

"Paper, Sir? Here You Are—The Best There Is!"

The BOYS' FRIEND 1^d/₂

TWELVE PAGES!

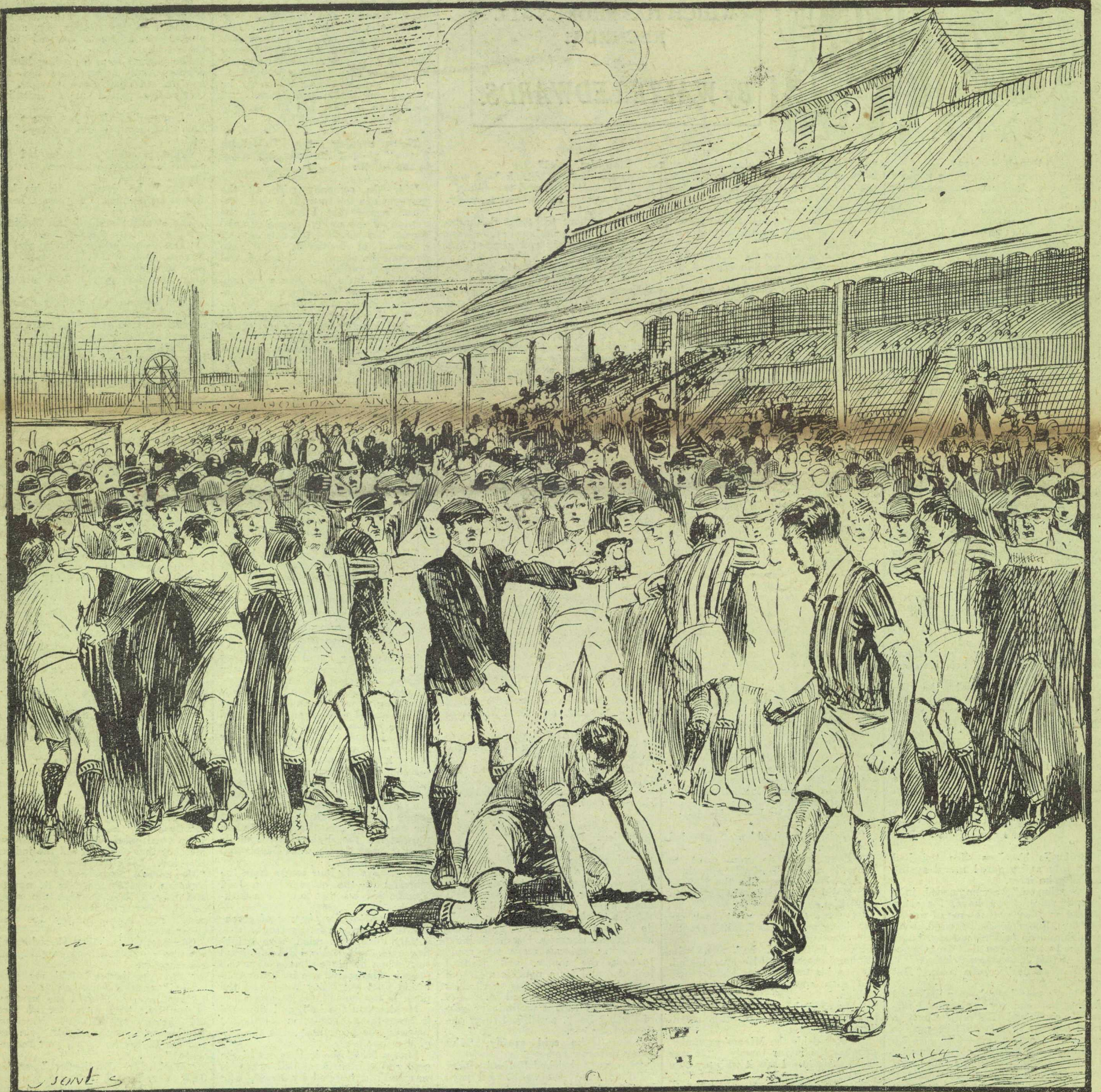
TWENTY-SIXTH YEAR!

No. 1,025. Vol. XXI. New Series.]

THREE HALFPENCE.

[Week Ending January 29th, 1921.

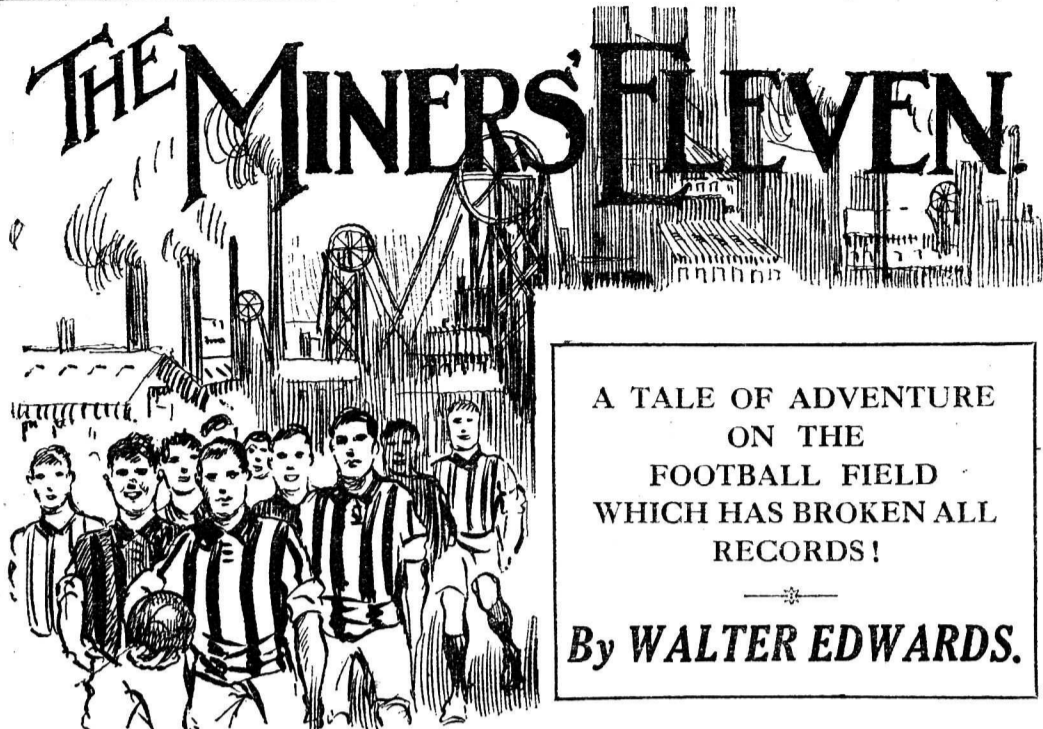
A Footer Yarn Which Has Scored Heavily—"THE MINERS' ELEVEN!"



CAUGHT RED-HANDED!

The game having been stopped by Green's mysterious fall, the referee hurried up. Ordering Sayers to take off his boot, he held it up for the benefit of the other players and the crowd which had swarmed on to the field. "You—you cad!" he hissed, as he displayed the thin steel spike in the heel. "So it was to wreck the Miners' Eleven that you 'broke' with Bullford! Get off the field before I thrash you within an inch of your life!"

Read This Smashing Footer Yarn and Enjoy It—Thousands Do!



A TALE OF ADVENTURE
ON THE
FOOTBALL FIELD
WHICH HAS BROKEN ALL
RECORDS!

By WALTER EDWARDS.

Rough Justice!

Jack Vernon is the young nephew of Stephen Bulford, a mine-owner and profiteer. The latter's latest stunt for extorting money from people is to double all prices of admission to the Coalham F.C. Jack, who was the captain of the team, resigns. He gets work in the pits, and sets about recruiting for a new eleven of his own—the Miners' Eleven. Bulford is furious, and sets about ruining the new club. He gets a crony of his, Tom Sayers, into the Miners' Eleven. Sayers starts his nefarious work by injuring the centre-forward, Bunny Scrutton. Bulford then sets his gang on to wrecking the playing-field. When Jack Vernon informs some of his supporters that a match has had to be put off on account of this, they are furious with the unknown gang who have caused the damage. Seeing Bulford in his car, they hold him up, threatening to rush him if he does not immediately pull up and listen to them.

Stephen Bulford remained transfixed, like a man who had gazed upon a gorgon's head. The vast, swaying crowd, swarming round the luxurious motor-car, was in an ugly mood. Sticks were brandished in the air, and threatening shouts came from all sides.

"Down with Bulford!"
"Rush the car! Fire it!"
"Bulford destroyed Jack Vernon's ground!"

"Then let's destroy Bulford!"
The mob, which contained the inevitable sprinkling of hooligans, closed in upon the car, and Bulford, realising his dire peril, held his hand aloft, enjoining silence.

This action increased the din momentarily, but eventually loud voices bade the crowd give the managing-director a hearing.

The pandemonium died away at last, and Stephen Bulford, pale-faced and shaking in every limb, gave a wan smile.

"Speak up, Bulford!" roared a hoarse voice. "Say what you've got to say, and after that we're going to chuck you into the river!"

"Yes," cried someone else; "and your motor-car's going to follow you!"

Bulford's bloodless lips twitched nervously as he gazed round at the sea of grim faces.

"Gentlemen," he commenced, in a hoarse voice, "you have, for some reason or other, accused me of wrecking the Miners' football-ground. Why you should do so I cannot say, but I hasten to assure you that I am innocent of this preposterous charge!"

"That's a lie!" cried a voice. "But go on!"

"There may have been a little bad feeling between my nephew and myself," continued Bulford, "but to even suggest that I could be capable of such an act as this—"

Bulford was obviously overcome by the bare thought of such a thing, and his voice trailed away pathetically.

"Is that all you've got to say, you lying old hypocrite?" asked someone scathingly.

Bulford held a shaking hand up. "No, no!" he said, emotion in his voice. "Let me finish. I bear Jack Vernon no ill-will, and I am really

and truly glad to see that his eleven is making headway! After all, his opposition means very little to the Town club, so why should I be jealous of the youngster? No, gentlemen, you have wronged me, and it almost breaks my heart to think that you should do so."

He paused for a moment, conscious of the fact that he had claimed the attention of the mob.

"I have been amongst you for many years," he went on feelingly, "and that the day should dawn when you should accuse me of a dishonourable action seems almost inconceivable. Gentlemen, I wish Jack Vernon every success from the bottom of my heart, and I assure you that if ever it should be in my power to give him a helping hand I shall not hesitate to do so!"

Glib-tongued, histrionic, a plausible liar, Stephen Bulford began to sway the mob.

"There may be something in what he says," opined a miner to his mate. "After all, we've only got young Jack's word against him. Perhaps he made a mistake!"

Quite an appreciable portion of the crowd was arguing in a similar manner, and Stephen Bulford sensed the fact. His smile broadened, and the colour commenced to ebb into his fleshy features.

"Gentlemen," he went on, gaining confidence, "I appeal to you, as sportsmen, to give me fair play! You accuse me upon the word of my nephew, it seems, forgetting that all of us are liable to make mistakes! He may think that I did this terrible thing, but I give you my word of honour that I know nothing about it! Also, I—"

"Not so fast, guv'nor!" growled a deep voice. "I just want to ask you one question!"

A burly miner, with a phenomenal breadth of shoulder and a deep chest, pushed his way through the crowd, and came to a halt beside the car. His honest features were grim, and his firm jaw set determinedly.

Stephen Bulford looked down at him and smiled.

"Well, my friend—" he began blandly.

"Don't 'my friend' me!" growled the miner.

"Well, what do you want to know?" asked Bulford apprehensively. He did not like the look of this stolid fellow, who obviously disliked him.

"I want to know what your car was doing outside the football-ground this morning!"

Bulford's face blanched, turned the colour of cheese, and his eyes dilated. He ran his tongue over his dry lips, and then spoke in jerky, nervous fashion.

"My car," he said—"my car outside the football-ground this morning—"

"Yes, outside the Miners' ground!" grunted the miner tersely. "It was there at dawn. I saw it with my own eyes!"

The poignant words came plainly to the ears of the mob, and a yell of fury made the air vibrate.

"Let's heave the hound into the river!"

"He's been bluffing us, the mealy-mouthed thug!"

"Grab him, lads!"

Stephen Bulford shrank back pitifully, terror-stricken and trembling.

"It's a lie!" he shouted hoarsely. "A foul lie!"

He was about to repeat the statement when the grim-faced miner leapt lightly into the car and gripped him by the scruff of the neck.

"I don't allow nobody to call me a liar, Mister Bulford!" he said evenly, shaking the big body as a tennis racket shakes a rat. "Do you hear that? I don't allow it!"

He shook Bulford until he was almost in a state of collapse. Then, still holding his captive in his sinuous hands, he asked for silence.

"Let me say a word, lads!" he cried, looking round at the scowling faces. "I saw this car—Bulford's car—outside the Miners' ground this morning, and although this scoundrel mayn't have actually taken a hand in the job, I guess he was at the bottom of it!"

"Of course he was!" went up the emphatic shout.

"The unsportsmanlike hound!"

"There's something else I want to say," continued the miner, shaking Bulford until his teeth rattled. "I've read a good deal in my time, and I've come across something what's known as poetic justice! I've got a proposition to put to Bulford, and it's this: He must either pay to have the Miners' ground thoroughly done up and redecorated—"

"I'll see you to Halifax first, you scoundrel!" shrieked Bulford, trying to release himself, but in vain. "You sha'n't have a penny piece—"

"Hold your tongue!" growled his captor, smacking his head. "Listen to what I've got to say! Either," he went on, raising his voice—"either Bulford foots the bill or I throw him out of this car, and hand him over to you!"

"Hand him over!" roared a score of voices. "We'll sling him over the bridge into the river!"

The tone of the voices proved that this was no idle threat, and a look of abject fear crept into Bulford's close-set eyes.

"I can't swim—I can't swim!" he whined frenziedly. "It'll be murder—murder! Do you hear?"

"It'll be rough justice!" growled the miner, who held him in a grip of steel. He gave Bulford another shake.

"Now, are you going to pay up, or shall I throw you out of the car? I don't mind which it is, although I think a ducking in the river would do you a world of good. Your black heart needs cleaning, I've no doubt!"

Another ominous move was made towards the motor, and Bulford looked round for a possible means of escape. But the mob was on all sides of him. He was hemmed in.

The miner took a preliminary grip of his big body, and lifted it off the floor of the car.

"Now," he said gruffly, "I'm going to throw you—"

"No, no!" shrieked Bulford wildly. "I'll do what you want! I'll pay! Let me pay!"

A disappointed groan escaped the lips of the crowd.

"You'll pay for everything! Get the workmen, and have the job finished within a month—eh?" asked the miner.

"Yes, yes—anything!" shrieked Bulford. "Now let me go, and keep those wolves away from me!"

He shuddered as he gazed at the threatening faces on all sides of him.

"Don't worry about that, Bulford," said his captor. "But remember this. All these lads have heard your promise, and it'll be as much as your life is worth to go back on it. If the Miners' ground isn't in shipshape order within a month we shall go up to the Town ground and wreck it; raze it to the ground!"

"Yes," cried a dozen voices; "and you won't get off scot-free, either, Bulford!"

Stephen Bulford looked as pale as death as he took his seat at the wheel.

"All right!" he said nervously.

"I'll do as you say!"

The miner shot one searching look at the crafty features before he sprang from the car.

"Bulford," he said slowly, "if you go back on your word Heaven help you!"

The motor-car commenced to move forward slowly, passing between two rows of angry and indignant supporters of the Miners' Eleven. Once out of the danger zone he increased his speed, until he was dashing through the town recklessly, scarcely knowing or caring where he went.

"The hounds! The scoundrels!" he ground out, again and again. "I shall have to pay, but I'll be even with them for all that!"

That evening the "Coalham Argus" printed the following letter to the editor:

"Sir.—In company with all the sportsmen in the town, it is with profound regret that I learn that the ground of the newly-formed Miners' Eleven has received the attention of a crowd of hooligans, who have wrecked the stands, the terraces, and the playing-pitch.

"This is little less than a tragedy for a club that has but a small financial backing, and so, having the interests of our great winter game at heart, I humbly offer my services in the matter of restoration.

"Indeed, I have already managed to get in touch with the necessary workmen, who will commence operations at the earliest possible moment.

"Expert opinion says that the ground will be finished within a month.

"In conclusion, permit me to state that the entire cost of this extensive work of reconstruction and renovation will be met by me.

"Here's to football! May it flourish in Coalham!"

Faithfully yours,

STEPHEN BULFORD.

Managing Director,

Coalham Town F.C."

The sportsmen in Coalham who did not know the true facts of the case, shook their heads as they read the letter.

"What a sportsman!" they declared admiringly. "One of the very best!"

The New Recruit!

The next day found a small army of workmen trooping through the players' entrance of the Miners' Eleven ground, and they lost no time in setting to work upon the ruins.

They toiled with commendable zeal for the whole of that day and the next; indeed, their aptitude for honest work was unique.

As a consequence of this unparalleled phenomena the ground looked spick and span before a month had elapsed. The terraces pleased the eye, the grand-stands—newly painted and renovated—were a sight for the gods, and the playing-pitch showed not the slightest trace of its mutilation at the hands of Sayers and his satellites.

It was exactly four weeks from the morning of the outrage that Jack Vernon led his men out for a kick-about.

He gazed at the expanse of green-sward, and gave a happy laugh.

"By Jove," he cried, with twinkling eyes, "old Bulford did us a good turn when he played havoc with this place! The stands are in better condition than ever they were, and the pitch is top hole!"

He dropped the ball, and slammed it towards an open goal. It flashed between the posts and made the rigging quiver.

Mason fished the leather out of the goal and punted it up-field, where it was smartly trapped by Brant, who steadied himself and let drive.

The sphere flashed through the crisp air, and Mason brought off a magnificent save.

"By Jove, that wasn't too bad, you precious old bean!"

A high-pitched but not unmusical

voice floated across to the players, and every eye turned in the direction of the resplendent form of a stranger who had wandered unobtrusively on to the field.

"My hat!" ejaculated Jack Vernon involuntarily.

"Oh, help!" breathed Brant weakly.

"Tell me—oh, tell me, mother dear, what's this vision of manly beauty here?" chanted Green.

There was certainly some ground for these remarks, for the newcomer was immaculate—exquisite. He wore a stylish morning-coat, light lavender-grey trousers with a pronounced stripe, and a modish silk hat, the lustre of which was equalled only by his speckled patent-leather boots.

His yellow gloves harmonised with his snowy linen, and a monocle, adorning his aristocratic features, completed the picture.

He was the dandy-de-luxe, and he wore his clothes with an easy, insouciant air which gave him an undeniable air of distinction.

He looked for all the world as though he had been melted down and poured into his clothes, for not a pucker or a crease marred their perfect fit.

The players were regarding him in open-mouthed amazement, but the fact did not trouble the stranger.

His lips parted in a charming smile.

"I remarked that that was a top hole shot, my precious old top!" he said.

Brant grunted, and regarded the exquisite dandy with obvious disfavour.

"Say," he drawled, in his best American manner, "I guess I heard you."

The stranger nodded and flicked a speck of dust from his sleeve.

"Don't—er—let me butt in and interrupt, you know," he said. "I like to see you footballer johnnies kick the merry old ball about—what?"

Jack Vernon was smiling quietly, although he had little use for this effeminate type of male. He walked across to the stranger.

"Excuse me, sir," he said, "but I presume you know that you are trespassing?"

A look of frank amazement greeted the words.

"By Jove, now," said the stranger, "I suppose I am—what? Anyway, you don't mind my being here, I suppose? After all, you know, I sha'n't do any damage to your merry old field, or scuttle away with your priceless old goalposts—what?"

Jack had to laugh, in spite of himself.

"Oh, no, I don't mind your staying here, although we can't have all sorts of strangers wandering about the place," he said.

This piece of information appeared to surprise the stranger.

"By Jove, I suppose not!" he said, polishing his monocle with an expensive silk handkerchief. "I hadn't thought of that—what? By the way, my precious old fruit, I suppose I ought to tell you who I am!"

