

"THE MINERS' ELEVEN!"—Our Grand New Football Yarn Starts To-day!

The BOYS' FRIEND

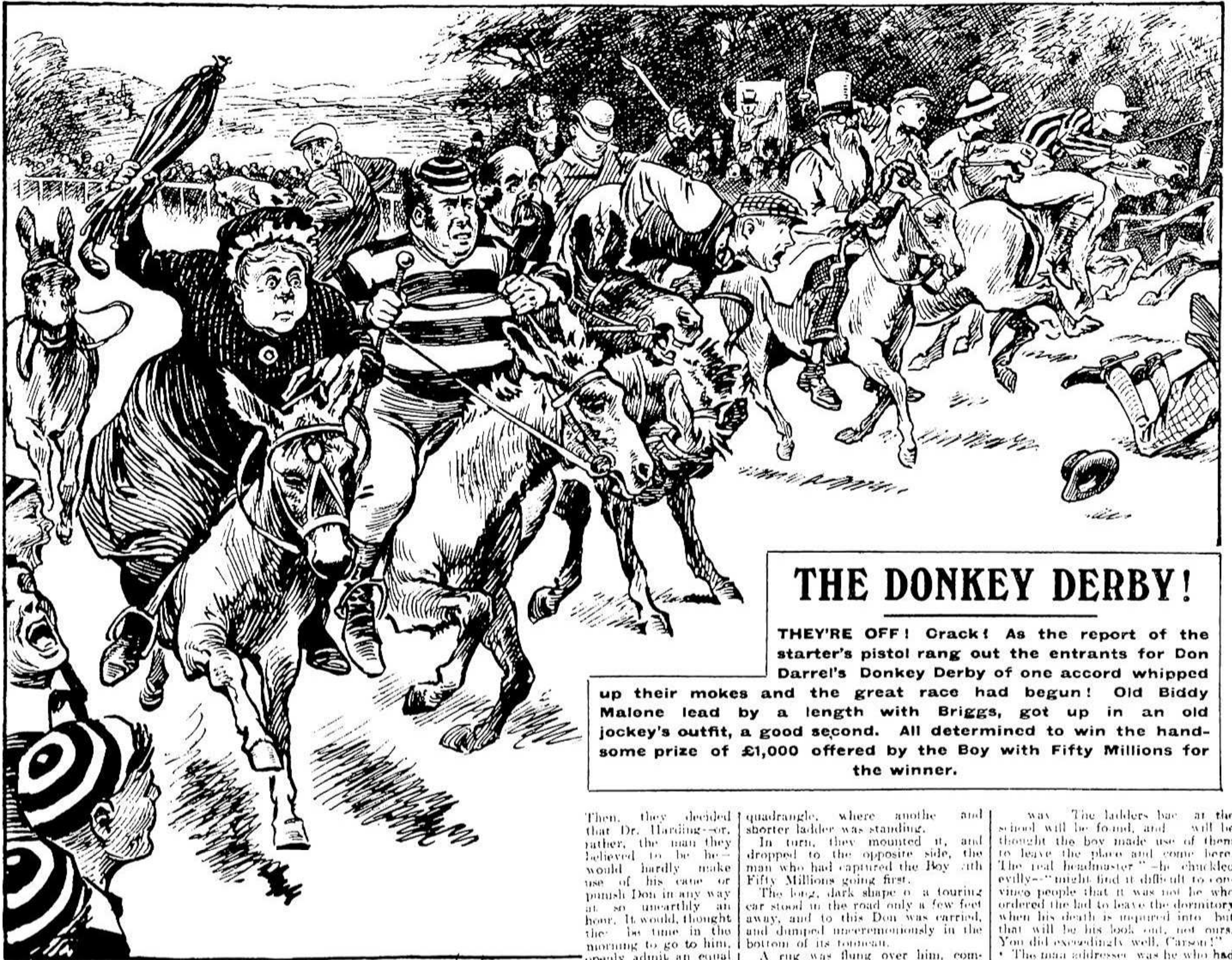
TWELVE PAGES! TWENTY-SIXTH YEAR!

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THREE HALFPENCE.

[Week Ending December 18th, 1920.]

THE BOY WITH FIFTY MILLIONS! - BY - VICTOR NELSON.



THE DONKEY DERBY!

THEY'RE OFF! Crack! As the report of the starter's pistol rang out the entrants for Don Darrel's Donkey Derby of one accord whipped up their mokes and the great race had begun! Old Biddy Malone lead by a length with Briggs, got up in an old jockey's outfit, a good second. All determined to win the handsome prize of £1,000 offered by the Boy with Fifty Millions for the winner.

A Grand Story of the Adventures of a Boy Multi-Millionaire.

Don Darrel's Awful Peril.

The man who was dressed in scholastic robes and disguised so like the kindly old Head of Eaglehurst School tightened his grip, and a great darkness descended upon the unfortunate Don Darrel.

The Boy with Fifty Millions ceased to struggle, and his body relaxed in the impostor's clutches.

"This time there will be no mistakes made, you little whelp!" the man muttered, snatching up the unconscious boy, and swinging his limp form over his shoulder. "You are bound on a trip to Kingdom Come, and our friend, Mr. Randolph Gurney, will be for your millions!"

Again he chuckled silently, as he moved with his burden towards the window.

Perhaps he was already anticipating what he would do with his share of the huge reward Gurney had promised his gang when Don Darrel was "removed."

There is such a thing as "counting one's chickens" but certainly it seemed that nothing could save Don now.

True, in the dormitory, the whole Fifth Form was awake. But the juniors merely waited for Don Darrel to return to hear what had happened when he reached the study with the supposed Head. They little guessed that their comrade's life was hanging by a thread.

South, Losely, and Frank Philips had at first thought of following to the study, and frankly confessing that they were as much to blame for the organising of the "feed" as Don.

They had felt that it would not be "cricket" to allow him to bear the brunt of the Head's displeasure.

they might sort of wiggling lay ahead.

Thus, there was no hope for Don in this direction.

The bogus schoolmaster raised the window, and, taking an electric torch from his pocket, he flashed it thrice.

Almost immediately two dark forms, carrying between them a long ladder that would reach up to the window, detached themselves from the shadows.

The ladder was reared against the sill, and, throwing out his leg, the impostor clambered on to it, with Don still lying over his shoulder.

A few seconds later he joined the pair in the quad.

"You've got him—good one of them breathed, and the voice was that of the ex-bushrauger and scoundrel, Captain Raymond. "Bo quick! Bring him along to the car!"

The three moved away into the darkness, reaching the wall of the

quadrangle, where another and shorter ladder was standing.

In turn, they mounted it, and dropped to the opposite side, the man who had captured the Boy with Fifty Millions going first.

The long, dark shape of a touring car stood in the road only a few feet away, and to this Don was carried, and dumped unceremoniously in the bottom of its tonneau.

A rug was flung over him, completely hiding him from view, the sloop-halted leader of the trio took his place at the wheel, and, as the other two sprang into the body of the car after Don, it glided away into the night.

For mile upon mile the motor journeyed, Captain Raymond showing that he was not only an expert chauffeur, but one who was open to take risks as long as he attained speed.

It must have thundered on through the night for fully half an hour, travelling into a wild and unpopulated part of the country. Captain Raymond slackened the breakneck pace only when they suddenly rounded a bend in the road, and came in sight of a spot that was near their destination.

"So far, so good!" drawled, guiding the car over a narrow, roughly-marked out road, running across a stretch of gorse-dotted common. "We have not passed a soul on

way. The ladders lay at the school will be found, and will be thought the boy made use of them to leave the place and come here. The real headmaster"—he chuckled evilly—"might find it difficult to convince people that it was not he who ordered the lad to leave the dormitory when his death is inquired into, but that will be his look-out, not ours. You did exceedingly well, Carson!"

The man addressed was he who had made-up to look so like Dr. Harding. During the journey the car he had removed his flowing gown and replaced his mortar-board with a dark cap.

He had removed his wig and venerable side whiskers, rubbing into them some cocoa-butter to loosen the grip of the spirit-gum that had adhered the false hair to his skin. More cocoa-butter, generously applied, he swept away all other traces of his recent disguise.

He smiled grimly.

"Yes, I flatter myself all went well," he said, with slight American accent he had been able to master when playing his part. "But it was not hard to impersonate the old guy."

"Not for you, perhaps, though it would have puzzled me," of our greatest actor to my age," Carson, Captain Raymond returned. "The stage lost a master when you missed taking it, I'm thinking."

A smile flickered for a moment over

A SPLENDID NEW STORY OF A YOUNG CAPTAIN AND HIS ELEVEN!



THE MINERS' ELEVEN!

A Magnificent New Football Serial.

By WALTER EDWARDS.

The 1st Chapter.

The Profiteers!

Every alternate Saturday evening found twenty thousand persons in Coalham Town suffering from sore throat, though the fact must not be attributed to a periodical epidemic of bronchitis, mumps, whooping-cough, or any similar ailment.

The miners flocked to the ground en masse, and their shouts of encouragement, derision, and occasionally vituperation could be heard in all quarters of the town, for Coalham took its football seriously, wholeheartedly.

The club, started some few seasons before by Stephen Bulford, a mine manager, had taken but one season to establish itself, and from that time onwards it had attracted the cream of local talent.

