

THE GREAT SATURDAY SPORTS PAPER.

The Boys' Realm

of Sport and Adventure.

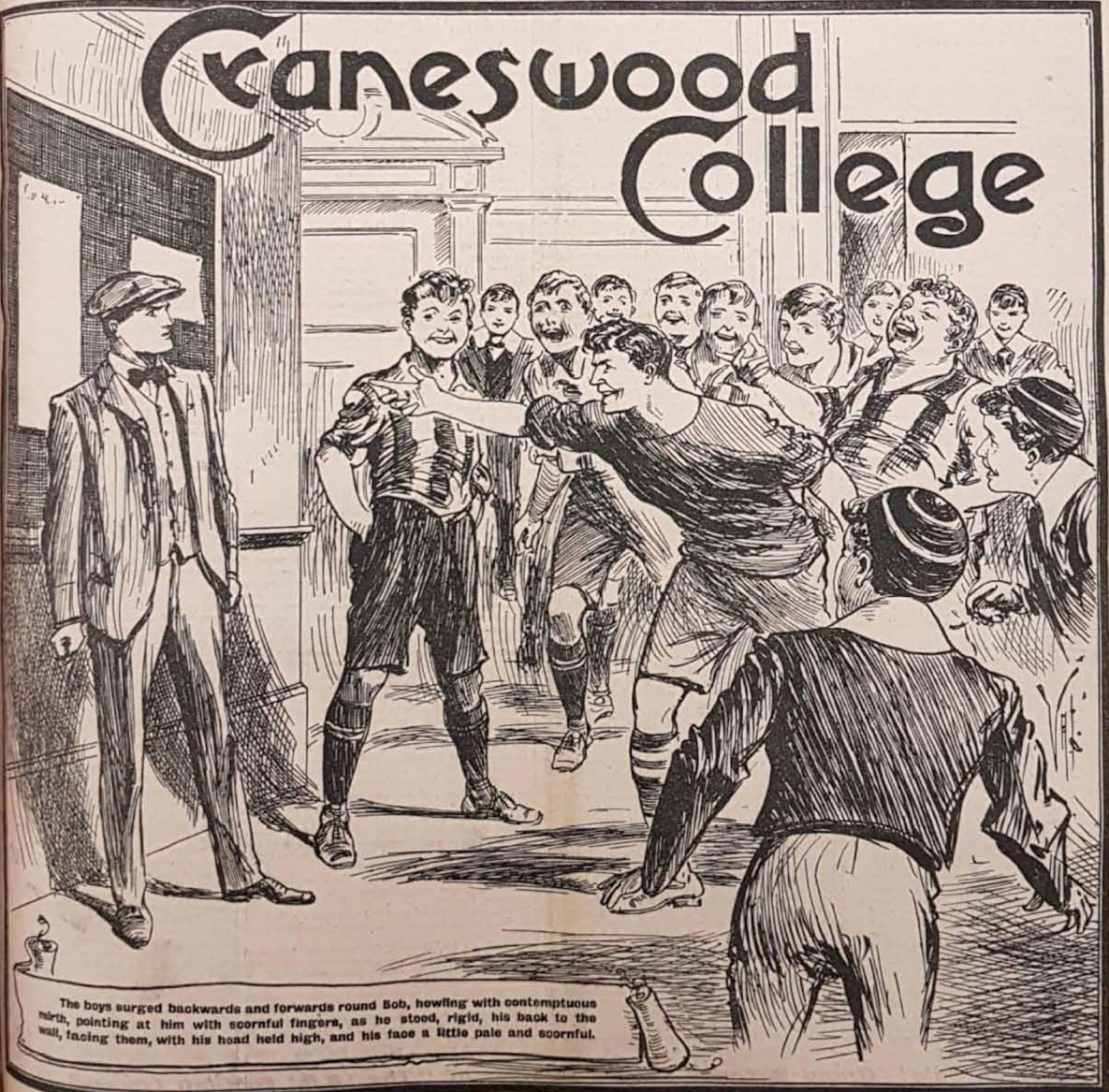


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EVERY SATURDAY—ONE PENNY.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 1910.

Caneswood College



The boys surged backwards and forwards round Bob, howling with contemptuous mirth, pointing at him with scornful fingers, as he stood, rigid, his back to the wall, facing them, with his head held high, and his face a little pale and scornful.

CLIFFY'S TREASURE HUNT

A Rattling Complete Tale of Pelham School.



THE 1st CHAPTER.

A Mysterious Expedition.