Jack shrugged his broad shoulders.

"Just as you like, sir," he returned. "My name's Vernon—Jack Vernon."

"By Jove, is it, now?" asked the stranger.

"Yes," grinned Jack; "and it was yesterday. In fact, I've been Jack Vernon for as long as I can remember!"

The players were wearing broad smiles, but the stranger's clean-cut features remained impassive. Then, after a few moments' silence, he smiled, eventually breaking into a roar of shrill laughter.

"By Jove," he chortled, "that's a jolly good joke—what? I must remember that one, and tell the lads at the club. Let's see, how does it go? 'My name's So-and-so,' I say, and someone says to me, 'Is it, now?' and then I dash in with the witty retort, 'Yes, and it will be to-morrow.' Top hole! Simply too perfectly precious!"

The footballers had gathered round the newcomer, and were laughing unrestrainedly.

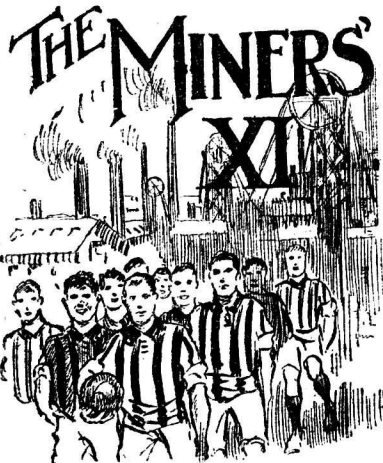
"But you haven't told me your name!" gurgled Jack helplessly.

"By Jove, no!" said the stranger regretfully. "As a matter of fact, old bean, my name's Bertram Bretherton, though most johnnies call me B. B., for short, you know—what?"

"Well, Mr. Bretherton," smiled Jack Vernon. "I feel sure you will excuse us, but we must get on with the practice."

"By Jove, don't stop for me, you know!" beamed B. B. "I just love to watch you at play!"

The players nodded, and trooped towards the goal.



on a dozen occasions, much to the profound chagrin of Mason.

Also, he proved that there was nothing he did not know about the gentle art of trapping a ball. His footwork was superb, and he dribbled like a past-master.

"What a surprise-packet!" breathed Green, with sheer admiration in his voice. "He's a wizard!"

Mason certainly thought so, for the dandy's knack of finding the net with a curious screw-shot was almost uncanny.

Jack Vernon glanced at his wrist-watch, after an hour's play. "Time's up, you fellows!" he called. "It's close upon lunch-time!"

Bertram Bretherton, who looked cool and self-possessed as ever, fell into step beside Jack Vernon.

"I say," he said impulsively, "I'm staying in Coalham for a few months—gonn' to study the merry old mines, you know—an' all that—"

Jack looked into the aristocratic features.

"Are you going to become a miner?" he smiled mischievously.

"No, no; not exactly that!" returned B. B. slowly. "You see, I'm John Maynard's nephew, and I'm going to be a managing-director or something, when I know all about the job. Still, that's by the way—what? Now I'm jolly keen about soccer, you know, so will you give me a kick-about sometimes?"

Jack stopped in his stride. "Give you a kick-about?" he asked.

The players looked fit and trim as they trotted across the pitch, and Bertram Bretherton struck an original note in the matter of footwear, his shapely feet being encased in a pair of light walking-shoes.

His football clothes revealed the fact that he was a fine figure of a youngster, his legs being sturdy and his arms well-formed and sinuous.

His fair hair was brushed straight back from his forehead, and looked as smooth as the surface of a billiard-ball.

All eyes were upon the new player, of course, but the fact did not disconcert him. He gazed round at the spectators with unfeigned interest, who lost no time in giving vent to a few good-natured, if somewhat personal, remarks.

"Cheerio, Reggie!" roared an alleged humorist from the terrace. "Don't forget to kick a jolly old goal, you priceless old pippin!"

B. B.'s profusely-adjectived manner of speech was already known to the crowd, it seemed, and the fact amused Bertram.

"Merry lot of leg-pullers—what?" he smiled.

"They're all good chaps!" said Jack Vernon, to whom the question was addressed. "They're always out for a bit of fun! Good shot, sir!"

His eyes were upon Sayers as he spoke, and the exclamation broke from his lips as the fair-haired right-half netted with a perfect "daisy-cutter."

Another roar of cheering broke out as the Bucklehurst eleven ran out,

Faber was injured. The inside-right was squatting on the turf and holding the calf of his right leg.

His good-looking face was pale, and beads of perspiration stood out upon his forehead. It was obvious that he was suffering exquisite agony.

The referee trotted over to him and dropped to his knees.

"What's the matter?" he asked. "Have you sprained a muscle?"

Faber shook his head, and pulled down his stocking. He displayed a flesh wound and a trickle of blood.

The official's brow clouded. "How did that happen?" he asked puzzledly. "That's not the result of a kick."

"I haven't the faintest idea," answered the injured player. "I know that I leapt for the ball, and then felt a stab of pain. It felt as though somebody had cut me with a knife!"

The referee looked worried, and beckoned to Harry Lake, who was soon upon the scene with his towel and water-bottle.

"What's the matter here?" he asked. "Broken leg? Broken ribs?"

Faber smiled, in spite of the pain. "You're always a cheerful soul, aren't you, Harry?" he asked.

"Have a look at this."

The little, bald-headed trainer examined the deep incision, and frowned.

"You'll have to go off, my lad," he said mournfully. "I must treat that before blood-poisoning sets in."

outside the penalty-area. A burly back charged straight at him, and B. B. slipped the ball to Green, who had an open goal.

The inside-left raised his foot, hesitated for a fraction of a second, and then—

A sharp cry of pain broke from his lips, and he sagged to the ground!

The players, who had swarmed round him, looked at each other in frank amazement. First Faber had collapsed, and now Green!

What could it mean? It was inexplicable—unheard of!

Sayers, who had been immediately behind Green as he was about to take his shot, made as though to bend over the prostrate youngster, and at that moment a hard fist caught him full in the face, and sent him flat on his back.

It was Jack Vernon who hit him, and the punch had every ounce of his strength behind it.

A cry of alarm escaped the players, and the spectators began to shout.

The miners gathered round their skipper, holding him back as he was about to aim another blow at Sayers, who was rising slowly to his feet.

"What's the matter, Jack," asked Brant angrily. "Have you gone off your head?"

"What's the meaning of your conduct, Vernon?" demanded the referee sternly. "I shall order you off the field for striking Sayers!"

The youngster was white-faced and trembling as he looked from the official to Sayers.

"Look at the heel of that man's boot!" he cried, glaring at Sayers. "The right boot!"

The renegade player blanched at the words, and made as though to back away. Guilt was stamped upon his crafty features, and into his colourless eyes there leapt a look of fear.

"What rot!" he said, trying to force a smile. "Look at his heel!" repeated Jack Vernon, in grim tones.

The referee turned to Sayers. "Let me look at your right boot," he said, with an almost imperceptible shrug of his shoulders. "Vernon seems to think—"

"No, I refuse to," returned Sayers. "Vernon's talking rot!"

The next moment Jack had broken away from the restraining hands of his comrades, and had sent Sayers reeling with another punch to the mouth. A second later he was on top of the recumbent form, and tugging at its right boot.

It came away, despite Sayers' struggles, and Jack Vernon tossed it to the referee.

The official gave one glance at the right heel, and an angry look crept into his eyes, for protruding from the leather was a vicious steel spike!

He held the boot up, so that the players might see the instrument which has caused injuries to Faber and Green.

The crowd also saw—and understood. "The traitor! The black-hearted traitor!"

Yells of anger broke out, and a few enraged men clambered over the railings, and advanced threateningly upon the knot of players.

Twenty seconds later the playing-pitch was black with men.

Sayers showed signs of fear, and looked as if he would make a dash for liberty. To prevent this the Miners formed a ring round him, serving the double purpose of preventing his escape, and keeping back the angry crowd which swarmed all around.

"The—the cad!" was the shout on all sides. "At him, lads!" yelled one indignant supporter. "Let's lynch him!"

"Lynch him!"

The Miners were hard put to it to keep up the circle round the wounded player, Green, who still lay on the ground nursing his pain-wracked ankle.

Sayers, by this time, was white with fear—fear that he would be mobbed by the hostile crowd.

"Don't let them get at me, for mercy's sake!" he pleaded to Jack Vernon.

Jack turned to him with a look of scorn on his face.

"If we do keep them off, it won't be for your sake!" he snapped.

The referee was still standing in the centre of the ring, holding Sayers' right boot in his hand.

At last he found his voice. "You—you cad!" he hissed. "Get off the field, before I thrash you within an inch of your life. Get off!"

(Another rattling good instalment of this topping footer yarn in next Monday's BOYS' FRIEND. Order your copy to-day!)

"I should think it would do him a world of good if he kicked a ball occasionally!" growled Brant. "A fop don't cut any ice with me!"

"Surely you wouldn't have him kick a nasty, dirty football, and soil his patent-leathers, would you?" asked Green, aghast at the bare thought of such a catastrophe.

"He's certainly a priceless idiot," said Mason, "but I expect he's a good chap, and quite harmless."

"I bet he's handy at Lady Mudd's tea-fights!" grinned Faber. "He's probably got medals for handing round tea and cakes!"

The others laughed, and Mason scuttled off to his goal, and took his stance between the posts.

"Now, then, let her go, my hearties!" he cried.

And a second later Jack Vernon almost shattered the crossbar with a long drive.

The footballers were soon engrossed in their game, and all thoughts of Bertram Bretherton vanished. Indeed, it was only when Mason punted the ball in the dandy's direction that they remembered his existence.

The muddy ball bounced in Bertram's direction, and the players gave an ironical shout of warning.

"Mind what you're doing, Bertie!" cried Thomas, in alarm.

"Don't kick it, or you'll split your beautiful boots!" warned Johns.

B. B. did not heed the cries, however, but took a couple of short strides, swung his leg, and then—

Boomph!

Something rushed past Mason's head, and crashed into the net.

It was the ball, and it was the dandy's patent-leather boot that had propelled it!

Mason stood stock-still and scratched his head perplexedly.

"What—what happened?" he asked weakly, and the expression upon his homely features made the players roar with laughter.

"Our friend scored a goal," returned Jack Vernon, grinning. "He beat you all ends up!"

Mason looked vicious, for he prided himself upon his goalkeeping ability.

"Oh! Did he?" he asked gruffly. "Well, you can take it from me that it was a fluke of the worst order! Hi, B. B., would you like to have another?"

Bertram Bretherton smiled and jammed his monocle into his eye.

"That's very kind of you, old top," he said. "I shall be delighted!"

"Coming over?" cried the goalkeeper, putting the ball straight at the immaculate Bertram. The dandy put out a perfectly-shod foot, and trapped the leather in a manner which brought a gasp of amazement from Jack Vernon.

B. B. shot a quick glance at goal, swung his foot with a curious jerky movement, and the ball hurtled towards the net with the force of a cannon-ball. Mason leapt for it, but he might as well have clutched at the moon. The leather evaded his outstretched fingers in an almost uncanny manner, and shook the rigging.

Jack Vernon gave a shout of "Goal!" and trotted across to Bertram.

"Splendid, old man!" he cried heartily. "Shake!"

"Delighted!" beamed B. B. "Do you mind if I join in?"

"Not at all!" returned Jack, running his eyes over the dandy's immaculate attire. "But you aren't suitably clad, are you?"

B. B. waved the remark aside. "I've plenty of suits," he said, "and as for these—" He held out a slim foot and shrugged his shoulders. "You see, I never play in regulation footer boots!"

"Come along, then!" said the young player-manager.

Bertram followed Jack, and in less than five minutes he found the net



SOME SURPRISE! The solitary spectator of the practice game seemed such a hopeless dude that the players fully expected he would not deign to even touch the ball. Instead, with a mighty lunge from his patent leather shoe, he sent the sphere hurtling straight at goal. Such a shot was very rarely witnessed even by members of the Miners' Eleven!

"My dear old son, I'll sign you on at once! What's your position?"

"Centre-forward!" answered B. B., whose pale blue eyes were glinting with excitement. "Do you mean to say that you'll play me in the Miners' Eleven?"

"Play you!" cried Jack. "My dear B. B., you're just the fellow we're looking for. You see, our centre-forward, Scrutton, has been pretty badly crocked, so that's where you'll come in!"

"That's top hole—perfectly precious!" said B. B. "I'll sign at once."

And that's how the Miners' Eleven found a new centre-forward.

The Traitor!

The postponed game against Bucklehurst United attracted fifteen thousand spectators to the Miners' ground, and that figure would undoubtedly have been doubled but for the fact that the Town team had a counter-attraction in the shape of a Cup-tie.

Jack Vernon's loyal supporters rallied round him, however, and their yell of greeting threatened to rip the roof off the grand-stand.

"Here are the lads!" shouted a hundred voices, as Jack led his men out.

"Give 'em a cheer!"

and commenced to bombard their goalkeeper with test shots.

Phlepp!

The referee called the two skippers to the centre, where they shook hands and tossed for choice of ends.

The Bucklehurst captain won, and decided to take advantage of the little breeze that was blowing straight down the field.

The teams lined up, a breathless hush settled over the ground, and then the referee blew his whistle.

B. B. passed a slim hand over his hair as he touched the ball to Jack, who promptly swung it straight across to Brant.

The pseudo-American, who was chewing mechanically at his gum, snapped up the pass and sprinted down the wing, beating the Bucklehurst defence with comparative ease.

He reached the corner-flag in safety and then placed a perfect centre. The ball was a gift for Faber, and he made a leap. Yet, even as he left the ground, he gave a sharp cry of pain and collapsed, the leather shooting across the goalmouth and out of play.

A disappointed groan escaped the crowd, for it seemed that Faber had the goal at his mercy when he slipped.

The referee was about to whistle for the goal-kick when Jack Vernon called his attention to the fact that

The referee agreed. "That's quite right, Lake," he said. "Take him off!"

Lake helped Faber to his feet, and sympathetic shouts greeted the injured player as he hobbled towards the dressing-room.

"Buck up, the ten men!"

The inevitable and time-honoured cry went round the ground as the whistle blew for the goal-kick.

Boomph!

The Bucklehurst custodian punted the ball well past the half-way line, where it was snapped up by the inside-right. This player—a bow-legged, stocky little chap, who moved like the wind, made straight for the home goal, and managed to get within shooting distance.

The breathless spectators waited for the shot, but even as the Bucklehurst man raised his foot, Johns rushed across and took the leather clean off his toe.

A second later he had cleared, and Bertram was making for the visitors' territory.

"Up, up!" roared the crowd. "Go on, you perfectly priceless old person!"

B. B. literally "made rings" round the Bucklehurst defence, and his finished style sent the home team's supporters mad with delight.

On, on he raced, until he was just

A FINE LONG COMPLETE YARN OF JIMMY SILVER & Co.



The 1st Chapter.
On Suspicion!

"Dodd!" Knowles of the Modern Sixth stood in his study doorway, and shouted.

Tommy Dodd of the Fourth looked round. But he did not approach. Knowles did not look safe to approach at that moment.

Evidently something had occurred to rouse the ire of the Modern prefect. His brows were darkly knitted, and his eyes glittered under them. He had his ashplant in his hand—an additional reason for not approaching him in a hurry.

"Do you hear me, Dodd?"

"Yes, Knowles," answered Tommy meekly.

"Come into my study," said Knowles harshly.

Tommy Dodd hesitated. He was bound to obey a prefect's order, but he did not like Knowles' look, and still less did he like the look of the ashplant. He decided that it would be less risky to disobey than to obey, so he cut along the passage to the open doorway to the quad.

"Dodd!" shouted Knowles angrily. "Come here, I tell you! Stop him, Catesby!"

Catesby of the Sixth, unluckily for Tommy Dodd, was just coming in. He brought the junior by the collar.

"Bring him here," said Knowles. "Come along, you young sweep!" said Catesby.

Tommy Dodd submitted to his fate. There was no arguing with a Sixth-Former who had a grasp on his collar.

"All right, Catesby; anything to oblige," murmured Tommy.

And Catesby led him by the collar into Knowles' study. Knowles fixed an angry and savage look on him.

"Why didn't you come in when I called you?" he demanded.

"You looked too dangerous," said Tommy, eyeing the prefect warily. "But here I am! What do you want?"

Tresham and Frampton of the Sixth, were in the study. Both of them were looking rather disturbed.

"What's the trouble?" asked Catesby.

Knowles, with a scowl, pointed to a slip of cardboard that lay on the study table. On the card was daubed, in big letters with a brush,

"BEWARE! The R. S. S. is on your track! TREMBLE!"

Knowles of the Sixth was not trembling, as the mysterious message bade him. But undoubtedly he was in a very savage temper.

"The R. S. S.," said Catesby. "That stands for the Rookwood Secret Society, I suppose?"

"Yes—a trick of those cheeky fags!" said Knowles, between his teeth. "They've frightened Carthew of the Classical Sixth out of all his nerve; but it won't have the same effect here. Dodd, did you put that card on my table?"

"No."

"Do you know who put it there?"

"How should I know, Knowles?"

"I believe this secret society bizny is a stunt of the Classical fags," said Catesby. "I believe Jimmy Silver's mixed up in it."

"I don't see how a Classical could dodge in and out of this house without being noticed," said Knowles. "I want to know whether any Modern fags have a hand in it. Answer me, Dodd."

"But I've nothing to say!" protested Tommy Dodd.

"Do you know anything about this card?"

"That—that card?"

"Yes; answer me at once," said Knowles, taking a harder grip on his ashplant. "Now, then, what do you know about it?"

"It—it's a card."

The Death of the Secret Society!

A FINE TALE OF ROOKWOOD SCHOOL.
By OWEN CONQUEST.

"What?"

"Made of pasteboard," said Tommy.

Knowles stared at him for a moment.

"Are you trying to pull my leg, you young rascal?" he ejaculated.

"You asked me what I knew about it," said Tommy Dodd meekly. "I'm telling you, Knowles."

"Do you know who put it in my study?" asked Knowles, breathing hard.

"I know who might have," said Tommy Dodd, after some reflection.

"Who, then?"

"Mr. Manders!"

"What?" roared Knowles.

"I don't say he did, you know, but he might have—anybody might have," argued Tommy Dodd. "The Head might have, if he felt so disposed."

Catesby grinned, and Tresham and Frampton exchanged a glance. It was easy enough to see that Tommy Dodd was avoiding a direct answer. From which it was not difficult for the Modern prefects to deduce that Tommy knew more about the Rookwood Secret Society than he cared to admit.

"I shall take it for granted, Dodd, that you put this card in my study if you don't speak out," said Knowles grimly.

"I can't help what you take for granted, can I, Knowles?"

"I'm going to give you a licking, as a warning."

"You're going to be a beastly bully, as usual," retorted Tommy Dodd. "I can't help that."

"I'll let you off on one condition," continued Knowles. "I'm quite certain that you know all about this gang of fags that calls itself the Rookwood Secret Society. Give me their names, in a list, and I'll let you off the licking, and excuse you fagging for the rest of the term."

Tommy Dodd's lip curled.

"Well?" snapped Knowles.

"Nice weather, isn't it?" said Tommy calmly.

"What?"

"But I think we shall have some more snow."

"Will you answer me?" roared Knowles.

"It will be rather rotten for the footer, but we shall get some snow-balling," continued Tommy Dodd.

Knowles bit his lip hard.

"Shove him across the table," he said. "When he won't be quite so funny. Up with him!"

To Knowles' surprise, Frampton and Tresham did not move; and Catesby released his grip on Tommy Dodd's collar.

Knowles stared at them.

"Don't you hear me?" he bawled. "We're not deaf," remarked Frampton.

"This is bullying," said Catesby. Knowles jumped.

It was the first time he had ever heard Catesby utter a word against bullying. He fairly blinked at the speaker.

"Wha-a-at?" he stammered.

"I'm not having a hand in it," said Catesby, and he quitted the study without waiting for Knowles to reply.