To play for Coalham was the cherished ambition of every youngster for miles round, although many an aspirant knew no more about soccer than did the little china dog on the corner of his mother's parlour mantelpiece.

Coalham became a power in the Midlands, and then, as though to crown the club's success, Stephen Bulford introduced his nephew, a sturdy youngster of seventeen.

Jack Vernon came straight from school, and his clean cut tactics and almost uncanny knack of finding the net from seemingly impossible angles, combined with a magnetic, quiet personality which stamped him a leader of men, had resulted in his being elected unanimously to the captaincy of the side.

He was the junior member of the team, yet he speedily proved his worth, and became the pivot from which all movements of attack emanated. Furthermore, he taught his men the art of penetrating the enemy defence with deft, understanding touches.

Jack Vernon became the backbone of the team, the leader, an ideal captain.

Yet, despite his popularity with his men and the hero-worship of the crowd, the youngster remained his modest, efficient self; and the team, with such a leader, became invincible.

Jack had found life at Coalham Town very strange at first. He missed the care-free life of his school and the companionship of his chums. The change of atmosphere was drastic, revolutionary, for he had thought that he had nothing in common with the grimy, coal-stained toilers who tramped to and from the pits.

But the youngster was wrong, for an iron bond—that of sport—bound him to the miners and supplied the interest in common.

All Coalham Town loved the great winter game, and so did Jack Vernon. And when he eventually turned out for the Town and displayed his prowess—his remarkable turn of speed, his clever passes, his inspired dexterity with the leather—the miners rose to him as one man and took him to their hearts.

And from that day onwards Jack was happy.

Five days a week he spent in his uncle's office, and Saturday found him leading his men to victory.

It was an ideal life for a healthy, sport-loving youngster, and he soon

settled down to the changed order of things.

Coalham Town F.C. became a team of giants, and whenever they played at Slug Heap the ground was packed to capacity long before the whistle shrilled for the kick-off, and hundreds of discomfited partisans had the gates closed in their faces.

In a word, the club was thriving, and its amazing prosperity was due, in the main, to Jack Vernon and his understanding of his men.

Stephen Bulford, the chairman and chief shareholder of the club, did not realise this poignant fact; or, if he did, he made no mention of the matter, neither did he give his nephew the slightest praise or encouragement.

with the other, and the total number of goals in any one game had never exceeded two.

But this season, with Jack Vernon on the top of his form and the other players in the pink of condition, the local sportsmen felt certain that their bets would give Merton Craye a "real good kicking," as they phrased it.

All roads leading to the ground were thick with miners, all of whom were discussing the forthcoming game from all angles, and it was perfectly obvious that not one of them gave a thought to defeat.

Jack Vernon felt much the same way about matters, for his men had improved out of all knowledge during the past month or so.



DEFYING THE PROFITEERS! "And suppose I inform you that it is our intention to go through with our new scheme—ah?" sneered Bulford. "Then I shall resign from the club right now," replied Jack Vernon quietly.

Not that the youngster expected praise; he considered that he had merely done his duty as skipper of the eleven.

One Saturday afternoon, early in December, Jack left his lodgings and turned in the direction of the football-ground. The youngster looked the picture of fitness as he swung along, his face flushed with health, and his eyes holding that clear light which spoke of perfect physical condition.

A snatch of song parted his lips as he covered the ground, and he nodded in friendly fashion to anybody who greeted him.

All the town seemed to be making for the ground, for the occasion was a match of the war-to-the-knife variety.

Coalham was opposed to Merton Craye, a team which invariably put up a good, bustling game of tricky, forceful football. The two clubs were sworn rivals, for neither team had ever been able to gain a really decisive victory. The fortune of war had first been with one side and then

The crowd grew dense as the youngster neared the ground, and when he was within thirty yards of the gate he was held up by a phalanx of yelling miners.

The din was almost deafening, and Jack could see from the expressions upon the coal-grimed faces that something serious was afoot. The men, consumed with excitement and anger, were shaking their fists and waving sticks in a threatening manner, and the name that appeared to be on every lip was that of Stephen Bulford, Jack's uncle.

"Come out and face us, you dirty profiteer!" roared a stentorian voice. "Come out, Bulford! Tell us what you mean by it, you unsportsmanlike hound!"

Jack, packed in the crowd, his arms wedged to his side, listened with surprise and apprehension stamped indelibly upon his clean-cut features.

What could be wrong? he wondered. Why were they so enraged against his uncle?

He knew that he would learn

nothing standing where he was, so he thrust his sturdy shoulders forward and commenced to force his way through the vast crowd.

"Make way there!" he cried. "Make way!"

Heads were turned in his direction at the sound of his voice, and a combined cry went up.

"Here's Jack! Here's Jack Vernon!"

"Make way for the lad!"

A path was made for the youngster, and, slowly but surely, and not without delays, he eventually found himself outside the gates of the ground. The crowd was still shouting hoarsely, and it was not until his eyes rested upon the large printed notices which were pasted over the turnstiles, that Jack understood the reason of the uproar.

He stopped dead in his stride, and remained like a man turned to stone. His face paled, and his eyes stared fixedly at the lettering, for, printed in bold black capitals, was the following notice:

"THE PRICE OF ADMISSION TO ALL PARTS OF THE GROUND IS DOUBLED."

(By order) STEPHEN BULFORD.

Jack Vernon rubbed his eyes in sheer amazement. The very idea was unheard-of—unwarrantable. The club had never been so prosperous in the whole of its history, and yet his uncle—who was the moving spirit amongst the directors—had doubled the price of admission.

It was a scandal—sheer profiteering in sport!

"What do you make of that, lad?" yelled a voice; and Jack Vernon's face flushed crimson.

His jaw set, and his lips formed a thin, straight line, but he did not reply.

Instead, he strode towards players' entrance.

"I'll see about this!" he muttered grimly.

of his hair, and hesitated for an instant. His uncle's tone of voice was not pleasant to hear—it was harsh, almost contemptuous.

He was about to make a heated reply, when the angry din increased and became a deafening volume of sound.

Jack looked meaningfully into his uncle's shifty eyes.

"I fear there'll be trouble, sir," he said. "The best thing we can do is to start the match as soon as possible, or else the crowd inside may get out of hand."

Stephen Bulford nodded.

"Perhaps so," he returned ungraciously. "I'll see to it at once."

He turned on his heel and strode away towards the dressing-rooms, followed closely by his nephew, and the maddened cries of the indignant and enraged mob outside the gates, the rough element that refused to pay the increased price of admission, and was ripe for any trouble that might come along.

The injustice of the affair did not strike this particular section of the crowd; it simply wanted to incite a riot.

Bulford lost no time in getting into touch with the referee, whilst Jack joined his men, who had already changed into their playing clothes.

"This is a fine old how-d'-ye-do, isn't it, Jack?" asked Webster, the goalkeeper. "What is your uncle thinking about?"

Jack Vernon shook his head helplessly, and slipped off his jacket.

"Blessed if I know, Jim," he returned, shrugging his broad shoulders resignedly. "There's one thing I will prophesy, however, and that is that there'll be trouble to-day—lots of it!"

"You're no there, old man," said Merton, Jack's inside-right. "There's a rowdy mob outside that's ready for a rough house."

"Sure, and I guess the guys have got a grievance," put in Brant, who had a harmless little habit of using Americanisms. "If those fellows rear up on one ear, they'll sure get that Great War of ours looking like a dog-fight!"

Jack Vernon smiled in spite of himself.

"Sure thing, Steve!" he agreed whimsically.

The door opened, and the referee popped a rather scared face into the room.

"You fellows ready?" he asked.

"We want to start at once."

"The boys are ready, old man," returned Jack, "and I sha'n't be a moment!"

"Good!" said the official. "It seems to me that the crowd on the embankment is ripe for mischief."

Looking worried and apprehensive, he disappeared, and a few seconds later Jack led his men on to the field, to be greeted by a derisive round of cheers from a section of the vast crowd.

"Hurrah! Bravo!"

"Give 'em a cheer."

"Three cheers for Profiteers Eleven!"

Jack Vernon's lips set tightly as the insulting words came to his ears, and a flush made his cheeks burn.

"The Profiteers' Eleven!"

The name ate into his brain, and in a flash Jack realised that the crowd had a perfect right to so christen his team! For the club was prosperous—wealthy and yet his uncle had doubled the price of admission to all parts of the ground.

The youngster's first impulse was to gather his men together and walk from the playing-pitch; but a moment later he dismissed the idea, for he knew that to cry match off would mean rioting—possibly, bloodshed.

So the youngster set his teeth, and determined to thrash the matter out with his uncle after the match.

Merton Craye took the field, and was greeted with prolonged cheers.

"Give 'em what-for, Merton!" roared a thousand voices.

"Whack the profiteer!"

The visitors' skipper punted a ball towards the vacant goal, and his men spread out to take a few pot-shots before the game started.

The referee examined the nets, and then strode briskly to the centre-line. He put his whistle to his lips preparatory to summoning the rival skippers, and was about to sound a blast when his whole body stiffened, and he remained as a person petrified.

For the cries of the mob, which held the snarl of a wild beast as an underlying note, came from the direction of the gates, and a second later a deafening crash made the air vibrate. Then came the splintering of wood, and a roar of vicious triumph.

