

The 1st Chapter. Caught in the Snow!

Y Jove! It's coming down!"

"Sure, and ye're right, Dicky
darling. And it's a fine half-holiday darling. And it's a fine half-holiday we're having, intoirely."
"I guess we'd better be getting on to Cliveden,

kids."

Nevi'le, Flynn, and Poindexter, of the Fourth
Form at Cliveden College—known in the school
as the Combine—were standing under a tree some
three miles from the old school, looking with
glum faces at the thick, whirling flakes of snow
as they fell.

It was Wednesday afternoon, a half-holiday

three miles from the old school, looking with glum faces at the thick, whirling flakes of snow as they fell.

It was Wednesday afternoon, a half-holiday at Cliveden, and the three chums had left the school in high spirits, and spent a couple of hours in strolling round the ancient market town of Carbury. Just as they set out for the homeward walk, the snow began to fall. The Cliveden Combine cared little for a fall of snow, and they turned up their trousers and their coat-collars, and tramped on determinedly. But the snow was coming down now, as Poindexter expressed it, in sackfuls. Thicker and thicker it fell on the unsheltered high road, whirling in heavy flakes on the bitter wintry wind. And at last the three chums had drawn into the shelter of a tree, and there, shaking the snow from their coats and caps, they debated what was best to be done.

While in the market town, Poindexter, who had a keen American eye to business, had improved the shining hour by making various purchases of comestibles, which could be obtained at a much cheaper rate in Carbury than in the village of Clivedale, near the school. The result was, that each of the juniors had a good-sized parcel to carry, as well as having his pockets stuffed. They set their packages down as they halted under the tree, glad to be relieved of them for a time. Micky Flynn was slapping his chest vigorously to keep himself warm, swinging his arms like the sails of a windmill. Dick Neville stamped savagely on the ground.

"We'd better be getting on," said Poindexter.

"It's a bit thick, I know, but I guess we can't do any good by staying here, and—ow! You utter ass!"

The back of Micky Flynn's right hand caught the American full on his rather prominent nose, as Micky gave his arms another wide swing. Poindexter staggered back, and clasped his damaged nose.

"Sure and I wish ye wouldn't get in the way, Puntpusher!" exclained Micky Flynn indig-

"Sure and I wish ye wouldn't get in the way.
Puntpusher!" exclaimed Micky Flynn indignantly. "Ye've hurt me hand intoirely, and—""

I'll hurt your fat head, I guess !" exclaimed

oindexter.

But Dick Neville stepped between.

"Now, then, pax, you two asses!" he examed. "You can leave all that till we're ife in the study at Cliveden."

"He's nearly flattened my nose—"

"He's hurt the back of my hand—"

"Oh, shut up, both of you! The question is, hat's to be done?"

Poindexter rubbed his

Oh, shat bp, bon'd you The question what's to be done?"

Poindexter rubbed his nose ruefully.
"I've said that we'd better be getting on," he replied. "It's no good waiting here for the snow to stop. It would be like the chap who sat down on the bank and waited for the river to flow past, I mass."

guess:
"Sure and ye're right, Puntdodger! But we can't walk three miles through this beastly snow,

you know."

"We can't stay here."

"Faith, but there's another way. We can go home by train if we can find our way to Fernedge

Poindexter looked thoughtful. To go home by train would certainly be an improvement upon tramping three miles through a blinding snowstorm. Fernedge Station lay on a lane that led off from the high-road, but exactly where the American chum did not know.

"It's a good idea," said Neville instantly.

"Fernedge Lane turns off to the right here somewhere. Let's look for it."

"Not the sort of weather to go wandering round in looking for it," Poindexter remarked.

"Better than tramping three miles through this snow."

"Well, we'll see."

The chums of Cliveden picked up their packages once more and shouldered them, and tramped on through the falling flakes.

The February wind blew hard and cold, and it was in their faces, dashing the snowflakes upon them as they tramped on. They bent their heads to the wind, and kept on doggedly. The snow was thick under their feet, and at every step their boots sank deep into it. The going was hard and slow, and it was borne in upon their minds that if they tried to finish the journey on foot, it would be something like midnight before they arrived at Cliveden."

"Hallo! I guess this is the place!"

Through the blinding flakes the chums made out a turning to the right. But the discovery benefited them little, for a second glance disclosed two turnings branching off in different directions at the same spot from the high-road. And as there was no sign of a guide-post, it was a puzzle which turning to take. One of them was doubtless Fernedge Lane, and would lead to the station they desired to reach, while the other was pretty certain to take them miles out of their way.

"I guess," said Poindexter, after a good look

"I guess," said Poindexter, after a good look round, "that we're in a fix. I wish we had old Panky with us now; he knows Fernedge Lane well."

well."

Dick Neville grunted. It was useless to wish for Pankhurst just then. Pankhurst and Price, the Combine's rivals in the Fourth Form at Cliveden, had spent the half-holiday in Carbury, and the Combine had encountered them in the streets there, and exchanged volleys of more or less polite chaff. After that they had lost sight of the Old Firm, but at the present moment they would have given a great deal for Pankhurst's knowledge of the country.

"Sure and ye might as well wish for a finger-post, Puntpusher," said Mieky Flynn, "or for somebody to ask the way of."

"Hark!" exclaimed Poindexter, holding up his hand. "I think I heard somebody."

"Not likely, darling—"

"Shut up, while I listen!"

"Yes, yes; but, all the same—"

Poindexter seized Micky by the throat and ran him against a tree. Taken by surprise, Micky had no choice but to shut up. The sound of voices came floating through the dimness of the thick-falling snow."

"I know we're on the track, Pricey!"

Poindexter gave a jump.

"By Abraham Lincoln's whiskers! it's old Pankhurst!" Dick Neville grunted. It was useless to wish

The 2nd Chapter. A Surprise for the Old Firm-Pankhurst Takes the Lead!