"By gad!" stuttered Knowles. "Catesby in a funk! Are you fellows in a funk, too—frightened by fags like Carthew?"

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Tresham uneasily. "There—there's such a thing as—as justice."

Knowles did not answer that. He made a rush at Tommy Dodd, grasped him with his left hand, and plied the cane with his right.

"Lash, lash, lash!"

"Oh! Ah! Ow! Wooooop!" roared Tommy Dodd, wriggling wildly in the prefect's grasp, as the lashes fell.

"Draw it mild, Knowles!" exclaimed Frampton.

"Don't talk to me, you funk!" hissed Knowles.

"Well, we disapprove of this!" said Frampton, and he followed Catesby's example, and quitted the study. Tresham hesitated a moment or two, and then walked out after Frampton.

Knowles laid on the cane unheeding. Tommy Dodd struggled and roared and kicked; and a hack on the shins only seemed to intensify Knowles' wrath. He did not release the junior till he was quite breathless. Then he twisted him to the door and pitched him into the passage.

"There!" he gasped. "Now—"

"Yah! Bully!" howled Tommy Dodd.

Knowles made a furious stride towards him, and Tommy fled for his life. The Modern prefect stepped back into his study, picked up the card from the table, and tore it into a dozen pieces. The mysterious warning of the Rookwood Secret Society had certainly failed to do its work upon this occasion.

"The 2nd Chapter.
The Secret Society Meets!

Jimmy Silver came into the end study, on the Classical side, with a smiling face.

The end study was rather crowded. Jimmy's chums, Lovell and Baby and Newcome, were there, and Putty Grace and Conroy and Pons and Van Ryn and Oswald and Mornington, as well as Tommy Cook and Tommy Doyle of the Modern Fourth.

It was evidently a meeting. Chest-nuts were baking on the grate, and the meeting disposed of them with satisfaction while they chatted.

"All here?" asked Jimmy Silver, as he came in.

"All excepting Doddy," said Cook. "He's late."

"Trust a Modern to be late!" remarked Arthur Edward Lovell.

"Rats!" rejoined Tommy Cook cheerfully.

"I've just seen Carthew of the Sixth!" remarked Jimmy Silver, his smile widening.

"Any trouble?" asked Putty of the Fourth.

"Trouble? No trouble with Carthew of the Sixth these days. He said— What do you think he said?"

"Give it up!" said Baby.

"He said, 'Good afternoon, Silver!'" grinned Jimmy, "as pretty and polite as you like."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What did I tell you?" chuckled Putty Grace. "Didn't I tell you the Rookwood Secret Society would work the oracle? Carthew has had enough."

"And he doesn't want any more," chuckled Jimmy. "I suppose he suspects that I'm in the game, but he can't prove it. He's getting so mighty civil that we hardly know him. He hasn't even cuffed his fag for two or three days."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He wouldn't be happy till he got it, and he's had it now," remarked Putty. "It's the stunt of the season. We shall bring Knowles to heel in time."

"Knowles is rather a harder nut to crack than Carthew, though," remarked Newcome dubiously.

"We'll crack him, all the same," said Mornington.

"You put the card on his table, Doyle?"

"Sure and I did!" grinned Doyle. "There'll be a row when he finds it there, I'm thinking."

"Hallo, Here's Tommy!"

Tommy Dodd came into the study. He was looking very flushed, and he seemed to limp a little. It needed only a glance from the members of

the Rookwood Secret Society to see that the hapless Modern junior had "been through it."

"Hallo! What's the matter?" asked Tommy Cook.

Tommy Dodd sank into a chair, and immediately jumped up again, with a dismal ejaculation.

"Sit down, old chap," said Jimmy Silver.

"I—I'd rather stand, for a bit," said Tommy Dodd, with a wry face.

"I—I've got a pain!"

"What's happened?"

"Knowles found the card on his table," groaned Tommy Dodd. "He called me in to ask questions."

"But you didn't put it there, bedad," said Doyle.

"Knowles took it for granted. He guesses I'm in this stunt, and he pitched into me on suspicion," groaned Tommy. "Ow! I've had a fearful licking! Yow-ow-ow!"

Jimmy Silver knitted his brows. "Time for the secret society to get to work again," he said. "Knowles is next on the list, you fellows."

"Hear, hear!"

"Feel very bad, Tommy?" asked Cook sympathetically.

"Yow-ow-ow!"

Tommy Dodd's reply indicated that he felt very bad indeed.

"Never mind. We'll make Knowles sit up for it," said Conroy comfortably.

"Knowles doesn't play the game," said Jimmy Silver. "He's no right to take things for granted, or to ask a fellow to convict himself. He doesn't know the meaning of fair play. Old Bulkeley wouldn't do that. But the secret society is going to teach him a lesson—"

"Carthew's caught on already," said Putty Grace, "and I think that Catesby and Frampton and Tresham don't want any more."

"I know they don't!" said Tommy Dodd, with a faint grin. "They refused to have a hand in licking me in Knowles' study. Catesby said it was bullying—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"And Tresham and Frampton didn't approve—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tommy Dodd chuckled; but his chuckle ended in a dismal groan. He was feeling very sore.

"They're all learning their lesson," said Jimmy Silver. "It's only Knowles who's got to be made to understand. And Knowles is to be the next victim of the R.S.S."

"The 3rd Chapter.
A Cheap Hair-cut!

The door of Knowles' study was thrown open quite suddenly, and a crowd of curious-looking figures rushed in, and the door was instantly closed again, and the key turned in the lock. It was ten o'clock, and nearly everybody was in bed.

The sudden invasion of the study had taken hardly more than a second. Knowles blinked at the invaders. That they were juniors was clear enough from their stature. But they were quite unrecognisable. Each of them had a Guy Fawkes mask on his face, securely tied on with string, and wore overalls over his clothes. The overalls had evidently been borrowed from the laboratory on the Modern side.

Their aspect was extraordinary, and rather alarming. The last to enter locked the door.

"What—" stuttered Knowles.

He realised in a flash that he was in the presence of the Secret Society of Rookwood—or some of its members, at least.

The disguised juniors did not speak. Five of them rushed straight at Knowles. He put up a terrific fight as his assailants rushed him down, and shouted for help at the same time.

But he had time for only one shout. Two of the juniors staggered away under his hefty blows, but the others were on him, clinging to him like cats, and Knowles came to the floor with a crash. As he sprawled there, they all scrambled on him, and he was pinned helplessly to the carpet.

A knee on his chest held him down, and a hand was clapped over his mouth, choking back his attempt to yell.

But they were not quick enough. One more long yell escaped the hapless Sixth-Former before he was effectually gagged with an oily rag, which, from its taste, had been picked up in the bike-shed, and which excellently served its purpose.

Almost immediately footsteps sounded in the passage outside. The one shout that Knowles had uttered had evidently been heard in the other Sixth Form studies.

"Knowles!"

It was a whisper from the leader of the masked party. Steps were approaching the study. It was locked, but the invaders were shut in,

and there was no escape for them. "Knowles, tell them it is all right. You catch on?"

"Yes," breathed Knowles.

The gag had been removed from his mouth, but he dare not shout out for help.

"If they come in and catch us here, old pippin, we're going to pinch your nose with these?"

So saying, the Grand Master produced a dangerous-looking pair of pincers, and snapped them threateningly before Knowles' face.

Knowles shivered.

"I'll do my best," he muttered.

"Mind you do!"

The door handle turned, and then there was a knock.

"Knowles," came Catesby's voice from outside.

"Hallo!" called back Knowles, in faltering tones, his eyes on the pincers that were ready to pinch his nose.

"Did you shout?"

"Eh?"

"Somebody shouted for help," exclaimed Catesby irritably. "Is anything up here?"

"What—what should be up? It's all right!"

"Can't you open the door?"

"I'm—I'm just turning in."

"Well, what the thump did you yell for?" exclaimed the Sixth-Former in the passage, in annoyance and astonishment. "I heard you in my study."

Knowles could not explain that it was he who had yelled, and why. It was a case of least said soonest mended, with a pair of pincers just touching the bully's nose.

"I—I was dreaming, I think," stammered Knowles at last. "I—I fell asleep in my chair, and I—I think I was dreaming—"

"Well, you are an ass!" said Catesby, and his footsteps were heard returning to his own study.

There was a soft chuckle from under the Guy Fawkes' masks as the footsteps died away. While the prefect was at the door the secret society members had kept as still as mice, hardly breathing. But he was gone now—surprised, but far from suspecting what was going on in Knowles' study.

One of the members replaced the gag in Knowles' mouth.

Knowles bit deep into the oily rag in his rage. He had felt assured that the game was up with the ragers as soon as Catesby knocked at the study door. He had lied, perforce, and turned away the only hope of assistance, while all the time wanting to shout at the top of his voice.

Now he was at the mercy of the secret society, and he knew that there was little mercy he might expect. The members of this unruly band had never as yet failed to carry out their threats, and Knowles had not much hope of their weakening in this instance. He was just beginning to realise why Carthew of the Classical Side, and Tresham, Frampton, and Catesby on the Modern Side had altered their behaviour as regards bullying since the advent of the secret society.

Who were they? His eyes glittered at them, but could not penetrate the disguises. The Guy Fawkes' masks and the overalls completely concealed clothes, forms, and features. Their looks told him nothing, and they might be in the Shell, the Fourth, the Third—they might be any of a hundred and fifty fellows. He suspected that Jimmy Silver was one of them, but it was the barest suspicion. For aught he knew, Jimmy might be fast asleep in the Classical Fourth dormitory at that moment. He had listened to the Grand Master's whispering voice eagerly, but he could not recognise it, the forced huskiness of the tones baffled him. Knowles, as he lay on the study carpet, quivered with rage, but still more with apprehension. He began to understand Carthew's tame submission. He would have given a great deal himself to be safely out of this scrape.

What was going to happen to him now? He watched the masked juniors in growing uneasiness.

Only a soft chuckle broke the stillness of the room.

"All serene now?" said the Grand Master.

"What-ho!"

"And now for Knowles!"

"Now for Knowles!" repeated the members, in hoarse voices.

Knowles shivered a little as they surrounded him. The fury in his face was changed into something very like fear.

"Put him in the chair!"

Knowles was placed in a chair. He could not move hand or foot to resist, and his jaws ached with biting at the oily rag in vram. Only his eyes were eloquent.

"Knowles"—the Grand Master's

voice was very deep—"do you know into whose hands you have fallen?" Knowles glared.

"Nod your head for yes, and answer."

Another glare.

"Pull his ears till he answers."

"You bet!"

A muscular finger and thumb fastened upon Knowles' right ear, and it was mercilessly twisted. Knowles would have given a fearful howl if the oily rag had not stopped it. As it was, he gave utterance to a faint, anguished gurgle.

"Will you answer now?"

Knowles nodded hastily.

"Good! Just in time to save your other ear," said the Grand Master approvingly. "Do you think we shall teach you manners in time, Knowles?"

scissors were produced and glided over his eyebrows, clipping them off close to the skin.

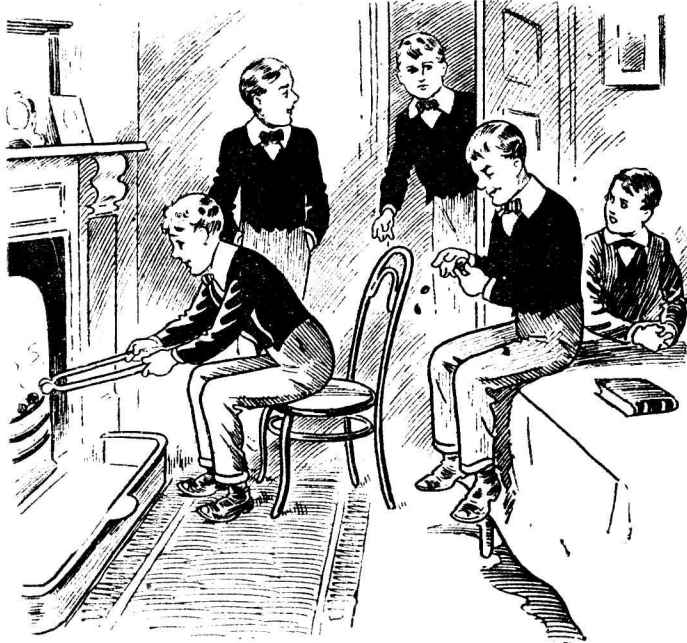
Knowles' aspect was extraordinary without any eyebrows.

"They'll grow again," said the Grand Master cheerfully. "You'll look a bit of a sketch, Knowles, until they grow; but they'll grow all right. While they're growing you'll have time to reflect upon your sins. You'll have lots to reflect on. Meantime, you'll furnish a little harmless and necessary entertainment to the fags. I'm sure the Second Form, at least, will be no end interested in you in this state, and will think it funny."

There was a chortle from under the cardboard masks.

"Now for his topknot!"

Knowles wriggled spasmodically.



THE SECRET SOCIETY MEET! The end study was rather crowded. Chestnuts were baking on the grate, and the members were feeling highly satisfied with the state of things.

Knowles bit savagely into the gag. "No answer? Pull his other ear." Gurgled.

"Will you answer now, prisoner in the chair?"

Knowles nodded.

"Do you think he shall teach you manners in time, Knowles?"

The Grand Master repeated his question.

Nod again. Knowles had had enough persuasion, and he was prepared to nod like a Chinese mandarin, if requested.

"That's better. Now, do you know into whose hands you have fallen?"

Nod.

"This afternoon you bullied a junior in the Modern Fourth. Do you remember?"

Knowles had an inward struggle, but finally he nodded. He knew what would happen if he didn't.

"You remember acting like a beastly bully?"

Nod.

"The rotter realises what a rotter he is," said the Grand Master. "That's something! You realise what a rotter you are, Knowles?"

The hapless Knowles nodded.

"Are you properly ashamed of yourself?"

Nod.

"Good! We're getting on. Do you think that the lesson we're going to give you will do you good?"

Knowles wriggled in his bonds, in a desperate and frantic effort to get loose. He would not have thought of counting the odds if he could have got his hands free just then. But he sank back in the chair, exhausted by the futile effort, and as he did so a hand from under an overall gripped his ear, and pulled hard and long. Knowles writhed, in a perspiration between rage and pain.

"Do you think the lesson we're going to give you will do you good?" repeated the Grand Master calmly.

Knowles nodded, choking.

He was experiencing a severe form of bullying now. The secret society were evidently proceeding on the system of making the punishment fit the crime. Whether it was doing Knowles good was another question. Certainly, it was not improving his temper, or adding to his stock of the milk of human kindness.

"Good again! I hope, for your own sake, Knowles, that the lesson will do you enough good to cure you. Eyebrows first."

A shudder ran through Knowles as

if his tongue had been free he would have pleaded for mercy; he was reduced to that. But he could not speak. He shuddered as the scissors glided over his head and his hair fell in a shower.

Knowles, who was rather a dandy, prided himself on his hair, which was always beautifully brushed and parted. The scissors made havoc with it. The Grand Master, whoever and whatever he was, was evidently not a skilled haircutter. He cut in jags and gashes, and hair came off in chunks, leaving thick patches in one place and bald spots in another. The sufferings of the hapless Knowles were acute. How long would it take for his hair to grow again? What would he look like while it was growing? Carthew's celebrated black eye, at the beginning of the term, was nothing to this—nothing! He would have to hide himself in the sanatorium, under the pretence of illness; he would have to keep, somehow, out of the sight of Rookwood. He could not see himself, but he could feel the scissors snipping and see the hair falling. He knew that already he would cause howls of laughter, if he appeared in public, and the amateur barber was not finished yet.

Snip, snip, snip!

The scissors were very busy. Hair lay all around Knowles in the chair, and he had a cold feeling on top of his head.

Snip, snip, snip!

"There, I think that will do!" said the Grand Master of the Rookwood Secret Society at last. "There isn't much more to come off!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, my hat! What a beauty!"

"You can thank your lucky stars, Knowles, that you haven't reached an age when the hair doesn't grow again. Suppose you had?"

Knowles did not need to suppose that; he was horrified enough already. Even if he found out these young rascals, and had them punished, that would not restore his shorn locks. Nothing but the slow process of Nature could do that, and that process was very slow.

He sat with a stony look on his face. All the ferocity had been taken out of him now. He only wondered dismally whether the secret society was finished yet.

"That'll do. We're leaving you now," said the Grand Master.

Then the Grand Master tiptoed to the door and unlocked it, and peered

out cautiously into the passage. The Sixth-Form corridor was deserted. Most of the Sixth were gone to bed.

"All serene."

Noiselessly the seven members stepped out of the study, and the door was drawn shut and closed quietly.

The 4th Chapter. Nice for Knowles!

After much struggling and wriggling in his bonds, Knowles managed to free himself, and, jumping to his feet viciously, turned up the light, and looked into the glass. He scowled ferociously at his image reflected there. How was he to appear in public in this state?

He couldn't—he knew that he couldn't! Even for the sake of vengeance on the secret society he would not meet the grinning looks of all Rookwood in his present weird state.

There was a tap at the door, and he spun round. Quick as thought he caught up a muffer, and wound it over his head, low over his forehead to cover up the missing eyebrows. Frampton opened the door and looked in.

"Oh, here you are!" he said.

Knowles muttered something indistinctly.

"Anything wrong with your head?" asked Frampton.

"My—my head? No!"

"What have you got it wrapped up for, then?"

"A—slight cold," mumbled Knowles.

Frampton eyed him very curiously. He could see that something very unusual had happened, and that Knowles did not intend to tell him what it was.

Even to his chum's eyes, Knowles did not care to reveal his disfigured looks. Much less would he have revealed them to the whole school.

"You've caught a cold?" asked Frampton.

"J-j-just a trifle," stammered Knowles. "N-n-nothing much! Good-night! I'm going to bed!"

"By the way, what does Carthew say about the secret society?"

"Hang Carthew!"

Knowles almost pushed Frampton out of the study, closed the door on him, and locked it. Frampton whistled softly in the passage, and looked in at Tresham's study before going to his own.

"Somethin's up with old Knowles," he remarked. "I fancy he's fallen foul of the secret society; looks as mad as a batter."

Tresham grinned.

"Is Carthew backin' him up?" he asked.

"He said, 'Hang Carthew!' so I fancy not. Looks to me as if the fags have done somethin' to him," said Frampton. "He's got his napper wrapped up, and says he's got a cold; but he jolly well hasn't! They threatened to shave Carthew, before he knuckled under. I wonder if they've shaved Knowles?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Old Knowles was always so jolly cocksure," said Frampton. "My idea is, leave the little beasts alone!"

"Mine, too!" agreed Tresham.

And it is probable that Knowles, as he restlessly paced his study, and occasionally glared at his awful reflection in the glass, was coming to the same conclusion.

The 5th Chapter. Knowles Toes the Line!

Jimmy Silver & Co. came down cheerfully in the morning. Perhaps one or two of the cheery juniors showed slight signs of having been awake unusually late. But they were very merry and bright, and when they met the three Tommies of the Modern Fourth in the quadrangle there was a general chortle.

"Somethin's happened to Knowles," said Tommy Dodd.

"I believe so!" said Jimmy Silver. "I've heard—ahem!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I've heard that he was shaved in his study last night. Of course, I can't say anything official. But I believe it's true."

"I believe so, too," remarked Putty of the Fourth, speaking for a moment in the deep, husky tones of the Grand Master.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He hasn't come down," said Tommy Cook. "He's keeping his bed, and it's said he's got a cold."

"Keeping his head well wrapped up, anyhow," said Tommy Dodd. "Towie's seen him, and he says Knowles' head is muffled up all over—can't see anything above his eyelashes. Somethin' may have happened to his eyebrows."

"I wonder if he's going to the Head?" said Jimmy Silver musingly.

"If so, the Rookwood Secret Society will have to lie awfully low and say nuffin. The Head will be in a rare wax if he sees Knowles looking like that."

