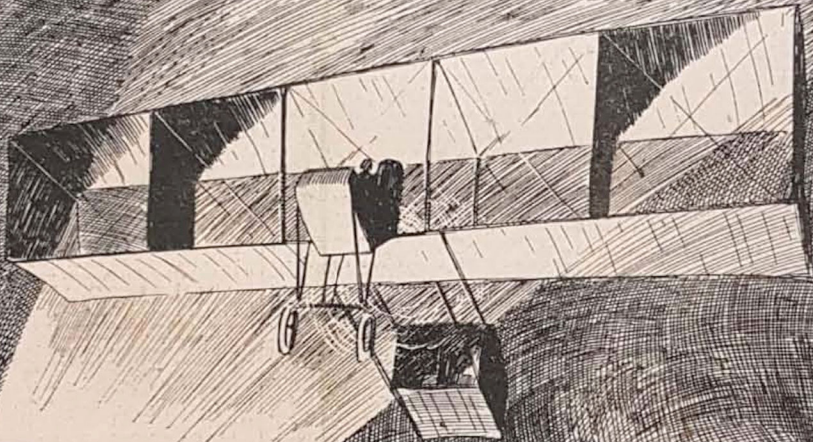


THE GREAT SATURDAY SPORTS PAPER.

# Boys' Realm



## Vultures of the Air!

A THRILLING  
FLYING STORY



# CLIFFORD'S PRIZE

A Fine, Complete Tale of Jack Noble and Pelham School.



### The 1st CHAPTER.

**Clifford's Little Plot Succeeds.**

"My only hat!" gasped Clifford, bulging eyes at the small notice fixed on the door of the Pelham Hall.

"I'll bet anything that that's a number of Bayne's ticket," he continued, talking his thoughts aloud in the excitement of the moment; "and, by Jove, he's won the first prize in the lottery!"

He glanced again at the notice, and saw that the prize was still damp and covered with water. Evidently the sheet had only been pasted up.

"I must take a note of the number," Cluffy muttered, fishing out a stump of pencil and a scrap of paper. "25764. Got it!"

He thrust the paper away, and, with one last nervous look at the notice, leaped out his bike, pedalling through the village as hard as he could peddle.

"I don't believe that that silly ass knows anything about this!" he thought. "It's ten to one that he has forgotten he ever bought a ticket."

The tickets for one lottery in connection with the local cattle show had been sold a good month before, and Bayne, a derry-headed fellow, was one of Clifford's cronies, as a mad moment had paid a shilling for one. He had suffered a deal of chaff over the transaction, especially from Noble and his merry set of the Third, but the laugh would be on his side now.

Clifford's brain fairly creaked as he tried to remember.

"A chack-headed ass like that has no right to a prize!" he decided. "I—I must get that bloody ticket!"

By the time he reached Pelham School his fancy imagination had formed a plan. It was a particularly clever one; but then, Clifford was a particularly clever chap.

"I'll fetch him all right," the bully thought, "and, anyhow, if it doesn't, I'll jolly well take the ticket from him!"

He took his bike in the shed, and darted down the Close into the Lower School. A number of Third-Formers, lounging beneath the clock, watched his long body streak across.

"Look at darling Clifford!" Bob Russell murmured under the brim of his straw hat. "He seems badly energetic this afternoon. I wonder what's his game?"

"It seems trouble for someone!" Lawson remarked.

As soon as he was safely inside his study, the little captain began to arrange his little plot. He placed a small table close to the door, and on it stood a very gaudy thing in vases. The masterpiece was supposed to be an ornament for the hall, and if he had paid more than five pounds for it, he had been swindled.

"I'll bet that'll do," he cried, "and I'll bet my back and eying his trap. "When he comes barging in here, he'll knock that chack-headed right of bricks."

Clifford laid his trap the next thing to do was to forego his victim into entering it. The little captain slipped through the door, and, walking along the corridor, pounced on the first kid.

"You go and find me, and I'll want to see him at once!"

"But—what I've just been sent up to fetch a set of pads for Noble," the fag complained.

Clifford made a quick dart forward, and pulled the fag by the ear.

"You'll do me a favor, if I tell you, or I'll make you a very chippy cub!" he roared, giving the fag a nip of flesh as severe as twist.

"All right, Clifford, I—I'll go!"

Clifford loosened his hold, and stood back, a grin on his face.

"You'll do me a favor," he said, and the little fag walked away.

Clifford, feeling quite pleased with himself and dandy, sauntered back to the corridor into the room opposite his, and closed the door behind him, and

then, leaning against it, waited for the coming of Bayne.

He hadn't long to wait. Ten minutes later the sound of heavy breathing came to him, and he heard Bayne tramping along the corridor.

