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REPORTER

CHAPTER I. Back to the Wall!

Fustler, senior prefect, and captain of the Village School of St. Claire, at Danvers, approached his big, blue boy.

"Byrne, how many new 'uns?" he demanded.

"Three."
"Only three—and a new term! That's rotten!"

"Of course it is," replied Blue, who agreed with his big master in all things, except when he was out of hearing. "Everything's rotten here! The dry rot set in three years ago—just about the time you came!"

"Then a yell escaped him. Fusty had scolded him by the ear.

"I didn't mean that! That was a non-sensicalness! Longo my ear!"

Fusty, with a final twist which evoked a louder yell, concluded.

"Well, no more considerations," he said. "Fusty knows that the rot set in at St. Claire's when the governor, soon, to reduce men, got rid of

a great scholar and a gentleman, and appointed in his place Phineas Barroch, an ignorant booby who bought his degree in America, and can't speak the King's English, let alone touch the dead language. But about these new 'uns. What are their names?"

"Well, one of them is called Carson Custler Cust."

"Oh, what! Mean to say any fellow's got sense enough to bring a name like that up here?"

"He has! He's a nut in his own estimation, too, and don't you forget it. His people are no real snobs, it appears. His side name in the family name, and a flourish with flour on his hair handed out his post-graduate. Another of the new 'uns is called Malins—Chick Malins."

Fustler screwed up his face.

"Is he a nut?"

"No," said Byrne. "He's not a nut—he's a nub. Oh, really, he's hot stuff! Check! He's got no end! He hails from the East End of London. His people used to sell things on barrows; now they're simply rolling in gold!"

"That also is interesting. What is the third—a nut or a nub?"

"Neither! He's a cough-drop!"

"Name?"

"John Stirling."

"Where does he hail from?"

"Don't know. When I asked him what his governor was, he told me to mind my own business."

"Of course you cheated him!"

"I—I was going to, but the silly see—"

"Well, come on! Get it off your chest!"

"He—he cheated me?"

"What, a new kid? What did you do?"

"I—I started to put him in the common-room coat-line, only—"

"Well, only what?"

"Well, the silly see put me in instead."

"What, a new kid? Where is his nibble now?"

"I left him in the common room with the other two. Fast is, I ordered them out, and started to put them out, but—the silly see put me out instead!"

"Great Julius Caesar!" exclaimed Fustler. "This is interesting. I see a chance of a bit of sport. It's quite a time since I gave a kid a real good tawdler. I'm getting quite out of practice, and here comes a chance of hammering three. Harroo!"

Fustler strode away to the common-room in quest of his victims, and three followed with his greenish, horny eyes, and rubbed his still aching ear tenderly.

"Go your way, you swanking lolly," he bawled. "You know jolly well it isn't old Barroch alone that has driven chaps away from St. Claire's, and nearly ruined the old place; but your beastly and bawling, and the reign of terror you and your teacher have established. You knowed, I hate you—hate you even worse than I hate the new 'uns who pitched me in the coal-bin!"

Meanwhile, in a corner of the common-room, the three new arrivals stood talking in an undertone.

"Nice hot pool we've popped into. I don't think," said the youngest of the three, a youth whose freckled countenance was dotted by a broad smile that had never been known to come off, and who possessed a head of bristly hair that had never been known to lie down.

"I've a hunch, I can't make you out. Eh? What?" the long, lank, pallid youth standing next him drawled.

"You seem to say you don't think what you do think, so that a fellow never knows what to think you do think. Don't you think so?"

Jack Stirling, to whom the lanky one had appealed, laughed heartily.

"To tell the truth, that wants too much thinking on," he replied. "But there's one thing certain. This new famous old school, all with our people have been induced by blue representations to send us, it is a bad way. The

headmaster is a really old fraud, most of the fellows appear to be snobs and cowards, or else swanking bullies, and we three are in for a hot time. The question is, how are we going to take it—lying down, or fighting?"

Before that question could be answered, Fustler swung through the doors into the room, and the rest of the occupants, who had been scanning the three with curious glances, crowded around to watch the fun.

Fustler had no time in approaching the new arrivals. He sped them instantly, meantime greatly enjoying a cricket-bat with a formidable-looking back.

"So you are the new kids!" he said. "The odds we've got to look into shape, the new brooms we've got to sweep the floor with. What's your watchword?"

"The demands," blurted the eldest of the aristocratic youth, who replied slowly. "My name is Carson Custler Cust, I'm happy to say!"

"What! You tonight barbarian! Mean to tell me your name is Carson Custler—mean something of that sort—and you glory in it! Now, understand this. That swanking name is too long and too awful for this establishment. From this moment you are The Balled Owl."

"The Balled Owl," a snore or two of voices rolled in again, and Fustler went on addressing the young gentleman on Carson Custler Cust's left.

"Now, do, your name, please!"

The smile on Malins's countenance grew wider still.

"What's my name?" he replied.

"Lunacy! I've heard as how my front name's Liberman; but as long as I can, I'll prefer they call me—"

"Check! down our coat, 'cause of my gear' round to the counters, else the old man made his speech, with cheery-woah as pronounced for their dicky-birds."

One deep breath of amazement filled the big common-room, and when it had subsided, Fustler laid on the newcomers a frozen glare.

"Do I understand you to say," he said slowly, "that you in earlier days sold—thick-wad?"

"You've guessed it in one, master," was the cheery reply. "He was in the greenish line, we was—greenish and noble and cool—and very well we did at it. Always give good measure, as the quantity was up to the quality."

"And your name?"

"Malins," came the cheery reply. "Capted them—subscribed to—see-see. Any other article to-day? No! Custler forward! Right!"

"Don't be in a hurry, Mr. Mullins, I shall have something to say to you presently," remarked Penitence. "Meanwhile, I'll deal with this third fellow. Here, you, what's your name?"

And Jack Stirling looked out with a defiant glare.

"What the diabolical has that to do with you?"

There was a commotion—one gasp of amazement from the crowd. Some pressed forward to see the fun, while others retreated to a distance to be out of danger.

"You impudent young whelp!" Penitence bellowed out. "I'll work you to ribbons! Trust him up, some of you, and I'll lay him with my belt!"

Three or four started forward, but, as if by instinct, the three new fellows had backed to the wall—shoulder to shoulder—and Captain Currier's Coat drawn languidly.

"You guessed right, Stirling. We shall have to take it fighting!"

"Right you are, young fellow—ah-ha!" Check Mullins chorused gaily.

"We're in for a real good old scrap."

But just then a diversion was caused by the huge hanging made open of the big swing door, and the entry of top speed of a lad of about their own age, but of by no means their sturdy build or stalwart appearance.

The new-comer was pallid and wasted of face. He had deep-set eyes, with dark rings under them, and a brittle spot on his white cheekbones. And, for all his haste, they noted that he limped with his left foot.

"Don't let him touch me, the brute!" he shouted, in martial terror. "He'll kill me some day, I'm sure he will!"

"And serve you right for making such a bulwark!" exclaimed Penitence angrily. The bully aimed a blow with the back-end of his belt that only just missed the lad's head, and evoked from Jack Stirling an angry remonstrance.

"You owe to hit a lame chap!"

"Oh!" said Penitence coolly.

"You're piling up a nice little account, my young friend. Making you sit up and behave will be quite a joy. Now, Wankling, come here and be courageous!"

The delicate lad, known evidently as "The Wankling," crouched with a new terror; and even as he did so, in hot haste there burst into the room a beetle-browed, swarthy lad, body and brow of build, and with eyes causing blinding in his deep-set, busy eyes. The wretched Wankling stood as though transfixed.

The latest arrival pointed on him with an outburst. "Get you!" and, seizing him by the throat, forced him to his knees, then set to work, driving his bony knuckles with a screaming motion into the nape of his neck.

The Wankling screamed with agony, but his despairing wail evoked from those who watched only a yell of mirth.

All enjoyed the scene heartily, save the three new arrivals, who with one impulse sprang at the body tyrant.

Jack Stirling reached him first, and with a right swing fell between the eyes bowled him over like a rabbit.

The tyrant was up in a moment.

"Run, run!" the Wankling whispered to Jack, in hoarse tones. "You don't know what a cruel beast he is! He'll kill you!"

But Jack waved him aside.

"Let him come on and try!" he exclaimed. "I think I'll take him all his time."

The body one had, in his turn, swung back Penitence.

"Good luck!" he snarled. "This is my business. Leave him to me. I'll smash him to a jelly!"

As if by magic the lockers-on had formed a ring, everybody present, with three exceptions, shouting:

"Get about him, Stibbold! Put him through it!"

"If he doesn't, I will!" scolded Penitence. "Go it, Stib! Hammer him well!"

All this took place in a second. Next moment the two had flown at each other, the blows from their fists falling like rain.

One thing was speedily apparent. Stibbold had met his match—had cut himself a bigger chunk than he could chew. He was breaking ground. He had met an opponent who could stand punishment as well as he could, and could give more in exchange. His blows were coming slower and with less force, while every blow the new chap delivered found its mark—and nearly always left its mark—till Stibbold's mother wouldn't have known him.

His breath was coming slow and laboured, in deep gasping sobs. He was breaking ground. And now the new chap was all over him.

What a wrench! Look a swift, upward swing of that terrific right! Stibbold caught it full on the point. Down went his head, up went his heels, almost in a half-circle, then he rolled over on his face.

Further sprang at Stirling.

"You whelp! Now I'll hammer you!" he bellowed; but at the identical moment Check Mullins shot out his foot, over which Penitence stumbled, and Captain Currier's Coat shot out a straight left which caught him on the right ear.

Further the mighty, the terror of St. Clair's, rolled over on Stibbold's still prostrate form.

"Down there!" came the shout; and the crowd advanced on the three, who, standing shoulder to shoulder, brushed through them, and dragged the Wankling into the angle of a corner. Here they stood shoulder to shoulder across that angle, hitting out swift and surely at any head that came within range.

The opposing host were not too particular in their methods, and began to feel misses at the chaotic charge. The three followed their example. With well-directed aim they hurled elbows, elbows, books, and anything else they could lay their hands on, at the new hair-raising mob.

Then Jack, picking up a chair, whirled it around with such effect that the front rank fell back. Then Currier's Coat hurled a blackboard at the mob, following it with the coat on which it had rested.

They wavered still more.

Check Mullins dragged the fireguard from its position, and the other two helped him to bear it skidding in front of them, and then, wonder of wonders, the poor little Wankling, who had, unheeded, been urinating the school fire-quart and attaching it to the hydrant, set the thing at work, playing on the enemy as if they were a raging fire, instead of merely a raging mob.

The common-room was filled with a shrieking hurricane of yells, the crash of chairs and tables, the shivering of glass, the thud and clatter of fellows rolling over in heaps, the howls of

those lying kicking and struggling water-logs.

There were terrific odds against the loss, but they were shoulder to shoulder, and the men standing there were looking in combination.

"They're too thick!"

"Lemme get out of it!"

"You're squandering you to a jelly!"

These and other like cries filled the air, when all of a sudden there rose above them all a shriek!

The Wankling had paid the penalty of strange genius. The foe had marked him down. An instant, lung by Stibbold, caught him full on the forehead. He hung up his arms and toppled off the form on which he had been standing, roared to the floor, rolled over, and lay still, a thin red streak trickling through his hair.

Jack Stirling broke the sudden, instinctive hush.

"Oh, you man! You villain!" he shouted. "You've killed him! And he was such a game little chap! Stand back, and give him air! Fetch some water, somebody!"

Something impelled those to obey that commanding tone—even those who had been fighting like fury against the lad who lay there, with the white face of the Wankling leaning against his shoulder.

In the midst of it all the big doors swung wide open, and on the threshold there appeared the party from crimson face and fiery cheeks of Tina Barnard, the headmaster, in his mortar-board and driving gown.

CHAPTER II.

The Headmaster's Wrath—Mrs. Gabbie's Secret.

The hush was followed by a leader clearer than the first, the opening host rushing to be ever to lay the blame for everything on the shoulders of the three new fellows.

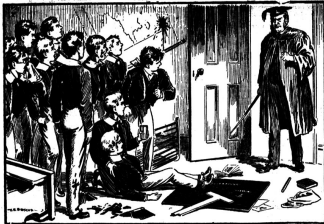
And Dr. Barnard, whose readiness to believe Penitence and Stibbold, and doubtless all who condemned them, was one of the foundations of their sway, as usual gave ear to them. He turned on the three new arrivals in a fury.

He was particularly down on Jack Stirling, and for a special reason, though Jack was not aware of it. His father, in sending him to St. Clair's, had placed on the splendid reputation the school had gained under the rule of Dr. Grandison, who had been an assistant master when Jack's dad was himself a boy at St. Clair's.

Barnard was careless of nothing in the world so much as of that reputation and the pride and affection with which Grandison's old boys used to speak of him. His—Barnard's—was, in fact, an ancient reputation, whose decay had been bought in America, and he hated to think of the better man who had once ruled here.

The Wankling, whose father had also been an old boy, came in for a share of Barnard's wrath as soon as he had been restored to consciousness, and only the three new-comers uttered a word in his defence. For, as Jack remarked, the boys of St. Clair didn't seem particularly keen on being even ordinary spectators, let alone on playing the stick game.

"At it again!" the headmaster roared at the Wankling, without pausing to hear any explanation. "You're always at it—giving your head out open, or your arm sprained, or your eye blackened, you aggravating little



While all the fighters were standing horrified by the Wackling's agonized form and white face, the door opened and the head strode in. The new boys were in for it now!

wretch!" And he strode towards the shrinking little chap, brandishing a short, thin wooden rod, which he wielded with cruel cunning.

But Jack Stirling sprang between them.

"Don't hit him, ah!" he exclaimed, respectfully but firmly. "He was not to blame at all. And no wonder he gets black eyes and a broken head, if fellows are allowed to ill-treat him as I saw one cowardly brute doing just now. And if you want to know who caused the rapine, it was myself. I tried to stop his being returned."

"Here, I say, I took a hand in the game, too—eh, what?" stammered C. C. C., not to be done out of his share of the blame, and Chick Mullins slipped in.

"Come off your perch, both of you! Where do I come in—me what lifted the pookin-headed jakes on the napper wiv the coal-scuttle?"

Harrold eyed the three with eyes bloodshot and bulging with fury.

"You whelps!" he spluttered. "You're starting very early. You're going to be three nice handbills, I can see! But mark me, I've had bigger whelps than you to turn, and I've cowed them!"

As he spoke he slashed right and left with his malacca.

"They're come here full of mischief like you, but I've wotted it out of them, as I'll wot it out of you!"

"Steady!"

Jack Stirling had watched up a chair, and stood brandishing it with a look in his eyes that Harrold, shocked and sobered, took rightly for a danger signal. He crossed to the door.

"Mr. Cribble, he shouted, "kindly take these rebels to the punishment

room, and lock them in till I give you further orders!"

A hatchet-faced person, with a shock head of rusty hair, and with crooked green eyes and sandy whiskers, entered the room with a smoky, writing machine. This was Era Cribble, one of the head's underlings.

He scanned the three with a malevolent scowl; but the moment his shifty eyes caught sight of Jack Stirling he started as if struck a sudden blow.

"Come along," he commanded, in a grating voice, "all four of you. Here, what's your name?"

"John Stirling," came the steady answer, and the questioner flinched again.

Then, seeing the Wackling by the collar—some instinct warned him not to grab at either of the others—Era Cribble led the way downstairs and through a number of corridors into a barely-furnished sitting chamber, wherein, having targeted the key on them, he left them.

"That's the whelp," he hissed, as he shuffled away. "All the Stirlings are like that. He's got the Stirling square jaw, and the eyes that seem to flash 'Who cares for you?' May had it when I married her; but she won't have it much longer, if I have my way with her! May would be that boy's aunt, of course. I wonder what's he here for! Have his people got a clue, and is he here to follow it up? Or is it merely chance? They know no more than that she disappeared; but she'll never get back, they've found her—May, with the fortune that has got to be mine! But I must keep an eye on this boy, or my whole game is spoiled!"

Meanwhile, the four boys, left to themselves, stared blankly at each

other, till Chick Mullins broke the silence.

"Well, this is a nice way to begin the week, as the man said who was hanged on Monday morning!"

"At all events we are in each other's company, which appears to be the only decent company at this place," said Jack Stirling cheerfully. "Wish they'd allow us to one study."

"No such luck!" sighed little Binkie, to give the Wackling his real name. "Didn't you hear what the head growled as he sent us away, that meantime he would take steps to prevent our competing for further disorder!"

"Cheer up, kiddie!" checked Chick Mullins. "Don't let's cross our bridges till we come to them."

"You haven't been in this place a year," Binkie said. "I have! You haven't seen small boys tortured by big ones for sheer malice. I've seen a braver boy battered since he has given in till he has fainted. I've seen little chaps who came here as healthy and cheerful as you three, taken away light-headed and delirious with their sufferings."

"But hasn't anybody interfered?" Jack inquired, and Binkie replied:

"Yes, some of the parents have made a fuss, but you can guess what happens in their line as in their cruelty. Fusty Stibbold, and a lot more of them, hang all together—a regular gambling, smoking, drinking and blackguardly crowd."

"But I can't understand it," said Jack. "My dad was at St. Clare's, and he swore by it to this day."

"So was my governor," drawled C. C. C., "and he jave about it no end."

"So was mine," said Binkie, "and he is so wrapped up in his old school I believe he'd think I was dreaming if I told him but what I know about the place. It all began when the old headmaster left, and Barnaby got appointed over the head of Harvey Lane, the man who ought to have had the headmastership. Barnaby Dene is the one real good sort amongst the masters, and he still stops on because it would break his heart to leave the old place, though it breaks it just the same to see the cruelty and fraud that swamp it. He's been offered no end of big positions, but he simply can't tear himself away from here. It seems to me a foundation pupil here, and the old place has a warm corner in his heart."

"I've heard my father speak of him," said Jack. "Look here, you fellows, my father and my grandpapa were Choir-Colegians, and somehow I feel it a sort of duty to stick on here, and by some means or other put the old place to rights."

"And it's that that keeps me here," said Binkie. "There have been Binkies at St. Clair's for two hundred years."

"I'm going to stick it, too," Chick Mallins chimed in. "My old man won't leave. He went to the Board school, his old man went to the Ragged school, and his old man didn't go to no school at all. But I belong to this here place, and so in a sorter kinder way it belongs to me."

"Chick has put it in a nutshell," said Jack smiling. "We four are true Choir men in heart and soul. I vote we make a compact to write, and fight, and adhere side by side, shoulder to shoulder, to maintain the honour, clear the name and fame, and restore and uphold the glorious traditions of the old school."

"Right-o!" said Chick Mallins. "St. Clair's for ever!"

The four gripped hands solemnly, and as they did so the door opened, and a man well past middle age, with gray of hair, and wearing a short, stubby beard and moustache, entered, bearing a tray.

There was a twinkle in his shrewd, kindly eyes, and a note of geniality in his voice as he exclaimed:

"Here you are, you rebels! You new chaps hasn't lost much time in getting into hot water. As for you, Binkie, you never seem able to get out of it."

"No change of that, sir, while I'm here," the Wackling replied gravely.

"I'm afraid there isn't, Binkie—I'm afraid there isn't. But we must stick it, Binkie—we must stick it. The vote's over to turn some time or other. And now, come, tell me all about it, honest boys, and while you're telling me you can all sit sampling this plum-cake my big sister sent me. I've phoned her my big sister ever since I could talk because once she was two inches bigger than I was; but now she's a little old maid not up to my shoulder, but always my big sister."

Remember the three new chaps took Barnaby Dene, with his plum-cake, and his little big sister, to their hearts. Then and there they told their tale, and the bushy brows bent over the kindly eyes.

"Well, there's one thing certain," said Barnaby Dene presently. "You three new chaps—for you do seem pretty chummy—"

"We're chums for evermore, sir," the three interrupted him.

"Glad to hear it, my lads," said Barnaby Dene. "I may say that you have made a distinct impression here. I may say a good many impressions, judging from the lot of anomalies, and I don't think you'll be worried much in the way of hollaying. But you, Binkie, had better look out. They say the five-extinguisher effect was your special idea."

"We shall all be on the look-out, sir," said Jack smiling. "We're going to put things right here, sir, and restore the old good name and fame of this ancient and honourable school—and don't you forget it."

Barnaby Dene opened his shrewd eyes wide.

"I won't forget it," he exclaimed, "but, by Jingo, I believe you mean what you say, and that you'll do what you say. Go steady, boys, and you'll prosper in the end!"

Then, pulling at his big black briar-root, this splendid fellow strode off towards his study, and, happening on the way on a group of Sixth-Formers indulging in the secret cigarette, called them to right and left with no more scruple than if they had been Lower-Formers.

CHAPTER III.

The Wackling's Great Whore.

A few hours later the four were summoned, and joined the rest of School at "Supping" in the ancient dining-hall. They found themselves the objects of scolding looks and constant whisperings, but no attempt was made at hollaying for Mr. Binkie's suit was vacant, and he was reported to be supping in "Jack Ward."

Forbes, too, was carrying out with in a ding, the result of going down in the "rush" following the upheaval of the big blackboard and the charge of the flagstaff. But from his glance in their direction they could guess that his whispers were eloquent of what he meant to happen to them in his own good time.

Binkie the Wackling correctly anticipated what would be one of the earliest forms of revenge.

"They'll pinch your hamper," he said, with gloomy confidence. "It's one of their favourite dodges. They form a circle in the dormy, with your hamper in the centre of it and you outside it, and you have to sit and watch the boss of the dormy heading round all your tack and goodies. 'Tis a pleasant sort of feeling."

"Oh, do you?" exclaimed Jack, grinding his teeth and clenching his fists, and Binkie went on:

"My dear chap, you have to. You may be jolly plucky, but if you kick they'll simply swamp you by force of numbers."

"Nice sporting lot," drawled Currier Cust.

"I don't think," rejoined Chick Mallins.

It was then that the genius of Binkie the Wackling once again asserted itself.

"I've got a lovely notion," he said. "Only it seems such a lot of wicked waste. It's simply this: be whispered—" "You may not know it, but the only subject I've any good at here, is 'winks'—chemistry, you know. Well, I know one or two winks, quite harmless and roborative, that you can introduce into any fruit pie, or fruit salad, and in less than half an hour the chap

who has sipped it will with his eyes been born."

Jack whistled thoughtfully.

"I won't seriously injure him!" he asked; and Binkie replied:

"No; but it'll give him one-or-two, and he'll think his number's up. Now, have any of you chaps got a fruit pie in your hamper?"

"I've brought a damson tart," said Jack, his mouth watering at the thought.

"And I've brought some of mother's apple turnover," Chick chimed in.

"Our chef's a nut on fruit tarts, and he's fixed me up a regular prison pie," said Currier Cust. "But I say, what a young ruffian you are, don't you know?"

"Not at all!" said Binkie. "But Jim's a wackler, and my own chaps will break his will and Henry, it being a fool. Our thing will run, but your winks can't, they see, let you teach an omen of your tack. The more suspicious it is, the more those oinks will glory in winking it before your very eyes."

"That puts the lid on!" said Chick. "They've just told me to put me down up to the dormitory, and I saw a few of them grinning. Let 'em wait half-a-me, and they'll be grinning the other side of their mouths. What-a-fo! Come along, boys!"

And all went the conspirators to carry out their great scheme.

A few minutes later Binkie was leading Jack a hand with a hollaying-making hamper, which the crowd had been regarding with affectionate interest.

It was indeed a topping hamper. And got the sight of it had given Jack a pang.

Even as he had crashed down the lid of the abundance of good things he had reflected that among them there was not a single goodie, not a party, not a cake, or pie, or bunnet from the divine hand of dear old Aunt Meg.

She was really his father's aunt, but to Jack she had been like a moth after silver. And, when one day, after her absence on a long holiday, the news came that she had mysteriously disappeared, no one missed and mourned her more than Jack.

Others, indeed, were asked in their goodness, but not in his hearing. Some asserted that she was a vain old maid who had been wheedled into marrying some swamp after her money, and that it served her right for leaving her fifth and his without a word.

But to Jack she was always dear, kind, gentle Aunt Meg, and in the absence of his not many and many a night he went as near to "hollaying" as he would let himself, wondering what evil might have befallen her.