"I fancy he won't care to face the Head," grinned Arthur Edward Lovell. "He won't face anybody like that! Two to one he's going to have a long, obstinate cold—long enough for his fur to grow again."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. were quite interested on that subject. They were very well aware that the Rookwood Secret Society had taken risks in dealing with Knowles so drastically, and that if the Head made a strict inquiry, it was possible that something might come out—in which case it was undoubted that severe floggings would be the order of the day. But if that should happen, they were quite decided that Knowles should have another and more severe lesson, and they thought it probable that Knowles was aware of that.

They learned, after morning lessons, that Knowles had not appeared in the Sixth Form-room that morning. That the Modern prefect was confined to his room with a cold was soon known all over Rookwood.

But the nature of his cold leaked out somehow or other. By the next day Tubby Muffin knew all about it, and was spreading the news far and wide. That morning Knowles was shifted into the sanatorium—his story of a cold being taken in good faith by the Head.

Bulkeley of the Sixth called Jimmy Silver to him that morning. He eyed the captain of the Fourth very grimly.

"Have you heard this about Knowles?" he demanded.

"That he's got a cold?" said Jimmy innocently. "Yes, Bulkeley."

"I hear it's being said that his hair was cut by a gang of fags."

"Not really!"

"Yes, really!" snapped Bulkeley.

"That was kind of them, then, wasn't it?" said Jimmy. "It will save him eightpence at the hairdresser's."

Bulkeley looked at him very hard. But there was nothing to be read in Jimmy Silver's innocent face, and the captain of Rookwood turned away.

Jimmy smiled serenely.

It was clear, by this time, that Knowles did not intend to lay a formal complaint of the outrage before the Head. He wanted, as far as possible, to hush up his humiliation,

interested in the progress of his bad cold.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was a couple of weeks before Knowles came out of sanny—so obstinate and prolonged was his "cold." When he emerged one morning, the Fistical Four met him with a polite greeting. Knowles' eyebrows looked very thin, and his hair was exceedingly closely cropped. A blaze came into his eyes as he sighted Jimmy Silver & Co.

"Good-morning, Knowles!" said Jimmy politely.

"Hope you're better!" said Lovell.

For an instant Knowles seemed about to spring, like a tiger. But he didn't. He had learned his lesson.

"Good-morning!" he answered quite civilly. "Much better, thanks."

"So glad!" murmured Jimmy.

Knowles walked on hastily. Jimmy Silver & Co. exchanged blissful glances.

"Wouldn't the dear boy have loved to pitch into us!" murmured Lovell. "But he doesn't want another shave!"

And the Fistical Four chuckled.

Jimmy Silver dropped into Bulkeley's study that evening. The captain of Rookwood met him with a rather grim look.

"You were speaking to us the other day, in the end study, about some queer organisation called the Rookwood Secret Society, Bulkeley," began Jimmy softly.

"Well?"

"You hinted that you'd like it to come to a stop?"

"Yes."

"Well, I hear," said Jimmy cautiously—"I hear that it's all over now. This—ahem!—isn't official, of course."

"Of course not!" said Bulkeley sarcastically.

"Ahem! But I hear that there isn't any secret society now," said Jimmy. "It's all over and washed out! I thought you'd like to know, Bulkeley."

And Jimmy quitted the study. Bulkeley stared after him, and his hand strayed to his ashplant; but he withdrew it, and a smile broke over his face. He was not quite sure that the Rookwood Secret Society hadn't been a useful institution while it lasted—though he was glad to hear of its demise.

Nothing more was heard at Rook-



A CHEAP HAIR-CUT! Snip, snip, snip! The noise of the scissors filled the room as they did their nefarious work on Knowles' hair, wielded by a member of the Rookwood Secret Society!

and he feared the future vengeance of the Rookwood Secret Society. He had sneered scornfully at Carthew and Frampton and the rest, but he had followed in their footsteps at last. They had had enough, and Knowles had had enough, too.

"I've got an idea," Jimmy Silver remarked to his chums casually, "that there won't be so much bullying from Knowles & Co. after this. Some fags, called the Rookwood Secret Society, seem to have taken some of the Hunnishness out of them. It's rather mysterious, but whoever they are they—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Whoever they are, we owe them a vote of thanks," said Jimmy Silver. "Probably the Rookwood Secret Society will disappear now, leaving only a pleasant recollection to Knowles & Co."

"Very pleasant!" grinned Lovell.

"We must see him the day he comes out of sanny. I'm really quite

wood of the secret society. Knowles & Co., grown wise by experience, were willing to leave the matter where it was. And where it was, it remained—a mystery to most of the Rookwood fellows. And those to whom it was not a mystery wisely kept their own counsel. On the Modern side, Tommy Dodd & Co. found Knowles much more tolerable than of old; and on the Classical side, Carthew, for the rest of that term, sedulously avoided trouble with the end study. The Rookwood Secret Society was dead and buried, but it was not forgotten. The juniors had been victorious, and it was, as Arthur Edward Lovell slangily observed, "Some victory!"

(Look out for "The Mystery of Mr. Bootles!" A topping Rookwood yarn in next Monday's Boys' Friend. Make sure of your copy every week by placing a standing order with your newsagent.)

HOW TO PLAY FOOTBALL

By An International.

Ball Control.

Have you ever seen first-class players who always give the impression of having the ball fixed to the feet by a piece of elastic? As they run the ball is kept apparently under their feet. Jock Rutherford, the Arsenal winger, is a typical player of that type. Watch him as he flashes down the wing. The ball is kept so close to his boots that every moment you feel that he will step on it and throw himself head over heels. But, of course, he does nothing of the sort. He has mastered the art of ball-control, and by keeping the leather close to his boot as he runs along at top speed, he can do what he likes with it almost.

The Close-Passing Game.

Now we turn to the close-passing game. In this type of forward play, an attack started on one wing will probably finish on that wing, progress being made by means of short, sharp passes from one player to another. This style of play is exceedingly pretty to watch, and can also be very effective, for the defenders scarcely know what to do. In vain they dodge hither and thither. The trouble with this style of play, though, is that it is so apt to be overdone.

The habit of passing and re-passing the ball seems to get into the players so completely that they go on passing long after they ought to have tried their luck with a shot at goal. I have seen many a first-class side beat their opponents all ends up so far as football skill goes, but they have played the dilly-dally game so thoroughly in front of goal that they have failed to get the ball into the net as a reward for their skill.

And, after all, the great thing to remember about football is that goals are the only things which count. Football which does not produce goals may still be pretty football, but it does not win matches or bring points to the club. This close-passing type of game is likely to be most successful when a side has a centre-forward who is rather different from the rest of the line—a leader who can dash through, and who can shoot at sight, as it were. This type of centre-forward prevents the close-passing game from becoming a mere exhibition of the pretty stuff without the goals which ought to be the natural conclusion.

Mix It!

All things considered, then, my general conclusion as to the forward-line which is most likely to be successful is the one which contains players who know how to "mix it." A bout of short passing on one wing, followed by a long, swinging pass to the other side of the field, will probably find the players on that side almost entirely unmarked, and with a fine chance of going ahead and scoring.

No "Official Scorer."

Whatever style of forward-play your team adopts, though, don't get into the way of having one man in the line who is expected to do pretty well all the goal scoring. Many so-called first-class teams of the present day are not winning as many matches as they ought to do, for the simple reason that they have got into the habit of expecting one man—say the centre-forward—to score all the goals. This temptation should always be resisted. I knew a famous international player once who said that the only forward-line which could really hope to be successful was not the one which contained only a single sharp-shooter, but the forward-line which contained five sharp-shooters.

You see, the trouble is that when a line gets into the habit of allowing or expecting one forward to score the great majority of the goals, opponents soon become aware of that habit, and the demon goal-scorer is very closely watched—so closely that the day soon comes when he never gets a real chance of scoring. And if the other forwards have learnt to lean on the centre-forward for their goals, they will be unable to render the side real help on those days when the centre-forward gets hopelessly shadowed and crowded out of the game.

(Keep an eye on this feature for more useful information on "How to Play Football." See next Monday's BOYS' FRIEND.)

IN YOUR EDITOR'S DECK

As regards the contents of next Monday's issue of the old "Green Un," we will "cut the cackle," and get down to hard tacks!

The title of the next Rookwood yarn is,

"THE MYSTERY OF MR. BOOTLES!"

By Owen Conquest.

No; you're all wrong. It is not a Rookwood Secret Society tale, it is something quite new in the way of school stories, and you're going to roar with laughter as well as remain puzzled right up to the last line. Some story, I assure you!

"FROZEN OUT!"

By Martin Clifford.

will represent next week's backwoods story. Here the chums of the school in the Canadian backwoods, Frank Richards & Co. will help to make one out of Monday's twenty-four hours just ten times brighter than it would be without the assistance of next week's BOYS' FRIEND.

As you are familiar with all the serial tales, articles, etc., I will not waste valuable space here in commenting upon their excellence. It is really unnecessary to keep on rubbing it in—you know they're one and all just the best you've ever read, and that's that.

RESULT OF TELEPHONE COMPETITION Nos. 6 and 7.

I have much pleasure in announcing
L. Houghton,
7, York Avenue,
Hunstanton,
Norfolk,

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."

as the winner of Telephone Competition No. 6. A cash prize of ten shillings has been sent to him.

The winner of Telephone Competition No. 7 is

Arthur Robertson,
29, Raby Street,
West Hartlepool,

who has been awarded the ten shilling prize for this competition

Now, look below, take a pen and ink, and try your hardest in the "something for nothing" feature, where we are giving away ten pounds in prizes every week!

THE COUNTRY.

It is the way with many people to regard the country as a sort of show which is open for the summer months, and which afterwards shuts down for the off season, to be started again in the spring. But the real fact is that the country is fascinating all the time. October and November are splendidly interesting periods in the lanes and fields, and those fellows who are not able to get away during the brilliant summer—not so tremendously brilliant, either, last year—would be well-advised to try a tramp through their favourite country late on in the fall. You get rich colouring everywhere. Those veitchii creepers make the old farmhouses and cottages resplendent with red and gold, and in many an old garden summer, which is supposed to have put up the shutters, is lingering yet among the crimson dahlias and the tawny asparagus. The appearance of the countryside is good.

There is no such thing as shutting down in the country. It is all preparation, and the town dweller is all wrong here. Before autumn is done with there is the thought of the coming spring. In sheltered quarters you find spring flowers about Christmas time.

GUERNSEY.

"Guernsey, as everyone knows, is one of the Channel Islands. It is noted by English visitors to the island not only for a health resort, but also a charming place for a holiday. It has beautiful bays and wonderful cliffs. On the east coast Herm, Jérou, and Sark can be seen in the distance. Lovers of Nature will find much to interest them in the narrow lanes. The bird life is marvellous, and there are flowers and plants of all kinds. In the meadows you see herds of famous cattle. Guernsey played its part in the war, sending many of its best to fight. Those who were spared are returning home to cultivate the soil and send consignments of fruit to England. A holiday in Guernsey is an experience to be remembered through life."

Sent in by Ben Salisbury, Hillcroft, Colborne Road, St. Peter Port, Guernsey, Channel Islands, to whom a cash prize of five shillings has been awarded.

Your Editor

£10 in Prizes Every Week!

1st Prize, £5.
3 Prizes of Splendid Tuck Hampers.
8 Prizes of 5s. each.

On this page you will find a picture-puzzle, dealing with some famous boys' heroes, which you are invited to solve. Bear in mind that each of the pictures may represent part of a word—one, two, or three words, but not more than three words. There is nothing unusual about the wording, and the sense of the sentence will guide you. Solutions containing alternatives will be disqualified.

When you have solved the pictures to your satisfaction, write your solution in ink on one side of a clean sheet of paper, then sign the coupon beneath the picture. Cut out the picture and the coupon—do not sever the coupon from the picture—pin your solution to the picture, and post to:

"Boys' Heroes Competition No. 6,"
Gough House, Gough Square,
E.C. 4,

so as to reach that address not later than Wednesday, February 2nd.

This competition is run in conjunction with the "Boys' Herald," and readers of that journal are invited to compete.

Read These Rules Carefully.

The First Prize of £5 will be awarded to the competitor who complies with the above conditions, and sends a solution exactly the same as the Editor's original paragraph. In the event of no competitor's solution being exactly the same as the original paragraph, the prize will be awarded to the competitor whose solution is the nearest.

The second or other prizes will be awarded to the readers whose solutions are next in order of merit.

In the event of ties, the right to add together and divide any or all of the prizes is reserved, but the full amount will be awarded. No competitor will be awarded more than one share of any prize.

No responsibility can be undertaken for any effort lost, delayed, or mislaid, and proof of posting will not be accepted as proof of delivery or receipt.

The Editor reserves the right to disqualify any competitor's solution for reasons which he considers good and sufficient. The decision of the Editor must be accepted as final and legally binding in all matters concerning the competition, and entries are only accepted on this express condition. Correspondence must not be enclosed with efforts, neither will any be entered into in connection with this competition. Employees of the proprietors of this journal are not eligible to compete.

J.W.H.T Dou TA IN of 60 minutes H C E T M P

iii A He made a SUPERB score of 250 runs

A. Mutch, who PLAA 4 Hudder s 1

of the CHOICEST GOODS ONLY SOLO HERE er P er

MAJOR W.G. BRER, 3 VC, P 1 of £4 He was the MOST DARING man in the Battalions

B.F. I enter this competition and agree to accept the Editor's decision as final.

Name.....

Address.....

Closing date of Competition—February 2nd.

HEALTH AND EXERCISE.

Breathing.

Readers of these notes, together with those who have written to me, will have noticed the frequency with which occurs the advice, "don't fail to breathe deeply and fully through the nose, allowing the abdomen to come forward when taking in the breath, and pressing the abdomen in breathing out." When this is done, we have done what is called abdominal or diaphragmatic breathing.

The easiest way to learn this method of breathing is to lie flat on your back on the floor. Leave your muscles alone; don't exert yourself, but take in a long breath, forgetting all you've ever heard about breathing. Place one hand on your body just below where your breast-bone finishes—it's the part the centre of which those who go in for boxing call the "mark"

Now, as the breath enters your lungs, you'll feel that the part under your hand is moving, lifting your hand as it moves. That is a purely natural movement. You don't make it by a muscular effort; it is made by your lungs expanding as the air enters them. There is something moving inside you, and that something is what is called the diaphragm, which is the name the doctors have given (it comes from two words meaning "to fence across") to a thin sheet of tissue—like skin—which goes across the body and separates the box in which are the lungs and heart, from the lower half of the body, in which the stomach and bowels are contained. By drawing in the lower part of the body, you fix this sheet, prevent it from moving, and so prevent the lower portion of the lungs from expanding, because they haven't room.

Now, you can see why I advise letting the stomach come forward when breathing in air. It you don't do this, the lungs can't fully expand. Compressing the stomach when you breathe out, you help to force the air out of the lungs by the pressure that the moving diaphragm brings upon the lungs. If there isn't that pressure, all the air can't get out. And you don't want to forget that that air is used up—bad air, filled with poisonous gas—the sooner got rid of the better for you.

Ju-Jitsu.

To commence with the arms. Bring both hands to the right hip with the wrists crossed, inside pressing against inside. The right hand should be underneath. The movement is to force the right hand, against the contrary pressure of the left wrist—which is to be regulated to the exerciser's liking—upward toward the face, up over the head, and then down to the left hip, where both hands finish in the same position as that from which they started. As the hands go upward, it is the right arm which is doing the aggressive work—try to keep arms as nearly straight as you can manage—the left resisting, but when the top of the head is reached and the arms begin to descend, the left hand, being on top, becomes aggressor, trying to shove down the resisting right hand.

When the return movement is made back to the right hip, the left wrist is first resisting, then, on the downward move it again becomes attacker.

During the whole of these movements the fists will be tightly clenched, and every single muscle from knuckles to shoulders will be brought into play, tense and vigorously working. The deltoids—those big muscles that cap the top of the shoulder and arm—are wonderfully developed by this exercise, as are the forearms muscles.

Don't put too much pressure and vigour into your first trials of these movements. Don't make many complete movements in succession—three will be quite enough for the novice. Between each complete movement pause to take a couple of long, deep breaths. Try not to hold your breath—there's a big temptation to this—while working the arms.

Ray horfman

(Do you want to keep fit? Then read "Health and Exercise" every week in the BOYS' FRIEND.)

The Astounding Yarn Which Everybody is Talking About!



THE BOY WITH FIFTY MILLIONS!

BY VICTOR NELSON.

A YARN OF SCHOOLBOY
ADVENTURE AND
DRAMATIC INCIDENT, by
:: A NEW AUTHOR ::

The Real Derrick Brent!

Don Darrel inherits a fortune of fifty millions. He comes to school in England with his servant, a half-caste, Chuta, and his dog, Snap. Several attempts are made on his life by the disinherited Randolph Gurney, but all are in vain. Don decides to stay with his special chums, Frank Philips, South, and Losely, for the holiday, at Frank's home in London. One of the guests is robbed of a giant ruby, and a man calling himself Derrick Brent happens to come to the house at the time, saying he has been sent to take Don Darrel away to some place of safety until the instigator of the attempts on his life has been discovered. Don goes away with the man. A few moments later the butler announces that: "There is another man here of the name of Derrick Brent."

Mr. Philips stared at the butler in undisguised amazement.

"Another man who says he's Derrick Brent!" he said incredulously. Then, with sudden suspicion: "Have you been drinking, man?"

"I swear I ain't, sir! I say, I swear I ain't!" the butler declared indignantly. "He sez, as plain as could be, that he was Derrick Brent, and asked to see you."

"Then the fellow must be an impostor!" Mr. Philips cried, in annoyance. "He—"

He was interrupted by the hurried entry of a tall, clean-shaven man, not unlike the other in build, but quite unlike him in features. This visitor was accompanied by two bright-faced boys.

"I am no impostor, Mr. Philips!" he said sharply. "I am Derrick Brent—the real Derrick Brent! From what your butler says, someone has been here who has assumed my identity. Tell me quickly what has happened."

As Mr. Philips stared into the newcomer's pale, studious face, with its firm lips and keen, clever grey eyes, somehow, he felt obliged to believe him.

Mastering his bewilderment, he speedily related how the other man who called himself Derrick Brent had called, how he had arrested a criminal, and restored the rajah's ruby, and how, scarcely waiting for thanks, he had rushed away with Don Darrel, whom he declared he wished to take to his guardian, Mr. Ponsonby.

This time the visitor was in reality the well-known detective, Derrick Brent. He listened intently to Mr. Philips' story. When it reached its end, and he learned that Don Darrel had been induced to go from the house with his impersonator, all his coolness left him, and he uttered a cry of consternation.

"Then they have got him!" he cried, aghast.

"He went with this man, yes," Mr. Philips admitted, not understanding. "But—"

"You have been deceived—tricked!" the famous detective said grimly. "I give you my word that I am the genuine Derrick Brent. These two lads are my young assistants, of whom perhaps you have heard."

He swung round upon the Indian. "Permit me, your Highness, to examine your ruby," he requested quickly.

With a look of wonder on his dusky face, the rajah released the ornament from his turban. Derrick Brent took it between his slender, white fingers and closely inspected it.

"I guessed as much! It is glass—paste, though a very good imitation!" he rapped, with a shrug of his shoulders, as he handed the glittering red thing back to the rajah.

The latter stared at him, unable to credit that he heard aright. Then, wild with apprehension and excite-

commissioned me to give him my protection, and seek the enemies who have been trying to take his life. They must have known, too, that the rajah would be here with his famous jewel. Well, they aimed at getting two birds with one stone, and they succeeded. They have stolen the ruby and the richest boy in the world into the bargain!"

"You—you mean that they have abducted him—kidnapped him?" Mr. Philips gasped, in alarm.

schoolboy assistants—they were still practically schoolboys, for Mr. Brent acted as their tutor—in their turn watched their friend.

Knowing his powers, they hoped that it would not be long ere some inspiration came to him that would send them hot on the track.

Phyllis and Elaine Philips were very pale. Both the girls had taken an immense liking to the warm-hearted, happy-go-lucky Don Darrel, and were stunned as they learned that he was in deadly peril—ay, perhaps even already murdered by his enemies.

