EXTRA-LONG COMPLETE STORY OF THE CHUMS OF ROOKWOOD SCHOOL ISSUES

SIXTEEN BIG PAGES!

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THE BEST BOYS' PAPER IN THE WORLD!

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AN UNEQUAL COMBAT!

The juniors, though utterly outmatched, struggled gamely with the burly footpads. Jimmy Silver's cousin from Canada sat up in the grass, quietly watching the wild and whirling combat around him—but he made no motion to join in!

The 1st Chapter.

"I wonder—" murmured Jimmy

The big bronzed Canadian made quite a conspicuous figure at Rookwood, and Jimmy Silver was immensely proud of him. Jimmy felt that the Head might very well have given him a special holiday, while Mr. Smedley was there—but the Head did not seem to have thought of it.

guite a conspicuous figure at Rookwood, and Jimmy Silver was immensely proud of him. Jimmy felt that the Head might very well have days as the fourth, were, in fact, very much exercised in their minds.

They had food for thought.

The food for thought was not supplied by Mr. Dalton, their Form master; though, at that hour, all their attention ought to have been fixed upon Mr. Dalton and his valuable instruction. The Fourth Form of Rookwood were in class; and Mr. Dalton was taking them upon a personally-conducted tour, as it were, into the history of Imperial Rome. But never had Jimmy Silver's cousin from Canada had arrived at Rookwood. Mr. Hudson Smedley was staying for a few days as the guest of the Head.

quite a conspicuous figure at Rookwood imm. Jimmy felt that the Head might very well have swood, and Jimmy Silver was immensely proud of him. Jimmy felt that the Head might very well have given him a special holiday, while Mr. Smedley was there—but the Head did not seem to have thought of it.

But what interested Jimmy chiefly was the fact that the Canadian gentleman's visit had something to do with the coming vacation. There was an appointment in the end study, fixed to follow morning classes. Mr. Smedley had some proposition to make regarding the holidays; and Jimmy was very anxious to hear it. So were his chums. Never had not holiday.

"I wonder—" You fellows know how I ricke at least of coke!" came from Canada had arrived at Rookwood. Mr. Hudson Smedley was not upon them, they discussed in whispers that appointment in the end study, and wondered what Mr. Smedley had to suggest about the holidays.

"I wonder—" murmured Jimmy it was seminated in the dim past. Every other minute they glanced at the Fourth Porn of Canada had arrived at Rookwood. Mr. Hudson Smedley had to suggest about the holidays.

"I wonder—" murmured Jimmy." Twonder—"Canada in't Younder an ecstatic look. "Canada in't younder ask

Mr. Dalton being just then busy with Tubby Muffin. "I wonder—" "Canada isn't so jolly far off in these days!" whispered Lovell, with quite an ecstatic look. "Suppose he asks you on a visit to his ranch, Jimmy—" "Or me let!"

grimly. Mr. Dalton was a kind man, and a popular master. But he laboured under the delusion, so common among Form masters, that a Form-room was a place for work, and not for light and genial conversation.

tion.

"Silver, Lovell, Raby, Newcome! You four juniors have been talking incessantly!" said Mr. Dalton, in his grimmest voice. "I am sorry to interrupt what is no doubt a very interesting conversation."

"Oh, sir!" murmured the four.
The rest of the Fourth grinned.
Their Form master was being sarcastically humorous; so it was, of course, the duty of the juniors to grin.

course, the duty of the juniors to grin.

"I am really sorry," continued Mr. Dalton, in the same vein. "May I inquire whether you have, by any chance, finished your conversation yet?"

"Oh, sir! Yes, sir!"

"Very good! No doubt you will now give some attention to the lesson."

"Oh! Certainly, sir!"

"And in order to make up for lost time," went on Mr. Dalton genially,

"you will remain in the Form-room for half an hour after the Form is dismissed, and study your Roman history."

"Oh!" gasped the Fistical Four.
Blank dismay settled upon them.
They had an appointment in the end study with Mr. Smedley, to follow class; at least, Jimmy Silver had that appointment to keep, and his chums meant to help him keep it. Detention dropped on them like a bolt from the blue. The cousin from Canada would be kicking his heels in the deserted study, waiting for them—waiting for Jimmy, any-how. It was utterly dismaying. It might even give the Canadian gentleman a bad impression of them—at least in the faces of the Fistical Four might have touched Mr. Dalton's-heart; but he turned away, and did not even notice it.

The lesson went on—Jimmy Silver & Co. giving it their very best attention now. There was not a murmur or a whisper among them from that moment.

(Continued overleaf.)

(Continued overleaf.)

Fire away!'

By Owen Conquest:

(Continued from previous page.)

"Now's your chance, I guess," said the big Canadian good-humouredly.

"Yes A regular beast!" said

Tubby.

"I'm Jimmy's best pal, you know," said Tubby. "My name's Muffin—Reginald Muffin As Jimmy's detained in the Form-room, I thought I'd come and look after you."

"Jimmy's detained, is he?" said Mr. Smedley.

Peele and Gower exchanged a look of disgust. It was just like Tubby Muffin to "butt in" unconsciously, and spoil everything.

"Yes. Old Dalton got his rag out, you know," said Tubby. "They're lagged till half-past twelve. Dalton's a beast, you know!"

Mr Smedley looked stern.

"Are you speaking of Mr. Dalton, your Form master?" he asked.

"Yes A regular beast!" said Tubby.

"Yes A regular beast!" said

"If you speak of your Form master

"I—I mean he's not a beast!" stammered Tubby Muffin. "Not at all! The Head's a beast, but Mr. Dalton is—is simply topping! We're no end fond of him in the Fourth."

"The Head is what?"

"I-I mean—"

"You are a young rascal, sir!" said
Mr. Smedley severely, and he circumnavigated Tubby Muffin, and walked

on. Tubby blinked after him in dismay.

Tubby blinked after him in dismay. It was Tubby's intention to ingratiate himself with the Canadian gentleman, but his methods did not seem well-chosen. Tubby, as well as Peele, had heard some of the whispered conversation of the Fistical Four in the Form-room that morning; and Tubby's idea was that, if there was going to be a holiday in Canada, the party would not be complete without Reginald Muffin. So long as his fare was paid, and plenty of tuck provided, Tubby was prepared to rough it in the wild and woolly West.

West.

He rushed after the Canadian gentleman, his fat little legs going at a terrific rate to overtake Mr. Hudson Smedley's long strides.

"I—I say, sit—"

"Oh, get!" said Mr. Smedley good-humouredly. He was not pleased with Master Muffin; but good-humoun seemed to be his leading characteristic.

"Certainly!" said Tubby. "What do you want me to get?"

"Eh?"

"I'll get anything you like, sir."

"I'll get anything you like, sir."
Mr. Smedley looked at him. Then
he grinned, as he realised that
Reginald Muffin did not eatch on to
the meaning of the American verb
"to get."

"I mean, vamoose the ranch," he explained.
"Wha-a-at?"
"Travel!" further elucidated Mr. Smedley.
"Oh!" said Tubby. He could conjugate the verb "to travel." "Butbut, I say, sir, I'm going to look after you while my old pal Jimmy is detained."

"I guess you're real good," said Mr. Smedley, with a touch of sarcasm. "But I can look after myself, some." And he strode on.

And he strode on.

Tubby Muffin was not to be dismissed so easily as all that. He was going to make himself agreeable to Mr. Hudson Smedley, somehow. While the Canadian gentleman was waiting in the end study it was a chance for Tubby to impress him with his fascinating qualities. The fat junior hurried along the passage with Mr. Smedley.

"Here's the study, sir!" gasped

with Mr. Smedley.

"Here's the study, sir!" gasped Tubby, a little out of breath as the end study was reached.

"I guess I know the room, youngster!"

"Here you are, sir!"

Tubby Muffin politely opened the door of the end study for Mr. Smedley to enter

Certainly Master Muffin had not the remotest suspicion of what was to follow the opening of the door.

Crash!

"Yaroooooogh!"

"Yarooooogh!"
A terrific yell rang along the Fourth

Form passage

mean, vamoose the ranch," he

to get.

Tubby. "You young rascal!"

in that manner-

"You're wanted, Peele," said Jimmy Silver. "Hallo! Anything up?" yawned

Peele.
"My cousin Smedley wants to

speak to you."

"Tell your cousin Smedley to go and chop chips," answered Peele.
"I'm not interested in his conversation."



Peele, on the form behind, grinned. He seemed to be entertained by the misfortune of the chums of the Fourth. Peele was the kind of fellow who derived enjoyment from the troubles of others.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were extremely good—very attentive—till the

Jimmy Silver & Co. were extremely good—very attentive—till the hour of dismissal came. They hung upon their Form master's words, as though those words were pearls of wisdom. They almost thrilled with intense interest in the Twelve Cæsars. But it booted not as a root

But it booted not, as a poet would say. When the Fourth Form were dismissed, Mr. Dalton made the four a sign to remain. The rest of the Form filed out, leaving them stranded.

"If—if you please, sir—" Jimmy Silver ventured.

"Quite so, Silver! You will remain here till twelve-thirty!" said Mr. Dalton.

main here till twelve-tinity.

Mr. Dalton.

"But, sir—"

"That is all!"

Mr. Dalton quitted the Form-room; and the Fistical Four groaned and resigned themselves to their

and resigned themselves fate.

Peele's grinning face looked in at them; and Lovell hurled his Roman History with deadly aim. There was solace, in the circumstances, in seeing Cyril Peele fairly bowled over, and in hearing a heavy bump and a terrific yell in the passage.

Peele picked himself up; and did

Peele picked himself up; and did not look into the Form-room again; neither did he grin any more. "Hard cheese, old bean!" chuckled

Gower. Peele rubbed his chin.

Pecle rubbed his chin.

"Come on," he muttered. "Those rotters are detained till half-past, and they're expecting the Colonial johnny in their study soon after twelve. This is where we come in."

"How's that?" asked Gower, puzzled.

"Fathead! Come and see."

"Fathead! Come and see."

Peele led the way to the Fourth Form passage. All the rest of the Fourth had gone out into the sunny quadrangle; the coast was clear for Peele. And for several minutes Peele of the Fourth was busy in the end study—and when he left, he was grinning again, and chuckling—and Gower was chuckling, too! The door of the end study was a little ajar, and on the top of it—skilfully arranged by Peele's cunning hand—was a large paper bag of flour; all ready for Jimmy Silver & Co.'s distinguished visitor when he arrived!

The 2nd Chapter.

The 2nd Chapter.
Tubby Muffin Comes in Useful.
Mr. Hudson Smedley, of the Windy River Ranch, came up the Fourth Form staircase with a heavy tread. There was a cheery smile on the rancher's sunburnt face. He looked as if he were enjoying his visit to the Old Country, and found his surroundings at Rookwood School congenial. Two juniors, peering from the doorway of the first study, exchanged a grin. Now for it!" murmured Peele.

Mr. Smedley glanced at the two as e came abreast of the study door-ay, and gave Peele and Gower a

way, and gave rees kindly nod.

He strode on towards the end study, He strode on towards the end study, where he expected to meet his cousin, Jimmy Silver of the Fourth. Peele and Gower glanced after him with breathless interest, expecting the catastrophe But from the doorway of Study No. 2 a fat figure rolled, intercepting the big Canadian. It was Reginald Muffin, more commonly known in the Rookwood Fourth as Tubby

Tubby
Mr. Smedley stopped.
"Good-afternoon, sir!" said Tubby

brightly.

Mr. Smedley smiled. Possibly he found something entertaining in Tubby Muffin's unusual circumfer-

ence.
"I haven't had a chance of speaking to you yet, Mr. Smedley," went on Reginald Muffin.

Mr. Hudson Smedley jumped back

in astonishment.
Right upon Tubby Muffin's devoted head the paper bag of flour had crashed, bursting as it struck.

A flood of flour enveloped Muffin.
It smothered him. It covered his head and his fat face and his large ears. It rolled down his neck, it swamped his clothes, and it floated into his capacitors mouth as it was into his capacious mouth as it was opened to yell.

opened to yell.

"Gurrrrrrgggh!"

"Great Gophers!" ejaculated Mr.
Smedley.

"Wurrrrrggggh!"

Tubby Muffin stood in the doorway
of the end study, a figure of spotless
white, gurgling and gasping.

"Oooooch! Mooooch! Groooogh!"

Mr. Smedley grinned. He could not help it. Tubby Muffin's aspect at that moment was funny.

The fat junior gasped and gurgled and spluttered, and gouged at his eyes with his fat hands.

"Ooooch! Oh dear! Ow! I'm smothered! That horrid beast, Silver, is—Oooooch! Groooogh! Oh crikey!"

"I guess you've got it. Master

"I guess you've got it, Master Muffin," said Mr. Smedley. "Ooooooch! Grooogh!"

Tubby staggered into the passage, still gasping and gouging. Mr. Smedley stepped farther away from him. He did not want any flour. Tubby left a white trail where he moved, and spread clouds of flour around him. Peele and Gower, from the other end of the passage, stared at

The 3rd Chapter. Painful for Peele.

"Well?"

"Weil?"
Mr. Smedley rapped out the monosyllabic inquiry.
"Here we are!" said Jimmy Silver,
"We've been detained——"

"I know that. Muffin told me.
You seem to have rigged up a little
surprise for your visitor!" said the
Canadian gentleman dryly. "I'm not interested in his conversation."
"Will you come?"
"No, I won't!"
"Your mistake — you will!"
answered Jimmy Silver. And he
seized Cyril Peele by the collar and
whirled him out into the passage.
"Leggo!" roared Peele.
"This way!"
The slacker of the Fourth had no
chance in Jimmy Silver's muscular
grip. He was propelled along the
Fourth Form passage to the end
study.

Jimmy Silver stared at the flour on the floor and understood.

"A-a-a booby-trap!" he ejacu-

lated

A—a—a boody-trap! he ejaculated.

"I guess so."
Jimmy crimsoned.

"We knew nothing about it," he exclaimed. "Mr. Smedley, you couldn't think we would—"

"Some rotter's been here while we've been detained in the Formroom!" exclaimed Lovell wrathfully.

Mr. Smedley gave the juniors a searching glance.

"You couldn't suspect us—" exclaimed Jimmy.

"I guess I can take your word, anyhow," said Mr. Smedley, his brow clearing. "I should have got it if Master Muffin hadn't butted in, that's sure. I was going to wait for you in sure. I was going to wait for you in "Tubby's come;"

Fourth Form passage to the chastudy.

"Let go, you rotter! I'll come!"
he gasped. And under Jimmy's watchful eye Peele walked rather breathlessly into the end study.

Mr. Smedley gave him a smile and a nod.

Mr. Smedley gave him a smile and a nod.

"Ah, Master Peele," he said.

"Come in! You seem to be a very humorous young fellow, Master Peele. Very expert in booby-traps—what?"

"I—I know nothing about it!" gasped Peele.

"I guess I noticed when I passed you at your door, that there was flour on your clothee," remarked Mr. Smedley. "We cut our eye-teeth early out in Saskatchewan, you know."

Peele gave a start. He glanced down guiltily, and reddened as he noted the tell-tale signs of flour on his Etons.

noted the tell-tale signs of note his Etons.

"I-I-I-" he stammered,
"Sit down while we talk it over," said Mr. Smedley, dropping a heavy hand on Peele's shoulder, and twirling him to the armehair.

Peele resisted desperately. He knew what was in that chair.

"I-I'd rather stand—" he gasped.

gasped. "Why?" gasped.
"Why?" asked the Canadian gentleman, smiling. "Why not sit down
in that comfortable old chair?"

"I—I'd rather not!" spluttered
Peele, squirming in the muscular grip
that was fastened on his shoulder like
a vice.

reeie, squirming in the intstudiat gripthat was fastened on his shoulder like
a vice.

Lovell had returned with the
broom. The Fistical Four stared at
the scene. They had not observed the
treacle yet, and they did not catch on.

"Oh, sit down for a few minutes,
my boy!" urged Mr. Smedley.

"I—I won't!" gasped Peele.

His back was to the armchair, and
certainly he could not see what was
in it. But he knew that his intended
victim had seen.

"You won't?" asked the rancher,
with a smile.

"N-no! Leggo!"

"I guess you will!"

Mr. Smedley's tone was suddenly
grim. His powerful grasp forced the
junior back into the armchair, and
Peele sat down helplessly with a
squelching squash.

"Ow!" gasped Peele. "Oh, my
bags! Oh!"

"Treacle!" yelled Lovell.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow!" gasped Peele. "Oh, my bags! Oh!"
"Treacle!" yelled Lovell.
"Ha, ha, ha!"
Peele sat in the treacle and glared. It was soaking through his trousers as he sat there helplessly in the powerful grip of the Canadian gentleman.
"Let me go!" he yelled.
Mr. Smedley burst into a laugh.
"I guess that's enough," he remarked. "You can get, Master Peele."

marked. You can get, Master Peele."

He released the junior.
Master Peele was only too glad to "get." He squelehed out of the treacly armchair, his lower garments dripping with the sticky fluid. With a face like a demon in a pantomime. Peele rushed to the door, oozing treacle. But although Mr. Smedley had done with him. Jimmy Silver & Co. had not. The Fistical Four realised that their guest might have suspected them of laying booby-traps for him, and they knew that that was what Peele had intended. And so as Peele fled through the doorway four pairs of hands were laid on him.

Bump!

Bump!
Cyril Peele sat down—in the flour!
"Roll him over!" rouged Loyel!

Cyril Peele sat down—in the flour!

"Roll him over!" roared Lovell.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess—" began Mr. Smedley.
But for the moment the distinguished visitor was not heeded.
Peele, struggling and yelling, was rolled over in the flour, till he had moped up most of it with his clothes, his hair, and his features. Then he was rolled into the passage.

He lay there, gasping and spluttering.

lay there, gasping and spluttering.

But he did not lay long. Lovell swept out what was left of the flour



ROUGH ON MUFFIN! As Tubby Muffin opened the door of the end study for Mr. Smedley to enter the paper bag of flour crashed down on his head, bursting as it struck!

him. The booby-trap had been a great success; only it had caught the wrong victim.

"Mmmmmmm!" gurgled Tubby.

"They set it for me, you know-oooch!—that beast Silver—ow!—or that other beast, Lovell—oooch!

Tm smothered! Tm chook-chook-choked——Ooooch!"

Mr. Smedley knitted his brows.

"I guess that little joke was meant

"I guess that little joke was meant for me," he remarked. "I guess I was expected in this study, and you were not, Master Muffin." "Oooooch!"

"Occooch!"
Tubby Muffin staggered away. In his present floury state he had forgotten all desire to make himself agreeable to the rancher. He was only thinking now of getting rid of the flour.
There was a rush of footstons on the There was a rush of footsteps on the

There was a rush of footsteps on the stairs, as four juniors came scampering up. The Fistical Four, the moment their detention was over, headed for the end study at top speed. They almost rushed into Tubby Muffin in the Fourth Form passage, but fortunately stopped in time.

"What on earth's that?" yelled Lovell

"What on earth's that?" yelled Lovell.
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Grooogh! Rotters!" spluttered Tubby Muffin. "Goooch!"
And he rushed away to the nearest bath-room. Jimmy Silver & Co. trotted along the passage, and outside the end study M. Smedley met them, with a grim frown on his sunburnt brow.

"Come in, won't you, sir?" murmured Newcome.

Mr. Smedley nodded, and strode into the study. Lovell rushed away for a broom to sweep up the flour. The rancher was about to sit down in the study armehair when he paused suddenly. Possibly the booby-trap at the door had made his suspicious, or perhaps he was accustomed to keeping his keen eyes well about him. At all events, he observed just in time that the well-worn seat of the armehair was sticky with treacle. A whole tin of treacle seemed to have been expended in preparing that armehair for a visitor.

"Sit down, sir!" said Raby hospitably.

"I'll guess I'll stand for a bit," said Mr. Smedley. "There appears to be some humorous young galoots loose in this school. Will you ask Master Peele to step here, Jimmy?"

"Peele?" repeated Jimmy. Peele of the Fourth had already exercised his misdirected gifts of humour at Mr. Smedley's expense the previous day; a fact the Canadian had not forgotten.

"Yes. He's in the study at the other end of the passage."

"Was it Peele—"

"I guess I want to speak to that young gentleman."

"Was it Peele—"
"I guess I want to speak to that young gentleman."
"Tll fetch him."
Jimmy Silver hurried from the end study and scudded down the passage. He found Peele and Gower grinning in their study. They ceased to grin as the captain of the Fourth looked in.

with the broom; and Peele picked himself up and fled, gasping and sneezing and gurgling, in a sadder state than Tubby Muffin. He burst into his study at the other end of the passage, smothered with flour, sticky with treacle, and crimson with rage. Gower gave a yell at the sight of him.

Gower gave a yen at him.

"Ha, ha, ha! You look a picture, Peele! Ha, ha, ha! Yarooooogh!" added Gower in a roar, as his infuriated chum rushed upon him and smote him hip and thigh. By the time Gower escaped be was in almost as shocking a state as Peele.

The 4th Chapter. Glorious!

"Sit down, cousin Smedley—not the rmehair!" added Jimmy Silver armehair!" added Jimmy Silver hastily.

Cousin Smedley laughed, and sat on

a corner of the study table, which creaked under his weight

"You had something to say to us after class?" said Jimmy.
"I guess so," said Mr. Smedley.
"At least, I had something to say to you. Jimme?"

At least, I had something to say to you, Jimmy."

The Co. glanced at one another.

"Better pitch it to the lot of us, sir," murmured Lovell. "You see, we're really Jimmy's keepers—"

"You cheeky ass!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver warmly.

"Come, come," said Mr. Smedley.

"It's about the vacation, Jimmy.

I've talked to your father about it, and he is agreeable. He thinks it would be a good thing for you to see a little of the world. How do you like the idea of a holiday on a ranch in Canada?"

Jimmy Silver's eyes danced.
"Oh, ripping!" he exclaimed.

"Oh, ripping!" he exclaimed.

Lovell & Co. exchanged another glance and drew to the door. They felt that it was up to them to leave Mr. Smedley and Jimmy to themselves; but as they went, they gave their chum extremely expressive looks. Those looks told him, as plainly as looks could, that, unless he fixed it for his chums to accompany him to Canada, the consequences would be dire—so dire that Jimmy, indeed, would not be in a condition to cross the ocean. Lovell added to the effect of his expressive looks by shaking a warning fist at Jimmy as he left the study—Mr. Smedley's back being turned to the door. But just as Lovell's fist was shaken, the Canadian gentleman glanced round, and Arthur Edward Lovell met his astonished glance, with his fist still brandished in the air.

vell crimsoned, and shut the hastily. Jimmy Silver's face red as he met his cousin's ed look.

door hastily. Jimmy Silver's face was red as he met his cousin's amused look.

"Well, what do you think, Jimmy?" asked the rancher.

"That's soon said," answered Jimmy. "I'd like it no end."

"Mind, it won't be like Rookwood or like your home," said Mr. Smedley. "The Windy River Ranch is in the west of Canada, and you won't find electric light and warm baths and French chefs there."

Jimmy laughed.

"I fancy I can rough it," he answered. "But—" grinned Mr. Smedley.

"A 'but 'already!" grinned Mr. Smedley.

"N-no! But—" Jimmy coughed.

"Could my pals come?"

"How many?"

"Three," said Jimmy, at once.

"They'd like it no end—and—I don't think I ought to desert them for the vac. You see, we always fix it up to spend the holidays together."

Mr. Smedley looked thoughtful.

"The more the merrier, in a way," he said. "But it will really mean roughing it, Jimmy. Any galoot that is soft would not have a good time on the Windy River ranch."

Jimmy flushed.

"We're not soft at Rookwood," he said warmly.

"I guess I'm going to make sure of that before I take you out west," said Mr. Smedley coolly. "No use landing a set of invalids on the ranch to be sent home this side up with care, what? I guess I'm going to put you to the test and see what you're made of—and your friends, too."

"Any old thing," said Jimmy.

"Done!"

Mr. Smedley slid off the study

jumped back just in time to save his fat person from being trodden on.
"I—I wasn't listening!" he gasped.
"You young galoot!"
Tubby Muffin still showed traces of flout. But he was newly washed and brushed.

Tubby Muffin still showed traces of flour. But he was newly washed and brushed.

"I—I say, Jimmy, thanks for putting in a word for me," he gasped.

"I'll come with pleasure."

"What!" ejaculated Jimmy Silver.

"I shall like a vacation in Canada no end," said Tubby, beaming. "I say, Mr. Smedley——" But Mr. Hudson Smedley was striding away down the passage, deaf to Reginald Muffin.

"I say, Jimmy, won't it be rip-

"I say, Jimmy, won't it be ripping?" said Tubby.
"Fathead!"

"It's awfully kind of Mr. Smedley to ask me—"
"You're not asked, you fat duffer" duffe

duffer."
"Of course, it was because I saved him from the booby-trap," said Tubby, unheeding. "I knew it was there, you know, and—and—" "Choese it!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Cheese it!" said Jimmy Silver.

He left the end study to search for his chums. Lovell and Raby and Newcome were waiting for him in the quadrangle, and they greeted him with eager looks.

"All serene," said Jimmy Silver cheerily. "Us four."

"Hurrah!"

"We're to turn up for a walk with Mr. Smedley after lessons," said Jimmy, with a grin. "I fancy he's

the door of the end study, had heard most of the talk between Jimmy and his Canadian cousin, and knew that the Wild West trip was settled—and Tubby was quite determined that he was going. He felt that he had a right to go. He had intended to inflict himself upon Jimmy at home that vacation. If Jimmy wasn't going to be at home, obviously Tubby's only alternative was to inflict himself upon Jimmy abroad. This seemed clear and logical to Reginald Muffin—though, perhaps, not convincing to Jimmy.

Mr. Smedley gave the fat Classical

not convincing to Jimmy.

Mr. Smedley gave the fat Classical a glance. Tubby bestowed upon him a nod and a grin.

"We're ready," he remarked.

"Oh!" said the rancher, with a rather puzzled look.

"I've got over it, sir," said Tubby.

"Eh! Over what?"

"That awful shock when I went into the booby-trap to save you, sir," said Tubby.

"To—to save me?"

"Just that!" said Muffin. "I—I rushed in, sir, to—to save you—only

"Just that!" said Muffin. "I—I rushed in, sir, to—to save you—only just in time. I—I'm that kind of chap, you know—always doing these generous, devoted things."

"Holy smoke!" said Mr. Smedley.

"I'd do more than that for a man I really like," beamed Tubby. "You see, as Jimmy's my best pal, he wants me to come to Canada with him. I'm not going to refuse."

"You fat duffer!" growled Jimmy Silver.

Silver.

strode on with his long, springy stride that seemed to carry him over the ground without effort, deaf to the voice of the charmer. The Fistical Four grinned and followed. Tubby Muffin did not grin—he groaned. But he followed on, A holiday in Canada was to be the reward of that walk, and Reginald Muffin was determined not to give in.

"Three miles to Latcham!" read out Mr. Smedley from a signpost. "Good!"

"Good!"
Tubby spluttered.
"I—I say, are we going as far as Latcham?"
"We'll waske Latcham the starting.

We'll make Latcham the startingplace for our little ramble, I guess, answered Mr. Smedley genially. "The-the-the starting-place?" "Sure!"