Jack's love was a huge affair, and it required the joint efforts of the four chaps to cart it up to the sort of combination of ward and barracks-room to which Cust had been allocated. Jack's outfit was next to the right, Chick's to the left.

A few minutes later School lined up for prayers, and the squads were marched to their respective dormitories. That something was in the wind was apparent from the whisperings, mutterings, and giggles of the Poney and Stinkhead divisions.

The prefect of each dormitory gave the word "Lights out!" and darkness and silence reigned—for a while.

Then a low whistle sounded along the dormitory in which Jack was located. Jack was occupying the next cot to

Dinkie, and the latter whispered to him:

"Now the fun's going to begin!" Stealthily forms in pyjamas and night-gowns stole out of their cots, and fixed the old-fashioned shutters close, drawing the heavy curtains over them. Then the gasjets were re-lighted, but turned as low as possible. From the other dormitories other forms stole silently in, certain of them dragging what Jack rightly judged to be Chick's and Cass's boxes.

Of a sudden half a dozen fellows made a dive at his own box, and dragged it to where, in the centre of the ward, the boys had raised two cots together, and formed a ring round them just as Dinkie had proposed.

Then Pottifer, amid a ripple of suppressed giggling, chuckled: "Friends, Romans, countrymen, welcome to the banquet!"

back to their respective home-studies as soon as their turn, the *Wackling*."

They plucked the beam in a chorus of whimpers:

"The Founders of the Feast!"

The only word from Jack Stirling's cot was a moan.

"I thought he'd get more pluck," said a boy named Chandler, whose conscience was stinging him, and who had begun to wish himself a pal of the three new-comers.

"Rats!" replied Syms. "They're as careless as—as the *Wackling*. What a science took out! One night!"

Science roared for a full half-hour, broken only by a yawn or a sneeze.

Then another fellow began to stir in their sleep uneasily.

Then one chap groaned. Then Sybilins sat up with a sudden start, and Syms from the next cot groaned:

At that moment Syms sprang up with a yell.

"Get a light! Fetch a doctor!" he cried. "I've got cholera, or else it's ptomaine poisoning. I've eaten something that's disagreed with me."

A few minutes later, all the dormitory was in an uproar of groans, shrieks, wailings, and moanings. Fellows were sitting doubled up on their cots, others rolling on the floor, and others tied up in knots were heaving under the bedclothes.

And from the adjoining dormitory came sounds of distress as poignant and despairing.

The curtains were flung back, the shutters opened, bells were set ringing, the masters were aroused and came streaming in, Barnack himself at their head.

The local doctor and his assistant were telephoned for, and matrons and



In a few minutes all the dormitory was in an uproar of groans, shrieks, and wailings, as the unhappy ballies wrestled with their pains. The *Wacklings* however had worked!

Then followed the sound of good things being unwrapped and divided, the clatter of plates, the clink of cutlery, the clink of glass, and the purl of orange, elderberry, and ginger wine, together with expressions of rapture as some of Casson Cass's delicacies were unspiced and served round.

Just as the last of the toothsome pasties, macarons, macarounges, and jellies were being washed down with home-made contrast-wine, Niles Syms sprang to his feet.

"Mr. Chairman," he exclaimed, "I propose a toast—The Founders of the Feast! They didn't mean to do it. They would have stabbed it if they had thought it good enough, but they brought them to their senses this afternoon, and in recognition of the delightful banquet they have so hospitably provided, we propose that by the time they have passed a term at St. Claire's School, we will send them

"Wassermeyer!"

"A dream!" replied Skiffins, with a shudder. "I dreamt those Star Chandler chaps we read about in history this afternoon had returned me to be drawn and quartered, and they were beginning it!"

"Go on dreaming it, and shut up!" snapped Syms.

"I don't want to! Oh, cranda, I've got such a pain!"

"Shurrup!"

"I can't! I shall have to get up! You entering house, isn't you see I'm in, agony! Oo-ow!"

"Great snakes! I believe I've swallowed a hedgehog!" shouted Brian Barnack, from Tipperary, springing up, his hands crossed on his breast. "Begorrah, it's pointed that O' an'!"

"Skittles!" said Pottifer himself, awakened by a sudden pain. "Do, go to sleep, see chaps!"

portion were passed. In short, St. Claire's Collegiate School was a scene of pain.

And through all this the three-chance who were the cause of all the trouble, and their "pup," the *Wackling*, slept the sleep of the more or less just, until Dr. McVarrish, satisfied that cholera had not broken out at St. Claire's, and having applied simple and ordinary remedies, went back to Darrochester, and the masters and servants had all retired to resume their shattered rest.

And then, from four separate cots, a quick ear might have caught the sound of muffled laughter—hysterical laughter—suppressed at the cost of bodily pain, and the risk of stifling.

(Another grand long instalment of this rollicking new *Book of Babel* next Tuesday! Please order to-day!)



When in trouble or in doubt, write to me to help you out.

HEARTY THANKS!

My dear Reader,—I take this first opportunity of thanking all of you who have been kind enough to remember me during Christmas and the New Year by sending cards and other little tokens of your friendship.

Of course, I have made a point of personally thanking every reader of a card, but owing to the enormous number it is possible one or two may have been overlooked. If any chum of mine has not received a letter from me by the time these lines appear, will be please accept these words of thanks for his kindness during Christmas!

All these cheery and affectionate greetings I have received, my chums, mean a great deal to me. If I had been at all depressed about the future, your kind wishes would certainly have dispelled every trace of gloom. As it is, I am able to tell you that the New Year has dawned particularly bright both for Cassin Ross Chess and your old friend the Editor.

As you know, we have a really superb programme of New Year stories and other features, and for several weeks to come there will not be a single issue of "C.R.C." that does not contain either a new serial or a new series of stories. And all these new attractions are the pick of the market.

Apart from greeting cards, I have had a tremendous increase in my postage just lately, and I can only attribute this to the enormous number of fellows who, taking up Cassin Ross Chess for the first time, have found it to be absolutely the ideal paper.

This is what one gathers from the letters, and I want to tell all these new readers that they will never regret the day when they became regular subscribers of "C.R.C." but will prize it as dearly as do all these readers who started with number one.

FROM A CHUM IN CANADA.

Here is a nice, chatty letter I have received from a chum in Canada, and I publish it because I am sure that a lot of you will be interested in the little glimpses of Canadian life which he gives:

"Quibon,

"Dear Editor,—A few lines to wish you a prosperous New Year. I received your issue quite safely. Your Christmas Double Number was a great success, and I greatly appreciate the time and money you spent to get out this fine issue. You will probably be getting hundreds of letters about this number, but I am sure you will regard my letter more the less.

"When I am reading the stories in

"C.R.C." I am in England before I know it, and forget entirely that my home is in Canada. I am glad to hear that you have so many readers abroad. I wonder if you have ever travelled to this country? If you have I think you will agree with me that it is a fine country.

"Our house is situated in a beautiful spot, surrounded by maple-trees on all sides, and giving a splendid view of the surrounding country. Next time I write I will try and send you a photo of it.

"At present the ground is covered with snow, but as our work is pretty well along we do not mind this; in fact, we welcome a little snow.

"We always have a good time out here at Christmas, and everyone is jolly and light-hearted. But for all this I would like to spend Christmas in Bristol.

"You don't know how I would enjoy a game of football. When I was over there I used to play in a team.

"The favourite game over here in the winter is hockey, which is a very exciting game, but very rough, because sometimes a player is badly hurt. I witnessed a game last winter, which was a very rough one. One player received a knock over the head on purpose, and he was carried off unconscious, but was able to continue after coming round.

"Writing your paper every second, I remain a very loyal reader,

"GEORGE."

Many thanks for your letter, "George." I can quite understand your playing football for the Home-land, and I hope that some day, before long, you will have got on so well that you will be able to pop across the Atlantic, and have a good time amongst us.

IN A BAD WAY.

Such a terrible tale of woe as has come to me from a London reader! He tells me that his mother, father, and sister grumbled at him; he is very unpopular with other boys; he had a girl chum, but she does not care for him now; he gets grumbled at by his governess at business; and, lastly, he is in a woe, and all the other accounts make fun of him.

Really, my chums, you have set your Editor a hard task when you ask him for advice and help, for I am afraid there must be something radically wrong with you that you should be in such an unhappy plight.

I note in your letter that you are nervous in company, and possibly this same nervousness has a good deal to

do with all your troubles. You are too self-conscious and sensitive. Try and get rid of these complaints, try chum, by exercising all your will power. Don't brood over them. It is open to you to make short work of all the troubles you have described, and you must really pull yourself together, and play the man. Then, I am sure, you will have a much happier future.

Write again shortly, and let me know, will you, how you are getting along!

A CURE FOR CHILBLAINS.

I have received a letter from one of my Backham Hill readers, in which he requests me to publish a cure for chilblains.

Chilblains, my chums, are due to exposure to cold, and to extremes of temperature. Persons who suffer should be very careful in the matter of maintaining their health during the cold season of the year.

Chilblains generally appear by those who have a weak circulation. In such a case, to restore warmth, the body should never be placed before a fire, but friction used to promote the circulation.

To ease the itching, dash on the chilblains a lotion composed of equal parts of soap liniment and tincture of camphor. Another good application is composed of compound tincture of camphor.

When chilblains break, the surface should be washed with a good soap and tepid water, and boracic ointment applied.

"THE PHANTOM SUBMARINE"

On page 25 of this issue my chums will see a full advertisement of our magnificent new series of complete stories, commencing

NEXT WEEK.

This grand series, by one of my best authors, is another of our New Year features, and it is to be followed by more new stories, of which I will speak next Tuesday.

In the meantime, let me urge all my readers, old and young, to make an absolute certainty of getting next Tuesday's "C.R.C." containing "The Submarine Battle," the first of our Phantom Submarine stories.

Owing to the continued increase in our circulation at this time, it is really essential that readers everywhere should make a point of ordering their copies of the paper in advance.

Yours Editor



The Mere House Mystery.

An Enthralling Complete Story of
Lester Griffith, Detective.



Nick Swanson noticed his mother's fingers shake a little as they tore open the official-looking blue envelope. He saw the worried look on her thin face as she read the typewritten contents.

"What is it, mother?" he asked quietly.

"They're going to turn us out, Nick!" she answered, in trembling tones.

"Turn us out?" repeated the boy unbelievably. "Why, Sir John promised we might stay here at Mere House as long as we liked."

"But he's dead, Nick," answered Mrs. Swanson. "He died quite suddenly of aneurysm in India, and everything has gone to his cousin, Mr. Hawkins."

"Hawkins, of Durham Court; that queer old stick who collects medals and snuff-boxes?"

"Yes; I think that is the one. And his lawyers have written to say that Mere House is going to be sold, and that we must leave."

"What a beastly shame!" burst out Nick. "But didn't Sir John leave any directions, don't you think? He'd never have let us be kicked out like this!"

"I'm sure he wouldn't. But I'm afraid his death was so sudden that he had no time to make a will or anything. He couldn't have, for if he had they wouldn't dare turn us out!"

For a minute Nick said nothing. His mouth was very tight set, and there was a queer look in his gray eyes. He was a big, young-looking fellow for fifteen, and being an only son, was old for his years.

"How long have we got before they kick us out?" he asked presently.

"A month," answered his mother.

"I'll go off, and have a yarn with Ned Cantor," said Nick. "He's got his head screwed on all right, and perhaps he and his father can give us some notion what we'd better do."

He gave his mother a kiss, whistled up his rough-haired terrier Peter, and started off across the fields.

Mere House, where Nick and his mother lived alone, was a picturesque but half-ruinous old manor house. The Swansons had once been well off, but Nick's father had dropped nearly all his fortune in the East Australian Bank smash, and the shock killed him. After his death, Sir John Montmart, an old friend of the family, came to the rescue, collected enough out of the wreckage to give Mrs. Swanson about fifty pounds a year, and offered her Mere House rent free. There she and Nick had been living for nearly two years, when the news of his sudden death upset all their plans.

The Cantors lived a mile away, at Dillyer Farm; but when he arrived Nick found, to his disgust, that Ned and his father had gone off for the day to the Tavistock Castle Fair. So he came straight home, to help his mother with household matters. They were too poor to afford a servant.

Work in the house and garden kept Nick busy all day, and when he turned in about nine o'clock he was tired enough to tumble off asleep the minute his head touched the pillow.

It was a great find. Peter had creased him, Peter slept at a mat at the end of his mother's bed, and when Nick sat up the dog was standing by the bedroom door.

He quickly lit a candle, and jumped out of bed. Every hair on Peter's back was erect, and his low, deep growl filled the room.

"What is it, old man?" whispered Nick.

Peter turned, and looked at his master, then stretched at the door, and growled again.

There was no moon, but the night was clear, and the house, with its big windows, not too dark. Leaving the candle, but thrusting matches into his pocket, Nick opened the door, and, with Peter close at his heels, slipped down the broad, shallow staircase.

Everything was as usual. The front door was locked as he had left it overnight.

Peter paddled off towards the back regions. He was still growling.

"This is a bit run!" muttered Nick, as he followed. "Surely to goodness no burglar would be fool enough to come breaking in here! Why, he wouldn't find the price of a meal."

Peter was sniffing at the back door. Nick tied the handle. To his amazement, it was open. Yet he remembered plainly locking it before going to bed.

"Be sure, then there is someone in

the place, after all!" he muttered. "Look him, Peter!"

The dog ran off into a long passage, which led into the unused part of the house. Nick followed.

Suddenly Peter gave a sharp yelp, and sprang forward. At the same time there came a sound of rattling footsteps, and immediately afterwards a crash of breaking glass from a room to the right. Nick rushed in, but was just too late. A large hole in the lower wall showed where the intruder had crept.

Nick did not hesitate. He swung himself out through the hole, dropped to the ground, and took up the flame. He heard someone look through the trees. Peter dashed on ahead. Nick, running hard, heard the dog give a yelp of pain, and the next moment came upon his pet lying on the ground, stunned by a heavy blow or kick.

For the moment he forgot everything but his dog. With his heart almost bursting with rage and anxiety, he poked up his pet, and carried him tenderly back to the house. There he found, to his great relief, that no harm had been done. He hushed the bewinged bird, and the little bleggus soon came round, and gratefully licked his master's hand.

Nick did not sleep much more that night, and early next morning went out to look for the tracks of the midnight intruder. He found that they led through the wood at the back of the house, into a field. He tracked them to a lane beyond, and there lost them.

As he turned to go home again, a tall, curly-haired young man came whirling up the lane, and, seeing Nick, hailed him cheerfully. It was Ned Cantor.

"Sorry I missed you yesterday, Nick," he said, at last. "Wasn't you prowling about here?"

Nick told him of the burglar.

"I can't imagine what he was after," he added.

"I expect he was a tramp who didn't know the place, and thought there might be plunder," answered Ned. "Anyhow, you've given him a jolly good scare. But what's this about your getting notice to quit?"

"It's true," said Nick seriously. "Hawkins has given us notice to clear out!"

"That's a bad job," said Ned, with a serious face. "I don't know what you'll do, for there's not even a cottage anywhere near."

"And we couldn't afford it if there was," replied Nick bitterly. "Mother writes in Mr. Hawkins to tell her how things are with us."

"I'm afraid he'd never see the letter," said Ned. "They say he leaves all business to his secretary. His care for nothing but his collections. Denham Court, where his office is, is simply stuffed with old coins and medals and such things."

"Wonder if it would be any use if I went to see him myself?" suggested Nick.

"You might try," said Ned doubtfully. "Tell you what—I'll ask father. Can you come over to Elixer this afternoon?"

"Not to-day. I shall be full up with work around the house. I'll come tomorrow."

Ned nodded, and, after Nick had shown him the tracks of the burglar, went off home.

The Countess had been very good friends to the Westons. The boys were great pets, and Ned often brought over a pound of cream or a dozen fresh eggs as a present from his mother.

The Countess family were at breakfast next morning, when a boy came running full tilt up through the garden.

"Hallo, there's Nick!" exclaimed Ned, jumping up, and hurrying out.

"I say, Ned, the burglar turned up again last night!" exclaimed Nick.

"The mischief he did! Did he get in?"

"No, I was ready for him. I know he was going to try it again."

"How?"

"I found poisoned meat around the house overnight. The brute meant to poison Peter. If I hadn't trained Peter not to eat anything I didn't give him he'd have been done for a certainty."

"What happened?"

"I set up and waited. Sure enough, about one o'clock I heard someone sneaking about outside. I tied up Peter and took a stick, and went down. When I got down I spotted the chap close under the wall of the old part of the house. He got under that window where he looks out the night before, and started to climb in."

"I thought I'd got him, but just that minute Peter must have heard him, for he set up a row fit to make paradise. The burglar chap gave a curse, dropped back, and looked it before I could get within yards."

"Wish I'd been there!" exclaimed Ned. "We'd have collared him between us."

"I wish you had. But what beats me is why the chap came the second time," said Nick.

"A second time?" repeated a deep voice.

Nick started. Beside the boys stood a tall, well-built, good-looking man, dressed in well-cut Norfolk jacket and knickerbockers. He was smoking a black Algerian cigarette.

"It's Mr. Lester Griffith, Nick," explained Ned. "He's boarding with us for a bit. He's come down to Devonshire for a holiday."

Griffith shook hands with Nick.

"I wish you'd tell me about this burglar of yours," he said, smiling.

"I'm rather keen on crime stories."

His remark was so pleasant that Nick had no hesitation in spinning the whole yarn.

Griffith listened quietly, but his dark eyes gleamed with interest.

"Are you sure that this was the same man who came the previous night?" was his first question.

"Quite!" declared Nick. "I could swear to the footmarks."

"Do you mind if I come over and see?" said Griffith.

"I wish you would," said Nick eagerly.

"All right; just wait till I get my cap."

Short as the walk was, by the time they arrived at Mere House Griffith and Nick were old friends. Griffith got on well with boys. His kindness on sport and cheery manners always made him friends with youngsters.

Nick introduced Griffith to his mother, and she, too, took to the genial stranger.

"Now, Nick," said Griffith, "I want you to show me the tracks, and where this chap tried to get in."

The tracks of a pair of thick-soled, clumsy boots were plain in the soft ground under the broken window. Griffith examined closely, measured them carefully with a tape, marked with a pencil, and presently told Nick that he was quite right. It was the same man on both occasions.

"Now I want to look through the old part of the house," he said.

Nick took him through the bare, deserted rooms. The floors were full of dry-rot, the paper was peeling from the damp walls. Griffith went through every one of the rooms, examining everything with the greatest care.

"There are others underneath," he said abruptly.

"I believe there are," said Nick, rather surprised. "But I've never been down. We were told they were not safe, and mother asked me not to go."

"Do you know where the entrance is?"

"There was a grating outside, but that's been blocked by a tail of masonry. I think there's a way in close to the old back kitchen."

"Ah, that'll be here," said Griffith, stepping out into the passage and along it.

"Why, you know as much about the house as I do!" said Nick, in amazement.

"I've had a lot to do with old houses," smiled Griffith.

"Are you a detective?" demanded Nick.

Lester Griffith laughed.

"I do a little in that way," he said modestly. "But don't tell the Countess, Nick."

"All right," said Nick. "I won't. But what do you think this burglar chap was after?"

"That's just what I mean to find out. Ah, here's the cellar door! But it's locked. Wait a minute."

He took from his pocket some stout wire and a small pair of pliers, and a tiny oil-can, and in less than three minutes the rusty lock had yielded to his persistence, the door creaked, and a flight of grey steps led down into the darkness.

"I'll go down," said Griffith quietly.

Nick waited impatiently. He heard Griffith moving about down below, and saw the glimmer of the small electric torch which he carried. He heard him tapping the walls, and stamping now and then on the floor.

At last he appeared again.

"Found anything?" asked Nick eagerly.

"Afraid I haven't," answered Griffith. "But after all, I hardly expected to. Still, that isn't to say that I shan't find something later on."

"I think I understand," said Nick eagerly. "You mean that this burglar fellow may come again?"

"Good lad! That's just what I do think. And when he does come, there are to be no dogs or sticks. He's to have a free hand."

Nick gave a low whistle.

Griffith smiled.

"Look here, Nick," he said. "I've thought the Countess would put your mother up for a day or two."

"I expect so. She's stayed at Elixer several times."

"All right. Then she must go off to-day, and you and I will stay here on the quiet and see what turns up. But we must be low. I want your burglar to think the place is empty."

"Hopping!" was Nick's only comment.

The watchful Peter gave vent to a low growl.

Lester Griffith sprung up softly and crept to a passage.

"Keep the dog quiet, Nick," he whispered.

"Can I come with you?"

"Yes; but keep well behind me, and whatever you do don't make a sound!"

As he spoke, he slipped away towards the door of the kitchen where he and Nick had been keeping watch for two nights past. Nick set Peter down with a whispered warning to be silent and followed.

Griffith had taken his stand in a nook in the passage leading into the old part of the house, and not far from the door of the room with the broken window. His stalwart form was pressed close against the old paneling, and there he remained, silent and motionless as a statue.

Outside it was raining, and gusts from the north-west swept through the tall trees behind the house with a powerful, moaning sound. Nick, standing close beside Griffith, strained his ears, but could hear nothing except the splash of the rain and the rattle of branches in the wind.

"Must have been a fine storm," he whispered.

Griffith's fingers closed on the boy's right arm like a vice. Nick understood, and was silent.

It seemed to Nick that they waited for an hour. It was really perhaps five minutes. Suddenly Griffith stiffened. At the same moment Nick distinctly caught a scratching sound from the room near by.

There followed the slight creak of a lifted sack, the sound of a man climbing in, then a slight creak as feet came to rest on a loose board.

Nick felt his heart beating like a hammer, but Griffith never moved an inch, and Nick followed his example.

Fresh coughing. Surely the man must be a very big and heavy one!

A figure, barely visible in the gloom, came out of the door of the room into the passage. Nick involuntarily pressed forward. Again Griffith's powerful fingers tightened on his arm, and then the boy barely repressed an exclamation of surprise as a second figure followed the first, and the two together, without a word, moved off down the passage.

"Two of 'em, by Jove! This combination matters," muttered Griffith as the pair of intruders disappeared in the darkness of the long corridor.

"Come on, Nick!" he whispered.

His feet moved soundlessly as the soft paws of a cat. Nick did his best to imitate the silence of his leader. A moment later and there came the slight click of a lock.

Leicester pulled up again, and waited.

Nick could distinctly hear two pairs of feet descending the stone steps into the cellar.

"We've got 'em now!" he whispered enthusiastically to Griffith. "If we don't shut the door on them they're bound. They can't get out by the grating."

Griffith paid no attention to this suggestion.

"No; I'm going down after them," he said. "You'd better wait here."

"Let me come," begged the boy.

Griffith hesitated.

"All right, you can come. But keep well back. They mustn't see us yet."

The stone steps of the old cellar were worn and broken, and they and the wall were slippery with the damp which had oozed from the soil. Griffith led the way slowly and cautiously.

The cellar below was evidently very large, for the light of the electric torch which the midnight visitors were using seemed a long way off.

Griffith stopped at the foot of the steps.

"This here's the place," came a gruff warning from beyond.

"Hell that there creak away, Beth!"

Nick, watching with intense interest, saw the blurred figures of two heavily-built men groping among the old broken coverings which still remained under the far wall. He could not imagine what they were at.

"Is it in the wall, Luke?" asked the second beggar.

"No; under a flag in the floor. Give on the bar, and I'll soon root it out."

There was the click of iron against stone. The man called Luke was evidently prying up a paving-stone from the floor. He grunted as he bore it up. They saw Beth stoop and grasp it, and with a big effort turn it over.

It fell with a heavy thud.

"You clumsy ass!" growled Luke. "What'd ye make such a row for?"

"Don't worry, there's no one to hear," was the answer. "Get it, partner?"

"Ay, here it be!" answered Luke, in a tone of great satisfaction.

Griffith and Nick saw him lift a gunny-looking leather bag from the depths of a hole under the big stone. The leather was rotten. As he lifted in the bag broke, and a shower of articles which glowed dully in the



There was a click of iron against stone, and with a mighty heave the great slab was prised up from the floor.

light of the electric torch, fell flaking back into the hole.