Don's chum, Frank, and his father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. Philips, were as concerned as Phyllis and Elaine.

The awed hush that had fallen over the spacious room was broken suddenly by the rajah.

With a groan he sank into a chair, hurled the imitation ruby fiercely into the fire, and wrung his dusky hands.

"How am I to face my court without the ruby?" he cried. "This is terrible—terrible! Mr. Brent, you will do all in your power to regain it for me?"

Derrick Brent gave him a glance that held in it a touch of contempt.

"The life of the boy must be thought of first, your highness!" he said coldly.

The rajah gave a gesture of apology.

"True! Forgive my selfishness," he said quickly. "But if you can save him, afterwards—"

"Why, afterwards I will regain your jewel, if it is humanly possible," Mr. Brent answered quietly.

"If only you can, I will pay any fee—"

Derrick Brent held up a protesting hand.

"We can speak of fees after, should

world-renowned rooms in Jernyn Street.

They went to the rather sombrely-furnished consulting-room, an ordinary-enough-looking apartment, yet one that had had discussed in it more grim stories and mysterious and sinister secrets than, perhaps, any other in the whole of London.

As was his wont when faced with an unpleasant task, Derrick Brent did not shirk it. As Mr. Ponsonby, Don's trustee and guardian, rose from a chair with a look of inquiry on his grave old face, the detective laid his hands upon his shoulders and quietly told him the terrible news.

As he listened Mr. Ponsonby reeled and clutched at his temples. He had gone deathly pale. Even his lips grew bloodless, and his eyes were filled with horror.

"Then I came too late—too late for you to save him!" he muttered huskily. "Brent, I blame myself for this. If they kill that boy I shall feel I can never forgive myself. I ought to have started for England immediately I received the letter from Dr. Harding, of Eaglehurst School, telling me of how he was shot at in the village on the day that the poor lad bought his circus."

"I take it, though, that it was not easy for a man in your profession—an attorney—suddenly to leave your business and cross the Atlantic," the detective protested. "It is useless to repine, at all events. We must leave no stone unturned to try to find and save him. Tell me, what was the name of the man you mentioned as being entitled to the boy's huge fortune should he die?"

"Randolph Gurney; and he is known in New York to be a man without scruples, without honour—in plain language, a bad lot!" Mr. Ponsonby answered. "Depend upon it, Mr. Brent, he is at the bottom of this."

"You said, I believe, that he had disappeared for some time from New York, though you had no absolute proof that he had crossed to England?"

"Yes. He certainly seems to have left America, but I am not in a position to say whether or no he is now in this country."

Mr. Brent nodded thoughtfully as he sank into his favourite chair and with studied care lit a cigar.

"Before long we may be able to be certain on the point," he remarked grimly. "But sit down, Ponsonby—you, too, my lads. Let us review the position and try to reach some starting-point."

He lay back in the roomy chair and sent a blue spiral of smoke towards the ceiling.

"Don Darrel is practically an American, the man who willed him this vast amount of fifty millions was an American, and so is Randolph Gurney," he murmured. "I think, therefore, that it would be almost safe to assume that the men who have abducted him will be Americans, too. Teddy, get through to Scotland Yard, and get in touch with Lawson!"

"Yes, sir!" the boy agreed brightly, jumping to the telephone that stood on the table.

"Hallo! Is that the Yard?" he asked a few seconds later. "It is? Put me through to Mr. Lawson, please. I am speaking from the rooms of Mr. Derrick Brent."

Another short delay, then Teddy handed Mr. Brent the receiver.

"That Detective-Inspector Lawson?" Derrick Brent asked. "I want some information, Lawson—also to give you some. Have any American criminals landed in this country during the last few months—I mean: of the more important and dangerous type?"

"If they have," came back the voice of Derrick Brent's official friend, Lawson, "we have no record of it. And those sort of gentry do not usually land in England without we know it. But what information have you got for me, Brent?"

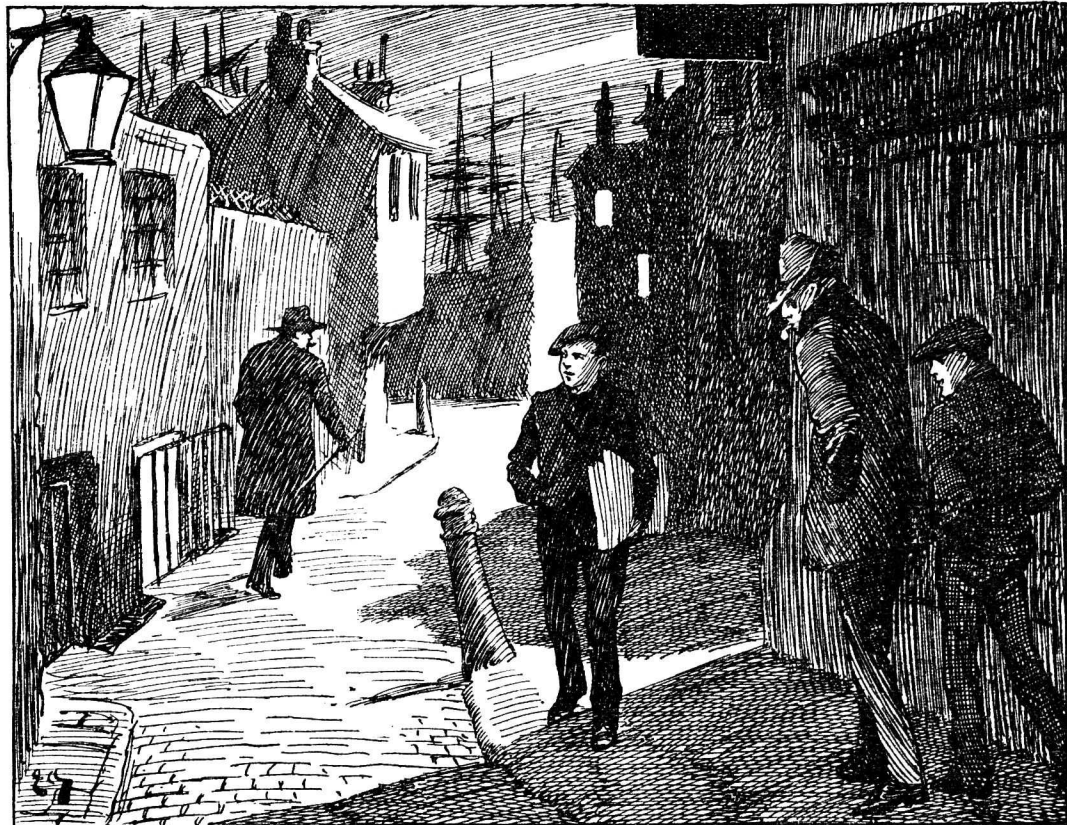
"That the world's richest boy has been abducted, and is now in the gravest danger!" Derrick Brent returned quickly.

"Not the lad Darrel—Don Darrel—whom all the papers were talking about a few months ago?"

"The same; yes."

"But I thought he had gone to some English school somewhere down in Essex? We kept a guarding eye on him until he seemed safely settled down, you know, as is usual when Yankee millionaires come to London."

"He has been back in London—at the house of a Mr. Philips, in Berkeley Square—on holiday, and was



SHADOWED!

Captain Raymond made his way along the street from Hair-Trigger Dan's public-house. He was quite unaware that he was being shadowed. Derrick Brent and his young assistants were far too clever in a matter like the present for that!

ment, he clutched Derrick Brent by the arm.

"Glass—an imitation! What, in Heaven's name, do you mean?" he demanded hoarsely. "This must be my ruby—"

"No," Derrick Brent objected, shaking his head. "Your ruby—the real ruby—went with the waiter who was supposed to be arrested, unless it happened to be passed from him to the man who had the impudence to say he was me!"

"But—but the two policemen?" Mr. Philips exploded, his hands pressed dazedly to his temples. "They were—"

"They were not really constables at all, merely two of the gang, just as the criminal—the waiter—was a member of it, too. It was all a conspiracy, my dear sir," the detective assured him, with conviction. "And, by Jove, these crooks have made the coup of their lives this time! They must have got to know Mr. Ponsonby—Don Darrel's guardian—had

"Yes," Derrick Brent answered, his keen grey eyes very grave. "And unless I can by good luck find some clue that will quickly enable me to discover his whereabouts, they will murder him! I may be in time to save him, but"—and he shook his head—"I very much doubt it!"

Derrick Brent on the Track!

For a long moment an appalled silence followed the famous detective's words.

The Rajah of Bunyah stood fingering the worthless imitation of his renowned and almost priceless ruby, seeming stupefied with the shock and unable to credit that the piece of red glass was not his stone.

Derrick Brent was looking quickly about the room, as though he hoped to find in it some clue to the identity of the crooks who had stolen the gem and kidnapped Don Darrel.

Tom and Teddy Rawdon, his

I be successful in finding the ruby and restoring it to you, your highness," he said. "I shall leave here now. On the way to my rooms some idea for picking up the thread that may lead me on the right track may come to me. I will communicate with you, Mr. Philips, immediately there is any news of Don Darrel."

"Please do, sir!" Mr. Philips begged. "My family and myself will be most anxious until we can be assured that he is safe."

"I wish I could be certain that you will eventually hear that," the detective answered gravely. "I am afraid that it is very doubtful. But I shall do my best, and, please Heaven, I shall find out where he has been taken, and be in time."

He bowed, and, turning upon his heels, walked quickly from the room, Tom and Teddy following him.

Outside, the trio had left a taxicab, and, entering this, they were driven to Derrick Brent's almost



THE BOY WITH FIFTY MILLIONS!



(Continued from previous page.)

lured away from there this evening. Although you may not know, at least one attempt has been made on his life before, and I fear the worst." Derrick Brent rejoined, his tone very grave. "No"—in answer to some thing Lawson jerked out quickly over the wire—"I am afraid I can give you no more definite information; but hold yourself in readiness to come to me when I give the word, perhaps with a strong body of men."

"You can depend upon me, Brent," was the inspector's response, as he prepared to ring off.

Derrick Brent returned the receiver to its rest, and rose abruptly to his feet. He squared his shoulders, and moved sharply towards his dressing-room.

"Come with me, lads!" he ordered tersely, and obediently Tom and Teddy Rawdon followed him.

A prey to the keenest anxiety, although he, somehow, felt that Derrick Brent had now some definite plan of action, Mr. Ponsoby sat, waiting.

Ten minutes, a quarter of an hour dragged away, and he began to wonder what Derrick Brent and his two young assistants could be doing to keep them in the adjoining room so long. Then the lawyer received a scare.

He suddenly looked up, and found standing before him a most villainous-looking specimen of humanity.

It took the form of a tall though bulky man, in baggy, loud-patterned clothes that reminded Mr. Ponsoby of men he had once seen when business had taken him to New York's Bowery.

His chin was ill-shaven, his lips curled about the stump of a cigar. In the gaudy scarf that took the place of a collar and tie about his neck was a cheap and "flashy" pin.

His face was sallow and deeply lined, and a redness about his nose suggested that, if he had only recently come from the States, it had not been "dry" as far as he had been concerned. The check cap that was dragged down over his left ear did not add to his charm, or, rather, lack of it.

"That guy Derrick Brent in?" the man drawled, with a twang one could have cut with a knife.

"N-no—I mean, yes," Mr. Ponsoby stammered nervously. "I think he will be here in a moment, my good fellow."

The "good fellow" laughed softly, and the lawyer almost fell out of his chair in surprise as he recognised the laugh as that of the man whose rooms he was in.

"Brent! Good heavens, is it really you?" he gasped, staring wide-eyed.

The disguised detective nodded, as he stood away from the door of the dressing-room to allow Tom and Teddy, his assistants, to pass out. They, too, were disguised to an extent. Tom Rawdon wore clothes of a similar style to those of his famous friend, and looked a typical young ruffian who had emigrated from the States. Teddy was attired in an old and ragged suit, had dispensed with his collar, and had a bundle of newspapers under his arm.

"What are you going to do, Mr. Brent?" Mr. Ponsoby asked, realising that it was a clever padding of his clothes that had so changed his spare figure.

"Follow the only plan there apparently is to follow. Go to a certain low drinking and dancing den I know of down East, which is much frequented by American criminals when they find their way to this country," the detective answered. "Lawson, my friend of Scotland Yard, as you may have been able to follow, has no record of any important crooks having recently landed in London from the States; but, all the same, I believe that probably a gang is here."

"It almost stands to reason. Assuming that we are right in thinking Randolph Gurney is behind the former attempt on Don Darrel's life and also his kidnapping to-night, who but some dangerous American criminals could be his agents? Remember that he is an American himself, and would hardly know criminals in this country whom he could employ to do this evil work."

Mr. Ponsoby had been staring, still wonderingly, at the metamorphosis that skilful application of grease-paint, eyebrow, and lining in pencils had created in the ordinarily grave and handsome face of Derrick Brent.

"And, you think," he said, "that by going to this place in the East End, you may be able to pick out such crooks as you suppose are here, and, by shadowing them, gain some clue as to the whereabouts of Don Darrel?"

"That is my plan," the detective agreed. "The chance of success is very slender, but, as it is the only chance that can be taken, it must be grasped. Please remain here, and await news from me. If we are late, as I expect we shall be, and you wish to go to bed, my housekeeper will see—"

"Bed! I should not be able to sleep a wink!" Mr. Ponsoby cried. "Don't trouble about me or let me delay you, Brent."

The detective could quite understand his agonised state of mind, and, nodding, he moved towards the door. Tom and Teddy followed him, and five minutes later the trio were on a bus bound eastwards. It was down East that the place of ill-repute, for which Derrick Brent was bound, was situated.

Arriving in its neighbourhood, Brent halted in the mouth of a dark and evil-smelling alley.

"We must separate from you here, Teddy," he said, "but follow us at a distance to Hair-Trigger Dan's. Remember what we have arranged, my boy, for our lives may depend on your quickness should anything go wrong."

"You bet I'll not forget, sir," Teddy answered. "If I hear two shots from your revolver I am to rush to the nearest telephone-box, and tell Lawson to come at once with a strong body of plain-clothes men, and raid the place."

"Quite!" Derrick Brent nodded.

"Fall behind a little, lad!" The schoolmaster-detective and Tom slouched away round a near-by corner, with Teddy, clutching his newspapers, whistling carelessly and shuffling along some dozen yards in the rear.

Through a network of alleys went Derrick Brent, Tom walking by his side. They neared the river, and entered an ill-lighted, narrow street running parallel with the dark waters.

It was now long past the hour when drink can be sold legally, but Derrick Brent had been in Hair-Trigger Dan's den on a previous occasion, and knew that the dark windows of the riverside public-house he presently stopped at were merely a blind.

Not that those who were in the underground dancing and drinking-hall that existed here were likely to be troubled by the police. The vicinity was one of the worst in the district, and if constables came here at all it was only infrequently and in a body.

And Hair-Trigger Dan had had numerous spies, who were ready to rush to him with a warning should any suspicious number of policemen be glimpsed within a quarter of a mile of the den.

It was a year since Brent had come here and gained admittance in order to get on the track of a man wanted for a particularly brutal murder, and the detective's greatest fear that the style of knocking and the password that were necessary to get into the den might have been changed.

As it happened, however, a certain amount of luck was to prove to be on Derrick Brent's side to-night, and he was to find no need to enter the place.

Even as he and Tom Rawdon approached, the door of the public-house was opened, and, casually humming a tune, a man in shirt-sleeves strolled to the edge of the kerb.

Derrick Brent had gripped at Tom's arm and, like lightning, dragged him back with him into the doorway of a marine-store dealer's that stood a few doors away. The night was moonlit, and as the man and the lad watched from their hiding-place, Brent had no difficulty in recognising the fellow as Daniel H. Fenning, otherwise Hair-Trigger Dan, the proprietor of the resort.

He himself was a Yankee of undesirable character, who, having made the States too warm for him, had honoured England—or dishonoured it—with his presence, which was doubtless the reason for Americans of the crook class making for his house when they found their way to London.

Hair-Trigger Dan glanced from left to right, as ostensibly he lit a cigar. Then he sauntered back to the doorway of his house.

"All right! No one about," he said, as he passed into it. And now another man came sharply out of the place, and walked quickly past Derrick Brent and the lad, as they shrank back into the shadows.

But, smartly as he strode out, he did not pass the detective quickly enough for Brent's keen eyes to fail to recognise him.

The detective's mind had raced back to a period when he had been in New York, some two years previously, and helped the police of that city to round-up a gang of bank-robbers.

The man with a heavy black moustache, who had passed, had been thought by the police to be one of them, but as there had been no real evidence against him he had had to be missed when the wholesale arrests Derrick Brent had brought about were made.

As the man passed out of hearing Tom heard his friend draw a hissing little breath of excitement.

"You know that chap, sir?" he whispered eagerly.

"Yes. He is one of the cleverest crooks that ever crossed the Herring Pond, the cleverest and one of the most dangerous!" Derrick Brent answered. "His name—or, at least, that by which he is known to the American police—is Captain Raymond."

"Then he's a Yankee, sir! My hat! He may be one of the scoundrels who arranged Don Darrel's abduction!" Tom Rawdon exclaimed.

"I was thinking that, too, Tom!" Derrick Brent rapped. "Come, we will follow him and see where he goes, at all events!"

Hurled Skywards!

Captain Raymond was a wary man. Long years of living by his wits had sharpened all his senses. But, even so, he had not the least idea that his footsteps were being dogged as he made his way from the street by the river, where Hair-Trigger Dan's public-house was situated.

Both Derrick Brent and Tom Rawdon had had far too much experience in shadowing work to give their presence away, and, at a little distance behind the crook, and on the opposite side of the road, they were stealing along in the shadows.

They almost ran into Teddy, who was on his way to the den the detective and Tom had been bound for. The youngster was too well-trained in his work to take the slightest notice of them.

He let them pass him without appearing even to glance towards them;

then, swinging round, in his turn, he noiselessly went after them.

It was growing very late now, or, rather, early, for midnight was passed; and it was only an occasional night-bird that hunted and hunters encountered as the dark streets that Captain Raymond took were traversed.

Derrick Brent knew the neighbourhood as he knew the lines in the palm of his hand, and, as he and Tom pressed on after their quarry, the detective found that they were winding back towards the river.

At length Captain Raymond entered a street of old, tumbledown houses, the backs of which overhung the water. They were very ancient, and many of them empty and condemned, and the majority built almost entirely of wood.

It was up the steps of one of the latter that the polished scoundrel from New York suddenly went. Derrick Brent and Tom again secreted themselves in the shadows of a nearby doorway opposite, and watched, whilst, farther in the rear, Teddy followed their example.

As Captain Raymond let himself into the house with a latchkey, Teddy ran noiselessly along the narrow, broken pavement, and joined the detective and Tom.

They speedily explained to him how matters stood, and had hardly done so when Captain Raymond reappeared, this time in company with Carson, Li Fang, and the mechanic Jones, who had been the chief means of sending Don Darrel on the terrible flight in the monoplane a few months back.

Derrick Brent pressed Tom and Teddy back into the darkness of their retreat, and on the other side of the street the four criminals passed without having the least suspicion of their presence.

"Tom," the detective said, "it was too far to see the faces of the men who were with Captain Raymond; but it is more than likely they represent, with him, as pretty a quartette of crooks as one could hope to find. Its more than probable they are our men, and, although Don Darrel may be in the house they have just quitted, there's the chance that he—and the rajah's ruby—may be in some other retreat they have. Follow them, but try not to fall foul of them. Raymond is the kind of man to stick at nothing to safeguard himself. You, Teddy, shadow Tom to be ready to bring Lawson and his men along should anything go wrong and Tom be in peril. You understand?"

"Yes, sir; but you—"

"I," Derrick Brent rapped, "am going to investigate the interior of that house across the way. Quick! Cut away, or you may lose them!"

The boys obeyed him, slipping away into the shadows. They felt that there might be other desperate men in the house into which their friend and master intended to go, and would have liked to have stayed with him to share his possible danger. But they knew that it was useless to argue when Derrick Brent gave orders in his present tone.

