozen North West Mounted Police, carbines in hand.

The sun sank from sight, and deep shadows lay on hill and prairie. One by one the stars came out in a dark velvety sky, and still, under the sky, the thunder of hoofs rang without ceasing on the grassy plain.

The 2nd Chapter. Through the Night!

"They're behind us, Franky"



A FIGHT TO THE DEATH! Frank Richards & Co. were powerless to help the unfortunate rustler. The infuriated animal had a grip on his shoulder now, and there was no escape for the wretched man.

desperado was turning his back on the Thompson Valley for good, scared off by the hornets' nest his depredations had awakened in the valley.

His last blow had been to raid the backwoods school, and to capture the three chums, to carry them off with him into the wilds of the boundless north-west.

For what? What the Californian's intentions might be Rancher Lawless could not guess; but he knew that unless the three captives were rescued now they would never be seen alive again.

But the pursuit had been sighted by the distant rustlers now, and the gang had changed their course for a line further west, heading for a low range of hills that loomed up faintly in the shadows of the darkening evening.

Crack! The rancher put up his rifle, and fired as he rode.

But the range was too far. The bullet dropped spent into the grass far from the rustlers.

Handsome Alf and his men were riding now at a gallop.

Bob Lawless uttered the words hopefully. Darkness lay about the rustler gang as they rode, save for the glimmer of the starlight. Ahead of them the low hills lay like a black bar against the less opaque heavens.

More than once Handsome Alf shot back an anxious glance into the shadows. From the darkness again and again came a flash of fire. It showed that the pursuers were still close on the track, in spite of the darkness.

"I guess this will be a close call, cap'n," said the burly Bunco, as he thudded on beside his leader. "I reckon I told you it was risky calling in at the school for them young scally-wags!"

Handsome Alf gritted his teeth. "Risky or not, I guess I wouldn't quit without paying off my score!" he said. "We've got to vamoose out of the Thompson Valley, owing to them. I reckon I'd not go without them—"

"Easier to shoot them through the cabs, and have done with the galoots!" growled one of the rustlers. "I guess I shall shoot them if their

friends get too close. Pecos Pete!" answered the Californian. "But they ain't close yet, and once in the sierras we'll laugh at them."

Frank Richards heard the words, and he drew a quick breath. The chums of Cedar Creek were tied to their horses, and their hands were fastened behind their backs. Mexican Jo led the three horses strung on a trail-rop, behind his own galloping steed. The three school-boys could not move a finger to escape or in their own defence, and with their friends in pursuit behind they were compelled to ride hard with the escaping outlaws.

Handsome Alf's campaign in the Thompson Valley had ended in defeat and disaster. Nothing but retreat remained to him. Escape and revenge upon the schoolboys who had brought about his defeat. For that he had run this last risk.

"I guess it's the North West M.P.'s arter us!" went on Bunco. "I guess I sighted the red coats afore the sun went. They're stickers on the trail, cap'n."

The Californian replied only with an oath. "Once we're across the Fraser, I calculate they won't have a look in!" said Pecos Pete.

"I guess it's a long jump to the Fraser yet!" grunted Bunco. "Thar'll be shooting afore we see the Fraser!"

"There'll be shooting before dawn!" growled Handsome Alf. "If they follow us into the hills, we'll shoot them down like coyotes!"

They dashed on in the gloom. Another flash came from the darkness behind, and a bullet tore up the grass-roots under the galloping horses.

Another shot, and another! The Mounted Police were within range now, and though most of the bullets flew wild in the dark, an occasional shot came perilously close.

the string, rearing round him, and his own horse was tangled with them and the connecting trail-rop. A lashing hoof from the darkness struck his horse, and the animal squealed with pain and reared wildly. Pecos Pete grasped the reins again to control it, and the drag of the frantic string of horses on the trail-rop dragged his lamed horse over with a crash.

The rustler went heavily into the grass. Already his comrades had vanished into the darkness towards the hills; it was every man for himself in Handsome Alf's gang.

Pecos Pete scrambled clear of the maddened animals—on foot. He rapped out a savage curse.

His comrades had vanished, and he was dismounted. Behind him the thunder of hoofs grew closer. The pursuers were at hand.

To release a horse from the frantic "string," and mount, was a difficult task; too long for his safety. The rustler plunged away in the grass on foot, cursing furiously.

Thud, thud, thud! came the beat of hoofs behind.

The deserted rustler struck across the trail to the right, to clear out of the path of the oncoming horsemen and leave them a clear way on the track of Handsome Alf.

But the troopers were riding in line, and Pecos Pete had no time to get clear of their path.

A shadowy horseman loomed almost over him, and the rustler desperately dodged the thundering hoofs, at the same time snapping off his rifle.

Crack, crack! came sharp revolver-shots in reply, and there was a fearful yell from Pecos Pete.

He dropped in the thick grass, and the horseman pulled in his steed. The voice of Sergeant Scott shouted in the darkness:

"Ride on!" The troopers swept on in pursuit of the vanished rustlers, leaving the abandoned string of horses still plunging and squealing. But Rancher Lawless jumped from the saddle, to seek the fallen rustler in the grass. In the dim starlight Pecos Pete lay on his back, staring upward, as the rancher bent over him.

He made a feeble wards the revolver in rancher jerked it away, into the darkness.

He struck a match, and looked at the savage, bearded face of the rustler.

"Not Handsome Alf!" he muttered savagely. "I guess you've got me, rancher!" muttered Pecos Pete. "Darn them—darn them, leaving a pard like this byer! I guess it's me for the long jump now!"