The mob had "rushed" the gates! Cries of pain and alarm, blended with wild shrieks of anger, came to

The 2nd Chapter. "Rush the Gates!"

Once inside the ground, the first person Jack encountered was his uncle, whose cadaverous face looked livid but determined. The eyes—which were set too close together—were glinting with either rage or excitement, and the chin was set determinedly.

Jack strode up to Stephen Bulford. "What is the meaning of this, sir?" he asked, checking the hot words which flew to his lips.

The man flushed at the blunt question.

"Since when have you had the right to question me?" he demanded acidly. "Must I come to you and ask advice as to how I shall run my club?"

He glanced at his wrist-watch significantly.

"The best thing you can do is to get along to the dressing-room and change," he continued. "You haven't got too much time."

Jack Vernon coloured to the roots

A COMPLETE STORY OF THE FAMOUS CHUMS OF ROOKWOOD SCHOOL!



Cheering up the Captain!

A SPLENDID COMPLETE STORY OF JIMMY SILVER & Co. AT ROOKWOOD, BY OWEN CONQUEST.

The 1st Chapter.

Jimmy Silver is Wanted!

Squash! Tubby Muffin meant that snowball for Jimmy Silver. It was like Muffin's cheek, of course, to hurl a snowball at the captain of the Fourth; and it was still more like Muffin to land the missile upon the wrong party. Jimmy Silver was standing on the School House steps, engaged in a debate with his chums Lovell and Ruby and Newcome. It was a half-holiday at Rookwood, and a keen winter's day. There was snow in the quadrangle, deep. Snow was piled up against the trunks of the ancient beeches, the branches of which shivered, leafless, in the wind. And the Fistical Four were debating whether their leisure time could be better spent than in a raid on the Moderns with snowballs. A final bust-up, as Lovell expressed it, to wind up the term and give the Moderns something to remember them by during the Christmas holidays. And then Tubby Muffin happened along with his snowball. Tubby rolled that snowball with care, and kneaded it hard in his fat hands with a twinkle in his round eyes. He took careful aim at Jimmy Silver, whose profile was turned to him. The snowball was destined to land upon Jimmy's right ear, and squash there, greatly to his surprise. But its destiny was never fulfilled. It whizzed from Tubby's fat paw, and missed Jimmy Silver's nose by about a yard. Naturally, meeting with no resistance, it whizzed on. But every bullet, it is said, has a biller, and the same applied to Tubby Muffin's snowball. For Mr. Bootles, the master of the Fourth Form, came out of the big doorway at that moment in coat and hat and muffler, and his chubby face was exactly in the line of fire. Squash! The snowball landed fairly upon Mr. Bootles' nose. It squashed there. "Oh! Ah! What—what—ah!" ejaculated Mr. Bootles. He sat down suddenly. It was quite a surprise to him. The most venturesome spirit among the Rookwood juniors never ventured to snowball a master. Mr. Bootles had emerged all unsuspecting of peril. The sudden concussion on his respected nose fairly bowled him over. He sat down, and remained seated for a fraction of a second—not more. For the steps were slippery. Having reposed gracefully on the top step for the thousandth part of a second, Mr. Bootles shot down the steps. Jimmy Silver & Co. stared at him. The happening was too sudden for them to lend their Form-master a hand. As for Tubby Muffin, he stood frozen with horror at what he had done, blinking at the sliding Form-master with distended eyes. "My hat!" ejaculated Lovell. "Oh! Ah! Ow! Ooooooh!" Mr. Bootles landed at the bottom of the steps, where the snow was thick and deep; the flakes were still falling. Mr. Bootles sat in the snow, and grabbed wildly at hat and spectacles. "Oooooh!" "Oh crumbs!" gasped Jimmy Silver. "You've done it now, Muffin!" "You shrieking ass!" gasped Ruby. "Oh dear!" stuttered Tubby. He found the use of his legs suddenly and fled. Mr. Bootles sat and spluttered. And Jimmy Silver & Co. rushed to his aid. In their dutiful eagerness to lend aid, they forgot that the steps were slippery. It was only a momentary forgetfulness, but it was enough. Four juniors came whirling down on Mr. Bootles, landing on him and rolling him headlong in the snow. There was a chorus of exclamations,

"Oh!" "Ow!" "Oooooh!" "Yaroooooh!" "Bless my soul! What—what? Upon my word! Grooogh! Gerroff! Oh dear! How dare you—Mmmmmmmmm!" The juniors scrambled up. They were rather quicker upon their feet than Mr. Bootles. "Oh, my hat!" stuttered Jimmy Silver. "Sorry, sir! We—we were coming to help you—" "Sorry, sir!" spluttered Lovell. "Bless my soul! Oh dear! I—I am quite breathless! I—I fear I am injured! Bless my grooogh!—soul! Oh! Ah! Help me up, Silver! I—I find it difficult to—to rise! Oh dear!" Four dutiful pairs of hands grasped the master of the Fourth. The little gentleman was dragged, gasping, to his feet. He was a shocking spectacle.

that he did not glance towards the cane on the table. "Silver!" stuttered Mr. Bootles, at last. "Yes, sir." "Someone hurled a missile at me!" "Hem! I—I think somebody was—was throwing snowballs in the quad, sir," said Jimmy. "Must have hit you by accident, sir." "A most reckless—grooogh!—proceeding, to hurl snowballs near the—oooch!—house!" gasped Mr. Bootles. "I shall inquire for the—delinquent, and punish him severely! Meanwhile, Silver—Wow! I was about to go to the station at Coombe, Silver. Oh dear!" "Yes, sir." "To meet a relative who is coming to stay with me for a few days—in fact, until the Christmas vacation begins," said Mr. Bootles. "My—ah!—nephew, Captain Digby—grooogh! I cannot proceed to the station,

I mention this because you may notice—Ooooooh! Now go at once, my dear boy; I am much obliged to you." "Certainly, sir." Jimmy spoke more cheerfully now. He was quite willing to give up his half-holiday for the sake of a gentleman in khaki who was suffering from shell-shock. The Fistical Four quitted the study, leaving Mr. Bootles wrestling with a tremendous sneeze.

The 2nd Chapter. The Old Boy.

Jimmy Silver & Co. put on their caps, and started across the quadrangle. The snow was still coming down in heavy flakes. It was the first snow-fall of the winter at Rookwood, but it was a long and heavy one. It had been coming down since dawn. "Poor chap!" Arthur Edward Lovell remarked. "If he got shell-shock in the war, and hasn't recovered yet, it must be a pretty bad case. We'll come with you, Jimmy, and help you look after him." "If the poor chap suffers from depression, we might have him in the end study and cheer him up," remarked Ruby. "We'll ask him to tea some day, and I'll do some of my comic recitations." "Might make him worse." "Look here, Lovell—" "Well, old chap, you know what your comic recitations are—" "You silly ass—" Whiz, whiz, whiz! Smash! From the direction of Mr. Manders' house came a volleying of snowballs. Tommy Dodd & Co., of the Modern Fourth, had spotted the four Classics on their way to the gates.

pathetic. It was a little difficult for the healthy, cheery schoolboys to comprehend exactly what shell-shock was like; but they knew that it was something exceedingly unpleasant. The train was puffing in the station when they reached Coombe, and they hurried in. There was no khaki to be seen in the station, but it occurred to them that Mr. Bootles' nephew had probably been demobbed long ago, and would be in civvies. A well-built young man in an overcoat and soft hat was standing in the station vestibule, looking about him. He did not bear much resemblance to the plump little Form-master, but Jimmy guessed that this must be Mr. Digby. "That's the merchant," said Jimmy in a low voice. "We'll ask him, anyhow." They scanned the young man before approaching him. He looked about twenty-eight or thirty, and was good-looking, with a rather bronzed complexion. But the expression on his face was more noticeable than anything else. It was darkly sombre, and looked as if a smile had never visited it; and the eyes, a little sunken, had a strange and restless light in their depths. It was evident from the young man's manner that he was expecting somebody—doubtless his uncle. The Fistical Four closed in on him at last, and raised their caps together, as if moved by the same spring. "Excuse me, sir," said Jimmy Silver, with great politeness, "Captain Digby, I believe?" The young man nodded without speaking. "We've come to meet you, sir, and take you to Rookwood. Mr. Bootles had a little accident just as he was starting, so he sent us. I'm Jimmy Silver, of the Fourth Form," added Jimmy. The young man glanced at him. Then he nodded again, still without speaking, and walked out of the station with the four juniors. The village street was white with snow, that gleamed on every roof and wall. The old station huck, usually visible there, was not to be seen now; it was under shelter somewhere, and the driver was warning his circulation at the Red Cow. "You'd like to drive, sir, or walk?" asked Jimmy. "Rather slow work driving in the snow." "Walk!" said Mr. Digby. He had a pleasant, musical voice, but he did not seem much given to using it. He could scarcely have been more laconic. "Right-ho, sir! This way." They started down the village street. Mr. Digby walked with a springy, soldierly stride, and the juniors had to break into a trot occasionally to keep pace with him. Jimmy had relieved him of his bag, and Lovell of his rug, with great politeness. They were prepared to talk cheerily on the way to Rookwood School; but the dry manner, and the grim silence of the young man rather froze them off. However, they couldn't make it a funeral march, as Lovell said afterwards, and Jimmy tried his hand at conversation. "You know Rookwood, Mr. Digby?" "A nod." "Your uncle's our Form-master, sir?" "Nod." "The fellows like him no end," said Lovell. Mr. Digby walked on. "You came to visit Mr. Bootles once before, I think, sir," said Newcome, feeling that it was up to him to do his bit. As a matter of fact, Arthur Newcome had never even heard of Mr. Digby before that afternoon. "A shake of the head. "Perhaps you're an old Rookwooder, sir?" suggested Ruby. "Yes." The young man spoke at last. "Oh, good!" said Jimmy. He thought he understood now why Mr. Bootles supposed that a visit to Rookwood School would cheer up the invalid. Staying among the cheery surroundings of his boyhood might be just what he needed. "You'll find Rookwood a bit changed, sir," said Jimmy. "There's a Modern side to the school now. They teach German and stinks there." A faint smile flickered over Mr. Digby's pale face. Jimmy felt encouraged. His description of the Modern side at Rookwood, where they taught German and chemistry, had at least brought a trace of a smile to the invalid's sombre face. "We have had no end of rows with the Modern cads," said Lovell. "The