Left alone, the schoolmaster-detective stood for a moment eyeing the dark windows of the uninviting-looking house across the narrow street.

Then, on tiptoe, he silently speeded over to it, whipping from his pocket a bunch of skeleton-keys.

For a breathing space he stood before the ill-fitting, paintless front door, fitting one of the keys into the lock. There was a faint click, the door opened before him, and, as noiselessly as a prowling cat, he stepped into the passage beyond.

He softly pushed to the door, and stood, with every nerve on the alert, listening. The silence of the grave hung over the old place, however, and Derrick Brent became next to sure that there were none of Captain Raymond's gang left in it.

The place was in an absolute state of decay. It had probably been built considerably over a century ago, and what with age and the dampness, owing to its close proximity to the river, was falling to pieces. It had an air of desolation hanging about it, and Brent shivered as he stood still in the eerie silence, waiting for some sound that might betray the presence either of some of Captain Raymond's gang, or possibly the Boy with Fifty Millions. Several rats scuttled across the hall floor, making a seemingly great noise in contrast with the absolute quiet of the surroundings at this early hour of the morning.

The question was, though—was Don Darrel lying in one of its rooms, a prisoner?

Derrick Brent had scarcely asked himself this, when he heard from afar off and from somewhere on one of the other floors—the house had two storeys—an unmistakable cry for help.

With his jaw tightening and his revolver out, the detective started up the creaking, rickety stairs, a great relief and triumph seizing him.

For, who, he thought, could be in need of help in the place but the missing boy millionaire?

Then Derrick Brent paused for the fraction of a moment, and sniffed deeply. An impression he had suddenly had proved right. Somewhere in the house there was an escape of gas.

Horror was Derrick Brent's next sensation. Did it mean that the scoundrels had locked Don Darrel in one of the upper rooms, and flooded it with gas to suffocate him? he asked himself.

Like a madman the detective tore up the flight of stairs.

"Where are you?" he yelled frantically, as he reached the first landing.

"Here! On the top floor! Help, help!" came back to him, in a distant and muffled key.

On up the next flight and the next went Derrick Brent, coming to the top storey of the rambling old house.

Again a cry for help reached him, and he rushed to the door of a room directly before him across the landing.

He flung himself again and again at the door. With the fourth or fifth onslaught of his shoulder its lock burst, and it went thudding back upon its hinges.

The detective had expected to find a volume of gas rushing out into his face. To his surprise, however, the air here was as sweet as could be expected in the damp and mildewed building, so he struck a match, and held it above his head.

On the floor, bound hand and foot, and with a handkerchief that had gagged him hanging loosely about his neck, was a lad he knew must be Don Darrel.

There was no fear about the boy—who was, of course, Don—but a great despair leapt into his eyes as the disguised detective stooped over him. He thought that the luck he had had in working the gag from between his teeth was to avail him nothing, and that the man who had come in answer to his cries was another of Captain Raymond's gang.

Brent, however, relieved his mind as he noted his expression.

"I am disguised, my boy. I am Derrick Brent—the real Derrick Brent!" he said quickly. "I'll cut your bonds, and we'll get away from here as quickly as we can."

"Thank goodness, sir!" Don exclaimed, though his eyes had widened in amazement. "Shucks! I guess I thought I was a goner this time!"

As Derrick Brent knelt beside the Boy with Fifty Millions, and released him, again the smell of gas came to his nostrils. Now, however, it was growing far stronger, and suddenly Brent realised the awful truth.

The men who had left the house had filled one of the lower rooms with gas, and left some slow train that was intended to convey a spark to it, and blow the house and their victim to atoms!

Derrick Brent was a brave man, but he felt his scalp tingling, and his heart seemed to stop with the horror of the thing. It meant that any second they might be deafened by the roar of an explosion that would hurl them to Kingdom Come.

There was not a moment to lose. Even to take the stairs in leaps and bounds might find them too late to escape, and they would be going nearer to the awful danger than they were at the moment.

He gripped Don Darrel about the waist, as the boy rose a little stiffly to his feet, and fairly dragged him to the window.

"The house may be blown up at any moment—no time to explain! Jump for it—into the river!" he cried hoarsely.

Don was a quick-witted lad, and he did not stop even to speak. He flung his leg out of the window, and, clutching a stout drain-pipe that ran down the wall, swung himself to it, and clung to it with his hands and knees, preparing to take the forty-foot jump to the black waters that lapped the walls of the doomed house beneath.

On his part, Derrick Brent was standing on the window-sill and also preparing to dive.

But they delayed for just the fraction of a second too long. There was a reverberating roar from below and a blinding flash of flame.

For one terrible, dizzy moment they felt the old wooden house rocking, then, like a pack of cards, it collapsed with them, and they were hurled into space.

(Keep a weather eye lifted for next week's grand, long instalment of this thundering fine yarn. Order next Monday's copy of the Boys' Friend now!)

Who is This?



£250

IN CASH PRIZES

Offered in Simple Competition.

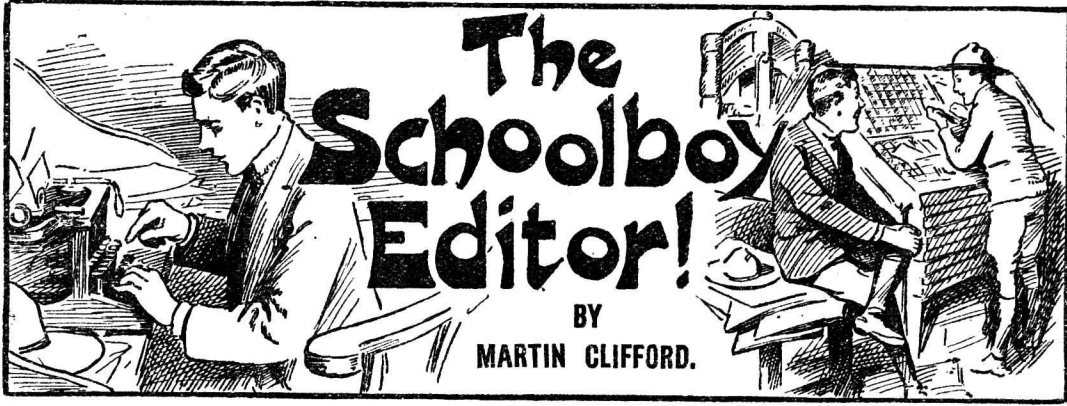
Could you recognise your favourite cinema stars if they suddenly took to wearing goggles? If so, enter this fascinating new competition, and try for one of the big cash awards. Full particulars appear in TO-DAY'S issue of

BOYS' CINEMA

WEEKLY

The Cinema Adventure Paper

A Screamingly Funny Complete Yarn of Frank Richards & Co.



BY MARTIN CLIFFORD.

The 1st Chapter. The White Elephant!

"Oh Jerusalem!" Bob Lawless uttered that exclamation in dismal tones. "Can't be helped!" said Frank Richards. "I know; but—" "No good crying over spilt milk," remarked Vere Beauclerc. "And it's no good telling you that you are an ass, Bob! You know it!" "I guess I do," said Bob Lawless dismally. "A regular jay from Jaysville! Two hundred dollars gone bang!" "Never mind!" said Frank. "But I do mind!" grunted Bob. "If they were my dollars, it wouldn't be so bad; but as they're yours—" "We've got the property!" said Frank Richards, with a smile. Bob Lawless sniffed. That sniff expressed his opinion of the value of the property which the chums of Cedar Creek had acquired at the cost of two hundred dollars—that sum representing the major portion of Frank Richards' savings, hitherto safely tucked away in the Thompson Bank.

Frank Richards & Co. were in the shanty office of the "Thompson Press" on Saturday morning. Bob Lawless was looking worried, Beauclerc very grave, only Frank Richards seemed to be in his usual spirits.

The door was open, giving a view of Main Street, powdered with snow. In the open doorway a fat figure was suddenly framed; and Chunky Todgers blinked in at the three. Chunky's blink was inquiring. "What are you fellows doing here?" he asked. "Grousing!" answered Bob Lawless.

"Speak for yourself, old chap," said Frank Richards, laughing. "I'm not grouching." "Then you ought to be," said Bob. "You can punch my head if you like. I've chucked away your dollars—" "Rats!"

"All through playing the giddy goat," said Bob remorsefully. "Even Chunky couldn't have been a bigger ass—" "Oh, I say—" began Chunky. The fat youth blinked inquiringly at the Co. He was puzzled.

"I heard there was an auction here to-day, and I came along to see it," he said. "The 'Thompson Press' is to be sold, with the office and things. A. B. Carter is selling out and vamoosing the ranch."

"You're late," said Frank. "The auction's over, and A. B. Carter has sold out, and cleared out, and gone." "Who's bought the shebang?" inquired Chunky eagerly. "I heard a galoot say that old Isaacs was going to bid for it. Has Isaacs bought it?" "No."

"Who has, then?" "We have!" answered Frank Richards grimly. Chunky Todgers gave a yell of astonishment. "You've bought the 'Thompson Press'?" "Yes."

"Oh crikey! How much did you give?" "Two hundred dollars." "Phew! You must be an ass, Richards!" "Thanks!" "It was my fault!" groaned Bob Lawless. "I ran old Isaacs up in the bidding, just for a joke, and the property was knocked down to me at two hundred dollars. I don't know what popper would have said if he'd had to find the spondulics. Frank came to the rescue."

"Then it all belongs to Richards?" "Yep!" "No, it doesn't," said Frank. "We've taken it as a Co.—I've had our three names put in the giddy document."

"You've found nearly all the money," said Bob. "I've found three dollars," said Beauclerc, with a smile. "Bob's found thirty. Frank's found one hundred and sixty-seven. That's how it works out. Frank is senior partner."

Frank Richards laughed. "We may see the money again," he said. "Isaacs was willing to give a hundred and fifty, anyhow. That will let us out with a loss of only twenty-five per cent, if we choose."

"I guess that's the best idea," said Bob Lawless. "I will stand the loss, as it was all my fault."

"Rats!" "I tell you, Frank—" "Bosh! Haven't we agreed always to sink or swim together?" said Frank Richards. "Besides, the money I had in the bank came out of the 'Thompson Press' in the first place. It was what Mr. Penrose paid me for my contributions before he

ing lots, and loans, and many other things. More than one hopeful "tenderfoot" had bought a town lot or a mining claim from Mr. Isaacs, and wished afterwards that he had never had the pleasure of making that gentleman's acquaintance.

"My dear young friend," said Mr. Isaacs, "you seemed so keen on buying, I would not stand in your way." "Oh, rats!" grunted Bob. "Now you are the proprietor, perhaps you would like to sell?" suggested Mr. Isaacs.

Bob Lawless brightened up. "That's just it!" he said. "We'll be glad if you'll take it over at the same figure."

Mr. Isaacs chuckled, his aquiline nose almost curling up with merriment at the idea. "That would not be piziness," he said. "But I will give you fifty dollar." "Fifty!" howled Bob. "Yeth!"



UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT! The notice Bob Lawless pinned on the notice board in Gunten's Store caused much comment from the few men loitering about the shop. To all questions, however, Bob simply replied: "Business. We've bought the 'Thompson Press'."

"We've just given two hundred!" exclaimed Frank Richards indignantly. "You have bought a white elephant," explained Mr. Isaacs. "It is of no use to you. Fifty dollars is more use, my young friend." Frank Richards could not help thinking that that statement was correct; but he had no idea of closing with Mr. Isaacs' offer.

"Vat do you say?" "I say good-morning!" answered Frank. "Shut the door after you." "Perhaps you zink better of it later," smiled Mr. Isaacs. "Goot-morning!"

And the fur-coated gentleman walked out. Bob Lawless grunted. "There's nobody in Thompson likely to buy, excepting Isaacs," he said. "He knows we've got to sell, or else stand a dead loss. Won't one of you fellows kick me?" "Bow-wow! We'll see it through," said Frank.

Chunky Todgers had been silent for some minutes—rather an unusual phenomenon with Chunky. He spoke at last.

took it on, I gave him a chance of making a fortune by publishing my literary works—" "Ass!"

"He refused, and the natural result was, he never made the paper pay, and it's gone bust, and sold by auction," said Chunky. "Now, you see what I'm getting at?" "Blessed if I do!" said Frank Richards.

"Oh, you're dense, Richards! Can't you see what a chance you've got?" "No, ass!"

"I suppose I'd better put it in words of one syllable!" said Chunky Todgers sarcastically. "Look here. You own the paper and the office now. You can handle the type, Frank. Bob can soon learn to use the machine. Beauclerc can fold and so on. Run the paper!"

"What?" "Eh?" "Run the paper!" said Chunky. "And I'll write for it."

"Wha-a-a-at?" "With my stuff in it, the paper will sell like hot cakes. You fellows can rake in the fortune that Penrose

"It's all right, you chaps!" "Oh, is it?" growled Bob. "Yep! You listen to me, and I can tell you how to turn this deal into the biggest bonanza ever heard of between the Rocky Mountains and the sea!" said Chunky Todgers confidently.

The 2nd Chapter. Something Like a Stunt!

Frank Richards & Co. stared at Chunky Todgers. The fat youth spoke with the utmost confidence.

Chunky's schoolfellows at Cedar Creek did not hold a very high opinion of Chunky's intellectual powers. In fact, he was generally regarded as what Bob Lawless would have called a "jay from Jaysville."

His suggestions were not likely to be of any great value. But at the present moment Frank Richards & Co. were prepared to accept counsel from anybody on the bare chance of there being something in it. So they gave Joseph Todgers a hearing.

"Get it off your chest!" said Frank. "You're talking rot, of course, as usual, but go it!"

"It's the biggest cinch—" began Chunky Todgers impressively. "Cut that out!" said Bob Lawless. "If you've anything to suggest, get on with it, and cut it short."

"It's the biggest bonanza—" "Come to the point!" said Beauclerc.

"How can a galoot come to the point when you jays keep on interrupting him?" demanded Chunky warmly. "This is how it is. Just you listen, you jays. You know I used to send Mr. Penrose first-rate literary stuff when he had the paper—"

"Cut it out!" "Afterwards, when A. B. Carter

and Carter hadn't sense enough to bag while they had the chance!" "Ye gods!"

"Rely on me for all the literary stuff required," said Chunky Todgers. "I can turn it out pretty fast. I'll have a typer to work on. You fellows can supply the paper from the office. I'll do a thrilling serial—" "My hat!"

"A weekly short story, and the editorial article, and the poetry. You fellows can scout round Thompson getting in advertisements."

"Of all the—" "You can do the donkey-work, you know—the setting up, and printing, and folding, and so on. You're suitable for that," said Chunky. "The work that requires brains will be done by me—see? I will let you fellows have half the profits to divide among you; I take the other half. I think that's moderate. What do you think of that?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Frank Richards & Co.

Chunky blinked at them in astonishment. Apparently he had expected an outburst of enthusiasm mingled with gratitude, instead of which he was treated to a roar of laughter.

"What are you cackling at?" howled Chunky, in wrath. "Can't you see it's a top hole idea—the stunt of the season? Haven't you brains enough to see how we shall scoop in the dollars?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "If you're going to cackle—" "Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the Co.

It was ungrateful, perhaps, when Chunky had taken the trouble to think out such a splendid scheme. But they couldn't help it. Chunky's great stunt was really too much for them.

"It's awfully kind of you to come in and cheer us up like this, Chunky," said Frank Richards, wiping away his tears. "I think I can see us setting up type, and printing, and paying the bills—ha, ha, ha!—to print your literary works. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Are you really going to be jay enough to miss a chance like this, Richards?" asked Chunky scornfully. "I think so! Ha, ha!"

"Then you deserve to lose your money!" said Todgers. "You'd better let old Isaacs have the paper for fifty dollars. It's the best you'll ever do without my assistance."

"By Jove, though," exclaimed Frank, "Chunky's a born idiot, you fellows! But out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, you know—Why shouldn't we try to run the paper?"

"Run it!" said Bob. "Yes," Frank's eyes sparkled. "It isn't as if it was a big city newspaper with a circulation of a million daily. We could find time after school and on Saturdays to do the work. There isn't much to do. Mr. Penrose never put much time into it. He spent as much time in the bar-room at the Occidental as we do at school."

"Ha, ha, ha!" "I know he often set up the whole paper and printed it in a day's time," said Frank. "I've often helped him on a Saturday. I know as much about it as he did, and I can set type better than he could. My hand doesn't shake like his. There's a stock of paper in the office, and printer's ink, and all the things for the paper. Why shouldn't we run it?"

"Phew!" "We'll put up a sign, 'Frank Richards & Co., Proprietors—'" "Oh Jerusalem!"

"Editor, Frank Richards. Advertisement Manager, V. Beauclerc. Chucker-out, Bob Lawless."

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Beau can look after the advertisement department, and get orders, as he's got the nicest manners—" "Good!" said Beauclerc, laughing.

"You can help with the printing, Bob. I can set the type," said Frank, much taken with his idea—or, rather, Chunky's idea. "I can write the weekly story. I did that for Mr. Penrose, and it helped to sell the paper. And I suppose I can turn out an editorial article as well as Penrose. Local news we can handle all right. We know everybody in the section. We can report the dances at the Mission Hall and the services at the Mission. We go to them, so we can report them easily enough. We can put in a column of Cedar Creek School news; and one of us can attend the stock sales, and report the price of cattle, and so on. I wonder we didn't think of it at once."

"I thought of it!" hooted Chunky Todgers. "So you did, old chap!" "And where do I come in?"



Miss Meadows interviewed by the representative of the new proprietors of the "Thompson Press," Frank Richards & Co.

"You? Oh, you don't come in at all, Chunky!"

"Look here—"

"Chunky can be office-boy, though," said Frank. "He can come on Saturdays, and sweep and dust—"

"I'll see you blowed first!" howled Chunky.

"There won't be any wages!"

"Eh?"

"You can do it out of friendship, Chunky!"

"Why, you—you—"

"And Chunky can carry home parcels!"

"Catch me carrying home parcels!" hooted Chunky Todgers. "I'm willing to do the literary work."

"My dear chap, you can't do literary work, and you can carry parcels," said Frank. "The cobbler should stick to his last, you know."

"Am I going to do the literary work?" roared Chunky.

"No fear!"

"Then you can go and chop chips!"

And Joseph Todgers marched out of the office in great dudgeon. Evidently he was not satisfied with the humble, though useful, job allotted to him.

But the loss of Chunky's co-operation did not worry the enterprising Co. They sat down to discuss the new scheme—Frank Richards full of enthusiasm, his chums a little dubious, but they soon came round to Frank's way of thinking.

They were, as Bob Lawless remarked, landed with the pesky thing now, so the least they could do was to give the stunt a trial.

And that they resolved to do.

The 3rd Chapter. Going Strong!

Frank Richards & Co. were busy that Saturday afternoon.

They had ridden into town for shopping at Gunten's Store, but the shopping did not take them long; and instead of riding home with the goods these were despatched by a gentleman returning to the ranch. Then the chums had a hasty lunch at the Occidental, and returned to the newspaper office to begin work. A note had been sent home to state that they would be away all day, and they intended to make a field-day of it.

Mr. Penrose's shanty office had been much improved by Mr. A. B. Carter, who had put in linoleum from Gunten's Store, and a roll-top desk and swivel-chair, and many other improvements. Mr. A. B. Carter was an efficient young man who had come to Thompson to "do things," but he had only succeeded in reducing an already small circulation almost to vanishing point, and he had been glad to carry his great gifts into another sphere of action. Frank Richards & Co. intended to do much better than that. Meanwhile, they were the heirs of A. B. Carter's improvements. Frank felt quite pleased with himself when he sat in the revolving-chair at the roll-top desk, arranging his editorial memoranda, and feeling like anything but a schoolboy under fifteen. One of his first tasks was to draw up a notice, to be put over the stove at Gunten's Store, for the general information of the good citizens of Thompson.