With sharp exclamations both men dropped on their hands and knees, and began picking them up.

Griffith bent and whispered excitedly to Nick. Then he dashed across the floor.

Next thing Nick knew was a crash. Griffith, who had not dared to flash his own light, had tripped over a board lying loose on the floor, and fallen.

There was a yell of fright from the two men, and both sprung to their feet. Luke flashed his lamp, and as his rays fell on Griffith he gave a shout.

"Out the beggar, Beth!"

The two men a combined rush at Griffith, both swinging the iron bar.

How Griffith guessed his feet again and managed to jump aside out of reach of the swinging bar which Beth aimed at him was a miracle. But he did it successfully, and then, as Luke bore down upon him from the other side, he dodged him, and as he came by gave him a left-handed clip under the jaw, which sent him sprawling.

With an ugly exclamation the man Beth charged again. The bar gave

him a terrible advantage, and Griffith had once more to seek safety in flight.

This brought him right up against the wall, where Beth had him at his mercy, and he was swinging his ugly weapon for a second stroke, when Nick took a hand in the game. He dashed in from behind, and collared the hairy ruffian round the waist.

His light weight was a mere drab to Beth, but the delay, slight as it was, gave Griffith his chance, and that deadly left of his, so well known in the ring at the Colosseum, crashed into the rascal's face, rattling his nose, and driving him backwards all across the floor. His back caught on the prostrate body of his pal, and there he went on top of him with a shout that knocked all the breath out of his big nostrils.

"Well done, Nick!" shouted Griffith, as he went after his man like a bullet from a gun. "Collar the bar, and keep the other beggar from playing the fool!"

There was no need. Beth's fall weight, landing on Luke's chest, had knocked out of him what little wind Griffith's first blow had left him. Inside two minutes the pair were triced up like trussed chickens.

As soon as they were safe Griffith

and Nick hurried across to the hole under the bar wall. The moment the light from Griffith's torch fell on its contents he gave an exclamation of delight.

"Great luck, Nick! This is the very stuff I was looking for!"

"The stuff you were looking for?" repeated Nick.

"Yes," answered Griffith, as he held up a broad, old-fashioned gold piece, and examined it under the light. "Look, the Tabor rose noble that was stolen from Dehnam Court four years ago!"

"Dehnam Court is Mr. Hawkins's place," said Nick, starting.

"Right, my son. And this little bit was stolen from Hawkins's collection four years ago, and there's still a reward of a thousand pounds for its recovery."

"But how in the world did it come here?" questioned Nick, in amazement.

"I fancy Luke Rowles here knows more about that than we do—oh, Luke!"

Luke's answer was a baricous improvisation.

"He's cross. He won't tell," laughed Griffith, as he filled his pockets with the wonderful old coins.

"But I can put the story together even without his assistance. He and his pal have bargled Dehnam Court, and the chase was so hot that one of them hid the plunder here. It was a good place, for the house was unhabited at the time. Then Master Luke got caught, and, though they couldn't have him for this particular crime, they did for another. He was sent up for five years. If good conduct he got full remission, and as soon as he was out of Dartmoor all he set to recover his spoil."

"And we've spoilt his game," chuckled Nick.

"You have, Nick. I should never have done anything without you. The reward is yours."

"Nonsense!" related Nick indignantly. "If I have had his's more than my share."

"We won't argue," answered

Griffith, with a smile. "We'll get a couple of hours' sleep, and as soon as it's light fetch the police. Then I think you and I will make a little trip to Dehnam Court, and see what happens. I've a sort of notion we may get a bit more than that thousand pounds out of this night's work."

Lester Griffith proved a true prophet. Griffith's delight at sight of his recovered treasure was so intense that he not only went a cheque on the spot for the reward, but as soon ordered that Nick and his mother should continue to live rent-free at Moss House for just as long as they pleased.

Nick and Griffith shared the reward, and what with a good house and garden for nothing, and another twenty pounds a year, the Swansons are comparatively comfortable.

THE END.

(Lester and's Lester Griffith story is entitled "Washed Up.")

Five Minutes' Fun.

A Cat from the Upper.

Mr. Tenderloin looked at it. Then he bit it. Then he called the waiter: "What on earth do you call that?" he demanded. "It's as tough as leather!"

"The waiter bent forward sympathetically, made a minute study of the dish, and accented the bill-of-fare.

"Fillet of sole, sir," he pronounced.

"Fillet of sole, is it?" retorted Tenderloin. "Well, take it away, and see if you can bring me a tender piece from the upper portion of the boat, with the buttons removed!"

"What is the hardest thing to learn about farming?" inquired the visitor.

"Gettin' up at five o'clock in the mornin'!" replied Farmer Cartmowel.

Salesman: "You'll find these good-wearing socks, sir."

Customer: "Rather hard, ain't they?"

Salesman: "Yes, sir. But that keeps the feet from going to sleep."

A Moving Picture.

The little townlet of Paddletown was in a state of the greatest excitement. Stales, the grocery, one of the best, most kind-hearted, and generous of men, was to be placed in the dock for assault. Surely there was a mistake somewhere!

The justice of the peace leaned over towards the defendant.

"You are accused," he thundered, "of wilfully striking and causing serious bodily harm to Mr. Brown, cinematograph operator, of this town. What have you to say in your defence?"

Stales drew himself up proudly.

"Your honor," said he, "the man involved me."

"Involved you? In what way?" demanded the magistrate.

"The grocer knocked a ruddy heap."

"If you please, your honor," said he, "he came into my shop and asked if he could take a moving picture of the counter!"

"I've just washed out a suit for my little boy, and now it seems too tight for him."

"If it fit all right, if you wash the boy!"

"But, Mabel, on what grounds does your father object to me?"

"On any grounds within a mile of our house!"

"How many legs has a dog if you call his tail one?"

"Five, of course!"

"No, four, because calling his tail a leg doesn't make it one!"

"You haven't explained how you came to have Mr. Staley's money in your possession," said the judge.

"I'm trying to think, your honor," replied the accused. "Give me time."

"Very well," responded the judge blandly; "six months!"

"What's the hardest thing you encounter in flying?" she queried.

"At the present stage of the game," returned the aviator, tenderly rubbing a bump, "the hardest thing we encounter is the earth!"

BOXING!

Readers who are keen on Boxing Stories will be glad to hear that the Editor of "C.B.C." has secured a Grand New Series, entitled

JACK STRONG,

The Young Professional.

This Grand New Series will positively commence

THE WEEK AFTER NEXT!

Too Smart.

Joe was down on his back—lower than he had been for a long time. That is why he was foolish enough to stoop to crime. He had never dabbled in crime before; but, being lonely, and out of work, and hungry, with only one old pistol in his possession, he could see no alternative.

So, one evening, happening to meet an old gentleman in a deserted road, he levelled the above-mentioned pistol at his head, demanding, with traditional fervour, his money or his life.

"Come," said the old gentleman, "we can settle the matter better than that. How much do you want for that pistol?"

"Ten pounds," came the answer.

Without a murmur, the old gentleman handed out two notes, and in a moment the sale was completed. But, just as he was preparing to move on with the money the purchaser turned on him.

"That money back," he demanded, "or I'll blow your brains out!"

"Blow away," said Joe quietly, as he began to walk away. "The pistol isn't loaded!"

Cranium—Not Wavelets.

"Toss off the coast of dear old Omelet, and the steamship was a trifle off its course. It had, in fact, taken the wrong turning.

"Breakers ahead! We are lost!" yelled the look-out, from his point of vantage in the bows.

"Nonsense," cried the Irish cook, "we're not lost if that will serve us!"

And he seized a belaying-iron and hit the look-out such a blow as to completely deaf the man.

"How dare you?" belittled the captain angrily. "Why did you strike that?"

"Well," replied Pat, "he yelled 'Break us a head, or we are lost!' and, sure, I did it, sure. And I'll break a dozen, sure, if that'll save the ship, beled!"

Just Starting! The Story that is Better than a Play!

The Boy

A GREAT NEW STORY OF
LIFE'S HANDICAP.

Breadwinner.

By
Horace Phillips.



These scoundrels have stolen my brains, they have left us to beg for bread. But let them beware. MY TIME WILL COME!

THE STORY IN A NUTSHELL.

JIM CARVER, a young and clever mechanic, is the sole breadwinner in a family headed, consisting of himself, his sister HEITZ, a schoolboy brother BOB, and "MUTTLE JACKY," a cripple.

Jim has invented a new type of motor-engine, and he resolves to place it before H. H. HARMON, the owner of the motor works in Milton, when he is employed.

Robbed of His Brains.

To the lad's surprise and dismay, Mr. Harmon tells him that this same invention has already been submitted to him by CARL RICKEL, the German mechanic of the works, and patents have been applied for.

Jim suspects that the idea has been stolen from him by Carl Rickel, and there is a dramatic scene, Mr. Harmon, for various reasons of his own, taking Rickel's part against the lad.

Induced at a moment's notice by Harmon, poor Jim returns utterly broken-hearted to his home, and there a fresh trial falls.

The lad is suddenly arrested, the police having discovered stolen goods in his workshop in the garage, and next day he is bound tightly and sent to prison.

to a work.

HARRY REDDIE, Mr. Harmon's nephew and heir, wishes to give up his friendship for Jim, and, forsaking his study work, he resolves to earn his own living, and to help the Carvers to keep a roof over their heads.

When Jim comes out of prison he gives the life of a well-connected fellow, TIM DICKSON, who, in return, gives Jim the job of putting a new engine into a motor-car.

Jim is convinced as to the design of fortune, as it means that he can carry out another new invention.

A few nights later Jim's home is burnt to the ground, and the car is saved, and he and Harry Reddie run a small garage.

Indeed, when the car and the two, having read to have a look at the garage, and whilst there Jim, since him, gives him a thrashing, and then kicks him out of the place.

(See read on.)

No Quarter!

Seeing Mr. Harmon staring there, Carl Rickel pulled himself together and approached to his feet.

"Good!" he got on, in a voice hoarse with passion. "You are a villain, Mr. Harmon. It is an accident—an unprovoked assault. Ach, my friends!"

he cried, shaking a fist at Jim, who had just kicked him out of the shed. "You shall go to prison for this!"

Mr. Harmon silenced the man with an imperious gesture. He had no intention of calling in any police aid.

"You were a fool to come poking and prying round here!" he rebuked the German sternly. And Jim burst out laughing.

"Quite right, Mr. Harmon. You mean he ought to have waited until after dark!"

The works owner gave a contemptuous shrug and half turned away.

"If it pleases you to keep up that idle talk about being robbed—"

"Robbed, yes!" screech in Jim hoarsely. "And not only robbed, but hit at in other ways, as you very well know. What about last night? It was only an accident, I suppose, that my home was burnt out, my brother and niece within an ace of being burnt to death? Cowards, liars, thieves, both of you!"

"Had you any evidence that there was foul play?" challenged Rickel.

"I have!" answered Jim triumphantly. "And I mean to keep it till the right moment. Meanwhile, if the pair of you have done enough spring, I will wish you good-bay!"

Mr. Harmon loved a mirthless laugh.

"Come, Rickel!" he said. "The boy is still suffering from delusion. I have often been told that inventors were more than half mad, and here is a case in point."

"Better to be mad than dishonest," retorted Jim; and the words cut like the lash of a whip.

"Ah, Mr. Harmon, you are going to be sorry yet—sorry that you backed the wrong horse! It is the result of everything—all the cruel vilifying you and that scoundrel have carried out together—the tide is set in my favour. A little while, and you will be glad to cry for pity!"

Again Harmon laughed, but Jim turned his back on the pair, knowing that he had hit the mark. For a moment the works owner looked like calling after him; then his pride and hardness of heart got the better of him, and he walked off, with Rickel

following like a whipped dog at his heels.

"So I have backed the wrong horse, have I?" broke out Harmon, turning suddenly upon the German. "It rather looks as if the lad were right. You are a fool and a bungler, Rickel!"

"[Ud you—you are a hard master, as I had said before," retorted the German, stepping dead and glaring at Harmon as though ready to fly at him. "You would you? Had I said that? Hinned, had I said that? Everything to crush her luck? Come him!"

"Whatever you have done need not be shared from the hearstaps," said Harmon coldly. "Come, man, you and I can't afford to quarrel!"

In silent silence they walked on for a few minutes, and then Harmon stopped again.

"Well!" he mopped. "Have you nothing to suggest—no plan? Is the lad to beat us after all, bringing me to the gutter, after he has robbed me of the boy who was as dear to me as any son? By Heaven," he said fiercely, "to think of my Harry being back there, working with that common scum, perhaps making love to that vulgar louse! And you have nothing to suggest!"

"Wait," you say? Man, a day wasted now may ruin everything. You know it. Had it you have my plan, I have. They shall never be allowed to carry a shining out of that garage they've taken! I'll keep them down, bring them to their knees, if it costs me a thousand pounds! Listen, Rickel!"

The German drew closer, and Harmon, after a cautious glance around, went on in a hoarse undertone:

"There's a big shop to let next door to the place Carver has taken. You noticed it? That shop you will rent for me at once. Get it today. Never mind the rent, or what the loss is going to be."

"You mean—"

"I mean that shop to be opened as a motor-garage. I mean it to get every bit of trade the boy is hoping to pick up. Give him a month's fight—"

ing our competition, and then we shall see who is begging for mercy—ho or I?"

Good Richd gave an upward twist to his brilliant moustache.

"Good!" he grinned. "It is a clever plan, that, and quite safe." He looked at his watch. "It shall be done, Mr. Harmon. I go to see about it now."

And before that short winter day had drawn to its close the cruel, cowardly plot was taking effect. The empty shop had been rented, a dozen men were busy getting it in order for business on the narrow, Machinery, streets, and a stock of cars from the north were rushed to the place, and right across the spacious front an imposing announcement was planned, completely eclipsing the modest sign which had been put up over the Bay Roadwinner's little shop next door.

A fresh round in this desperate fight between the strong and the weak had started, and all the odds were surely against plucky Jim Carden and his staunch champion, Harry Redwin.

Jim Carden's Triumph—The Man from London.

It was close upon eleven o'clock one night a week after the fire. By the light of a single candle, Jim Carden and his champion, Harry Redwin, were hard at work in the small garage they had rented together.

Night after night, behind closed doors and screened from prying eyes, these brave, hospital lads had toiled away at the car that was to create a sensation in the motoring world. It had been a harassing, wearisome business, what with the lack of proper tools, and the difficulty of picking up necessary parts second-hand at first cheap prices. The latter task had been mostly Harry Redwin's part of the job, and while he was absent it had been necessary the whole neighbourhood for cold repairs.

He had got a few jobs, too, and of course, the changes were giving prompt attention to the outside work, thus saving enough to pay current expenses. But with Harmon's huge civil establishment next door to them, it was upon the success or failure of Jim's wonderful new motor engine that all the future must turn, and now to-night the fatal moment had arrived for putting it to the test.

Jim wiped his oily hands on a bit of cotton-waste, straightened his aching back, and looked at Harry with a queer smile on his grimy face. Both lads were utterly worn out, their hands and clothing telling an eloquent story of desperate hard work; yet their eyes were bright with hope, and their voices trembled with eager excitement.

"Ready?" asked Harry, taking up a can of gasoline, not petrol, but common paraffin, for it was Jim's boast that his new engine was going to run on oil at great a pinch.

"The young inventor nodded, and with trembling hands his chum charged the apparatus with all that the can contained.

"Just a pilot," he said, smiling ruefully.

"Quite enough to test her on," Jim answered, a dash of pride colouring his pale cheeks. "If she isn't the most economical engine ever turned out, then my work's been wasted."

He walked all round the car slowly, casting a last glance over the wonderful device which were A B C to him,

and then he seized the starting-lever. Harry Redwin held his breath. The silence of that critical moment was awful in its anxious intensity.

A sharp whirr—silence again—a faint gasp from the lads.

The engine had failed to start!

Jim bent over it, fiddled with some apparently trifling part, and tried again.

Whirr—! It was off! The engine had leapt into life, running at terrific speed, and when a moment the noise died down to nothing more than that of a humming toy. The back wheels of the car were then into gear, and Jim threw them into gear, and then stepped back, his face radiant with joy, his chest heaving with the stress of his exertions.

"At last, Jim—at last!"

His chum had come close to him, was wringing his hand in an ecstasy of happiness.

"Old fellow!" gasped Harry—and that was all.

Jim tried to speak, but couldn't; and so they stood for a long time, side by side in this moment of triumph, as they had stood in the hour of disaster. The engine ran on quietly, smoothly, with never a sign of trouble, and with straining eyes they watched it, fascinated by the glorious sight.

Suddenly a gentle tap at the door caused Jim to spring across and draw back a bolt, and then Harry came in.

"Why, Jim?" she cried excitedly.

"It's—it's working!"

She looked from one to the other of the lads, ran close to the engine, and watched it for a space. And then she went straight up to her brother and kissed him.

"Bravo!" she said. "Bravo, Jim!"

"You should say 'Bravo, Carden and Co.!'"

And so it did!" cried Betty, and on the impulse of that happy moment she went straight up to Harry and—held out her hand.

Jim laughed again.

"Never mind, old fellow. It's only because I'm here. But take him indoors, Betty, and I'll follow in a jiffy. Eleven o'clock, and we haven't had a bite since dinner! Out goes, both of you, I want to be alone."

For a space they hesitated; then, as he turned his back upon them and bent lovingly over the child of his brain, they slipped off in silence. It was but a step round to the dwelling which the Cardens had made their new home; but the winter night was fine, a million stars shimmering the dark heavens, and the cold had lingered in the open, their hands linked lightly, their hearts beating fast.

Suddenly Betty gave a sharp sigh.

"Because it has all cost so much!" she murmured, as Harry turned quickly. "I've not thinking of Jim, but you. If only you could get back all that you have had for our sakes!"

"Don't speak about it," he pleaded gently. "My uncle has only himself to blame. If he had backed Jim, instead of linking himself with that scoundrel Richd, there would never have been any breach between us. Never mind; Jim has won. His invention will soon place you far over beyond the reach of want—"

"And you?" she took him up, still with a sad note in her sweet voice.

"It is going to make you happy, this triumph of Jim's, when you know that

it may mean ruin to Mr. Harmon? He is your uncle; you were like a son to him?" She paused. "Oh, I hate to feel that you and he are living in open enmity!"

Harry Redwin pressed the girl's hand.

"My life is bound up with all of you—with Jim, the best and noblest fellow in the world; with you, Betty, the dearest, bravest, truest woman—"

"Ah, you wouldn't say that," she whispered, and moved to go indoors. But he restrained her gently.

"Betty, why wouldn't I say it, when it is the truth? I'm not a boy, you're no longer a girl. I wouldn't say a word that seemed only unchristianly not; but you know how I feel—what I've felt all along. Betty dear—"

"You have been a true friend to all of us," she said. "What we should have done without you I dare not imagine. Oh, don't think I am heartless, unwilling. It is only that I am thinking of you and your uncle. I still hope that you will be reconciled to him. But it rests with me. I— I must not widen the breach between you."

"You mean—"

She shrugged her shoulders and sighed again.

"We can't have all our hearts' desire in this world," she said. "But as you have been all along, Harry; and as for the rest, try to live it down, won't you?"

He restrained his dry lips and looked at her with a blank, stricken face. A few moments of painful silence crept by, then he swallowed hard.

"It is what I might have expected from you, Betty. It won't make me—like you—him. All right, dear, I'm not going to make a fuss."

"That's my Harry," she answered simply; and suddenly she lifted his tear-begotten hand and pressed it to her cheek.

"Betty!" he breathed. But she was gone in a flash, and when he followed indoors a little while afterwards with Jim the girl was calmly and promisingly making cocoa for them.

That was a happy meal they made, in spite of the late hour, but although the talk ran on the night's triumph there was no wild speculation about the future. Jim and Betty would not help recalling that other night when they had built castles in the air, only to have them shattered by a cruel, snow-drift blow the very next day; and, although all there were still anxious to be reconciled with—

But it's not Harmon or Richd I bother about so much now," Jim said to Betty, when Harry had wished them good-night, and gone to his lodgings a few doors off. "I can't believe they'll try more foul play on the lines they used before; it would be too risky. Already the public's beginning to feel that there's something queer about the run of bad luck I've had. No, old girl, it's the ways and means of getting my money in the market. But that'll do to-morrow." He finished up, stretching his weary limbs.

"Ah, dear, I've done good to-night!"

Tired was hardly the word for his utter exhaustion of mind and body, yet he was up again at daybreak and had the engine running before breakfast.

Harry came round soon after, looking blithe also, and to work they went on one or two bicycle-repairing jobs that had been brought in.

The deal concerned next door, under the supervision of a man from Harrison's, who was secretly given to "seeing the time" at the nearest pub, had not quite crashed Gordon and Co. It certainly was cheating them out of a good deal of better class work, but really a humble workman was sending his kith or the baby's pram round to Jim's shop for trifling repairs. Only a few coppers did each job mean, but every little helped.

And to-day the tipping habit of Harrison's bossman was to give the Bay Breadwinner quite a big lift on the road to victory.

Jim was alone in his shop, after dinner, when a stranger noise stopped outside. The solitary occupant of the now-a-prosperous-looking gentleman in a far-lined coat—went straight to the rival shop next door, but in a minute Jim saw him walking back with an air of content.

"That I do anything for you, sir?" Jim saw after him to ask.

"No, thanks, none."

"No, thanks, none," he said again. "Only got down here because I saw that car standing there with the notice on it."

The car referred to was out of the new ones built at Harrison's works, with the patent engine containing Jim's stolen invention.

A card of big print set forth its claims, and Jim had seen a number of keen motorists stop and ask for particulars.

"See here," went on the stranger, in his easy-going way.

"I've come down from London on purpose to see this wonderful new car of Harrison's, but I guess this is only a branch."

"Yes," said Jim. "The works are not far off. Are you interested in new engines?"

The man laughed, and thrust a card into the lad's hand. Jim saw the name "Julius Tyrenson," and he might his breath.

This gentleman who stood before him was one of the biggest powers in the motoring world! An American of enormous wealth, he owned the controlling interest in a motor combine that had a capital of over a million pounds.

"Calculate you've heard of me, sonny?"

"Rather!" cried Jim, smiling. "Why, only this morning I was wondering if I could ever get a chance of showing you my engine."

"No! And what engine would that be?"

For answer, Jim turned and pointed, with modest pride, at the car standing in solitary state in his own little shop, amongst the odd assortment of horse-shoers and paraphernalia.

The American walked straight up to the car, looked at it, and then smiled on the one side of his mouth that held a large cigar.

"Well, what'll she do!" he asked.

"Miracles!" said Jim, laughing and blushing. "Do you want an engine for the million—a car that'll run fifty miles on a gallon of paraffin—here it is."

The American grabbed the cigar from his lips.

"Paraffin!" he cried. "Fifty miles on a gallon of paraffin! Oh!"

But Jim only laughed again with calm assurance, and suddenly the incredulous look in Julius Tyrenson's face changed to one of eager interest.

"You show me. Wind her up, sonny."

He evaded no desire to pay into the mechanism, though Jim would not have minded if he had, for Julius Tyrenson had a name that was as good as all the gold in his credit in the bank.

Without any preliminaries, the motor was started, and for five minutes the expert stood there, his cigar unsmoked between his fingers, his eyes

burn," he chuckled, "paraffin's the trick!"

Jim stared blankly, overcome for the moment. But the locomotive air about the man was not to be doubted, and with a mental "Harrish!" the young inventor rushed about his task.

Five minutes later they were off, Jim at the wheel, waving a hand gaily as they streaked past Harry Redwin just coming back to the shop. It was really funny to see the look of amazement on Harry's face as he stood and stared at Jim, sitting beside that strange oval with the far-lined coat and cigar. Jim chuckled to himself over the incident. But there was something even better to come. For an hour later, when the car came home, after a perfectly successful trial, the American was at the wheel, and in his exuberance of spirits he almost ran down a man in the road.

That man was Carl Richel.

"Goo!" cried Julius Tyrenson.



"Go away!" snapped the millionaire. "I'm busy!" And he turned his back on Carl Richel.

ghed upon the Bay Breadwinner's work of triumph.