"The—the—the starting-place?"
"Sure!"
"Oh crikey!"
If a spot three or four miles from Rookwood was to be the starting-place for that ramble, Tubby Muffin wondered in a horrified way, how far that awful ramble was to extend.
But he plugged on manfully.
So long as his fat little legs held out, Tubby was not going to lose the chance of a holiday in Canada. If "legging it" could work the oracle, Tubby was prepared to leg it till his legs failed him.
Unfortunately for the fat junior his

Unfortunately for the fat junior his legs were showing signs of failure already. They were not accustomed to these strenuous exertions.

Tubby Muffin dragged behind the



PEELE IN THE WARS! Peele, struggling and yelling, was rolled over in the flour, till he had mopped up most of it with his clothes, his hair, and his features. Then he was rolled into the passage, and Lovell swept out what was left of the flour on to him.

going to put us through it, to see now much we can stand. Let him!" "Yes, rather!" said Lovell. "We'll walk him off his Transatlantic legs, if he likes!"

"I soy! hoo both he block here. I support "
"I say, Jimmy, I'm coming!" hooted Tubby Muffin. "Didn't Mr. Smedley mention me specially?"
"No, you silly ass; he didn't mention you at all!" grunted the captain of the Fourth.
"Not after I rushed in and saved him from the booby-trap—"
"Ass!"
"Look here. Jinux—"

"Ass!"

"Look here, Jimmy——"

"Fathead!"

The dinner-bell rang, and the Fistical Four went in to dinner in great spirits. They were already dreaming dreams of the Wild West—of boundless rolling prairies, of soaring snow-capped mountains, of bucking bronchos and grizzly bears, and Arthur Edward Lovell was considering seriously whether he could borrow Mr. Dalton's old Army revolver to take with him!

The 5th Chapter. A Little Walk.

"Any old thing," said Jimmy.
"Done!"
Mr. Smedley slid off the study table.
"You'll be ready to take a little walk after lessons?" he asked. "I guess I want to see some of the countryside hereabout."
"Yes, rather," said Jimmy.
"O.K., then."
Mr. Smedley opened the study door; and there was a gasping exclamation outside. Tubby Muffin reant to stick.

After classes that day, Jimmy the school gates. They were first at the appointment on this occasion—standing ready for Mr. Hudson should be countryside hereabout."
When the fistical Four. Short of kicking Reginald Muffin, there was no means of inducing him to depart; and Tubby Muffin meant to stick.
Tubby, having had a fat ear glued to

"I shall like it on end, sir, at Sas-katchewbasca," said Tubby.
"Where?" gasped Mr. Smedley.
"Isn't it Saskatchewabasca?" asked
Tubby. Tubby really was not strong
in geography. "I—I mean Athabas-

wan. "Ha, ha, ha!" roared Mr. Hudson Smedley. "Come, let's be off, my lads. I'm going to give you a stiff walk to see what you're made of. If Master Muffin keeps on to the finish he shall come to Canada."
"Oh, good!" gasped Tubby.

"Oh, good!" gasped Tubby.

The Fistical Four grinned as they started with Mr. Smedley. They were sturdy and extremely fit fellows; but they knew pretty well that they were going to be tested hard. As for Tubby Muffin, he had about as much chance of keeping up with Mr. Hudson Smedley as with a racing car.

But Tubby was quite resolute. He

But Tubby was quite resolute. He rolled after the party down the road to Coombe, every now and then to Coombe, every now and breaking into a trot to keep pace

By the time they reached the village Tubby had bellows to mend; and he paused outside the village tuck-shop.

shop.
"I—I say, Mr. Smedley—"Hallo!"

"Hallo!"
"Will you sample the gingerbeer?" asked Tubby. "They've got
jolly good ginger-beer here, Mr.
Smedley."
"I guess not, thanks."
"The jam-tarts are fine!"
"Come on."
"They've got jolly good doughnuts——"

nuts—"
Mr. Smedley did not heed. He

party, and more than once he yelped out to them to go slower and give a fellow a chance. Mr. Smedley, whose good-humour was still a conspicuous quality, slacked down a little. But what the big rancher considered a snail's pace was something like a footrace to Reginald Muffin.

He had to trot now, and he plugged along the dusty road with sinking spirits, almost in a state of despair. His vacation in Canada seemed farther and farther off now. He began to wonder whether he would ever live to see Saskatchewabasca or Athabaschewan!

live to see Sa Athabaschewan!

Tubby felt more dead than alive when the walkers reached Latcham. His fat face was crimson with exertion, streaming with perspiration.
Mr. Smedley paused and looked at a

Mr. Smedley paused and looked at a signpost.

"Five miles to Oakshott!" he said.
"This way."

Groan from Tubby Muffin.
So far as Tubby was concerned Mr.
Smedley might as well have said five hundred miles, or five hundred leagues.

Come on!" said Mr. Smedley briskly

Groan!
"I think Tubby's done!" grinned

"I think Tubby's done!" grinned Lovell.

"Put it on, Muffin!" said Mr. Smedley encouragingly. "This is nothing to what you'd have to do on the Windy River ranch. It's only five miles to Oakshott—"

Groan!

"After that we have six miles round to Heathfield—"

Groan!

"And then ten miles home—"
"Ow!"
"Put it on!"
Tubby Muffin sat down on a milestone and groaned in anguish of spirit. How he had done four miles and still survived he really did not know. He knew that he couldn't walk back to Rookwood by the direct route—and as for going round by Oakshott, Heathfield, and the heath, Tubby would not have attempted that if Mr. Smedley had offered him the Windy River ranch as a gift.

Mr. Smedley's bronzed countenance

Mr. Smedley's bronzed countenance relaxed into a grin.

"I guess you're not up to Canadian form, Master Muffin," he said.
"You'd better turn back."

"Ow! I can't walk home!"

"Oh, holy smoke!" said Mr. Smedley.

Smedley.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's a railway-station in Latcham," grinned Jimmy Silver.

"Shall we chuck Muffin into a train?"

train? guess so!" grinned Mr.

"I guess so!" grinned Mr. Smedley.
"You'll have to carry me to the railway-station!" said Tubby Muffin.
"I-I-I'm dying!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Oh! You awful beasts—"
"Let's help poor old Tubby," said Lovell. "I'll take one of his ears, Jimmy, and you take the other. Pull!"
"Yaroooogh!"
With that kind of assistance Tubby.

"Yaroooogh!"

With that kind of assistance Tubby Muffin found that he could rise from the milestone, and wark. His fat face was a picture of suffering and wrath as he tottered to the railway-station in Latcham. Mr. Smedley took his ticket, and almost lifted him into a railway-carriage. Tubby Muffin sat there and groaned as the train moved out of the station. His trip to Canada evidently was "off." Indeed, if exertions like this were to occur on the Windy River ranch, Tubby decided that he did not want to visit the place. He would not have gone to that ranch on any terms short of being kidnapped and carried there by force.

Jimmy Silver & Co. chuckled as

of being kidnapped and carried there by force.

Jimmy Silver & Co. chuckled as they resumed their walk with Mr. Hudson Smedley. But as the miles lengthened out under their feet they began to look serious. Mr. Smedley seemed made of iron or steel—miles made no difference to him. But they began to tell on the Fistical Four, and footsteps began to drag.

But the chums of the Fourth were made of very different stuff from Tubby Muffin. They kept on resolutely, determined not to give in, or even to show a sign of fatigue, if they could help it. They were going to keep up till they fairly dropped on the road—anything was better than allowing the Canadian to think that they were "soft." So they tramped on, and when Mr. Smedley asked them presently how they were enjoying their little ramble, they answered with one voice:

"Fine!"

"Fine !"

Silver.

The 6th Chapter Going Through It.

"Stop, you!"
"Great Scott!" gasped Lovell.
The Rookwood party were following a footpath through a wood that lay between Heathfield and Coombe. It was a lonely path, and the dusk was falling. Mr. Smedley was striding on as springily as ever; but the Fistical Four tramped heavily and doggedly now. And suddenly, from the trees, five roughly-clad men rushed out and surrounded the party.
"Footpads!" ejaculated Jimmy Silver.

Silver.

"Now then, stop!" shouted the leader of the gang, brandishing a heavy bludgeon threateningly.

Mr. Smedley halted, and the juniors gathered round him. Five burly, ruffianly footpads, bludgeon in hand, surrounded them on the lonely woodland not have the transfer of the same property. surrounded them on the lonely wood-land path. It was an amazing scene to the Rookwood juniors. Footpads were not absolutely unknown in the neighbourhood, but an attack from a ruffianly gang like this was a sur-prising experience. Mr. Smedley slipped his hand to his hip-pocket. "I guess—" he began. "Collar him! Never mind the

"Collar him! Never mind the

kids!"
Two of the ruffians threw themselves upon the Canadian. He wend heavily to grass, struggling in their clutches. "The kids can go," said the ruffian who had first spoken. "Cut off, you youngsters. Turn out that bloke's pockets, mates."
Mr. Smedley struggled.

(Continued overleaf.)

The Rancher at Rookwood!

(Continued from previous page.)

"Run for it, you boys!" he gasped.

Jimmy Silver & Co. did not run.
They had little chance in tackling the gang of footpads—every one of them a burly ruffian armed with a bludgeon. But to run and leave the Canadian gentleman to be robbed, and perhaps maltreated, was not to be thought of.

"Come on your fallengt"

"Come on, you fellows!" panted Jimmy Silver desperately. "Back up!" shouted Lovell. The juniors rushed desperately to

the attack.

the attack.

That attack seemed to be rather unexpected. Two of the footpads went down under hefty blows, and another backed away. If they had used their bludgeons matters would have gone hard with the juniors. But fortunately they did not use their wearons.

"Back up, Rookwood!" roared Lovell as he closed with one of the ruffians and strove to bring him to the ground.
"Oh, my eye!"
"Give 'em socks!" volled Belevi

"Öh, my eye!"
"Give 'em socks!" yelled Raby.
The Fistical Four were tired from heir long tramp. But they forgot their long tramp. But the fatigue in their excitement.

With desperate energy they tackled the gang of footpads.

The two men who were grasping Mr. Smedley left him, and turned their attention to the juniors.

Mr. Smedley sat up in the grass.

He did not rise to his feet, but sat there, watching the wild and whirling combat around him.

That circumstance would have

ing combat around him.

That circumstance would have astonished the Rookwooders, if they had had time to observe it. But their hands were full with the foot-

pads.
Each of them was struggling with a burly ruffian, and though utterly outmatched, each was giving his adversary plenty of trouble.
But superior strength told, and the juniors were slammed down into the grass, with a powerful knee planted on each of them, pinning them to the ground.
They still struggled furiously, breathlessly, but they were powerless.

leas.

"You young rips!" roared the leader of the gang. "Will you clear off quiet if we let you go?"

"No!" panted Jimmy Silver.

"No, you rotters!" gasped

gasped

"Smash 'em, Bill!"
"You bet!"
A bludgeon whirled in the air over Jinmy Silver's upturned face. He made a desperate effort, and tore himself loose, and rolled out of the way. The pan who was holding tore himself loose, and rolled out of the way. The man who was holding him pitched forward, and fell in the grass; and Jimmy clutched at the bludgeon and tore it away. It swept into the air, in Jimmy's grasp, and in another moment it would have crashed on the footpad's head.

A sudden grip on Jimmy's arm

would have crashed on the footpad's head.

A sudden grip on Jimmy's arm stopped him and arrested the blow.

"That will do, I guess!" said a quiet voice.

It was Mr. Smedley who had grasped him.

"Let me—" gasped Jimmy.

"I guess that's enough."

Mr. Smedley made a sign to the footpads, and the juniors were released. Jimmy Silver & Co. staggered to their feet, breathless, exhausted, and utterly amazed by this sudden and unexpected turn of events.

To their amazement, the five footpads were grinning now, and Mr. Smedley was smiling.

Jimmy Silver wondered, for a moment, whether he was dreaming.

"All right, guv'nor?" asked one of the ruffians.

"I guess so: Enough's as good.

"All right, guv'nor?" asked one of the ruffians.

"I guess so. Enough's as good as a feast!" said Mr. Hudson Smedley.

"Wha-a-at—" stuttered Lovell.

"What the merry thump—" gasped Newcome blankly.

-Like fellows in a dream, the Fistical Four watched Mr. Smedley. He took out a purse, and handed a pound-note to each of the footpads. The five grinning tramps touched their ragged hats, and walked away into the wood.

Then the Canadian rancher turned to the juniors.

"Well done!" he remarked.

Jimmy Silver fairly blinked at him. He was not quite sure that he was awake.

"But—but what—" he stammered.

"What the thump—"

mered.

"What the thump—"

"How the dickens—"

"I guess I'm real sorry," said
Mr. Smedley as he looked at the
dusty, dishevelled, breathless
juniors. "I didn't reckon you were
such fiery young fire-eaters. Lucky
I stopped you from giving that
galoot a sockdolager with his own

club, Jimmy. I guess he's earned his tip without that."
"His — his tip!" stammered

"His — his tip!" stammered Jimmy.

A light dawned upon Jimmy Silver's mind. Five desperate footpads in a quiet Sussex wood seemed very surprising—in fact, too surprising to be genuine. Jimmy understood at last.

"Spoofed!" he gasped.

"Wha-a-at—" exclaimed Lovell.

"It was a put-up job!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver indignantly.

"Look here, Mr. Smedley, this is too jolly bad of you!"

"A—a—a put-up job!" said Lovell blankly. "Ch, my hat!"

"A-a-a put-up job!" said Lovell blankly. "Oh, my hat!"
"Fixed up while we were at lessons this afternoon," said Jimmy, in great disgust. "He's given those tramps a quid each to pretend to be footpads—"

Oh, my hat!" And—and w we thought-

"Oh, my hat!"

"And—and we thought—"
gasped Newcome.

"What a rotten practical joke!"
said Raby. rubbing his nose. "Like
one of Peele's beastly tricks! Look
here, Mr. Smedley—"

"Rotten!" growled Lovell.
Mr. Smedley burst into a laugh.
"I guess you young galoots have
played up well," he said. "You see,
I told you I was going to put you
to the test before I could take you
out West. This was the test."

"Oh!" said Jimmy.

"I—I see!" stuttered Lovell.
"Look here, did you think we would
cut and run and leave you to be
robbed, if they'd been real footpads?"

"I guess that's what I was out to
see," answered Mr. Smedley calmly.

robbed, if they'd been real footpads?"

"I guess that's what I was out to see," answered Mr. Smedley calmly.
"I wanted to know the stuff you were made of. It's turned out all right. You're the right stuff. Cheerio! Don't worry about a thump or two."

The juniors grinned. A few hard knocks did not matter very much to the Fistical Four of Rookwood. And they were feeling very satisfied at having come so well through that unexpected test.

"Come on!" said Mr. Hudson Smedley. "We've got a good many miles more before us."

"No more footpads, I hope?" asked Lovell suspiciously.

"Ha, ha! None!"

And the Rookwooders tramped on. But the Canadian gentleman had mercy on them at last; and the final six miles were done in a taxicab

from Heathfield. Jimmy Silver & Co. arrived back at Rookwood tired to the bone, but feeling upon the whole very well satisfied with themselves and things generally.

The 7th Chapter. Off to Canada !

Mr. Hudson Smedley left Rook-wood the following day, having made all arrangements with the chums of the Fourth. That day Lovell, Raby, and Newcome were busy writing home, explaining their intentions for the coming vacation, and asking permission for the trip to Canada — which was duly accorded. And during the remaining days of the term, Jimmy Silver & Co. were making great preparations, and dreaming extensive day-dreams, what time they were objects of great envy to the rest of Rookwood.

objects of great envy to the rest of Rookwood.
Rookwood School broke up at last, and the Fistical Four went to their homes to make the final preparations for their wonderful trip. They gathered at Jimmy Silver's home to meet Mr. Hudson Smedley again. Under the rancher's charge they were to make the journey to the great Dominion.

Tubby Muffin did not even offer to accompany them. His one experience of Mr. Smedley had been enough; and he could not think of the Windy River Ranch without an ache in his little fat legs. But Jimmy Silver & Co. were full of joyful anticipations.

"I guess we're off at last!" said Arthur Edward Lovell, as the chums of Rookwood stood on the big steamer and watched the shores of England receding.

"You what?" ejaculated Jimmy Silver.

"Guess!" said Lovell firmly.

"Guess!" said Lovell firmly.
"I calculate—", grinned New-

Lovell shook his head.

Lovell shook his head.

"You don't calculate in Canada," he said. "That's American. You guess and reckon. I'm taking notes from Mr. Smedley; and by the time we get to the Windy River Ranch I guess I shall be able to talk the lingo, sure. We don't want to be sized up as tenderfeet by the cowpunchers."

"What on earth is a cowpuncher?" demanded Raby. "I don't believe they punch cows in Canada. It wouldn't be allowed."

"You're an ass, old chan!" said

"You're an ass, old chap!" said ovell. "I mean, you're a pesky

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The cattlemen are called cowpunchers," said Lovell, with the loftiness of superior knowledge.

"I don't know why, but they are—sure. I guess I wish I'd brought a shooting-iron."

"A—a—a what?"

said Lovell witheringly. "Suppose galoot—"
"A what?"

said Lovell witheringly, "Suppose a galoot—"
"A what?"
"A galoot! Suppose a galoot fell in with a road-agent—"
"A which?"
"Oh, you sure don't know anything," said Lovell. "There are road-agents out West—"
"Do you mean a house-agent?" asked Raby.
"No!" roared Lovell. "I don's mean a house-agent."
"But they don't sell or let the roads in Canada, do they?"
"I guess not."
"Then what is a road-agent?"
"Then what is a road-agent?"
"Fathead! It's what we should call a highwayman or a footpad."
"Well, if we meet any road-agents," grinned Jimmy Silver. "I shall be sure glad that you haven't a shooting-iron, old chap! It would be more dangerous to us than to the house-agents—I mean road-agents."
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Br-r-r-r!" said Lovell.

Jimmy Silver & Co. enjoyed the run across the Atlantic, and still more the passage up the great St. Lawrence River. They gazed about them at new scenes with never-ending interest. Mr. Smedley and his party landed at Quebec, and the Rookwood juniors were allowed a day or two for exploring that ancient city. Then the railroad bore them westward—the railroad bore them sun end agent further progress in the language. Railways were left behind in the Old Country. They had become railroads now, and luggage, at the same time, had become haggage.

gress in the language. Railways were left behind in the Old Country. They had become railroads now, and luggage, at the same time, had become baggage.

Many a long hundred miles disappeared under the never-ending wheels, as the great train rolled westward. The Canadiah-Pacific Railway was a novelty to the Rookwooders. Days and nights succeeded one another as the great cars rolled on. The first sight of the summits of the Rocky Mountains, in the dim distance, gave the Rookwooders quite a thrill.

"The Rockies!" said Lovell in quite an awed voice—"the real Rockies, you know!"

And the chums of Rookwood gazed and gazed, and Mr. Hudson Smedley looked at them with a kindly smile. Rookwood School seemed a long way behind Jimmy Silver & Co. now.

But before the Rockies were reached, the Rookwood party left the train. The great cars rolled on towards the Kicking Horse Pass and British Columbia; and Jimmy Silver & Co., in boots and riding-breeches and Stetson hats, with sun-browned faces, headed for the Windy River Ranch.

THE END.

(You will enjoy "Jimmy Silver & Co.

shooting-iron."

"A-a-a what?"

"Shooting-iron!" said Lovell.

"What on earth's that? Anything like a flat-iron?"

"No, you guy. It's a revolver,"

"THE END.

(You will enjoy "Jimmy Silver & Co.
Out West!" next Monday's stunning
story of the chuns of Rookwood School
On no account miss it! Order your copy
of the Boys' FRIEND in advance!) THE END.

In Your Editor's Den



Your Editor is always pleased to near from his readers upon any subject.

Address yo letters to: Editor, "Boys' Friend," The Fleetway House,
Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

ROOKWOOD RANCHERS.

An extra specially fine number of the "Boys' Friend" is in your hands this week, and I know the great yarn of Jimmy Silver and his Rookwood chums will appeal to everybody. It opens up a splendid vista of new and attractive possibilities, and Mr. Owen Conquest is not the man to miss a single chance offered by this wonderful tour in the wilds. I told you that a big surprise was in store, and here it is. I shall be cager to know what you think of this extra-long yarn of the famous characters who have figured in such a lot of topping stories.

JIMMY SILVER & CO. OUT

Next week's Rookwood tale is of the same increased length as this week. In twe get right into the thick of things, and Jimmy and his friends have a taste of life on the prairie which is thrilling. The cousin of the Rookwood leader has zone on to the ranch, leaving his young sistors to rest after the fatigues of the iourney. But Jimmy Silver & Co. do not lead that they are in any special need of ranquility; they decide to follow on on their own. So a chore-boy is told off as guide across the wilds, and the cicerone, as you might call him, fancies he has to deal with a party of helpless greenhorms. He expends a good bit of time and trouble over the business of pulling the legs of the newcomers, but the manner in which he is disillusioned is refreshing in the extreme. There is never any change worth mentioning to be got out of Jimmy Silver & Co. when they are at home on their native heath, i.e., at Rookwood. It makes not a pin of difference when the scene is changed to the Western wilds. The chore-boy comes to

realise that he woke up the wrong passenger, and gets to feel somewhat sorry for himself. For Rookwood turns the tables on him, and the young Westerner wishes he had not spoken. There is an exciting encounter with a rustler, and eventually the party reach the ranch safe and sound, much to the surprise of Jimmy's cousin, who was far from expecting them.

"CAST-IRON CASSIDY!"

Next Monday's story of Rollo Dayton is a rousing boxing narrative full of pep. Look out for it. It is bound to fascinate you; and I know another effect it will have, for nobody could read this, the latest by Walter Edwards, without feeling increased respect for that writer's all-round knowledge of sport.

RETURN OF "BULLDOG" HOLDFAST.

For weeks past I have been receiving requests for another yarn of Harry Hold-fast. Well, next Monday the celebrated "Bulldog" will take the boards again. "The Men of Vengeance!" is great. It will prove enthrulling, and it will also revive all the cheery old memories of the magnifacent fellow, who goes to meet difficulties in so debonnair a style. It is all so natural. You remember the earlier yarns—the studio mystery, the radium affair, the secret down by the waterside. They were all ripping, and the character of the "Bulldog" stood out vividly—a man who took the keenest interest in life, and enjoyed it, though, as he has shown over and over again, he is ready when need be to lay his own down to serve a right cause. Well, "The Men of Vengeance!" will enhance the reputation of Holdfast. I am glad to

have him back in the pages of the "Boys' Friend."

OUR SERIALS.

"Sound the Eternal!" and "The Phantom Pirate!" are booming along in the best style. They are both aces of trumps, the strong cards of fiction, packed with thrills.

SOMETHING AHEAD.

Coming events cast their shadows before, though there is very little shadow about-the work of that author, who has jumped bang into popularity, thanks to his capital stories of Danesbury School. I refer, of course, to Peter Foy. It is fair to call him a new discovery in boys' authors. He has the gift for school work, and in reading his delightful yarns you get thinking of other masters of this sort of thing, men like P. G. Wodehouse, whose tales linger very pleasantly in the memory long after they have been read. I am delighted to think that ere long we shall hear again of Peter Foy and the Boys of Danesbury. If I am not much mistaken, the story of Danesbury in this week's number will enjoy one of those quick, immediate, downright successes, which leave no doubt at all of the enduring merit and sound quality of a writer's stuff. But that's for the future.

COMPETITION AND FOOTER.

These attractions will be found in next week's programme as fine as ever. We are well on the way to the wind-up of football for this season, but the interest in the game never flags a second, as we all know.

A RECORD LETTER.

A RECORD LETTER.

It was a pleasure this week to read a really sporting letter, pages long, from an enthusiastic reader in far Australia. The writer has read the old paper for umpteen years, and he wanted to know a whole heap of things about the why and the wherefore of certain changes of programme. Of course, as I told him in my reply, there are bound to be endless alterations in the bill, but the magnificent traditions of the "Boys' Friend" are carried on through the seasons. The paper is, in a sort of way, the mirror of the passing years. The world changes; interests are different, and a popular weekly has to bear the impress of all these phases if it is to keep abreast of the times. And if it did not do that it would not be popular!

The "Magnet" Library Limerick Competition.

NO ENTRANCE FEE REQUIRED.

FIRST £1 1s. PRIZE

AND

Consolation Prizes of 2/6 for all efforts published.

In order to win one of the above Prizes all you have to do is to supply the last line of the verse given below, taking care to see that your effort bears some apt relation to the theme.

RULES GOVERNING THE "MAG-NET" LIMERICK COMPETITION

- 1. The First Prize will be awarded to the sender of what, in the opinion of the Editor and a competent staff of adjudicators, is the best Last Line received.
- 2. Consolation Prizes of 2/6 will be
- 2. Consolation Prizes of 2/6 will be awarded from week to week to those competitors whose efforts show merit.

 3. The coupon below entitling you to enter for this competition must be either pasted on to a postcard, in which case your Last Line must be written IN INK directly beneath it, or enclosed separately in an envelope with your Last Line effort attached.

 4. Competitor's name and full postal address must accompany every effort sent in.

 5. Entries must reach us not later
- Your Editor. 5. Entries must reach us not later B. F. CUT HERE.

NOT be enclosed with entrance forms for any other competition. They must be addressed, "Magnet' Limerick No. 1," Gough House, Gough Square, London, E.C. 4.

6. Your Editor undertakes that every effort sent in will receive careful consideration, but he will not hold himself responsible for coupons lost or mislaid, or delayed in the post. Proof of posting will not be accepted as proof of acceptance.

7. This competition is open to all readers of the Companion Papers, but the result each week will appear only in the "Magnet."

8. It is a distinct condition of entry that your Editor's decision must be accepted as binding in all matters. Acceptance of these rules is an express condition of entry.

"MAGNET" LIMERICK COMPETITION No. 1.

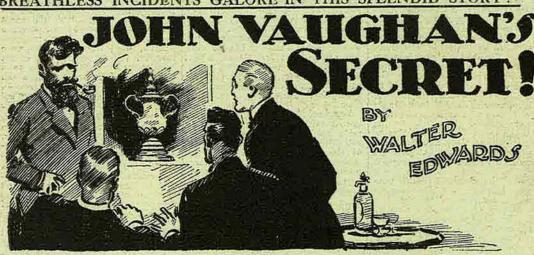
"I fear there's a burglar about; With my rifle I'll ferret him out!"

Mr. Prout did exclaim. Then he took careful aim,

THIS EXAMPLE WILL
HELP YOU:
And smashed the window, no doubt! Head's

A Wonderful Treat—FOUR School Tales—FREE Real Photo—GREAT Dick Turpin Serial in the "Popular!" Out To-morrow!

BREATHLESS INCIDENTS GALORE IN THIS SPLENDID STORY!



A dramatic announcement concerning the stolen Cup is made by John Vaughan, the managing-director of Chelsea Villa!

The 1st Chapter. The Meeting.

The ist Chapter.

The Meeting.

"Once," said the Duke dreamily, "I staked a man out, smeared his face with honey, and left him to the ants. He went raving mad—and died!" A sinister smile twisted his thin lips at the thought. "I wish I could have treated Crauford, the traitorous hound, in the same way! The knife was too merciful!"