"You're wounded," said Mr. Lawless quietly. "at I reckon if I leave you, you can crawl on a horse and get a chance for your life. Where is Handsome Alf heading for?"

"Find out!" snapped the rustler. "I guess I'm going to—"

The rancher placed his rifle muzzle to the rustler's breast. His finger was on the trigger.

"One second!" he said grimly. "Hold on, pard, I'll speak!"

"Quick, then!" He's heading for the upper waters of the Fraser, to get across the river and vamoose into the north-west his old hunting-ground!" gasped Pecos Pete. "That's the frozen truth, rancher!"

"That's the frozen truth, rancher!"

"That's the frozen truth, rancher!"

"That's the frozen truth, rancher!"

"That's the frozen truth, rancher!"

"That's the frozen truth, rancher!"

"That's the frozen truth, rancher!"

The 3rd Chapter.

The Fight in the Canyon!

Frank Richards and his chums rode on in the midst of the rustlers, in grim silence. They were bound to horses without saddle, and they were aching from the rough ride. There were six of the rustlers round them now. The stolen string of horses, and the man who had led them had disappeared in the night behind, and they heard Bunco remark in grim tones:

"I guess Pete is a gone coon. The fool should have got clear growled the Californian. "Careful now! You can slacken here!"

Rough rock rang now beneath the hoofs of the horses. Round them loomed the dim shapes of the hills.

At a slower speed the gang rode

into a low canyon, wooded on both sides, thick with shadows.

Loud and clear the horses' hoofs rang on the rocky soil.

The ground rose under their feet, and it was rough and broken, and ere long the riders were proceeding at little more than a walk.

The cessation of the furious gallop was a relief to the schoolboys, aching in their bonds.

From the distant darkness the thunder of pursuing hoofs could still be heard. If Handsome Alf had hoped to shake off the pursuit in the darkness, he had been disappointed.

"Halt!" his voice rang out at last. The rustlers drew in their horses.

Frank Richards stared round him.

Across the canyon, from one wooded bank to another, a torrent flowed, glimmering in the gloom.

The rustlers dismounted, and led their horses across the stream, wading thigh-deep.

They did not remount on the opposite side.

Only Mexican Jo remained in the saddle, with the three prisoners, who were still bound on their horses' backs.

"Take cover, you galoots!" rapped out Handsome Alf.

The rustlers tethered their horses in a clump of stunted firs, and handled their rifles. It was evident that a stand was to be made on the bank of the mountain torrent, with the fast waters flowing between them and the pursuers. It was a favourable spot for turning on the enemy. Four of the gang laid down among the rocks, with their rifles covering the stream, which the troopers must pass to reach them.

Handsome Alf stepped to the side of the Mexican, who still sat in his saddle. His black eyes glittered for a moment at the chums of Cedar Creek, but he did not address them.

"Ride on, Jo, while we keep those devils off!" the Californian muttered.

"You'll wait for us, if you don't see us sooner, at Kicking Mule crossing on the Fraser. Savvy?"

"Si, senor."

"Ride on!"

The Mexican jerked on the trail-ropes that led the prisoners' horses, and set his own animal in motion again.

He rode on up the dark canyon, with the three prisoners following.

Their hearts were heavy.

Advantageous as was the spot the rustlers had selected for making a stand, Frank Richards & Co. had hoped for rescue, but it was evident that the man with the ear-rings intended to run no risk of that.

Handsome Alf joined his men in the rugged rocks along the bank of the torrent, rifle in hand.

In the lower canyon the steady hoof-beats of the pursuers could be heard drawing closer.

"Let them come on," muttered the Californian, "to their death!"

"I guess the North West M. P.'s are a tough mouthful to chew, cap'n," grunted Bunco. "And I reckon I counted a dozen of them, and we're only five galoots byer."

Handsome Alf answered with an oath.

A shadow loomed up in the dimness, and he threw up his rifle and fired. A Stetson hat spun from the head of Sergeant Scott, and he pulled in his horse at once.

The hoof-beats ceased.

Before the troopers lay the torrent, a dozen feet wide, thigh deep, and rapid, with steep, rocky banks; and on the farther side five desperate men in cover with ready rifles.

Only a pale glimmer of starlight fell into the canyon, glistening on the rippling, murmuring waters.

The sounds of Mexican Jo's horse and the prisoners had died away into the hills behind the rustlers.

Silence fell on the canyon.

"I reckon we've stopped them," muttered the Californian, at last. "If they come on they're at our mercy!"

"I guess they'll wait till mornin'," muttered one of the rustlers.

"Then they'll find us gone—"

Crack, crack!

Bullets whizzed across the mountain stream and crashed among the rocks, amid which the rustlers lay.

The Californian laughed contemptuously.

"I guess that won't hurt us," he said. "Keep your eyes peeled here, Bunco. I'm going up the rocks to get above their cover. Keep your eyes peeled, and be ready for a rush."

"You bet, cap'n!"

On the farther side of the torrent the troopers had dismounted, and taken cover in the rocks. Mr. Lawless, burning with impatience as he was to get to close quarters with the rustlers, submitted to the orders of the sergeant. It was useless to throw away his life in a reckless plunge across the torrent.

"I guess they're our meat," Ser-

geant Scott said coolly. "As soon as the sun's up they've got to run—we can pick them off in their cover from the hillside, if they hold on there. It's only the darkness that saves them."

"But my son—" muttered the rancher.

He watched across the stream with savage eyes occasionally loosing off his rifle. The rustlers fired back at every moving shadow. Handsome Alf crept away from his men silently in the darkness and vanished from their sight.

But he did not climb the rugged side of the canyon to fire on the troopers from above.