Now and again he walked round the car, listening to the rhythm of the engine, smiling in vain for any vic stretch of badly-burned paraffin. Then suddenly he held up his hand, and Jim stopped the motor.

"Patented yet?" rapped out the millionaire.

"No, sir."

"Going to send her to the London show, I guess?"

"No, sir," Jim answered again, with a deep sigh. "You see, I'm only a working lad—"

"Nothing doing now—this afternoon, I mean!" broke in the American, looking at his gold watch. "Then come along, my son! Fetch my car in here. You're going to take me on an hour's trial in that contraption, with a measured allowance of paraffin.

"She's the real goods, sonny! You and I, we'll have to have a quiet confab before I go back. I'll get you a stall at the show. Why—why," he chuckled, blowing at the hairs, "she's IT!"

Stepping at the back, he got down and walked round and round the car, nodding approvingly all the while. Then he drew out a leather wallet and pencil, and fell to scribbling on a card, while Jim, flushed with pride, lifted the bonnet and ran his eye over the silent engine.

Suddenly the lad heard a man running towards them, and he leaped round, to see Carl Richel peeping up, the perspiration almost running down his excited face.

"Mr. Tyrenson!" cried the German, paying no heed to Jim.

The American looked up from his writing for a moment, and grinned.

"Hallo! Guess you've the Johnny

I nearly ran over just now! Say, I'm mighty sorry; but—"

"It was nothing," panted Richel, trying hard to smile pleasantly as he stepped his horse. "I was not meaning to mention it."

"Say, then, what else do you want?" snapped the American.

"What do I want? But—but you do not understand!" spluttered Richel. "I am Carl Richel—the manager at the works!" Mr. Harmon's representative him! He is expecting you, visit!"

"Oh, ah, for sure!" said Julius Tyreman, going on with his writing. "All right, I'm coming along here-by. Just wait to settle with this young friend of mine here."

Richel twisted up his mustache feebly.

"Himmel!" he cried. "But you had made a mistake! Der fault here—"

"Go away!" snapped the millionaire, signing his name to what he had written. "Go away, man! I'm busy!" And he waved his back on the German.

Signing a Death Warrant!

That evening Mr. Julius Tyreman sat at ease in Michael Harmon's luxurious library, smoking the works' owner's best cigars and sipping his best wine.

In the room adjoining could be seen the dinner-table from which Mr. Harmon, his visitor, and Carl Richel, the German, had risen a few minutes since—a table spread with costly linen and fine silver accessories, over which all-shaded electric lights cast a soft light.

It had been quite a success, that dinner, and both Mr. Harmon and Richel were secretly anticipating a firm business deal as the happy climax to the evening. They, too, knew the power of this American millionaire in the motor world, and if only he could be got to buy up the patent rights of the engine which Richel claimed to have invented, then—well, their pockets would be well lined, whatever happened afterwards.

But Julius Tyreman, although frankly pleased with what he had seen at Michael Harmon's works, was not showing any eagerness to discuss contracts. Richel had tapped him once or twice before signing a firm business deal as the happy climax to the evening. They, too, knew the power of this American millionaire in the motor world, and if only he could be got to buy up the patent rights of the engine which Richel claimed to have invented, then—well, their pockets would be well lined, whatever happened afterwards.

"We are very close to the great motor show in London—too close for my liking," said Harmon, with a laugh. "Of course, I quite intend to exhibit this new car of mine. It is bound to make a sensation, too. But I have been waiting until the last moment, thinking perhaps—or—that you—"

He paused awkwardly, but the American made no attempt to help him out.

"To be quite frank, then," Harmon went on, "I thought you would wish to be associated with the new car when it takes the public by storm."

"Ah, yes!" chimed in the German, rubbing his fat hands. "You had seen it, Mr. Tyreman. You see it is wonderful—colossal!"

"Well, she's good," said the American, rolling the cigar in his mouth. "You may but she'll please the motorist public. But do not think I'm after. It's the outside men. It's

a car for the million I want. Yes," he added, sitting up and during some cigar-ash from his ample waistcoat; "and I rather guess I've got her!"

Michael Harmon pursed his lips. The German bent forward.

"There's a sharp drop here—Carden's his name. You know him, maybe?" Tyreman threw out carelessly.

"Know him! He was asked from my works!" said Harmon quickly. And the American laughed.

"Say, I calculate you lost a clever worker, then. But the point is, that this Jim Carden has got a motor that beats yours to a frazzle. Excuse my saying so, but there it is. Talk about a sensation at the show! It'll knock 'em, if I know anything about those things!"

"We had heard something about it," said Richel, as Harmon sipped his wine. "It is good—well, yes. But as for der lack—"

"What about the lad?" asked the American, in such sharp, challenging tones that Richel quailed.

"Ah," was the answer, "it is a long story!"

"Ah, then I'm afraid I can't stop to hear it!" said Julius Tyreman, pleasantly enough. "Mr. Harmon, I mustn't hang about like this. I'm a busy man, and I want to get back to London to arrange about the show. That lad's car—she's going to be sent down at my expense to-morrow night."

The works' owner nodded, and rose from his chair, all smiles and good manners; but even as he turned to conduct his visitor to the door, he came to grips with the whole business.

"We are not to have the pleasure of striking a bargain, then?" he asked. And the American shook his head.

"Not now I've seen that youngster's record. Say, though, it was real good of you to ask me down, if it hadn't been for that I'd never have found the boy. I owe you a million thanks for that! Good-night, Mr. Richel!"

"Good-night!" Under a fawning smile took you!" the German muttered savagely to himself when he was left alone in the library. "A million thanks for meeting der lack! Ah, it is as if der man knew everything!"

Giving his mustache a savage twist, the millionaire drained his glass of spirits at a gulp, and then waited for the storm that would surely burst when Mr. Harmon came back alone.

The works' owner entered at last, with a dangerous gleam in those steady eyes of his. Slamming the door, he strode across the room and confronted the cowering German with clenched fist.

"Again! Buzzer again—heads to you!"

Richel spread out his hands in mild explanation.

"It is not I expected, Mr. Harmon. Always it is you—ah, and after all that I had done!"

"Done? You have done nothing! You have only tried and failed. If you had had a reliable man of the bench shop, instead of a drunken fool—There, I don't talk about it. A mere boy beats you every time! What then?" chimed Harmon, "and I to do this thing myself? I am quite prepared; but in that case, here's good-bye to your fortune!"

He snatched a wallet from his breast-pocket, pulled out a folded sheet of paper, and tore it to pieces.

"There's the promise I made to pay you a fixed sum on every car we sold!"

he blazed, flinging the scraps of paper into the fire.

"Mr. Harmon—"

"Not another word! You can go! I'm done with you, helpless fool that you are!"

"You shall not send me away like this," said the German, gnashing his teeth. "I had been beaten once, but perhaps, No matter. There is yet more chance—"

"How? What chance?"

"Ah, why should I tell you?" answered the German, growling hoarse. "Had I told you before? Had you ever helped me? No, no. But you had been so pleased to trust me," he added, with a sneer.

The other drew a hard breath.

"You chance yet?" repeated Richel, in a hoarse whisper. "But why should I trouble now, if you no longer trust me—if you do not make it worth while?"

"Write out that promise—"

"Used to be a mistake! No, Mr. Harmon. Give me something better—a signed promise to pay me a large sum in cash—and then, you will see!" he added, with a sinister look.

Harmon eyed him dubiously for a space; but he was too deep in with the accounts for any display of real anxiety. With a gesture of desperation, he sat down at his bureau, and toiling a pen.

"You shall have another chance, Richel. I will make out a signed promise to pay you the large sum, and you shall have the money as soon as I hear that you have prevented Jim Carden's motor from being shown in London. Five hundred pounds—"

"Five hundred pounds—"

"That's nonsense!"

"When I risk my life—ah, yes, my own life—to crush your rival! Listen, and I tell you what I had to do to beat der lack. His car, it will go up by der night train—"

"I don't want to hear your plans!" cut in Harmon curtly. "Wait!"

For a while he was silent, musing his chin and thinking deeply. Then he began to write.

"We must had a witness," said Richel, tapping the bell that summoned a manservant.

Harmon wrote on steadily, and then handed the document in the German.

"Good!" was the comment. "And now—"

"Just witness this, Walker," said the workman, shading down his eyes; and the servant obeyed, although withdrawing quietly.

"Take it!" snapped Harmon then, thrusting the document into Richel's greedy hand. "But, don't think you will ever see a penny of the money if you fail again. It is a legal document, but if you try to show your teeth I think I could easily draw them."

And the master-schemer laughed at his little generosity, never dreaming that by this word he was creating a violent death. Yet so it was. The document he had signed was perfectly legal, and in the event of his death Richel could enforce payment without fear of its being disputed.

"Five hundred pounds!" muttered the German, crumpling the paper to his breast, as he waded his way homeward through the night. "It is der lack's death warrant you have signed, or even mine perhaps. But had a care, Mr. Harmon! Had a care that it does not prove your death warrant instead!"

(Thinking developments in our Tuesday's grand instalment.)

The Forbidden Road.

Our Magnificent New Story of Adventure, Sport, and Army Life.

By the Authors of "The Phantom Footballer" and "Tom Truman, Amateur Boxer."



CHARACTERS IN THIS GREAT NEW ADVENTURE SERIAL.

TOM TRUMAN, a young merchant, who has won fame as an amateur boxer. By a

JACK STAVELBY, the possible owner of a big engineering works in the North. He has just secured the contract for building a military road in the savage land of Tibet, and he takes Tom Truman with him to supervising the work.

JIFFREY GROOM, a cousin had enemy of Jack Stavrelby, is the villain of the story. He is determined to get possession of the engineering works by the death of Jack Stavrelby, and he secretly follows his intended victim to the Forbidden Land, meaning to kill on the spot against the British.

LIGHT VINCENT is connected to the mountain by a rope that is affording military protection to the continent.

The last instalment showed how Tom Truman, Jack Stavrelby, and Light Vincent, on a morning one evening from a short acquaintance, when they are attacked by a

The three others are crawling upon a rope ladder, when Jeffrey Groom dashes up on the far side and cuts one of the ropes, leaving the three hanging a thousand feet above the roaring torrent below.

(You read this and its sequel's treatment.)

The Mountain Routed the Gorge.

As a ray of greenish moonlight struck full upon the crouching man, Jack could see that he was indeed not mistaken. The sounder who had cut the rope was Groom, his cousin and deadly enemy.

For a moment Jack all but let go his hold upon the upper rope. A great wave of astonishment surged through him, for he had imagined that Geoffrey Groom was far away in the wilds of South America, banished for ever from the sight of decent men.

The lower rope had been cut, and now the three men were hanging by their hands above the wild abyss.

Jack's head ached. Below he could hear the thunder of the torrent, rushing through the narrow, black valley, between the precipices of the gorge; and his heart jumped, and the blood coursed like fire through his veins, as, with every muscle tense, he gripped frantically of the rope.

The dark rocks, and the towering, silver peak of the mysterious mountain to the left seemed to aid and sound him. As in a dream he saw the rapid trickle of rifle-fire, heard the crack-crack of the shots behind him, and the hum of bullets tearing by. He knew that a terrible death was very close.

"Quick, man—quick! Scramble on—(or your life!) Use your hands!"

Vincent was shooting wildly in his ears; and, seeing the dangling figure of Tom Truman a few yards ahead, working his way to the gorge-side, Jack pulled himself together, and, setting his teeth, threw all his strength into a mad attempt to reach the side of the abyss in time.

But the task was hopeless. In the moonlight he could see, quite plainly, the crouching figure of Groom. He could see the knife glancing in his hand, flashing as the strings drew it backwards, and forwards, across the tough strands. And he could hear the snap of breaking fibres, and feel the tremble of the rope. Then the cable sagged a little.

Singlehanded Groom leaped to his feet, raising his knife for a final slash that would finish the work of severance.

At that moment Lieutenant Vincent loosed his hold with one hand and swooshed frantically at the brown leather holder at his side.

Even as Groom brought his knife down viciously, a tongue of red flame spouted from the muzzle of the revolver in the soldier's hand, and the smart crack of the shot rang out, rebounding through the gorge.

A trickle of falling snow and a wild yell followed.

"Crack! Crack! Twice more the revolver spoke, stabbing the blackness with flame, and Jack cried out with awe for as Groom, groping for the knife which had been shot cleanly out of his hand, sprang to his feet, staggered, and stood for a moment, with a hand to his right shoulder.

"Oh him!" roared Tom. And then, in grim silence, he struggled forward, hand over hand, along the now sagging rope, making for the sounder.

At the same moment Vincent uttered a cry, and dropping his weapon into the darkness of the abyss, brought his free hand more to the rope, wrenched out by the effort of supporting himself by one arm—no easy task for an already exhausted man.

That was Groom's mistake. For the three comrades were still dangling over the gorge, and the rope was all but severed. But the villain had been hit, and groaned as he stopped, searching frantically for his knife. Then, glancing up, he saw that Tom Truman was close to him, and, with a groan of

disappointment, he turned and made off into the darkness.

A few moments later Tom laid hands upon the edge of the precipice, and, panting and weary, drew himself up to safety.

Without a second's hesitation, he turned, preparing to follow Groom's white figure. Hitting, ghost-like, among the dark boulders ahead; but Vincent's stern voice ceased him to halt.

"Stand by there, Truman! You're running right into the enemy!"

The keen eyes of the soldier had detected the living shadow of a figure to the right there among the rocks, and as he and Jack scrambled at last to safety and crouched upon the edge of the precipice, Vincent pointed.

"We're being cut off, boys!" he gasped. "By James! We've got to go on an ambush! The trifles! They're on both sides of the gorge, Jack! Look!"

He nodded to the left. A flood of brighter moonlight bathed the edge of the gorge there, striking over a tower of rock; and Jack detected the steady movement of a number of indistinct, dark shapes.

Then he looked as a bullet cheeped overhead and sent a spout of dust up from the ground.

"Crack!" A rifle rang out on the right. And at the same moment a terrifying sound rose through the night—no sound so strange and wild that it sent a thrill of cold horror through Jack and his two companions.

It was the booming cleavage of a gang of some description, and as the vibrating notes seemed to shiver through the gorge, the steady clanking of a drum became audible, accompanied by a strange howling.

"My man! Trifles! Of some sort! And on the march! Quick! If we're not going to be cut off from camp, we've got a second to waste! Forward!" cried the little soldier, drawing his second revolver as he ran.

It was evident that he spoke the truth. On either side of the three men trifles were running and firing, and behind—across the gorge—the main body was plainly advancing to the ward music of the gang and drum.

The powerful night was suddenly filled with death and confusion, and Jack felt a wild joy in his heart as he unloosed his gun from his shoulder and read on beside his two comrades.

Ahead of him, across the plateau, that was now flooded brilliantly with moonlight, he could see the twinkling lights of the camp and the red flickering of the camp-fire.

It was evident that the sound of shots had reached the ears of those quartered there. For suddenly, as he ran on, Jack saw the rapid winking of a Morse signalling-lamp, and heard the broken notes of a bugle ringing faintly over the rocks.

"There's the fall-in!" shouted Vincent breathlessly. "The outposts are signalling! Ah—"

He broke off with a cry, and, lifting his right arm, blazed away rapidly at a clump of boulders on the right.

Jack, racing at top speed, glanced round, and saw a flash of white or yellow robes and a stab of flame. Quick! The report rang in his ears,

three rose suddenly a gigantic and terrifying figure of a man—or a devil.

As it stood there, on the top of the boulder, it raised a mighty, flashing disc of metal, and struck it, lifting the air with that strange, booming note.

Jack, glancing up, echoed Tom's cry. He had a vision of a towering shape, wreathed in a light robe of some shining material; and then his eyes fell upon the thing's head. It was immense, and it was crowned with horns. The face was contorted with dejected fury—the lips drawn back and the great teeth exposed; the forehead was puckered into deep wrinkles; and huge, green eyes glared sternly at the advancing white men.

It was a face half human and half animal, and it glittered with a strange radiance, while the creature, whatever

kind of weapon, who was drawing back his spear to stab at Vincent.

The ball crashed down upon the man's head, and as he went to the ground Tom ran on.

"Through! Now sprint!"

Vincent's gasping cry rang out clearly, and Jack needed no urging. For behind them rifles were beginning to speak with dangerous regularity, and the clamour of the guns rose to a deep crescendo.

For a little while the three ran on with sobbing limbs. Then suddenly Vincent cried out furiously to them to halt, and as they did so he threw himself at Jack and pulled him down to the ground.

"Lie down!" he roared. "Machine-gun action ahead!"

Scarcely had he spoken when the rapid flanking of a Maxim-gun immediately ahead pierced the blackness, and the plateau rang with the crisp volley of reports.

At the same moment a bugle sounded, and this was followed by the shrill whistling as the subaltern in charge of the advancing company sent their men out into open order.

Jack, lying breathless upon his face, saw a long line of dark figures approaching, and caught the gleam of bayonets. A moment later the bringing-up of the Southshires was all around him, and with a glad cry of welcome, Vincent had sprung to his feet, to take his share with his men.

"Easy—half left! Four hundred yards—fire!"

The crisp orders rang out down the line, and the hairy men of the regiment, joyfully advancing into action, flung themselves down and emptied their magazines at the yellow flashes among the boulders.

The whole plateau echoed with the rattle of firing, and for five minutes it seemed likely that a regular battle was about to be fought.

Then, however, the enemy began to draw off. For on the extreme left rose a sudden tumult of shouting and firing, which was as quickly stifled. And simultaneously the clamour of the guns died away, and the boulders in front no longer spouted fire into the night.

"His bayonets! Double!"

A clatter of steel; and then, like one man, the firing-line of the Southshires swayed to their feet, and doubled off into the darkness; and Jack Starkey and Tom Truman, still gasping for breath, sat still and watched.

But there was nothing to be seen. The enemy had mysteriously melted away; and when Vincent led his men to the edge of the gorge, the only hint of their presence was the distant creaking of a drum, echoing amid the silent, mysterious mountains that barred the way to the Forbidden Land.

But the bridge across the gorge—the bridge that the renegade Grooms had all but broken—was destroyed, and there was for the moment no chance of pushing home a pursuit.

Finally the attack was over, and, after posting strong outposts, the colonel withdrew his men.

As they marched back they fell in with a full-company of Grooms, tramping steadily in from the left.

The little man was engaged in cleaning their self-loading rifles, and it was evident that some of the tribesmen, at any rate, would never cross the gorge again.

"That's the worst of it," said Vincent, alluding to the fact, on horse or



From the dark shelter of big rocks there rose a gigantic, hideous figure that beat a weird note upon the gorge of fate.

but plainly the tribesman was not good at running target work, and the three men ran on.

Boog, doog, doog! The whole plateau appeared to be filled with the cease of the beaten gong behind and the nasal howling that accompanied it; and on either side the darkness still twinkled with the fire of rifles.

And now the three comrades, their hearts thumping wildly, their chests heaving as they ran, were approaching the last ring of scattered boulders.

In a moment they would be out on the open plateau, in the full glare of moonlight. And from ahead, doubtless, men from the camp were already deploying into skirmishing order ready to meet the threatened surprise attack.

A low peep further, and the three were under the last boulder.

Then suddenly Tom Truman uttered a wild cry of horror and alarm, for from the dark cluster of his rocks

it was, least continually with its thick right arm on the flashing gong.

"Don't stop to shoot! Run!" came Vincent's wild shout; and as he pulled he moved to the left, seeking to avoid the clump of rocks.

Simultaneously three dark, flustering figures rose from the shelter of the boulders, each armed with a huge spear, hung with bells, which tinkled shrilly.

The next moment they had closed upon the white men.

Crack!

Vincent's revolver spoke, and one of the men—a shaggy, dark-haired tribesman—flung up his arms, and went down without a sound. A second man Jack met with a straight left, gripping the flashing spear in his right hand as he struck out. His hat crashed down, and the man rolled over on the rocks, gasping.

At the same moment, Tom Truman stabbed his gun, and scoring at the

no later, as he sat with Tom and Jack in their tent. "Now that we've put some of 'em through it, the tribes over there"—nodding towards the glowering, silent mountains—"won't rest all they've settled up. It seems trouble and it's that kind of a white man—that one of a renegade that's caused it!"

For a moment Jack hesitated. Then he stood up, lighted his pipe, and faced his chieftain.

"Vincent," he said, "perhaps I ought to tell you I know the renegade. He's a cousin of mine—an enemy who all but murdered me in the old country. What he's doing here—how he came here, and why, I don't know. Listen!"

And then Jack told the whole story of his relations with Jeffrey Green, and of the reasons that Green had to hate him.

When he finished, Vincent whistled.

"My word! But that, after things a bit," he said. "The colonel ought to know; we've not only got to fight against the hostility of these tribesmen, but against a white man's hate! For, I suppose, you've no doubt that this renegade knows who you are!"

"Not much!" said Jack, shaking his head, and smiling grimly.

"Um!" remarked Vincent, chuckling. "Then it strikes me that this road of yours isn't going to be easily built, old man! There's going to be some ornament for us yet!"

The Court of Many Eyes.

It was noon upon the following day when Jeffrey Green opened his eyes and sat up in a litter in which he was being carried by four of the tribesmen.

For a moment he stared about him wonderingly, gazing at the matted black hair of his carriers, the long knives thrust into the girdles that clasped their robes, the savage, almond-shaped eyes, and the thin, oval mouths.

Then a throbbing pain in his shoulder, where the bullet from Vincent's revolver had struck him, roused him, and he mastered an oath, and, gasping a water-skin at his side, drank eagerly.

After that he felt better, and was able to remember what had happened.

Only a fortnight previously he had arrived in the district, and by various means, through the agency of a Chinese servant, had thrown in his lot with an outpost of tribesmen from the Forbidden Land, who were engaged in watching Jack's engineering operations.

By dint of bribes, and villainous



Jeffrey Green gazed with fear as he was led, before the throne of the Great Chief, "know!" whispered a voice at his side, and in terror he obeyed.

treatment of one of the tribe's prisoners, Green had established himself as a friend; and it was he who had largely organized the skirmishing attack upon Jack on the previous night.

Green recalled his disappointing effort to kill his rival, and remembered running back from the rope bridge, with his shoulder throbbing. After that he had hunted—and now he was at a loss to understand whether he was being taken.

He glanced about him. On either side was a mighty wall of rock, a sheer precipice towering up to the deep blue sky, and covered with perpetual snow.

Behind was the path by which they had come—a sloping, rocky track, bare and rugged, skirting the edge of a precipice; ahead the road vanished round a curve in the canyon; and Green had a glimpse of the rear company of the tribesmen before it wound round the corner and vanished.

He gazed fearfully. He was not altogether at his ease, for the men who carried him wore of the savagest type—half Oriental; and that they were cruel to their prisoners he knew full well.

Then his face cleared a little, for his gaze rested upon the shuffling figure of Lu-San, his Chinese servant—a criminal from Hong-Kong.

"Where are we?" he asked, as Lu-San came up, low-towing.

The Chinaman shook his head, and spread his hands out.

"No can say. No white men here before—savvy?" was his answer, and Green whistled.

"The Forbidden Land—eh?" he said, and bent forward. "Where are they taking us?"

"To the great chief. To the lama's temple—no can say!" replied Lu-San, glancing nervously about him.

"Nearly there, anyway!" Green nodded. Then one of the carriers glanced angrily at him, and muttered something beneath his breath; and Lu-San slunk away, his yellow face bowed to the earth.

Green lay back in his litter, growling. He understood that he was evidently in evil repute because of the tribesmen's defeat, and it was with no peaceful mind that he lay thinking in the litter.

Presently he fell asleep; and it was not for another half-hour that he was awakened by a prod in the ribs, and, sitting up, found that his litter had been set down, and that he had reached his goal.

He staggered to his feet, and, locking round, gazed in astonishment.

He was in the middle of a great basin in the mountains, a valley surrounded by empty walls of rock, thousands of feet high, that gleamed in the sunshine.

A mile away, across a grassy plateau, the roofs of an Oriental town gleamed

in the light, and Groom could see that bronze pagodas, temples, and palaces shrouded. But the city was surrounded by a wall, as white as snow, and the main part of it was hidden.