There was a terrible note in the purring voice, and the listeners, hard cases though they were, could not suppress the shudder which ran through each one of them.

Reclining in a deep saddlebag chair, with his neatly-shod feet resting upon a low Moorish table, the master-criminal, who was called the Duke, was being unusually gracious to his hirelings; and this was due to the fact that he was enjoying one of his beloved cigarettes.

There were a dozen men present, criminals all, and even a cursory glanes round their club-room showed that it had been furnished tastefully and with an eye to solid comfort.

The spacious floor was covered with a thick smoke-blue carpet, the chairs were deep and roomy, and adorning the panelled walls were a number of good paintings, valuable works of art which had once graced the gallery of a millionaire's mansion.

A steward, a wooden-faced man in sombre uniform, stood behind the Duke's chair, waiting to do his master's.slightest bidding. This man was well known to the police as "Dirk the Penman," and he had retired from business owing to his hand having lost its cunning.

The other men also showed a marked respect to the sleek-haired criminal; yet each one was a past-master in a particular branch of law-lessness.

The Duke, however, was a criminal genius, a man who could turn his

master in a particular branch of lawlessness.

The Duke, however, was a criminal
genius, a man who could turn his
expert hand to anything, from
forgery and blackmail to safe-breaking or gun-running.

Strange company, indeed, yet a
stranger finding his way into the club
—which he would not, of course—
would have been impressed by the air
of comfort and the well-groomed,
opulent appearance of the members.

And this club—a thieves' kitchen—
was in Limehouse, within a stone's
throw of the docks.

The members were grouped round
the open grate, and standing upon
the mantelpiece of the fine old carved
fireplace was a silver trophy, a thing
of beauty and noble lines—the
English Cup.

The Duke blew a perfect smokering and gazed through they would get
you, my beauty!" he murmured, with
a pitying note in his soft voice.

"Dayton and Vaughan—"

He ceased speaking as a sharp rap
came from the far end of the room.
A momentary pause followed, and
then a blue light gleamed over the
door.

"It is Li Sing," said a tall, slim

"It is Li Sing," said a tall, slim

door.

"It is Li Sing," said a tall, slim man, with a clean-shaven, effeminate face. His expression was one of child-like faith and innocence, and he was known to his intimates as "Gentleman" Finniss, a "confidence" man who operated upon the Atlantic liners.

liners.

The Duke touched a small device beside his chair and released the lock; and every eye was upon the door as it slowly opened. A raiding-party, with so much space to cover, would have stood a poor chance against the twelve armed men.

A Chinese entered, a gross man

with a dark-skinned face and slant eyes which appeared to be closed; yet there were few things which Li Sing did not see.

Unhurried, with stately stride, the fleshy Celestial walked across the carpet and bowed low before the Duke.

"What's the news, you yellow dow?" spanned the criminal with a

"What's the news, you yellow dog?" snapped the criminal, with a sudden change of mood, for the sight of Li Sing reminded him of Crauford, the traitor.

"He is dead, Excellency," declared the Chinese impassively; and from the folds of his silken robe he produced a newspaper.

The Duke, whose uncanny eyes showed a slight trace of excitement, snatched the paper from the long yellow fingers; and a tinge of colour crept under the ivory skin as he scanned the paragraph headed "The Limehouse Tragedy."

"James Crauford, the well-known footballer who was stabbed under such dramatic circumstances last Saturday evening, died during the night," said the report. "He remained unconscious until the end, and died without making any statement which might lead to the speedy arrest of the mysterious criminal who calls himself the Duke.

"This is a serious set-back for Scotland Yard, but the Chief Commissioner, in a statement to the Press, says that everything is being done to run both the Duke and James Crauford's murderer to earth.

"Important developments are expected at an early date."

A sinister chuckle escaped the Duke's thin lips as he tossed the newspaper across to Gentleman Finniss.

"The poor fools!" he muttered, in pitying tones. "Important developments are expected 'I I'll steal the gold stopping out of the Commissioner's tooth one of these days!"

Again he chuckled.

"And they dare to pit their puny wits against the fines: brain in the world! Even Crauford did so!" His lips tightened at the name. "And Crauford, the traitorous cur, is no more! But the death was too good for him! He should have been flogged—cut to ribbons with a knout And that will be the fate of the next man who turns traitor! Let that be known to the rest of the carrion that may be tempted to betray me!"

His uncanny eyes flashed fire as he rapped out the threat, but a second or so later he was calm again, running over the events which had led up to the sudden demise of James Crauford:

For many years the Duke had been known and feared in the underwo

Then, tiring of the ordinary round of crime, he decided to strike a blow at Society, at the very heart of the people, and to this amiable end he declared war upon British sport. He wowed to drag its good name through the mud; by hook or by crook he meant to disgrace it. He swore to bring the national institution toppling

country in a ferment, and many harsh things were said and written about big John Vaughan and the Chelsea Villa Club. It was not the intrinsic value of the trophy which meant so much, it was its associations and all that it stood for.

Then came the game between Chelsea Villa and Tottenham Hornets—the local Derby—and the Duke, who had Crauford in his power, ordered the fellow to do his utmost to stir up trouble between the rival partisans.

Crauford, who feared his master, did his best, but his efforts were anything but a success. He merely succeeded in falling foul of the crowdand Hercules Samson, the eccentric little winger; and the climax came after the match when Hercules gave the burly fellow the hiding of his life.

Beaten, battered, and demoralised, he scarcely knew what he was doing; and no sooner did Rollo Dayton accuse him of being in the pay of the Duke than he collapsed.

He ultimately blurted out everything he knew, declaring that he would turn informer as a price of his liberty. He hated the Duke for his brutal, inhuman methods, and jumped at the chance of turning traitor.

That evening, after dusk, Rollo, John Vaughan, and Crauford set out for Limehouse, and an hour later, when the trio were passing along a narrow street, a silent form loomed up out of the brown fog and a stiletto did its deadly work.

Crauford tottered and fell. A neat ivory card was attached to the handle of the knife, and it read:

"So end all traitors.—The Duke."

The thought of the read manner in which Li Sing had disposed of to the ground, to put an end to racing, boxing, football, and the like; and the weapons he employed were blackmail, bribery, or violence.

He succeeded in his diabolical scheme only too well for the time being, but eventually he received the shock of his life, for he encountered a person who was not afraid of him, a youngster who did not cringe and tremble before his gaze.

That youngster was the Hon. Rollo Dayton, the famous all-round athlete, and he capped everything by

SURPRISE FOR THE DUKE! Placing the armchair beneath the tiny grating, Duke mounted it and peeped into the next room. Then a startled broke from his thin !ips as he recognised James Crauford, the man he had thought dead, among the occupants of the apartment!

declaring war upon the infamous criminal and his myrmidons!

The Duke was not slow to accept the challenge, and in the battles of wit and strength which followed he quickly realised that he had met his match. The youngster became a menace, a danger, and the master-criminal declared that he must be "destroyed"; and many were the occasions upon which Rollo escaped death by a hair's-breadth.

Then came the opening of the football season, and the youngster was still very much alive; so much so, in fact, that he signed amateur forms for Cheleca Villa, the famous Cupholders.

Cheleea Villa, the lamous cup-holders.

Time and again the Duke tried to ruin the club, but all his efforts were frustrated by his youthful opponent.

Then came his brain-wave—his chance to strike a subtle blow at the Villa and its players.

He stole the English Cup!

The audacious theft put the whole

EVERY MONDAY_PRICE 2:

Crauford brought a cruel smile to the Duke's thin lips.

"By the way, Finniss," he drawled, "when is the funeral?"

"On Thursday at one o'clock, chief," answered the "confidence" man, glancing up from the newspaper.

"Thanks," murmared the Duke.
"I shall be there!"

The other criminals gazed at the speaker with a question in their eyes.

"I wish to pay my last respects to a faithful servant," explained the Duke; and the words were a warning to every man in the room.

The 2nd Chapter

The 2nd Chapter.

A Surprise for the Duke!

The funeral took place on Thursday, and hundreds of sportsmen made the pilgrimage to Highgate, the Chelsea Villa players being of the number.

Crauford had never been really popular with the London crowd, but his tragic death at the hands of the Duke had aroused public sympathy. All his faults were forgotten and forgiven. forgiven. The s

The simple service at an end, a small party of mourners followed the coffin-bearers to the graveside; and

Rollo Dayton, in raising his bowed head, found his eyes resting upon the bent figure of an old man standing on the opposite side of the deep trench. Shabbily dressed, with a straggling grey beard, he kept his head bowed; and could the youngster have caught a glimpse of the mocking eyes he would have known that he was in the presence of the sinister villain whom the world knew as the Duke.

For the criminal had kept his word. He had come to pay his last respects to the man who had tried to between

He had come to pay his last respects to the man who had tried to beth! him.

The interment over, the crowd of silent mourners moved off toward the main gates; and neither Rollo nor the others noticed that the shabby old man was following close upon their heels and near enough to overhear at least scraps of their conversation.

Reaching the main thoroughfare, the footballers came to a halt.

"Are we all going by train?" asked Giles, the goalkeeper. "You go my way, Dayton?"

"No, not to day, old egg," returned the amateur. "As a matter of fact, Daggers and Vaughan have got a little bit of business to do in my rooms. What's more, we're going to be thoroughly rash and have a taxi!"

Nodding cheerily, the trio strode away toward the cah-rank, and scarcely had they tumbled into a taxi and started westward than the Duke hobbled across the road and placed a shaking hand upon the doorhandle of a vacant cab.

Thanks to a perfect disguise, he did not look the type of person who could afford to ride in anything more luxurious than a bus, and the driver obviously thought so.

"Nah, then, uncle!" he grinned.
"Put that keb down!"

A sudden warning flashed into the Duke's eyes and was gone. But he swung open the door and stepped inside the vehicle.

The driver was out of his seat in a moment, and glaring at the bearded old fellow seated inside the cab.

"What's the game, uncle?" he demanded, running his shrewd Cockney eyes over the shabby clothes and broken boots. "Strike me, if—"

"I certainly shall strike you in a moment, my friend!" snapped the

and broken boots. "Strike me, it—"

"I certainly shall strike you in a moment, my friend!" snapped the criminal; and the voice was not that of an old man. It was harsh, metallic, and had an authoritative ring. "Listen. This is a police job!"

"Come orf it—"

"Silence!" The command cut like a knife. "You saw three men get into your mate's cab a moment ago?"

The flabbergasted driver could do no more than shake his head.

"They've gone to the Albany. Piccadilly," ran on the Duke, who knew the address of Rollo's flat. "That's where we're going. Move?"

"But—"

A tearible everession distorted the

knew the address of Rollo's flat.

"That's where we're going. Move!"

"But—"

A terrible expression distorted the criminal's features, and the driver started back, fear in his eyes.

"Move, you rat!" snapped the Duke; and the other man, scarcely knowing why he obeyed, lost not a second in clambering into his seat and setting off towards the West End.

Guessing what was expected of him, the fellow came up with Rollo's cub and kept it in sight; and when, in answer to a tap at the window, he pulled up near Piecadilly, he found that his bearded fare had quite recovered his good humour.

"Here's a pound for you," said the Duke. "Keep your mouth closed!"

Faithful to the character of the shabby old man, he shuffled off towards the Albany, and upon turning the corner he was just in time to see Rollo Dayton and his friends pass under the somewhat gloomy portice of Raphael Mansions.

Slackening his pace, he gave them

sincer the somewhat gloomy portice of Raphael Mansions.

Slackening his pace, he gave them a couple of minutes' grace and then mounted the broad stone steps, holling in his grubby hand an envelope, which he had addressed in the taxi.

The hall-porter, a sour-faced man with a grizzled moustache, looked hard at the caller and sniffed.

"I wanner see Mister Rollo Dayton," announced the criminal in a wheezy voice.

The porter grunted.

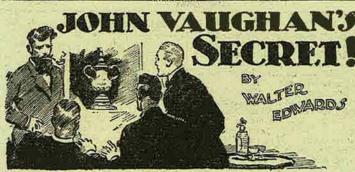
"You got some 'opes!" he declared scathingly. "You've 'eard about the cab-orse that couldn't go through the eye of a needle? Well that's you!"

The Duke shot a quick glance round before he spoke again, and then his tone was sharp, so sharp, indeed, that the amateur humorist gave a start of surprise.

"I'm Matherson, of the 'Yard'"

of surprise.
"I'm Matherson, of the 'Yard'"
snapped the criminal.
The porter touched bis cap. He
looked nervous and breathless.

(Continued overleaf.)



(Continued from previous page.)

"Beg pardon, sir! Sorry, sir!" he stammered. "But I might ha' guessed!"
The Duke, whose nerves were under perfect control, raised his eyebrows.
"And why should you have guessed?" he asked, with no trace of excitement or eagerness in the question.

"And why should you have guessed?" he asked, with no trace of excitement or cagerness in the question.

"Well, Detective-Inspector Craddock has been here all day, and—"
"Of course, of course!" broke in the criminal, with the suspicion of a smile. "Did he mention that he was expecting me?"

The porter shook his head.

"I asked him to do so," came the glib lie. "That is why you didn't recognise me, of course!"

The Duke nodded and turned towards the stairs, whilst the porter tilted his cap and scratched his head as he watched him out of sight.

"Them 'tees is blinkin' marvels; blow me if they ain't!" he declared, his voice vibrant with admiration.

Rollo's snug flat was on the second floor, as the "crook" well knew; but the Duke's mien was anything but furtive when he reached the landing. There were three doors along one side of the corridor, one leading into the sitting-room, another into the bedroom, and the third into a small scullery.

The sitting-room, which overlooked the street, was separated from the bedroom by massive folding-doors, which were heavily curtained; and it was the door of the latter room which the Duke tried, but not before he had made practically certain that the apartment was unoccupied.

Then, making no sound, he gently turned the handle and pushed the apartment was unoccupied.

Then, making no sound, he gently turned the handle and pushed the door open. Nothing suspicious happening, he padded across the threshold, closed the door, and turned the key in the lock. This was a precautionary measure, for thus he guarded against a surprise attack.

He knew that an iron fire-escape was clamped to the wall outside the window, and he decided to use this should he be called upon to make a sudden departure.

The sound of deep voices and an occasional roar of laughter came from the sitting-room; and it was whilst he was straining his quick ears, trying to catch a word here and there, that the criminal caught sight of a small ventilator let into the wall over the old-fashioned folding-doors.

His sharp eyes at once sought a means of reaching that tiny grating, and he gave a little grunt of satisfartion as he steeped across to a substantial-looking armchair, the back of which would give him a foothold.

Noiselessly, with his pulse beating normally and no trace of hurry in his movements, he lifted the armchair and placed it in position, after which he mounted it. Then, by dint of straining every muscle, he managed to peep into the next room.

One swift glance brought a startled cry from his thin lips, and it was only with the utmost difficulty that he saved himself from reeling from his perch and crashing to the floor.

Seated near the window was Rollo Dayton, Dagnall, and John Vaughan, whilst sitting very upright in an armchair was a burly, thick-set man with a red face and bristling close-cropped hair. He was in ordinary clothes, but he had "the Force" stamped all over him.

None of these people caused the Duke's sarprise, however. The person

over him.

None of these people caused the Duke's surprise, however. The person who, for the moment, had robbed him of his iron nerve was a man scated by the fireplace—James Crauford, whose "funeral" he had so recently attended!

The 3rd Chapter. The Warning!

The Hon. Rollo Dayton allowed his gold-rimmed monocle to dangle at the end of its silken cord whilst he dabbed

end of its silken cord whilst he dabbed a tear from his eye.

"There is only one fly in the price-less old amber, old eggs," he declared, "and that is the fact that the Duke isn't with us to enjoy the joke!"

Daggers, or Harley Street, chuckled.

"I should like to see the beggar's pasty face when he learns how neatly he's been had," he said, filling his battered cild briar. "I wouldn't mind betting that he'll go straight into the garden and eat worms!"

"He's likely to know all about it very soon sir." put in Detective-Inspector Craddock, in grim accents.
"We don't intend to lose any time, or take any risks. The commissioner has threatened to fire the whole lot of us if we miss him this time!"

Excitement gleamed from Rollo Dayton's blue eyes as he bent towards the police-officer.

"D'you mean that you're going to carry out the precious old raid almost

"D'you mean that you're going to carry out the precious old raid almost at once?" he asked eagerly. Craddock nodded his close-cropped

head, "I do," he answered, in his pon-"I do," he answered, in his ponderous manner. "He's slipped through o. r fingers too often for us to wait for a second longer than is necessary. We raid the Limehouse den tonight, and, with a bit of luck, we should nab the Duke and a whole nestful of beauties!"

"But surely there is no possible chance of anything going wrong on

"CAST-IRON CASSIDY!"

A Great Boxing Yarn leaturing Rollo Dayton in next Monday's BOYS' FRIEND!

this occasion?" asked big John

this occasion?" asked big John Vaughan.
Craddock rubbed his heavy chin and pondered.

"There shouldn't be," he confessed, speaking very slowly; "but when you're dealing with a man as cunning as the Duke, you never know what's going to happen! He seems to be able to vanish—well, as quickly as a drink!"

Rollo gave a light laugh.

"Help yourself, old egg!" he cried, nodding towards the decanter and siphon at the officer's elbow.

"And what time do we start?" asked Dagger. And Craddock, with the tumbler half-way to his mouth, looked across at his questioner.

"Eh?" he grunted. "What do you mean by 'we'?"

"But surely we—that is, Dayton and Vaughan and I—are in this rag?" asked Daggers in amazement.

The officer finished his drink before making reply.

"H" he growted "Um not so."

"H'm!" he growted "I'm not so sure that that wouldn't be against regulations; but if you happened to be on hand just as we were about to make the raid—""

"Splendid, clo egg!" cried Rollo excitedly. "And now you'd better tell us all about it—the arrangements,

you know!"

"Well, there can't be any harm in that," confessed the officer. "We raid the place at eleven o'clock, police coming from all sides of London, and arriving in twos and threes. They keep in hiding until they get the signal, of course, and then a strong cordon is drawn round the den. I've got my instructions and seem. got my instructions, and you can stick close to me!"

Close to me!"
Vaughan, Rollo, and Daggers were greatly excited at the prospect of the raid; but James Crauford, who was still suffering slightly from the effects of the knife-wound which had so narrowly missed being fatal, had very little to say. little to sav.

He had missed certain death by a matter of less than an inch, and the mere mention of the master-criminal's name caused him to tremble like a man with the ague.

The Duke had struck terror into

The Duke had struck terror into him.

It was Craddock's idea that the news of the footballer's speedy recovery should be kept out of the papers, but the suggestion of going one better and burying a bundle of old clothes, had emanated from Scotland Yard.

The intention, of course, was to put the Duke off the scent, for did he think that Crauford had made a con-fession he would lose no time in flitting away to another of his criminal

haunts.

And then the dreary, heart-breaking search would have to start again.

But now it seemed that he would be caught like a rat in a trap, and it was a sanguine, light-hearted party which set out from Rollo Dayton's flat at half-past nine on the night of the raid.

The 4th Chapter.

Limehouse!

An ugly, unpleasant name for an ugly, unpleasant place; at least, so thought Rollo Dayton, as he and the others followed Craddock through the squalid, tortuous streets on the night of the raid.

of the raid.

There was a slight river mist—damp and clinging—but this did not veil the dilapited houses, nor obscure the gaunt-looking buildings which stood out, black and forbidding, against the leaden night sky.

The sound of a ship's siren, like the plaintive wall of a soul in distress, came from afar. Then all was silence again—eerie, threatening, uncanny.

Occasionally a soft-footed figure flitted past, and was gone. Chinese, lascars, and white men were abroad, but very few.

Nothing had been left to chance with regard to the raid, for Crauford knew the thieves' kitchen like the palm of his hand, and he had ac-quainted the police with the exact position of every possible cutrance

position of every possible entrance and exit.

Rollo, whose smooth cheeks were burning, glanced at the dial of his wrist-watch as Craddock came to a halt in the dark doorway of a tall warehouse.

"Two minutes to go!" breathed the youngster; and the police officer silenced him with a growl.

Those two minutes seemed like an eternity to the little knot of men, but at last—from a distant church—came the first stroke of eleven.

came the first stroke of eleven.

"Steady!" warned Craddock, his big right hand curling round the butt of his automatic; for Scotland Yard was determined that the Duke should be caught, even if they had to riddle him with lead.

Five—Six—Seven—

The solemn strokes were dragging!
Eight—Nine—Ten—Eleven!

Hundreds of gloomy figures, silent-footed and stealthy, appeared like phantoms from dark doorways and inky shadows; and they were all con-verging upon the thieves' kitchen which harboured the Duke and his

which harboured the Duke and his myrmidons!

The hour had arrived, and the criminal who was "wanted" by the police of two continents would, within the next few minutes, be in the hands of the police—run to earth at last!

Rollo and Daggers, following upon the heels of Craddock and his men, heard the door of the club-room crash as the police rushed it.

Hoarse shouts rang out, but not a shot was fired, and all the time a stream of police poured along the passage and disappeared into the club-room.

The splintering of wood and the

club-room.

The splintering of wood and the tinkling of broken glass proclaimed the fact that the skylight had been smashed, and all was din and pandemonium when Rollo, Daggers, and John Vaughan were finally carried across the threshold.

And then a gasp broke from the

The comfortable apartment was awarming with police, but of the Duke and his satellites there was no

Duke and his satellites there was no sign.

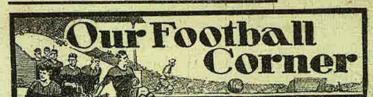
Craddock, fuming, wild-eyed, and muttering, was standing near the table, a victim to acute disappointment and impotent rage.

"Less noise!" he roared hoarsely; and then his blazing eyes rested upon James Crauford.

The footballer, pale as death, shrank before the blistering, accusing gaze.

(Continued on the next page.)

ANOTHER SPLENDID FOOTER CHAT.



England v. Scotland.

England v. Scotland.

This week-end there is to be staged one of the big events of the football calendar. This is the meeting of the chosen of England and Scotland. Indeed, it is not going too far to say that, so far as Scotland's football enthusiasts are concerned, the match against England is the biggest event in their football year. The difference in the way the people of the two countries look at these International games is quite marked. Personally, I have never seen enthusiasm to equal that of the people of Scotland, and have never seen sights which excelled those in Glasgow, over the playing of the big International encounter with England. South of the border, of course, the greatest event of the year is the Cup Final, and the people of England are rather apt to look upon the International games as something which has to be tolerated, but over which there is no occasion to get tremendously excited.

That the foregoing is true is proved by a comparison of the ligures of the attendance at the

That the foregoing is true is proved by a comparison of the figures of the attendance at the games. When the match against Scotland is played in England, the probability is that the onlookers will not number many over fifty thousand. But in Scotland twice this number is generally nearer the mark, and, of course, we have seen at Hampden Park, Glasgow.

gathered together for one of these International matches, the biggest crowd which has ever attended a football game anywhere. In 1912 the attendance touched the stupendous figure of 127,307. The fact that in England there is no enclosure—bar the new Wembley—which would take such a crowd of people who could all see the game, cannot be given as the reason why the crowds do not approach the same proportions.



A. WHITE

As a rule, the grounds in Eng-land on which the International matches are played are far from full.

The Match at Glasgow.

The Match et Glaegow.

This week-end, though, the game is to be played in Glasgow, and a huge crowd of watchers may be anticipated. And this huge crowd will expect the chosen of Scotland to show once more that they are better footballers than the men born south of the border. At the present moment Scotland has quite a substantial lead in the matter of victories won in these games. Apart from the Victory International games, which are not included officially there have been forty-six encounters between the two countries, and of these Scotland has won twenty, while England has recorded and of these Scotland has won twenty, while England has recorded only fourteen victories, the remain-ing engagements having been drawn.

ing engagements having been drawn.

The Scot is, of course, ever ready to talk about the superior footballing skill of his countrymen; but, as a matter of fact, while thinking about this phase of International encounters between the two countries there are one or two rather important things to be borne in mind. In the first place, it will usually be found that in the Scottish team there is a fair proportion of players who are at the time serving with English clubs. The Scot says that the English clubs have merely captured these players, but the Englishman replies that the Scottish players who have had experience in England, are chosen by Scotland because they are better men than the Scots who stay at home. But while it may, to a certain extent, be true that the man who comes nearest to being the ideal footballer is the one who has been brought up in Scotland and then completed his education

in England, it is quite likely that, so long as present day methods are con-tinued. England will always find it very hard to beat Scotland.

Different Training.

The way the players of the two countries are trained in their early



WADSWORTH (Huddorsfield Town).

days is mainly responsible for this. In Scotland the youngster has it drummed into him that ball control is the base on which success at the game can alone be built, and the player is taught how this ball control can be attained. This gives him the right foundation on which to build. On the other hand, far too many trainers in England are what might be called speed mad. They are concerned about nothing so much as getting the players under are concerned about nothing so much as getting the players under their control to reduce the length of time it takes for them to do a fifty or a hundred yards' sprint. Now,

I am not going to suggest for one moment that speed is other than a valuable asset to the footballer, but speed which is not allied with skill in keeping the ball under control is of comparatively little use. The process with the young player, so it seems to me, should be this: Give him a thorough grounding in the art of ball control, and the tricks of the trade, and, after that, teach him to do quickly the things he is able to do.

From Forward to Full-Back.

One of the men who have recently come into prominence as an England player is Samuel Wadsworth, the left full-back of Huddersfield. Like left full-back of Huddersheld. Like many other prominent players of to-day, this man only found his right berth by accident, for in his early days—when he was with Blackburn Rovers—he was persevered with for some time as a forward. Later, though, when he went to Nelson, he

though, when he went to Nelson, he was pressed into service as a full-back, and as a full-back he has won an English Cup medal and several International caps.

The Blackpool club is very keen on winning promotion to the First Division at the end of the present season, and a few weeks ago, to help them with this project, they secured the transfer of White from the Arsenal. He can play fither at centre-forward or inside-left, and is also a pretty good cricketer.

(Another splendid article next week.)

"And what have you got to say about it, Mister Informer?" growled Craddock. "What's the little game, eh? The raid was supposed to be a dead secret, yet we find that the birds have flown! Looks a bit fishy, don't it, Crauford?"

Nobody noticed the mixed metaphor. Cra eh?

The footballer ran his tongue over

The footballer ran his tongue over his dry lips.

"I know nothing about it, sir," he declared, his tone ringing with conviction. "I swear I've played it straight this time!"

"And I believe you, old egg," put in Rollo Dayton quietly.

"Same here," growled Daggers. Craddock grunted, but kept his suspicious gaze upon Crauford.

He was about to speak, but Rollo

He was about to speak, but Rollo got in first

"My hat!" cried the youngster, his blue eyes glinting with excite-ment. "Look what's on the mantel-

Every eye turned to the carved oak freplace at the end of the room; then came a gasp.

"The Cup!"

A young constable was the first to reach the trophy, but scarcely had he touched it than there came a blinding flash of light, a deafening report, and the room was plunged into Stygian darkness. the room was plunged darkness.

The English Cup had exploded!

The 5th Chapter. No Casualties !

