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The Greyfriars

Herald 1st
2



No. 60 (New Series)

PUBLISHED EVERY TUESDAY.

Dec. 18, 1920.



FROM THE JAWS OF DEATH!

Drake raised the white flag, and advanced towards the Indians, his comrades watching him with throbbing hearts.

EDITORIAL.

My Dear Chums, — I think you will agree that the present number of the "Boys' Herald" is in every way an excellent one. Our stories are written by the very best authors available, and I hope that you will be thrilled and interested in the same way that I was when it was my pleasure to read them. I want you all to do your very best to obtain as many new readers for your favourite paper as possible during the next few weeks. There are many treats and surprises in store for our readers, and I am desirous that as many boys as possible will benefit in the good things. The more the merrier! Let us all do our best to make the happy circle of "Boys' Herald" readers larger than ever. Many of my chums are writing letters to me full of enthusiasm and praise for our paper. I am delighted to hear from all my chums who care to write me a line; and remember if there is anything in the "Boys' Herald" which you do not like, let me know at once. It is my desire to please you all, and publish only the kind of stories which entertain you. In an early issue of the "Boys' Herald," I am starting a wonderful new series of stories entitled "The Courage of Jack O'Dare." I am sure that Jack O'Dare will win a big place in your affections. He is the sort of hero that every boy admires. Look out for this splendid series. Now a word about next week's "Boys' Herald." This will be our Christmas number, and I must advise you to order your copy at once in order to avoid disappointment. There is bound to be a huge demand for this special wonder number. In addition to the splendid stories, there will be a grand new competition in which valuable money prizes will be awarded to the successful readers. This competition is delightfully simple, and will provide amusement as well as an opportunity for you to exercise your skill.

YOUR EDITOR.

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FROM THE JAWS OF DEATH!

OUR SPLENDID, LONG COMPLETE STORY WHICH WILL GRIP YOUR INTEREST

BY OWEN CONQUEST

(Author of the famous Rookwood school stories appearing weekly in the "Boys' Friend.")

CHAPTER I.

Surrounded by Foes!

"WERE a precious set of asses!" growled Daubeny of the Shell.

"We are—we is!" agreed

Jack Drake.

"We've played the giddy ox, and no mistake," remarked Dick Rodney. "What would you fellows give to be safe back on the Benbow?"

"Oh, dear!" groaned Tuckey Toodies. The sun was rising over the forests of the Orinoco, and it shone down upon the worn and haggard faces of the chums of the Benbow.

They had hardly closed their eyes during the night.

It had been a night of constant anxiety and fear of alarm, though no alarm had come.

On the top of the mesa—the great flat rock by the side of the stream—the juniors stood, watching the sun climbing up beyond the great forest that shut them off from their friends.

Many a long league away across the forest was the Orinoco, and on the great river the school-ship was anchored, with their friends, who had probably given them up for dead by this time.

The reckless expedition into the South American wilderness had reached its end; and the end seemed likely to be a tragic one.

The mesa was surrounded by the Arrowac Indians; in every direction, as the sun rose, they could see the gleaming paint and feathers of the savages.

Every now and then an arrow shot into the air, curved over the high table-rock, and dropped, but the branches of the great ceiba tree were a covering that kept off most of the missiles.

The summit of the mesa was only a dozen feet or so from the plain, but the walls of it were too perpendicular for climbing—save in one spot, and at that spot Tin Tacks was on guard with his rifle.

But even if the copper-skinned savages could not get at the treasure-seekers escape was cut off; the mesa was encircled by scores of the Arrowacs.

Jack Drake's handsome face was clouded.

The night had passed without an attack; but it was pretty certain that the day would not be allowed to elapse without an attempt of the Arrowacs to get to closer quarters.

Tuckey Toodies was in a palpitation of funk, to such an extent that he almost forgot to groan. And Egan seemed to share Tuckey's state of mind. Torrence was very silent and subdued. Peg Slaney, the one-eyed seaman, broke his silence only to mutter a curse.

"We're in for it," said Rodney quietly. "It's not much good complaining now. We're landed."

Daubeny gnawed his underlip. "I've dragged you fellows into this," he said.

"Can't be helped," said Drake as cheerfully as he could. "We came after you of our own accord to lend you a hand. Now we're all in the scup together."

"Oh, dear!" groaned Tuckey Toodies. "You fellows oughtn't to have come, you know, and then I shouldn't have come. It's all your fault."

"Dry up, Toodies!" "I—I say, Slaney, are the Indians cannibals?" mumbled Tuckey Toodies.

Peg Slaney turned his single eye on the fat junior.

"Some of 'em, I guess," he answered.

"Ow!"

"They'll begin on you if they are—you're the fattest," added Slaney.

Tuckey gave a yelp.

"I—I say, Drake, I—I've got an idea," stammered Tuckey.

"Well?"

"S-s-suppose you fellows go down and surrender to the Indians—"

"What?"

"I could hide up here in the bushes," pursued Tuckey. "They don't know how many there are of us. See?"

"Eh?"

"They wouldn't find me, and that would save my life."

"And what about our lives?" bawled Daubeny.

"Oh! I—I——" Tuckey Toodies did not seem to have thought about that trifling consideration. "Well, you see, it's all your fault we are here, you know, with your silly rot about a buried treasure on this beastly rock. I knew there wasn't a treasure all the time; I told you so, in fact."

"Why, you fat owl, you were the greediest of all after it!" exclaimed Rodney. "You would come!"

"Look here——"

"Dry up, Toodies!" urged Drake.

"No good being funky now; we've got to face the music."

"I'm not funky, of course," mumbled Toodies. "You fellows know that I'm as brave as—as a——"

"As a rabbit?"

"As a lion, you beast! I was really thinking of you. If I escape, you see, I'll get back to the Benbow and—and bring help——"

"Ring off!" "I think it's a really good idea——" "Shut up!" roared Drake. Clink!

A little arrow dropped from the air, through an opening in the branches of the ceiba, and fell almost at Drake's feet.

He stooped and picked it up. "That's a queer thing," he remarked; and, indeed, the arrow looked odd enough. It was not more than a foot long, and there was a cotton ball at the end in place of feathers.

Tin Tacks gave a startled yell.

"Mass' Jack, no touch—poison!" Drake dropped the little arrow as if it had suddenly become red-hot.

"My hat!"

"Yaroooh!" gasped Tuckey Toodies. "Poisoned arrows! We're all dead and done for! Yow-ow-ow!"

"Shut up!"

"Dat am arrow from blow-pipe," said Tin Tacks. "Berry bad poison on tip, Mass' Jack. Touch skin and scratch, and you dead as ole C'lumbus!"

"The beasts!" muttered Drake.

Drake had noted that some of the Indians were armed with what looked like long poles, a dozen feet in length. He realised now that the poles were hollow, and were, in fact, the deadly blow-pipes, with which the Indians can project an arrow for a great distance. His heart sank. Against weapons like these even the rifles stood a poor chance, if the copperskins came within shooting range.

"Keep under de tree," said Tin Tacks. "Safe dere. I guess dem Injuns no able to come up here, Mass' Jack."

Drake nodded, but his heart was heavy.

There was little food among the party cornered on top of the mesa, and death by famine was not much better than



Three or four coppery faces rose into view, and dusky hands clutched at rocks and shrubs to drag the Indians up. "At them!" panted Drake. He tore across the level top of the table-rock to meet the fresh attack. Rodney and Daubeny were at his heels, and Peg Slaney followed, with a pick in his hand.

death by the poisoned arrows of the Arrowacs.

He realised, too, that though the steep sides of the mesa were not practicable for a climber, it would be easy enough for the Indians to make ladders for the ascent, if the idea occurred to them.

"We've done for, old chap," said Dick Rodney in a low voice. "All we can do now is to face the music without showing the white feather."

"That's all," said Drake.

"Dead and done for," muttered Peg Slaney. "Dead and done for, and the treasure gone before we came. What luck! But I guess I'll spite the beauty of an Injan or two before they get me under!"

A sudden fearful yell rang from the plain, and it was followed by a shout from Tin Tacks.

"Dey coming!"

"Line up," said Jack, between his teeth. "We'll make them pay for it, anyhow."

And the chums of the Benbow grasped their weapons and rushed to face the attack.

For Life or Death!

UP the steep, narrow path on the side of the rocky mesa came a painted savage, spear in hand. He was followed by a dozen more, clambering like monkeys.