But what chiefly attracted his attention was a building immediately before him.

It was a small, square temple, of a deep crimson colour, with gilded roof, that was quaintly carved, and turned upwards at the four corners. It stood upon a mound, and all around it was a deep moat, filled with running water, that meandered in the form of a stream across the plateau, running towards the distant city.

As Groom gazed at it, a whirl of incense came in his nostrils, and his ears were suddenly assailed by the clamour of a mighty gong, followed by a thin, nasal chanting. Suddenly had this ceased, when a door in the temple opened, and a gilded and carved draw-bridge descended slowly until it bridged the natural moat.

Stragglingly his guards stopped beside him, urging him forwards, and with Lu-San following, Groom set foot upon the bridge, and with blanked face and wildly-beating heart passed into the temple.

As he passed over the threshold he halted in amazement, for the scene which met his eyes was the strangest that he had ever gazed upon. He was in a great hall, from the floor of which pillars, carved into the form of withering snakes, rose to the dim roof, under which blue clouds of incense smoke curled and drifted.

He had a glimpse of rows of yellow-clad lamas, or priests, their heads shaven, and their bodies bent, and he heard the clinking of innumerable chains of wooden beads which they wore upon their necks.

Then he cried out in astonishment, for suddenly he saw that the walls of the court were covered with thousands of glass eyes—eyes of all sizes and colours, that glistened and shone in the light of leaping flames, curving upwards from brass bowls upon the floor.

From every side, from every dark corner and pillar, these myriads of eyes were watching him, like the eyes of spirits, and Groom was still staring about him in amazement when a gong sounded, and a murmur of voices arose. Simultaneously, the lamas in the bowls soared up to an increased height, and amid the smoke of the incense Groom saw a bronze throne, upon which sat a savage-faced Chinese.

It was the Great Chief of the Unkown Tribe, and at his side stood a huge man—the high priest, garbed in yellow silk, and wearing a hideous devil-mask. He it was whom Yinzoo and his comrades had seen upon the rock during the night skirmish.

"Kneel!" whispered the voice of Lu-San in his ear.

Groom, catching the gleam of the knives flashed by his guards, obeyed.

Down! The gong rang out again. Groom felt a strong hand pressing upon his neck, and, with his heart sick with crown fear, he bent until his forehead touched the earth, and fluted articles as a storm voice spoke. Then a hand touched him again, and Lu-San spoke:

"We speak for you. Great chief very angry because his men killed. What for you come here?"

"Tell him I've come to help. Tell him there are white men breaking into his land—and I'll help him against them. Tell him anything to save us,

man!" growled Groom, and Lu-San obeyed.

"Chief he say very funny thing, that. You white man yourself. You die for come into Forbidden Land!"

"No, no!" shouted Groom. A wave of terror surged through him. Breaking away from his guards, he ran forward to the foot of the throne, and bowed there, calling to Lu-San:

"Told him I'm his friend; tell him I hate white men. I want those outside there beyond the mountain to die. I know their ways—I can lead the tribesmen to them. I understand them. Tell him he can trust me to stay them."

There was a pause as Lu-San spoke. And then the chief, a yellow-faced man, with his hair worn in the pigtail fashion of the Manchus, smiled, and turned to the tall priest at his side.

The latter bent, and Groom shivered as the following glow lit up the fearful devil-mask, painted in bold colours, and crowned with golden horns. The lama spoke in low tones, and then raised his hand, and a group of the tribesmen who had fought by the gorge appeared, and, pointing towards Groom, spoke earnestly.

It was evident that they were explaining the part he had taken against his fellow-countrymen, and it satisfied the chief. He nodded, and turned to Lu-San; and presently the latter spoke to Groom.

"Chief very pleased—he keep you to help; to live with the lamas; big man there keeps us!" And he pointed to the Chief Lama.

Groom shuddered.

"I don't like him, Lu-San!" he muttered, and the Chinese smiled craftily, glancing at Groom through his half-closed eyes.

"He's very great man. Be very careful!" he said warningly.

Groom opened his mouth to speak. But at that moment the chief raised his hand, and four other Chinese stood about him. The Chief Lama cried out, and with a cold edge of steel touching his neck, Groom was swung round and marched back to the door of the temple.

Five minutes later he was once more in his life, on the way across the plateau to the white city of wonder that gleamed beneath the mountains a mile away.

He drew a great breath of relief and smiled, thinking of Jack Starvelay and the end awaiting him.

Yet, had he known it, even at that moment the Chief Lama was talking in pleasant tones about him, and the chief, still seated in the Court of Many Kms, nodded.

"He that is a dog will betray his own kind," he cried. "He is viler than the serpent, more treacherous than the tiger. Guard him, Lama! We will use him!"

His savage face grew hard in the flickering light. His narrow eyes gleamed like steel plates. And he laughed shortly.

"O Lama, a fool that has served his purpose is cast aside! And a white man who setteth foot in the Great Forbidden Land shall die the death that herts. Remember those white, Lama!"

And the tall Lama who wore the fearful mask bowed.

"I read aright," he answered sternly, as a clamour of gongs arose, and the chanting of priests filled the court.

"Well will I guard the dog!"

(Another authentic statement of the striking adventure given to our readers by "G.R.C.")

ALL ABOUT THE ENGLISH CUP.

A Typical Footballer's Article, By "Care Forward."

On Saturday of this week the match in the first round of the competition proper for the English Cup will be played. This Cup—the Major Cup, as it is often called—has a wonderful history, and is sought after by hundreds of football clubs in England and Wales.

In the year 1872, the first in the Cup's history, only three clubs entered the competition, which was won by the Wanderers, an amateur club. This year over four hundred clubs will have taken part in the competition. What an increase in the sport of forty years!

Nevertheless it is a very great achievement for a club to win the Cup, and it goes without saying that they must be one of the best teams in the country. Many small clubs, of course, enter the competition without any hope of ultimately carrying off the Cup.

The Unkown South.

Though the first round of the competition proper only commences next Saturday, seven preliminary rounds have already been played. These early rounds are organized for the purpose of weeding out the weakest clubs.

The twelve clubs which survive the early rounds, with fifty-two which are exempted from the preliminary rounds by the Association, take part in the first round of the competition proper to be played on Saturday next. The number of clubs remaining in the fight for the Cup gradually gets less as each round is played, until there are only two left, who must decide which shall hold the precious trophy.

Professionalism was first legalized in England in 1906, and since that year the Cup has always been won by a team in the North or Midlands, with the exception of the year 1901, when Tottenham Hotspur succeeded in beating Sheffield United in the Final.

Why is it that nowadays so many in the South of England succeed in winning the Cup? The only explanation seems to be that the Northern teams play much better football than their Southern rivals.

During the last six years one club in the South has reached the semi-final stage each year, but only one managed to get through. Bristol City were the fortunate club in the year 1908, but in the Final match they succumbed to Manchester United by the only goal scored.

Newcastle United have been in the Final more than any other club during recent years. From 1905 to 1911 they reached the Final five times, but only once—in 1910—did they succeed in winning the Cup, and then it was after a replay. Burnley were the club they met, and ultimately defeated by two goals to one.

This was Burnley's first appearance in the Final, and they missed over five thousand pounds out of the competition. This they spent on improving their ground. The following season they had such a disastrous time that they were knocked out of the Cup in the second round, and finished bottom but one in the Second Division of the English League.

(This article will be continued in our weekly "G.R.C.")

When Eton Burnt Its Flogging Block.

These fascinating true stories of famous schools have been especially written for "C.B.C." and have never appeared in any other paper.



Head; the most exclusive and expensive of public schools, has always been notorious for the severity of its punishments.

Even nowadays the birch is in regular use for serious offences; but in times not so long gone by the slightest breach of the rules was made the occasion of its employment.

No wonder that in the end the boys rebelled amongst themselves to stand it no longer—that they rose in rebellion, defied their masters, burnt the flogging-block, and generally played havoc with order and discipline.

The trouble began with the appointment of a new Head of the famous college. He was the son of a Windsor butcher, and this in itself was an offense to his aristocratic scholars.

"Snobish, wasn't it? Well, there it was, and the feeling was common to the whole school. No wonder there was trouble.

Nevertheless, at the beginning the new Head might possibly have been able to have gained the respect and affection of his charges, providing that he had gone the right way to work. But he went the very wrong way. Finding himself unable to rule by ordinary methods, he adopted those of terrorism, pain and stripes.

One night he had over eighty boys rounded from their beds at dead of night—sending the tutors round to the dormitory House to waken them—and then soundly flogged them. Their sole offense was that they were supposed to have been disorderly in chapel. The subjects were brought to his study by two and three, and the oppression lasted until the small hours of the morning.

On another occasion the names of a batch of candidates for Confirmation were by accident sent up to the Head on a piece of paper identical in size and shape with the "bill" used by the masters for the purpose of reporting delinquents.

All the boys mentioned in the document were duly flogged, none knowing the why and the wherefore; nor was any apology forthcoming when the mistake was at length discovered.

Up to the new Head's time all floggings had been administered in private, and the proctors, and the Sixth Form boys generally, were exempt

But the new Head flogged in public before the whole school, and treated them all alike.

The climax came one afternoon when the doctor announced his intention of flogging several big boys, amongst them being William Grenville—the same who afterwards became Prime Minister of England—and the eldest son and heir of the Earl of Godwin. A start was made with the latter, and he took his actual punishment with a martyr, although he protested strongly beforehand against the indignity that was being put upon him.

But when it came to Grenville's turn, he felt rather to kneel.

"Sir," he said hotly, turning and facing the astonished Head, "it is a scandal and an outrage, and I will not submit to it."

"Then, sir," replied the doctor, "I shall expel you from the school."

"Very well," said Grenville, turning on his heel, "do so!" Whereat a roar of cheers broke from the assembled boys.

In vain did the assistant masters try to stop the uproar. They were assailed with all sorts of missiles, including rulers and inkpots, and were compelled to beat a retreat.

A HISTORIC BOWFIRE.

Then the angry and excited boys surged into the library, seized the flogging-block, together with a dozen new birches, and proceeded to make a bonfire of them in the middle of the Playing Fields.

But the block was of solid oak, and did not burn very readily. So they got pointers, made three red-hot, and drilled holes into it and through it. Afterwards, what remained of it was broken into pieces, which were eagerly seized by the boys as souvenirs.

Indeed, to this very day there are to be found fragments of charred wood from the old block jealously preserved in not a few of the "stately houses" of England; while one of the largest pieces remaining unburned was conveyed secretly to London, and far a time formed the official seat of the president of the "Eton Black Club," an exclusive society for which no one was eligible who had not been flogged at least three times at school.

During the proceedings in the Playing Fields, and afterwards, the Head remained grimly inactive, viewing the scene from a distance. Not even when some 500 of the boys broke bounds, and started to walk to London, after throwing their school-books into the Thames, did he actively interfere.

Perhaps he thought it wise not to, for amongst the rebels were several active, strong lads—almost young men—of eighteen years of age or thereabouts. These masters constituted

themselves the leaders, and the smaller boys followed them readily.

By six o'clock the rebels had marched in a compact body as far as Maidenhead, where a hall was hired for the night, every available bed in the town there being taken at good prices. Indeed, there seems to have been no lack of money, the bill at the principal hotel amounting to no less than £50 and some odd shillings.

The boys did themselves well here as elsewhere, for after disposing of a sumptuous dinner on their arrival, they partook of an equally elaborate supper.

With the morning, however, came serious thoughts, followed by a division in their councils. Some of the older boys were for going on at all hazards, while others, frightened at the possible consequences, voted for returning to Eton, and trying to patch up a truce. In the end about 120 turned back, while the remaining forty resumed their journey.

Some amongst these latter were well received by their parents; others were not. Thus, Lord Harrington's son, who was one of the ringleaders, was actually refused admission to the family mansion in Grosvenor Square.

"Go back to Eton at once, sir!" commanded his father wrathfully, through the keyhole of the front door.

"No," answered the young man, "I'll be hanged if I do."

"And I," replied his father, "will be hanged if you don't!"

"I don't know about that, my lord," retorted this "daring" son; "but you must certainly deserve hanging in my case."

The two sons of the Marquis of Granby met with a warmer reception, and were asked whether they would like to go to the Gazette that evening. The offer seemed too good to be true, but they accepted it with alacrity.

"Very well," said the bluff old general, "you shall go there to-night for your own pleasure, and to-morrow you shall return to Eton and be flogged for mine."

Of the main body who returned from Maidenhead of their own accord, all were broken, and some were expelled. Amongst those who suffered the extreme penalty was Harris, the "cock" of the school, a burly Irish boy of eighteen.

When he knelt down to be flogged a deaf silence prevailed. The doctor administered the punishment with sparing hand, then laid the culprit straight up, and said, "Now I expect you from the school."

By methods such as these order was restored, and the malcontents cowed. But the best comment on the Head's stiffness is to be found in the fact that, during his rule, which lasted barely eight years, the total number of scholars fell from 880 to 550, over 100 having either been expelled or withdrawn owing to their participation in the "Great Rebellion," as the string of incidents above narrated are termed in Eton College history.

Put to the Test.

A Splendid Complete Story-Drama of
Australian Life.

By Robert Leighton,

Author of "Redskin and Rancher," etc., etc.



"Well, I reckon it isn't Bush religion, anyway, to desert a mate in a hole!" declared Dick Kirle, stooping forward to draw the belly from the edge of the fire.

"It isn't even 'uman," supplemented the boss, puffing at his pipe. "An' yet, I suppose, nobody rightly knows wot 'e'll do until 'e's lain put to the test, as to speak. You've got to be in a situation of danger 'fore you g'n a tell as you're not a 'ndeen' coward."

"Maybe so," rejoined Dick Kirle. "But, as I said just now, it isn't Bush religion to desert a mate when he's in a hole?" He repeated the phrase as if it pleased him.

Young Charlie Meek glanced round at the green, ashen faces of his companions, wondering if, in emergency, any one of these hardy, up-country stockmen would fail to behave with the self-sacrificing bravery of the man in the bivariate fern to which he had just been listening.

His glance lingered upon Dick Kirle with calculating scrutiny. He believed Dick to be one of the bravest men in all Western Australia, as he was certainly one of the strongest. Whatever any of the others might do, Dick, he felt sure, was not the man to desert a chum in distress.

Dick saw that the boy was looking at him.

"You been along at the water tanks, Charlie?" the man carelessly inquired. "How's things?"

Charlie nodded.

"Yes," he answered; "I been along. How's things? Just as bad as they can be. Nussler's four tank is empty now. They're all of 'em empty. And the creek's dried up. There's not enough moisture in tank or creek to see a postage-stamp, and the sheep know it. I counted seven-and-twenty more of them 'lins' dead against the fence as I came along."

The boss drew a deep breath that was almost a groan.

"That's bad," he deplored—"mortal bad! But it's wot I've bin expectin' all along. Wot'd ought to 'ave killed 'em 'fore now's a week ago. Now things got so bad. It's just a foot's guess 'agin' around water' for rain as never comes, an' don't intend to come. Tanks all empty, creek run dry, grass all withered up, the silly sheep all rottin'. Wot's to be done?"

"Seems to me," said Dick Kirle, "as if the only thing to do if we've to see the rest of the flock from dyin'

of thirst is for somebody to go an' 'ave a proper good search for water."

"Wot's the good?" ruminated the boss. "There isn't bin no rain no more for weeks back, an' sun 'ot enough to melt a mountain. Wot's the good?"

"There's bound to be water somewhere!" reassured Kirle. "All the water in all the world isn't dried up. We can't stay 'ere, that's a cert. We can't stay 'ere, and let the sheep die off same as 'em. An' we shall be as bad as the sheep ourselves 'ere long. Them tinned meats an' fever water an' 'ot dust, an' 'ot all, they're wot's for us, straight-'dein' for us, they are! Any'er's better's this stickin' 'ole! I wonder git out of it for a spell, an' git a breath or two of air as us'n't polluted with the smell of them festerin' sheep's carcasses."

The boss looked anxiously outwards through the darkness beyond the fire into the suggest'd direction of the camp. From all directions came the hoarse, plaintive bleating of the thirsty sheep, like the dismal moaning of the sea upon the heavy, poisonous air.

"If you're so sick of it," he said, "if you're so precious anxious to git out of it, wot'd you say for goin' as you proposed just now, an' 'avin' a proper search for water? If so be you should come across any, we could shift our quarters. There's a creek twenty miles to the westward, yonder. It mightn't be dry. Wot'd you say to goin' yonder?"

Kirle threw aside the empty telly, and reached for a cake of damper, which he began to nibble.

"I'm on!" he agreed. "But wot's ter go along o' me? Tin's safe to go alone, an' I don't ambition gittin' accidented on yonder on roads an' expeditions, any more than gittin' chocked with the stink of rottin' sheep. Who's ter go along o' me?"

"There's Tommy To-morrow," the boss intimated. "Tommy'll find water, if anybody can, 'an' bin a native. F'raps Charlie Meek'll go as well. 'E'll on'y git the lower if 'e stops 'ere 'ere longer." He turned to the boy who still stood within the circle of the firelight. "Wot'd you say, Charlie?" he asked. "Feel like goin' along o' Dick?"

Charlie Meek did not hesitate. He said that he was ready to start whenever Dick should be ready, and the sooner the better, because of the hard-

ships of sleep that were dying of thirst.

"Then we may as well git startin'!" Dick decided. "It's easier travelin' by night than under the Mission's sunlight of day. Where's Tommy?"

Tommy was found asleep on a pile of gunny sacks at the rear of one of the tents. A kick in the ribs from Dick Kirle quickly aroused him, and he scrambled to his feet.

"You come long o' me!" commanded Dick. "Find water."

"Oo!" the native agreed, sniffing the hot air. "He tells find water kerra quick." And he pointed to the westward.

Dick Kirle was restless. He raked his two companions out of the camp in a violent hurry, with as little preparation for the expedition as if he expected to return successful within a few hours.

He saddled the first horse that came to him, an old, broken-winded animal, too weak to endure hard riding, and already suffering from hunger and thirst. Charlie Meek's mount was hardly in better case. Tommy To-morrow preferred to go on foot, carrying in advance.

He led them westward in the night darkness, finding his way by the stars over the sun-scorched mounds and porcupine grass, and before morning he had got them ten miles out on the burning plain, where, as the white, hot sun shot up, they were confronted by the dry horror of a flat and arid world.

"There's bound to be water out yonder," Dick Kirle declared heartily, indicating a faint blue smudge on the horizon. "See them gunny sacks we've got there! Them is they wouldn't thrive without moisture. You may say they're growin' alongside the creek as the boss was guessin' about."

But the native tracker, who knew better, shook his black woolly head in denial of the supposition, and the disappearing cloud presently revealed that there were no trees, but only the ord-bone, mysterious plain of white, hot dust.

At about ten o'clock they made camp beside a thickish clump of widgee scrub, where there was a little grass newly-sprung up about a small water-hole.

They ate a touch of mutton and bread, and then lay and waited in the stifling heat, fought to keep off the flies, and got sticky and hot-tempered, until the sun was a couple of hours past the meridian.

In front of them, as they pushed on, was still the eternal desert. The two horses were dismounted. They were crawling hoarsely, with swollen tongues hanging out, and their legs streamed with blood from wounds made by the poisonous grass. More than once Charlie Meek's sag went down on its knees exhausted. Charlie dismounted, and gave the suffering animal his last drop of water.

"Are we gain' any farther, Dick?" he questioned wearily, when they had made camp, and water what remained of the tucker they had brought with them. "We don't seem to be any nearer water than when we started, and—I'm feelin' queer. I'm giddy. I'm sick. Heed'n we better turn back!"

"Back up!" roared Kirtle. "You'll be all right again soon's you've 'ad a dose. It's as easy to go on as to turn back now. Durnay we shall come upon that creek in the mornin', an' had gallons of clean, cool water. Let's go to sleep, an' dream as we've 'ad water to drink."

But Charlie Meek did not find it easy to sleep. His eyes nipped painfully with the gritty dust that was in them, his tongue was swollen, his throat was parched, there was a fierce, incessant gnawing in his mouth, and his brain whirled.

"It's wastin' time back there in camp," Dick Kirtle admitted dolefully. "Seems to me as we've come out on a fool's errand. Looks as if we was gain' away from water all along." He bent over the boy, and touched him. "Your paws' done for, Charlie. Did yer know?"

Charlie raised himself as if in answer.

"Lime foot? How'd you mean?" he questioned in amazement.

"No, it's dead!" Dick told him. "You'll have to do the rest of the journey on foot."

"But I can't," Charlie moaned despairingly. "I don't feel as if I could ever move from here, and unless we can get some water. Wish it would rain."

"Tim's likely to," returned Dick. "Tim's likely to. Look up at the stars. You can see every one of 'em. You'd think you could touch 'em." He turned to Tommy, who was lying flat asleep beside the dead horse.

"Ere, you?" he growled, giving the native a prod with his foot. "Call yourself a tracker? Well, the good of a thing is the best! Where's the water an' you said you'd lead us to? Where's the water—oh! A nice 'ole you've leaded us in, an' no error!" Tommy sat up, and said wearily:

"You wait one time. You go sleep. Din'te find them hole water berry quick. Me go; come back. You wait!"

There was silence for a long time. Charlie Meek closed his eyes, and tried to forget that there were such things as ravenous hunger and torturing thirst. The air grew awfully cooler as it drew towards midnight, and gradually he fell into unconsciousness.

At dawn he awoke, to find that Tommy To-morrow was no longer near him when he had lain, and that the

curious, crumbling sound which sent a nervous shudder through his weak-cord frame.

For a long time he lay there motionless, as if stunned by the horror of his discovery of this dead man. But after a while he lifted himself to his elbows and gathered courage to look at the thing again, and to conjecture who and what the man had been, and how it had come about that he had died here alone and unknown on the trackless desert waste.

That he had been a white man,



The streaked fingers of the skeleton hand were stooped upon a canvas bag of gold nuggets.

empty water-bag which he had used as a pillow had been taken away.

He tried to speak, to inform Kirtle that the native had gone off alone; but his lips and tongue and throat were hard and dry, and the only sound that came from them was a painful moan.

He crawled slowly, tottering forward on hands and knees in the warm, loose sand, passing many times to rest. Once as he waded, his right hand sank beneath his weight, and came in contact with something hard and round.

He did not think that it was a stone, here where stones were so low. He dug his hand deeper, and raised the thing upward. The loose sand streamed off from it, and he drew back, with a hoarse cry of horror, for the thing that he had unearthed was a human skull, with gruesome tufts of red hair and long red hair clinging to it. As he moved back, his dress disturbed the sand, and there was a slight,

Charlie could not doubt, and there could be no little doubt that he had died of thirst.

An edge of the dead man's hat and part of the collar of his red shirt had been disclosed. Charlie Meek bent down and removed more of the sand, scooping it away until the whole of the skeleton was revealed, with a swarm of ants busily moving about the ragged clothing and the bones, protecting bones. Then, under the crooked fingers of the left hand, he discovered the remains of a canvas bag with many nuggets of yellow, glistening gold.

He did not touch the gold. He did not move it. It was of no little value to him now as it had been to the man who had earned it and guarded it so closely, and who, while owning it, had perished miserably of thirst. Charlie Meek did not want it.

All that he wanted was a drink of water. For one precious cup of water

he would willingly have given all the gold in all the world.

He turned away and crawled towards his sleeping companion.

"Dick," he purred, chucking at Kirle's arm, Tommy's gone. Do you think he'll find water? Do you think he'll bring me some? I shall die if he doesn't, the same as that poor chap over there."

"'Wot chaps?" Dick asked. "'Ave you gone blind?"

"'Dunno," said Charlie. "I feel queer in the head. But there's a man's skeleton lying away there near where I sleep. Come and have a look at it."

"'Not I!" Dick shook his head and stared outward across the desert. "I don't want to look at any dead man's bones, not I! 'E's got nothing to do with me. I reckon there's rain in that cloud yonder."

"'He's been out lookin' for gold," went on Charlie, "and has found it. There's a tidy pile of nuggets (yix) he's holed his."

"'Wot?" he exclaimed. "'Wot's that you're sayin' of? Gold?"

He had leapt to his feet excitedly, and now he started off in haste to the place where the sand was turned up.