A derisive grin glimmered on his swarthy face as he deserted his men by the bank of the torrent.

He stepped quietly into the clump of trees where the horses were tethered, and with cautious noiselessness released his own horse. With fragments cut from a blanket he muffled the animal's hoofs, and then led it away in the darkness, silently.

Not a sound from the cunning Californian betrayed to his followers that he was deserting them, and leaving them to their fate.

Handsome Alf knew the game was up—that by morning, at the farthest, the North West troopers would have the upper hand. By that time he intended to be far away.

With utter unscrupulousness the rascal was planning to abandon his men, leaving them to keep the troopers at bay while he escaped.

For half a mile he led his horse in the darkness before he ventured to mount.

Then he vaulted into the saddle, and rode on into the hills, the muffled hoofs of his horse making little sound.

Meanwhile, the four ruffians by the torrent's bank were still exchanging shots with the troopers across the stream.

Every moment they expected to hear the Californian's rifle ring out from some point high up the canyon side, whence he could pitch his bullets among the rocks across the stream where the troopers were in cover.

But there was no sound from Handsome Alf.

He was already far away.

A couple of miles from the spot where he had deserted his men, the man with the ear-rings dismounted, and freed his horse's hoofs of the mufflers, laughing lightly as he did so. He remounted, and rode on at a gallop, on the trail Mexican Jo had already taken with the prisoners.

Behind him the ringing of the rifles died into silence.

More than an hour had passed before a glimmering suspicion dawned upon Bunco's dull brain that the Californian had gone. He crept from his cover into the trees where the horses were tethered, and found that Handsome Alf's horse was gone.

The rustler rapped out a savage oath.

"Deserted, by gosh! The dirty hound—"

"What's that, Bunco?"

"Handsome Alf's lighted out!" shouted Bunco, with a fearful curse. "He's sold us out! His critter's gone!"

There was a chorus of exclamations and curses from the rustlers, as they joined Bunco in the thicket. Bunco brandished a clenched fist in the air.

"The darned scullyway—deserted! And that's the galoot I got away from Judge Lynch in Thompson! He's sold us out, boyees. That's why he left us—" The ruffian choked with rage.

Crack, crack, crack, came across the torrent. The excited voices of the enraged rustlers had been heard, and the troopers were firing into the trees. Leaves and twigs fluttered, torn away by the whizzing bullets; and one of the rustlers gave a wild yell and dropped.

The other three dragged their horses loose, threw themselves into the saddle, and rode desperately away into the hills. For a moment they were visible in the starlight as they rode off, and in that moment there came a blaze of rifle-fire, and one of the rustlers went down shrieking. Bunco dashed on into the night with one comrade, and behind him the North West troopers came splashing through the torrent in hot pursuit.

Rancher Lawless was the first to cross, savagely glad to be in action again. He dragged his horse through the stream, remounted, and rode recklessly on the track of the fleeing rustlers. Behind him came the troopers at a gallop.

Through the shadowed canyon under the starry sky the chase swept on, Bunco and his comrade occasionally loosing off a rifle shot to the rear. A bullet tore past Rancher Lawless' cheek, leaving a streak of red on the bronzed skin. He fired

back, heedless of the scratch, instantly at the flash of the rifle, and there was a groan and a heavy fall. Bunco rode on alone, but his horse was stumbling heavily—a bullet, glancing from a rock, had struck the animal and lamed it. With a fierce oath, the rustler leaped clear of the horse as it fell on the rocks, and faced round desperately, his rifle in his grasp. Through the gloom the scarlet coats of the troopers glimmered as they came on.

Crack, crack, crack!

A trooper clapped his hand to his side—a horse squealed and fell. Then there was a crash, as Rancher Lawless fairly rode down the desperate ruffian, and Bunco rolled on the rocks under trampling hoofs. Mr. Lawless dragged in his horse.

Bunco lay on the rocky ground groaning. His savage face glimmered up white as the rancher sprang down and bent over him.

"Nearly a wipe-out, I guess," Sergeant Scott said coolly.

A match glimmered and gleamed on Bunco's face.

"Where is Handsome Alf? Where are the prisoners?"

Bunco panted.

"The darned galoot deserted us! He's gone on; you'll find them—"

He gasped and groaned. "Kicking Mule Crossing—on the Fraser—"

He groaned again, and was silent. When Mr. Lawless rose it was a dead man that lay at his feet.

"Kicking Mule Crossing, on the Fraser!" repeated the sergeant. "They're making for the north-west, and the Cascade Mountains, I guess. There's only two got away—and the prisoners! Ride on! I guess Handsome Alf will be in our grip before another sundown!"

And the troopers rode on under the stars.

The 4th Chapter.

Man Against Horse!

Frank Richards was drooping forward in his saddle as the dawn came up pale over the plains. Another day was dawning on hill and valley, and still the Mexican rode onward, the trail-ropes behind him leading on the three captives bound to their horses. Strong and hardy as they were, that rough ride was telling hard upon the chums of Cedar Creek.

In spite of the grip of their bonds and the motion of the horses, they had nodded off to sleep many times, to awaken with a jerk.

In the flush of dawn their faces showed white and haggard. Eastward the Cariboo Mountains, a foothill range of the Rockies, barred the sky. By plain and forest and hillside they had ridden many a long and weary mile under the darkness till the dawn came. Mexican Jo, though riding at his ease, showed signs of fatigue.

Many a longing glance the comrades cast backward as the dawn strengthened, and the sun showed over the Cariboo hills.

But there was no sign of pursuit—no sign even of the rustlers following after their comrade.