THE FATAL SHOT! Whiz! The snowball caught Mr. Bootles full in the face as he descended the School House steps. The Fistical Four were amazed. They could scarcely believe that even Tubby would dare to snowball a master!

Snow smothered him from head to foot; the buttons of his coat had burst, and his hat had fallen under him with dire results to the hat. He leaned on Jimmy Silver and Newcome, and spluttered. "Help help me into the house!" he managed to articulate. "Yes, sir." "Certainly, sir!" "So sorry, sir!" With great care the Fistical Four piloted Mr. Bootles up the steps—upon which the Form-master trod very gingerly—and into the house. They navigated him to his study, and anchored him in his armchair before the fire. Mr. Bootles sat and gasped for breath. The roll down the steps had not hurt the Fourth-Formers, but Mr. Bootles was not of an age to indulge in such gymnastics with impunity. Jimmy Silver & Co. would have retired from the study, leaving their Form-master to recover at his leisure; but Mr. Bootles made them a sign to remain. They remained—in some trepidation. It certainly wasn't their fault that Mr. Bootles had taken his tumble, but there was no telling what view a Form-master might take of anything. Form-masters were an uncertain quantity, and it was quite possible that Mr. Bootles might find solace in eating them. They waited for him to recover breath. They were relieved to see

Silver. I am too—oooooh!—too upset! Will you have the kindness to proceed to the station—ow, oh dear!—and meet my relative, and oooooh!" Mr. Bootles wound up with a sneeze. Jimmy Silver & Co. exchanged a rather dismal look. The snowball raid on the Modern juniors was evidently "off." For a Form-master's request amounted to a command. "Oh, certainly, sir!" said Jimmy, with all the cheerfulness he could muster. "Mr. Digby arrives by the three train," said Mr. Bootles. "You will—ah!—explain to him that—grooogh!—I have been prevented from coming—atchooch!—you will bring Captain—atchooch—" "Captain whom, sir?" "Atchooh! Captain Digby, you will—grooogh!—bring him to the school—grooogh! Kindly go at once, or you may be too late. Oh dear! Do not lose a moment!" Jimmy Silver & Co. turned to the door. "Stay. The juniors turned back. "Captain Digby has been on active service," said Mr. Bootles, sneezing. "He has suffered from—Grooooooh!" "From—from what, sir." "Atchooh! Shell-shock, Silver, and he is not yet quite recovered. I am in hopes that a few days at Rookwood will—grooooooh!—will cheer him up, and—Ow, ow! He suffers from deep depression of spirits.

The sudden fusillade smashed right and left on the Fistical Four. "Give 'em beans!" roared Tommy Dodd. "Oh, my hat!" "You Modern rotters—" Lovell grabbed up snow to return the fire. "Hold on!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver, fielding his cap, which had been knocked off. "No time for rags now. We're in a hurry—" "We're not going to give Modern cads best!" roared Lovell. "Come on, ass!" Whiz, whiz! Smash! Squash! Quite a little army of Modern juniors advanced upon the Fistical Four, and snowballs rained on them. But Jimmy Silver, for once, turned his back upon the enemy, and scudded out of gates. Lovell hurled one snowball which landed in Tommy Dodd's eye, and followed him with Ruby and Newcome. The Moderns crowded the gateway after them, crowing with victory. "Never mind those bounders," said Jimmy Silver, turning up the collar of his coat. "Buck up!" Leaving the Moderns still crowing, the four Classical juniors hurried on through the snow towards Coombe. It was heavy work, tramping through the lane, with the snow over their boots, but they trudged on manfully. It was not the way they would have chosen of spending a half-holiday, but they were quite cheerful about it, being interested in Mr. Bootles' nephew, and very sym-

... as the grey coated ones fell to their knees. Even the Cadi and the captives joined in the prayers, their backs towards the fortress, while the red standard of the League rose and dipped three times. A muzzin on a minaret back in the town chanted some musical words that Dick could not catch, and the standard dipped again. The Moors, having carried through this part of their programme, according to plan, now rose, and the ... at a second blast from the trumpet, broke into a run, and a ... packed, secret mass swept down on the steel walls of the fortress.

A British rifle, cracked and that was all. The Moors, mad with the lust of battle, yelled discordantly, and fired their pieces harmlessly against the steel walls. There seemed little or no method in their rushing; they were like a solid grey wave hurrying to smash itself against the ramparts of the world; they seemed to care little that there was every likelihood of their being killed or badly wounded in the attempt.

On they came, and Dick felt a queer cold feeling clutch at his heart. What if there should be some secret way through the ramparts some weak spot, whereby this grey horde could win into the interior of the citadel? In a hand-to-hand fight it could only be a matter of moments before he and his gallant crew went under, for, grave as they were, odds of a thousand to one were a little too heavy for victory to be assured. The Moors must not be allowed to come too close. On the meditation, Dick acted.

"Stand by!" His order was a wild yell, and the little lust rang in its every one. "Aim low, waste no ammunition. FIRE!"

The air thickened with the stuttering and stammering of the machine-guns, as they sent forth death and mutilation in a pitiless stream. It was as if lead was squirted from a dozen hoses into that serried mass. The front ranks, as the guns swept their deadly muzzles from side to side, crumpled up and fell where they were; the sound and subsequent rain fell back little, terrified, dismayed, at this sudden development. And then, as the machine-guns commenced their dreadful spraying again, the grey coated soldiers of the Star and Crescent fell back, turned, and raced away like fiends.

They never halted until they reached the cover of the streets, though the machine-guns, after that first terrible burst which had left the square with still figures, ceased their fire.

And then, quite suddenly, with a white flag tied to a spear-shaft, and mounted on horses, unarmed, there came three men from the streets, and rode towards the still frowning fort.

Have they come to make terms, said Dick, peering through his glasses.

The centre one is the Cadi himself, and Casey, you are a rotten shot, after all—the chap on the left is the much battered Hadji. But who is this chap on the right; I can't see his face properly?

Then Dick started, and whistled, and nearly fell from his lofty perch with astonishment. For the wind had suddenly blown aside the swathe of burias that hid the third man's face, and revealed to the lad and the petty officer was none other than Yussuf—their supposed friend and help.

In a whirlwind the three mounted men crossed the square, the fluttering white cloth on the spear-shaft gave protection than a suit of armour-plate. But, though they did not fire, the blue-jackets kept the muzzles of their machine-guns trained on the trio, for, as Matthews said: "You never knows what those coffee-coloured chaps'll be up to, and it's always as well to be on the safe side."

Dick sheathed his automatic, and allowed his buddies to fall to the full length of their sling. Then, pushing aside the steel shutter, he stepped out in full view on to the little ironwork balcony on the outside of the wall.

At sight of him, the three men on the horses, who had by this time arrived at a spot immediately outside the gate, reined in, and as Ahmed Ben Adeem shot a glance of hatred and malignancy at the slim figure of the lad, Yussuf the Moor dropped a little behind him, and Dick was surprised to see a huge wulk pass from that dusky gentleman's face in his own direction. Casey, joining his master, gullawed at the sight.

"'Tis a wink of another kind ye'll be wearing, Mister Yussuf, if so be as ye're trying to double-cross us," whispered the Irishman; and Dick, turning his head, could see the unholly fighting-light in the petty-officer's eyes. But before he could pass any

answering remark, the full voice of the Cadi came to the lad's ears.

"Greetings, oh warrior of few summers but many strategies!" said the Moor. "Greetings and salaams! I come to offer thee and thy warriors terms of clemency, out of my great love for thee!"

"A lot of ice that love would cut, I'm sure," was Dick's reply. "And say, Cadi, don't you think you're rather exceeding the bounds of a joke to come here and offer us terms? But let's hear what you've got to say. It may be amusing, and we haven't laughed for a long time. Say on, Cadi; we've got plenty of time."

"Time to starve, and to have your throats cut!" snarled Hadji; but the Cadi silenced him with a gesture.