Tin Tacks' rifle rang out sharply.

It was followed by Drake's, and Daubeny chimed in with his revolver. These were all the firearms in the party, but they sufficed to defend the path up the mesa.

The leading savage dropped back with three bullets in his body, and on the narrow path he crashed down on those who were following.

In a moment nearly all the dozen Arrowacs were rolling down on the plain again.

One of the savages clung to a point of rock and saved himself, and came springing up as his comrades rolled down.

A fierce spring landed him on top of the mesa.

But Tin Tacks was ready, and his clubbed rifle struck the Indian with terrific force, sending him staggering back.

The Arrowac staggered off the mesa and rolled down the steep path, crashing on the plain among his comrades.

"No get past ole Tin Tacks!" chuckled the black man of Barbados.

Fierce yells rang out below, and the savages came on again. At the same time a loud howl from Tuckey Toodles gave the alarm on the other side of the mesa.

On the opposite side another party of Arrowacs were attacking, swarming over one another's shoulders, with the activity of monkeys, to reach the level of the top.

Three or four coppery faces rose into view, and dusky hands clutched at rocks and shrubs to drag the Indians up.

"At them!" panted Drake.

He tore across the level top of the table-rock to meet the fresh attack, leaving the defence of the path to Tin Tacks.

Rodney and Daubeny were at his heels.

Peg Slaney followed, with a pick in his hand.

One of the savages had a knee already on the rock when they reached the spot.

Drake's clubbed rifle sent him crashing back.

Another barely dodged Slaney's pick, and fell to the plain, and the rest dropped out of sight, yelling with rage.

Almost a cloud of arrows flew into

the air, dropping and pattering on the mesa, and the juniors rushed back to the shelter of the ceiba tree.

Drake hurriedly reloaded his rifle.

The Arrowacs were clambering up the path again, but the black sailorman was equal to its defence. His rifle sent the leader whirling down and again the savages were swept away by the falling body.

With fierce and furious yells the Arrowacs drew off at last from the assault of the mesa.

Peg Slaney snatched Drake's rifle and sent a bullet after the retreating savages, laying one of them dead on the plain.

The rest scuttled back, yelling, leaving a good space on all sides between themselves and the mesa. The arrows they sent in return now fell short.

"We've pulled through that," muttered Drake, breathing hard.

"P'r'aps we pull trough all right, Mass' Jack," said Tin Tacks hopefully.

"No dead yet!"

"We'll stick it out to the very last, anyhow."

"Are—are—are they gone?" stuttered Tuckey Toodles.

"Yes, they're gone now."

"I say, I'm hungry!"

Drake chuckled.

"There's half a mango for you," he said.

"If you think you're going to starve me, Drake—" began Tuckey Toodles, forgetting even the Indians in his indignation.

"Fathead! We can't make the food last two days even on strict rations," answered Drake. "We've got to make it last as long as possible."

"You fellows don't need so much grub as I do—"

"Dry up!"

"Yah!"

"I—I say," muttered Torrence, "do you think there's even a faint chance of getting any help, Drake?"

Drake shook his head.

"Where's it to come from?" he said.

"We left the school in a canoe. Mr. Packe wouldn't even know in what direction to look for us. We're dozens of miles from any white settlement. It's no good thinking of that."

"What fools we were to come!"

"Not much good thinking of that, either."

"And to think that the treasure was gone!" muttered Egan. "To think that it had been dug up and the hole filled in! To spoof us when we came lookin' for it!" He clenched his fists.

"Well, the treasure wouldn't help us much now if we had it," said Drake. "We should lose it when we lose our lives, I suppose."

Egan did not answer, but he gritted his teeth. Even in the shadow of death he could not forget the lost treasure, the will o' the wisp that had drawn the Benbow juniors into their present terrible danger.

The beleaguered treasure-seekers breakfasted, a remarkably frugal breakfast, which drew loud complaints from Tuckey Toodles.

Fortunately there was no lack of water; they dipped it from the pool on top of the mesa, and though it was brackish it quenched their thirst.

While they ate they watched the Indians in the distance.

The Arrowacs had camped out of effective range of the mesa, in groups surrounding it. Squaws could be seen issuing from the forest with grass-plaited panniers, evidently bringing provisions to the braves from the Indian village.

It was only too evident that the Arrowacs, though they desisted from attack, had no intention of allowing the white intruders to escape.

"It's rotten," Drake said, after a long silence. "We don't want to do the poor wretches any harm; if they only understood that, I dare say they would sheer off. But—"

"We can't even talk their lingo, even if they'd let us get near enough to speak," said Daubeny.

"Slaney can," said Dick Rodney. "I wonder if there's a chance?"

Drake started thoughtfully. He remembered that Peg Slaney had acted as interpreter when an Arrowac Indian had come on board the Benbow at that time at anchor in the Gulf of Paria, by Trinidad.

He called to the one-eyed seaman, who was munching a coconut with a sullen, lowering face.

"Slaney, you could talk to the Indians."

"Ay, ay!"

"Suppose you explained to them that we're not enemies, and we only want to clear off in peace?"

Slaney grunted.

"I guess they'd have me full of poisoned arrows before I could get near enough to chin-wag," he answered. "And they wouldn't let up on us, anyhow. They're down on white men in this region. I guess they've had the Venezeulian soldiers here one time or another."

"But we're not Venezuelans."

"The Injuns wouldn't make any distinction, sir; a white skin is a white skin to them, whether it's white or brown."

Drake nodded dismally.

"I suppose you're right; they don't look as if they'd be very willing to listen to reason."

"What about a white flag, though?" asked Daubeny.

Another grunt from Peg Slaney.

"They wouldn't take any notice of that."

"Hallo, there's something going on yonder," said Torrence. "Looks as if they're getting ready for another rush."

The juniors watched. There was some excitement in the camp of the Arrowacs on the side nearest the path up the mesa. A fresh party of Indians had arrived from the forest, among them a tall chief, whose golden ornaments glittered in the sunshine. His coppery face was barred with streaks of black paint, which gave him a strangely wild and ferocious appearance. Drake stared at him across the distance intently. It seemed to him that there was something familiar in that powerful form, draped in a blanket of sewn jaguar skins.

"I believe I've seen that johnny before somewhere," he said.

"On the Orinoco, perhaps," said Rodney. "Lots of Indians come to trade with the ships. We may have bought souvenirs from some of these very brutes who are thirsting for our blood."

"My only hat!"

Jack Drake shaded his eyes with his hand, staring hard at the distant Arrowac chief.

"Taro Niom!" he exclaimed.

A Friend Among Foes!

TARO NIOM!" Rodney repeated the name. Jack Drake's eyes were gleaming with excitement.

"Taro Niom! Don't you remember—the Indian we met in his canoe on the Gulf of Paria? We helped him when the shark nearly had him. He gave me his coral ear-rings to remember him by, and I gave him a knife. You remember,

when he came on the Benbow, and Slaney interpreted—

"I remember."
"Me know him," said Tin Tacks, with a nod. "Him painted now, berry much painted for de warpath; but me know him. Him Taro Niom."

Rodney had a hopeful look.
"You saved him from the shark, Drake," he said. "I wonder—I wonder if—"

He paused.
"It's a bare chance," said Daubeny. "If he remembers—and if he has influence over the others—"

"He's the chief!" said Torrence. "You can see that—they're all kow-towing round him—"

Drake drew a deep breath. He remembered how grateful the Arrowac had been, and how he had said, through the interpreter, that if "Yak Dak" should come to his village, he would show him hospitality, even to the extent of providing him with a choice selection of wives. Drake certainly had no intention of testing the Arrowac's gratitude to that extent. He smiled at the recollection.

"They're going to attack," said Peg Slaney. "Now the chief's arrived—I suppose he's been away hunting—but, now he's come, he'll bring them up to the scratch. I guess it will be the finish this time. Sooner's no worse than later, I guess."

"There's no time to lose," said Drake quietly. "I want a white flag—"

"Drake, you can't—"
"I'm going!" said Drake.
"But—"

"It's our only chance," said Drake resolutely. "I believe the Indian meant what he said, when he talked to us, through Slaney, on the Benbow, and he will know me again. He doesn't know I'm here now; he only knows a party of whites have been cornered here. If they make a real rush, we're done for, so I'm not risking much. I'm going."