It was a long distance yet—how far they did not know—to the upper waters of the Fraser, lone in the wilderness. The ride was not over yet by any means. It seemed to Frank Richards, as he drooped over his horse's neck, that he would die of sheer fatigue if there was not a rest soon. He was aching, limb by limb, from head to foot.

The Mexican stopped at last.

The horses were fatigued, and he staked them by a mountain stream, and gave them water. Then he turned corn-cake and dried beef out of his wallet, and began to eat, washing down the fare with whisky from a flask.

He did not even look at the prisoners.

Evidently they were not to share his meal. He did not even offer to release them from the horses.

"You brute!" panted Bob Lawless at last. "You bound! Can't you even give us a few minutes' rest?"

The Mexican looked up under his sombrero and grinned.

"We do not remain here long, senorito; only until I have eaten."

"We're aching all over—"

Mexican Jo laughed.

"You will soon rest—a long and quiet rest, senoritos. You should not have taken a hand against us in the game. We are driven out of the Thompson Valley through you, and our loot is lost. You must pay for that, senoritos. Carambo!"

He sliced the beef with his sharp cuchillo, and ate, occasionally bestowing a grin on the schoolboys as he sat on a grassy knoll.

Long since the prisoners had given up struggling with their bonds. They were too securely tied to have any

chance of getting loose. They could only sit in aching misery, their eyes glittering at the rustler, as he ate and then smoked and grinned.

But Vere Beauclerc's pale, handsome face suddenly lit with a flash of hope.

His black horse, instead of nibbling the grass like Frank's and Bob's steeds, had turned his teeth upon the trail-ropes by which he was pegged out.

Demon, the black horse, was unaccustomed to restraints upon his liberty. He would come at a call from Vere Beauclerc, and he was seldom tied up.

His long, glossy neck lay along the trail-ropes, and he had taken it in his teeth and was biting through it hard. The Mexican, unsuspecting what was happening, did not glance at the black horse. He had seated himself out of its reach, having had some experience of Demon's kicking before.

Beauclerc's eyes met those of his chums, and with the slightest movement of his head he indicated what the black horse was doing.

If he was not interrupted, in a few minutes the black horse would be free as air, though still with his rider bound upon his back.

Frank and Bob were silent, their hearts beating. They had no hope of getting loose. Their horses were contentedly cropping the grass, and the trail-ropes held them securely to the stake-pin.

But freedom for one might mean rescue for all, and Beauclerc might ride off bound as he was once the horse was loose.

Even if he fell again into the hands of the rustlers, he would be no worse off than at present, and he might fall in with the troopers.

There was a rustle, as the trail-ropes, bitten through at last by Demon's sharp white teeth, dropped severed in the grass.

The black horse raised his head and tossed his mane, with a whinny. The Mexican stared round, and started to his feet.

"Carambo!"

He rushed towards the prisoners, with a curse.

Beauclerc called out to the horse, but his voice was not needed. More than once during the long ride the Mexican's whip had fallen savagely on the black horse's flanks, leaving red marks there. As he rushed to secure the animal, the black horse turned on him savagely, his eyes gleaming, his ears laid back, his teeth flashing white.

With a gasp, the Mexican sprang back. He escaped only by a foot the tearing teeth, as the half-savage horse turned on him.

"Carambo!"

He leaped back to the knoll where he had laid his rifle when he sat down to eat. It was his intention to send a bullet through the black horse's body as soon as the weapon was in his grasp.

But the swarthy hand never touched the rifle.

The savage horse was upon him with a bound, and the lunge of his head behind sent the Mexican whirling and staggering forward.

Mexican Jo reeled, and fell on his hands and knees in the grass, with a scream of terror.

He squirmed desperately in the grass to escape, but the savage, gleaming eyes, the white, flashing teeth, were over him now, and there was no escape for the wretched ruffian.

He screamed again as the jaws fastened on his shoulder and tore him over. He grasped at his belt for his knife, but the long cuchillo was sticking in the beef he had been eating out of his reach. He screamed and screamed as the savage horse tore at him.

Frank Richards and Bob Lawless, sitting bound on their tethered steeds, watched the fearful scene in horror.

They could not have helped the hapless rustler if they had wished to do so.

Vere Beauclerc sat silent on the black horse as it tore at its victim. One word from him would have stilled its fury.

But he did not utter it.

Life and death depended on this grim, ghastly struggle between man and horse, and the rustler, who showed no mercy, deserved none. If he had been spared, it would have been to grasp his rifle, which lay a few yards away, and shoot the black horse dead. Beauclerc uttered no sound, though his face was white with horror.

Mexican Jo was on his back now, struggling and screaming, and fighting with the black horse; but the grip of the sharp white teeth never left his shoulder, where they met through the bone.

Hither and thither he was dragged, struggling but helpless, in the savage teeth, and the horrified schoolboys heard the bones crunch under the teeth as they dove harder and faster into the Mexican's shoulder.

The black horse was "worrying" the ruffian almost as a terrier worries a rat. The brutal lashes of the quirt, which still showed red on the horse's flanks, were terribly avenged now.

The Mexican's screaming died away into sobbing moans; his curses, his wild cries ceased; but after his struggles had ceased, the savage horse still dragged him to and fro, tearing with his teeth.

"Cherub," panted Bob Lawless at last, "stop him—stop him, for Heaven's sake, if you can!"

"The man's past mischief now, Beau," said Frank Richards huskily.

Beauclerc's white lips moved at last, and he called to his horse. But the excited animal did not heed, for some minutes, even the voice of his master, which generally he instantly obeyed. It was several minutes before Demon relinquished his victim, and the Mexican rolled broken and helpless, in the grass, his expiring face turned up to the sun.