The 5th Chapter.

No Casualties!

The terrific explosion, which seemed to jar everybody in the place, was followed by a blinding cloud of acrid smoke which soon had the raiding party coughing and spluttering; and many harsh things were said about the man who called himself the Duke. The police were equipped with electric torches, but some seconds clapsed before points of light blazed from all sides.

"Is anybody hurt?"

It was Craddock's harsh voice which rang out. Caring nothing for ceremony, he roughly pushed his way through the throng and made for the fireplace; and a growl broke from his lips when he dropped beside the young constable who had lifted the Cup.

"Show a light here!" he snapped testily; and a beam was directed upon the pallid features of the unconscious man.

His eyes were closed, and his hair and eyebrows were singed, but, apart from these minor injuries, he appeared to be suffering from nothing worse than shock. But it was only the fact that he had ducked instinctively which had saved him from severe burns—or worse.

Of the English Cup there was no sign; the explosion had blown it to atoms.

"We'll pull this fellow round, and in the construction of the sexplosion had blown it to atoms.

"We'll pull this fellow round, and in the construction of the sexplosion had blown it to atoms.

sign; the explosion atoms.

"We'll pull this fellow round, and then get away," growled Craddock, who was in anything but a sweet temper. His next job was to report to the Chief Commissioner, and he was not looking forward to it.

the Unief Commissioner, and he was not looking forward to it.

The injured constable recovered in a matter of minutes. Then Craddock, having detailed a dozen men to guard the place, passed into the narrow corridor and gained the deserted street.

Rollo Dayton, Daggers, and John Vaughan followed him, and the expression upon the faces of the three proved that they were as disappointed as the officer himself.

They certainly had many good reasons for wishing the Duke under lock and key, for, apart from being a menace to the Villa, he had deliberately destroyed the cherished English Cun. This was an act of sheer vandalism, the work of a madman, and Rollo's muscular fists clenched at the mere thought of the outrage.

Resching Commercial Road, they

outrage.

Reaching Commercial Road, they found Daggers' car waiting, and it was a very disgruntled party which was whirled westwards.

was a very disgranted party which was whirled westwards.

"Will you go straight to Scotland Yard, Craddock?" asked big John Vaughan, as the car sped past the Mansion House and turned up Queen Victoria Street.

The officer, who had been deep in thought, glanced at his watch.

"H'm, nearly midnight!" he murmured. "Sir Henry Bellfield, the Commissioner, will have gone by now, so I think I'll phone to his private address and leave the detailed report until the morning."

"Then you can come along to my place and have a night-cap, old man?" asked the bearded giant hospitably.

The suspicion of a smile flitted across the police officer's rugged features.

"Thenks I will" he answered.

features.
"Thanks, I will," he answered,

"for if I go to the Yard to-night I know I shall slaughter somebody. I'm in the right mood! For I'm in the dickens of a mess over this job! We thought we'd got the fellow on toast, and then— Brrr! I think I'll give up police work and take to knitting jumpers!"

"You must be pretty sick about the business, old egg," put in Rollo, "but I don't see that you are to blame, yknow! After all, you did all in your power to nab the rotter!"

"Then I wish you'd go along and convince the Commissioner upon that point!" growled Craddock fervently, snapping off the end of a big black cigar and proceeding to light up.

Vaughan had a very comfortable at near the river at Chelsea, and it as just striking the half after mid-ight when Dagnall's car swerved to Whistler Walk and came to a

into Whistler Walk and came to a standstill.

A bright fire was burning in the famous sportsman's den, and his guests lost no time in making themselves at home. Even Craddock forgot his troubles for the moment as he gazed round the mellow apartment, with its good sporting prints and the hundred and one other objects which reflected the tastes of his host.

Needing no second bidding, he

Needing no second bidding, he helped himself to a generous drink

The 6th Chapter. John Vaughan's Secret!

John Vaughan's Scoret!

Craddock sat up as though an invisible hand had jabbed him with a knitting-needle.

"What! Letter for me?" he snapped, as Vaughan smilingly held the missive towards his guest. "Dang it! The thing's impossible! Yet—yes, that's my name! What the dickens—"

ges, that's my name! What the dickens—"
Growling savagely, he ripped open the flap of the envelope and extracted a sheet of notepaper, and his eyes had not scanned two lines before his face took on a tasteful shade of purple.

Detective-Inspector Craddock, of Scotland Yard, was a very angry

"Listen! Listen to the impudent jackal!" he cried throatily. "'My dear Cra.dock, by the time you receive this note you will know that your crack-brained adventure—the raid upon my Limebouse quarters—has failed. You poor flat-footed, muddle-headed, swivel-eyed police—

The detective raised blazing eyes nd glared round at his listeners.

"Did you ever hear such insults?" he demanded fiercely.
"Go on, old egg." murmured Rollo Dayton soothingly.

his door. You might ask him to have the small ventilator over the folding-doors lowered an inch or so, will you? I was compelled to stand on tiptoe to hear the pearls of wisdom which fell from your lips, and the position was tiring, to say the least of it.

"And now, my excellent Craddock, one last word. Crauford, the cur, has tried to betray me a second time—and failed. His hours are numbered.

"The Duke.

"P.S.—Please apologise to Vaughan for the liberty I have taken in entering his flat. After all, he forced an entrance into my place at Limehouse, didn't he? I trust he found the English-Cup upon the mantelpiece! My laugh, I think!"

Craddock was breathing hard as he looked round at the set faces of his listeners.

isteners.

"Did you ever know anything like it?" he asked helplessly. "The fellow's uncanny! And—and how the dickens did he guess that I would come back here?"

"That was probably a shot in the dark, eld man," answered Vaughan quietly. "Anyway, he knew that I would lose no time in sending the note along to you."

"I'm, that's so!" agreed the officer, somewhat relieved.

"I don't like what he says about

"And the Cup's vanished!" put in Daggers in a hard voice. sportsmanlike cad!"

"But the Cup hasn't vanished, old man," smiled John Vaughan, rising from his armchair and strolling across

to a cupboard.

Rollo, Daggers, and Craddock looked at him as though they feared for his reason.

"What—what the dickens do you mean, John?" asked the doctor.
"Why, the 'pot' was blown to smithercens before our very eyes! You're mad!"

Vaughan was still smiling.

"'A' cup was blown to smithereens
before our very eyes, you mean," he
said quietly. "As a matter of fact,
our 'pot' is here, and has been all
along!"

He swung open the cupboard door, and there, standing upon the middle shelf, was the English Cup!

"And—and you've had it here all the time, old egg?" gasped Rollo when, half a minute later, they were seated round the fire again. "My only hat!"

Vaughan nodded his leonine hoad.

Vaughan nodded his leonine head.

"Yes, it was in the cupboard when our friend the Duke left his 'billy doo' for Mr. Craddock!" answered the football manager, with a deep-throated chuckle: "So it isn't his laugh, after all!"

A score of questions flashed through Rollo's whirling- brain, and even Daggers was too excited to talk quite-coherently.

"Anyway, what do you gain by this business?" growled Craddock, helping himself to another drink.

"For one thing, old man," answered Vaughan, "I get quite a lot of personal and selfish pleasure in heating the Duke in a battle of wits, for he is going to be a very sick man when he learns of the simple manner in which he has been duped. I guessed that he would try to steal the 'pot,' and laid a trap for him. This affair is going to stab his pride. Craddock."

"I wish it would stab his heart!" growled the detective 'viciously, for he was in no mood to appreciate the finer points of Vaughan's deception.

"In the second place," continued the bearded giant, "whilst he held the counterfeit cup there was no chance of his getting his thieving fingers upon the real article. And now, my dear Craddock—"

"Don't 'Dear Craddock ine, confound you!" snapped the police

"Don't 'Dear Craddock' me, con-found you!" snapped the police officer testily. "It reminds me of

omeer testuy. "It reminds me of him!"

"Serry, old man," smiled Vaughan.

"What is more, the mean and unsportsmanlike theft roused the whole country against him, and it is a wonder to me that he hasn't been caught long before this."

"H'm!" grunted Craddock grudgingly. "Maybe there's something in what you say, Mr. Vaughan, but you should have let the 'Yard' on to your little game."

"They'll know all in good time, old man," smiled Vaughan good-humouredly. "As a matter of fact, there is a letter already in the post."

"And what about the newspapers, old egg?" asked Rollo. "We must give the Duke a pleasant surprise when he sits down to breakfast!"

"I've given the Press Association all particulars, old man," answered the Villa manager.

"Then I should like to see the Duke's face when he opens his 'Burglars' Budget,' or 'Prison Pictorial,' or whatever paper be favours!" smiled Daggers.

A few hours later the news that the English Cup was still in the safe keeping of Chelsea Villa was shrieked from placards all over the country.

Newspapers sold like hot cakes, and the public chuckled when it read of the neat manner in which the notorious Duke had been gulled by John Vaughan.

Yet there was one item of news which they did not associate with the Sorry, old man," smiled Vaughan,

John Vaughan.

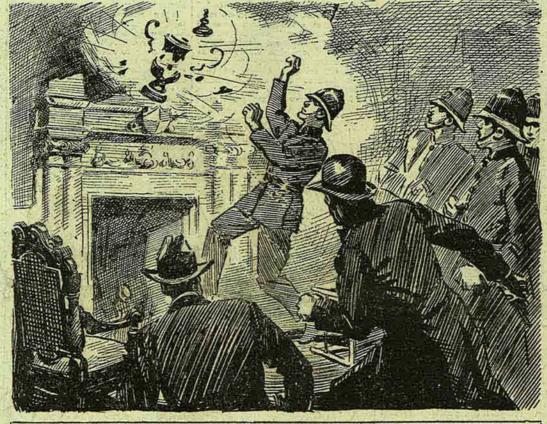
Yet there was one item of news which they did not associate with the affair. This paragraph was tucked away in a corner, and ran:

"Early this morning the body of an unknown man of thirty or thirty-two was found floating in the dock at Limehouse. Nothing was found on him. 'J. C.' are the initials upon his linen."

Such was James Crauford's epitaph!

THE END.

(Order your copy of next Monday's Boys' FRIEND right away and muke sure of reading "Cast-Iron Cassidy!" —a great boxing story starring the Hon. Rollo Dayton.)



THE CUP EXPLODES!

Sparcely had the young constable touched the trophy than there came a blinding flash of light, a dealening report, and the room was plunged into darkness. The English Cup had exploded!

and settled his big body comfortably in the deep saddlebag chair by the side of the fire.

de of the fire.

The others drew their chairs up to
ne blaze—for the ride from Limeouse had been a chilly one—and
aughan reached out for the cigars. "Can I tempt you, Daggers? asked, with a smile.

"Well, just one, old man," returned the doctor.

Vaughan opened the lid of the box and frowned puzzledly, for rest-ing on top of the cigars was an

Furthermore, it was addressed, in a small, neat hand, to Detective-Inspector Craddock.

The detective-inspector continued:

The detective-inspector continued:

"'Knowing that you possess about as much imagination as an oyster, my very dear Craddock, I feel sure that it will surprise you to know that I was at the conference of beauty, intellect, and wit which took place at the Hon. Rollo Dayton's flat yesterday afternoon.

"'It is, of course, quite against my nature to play the part of eavesdropper, but I was so absorbed in listening to the detective genius of the age—yourself, my dear Craddock!—that I could not tear myself away.

"'I left eventually, however, but

"I left eventually, however, but not before I had put Mr. Dayton's bed-room in order and had unlocked

Crauford," put in Daggers gravely.
"He won't rest until he's had his revenge."
"You're right, old egg," murmured Rollo. "We must do something for the fellow, who's not really bed at heart. Perhaps we'll be able to get him out of the country. Anyway, I've got his address, and I'll look him up in the morning."

There was silence for a few

There was silence for a few moments, during which time Crad-dock glared into the heart of the fire, as though he owed it a grudge.

"The hound's had it all his own way this time," he growled, puffing jerkily at his cigar. "He's vanished, his pals have vanished—"

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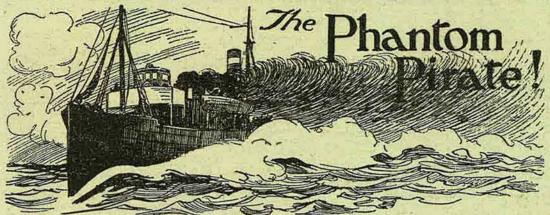
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Pieface and Bunjie return to camp, and Captain Joe Tremorne plans an attack on the lost Spanish City!

The 1st Chapter.

The 1st Chapter.

Hearing of the mysterious loss at sea of more than twenty ships within a month, Captain Joe Tremorne, the Polruan cousins, Frank and Dick, and Harry Rawson, their chum, set out in the Defiance, a camouflaged high-speed destroyer, to discover the modern pirate to whom the loss of the vessels is attributed. With them is Pieface, their negro servant, the crew of the Enchantress, Joe's old ship, and Bunjie, Pieface's baby elephant. When they have been at sea some weeks, they come upon a derelict vessel, the Octoroon, of New Orleans, and find that the passengers and the crew have been murdered, and the officers are missing. The ship's papers, log, and valuables have been stolen. Suddenly time-bombs explode on the Octoroon, sending her to the bottom without a trace. Later when making for the Gulf of Mexico, the Defiance encounters a tidal wave which carries her into an inland lake of a mysterious South Sea Island. On the island the marooned seamen come upon one of the lost cities of the Spanish Main, and discover it is being used by the modern pirate as his headquarters. At night, Frank and Dick and Harry Rawson visit a Spanish galleon, which is at anchor in the harbour of the city, and Frank has the good fortune to recover the ship's papers of the Octoroon. When the boys return to camp it is to find that Joe Tremorne has hurt his foot, and has sacked Pieface and Bunjie. They plead on Pie's behalf, and Joe agrees to allow the black boy to return. Meanwhile, Pieface, having thought of a notion by which he may be able to get back into Joe's good books, reaches the inland lake and rows out to the Defiance.

The 2nd Chapter.

The 2nd Chapter

The 2nd Chapter.

How Pleface Won a Charter.

An Irishman named Grimwade had been loft in charge of the Defiance, not so much in the nature of a defending force, as because of a somewhat irascible temperament which Joe knew was calculated to disturb the harmony of the shore expedition.

The fact of the matter was that Grimwade, right up to the moment that Joe signed him on as extra hand at Plymouth, had been a bit of a lad, exhibiting certain human weaknesses which were not compatible with the smooth working of a ship's company. And yet, because Grimwade was really sound at heart, and had begged the skipper, whom he had known a good many years, to give him another with the idea of reforming him than for any use he might be to the party.

Now, Grimwade had a great many weaknesses. Given perfect freedom of action, he would eat and drink until he could hold no more. Of tobacco, too, he was so inordinately fond that, although somewhat more strictly rationed than the rest of the vessel's crew, he was so attached to his pipes that night and day he wore them stuck like pistols in a belt round his waist, which peculiarity had earned him the soubriquet of Captain Brass, the Pirate King.

Now be it remembered that Pieface, by reason of his long and honourable associations with the Polruans, was the trusted keeper of all the ship's stores, from the humblest packet of tacks to the choicest cabinets of Havana cigars which were Joe Tremorne's special pride. And, as showing the weakness of human nature that can trade upon another's frailties for one's own personal advantage, Pieface wickedly conceived the notion

of making use of Ballyhooly Grimwade to help him in his plan.

Accordingly, as soon as the cutter's nose bumped under the steamer's counter, Fieface sent out a ringing hail which brought Ballyhooly out of a lovely snooze, peopled with wonderful dreams of a land of smiling green, where baccy is cheap, and pigs and potatoes provide a living without the necessity for work.

"Hallo, below there! Who is ut that's calling this son of Erin by the swatest name iver given to morthal

"Hallo, below there! Who is ut that's calling this son of Erin by the swatest name iver given to morthal man?" asked Grimwade goodnaturedly. "Sure and indade, ut's the son av Old Nick himselluf! Top av the mornin' to yez, Misther Pieface, and plased indade I am to see the likes av yez."

Pie grinned amiably while he made the boat fast.

"Do same to yo', Massa Greenspade," he replied. "Dis chile tink yo' must be bery lonelum all by yo'sef on dis yeah rotting ole steamer, so he come to liben yo' up a bit."

"Liven me up!" grunted Ballyhooly. "By the bones av St. Pathrick, it's about time, bedad, something was done for the loikes av a pore sinner like me. Dival a smoke have I had this two hours past, and those spalpeens over yonder enjoying av thimselves no ind. Look at 'em, Misther Pieface"—throwing back the sides of an old sea-jacket, and exposing his bandolier of pipes. "Ivery wan empty!"

Misther Pietace"—throwing back the sides of an old searjacket, and exposing his bandolier of pipes. "Ivery wan empty!"

"But, Massa Neberfade, dis li'I fellah serve you out with de regulations ob tobaccums accordum to de orders ob de skipper. You smokum all too fast, yiss."

Grimwade thrust out his under-jaw.

"Misther Tremorne, indade! And phwat does he know about the wants av me? Two ounces av tobacco a day. Phwy, I cud put that amount in the holler av me best back tooth and not know it was there!"

"Never mind, massa," said Pie, rolling his eyes piously. "Dis boy ob de Africy forestums hab a berry big heart near to busting for yo', and just fo' dat he comes back all dis longum way alone to look after yo'. Yo' come below with me, Massa Neberfade, and try ole Joeyman's cigars—yiss?"

Ballyhooly smacked his lips.

"Snakes in Buncrana, but that's the best notion Oi've heard this ten years! Begorra, it's a foine lad yez are, and may the mither that owns yez be proud av such a gin'rous son. My best respecks to you, Prince Pieface, of the Fuzzy-Wuzzy tribe, and it's as a king indade the blessed people av owld Oireland would receive yez entoirely."

"Dat same am bery nicely said," chortled Pie, scenting the first-fruits of his labours. "Jus yo' come blong ob me down to de store, and I show yo' sometinks to make dem ole cod's eyes ob yours woggle in yo' lead. It am too bad, berry bad, to lebe yo' heah without de tobaccum, and my heart melt so much dat it flow ober into my mouf and choke dese angel eyes ob mine with tears."

He led the way through the lazarette to the store-room, and, unlocking a cupboard, brought out a huge box of cigars.

With great solemnity Pie raised the lid, removed the sheet of silver-foil, and waved the delicious cigars under Grimwade's nose.

"De row what yo' tinkum ob dem beauties?" De bes' cigar whateber came out ob a Habana factory.

"Dere, what yo' tinkum ob dem beauties? De bes' cigar whateber came out ob a Habana factory. Selection Connoisseur, and de name on ebery box. Hab yo' eber seen a finum cigar dan dat, Massa Iron-spade?"

for Pie to have carried out the heavy work alone, but with Grimwade's unstinted aid everything went smoothly. The next job was to remove the hatch covering from No. 3 hold and to raise a number of stout wooden casks. A swift and uncompromising raid on the carpenter's stores produced hammers, nuts, bolts, and bars of round iron about an inch in diameter.

"Now yo' see de idea," piped the black boy. "We clampum two ob dese cask bottoms together and make one wheel. Den we drill one big hole in de miggle and putum on de end ob de axlc. Yo' knock ober de end ob de bar so dat de wheel doan come off, and I put anudder wheel on de udder end—so."

end—so."

"I see." Ballyhooly mopped his perspiring brow. "You're goin' to make a sort av carridge?"

"Dat's de ideaum," agreed Pie. "In a berry li'l while we hab de four wheels on de two axlums; den we clampum to de keel of de dingby, and de hull contraption roll smooth ober de groun', pulled by one man and a rope."

"Splendid, splendid!" agreed the Irishman. "But phwat's the notion, anyway? Who's goin' to use av the kerridge phwan it's finished en-toirely?"

Ballyhooly's nose began to quiver like a cat when it scents fish.

"Faith and bedad, it's meselluf entoirely as never have seen such wonders since the world began. And you really mean me to have wan?"

"Massa Greenmade, I hab no such meanness in dis heart ob mine to offer yo' only one," said Pie magnificently. "Yo takeum one big handful—see? I laid dem all out on de li'l counter—one, two, tree, four, fivum, six, soben, eight—yo' smokum eight befores dat ole Joeyman's return."

"By the bones av my great aunt"

"Splendid, splendid!" agreed the Irishman. "But phwat's the notion, anyway? Who's goin' to use av the tright and finish dem axlums."

"Dat am my secrep. Yo' jus' get algum and finish dem axlums."

They worked heroically at their task, and at the end of two hours Pie had the small boat running smoothly across the deck. Very little remained to be done to complete the first part of the scheme. The dinghy with her added under structure was hitched to the Wellin davits, which were then swung out, and the strange craft was lowered to the bosom of the lagoon.

PIEFACE IS HELD UP! Suddenly a sharp command to halt rang out, and as Pieface pulled hard on the rope and brought his vehicle to a stop, Dick and Frank Poiruan, shaking with laughter, stepped into the path!

Molly O'Rafferty, I cud smoke a dozen av the same!"
"Den makum it ten, and two more to fill up de dozen," said Pie. "But yo' mus' smokum all before ole Joey

yo' mus' smokum all before ole Joey returns!

"Dat am only de fus' instaluments," he said, laying his black hand on Grimwade's shoulder. "Dere am more to come when we hab done a littlum work."

The Irishman squared his fine shoulders.

"Work! I can work from sun up to sundown, wid wan av these between my teeth," he said, biting off the end of one of Joe's cigars and lighting it. "Heavin rest O'Hara phwat ran away wid my Aunt O'Flaggerty, but this is indade the peace phwat passes all onderstanding."

"Good!" said Pie. closing the

peace phwat passes all onderstanding."
"Good!" said Pie, closing the store-room door and leading the way back to the deck. "Now, yo' gib me a hand. Swing dem davits inboard and lower de longboatum to de deck. Make her free an' den help me bringum de small dinghy from de boat deck to this yeah place."

It would have been quite impossible

"Now I gib yo' anudder dozen ob dem berry fine cigar, and wishum yo' good days," Pie announced, as he gathered up Bill Dawes' tools.

Leaving Ballyhooly surprised and supremely satisfied with his good fortune, Pie re-entered the cutter, tied the dirghy astern, and rowed away from the Defiance, with the carriage in tow. He had very little trouble in dragging the dinghy up the slope—the wheels ran smoothly, and very little jelting was produced owing to the soft nature of the ground.

The bottom of the boat Pie piled deep with dry ferns, arranged a number of cushions which he had taken from Joe's cabin in the stern, and halted only long enough to decorate the strange affair with trailing hibiscus blooms, scarlet salvias, pink orchids, and magnolia blossoms. Then freeing Bunjie, he passed the towing rope round the elephant's neck, and, seating himself in state, started out to make his peace with Joe Tremorne.

He had traversed scarcely a mile when ahead of him a sharp command to halt rang out, and from the under-growth on either side protruded two

gleaming rifle barrels. Pieface pulled hard on the rope and brought his vehicle to a stop. The parting of the bushes was preceded by a peal of merriment. Dick and Frank Polruan,

bushes was preceded by a peal of merriment. Dick and Frank Polruan, shaking with laughter, stepped into the path.

"Pie, you've made a mistake, my young friend," said Frank. "This isn't May Day. And what in the name of Jehoshaphat are you doing with that weird turnout?"

Pieface solemnly flicked Bunjie's large ears with the tassel-like flowers of a sugar-cane.

"Dis am de peace offerum for dat ole scoundrel ob a Joe," said the black boy, grinning. "He no ablum to walk, so I done gorn an' providum wid a nicy comfy carridge to ride in. Com' blong, I show yo'."

"I guess," interjected Dick, heaving ons long leg over the gunwale of the dinghy, "where Joe can ride, we can. Come along, Frankie boy, there's plenty of room for all three. Goe up, Bunjie; it will be nice to be home by dinner-time. Say, Frank," removing a sprig of trailing hibiscus and snapping it into two lengths, "we may as well arrive in triumph, like the Roman consuls of old. Wreathe this around your manly brow, lad, and help make a pretty picture."

Bunjie was accordingly whipped up into a lumbering trot, and twenty

Bunjie was accordingly whipped up into a lumbering trot, and twenty minutes later they made the camp. Their arrival was well timed, for Joe, chafing under his inability to get about at a moment when there was a great deal to be done, was giving everybody a more or less bad time.

"Darn this sock of mine which is too small for my foot and hurts rottenly," he said to Pengelley, as he made rather a ludicrous figure in his effort to hop round on one leg and a stick. "Whar are them byes; and why don't that fellow Pieface return with his efferlunt? I could ride on that."

"Jolly good idea, sir! Why

"Jolly good idea, sir! Why didn't you think of it before you sent him away," suggested Pengelley

"Jolly good idea, sir! Why didn't you think of it before you sent him away," suggested Pengelley respectfully.

"Think of it!" growled Joe, in a voice of thunder. "How can I think of everything for this blessed outfit? Haven't any of you got brains, or am I supposed to supply the lot for the entire party? Here, Hosken, and Rogers, hitch your slacks up and lend a land looking for Pieface. Master Dick and Frank won't find him in a month of Sundays. It needs men for this forest work. That's the worst of being clobbered up with a pack of byes what aren't any good to beast or man. Ho, but I'll never be able to move a yard this side of Christmas. What's that infernal row?"

Very quietly, but none the less quite audibly, three voices were singing in unison the opening bars of "See the Conquering Hero Comes!" only Dick persisted in using a paraphrased version which went something like this:

"' See the corn-curing Nero comes, To make old Joe amenable."

"Make me amenable!" snapped

"Make me amenable!" snapped the sailor, swinging round on his stick. "Well, I never!"—passing one hand over his eyes. "Am I really seeing things at last?"

"We're not things!" shouted Dick, jumping out and prostrating himself before the skipper. "We're the spirits of the wood—not the sort of spirits you like, Joe, but bringers of peace and goodwill to hoary-headed old ruffians like you! Behold in this contraption a peace-offering brought by the most honourable Pieface—to win your favour—the gift of a most noble chariot so that you can ride in state so long as your foot remains groggy. But I am empowered, most Horrible Joe, to offer the gift only on one condition—that you grant a free pardon unconditionally to Masters Pieface and Bunjie, and put them both back on the ship's payroll again!"

"For eber and eber and eber, and two days afterwards!" squeaked Pie, climbing out and tossing the improvised reins over the elephant's shoulders. "Here yo' are, Massa Joe, a carridge fit for a king. I help you in and dribe yo' round, but first ob all yo' gib de forgibeness to dat li'l elephants and me."

"Forgive you—eh?" mused Joe, glancing first at his bandaged foot and then at the boat on wheels. "I'm not so sure that I can."

"All ri'," replied Pie shortly. "It dean make no diff'rence to dis yah chilb. I wish you a bery goodmorniums, Massa Joe, and I go for one long ride myself. Gee up, Banjie; we doan want to hab no more to do wid dis rude ole fellah."

He strode off, his tall hat swaying at a perilous angle, and started to climb into the boat.

"Hi, there, I say—stop!" velled Joe, hobbling after him. "I didn't mean it, Pie. By the ghost of Vanderdecken, my hancestor, I didn't!" Pie, from his flower-embowered seat in the boat, looked down sternly on the old man.