"This do I offer thee, O Midshipman Effendi," said the Cadi, butting in. "Thou shalt give up to me possession of the fortress, and hand over to me the secret writings we know of, and that by the time the sun reaches the noon-tide to-day. That is what I require of thee. And if the fortress and the papers are again mine by that time, then shall thyself and thy followers be allowed to return unmolested to the house ye vacated last night, and there dwell in peace and security till such time as it shall be decided what is eventually to be done with ye. Nor shall I reproach thee for the death of many of my followers, nor the wounds thou hast inflicted on as many more; they shall be as things that never were, and

your heart being warm for us, when we know full well that the minute we stepped outside those gates you and your mob would fall on us, and batter us to little bits, out of revenge. But, look here, you seem pretty anxious to get hold of this fortress again. We'll leave the papers aside for the moment, since, as I dare say you know, they are no longer in our possession, nor do any of us know where they may be hidden, though we have a good idea."

Here Dick looked intently at Yussuf, whose face, however, showed no signs that the shaft had gone home. Indeed, he repeated his previous wink, and in answer Casey raised a fist like a leg of mutton, and shook it in the Moor's direction.

"Well, we'll give up your fort, Cadi," said Dick, after a pause. "Don't look so pleased about it till you've heard all we've got to say. We'll give up your fort when you swear, by the board of the Prophet and on the open Koran—I believe those are two oaths you Moslems dare not break—that you will not only set us all, unharmed, at liberty, and provide us with a fully-provisioned, fully-fueled, fast motor-boat to take us back to Gibraltar, but will also hand back to us the papers that have been the cause of all this fuss. There you are, Cadi—those are my terms, and you'd better fall in with them. No, don't imagine that you will be able to carry this fortress by storm; you've already had a taste of our

said the Irishman, with a grin. "And now, be off with ye, afore we forget that ye're covered by that dirty tablecloth and waste a bullet on ye're filthy ould carcass! The fact is, we've got all the cards, and ye know it. Indeed, if ye don't see reason soon, we'll cut off the town's supply of water—we're already holders of all the grub that ye haven't got in ye're dirty ould shops—and bring ye to ye're senses that way. If ye want to be rid of us in a pleasant manner, just ye carry out Lieutenant Murray's orders as regards the safe-conduct, the boat, and the swearing on the Koran, and we'll leave ye in peace. Believe me, 'twould be much better for ye to do that 't'd save ye such heaps of trouble!"

Then, with a gesture to his companions, the Cadi reined round his horse, and they raced across the town square back to their own people.

As the Cadi and his two followers rejoined the ranks of the men—Hadji, turning round and contemptuously coating into the square the white flag that had served them so well—the Moors swarmed round them.

Dick suddenly clutched Casey's arm. "Ladders!" he said. "They're going to try and take the place in the style of the Middle Ages. Well, I think we shall be able to deal with that little matter presently."

Long steel ladders had been procured from somewhere, and, armed with these, a second rank of warriors,



How to Play Football
By
An International.

No Fancy Tricks on a Slippery Ground.
If, when you go on the field, you find that the surface of the ground is slippery, then make up your mind—every one of you—that during the match you won't try to indulge in fancy tricks. A slippery ground does not permit of players doing elaborate twists and turns. There is only one type of play which pays on such a surface, and that is the "straight ahead all the time" method.

Remember, too, that when the ball is slippery, and the surface greasy, it pays distinctly well to hustle the full-backs of the opposing side. Most full-backs will make a fairly good clearance if they get their boot fair and square on a dry ball, and are given plenty of time in which to complete the clearance. But if the ball is slippery, and the ground treacherous, then full-backs are apt to make mistakes. And if the forwards have followed up, they will be able to avail themselves of the blunders which are inevitably made by full-backs sooner or later.

As a matter of fact, following up is always worth while. Don't assume that the full back will make a good clearance. He may blunder. If he does not do so, it can't be helped; but if he does miskick, and you haven't followed up, it is clear that you won't be able to take advantage of the blunder. So keep on worrying, especially if the ball is slippery.

Keep Fit.

December is usually the period of the season when heavy grounds are experienced—days on which the mud clings to the boots of the players. This, of course, makes football into even harder work than it is at ordinary times, hence the special necessity for every player to go on the field in the very best physical condition. Don't imagine that you will be all right without looking after yourself. A thing which is worth doing is worth doing well, and in order that you may be successful on the football field, it is imperative that you should be fit to stay the pace right through ninety minutes of a gruelling game on a bad ground.

Many a match has been lost because a team, which was really better than its opponents, have been in such indifferent condition that they have been unable to last out the whole game. Start strongly, of course, and get one or two goals up before your opponents have settled down, if you can possibly manage it, but don't then assume that the game is all right, and that you can leave it to your defenders to pull the side through.

The First Half.

It is with the object of getting ahead in the first half of the game that most wise captains of football clubs decide to play with the elements in their favour if they win the toss. A following wind is a great advantage, and when your side has the choice of ends, always play with this wind behind you. It will help you to attack during the first half, and, provided that the strength of the competing sides is something like equal, your opponents will probably have to work so hard to keep you out during the first half that they will be feeling a bit tired when the second half is entered upon.

There are also quite effective ways of using the wind, and forwards especially should bear in mind that if there is a breeze blowing towards their opponents' goal, it should be used as a help to score goals. By that I mean that, with the wind behind them, forwards should avail themselves of every possible opportunity for firing the ball towards the opposing goalkeeper. Shoot as often as you possibly can when there is a wind to give additional force to your shots.

The wind will, in addition to carrying the ball goalwards at a great speed, probably make it curl in such a way that the goalkeeper will be deceived and beaten. Put on full sail when you have the wind behind you, and lose no opportunity for taking a pot-shot at your opponents' goal.

(More on "How to Play Football" in next Monday's BOYS' FRIEND.)



THROUGH A GIANT EYE! Dick and his men could not refrain from laughing loudly at the futile efforts of the attacking Moors on the outer shell of the steel fortress, shown clearly to them by the giant periscope.

thou and thine shall live under my powerful protection in Eleazar."

"Very good of you, Cadi, I'm sure," said Dick. "Really magnanimous, what? But suppose we decide to stay where we are? What then?"

The Cadi's face became on the instant a study in hatred.

"Then shall ye neither sleep nor rest day nor night," he answered. "My men shall attack ye at all hours, and keep ye so busy that your eyelids shall become as lead, and your bodies suffer the tortures of exhaustion, of hunger, and thirst. And in the end, when ye shall have been worn out, then will I take each of you and put ye all to the torture by fire, and finally your heads shall be struck off and mounted on spear-heads, so that strangers coming to Eleazar shall see and take warning. That will I do if ye are obdurate, and so shall both the fortress and the papers come back to me in the end. So take ye advantage of my clemency whilst yet my heart is soft towards ye, and provoke me not by obstinacy."

He broke off short, for both the midshipman and the Irish petty-officer had thrown back their heads, and were laughing heartily.

"I thought your act would be funny, Cadi," said Dick, at last. "And it's funnier than I expected. Really, now, you must think we're simple, to be taken in by the tale of

mettle, and next time we perhaps shan't be so merciful."

The Moor threw up his hands in a gesture of rage.

"Boardless boy," he snarled, "thy days, even thy very hours, are numbered. Remember that I told thee about the explosives stored below the fortress—remember that the pressure of a hand on a firing-knob, and thou, and all thy band mingle with the dust that blows in the wind. That shall be thy fate, and that this day. I have spoken."

"Here, hold on a minute, Cadi," said Casey, intercepting still a third wink from Yussuf. "You've overlooked one fact, sheik. You don't know where that electric-knob is, and you daren't, for your very life, touch it without express orders from the chiefs of your league, who're hundreds of miles away."

The expression on the old Moor's face told that the petty-officer's shaft had sunk home. He reeled back in his saddle, and would have fallen had not the ever-present Yussuf put out a hand to save him. His face went ashy grey under its tan, and he goggled at the speaker and the midshipman.

"Where—where learnt ye that?" he gasped. "What traitor to the sacred cause has betrayed me?" "That's a thing ye can spend a lot of time thinking out, Whiskers,"

protected each by those miniature shields, sneaked out along the ground and reinforced their fellows. And, yard by yard, the thin line of steel approached the fort, rifles crackling.

And at last they won to the feet of the walls, and, the ladders, still operated from behind the shields, were placed on end. And then a strange thing happened—happened at Dick's orders, for the lad was bent on fooling the Moors now to the top of their bent. The armour-shutters swung so, and sealed themselves without even the faintest click, and the fortress presented a solid wall of steel to the attackers. Only, on the very top of the building, through a lately-discovered periscope of huge size, the defenders watched the tactics of their antagonists.

This periscope, through a series of powerful lenses, threw on a wall, as a cinema lantern throws on a screen, an accurate presentment of the happenings outside. And though these happenings were designed to inflict upon themselves sudden and horrible death, these strange sailormen simply stood at their various posts and watched the display, roaring with laughter.

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

A LONG COMPLETE CANADIAN SCHOOL STORY!



The CEDAR CREEK SWEEPSTAKE

A Grand Complete Story of the School in the Backwoods.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

The 1st Chapter.

Honk's Latest Stunt!

Frank Richards was frowning. His chums noticed it at once, when they came in from skating on the frozen creek, and met Frank in the playground of the backwoods school.