THE Combine stood quite still under the big tree at the corner of the lane. They were almost concealed by it, and the two youths coming on down the lane did not

two youths coming on down the lane did not observe them.

Two juniors from Cliveden, buttoned up in greatcoats, with mufflers, and with caps pulled down tightly on their heads! From under the caps escaped a lock or two of flaming red hair, showing anyone who knew Cliveden at all that the two juniors were Pankhurst and Price, self-styled the Old Firm.

The Combine remained silent, even Micky Fiynn keeping his mouth closed, as the Old Firm came nearer. Pankhurst was still speaking.

"I wonder if they turned this corner, Pricey?"

They'd be leaving the road to Cliveden, Panky."

"They'd be leaving the road to Cliveden, Panky."

"Yes, but they might have made up their minds to go by train. It's a bit difficult to follow tracks when the snow's coming down so thick. But we've been right so far; you see, here are the tracks at the corner."

"Quite so."

"We are close behind now, or the tracks would be nearly covered, with the snow coming down so thick," said Pankhurst sagely. "Mind, when we get in sight of them, Pricey, not to alarm the rotters! They're three and we're only two, and so we shall have to take them by surprise

"Quite so."
The hidden juniors exchanged a grin. Moved by the same thought, they stooped down to gather handfuls of snow, and commenced to knead snowballs, Pankhurst was stooping in the lane examining the tracks, and Price watching

"Yes, they left the high road here," said Pankhurst. "The question is, did they know the right way to Fernedge, or have they gone the other. But I'll soon see. They can't be far away now; in fact, I think we're pretty close to them."

away now; in fact, I think we're proved them."

"I guess you're about right there," remarked Poindexter, as his right hand went up and the snowball flew with deadly aim.

"Ow!" yelled Pankhurst, as the missile caught him behind the ear, and he went over in the sudden surprise, and fell at full length in the snow. Price stared round in amazement; and as he stared, two snowballs came whirling from under the tree, and smote him simultaneously. Price gave a gasp, and rolled over on the ground.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

With a roar of laughter, the Combine rushed

"Ha, ha, ha!"

With a roar of laughter, the Combine rushed into view. Pankhurst and Price were sitting up in the snow, looking dazed. They jumped to their feet at the sight of the Combine.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Poindexter. "I guess this is a case of 'the biter bit'! Are you going to raid that grub, Panky?"

"Sure, and here it is ready to be raided!" grinned Micky Flynn.

"O!, pax. you bounders!" exclaimed Panky, as Dick Neville took aim with another snowball. "We're going to have a snow-fight at Cliveden when we get in, and enough's as good as a feast. Sheer off!"

Dick Neville grinned, and dropped the snowball.

Sheer off?"

Dick Neville grinned, and dropped the snowball to the ground.

"Right you are, Panky. As a matter of fact, we were just wishing for you, to show us the way to the railway station."

"Good! I can do that."

The Old Firm dusted some of the snow off their coats, and Pankhurst led the way. The lane was narrow, and the snow piled deep in it, but the juniors faced it briskly.

"My word!" said Pankhurst. "It's a long time since we've had snow like this near Cliveden. I don't remember a fall so heavy since I've been there."

"It's a bit thick I."

there."

"It's a bit thick, I guess," panted Poindexter.

"How far is it to the station now, Panky?"

"Only a few minutes more, I think."

Pankhurst was right. A few minutes later the station came in sight, its roof gleaming one sheet of white in the gloom of the February afternoon.

"Thank goodness!" exclaimed Dick Neville.
"Put it on."

"Put it on."

The juniors "put it on," and came up to the station with a rush. They dashed under the sheltering porch, and plumped down their parcels with great relief. Then they shook off the thick layers of snow, and knocked their caps on the wall to clear them. Then Poindexter went to the booking-office.

It was open, showing that some train or other was nearly due. Poindexter rapped, and a sleepy-looking man came and stared at him.

"Next train to Clivedale?" said Poindexter.

Nearly due, sir, if the snow doesn't stop it."

Poindexter stared.

"My hat! I never thought of that! Is there likely to be a block on the line, then?"

"There have been some already, yawned the sleepy man. "I don't know whether there will be another. Single?"

"There residepy man. "I don't know be another, Single?"
"Yes, five," said Poindexter.
"That's a jolly prospect," growled Pankhurst.
"Fancy being snow-bound at a dead-and-alive hole like this! Ask the image if he has any foot-warmers to give away, young Tinned Beef."
"None at this station," said the man in the hooking-office. "You can get them at Carbury, hooking-office."

mers to give away, young Tinned Beef."

at this station," said the man in the office. "You can get them at Carbury, livedale—"

"In the control of the contr Poindaxter put the tickets in his pocket, and they went on the platform. There was a fire in the waiting-room, and nobody there but the solitary porter of Fernedge, who was sitting on a "Got and Cot and Cot

The porter looked round and blinked, as rose. The fire was at its last gasp, and Pointern Carefully poked it, and began to pile on the porter watched him dumbfounded, as it is coal were some highly-prized possession of its want slowly out there is no the possession of its want slowly out these the possessions.

The porter watched him dumbfounded, as it as coal were some highly-prized possession of the own. Then, as a train-whistle was heard, is went slowly out upon the platform.

"You won't get much benefit from that the ment slowly out upon the platform.

"You won't get much benefit from that the ment slowly out upon the platform.

"Quite so."

"Never mind, it will be all right for the nercomer," said Poindexter. "A good action is to own reward. I know that's true, because I mai it in a copy-book. Here's the train, so come on the platform. The train had come in, and the carriage windows glimmered with yellow he through the mist. Poindexter opened a carriage windows glimmered with yellow he through the mist. Poindexter opened a carriage of the platform. The train had come in, and the train is the door slammed, and the train jerkel in motion. In the midst of the whirling snow, a train ran out of the station.

Poindexter glanced from the window as train, leaving the station behind, hummed a through the gleaming countryside.