"Joe, you am a wickedum ole man!" he said, frowning heavily. "But I gib vo' one more chance, and only one. Will yo', on your biggest oathum, swear for eber and eber to lub, honours, and obey dis li'l baby elephants, and to be nice, kind ole genelmans to dis child ob sin and darkness. Promisum, and I'll let yo' ride in my state coach."

Tremorne hesitated a moment, and a good-humoured twinkle began to creep back into his blue eyes.

"All right, Pie, you've won!" he said. "You've won a charter of freedom for Bunjie."

Joe Plans a Campaign.

"Joe's Juggernaut" was the disrespectful term thereafter applied by the boys to the conveyance which the quick-witted brains of Pieface had provided, and Joe's Juggernaut came as a godsend at a most critical time. For of one thing there could be no question. If the pirates holding the galleon, the ancient Spanish town, and one of the forts, were to be dealt with, it followed that constant communication must be established between the camp and the steamer lying at anchor on the lake.

To do this in his present condition would have been a practical impossibility so far as Tremorne was concerned; but scated comfortably in his state carriage, as Joe termed it, the said carriage being drawn by Punjie, with Pieface acting as mahout, the old sailor was enabled to travel in comfort down to the original landing-place and back again.

There was much to be done for.

original landing-place and back again.

There was much to be done, for, following on the grave news brought back by Frank, Joe had decided on nothing less than a bold and determined attack on the pirate strong-hold.

hold.

"We can't be sure of their numbers, or how strongly they are armed," he said to Frank on the first journey down to the lake; "but one thing is quite certain, we oughter strike a blow before the yacht returns. Mebbe, with luck, we may be in possession of the city before that ugly-looking craft shows up with her crew of bloodthirsty ruffians."

In none of their minds was there a

be in possession of the city before that ugly-looking craft shows up with her crew of bloodthirsty ruffians."

In none of their minds was there a shadow of doubt that the same hands which had pillaged and murdered on the Octoroon also manned the fast-steaming vessel that had put to sea early the previous morning.

"Wo're handicapped by reason of our own vessel being land-locked," Tremorne went on. "All the same, that's no excuse for standing by with folded arms. We can bring off as much gear as will be usable for land warfare, establish ourselves in one of the forts, provided we find one empty, and then, without a moment's warning, launch an attack on them."

"One thing we've got to be mighty careful about, and that is not to betray our presence by kicking up a row," said Frank. "There's only the range of hills and about four miles of forest between the lake and the lagoon, and an accidental rifleshot would turn the trick against us."

Joe quite appreciated the point.

"To tell the truth." he answered, "if it weren't so jolly important to make a move against those fellows in the galleon before the yacht's crew reinforces them, I should prefer to get this work done by night. As it is, when the time comes to establish ourselves among the old fortifications, everything will have to be done in the dark. However, I haven't got out all my plans yet, and the only thing that matters just now is to get guns and ammunition ashore."

It was lucky for at least one of the ship's company, Grimwade to wit, that Joe's hurt prevented him coming aboard the Defiance. Otherwise the skipper would have found this worthy, as did Dick and Frank when they clambered on to the deck, curled up in the shadow of the charthouse with a half-burned Flor de Naves projecting at an angle from his capacious mouth, and half a dozen stubends scattered around him.

"Crikey!" gasped Dick, staring down at the slumbering form. "Old Ballyhooly Grim has been boning the Old Man's cabagios! Here, Pie, do you know anything about this?"

Pieface looked at his

Published Every Monday

"Dar am some times, Massa Dick, when de wise man am him who asks no foolish questium. Dis am a time of de sort, and if yo' doan mind, we throw dese ends oberboard to feed de sharks. You savvy?"

Dick laughed and passed on, exchanging meaning glances with Frank. They worked the afternoon through, taking the Maxims and Nordenfeldts to pieces, stowing them in the whaler and the longboat, and loading the cutter to the gunwales with cases of ammunition.

With Harry Rawson in charge of one boat, and Dawe skippering another, in all eight trips were made to the landing-place, where the arms and munitions were put ashore.

It was now that Pieface, whom Dick had sent back with the first return party, proved to Joe, in a most practical fashion, the worth of his pet. It would have taken half a dozen able-bodied men a whole week to carry parts of machine-guns and cases of shells, weighing in all close upon a hundredweight, to the top of the ridge; but Bunjie performed the entire journey without the slightest show of fatigue inside two hours. Leaving Joe comfortably scated on the shore, Pie stacked the dinghy up with arms and ammunition, and, mounting the elephant's back, set gaily off.

This work went on till sundown,

disturbed tranquility. So far as they knew, there had been no communication between the men on board the 'galleon and those occupying the fort near the entrance of the narrows.

Towards seven o'clock Frank and his companions struck into the plantation, following the route he had taken with Dick nearly four days earlier, but, instead of entering the town, he bore away to the left until the old fortress wall barred further progress.

The Return of
"Bulldog" Holdfast!
Read his breathless adventures
NEXT MONDAY in
"The Men of Vengeanes!"
and tell ALL your pals to read
it too!

The boys, however, were prepared for this eventuality. Frank drew from beneath his coat a thin rope-ladder, fitted with stout iron hooks at one end. Those he cast over the top of the wall, drawing them ever the rough blocks of masonry until they held. Then, while Harry drew the ladder taut, he mounted, pistol in hand. Rawson followed after him. The ladder was dropped with its free end into the moat, and in this way they passed the outer bastions.

Their position was now a novel, if

explosive they had as yet no means of

explosive they had as yet no means of telling.

The night being very still, and dark clouds gathering in the west, which somewhat obscured the light of the moon, Frank decided on a quick return to acquaint Joe with their discovery. This was a good strategic move, for the instant Tremorne heard of it he ordered every man to load himself with a gun or ammunition, and to take it, under Frank's direction, to the castle.

Obvious, such a dangerous task could be carried out only very slowly and with much caution. In all it occupied four nights to arm and provision the fort, the daytime being spent resting under cover of the forest. By the time the last bag of flour and water-keg had been carried in, Joe was well enough to dispense with his chariot, and, though somewhat lame, to make the rendezvous on foot.

He had left behind on the top of the hill, a small observation-party, in

He had left behind on the top of the He had left behind on the top of the hill, a small observation-party, in charge of Pengelley, whose duty it would be to come to the rescue if a signal for assistance should be sent out. Two other men were left at the bivouac near the original landing-stage to keep guard over the boats in case it should be necessary to evacuate the castle, take to the forest, and fight a rearguard action till the lake was reached.

And all this while the adventurers.

young fisherman passed out of the castle door, dropped into the ditch, and, clambering up the steep side of the moat, struck across the flat ground which lay between them and their objective.

Cover there was in plenty—ruins of fallen masonry, disused sheds, and heaps of modern junk very similar to that which littered the quayside. Everything seemed in their favour, for when they came at length to the fortress, which bore, engraven in old Roman letters over its central portal, the cryptic title of Plattsforma do los Artilleros, they found the door unguarded, and a flight of steps leading into the grim interior.

At the top of the steps tiny pencils of light streamed into the darkness. These rather puzzled Dick at first, until he realised that they came through an old wooden door, cracked and eaten away in places by worm.

Leaving Rogers on guard at the bottom, he went forward on hands and knees, and, applying his eye to a hole, looked through. This is what he saw. A long room of four stone walls, high and vaulted, with groined arches supported by magnificently carved pillars of pale green marble. About the floor wonderful pieces of old-fashioned mahogany and teak furniture, clearly loot taken from the house of a rich merchant in the old Spanish town.

A heavy wooden table occupied the centre of the stone floor, and above this were ground some eighteen or

old-fashioned mahogany and teak furniture, clearly loot taken from the house of a rich merchant in the old Spanish town.

A heavy wooden table occupied the centre of the stone floor, and above this were grouped some eighteen or twenty men, all in seafaring garb, three of them wearing the distinctive gold braid and gilt buttons of officers of the Merchant Service.

An open armoire at the far end of the room showed a number of short-barrelled rifles, a pile of heavy Service rovolvers, and boxes of cartridges.

At the moment of Dick's arrival so close to the scene, a heated argument was going on. It was not possible to gather all that was said, but very little escaped the watcher.

Said an elderly man whose distinctive features were a long grey beard and deep-sunk, picroing eyes on either side of an immense hooked nose:

"I favour the use of picric acid because it produces an easily graduated explosion. The chief has asked for bombs, and it is my work to supply them. This one here, now—he picked up a shiny black box—"contains the new explosive. By means of the mechanism it can be set to go off at one hour, two hours, ten or twenty, according to the position of the pointer on the clock face. I guarantee that one of those, placed in a good position, will blow the biggest ship out of the water."

"But don't you see, professor," insisted one of the men in officer's uniform, "the very thing which the chief wants is not to blow a vessel out of the water. In your enthusiasm you are producing too-high-powered explosives. We need, and must have, the small machines such as you have previously made—machines whic will explode on time, but do little more than blow a hole through an ordinary steel plate. So long as we make sufficient opening in a ship's side for water to get in, the vessel will soon fill and go down without leaving masses of wreckage floating round. Now do you see what I am driving at?"

If the professor "saw," he certainly did not fail to show his disappointment.

"I have wasted much time and much labour," he

If the professor "saw," he certainly did not fail to show his disappointment.

"I have wasted much time and much labour," he said testily. "Here in the room below, I have been working for nearly a fortnight making these immensely powerful infernalmachines, and now you tell me they are no good. It is—"

Dick waited to hear no more, but drew silently back, and joined Rogers, waiting in the darkness by the door.

"I say, old chap," he said in an excited whisper, "I've just discovered something. Somewhere below that room upstairs is another, filled with high-explosive infernal-machines. If we can only lay our hands on them, we can take this place and every man inside it without any fighting. What do you say? Will you take the risk?"

Rogers laughed, and nodded briskly.

"Risk! I'll risk anything. Just you lead the way, Master Richard. Show me what to do, and I'll follow you anywhere!"

"Right!" said Dick, whipping an automatic from his pocket. "I can see the door just along there. We'll either capture the whole bag of tricks, or blow the fort to smithereens!"

(Will Dick Polruan and his companion succeed in capturing the the armed yacht should return before the time was ripe to fall on their enemies.

At last Hawke announced that everything had been done in readiness for an attack. The news came at nightfall on the twelfth day after landing on the island.

"Now," said Joe, seated in one of the cid stone vaults beneath the powder-store, "I call for volunteers to go with me to discover the strength of the garrison on the Narrows Fort."

Instantly there was a universal show of hands, and a good deal of argument and disagreement. To settle the matter amicably, lots were drawn. To his chagrin, Joe found himself out of the running altogether, the winning numbers falling to Dick Polruan and young Rogers.

Precisely at ten o'clock, with an hour to spare before moonrise, and only faint streamers of ghostly light in the southern sky, Dick and the received and the southern sky, Dick and the remaining the properties. The same of the ripe of the running altogether, the winning numbers falling to Dick Polruan and young Rogers.

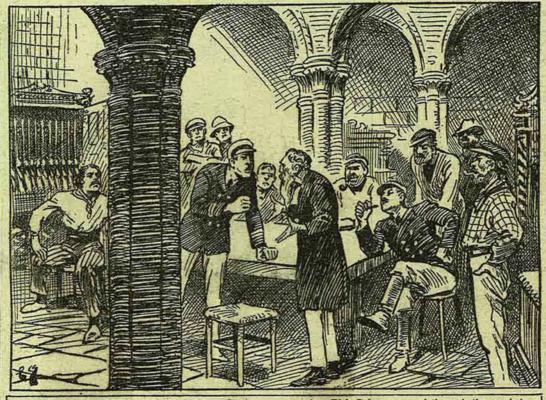
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(Will Dick Polruan and his companion succeed in capturing the pirates' stronghold? On no account must you miss next Monday's long instalment of this ripping tale. And don't forget to introduce the Bors' FRIEND to all your pals.)



At the moment when Bick Polruan peered through the crack in the door into the fortress room, a heated argument was going on among the pirates! THE PIRATES' STRONGHOLD!

and right through the following day, by which time the clearing on the lake side of the range strongly resembled an armed camp. They had brought up altogether three Maxims, two Nordenfeldts, a three-pounder quick-firer, over forty rifles, and close on forty thousand rounds of ammunition—truly, as Joe afterwards confessed, an achievement due almost entirely to Pieface and the young elephant.

The third day was passed in denuding the Defiance of stores and barrels of water, although large quantities of the latter were hardly essential, as Joe felt certain that every fort would be provided with its own water supply.

Each took a long rest throughout that night, and the whole of the next day, until sundown. Then, dividing his forces into two, Joe topped the ridge, still keeping his men well in the shelter of the forest, and leaving one section to keep the way clear for a possible retreat, led the other in the direction of the town. A halt was called within three hundred yards of the deserted plantations, and from this point as a base, as soon as the moon came up, Frank and Harry were sent forward to recompitre.

It irked Joe dreadful to have to stay behind when desperate measures

were sent forward to recompoitre.

It irked Joe dreadful to have to stay behind when desperate measures were afoot, but it was a matter of striking swiftly, in the hope of achieving victory before the odds strengthened against them.

So far, it was plain their presence on the island was unsuspected, for the whole place was in a state of un-

a precarious one. They were enclosed by a massive, encircling bulwark of stone some twenty feet high, extending in all for a distance of nearly a mile and a half.

Within the wall were four other forts, beside the one guarding the narrows and the castle which they had noted on their first survey. It was towards this latter building that Frank and Harry directed their steps, being halted temporarily by the twenty-feet deep moat, which, though dry, was difficult to get over. There was but one means of entry, a single door set in the middle of a stout wall and leading to the castle proper.

To their surprise, this door gave without the necessity for force, and, mounting between thirty and forty steps, they came to a platform of solid masoury, on which were mounted eleven old-fashioned pieces of cannon, each of which could be turned on to the town below.

"Here's something the silly beggars haven't allowed for," whispered Frank, drawing his chum to one of the embrasures from which they commanded a view of the city, the quayside, and the lagoon where the galleon rode. "We've only got to get our shooters up here to command the whole blessed show!"

From the top of the artificial mound they descended to a storehouse built between solid walls, and here they discovered immense barrels of gunpowder; although whether serviceable or not it was impossible to tell. One or two of the casks had been broken, and the black grains were scattered about the floor, but of what quality as an arf, featuring that popular char

securely hidden within a mile of the fort at the entrance to the narrows, had seen scarcely anything of their enemies. Once or twice there had been signs of life in the neighbourhood of the large sheds, with their flambuoyant hoarding title to fame as a film company, and on three occasions a small party had put off in the launch to visit the galleon.

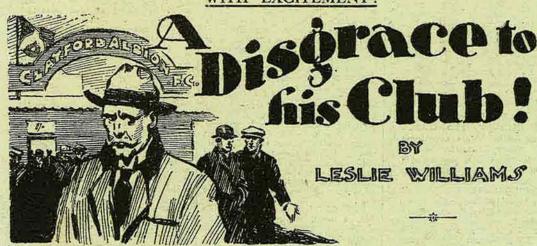
Through long hours of each day, while preparations went steadily on below him, Joe would be stretched full length in the shelter of the embrasured wall, watching through his glass the entrance to the lagoon and the vast stretch of sparkling ocean beyond. His one fear always was lest the armed yacht should return before the time was ripe to fall on their enemies.

At last Hawke announced that

RIPPING COMPLETE FOOTBALL STORY-CRAMMED

Published Every Monday

WITH EXCITEMENT!



To make certain that his club win their matches, Daniel Gill, a director of Clayford Albion F.C., "plays it low," but when the Barchester Rovers match comes off the Albion F.C., tables are turned on him with a vengeance!

The 1st Chapter.

The 1st Chapter.
Trouble Brewing.

"I'll be even with them yet!"
Fred Reid, the ex-centre-forward of the Barchester Rovers Football Club, growled out the words as he left the board-room. He had been dismissed altogether from his employment with the club, after an assault on young Jack Kerr, who had taken his place as leader of the attack.

"You were suspended for foul play a few days ago," the chairman had told him sternly. "You have disregarded that warning, and you have aggravated your offence by this unprovoked assault. The club has no further use for your services."

Reid, furious with anger, went out of the ground and directed his steps towards the lowest part of the town. Here he turned down an alley and knocked at the door of a tumble-down house.

A tall man with a sear genes the

down house.

A tall man, with a scar across the cheek, and a very surly, forbidding countenance, opened the door. Reid went in, and the two worthies were soon deep in conversation.

"So you're thrown out," said Robert James, with something like a chuckle. "What are you going to do now?"

"So you're thrown out," said Robert James, with something like a chuckle. "What are you going to do now?"

"Get my own back!" retorted Reid angrily. "That's my first job, and you must help me!"

"That's all very well. But what do I get out of it?" objected his companion.

"You help me in this business, and I'll stand in with you in future. There are plenty of jobs in your line where you want two," replied Reid.

"Look here, though," said Robert James. "Your revenge can wait for a day or two. I've a little affair of my own to-morrow night."

"What's that?" inquired Reid curiously.

"You know old Dan Gill, the Clayford Albion director, I suppose?"

"I've seen him," admitted the excentre-forward, grinning.

For Mr. Daniel Gill had not the best of reputations in the football world. He was supposed to bet on the results of games, and was even rumoured to have been concerned in cases of bribing players to arrange matches. But his shady transactions were so cunningly managed that nothing had ever been brought home were so cunningly managed that nothing had ever been brought home

to him.

"Well," continued James, "old Gill has a big house on the outskirts of Clayford, and he's got a fine service of plate."

"And you are after the plate, no doubt," muttered Reid.

"Just so, old chap. I know exactly where he keeps it, and if you come along with me to-morrow evening, when the old boy is due at a dinner, the silver is ours!"

Fred Reid hesitated. Rascal as he

the silver is ours!"

Fred Reid hesitated. Rascal as he was—as he had proved himself to be on the football field and off it—he did not much relish the idea of burglary. But he saw no way of earning his living by honest means. No football club would employ him after the scandal he had caused at Barchester, even if the Football Association did not debar him permanently from the game, a course which would probably be taken very soon. So finally he agreed to the proposal of his cracksman friend. living by honest means. No football club would employ him after the scandal he had caused at Barchester, even if the Football Association did not debar him permanently from the game, a course which would probably be taken very soon. So finally he agreed to the proposal of his cracksman friend.

The next day saw the two men at Barchester station, en route for Clayford, a large manufacturing town some fifty miles away. The afternoon was dark and foggy, much to

the delight of Robert James, who rejoiced in conditions so favourable to his netarious schemes.

In the gloom of the evening the two fellows from Barchester were outside the splendid house in which lived Daniel Gill, stockbroker, director of the Clayford Albion Football Club, president of various societies in the town, and—over and above all—rogue!

They reconnoitred the mansion on all sides, and, lurking up a side street, they saw Mr. Gill drive off in his car early in the evening.

At eleven o'clock they were in the garden, ready to start operations, and Robert James, as the old hand, took command.

He set to work very carefully on a

Robert James, as the old hand, took command.

He set to work very carefully on a window, and in a few minutes the two burglars stood inside the house, apparently without raising the slightest alarm. They were in the library, and James, who knew all about the interior of the building, led the way across the room.

"Here we are," he whispered.
"The safe's here, behind the bookcase. We'll just take out this row of books, and then we can get to work on the job," he continued, producing a dark lantern from his pocket, "Just see that the door's locked. Fred," he concluded.

Reid tiptoed across the room to the

Fred," he concluded.

Reid tiptoed across the room to the door, found the key, and tunned it softly in the lock. Now that they felt safe from interruption the two fellows began to work.

The row of books was soon removed, and they saw that a piece of the woodwork had been cut out of the back of the bookease, and in the wall behind appeared the door of the safe.

wall behind appeared the door of the safe.

"Good idea, that!" muttered Fred Reid admiringly.

"Yes, a very good idea! Very smart indeed, gentlemen!" said a voice sarcastically, and the library was suddenly flooded with light.

James and Reid turned in utter astonishment. There, by the door, stood Mr. Daniel Gill himself, in his hand a revolver.

astonishment. There, by the door, stood Mr. Daniel Gill himself, in his hand a revolver.

"Hands up, my friends," he remarked suggestively.

The two rascals, with great reluctance, complied with the request.

"Sit down," said Mr. Gill. "I want a few words with you. Oh, no, keep your hands up," he chuckled, "or you will get hurt!"

Very gingerly, holding their hands above their heads, the two crestfallen burglars sat down, wondering what the director meant to do with them.

Mr. Daniel Gill had returned early, and, hearing a slight sound in the library, he had determined to investigate it. He tried the door cautiously, and, finding it locked, had gone quietly round to the window, which James had left ajar lest a hurried retreat should become necessary.

Entering by the window, the Clay-

necessary.

Entering by the window, the Clayford director had stolen across the room unheard, and switched on the

Robert James stared open-monthed at the last words. Fred Reid, in spite of himself, could not help grinning.

"You've got us, Mr. Gill," said James at length. "Send for the cops, and have done with it!"

"Not so fast! Not so fast friend," replied the director.

The 2nd Chanter. Trapped!

"Well, old chap, I think I'll get

"Well, old chap, I think I'll get ready."

It was some three weeks after the attempt of Robert James and Fred Reid to steal Mr. Daniel Gill's plate, and Jack Kerr, the young centreforward of Barchester Rovers, was standing in the front room of the house in which he lodged with his friend, Jim Brown, the burly centrehalf of the team.

Jim looked up from the letter ne was writing.

"Right, Jack. I'll just finish this letter, and then I'll come along," he replied.

The two professionals were due at the station at twelve o'clock to meet the rest of the team, for the League game with the Albion was to be played that afternoon at Clayford.

"By the way, Jack, have you heard that strange yarn about Clayford Albion?" asked Jim as they made their way along the street.

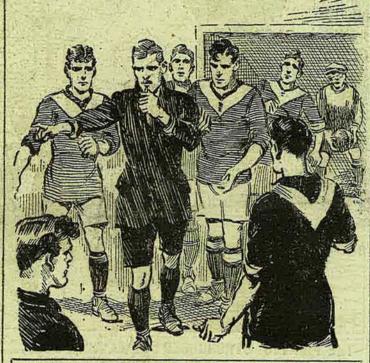
"No—nothing special. I see they have started to win lately, that's all," replied Jack, without much interest.

"Well, when they beat Canford United last week, three of the United's team didn't turn up until half-time," remarked Jim.

"Great Scott! I noticed by the reports that the United had a weak team out," replied Jack surprisedly.

"They have kept it very dark," continued Jim, "but there's a rumour flying about to the effect that there was foul play."

"You don't say so!" exclaimed his



OUESTIONING THE REFEREE'S DECISION! The referee rounded by a gesticulating mob of players, the Rovers claiming that the ball had crossed the goal-line, the Albien protesting furiously that it had not. But the official, who had been close up with the play, pointed without a moment's hesitation to the middle of the pitch. It was a goal!

see, of course, that there is a bell handy, if you should prove obstinate in your views concerning a little scheme I am about to put before you. But you will find it best to assist me, I think."

"What do you mean, guv'nor?" asked James, for Reid was too much overcome by the collapse of his first attempt at burglary to be able to say a word.

attempt at burglary to be able to say a word.

"I require your assistance in a little idea I have decided to carry out—an idea which will considerably improve the position of the Albion in the League," continued Mr. Gill.

At the director's last words, Fred Reid had sat up suddenly.

"If your plan means doing any harm to the Rovers, I'm on!" he exclaimed eagerly.

"Not so loud, my dear fellow!" suggested Mr. Gill. "Yes, the scheme does involve certain misfortunes to the Rovers, and to various other teams," he continued.

And he outlined a plan for the following Saturday, when the Albion were to play Selsdon Athletic. The faces of the listeners brightened, and presently they departed, as they had come, by the window, chuckling to themselves as they thought of the consternation there would be in the camp of the Albion's opponents on the afternoon of the match!

to be found in the BOYS' I

companion. "I thought you meant the fellows had simply missed their train."

"Not a bit of it! Some chap offered them a lift in his motor-car, and, like fools, they accepted. The car broke down miles from anywhere, and the boys think it was a deliberate plot to keep them away. But I suppose they can't prove it."

"My hat!" exclaimed Jack.

"Yes, and there's more yet. When the Albion played Selsdon Athletic three weeks ago, two of the Athletic chaps were run down by a car—the same car. I dare say—and injured just before the game," went on Jim.

"I remember that. It seems very

"I remember that. It seems very neer. Have they traced the car?" queer. Have they traced the call "I haven't heard, and I expect the number was faked, anyhow," said

Jim. "Sure thing!" replied Jack Kerr:
"Do you think the Albion are in

this?"
"Shouldn't think so. They have

"Shouldn't think so. They have always had a good reputation for sportsmanship. But I suppose the F. A. will investigate the matter."
"Well," laughed young Kerr, "we must look out this afternoon. They might get us next."

"The Brown chuskled at the idea.

we're meeting all the other fellows there!"

But Jim Brown would not have been so cocksure if he had noticed that he and Jack were being watched by Robert James on the other side of the street. Unfortunately, neither of the professionals knew the cracksman by sight, nor were they aware of his connection with Fred Reid. James went on ahead of them, turned down Symond's Lane, which, as he well knew, was their usual way to the station, and by the time the two footballers had reached the corner he had disappeared from view.

Symond's Lane was a narrow turn-

Symond's Lane was a narrow turning, with high walls on either side, except at one spot where there was an old house, long empty and in bad repair. The two Rovers took their accustomed short cut, and as they neared the house their conversation was interrupted in unexpected fashion.

"Help, help!" called a voice.
They stopped short, and looked up
nd down. There was no one in

sight. "Hear that, Jim?" cried Jack

excitedly.

"Sounds like a child's voice somewhere. But where on earth is it?" replied Jim, glancing round again.

"Help, help!"

Once more came the pitiful cry.

"Must be in that house!" exclaimed Jack Kerr. "Come on,

And Jack rushed off towards the do

door.

The two fellows found the house apparently empty. They searched it in vain from top to bottom, and were about to go out when the cry sounded again, seemingly beneath their feet as they stood in the passage.

"That's down below!" shouted Jack. "There must be a cellar somewhere. Look! Here's a door we missed!"

He rushed forward as he spoke, and

missed!"

He rushed forward as he spoke, and opened a door concealed in a dark corner. Sure enough, a flight of steps appeared to lead downwards.

"I'm going down, Jim!" cried Jack, in great excitement. "Coming?" And he began to descend the steps.

mg? And he began to descend the steps,
The cellars under the old house were very extensive. Jack produced an electric torch, for there was no light away from the foot of the steps. They looked carefully through the cellars, but found no one, and little did they guess that two men were watching them closely from a secret hiding-place in the first cellar.

"Faure this!" settlessed Jack as

"Funny, this!" muttered Jack, as they loosed round the last cellar and found it empty.
"Come on, old chap, or we'll lose our train!" urged Jim, And they turned back to climb the stairs.

The cellars were in three divisions. They passed through the opening into the middle one, and Jack turned his torch to light Jim past the gap into the first. Jim went forward, and then suddenly stopped.

"Where the dickens is the opening?" he shouted. "Look, Jack! There's a door here!"

Jack Kerr looked, and there, much to his surprise, he saw a door—a massive wooden one, which blocked their way!

way!

"What on earth is this?" he exclaimed. "There wasn't any door there when we came in!"