"Then I'll come with you."
Drake shook his head.
"No good. If they are treacherous, you're better here; there's a ghost of a chance of pulling through, while you're alive. If Taro Niom plays the game, it's all serene for me; if not, you're better here, old chap. I'll go alone."

"But—but—" panted Rodney.
"Mass' Jack!" muttered Tin Tacks.
"It's our only chance, old bean!"
"Me come with Mass' Jack!"
"No, I tell you! You're wanted here with your gun, Tin Tacks, if they cut up rusty."

Jack Drake had his way; it was, indeed, all that was to be done. The Redskins were evidently preparing for a grand attack, under the direction of Taro Niom, the Arrowac chief; and if they came on determinedly, on all sides at once, the chances of beating them off were slim. Drake ran little more risk by advancing to meet the Indians, though it was a test of nerve that required all his courage.

His sunburnt face was a little pale, but he was quite firm and cool.

If he succeeded in his mission, he would save the lives of the whole party on the mesa; and he believed that success was possible. All depended on whether Taro Niom remembered him, and remembered that "Yak Dak," as the Indian had called him, had saved his life in the Gulf of Paria. And Drake believed that he would remember. Savage as Taro Niom was, Drake believed that he would "play the game."

The rest of the party remained on guard, while Drake, with a handkerchief tied to the end of a stick to serve as a

white flag, descended the steep path to the plain.

Rodney's face was paler than his own as he went.

Drake's heart beat fast as he dropped from the rock and stepped out from the plain towards the Indians.

A yell from the savages announced that his movements had been observed. Drake raised the white flag, and advanced towards the Indians, his comrades watching him from the top of the mesa with throbbing hearts.

For some distance he was not within range of the Indians' arrows, but, when he was near enough, he saw several of the blow-pipes raised.

A sickening feeling came over him. If the Redskins did not respect the white flag, he might never get near enough for speech with Taro Niom, and he would perish, with the poison in his veins, without being able to put the Arrowac chief's faith to the test.

But he walked steadily on. It was for life or death now, and he did not falter, though his heart was sick within him as the deadly blow-pipes were raised.

One of those little arrows scratching his skin meant death—death sure and terrible; and a puff of an Indian's breath into the blow-pipe was sufficient to send the messenger of death.

Still he strode on, his head proudly erect.

"Heaven preserve him!" whispered Dick Rodney huskily.

The yelling of the Indians had died away, and they were all staring in silence at the schoolboy who was advancing so fearlessly towards them.

The voice of Taro Niom broke the silence, shouting in the Arrowac tongue.

Instantly every blow-pipe was lowered. Drake's heart throbbed.

From the crowd of Indians Taro Niom advanced to meet him, his black eyes scintillating at the junior.

It was evident, as he came closer, that he recognised the boy—his expression could be read through the black bars of paint on his face.

Drake, holding the white flag with his left hand, felt in his pocket with the right.

From his pocket he drew the coral ear ornaments which Taro Niom had given him on the deck of the Benbow, long before.

He held them up for the Indian to see.

Taro Niom bowed his feathered head. "Yak Dak!" he said.

Drake smiled.
"Taro Niom!" he answered.

The Indian spoke rapidly, in a tongue of which the junior understood not one word. But the expression of his grotesquely painted face was friendly now. He made Drake a sign to remain where he was, and strode back to his people.

Drake stood still, and watched him.

Taro Niom raised his hand commandingly, and commenced a harangue in the Arrowac tongue, to which the Indians listened in silence.

The chief's harangue lasted a good ten minutes, during which the rest of the Arrowacs spoke no word.

When he ceased there was a shout, and immediately the Indians began streaming away towards the forest.

Drake's heart leaped.

The siege of the mesa was over, and the deadly shadow of peril had lifted from the chums of the Benbow.

The Red Man's Faith!
TARO NIOM turned, and came back to Jack Drake, as the Redskins began their retreat. There was a smile on the coppery, paint-barred face. He made a gesture

towards the mesa, which Drake understood, and he started back, followed by the Indian.

As they reached the path up the side, the faces of the defenders looked down at them over the edge, with great relief.

Taro Niom ascended the path, and Drake followed him to the top.

The Indian saluted the party with a grave inclination of the head, apparently forgetful of the fact that a very short time before he had been about to lead a fierce attack, which not one of them would have survived.

Tuckey Toodles gave a howl at the sight of the stalwart Arrowac, and dodged behind the ceiba. Some of the other members of the party eyed him with uneasiness. But it was clear enough that the Indian was friendly.

He smiled a little grimly at the sight of the excavation under the branches of the ceiba.

"Come and speak to him, Slaney!" said Drake.

The one-eyed seaman slouched forward.

"Tell him we're all friends, and that we're sorry there's been trouble with his tribe," said Drake.

Slaney interpreted.

Taro Niom nodded, and pointed inquiringly to the excavation, where the treasure-hunters had sought in vain for the buried gold of the revolutionists.

Through the one-eyed interpreter, Drake explained, and Taro Niom smiled again. What would have happened if the treasure had been there, it was not necessary to inquire; but Drake could not help feeling that it was very doubtful whether Taro Niom's good nature would have stood the strain of seeing it taken away by the explorers.

Fortunately, the question did not arise, as there was no treasure left by the earlier searcher who had forestalled the Benbow party.

Slaney was kept busy for some time, interpreting, while the position was explained to the Indian chief, who listened gravely, and replied, through Slaney, that "Yak Dak" had saved his life, and that therefore Yak Dak and all his friends were welcome to his hospitality and aid. His suggestion that they should leave the mesa and travel with him to his village caused some uneasiness.

But Drake made up his mind at once.

"He means good faith," he said, "and we're in the hands of the Indians, anyhow. We can't get away unless they choose. Let's go with him to the village, and make the best of it."

"Me tink so, too, Mass' Jack!" said Tin Tacks.

"I guess we can't do anything else," said Peg Slaney, "and I reckon the Injun means fair an' square. I've always found that Injuns is pizen, but—"

"Perhaps you never tried doing them a good turn?" suggested Rodney.

Slaney grinned.

"Ay, ay, p'raps that's it, sir. Anyhow, I believe this swab means well, and we can trust him. We've got to, anyhow."

"I'm not going to the Indian village!" howled Tuckey Toodles. "I'm jolly well not going to be scalped to please you, Drake!"

"All right, old bean—stay here."

"Look here, you beast—"

"We're going to get plenty of grub at Taro Niom's show, Tuckey," said Dick Rodney, laughing.

Tuckey's expression altered.

"After all, he's got rather a nice face," he said.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The prospect of plenty of "grub" reconciled Tuckey to the Indians. He was quite brisk as he joined in the preparations for quitting the mesa.

The adventurers had little to carry,

not so much, in fact, as they had hoped when first they arrived at the mesa. In a short time all was ready, and they followed Taro Niom from the mesa and across the stream.

Taro Niom stalked on ahead by the beaten track through the forest, and Drake and Co. followed him. Near the Indian village they were soon surrounded by a crowd of redskins, and squaws, and children; but the looks and howls of the Indians were friendly enough. Of the Indians who had fallen in the attack on the mesa, there seemed to be no vindictive recollection. Life is cheap on the Orinoco.

That noon-tide the chums of the Benbow were resting comfortably in the bark jacals of the Arrowacs, in a cheerful mood.

Their narrow escape from death reconciled them, to some extent, to the loss of the mythical treasure they had come so far to seek. They were going to return to the Benbow with pockets as empty as when they left. But they were going to return—and a few hours earlier, that was the greatest boon they would have cared to ask for.

The remainder of the day they rested in Taro Niom's village, and Tuckey Toodles was able to feed to his heart's content. Indeed, the fat junior fed so well that he suggested passing a few more days with the Indians before setting out for the Benbow.

"You see, the Benbow can't leave the Orinoco till we go back," argued Tuckey. "They won't sail and leave us behind. And we're booked for a fearful row when we get back. So we may as well hang it out for a few days, and get out of lessons a bit longer, what?"

"Rats!"

"Well, I think I shall stay, anyhow," announced Tuckey.

"I saw one of the Indians eyeing Tuckey in a rather hungry way," Dick Rodney remarked, closing one eye at his chum. "I wonder whether there's any cannibals among them, after all?"

Toodles gave a jump.