Embankment and track, field and wood may be the control, were white with a spotless carpeting; white the dazzling glare under the winter sm.

"I guess we're in for it," remarked Poindexte.

"Just our luck to get it like this on a him holiday! Still, there's good in everything, as this will be all right for the snow-fight in the Close at Cliveden."

"Rather!" said Pankhurst. "There we plenty of snow in the Close already, as a man of fact, but the more the merrier. Ugh! Is it cold! I want a foot-warmer! I say, for dexter, would you mind lying down here in Price and me to put our feet on?"

The 3rd Chapter.

The 3rd Chapter. Stopped on the Line.

The train had slowed down, and juniors knew that there were masses snow on the line, through which the engine w

forcing its way.

When they looked out of the windows, nothing ages, and their games.

When they looked out of the windows, nothing but snow—snow—snow met their gaze.

"I guess we shall be late for tea at Clivela," remarked Poindexter. "It's jolly lacky we so in this grub while we were at Carbury."

"Very lucky," agreed Pankhurst. "We we going to raid it from you, Pantpusher, but no we'll share and share alike."

"Thank you," said Poindexter. "You're to kind to live, Panky! But here you are—at drink, and be merry, while you've got the chane. The keen weather had made the juniors lung enough. The packages were opened, and to good things intended for a study feed at Clivela were passed round. There was nothing to share with foes as with friends, and the firm did full justice to the mea!.

"Good!" said Pankhurst. "I like the tarts. Till finish them for you, if you like, in to show there's no ill-feeling."

"Do," said Neville.

"They're jolly good. I like your taste'n justarts, really!"

"Quite so," said Price.

"We'll stand you a feed, though, at Clivela."

"Quite so," said Price.
"We'll stand you a feed, though, at Clivelet said Pankhurst. "One good turn designanther. A good feed, you know, with anything tinned in it."
"Oh, get off that subject!" said the different Chicago.
"Ah, excuse me, I forgot," grinned Pankhurs."
Never mind, Puntdodger, you're a very is specimen, considering that you were brought to nt tinned rats in Chicago.
"If you're looking for a thick ear, Palhurst."
"Parent Power of the said Price of the said of the said Pankhurs."
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"Parent Power of the said Price of the said Pankhurs."

hurst—"
"I'm not, Pointplunger; but if I were then nobody in this carriage who could oblige me to one, I think," said Pankharst, with a wall Sure and ye-"

"Sure and ye—"
"I guess—"
"Faith, and don't be interruptin' me, he dexter. It's talkin' I am."
"I say I guess—"
"Sure, can't ye give a chap a chance to spail it's lookin' for a thick ear ye are, less sure's it's meself——"
"I guess—"
"Arrah, now, and let me finish intoirely. Su and I'm the boy to give ye a prize assortment thick ears, Pankhurst; half a dozen it we like—"

thick ears, Pankhurst; half a dozen "like —"

"I'd like to see you do it!"

"Sure, and so ye shall, darling!"

And Micky Flynn hurled himself forward for his seat, right upon Pankhurst, who was simple opposite to him.

Pankhurst fell back against the cushion, a the tart he was taking a hite out of went for into his mouth as he fell back. Pankhurst mouth was a good size, and that tart just fixed nicely, but it left no room for breathing.

"Goo-gerroo—geroooooh!"

"Faith, and is it Chinese ye're talking. Is

Goo-gerroo—geroocooh!"
Faith, and is it Chinese ye're talking. Put

grappled with him. Pankhurst was red in the face from the effects of the tart.
Dick Neville did not interfere. Two to two was fair play, and Dick was busy with a currant

The four grappling juniors reeled to and fro, and Pankhurst and Micky came with a crash against Neville.

"Here, get off, you asses!" roared Dick, as the cake was dashed off his knees.

"Arrah, now—"
"Get off!"
"Sure and I—"
Neville gave Micky a shove, and he went reeling away with Pankhurst, and collided with Poindexter and Price.
At that moment the train gave a sudden, shivering jerk!
The four combatants reeled over, and went down in a heap in the bottom of the carriage, and Dick Neville was shot forward on to the opposite seat, from which he rolled upon the other juniors.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Pankhurst, in a muffled voice. "What's the matter?"
"Gu-qu-quite so!" gasped Price.
"I guess the train's stopped."
The juniors sorted themselves out and scrambled to their feet.
The train was certainly at a standstill.
Poindexter, with his hair unkempt and his collar hanging by one end, opened the window and put his head out. Many other windows had opened, and excited passengers were looking out upon the line. The guard was coming along the train.

"Hallo!" called out Poindexter. "What's train.

"Hallo!" called out Poindexter. "What's the matter?"
"The train's stopped."
"Snowed up?"
"Yes!"

The 4th Chapter.

Snowed Up!

Snowed Up I

"HEW!"

The Cliveden juniors gave a simultaneous whistle. The row in the carriage stopped at once, and the lads put themselves to rights as well as they could. Price had a stream of red flowing from his nose, and Poindexter a blue ring round one eye. Micky Flynn was ruefully rubbing the back of his head, where it had come into contact with a seat. Pankhurst did not seem to be hurt.

"Phew! Snowed up!"

The juniors did not look alarmed. On the contrary, it was clear enough that the untoward

"Plew! Snowed up!"

The juniors did not look alarmed. On the contrary, it was clear enough that the untoward happening was by no means unwelcome to them. To be snowed up in a train was an adventure which would make them the envy of all Cliveden, and as yet they thought nothing of the privation and danger it might entail.

"I guess I'm glad we took this train," said Poindexter, rubbing his hands.

"It will make us late for the snow fight at Cliveden..."

oden—
Oh, so long as we get in before dark, that be all right, I reckon."
We may not get in before dark," said Neville, before morning either, for that matter,

r belore morning either, for that matter, son!"
'Oh, don't croak, kid!" said Pankhurst. Ve're not hurt yet, anyway. I suppose they I try to back the train, but if the snow's thick in front, it will be too thick behind, hould think."