"Now for it!" Clifford thought, bending down and applying his eye to the keyhole.

Bayne came right down the passage, and, unsuspecting of evil intent, halted in front of Clifford's study.

Turning the knob, he banged the door in. "What do you wa—"

Crash!

The slender table went toppling over, and the gorgeous vase shot off and landed on the floor, bursting like a miniature bomb into a hundred fragments.

"Well, I'm dashed—" Bayne began.

From behind him there sounded a roar of wrath, and Clifford, fire flashing in his eyes, tore out of the room opposite, and into his own.

"You clumsy ass!" he howled. "I'll—I'll knock your fat head off!"

A quick leap carried Bayne round Clifford's desk, and he turned a pair of anxious eyes towards his bullying leader.

"I—I don't know how it happened, old chap!" he stammered. "I—I only just pushed."

"Pushed—pushed?" bawled Clifford, working up a really creditable display of virtuous rage. "You went barging in there like a bull in a china shop! Dash it, man, look what you've done!"

Bayne directed his gaze towards the heap of fragments on the floor.

"It's a good job it was only that tuppenny vase he's hazardous."

"Wh-what's that?" yelled Cluffy, taking a pace forward.

His toady backed away against the wall.

"I—I only said that it was a good job I didn't break anything really va-valuable!" he stammered.

Clifford's howl of fury made its hearer shiver.

"Why, you—you frabjous ass!" bellowed the captain, "that vase was—one of my best things! It—it came from Egypt, or—some other place like that. I wouldn't take five shillings for it!"

"You don't believe you would," Bayne said, half to himself, "because no one would be fool enough to offer it!"

Clifford was kneeling on the floor gathering the fragments together with painful care.

"It's absolutely ruined!" he muttered, loud enough for his toady to hear. "I'll never be able to get it riveted!"

"I shouldn't think you'd want to," Bayne murmured. "Chuck it in the dustbin!"

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"I shouldn't think you'd want to," Bayne murmured. "Chuck it in the dustbin!"

"Yes," he roared, "I will chuck it in the dustbin; but you'll have to pay for a new one."

Bayne began to protest loudly.

"It wasn't my fault!" he cried. "I only just fouched your rotten door. The table must have been leaning against it!"

"That he's broken the vase, and you'll jolly well have to pay for it!"

He looked so menacing, and Bayne had felt the power of his fists so often, that he capitulated at once. Diving his hand into his pocket, he withdrew three coppers, and placed them on the desk.

"All right," he said, with a sign; "there you are. You can buy a couple of 'em with that!"

Clifford grabbed up the coppers, and pocketed them swiftly.

"If you think that threepence will square up to it," he remarked, "you're mistaken. I want me, at the very least, five shillings."

"Two shillings!" Clifford roared. "I'll give me any more of your dashed sauce. I'll knock your head off!"

Bayne eyed the fist and the ugly face behind it, and surrendered.

"But, anyhow," he breathed, "I can't pay you any more. That threepence was all I had. You're stamped."

"Then I'll have to get its value out of you, that's all!" Clifford roared, dropping his fist. "Turn out your pockets—sharp!"

The toady began to obey his orders, and a rare display of utterly unseizable articles took place.

Clifford turned over the heap of rubbish with his finger, and snorted. There was a spring- less knife, a ball of eolubler's wax, a length of wire, a battered policeman's whistle, and a folded square of paper.

"The whole jolly lot of it isn't worth carting away!" commented the Shell captain. "I never saw such muck in my life!"

"Oh, they come in handy now and again," Bayne commented cheerfully. "You can have 'em if you like."

Clifford picked up the square of greasy paper, and began to unfold it. Bayne did not see the look of triumph which flashed into his leader's face.

"What's the lottery ticket for?" he asked.

Bayne, with a cry of surprise, leaned forward and made a quick grab at the paper; but, quick though his action was, Clifford was on the alert.

"Oh, no, you don't!" he cried, backing out of reach, and waving the ticket above his head. "Forgoats, after all, this may be worth while sticking to."

"I—I forgot all about it!" Bayne cried. "It's—It's a lottery ticket, and there are no end of ripping prizes. You give it back to me."

"No jolly fear!" said the bully. "You said that I could have it, and I'll take you at your word."

"You're a beast if you do!" Bayne breathed. "It cost me a shilling, and your rotten vase never cost half that!"

"That's your look out!" commented the scheming Fourth-Former, folding the precious ticket up and putting it into his pocket.

You smashed my ornament, and so I'm going to stick to this ticket!"

For a moment Bayne stood still, breathing fire and fury at his tormentor. Then a calmer mood came to him. After all, the ticket might only be so much waste paper.