"C-c-cannibals! I—I say, Drake, perhaps we'd better start for the Benbow this evening, instead of waiting till morning. We—we really ought to be

getting back to our lessons, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't see anything to cackle at," said Tuckey Toodles warmly. "Let's start to-night, you blessed slackers."

"They won't eat you before morning, old top," said Jack Drake, chuckling. "If they did, it wouldn't be any great loss."

Tuckey Toodles determined to remain awake that night, on the watch. He remained awake for about a minute and a half after the juniors turned in, in the jacals, and then his eyes closed in slumber, and did not open again till a boot clumped on his fat ribs in the morning.

"Yarocoooh!" roared Toodles, coming out of dreamland with a jump. "Keep off, you cannibal beast!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Toodles sat up and blinked.

"Oh, is it you, Drake, you rotter? I say, what is there for breakfast?"

Breakfast was ample, though what it was composed of the juniors did not wholly know. Dick Rodney remarked that perhaps it was best not to inquire too closely—and doubtless he was right.

After breakfast, Taro Niom presented himself, with a select party of his braves, who were apparently to act as escort.

They tramped down to the Rio Catalina that day, camping on the bank of the river for the night.

The next morning, a dozen canoes were visible on the sluggish waters of the Rio Catalina, when the juniors turned out.

The treasure-hunters embarked in their own canoe, and Taro Niom and his warriors in the others; a couple of Indians, entering the Benbow canoe, came to help Tin Tacks with the paddling.

The return journey was more rapid than the voyage up the sluggish tributary of the Orinoco.

In two days the juniors were looking again upon the mighty river of Venezuela.

There they took leave of the Arrowacs.

Taro Niom's canoe pushed alongside Drake's, and the Indian chief held out

a brown hand across the strip of water between, to Drake, and spoke in his own dialect. Peg Slaney translated his farewell, and Drake shook hands warmly with the copper-skinned chief. He was sorry to see the last of Taro Niom.

Through the interpreter, he promised to visit Taro Niom's village if ever he came up the Orinoco again—a promise he was not likely to be called upon to fulfil. Then the Arrowac canoes paddled back up the stream, and the adventurers were left to cross the Orinoco to Las Tablas.

They were glad to look upon a white man's town again.

At Las Tablas, Peg Slaney went ashore.

"I guess I ain't coming back to the Benbow, Mister Drake," he said. "I reckon I only took a passage on the ship to get out here, and look for the treasure. I've been done out of that. But I reckon I'll find some chances along the Orinoco, sooner or later, and you may see me rolling in my carriage in Park Lane yet."

"I hope so, I'm sure," said Drake, with a smile.

And he shook hands cordially enough with the one-eyed seaman before he went ashore, and vanished.

At Las Tablas there was no news of the Benbow, and, after a rest, the canoe glided down the Orinoco, to Barrancas, where the school-ship had been left at anchor—little more than a week ago, though it seemed months to the adventurers returning from the heart of the wilds. It was probable that a warm reception awaited them on the school-ship; but when they saw the tall masts and graceful spars of the old Benbow in the distance, there was a cheer from the whole party.

"The Benbow! Hurray!"

And a few minutes later they were clambering up the side of the school-ship.

THE END.

Another splendid, long complete story in next Tuesday's Greyfriars "Boys' Herald."

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

MORE AMUSING EXTRACTS FROM OUR POSTBAG

A Howl From Highcliffe!

To the Editor of "The Greyfriars Herald."

Dear Sir,—With regard to the cricket match which was played between your school and ours last season, we, the undersigned, are of the firm opinion that your victory was a howling fluke!

Bob Cherry's winning hit was screamingly funny. He intended to cut the ball in the direction of point; instead of which, he fluked it round to leg. As a matter of fact, the ball had him beaten all the way, and it was more by accident than design that he managed to hit it at all.

You Greyfriars fellows can account yourselves extremely lucky to have won the match. On the run of the play, you deserved a crushing defeat.

We hereby challenge you to another match next season, when we shall have great pleasure in turning the tables—Yours defiantly,

FRANK COURTENAY,
RUPERT DE COURCY,
PHILIP DERWENT.

(We shall be pleased to accept our friends' challenge, and we mean to demonstrate our ability to repeat the so-called fluke.—Ed.)

"Unnatural History!"

To the Editor of "The Greyfriars Herald."

Dear Sir,—At this season of the year, how refreshing it is to take a walk abroad! How invigorating! How exhilarating!

This afternoon, whilst my schoolfellows were indulging in the fierce and degrading pastime of football, I went for a delightful ramble. The verdant pastures were carpeted with dandelions; and Nature had adorned herself in her Sunday best.

As I passed Cliff House School, I beheld in the roadway a plump worm, which I rescued with some difficulty from an approaching steam-roller. And when I had proceeded a little further, a dear old duck waddled up to me.

It was all so delightful; and I feel sure, dear Editor, that you would have loved to be with me during my peregrinations.—Yours fraternally, ALONZO TODD.

(Many thanks, Lonzy, for your interesting and fiercely exciting narrative. We presume that the "plump worm" you encountered was Billy Bunter, and that the "dear old duck" was Miss Primrose, the headmistress of Cliff House. But what a quaint way of putting things!—Ed.)

"A Few Words" For Wingate!

To the Editor of "The Greyfriars Herald."

Sir,—I am continually being pestered for late passes by the members of the Remove Form.

One evening last week, no less than twenty-seven juniors barged into my study, at various times, with the stammering request: "Pip-pip-pip-please, Wingate, can I have a late pip-pip-pip-pass?"

Cherry informed me that he required a late pass in order to visit the circus at Courtfield. Penfold (your preposterous poet) said he wanted to get his hair cut. Skinner declared he was going to see "The Triumph of Virtue" at the cinema. In each case, I issued the passes, and discovered next morning that there had been no circus in Courtfield; that Penfold's flowing locks were still unshorn; and that there was no such film as "The Triumph of Virtue." What Skinner had gone to see was "The Road to Ruin."

Allow me to inform these bright youths (and others) that it is dangerous to resort to these leg-pulling stunts, so far as I am concerned. And if this sort of thing goes on, I shall bring my ashplant into action!—Yours in earnest,

GEORGE WINGATE.

(We apologise most humbly for ruffling your feathers, Mighty One. May we all have late passes this evening, in order to get out of your way?—Ed.)

Our splendid new serial of a footer team's great fight. Start this week!



This great new serial introduces an amazing character named "Stringer."

By WALTER EDWARDS

Every boy will soon be talking of "Stringer." Tell your chums about him.

READ THIS FIRST.

Jack Denyer, the young player-manager of Norchester United, is aroused from his dreams by a loud knock at the door. The next minute he is astonished to see a young man of extraordinary appearance enter his room. The new-comer is dressed in a suit of black, which must have been made for him when he was quite a small boy, and altogether he looks a queer sight. The man announces himself as the greatest goalkeeper in England, and explains that his name is Stringer. Jack cannot refrain from laughing, and imagines his visitor to be a harmless lunatic. But Stringer proves, by an extraordinary feat of strength that he is not quite so silly as Jack imagines, and he eventually succeeds in getting the club manager to give him a trial in goal. He takes the field with Norchester against Beckingham Town, and makes a memorial debut. Later, the United visit the local Empire, where Stringer accepts a challenge from the great Bilbisco to a wrestling match.

(Now go on with the story.)

Mortal Combat!

EVERY eye in the Norchester Empire looked from the adipose Bilbisco to the lean goalkeeper, and there was a momentary speculation as to whether Stringer was having a joke at the wrestler's expense.

Mr. Norman Carruthers—Bilbisco's Semitic-looking manager—also had some misgiving upon the matter. He was a born showman, however, and his thick lips parted in an oily, ingratiating smile.

He looked up at Stringer.

"You are a true sportsman, sir," he declared, rubbing his fleshy hands together in an ecstasy of admiration, "and I feel that the ladies and gentlemen present to-night admire your plucky spirit in accepting the challenge of the Great Bilbisco, who is known throughout the sporting world as The Terrible Tiger!"

Stringer's cadaverous features retained their mask-like expression as he raised an enormous red hand.

"Sir," he boomed in a voice which carried through the packed house, "I tame tigers!"

The theatre rocked with laughter at this unexpected announcement, and a flush mounted to the narrow forehead of the great Bilbisco.

"Let's get to work, Aarons," he growled, speaking to Mr. Norman Carruthers.