"Keep your seats," called out the guard.
"That's it; they're going to back the train."
With a jerk the train was set in motion again.
It was going backwards now, but ere long it came to a stop with a sudden jerk. The juniors were prepared for it this time, and kept their footing.

ooting.

"Stopped again!" said Pankhurst.

Again the train moved forward.

"Full steam on!" grinned Pankhurst. "But hey won't get through the snow, I fancy."

Pankhurst was right.

ankhurst was right.
he speed slackened, and became slacker slacker. Finally the train came again to alt, and it was evident that further progress impossible.

a impossible.

Coindexter opened the door, and the Cliveden liofs scrambled out. Other passengers were wing the carriages. The guard was in contation with the engine-driver. It was evident at they were helpless to deal with the matter. The passengers surrounded them in an excited owd.

The passengers surrounded them in an excited crowd.

The train was a local one, and carried no more than a dozen passengers all told, most of them country people returning from the market town of Carbury. There were several women among them, some of them inclined to be extremely frightened. The Cliveden juniors, as a matter of fact, seemed to be about the coolest there. Poindexter would have been cool and level-headed under any imaginable circumstances, and the others followed his cue.

"I guess that train's fixed there for a bit!" Poindexter remarked, and then he glanced up the line. Snow had rolled down from the laden embankment into the cutting which lay before the train, and a huge mass of white rose to a height of several feet. "That will want a lot of digging away, kids!"

"By Jove, rather!" said Pankhurst. "The question is, how to get help. It won't be easy It was certainly true.

Before and behind the train the cutting was blocked, and the heavy flakes coming steadily the pile.

On either side rose a steep embankment, ooked as if

is pile.

On either side rose a steep embankment, rammed with snow, piled so thickly that it oked as if any moment masses of it might ome tumbling down upon the track.

The faces of the juniors grew very grave.

The matter was more serious than they had imagined at first. If it was impossible to get away through the snow, it might be equally impossible for help to reach them. That might mean imprisonment in the blocked train for days—perhaps longer. They had heard of snowbound passengers dying of hunger and cold, but never had they dreamed of such a peril being brought so terribly near to themselves.

"We shall have to get help," said Poindexter resolutely. "I say, guard, what are you going to do?"

The guard shook his head helplessly.

"They'll soon know at Clivedale that we're blocked in," he said, "and they'll set a gang to work to clear away the snow."

"And when do you think we shall get away?"

"We may get away by morning."

Poindexter whistled.

"That's not good enough," he said coolly.

"We've got a snow fight coming off at Cliveden this afternoon, and we've simply got to get in."

The guard shrugged his shoulders and turned away.

away.

"You're right, Poin," said Neville, "we're not going to stick here till the morning, if I know it. We should be giddy heroes, of course, by the time we got in to Cliveden, but we should be too jolly cold and hungry to fully appreciate it."

it."

"I guess so."

"Faith, and what are we goin' to do intoirely?"

"Get out, somehow. I say, guard, I guess you'd better go for help."

"Can't get through the snow, you young idiot!" growled the guard, with scant courtesy.

"But somebody must go for help."

"It can't be done, I tell you!"

"Well, if you can't do it, I can—"

"You can, eh?" said Pankhurst. "What do you can? I know you can all sorts of things

The 5th Chapter. Through the Snow.

IVE me a bunk up!"

"I guess you'd better give me G "I one."

"Rats! Of course a member of the Old Firm is to lead the way!"

"My dear kid, the Combine is always at the front. First in the field, first in the study, first in the—"

"In the canning trade——"

"Oh, dry up——"

"Well, you set the example, and leave off arguing!"

"Now, look here, Panky—"
"I'm looking, and I can see a conceited ass

"First time I knew my face answered the purpose of a looking-glass," said Poindexter.

Pankhurst had no reply quite ready for that; and Dick Neville struck in.

"It stands to reason we must lead the way, Panky. We'll put it to the vote, though, if you like. Fair play's a jewel."

"Why, you rotters, you're three to two—"

"Quite so."

"Well someone must give in," said Neville.

"Well, someone must give in," said Neville.
"The inferior party ought to do so, and so call upon you to shut up, Panky and Price."

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Biff! biff! came the whizzing snowballs from the fort, and Monsieur Friquet received as many as anybody. Thick and fast they fell; but the assailants were not to be denied. They swarmed around the snow walls, and fought a way through the defences, in spite of the efforts of the defenders within.

Chicago-rats, and horses, and other nice

in Chicago—rus,
things—"
"Oh, cheese it!"
"My dear Puntbuster, you started talking
"aid Poindexter, "we're not "My dear Puntbuster, you started taking about canning—"
"Look here," said Poindexter, "we're not going to stick here all night, that's certain! Besides, we must have help. There's some women here, and we must get word to Clivedale at once for help for them. Who's game to try?"

"All of us," said Pankhurst.

" Quite so.

"Faith, and it's meself that's with you intoirely, Panky. As for the grub we've got left, sure and it must be handed over to the ladies, in case the poor dears get hungry while they're waiting to be rescued."

waiting to be rescued."

"Good for you, Micky."

The remains of the provisions were fetched out of the carriage; and the quantity was still considerable, for the shopping had been extensive in Carbury. Poindexter took the bundles to the guard, and explained to him. The man gave him a puzzled look.

"That's very kind of you, young gent, but you can't go through the snow!"

"I'm going to try."

"But you can't, and I can't allow it."

"My dear chap, I don't want you to allow it. I can manage it all right without that. The only difficulty is the snow. I can—"

"You can't!"

"I can—"

"You're quite wrong, guard," said Pankhurst.