His black eyes rolled at the schoolboys in pain and rage, but his tongue was still. Convulsive breathing shook him for a few minutes, and then he lay quiet—terribly quiet.

For a long time the chums of Cedar Creek did not utter a word, but they kept their eyes turned from the object that lay so still in the grass. A black spot appeared in the sky, and settled down towards the halting-place. Frank shuddered.

It was a vulture, scenting prey!

Another and another of these obscene birds appeared, wheeling and croaking, and one after another they settled down in the grass where the Mexican lay.

The schoolboys, chilled with horror, kept their faces turned from the scene.

Beauclerc brought his horse close beside his chums. He could not move his hands, but the pressure of his knees was enough to guide the intelligent animal.

"What now?" he asked, in a low voice. "The Mexican's dead." He shivered. "I can ride away. Demon understands me. I can guide him, bound as I am. But you fellows—"

Bob gritted his teeth.

The strong trail-ropes, fastened to the stake-pin driven deep in the ground, held the two horses securely, and the schoolboys were helplessly bound on their horses. They could not stir from the spot; and Beauclerc, though he could ride away, could not stir a finger to release them. It was a strange situation. But they were free, at least, from the Mexican, who could drive them no farther into the wilds of the north-west.

"I guess we're fixed here, Cherub," said Bob at last. "You'd better light out. You may get to help, and bring it to us. No good your stopping here, for the rustlers may come on any hour, and rope us all in."

"They're bound to come on," said Frank Richards. "Ride off, Beau, while there's a chance. And if you fall in with the troopers we are all saved. If not, we're no worse off. Cut off, old fellow!"

"I'll go," muttered Beauclerc at last. "Good-bye, then—and Heaven help us all!"

Demon turned, at a pressure from his knees, and Vere Beauclerc rode away, bound as he was, back along the trail the Mexican and his prisoners had made. Demon understood well enough that he was to follow the trail back, and he dashed on cheerily. In a few minutes Vere Beauclerc was out of sight of his chums, as he rode through the thick grass.

With a white face, and a bitter pang at his heart, the schoolboy rode on towards the hills. The pursuers were there, and if he could reach them, hasten them, there was hope yet for his chums.

The hoofs of the black horse clattered at last on the rocks. There was a shout. A dozen scarlet coats closed round him, and as the black horse halted the hand of Rancher Lawless fell upon his shoulder. A minute more and Beauclerc was free, and panting out his story. And the North West Mounted Police swept on at full gallop across the plain—to the rescue!

THE END.

(Be sure you read "The Schoolboy Mazeppas" in next Monday's Boys' FRIEND. It's a corker!)

A GRAND NEW SCOUTING YARN!

THE MISSING SCOUTMASTER!

BY ROSS HARVEY



INTRODUCTION

TED MARTIN, patrol-leader of the Otters, and his second in command, KITTO, with the patrol rescue a blind sailor named CAPTAIN BOWERS from a small island, where he is cut off by the tide. Following on this the Otters and a patrol of Girl Guides, under the command of MISS BETTY HANSON, take part at a tournament. Wilson gives a fireworks display; the scouts and guides give a display of scoutercraft. While the two patrol-leaders, Ted and Betty, are riding in an aeroplane as a reward for the display, they see Captain Bowers on the rocks in the sea. They return to camp, and Mr. Hendron sets off alone to interview the blind sailor. Ted Martin and Kitto discover that Mr. Hendron has been kidnapped and is to be kept a prisoner. Later, whilst listening outside Captain Bowers' shack, they hear the old sailor threatening to kill someone unknown to them.

Now read on.

The Eavesdroppers Discovered!

Captain Bowers' words died away as far as Ted was concerned, but there was no mistaking his nerve-racking gestures. The blind sailor was on his feet, the fingers of his great hands clenching and unclenching, and his red, ragged face disfigured by a passion that was terrible to look at.

His friends, too, had risen to their feet. They were all obviously excited, so there was a chance that they might speak in louder voices now. Even as Ted thought that a sentence or two carried clearly to him—wonderfully important, sentences—

"And this scoutmaster you've spoken of, cap'n! How comes he to be meddlin' in it?"

"Chance, nothin' more!"

"An' you say he's there, a prisoner?"

The sentence trailed off into a sudden cry of fury, and the whole party of five wheeled round to stare at the window.

Jack Kitto stared back.

"Ted, they've seen us!"

He rapped out the warning like lightning; then, to his horror, he saw one of the men whip up the lamp from the table, and an instant later it was hurtling through the air—flung at the window with all the strength of a man's arm.

There was a sickening crash as the heavy lamp crashed through the glass, while Ted Martin was only just in time. If he had been a second later in flinging himself down on his face the lamp would have struck him; as it was, it thudded down into the sand a dozen yards away, bursting with a dull explosion.

Instantly there was a dazzling mass of flame, turning blood-red as a furze-bush caught alight, but by that time Ted Martin was on his feet.

"Come on, Kitto!" he panted.

"We shall have the whole gang on our heels in a minute!"

"As hard as you can, old chap!"

The two scouts darted away, not caring in which direction so long as they left the shack and that villainous-looking gang behind; but they were not to escape so easily as that.

A sudden shout behind told them that they had been seen, and when Ted glanced over his shoulder, it was to witness a spectacle that was nerve-racking enough for anything.

ing bushes, but all the time his heart was beating at a fine pace.

The way one of those ruffians had thrown the lighted lamp through the window, showed that they were not the sort of men liberties could be taken with, and these sandhills were very lonely.

It was all very well to lie low, hoping the scoundrels would blunder past in the darkness, but suppose they didn't? The luck might be with them, and one or other might spot the two scouts, and Jack Kitto couldn't help shuddering a bit at that thought.