Bob Lawless walked into the store in the afternoon with the paper in his hand and a lurking grin on his face. There was the usual crowd round the stove in the store, smoking, and discussing the weather, the price of lumber, and Buster Bill's "jamboree" at the Red Dog, and other local news. On the wall by the stove there were a variety of notices already, an inquiry from Sheriff Henderson about a lost dog, an announcement that McGahan's whisky was the best, and a written statement by Buck Punter that any galoot trespassing on his claim by the windgam would be filled full of lead. Bob Lawless selected a space among these announcements, and pinned up his paper, followed by a good many curious glances. Mr. Gunten, sitting

fat and imposing upon his counter, burst into a guffaw as he read it:

NOTICE!
UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT!
THE "THOMPSON PRESS"
 will appear as usual on Monday under entirely new and up-to-date management.
EDITOR: FRANK RICHARDS.
 Advertisements at Usual Rates may be sent to the office.
THE "THOMPSON PRESS"!!!
PRICE, 25 CENTS.!
 Publishers:
FRANK RICHARDS & CO.,
 Main Street, Thompson.

"Haw, haw, haw!" roared Mr. Gunten.

Billy Cook, the foreman of the Lawless Ranch, who was steaming his big boots at the stove, burst into a chuckle.

"What's that stunt, young Bob?" he inquired.

"Business!" answered Bob Lawless cheerfully. "We've bought the paper and the office—"

"Bought it!" yelled the ranchman.

"Sure!"

"Oh, hokey! What for?"

"Hard cash!" answered Bob, as he walked out of the store, leaving an interested crowd grinning over the notice.

"I guess the galoots at Gunten's think this is a bit of a joke, Franky," he remarked, as he came into the editorial office. "They're sniggering no end over our announcement."

"Let 'em snigger!" said Frank. "So long as they read the notice and buy the paper they can snigger all they want to. If it gets round the town as a joke that will be a jolly good advertisement for the paper."

"What's the next move?" asked Bob.

"I'll give you a lesson in setting type. You and Beau can set up the ads, while I write the editorial column."

"But nobody's offered any advertisements so far."

"We'll print the same lot as in the last number. Can't let a paper appear without advertisements," said Frank sagely. "Then Beau can call on the advertisers and collect the cash—"

"If any" grinned Beauclerc.

"Well, some of them will pay," said Frank. "Anyhow, we've got to fill the paper. We'll offer them this weeks ads. as a bonus if they give us a standing order. See?"

"Oh, all right!" said Bob.

Setting type was not a difficult business, but slow to an unaccustomed hand. Bob Lawless was not much use, but Beauclerc's neat and nimble fingers were very useful. In a short time it was Beauclerc who was setting the type, and Bob Lawless was sitting on the bench watching him, and making suggestions. Both of them being thus industriously employed, Frank Richards returned to the editorial sanctum, and clicked off a leading article on the typewriter. He had read a good many of Mr. Penrose's leading articles, and he had a vague recollection of some he had read in the Canadian papers. He was quite satisfied with the result, and he brought it into the "works" to be set up.

While Beauclerc was busy with it—Bob still playing the part of observer and critic—Frank Richards sat down in the sanctum to write his story. He had been accustomed, up to a few weeks ago, to doing a weekly story for Mr. Penrose, and a month or so's rest had left him full of ideas. So his story rattled off on the typewriter at a great rate, and he had it finished by the time the shades of evening fell upon Main Street.

Lamps were lighted in office and works, the "works" being a wooden shanty attached to the office. Frank joined now as a compositor, and the work was done rapidly. He had done a good deal of that work for Mr. Penrose, and the experience came in useful now. In fact, he was a better and quicker compositor than Mr. Penrose had been. His hand was a good

deal steadier and his sight clearer, Frank not being a constant visitor to the bar-room of the Occidental as poor Mr. Penrose had been.

By lamplight the type-setting was finished, and then proofs were pulled on the rather rickety hand-press. All three enterprising youths sat down to correct the proofs, and Frank nipped out a letter here, and nipped in a letter there with all the deftness of an old hand. There were going to be fewer printer's errors in the local paper under its new management.

"Getting on like thunder, ain't we?" remarked Bob Lawless.

"Nothing to do now but the printing!"

"That's all," said Frank.

"You fellows getting hungry?" hinted Bob.

"Ahem!" murmured Beauclerc.

"No time to stop!" said Frank.

"Everything's got to be done to-day, and the papers bunched out. You can fetch in something from the Occidental, Bob, as you're least use in the office."

"I'm glad I'm good for something," said Bob, laughing.

And he departed for the Occidental, and returned with cold beef and bread and cheese, by which time the reading and correcting of the proofs was finished. Bob Lawless brewed coffee on the stove, and then the editorial trio sat down to a hasty meal. But that did not detain them long. There was plenty of work to be done.

"Half a column short!" said Frank Richards. "There's another half-column to fill somehow."

"Put a bit on the end of your story," suggested Bob Lawless. "That won't take you long on the typer."

The schoolboy author glared.

"That's easy, isn't it?" said Bob, heedless of the glare. "Let's see, your story ends with 'And Bullivant of the Fifth returned to his study a sadder and wiser Fifth-Former.' Well, now make some fellows come into the study to tea—"

"Ass!"

"Or somebody can come in and have a fight with Bullivant to the extent of another half-column—"

"Fathead!"

"Mr. Penrose used to fill up odd corners with poetry," remarked Frank. "That's what poems are for, I suppose. Nobody ever reads 'em, but they fill a bit of odd space."

"I'll do you 'Sunset on the Rockies'!" said Bob. "That's quite a usual subject."

Bob took a sheet of paper and a pencil, while his comrades were busy with the press.

Bob Lawless chewed the pencil, and ran his fingers through his thick, curly hair, wrinkled his brows, and started.

"I gaze upon the mighty mountains, And watch the rippling, sparkling fountains."

"Will that do, Frank?"

"It would have done once upon a time, fathead! But those rhymes went out with George the First," answered Frank. "They were worn out then."

"Oh Jerusalem!"

It was some time before Bob got going again. At last he produced:

"O giant guardians of the West, Now sinks the sun upon thy breast! The shades of night are falling fast. Because the daylight's nearly passed."

"That seems to me rather good, Frank," said Bob, after reading it out. "I can do some more like that, if you like."

"Don't bother!" said Frank, laughing. "That's enough to knock spots off any paper's circulation."

"Mean to say it won't do?"

"Ha, ha! Of course it won't."

"Come to think of it, perhaps I'd better do some of the printing, and you can do the poetry, Frank."

"Not a bad idea," said Beauclerc, laughing.

Bob Lawless took his place at the hand-press, and Frank Richards repaired to the typewriter in the editorial sanctum. There the required length of poetry was duly clicked off, just enough to fill the vacant space. It was set up promptly in the forme, and the last sheet of the "Thompson Press" began to roll off the machine.

"The folks at home will wonder what's become of us," Bob Lawless remarked. "It's eleven o'clock."

"We'll be earlier next week," said Frank. "We shall get it all finished before twelve. Luckily, Gunten's Store doesn't close till midnight. We've got to let him have his stack of papers for Monday."

Close on midnight the editorial trio were extremely fatigued, but still cheerful. But their work was done. A gigantic bundle of "Thompson

Presses" was borne down to Gunten's Store, and handed over to the grumbling storekeeper.

Then the wearied trio mounted their horses to ride home.

That night they slept like tops, and they were up too late in the morning for the usual ride to the Mission.

But they were feeling very satisfied with themselves. They had performed a heavy task, and it only remained to be seen whether the public of the Thompson Valley would rally round the "Press" under its new and up-to-date management.

The 4th Chapter. Success!

Frank Richards & Co. were the cynosure of all eyes when they turned up at Cedar Creek School on Monday morning.

By that time all Cedar Creek knew of the new stunt, and had discussed it, and wondered at it, and grinned over it. From the smile he detected on Miss Meadows' face that morning, Frank could guess that the school-mistress had heard of it, too. After morning lessons, Vere Beauclerc approached the Canadian school-mistress with a businesslike air.

"Excuse me, Miss Meadows—"

began Beauclerc.

"Yes, my boy?"

"I represent the 'Thompson Press,'" explained Beauclerc.

"Oh, indeed!" said Miss Meadows, with a smile.

"We shall be very pleased to supply you with the paper regularly, ma'am, delivered at your door," said Beauclerc. "Under the former management the paper was not delivered. But we—"

"Please let me have a copy every week," said Miss Meadows kindly.

"Thank you, ma'am!"

Mr. Slimmey was next interviewed, and then Mr. Shepherd. Both gentlemen put down their names for a weekly copy, to be delivered at their door. The latter engagement was easy enough to fulfil. That was one of the advantages, as Frank remarked, of being schoolboys as well as publishers. They could bring the Cedar Creek copies to school with them.

"That's three regular readers already," said Bob Lawless with satisfaction. "And we'll jaw all the fellows, and get them to make their poppers take the paper. We'll punch their heads if they don't!"

"Well, that's one way of pushing a sale," said Frank Richards, laughing.

"I say, Richards"—Chunky Todgers rolled up with a copy of the "Press" in his hand—"I got this rag at Gunten's Store!"

"How do you like it, Chunky?"

"Rotten!" said Chunky Todgers, with great frankness. "If you'd taken my tip, you might have made a success of it. As it stands, it's simply rotten from beginning to end. You don't mind my mentioning it?"

"Not at all."

"Your story is awful rot, Frank! You like a fellow to be candid, don't you?"

"Awfully!" smiled Frank.

"You can't write, you know," explained Chunky. "I've told you that several times, but you don't seem to see it. Now, I'll tell you what I'll do; I'll do you a thrilling serial—"

"Help!"

"I shall only ask you twenty dollars per instalment."

"Is that all?"

"That's all. What do you say?"

"Rats!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, Frank, you jay, if you had any sense—"

"I haven't, old scout—not that kind of sense, anyhow. But you can bring along your serial, if you like; it will do to light the stove!"

"Yah!" was Chunky's forcible, if not elegant, rejoinder.

He had no desire to supply the office stove with thrilling serials.

Tom Lawrence bore down on Frank Richards in the playground, with a serious expression on his ruddy face.

"You're running the 'Thompson Press' now, Frank?"

"That's right."

"I'm doing a little story—"

"Excuse me, old chap, I'm going for my skates," said the schoolboy editor hurriedly, and he fled.

When the chums of Cedar Creek came in for dinner they found Dick Dawson waiting for them. He put his arm through Frank's quite affectionately.

"You're the fellow I want to see, Richards," said Dawson amicably. "Now you're running the 'Thompson Press'—"

Frank suppressed a groan.

"Yes," he said weakly.

"I've got some lines on 'Sunset on the Rockies'—"

"Leave 'em on the Rockies, old fellow," said Frank. "That's the best place for 'em."

And he ran in to dinner.

Harold Hopkins seized him as the Cedar Creek crowd came out of the dining-room. The Cockney schoolboy wanted to talk business.

"I fear you're running the paper now," he said.

"The what? Oh, the paper! Yes."

"Ow would you like an article—"

"Hallo! What are you scooting off for like that, Richards?"

Frank Richards did not stop to explain what he was scooting for; he scooted. But it was only out of the frying-pan into the fire; or to put it more classically, he escaped Seylla to run into Chrybadis. Bunker H. Honk, the youth from Chicago, was upon him in a moment. The Chicago youth dug a bony forefinger into Frank Richards' ribs.

"See hyer—"

"Ow!"

"I guess what you want on your paper is a galoot with some punch in him," said Bunker H. Honk. "You want the thing to buzz? Yep? Then you must put some pep in it. I'm your antelope! Yes, sir, I'm the very galoot you've been looking for."

"I haven't," protested Frank.

"You don't know what you want," explained Honk. "I do! I'll put you wise! I guess I'm prepared to mosey in and run the whole thing for you—you hear me yaup? I guess I'm going to see you through."

"Guess again," said Frank.

"Now, let me tell you right here—"

Stop, you jay!"

But Frank Richards had fled.

"I've been looking for you, Frank," said a soft voice, as Molly Lawrence joined the schoolboy editor in the playground. "You are editor of a paper now—how nice!"

"Yes, isn't it?" murmured Frank.

"Now you'll be able to print my sonnet."

"Eh?"

"I offered it to Mr. Penrose when he had the paper, but he said he could only print it at advertisement rates," said Molly. "I thought it was so rude. Don't you, Frank?"

"Oh! Hem!"

"It is really very pretty," said Molly. "It begins:

"The Lady Clara
 Was tall and fair."

"Is—is that a sonnet?" stammered Frank.

"Yes. I'm going to bring it tomorrow," said Molly brightly. "You'll put it in the paper, won't you, like a nice boy?"

"Oh, ah! Yes. Certainly," said Frank feebly.

Frank Richards began to think that the life of a schoolboy editor might not be "roses all the way." The number of authors and poets to be found at Cedar Creek School was astonishing; and by the end of the day he had convinced half the school that he was a crass ass, a born duffer, a silly jay, and several other things. Quite a crowd of fellows remarked to one another that day that they'd never realised what a silly, obstinate ass Frank Richards was. However, it was all in the editorial day's work.

But later in the week there was great satisfaction in the office of the "Thompson Press." For, although the town of Thompson seemed to take the new management of the paper as rather a joke, or perhaps because of that, the "Press" certainly sold off at a great rate; and by Thursday Mr. Gunten sent round to the office for a fresh lot, being sold out. Whereupon there was rejoicing.

"It's a success—a giddy success!" said Frank Richards. "We've sold more this week than Penrose ever sold; and next week it's going to jump—I hope so, at least. We'll pile in like anything on Saturday."

"I—I was going to ride to Lone Pine on Saturday," remarked Bob Lawless casually.

"Business first!" said Frank Richards with severity.

"Oh, ah—yes! Of course!"

And on Saturday there was energetic work in the editorial office and the printing works, and again the "Thompson Press" sold out to the last number. Frank Richards & Co. were evidently embarked upon a successful career; but how long it would last was another question, which only the future could answer.

THE END.

(You must read "Frozen Out!" A fine long backwoods tale in next Monday's "Green 'Un." Order your copy to-day!)

THE LEAGUE OF THE STAR AND CRESCENT.

By JOHN S. MARGERISON.



CHECKMATE! "Go, ye spies," said Yussuf, "lest the finger which trembles on the trigger of my automatic should tremble too much and ye should be blown into eternity!"

The Parting!

Dick Murray, a midshipman on H.M.S. Firecat, and some eighteen of his men, have been held captive in a secret city called Elcazar. This city is owned by the League of the Star and Crescent. The reason for their capture is that they hold some papers—instructions to a secret hoard of money deposited by the Kaiser during the late war. Dick and his men escape from the city, accompanied by Yussuf, a Moor, and a friend of the white men. Having got many miles away over the desert on camels, they encounter a band of Bedouins allied to the League. There is a terrible fight, the Britishers eventually winning.

"Thou hast done well, beardless warrior," said the old Bedouin. "Better than well, for thou hast used the natural wits Allah gave thee as well as the more powerful arms of mankind. What, then, shall I do with this scum of the desert, who has dared to lift hand against me and my friend?"

"That's your affair, sheik," said Dick. "I've no use for him. Maybe you'd better cart him and his gang along as prisoners and set them to work in your oasis, or shove them in gaol, or whatever it is you do with people like that. Take him away."

Neyjim bowed, and signed to two of his men, and the captive was led away, his men having already been bound and set aside by the Bedouins. Casey smothered a grin behind his hand as he turned to Dick.

"Sure, sor, and it was as dandy a bit of strategy as iver I've seen, sor," he said. "And wouldn't Ould Physical Jerks be proud of the quickness and agility of ye, had he seen the way ye performed the flying trapeze act? One thing, sor," he added, with a sly grin. "Suppose Abdulla had refused to put his hands up, and had turned and tried to grapple with ye? Would ye have shot him out of hand?"

Dick grinned, and looked round to make sure none of the Bedouins of either side were within earshot. Then he dropped his hand to his automatic and slid back the bolt, exposing an empty magazine.

"I might, Casey," said the lad, "if I'd been able to, but the only deadly thing about my gun—and I didn't even think about it till you spoke—is its bluff."

And, laughing heartily, the midshipman turned away, to receive the congratulations of his men.

The sheik rode towards him as he recovered from the fit of laughter.

"My son," he said solemnly, "though there are those who will never again feel the wind blow across the desert, and among them two of thy gallant men and mine own son, yet am I happy and glad of this victory. Kismet has shown me this day that it is not for me or my tribe to capture thee—nay, even Nature fights for thee by sending the sandstorm to show thee a way of winning to thy side as friends they that were lately thy foes. So, in peace thou comest, and in peace shalt thou go. I stay but to put my dead under the sand, and to perform the same office for thine, and then our ways lie apart.

But, before thou leavest me, accept this little gift from one who would have handed thee to death and torture. Than this, in the desert, there is only one more precious thing—water."

He handed Dick a small, round object.

"A compass," said Dick. "Just the thing we've been wanting. Thanks, awfully, sheik! This is good of you. But add to your kindness by indicating in what direction lies the nearest town where one can find ships of the British Navy, and I'm your debtor for life."

"Let there be no talk of debts from thee to me, my son," was the grave response. "To the north-east, three days' march away only, lies the Nile, and by following that river thou shalt come in good time, and in easy stages, to the port of Alexandria. But beware as thou goest, for the League of the Star and Crescent is everywhere, and all that serve are not Bedouins or Arabs of the desert. I say farewell now, warrior of the smooth cheeks, the quick brain, and the fearless eye, for I must away to mourn him who was dearer than life to me. I may not go with thee, or furnish thee with an escort, but thy water-bags shall be filled before thou leavest. Farewell, children from the far seas, and the blessing of Allah, the Father of Fathers, go with ye all!"

The old Arab made a deep obeisance before them, and then, to Dick's embarrassment, he placed one hand on each side of Dick's head, and kissed the lad on the cheeks. Another stately bow, and he turned, walking away from them without a movement of his fine old head.

There were a few hoarse throats in the little party for a few minutes, and then they set to work to make their preparations for departure. Two or three of them had received wounds, but not of a serious nature; the really serious work they had to do was burying the two men who had fallen. Dick officiated, repeating as many passages from the prayer-book as he could remember, and the bluejackets filled in the sand above their comrades. Then they snatched a hasty meal, exchanged three camels that were wounded for unharmed beasts from the captured herd, and, with a farewell wave of the hand, set off once more into the trackless desert as the sun was beginning to set.

Seven times during the following days did the party make detours to avoid contact with bands of Arabs who had suddenly appeared on the skyline, and who were as suddenly swallowed up into the distance. They met with no adventures, though they relaxed never a jot their vigilance against the agents of the league. Once they overtook a caravan of animals laden with merchandise, and on the turban of a sleepy-eyed Arab, who gave them greeting in his own tongue, and affected to understand no English, they saw the silver badge of the league. The device was worked also into the camel harness, and they were glad that the white burnous they wore protected their English Navy uniform from being detected. Also, Yussuf, knowing the language,

(Continued on next page.)

WRIGLEY'S

3 FLAVOURS

On Every
FOOTBALL FIELD

Players and Spectators of all
Ages Appreciate WRIGLEY'S.

THE leading players in the Senior and Junior and Amateur and Professional League and Cup matches keep in form with the aid of WRIGLEY'S. A long-lasting bar of this delicious sweetmeat prevents thirst and fatigue (and the accompanying "off form" feeling) in the hardest game.

WHERE the 50,000 crowds of spectators are seen look around and you will see thousands enjoying WRIGLEY'S, which keeps everyone feeling fit and fine.