"I can—"
"You're quite wrong, guard," said Pankhurst,
"he can. He's in the canning trade, you see,
and his father canned before him."
"Oh, shut up, Panky! Let's get along!"
"You mustn't ge!" exclaimed the guard.
"I am responsible—"
"I hereby, thusly, and therefore relieve you
of all responsibility," said Poindexter. "You
see, you can't stop us. We're five to one, and

"I call upon you not to be a silly ass!"
"You'll call upon me for a black eye if you don't take care, Panky."
"Faith, and it's a set of silly spalpeens, ye are!" exclaimed Micky Flynn. "Sure, I'll lead the way. Ireland always leads the way, doesn't she? Here goes!"

And Micky Flynn scrambled up the bank

doesn't she? Here goes!"

And Micky Flynn scrambled up the bank.

The Cliveden juniors had been searching along the bank for some favourable spot to climb, and, after a long search they had found one. In this spot the embankment was less steep, and under the snow straggling bushes grew, which afforded some hold for hands and feet; and also held the snow more securely. The climb was certain to be a matter of difficulty, and might lead to an avalanche coming down.

"Here come hack Micky!" exclaimed Point

Here, come back, Micky !" exclaimed Poindexter

dexter.

"Faith, I'm not coming back! I'll show you how to do the trick."

And Flynn went plunging up the steep bank. Perhaps he was in too great a hurry to be careful. At all events, he came rolling down the next moment in the midst of masses of snow. He sat up, looking quite bewildered, amid the fallen snow, and stared round him. The juniors burst into a roar.

"He he he he!" rolled Pankhurst. "If that's

into a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Pankhurst. "If that's the way you're going to show us, Micky Flynn, you needn't trouble."

"Sure and I——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Faith, the snow must have slipped——"

"Go hon! Here, stand aside, and let me

I suppose you don't want to have your head snowballed off, do you?"

"Exactly!" chimed in Neville. "You see, we are circumstances over which you have no control. Come along, kids!"

And, leaving the guard still puzzled and doubtful as to what he should do, the juniors marched off to make their forlorn attempt to get through the snow to Cliveden.

was getting up, jamming him down into the snow again.

"Arrah, ye howlin' spalpeens, sure and it's crushed I am intoirely!" roared Micky. "Get off my chest, Puntpusher, or sure I'll bite ye!"

Neville grinned, and leaving the others to seramble up as they could, he tackled the ascent of the bank, Price turning to his chum to help him rise. Neville clambered up the steep side, sending dawn showers of snow upon the juniors. was getting up, jamining inin down into the show again.

"Arrah, ye howlin' spalpeens, sure and it's crushed I am intoirely!" roared Micky. "Get off my chest, Puntpusher, or sure I'll bite ye!"

Neville grinned, and leaving the others to scramble up as they could, he tackled the ascent of the bank, Price turning to his chum to help him rise. Neville clambered up the steep side, sending down showers of snow upon the juniors. As the snow slid and rolled away under his feet, he grasped at the bushes growing under it, and held on. He was caked with snow and slush, wet and wringing from head to foot; but he stuck to it with dauntless pluck. Before the other juniors had sorted themselves out, so to speak, Dick Neville had made good progress up the bank.

Poindexter looked up after him. Neville was

speak, Dick Neville had made good progress up the bank.

Poindexter looked up after him. Neville was half-way to the top, and still going strong.

"I guess he takes the cake!" exclaimed the American chum. "But I'm next."

And Poindexter essayed to climb. Pankhurst reached out and grasped his ankle, and they went down together in a heap of snow. Flynn, giggling, followed Dick, and then Price followed him.

"Make it pax, ass," said Pankhurst, as he scrambled up, "we shall be left behind at this rate, and I don't enjoy your company enough to stay here for it."

"Head or tail?" said Poindexter, clasping a penny in his hand. "First guess does it."

"Righto! Head!" "grunted Poindexter. "Geton."

"Plicht Dea't grant it's only money that

"Right. Don't growl; it's only proper that I should go first, as head of the Fourth Form at Cliveden

Rats! Get on."

"Here goes!"
Poindexter sprang up the bank. The chief of the Old Firm followed. By this time Dick Neville had nearly reached the top, but the higher he rose the more difficult he found the ascent. And suddenly, as he was almost at the level, his foot slipped, a tendril he was grasping broke in his hand, and he fell. Away he slid down the way he had come, gathering snow and speed as he rolled down the slope.

"Arrah, ye gossoon!" roared Micky Flynn, as Dick rolled into him, and sent him flying too.

as Dick rolled into him, and sent him flying too.

Price was the next to suffer. He had no time to get out of the way, and he went down with the other two, rolling and gasping.

Poindexter and Pankhurst were a dozen feet from the start when the three flying juniors rolled into them, carrying them away as if they had been smitten by an avalanche.

Down they went, five juniors with flying legs and arms, amid a cloud of snow. It was fortunate for the Cliveden juniors that there was a deep carpet of snow in the cutting, or there might have been broken bones as the result of that wild slide. As it was, they plunged into the snow, nearly burying themselves, and lay there help-lessly gasping for several minutes.

Poindexter was the first to scramble up.

"My Panama hat!" he exclaimed. "What the dickens did you do that for, Neville?"

Dick Neville spluttered the snow out of his mouth.

"Ass!" he eigensted. "Do you think! I did."

mouth.
"Ass!" he ejaculated. "Do you think I did

mouth.

"Ass!" he ejaculated. "Do you think I did it on purpose."

Pankhurst rubbed the snow out of his eyes.

"This is what comes of allowing one of you bounders to lead the way!" he exclaimed. "I'm going first this time."

And Panky sprang up the bank.

"After him!" exclaimed Poindexter. "I guess he's not going to get ahead of us!"

And the juniors scrambled after Pankhurst.

The chief of the Old Firm was making good speed up the slepe. As a matter of fact, the juniors, in rolling down, had almost cleared it of snow in that particular spot, and the bushes underneath were exposed to the falling flakes, and easy to hold.

Pankhurst was not long in reaching the spot where Dick Neville had lost his footing, and he here exercised great caution, feeling his way inch by inch.

where Dick Nevine here exercised great caution, feeling here exercised great caution, feeling hinch by inch.