Charlie Meek followed him, crawling slowly and with difficulty, watching him as he went down upon his hands and knees and gleefully gathered the scattered nuggets, dropping them one by one into his wallet.

When Charlie at length reached his side there was not a visible sign of any gold. Every grain had been eagerly seized and hidden away.

Dick turned upon the boy and regarded him queerly through half-closed eyes.

"'You've gone off of your camp, for a dead certainty, Charlie!" he declared. "'You're ill, that's wot you are—ill. There's no gold 'ere. You've only been chasin' it as you seen it. Look for yourself, an' you'll see as there's no gold; nothin' but so much sand—yotter! but the up-baked sand is a few rotten bones."

He stood up, agitatedly backing the strap of his wallet. Then he slung towards his horse, unshibbled the animal, saddled it, and mounted.

"'Dick, where are you goin'?" Charlie inquired.

Kirle looked down at him, and chuckled.

"'Where'm I goin'?" he retorted.

"'Well, if you want to know, I'm a-goin' to 'ave a search for water over

youder, w'ere you seen that rain-cloud. Water's better'n any of your dream gold—'scape better."

Charlie tried to smile. "You're goin' to fetch me a drink. That's very good of you."

Dick frowned.

"'Wot d'you take me for?" he questioned. "'Think I've gone off of my camp, same as yourself? Tommy's took all the water-bags. Wot d'you suppose I could carry water in?"

Charlie shrunk back in apprehension of the man's intention.

"'And are you intendin' to leave me here all alone," he asked, in alarm—"alone, under this blisterin' sun, on the open desert, to die of thirst?"

"'Well, you see," returned Kirle, gathering the bridle-reins in his fingers. "You 'aven't got no 'wos, 'ave you? Mine can't carry as both. You can't walk; you've got like a crawlin' worm. Wot's the good of talkin'? There's nothin' else for it but to leave you 'ere. Wot's the good of talkin'?"

Charlie Meek raised his eyes pleadingly.

"'But you'll come back for me when you've had a drink!" he urged hoarsely. "'You're not goin' to desert me, are you? It isn't Bush religion to desert a mate in a hole, you know. There are four ows yours."

"'Yes," nodded Kirle, remembering the words well enough. "'But then, you see, a man never can tell wot 'e'll do until 'e's got to the test. 'Ave you got the cheek to expect as I'm to stop one along of you, to be chucked with down to be trampled up an' all, as it is of 'aint, as you say? Not likely! Wot's the good of talkin'? So long, Charlie boy!"

He dug his spurs into his horse's flanks and rode away. And Charlie, lying propped and panting on the hot sand, watched him until he became a mere speck on the far horizon.

As night, the deserted boy tried to quench his burning thirst by making a cut in his wrist and sucking the blood.

An hour after midnight he had fainted, and lay unconscious. The sun sank lower, and a breeze cooled his hot cheeks. He began to dream.

He dreamt that he was at the side of a stream, and that he had put his face into the icy water, and was drinking, drinking. The dream was so real, the water so intensely refreshing, that his whole body tingled with the enjoyment. He moved, and then suddenly awoke, to find his face wet and his throat relaxed, and to look up into the dark face of Tommy Tommorrow, who knelt at his side in the moonlight, holding a water-bag towards him.

"'Drink! Drink more one time!" said the tracker. Then, as Charlie obeyed, he asked, questioningly: "'Where Dicks! He no here. Where he gone? Me say no bring lida water. Why he no stay?"

Charlie sat up, and feebly replied:

"'He bad man. He no good," was Tommy's comment. Then he lifted the boy to his feet, hoisted him upon his back, and started to walk with his burden across the moonlit desert. Many times he paused to rest and to give the boy another drink, but he was strong and he went quickly.

At sunrise they were within half a mile of the creek, and were resting before making a new start, when Tommy pointed in the direction of

something that lay dark and still upon the sand.

"'Look!" he exclaimed. "'Them horns him no fit go far. Him dead for true."

They made their way to the side of the dead horse. Tommy looked at the hoofmarks in the loose sand, and decided by their appearance that, in his haste to reach the creek, Dick Kirle had been pushing forward without regard to the animal's condition, and leaving it forward beyond its strength. The uneven track showed that the horse had staggered blindly for many yards before it fell exhausted, with its tongue hanging out, dry and swollen.

It had evidently tried to regain its feet, perhaps knowing by some instinct that water was near. Kirle's own few footmarks betrayed that he had not improved many moments to give help to the companion that had carried him as far, but that he had set off in a bee line for the creek.

"'I expect he ran to fetch water for the horse," conjectured Charlie. "Tommy! To-morrow show his head."

"'Why he no come back?" he said, pointing to the trail, where the footprints were all in one direction.

Charlie understood.

"'That's queer," he observed. "'If the horse wasn't dead when he left, he'd surely come back to give it a drink and save it, so that it would carry him home to camp. Can you make out how long ago it is since he was here?"

Tommy indicated that it was at least eight hours since the horse died.

"'Come!" he added, dipping to the boy to accompany him to the creek.

They followed Dick Kirle's track, which showed that he had been running, or, at least, walking very quickly.

It led them towards a small bunch of wright scrub. They could see the water glistening beyond. The sand was moist on the surface. There had been a shower of rain. They came to a patch of sand that was turned up by Kirle's feet, where he seemed to have stumbled. They saw the marks of his hands and knees. But they saw something else as well—a dead adder, with its head out off and many vicious coils about its reddish-brown body. A few feet away from it there was a knife, with a long, shining blade open.

"'That's one of those beastly death adders!" said Charlie, touching the snake with the toe of his boot. "'It's deadly poisonous!"

"'That!' nodded Tommy. "'Suppose Dicks no kill snake, snake kill Dicks." Beyond the spot where they found the adder, Dick's footprints were strangely uneven.

"'Dicks walk all same him drunk," said Tommy.

A hundred yards further on, and hardly a dozen feet from the edge of the stream, they found Dick Kirle, dead, lying face downward on the track, with his club resting on the bag of gold. He had dragged himself along the ground to reach the water which he never guaged. His bare right arm was stretched out in front of him, swollen and discoloured. Tommy pointed to the tiny marks of the snake's deadly fangs.

"'He'd better by far have waited along with me," retorted Charlie Meek. "'He was right when he said that it isn't Bush religion to desert a mate in a hole."

THE END.

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The Bucking-Up of Halford.



A Splendid Long, Complete Sporting Story,
Dealing with Boxing and Football.

CHAPTER I. Challenged to Fight.

"We have got to buck up!"
It was Arthur Lawrence, the captain of Halford Football Club, who spoke, and his words were met by a general silence.

The young footballer looked round at the faces of his committee.

"We have got to buck up!" he repeated. "Unless we do something, Halford will be hopelessly behind in the competition, and that's not going to happen if I remain captain of the club."

"You haven't been captain very long!" suggested Rupert Crayo, with a rather unpleasant look in his eyes.

The captain's eyes flashed.
"No. If I had the club wouldn't have fallen into such a state of unlikeness?" he exclaimed hotly. "I didn't thrust myself into the position of captain, but as captain I cannot see the club floundering without thinking something about it. What I say is, we've got to buck up all round, myself as much as anybody else, and make a general improvement. We are going to win the County Junior Cup, if we can."

Rupert Crayo was silent. As a matter of fact, he had had an ambition to shine as the captain of Halford, and he had been passed over in favour of Lawrence.

Crayo was a great deal of a dicker, and, although his play was brilliant at times, he had proved himself to be unreliable. And the Halford Club, though it had as a whole fallen into a slack state, had the sense not to take a chance for its captain. Arthur Lawrence, ardent, keen, and enthusiastic, was just the fellow to pull the club upon its legs again.

"We've got to pull up," said Lawrence. "So far, we've scringed along by the skin of our teeth, so to speak. But wait until we meet the Wingate team; they're our toughest rivals. Why, if we play as we have played hitherto, they'll simply rush us off the ground."

"I don't see," said Crayo.
"There are none so blind as those who won't see!" retorted Lawrence. "I hope that doesn't mean that you are going to set yourself against me in this matter, Crayo?"

Rupert was silent.
"I am in dead earnest over it," said Lawrence. "I am going to work myself, and make others work. If the club don't like my methods, they've got their remedy. I'll never be captain of a team of slackers. We've got to make ourselves fit and hard, and play up like Trojans. That's the programme."

"And a jolly good one, too!" exclaimed Price.

"I'm not against you," said Crayo, at length. "I don't believe in a policy of haste, that's all. I don't think it's necessary. But I suppose you'll have your way, and that ends it."

"Quite so," agreed the captain of Halford quietly. "As you say, that ends it. There will be a new regime, and I don't think the club will be sorry for it in the long run."

And, after a little more discussion, the committee meeting broke up. Arthur Lawrence and Price discussed the new programme as they walked homeward, but there was a sickly look on Rupert Crayo's face as he went his way.

It was pretty certain that from this moment of the club, at all events, the captain would receive little support.

The best thing the Halford Club had ever done for itself was to make Arthur Lawrence its captain. His new measures startled the club out of its slouch.

There were two or three resignations upon the spot, and Arthur Lawrence accepted them with alacrity, for the members thus saved off by the prospect of hard work were the slackest of the lot, and were a good hindrance to any club that was supposed to play football.

The rest "bucked up."
As for Crayo, he did not venture to make his opposition open. He contented himself with a sort of passive resistance, and with raising his eyebrows or shrugging his shoulders at the new regime.

"There will be trouble with Crayo," Price remarked to the young skipper one evening, about a week later. "He is looking very sore about the new order of things."

"He will feel sorer if he bothers me," said Lawrence.

The secretary grinned.
"I understand. But go slow, old fellow. He lathers subscribers liberally to the club, and we're not strong enough to stand upon our own feet."

Lawrence's eyes flashed.
"You mean that we must keep in with Crayo for financial reasons, Price?"

"Well, something like that."
"Not while I'm captain of Halford!" said Lawrence instantly.

Price made a grimace. As secretary to a struggling club, he knew the difficulties of the matter only too well, and Mr. Crayo's solid and certain subscription was a godsend to Halford finances.

The two comrades were returning from a long tramp in the country when this conversation took place. Long walks and runs were a feature in the training of the Halford footballers. Lawrence saw to it with a careful eye.

Almost every fine evening some of the fellows were out on a steady sprint, paced by a comrade on a bicycle. The subscriptions from outside, which Lawrence did not wholly like, at least disliked the Halford Club to keep up quarters of a better sort than they would have possessed had they depended entirely upon their own resources, for most of the members were young fellows in employment, with salaries none too large for their needs. And the large room, fitted up as a gymnasium on a small scale, which belonged to the club, was the scene now of more energetic exercises than of old.

After changing from the run, Lawrence and Price turned up in the gym, and found most of the fellows there, among them Rupert Crayo.

Crayo did not see Lawrence enter. He was speaking in a rather loud voice to Hilton, a member who sympathized with his views to a certain extent. A couple of fellows were skipping for exercise, and Crayo looked on with a grin.

"I don't think anybody here's down a quiet breath since Lawrence became captain of the club," he remarked. "He ought to be in a Chicago hotel factory; by Jove, that's a most miserable place for him! He's a huffer, and no mistake! And the queer thing about it is that fellows seem to like it!"

Hilton laughed.
"Then it's no good a minority of two objecting," he said. "Besides, there's a lot in what Lawrence says, old fellow. It's the way to win."

"We've won before without all this," yawned Crayo, "and I dare say we could win again."

"And lost, too," broke in Arthur Lawrence quietly. "Come on, Price, and let's get the gloves on for a bit."

Crayo wheeled round quickly at the captain's voice.

"Right-ho! I'm ready,"
Rupert Crayo hit his hip.

For some time it had been in his heart to quarrel openly with the club captain, but he had always been, somehow, restrained from doing so.

"I'll have the gloves on with you if you like!" he exclaimed abruptly.

Lawrence glanced at him.

"Certainly!" he said. "I'd be glad to have a round or two with you, Crayo!"

Rupert Crayo's eyes glittered. He was a good boxer, and he was in good condition. Lawrence's fists with the gloves he knew to be good, but his own he thought better. And it came into his mind that the surest way of undermining Lawrence's undoubted influence with the club would be to

defeat him in a personal encounter. It was very likely that Lawrence owed a great deal of the respect he received to his reputation as a fighting man.

"Come on, then," said Cray. A group of fellows gathered round them as they got the gloves on. Although nothing was said, it was felt that this was an encounter between the two opposing forces in the club, and that the result would mean a great deal to the fortunes of Halford.

If there had been any doubt about it, Report Cray's wrath as he put on the gloves would have banished it.

"I suppose a hustler like you won't be afraid of a knock or two?" he remarked.

"No," said Lawrence quietly.

"Then we'll make a mill of it. Nothing like hardening oneself, you know," said Cray, with a grin. "As you say yourself, it's the way to win!"

Lawrence nodded.

"Good! I shall not be the first to cry off!"

"I'm ready, then?"

And the rivals of Halford Football Club faced one another, with a circle of eager faces round them.

CHAPTER II.

Looked:

Report Cray began the contest with the belief that he had only to put forth the strength and skill he knew he possessed in order to defeat the captain of Halford; but on many minutes had passed he found out his mistake.

Good better as he was, he found that he had met his match in Arthur Lawrence. And in personal strength and activity the captain of Halford was, if anything, his superior.

The contest was not in rounds, and so the test of the combatants' endurance was a severe one, and Cray was driven round the ring before a vigorous attack, which he found it harder and harder to guard.

Price grinned as he looked on.

He knew that the challenge to her was, in reality, a challenge to Arthur Lawrence's supremacy in the club, and it was turning out in an unexpected way for the challenger.

But

Lawrence's right came home on Cray's nose, and he dropped to the floor as if he had been shot.

"Bever!" yelled Price.

Cray scrambled to his feet. His face was red with rage, which he made hardly an effort to conceal.

Lawrence deliberately stepped back to allow him time, which he was by no means loath to do in such a contest.

This concession from the generosity of his opponent had only the result of still further enraging Cray.

He rushed forward angrily, and pushed the attack so hard and fast that Lawrence was compelled in his turn to give ground.

Round the ring Report Cray drove him, his eyes blazing.

But Price grinned as he saw it.

He saw that Lawrence was hardly being touched by the furious drives Cray sent at him, and that he was, in fact, leading his adversary on to what his

Cray paused at last, spent, and gasping for breath.

Then came Lawrence's turn.

He suddenly pressed on, sailing drive on drive, and Cray went back and back, his guard growing looser before every blow.

And at last a heavy right-hander crashed full upon his chest, and the left followed it up under his chin, and he went down like a log.

He lay gasping, without an effort to rise.

Hilton bent over him.

"Are you done, Cray?"

"Yes," gasped Cray.

Lawrence pointed to the gloves. He was somewhat fagged himself by the stiff fight, and his handsome face was flushed.

"I hope you're not hurt, Cray?" he said, sincerely enough. "You preferred to have it to a finish, you know."

"I'm all right!" snarled Cray.

He rose to his feet with Hilton's assistance, and flung the gloves angrily aside.

Lawrence walked away with Price. "That will do him good, Arthur," the secretary commented angrily.

"He's been asking for that for a long time, and it will open his eyes to the fact that he's not the great paragon he has believed himself to be up till now."

Lawrence laughed.

"It tops us," he said.

His gloves were to the door. Cray had his coat on, and was leaving, but he was going about

The sulky look on his face did not seem to indicate that the licking had done him much good.

CHAPTER III.

From Foes to Friends.

In spite of the covert sneers of Report Cray, the process of "looking up" had done the Halford club world of good, as their next important match proved.

They had to meet a strong enemy, but they turned into the field with an unconquered energy, and lined up with a determination to win that was not to be denied.

Arthur Lawrence's eye was on Cray with a glance of animosity at first. He saw that the defeated champion of the weaker interest might be inclined to play a weak game for his side, but he soon realized that, in this, at all events, he had done Report an injustice.

He played up well for his side, and contributed to a great extent towards the victory which rewarded Halford for their unusual effort.

A fagged but jubilant team met in the dressing-room to roll down and change after the match. The choice of the spectators were still ringing in the ears of the Halford footballers.

"Jolly good game!" exclaimed Price gleefully. "At last we were thought we should pull it off. But we did it."

"Thanks so much to Cray as anybody," said Lawrence heartily. "You played a splendid game, Cray!"

Cray shrugged his shoulders.

"In spite of being a slacker!" he asserted.

Lawrence coloured.

"I never called you a slacker!" he replied.

Cray did not answer, but there was an unpleasant look upon his face.

That victory had come in good time to back up the captain of Halford. The young footballers threw themselves into the work of improvement with all their hearts.

Even Cray caught something of the atmosphere of excitement and deter-

mination, and showed an unaccounted nerve. He maintained his distance of manner towards Lawrence, and that worried the captain a little. He would gladly have been on the best of terms with every member of the club. But so long as Cray played well on the field he had no fault to find, and Cray certainly did that.

"Coming on to the club-room this evening?" Price asked Lawrence, a few days later, as they left the office where both were employed.

Lawrence shook his head.

"Not till later, I think. I'm going out to Wiggins on my bike, to speak to Yorkie about the match. I shall be in later. By the way, that cheap Cray seems to be coming on with the rest."

Price grinned.

"Yes; I think he's afraid of getting left. Some of the fellows who were much below his form are coming on so strong that he is risking getting put back, and his place given to somebody else. I think he's realized that."

"A good thing, too."

"He's going on a sprint as far as Wiggins to-night, he told me," Price remarked. "You may see something of him on the road."

"I hope not," said Lawrence, laughing. "We never seem to meet without some kind of a snip, and I don't enjoy that sort of thing."

"It's a pity, too," said Price reflectively. "He's a decent fellow at bottom, if it wasn't for his beastly pride!"

The friends parted. An hour later, in the dusk, Lawrence wheeled his bicycle out at the garden-gate of his home, and lighted the lamp.

He mounted, and pedalled away at a good rate. Halford was left behind, and he went whizzing along the chertey high-road. The night was dark, and the lamps few and far between. It was nearly an hour before Lawrence reached Wiggins, and there he called upon Yorkie, the captain of the Wiggins team, and stayed for half an hour chatting with him.

It was close upon nine o'clock when he mounted his cycle for the homeward spin to Halford.

The night was darker now, only a faint glimmer of moon showing from amid banks of heavy clouds. Lawrence rode along at a moderate pace, his light gleaming out ahead through the darkness of the lonely road.

Suddenly he gave a start. From the gloom of the road ahead came a loud, ringing cry:

"Help!"

It was followed by a savage oath, in a rough voice.

"Hold on!"

"I've got 'im, mate! Look-out!"

There's a bicycle coming!"

"Help!"

Lawrence's eyes blazed. It was not difficult to guess what he had come upon, though as yet he could see nothing. Some vagabond on the solitary road had been stopped by a couple of thugs, and was being robbed and probably ill-used as well.

And Lawrence knew the voice that called for help, and as he came whizzing nearer it sounded clearer to his ears.

It was Report Cray!

He came on the scene with a dash, and sprang off his bicycle. The machine went reeling away, but not before Lawrence had caught the gump from the bar. It was the only thing he had that he could use as a weapon.

"Back up, Cray!" he shouted.

"Lawrence! Help!"

"I'm here!"

A hairy, rough-sided fellow leaped up before the captain of Halford. The big-headed fellow was a tall, thin man with a terrible crash upon a helmet head. The punch was bent by the force of the blow, but it had answered its purpose. The big-headed fellow crashed into the road.

The next moment Lawrence was seized in a powerful grip, the other ruffian being upon him before he could react against the attack.

Down he went to the ground, a savage grip upon his throat, and a heavy knee grinding into his ribs as he lay on one side.

"I've got 'im! Lead me a 'ead, Jake!"

But Jake was lying stoned, fortunately for the young footballer. Rupert Craye, in his running clothes, was lying dazed in the road, but he staggered to his feet now, and came towards Lawrence.

The captain of Halford was helpless under the weight of the ruffian, and his senses were swimming as the grip upon his throat tightened. He tried to cry for help, but the words would not come; he could only give a faint, spluttering gasp.

But Craye was on the spot now. His right fist was clenched, and his right arm drawn back, and he drove out a terrible blow at the head of the footpad.

The ruffian gave a gasp, and dropped into the road like a log, as the right-hander caught him behind the ear. He did not move again.

Craye bent down to help Lawrence. For some minutes Arthur could not move, but could only gasp and gasp and gasp.

"Lawrence," cried Craye hoarsely, "you—you have saved me, after the way I've treated you! Are you much hurt?"

But Lawrence could not speak.

Craye was bending anxiously over him, and Lawrence tried to find his voice to reassure him. But for two long minutes no words would come. And when he spoke at last, it was in hoarse and straggled tones.

"I—I'm all right!"

Craye gave a cry of relief.

"I—I was afraid you were badly hurt. They were going to stave me and rob me when you interfered. The ruffians were already lifted over my head. The bounds! You came to my help, Lawrence, and they might have killed you!"

"That's nothing!"

"Yes, it is! I've acted like a cad, Lawrence! I've stuck out against you in the club all the time, though I knew very well that you were right! If I had been captain, I should have followed the same methods as you have followed. But, if you were to let happen to happen, that's all over now!"

Lawrence's face brightened.

"You couldn't suppose anything I should like better, Craye," he said.

And he said it with all his heart.

Craye gripped his hand.

"Then it's a go!"

Lawrence staggered to his feet. He was feeling very dazed and exhausted. The two ruffians were staring now, and the young footballer had no time in getting away from the spot.

Lawrence, wearing his shirt, and Craye walking by his side, they set their faces towards Halford, and half an hour later walked into the town.

During that half-hour they had not been silent. Many matters had been

talked over between the two, and in a frank and a friendly way that showed more plainly than words that the old ill-feeling was quite gone.

Homeforth Arthur Lawrence would have an more cordial supporter in the Halford Club than its quondam rival.

At the gate of Lawrence's home they parted with a hearty handshake.

CHAPTER IV.

A Hard-Fought Match—The Way to Win.

"Jolly glad to hear it!" said Price heartily, when Lawrence told him the next day of the adventure on the Wingate Road, and its unexpected result.

"You two fellows ought not to be so scarce; there's nothing for you to scrap about. And this will be a good thing for the club, too—the last bit of dissension gone!"

ford could face the rest with confidence.

The young footballers were very keen and fit when the wonderful Saturday afternoon at last came.

The day was bright, fine, and cold, as good a day as they could have asked for if the ordering of the weather had been left to them.

The match was to take place on the home ground, and half Halford seemed to have turned out to see it.

The wonderful improvement in the form of the local club had roused much interest in it, and two or three hundred people were on the spot when the Wingate fellows arrived.

Lawrence greeted Yorke, the captain of Wingate, heartily, and the visitors at once went into their dressing-rooms to prepare for the fray.

Halford were the first to appear in the field, and a cheer from the crowd greeted their appearance.



The Wingate team attacked desperately, and time after time a Halford man was sent flying from a vigorous charge.

"That's what I was thinking, Price."

"Craye's a fellow of his word; he'll keep to it," said the secretary of the Halford Football Club. "And now we're going to beat Wingate!"

Arthur Lawrence smiled.

"I hope so, Price. And it's just as well to keep up a show of absolute confidence in the club; but, between you and myself, they're a tough handful. I've seen them at play, and I know they're the hardest nut we shall have to crack so long as we're a junior club."

"But we'll crack 'em!" said Price.

Halford were all looking forward eagerly to the most important match—so those—of the local competition.

If they beat Wingate they were safe for the cup, as Lawrence was never tired of insisting upon his followers; for the other clubs were by no means up to Wingate's force, and, with Wingate well beaten, Hal-

ford won the cup, and Yorke chose the goal team which the mind was blowing. Arthur Lawrence kicked off, and the game started.

That the visitors had come over for snipe was evident from the start. They rushed the game, and in a few moments the whole play was in the home half, with Wingate pushing hard for a goal.

Price, in the home goal, was on the look-out. He was soon called upon to save a tearing shot from Yorke.

But Price was equal to the occasion.

The leather went out from his ready fist, and a home kick cleared to the half-way line, and the rush of play went to goal-land.

But Wingate was soon attacking again.