"B. IT parky!" said Bob Russell. "Never mind; we'll all get warmed up nicely when Noble comes!"

It was a half-holiday in early autumn, and the afternoon, though beautifully bright, was rather chilly, and especially so at the river-side. Russell was standing on the little landing-stage, looking down at the roomy old four-oared boat which Noble and his chums were accustomed to use on their up-river outings.

The others then present, Murphy, Macalpine, and Evans, nodded in agreement with Bob's remark, but said nothing. However, they seemed to be thinking a lot. In fact, there was a noticeable air of suppressed excitement about the little company. Any Pelhamite who was up to the ways of Noble's lively crowd—and what Pelhamite was not?—would easily have seen that the brisk Third-Former had some great game on hand that afternoon.

Of so much the four chums were quite sure. Almost at the last moment several other promising projects had been thrown aside in favour of this rather mysterious boating excursion.

Jack had given no explanation, but his quiet hint and his accompanying wink had been quite good enough for the other four concerned.

They had gathered at the landing-stage with most comfortable expectations of a lively time. They had got their craft all ready, and were now waiting for their leader. No doubt they would get all details of the expedition when Jack Noble made his appearance.

"Faith, he ought to have been down by this!" said Murphy, looking up the road.

"Ye're a wee previous," returned Macalpine. "He said three, and it wants five minutes of that yet."

Jack Noble, who was not far off, spent part of that five minutes in a rather odd way. He paused in front of a second-hand furniture shop, where the dealer was giving a likely customer all the points of an old black oak settle. It was genuine antique, said the dealer, and he himself had bought it, along with many other articles, at the great sale of the furniture and effects at Myldon House.

Noble passed on, chucking quietly.

"Yes," he muttered, "with many other articles. And I happen to know where one of

these articles went, and that's just why we're going to have such a lovely time of it this afternoon. Ha, ha! It's the best chance of a jape that's turned up for ages, and it would be a sin to let it go. But I must hurry.

He did, and turned up at the riverside dead on time. There was no chance for discussion. It was hustle, hustle, hustle, all the way. Soon the boat was out in mid-stream, with Evans steering, and the other four putting in a lively lot of log-work as they worked up against the current.

Noble set a spanking stroke, and the three good fellows behind him had no breath to spare to ask questions about where they were going, or what they were going to do. For the time the sport itself was plenty good enough for them, and it was not until they had an "easy" that Taffy Evans put a query to the skipper.

"I say, Jack, where are we making for?"

"Oh, the island!" said Noble. "Not the osier island; the big one higher up, with the trees on it. Close by Myldon House, you know."

"Humph!" said Russell. "Then we've got a long way to go. Strikes me we should have started earlier."

"Yes," said Taffy, "and that's just what I've been wondering about. We were just as fit to start at two o'clock as we were at three. Why didn't we get a move on directly after dinner?"

"Quite impossible!" said Noble calmly.

"What's impossible?"

"That we should have started directly after dinner."

"But why?"

"Because it was directly after dinner that the other fellows started," explained the skipper generally.

"What other fellows?"

"The fellows we're going after," said Jack.

"If we had started at the same time as they did, they would have twigged us, and then our glorious jape would have been off—right off—dead off! See?"

The other four didn't see a bit, and made no bones about saying so.

Noble, with a grin, turned sideways on his thwart, so that both cowxain and oarsmen could get the full benefit of his remarks.

"Ah," he said, "I must tell you that directly after dinner another four-oared boat, manned—ahem!—by five members of the Pelham Shell, started off on a trip to the big island."

"Names—names!" cried Murphy.

"Manned," chuckled Noble. "As follows: Bow oar, Prince of the Shell; No. 2, Bayne, ditto; No. 3, Marker; and last, but not least, stroke—"

"Cluffy!" yelled the four in chorus.

"Shut up!" hissed Jack. "You're quite right, but you needn't make such a blessed row about it. Cluffy's leading, and we're following on to see what we shall see, but we mustn't let him know we're on his track."

For quite half a minute the chums were as mum as mice on a pantry shelf. They were letting the glorious news sink right in—the glorious news that their sworn foe, Clifford, was to figure in the jape which Jack Noble had planned.

They only hoped it would be as successful as the many others which Noble had contrived against the same person. At all events, they would do their level best to make it so.

Evans was the first to speak, which he did in a throaty whisper.

"Have they got a cowxain?" he asked.

"Oh, yes," said Noble, with a little chuckle. "I'll have to tell you that bit. You'd never guess. It's Simson."