Higher he rose, and higher, till at last he stood breast-deep in the snow on the high level, and waved his hand. He would have waved his cap, but it was buried somewhere in the deep snow of the cutting.

"Hurrah! It's done!"

"And we've done it!" shouted Price. "Hurrah for study No. 10!"

"Hurrah for the Old Firm!" shouted Pankhurst.

"Hurrah for the Old Firm!" shouted Pankhurst.

"Oh, dry up!" grunted Poindexter. "There'll be another avalanche if you make that row, kids. Still, I'm glad we've got out."

One by one the juniors dragged their weary limbs upon the summit of the embankment. The snow was deep around them and before them but, after a brief pause to recover their breath, they plunged on through it, and reached the road. "A mile to Clivedale!" said Poindexter. "Here's for a long tramp. Come on!"

And the juniors, shivering and shuddering with the cold, were glad to get into rapid motion again to keep from freezing.

The 6th Chapter. Welcome Home!

THE snow was thick on the road, and was still falling in heavy flakes. The five juniors tramped on doggedly. Exactly try."

"Me, you mean, I guess," said Poindexter.
"Rats! Get out of the way."
"No fear."
"I'll jolly soon shift you if you don't."
"I'll guess I'm ready to see you try."
Pankhurst laid hold of the American at once, and they staggered away, and fell over Micky, who

And the wet and snowy juniors hurried to the station to report the mishap to the train there. In the station-master's room they were given something hot to drink, and they felt all the better for it as they faced the snow again to tramp to Cliveden School. It was useless to think of getting a vehicle, and, besides, they would have frozen in their wet clothes had they remained still.

Fortunately, the walk to the school was not

remained still.

Fortunately, the walk to the school was not a long one. Cliveden College gates, surmounted with snow, rose into view at last, and the five

with snow, rose into view at last, and the five weary juniors passed in.

It was very dark in the Quadrangle, save for the glimmer of snow, with which the ground was carpeted. But several figures in scarves and caps were moving about in the gloom, and the five belated youngsters received a hint that their return had been noticed, in the shape of a shower of snowballs.

"Here, stop it!" exclaimed Poindexter.
"We're not up to that sort of thing now. Is that you, Philpot, you rotter? Stop it, I say!
Philpot, the cad of the Fourth, was taking aim with another snowball. Greene came up through

the gloom, and gave him a push that made him sit down in the snow.

"Thank you, Greeney," said Poindexter.

"We're fagged out. Been snowed up in a beastly train, and had to climb out through heaps of beastly snow."

train, and had to climb out through heaps of beastly snow."

"My word!" said Greene. "You do look a lot of giddy scarcerows, and no mistake. Where's your cap, Panky?"

"Somewhere in the Clivedale cutting."

"You look frozen and starved. Come on into the house, and get your tegs changed. You looked soaked."

"And we are soaked, my son," said Neville,

looked soaked."

"And we are soaked, my son," said Neville, ruefully.

"Sure and we—"

"What about the snow fight?" went on Greene. "We were waiting for you to turn up, you know, and we've got the fortifications all ready. There's a splendid fort built up over by the fives court, and the side that has to attack will have all its work cut out to capture it."

"It's too late to-day," Pankhurst remarked.
Poindexter smote his thigh as a new idea came

"Not a bit of it! There will be a moon to-night, and why shouldn't we have a snow fight by moonlight?" Good wheeze!" exclaimed Pankhurst.

"Good wheeze!" exclaimed Pankhurst.

"Quite so."

"Faith, and sure ye—"

"We'll do it," exclaimed Greene, "it's a ripping iden! Hallo, Trevelyan! Nice-looking crew of scarcerows I've got here, haven't I?"

Trevelyan, the captain of Cliveden, stared at the woe-begone juniors in amazement as they entered the house.

"Great Scot! Where have you been? What have you been doing?" he exclaimed.

"Snowed up!"

"Come into my study," exclaimed Trevelyan, hurrying the juniors into his room. "Get those clothes off, quick. I'll get some towels and blankets. Hurry!"

"I guess—"

"Don't talk! Move!"

"Righto!"

"Don't talk! Move!"

"Righto!"

Trevelyan did not allow them to waste a moment. They were stripped, and rubbed down with rough towels, and then they sat before a roaring fire, wrapped in blankets, while a change of clothing was brought to them. They had dressed, and, by the time they were finished, tea was ready in the captain's study.

How tea and muffins were grateful and comforting after their experiences in the snow. The juniors fell to with a hearty goodwill.

"My word!" said Pankhurst. "Trev., old boy, you're a brick—a real, first-class, non-skidding brick, and no mistake."

"Faith, and so he is intoirely. Sure——"

"I guess that's so," said Poindexter. "We're proud of you, Trevelyan, I can tell you. I don't know which to admire the most, your kindness or your——"

"Stuff!"

your--"
"Stuff!"

"Stuff!"
"Or your muffins," said Poindexter serenely.
Trevelyan laughed heartily.
"You young rascals are always getting into some trouble," he remarked. "Now you are dry, you can tell me exactly how it happened."
"Sure, and I'll tell ye—"
"It was like this—"
"I guess I can explain—"
"You see, Trevelyan—"

"You see, Trevelyan—"
"Quite so."
"No, I don't think I quite see," said the captain of Cliveden. "It's a bit difficult to do so, with all of you talking at once."
"I reckon so," said Poindexter. "So, as head of the Fourth Form, I had better do the talking, kids—"

"Excuse me," said Pankhurst. "As head of the Fourth I think I—"
"Faith, if ye start that here, I shall ask Trevelyan to sling ye both out," exclaimed Micky Flynn.
"Why can't ye be quiet and leave me to explain

"Shut up, all of you," said Trevelyan. "Price can explain. He's about the only one that doesn't seem anxious to gloat on the sound of

doesn't seem anxiou.
his own voice."
So Price told the story.
"Well you've had a rough time, and I hope the other passengers are safe out of the snow by this time," said Trevelyan, when Price had finished, which he soon did, for Price was a fellow of few words. "You had all better stay before of few words. "You had all better stay before and go to bed early." finished, which he soon did, for Frice was a fellow of few words. "You had all better stay before your fire to-night, and go to bed early."