Their rufians were hard and fast, and their weight gave them an advantage. They were not very particular, either.

(Continued on page 26.)



This splendid new series of story-articles has been specially written for "C.B.C." by the author of "The Call of the Sea." It describes the adventurous life lived by men who seek their fortunes on the outskirts of civilization.

TIGER-HUNTING ON ELEPHANTS IN INDIA.

which is used for a tiger is no use, say, for a rhino.

In front of the howdah, sitting on the animal's neck, is the mahout (elephant driver), who controls the huge beast with a gunga-ban.

This latter is an iron rod, with a curved blade projecting at one end, and the mahout does not hesitate to dig it into his charge should the latter become unruly. As a rule, however, elephants are easy to manage and, being very intelligent brutes, a keeper who is kind usually gets promptly obeyed by merely talking.

The procession moves off, lurching forward slowly, and it is interesting to notice the care which an elephant takes in crossing streams or treacherous ground. Instinct warns an elephant of unsafe places. Any thing doubtful in front is carefully tested by the trunk, and in ascending a steep place the creature will go down on his knees and patiently dig out footholds with his tusks.

As length the village is reached, and, in all probability, a detachment of native residents meets the hunters, with detailed information of the movements of the tiger. Now, the tall grass which I mentioned just now is generally freed by the natives when it gets too thick, but near any watercourse the ground is sufficiently damp to defy the spread of the bamboo, and the grass grows without interruption in these places. There is usually a stream near any village in India, and the patches of thick grass on its banks will surely contain the tiger.

The hunters take up their positions—sometimes these are decided by drawing lots—and the hunters start operations, advancing slowly, with much heaving and clanging, through the cover.

In the howdahs the hunters snail developments, with nerves strained to the utmost. And no wonder, for a fearless full-grown tiger is no mean foe. Boredom is the thick jungle, he is absolutely invisible, and not one of the men can tell from which direction he will spring. Also, he maintains a silence which, under the circumstances, is far more terrifying than the loudest roar.

There is a certain mystery attending the proceedings. It is not certain, in fact, whether the beast is there or not. This uneasy feeling is increased by the knowledge that for agility the tiger is

really remarkable. In a flash he will spring clear of the elephant's head, and maul the helpless and terror-stricken mahout.

At the best, the man in the howdah can only hope for a flying shot.

Gradually the hunters come forward, and the patch of undisturbed foliage gets smaller and smaller. Instinctively the hunters close in, and no avenue of escape is left open.

Still the hunters advance, and still no sign comes from the center of the grass. The experienced hunters watch, calm and keen, and ready for any emergency. They are anxious to get in the first shot, for the man who does this claims the skin. The novice shows signs of restlessness, and generally on to their arms, notwithstanding the latter may be in perfect order.

They want to make sure that everything is all right.

Without warning comes a quick, gruff bark—the sound of a tiger at bay.

Simultaneously, a striped, yellow streak flashes through the air.

Crack! Crack! Crack! The rifle squeak, and the savage beast drops dead.

Then the hunters go leisurely back to the camp, leaving to their servants the task of skinning the carcass.

And, high up in the hot, cloudless sky, an army of hungry vultures circles round, waiting to tin) to devour the remains of the King of the Jungle.

(Next week: "The March of Life in the World.")

Is Fish Good for the Brain?

"Ah, fish is a fine thing for the brain!" is a remark frequently heard, and believed in, but anyone who has studied the subject closely would not hesitate to denounce it as a fallacy.

In the first place, it is the phosphorus in fish which acts as the brain-irrigator, and a man might eat a huge quantity of fish every day of his life, and at his death the amount of phosphorus consumed, if it could be made visible, wouldn't be enough to tip a couple of matches.

Are the Northern tribes, who live principally on fish, famous for their brain-power? Are our own fisher-folk brothers of genius? Men of mark—poets, prosaists, lawyers, warriors, philosophers and physicians—have originated from all classes except that of fishing.

No; fish for the brain is a fallacy.

I am not quite sure that this article comes strictly under the heading of this series. Still, as I have told you about tiger-hunting in Rhodesia and whaling at sea, I thought it would not be amiss to tell you something of tiger-hunting.

Probably this is the most expensive form of hunting in the world. In the first place, the party will consist of, say, six hunters, who have an elephant apiece. Then the hunters also ride elephants, making a total of some thirty odd animals, worth anything from £150 to £200 each. Food, alone, for these brutes would amount to about £8 per day, so you will see at once that, to indulge in this sport, a man requires a big income, and it is not called "The Sport of Princes" without reason.

In some parts of India there are vast tracts of thick grass, growing sometimes to a remarkable height, and hunting would be impossible in any way except from the back of an elephant.

Let me give you a description of the way these wealthy hunters tackle the tiger in his native haunts.

The camp itself will be replete with every convenience, and the food of the very best. There will also be a host of coolies, attendants, etc., for a man who can afford to indulge in this form of amusement can easily have his camp comfortable, or even luxurious.

The native guides may be clearing away breakfast, and their white masters preparing for a possible pipe, when the shikaris (native trackers) arrive, and report that a tiger has been making raids on some village a few miles distant.

Preparations for a start are made at once. The elephants which carry the guns kneel down, and the massive howdahs are fixed in position. The howdah is a contrivance in which the hunter sits. It is made of cane, and the framework is of wood. There is ample room for the hunter to sit at ease, besides which there are, at least, four rifles and an ammunition-box. The extra rifles are necessary, because it is never certain what sort of a wild beast will be encountered, and a gun



TO FIND THE GOLDEN LILY!

TERENCE O'ROURKE, a young Irish doctor, has set out in a small yacht on a journey to Africa, his food supplies being to discover the Forest of Fear, where it is believed a marvelous plant can be found that has wonderful healing properties. This forest is called the Golden Lily.

O'Roourke's little boat is wrecked by a storm in mid-ocean, and he is saved thus far by CAPTAIN SMOOLA, who turns up in his marvelous ship, the Bee.

On board the strange are three young bushmen, JIM HUNTER, JACK ORDE, and JOE VANCE, while another central character in the story is DAN, the captain's black servant.

After leaving O'Roourke's tale of his intended quest, Captain SMOOLA at once starts the search in quest of the Forest of Fear.

The forest is reached at last, and during a temporary quarrel with the natives, O'Roourke falls into their hands, and is carried off.

Escaping from the natives, O'Roourke is lacerated by a beautiful white woman, who is known as HADES, or "the White Snake."

Meanwhile, Joe Vance has set out from the wrecking of a vain search for O'Roourke, and as the latter does not return, Jack Orde and Jim Hunter also start to explore the forest.

They fall in with a tribe of friendly giants, one of whom is told off to recover the belt to which Joe Vance is a prisoner in the hands of the Twaggs, as the natives are called.

(See next no.)

The Haunted Temple.

"Good gracious, Jim, what's that?"

As he spoke, Jack Orde was following as close behind their little pigmy guide as the latter's agility would allow, for he seemed more at home amongst the branches of trees than on solid ground.

"The wailing of a parrot, I expect, or—listen Jim Hunter, when he ceased speaking, his heart beating wildly with excitement and apprehension, as from what appeared to be a large, vaulting hill almost immediately beyond, came a wild, piercing cry of hoarse, broken tones! You cowardly lizards!"

There was no mistaking the voice of the sufferer, for that he did indeed suffer his agonized tones proclaimed, and they knew that somewhere in the heart of that grassy mound Joe Vance was undergoing some cruel torture.

The Forest of Fear.

Our Great New Story of Thrilling Adventure in Wild Africa.

By Reginald Wray.

His quick hearing warning him that his companions were not following, the pigmy looked back, then waved them impatiently onward, pointing to what looked like the mouth of a pit on the summit of the mound. Springing like a monkey from limb to limb, he made straight for the hole, and dropped lightly by its side.

Jack and Jim followed more slowly, yet as swiftly as their being unconcerned to the strange path would allow.

Motioning them to silence, the pigmy pointed with trembling fingers down the circular opening, then springing up, grasped an overhanging branch, and the next moment he had disappeared on his return journey, evidently content at having fulfilled his chief's words to the letter, and brought the two boys to where their friend was imprisoned.

Wonderingly, Jack and Jim glanced through the opening, to find, not the enclosed shaft of a deep pit, as they had expected, but the interior of an enormous circular building.

Immediately beneath them was a huge witherwork idol, around which a number of strange, weird shapes were dancing.

It was the Twaggs' temple, and Jack felt his heart grow like lead in his bosom as he realized that it was from this curious place Joe Vance's despairing cry had come.

As first they could see nothing of their shaft, but presently Jack laid his hand with a light grasp on Jim Hunter's shoulder, and pointed excitedly to where, suspended from a beam in the sloping roof, Joe Vance swung back-wards and forwards like a moving pendulum over a slab of red-hot stone.

Even as they gazed, one of the boy's feet touched the glowing slab, drawing a cry of pain from the victim.

In a flash Jack Orde realized the truth. As every swing Joe Vance's feet would remain longer in contact with the stone, until, at length, his sweeping rope ceased to move, and he would meet a horrible death suspended over the red-hot slab.

Tightening his grasp on his rifle, Jack Orde dropped on the idol's head, and, followed by his chieftain, commenced climbing swiftly down towards the altar.

Clinging tightly to the open witherwork of which the chief's knee was crossed, Jack Orde reached forward, and, grasping Joe's swinging body as he swung by, drew it towards him.

As he did so, Jim Hunter leaped forward, and with one dash of his hunting-knife severed the rope.

A moment later, dashed by his late fearful experience, bewildered at his sudden rescue, Joe was lying between Jack and Jim on the idol's huge knee. "Already the whirling dancers had

come to an abrupt halt, the incense-burner ceased drifting from their lips was stopped, and all gazed in amazement at the two daring white boys who had robbed their idol of its victim.

The white doctor was the first to recover from the stupefaction into which their appearance had thrown him.

With a yell of rage, he pointed his leaf-shaped sword at the daring youngsters, issuing an order in a loud voice, which was almost a shriek of fury.

Immediately the dancers threw off their strange masks, and, armed with the swords without which no Twaggs was ever seen abroad, rushed towards the idol.

Jack Orde threw his rifle to his shoulder.

"Stop, Jack—don't fire! We can never hope to keep these horrid away like that. Let me try what I can do with my ventriloquist," cried Jim Hunter.

Advancing to the very edge of the huge knee, he turned his face towards the door, through which a crowd of Twaggs were hastening, and, throwing his voice immediately above their heads, produced a loud, deep, resonant howling groan.

Immediately the chant was stopped, and every eye was turned in the direction from which the mysterious sound had come.

Delighted at the success of his first attempt, Jim Hunter sent a shrill, piercing shriek from the ground at the idol's feet, just as a body of priests were about to clamber up the witherwork.

The result was ludicrous in the extreme. Uttering cries of terror, they sprang back. Then, as the sound was repeated from immediately above their heads, they stood rooted to the ground with terror, waiting for a repetition of the mysterious cry.

Jim did not allow them to be disappointed, and the high priest wheeled round like a totemism as an ominous, threatening groan ceased in his ears.

A moment later Jim Hunter was filling the empty space above the Twaggs' heads with all manner of hoarse and weird cries, until at last, with loud shouts of terror, they fled hastening towards the door, clashing, tearing, and trampling on one another in their eagerness to leave the haunted temple.

Eager to keep them on the run, Jack Orde drew a port-fire from his emergency haversack, and flung it on the slab.

There was a loud explosion, and, to the horror of the Twaggs, the whole place was filled with blinding smoke.

This completed the Twaggs' discomfiture, and a few minutes later the three Britons were alone in the temple.

"How goes it, old chap—able to walk?" asked Jack, turning to his tortured chieftain.

"I will if I can, Jack. I'd face any

pain to get out of this awful place," replied Joe Vance, with a shudder.

"Then come on! We mustn't give the brutes time to rally!"

"But where to?" queried Jim Hunter.

"I've got the slightest idea in the world! Perhaps we may be able to get back to our friends the puglies along with Joe, then return to search of O'Rourke," replied Jack Onda.

Between them, Jack Onda and Jim managed to get Joe Vance to the ground. Then, with the young boy limping in between them, they made their way to the big open doors, through which they could see a large party of Teague, warriors and priests, sweating them.

Their appearance was the signal for a howl of execration, and, urged on by the witch doctor, the Teague moved towards the temple.

But a pack of wild, unearthly laughter rang out from one of the many skulls with which the wall was encrusted, and again the Teague fell, the boys advancing in their rear as quickly as Joe Vance's limping movements would allow, until, just on the outskirts of the village to which Terence O'Rourke had been taken on his way to the temple, they came to a side-path.

Here Jack and Jim, taking Joe Vance between them, ran as swiftly as they could by their legs to the ground.

It was a false move, for it told the superstitious Teague that the white magicians were as capable of fear as themselves.

With the knowledge that, unless he lost the white man, his power over the Teague was lost for ever, Harzo, the witch doctor, took his courage in both hands, and, shouting to his men that the white man's power had left them, urged some half-dozen of the bravest chiefs to lead pursuit.

At first he urged in vain, until a happy thought struck him, and, watching up a jar of water that stood near one of the bats, he muttered it broadcast over the Teague, chanting some gibberish which they believed to be a mighty spell.

Then, assuring them that they were now perfectly safe from the white man's witchcraft, he induced the Teague to take up the pursuit.

The White Queen to the Rescue.

The delay, short though it was, had given the three young Britons a good start, and they were running down a beaten track a mile from the village ere the distant shouts of the Teague told that they were being pursued.

It was they quickened their pace. Joe Vance, whose burnt feet were causing him great pain, hampered their movements.

"Lower me, old chap," he said at last, as the yell of the Teague grew nearer. "I can't go any faster, and without me you might be able to make for the trees and save your lives."

"Shut up, you old leech!" We'll keep it up as long as we can, and when the Teague overtake us, we'll see what our magic will do!" replied Jack Onda.

A minute later, the three boys found their track terminated before a tall palisade, planked by a pair of large gates.

But the gates were closed, and though Jim Hunter beat frantically

upon them with the butt of his rifle, there was no response from within.

Suddenly he turned at a chorus of wailing human yells proclaimed that the pursuing Teague had sighted their host.

It was he threw his ventriloquist's voice above the Teague's heads and at their feet. Confident in Harzo's power, they still advanced threateningly upon them.

"It's no good, Jack! I can't stop them! They seem to have recovered from their superstitious fear!" cried Jim at last.

"Then we'll have to use what our rifles and revolvers will do," replied Jack Onda. "Here, Joe, catch hold!" he added, thrusting his revolver into Joe Vance's hand.

Placing their backs to the gate, the three boys fired, and seeing four of their men fall dead to the ground, while two others reeled back severely wounded, the Teague's charge was stayed.

But only for a moment.

The witch doctor seemed to hear a charmed life, and, shouting encouragingly to his men, he waved his sword aloft as he advanced upon the boys' sinking weapons.

With a wailing shout, the Teague moved forward once more.

"Good-by, Jack, it's all up!" cried Jim, firing almost point-blank at the witch doctor, but only succeeding in slaying a man charging at his side.

"Good-by, old chap. No surrender, mind—death rather than torture!" yelled Jack, and, clothing his rifle, he walked what seemed to be the inevitable end.

He saw before him a crowd of hideous, malignant faces, a flash of innumerable steel blades, as the Teague waved their swords above their heads, and then something sprang from the summit of the palisade to the ground immediately before them, and, to the boys' amazement, the warriors dropped their weapons and flung themselves prostrate to the ground.

All save Harzo, and he, his face convulsed with hatred, uttered a fierce, wild yell, and, whirling his sword above his head, sprang swiftly at their rescuer.

But instead of giving ground, the new-comer uttered a wild "Hurray!" and, ducking under the witch doctor's upraised arm, and Jim reeling back on to the prostrate bodies of his men with a well-planted knee between the eyes!

"Ara! ye speake, it's a nice soft bed I knocked ye on to!" said the warden, and the three boys uttered shrieks of surprise and delight as they recognized the rich Irish baronet of the missing friend, Terence O'Rourke.

He was standing between them and their loss, his left hand clenched ready to repeat the blow if the witch doctor showed symptoms of needing it, his right holding aloft the symbol of the life of gold.

But the Teague's high priest was not yet done with. Almost gasping at the mouth with rage, he struggled to his feet, and commenced a loud, fierce hurra, of which neither of the four Britons could understand a word, but which was evidently having its effect on the prostrate Teague.

Terence O'Rourke looked anxiously at the gates.

"I can't understand a word the old coachman is saying, but if those fellows aren't at our throats, fly or no fly, in less than a minute, I've not got the blood of a hundred Irish kings in me

veins!" he muttered, half to himself, half to Jack Onda.

It occurred so though the young Irishman had summed up the position correctly.

For a few minutes the Teague moved uneasily; then, with one accord, they sprang to their feet.

There was no need for a second glance at the bloodshot, hate-laden eyes to tell that the symbol was now powerless to hold them back.

The boys gave themselves up for lost, but just as the Teague were croaking like hoasts for a spring, their bodies became rigid, their wild murmurings of awe and wonder, and, glancing over his shoulder, Jack Onda saw that the gates had been thrown open, and a host of dark-skinned girls formed a half-circle inside them. In the center of which stood a tall, beautiful white woman, supported on either side by a magnificent leopard, whilst a third stood as though on guard before her.

Slowly the Teague recoiled before the angry light which flashed from the eyes of the beautiful woman when the opening gates had revealed.

Even Harzo seemed for the moment deprived of speech.

But only for a moment. In obedience to a whispered order from Terence O'Rourke, the three retreated through the gateway, and by springing after them, his lace ablaze with buffed haze and rage, calling upon his men to follow.

But even as he crossed the threshold, Jack Onda was conscious of a huge spotted body leaping between himself and Joe Vance, and the next moment one of Harzo's leopards, in obedience to a sign from its mistress, had thrown itself upon the witch doctor, and hurled him, struggling violently, on to the bodies of his men.

A blast on a silver whistle recalled the growling leopard from the witch doctor's prostrate form, and next moment the gates were slammed to, and the Britons were—no less, for the time being—safe from their foe!

The Wicked Danvers.

For nearly a minute the three boys stood looking in speechless wonder at the beautiful girl, who was holding a whispered conversation with Terence O'Rourke.

Presently she turned upon them with a smile of welcome.

"The Who Harzo is pleased to see the friends of his betrothed," she said, using the English interpretation of her name, Harzo.

The three boys bowed, somewhat awkwardly, it must be confessed.

"We are you our lives, madam—miss—I mean, your Majesty," stammered Jack. "But for you the Teague would have slain us."

"The Teague are wild beasts, whose creed is murder, whose delight is cruelty!" replied the girl, an angry flush dyeing her cheek. "But come, they are beyond the fence, and dare never pass it. We will forget that such people exist!"

Turning to the flower-bedecked girl who formed her Court, she issued in order, and a few seconds later the astonished boys found themselves walking through a perfect paradise of flowers behind Terence O'Rourke and the White Queen of the Teague.

Presently they reached Harzo's pavilion, and here the Who Harzo announced as old and wrinkled woman,

into whose arms Joe Vance was handed, while Terence O'Rourke lay Jack and Jim into a room which had been given him as his own private apartment.

"Who is she, Terence?" cried Jack, as soon as they found themselves alone with the young doctor, and the two had expressed their delight at finding him safe and well, and evidently in high favour with the savage queen.

"She, and who should she be but the fitting Miss O'Rourke! She's the prettiest, sweetest cologne that ever trod the earth!" replied Terence enthusiastically.

"We can see that for ourselves, Terence," laughed Jack. "But who and what is she? Whom did she come, and why is she here?"

"Oh, dry up and wash! Sheave, you look as if you hadn't seen water for twelve months! I'll tell you all about the White Holes here on. Hallo, here's Joe Vance!" How are your feet, old chap?" he added as the strong boy, escorted by one of the Amazon guards, entered the room.

For reply, Joe Vance commenced a supplication, which ended in a nasal outburst and a cry of pain.

"Hang it all, I thought she stuff had cured me!" cried Joe, sinking down on an elaborately-carved stool, and nursing his tender feet.

Terence O'Rourke laughed. "You mustn't expect the life-root to perform miracles, Joe," he declared. "It deadens the pain more than anything I know of, and keeps the flesh so clean that it heals up at once; but if you take liberties with the wound afterwards you must expect to get the worst of it."

Joe Vance made a grimace, and without reply hastened to where his two chums were already busy on their ablutions.

As they washed, their tongues flew quickly, each relating as briefly as possible the various adventures which had befallen them, with which the reader is already acquainted except with that of Joe Vance.

This, in brief, was up to a certain point similar to Terence O'Rourke's experience.

He had been captured by the Twagas and taken to the temple, where he had been kept a prisoner for some days; then, with many rites and ceremonies, a fire had been kindled beneath the altar, and, with a flourish of incense in which Hanzo himself had been made to swing pendulum-wise over the glowing stones as Jack and Jim had found him.

Half an hour later, the Three Wanderers were seated at dinner with the White Holes, beneath the blossom-laden branches of a magnificent magnolia-tree.

Terence O'Rourke occupied the place of honour by Saloni's side, next to him was Joe Vance, and on the other side of the beautiful Queen of the Twagas sat Jack Ordo and Jim Hunter, trying their utmost to appear unconscious of the presence of Saloni's same regards, which crunched immediately behind them, covering her groins, and regarding the three boys as though they also wanted their dinners, as Terence O'Rourke put it.

Behind the Queen of the Twagas stood a guard of Amazons, and moved on the grass before her were a dozen of her maids of honour.

The boys were wise enough not to inquire too closely as to the nature of the well-mixed meat served to them on wooden platters, but whatever it

was, they enjoyed it heartily, as they did also the yams and potatoes in the place of vegetables.

The dinner over, and the table cleared by the simple process of throwing their platters over their shoulders, Saloni rose to her feet.

Her example was followed by the rest of the diners, and the maids of honour, bowing low before their queen, commenced a graceful waltzing dance to the accompaniment of a regular rhythm.

But barely had the dance commenced ere Terence O'Rourke uttered an exclamation of angry astonishment, and, leaving Saloni gruffly on the arm, pointed along a path bordered with

whirling dancers. "Keep quiet, for my sake—keep quiet!" she pleaded.

Unwillingly, Terence O'Rourke obeyed, but he took the precaution to whisper the narrowly-needed warning to the Three Wanderers to have their revolvers and rifles ready.

These were about a dozen of the dancing maids, and as they advanced towards the queen they twined round quicker and quicker, and their dance became more wild and frenzied.

Trampling ruthlessly on flowers and ornamental shrubs, they advanced until within some six feet of Saloni; then all but one sank to the ground.

The standing one faced the Queen, and in loud, breathless tones he cried:



Suspended from the roof by a thick rope, Joe Vance was being swung backwards and forwards over the red-hot slab of stone in front of the altar. Was it possible to save him now?

flowers, and gazed on either side by hedges of the gayest blossoms, along which the form of a masked dancer appeared in view.

Another and another whirled in sight, and, glancing at his beautiful companion's face, Terence O'Rourke saw that it had gone deadly white.

In a moment the dancing had ceased, and, with low bows of terror, the girls gathered around their queen and her white companions as though for protection.

"What is it?" Terence cried; but Saloni laid a restraining hand on the young doctor's arm.

"It is death to resist or to insult the

"I am the Voice of Hanzo, the witch doctor, Hister, Saloni, Queen of the Twagas, and tender with the words of the great magician! Hanzo is gathered that the Queen of the Twagas has betrayed her people, for she has taken under her protection our enemies, the white men; therefore Hanzo has sent his Voice to demand that the white men should be delivered forthwith; and more, the great god in the Twagas' temple has spoken, and it is his will that the White Holes should give herself to his high priest, Hanzo, as his wife!"

(This grand tale of adventure will be continued in our Tuesday "D.D.C.")

THE SCOURGE OF THE SCHOOL



BY
Andrew Gray.

Author of "Miles London's Millions," "Palish of London," etc., etc.

THIS STORY IS NOW
AT ITS MOST
EXCITING STAGE.

"My Son! My Son!"

"Yes, it is Bob Adair, of the Shop, I am accusing," said the Head. "He looks out of the hospital ward where he was one night, and ordered my boys by one of the windows."