"Will you come on to the stage, sir?"

asked the manager; and before he could say another word, Stringer had taken a flying leap from the box, to land lightly over the footlights.

And this caused another roar of laughter to boom through the hall.

Stringer was the only really unconcerned person in the place, and he now proceeded to slip out of his inadequate coat and to roll up the sleeves of his shirt, thus displaying arms which had the circumference of broomsticks.

The quaint-looking goalkeeper then ran his long fingers through his mop of red hair, and cast the ghost of a smile at his grinning chums in the boxes.

A couple of uniformed attendants brought a thick wrestling-mat from the wings, and placed it in the centre of the stage, whilst Bilbisco's manager fussed round, at the same time casting a furtive, uncertain glance at Stringer. "Now, sir," said Mr. Carruthers briskly. "You understand the conditions of the challenge?"

Stringer nodded his fiery locks.

"Perfectly," he boomed. "I put your friend, Mr. Glaxo, on his back—both shoulders touching—within five minutes, and then you hand me the sum of twenty-five pounds."

The Great Bilbisco's fleshy features creased into an unpleasant smile, for he had not been christened Glaxo.

He made no comment, however, but nodded to his manager to proceed.

"Now, sir, are you ready?" asked Carruthers, producing a watch the size of a soup plate.

The contestants advanced to the mat as by mutual consent, and the audience, unable to restrain itself, burst into a shriek of uproarious laughter.

The Great Bilbisco, stocky and flesh-bound, made a striking contrast to the emaciated Stringer, and as the two crouched for a hold, the ludicrous side of the spectacle struck the onlookers in its full force and the uproar increased.

The Great Bilbisco's face flushed with anger, but Stringer showed not the slightest trace of emotion.

Instead, he suddenly grappled with the fleshy wrestler, threw him with seeming ease, and then put him flat on his broad back with a dexterous movement which came as a thunderbolt to everybody in the hall—including the Great Bilbisco.

Stringer's thin arms entwined the big body, and try as he would, the wrestler could not get a satisfactory grip on the frail, wriggling limbs of his adversary.

Great beads of perspiration stood out upon Bilbisco's unhealthy face, and his lips parted in a snarl of black rage.

"Go easy, you madman!" he gasped hoarsely; "do you want to spoil the whole show?"

Stringer gave a chilly smile and renewed his herculean efforts.

He had certainly managed to get his man to the mat, but it was not such an easy matter to get the two shoulders down. Stringer persevered, however, and roars of laughter and encouragement came from all parts of the house.

The Great Bilbisco was no amateur, despite the fact that he was not in the pink of condition, and time and again it seemed that he had managed to get a strangle-hold, upon the Norchester goalkeeper.

Stringer was as agile as a monkey, and the manner in which he handled his man, proved beyond all doubt that he was no mean exponent of the art of wrestling.

Breathing hard, groaning and wheezing in an effort to gain supremacy, the two figures waged war, the Great Bilbisco with bared teeth and blazing eyes, Stringer with a cold, wooden expression upon his gaunt features.

And all the time Carruthers kept his small, black eyes fixed upon the dial of his watch.

One minute, two minutes, fled, and an anxious look crept into Bilbisco's face, for he realised that he had met his match in this freak of a man who possessed the strength of Hercules.

He glared into Stringer's impassive features.

"Ease off, chum, ease off!" he almost begged huskily. "Give in, and you're on a fiver!"

Again the wintery smile flitted across the gaunt features of the lanky goalkeeper, but he made no reply other than to increase his efforts, a fact which clearly enraged the wrestler.

His face mottled with hot blood, and his little eyes glistened with a cunning, threatening light.

"I've warned yer, mind!" he breathed, struggling against Stringer's attack. "Goin' ter give in—or ain't yer?"

Stringer nodded his red head, but said nothing. It is not unlikely that he might have permitted himself to be beaten had not the Great Bilbisco threatened him, but now he meant to do his utmost to win.

So, calling up a store of reserve strength, he forced the great shoulders to the mat, and a yell went up from the front of the house.

"They're both touching! Stringer wins!"

But Carruthers, who was watching every move in the bout, held up his hand for silence, and shook his head.

The Great Bilbisco was looking exceedingly worried by this time, and gouty of sweat decorated his narrow forehead. Up till that moment, he had not employed any of the doubtful tactics which formed part of his stock-in-trade, but now he decided that he must either bring them into operation or suffer defeat.

And to suffer defeat was out of the question.

So, with a low cunning born of much study, he contrived to get a crushing grip upon Stringer's thin wrist, and keeping upon the "blind" side of the audience, to twist it in a cruel manner which brought a stifled cry from Stringer's lips.

The goalkeeper knew in a flash why Bilbisco had threatened him, and his cadaverous features turned to stone. The grim, merciless expression brought a gasp of fear from the wrestler.

"You hooligan!" boomed Stringer, in a terrible voice; and the next second, in a manner known only to himself—so quickly did he move—he was standing at his full height, and in his thin, sinuous arms he held the struggling form of the Great Bilbisco.

The wrestler struggled and yelled with comical impotence, but he could not free himself from Stringer's grip of steel. It seemed incredible that the goalkeeper could have performed such a feat of strength, yet the whole crowded house witnessed it.

The Great Bilbisco, casting dignity to the winds, was yelling with all the power of his lungs, threats and abuse mingling with almost tearful pleadings.

Stringer rocked his burden to and fro, crooning the while.

"There, there, did 'ums want to get down, then?" he asked, as though comforting a fractious baby. "I'll give you something to quieten you in a moment! There, there!"

The soothing words struck the audience as being more of a threat than a promise, and shouts of uncontrollable laughter filled the big theatre. Stringer took not the slightest notice of the uproar, however, but continued to nurse his burden, who was yelling and kicking in an effort to break free from the goalkeeper's "loving" embrace.

At last Stringer strode down the stage to the footlights with slow, measured tread.

He came to a halt above the big drum, and looked down at the drummer.

"Is the parchment strong?" asked the goalkeeper, and the performer nodded.

"Yes, it's pretty tough, sir," answered the man, with a wide grin. Stringer shook his red head reprovingly.

"You mustn't tell stories, drummer," he said, in his stern, solemn tones.

"But I'm not telling lies, sir," protested the drummer somewhat heatedly.

"The parchment's strong, I tell you!" Again Stringer shook his head; and then he looked up into the smiling face of Jack Denyer and gave an almost imperceptible wink.

"Do you think it's strong, Colonel?" he inquired anxiously.

Jack Denyer laughed, and fell in with Stringer's jape.

"I couldn't say, old man," he returned slowly. "I think you had better test it!"

"I'll take your advice, Colonel!" boomed Stringer, and the next second he held the Great Bilbisco at arm's length over the face of the big drum—and then dropped him!

Drummed in!

THE Great Bilbisco, the Terrible Tiger, dropped through the air like a stone, crashed through the taunt parchment of the big drum, and stuck—hopelessly, helplessly, with his arms dangling over the rim.

His face was as black as thunder, and his small eyes gleamed venomously as he glared up at the expressionless face of Stringer.

"You—you—you—" he stammered, incoherently. "I'll—I'll—I'll—"

"Exactly, sir," returned Stringer blandly. "I quite follow your remarks. Indeed, you are most lucid!"

The Great Bilbisco looked ripe for murder as he remained wedged securely in the drum.

"Let me get out of here!" he roared, the colour of his face changing to an artistic shade of purple. "Help me out of this thing and I'll—I'll smash you—knock a gaping hole through your skinny carcass! Only help me out!"

Stringer smiled down at the infuriated wrestler.

"I'm sure it's very kind of you, sir," he said, making his voice heard above the prevailing din. "But under the circumstances, I am afraid that I do not see my way clear to extricating you."

This remark had the immediate effect of incensing the big wrestler to a point of frenzy, and it looked as though he would lose every vestige of sanity. He mouthed unpleasantly for a moment or so, but no sound passed his lips.

"You—you shadow!" he shrieked hysterically. "Why, if you closed one eye, you'd look like a darned needle!"

The imperturbable Stringer at once struck an attitude of injured dignity.

"Sir," he boomed, "that is a most pointed remark! Furthermore, I like it not! Also—"

Stringer's fog-horn-like voice died away as he felt a tug at his shirt-sleeve. He looked down and found himself gazing into the face of the manager of the hall, a dapper little man clad in immaculate evening clothes.