"It's a trap, Jack, and we've walked into it!" growled Jim angrily.

"Well we'll soon walk out," re-

mto it!" growled Jim angrily.

"Well, we'll soon walk out," replied Jack coolly, examining the mysterious door as he spoke.

"We can't open it from this side, I'm sure," he went on. "It's a sliding door, you see, inside the first cellar, and someone must have pushed it along while we were in there at the back."

"I didn't hear a sound all the time," objected Jim, in a puzzled

"Nor did I. The wheels and grooves have been well oiled, no doubt. What fools we were not to notice the blessed door as we can

"Someone must have known we always come down Symond's Lane to the station," remarked Jim thought-

the station," remarked Jim thoughtfully.

"Yes. Some fellow was hiding in the house of course, and we didn't spot him. Smart chaps, these Clayford plotters!"

"We shall not play for the Rovers to-day, that's evident," said Jim dolefully.

"Don't be so beastly pessimistic, old son!" retorted the young centreforward cheerfully. "If we lose the

might get us next."

Jim Brown chuckled at the idea.

"Nonsense!" he cried. "We are half-way to the station already, and son!" retorted the young centre-forward cheerfully. "If we lose the first train, there's a special for supporters at twelve-forty, so we'll just

get out and catch that. Come on!
Let's try to break the thing down!"
The two foctballers, both sturdy, well-built fellows, hurled themselves several times against the door, but in vain, for it did not move an inch.
"It's barred on the other side, I suppose," said Jack Kerr at last. "Let's prospect a bit. I'll switch off, and we might see a gleam of light comewhere!"

Jack switched off his torch, and when their eyes had become used to the darkness, the two friends looked cagerly around. But not a ray of light was visible anywhere. They tried the further cellar with the same result.

"How about a shout?" suggested Jim Brown. "Somebody in the lane might hear us."

"I doubt it," said Jack. "We'll try, if you like, but you know how few people come this way."

They shouted loudly several times, but there was no sound in reply.

"No good, I'm afraid," said Jack at last, glancing round the cellar as he spoke. Suddenly he rushed over to a corner, where he had caught sight of a heap of old tools.

"Here's a pickaxe!" he exclaimed joyfully. "Now we can break down that door or make a hole in the wall near it!"

And they returned hastily to the mysterious door where they decided.

that door or make a hole in the wall near it!"

And they returned hastily to the mysterious door, where they decided, after some discussion, to break a hole in the brickwork. They set to work manfully to win their freedom, in spite of the bits of brick and mortar which were soon flying round them, and the clouds of choking dust in which they were enveloped. They soon succeeded in making a small hole right through the wall, but a considerable time had elapsed before they had enlarged it sufficiently for Jack Kerr to crawl out. But at last, grimed with dirt and dust, he forced his way through, ran to the foot of the stairs, and listened. Everything was still. Their captor had evidently gone away as soon as the two fellows were safely entrapped, and Jack called to his friend to follow him.

"It's nearly one o'clock!" exclaimed Jim Brown; "and there's no train now till three-fifteen!"

"Go round to Harry Wilson, in the High Street and ask him to take us

"Go round to Harry Wilson, in the High Street, and ask him to take us over in his car. Come back here with him to pick me up!" replied Jack. "I'm going to see if I can find any dues to this business in this house!"

dues to this business in this house!"

Jim hesitated a moment, but guessing that Jack was safe enough now, he dashed up the stairs and set off at a run. He saw nobody in Symond's Lane, but when he reached the High Street, he caused quite a sensation, for his appearance, like Jack's was most disreputable. He took no notice, however, even when someone called him by name, but rushed in frantic haste to Harry Wilson's house.

The young engineer had gone out in

him by name, but rushed in frantic haste to Harry Wilson's house.

The young engineer had gone out in his car five minutes before? Jim Brown did not know what to do. He went back, however, to Symend's Lane, where he saw Jack Kerr comizg along, carrying the two bags.

"Where's the car, Jim?" shouted Jack, as he came up.

"Harry's out. I just missed him. He has gone over to Standerton this afternoon, so they told me at the house," was the reply, "What's to be done now?"

"Let's try the station—" began Jack, but Jim cut him short.

"There's no train—unless they make up a special for us."

The idea was worth trying, and the two fellows were soon at Barchester Station, where they saw Mr. Herbert, the genial stationmaster, and put the matter to him.

"I'm very sorry," said the official, "but I can't give you a special, though, as you say, the club would pay for it. But I have no spare engine here, and by the time I could get one sent down it would be halfpast two. Can't you get a car somewhere?" he asked

"We have tried one friend of mine,

get one sent down it would be halfpast two Car't you get a car somewhere?" he asked

"We have tried one friend of mine,
but he was out," replied Jack. "We
must go and hire one, I suppose.
Come along, Jim!"

"Wait a minute!" suddenly exclaimed the stationmaster. "Why
not take the one-fifteen express to
Standerton—it's due in five minutes—
and then take a car from there?"
He drew a map towards him, and
went on:

He drew a map towards him, and went on:

"You see, Standerton is on a different line, but it's only twenty miles across country from there to Clayford, and the express is timed to reach Standerton at two, so you would have plenty of time."

"Jolly good idea, Mr. Herbert!" said the two professionals. "Thanks very much! That will be just the thing!"

"Oh, there's one thing you will be good enough to do for us, perhaps?" remarked Jack Kerr. "Will you send a telegram to our manager, Mr. Pain, to say we are on the way, and will be there before the kick-off? He'll be on the Clayford ground now, I expect, and he must be worried about us."

"Certainly!" said Mr. Herbert.
"I'll see to that for you!"
"Express for Standerton and Birmingham! Standerton first stop!"
The porters were shouting the words as the two Rovers ran down the stairs to the platform, and in another moment the train steamed in.

moment the train steamed in.

Finding an empty carriage, the two fellows entered and sat down. Punctually to the minute the train was off and flying along at a good pace.

"Well, Jack, did you find any clues?" asked Jim, after a while.

Jack Kerr grinned.

"See this!" he exclaimed, taking a small object from his pocket. "I found this in the back room. There was nothing else anywhere in the house, and our bags were just where we left them in the front room."

Jim Brown took the small knife which Jack handed to him, and examined it attentively.

"I have it!" he exclaimed suddenly. "This is Fred Reid's knife! I've seen him with it once or twice.

THE BOYS' FRIEND

at Clayford this afternoon for the league match."

"Well, we're trying to get there," replied Jim. And he explained how it was that they had made such an unexpected appearance on the Birmingham express.

"But what's up here?" he went on.
"We are in a hurry to get to.

"We are in a hurry to get to Standerton, so as to get a car from

Standerton, so as to get a car from there."

"Here comes my mate!" exclaimed the driver, as the guard, who had been up to the next signal-box for news, came along. "What's wrong, Alf?"

"Goods train ahead broken down. That's the smoke of it we can see. Three trucks off the line. Breakdown gang coming from Standerton," said the guard.

Jim Brown and Jack Kerr gasped.

"That means we'll be here for an hour or more, I expect," remarked the driver.

the driver.

Jim Brown glanced around. Some way off he noticed a church spire through the trees at the side of the

through the trees at the side of the line.

"Village over there, I see," he said hopefully. "Let's go and try to get a motor, Jack."

The two professionals climbed the fence and made their way across some fields to the little village of Ebbesford. Here they looked about. There were a few small cottages, a church,

In a mile or two they came out of the lane into a main road, and the driver turned to the impatient Rovers.

"This be the road to Standerton," he remarked. "It be only eight miles from here."

"This won't do at all, Jim!" muttered Jack Kerr. "I'm going to stop the first motor I see," he continued, addressing the farmer, "so pull up.

tinued, addressing the farmer, "so pull up.

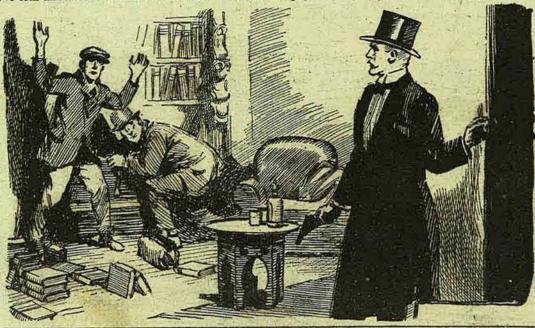
"Here comes one! New for it!" he shouted, after a minute or two. And he ran out into the middle of the road, in the path of the oncoming car, waving his arms frantically in the air. The motorist slackened his speed a trifle, but made no attempt to stop. Instead, a furious voice yelled from the car for Jack to get out of the way. Just in time, and only just, he jumped aside, and the motor passed on and vanished round a corner.

"Surly brutes!" growled Jack angrily. "I'll try again, though, and perhaps the next one will stop!"

In a few minutes a big grey car hove in sight. Jack repeated his frantic signals, and this time with

The car pulled up, and the driver leaned forward to ask what was the

"What's wrong?" he began; but he was interrupted by a wild howl of joy from the two friends.



CAUCHT! Suddenly the library was flooded with light and James and Reid turned in utter astonlehment to

It's got a bit chipped out of the blade, 1

"Then we've something really definite to go on now," said Jack, "and Reid is our man."

The train was rattling along merrily, and Jim drew out his watch.

"Quarter to two," he remarked.

"Soon be there, old chap!"

"Did you say Harry had gone to Standerton, Jim?" inquired Jack. "Yes. We might find him there and get him to take us on, if we have any luck," answered Jim.

any luck," answered Jim.

But any luck—luck of the good variety—which was to come the way of the two Rovers that day was not due to meet them yet! They were by no means at the end of their troubles, though the next misfortune which befell them was a pure accident, in no way connected with the Clayford mystery.

no way connected with the Clayford mystery.

"My word, we are going!" said Jack Kerr, looking out of the carriage window at the countryside, which seemed to fly past them at a tremendous pace.

And, indeed, the speed of the train, now on a down gradient, was terrific! Soon they reached the level, and the train slowed down a trifle. Suddenly the brakes began to grind, the pace slackened, the express crawled along for a little way, the whistle going furiously, and finally stopped.

"Dash it!" exclaimed Jim Brown.

"What's up now?"

He poked his head out of the window, and saw that the signals were at danger. A long way ahead he could see some smoke. The two fellows waited for a minute or so, fidgeting and dancing about with impatience, and at last they got out and walked up to the engine.

The driver happened to be a Bar-

The driver happened to be a Bar-chester man, and a keen supporter of the Rovers. He knew them at once. "Why, great Scott!" he exclaimed, in amazement. "What on earth are you doing here? Thought you were

and one tiny general shop, and that seemed to be all.

It looked as though the eventful journey of Jack Kerr and Jim Brown had at last come to an end, for there was apparently no prospect of obtaining a conveyance in this remote village, and their hopes of donning the familiar shirts of the Rovers in the afternoon's game at Clayford seemed to have vanished finally into thin air.

The 3rd Chapter. Not an Inch to Spare.

The 3rd Chapter.

Not an Inch to Spare.

"Lively spot, this, Jim!" said Jack, grinning in spite of their awkward predicament.

"Never seen a motor-car in their lives, from the look of it!" growled Jim, in great disgust.

They went into the little shop and asked where they could hire a car.

"A moty-car you wanted, was it, master? There bain't one in the village, and we never do see one of they nasty-smelling things in Ebbesford, that we doesn't!" answered the old dame who kept the village store.

"Well, we want to get to Standerton as soon as we can—" began Jack impatiently, when a shrill voice broke in upon his words.

"You be a wanting to go to Standerton, guv'nor? My father, he have got a pony and trap, and he'll take you, I 'spects."

They turned, and saw a small urchin of ten, who ran off forthwith to fetch his father. In a few minutes they had made a bargain, and were rolling along the country lanes behind what seemed the most ancient animal that ever walked on four logs.

"Hardly a Derby winner, this horse of yours, is he?" said Jack, turning to the farmer who drove. "Can't you get him to put on the steam a bit?"

"He won't go any faster than he be a going now, that he won't?" was the

"He won't go any faster than he be a going now, that he won't!" was the reply. "He ain't so young as he was, mister!"

"Harry Wilson, by all that's cky!" screamed Jack. "You're st the man we want!" "What on earth do you mean?"

asked the young engineer, surveying in great astonishment the disreput-able figures before him.

asked the young engineer, surveying in great astonishment the disreputable figures before him.

"Take us to Standerton—quick!" shouted Jack. "We'll tell you all about it as we go. Hop in, Jim! Oh, what luck!"

"You seem to have fallen into it properly to-day," said Harry, when Jack's tale was finished. "Lucky you found me, though. I'll put yoù on the Clayford ground by three o'clock, right enough! There's a little bit of business I must do in Standerton—that's why I'm here—but it won't take more than five minutes."

Harry Wilson stopped in the market-place of Standerton, and went into an office, while his friends waited impatiently outside. In five minutes he came out, and the town-hall clock was striking half-past two as he set the car in motion again.

"We are well out of the wood now, Jim, old chap!" said Jack Kerr cheerfully, as the car threaded slowly through the busy streets of the town.

"By the way, what has become of Fred Reid these last few weeks?" he continued. "I haven't seen or heard anything of him since he was sacked."

"He's left the town, I believe," was the reply. "Perhaps he's gone to Clayford. He used to play for the Albion, you know, until he was transferred to us three years ago. Two thousand pounds the directors paid, and a rotten bargain it was, for he never made good. He's a bad egg—always was?"

"I say, Harry's going the pace rather, isn't he?" exclaimed Jack, as they tore down a hill and began to breast a long slope ahead.

They had seen few vehicles, so far; but now, all in a moment, they found themselves in the most imminent danger.

**Xt Monday in "The Men of

They had reached the top of the They had reached the top of the slope, and were going again downhill. In turning a sharp corner they suddenly saw a big farm-wagon travelling in the direction of Clayford. It seemed to occupy the middle of the road, and Harry sounded his hooter repeatedly; but the driver was apparently either deaf or obstinate, for he made no effort to pull his clumsy vehicle in to the side of the road. Harry calculated the distance with his eye, and swept out to the right in an endeavour to pass the obstruction. obstruction.

right in an endeavour to pass the obstruction.

There was barely room, and the off-wheels of the car were on the edge of a deep ditch on the side of the road as they came alongside the wagon. There was a rasping sound as the car scraped by, for a projecting bit of wood had left a deep scratch all along the body of the motor. But Harry Wilson took no notice. All he cared for was that they had got past without accident, and he drove on down the hill harder than ever, while the stolid yokel, who had deliberately tried to block the way of "that there dratted motor," gaped with astonishment after the flying car.

"Narrow shave, that!" exclaimed Jack. "Harry's done his car a bit of damage, too! Lucky there was nothing coming the other way!"

"Let me see, we cross the railway somewhere, don't we?" asked Jim presently.

"Yes, at Norton Junction—a mile

"Let me see, we cross the railway somewhere, don't we?" asked Jim presently.

"Yes, at Norton Junction—a mile or two on. It's a level-crossing at the foot of a hill, and a very awkward place, too. I only hope the gates will be open, or we shall lose several precious minutes there," rejoined Jack, in a thoughtful tone.

The car breasted another long hill, and as they reached the top a grand view opened before their eyes. Far away over the plain were the tall chimneys and spires of their goal—the big town of Clayford—while just beneath them, at the foot of a steep descent, was Norton Junction, with its level-crossing.

Jack Kerr held his breath as they gathered speed on the downward slope. Harry, crouching over the wheel, with his eyes glued on the road ahead, made no sign as the car plunged into the valley.

"Look—look!" screamed Jim Brown frantically, leaning forward to attract the driver's attention. "Look, Harry, there's a train over on tho right, just coming in to Norton!"

The young engineer glanced at the trail of smoke which marked the oncoming train, but he did not slacken speed in the least. He turned the last corner on the hill, and the level-crossing gates came into sight a couple of hundred yards away, still open.

"Stop—stop! It's too late to get."

open.
"Stop—stop! It's too late to get through!" cried Jim, in horror; for he heard the warning bell beginning to ring.
"We'll just do it!" muttered Harry Wilson; and they seemed to leap forwards faster than ever towards the rates.

wards faster than ever towards the gates.

The gates were on the move as the car swept down on them. The two footballers were paralysed with terror, but Harry seemed to have no doubts. On they went, and the signalman in his cabin was horrified to see, as he pulled the lever to close the gates of the crossing, a big, grey motor-car racing furiously down the road towards him. He shouted a frantic warning, and as he reversed the lever to check the gates the car was through the first pair and on the rails. Just in time the further gates stopped swinging, and the reckless motorists were past, and had vanished in a cloud of dust.

"What fools!" muttered the railwayman, wiping the perspiration from his brow as he allowed the gates to close. "Narrowest shave I've ever seen!"

And indeed, the car had passed the

And, indeed, the car had passed the gates with barely an inch to spare!

The 4th Chapter. Unmasked!

Unmasked!

Mr. Daniel Gill, the rascally director of the Clayford Albion Football Club, sat in the stand that afternoon in a very pleasant frame of mind. His fellow-directors, with whom he was chatting quite calmly, had no suspicion of his cunning plots, for they were all good fellows and true sportsmen, who were as much worried as anyone about the recent untoward happenings to the Albion's opponents. They put the affairs down to pure chance.

"Nice day, Mr. Gill!" remarked the chairman, Sir Richard Elvington. "Good gate, too, I see," he continued, gazing at the banking on the other side of the ground.

(Continued overleaf.)



Daniel Gill had backed his team to Daniel Gill had backed his team to win, and he leant back in his seat, scanning the huge crowd opposite. He was looking for a signal, and presently it came. Someone hoisted high over the heads of the spectators a big umbrella, painted in the Albion's colours, lowered it, and then

Annon's colours, lowered it, and then
put it up again.
"The job is safely done, then,"
muttered the director to himself,
"and I stand to win again!"
He grinned as he thought of the

He grinned as he thought of the dismay and consternation there would be in the dressing room of the Rovers down below; but he was too waity to make any inquiries, lest he should arouse suspicion.

Sure enough the Rovers were extremely worried. Mr. Pain, their manager, had arrived from Barchester by the second train. He had stayed behind to find Kerr and Brown when they failed to turn up at midday, but he had in vain secured the town.

the town.

"It's no good, lads!" he ex-claimed, as he came into the dress-ing-room, "I can't hear anything of them. We'll have to play the

claimed, as he came into the dressing-room, "I can't heat anything of them. We'll have to play the reserves."

The boys looked gium. The reserves, though capable footballers, were not up to the standard of the two missing men, and the team felt that their chances of victory were

that their chances of victions remote.

"The Clayford a silver cried Charlie Randall, who skipper. "This business is bit too thick!"

"Telegram for Mananouscel a messenge again.l"
Royers'

announced a messenge that moments.

The manager seized the envelope cagerly, and tore it open. He read the contents and breathed a sigh of relief.

"'On the way. Shall be with you in time.—KERE.'" Flo read it out. "Good!"

"Good!"

But at five minutes to three the missing raen had not turned up.

The reserves were ready, and Charlie Randall was about to lead out his men, when the door opened and two very disreputable figures appeared on the threshold.

"Just done it," saw the Kerr calmly, "Lead 'em out tharlie, and we'll be there in a manual Some good folks on this ground will have the surprise of their lives this after noon."

good folks on this ground will have the surprise of their lives this after moon!"

"Don't stare at us like that," laughed Jim Brown, for the fellows were gazing open-mouthed at their two colleagues. "We're not hurt, only a bit dirty. Where's that soap!"
And he made a frantic dash across the room to the wash-basins, and began hastily to remove the dirt with which he was grimed.

Charlie Randall, astounded as he sts. led out the other men, and a stantic Randall astounded as he sts. led out the other men, and a stantic Randall was puzzled. Ho had expected to see the board, announcing two alterations in the Rovers' team, go round the ground. But it did not appear, for the manager, hoping against hope after he had received the telegram, had not notified any changes.

As the visitors ran out Gill bent forward eagerly, scanning the face of each man. Jack Kerr and Jim Brown were not there.

"Very queer!" muttered the director, as he counted the Rovers. "Only nine of 'em! I can't understand it at all!"

Another roar, far louder, from the crowd, heralded the coming of the Albion. And a very befty-looking lot they were.

Then the referee blew his whistle.

lot they were.

Then the referee blew his whistle, Then the referee blew his whistle, and the rival captains advanced for the toss. Suddenly two figures in the Rovers' colours strolled calmly out to the field.

The rascally director nearly fell off his seat in his amazement.

"Kerr and Brown!" he growled angrily, under his breath. "That fellow James has let me down, after all!"

On the bank opposite James and Reid could hardly believe their eyes as the men they had left securely barred in the cellar fifty miles away walked on to the field just as the game was about to begin.

The Albion won the toss, and set the Rovers to face the sun and a light breeze. Jack Kerr kicked off, and in a second Tommy Brailton, the speedy outside-right of the Rovers, was flying along the touch-line with the ball at his toe. Tommy was a little fellow, but his control of the hall was perfect, and only the very best of half-backs could check him once he was well away. He made rings round the Albion's left-half, and put over a beautiful centre.

duel in mid-field. The goalkeepers were rerely troubled, and an exhilarating first half ended with no more goals scored.

Jack Kerr and Jim Brown were heartily glad when the interval arrived. Their morning's experiences had tired them more than they had realised, and though they said nothing to the other fellows, they felt that a strenuous second half would be almost more than they could stand. And so it proved. They could not keep up the pace for very long when the game was resumed, and the Albion's centre-forward soon found his task much easier. He began to outpace Jim Brown, and the Rovers' custodian was speedily having the time of his life. Cheered on by the vast crowd, the homesters swept down the field again and again. Three corners in succession they forced, but the visitors' goal secred to bear a charmed life. Try as they would, the Albion's forwards could not manage to get the ball into the net.

Charlie Randall at right-back, was playing a great game in stemming

Charlie Randall, at right-back, was Charlie Randall at right-back, was playing a great game in stemming the fierco rushes of the home forwards: but at last he made a bad mistake. He handled the ball near the corner flag, and the referee at once awarded a free kick. The Albion's centre-half took the kick

skies as the sphere crashed into the net. Robert James and Fred Reid slapped each other on the back, and hoisted their umbrella on high once more. Mr. Gill heaved a sigh of heartfelt relief.

"They are going to pull it off, after all," he exclaimed joyfully, "if only the fools can keep it up!"

And, indeed, it seemed that the issue was now settled beyond all doubt. The game slackened down, for both sides had been playing at a rousing pace, which they could not maintain until the finish. And, with but five minutes to go, the score was still 2—1 in favour of the Albion.

Suddenly the Rovers forwards, of whom very little had been seen in the second half, broke nawy, raced up the field, and neared the home goal. The backs checked them, but the ball went out to Jim Brown, who chanced his luck with a long shot. The Albion's goalkeeper caught the leather; but then making one of those mistakes which the best of goalies do at times, he dropped it, let it roll behind him, and then, turning frantically, scooped it out, just too late.

The referee was instantly sur-

late.

The referee was instantly surrounded by a gesticulating mob of players, the Rovers claiming that the ball had crossed the line, the Albion protesting furiously that it had not.

The official, who was close up.

his carefully arranged plot to secure the victory of the Albion.

Throughout the game Jack's friend, young Harry Wilson, had been prowling amidst the crowd looking for Fred Reid. He felt sure that the ex-Rover had something to do with the events of the morning, and he lad asked Mr. Pain, the Rover's manager, to borrow Sir Richard Elvington's car after the match.

"I feel sure Reid is on the ground somewhere," said Harry, "and I'll do my best to spot him, though it seems a hopeless task. If I see him, I'll follow him out, signal to you, and you can come along behind slowly. We might find out where he goes, and whom he sees, for I bet he is not alone in this affair. If we fail to day, I'll make it my business to haunt his footsteps until I unmask the plot!"

Harry wandered round the ground during the first half, but failed to see anything of the ex-centre-forward, and he almost gave up the quest in despair.

"It's hopeless!" he muttered, when the teams went in at half-time.

But Harry did not give up. He continued to move about here and there, and at the moment, when, five minutes from the end of the game the Rovers equalised, he was on the top of the bank opposite the stand, and quite close to the man he sought, though he did not know it.

As the referee pointed to the middle for the disputed goal, pandermonum brake loose.

and quite close to the man he sought, though he did not know it.

As the referee pointed to the middle for the disputed goal, pandemonum broke loose.

"No-goal—no goal." roared a thousand voices.

And a storm—of hooting was directed at the referee.

Harry glauced around. Near by was a specially vociferous knot of spectators, and above them was waving a big coloured umbrella. Harry edged nearer.

"Got him!" he exclaimed joyfull as he caught sight of Fred Reid, who was shouting angrily. "And that's Robert James with him! I saw them together on Barchester Station once."

Harry Wilson, having spotted the man he was in search of, was afraid that he might miss him as the crowd went out; but his anxiety was unnecessary, for the two fellows remained on the terrace until nearly all the spectators had gone. And then Harry had an easy task in following them into the street.

lowing them into the street.

Sir Richard Elvington's car was there, and in it were the cliairmen of the Albiou and Mr. Pain, as well as Jack Kerr and Jim Brown. Reid and James, luckily, did not notice the car, but Harry's friends saw him at once. Harry followed the two men down the street, and saw them board a bus bound for the outskirts of the town. After a desperate struggle in a mob of would be passengers, the young engineer managed to get on, too.

town. After a desperate struggin in a mob of would be passengers, the young engineer managed to get on, too.

The chairman's car came slowly on behind. At the terminus Reid and James got off, and walked down the road towards the open country. Harry following a good way in the rear. After about a mile the two rogues turned down a lane, where their pursuer, on conting up, noticed the track of motor-tyres, for the line was hardly ever used by cars, and the marks showed plainly in the dust.

was hardly ever used by cars, and the marks showed plainly in the dust.

"My luck's in!" murmured Harry Wilson. "They are evidently going to meet someone down here!"

He looked back, saw Sir Richard's car, and signed to its occupants. Then he walked cautiously along the lane. About half a mile down was a lonely cottage. Here the two men paused, looked keenly about on all sides, and, fancying that the coast was clear, knocked cautiously at the door. Someone within opened it, and they went in. They little thought that Harry Wilson, behind a hedge, had seen all their movements.

The young engineer want a few yards back, and soon met Sr Richard and the others coming up. They had left the car in charge of the chauffeur, and were walking along in quest of Harry.

left the car in charge of the chaufeur, and were walking along in quest of Harry.

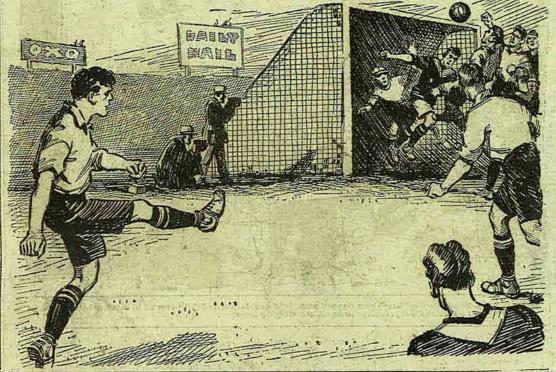
"Now, then—quick!" whispered Harry. "Over that hedge and across this field! They are in that cottage, and we can get round behind and into the garden. There's no window on this side, luckily!"