In a corner of the playground, by the wood-pile, there was a little crowd of the Cedar Creek fellows, and prominent among them was Bunker H. Honk, the youth from Chicago.

Master Honk, with his long thin nose blue with the cold, was addressing the other fellows in eager tones.

Frank was glancing towards him with a deep frown on his brow, when Bob Lawless and Vere Beauclerc came in, carrying their skates.

Bob clapped his cousin on the shoulder, in his cheery way.

"What's the row?" he asked.

"Not exactly a row, Bob—"

"Something's happened to disturb your lofty serenity, old scout," said Bob, laughing.

"Have you been rowing with the Honk-bird?"

"Well, not rowing," said Frank, cautiously. "I've told him what I think of him."

Bob chuckled.

"I've only told him parts," he said.

"It would take too long to tell Honky all that I think of him."

"But what's he done now, Frank?" asked Beauclerc.

Frank Richards gave a grunt.

"He's getting up a sweepstake among the fellows—"

"Oh!" said Bob, his expression changing a little. "Is that it?"

"That's it," growled Frank. "He's selling tickets now at a quarter each. Miss Meadow would be no end annoyed if she knew."

"A sweepstake!" said Beauclerc.

"But there's no race going on at this time of the year—"

"It's not a race. You can have a sweep on anything, of course. It's really a gamble," said Frank.

"He's been explaining it to me. He's got fifty-two tickets to sell at a quarter of a dollar each—that's the number of cards in a pack, you know. Ace of spades is the winning horse. I mean the winning card—and there's prizes for the other aces. All the other cards are blank."

"Oh, I see."

"I guess—" began Bob Lawless, and he paused. There was a tinge of red in his bronzed cheek.

"There'll be thirteen dollars in the pool," went on Frank.

"That's fifty-two tickets at a quarter each. Ace of spades takes ten dollars, and the other aces a dollar each. That's the scheme."

"And what does Honk get for his trouble in getting up the sweep?" asked Beauclerc.

"Oh, nothing!" He's doing it for the sport of the thing, he says, and just takes one chance with the rest, putting in his quarter like all the others."

Beauclerc raised his eyebrows.

"That isn't much like Honk," he said. "I should have fancied he wanted to make a sure thing for himself."

"Well, that's what he says. Lots of the fellows are going in for it," said Frank crossly. "He's just been bothering me to buy a ticket."

"What did you say?" asked Bob curiously.

"Something emphatic," answered Frank. "It's just gambling, and it isn't made any better by calling it a sweep. Of course, it's got to be kept secret. Miss Meadows would jolly soon put a stop to it if she knew. I don't like keeping beastly secrets, and sneaking about with something on my conscience."

"Hem!"

"Honk started it while we were away in the north-west," continued Frank.

"If we'd been here we might have nipped it in the bud. But it's too far gone now. Nearly all the tickets have been sold, I believe. That ass Todgers stuck me for a quarter, to buy a ticket. I didn't know what he wanted it for. Hopkins has bought five or six, I believe. Dawson and Lawrence and Diaz have two each. Yen Chin has four."

"There seems to be rather a run on them, I guess."

"Yes, Honk has only half a dozen left to sell," said Frank. "No good thinking of chipping in now, I suppose. But it ought to be stopped."

claimed Frank, as Bob Lawless hesitated. "I'm surprised you don't see it, too, Bob."

"Well, perhaps I should, if I'd thought about it," said Bob candidly.

"But galoots act without thinking sometimes. You see, we haven't all your powerful intellect, Franky—"

"Don't be an ass, Bob. I'm not preaching, either. But I don't like having a rotten secret to keep from Miss Meadows. If it was all right, she wouldn't be down on it, I suppose; and you know she would be down on it."

"I—I suppose she would," said Bob thoughtfully. "I never—I never thought of it before, but—but I suppose she would."

were going in for it, and offered me a ticket. I took it, and here it is."

Bob Lawless drew a slip of cardboard from his pocket.

Upon it was written the number 35, with the initials B. H. Honk's well-known straggling "fist"—B. H. H.

"That entitles me to a draw," said Bob.

"I've got to be on hand when the cards are dealt out in the old corral. If I get an ace—"

Frank smiled a little.

"So you're in it, Bob?"

"Yep."

"I wasn't preaching at you, old chap. But—I'm not going back on what I said. It's gambling pure and simple, though you never thought of looking at it in that light. And gambling's wrong. Now I've got that off my chest, I'll say no more about it."

Bob Lawless stood twirling the cardboard slip in his fingers.

He was very uneasy.

Without giving any thought to the matter, the careless, good-natured rancher's son had "come in" to Honk's little scheme. Now that he was in it, he was not wholly inclined to listen to the voice of wisdom. His expression showed that he thought Frank was taking a rather too severe view of a trifling matter.

"After all, it's only a game," he said.

"There's money on it."

"Yep. But it's our own money; we put it up at a quarter of a dollar each, you know, and every fellow's willing to take the risk."

"It's gambling," grunted Frank; "and that kind of things makes bitter blood. Lots of the fellows can't really afford to lose even a quarter of a dollar. And they oughtn't to want to bag other fellows' cash. And gambling leads to swindling; the two are always found together. I've heard my father talking about the

Frank glanced at Beauclerc in dismay.

"Here's a go!" he said ruefully.

"Now Bob's got his back up. I wasn't slanging Bob—only that sharp rotter, Honk."

Beauclerc smiled.

"Bob will come round, he said. He's acted rather carelessly, and he don't like being called over the coals."

"Well, I wasn't calling him over the coals, was I?"

"Ahem! Hallo, here comes Chunky!"

Chunky Todgers joined the two chums as Bob disappeared into the schoolhouse.

There was a very sharp, in fact, greedy, expression on Todgers' fat face.

"I say, Franky—"

"Hallo!" grunted Frank Richards. He was feeling very ruffled and sore just then—Bob's attitude worried him. He wondered, too, whether he had been a little "preachy." He had not meant to be.

"Can you lend me another quarter, Frank?"

"No."

"Well, I guess you might be civil about it, anyhow," said Chunky.

"Can you lend me a quarter, Beauclerc?"

"What for?" smiled Beauclerc.

"Honk's only got a few tickets left," said Chunky Todgers confidentially. "You know about the sweep, of course. Well, he's sold them up to number forty-eight. There's fifty-two in all. I want to take a second chance."

"Rats!"

"You might lend me a quarter. I'll stand you a whack out of the prize if I get it."

"If—" grunted Beauclerc.

"Well, the more tickets I take, the more chance there is, you know," said Chunky Todgers. "I say, lend me a quarter—"

"Bow-wow!"

Frank and Beauclerc walked away. Chunky blinked after them, and in a minute or so came puffing in pursuit.

"I say, Frank, will you lend me a quarter to buy some maple sugar at Gunten's Store?" he howled.

"No!" snapped Frank, without turning his head.

A bell rang, and the Cedar Creek fellows began trooping towards the house for dinner. Frank Richards met Bob Lawless' glance as he came into the dining-room of the lumber school; and Bob's look was rather grim. Evidently he still had a feeling that he had been called over the coals by his chum, and did not like it.

Frank's face was clouded during dinner.

The thought that a coolness should arise between him and his chum over a stunt of Bunker H. Honk's, was very exasperating. He was feeling inclined to fasten a finger and thumb upon B. H. Honk's long, thin nose, and twist it hard. But owing to that unfortunate difference of opinion, Bob seemed to be rather in the position of a defender of B. H. Honk on this occasion, little as he liked the astute youth as a rule.

Coming out of the dining-room after dinner, Chunky Todgers caught hold of Frank's sleeve.

"I say, Franky—" he gasped.

"Shurrup!"

"Will you lend me—"

"No!"

"A quarter—"

"Buzz off!"

"To give to a poor, blind man!" said Chunky Todgers pathetically.

"No!" roared Frank Richards.

He shook the persistent Chunky off, and went out into the playground. Bob Lawless strolled in another direction.

The 3rd Chapter.

Frank Richards Gives in!

"I guess you'd better come into the scoop, Richards."

Frank Richards was following Bob across the playground, and had nearly overtaken him, when the Chicago schoolboy came up briskly. Bunker H. Honk was always brisk, and generally in a hurry. He always had the air of a fellow who found life too short for his many interests. Though really what Honk had to be so busy about was rather a mystery.

"Put up your quarter and take your chance with the rest," urged Bunker H. Honk, heedless of Frank Richards' frown. "I guess Miss Meadows won't spot this little stunt, if you're afraid of the schoolmarm."

"You silly ass!" growled Frank.

"I'm not afraid."

"What's your trouble, then?" asked Honk.

"Haven't you ever heard of a chap



TROUBLE FOR THE SWEEPSTAKE PROMOTER! Many hands were laid upon the unfortunate youth from Chicago, with the result that he was "up-ended" in the snow. The Cedar Creek fellows were in no mood to be trifled with, especially by the Yankee Bunker H. Honk!

Bob Lawless' face, for some reason, had grown very red.

"You—you think it's rotten, Franky?" he asked.

"Of course."

"I don't quite see where the 'of course' comes in," said Bob, a little tartly. "Honk says it's a bit of sport—"

"You've heard about it, then?"