"Very well," he said, "you can stick to it, and we'll call it quits. I don't suppose that the beastly thing is worth anything. I've even forgotten when the draw was to take place. I wouldn't be surprised if the whole thing isn't over by now."

Clifford chuckled to himself.

"Well, that's my business," he remarked. "I had to get my money out of you somehow, and I don't mind risking the rest."

When Bayne had gathered up the rest of his rejected belongings, and had stalked gloomily out of the room, Clifford could hardly restrain himself. He drew out the ticket, and glanced at the number. Yes, there it was—25764!

The first prize!

"He's the jumping mad when he hears about it!" he thought. "But that's nothing to do with me. He said I could have it—gave it me, in fact."

It was a rather peculiar method of describing the transaction, but Clifford was a peculiar person.

"It's only turned three o'clock," he murmured, gazing out of the study window towards the clock-tower opposite. "I think I'll

cut right back to the village at once, and claim the prize now."

He stuck his cap on his head, and presently emerged into the quad again. As he made his way towards the bicycle shed, Bayne and Marker and Prince met him.

"Where are you off to, Clifford?" Marker asked.

Bayne grinned. He seemed to have quite forgotten his trial.

"I'll bet a shilling to a piece of chalk that I can guess!" he cried.

The Shell captain was in such fine humour that he would have joked with anyone.

"Right you are!" he cried. "I'll take you on, Bayne. Where am I going?"

Bayne sniggered.

"Down to the village to see if that rotten ticket has won a prize. Ha, ha, ha!" he chuckled.

"Ha, ha, ha!" echoed Prince and Marker.

It was evident to Clifford that Bayne had told the other two of what had occurred, and the trio were obviously convinced that Clifford had made a bad bargain. The wily captain grinned to himself.

"Laugh away, you duffers!" he thought. "You won't laugh so loudly when I come back!"

But in that he was mistaken. Prince and Marker and Bayne, and, as a matter of fact, the whole of Pelham School, were to laugh even louder on his return.

"You've won your bet, Bayne!" he said aloud, glancing at his toady. "I am going down to see how the lottery has gone."

"There! What did I tell you, chaps?"

Bayne grinned.

"I'm hanged if I would sweat down to the village on such a useless errand!" commented Marker.

"It wouldn't do if we all thought the same, would it?" Clifford murmured, as he wheeled his bike away.

When he leaped into the saddle, a chorus of cries broke out from his watching chums.

"Send us a wire if you've won anything, Cluffy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We—we'll wait up for you, old chap!"

"By-by, Cluffy! If you can't carry it yourself, we'll come down and give you a hand. Ha, ha, ha!"

"I never knew what silly asses these chaps really were until now!" was the comforting thought of the Shell captain as he peddled through the wide gates, and turned into the broad road which led to the village.

### The 2nd CHAPTER.

**Clifford's Little Plot Succeeds.**

"It's quite correct," Mr. Toomer, the town clerk, said, glancing over his spectacles at the Pelhamite. "I must congratulate you. You've won the first prize."

Clifford's sigh of relief sounded like a small tornado.

"Wh-where is it?" he asked eagerly.

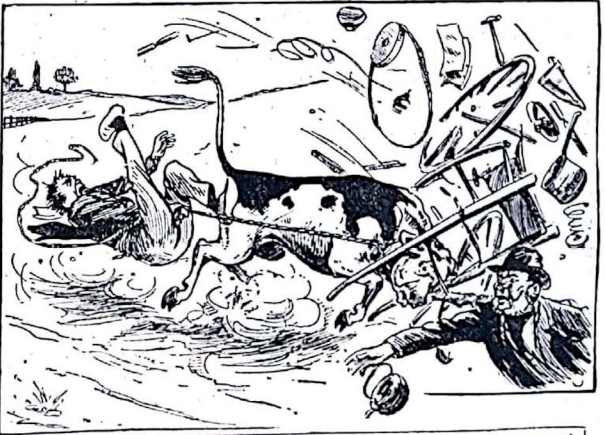
"You will find it in the custody of Mr. Tabbs, the butcher," the town clerk continued. "Just wait a moment, and I will write you out a note telling him to hand it over to you."

Clifford waited in silence while the official's pen scribbled noisily across the sheet. It struck him that a butcher was a rather strange custodian for a prize, but he did not give voice to his thoughts.

"There you are," said the town clerk, handing the envelope across; "and I wish you joy of your prize. It is worth forty pounds, if it is worth a penny!"

Clifford walked out of the office feeling as though he had trekked on air. He had certainly scored this time. Forty pounds for a miserable vase was the sort of transaction that

(Continued on the next page.)



A whirlwind of pots and pans and kettles seemed to break close around Clifford's head. His shins came into violent contact with the outstretched shafts, and he was thrown forward on to his face.