"What?"

"Fact!"

The four were silent again. This was something else that had to have time to sink in properly. What on earth had brought Simson, of the Shell, out on a boating excursion with Cluffy & Co.?

Simson was a moony, slack-backed sort of youth, who only played games under protest. He was crazy on chemical experiments, and when he wasn't concocting stinks in the school laboratory, he was generally raising odours in his study.

Though his usual manner was very meek and mild, he could on occasion fly into fits of passionate rage. Thus he had two nicknames, both relating to his hobby.

When he was at peace, they called him Soda Simson, and when not was in a wax, he went by the sobriquet of Sulphur.

The four thought him the very last chap in the school to join in with the Clifford gang. Noble, however, did not seem to be surprised, only very much amused.

"Well, let's get ahead, chums!" he said. "We don't want to miss any of the show. I say, Taffy, as soon as we get past the osier island you'll have to look out sharp for any signs of Cluffy's gang. We mustn't alarm them, and we want to see without being seen."

"Faith," said Murphy, "if they twig us, the fun'll be all over before it starts!"

The four went on cautiously, and reached the big, wooded island unnoticed. No sign of the other boat or crew was to be seen. They ran their own craft up at a spot pointed out by Noble, landed silently, and made the painter secure.

"Now then," said Jack, very quietly. "now's our chance for a bit of scouting practice. You all know that open space in the middle of the island, where the big stone is? Very well, then, I believe that Cluffy and his sweet little lot have gone there after a very good thing, so, of course, we're going there, too. Only we don't want to interfere with dear Cluffy and his pals. We only want to look at them and see how they're getting on. I think it'll be jolly funny—for us, but not quite so funny for Cluffy."

Noble's eyes twinkled as they scanned the eager faces of his chums. Their eyes twinkled back in fine style. Something that would be jolly funny for them, but not quite so funny for Cluffy, was just exactly what they were out for.

"So," continued the skipper, "for that high bank, the narrow space. Only no very narrow space. Then ringer quietly tangled undergrowth appointed spot. As bushes. The big tree, was full of view, and mighty Cluffy."

"But what in the name of heaven was he peeling off? With a handkerchief and rolling up his jacket. Facing Cluffy, with a Bayne, and lay at a side upper garments. Also son, with the full coat, fixedly at his watch, were to be seen."

"Faith, on! it's a sight it is!"

"Not a bit of it!" was the answer. "Not? Then what is it? His turnip in one hand, and the other hand, he's after."

"Judging by the way he see what Marker's doing?"

"Marker? Where? Oh, he's after Cluffy. Cluffy caught sight of Marker, who was big stone. With his three was digging away with a big dear life. It was plain having a very hard time of it, bearing with perspiration, and he was making on the ground, fully small in comparison with putting into the boat."

The Third-Formers were before. What could be the before. "Time!" said Simson, "There," sighed Murphy, "the fighter's rounds, after the Cluffy's next, but luck to the far better show was it. Cluffy is better at the wheel than the Cluffy thinkin'."

"Cluffy next!" snapped Simson. "Ha, ha! Marker laid down the Third-Formers with one arrow. Macalpine who added, "I'll be to turn, I'm thinkin'."

THE 2nd CHAPTER.

Simson Turns Sulphur.

LITTLE thinking that he had amused spectators, he had advanced to the scene of all the mischief of the man. The five chums up to much ado to restrain their chuckles of Cluffy, as a matter of fact, was absolutely miserable. Victim kind was not at all in his own clumsy figure, he worked away pick and spade. His air of gross seemed to indicate that there was serious depending on his effort.

"What the dickens are they doing?" murmured Bob Russell. "Is it for a prize competition? There's nothing big hanging to it, or Cluffy would be sweating his little self in that style. The wheeze, Jack, old chap!"

The answer was an unexpected interval of amazed silence followed by a thrilling whisper:

"Hush! They're hunting for hidden treasure."

As Russell said afterwards, that was the limit.

The Third-Formers felt that nothing surprised them any more. So Cluffy, being for hidden treasure, was he? Well, all serene. Let him hunt away, so long as he was content, and they would watch him at his work. They were more comfortable than they would be.

And if Cluffy should turn up anything that would be pleased to see it.

(Continued on the next page.)

YOUR EDITOR'S MAMMOTH OFFER TO JUNIOR FOOTBALL LEAGUES

Solid Silver Cups, Silver Medals, and Hundreds of Match Footballs to be Given Away!