"Sure."

"Well, he can say it's a bit of sport if he likes, but it's really gambling, same as playing poker or faro, at the Red Dog in Thompson," said Frank Richards. "I told him so."

"Franky, old scout, you mustn't set up as a preacher, you know. There's Mr. Smiley at the mission, who does that stunt for this section, and you oughtn't to take his trade away."

Frank stared at his Canadian cousin.

"Bob!" he ejaculated.

"You see—" said Bob.

He paused again.

"Well?"

"You—you see—"

"I see it's a rotten game," ex-

claimed Frank, as Bob Lawless hesitated. "I'm surprised you don't see it, too, Bob."

"Well, perhaps I should, if I'd thought about it," said Bob candidly.

"But galoots act without thinking sometimes. You see, we haven't all your powerful intellect, Franky—"

"Don't be an ass, Bob. I'm not preaching, either. But I don't like having a rotten secret to keep from Miss Meadows. If it was all right, she wouldn't be down on it, I suppose; and you know she would be down on it."

"I—I suppose she would," said Bob thoughtfully. "I never—I never thought of it before, but—but I suppose she would."

The 2nd Chapter.

No Quarter!

Frank Richards coloured.

In his wrath and indignation at Bunker H. Honk's latest stunt, it had never occurred to him that his cousin and chum had fallen a victim to that very cute youth's wiles.

"You!" he exclaimed.

"You're an ass, Bob!" remarked Beauclerc.

Bob looked very uncomfortable.

"I—I guess I never thought much about it," he said. "Honk said it was a sweep, and that most of the fellows

gaming casinos in Europe; every one of them a den of swindlers, where silly tourists go in to be fleeced."

"But there's no swindling here—"

"I'm not so jolly sure of that. Honk expects to bag the prize, or he wouldn't take the trouble to get the affair up. You know Honk."

Bob knitted his brows.

"Look here, Frank, I don't agree with you. The cards are going to be dealt out, one to each chap, and nothing can be fairer than that. It's purely a matter of chance."

"I can't quite swallow that—with Honk in it."

"Rats!"

"Look here, Bob—"

"My dear chap," said Bob. "If you're going to do the Smiley stunt, I'm off. I have enough of it from Mr. Smiley to last me through the week."

And Bob Lawless walked away to the lumber schoolhouse, whistling.

"Bob!"

The Canadian schoolboy did not look back as Frank called.

A FINE TALE OF THE ADVENTURES OF A TROOP OF BOY SCOUTS!

THE MISSING SCOUTMASTER.

By ROSS HARVEY.



THE ACT OF A MADMAN! The masked man, infuriated beyond all reason, hurled the old-fashioned cutlass at the boat's crew when the latter were quite three hundred yards away.

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 acrobatics. Mr. Hendron is kidnapped, and the patrol determine to discover him. This they are successful in, and rescue him from a raft on which he has been set adrift. Whilst walking home from visiting the Robins, Ted suddenly gives the order to "Take Cover."

(Now read on.)

The Masked Man Again!

Silently the scouts dropped down flat, lying there in perfect stillness, and not one of them yielded to the

temptation to ask questions. Patrol-leader Ted Martin had seen something, and that was all that mattered to the rest of the Otters.

A moment or two passed in breathless suspense, then Ted's voice sounded in another whisper.

"Can any of you see anything down there by the first of the chain of rocks running out to the island?" he breathed.

"Doesn't that shadow look like the outline of a man? There! Didn't it move then?"

"Ye-," whispered Kitto. "It is a man, Ted. Pity the moon isn't shining!"

"It will be in a moment!" Jack Kitto glanced up at the sky, and judged that Ted was right. Then he looked round at the other scouts. They were all lying very still, and, by good luck, would be in the shade

thrown by the sandhills when the moon did break through the clouds. There was not much chance of any of them being seen, Kitto reckoned.

Before he could whisper this to Ted the moon shone quite brightly, showing that Ted had not made a mistake. There was a man down there by the rocks, in a crouching position.

"He's wearing a black mask, Ted," Kitto breathed.

"And he's got a cutlass, came the answer. "Jack, it's the man who put up such a fine fight against that gang of sailors."

"Not a doubt of it!" Kitto was breathlessly excited, but it was not for him to make suggestions. Ted Martin was in charge of the Otters, and Ted could be relied upon to give quick, sensible orders when they were required.

They came now in crisp sentences. "Wilson, you heard what I said to Kitto just now?"

"Yes—" "Then show your worth as a scout by crawling away without being seen," answered Ted. "The moment you are certain that man down by the rocks can't possibly see you, jump to your feet and run like the wind back to the camp. Tell Mr. Hendron what is happening, and he'll give you fresh orders."

Tenderfoot Wilson made no answer, but he showed that his tenderfoot days would not last so very much longer by the silent, clever manner in which he crept away. Even the scouts who were close to him scarcely saw him move, yet it was only a minute or two before young Wilson was on his feet and running hard across the sandhills.

Ted Martin and the others lay where they were, motionless and silent.

The masked man was still down there by the rocks watching and waiting, and the minutes slipped by. Nearly five of them must have gone by when Kitto caught Ted's arm in a tight grip.

"Isn't that boy out to sea, Ted?"

"Yes. Just crawling along, isn't she?"

"Making for White Gull Island," answered Kitto. "Ted, things are going to happen to-night!"

A thrill ran through all the scouts, then a sharp cry cut through the air. The masked man by the rocks had

sprung to his feet, for he had seen the boat creeping so slowly and silently through the water.

Just for a moment he stood there, a tall, gaunt form of a man, then a cry of the most amazing fury rang from his lips, and he rushed on to the chain of rocks. By springing recklessly from one boulder to another, he was making a tremendously fast journey out to the island, until suddenly he pulled up dead.

Ted Martin was on his feet at that.

Kitto, the tide's too high for him to get out to the island!"

"Yes, it would be," gasped Jack. "That's what he's stopped for. My hat! He's raving like a madman!"

The Otters stood there, watching in bewilderment.

The masked man showed up quite clearly against the sky-line, his old-fashioned cutlass slashing in the air as if he were attempting to terrify the crew of the slowly moving boat, then, in his fury, he flung the old weapon at them when the boat must have been distant by three hundred yards.

It was the act of a man infuriated beyond all reason, but in Ted's eyes it was about the best thing that could have happened in the world.

Of course, the masked man might still have another weapon, but that terrible cutlass had gone, at any rate, and Ted was in the mood to take risks.

"Down to the rocks, you chaps," he cried. "Mr. Hendron will be along in a minute or two, and we've got to prevent the masked man coming ashore."

"Ted!"

Kitto spoke quickly, although he was not scared himself. He was thinking of the rest of the patrol, for many of the Otters were not very old, and Jack Kitto hadn't forgotten that tremendous fight the masked man had put up against overwhelming odds.

The half protest came too late, though, for Ted Martin was already racing down to the rocks, and it was at that moment the boat disappeared altogether. It had rounded the island on the south side, but whether the crew were landing or not, there was no saying.

Still, Ted wasn't thinking about the boat or its crew very much; it was the masked man who claimed his entire attention, and well he might, for he had wheeled suddenly round.

He did not appear to have seen the scouts, but he was coming back towards the shore just as fast as he could.

"Down on the sand again," jerked out Ted. "Mind! We've got to stop him somehow."

Just a trace of a shudder ran through Jack Kitto.

There was something almost uncanny in the way that masked, gaunt form was coming towards them—springing wildly from rock to rock, risking being flung into the sea with every step he took, then Jack's nerves steadied.

He edged a little nearer to Ted, and waited in breathless silence, while a cloud drifted in front of the moon and the sudden darkness blotted out everything.

The Mystery Deepens!

"Get ready, Kitto!"

Ted Martin whispered the warning, and almost as the words left his lips, the masked man sprang from the last of the chain of rocks. Even while he was still hanging in the air Ted and Jack were on their feet, both anxious to put themselves in front of the younger scouts.

"Collar him suddenly flashed Ted. "Look for a knife, though!"

The patrol-leader of the Otters streaked forward as he spoke, and, with pluck that amounted to recklessness, grappled with the masked man as he landed on the sand.

Alone Ted would never have had the slightest chance of making a capture, of course, but he wasn't alone by any manner of means. Scarcely had he got his arms about the mysterious individual when Jack Kitto came to his aid, and the rest of the Otters were only seconds later.

A shout of amazement mixed with fury rang out from the masked man, and he began to fight after the manner of a wild animal—in a way the like of which Ted Martin had never seen before.

The man tore and scratched with his finger-nails, and hacked with his heavy boots, and almost at the first attack Ted realised the truth.

"Kitto, he's a lunatic!"