In a minute or two more five men were crouching beneath a window of

were crouching beneath a window of the cottage, listening eagerly to the voices which sounded from within.

"Well," said someone in a sar-castic tone, "you've explained how carefully you trapped our Burchester friends! But what you haven't ex-plained is how they got to Clayford and played for the Rovers!"

(Continued on page 555.



THE EQUALISTR! The Albion's centre-half took the kick, and planted the ball well into the goal-mouth. Four or five players jumped high into the air to head the leather as it came hurtling towards them, but the centre-forward got there first, and a moment later the scores were level!

Jack Kerr trapped the ball, and just as the opposing back tackled him he touched the leather deftly to Stan Pool, the inside left. Stan took a first time shot with his left foot, and the Albion's goalic made a despairing leap into the air as the ball swerved past him at a terrific pace. He touched it, but that was all, and a second later he was ruefully picking it out of the net.

The Royces were one up in the

The Rovers were one up in the first minute. And the crowd was stupefied with astonishment as the teams once again lined up in the middle.

In the stand Dan Gill's face

In the stand Dan Gill's face was a study. He vented his wrath in muttered maledictions on Robert James, Jack Kerr, the Albion's goalie, and the world in general. And when Sir Richard Elvington. good sportsman as he was, turned to him and remarked that he had rarely seen a smarter piece of work, Gill could hardly bring himself to growl some sort of a reply.

The game went on, and for a time the Rovers attacked fiercely. But the Albion gradually recovered from the shock of that early goal, and soon began to have a fair share of the exchanges. Lucky, indeed, was it then for the Rovers that their big centre-half was on the field! Time after time he checked the Albion's inside forwards. His tackling was superb, and he was continually sending out passes to his wings. His fine play drew round after round of applause even from the supporters of the home team.

The sides were splendidly matched,

the home team.

The sides were splendidly matched, and the game settled down into a

and planted the ball well into the goal-mouth. Four or five players jumped high into the air to head the leather as it came hurtling towards them, but the centre-forward got there first, and a moment later the scores were level.

A mighty roar of triumph told the whole town of Clayford that the home team had scored. Having equalised, the Albion went all out to get the lead, and for the next ten minutes they were all over the Rovers. But for some brilliant goalkeeping, they would have scored on several occasions. No goalie, however, can survive a continuous bombardment, and at last Ted Milton, the Rovers custodian, succumbed again, this time to a smashing shot from the insideright.

The previous shout was as nothing

The previous shout was as nothing to the tremendous howl that rent the

pointed without a moment's hesitation to the middle, amidst howls of wrath from the crowd. But the referee would not alter his decision, which was a perfectly correct one, and the game was resumed by the Albion with a very bad grace.

No more goals were obtained before the call of time, and the game thus ended in a draw—two goals all.

As the final whistle went, Mr. Gill, his face black with anger, made his way out of the ground to where his car was waiting.

"I'll have an explanation from James and Reid," he muttered; "and if they have sold me, the rascals shall smart for it! You can go home, Jones!" he added to his chauffeur.

"I'll drive the car myself!"

And he swung himself into his seat and drove off, still boiling over with rage as he thought of the failure of

RESULT OF NOTTS COUNTY F.C. COMPETITION.

Another £10 awarded to Readers.

Devon.

In this competition one competitor sent in a correct solution of the pictures. The first prize of £5 has therefore been awarded to:

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Dowell Street,
Honiton,

The second prize of £2 10s, has been divided among the following five competitors, whose solutions contained one error each:

Mrs. J. Board, Dowell Street, Honiton, Devon; T. Jobson, 2, Charlotte Street, Tidal Basin, E. 16; Tom Loynd, 17, Clementina Terrace, Carlisle; Robert Scott, 424, Parliamentary Road, Glasgow;

Fred Brooks, 16, Nichols Square, Hackney Road, E. 2.

Road, E. 2.

Fifty-one competitors with two errors each divide the ten prizes of 5s. each—one shilling being added to the prize list to make up a round sum. The names and addresses of these prize-winners can be seen on application at this office.

SOLUTION.

There are few older football teams in the country than Notts County. It goes hack practically to the commencement of the game. The club made swift head-way, and reached a magnificent position in the First League table. Since then, fortune has obbed and flowed.

SENSATIONAL STORY OF MODERN ADVENTURE!



The City of Nayr is destroyed by a terrible death ray,

The 1st Chapter.

Britain is in a panic because a large part of Lincolnshire has disappeared in a night, leaving behind a blackened and charred coastline. Similar reports are received from China, South America, and South Africa. It is the opinion of Miles Belmain, an American scientist, that the calamities are caused by projectiles from another planet. To test the American's theory, Ken Thornton, Sid Kennedy, and Tim Baynes, three adventurous youths, set out for Venus in Pearl III., a space-ship, which they have constructed from a gravity-defying metal of their own invention. In a similar space-ship they have already visited Mars and Vulcan. They reach the planet Venus, but fall into the hands of some gigantic ants, or Spays, in whose stronghold they discover Thensla, a beautiful young Venusian girl, who is also being held prisoner by the terrible insects. After many narrow escapes from death, the three youths and Thensla succeed in escaping from the Spays, though they are compelled to abandon the Pearl. They reach Nayr, capital of Apadocia, over which rules Uensl, Thensla's father, a king without power. The real ruler of Apadocia, the only inhabitable part of Venus, is Scund the Eternal, who, from his citadel, Tarp, controls all that goes on in the country. Though their arrival is kept from the people, Sid explains to Uensl the reason why they have come to Venus, at the same time urging him to throw off Scund's voke. This the king agrees to do. Disguised as a Venusian, Sid Kennedy enters the city of Tarp in search of the secret of Scund's mysterious weapon. He descends the Pit of Tarp as a slave, hoping thus to gain his object, Later, the workers rebel, and Sid climbs a lift shaft, hoping that when he reaches the top he will be able to release the slaves. During his object, Later, the workers rebel, and Sid climbs a lift shaft, hoping that when he reaches the top he will be able to release the slaves, During his object, Later, the workers rebel, and Sid climbs a lift shaft, hoping that when he reaches the top he will be able to

The 2nd Chapter. The Fight!

"Then, lord," said Iram, "our journey ends where it began, and I repeat that your presence—and that of the youths beside you—is demanded in Tarp."

manded in Tarp."

"Plain speaking, soldier," Uensl replied. "And, to be equally plain, I pray you tell the Lord Scund that we enter Tarp when we will, and how we will. In short, the time has come when Nayr claims to work out its own destiny, and when Apadocia declines to be ruled by a clique whose mouthpiece is Scund. Return with those words, soldier, and the message that if my daughter suffers ill-usage, Tarp, and those who rule there, will pay a bitter price."

—dead or alive!" Iram answered doggedly. He turned impatiently to his troop. "Men, do your duty!"

Nothing loath, Iram's soldiers sprang forward, their swords bared, the expectation of easy victory reflected in their faces.

But swift as lightning Ken and Tim sprang in front of Uensl, their hands snatching strange-looking weapons from their tunics—six-inch tubes of steel which terminated in flexible rubber bulbs.

The tiny weapons looked ridiculously inadequate; so much so that the foremost line of charging men laughed openly—until a stinging pam crashed into their faces, blinding them and sending them to the floor.

"Good old Chlorine!" grinned Tim.

"Who'd have thought of finding it here and putting it to such good use! And that's for you, Iram, old lad!"

But Iram was quick to pull a subordinate in front of himself and so escape the evil-smelling liquid that Tim shot at him. Then, from a safe position in the rear, he urged his men to sweep the youths aside and seize the king.

Of course, the unequal clash would quickly have ended in the soldiers' victory, for the crudely made liquid squirts—whose manufacture had served to pass an idle hour—were already empty, and the pause in the onslaught had been more from surprise than actual harm. But that momentary set-back had been sufficient to warn Uensl's many friends of the great danger in which he stood, and without more ado hidden daggers were produced and a dour struggle ensued.

Whilst it lasted the fight was bitter and bloodthirsty; but Iram's soldiers, though better armed, were outnumbered three to one, and soon it became evident that they would never reach within striking distance of Uensl. That Iram was quick to see and understand, and, bitterly as the fact rankled, he ordered a retreat.

"A dash for the exit, men!" he suddenly cried, and himself led the way—an exhibition of cowardice that

and understand, and, bitterly as the fact rankled, he ordered a retreat.

"A dash for the exit, men!" he suddenly cried, and himself led the way—an exhibition of cowardice that was not followed by all his men.
But those who fought until over-whelmed by numbers delayed pursuit whilst Iram and a scant half-dozen of his kidney crossed the hall and vanished through the door. And whilst Uensl's angry friends would have taken up pursuit, the king wisely stayed them.

"Of what use to hunt him?" he said contemptuously. "His fliers wait at the entrance, and by now are doubtless taking the air. Let him go. He's but the servant, and it's the master to whom our debt is owing. Rather let us recognise that this treacherous attack means war between Nayr and Tarp—war to the death between Scund and myself."
He stilled the cheer that began with uplifted hand.

"For too long has the so-called Eternal made slaves of us. We carry out his orders without question; go to death if so he bids, not daring to

ternal made slaves of us. We carry out his orders without question; go to death if so he bids, not daring to murmur. He claims omnipotence—he would even murder me in my own palace. But for the shrewd wit of these youths he would have succeeded, and so forged the last rivet that makes you slaves to his will."

"But can we fight him with any hope of success?" an elderly, anxious-looking man asked.

"Fight we must, and I hope not altogether unprepared. Iram has told you that Scund's most trusted commanders have disappeared, but he has not told you that much strength has passed into my hands during the past period. I also have not advertised

that truth, but the time has now come

that truth, but the time has now come to tell you all."

And in the hour that followed Ken and Tim learned much that surprised them of Uensl's secret activities. It appeared that his men had quietly gained control, not only of the various power-stations, but also of the great factory wherein the wonders of atomic energy were subjected to man's will. That much had been done before the whispers began to filter through to Tarp.

perch three hundred feet above the pit and two hundred below level ground—a hair-raising position, made ten times more unenviable by the fact that a soldier of Tarp was swing-ing towards him with vicious sword-point aiming at his threat.

Nearer and nearer the soldier approached as the curve of his swing increased, and at last lie stabbed viciously at the being who, to his eyes, clung helplessly to the wall.

That time the sword point was three inches short of Sid's throat, and it was a nerve-shattering, uncanny experience. Sid listened to his disappointed mutterings, and watched the man swing away to the opposite side of the shaft.

But he knew that the next drive would bring a decision, and perhaps his own speedy end. His muscles grow taut. He saw the swinging body reach and almost touch the far wall, and begin its return.

Then Sid did the most hairbrained, suicidal deed that ever fell to his lot, for, whilst the soldier was still six feet away, he drew his sword, loosed his hold, and flung himself straight down on the body that hurtled towards him.

The tiniest miscalculation, and he would have hit the opposite wall, and, rebounding, have dropped into the pit, shattered and lifeless before ever he touched bottom.

But the very madness of his act

But the very madness of his act took the Venusian by surprise and threw him into a flurry—a fact on which Sid had counted. Too late, the soldier kicked sideways, but the force of the drive held him in an un-swerving line, and his wild stab at the

fact that within a minute he began to rise with a steady movement.

From the soldier he had no further trouble, and in a surprisingly short time they reached the guard-room of the upper level.

Ejaculations of amazement broke out at the sight of two soldiers rising from the depths where one had descended, and for the second time Sid thanked his lucky stars that he had donned the uniform of Tarp.

"How come you here?" an officer

"How come you here?" an officer demanded suspiciously. "And how comes it that Weil returns in this injured state?"

Sid took care to cross the bridge and reach solid ground before answer-ing, leaving the guard to attend the unconscious scout.

"Climbing from the pit I met he you name Weil," Sid answered, facing the officer and saluting with assured bearing. "In attempting to—or—take me from the wall he was injured, I it was who gave the signal for return."

injured. I it was who gave the signal for return."

"You had not the right!" the officer snapped. "Did not Weil tell you he was on duty of importance?"

"He did. He told me that you had sent him to spy on those confined within the pit. But I can tell you their state more truly than ever he would have seen."

"Humph! Then you had bettet do so, for the Lord Scand orders a report without delay!"

Closely watching the efforts to restore Weil, Sid saw that worthy's eyes flutter open, and stare stupidly about him. Then they fastened on Sid and, springing to his feet, he pointed accusingly at the false soldier.

"Believe him not!" Weil cried. "He is a traitor, a spy! Seize him, sir, before he works us harm!"

With the first word every eye in

sir, before he works us harm!"
With the first word every eye in the room fastened on Weil. Sid seized the opportunity to unfasten his pouch and take therefrom the two tiny globes it held. And, as the meaning of Weil's denunciation became clear, the officer rounded on Sid—to find that youth with arms aloft.

Sid—to find that youth with arms aloft.

"Back!" cried Sid. "Let none advance a single pace, or I swear that all will die!"

Well those soldiers knew that the bursting of one tiny bomb would devastate the room and kill everyone within it. He smiled grimly as he saw the panicky manner with which those men of war crowded away from his dangerous vicinity.

"No, officer, away from that door! and you, soldier, cast your spear down the shaft to appraise my friends that I have reached my journey's ond.

"Who are you, man?" the leader asked. "And what think you to gain by this madness?"

asked. "And what think you to gain by this madness?"

"Something better than the fate your master has awarded those below. Hark to my words, soldiers! Not for nothing have I risked life and limb in this shaft, fought with friend Weil, and ventured to defy you all. First, let every man throw down his weapons." A pause, a moment of silence, then the clatter of steel on stone. "Now, officer, your sword—by the handle, please."

Soowling black as thunder, mutter-

Scowling black as thunder, muttering disjointed threats beneath his breath, the Venusian leader sullenly obeyed. And Sid, holding the two dread explosives in his left hand, accepted the token of submission with a quiet smile.

"Now, my lad, gather those

cepted the token of submission with a quiet smile.

"Now, my lad, gather those weapons and pile them beside me." He turned to one whose eyes, fixed immorably on his left hand, showed such open fear that the prick of Sid's sword was hardly needed to accelerate his movements. "And you, officer, are going to descend the pit, where you will tell my friends to fix an ore-bucket to the rope and come up in batches of four. Then, soldiers, if you act faithfully, you can have your freedom and go—wherever you like. For now, get busy!"

"I'll not do it!" the officer suddenly shouted, his eyes glittering balefully. "Not though you kill me with my own sword will I betray my trust!"

"I think you will," Sid answered. He dropped the sword, and again each hand held aloft a bomb for all to see. "Seize that man and lower him to the pit, or I swear that we die together!"

And, despite that plucky officer's

him to the pit, or I swear that we de-together!"

And, despite that plucky officer's struggles and protests, his men forced him to Sid's will, for they saw not the need for an heroic deliance that would most certainly bring them to a speedy and painful end.

It was a long and monotonous job that followed, and until the bucket that presently appeared had made (Continued overleaf.)

THE BOMBARDMENT! One great building split into the distinct halves as a shell burst ne it, and the debrie thundered down on the petrified slaves below:

Uensl's encouraging words would have made Ken and Tim entirely happy had they known how Thensla and Sid fared. That these two were in Tarp was a fact that caused them much uneasiness, for they felt that in the clash that was coming either Nayr or Tarp would be horribly punished. They guessed that both cities controlled forces of awful power, and Ken had an uneasy feeling that Tarp hid many grim secrets that might yet work the undoing of Nayr.

Graciously enough, after publicly thanking them for so promptly coming to his assistance, Uensl asked them to choose their own place in the war that was imminent.

They decided on the possession of two of Uensl's swiftest fliers—machines which they were given leave to have altered and re-conditioned to their own ideas. By this means they had the hope of helping their chum and the girl who had become a close friend to them alt.

The Screaming Terror! It will be remembered that we left Sid clinging precariously to an insecure falling figure missed Sid's thigh by inches. Then Sid hit him, all clinging arms

and legs. Luck favoured the ven-turesome youth, in that his lower limbs circled the man's waist and his hands found hold in the loose tunic.

In a flash he steadied himself. First his left hand, then his right, took a strangle-hold on the Venusian's throat, and almost before Sid realised it, the man's tongue was protruding from his mouth, and he was unconscious and helpless at Sid's mercy.

Once assured at

Once assured that his enemy was no longer dangerous, he released his hold and took a grip of the rope, which still vibrated with the shock of his wild leap.

Hoping that those above would accept the signal, he began to shake the rope impatiently as if in dire need of help.

That some system of communica tion was in use was certain, else the Venusian soldier could hardly have stopped his own descent so quickly after sighting him. And that Sid reasoned correctly was proved by the

The BOYS' FRIEND, the "Magnet" Library, the "Gem" Library, the "Popular" and "Chuckles"! The Famous Five!



five journeys and a score of Sid's adherents had safely reached the surface, a time of anxious strain. Then Sid relaxed, knowing that the handful of soldiers were outnumbered, and that, from them, nothing more need be feared.

With the last load came Osen, an astonished and overjoyed man. He clasped Sid to his arms, and, to that undemonstrative youth's disgust, kissed him effusively on the forehead.

"Yosa, surely Valda breeds heroes, if all are as you," he cried. "You have done the impossible, and brought eighty men from despair to freedom!"

"Have I, Osen?" Sid answered

freedom!"
"Have I, Osen?" Sid answered dubiously. "I doubt it, when I remember that Scund still holds all of Tarp, and we hold but this one little guard-house. By the way, what have you done with our prisoners below there?"

there?"
"Walled them in a tunnel where it
will take them long to break out."
"Before which time all Tarp will
know what has happened, for the
changing of guards will reveal our
secret. But come, Osen, let us leave
these fellows for a moment whilst we
study the possibilities of defence."

Livestigation properly that the stone

study the possibilities of defence."

Investigation proved that the stone building was two-storied, the upper room containing stores for the pit and weapons for its guardians. From this store-room a ladder opened the way to the flat roof that was common to all Apadecian buildings.

"A poor place to fight in," said Sid.

"A poor place to again."

Sid.

"I can end that doubt by telling you a secret known to few, and only known to noe by overhearing a remark between Scund and Ixed, to the effect that a great store of explosive is buried in the pit, and can be fired from Scund's palace at his chosen moment."

osen moment." Sid looked questioningly at his com-

"Then why didn't he end our re-bellion by touching it off ere this?"

"And wreck the place wherein all his hopes are centred? No; that is a last resource. But come, Yosa, let us to the roof to see how it fares in "Yarn."

Tarp."
The first thing they noticed was that the roof of every building was crowded. In the streets and squares below, the workers—for once idle—that the crowded. In the streets and squares below, the workers—for once idle—stood in groups arguing. It was sufficiently remarkable that the soldiers, themselves in chattering clusters, ignored this open defiance of authority; but when Sid perceived that every face was turned in the direction of Nayr he began to get a suspicion of the truth.

"Osen, how comes it that these two great towns—whose ideals seem so wide apart—have been built so that each overlooks the other?"

"Hmph! And I'll wager that its secret is the gun we of Valda came to find. But, Osen, suppose that Nayr and the surrounding country decides to try and break Scund's overlordship and free itself from his abominable slavery, as we of the pit have tried to do. What form would the fighting take? Have you standing armies, great quantities of explosives like we war with on Valda?"

"That no man can tell, for Scund has long ruled in Apadocia, and no one knows the extent of his power. Matter that bursts we have in plenty both here and in Nayr, but no actual fighting in mass has taken place for generations past. Should it do so now, as you appear to think, I fear that few would live through it, for Scund is ruthless in breaking any who dare oppose his will."

Before Sid could answer a deep hum broke out, the sound of a thousand aeropiane propellers suddenly and violently rotating. Not a puff of wind stirred, but sight was dazzled, the buildings of Tarp became simmeringly unreal, and the distant beauty of Nayr alone stood out, clearcut and solid.

Then Osen's pointing finger drew Sid's attention to a hundred-foot steel tower that glistened in lonely majesty over Scund's stronghold. Even as

Sid's eyes stared upwards, a lurid green glare broke from its apex, and the ear-bursting note took on a thinner, shriller sound.

"Ye gods!" Sid suddenly cried.
"Look, Osen, the Spire of the Sun, Nayr's sacred building, shivers and collapses!"

That was the beginning of an influence nightmaps lusiness.

That was the beginning of an in-human, nightmare business.

Sound Strikes Home!

Two days after Uens's sensational defiance of Sound, the ruler of Nayr stood on the roof of his palace, surrounded by his principal adherents.

All eyes turned towards the west. There, dimly visible on the distant horizon, the grey city of Tarp-grin guardian of all Apadocia—reared its sombre head.

In the streets of Nayr, and from every flat roof of its buildings, a scene of feverish activity unfolded. Bat-teries of guns-strange weapons of thirty-foot barrel and three inch bore thirty-foot barrel and three inch bore—were taking up positions on the out-skirts of the city, whilst thousands of labourers were throwing up protective mounds of earth. On every roof and aerial platform flying machines of all shapes and sizes clustered, ranging

from single-seater seouts to the giant air-trains that had first brought the voyagers from Ayath to Nayr.

"We cannot tell," Uensl was answering one of his people. "Sound boasts that he is omnipotent. That may or may not be, but he keeps his secrets well. We can only wait his challenge, then answer by striking with all our might."

"Tim, you hear the king's words, and from them you'll judge that if a fight does come between the cities, it's going to be very much on the knees of the gods who wins," remarked Ken.

"Well, it looks like blindman's buff to me," Tim admitted. "There's no signs of movement from Tarp."

"Yes; because Uensl is reluctant to strike first. He respects Scund because he knows him. That the king's got the blues is evident, and from that, I argue a pretty hefty time ahead." Kenn patted a machine beneath whose shadow they stood. "That's why I had this chap altered to suit my own ideas."

Tim regarded the flier with mild amusement. It owned the torpedo body of the usual Apadocian machine, but where they were driven by borrowed power and almost invisible propeller, this invention of Ken's had a great spread of bamboo and canvawing, huge twin propellers, and a self-contained engine.

Tim's grin broadened.

"Ken, I've only got one little body, but I think rather a lot of it. D'you seriously expect me to risk it in this antiquated old bus?"

"Oh, I think i'll fly—"

"For goodness' sake, listen to him! He thinks it'll fly!" Tim's brows arched in anguished amazement.

"I raked part of it out of Nayr's historical museum," Ken answered, surprisingly. "This model was in use on Venus a century ago. Then Scund found that he could control a gigantic force such as we on Earth cannot even conceive. One of the liret results was that ordinary flying machines became as dead as our Dodo, and in their place came these Apadocian air fleets, who draw their power by wireless from the towers that are dotted at regular intervals all over the land. You already know that Nayr alone has over fifty of these power.

land. You already know that Nayr alone has over fifty of these power towers."

"That's so," conceded Tim. "But why your return to the prehistoric, Kenny boy?"

"Because I don't trust old mystery yonder," Ken replied. "Anyway, I'll feel a bit safer having a machine under me that has its own engine, because I've always had an uncanny feeling that these deliver-by-wireless towers might let us down some day. I've tried to make Uens! see my meaning; he says an air accident has not happened during his lifetime."

But Tim was no longer listening. He was staring towards distant Tarrwith a puzzled expression. Then Ken also became aware of something unusual.

They stood staring, not as yet realising that cries of anger and surprise were breaking out all over the city. All they knew was that strange little pains were shooting through their bodies, and that their eyes were playing queer tricks, or else the very air of Nayr was beginning to quiver and dance. They noticed a tiny flash of (Continued on the next page.)

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us."
"That is Scund's secret. We only know that some great work goes on, and that the Closed Cates can alone reveal that secret."

INSTRUCTIONS.

INSTRUCTIONS.

Here is a splendid footer competition which I am sure will interest you. On this page you will find a history of the Blackpool Football Club in picture-puzzle form. What you are invited to do is to solve the picture, and when you have done so write your solution on a sheet of paper. Then sign the coupon which appears under the puzzle, pin it to your solution, and post it to "Black-pool" Competition, Boys' FRIEND Office, Gough House, Gough Square, E.C. 4, so as to reach that address not later than THURS-DAY, April 19th.

The FIRST PRIZE of £5 will be awarded to the reader who submits a solution which is exactly the same as, or nearest to, the solution now in the possession of the Editor. In the event of ties the prize will be awarded in order of merit. The Editor reserves the right to add together and divide the value of all or any of the proprietors of this journal are not eligible to compete.

This competition is run in conjunction with the "Gem," the "Magnet," and the "Popular," and readers of those journals are invited to compete.



I enter "BLACKPOOL" Competition and agree to accept the Editor's decision as final, Name Address....



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ight coming : ad going from Tarp's highest tower, and a quantity of luminous green smoke that drove up in distinct puffs over the distant city. Quite suddenly Tim gripped his

Quite suddenly Tim gripped his chum's arm.

"Look, Ken! The Spire of the Sun is dropping to ruin!"

Almost the youths doubted the evidence of their sight. The building, a model of architecture, its marble spire tapering a hundred and fifty feet into the sky, was collapsing before their startled eyes. First a ten-foot pinnacle snapped and dropped into the square fronting the magnificent building, and the wail of agony that broke out attested to the damage it had done to those below. Then, as if invisible lightning impinged upon it, a jagged tear zigzagged from summit to base of the spire, and, to the horror of the thousands who watched, the whole structure shivered and dropped with a thunderous crash. the whole structure shivered dropped with a thunderous crash.

To the voyagers from Earth it was all lantastically unreal. They had an extraordinary persuasion that they were dreaming, that presently they would wake up, shake off the nightmare that shackled reason and laugh at the trick that sleep had played on them.

But it they were unable to credit that on which their eyes looked, the consuming anger of Uensl and those surrounding him, quickly proved that there was no doubt as to the agency responsible for this terrible disaster.

"The is Scand's challenge?" Longle

responsible for this terrible disaster.

"This is Scund's challenge!" Uensloied. "He seeks to smash Nayr with eays of vibration. Let our guns answer him. Signal the fleet to prepare for action!"

"Come on, Tim!" Ken cried.
"Into the old bus! Let's see if we can do anything for Thensla and Sid, poor beggars!"

Hurriedly they scrambled into the well of the flier, the machine ran half the length of the roof, lifted, and took the air as smoothly as a bird takes wing.

the air as smoothly as a bird takes wing.

Acting on an organised plan, the whole flying strength of Nayr was ascending in sections. For the moment no attempt was made to turn cowards Tarp, for it was Uensl's scheme to fling his whole force forward in one irresistible mass. First, the single-seater scouts rose high into the blue, the ten-seater battle-planes taking position below, and moving in slow, concerted circles whilst awaiting the rise of the heavy air-trains that had been converted into bomb-carrying vessels of super-destructive might.

ling vessels of super-destructive might.

High in the blue, the chums looked down on a scene that wrought high excitement in their breasts.

The knowledge came to them with sickening certainty that the fate which had overtaken the Spire of the San was fast gripping the whole beautiful city in its malignant clutch. Building after building was breaking and falling in ruins. The shrill screams of the harassed, terrified population rose even above the crash of splintering stone, and fires burst out here and there that soon obscured half the doomed city from the gaze of those shove.