The Editor of THE BOYS' REALM is prepared to present Twenty Solid Silver Challenge Cups to Twenty bona-fide Junior Football Leagues throughout the country. Secretaries of Leagues desirous to possess one of these handsome Trophies should make application in Form of application will be found below.

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This form, together with full particulars of the League, to be addressed to the Secretary, THE BOYS' REALM League, 23-29, Bouverie St., Fleet St., London, E.C.4.

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And if there should be nothing to turn up, it will be very much, so long as Cliffy has his toes with the spade, as he has been digging very frequently. The Third-Formers felt very glad indeed that Jack had led them up the river that afternoon.

Soda Simon, in favour of Bayne, had been the first to speak. Throwing a stone at the ground, he said gravely: "I hope you haven't made any more of the place. Let's have another look at the plan."

"I checked them half an hour ago," said Simon. "I can't help thinking they're somewhere. That ground is as hard as iron. I've been digging for ages. I've got you muddled over."

"You muddled over?" "I've got a ginger-pot bottle had struck the jaw, and from that, at least, he had a strong impression." The cork had come in the nerveless hands of the Third-Formers, and its contents were seeping into the hole. Needless to say, it had caused a very strong impression among the hidden Third-Formers.

"I mean it at all," said Marker, with a look on his face as if he were about to drink the "stuff." "It's the cork I'm thinking about," he said. "I'm not bothering about the cork," said Marker. "It's the stuff I'm thinking about."

"You mean you—" burbled Clifford. "You mean you—" mimicked Marker. "You mean you both quite right!" gasped Jack, who was looking very funny, but who wasn't giving away just yet.

The hole was restored among the treasure and Captain Clifford sauntered away with a look on his face. The digging was a genuine spell, but still there was a sign of concealed riches in the hole, and of considerable depth. In his turn, he came round again, and he had the usual notice of the fact. He suddenly one scented in no special hurry up to the spade which Marker had so far laid down.

"You mean you—" said Simon. "I'm jolly well on the wrong spot. I've just another place that looks far more likely. Any way, there's signs and signs that the earth having been disturbed, and it was than can be said for the place we've been at."

"What. Have it your own way, Clifford," said Simon calmly. "I'm on the spade and proceeded to the hole and took his fancy as a likely one for treasure. It was only a few yards and close to the granular trunk of an old tree. Cliffy made a very good thing for the afternoon, and minutes that he had in the work. He made the most progress. The soil here was certainly lower than at the spot indicated in the plan."

Price, and Marker then took their turn and the hole grew rapidly deeper. Cliffy, with excitement, fairly grabbed the hands of the concealed Third-Formers and with breathless interest. The hole of Cliffy doing real, right-down, hard work in itself to make the occasion. But still there was more to follow.

"Soda! said Marker to Simon, as he lay down for a rest, "what are you looking for?" "I'm thinking..." "I'm thinking..." "I'm thinking..." "I'm thinking..." "I'm thinking..." "I'm thinking..." "I'm thinking..." "I'm thinking..." "I'm thinking..." "I'm thinking..."

"The respective legal rights of the owners of land on the island," said Simon calmly. "This is an interesting, legal matter, and you see, belongs to the Mylon House, and partly to the Grand estate."

"You say, it's a wally interesting," said Marker. "I'm thinking..." "I'm thinking..." "I'm thinking..." "I'm thinking..." "I'm thinking..." "I'm thinking..." "I'm thinking..." "I'm thinking..." "I'm thinking..." "I'm thinking..."

"I'm thinking..." "I'm thinking..." "I'm thinking..." "I'm thinking..." "I'm thinking..." "I'm thinking..." "I'm thinking..." "I'm thinking..." "I'm thinking..." "I'm thinking..."

"I remembered," continued Simon, "the strange tales about old Miser Merriwell, about his queer habit of burying gold coin and silver plate all over his grounds. It struck me that I might make use of the plan. I made a few slight alterations on it. Then I looked up some of the school ink in one of my old galleys to make it brown and faded and ancient-like. With that I wrote some directions on the plan, which I thought there'll be any use in keeping on at the digging. But don't forget the night when you hazed me, and smashed up five pounds' worth of my apparatus. I've only been getting my own back in my own little way. There's no treasure—there never was any treasure! You claps have been making giddy asses of yourselves, while I kept time! That's all! We're quits, I think."