"Er—excuse me, sir," began the manager hesitantly. "You must really drop this mad freak."

"But I have dropped it," protested Stringer. "I dropped it in the drum!"

A bellow of rage came from the Great Bilbisco, and a rumbling roar of laughter filled the theatre.

The manager of the Empire did his best to retain his official demeanour.

"Look here, sir," he went on, looking up at Stringer with a stern expression upon his face. "This has gone far enough, and I must request you to leave the stage and allow the performance to continue."

"Sir," boomed Stringer, placing a heavy hand upon the manager's shoulder, "your slightest wish is a command to me! I go!"

He picked up his coat and hat and strode towards the wings, and as he passed the purple-faced Bilbisco he blew him a farewell kiss.

"Look here, you lunatic!" roared the Terrible Tiger. "What about me? How am I going to get out of this?"

Stringer paused for a moment.

"Don't worry, Bill! I'll send a party of men along with a charge of dynamite. They'll blow you out!"

And Stringer, to a valedictory roar of laughter, passed into the wings.

A grinning stage-hand piloted the goalkeeper through the maze of wings and "props," and eventually he found himself standing in the lofty entrance hall, where he was pounced upon by his grinning chums.

"You're a nice quiet little lad to bring out, Stringer!" declared Mallison.

"It's a wonder we weren't all chucked out on our necks!"

"Yes, you ought not to have treated that poor little Bilbisco man like that," grinned Jack Denyer.

"Stay thy tongues!" boomed Stringer, perching his little bowler hat upon his red head. "The question is, Where shall we go?"

"How about having some grub at The Railway Hotel?" asked Monty Selhurst.

A chorus of approval went up at once, and the footballers trooped down the broad marble steps and turned in the direction of the hotel.

It was not a long walk, and they were soon handing their hats and sticks to the cloak-room attendant.

"Now, my lads!" boomed Stringer. "Follow your Uncle Rupert!"

The dining-hall of the Station Hotel was a palatial affair, decked out with gilt and marble pillars. A string orchestra, concealed by an artistic arrangement of tropical ferns and plants, dispensed soothing music upon the exotic atmosphere of the place.

Most of the diners were in evening dress, the men well-groomed, and the women perfectly gowned. A hum of intimate conversation filled the lofty hall, and the musical tinkle of feminine laughter and the deep voices of men, blended with the staccato popping of corks.

Norchester was proud of the Railway Hotel, and it had reason to be, for it boasted the restaurant de luxe of the town.

Stringer led the way from the cloak-room to the dining-hall, the players following him obediently.

The big goalkeeper paused on the threshold of the room and gazed round at the display of snow-white napery and glistening silver. The others crowded round him, and one or two of them gave little gasps of surprise and dismay.

"Lummy!" breathed little Bailey. "I ain't going in there! Why, they're all dooks and dookesses, for a cert!"

"And I ain't going in, either!" breathed Bickley, in awestruck tones. The garnish magnificence of the place overwhelmed him.

Jack Denyer laughed softly.

"Don't talk so much bubble-and-squeak, you idiots!" he growled. "You've as much right to dine here as anyone else!"

Stringer looking cool, collected and as grotesque as usual, was watching the portly head-waiter out of the corner of his eye, and a slight flush mounted to his forehead when he saw that the fellow meant to ignore the presence of the footballers.

The head-waiter was walking leisurely in their direction, but he took not the slightest notice of them.

Indeed, he was about to pass by when a big red hand flashed through the air and grabbed his shoulder in a grasp which made him wince and give an involuntary cry of pain.

He gave vent to an angry cry and swung round upon his heel, to find himself looking straight at the third button of Stringer's waistcoat. He then raised his eyes and glared into the goalkeeper's impassive features.

"Waiter!" boomed Stringer impressively, and in a voice which made the diners look up in alarm. "I want a table for my ten friends!"

"I'm sorry, but—" began the head-waiter.

"I want a table for my ten friends," repeated Stringer, increasing the pressure upon the fellow's shoulder.

"Yes, sir, certainly, sir!" he said quickly. "This way, sir!"

Stringer's wintery, enigmatic smile was in evidence as he followed the portly figure through the maze of tables,

and the fact that every eye in the room was turned upon him, did not upset his habitual equanimity.

"There you are, sir," said the head-waiter, with a wealth of respect and a shade of fear in his throaty voice.

"Will this do?"

"Excellent, excellent!" boomed Stringer. "Gentlemen, be seated!"

Most of the players were highly amused at the whole affair, and they plumped down in their respective chairs and laughed heartily. Bailey and Bickley said not a word, however; neither did they smile.

"Don't look so jolly mournful, you chaps!" chided Jack Denyer. "One would think the grub was going to eat you, instead of things being the other way about!"

A tastefully served meal was soon forthcoming, and under its influence the players found their tongues. Yarns and experiences were swapped, and the room resounded with their hearty laughter.

And Stringer—the amazing Stringer—exhibited another side to his nature by proving that he was an excellent and accomplished host. He kept the ball rolling, as it were, and his guests laughed loud and long whenever he gave them a vivid description of his early life, which, by the way, had been spent in a circus.

It was after he had recounted a particularly humorous incident, and the laughter had died down to a quiet chuckle, that a high-pitched, drawling voice suddenly rang through the crowded hall.

A momentary hush had settled upon the place, and the spoken words came plainly to every ear.

"Yes, old man, they're just common professional footballers—fellers who don't know any better!"

"Pigs in clover, eh?" returned another voice, in lisping accents.

"Muddled oafs, eh, old bean? I can't understand why the management allowed 'em to come into the place!"

"Nor I, Archie, old bean! I—I always thought that this restaurant was a place for gentlemen, and—"

The high-pitched drawling voice trailed off, and the speaker, a weedy young man of about twenty-two, who was smoking a cigar, dropped the liqueur glass which he was holding in his fingers.

His spare frame stiffened—appeared to turn to stone—and the pupils of his small, shifty eyes dilated as though he had seen a gorgon's head.

In truth, he found himself fascinated by the fixed stare of Stringer the Norchester goalkeeper.

Stringer held the fellow's gaze for ten seconds, and then, slowly and deliberately, he rose to his full height and walked across the intervening space.

He came to a halt in front of the two young men in evening dress—the cads who had dared to insult them in a public place.

"Get up, you!" commanded the lanky goalkeeper in a hard, terrible voice that was pregnant with scorn and disgust. "Get up! You—and you!"

The two strangers had gone very pale, and into their eyes there crept a look of fear. They seemed to be incapable of movement, paralysed by the hypnotic, fixed gaze of the emaciated stranger who towered above them.

Stringer waited for them to obey his command, and when they did not move, he gripped each of them by the collar of their respective coats, and lifted them bodily from their chairs.

"Stand there!"

He pushed them unceremoniously against the wall, where they stood mutely, afraid to move or speak.

"Now, listen to me!" boomed

Stringer, his voice ringing in every corner of the big dining-hall. "You two weedy, mean-spirited little snobs have dared to insult my friends, who, as you remarked, play for a professional football club."

"Well, what's it got to do with you, anyway, old war-horse?" demanded Archie, in blustering tones. He struck his narrow chest with his clenched fist and tried to look valiant. "What's it got to do with you, I say?"

Stringer swallowed hard and smiled acidly.

"Just this," he returned grimly. "I happen to be a new-comer to the club, which makes me a professional footballer the same as my friends!"

Archie looked at his friend with a dubious expression upon his rabbit-like features.

"Of course, I'm painfully sorry if I offended you, old bean," he said, trying to bluff it out. "A feller like you—a johnny full of brains, y' know"—he gave a nervous giggle—"should be a jolly old Cabinet Minister, or somethin' like that—what?"

"Well, if you must jolly well know, I said 'common footballers' because, well, they aren't gentlemen, are they?"

The suspicion of a flush tinged Stringer's pale cheeks, and his eyes glinted dangerously.

"And are you in agreement?" he demanded of the other young man.

"Well, I suppose so, old bean! After all, a professional footballer can't be a gentleman, can he? It isn't done, is it?"

Stringer looked grim and terrible as he took a step towards the two cringing little cads standing against the wall. They shrank back at his approach, but they could not evade the big, muscular hands which gripped them by their respective necks.

"Now," boomed Stringer, holding the two heads very close together, "you are going to offer a public apology to my friends—the professional footballers!"