The
FOOTBALLER

WRIGLEY'S IS THE ONLY SWEETMEAT ALLOWED

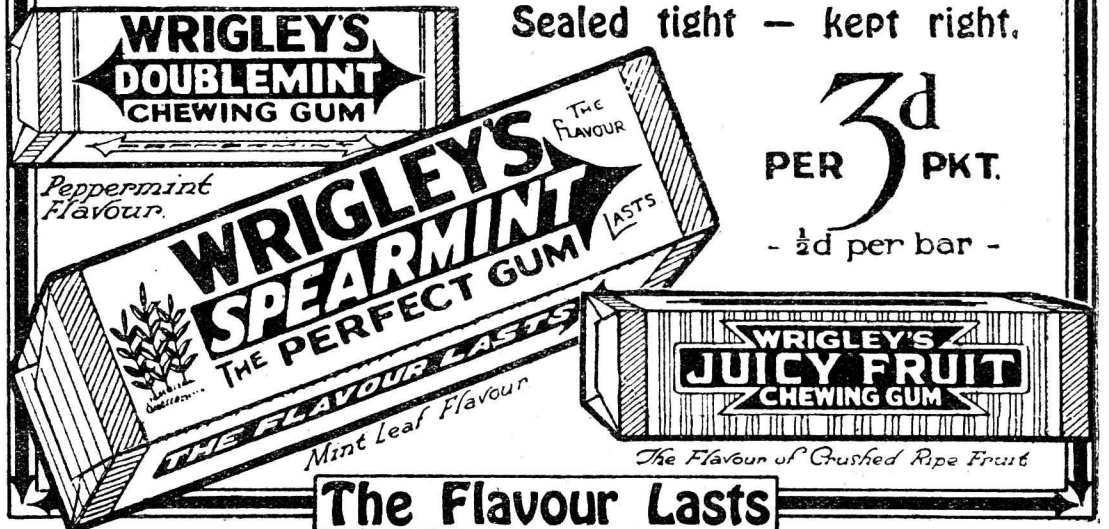
by the trainers of the leading athletes in strict training. You try WRIGLEY'S, boys, and you will find out WHY.

ONLY 3d. for a packet of 6 bars, and each bar gives you hours of fruit-flavoured "tuck" enjoyment.

SOLD EVERYWHERE

Sealed tight — kept right.

3d
PER PKT.
- 1/2d per bar -



The Flavour Lasts

WRIGLEY'S, LTD., 235, Westminster Bridge Road, London, S.E. 1.

LATEST POPULAR BOOKS.

ON SALE NOW!

DETECTIVE TALES.

Sexton Blake figures prominently in all the following stories:

No. 156. **THE ROMANIAN ENVOY.**

A thrilling story of romance, intrigue, and detective work, introducing Sexton Blake, Tinker, and Zenith the Albino.

No. 157. **A BREACH OF TRUST.**

A fascinating tale of a sad Christmas and a happy New Year, moving amidst the lights and shadows of the great City of London. Featuring Sexton Blake and Tinker in a most mysterious case.

No. 158. **THE CASE OF THE UNDISCHARGED BANKRUPT.**

A romantic story of detective work and thrilling adventure, introducing Sexton Blake, Tinker, John Lawless, and Sam, his black servant.

No. 159. **THE CASE OF THE MILLOWNER'S SON.**

Being a tale of one of Sexton Blake's most fascinating and baffling cases. By the author of "The Vengeance of Three," "By the Terms of the Will," etc., etc.

SCHOOL, SPORT, AND ADVENTURE TALES.

BOYS' FRIEND LIBRARY.

No. 538. **CORNISH GRIT.**

Splendid Tale of Mining Adventure.

By HERBERT MAXWELL.

No. 539. **THE PREFECTS OF BOWKER'S HOUSE.**

Superb Yarn of Jack Jackson and his Chums at Wycliffe.

By JACK NORTH.

No. 540. **FOOTER ON FOREIGN FIELDS.**

Grand Story of a Footer Tour on the Continent.

By ALAN DENE.

No. 541. **MICK OF THE MOVIES.**

Stirring Story of the Cinema.

By STANTON HOPE.

THE LEAGUE OF THE STAR AND CRESCENT!

(Continued from the previous page.)

they managed to pass onwards without arousing suspicion.

It was midday of the fourth day after they had parted from Sheikh Neyim that the camels suddenly extended their necks, and broke into a shambling trot, without being called upon to make the effort.

"They smell water, Effendi," called Yussuf to Dick. "We are near the Nile, where there are towns and civilization and soldiers to protect us. There are also those who would not protect us, and we may be sure they will look out for our arrival; but it is better to fight where one can see a possible retreat, than in a waste of sand like this desert."

Onwards they pressed, and by evening they had struck the banks of the Nile. A few rude tents showed where some nomad tribe of Arabs had established themselves for the night; and, in his delight at reaching safety, Dick would have gone over to them and asked for directions. But the wise Yussuf restrained the lad, pointing out that there might be among them members of the league.

"Rest assured, Effendi," said the Moor, "that there is no member of that organisation, however humble, but has received word of us, and orders to kill or capture us wherever we may be found. Nay, we will pass farther on, and make camp there, and we will maintain the same vigilance as has kept us safe from attack all the way across the desert. Here one's right hand may not know what his left hand does, nor is it always wise. Effendi, I have not failed ye in the harsh and driving hours, fear not now to trust me further, and before long things shall be made plain."

"Right-oh, Yussuf!" said Dick. "Your advice has always been good; and, as you're the only one of us that has a working knowledge of this country, its customs, and its lingo, you carry on till I relieve you of the job. What you say goes."

The Moor grinned and salaamed, and led onwards. Presently the party reached a spot on the bank of the stream that was totally deserted, and

here they pitched their camp Arab fashion, hobbling their camels that they might not stray. There was an air of gaiety pervading the camp, now that the end of their troubles seemed to be in sight, and as the sailormen stripped and dived, in the cool of the evening, into the placid waters of the stream, caring not for the crocodiles which Yussuf warned them might be about, they were as light-hearted as schoolboys on a holiday.

They dined frugally, from strips of dried flesh and the last of their tinned foods, and afterwards gathered around the cooking fire to swap yarns and to smoke the excellent Turkish cigarettes Yussuf had managed, somehow, and in some manner known only to himself, to scrounge.

"Proper old beano, ain't it?" said Hawkins, with a grin. "What about a bit of a sing-song, eh?"

"Not a bad idea!" retorted Casey. "If ye will keep ye're mouth shut and not spoil the harmony, I'll sing ye a doleful little ballad, entitled 'Mother, Take the Broom in—Our Jack's Come Home on Leave.'"

There was a little laugh at the petty-officer's sally, but presently his fine baritone was lifted up in a song they all knew—a song as old as the oldest ships, and older than any seaman of them all. It took their memories back to their friends, their homes, the ships they had served in, Firecat, and the places they had visited.

"We'll ramp and we'll roar, like true British sailormen,
We'll ramp and we'll roar, across the Seven Seas,
Until we drop anchor in the Channel of Old England.
Oh, from Ushant to Scilly is forty-five leagues!"

The chorus swelled loud and strong, and rolled across the desert and the river. The occupants of a passing Nile-boat, called a diyahbeah, heard the music and wondered.

Coming closer, they made out the words. One of them, a short man in a pith helmet and white ducks, turned to a girl lounging in a deck-chair, with uplifted finger, and a cruel light in his eyes.

"The fortune is ours, Estelle," he said. "It is they, and, like the English fools they are, they advertise their presence here by singing the infamous songs of their country!"

"There is something magnificent, something brave about it all!" said the girl. "It is a pity that they are so headstrong; these English. What are you going to do, Gustave?"

"Do, fraulein?" was the echoed response. "Why, have the diyahbeah brought in to the bank, set a plank ashore, and bestow upon them the light of my countenance."

The girl tossed her head, and laughed coldly and cruelly as the man turned and shouted several orders in Arabic. The river craft shoved her nose against the edge of the bank, and a barefooted Arab leapt out on to the sand with a rope, which he made fast to a tree. Then a narrow plank was thrust out into the gloom, and when the craft came to rest the girl, accompanied by the man she called Gustave, set foot thereupon, and daintily tripped to dry land.

"You will remember, Estelle, that we are French tourists, and if you have occasion to speak English it will be broken," were the man's instructions, as he gave the lady his arm.

The girl laughed in a low tone, and signified assent.

"Mais oui, monsieur," she said mockingly.

"The first land we made, is called the Dodman,
Rame Head, off Scilly, the Lizard, Start, and the Wight.
And then we made Fairley and Beachy and Dungeness,
And then we bore up for the South Foreland Light!"

sang Casey, and his tones thrilled the unseen listeners.

"Now, then, lads, all together, let her rip!" he added.

"We'll ramp and we'll roar," rumbled out the chorus.

Yussuf suddenly bent forward, and peered into the darkness. Then, with a nod to Dick, he rose, and strolled in the direction of his tent.

The lad sat gazing into the fire for five minutes, while the Moor disappeared into the darkness.

"Zank you ver' mooch for zat song," said a female voice, in broken English. "Eet ees ver' nice to 'ear English sung in ze desert."

Dick and the sailormen were on their feet in a moment, their hands on the butts of their guns. They could just make out, in the outer ring of the firelight, a man and a woman in white attire, the sound of whose approaching footsteps had been drowned by the singing.

"We are tourists from La France," said the man, as the midshipman demanded their business. "And, hearing you sing, we 'ave come to make ze investigation, n'est ce pas?"

"You vill for us again sing, eh?" supplemented his companion.

"Certainly!" said Dick, in his best French, thinking to pay these unexpected visitors a compliment.

"Messeur," said the girl, "you are too wonderful! You speak ze French—ah, an' you speak 'eem like ze native of England."

"And you speak it like a native of Berlin!" interposed a gruff voice, in perfect English. "Far too badly to pass muster in any assembly where the correct language is spoken. Who are you, and what do you want here?"

The girl and the man, smothering exclamations of surprise, turned sharply, to find themselves looking into the blue-black muzzle of a heavy automatic, behind which, with their gaze fixed on the intruders, were the steel-cold eyes of Yussuf the Moor.

"And, dog, who asked thee to interfere?" demanded the man, recovering swiftly from his surprise. "Is it usual for the servants to threaten visitors when they talk to the master of the house?"

"When the visitor is a snake and a reptile, then is it the duty of the servant to kill the visitor," retorted Yussuf, still cool and calm, though his eyes blazed. "They that pretend to be other than they are must be prepared for trouble when they visit us. How comes it that ye, being German, claim to be innocent French tourists, when there are none here that would harm ye if ye were what ye say ye are?"

"How comes it that you greet visitors with a presented gun?" came

back the reply, the whole conversation flashing in Arabic, which the supposed Frenchman had dropped into as soon as his eyes met Yussuf's. "Are ye, then, hiding from the law—murderers, or, perchance, thieves?"

"Not so," was Yussuf's counter. "We are innocent and honest men, and, if ye care to seek farther, British men, save I, who am the least of these. And between us and thou and thy companion is a great gulf fixed—even, if for no other reason, because of things that have been."

"Oh, is that all?" sighed Gustave, with an air of vast relief. "But look here," he added, in English, so that Dick could follow, "that war is a long time over, and we who fought have each other forgiven long since, hein? Besides, brother," he went on, catching sight of the jewelled star and crescent which gleamed on the breast of Yussuf's robe in the dim firelight, "there seems to be that between thee and me that should bring us together closer than brothers."

His last remarks were made in Arabic, and the ease and fluency with which this supposed Frenchman switched from one language to the other puzzled and astounded the midshipman and his followers. Their hands still rested on their pistol-butts, and Dick almost drew his own weapon as he saw the stranger make a surreptitious sign with his hand to Yussuf—a sign that Dick knew well was the first recognition between members of the League of the Star and Crescent.

"That is the badge that authorises me to prevent thee and thy companion interfering in this matter," said Yussuf, in English, taking a new line. "Therefore, come not spying in this camp, lest the finger which trembles on the trigger do that it desires to do, and put a short end to thy nefarious activities. In other words," he added, and Dick stared again to hear the Americanism, "you cut no ice here, so you'd better hit the trail, Mister French-German. Beat it, I say, or I shall have to tell the men to beat you back to the place whence ye came. No more words. There has been too much talk, and my next move is to deeds."

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

BOOTS ON

Also Raincoats, Suits, Ladies' Winter Coats, Overcoats, Cudlory, Melodeons, Watches and Jewellery on Easy Terms. 80/- worth, 5/- monthly, &c. Write for Free Catalogue and Order Form. Foreign applications invited. MASTERS, LTD., 8, Hope Street, Rye. (Est. 1899)

EASY TERMS

HEIGHT INCREASED 5/- Complete IN 30 DAYS Course. No Appliances. No Drugs. No Dieting. The Melvin Strong System NEVER FAILS. Full particulars and Testimonials 1d. stamp.—Melvin Strong, Ltd. (Dept. V.), 24, Southwark St., S.E.

NERVOUSNESS is the greatest drawback in life to any man or woman. If you are nervous, timid, low-spirited, lack self-confidence, will-power, or feel awkward in the presence of others, send 3 penny stamps for particulars of the Melvin Strong System Treatment. Guaranteed cure.—GODFREY ELLIOTT-SMITH, Ltd., 485, Imperial Bldgs., Ludgate Circus E.C.4

NICKEL SILVER WATCHES

Delivered on First Payment of

2/- ONLY. YOU HAVE WATCH WHILST PAYING FOR IT.

Gent's full-size Railway time-keeping Keyless Lever Watch; Stout Nickel Silver or Oxidised Damp and Dust Proof cases, plain dial, perfectly balanced superior movement, splendid timekeeper. Price for either pocket or wrist, 15/- each. Luminous dial (see time in dark), 2/- extra. Ladies' Chain or Wrist, 2/- extra.

We will send either of these watches on receipt of P.O. for 2/-. After receiving watch you send us a further 2/-. an promise to pay the remaining 11/- by weekly or monthly instalments. For cash with order enclose 14/- only. Five years' warranty given with every watch.

To avoid disappointment send 2/- and 6d. extra postage at once. No unpleasant inquiries. All orders executed in rotation.

THE LEVER WATCH CO., (M Dept.)
42a, Stockwell Green, London, S.W. 9.

CUT THIS OUT

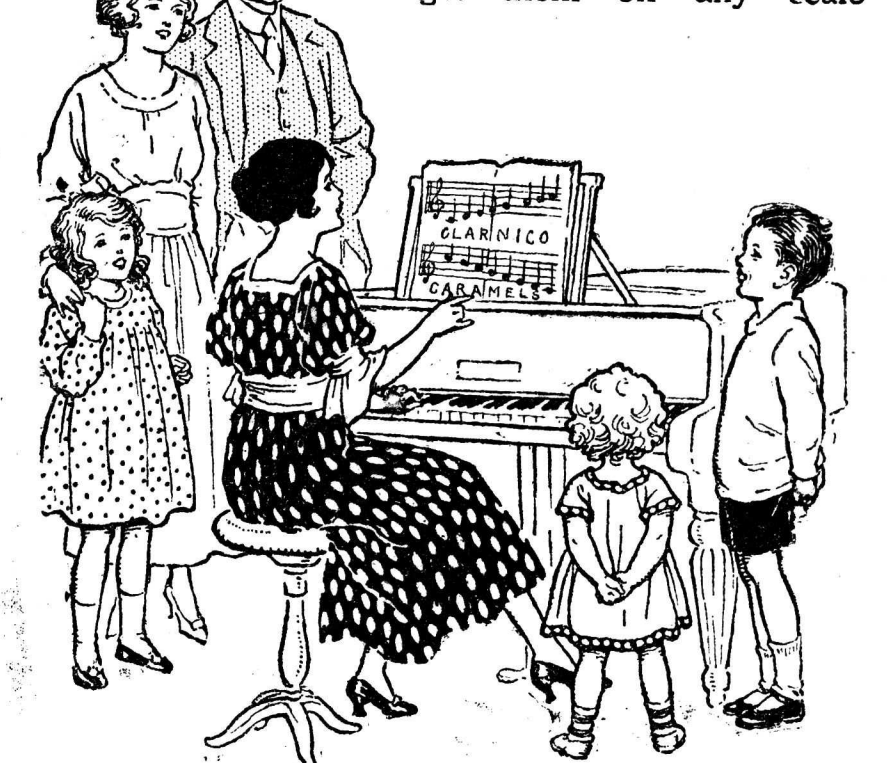
"Boys' Friend." PEN COUPON. Value 2d. Send this coupon with P.O. for only 5/- direct to the Fleet Pen Co., 119, Fleet St., London, E.C.4. In return you will receive (post free) a splendid British Made 14-ct. Gold Nibbed Fleet Fountain Pen, value 10/6. If you save 12 further coupons, each will count as 2d. off the price; so you may send 15 coupons and only 3/-. Say whether you want a fine, medium, or broad nib. This great offer is made to introduce the famous Fleet Pen to the Boys' Friend readers. (Foreign postage extra.) Satisfaction guaranteed. Self-Filling, or Safety Models, 2/- extra.

CLARNICO

NOW THEN—ALTOGETHER, PLEASE

C-L-A-R-N-I-C-O C-A-R-A-M-E-L-S

Excellent! And you can get them on any scale



CLARKE, NICKOLLS & COOMBS, Ltd., Victoria Park, London.

ENGINEERS and Apprentices

Earn more money at your trade. Write for Free Book which tells you how. Say what trade you want to learn. We teach by post the following:—

- Mechanical Engineering
 - Electrical Engineering
 - Draughtsmanship
 - Motor Engineering
 - Mathematics
 - Acro Engines.
- The Technological Institute of Great Britain, Ltd., 55, Thanet House, 221 Strand, London.

'B.F.' Tool Coupon Value 1/-

THIS HANDY POCKET TOOL will be sent to any reader of the BOYS' FRIEND for 3/-, post free, provided he sends the Coupon at the top of this announcement. To all other boys the price will be 4/-. This Tool is easily carried in the pocket, and is a novelty which has hundreds of uses. It combines Cork-screw, Gimlet, Awl, Screwdriver, and Tweezers, all of which fit into a Nickelled Case, which is used as a Handle for the Tools. Be Price 3/- with a handyman and send for one to-day. Send 3/- and Coupon direct to the sole manufacturers: **4/- without coupon.**

THE BRITISH O. TRADING CO. (Dept. B),
66, ALBERT ROAD, SOUTHAMPTON.

BECOME BIG NOW.

The plums of business and social life go to the man who has height, and physique to match it. You can easily increase your height from 2 to 5 ins., and improve your health, figure, and carriage, by the Girvan Scientific Treatment. 9 years' unblemished record. £100 guarantee of genuineness. Particulars for postcard—Enquiry Dept. A.M.E., 17, Strand Green Road, London, N.4.

TRUSTWORTHY MEMBERS ARE DESIRED BY LONDON CORRESPONDENCE CLUB. Full particulars supplied by General Secretary, 125, Dartmouth Park Hill, London, N.19. Stamped envelope is requested.

HOME CINEMATOGRAPHS from £1.—Real Value. A boon for winter evenings. Films galore. Lists free.—Desk II., Dean Cinema Co., 94, Drayton Avenue, W. Ealing, London.

MODEL STEAM ENGINES.—Locomotives, Railways, Electric Motors and Dynamos, Model parts. Illus. cat., 6d. (P.O.'s only).—Model Co., 58 (A.F.), Queen's Rd., Aston, Birmingham.

FREE FUN!

The Latest Scrambling Funny Surprise Novelty, causing roars of laughter. ERRE to all sending 1/- for 70 Cute Conjuring Tricks; 12 Jolly Joke Tricks; 6 Catchy Coin Tricks; 5 Cunning Card Tricks; 5 Mystifying Magic Tricks; 6 Jokers' Comical Cards, etc., etc.—C. HUGHES, 15, Wood St., Edgbaston, Birmingham. (Big box Demon Mustache Grower, 1/2 post free.)

"Curly Hair!" "Mine curled at once," writes Major Summers. "Curly" curls straightest hair. 1/5, 2/6.—SUMMERS (Dept. B.F.), Upper Russell Street, Brighton.

STAMPS (80 different)—Bahamas, New Barbados (Victory issue), Iceland, Rhodesia, Somali, Japanese-China, Gibraltar, etc., 9d.—TURNER, 129, Villa St., Waltham, ENG.

PHOTO POSTCARDS OF YOURSELF, 1/3 doz. 12 by 10 ENLARGEMENTS, 8d. ALSO CHEAP PHOTO MATERIAL, CATALOGUE AND SAMPLES FREE.—HACKETTS, JULY ROAD, LIVERPOOL.