Anything in the world might happen if once they were caught.

Ted Martin must have been thinking in much the same groove, yet

question in a hoarse, evil voice, and the man with him was deceived, too. Both of them thought they had glimpsed the scouts well inland, and they acted instantly upon their belief. To the huge joy of Ted Martin, and his second, the sailors broke into a fresh run and vanished in the darkness.

"We'll give them half-a-minute, breathed Ted, "then we're going to launch the old boat again."

"What for?" whispered back Kitto.

"To search White Gull Island," came the quiet answer. "Captain Bowers said that Mr. Hendron was a prisoner, and they were talking of the island at the time. Oh, I know, it's putting two and two together with the risk of making five of it,

thought he remembered where there was an excellent little landing place, so Kitto left him to do the steering.

Yard by yard they crept across the water, rowing slowly for fear of the low lying rocks, until Ted's voice broke out in the lowest of whispers.

"We're almost there. Another few yards and we shall be be-thing her bows. Don't make a sound!"

Ted could not have spoken in a lower voice if he had tried, and the boat was not making a sound as it drifted in towards the island, yet the scouts had been heard. The moment Ted had spoken he knew that, and he dropped his hand on Kitto's shoulder.

Jack understood, and backed water without raising a splash, stopping the boat in its journey towards the island, then he had all his work cut out to prevent a startled cry leaving his lips.

Dead in front of the scouts, with less than a couple of yards of water separating them, was the vague outline that looked scarcely human in its twisted shape.

But it was not that that fretted Jack Kitto's nerves; it was the pair of eyes that were gleaming at him through the darkness, the same terrible eyes that Ted Martin had found staring him on the rock such a short time ago!

Instantly, Kitto dug the blade of his oar in the water, and wrenched back the boat, and at the same moment Ted Martin's voice cut through the darkness.

"Who is there? Who are you?"

Not a sound came in answer.

The crouching form never moved, but the eyes were still fixed on the

"Ted, the moon'll be through the clouds in a minute!"

Even as the second of the Otters spoke, the darkness thinned, showing a picture that might have been taken from a book of the past—a picture of the days when pirates sailed the seas almost as often as honest men, for there, right in front of the scouts' eyes, were four of the choicest scoundrels splashing through the water covering the low-lying rocks, each of the four armed with an old-fashioned cutlass.

Ted Martin and Kitto stared as if they were finding it difficult to believe their own eyes, then the patrol-leader caught at his chum's arm.

"See who they are, Kitto?"

"Those rumps who were in Captain Bowers' cottage."

"Without doubt," breathed Ted. "They are making for the island. Ah!"

One of the sailors had slipped on a rock, and was all but flung into the sea, his muttered oath filling the air. Instantly there came a harsh order for silence from one of his companions, then, as the four reached the last of the rocks, the water almost up to his waist, and rising rapidly, the moon broke completely through the clouds.

The sudden light showed up the sailors with startling clearness, their evil faces, as they crouched on the rocks staring at White Gull Island, and the still more evil blades each carried in readiness.

But in readiness for what? That was the question that puzzled Ted Martin so. If these unsavoury friends of Captain Bowers meant to land on the island, what in the world could they want to come there armed for? All the countryside knew that no one more dangerous than seagulls lived on the island, that not a soul set foot on it from one year's end to another.

Of course, there was that crouching form with the terrible eyes that Ted and Kitto had both seen. But how did these sailors know of him? And, if they did know, surely it did not need four armed men to tackle one!

The questions flashed through Ted's mind like lightning, then he heard a low word of command carrying across the water. Instantly the sailors sprang ashore, to stand for a moment in a small clearing, listening intently.

Ted Martin and Jack Kitto watched

in straining eyes.

Jack Kitto stopped speaking, for a cry of amazement cut through the air, then perhaps the most extraordinary thing that either of those chums were destined to see in their whole lives appeared in front of them—the spectacle of one masked man, cutlass armed, rushing to meet the four sailors.

It was a bewildering sight, and the utter absence of fear on the masked man's part thrilled the scouts through and through.

As likely as not he was as big a scoundrel as the others, for Ted was pretty certain this was the man who had flung him into the sea from the rock that night, and he might as well be the masked ruffian who had made a prisoner of Mr. Hendron; but the man certainly had the courage of some maddened animal.

Before the sailors had recovered from their first bewilderment, the masked man was among them, his cutlass sweeping down, and the flash of steel against steel raising an echo in the night air.

One sailor was cut down at almost the first blow, another severely damaged, and the masked man was untouched. Ted was certain of that, but, as he saw things, this uneven fight could have but one end.

Numbers must prevail, and the fur of the masked man seemed to have roused equal passion in the enemies' hearts, and they fought him back.

The masked man fought on as wildly as ever, but he was on the defensive now. Then a harsh order was rapped out.

"Don't kill him! Dead he's useless to us!"

The two scouts shuddered at the horror of those words.

The scoundrels seemed to think only of human life in terms of gain to themselves. But there was at least the relief that the masked man was not to be struck down.

Back the sailors drove him, until a clump of bushes stopped further retreat, then the fight was waged with greater fury than ever, and brought to an end in as amazing a manner as it had started.

The deep-toned bay of hounds hung for a moment in the air, then Ted at his chum's side saw roundly half a dozen tremendous bloodhounds springing through the undergrowth. One and all all swerved past the masked man, to leap towards the sailors, and the scene



A DETERMINED ATTEMPT!