The two captives wriggled and hacked at the goalkeeper's shins and the pressure upon their necks increased.

"I'll jolly well see you hanged first!" bleated one voice.



Bilbisco dropped through the air like a stone, crashed through the parchment of the big drum, and stuck helplessly, with his arms dangling over the rim.

Archie dug his friend in the ribs with a playful jolt of his elbow.

"Jove, Archie!" simpered this insipid individual. "That's a good one—what? You're a born wag, dear boy!"

Stringer gazed down at the two young men as though they were strange specimens of the insect world.

"My dear imbeciles," he boomed, "if you don't cease your chatter I shall dip your heads in that ice-box and cool 'em for you!"

"Now, sir," he turned upon the first speaker, who was shaking in his dress-shoes. "Now sir, by what right did you refer to my friends as 'common professional footballers'?" Footballers—yes! But why common?"

The fellow addressed looked round nervously, and shrugged his narrow shoulders.

"Look here, I don't see why the dickens I should—"

"Answer me!" commanded Stringer, in ugly tones, his jaw jutting forward pugnaciously.

"So will I!" cried the other.

"Apologise to dirty professionals, what? Don't do it, Archie!"

"No, I won't; it isn't done!" Stringer nodded his red head.

"Very well," he said. "If you aren't going to apologise off your own bat, as gentlemen should, I shall have to—er—persuade you!"

He brought the two heads into close proximity with cool deliberation, and a wide grin appeared upon the faces of the Norchester players.

"Now, my rabbits!" growled Stringer. "Are you going to offer my friends an apology?"

And the two "rabbits" bleated:

"No, we jolly well ain't!"

Crack!

Their heads came together with a force which rang through the room, and brought a yell of pain from the "rabbits!"

Another gripping instalment of this serial next week.

OUR INTERVIEW

This Week: NAPOLEON DUPONT

"NAPOLEON—" said the Editor. "Killed at the Battle of Bunker's Hill, in 1066," I replied, with an air of profound knowledge.

"No, he jolly well wasn't!" snapped the Editor. "He's in Study No. 10, with Bolsover major." Trot along and interview him, my lad."

"I left the Editorial sanctum of the 'Greyfriars Herald,' and made my way to No. 10 in the Remove passage, the apartment where Napoleon Dupont, the French junior, and Percy Bolsover—the Remove's Beckett—hung out.

Apparently luck had inflicted itself upon me, for the sole occupant of the study was my objective.

He greeted me with a beaming smile. My first question was to ask the precise whereabouts of Bolsover major.

"E've gone off viz 'imself," smiled Nappy.

"I've been sent here for an interview, by the Editor of the 'Greyfriars Herald,'" I began, knowing I was safe from Dupont's aggressive study-mate.

Napoleon, prior to my entry, had been fencing; his antagonist was a most horrid looking dummy perched up on the table.

But he dropped the rapier into a corner and prepared to make me welcome.

"You feel a leetle 'ungry?'" suggested Napoleon.

"Well, I am a bit peckish!" I admitted.

He then offered me a chair, with a profusion and politeness, for which he was well known.

"What's the idea of sticking that tooth-pick into your Guy Fawkes?" I asked curiously.

"Vell," said Napoleon, setting a bowl of rich, brown soup up in front of me, "I practise; so when ze enemy attacks me I must 'im zrough, you see."

I shuddered.

"Do you like ze soup?" he asked, regarding me with anxiety, and tossing over some appetising-looking meat in the frying-pan.

"Grand!" I announced, without looking up.

Setting the pan down again the French junior began telling me all about his family and his past life, and yards of unedifying gas that simply went in one ear and straight out of the other. When I had negotiated the second course, a thought struck me.

"Have you just given me what you were going to have for your tea?" I inquired.

"Non, non, mon ami," replied Nappy promptly. "I cook it for zat Bolsovaire, only he say he no eat such nasty stuff. So I cook eet a leetle more, and manger eet viz myself."

"Why, it's fit for a giddy king!" I exclaimed.

"I know zat vell enuff," said Napoleon ruefully; "but zat Bolsover, he say you breeng no dead animals in zis chamber, and he give me ze cleep on ze ear."

"Oh, he meant what you put in the soup," I explained. "Was it chicken or hare?"

"Neizer of zose two," beamed Napoleon cheerfully. "Ze zoup was of ze leetle snail, and ze meat was ze leetle fat legs of ze vrog!"

"What?" I exclaimed in horror.

Sundry pains—before this moment, quite unnoticed—had suddenly made themselves apparent beneath my waist-coat.

Straight to the nearest bath-room I dashed, and I must draw a veil over what happened there. I mentally promised to give Dupont and the Editor a chunk of my mind afterwards, and so I did, with great gusto!

THE END.



Sports of all Sorts

BY VERNON-SMITH

A "SELFISH" SPORT.

IN last week's "Greyfriars Herald" I described how that fascinating sport of paper-chasing should be conducted, and, perhaps, it was chatting about cross-country running that afterwards caused my thoughts to revert to sports on the cinder track. Every schoolboy throughout the country takes some interest in track running, for there is not a school that has not at least one big sports day in the year.

But although running races are such a splendid test of fitness, there are many masters at schools who do not give them such whole-hearted support as they do games such as cricket, football, and hockey. The reason is that they consider track running a "selfish" sport—that is, a sport in which a fellow goes all out to make a win for himself instead of for a team.

Of course, there are sports meetings at which the boys run for the honour of their school against the athletes of rival establishments; nevertheless, we must admit there is something to be said for those who hold that running is a selfish sport. However, it is safe to prophesy that team racing—or relay racing, as it is properly called—will play a more and more important part at athletic meetings of all kinds.

RELAY RACING.

For a long time this form of sport has been extremely popular in the native land of Fisher T. Fish, and the visit of our Varsity athletes to the United States last summer, when a combined team of Oxford and Cambridge runners created a world's record for the half-mile relay race, made sportsmen, young and old, over here sit up and take notice.

For a half-mile relay race each member of the team must run half a mile, the first man away passing a baton into the hand of the second. On the completion of his lap, the second man hands the baton to the third, who, in turn, passes it on to the fourth and last, who should be the best runner of the team. The baton should be handed over without the runner, who is completing his distance, slackening in his stride. Any number of teams can compete in an event, and when relay racing becomes thoroughly established in our English sports meetings we shall not hear so much about running being a purely selfish sport.

SHOULD GIRLS PLAY FOOTER?

Notwithstanding the fact that each week the "Herald" carries an article by an expert at the game, football will creep into my "corner" somehow. The reason in this case is that two letters have come to hand—by the same post strangely enough—from girl readers. Mamie May of Maida Vale wrote to upbraid the Editor for having so much about football in our little journal. She says, as there are so many girl readers, we might have an article on "How to make jumpers" one week. Some day in this column I will reveal how jumpers are made, but perhaps the kind who can clear five feet six inches are not the ones Mamie means.

Sophie Smith of Preston, on the other hand, is frightfully keen on our football articles and serial, and she asks me the pertinent question. "Do you think girls ought to play football as so many are now doing?" To be perfectly frank, Sophie, I do not think the average girl should take up this game. Why? Because football, save when it is played by some of the most expert teams, is bound to develop at times into a rough-and-tumble game, and several of the most competent doctors in the land have distinctly expressed their opinion that such a sport as this is more likely to do harm than good to a girl. It is purely a question of physique. Although she may be perfectly healthy the average girl has not the "toughness" of a boy.

Before I leave the subject of footer let me pass a hint to you fellows who are members of football teams. Do not lace your footer boots too tightly. A well-known professional player developed strained tendons above his heels, and recently the trouble has been traced to the tight lacing of his boots. So much damage had been done, however, before the discovery of the cause, that it is feared that this footballer will never be able to take part in a match again.

SPORTY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

What are the longest distances ever walked or ran in the hour? The world's hour walking record was established by G. E. Lerner, at Stamford Bridge, in 1905, when he covered the remarkable distance of 8 miles 438 yards. The world's hour running record was made by a Frenchman called Bouin, who, in 1913, ran 11 miles 1,442 yards.