Rix was regarding him with eyes almost as large as saucers. He seemed utterly able to believe his senses.

"I am not surprised that you are astonished to hear that," said the Head, maintaining the look. "I would have been, too. Only there were other charges, it happened, already accumulating against the boy, to show what an unappreciated young criminal he is, in spite of his pleasant face.

"His lady, I may tell you, was found in a public post-box covered with glass, showing undoubtedly that he had been trying to pilfer letters out of it. Then, again, there was a certain matter of a cheque?" added the Head.

"A cheque?" gasped Rix, his hand flying instinctively to his pocket, where he had examined the crumpled slip he had plucked from the window.

"Yes; a cheque for eight pounds, which was sent to Bob Adair by his lawyers, but which he tried to alter to eight, so as to defraud the bank. Fortunately, his courage failed him at the pinch, and he still has it hidden somewhere—"

But by this time Rix was holding out the very document under his nose.

In his amazement, Dr. Marston almost released his grip of his wretched son. But he recovered himself in time.

"Great Scott, man! Where ever did you get it?" he cried eagerly.

"In Bruce's pocket, just now," was Rix's wordless reply.

The headmaster roared as if he had struck him across the eyes.

"And now let me tell you this, sir," continued Rix, speaking between his set teeth. "You're wrong about young Bob Adair—all wrong. He's the straightest chap there is in the school, and you're accusing him falsely. There lies the thief who stole your case, questions, if you want to know?"—pointing to Brian, who seemed to be trying to strick through the wall in his terror.

"He stole them, and handed them to me, and I paid him his money. Own

up, you?" he cried, turning on Brian.

"Don't sit silent there, and hear your own cousin accused of one crime, at least, that you know you committed yourself! He is a man for once, and own up, to save him!"

Filled with sudden, savage contempt for the coward, Rix swung Brian on to his legs. That sudden clutch was the last thing needed.

"Yes, I did it! I own up to it! I confess everything!" cried Brian, with a shudder. "I stole your case, questions, sir, and sold them to him, as he says."

"And the cheque?"

"Yes, sir; I had that, too. My cousin never even saw it!" babbled Brian, the words spattering from his lips like steam from a kettle. "Bruce has brought it to me. I craved money from him and others, and I showed the amount for Bruce to pass it at the bank."

It was a sorry business to hear both of Dr. Bartley's speaking like this of each other. But was it "speaking"? What would have happened to poor Bob, say—if they had kept silence?

"And the lady?" demanded Dr. Marston, in the same voice of iron.

Brian caved up to that, too. What was the use of trying to keep anything back, anyway! They were smashed. Their crimes were discovered.

"Then may Heaven have mercy on you all, is what I say!" growled Dr. Marston, looking as if only now the full shock of these revelations had reached him, and he was about to collapse.

His grip felt nerveless from his son's codish. Presently, like the rest he was, Bruce began to slink towards the door. Rix, seeking to the more, sprang after him, and Brian, too, yelping after him, managed to struggle out into the alley, and almost into the street.

No one appeared to notice them, which was strange, for there were plenty of people about. Rix expected a mob of teachers to come rushing round them instantly.

Instead, however, all eyes seemed fixed on something coming along the opposite side of the street.

Though he was growling furiously with Bruce Marston, Rix managed to snatch a glance to see what this could

be. And then a cry of horror escaped him.

"My stars, look!" he gasped, and fell away, leaving his own prisoner to go free.

For then, with two policemen gripping him by either arm, and the cook-room detective keeping back the rabble at their heels, was Bob Adair being marched to the lock-up, handcuffed like any common pickpocket.

For a moment Brian and Rix stood transfixed. Bruce Marston covered against the wall like a beaten band, his eyes rolling, and loose lip gaping.

Then a look, quick cry of dismay and rage scented behind them. Dr. Marston had also seen what was happening. He went striding forward to cross the street and bar the policemen's way.

Brian, though, was before him. It was as if the words had fallen suddenly from his eyes—as if guilty horror at all the wrong he had done had left him wings.

"Stop! Let that chap go!" he cried to the police. "He is innocent, and I have proof—"

The sentence was never completed. One glance had sufficed to warn Dr. Marston of a motor-car coming swiftly down on them, its horn sounding to clear the road. But Brian was oblivious to everything, except his resolve to save his cousin at all costs.

So, though the flood all but managed to clutch him to drag him back, Bruce darted free again. A yell, a roaring screech of brakes— But it was too late.

Brian was down and under the wheel—caught up and rolled along, until it seemed as if every bone in his body must be broken.

His cousin had uttered no cry. It was all too sudden even for that. For a second the crowd seemed too paralyzed to move. Then with a rush it dispersed Bob and the policemen, and came surging round the car.

Two men were riding in the motor—the chauffeur and a gentleman beside him. They had already kept down, white and shaken, to drag the mangled figure from under the wheels.

Dr. Marston, hurrying forward sick at heart, recoiled with fresh horror when he saw who this gentleman was whom

was laid both the innocent cause of the tragedy.

For it was quite other than Mr. Terence Adair, the father of the victim still gazed towards!

And now, as the senseless boy was flung out, the wretched father realized this, too. A great cry burst from his lips, and he flung himself down on his knees beside him.

"My son—my own son!" he wailed piteously. "Brian, my own, own boy!"

"At 'em, boys!"

It was by the crowd long of late that Brian's own father was riding in the car that had run him down.

Waiting on and on for his son to appear at the head, whether he had come for him, he had grown anxious at last. Ordering a waiter to set out for St. Bartolomew's to find him.

And now the ghastly tragedy had happened. He flung himself down on his knees in the road beside the wretched, well-stained figure.

"Brian! My boy—my boy!"

The crowd shuddered at the anguish in the cry. Yet the victim had not been killed outright, as everyone expected. His eyes opened just for a moment and his lips moved.

"Bob!" he whispered, and faltered.

"Bob?" asked his father, with a strong laugh. "Bob, indeed?" he dared not. "Why, it was his fault that all this happened! Brian must have run forward to save him, the worthless wretch! When is he now?" he cried.

Dr. Marston, who had recovered his swimming senses sufficiently to come forward, laid his hand on Mr. Adair's shoulder as if to speak in poor Bob's defence.

"But one glance at those glaring eyes told him that this was not the moment.

"Better to waste no time, but get this poor lad away to the hospital," he said quietly. "Lift him into your car and I will come with you. There may be hope after all."

He could see that Mr. Terence Adair was distraught between terror and rage, and small wonder. Brian was his only child, and heir to his great fortune. Brian was perfect—Brian was everything!

Alas, what a bitter awakening was preparing for his father now!

To see his so shaken prove Dr. Marston's strength. He had had his own dithering shock already. It had numbed his body and brain, but, like the fine man he was, he took instant command.

Tenderly, under his direction the team and wretched figure was pulled up and lifted into the car. Then they drove away to the hospital.

Meanwhile, for the first minute or two after the tragedy, poor Bob and the policeman had been left standing on the pavement. The detective had rushed forward with the crowd.

Bob was aghast. To him the whole preceding twenty-four hours had been one never-ending nightmare. He could not believe that he was awake.

After Wilson had departed to the station, Brian, the brother, was put in charge of him. Then the police had arrived.

Who had told the constables exactly where their prisoner was to be found no one could say. But they headed straight for the captain's study without so much as a by-your-leave.

There they had arrested Bob and flung him out, Mr. Fulger's protests

were in vain, and so the innocent lad was led away.

The stony silence of the crowd of his schoolmates from his wretched heart. None offered to follow him, to see him through, as any decent pain would. Fennell & Co. were in the gym, unfortunately, doing physical drill, and so had heard nothing about this yet.

It was the bitterest, blackest moment in all the history of that great school when one of its boys was dragged off as a dirty thief.

From that moment, as Bob passed under the gate, until the crash of the motor and the rush of people round something sprawling in the road, was all a blank to Bob.

Only the grip of the policeman kept him on his legs at times; he was so



THE MAN WHO STAGGERED THE UNIVERSE.

This is Professor Steel, the inventor of the Phantom Submarine, our striking new series of complete stories, commencing next week, consists of the most exciting adventure tales ever written. (See page 31.)

dared and done. Then he spoke. His words had halted now, he found. Gradually he began to take in the scene around him.

"What's happened?" he demanded, like one waking out of a heavy sleep. "I heard someone crying out my name, didn't I? Who called 'Bob' just now?"

"It's an accident. Someone ran over by a motor-car, trying to cross the street," the policeman told him. And just then he heard his uncle's voice raised in savage irony.

"Where is the murderer?" he was crying. "Bring him here, that he may see his handiwork. He has killed my son!"

That sufficed. Bob could see it all in a flash. It was Brian who had come rushing across at sight of him. He remembered it now. And he had been knocked down and killed.

With a quick wrench he tore himself free. In another second he would have

flung his way to the heart of the crowd. But the too—fortunately, perhaps—was just then pushing his way back to give orders to take the prisoner to the police-station.

Seeing Bob trying to escape, as if looked, he flung himself in his path. The boy had no time to pull up, only to duck his head. Over the top called in the crowd, the detective hitting at his diminutive prisoner as if he were some bangle trying to murder him. In vain the bobbies assured him that he could let go, as they had "got him."

"No, leave the little shark to me!" spluttered their superior. "I'll teach him to try and escape from custody! Here's that, you young beast!"—swearing Bob's wife behind his back until he gasped with agony.

"It's your wife, fish-packet!" he laughed, yank-shoving Bob along by his collar, increasing rather than relaxing the strain on his tortured arm, he hurried him up a side street, and a couple of minutes later was in sight of the police-station steps.

Bob was literally blind with pain by that time. Otherwise he must have recognized the two figures standing watching his coming, transfixed with horror.

One was a stockish-built gentleman with a round face, the other a pretty girl.

"Now then!" graced the too, getting ready for a last savage lunge which would shoot his victim up the stone steps and into the charge-room on his hands and knees.

What was the officer's astonishment, then, when, at the very police-station door, right under the nose of the law, this red-faced gentleman suddenly reared out a wild Irish howl and came charging at him like a mad bull.

With umbrellas clashed like a challenge he smote the stock-necked too, in the flank, tearing him from his victim and leaving him into the gutter.

Poor Bob was himself flung against the railing by the whirlwind rush. He managed to get his eyes open at last, and stared around in dazed bewilderment.

Hardly he knew that high-pitched yell, those square shoulders, broad as a gate, and that hairless bald head, gleaming like an ostrich egg!

"Whack! whack! whack!" The detective was getting a licking now if ever he had one.

"You brags, to handle a boy of mine like that!" his burly shoulder was roaring, in a voice that fell like sweetest music on poor Bob's ears.

For it was his own dad who had then come to his aid. And ponder was his eldest sister, Molly, the dearest pal he had in the world.

And, as if this were not enough, here into the street was a great mob coming pouring, and Fennell, Whiffle, and old Blazer Smith leading them on.

"At 'em, Bartolomew! Keweenaw! Kelly, St. B.'s!" roared the old familiar was-whoop.

Bob's pals of Poverty Flat had heard the news of his arrest at last, and they, at any rate, were coming to "see him through." As a trace he found himself surrounded, his father tearing readily at his handiwork, trying to release him, and his sister Molly, joggling him round the neck in tears.

The fight at the Police Station.

"Back up, Bartolomew! St. B.'s to the rescue!"

Poor Bob scarcely knew whether he

was on his head or his heels. Here was his sister Molly laughing him round the neck, weeping tears which might have been joy or sorrow; there was his dad, too, cowering like a bull at finding his son's wrists handcuffed; while those, down the street, were coming out Fennell and all the rest of them, leaving to his reason.

"Take those things off! Who dared to put them on my boy? Was it you, you scoundrel?" bellowed Mr. Adair, relaxing his efforts to strap the locks, only to turn on the detective with renewed fury.

He had never dreamed that his son was a prisoner under arrest. The detective in plain clothes he simply took to be some bolding trower, who was assaulting his boy.

But when two hobble ran down the station steps to their comrade's aid, he began to grasp what it all meant. The cock-nosed detective was still in the gutter, where he had been captured.

"Arrest that lout!" he screamed to the constables. "Have him in, too, for assault! That young rickpocket is his son, his name!"

"Rickpocket?" gasped Mr. Adair, in horror.

"Well, larger, letter-size thief, and general swindler, if you want to be so particular about it," spluttered the lot.

The two hobble made short work of grabbing their prey. Molly shrieked and clung to her brother, while for a moment it looked as if Mr. Adair was going to make a fight of it.

But fortunately police and prisoners were accompanied by a regular avalanche just then. Fennell, Hazon, and the

stuttering Whiffin, had come thundering up like a stampede of buffaloes.

To back them were some fifty other boys from St. B.'s, besides a respectable proportion of the population of Barchinosa St. Peter's.

In a jiffy the police-station steps were wracked tight with a cheering mass of Barchinossians, and the arrest of the hobble was cut off.

"Drop those chaps. You're not coming in here with them!" commanded Fennell valiantly.

"Hear, hear! They're doing no harm to you, suddenly that old codger. You leave go of them, or we'll police you!" cried in Hazon's Irish, squaring up with his fire.

"Be-fo-fo-fo, you-you-you've got the wrong ch-oh-oh, after all!" spluttered Whiffin. "Old Boid's in-innocent, as it happens!"

But the detective had heard that sort of yarn before. He went off into a hollow of forced laughter.

"Oh, all right!" sneered Fennell promptly. "Laugh away, Barchinossians. But we'll jolly well make you laugh the other side of your face before we're done with you!"

"Yes," and Hazon, "and what we say is true enough. Another fellow has confessed to the crime you're charging this chap with."

"What?" gasped the lot, turning a beautiful green about the gills in this bombastic "Who?"

"Finnell!" scolded Fennell. "Call yourself a detective, and think we're going to do your dirty work for you!"

"This was foolish, of course. If there was one person who was simply burning to get at the bottom of this scandal-

ous affair, it was the "old codger," as Fennell described him—in other words, Boid's dad.

Now, to make matters more perplexing still, the crowd suddenly recognized Boid as the youngster whom they had seen presented with a medal by the town and corporation for gallantry in saving life from fire.

First one began to cheer the hero, then another, until in a minute the street was fairly booming with hurrahs.

At this moment the station-inspector came rushing through the mob. He had been disappointed for when the accident to Brian had occurred, and was now hurrying back.

But to the disgust of the defenders of the steps no word had been given to him, evidently, about any confession.

"And in any case," he pointed out tactfully, "you're doing no good discussing the matter out here, but only causing a riot. So clear the way, young gentlemen, and let's talk it out quietly inside!"

Boid's father was quite game, of course. His head was spinning with the din. So in they all marched, taking Molly, too.

And now, for the first time, Mr. Adair heard the staggering charges which were being levelled against his son.

(To be continued next Tuesday.)



THE BUCKING-UP OF HALFORD.

(Continued from page 33.)

about their interpretation regarding charging, and many of the home side had many falls.

Now was the time for training to tell, now the time for Halford to buck up, and show that they had not learned in vain the way to win.

And back up they did, with a whole-heartedness that delighted their captain, and was cheer from the crowd.

First and foremost in bucking up the captain was Rupert Craye.

He had often been brilliant, but never reliable; but now he seemed to have taken on a new character, and his display was as steady as it was dazzling.

With the wind and a heavier team against them, Halford seemed to be fighting a losing battle, but they fought it out splendidly.

There was no slacking now. The side which had been a duck of slackers only a few short weeks before had put a team into the field now which would compose of budding Internationalists.

With many advantages on their side, Wingate failed to score till right up to half-time, and then at last a shot from York's foot found the Halford net.

Then the whistle went for a well-earned respite.

"They're a tough nut, and no mistake!" Hilton remarked, as he

looked a jawon. "But we'll beat them yet!"

"Wait till we get the wind behind us!" said Craye cheerily.

"You're right, Craye!" Lawrence consented, with a nod. "That will make things even. And I've noticed, too, that Wingate are getting damn much more than we are. They're a bigger team, but they haven't trained us in here."

"As you're trained us, you mean!" chuckled Price.

"Well, yes, if you care to put it like that. Oldy win, that's all!"

"And we will!" said Rupert Craye.

The rest was over. The teams lined up again. The change of ends brought the keen wind behind the backs of the home team, and the advantage was great.

Wingate tried their old policy of attacking. But this time it did not seem to be so successful.

Halford met them well, and gave as good as they received, and the struggle remained in midfield for a time, with occasional excursions into either half. The ball went in touch pretty often.

A quarter of an hour slipped without any advantage being gained by either side. But the moment among the spectators observed that Wingate were showing far more signs of lag than the home team.

Training tells. The Halford footballers realized that as they began to press the falling away.

At last came a chance to the Halford captain. He was away with the ball, and broke rapidly through the Wingate defence. As he was charged over by a ready back, he passed the ball to Hilton, who let Craye have it just in time. Craye kicked for goal.

The Wingate goals were soon to make a wild dash at the leather, and rain, and a cheer rang out as the ball found a saving-place in the net.

Halford had equalized!

And when the game restarted the struggle was heavier than ever. Neither side was willing to draw, each was determined that the old goal should come to hand.

A tackle more resembling League football than a junior match was the result. But training told.

Ten minutes more to play, and the score still level. Five minutes more! But the Wingate men had long ceased to attack now, and the struggle was all in the visitors' half, closer and closer to goal.

And suddenly, with a determined, combined rush, the Halford forwards came through. The ball was at Craye's feet, and he brought it right up to the goal, and sent it in with a whizzing disc.

Back it came from the foot of the goal, only to meet the Halford captain, who was ready for it.

With the Wingate halves and backs closing in on him, Lawrence kicked, and the next moment he was on the ground, but the ball was in the net.

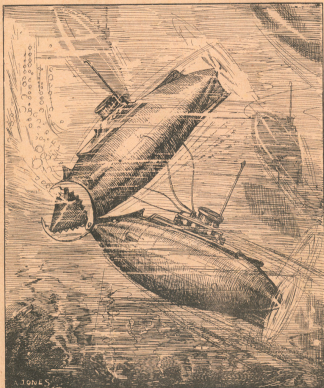
Three! It was the blast of the whistle, Cheers bursting from the delighted crowd almost drowned it. The game was over, and the home team had won by a goal!

The breathless footballers poured of the field, and carried high on the shoulders of Price and Craye, in the midst of the victorious team, was the forward who had kicked the winning goal—the captain who had shown Halford the way to win!

THE END.

NEXT WEEK! ————— NEXT WEEK!

The Submarine Battle.



Look out for this picture on the front page of next Tuesday's "C.B.C.," and when you see it, get a copy at once!

The above thrilling story is the first of a grand New Series, entitled:

“The Phantom Submarine.”

Each story packed with novel and exciting incidents!

Our Bargain Page.

Look through these Readers' Free Advertisements and see if there is anything you want to Buy, Sell, or Exchange.

BOOKS.

L. Cornfield, 57, Windsor Road, Griffithstown, Mon.—"The Young Welshman," an amateur magazine, 14d. post free.—H. Eliza, Swansea, Cumberland—"The Monthly Man," provision copy for stamp.—R. Brown, 48, Froham Park Road, London, S.E.—Monthly parts of "Work," cheap. Send stamp for list.

CAMERA.

C. Hill, 24 Grosvenor Street, Backpel, Lancs.—Cheap 1-plate hand camera, with stand, and a complete outfit of accessories.

CINEMATOGRAPH FILM.

F. Noyce, 14, Ashby Villa, High Street, Leeds.—Cyclic cinematograph film, 250 ft. long, fifteen scenes, nearly new, 2s. 6d.

CONJURING.

Scott, 65, Barrow Road, Hartwood, West—Marvellous pack of cards for fifteen tricks. No sleight of hand required. 3s.—A. E. Billing, Highfield, Macclesfield Road, Macclesfield, Cheshire, Lancs.—Lancs. tricks, sleights, etc., 4d. each. Send stamp for bargain list.

COMEDIANS.

Ed. Allen, 44, Highland Road, Dorset.—Screaming comic songs: "Brollins," for 4d. each; "Anno," "Twas all through looking at me," a comedy; for two comedians. "As the Election," screaming duet and comic talk. Stamp for list.

J. M. Finn, 225, Magdalen Street, Colchester.—"The Guardians of the Love," complete set for two comedians, comprising running intercepting cross-talk, catch-phrases, song, with full piano music, 1s. 6d. List of comic songs, duets, patter, running gag cross-talk items, ventriloquist dialogues, 2d.

FRITWORK.

Elkott, 71, Leigh Road, Leyton.—Hobbies.—"Imagined" Roger's machine, 3s.

MELODION.

S. Davies, 31, Essex Street, Leyton.—Melodion, cost 7s. 6d., will do, carriage paid.

STAMPS.

H. E. Beattie, Gosport Road, Parkhouse, Hants.—Breaking up collections. Send for approach.—A. W. L. Foster,

173, Blackthorn Road, Baber, Lancs.—Stamp-collecting outfit, 1s. 6d., or exchange for camera or "Daisy" rifle.

MISCELLANEOUS.

G. Polenzoni, 25, Harley Street, Earl Street, London, N.W.—Printing set, 2s. 6d., complete. Cinematograph, with film, 2s.—D. C. Hartwell, 7, Churchwell Street, Banbury, Oxfordshire.—Silver cup, worth 25s. 6d., sell for 2s. 6d. Thirty-six postcards, 6d.—H. Hudson, 22, East View, London, near Lamb.—Darkroom lamp, 6d. Forty-eight boys' books, 2s.—Richard 111, Station Road, Hinton.—Book on ventriloquism, 6d. Book of tricks and puzzles, 1d. Fifty postcards and fifty musical cards, 1s.—A. Hodge, 128, Northgate, Abingdon, Oxfordshire.—Photograph camera, 2s. 6d. a dozen. Send stamp for list.

WANTED.

BOOKS.

W. H. Giles, The Grange, Leyton, Essex.—"Black," Nos. 205, 183, 143, 110, 121, 126, 124. 5d. each post.—Machment, Tynburn, Hants.—"The Grange," 2d. Librarian, etc., containing notes by Maxwell Scott and Henry Brew.

Our Free "Exchange & Mart."

Open to all Readers of CHEER BOYS CHEER.

Send Along Your Advertisement To-day

Your Editor has had the pleasure of starting a new feature which will prove of great help and value to every reader of *Cheer Boys Cheer*. This new feature is a Free Exchange and Mart, by means of which readers will be able to do business with one another on the most favorable terms.

Have you anything that you want to sell?

Is there anything that you want to buy?

Would you like to exchange anything with another reader?

If so, here is your opportunity.

WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO.

On this page you will find an "Exchange and Mart" coupon. All you have to do to get an advertisement rate out "Exchange and Mart," is to cut out these coupons, which must be lost from the current issue of *Cheer Boys Cheer*, and attach them to the advertisement you want to be inserted in the "Exchange and Mart."

No money is asked for its payment of these advertisements.

Advertisements must be clearly

written on one side of the paper only. Each advertisement must not exceed twelve words in length, excluding your name and address. In special cases where a long advertisement is necessary, readers must send four extra coupons for every extra twelve words. Please note, however, that your Editor reserves the right to cut down an advertisement, or to exclude it altogether from the paper, if he deems it necessary.

The Editor takes no responsibility with regard to any transactions that may result from the advertisements, but he will use every precaution to guard against the "Exchange and Mart" being abused by advertisers.

"Exchange and Mart" Coupon.

Send Four of these Coupons, cut from the current issue of "C.B.C.," with your advertisement.

(Cut available 7 days after publication.)

"C.B.C." No. 14, Jan. 11, 1913.

A FEW HINTS.

Just to make everything quite clear, we give you a few hints that will help you to gain the best advantage out of our Free "Exchange and Mart."

See that your coupons are securely attached to the advertisement.

State clearly in the advertisement whether you want to buy, sell, or exchange.

No stamps will be accepted in place of coupons.

Do not trouble to buy four copies of the paper for the sake of getting the coupons. Ask your dealer to give you their coupons.

The coupons will always appear on the cover of *Cheer Boys Cheer*, so that cutting out will not mutilate the paper.

Send your advertisements and coupons to

CHEER BOYS CHEER,
Exchange and Mart Dept.,
The Fleetway House,
Farringdon Street,
London, E.C.