"You cur!" snarled Marker. "You beastly cur!" howled Bayne. "Let's duck him, chaps!" suggested Prince. The three Shell fellows stormed and raved, although none of them dared to lay a finger on Simon, who was looking more sulphury than he had ever done before. Strangely enough, as the Third-Formers thought, Clifford himself kept silent. Standing, waist deep in the hole, he was leaning on the spade, and gazing fixedly at the defiant Simon with a smile. Yes, an unmistakable smile.

"It was not long before his chums took notice of their leader's strange demeanour. "Come on, Clifford!" yelled Prince. "Let's souse the sneak—the rotter!" Clifford did not move. His only reply was

that—and that. And there's another—and that. Digging like a veritable maniac, Clifford began casting up spadeful after spadeful of loose earth. But not loose earth alone. With every raising of the spade there came something that clattered and clinked on the grassy ground, something that glinted and flashed in the afternoon sunlight. "By gum!" gasped Jack Noble. And Clifford let loose the ringing yell of the triumphant treasure hunter.

THE 3rd CHAPTER. The Third to the Rescue.

Clifford excited Clifford threw up half a dozen different articles of the most massive gold and silver plate before he stopped his furious tazing of the spade. "And there's lots more left," he panted. "Well, Boda, what do you think about it now?"

Simon had no chance to answer that question. Two men appeared suddenly from behind the old hawthorn-tree, two big hefty fellows, who looked like tourists. They wore Norfolk suits and cloth caps. One of them carried a camera, and the other a fishing-rod in a brown canvas case.

But there was nothing very tourist-like about the way they came on the scene. Their coarse faces were red with desperate rage, and they came with a rush and a roar. "Drop 'em, you brats!" one cried, as he cannoned into the Shell fellows, who had hurried up to inspect the articles which Clifford had unearthed. "Drop 'em, you vermin, and clear out—quick!"

The men did not stop to discuss the question of ownership. They were in a desperate hurry, and gave the astonished boys no time to realise



As Clifford stumbled on the brink of the hole, a heavy clenched fist caught him under the ear, and he fell on his face, quite stunned. The Shell were fighting a losing battle.

a grating chuckle, followed by a short, harsh laugh, more like a bark than anything else. "Great Scott!" muttered Noble. "Cliffy's gone off his rocker!" "Looks jolly well like it!" said Russell. "Why doesn't he come out of the hole? And what in the world is he grinning at?"

Clifford himself soon gave the reply to these questions. "Ha, ha! Jolly good!" he broke out suddenly. "You did it very well, Soda, old man, but I don't wish. I see your little game. Yes, I see right through it. You're deep, but not quite deep enough for me. Oh, no, no, no! That settles it," signed Russell. "Cliffy's up the pole!"

Simon, and the other Shell fellows, stared amazedly. "What do you mean?" said the former at last.

"What I say," laughed Clifford. "You've suddenly changed your mind about going shares in the treasure. You're sorry you let us into it, and now you want to put us off the scent. That accounts for the mistake in the bearings. Oh, it's all quite plain. But you're just a little bit too late with your pretty story, old man. Just a little bit too late."

"Too late!" gasped Simon. "What'd you mean?" "Oh, nothing much," said Clifford coolly. "Only it appears to have found the treasure, that's all."

"Found the treasure?" cried Simon disbelievingly. "But there's no treasure—it was tracted. Only lies about Merriwell hiding the stuff—there all lies about Merriwell."

the position. But Clifford quite understood that his treasure-trove was in danger. "No, you don't!" he roared, as he scrambled up out of the hole. But he tried to take the spade along with him to serve as a weapon, and that proved his undoing.

He stumbled on the brink. At the same moment a heavy-clenched fist caught him under the ear, and he fell on his face, quite stunned. So far as Clifford was concerned, that was the end of his eventful treasure hunt.

Simon, who, as Russell put it, was fairly bubbling over with sulphur, put up a tigerish fight. But while he was trying to strangle one of the fellows, the other downed him with a sweeping blow from a knuckle-duster. Marker had a like fate. The fellows were desperate, and determined to take all risks so long as they got hold of the plate.

Bayne and Prince fully appreciated this point. Besides, the speedy settling of their chums entirely cowed them. They turned tail and rushed off among the trees with a wild howl of getting away in their boat.

It had all happened so quickly that the concealed Third-Formers had no time to do anything. But when the two microscans rushed off in pursuit of Bayne and Prince, Jack Noble raised his head, and there was the fighting glitter in his eyes.

"We've just got to nail them," he said abruptly. "They'll be back for the stuff before long, and then—we'll see what the Third-Formers can do."

In a few minutes the two men came back to the clearing, roundly cursing their bad luck. Bayne and Prince had somehow managed to elude them in the undergrowth.