Whereat the Combine and the Old Firm exchanged a series of expressive winks.

The snowfight in the Close had to come off yet, but about that they did not think it advisable to speak to Trevelyan just now.

They left the captain's study feeling perfectly fit after the rest and refreshment, and ready for anything.

"What a brick he is!" exclaimed Pankhurst.
"I say, the moon's up over the clock tower, and it's left off snowing. Are you coming out?"
"Rather!"

"Rather!"
"I guess so."
"Come on then."
"Faith and sure—"
"Come on," said Pankhurst. And he led the way into the white-carpeted Close.

The 7th Chapter. Something Like a Fight!

IGH over the tower of Cliveden soared the moon, and the light streamed down in a sheet of silver upon the snowy Close and the gleaming white roofs of Cliveden.

The snow had ceased to fall, but it was a foot deep in the Close. It was bitterly cold out of doors, but little cared the hardy juniors for that.

Poindexter drew in a deep breath of the keen

Poindexter drew in a deep breath of the keen air.

"I guess it's cold!" he exclaimed. "All the better! We shall soon be warm enough! Let's go and look at the fort, and see if the kids have done it according to instructions."

"It's all right," said Greene, joining the Combine with several other Fourth-Formers.

"Let's go and look anyway. Get the rest of the Form together."

The Combine and the Old Firm walked over to the fives court, and examined the snow fort.

The Combine and the Old Firm waked ever to the fives court, and examined the snow fort.

Poindexter had laid out the plan of it, and it had been constructed by the juniors during the afternoon, there being plenty of material at hand, as only snow was used.

Poindexter looked at it with much satisfaction,

"I guess—"
"Oh, leave off guessing," said Neville. "Time we got to business. I saw Monsieur Friquet nosing round a while ago, and I shouldn't wonder if he comes bothering us. Time we started."
"Sure and you're right, Dicky darling. If Poindexter has done talking, we'll start."
"Well, I like that!" exclaimed Poindexter indignantly. "I guess that—""
"If you like it leave off grumbling then. Come

If you like it, leave off grumbling then. Come

"Five minutes grace to get ready for defence," said Pankhurst. "Then you can come on as fast as you like." "Agreed."

"Agreed."
The Combine and their forces drew off, and Pankhurst and his merry men poured into the snow fort, and blocked up the opening with snow. Huge piles of snowballs had been arranged in convenient places for the defenders. It would certainly be no easy task to take the fort, with the defence Pankhurst meant to make.

But the Combine were serenely confident of their own powers. They drew off for a distance to get room for a charge, and began making snowballs. A little, fat figure loomed up in the moonlight.

moonlight.

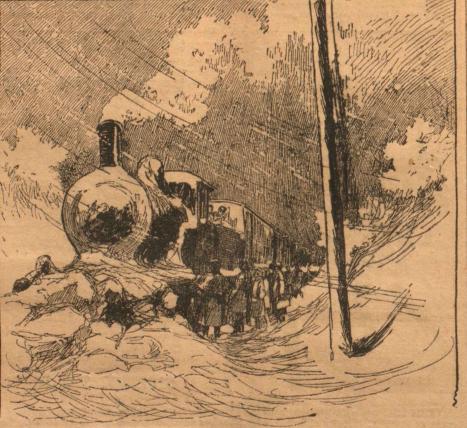
"Mes garçons!"—it was the voice of M. Friquet, the French Master of Cliveden—"are you not cold in ze open air in ze evening?"

"I guess not, sir," said Poindexter cheerfully.
"And we're just going to have some exercise, sir, to keen us warm."

to keep us warm.

"Oui, oui, but I really zink —"
The school clock chimed out.
"Time!" said Neville.

"Vat is eet zat you say viz yourself, Neville



"We shall have to get help," said Poindexter resolutely. "I say, guard, what are you going to do?" "They'll soon know at Clivedale that we're blocked in," replied the guard, "and they'll set a gang to work to clear away the snow." "That's not good enough," Poindexter said coolly. "We've got a snow-fight coming off at Cliveden this afternoon, and we've simply got to get in."

we've simply got to get in."

"Good!" he exclaimed. "That's all right. By Jove, this will be ripping fun. Now we had better separate the sheep from the goats."

The Fourth Form were nearly all in the affair, and they had already agreed as to sides. The following of the Combine were about equal to that of the Old Firm. The rivals had never been quite able to decide which was head of the Form, and the question probably never would be settled. There were about fifteen lads on either side, ready for the fray. Poindexter-examined the fort with a critical eye. It was really very well built. The walls, built of solid blocks of hardened snow, were high and thick, and there was only one entrance, which could be blocked up when the defenders were inside.

"Now, which side is to hold the fort?" asked Poindexter. "As the attack will be the more difficult part of the business, I think you had better have the fort, Panky, our side being a cut above your lot——"
"Rats! Canned Rats!" said Pankhurst.

fall in the snow.
"Head!" said Pankhurst.
"Sure and head it is intoirely," exclaimed Micky Flynn. "You're to hold the fort, Panky, Faith, but ye won't hold it for long,"
"We'll hold it till Doomsday for anything you fellows can do to get us out," said Pankhurst disclaimfully.

"Time, sir."

"Time for vat?"

"We're—we're just going to have a little game, sir. Would you mind standing on one side?"
said Poindexter, and as the Frenchman did not move, he drew him by the arm, "If you'd like to look on, sir, it will be fun."

"But vat——"

"Charge!" shouted Neville.