The words were gasped out by the patrol-leader, and Jack never doubted the truth of them. He was just as certain as Ted was that this was not a sane man they were attempting to

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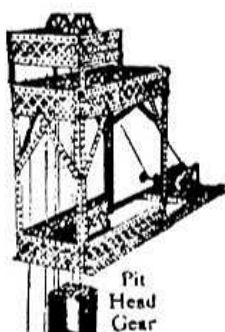
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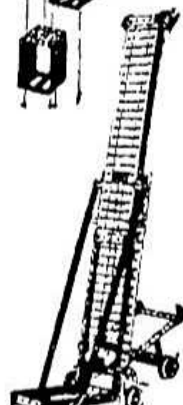
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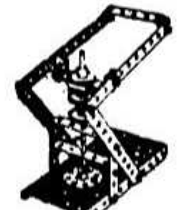
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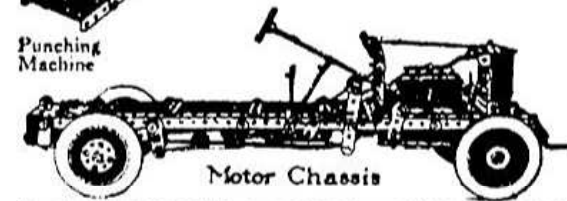
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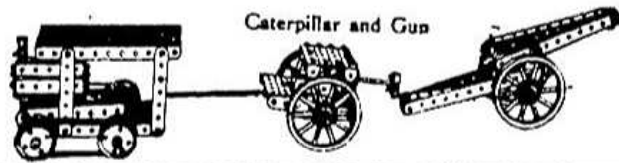
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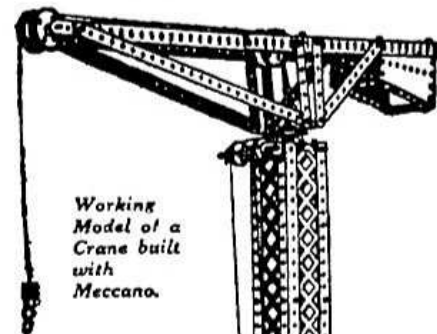
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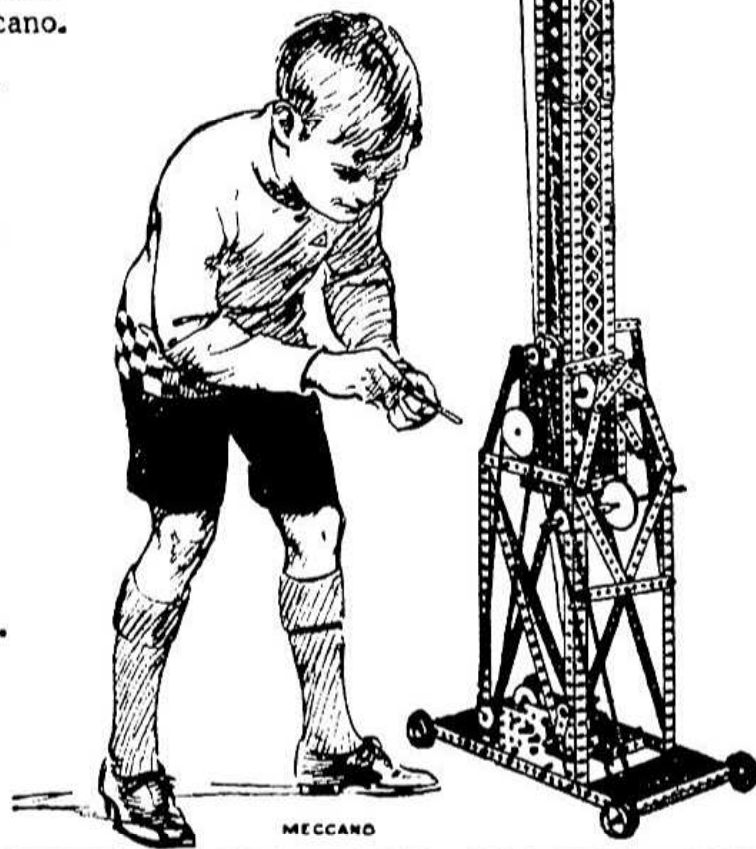
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capture, and the second in command gritted his teeth.

A heavy blow in the face had sent him staggering backward, but he rushed to the attack again, then the rest of the Otters made their weight felt. With one combined rush the patrol flung themselves upon the maniac, and he went down fighting and shrieking.

It was a pretty awful scene, and one that many of the scouts shuddered about long afterwards; at the time, though, excitement carried them through, and although Ted and Jack were a good deal knocked about, they got the unfortunate man down.

From the moment they had realised that he was insane, and therefore not responsible for his actions, they had done their best to hurt him as little as possible, but the capture had to be made. Panting and gasping, the scouts got the man down on his back on the sand and held him there with all their weight.

They had just succeeded in doing that when Tenderfoot Wilson brought Mr. Hendron running to the spot, and the scoutmaster flashed on a light from a powerful electric torch.

"Good gracious, Martin! What has happened?"

"The masked man, sir, panted Ted. "He's—he's maniac, and we've got him!"

Mr. Hendron swept the light down on the scouts' capture, and it needed only a glance to show that Ted Martin had not made a mistake. The man, whoever he was, was a raving lunatic.

"Take his mask off, Kitto!" cried Mr. Hendron excitedly.

But already Jack was fumbling with the strings that secured the black mask to the maniac's face.

He got them untied at last; then

in that circle of electric light the mask was wrenched away, and the Otter Patrol were staring down in utter amazement at a face that was as well known to them as any of their own.

"Mr. Quaife!" gasped Ted Martin. "The owner of White Gull Island!" cried Jack.

And that was all that was said for a moment or two.

The surprise was a tremendous one, for instead of clearing up the mystery of the island, it seemed only to increase it.

That Mr. Quaife, a respected and well-known local man, could be the mysterious masked individual who had flung Ted Martin into the sea for no apparent reason, and had made a prisoner of Mr. Hendron, was beyond them all, although, of course, his insanity might account for his extraordinary actions.

"But there's more behind all this than the acts of a madman!" cried Mr. Hendron. "Captain Bowers and his friends aren't mad as well. Wilson, you left my message at the police-station?"

"Yes, sir!"

And the police will be able to find this spot all right?"

Before the tenderfoot could answer the last question, three police-constables came hurrying across the sands, and Mr. Hendron was very brief with some sharp orders.

"All you need trouble yourselves about for the moment, constables, is that this man has lost his reason. You must take him to the station, and keep him under constant guard."

"But—but it's Mr. Quaife, sir!" gasped one of the policemen.

"I know; and you can see for yourself that he is insane!" replied Mr. Hendron. "Get medical attention

to him at once, and I will be along at the station very shortly to explain all that has happened. Has the guard been removed from the island?"

"Yes, sir," answered the constable. "We had a watch there until last night, and then decided that it was a waste of time. Mr. Quaife told us he'd leave a couple of his own men there, and we thought that was the best thing to do."

"I see!"

Mr. Hendron stood aside, while the constables persuaded Mr. Quaife to rise to his feet, and the unfortunate lunatic appeared to have grown a great deal calmer.

He spoke once or twice in quite his ordinary voice, and raised no objection to going away with the policemen, and the Otter Patrol watched him go.

As the little party disappeared in the darkness Mr. Hendron turned quickly to Ted.

"Now, tell me exactly what happened," he exclaimed. "You say Quaife was crouching on the rocks as if watching for someone—"

"Yes, sir; and a boat came creeping along towards the island," flashed Ted. "Of course, we couldn't see who was in her, but I believe they landed on the south shore of the island."

For a moment or two the scoutmaster did not speak.

He was staring out towards the island, for something of an extraordinary nature was happening on White Gull Island.

Then a startled cry rang out from Ted:

"The island is on fire, sir!"

(More of this exciting tale 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."

Our next issue of the BOYS' FRIEND is one which is looked forward to all the year round—the grand Christmas Number.

It is my custom to save up something very special for this issue, and this year is no exception to the rule.

In next week's issue, therefore, will appear a long instalment of one of the finest football serials ever read. It is entitled:

"THE MINERS' ELEVEN!" and is written by Walter Edwards, that famous author of sports stories. Mr. Edwards does not require any introduction to my readers. Beyond saying that he has surpassed himself in the writing of this story, I will not attempt to anticipate next Monday by telling you about "The Miners' Eleven." If you like football, you'll like Walter Edwards' new story.

Christmas without ghost stories would be almost as blank as Christmas without Christmas-pudding. Mr. Owen Conquest has turned up with a magnificent story entitled:

"THE PHANTOM ABBOT!" in which the famous chums of Rookwood, Jimmy Silver & Co., have a real Christmas adventure.

The next item on a superb programme is the story of the School in the Backwoods, and is entitled:

"FRANK RICHARDS' CHRISTMAS STORY!"

By Martin Clifford.

I am sure you can readily appreciate how much the boys who live in

the backwoods of Canada look forward to Christmas, with its holiday, opportunity for fun and feasting, and the chance of "letting themselves go." This is another story which will appeal to you all, my chums.

Then there will be extra fine instalments of our grand serials:

"THE BOY WITH FIFTY MILLIONS!"

By Victor Nelson,

"THE LEAGUE OF THE STAR AND CRESCENT!"

By John S. Margerison,

and

"THE MISSING SCOUTMASTER!"

By Ross Harvey.

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I want you all to make a point of going in for our great new competition in next Monday's grand Christmas number of the BOYS' FRIEND. This is an entirely new and original competition for any boys' paper, and is going to make a hit. It is to be run in conjunction with our great companion paper, the "Boys' Herald," and there will be twelve cash prizes and tuck-hampers given away EVERY WEEK!

Your Editor

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