Jack Kitto started. "Ted, they've seen us!" he rapped out. One of the men had caught up the oil-lamp and sent it crashing through the window at the two scouts.

neither of the scouts moved a muscle. Long ago they had learned the not very easy art of lying still, but it paid them well in the night if it never would again.

They could hear the three sailors running towards them; presently they could hear them talking.

"They are still on the sandhills, mates."

Aye, lying low, somewhere.

An' they're only boys," came a third voice. "The cap'n reckoned they were scouts from the camp yonder. They'll be hiding in some of these bushes!"

The men stopped as these words were spoken, and the two scouts held their breath more tightly than ever. By the worst possible stroke of luck, the sailors had chosen the very clump of gorse they were in, a step and for the moment Ted Martin never doubted that they meant to search.

One of the men did even step in among the gorse, and the scouts got ready.

Ted had his hand on Kitto's arm, the word to make another dash for it trembling on his lips, then the luck veered round.

What's that over there?" One of the sailors rapped out the

but I'm going to search White Gull Island!"

Jack Kitto was openly amazed.

"I'm with you, of course, Ted, he whispered, "but I can't quite see the use of it. We know that Mr. Quife has had the island thoroughly searched to-day by a man who knows every yard of it."

"Or thinks he does," added the patrol-leader of the Otters. "There may be a cave or something that no one knows about, except the scoundrels who kidnapped Mr. Hendron. Anyway, I'm going to have a scout round myself, and it'll be safe to start now."

Kitto raised no further objections. Personally, he did not think the scheme was likely to lead to anything, but he lost a willing hand in launching the boat, and a still more willing one with an oar, so the boat cut quickly enough through the dark, still water.

Ted laid the course for the shore side of the island, glancing every now and then over his shoulder, towards the rocks, but there was nothing to be seen there, nor was there a sound to be heard.

Very quietly the scouts urged their boat towards the island. They had often rowed round it, and Ted

scouts' boat, and a shudder ran through Jack Kitto, then something made him turn round quickly. Instantly he was gripping at Ted's arm, and pointing back towards the chain of rock, which at low tide all but linked the mainland with White Gull Island.

Clambering steadily over the rocks were three or four men.

Back as it was, the scouts could see them, like black moving shadows which showed up by reason of their darkness, then, suddenly, there was a crunching sound on the island, as if some one were forcing his way through the undergrowth.

The crouching form and the horrible eyes had disappeared, but the men on the rocks were still clambering steadily towards the island.

"Back water a bit," breathed Ted. "Get away to the lee of that rock, so that the men on the rocks can't see us!"

Kitto obeyed silence.

A Desperate Fight!

scarcely had the scouts backed their boat to the lee of the big rock when an excited whisper came from Jack Kitto.

that followed was like some episode taken from a screen drama.

The sailors turned, and flung themselves back towards the water. Without a thought for the rocks to their left, they scrambled into the sea itself, and Ted Martin unconsciously counted them as they dived one after the other.

"Only three of them, Kitto!" he breathed. "There's one still on the island!"

"Yes, the man who was cut down at the start."

"Then those hounds will have him! Kitto, we must do something!"

Ted cut the blades of an oar into the water as he spoke, for the thought of a wounded man—even if he were a scoundrel—lying helpless at the mercy of those hounds was too horrible, though what the two scouts could do to help him was not clear.

Still they urged their boat forward, seeing the heads of the three sailors bobbing about in the water as they swam away; then abruptly everything was blotted out in darkness, for another dense cloud had drifted in front of the moon.

Ted Martin still rowed on, but by the time he had the boat near that little landing-cove there was not a sound to be heard anywhere. The island, a few minutes before the scene of such tremendous fight, was now as silent as a churchyard, and the two scouts were at a loss.

They knew exactly where that sailor had been struck down, and if the moon had been shining, they would have been able to see the spot quite distinctly. But the moon might not shine for an age, for there was no telling with the sky so thickly overcast, while Ted dreaded the thought of waiting.

"The poor wretch may be torn to pieces, Kitto!" he shuddered. "Those hounds were too awful for words!"

"Ted, they're not there now."

"Then—then let's land."

Jack Kitto did not answer. As always, he was ready to go where Ted Martin led, but the second in command of the Otters did not pretend to like his job. He was too honest with himself for that, but if Ted thought it ought to be done Jack would be there to set foot on the island just as quickly as his chum did.

The boat was urged quickly forward, then as her nose grated on the shingle the moon shone again bril-

liantly. Every square yard of the clearing was lit up, and there was not a trace of the sailor who had been cut down. He had disappeared just as completely as had the hounds and the masked man who had fought so furiously.

Ted stared at the clearing, his face the picture of amazement.

"Jack, it—it is uncanny," he said, at last. "Why, it can't be three minutes ago that those sailors flung themselves into the sea, can it?"

"I don't know."

Jack Kitto was just as amazed-looking as his chum, for this latest mystery that had come along to make the Otters' camp such an exciting affair was utterly beyond him.

"Ted, I'm just done about it all," he whispered. "The masked man could have got away silently and quietly enough, and he might have carried the injured sailor with him; but those dogs, where in the world are they?"

"There isn't a sound of them!"

"That's what I mean. Why, they were half-wild brutes, and if they were loose on the island now they'd be raising an echo with their row. Are you going ashore, Ted?"

"Yes, but you look after the boat."

"I will," answered Kitto quietly, "by tying the painter to this tree here. I'll tie it loosely in case we have to run for it."

Ted made no reply. He had meant Jack Kitto to stay behind, but the second had seen through that quickly.

"Get ready to cut back to the boat," Ted breathed, "and keep your ears open. I say, what's that?"

Kitto started violently. He had seen and heard nothing, but the thrill in Ted's voice was enough to fret any fellow's nerves, then Jack understood.