Then Nayr replied. An answer ridiculously inadequate—or so, in their ignorance, the chums thought, It was just the noise of bursting crackers that ascended from Nayr's twelve, long-snouted guns—considerably less sound than an Earthly twelve-pounder would have made. But these sinister weapons had flung shells of titanic destructiveness into Tarp; a fact that was partly evident when the chums turned their eyes from stricken Nayr to the grey city.

It was as if a wet sponge had been

tilt his flier and rise above those who surrounded him. But the machine rose sluggishly and jerkily, as though bravely straining against a heavy weight that had become attached to

it.

Then Tim called his attention to the behaviour of their fleet. Looking down, they were confronted by a sight that was probably unique in the experience of mankind.

experience of mankind.

The three tiers of fiers were still separate and distinct—a height of about five hundred feet between each tier, and a like distance between the lowest and the domes of Nayr. But though hardly a breath of wind stirred the atmosphere—except that caused by their own movements—the fleet struggled as if labouring in a cyclone.

cyclone.

They lifted, rolled, righted, darted forward as if released from a leash, then staggered, whirled round in spinning circles, drove through the air stern first—dangerous, mad things, despite all the efforts of their bewildered pilots.

"Ey the bones of Biafra." gasped Tim. "What's got hold of them, Ken'"

"By the bones of Biafra?" gasped Tim. "What's got hold of them, Ken?"
"The invisible hand of Scund," Ken replied. "A terrible fight's going on between the power towers of Nayr and those of Tarp. And because Scund operates that awful ray of vibration, I fear he'll win." He tilted the nose of their machine. "I'm rising another couple of thousand."

pread death and destruction broadcast And almost before the fear-inspiring noise had rumbled to silence a blinding flash struck upwards from a tower

ing flash strike upwards from "Scund's "My hatf" cried Ken. "Scund's burst one of the atomic towers with his awful vibrating rays!"

"And every one be smashes," Tim added, "means a further handicap against keeping the flest in the zir. Why in goodness don't they try and land, Ken?"

and, Ken?"

"Impossible! You've read of ships being unable to berth alongside piers through stress of weather, and that's just what is happening below us. They're absolutely helpless, tossed up and down as the electric battle chbs and flows. And their fate, unfortunately, is outside their own keeping."

"And but for your idea of pushing an old engine into this contraption we'd be amongst them!"

But Ken was staring intently towards the outskirts of the city. Following his glance, Tim saw a second tower disappear in a sheet of rushing flame, and heard an avenispiring roar that made his flesh pringle and turn cold.

That was the beginning of the end.

With ruthless persistency the ray of vibration searched and rooted out tower after tower and directed its uncanny influence on each located victim, until it was vanquished by

ample cause for their emotion. The city that had been a delight to the eye was now a desolating heap of smoking rubble. In one short hour it had been crushed out of being, its inhabitants swept to death. It was indeed a truly appalling defeat.

But if complete disaster had over-taken Nayr, Tarp had not escaped scatheless.

For a time the attention of Sid and Osen was divided between distant Nayr and the steel tower that glistened over Scund's stronghold. Very quickly they understood the connection between the lurid green glare that shot from the tower and the falling buildings of the city of marble.

Sid. "D'you see what Scund's doing -actually splitting the buildings of Nayr as if they were made of card-board."

"Already I have told you that the Eternal controls the atmosphere itself, and from it extracts a tremendous strength that performs half the work in Apadocia."

in Apadocia,"

"That I know," Sid answered impatiently. "It's what we call atomic force. Well, unless Lens! has some card up his sleeve, it looks as if Scund can wipe Nayr out at his leisure."

"But why?" asked Osen. "Nayr serves him well, in that much of his

THE DESTRUCTION OF SID'S ARMY! From the black muzzles which suddenly protruded from the property of the grey walls of Scund's palace, there flickered white beams of light, and wherever they touched came shouts and shrinkles from the panic-stricken crowd! (A startling incident from next Monday's long instalment of this amuzing story.)

Then Tim understood, and felt the icy grip of fear clutch at his heart—not for himself, but for the helpless beings below, as he remembered that these Venusian vessels depended on an uninterrupted supply of wireless power to keep them suspended in air.

And Scund, with every particle of strength that could emanate from the towers of Tarp, was lighting a sinister, silent battle, with all the odds in his favour.

The fifty great towers of Nayr, which, by the magic of controlled atomic force, could have supplied ample power to the great fleet that floated overhead, were now forced to divide their strength. As the waves of Scund's contra-energy beat on their apparatus—preducing what a "broad-caster" would name "static"—the towers of Nayr were compelled to match half their force against their opponents, thereby starving the fleet which floated over them, and placing it in helpless, dire peril.

And in this supercharged atmosphere the fleet of Nayr rolled and tossed impotently, and helplessly strove to avoid disastrous collision. But at last the inevitable happened. The chams, peering downwards in speechless disnay, watched two of the heaviest air-trains lurch helplessly towards each other, make agonising efforts to avoid touching, only to crash broadside on and fall like stones.

The noise of their collision was drawned by the year of the heavient. when the chums turned their eyes from stricken Nayr to the grey city.

It was as if a wet sponge had been drawn over a chalked picture. Half the town simply vanished! A veritable volcano of stones, even whole sections of buildings, were flung to the four winds of heaven. And as these fell to earth a black pall of smoke spread over the place, and an ear-splitting sories of detonations lloated back to them.

But Scund's answer was swift and yet more terrible. To now, the fleet of Nayr had been lifting in orderly array, each unit taking its apportioned place in the higher, lower, or middle level. Now more than a hundred fliers circled over the city, the signal for the departure of the advance scouts was being made from Uenel's roof, and Ken had actually turned his machine in the direction of Tarp when he felt the wheel kick obstinately against his touch.

At first he thought that the mechanism played him false. He exerted pressure, and in response the nose of the machine dipped and threatened to drive him down on those below. Putting forth his full strength, Ken somehow managed to

the shattering of its stored-up energy. And with each explosion the resisting power of Nayr lessened and the gyrations of the air fleet grew more and more wild.

Striving valiantly to the last, the Striving valiantly to the last, the end came with dramatic abruptness. Just as a feather's weight turns the seale, so did the collapse of the cighteenth Nayr tower cause the resistance of the survivors to be instantly overborne, and result in the instantlaneous cutting-off of the fleet's indispensable fuel.

In that awful second the whole mighty force plunged to the earth! The voyagers—only survivors of the force that had so proudly soared aloft—closed their eyes, and longed to stop their hearing against the horror which arose as the ten score machines,

shoft—closed their eyes, and longed to stop their hearing against the horror which arose as the ten score machines, heavily burdened with explosive, crashed down on Nayv.

In an instant the air was full of sound, a deafening and confusing conflict of noises—the clangorous din of metals, the crash of falling houses, and the crash in falling houses, and the crash in falling houses, and the crash in the Even at the great height at which Ken's quaint machine flew a whirlwind of heat surged up and round them, and they were tossed and buffeted about in imminent peril of having their flier's wings ripped clean away.

But it was a relief to battle against that rushing wind, for it served the good purpose of distracting their minds from the annihilating disaster below.

And without doubt there was

material is made in that city. We break a place that is so useful

him?"

"Oh, I forgot. You've been trapped in Tarp for years, and know mothing of ourside events. Well, I can tell you that shortly before I came here Uensi had decided to challenge Scund's autocratic power for the sake of his enslayed people." Sid frowned as another great building of Nayr collapsed. "The brute! Surely Uensi has some means of replying."

As if to answer Sid's plaint, twelve smashing blows hit Tarp-twelve shells burst with a devastating effect that was beyond Earthly conception.

ception.

Sid stared in round-eyed amazement at the awful upheaval that suddenly surrounded him, a sight so fascinalingly gruesome that he was hardly conscious of personal danger.

He saw huge stones flung high into the air, as if the ground beneath Tarp had become actively volcanic. Directly facing them one great building split into two distinct halves, one side sagging to a heap of ruins, the other litting bodily and grotesquely into space. For fully fifty feet it rose in one swift rush, then tilted and broke into a hundred fragments that thundered down on the petrified slaves below.

(How will the dread battle and?

(How will the dread hattle end? Order your copy of the Boys' Eriend in advance and made sore you read yest Mondays' starting instalment.)

анионичний пальзичний пини поличий г A Disgrace to His Club!

As he heard the voice Sir Richard Elvington started as if he had been shot. Mr. Pain laid a warning hand on his arm, and the chairman of the Albion set himself to listen once more. "Your methods are too crude," the same voice went on. "When you ran down those fellows the other day you were much too careless. You nearly killed one of them. Quite unnecessary—quite! I don't want violence, or not more than is essential." Robert James laughed, and at the

killed one of them. Quite unnecessary—quite! I don't want violence, or not more than is essential."

Robert James laughed, and at the same time Sir Richard, outside the window, whispered to his companions.

"That's enough," he said. "Now follow me."

And he jumped up, thrust open the window, and burst into the presence of the astonished plotters, followed instantly by the others. Reid and James made for the door, but Jack Kerr and Jim Brown collared them. Meanwhile, Sir Richard and Mr. Pain had secured Mr. Daniel Gill, and when the struggle was over the charman of the Albion expressed himself in no uncertain fashion.

"I've heard you discussing your dastardly plots with your rascally accomplices, you secondrel!" thundered Sir Richard furiously. "Bat I'll deal lightly with you for the sake of the club. Either you resign your directorship at once, leave Clayford for good, and promise to keep your mouth shut about the whole affair, or I'll inform the police, and you will be tried for conspiracy."

Gill groaned in despair.

"As for you, you villains," roared the charman, turning to James and Reid, "you may think yourselves lucky not to be charged with mauslaughter over the Canford business. Get out of this part of the country at once. If I hear of either of you in Clayford or Barchester again, I'll see you safely in gao!!"

"But—" began Gill in a whining tone.

"Silence!" stormed Sir Richard.
"You have heard my torms. Willen."

"But—" began Gill in a whining tone.

"Silence!" stormed Sir Richard.
"You have heard my torms. Write your resignation here and now, or it will be the worse for you!"

Gill was a coward at heart, and he knew Sir Richard to be a man of his word. He found pen and paper, and wrote a formal resignation of his position as director of the Clayford club. Sir Richard took up the paper, and then, sternly repeating his warning, he walked out, leaving the three conspirators in a very unenviable state of mind.

mind.

The chairman of the Albion informed the directors of Selsdon and Casford that the accidents to their men had been the result of a deliberate plot by the ex-director, and added that Gill, James, and Reid had all left Chayford. The officials of the other clubs were at first inclined to put the whole of the facts before the Football Association; but, after a lone discussion. the whole of the facts before the Foot-ball Association; but, after a long discussion, they agreed to save the fair name of football by taking no action, for they were convinced that the other directors of the Albion were quite innocent of all participation in the affair, and the mystery of Clay-ford was thenceforth buried in the oblivion which it deserved,

Oblivion which is described.

("Bulldog" Holdjast reappears in a ratiling fine story, catified "The Men of Venytancel" next Monday.
On no account miss it. Order your On no account miss it. Order copy of Boys' Friend to days)



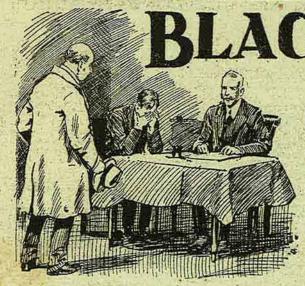
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BOYS' REALM

Every Wednesday.

ANOTHER TOPPING TALE OF THE BOYS OF DANESBURY SCHOOL.

Published Every Monday



By PETER FOY. 12:-

By a clever ruse Pargiter and Payne of the Fifth Form at Danesbury save Jones Minor from the hands of a rascal.

"Your governor basn't tumbled, has he?" asked the Fifth Form fellow.
"No. not yet; but he will before the week is out. Bead that note."
They stood under a lamp-post, and read these words:

"27x, Lennox Gardens, Kensington, W.,

"My Dear Boy,—As I have business
in Guildford to-morrow, I shall take
advantage of the jeurney to pop over
and see you. You may expect me
during the atternoon. However, as I
hate coming up to the school, you might
call at the Dragon Hotel, where I shall
be having lunch, and I will stay there
till you come along,

Your affectionate dad,

"Chauge Jones."

"Well, what's the trouble?" asked Payne, as he handed back the letter. "After all, Colonel Jones is not bound to find out about Beys simply because he pays a flying visit to Guildford."

Mr. Bevis went pale. If the colonel had discovered his dealings with young Jones, then his power over that youth was, of course, ended, and he could blackmail him no longer. However, the moneylender determined to put a bold front on the business.

"Well, what if I have?" he replied in a voice which he tried to render blustering.

a voice which he tried to render blustering.

"Come to this hotel—the Dragon—where I am staying for the day, and I will go into the matter with you," said the voice very sternly. "For your own sake, I advise you to come."

Bevis felt more anxious than ever. He knew that he had put himself in a very dangerous position by blackmailing the young fellow, and if Colonel Jones chose to be disagreeable, he might find himself at the Guildford assizes in less than no time. So, thrusting on his faded hat, and seizing his greasy gloves, the little man departed very lustily for the hotel.

As he approached the entrance, he say.

as he approached the entrance, he saw a youth standing by the door.

"Oh, there you are," said Frank Pargiter quietly "I was asked to look out for you. Come this way, and I'll show you up to the room."

Feeling in a highly nervous condition. Bevis followed Pargiter up the old-fashioned staircase of the quaint hotel, at the door of No. 27, Pargiter knocked. "Come in!" said a very irate voice. "Oh, I hope he won't be in a bad temper!" thought Bevis, as Pargiter turned the handle.

Seated at a table in the centre of the

Seated at a table in the centre of the room was the white-haired, white-moustached old gentleman. Seated opposite, with his head in his hands, was Jones minor.

"Afternoon, colonel!" said Bevis respectfully.

He was about to sit down when the white-haired man stopped him.

"Stand up, sir! Don't you dare to sit till I give you leave! By Jove! I wish I had you on parade. I'd make short work of you!

In an instant the wretched money-lender was crouching over the paper.
"Now write these words!" cried the other sternly. "I — whatever your Christian name is—Bevis, hereby with-draw all claims of every kind against William Claude Jones, of Danesbury School, and I admit that I have been blackmailing him for moneys not due to me."

blackmailing him for moneys not sine to me."

"Here, hold on-hold on!" gasped Bevis, white to the lips. "You don't want me to write all that, surely?"

"The bell is quite handy, Mr. Bevis, and Pargiter is quite ready to ring it!"

With a stifled groan, Bevis wrote the incriminating words.

A minute later the document was signed and witnessed.

Bevis rose and eyed the door cagerly. "Well, now that all this business is got over 50 nicely," he said, in his cily voice, "I think I'll go. Your son, colored, won't hear anything more from me, and I rely on you not to use that paper against me."

won't hear anything more from me, and rely on you not to use that paper against me."

"Quite so. But wait a moment! Pargiter, kindly lock that door and give me the key!"

The moneylender, with a little crydarted towards the door, but a vigorod's shove from the hefty Pargiter sent him spinning against the wall.

"Here is the key, colonel!"

"Thank you! Now, Mr. Bevis, just attend to me for a moment!"

"Well, what is it?" asked Bevis, in a voice made sullen by fear.

"Years ago, when I was on a hill-station in India, we had a case something like yours. A skunk of a moneylender had been blackmailing one of our regiment. We couldn't soil our hands by giving him a good thrashing, but we hit upon another method which answered our purpose. We propose to apply that method to you this afternoon.

"Here, no violence—no violence!" cried Bevis, shaking rather energetically.

"There's such a thing as the law, you know!"

"Yes, but you are not likely to appeal to it. Here, Mr. Pargiter, catch hold of

"There's such a thing as the law, you know!"

"Yes, but you are not likely to appeal to it. Here, Mr. Pargiter, catch hold of the fellow whilst I uncork the bottle!"

"Help! Help!" yelled Bevis.

But before he could get a third crepast his lips he found himself caught in a firm grip, whilst the huge, hefty hand of Frank Pargiter was firmly pressed over his mouth.

"You little skunk," said Pargiter. "We're not going to hurt you! We're only going to give you some medicine!"

Meantime, the fierce old gentleman had taken from a cupboard an enormous bottle. He drew out the cork, and smiled.

"Cod-liver oil," he observed. "And I prescribe a full tumbler, Mr. Bevis."

Jones minor, who throughout the recent interview had not spoken a word now joined the fray. Darting from his chair, he helped to hold the moneylender whilst the oil was poured down his throat.

"Ugh, ugh, ugh!" gasped Bevis, spluttering, half-choking. "You're killing me!"

"Oh, it won't do you any harm!" said.

me!"
"Oh, it won't do you any harm!" said.
Pargiter, with a grin. "It's quite an excellent drug, really. Only most people
don't like it in quite such big doses.
Now, Mr. Bevis, have you had coongil
If not, there's plenty left in the bottle!"
"Yet me go! Let me go!" groaned

"Let me go! Let me go!" groaned Bevis. "I'll take care never to interfere with any of your infernal boys again! But how the mischief was I to know that the colonel was going to be brought into the business?"

with another groam, and with his face a sickly green, he shambled from the room, and as the door closed on him Jones minor realised that he was safe from the attentions of Mr. Bevis for the remainder of his natural life.

"H'm! There's only one little bit of consolation in this horrible business," thought Bevis. "That young devil has had to tell his dad, and I know he hated the idea of it. The coionel will take it out of him, I'll be bound!"

But Mr. Bevis was wrong, quite wrong in his prediction. For hardly had that unhappy gentleman reached the street when a somewhat queer incident happened.

Jones minor gave a wild whoop, and sprang about two feet into the air. Then he sat down, buried his face in his hands, and laughed.

Pargiter was grinning from ear to ear. "Splendid!" he muttered. "A great notion!"

"Glad you think so!" observed Harold Payne quietly, as he removed a cropped white wig from his head, and a fierce moustache from his upper lip. "Rather lucky, wasn't it, that we had these props left over from last term's show! Lucky also that the genuine colonel sent a wire last night saying he couldn't get down, after all. In fact, luck has favoured us all the time."

On the way back to Danesbury Jones minor said, rather huskly:
"I don't know how to thank you claps. You've saved me from that brute: I sha'n't forget! Wish I could do something to show you what I'm feeling!"

Payne grinned, and gave him a mighty thump on the shoulder.

"So you can," he replied. "Come and help Parge and me toast some sausages for tea, and give those moneylending blighters a wide miss in future!"

THE END.

(Look out for another great story of the boys of Danesbury School. Make sure you obtain next Monday's Boxs' FRIEND by ordering it in advance from your newsagent.)

The 1st Chapter. Blackmail!

"Jones minor seems to have a hundred-horse-power hump, I notice," observed Harold Payne, one morning. "I rather like that chap. Wonder what's up with him?"

Harold Payne, one morning. "I rather like that chap. Wonder what's up with him?"

"Can't imagine," replied Frank Pargiter, as he proceeded to toast a sausage with considerable interest. "But if he is in any bother, why doesn't he get his brother to help him out?"

"Because Jones major, though only twelve months older than Jones minor, is a prig of three-cylinder dimensions!" said Payne. "Anyhow, I vote we dig young Jones out after morning school, and see if we can buck him up a bit."

They found the unhappy Jones moning in a corner of the big playground. Payne touched him on the shoulder.

"Look here, Jones, old chap!" he said. "Parge and I rather want to have a chow with you. Care to come to my study?" Jones, a tall, rather feeble-looking boy, looked up quickly.

"Here, what's up?" he asked nervously. His face went white as paper. "You—you haven't heard anything?" he jerked out after an instant's pause.

"No; but we've seen a bit," replied Payse. "And it's plain you are a bit upset about something. Now, Parge and I don't pose as phillanthropists, and we can't forget that you did us rather a decent turn last half, and we like to pay our debts."

Jones shivered. "Only I wantered. "Oh, I

Jones shivered.

"Jones shivered.

"Debts—debts!" he muttered. "Oh, I loathe the very word!"

Pargiter and the other Fifth Form fellow exchanged glances. "You'd better confide in us," he said. "Come along to old Payne's study!"

"Yes—yes, I'll come! By Jove, you are good chaps, both of you!" murmared Jones hoarsely.

A moment later the three of them were seated in the cosy little room, decorated with cricket-bats, boxing-gloves, and other interesting trophies.

"I'll tell you everything," began Jones. "You may be able to help me out, or you may not. In any case, it'll do me no end of good to get the beastly thing off my chest!"

"Then go ahead!" suggested Payne.

you may not. In any case, it'll do me no end of good to get the beastly thing off my chest!"

"Then go ahead!" suggested Payne. "And, of course, whatever you tell us, young Jones, we shall regard as quite confidential."

"Then, it's like this," said Jones, in a low voice. "I've been an ass! I was frightfully hard up last term, and I got a circular from that money-lending chap in Guidford—Jonas Bevis."

"H'm! I've seen the blighter!" remarked Payne.

"I borrowed about fifteen pounds from the fellow," went on Jones miserably. "But I've paid it back, every shilling, and the interest as well. I thought, of course, that when I had done that he would leave me alone. But the blackmard has now taken to blackmailing me. Insiats on another ten pounds for what he calls 'expenses." And I've not got more than a few bob in all the world!"

"But why on earth don't you set the police on him?" asked Pargiter.

"I can't. It would mean my dad getting to know, and he'd never forgive me! He hates the very idea of moneylenders. He'd take me away from Danesbury, and send me to some beastly tinpot private school. And, you see, that is where this low rotter Bevis has got the hold on me. He threatens to write to my dad unloss I raise the money somehow!"

"Have you threatened him with the police?" asked Payne thoughtfully. "You could do that without actually going to them."

"Of course; but the beast by going to
"Of course; but the beast by going to
some paper which I signed, stigulates for
the se-called expenses. Oh, it's a
uretched business altogether! Wish I'd
never been born!"

If the buried his hot face in his hands.
"Now then, buck up!" said Payne.
"Will you authorise Pargiter and myself
to interview our friend Bevis, and see if
we can come to terms?"

"Of course! And it's frightfully decent
of you. But I'm afraid it won't be much
good. The fellow is hard as a grindstone!"

At length the wretched Jones guitted

At length the wretched Jones quitted the study, looking somewhat brighter.

The 2nd Chapter.
Nothing Doing!

Pargiter and Payne did not believe in letting the grass grow under their feet. That very afternoon, when tea was ended, the two claums set out for the office of Mr. Jonas Bevis.

The moneylender lived in a narrow street close to the town-hall. Luckily, the office was still open, and Bevis himself happened to be disengaged.

"Ah. good-evening, young gentlemen!"

"Ah, good-evening, young gentlemen!" he cried, as-he rubbed his hands. "Very pleased to see you! From the school, I believe? Come into the private office, and sit down!" The blighter thinks we've come along to negotiate a loan!" whispered Payne, with a slight grin. "Strikes me he is going to have a rude awakening!" The moment they were in the small office Bevis carefully closed the door, placed chairs, and then said, almost in a whisper:

"How much do you want?"

"Not a shilling," replied Payne. "And if we did, we'd both sooner see ourselves shot than come to you for it?"

"Here, take care what you're saying, you young dog!" snarled Bevis. "If you don't want to borrow money, why have you come here?"

"To have a chat. Now just listen, Mr. Bevis. In the first place, I want to tell you that we know all about young Jones and his business with you."

"Well, that's no business of yours!" snapped Bevis.

"Perhaps not; but we are going to make it our business! Now, you must know that in lending money to a chap under age you are breaking the law. Suppose we go straight from here to the police-station, and have you arrested on that charge, and also on the charge of blackmailing him for further money?"

Bevis grinued.

"Oh, so that's your game, is it?" he said softly. "Well, I admit your statement. I dare say you could do what you've surgested. But suppose I cared to swear that he told me he was over twenty-one? He might easily pass for that, you know. And why shouldn't! have believed him? Ah, that touches you, don't lif? Then about this blackmailing. There is only his word for that. You see, my clever gentlemen, I have put nothing in writing—nothing! So go to the police at once, and they'll laugh in your faces!"

The sooundrel had spoken absolute fact. So subtly had he arranged matters that he had certainly protected himself from the law, or, at any rate, he believed that he had one so.

A pause followed. Then Bevis said, as he suddenly quitted his chair:

"Now go back to the school and tell your friend what I've told yo

Two minutes later they were in the street, and Bevis was grinning triumphantly.

The 3rd Chapter.

The 3rd Chapter.

The Colonel Arrives.

"So that's that!" observed Frank Parriter somewhat gloomily, as they strolled back to Danesbury in the gathering dusk.

"Well, we've done about as much good as if we'd never gone near that old hunks! What's the next move?"

"Leave that to me!" replied Payne.

"I'm done for the moment, but I'll come up to time, don't you worry!"

As they drew near to the gates of the school, they saw a boy walking hurriedly towards them.

"Hallo! It's Jones minor!" said Payne; "and he seems a bit rocky. Wonder what's up now?"

In another minute Jones was beside them.

"It's all fin you follows!" he evided.

In another thanks.
them.
"It's all dp, you fellows!" he cried.
"I've just had a note from home."
Payne gasped.

Jones minor shook his head gloomily.

"Bevis gets to know everything that goes on in the town," he said, "and one of his clerks is always hanging about the Dragon. The chances are about ten to one against me. And I feel in an awful funk."

"In that case," said Harold Payne, "we must try and think out a scheme, Jones."

Jones."
On the following afternoon whilst Mr.
Bevis was seated in his office, a clerk
entered and told him he was wanted
on the phone.
"Who is it—who is it?" snapped Bevis.

"Who is it—who is it?" snapped Bevis.

"Colonel Somebody, sir. I think the
name was Jones, but it rlight have been
Stones or Tones."

A moment later the moneylender was
at the phone.

"Yes, yes; what is it—what is it?"
he asked irritably.

"My name is Jones. I understand that
you have been engaged in a certain
transaction with my son," said a stern
military voice.

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"Now, about my son," began the cld man. "He has confessed everything to me, and I am very glad. He behaved like a young fool in ever borrowing money from a low-down person of your breed, but as he has paid back every shalling and interest as well, it is time that you ceased annoying him-persecuting him!"

"Persecute him! On dear-ol, dear! Don't talk like that colonal wait and

that you ceased annoying him-persecuting him!"

"Persecute him! Oh dear-oh, dear!"
Don't talk like that, colone!" said Bevis in a cringing tone. "Why, I'm quite foad of the young gentleman. Only I thought his father ought to know what was going on."

"Silence, you hypocrite!" shouted the colonel. "Don't lie to me! You were using my name as a means of trying to extort further money from him! However, I'm not going to waste words and time on you! Er-Pargiter, perhaps you would kindly bring the pen and ink over here. Also a sheet of paper."

Bevis looked on with wondering eyes.

here. Also a sheet of paper."

Bevis looked on with wondering eyes. What was going to happen next? he asked himself with considerable terror. But he was soon enlightened, for the white-haired old gentleman suddenly pointed to the table.

"Now sit down, take up that pen, and write as I dictate?" he commanded. "If you refuse. I ring that bell and send for the police! Blackmail is a pretty serious offence, Mr. Bevis, and the lending of money to boys under age is also against the law."



TAKING HIS MEDICINE! Bevis spluttered and gurgled as the oil was poured down his throat.
"Ugh! Ugh!" he gasped, half-choking. "You're killing me, you beasts!"

Monday's State IT'S SIMPLY GREAT!
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