"We must take our chance," said the one who appeared to be the leader. "But we must hurry in case the brats get away and give the alarm. Anyhow, if they all came in the same boat, it'll be too big for them to do much with. Come on, Timmy, let's get on with the packing. It's late, and the scoundrels! We've had to wait more'n a year to get you away nice and comfortable, but we've got you now!"

The other man's busy fingers had unfasted the brown paper from the end of the shaft of a spade. The blade of the implement, it was afterwards found, was concealed in his companion's camera, together with the screws and driver to fix the two parts together. The contents were spread out on the grass, and the different articles were quickly placed upon it, the leader checking each item off.

"That other silver-right; and the rose-wood—the soap—the gold-stuff—that's the style, Timmy; if we're quick, we'll do it safe yet."

"I say," said the other, "look here, Crank, hadn't we better leave them till another time?" "Fool!" hissed the other. "Where can we leave them? Not here, I suppose, and, by the time we've had put the scoundrels, they might be clear away with them. Come on, man; it's neck or no."

"Half a minute," came a quiet voice from behind. "You're not quite off it, and it's behind you know. You've missed the Shell. But that's not the only Form at Pelham. You're still got the little Thirds to deal with! We're the Thirds, and we're quite ready when you are."

The two scoundrels found themselves confronted by the five very hard-set faces of the Pelham juniors. Jack Noble's cool announcement had taken the two quite by surprise. They quickly recovered, and the chums were made aware of it immediately. At the first onset Taffy Evans got a blow, the effects of which he felt for many a long year. For the moment, he was out of action, and left the effective forces for two—two junior boys to each man.

Noble and Russell tackled the one, while Macalpine and Murphy set to on the other. The light was a fair one, and either of the ruffians seemed to have bargained for. They soon were made to realise that Noble had spoke the truth when he said that the Pelham Thirds was not to be so easily disposed of as the Shell.

Fighting Mac sustained a terrific blow over the eye. But he didn't let that freeze him off. He didn't care whether he could see his man or not, so long as he could hit him, and him he did, most effectually, his sturdy legs being brought into play almost as much as his arms. Soon a ringing whirring from his Irish comrade, Micky Murphy, announced that the truth in the game had been won by the Pelham Thirds.

Almost at the same instant, Jack Noble, who had lost Bob Russell's help a few minutes before, found himself being overpowered and forced down. His assailant's hands gripped his throat, and he was just giving himself up as a goner, when the ruffian's right hand was jerked backwards and upwards.

Jack's man saw the murderous knuckle-duster slipped off the thick hairy fingers. A second later he heard a tap and a groan. He felt himself crushed down by the senseless weight of his enemy, who had been neatly settled with his weapon.

"Soda!" gasped Jack, as he recognised the white face of his rescuer. And then his eyes grew too dim to see any more. That queer fish, Simon, had recovered his senses, and came to the rescue in the very nick of time.

With that it was all over bar the shouting. When Noble was himself again, he made a few remarks about the treasure that electrified his chums.

"Well," he said, "this little lot wasn't concealed by Miser Merriwell, but was stolen from his neighbour over the river, the owner of the Walgrave Grange, and presented to the great burglar at the Grange over a year ago. And these gentlemen here, Timmy, and his friend, are the burglars. Lucky thing that they weren't able to come to lift the hidden away until to-day, when we were here to receive them. Hallo, Cliffy, glad to see you up again! All's well that ends well, eh? I say, Russell, I think this is a case for the police. Go and find some, and then we can get back to tea."

That night at Pelham there was only one topic. In every study comments were made on the extraordinary train of events that had led to the recovery of the Walgrave Grange plate.

Those immediately concerned felt honestly glad that it had all turned out so well. Of course, Noble was called upon for a few little explanations.

"How did I get wind of the wheeze?" he said. "Well, I had a look at that old chest in the second-hand shop before Simon did. I wanted something to stow away my cricket ball in. And then I happened to hear to the boundary dispute. But it was no use to me, so I left it where I found it. And afterwards—well, I heard a few odd remarks which made me suspect the wheeze that old Soda was working up against Cliffy. I don't exactly admire Soda's way of getting his own back, but it certainly worked all right!"

"Ah," he remarked, said Macalpine, who believed in old-fashioned methods, who was soaking brown-paper in vinegar as a salve to his injured eye. "We went out for a lively time, and we found it, I'm thinking."

(Another rattling, complete Jack Noble yarn next week.)