"Arrah!" roared Micky Flynn, "Come on, ye rascals!"
And away went the Combined to have a little game.

And away went the Combine and their followers at top speed through the snow in the Close.

The little Frenchman gazed after them in stuppesting.

The little rrem.
stupefaction.

Mon ciel!" he murmured.

Mon wiz myself zat zere is m "Mon ciel!" he murmured. "I have often zought viz myself zat zere is madness in all ze English boys, and really I zink zat eet is true. Ciel!" he exclaimed aloud in his alarm as a terrific uproar burst upon the wintry air. Then he ran in the direction the juniors had taken, convinced that something terrible was happening. The Combine had reached the snow fort. Right up to the walls of snow they dashed, their followers close behind. They covered their advance with volleys of snowballs, which fell thick among the defenders. But from within the fort came volleys in return.

And here Pankhurst and his men had the advantage, for they were secure behind walls, and had piles of snowballs ready to their hands. The air seemed full of the frozen missiles as they flew. Thick and fast they fell among the oncoming juniors, bowling some of them right over on the slippery ground.

"Forward!" yelled Poindexter.

And he made a spring at the snow wall. He dropped with his chest right upon it; but in a moment he was collared from within and dragged into the fort, where two or three juniors sat on him and held him a helpless prisoner.

"Rescue!" Poindexter bawled. And

chums came gallantly on.
"They've got Poin!" shouted Dick Neville.
"Come on,! Rescue!"

"Rescue!"
But on the snow wall the assailants broke like a wave, and back they went surging, battered right and left with the snowballs from within.
Pankhurst gave a yell of glee.
"Beaten! Hallo, Pointplunger! How do year

like 'em done ?

Poindexter grunted under the weight of Green,
Gatty, and Simpson.
"Will you give your parole?" grinned Path
hurst. "Otherwise, we shall have to tie your,
and you'll find that rather chilly lying there in
the snow."
"I'll give it?" granted B. I. I.

"I'll give it," growled Poindexter—"till In

"Of course—that's understood. But if the wasters are able to rescue you, Puntbuster, I'll eat a snowball."

"I'll remind you of that."

"Ha, ha! It won't be necessary. Let he pointed start was allowed to rise to be the

go, kids!"

Poindexter was allowed to rise to his feet. Reshook off the snow and gasped for breath.

The defenders of the fort turned their attented to the enemy, and did not bestow a glance now on Poindexter. They knew he would keep he word.

The assailing party had gone back with a rule, and collided with the French master, who was coming on at top speed.

coming on at top speed.

Monsieur Friquet staggered back as Neville ran into him, and clutched at Micky Flynn is support. He caught hold of Micky's hair, as is happened; and Micky gave a yell.

"Arrah! Sure and ye're scalping in intoirely!"

"Mille pardons!" gasped Monsieur Friquet.

"Vat is ze mattair? Vat do you ery out is and run viz yourselves? Is it zat zere is anying wrong?"

"Yes?" growled Naville.

"Yes," growled Neville. "Panky is holding the fort, and he's captured Puntbuster; and so are going to rescue him!"

"Faith, and that we are intoirely, as sure a I am the descendant of the ancient kings of I relead."

Blow the ancient kings of Ireland! Com

on!"

"Faith, and if ye spake disrespectfully of mancestors, Dick Neville, it's meself that will six up the ground with ye."

"Oh, rats! Come on!"

"Stop! You vill hurt yourselves viz zis rough play. I will not allow—"

But no one took any notice of Monsieur Frique.
He remonstrated to the desert air; while the juniors, having recovered their breath, dains forward to the attack again.

"Stop—stop! Zis is too—"

But no one heeded.
In a body the Combine swept up to the saw fort, the bewildered little Frenchman in the forefront. on!

fort, the forefront.

forefront.

"Stop! Ciel! It is herreeble! I am lides! I am keel—"
Biff! Biff! came the whizzing snowlish from the fort, and Monsieur Friquet received a many as anybody. Thick and fast they fill but the assailants were not to be denied. They swarmed round the snow walls, and fought way through the defences, in spite of the efforts of the defenders within.

"Ciel! Eet is terreeble! Mon bleu!"
The little Frenchman had completely lost is head now. He rushed to and fro, waving is arms and shouting and gasping; while the Combine pressed the attack.

Assailants and defenders were hand to had now, Neville and Flynn being over the wall, and their followers pouring on to back them up.

"Stand fast!" yelled Pankhurst. "Socki in to them!"

"Come on!"

"Come on ! "
"Hurry up, ye scoondrils ! "
"Hurrah! Throw them out!" shouted Pank

hurst.
The next moment he was rolling in the saw, with Micky's grip on him.
Price rushed to the rescue; and Mosser Friquet came blindly between, and rolled ow in the grip of Price.
"Ciel! I am assault—I am knock down!" gasped the unfortunate Frenchman.
I shall never see my muzzer any more! Mero!" Neville rolled Price over and collared im unfortunately with Mossoo underneath them.
The fall of the leaders discouraged the defender and as the Combine's followers dashed on, Paithurst's defeated party poured out of the other side of the fort.
"Hurrah!" roared Neville. "They's

"Hurrah!" roared Neville.

beaten!"
"Fight it out!" yelled Pankhurst.
"Rats, old chap! They're gone!
get up! We've eaptured the fort.
garage and you can get up."

The Old Firm reluctantly gave it, and we helped to their feet. It was a victory to the Combine this time with a vengeance!

Pankhurst grinned as he rubbed the snow of his hair.

of his hair.

"Well, you've done us," he exclaimed:

"You'd better come and feed in my study, as it agood fire going there, and it won't take log to get the grub ready."

The suggestion was too good not to be adopted. Half an hour later the Combine and the Old firm were enjoying a ripping tea in the cheery, fitting study, as if such a thing as rivalry had norm been heard of in the Fourth Form at Cliveden.

THE END.

("Bravo, Cliveden," another grand com plete tale next Wednesday.)