To the left of the scouts there were a pair of massive iron gates, closing the entrance to what looked like a cave sloping down into the ground, and the sight of them suggested an explanation of everything.

"That's where the masked man came from!"

"Yes, of course," answered Jack excitedly. "It's easy to understand now why we can't hear those hounds at all. They've been taken into an underground cave."

(Another long instalment of this grand yarn in next Monday's BOYS' FRIEND.)



Write to me whenever you are in doubt or difficulty. All letters should be addressed: "The Editor, THE BOYS' FRIEND, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4."

Well, here is the last of the four great boom numbers, although this doesn't mean that there'll be any alteration in the paper next week. Oh, no; decidedly not!

You now have the fourth and last part of this splendid

BOXING GUIDE,

and from all the letters I have received from readers it has been received with open arms, not straight lefts and right body guards as might have been expected!

Our next week's issue will be just as stupendous. Long instalments of each of the fine serials—namely:

"THE LEAGUE OF THE STAR AND CRESCENT!"

By John S. Margerison,

"THE MISSING SCOUTMASTER!"

By Ross Harvey,

"THE BOY WITH FIFTY MILLIONS!"

By Victor Nelson,

being well to the fore.

"THE AFFAIR OF THE RAY!"

By Edmund Burton,

is the next case to be investigated by our famous crime investigator, Grant, Chauffeur-Detective. And an exciting case it is, too.

The title of the next of the new series of Rookwood yarns is:

"MORNINGTON'S ATONEMENT!"

By Owen Conquest.

And a fine story, too. These stories, besides being full of schoolboy fun, have a plot running through them which makes you think.

"THE SCHOOLBOY 'ZEPPAS!"

By Martin O'Grady,

is the next backwoods yarn, and is sure to please, as usual. Fine exciting plots in this new series of Cedar Creek tales, don't you think?

By the way, here's something that will interest you. Jimmy Silver's

early days at Rookwood are being chronicled week by week in the "Popular," our "great little" companion paper. These early adventures of your favourite school characters are well worth reading, and I strongly advise you to get a copy of the "Popular" to-day.

Here is rather a good joke, sent in by a loyal reader away in Belgium:

A GOOD IDEA!

What could he do? To stand still meant death! If he went on he would surely and swiftly be overtaken! So, just stepping off the permanent way, He let the London Express pass by!

His address is Master Eddie Helinssen, c/o. E. Kurfurth, 31, Rempart Kipdorp, Antwerp, and to whom I have sent a cash prize of half-a-crown for this rather nutty poem.

BOY McCORMACK.

In view of the boxing articles appearing in the BOYS' FRIEND some time ago, a personal impression of the famous boxer may prove interesting. He was staying with a relative in Stockport prior to his departure for America, and the present writer met him on the Stockport Cricket Club Ground. He was waiting for a friend to have a game of bowls, and in the interval of rest he proved a most entertaining companion. Boy McCormack is tall—about five feet eleven—and powerfully muscled. He has pleasing features, and a head of what some people would term red hair. His shoulders are wide, his chest deep, and his waist slender. In fact, he might have been specially constructed for a human fighting machine. Unable to get important contests in this country, he has had to find foemen worthy of his capacity in the States. There he has splendidly upheld the honour of Britain. He is much more intellectual than the

generality of pugilists, and carries on an intelligent conversation in a soft, well-spoken voice. He is fond of reading, and expressed a particular partiality for the works of A. G. Hales and Jack London. His profession he never alludes to, and to get him to speak of pugilism you must ply him with leading questions. He was personally of opinion that Beckett would beat Moran, and he also confessed that, like Dempsey, he had never had a boxing lesson in his life, but owed a good deal of his ability to natural instinct. No matter how much natural capacity for boxing a youth may possess, it can be improved by reading, and, above all, by practice. Readers of the BOYS' FRIEND should benefit by perusing the advice of one who is a 'sport' and a gentleman.

Sent in by W. H. Edge, Edgeley School, Stockport, to whom I am awarding a cash prize of 5s.

FROM A SUPPORTER AT BRUM.

A friend at Birmingham sends me the following letter: "Reading through the BOYS' FRIEND, I see it is just five-and-twenty years since it was first published. I started to read the 'Green 'Un' when I was at school, twenty-two years since. I am now thirty-six. Rather old to read the BOYS' FRIEND, perhaps, but I look upon the paper as the Man's Friend as well. I can remember the good old pit stories, but the paper gets better every week. I have four children, and they delight in the tales of Jimmy Silver. I have been the means of making new readers, which I did in a peculiar way. Whilst working in a big munition factory, I purposely left my copy lying in our department. A few days after I saw some boys reading the self-same copy, and they became regular readers. As our firm employed sixteen thousand hands, and as I always left my copy handy, the results were good. Even now I always give my number away. Wishing you and the 'Green 'Un' every success, A. RICE. I am much obliged to my correspondent, and rely on his promise to write to me again."

Your Editor

Advertisement for Mead Gramophones, featuring a gramophone illustration and text: 'Buy Mead ON EASY TERMS direct from factory at wholesale prices and SAVE POUNDS. World's best music table Gram. Portable, hornless and exquisitely coloured monster horn Mead-o-phones to select from. Grand bargains in Columbia, Regal, Edison Bell and Decca. Immediate delivery. Sent on 14 days' trial, packed free, carriage paid. 50 tunes and 400 needles included. Satisfaction, or money refunded. Send postcard for beautifully illustrated art catalogue. MEAD CO. (DEPT. G106), RUSSELL HEATH, BIRMINGHAM.'

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