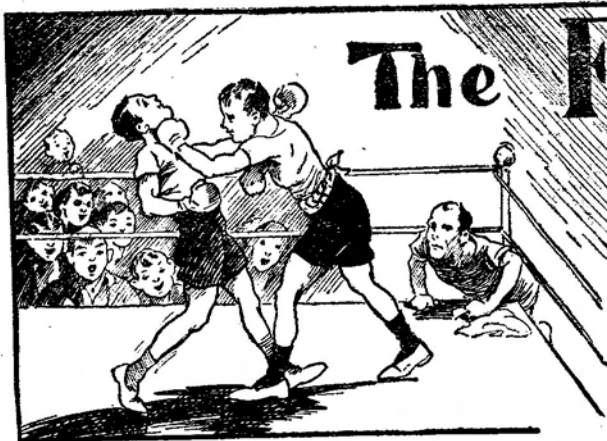
Jack Johnson, the ex-Heavy Weight Champion of the World, could take the hardest blows on the head without apparently feeling them. What was the secret of this extraordinary power? The fact is, that Johnson's skull is so thick. It takes five times longer for X-rays to penetrate it than in the case of an ordinary man.

P.S.—Percy Bolsover, the bully of the Remove, has never had his skull X-rayed, but it must be pretty solid, for it takes a mighty long time for anything Quelchy tells him to soak into his napper!

Another Sports Chat Next Tuesday.



START NOW! Our Great New Serial of School & Sport



The FIGHTING BREED

By ANDREW GRAY

Boys! You must not miss a line of this magnificent story. It is one of the finest school and boxing stories ever written, and contains a startling mystery that will grip your attention

READ THIS FIRST.

Jack Blundell and Guy Caldecott, both of St. Bartlemys, are rivals for school honours. Jack Blundell is the favourite of the majority of the boys. In the fight for the Public Schools' Championship Jack knocks out Caldecott. The blow is a terrific one, and it is soon discovered that Caldecott has been very badly punished. There is a sensation when the school doctor, who dislikes boxing, announces that Caldecott is unconscious. But there is a bigger surprise to come. That moment the Head comes hurrying back. "One minute, boys," he says to those who have started to move away. "There has been black work to-night, not only here, but in connection with the scholarship examinations!" The boys stare and gasp as he explains that all the papers have been tampered with while he was away from the study. Suspicion falls on Jack because of a dirty trick played on him by his stepbrother, Ken, who has got into the hands of bad companions. Jack forces Ken to tell him the whole story. Jack confides in Kip, the gym-instructor, and the two leave St. Bartlemys for Jack's home in London. Here they overhear Jack being denounced by his stepmother. They visit a cabman's shelter near by, where they partake of a hearty meal.

(Now go on with the story.)

Kicked Out!

THOUGH Jack ate ravenously, his mind was running on that chance word that Kip had blurted out about the Public Schools' Championships. He remembered now how cut-up his pater would be, just on that very account.

Old Blundell senior was such a born sportsman and upholder of boxing, that when he saw what a fine figure of a lad his boy was going to make, he had simply set his heart on Jack entering for every amateur championship that ever was, and sweeping the board.

The Public Schools, the Amateur Championship and the Army—for Jack was to have gone to Sandhurst from St. Bartlemys—were all mapped out for him to win for an absolute cert.

To that end, Jack might have any tuition he wanted. He could have, and did have, Kip down home during his holidays, so as to keep his hands from growing rusty. And once or twice his dad had had him up to the Imperial even for a Saturday afternoon, to try him out with the club-pro's there.

It was a fetish with the old boy that his son was going to make the finest amateur boxer the country had ever known. He had all the pluck and speed and brains for it, sure enough. And now—what had become of this dream?

Jack could picture the old fellow's cruel disappointment on this one aspect alone. But, when coupled to it, he believed that his boy was also a thief and a liar, his good old heart must verily have turned to gall.

No wonder he had told that woman, who hated Jack because he was her own son's rival, and the favoured heir, that he had finished with him for ever. That would suit his stepmother's book. Jack could picture her triumph and delight.

And it was to save her son that Jack had sacrificed himself!

"More coffee, laddie! Feeling better now, I'll warrant. I am, I know that. Here's to you, Billy, old buck! You've saved our lives." And Kip drank the health of their host, and squared his shoulders like a man ready to fight the world anew.

"So now, what's to do?" he demanded of Jack. "Ought to go back to the club and try and see your guv., I think. What say?"

Jack did not know. Memory of those overheard words, so cruel-clipped and decisive, chilled him. He did not know what to do?

And then the determination that he would go back and insist on seeing his pater, came to him with a rush. The injustice and the shame of such treatment, stung him.

"Yes, we'll go back. He must see me. He can't refuse really," he declared, and almost forgetting the thanks owed to kind old Billy for the free meal he had given them, he hurried out.

Kip came hastening after, but by that time Jack had reached the club and was already up the steps.

Through the glass-doors he pressed. It was one of the Imperial's "big night's," and the handsome entrance-hall was crowded with members arriving, mostly in evening dress.

These stared at sight of a mere school-boy—for such his cap betrayed Jack to be—pushing eagerly through, to get to the inner glazed-doors and the ante-room beyond.

The hall, wherein was the boxing-arena, was beyond that again. But standing on the steps one could obtain a glimpse down into it, and a sight of the ring itself.

The programme had already begun. Jack saw, and there in the ring, burly and handsome-looking under the glare of the arc lights, was his pater; officiating as referee in a hard-fought bout.

"Now then, young gentleman," demanded a voice. "What can I do for you? Are you a member? Only members and members' friends with tickets can pass through here."

One of the group of burly door-keepers was accosting Jack, who already had his nose pressed against the glass-panels.

"Why, yes. I mean, I'm not a member exactly," stammered the youngster, recalled to himself. "But my pater is. Mr. John Blundell, he's down through there," and he pointed through the glass-doors to the boxing-hall beyond. The door-keeper looked at him respectfully, yet still suspiciously.

If this was Mr. Blundell's son really, why they all knew Mr. Blundell, of course, and it was all right. But so many came trying that game here, particularly on "big fight" nights. That was why there were four burly, boxing-men in porters uniform guarding the door, to keep out "dead-heads," and undesirables.

So Jack must write a note and send in his name. In any case Mr. Blundell was refereeing now.

Jack returned to the hall-porters desk then and scrawled a shakily written note.

"DEAR DAD," he wrote. "I have just walked up from St. Bartlemys. I was near when you and mother arrived at the club, so know that you know what has happened. But I never did it, and you must let me in to tell you that. Please do!—Your affec. son, "JACK."

Fumbling the note into an envelope, he watched one of the attendants depart with it. Kip and he meantime retired to a corner out of the streaming throng, to wait. Several recognised the gallant sergeant.

"Hallo, Cooley! Like old times to see you again. How goes it? When are you coming back to give us a turn here?"

But though Cooley grinned his regards to these swells, his heart was elsewhere, like Jack's. So with a curious glance at the tall, pale, boyish figure beside him, the swells hurried on to their seats through the big swing-doors.

The big fight of the programme, between Shiner West and the new Yankee light-weight, Bud Brady, was billed to begin at ten, and all the house seemed full already. Old John Blundell would be sure to referee for that. In the interval, however, he would have a chance to read Jack's note and see him, they hoped.

However, the leaden minutes seemed as if they never would pass away. Jack's heart and hopes sank deeper and deeper. Then a page-boy appeared, calling his name.

He took the proffered envelope from the salver and saw to his horror that it was his own note, merely with a dozen words scrawled on the corner.

"Dr. Dowler has written me—also Ken. I have your self-confession, and there seems no more to say. I have no

further use for one who was so utterly disgraced my name. I refuse to see you again."

"That was all. Jack looked stunned. "No luck?" queried Kip, full of concern.

"None. Turned down, simply. He won't see me.

"But he must—he can't refuse!" declared Jack, determination flashing out again. It was not his confession at all that the Head had sent him. It was monstrous to deny him like this. He took a fresh sheet of paper and scrawled a further note, this time in firm, bold sentences.

"Take that to Mr. Blundell, will you?" he asked the page.

Another weary half-hour of waiting. At last Jack's heart leapt and tears forced themselves into his eyes. His pater had relented. Here he was coming across the ante-room beyond to speak to him.

"That's good. Everything will be all right now," he told Kip. "I'm bound to make him understand." And he got ready, his eyes shining and his cheeks flushed.

But the glass-doors were not opened. On the contrary, Mr. Blundell merely came so far that he could catch a glimpse of the disconsolate pair of outcasts beyond. He had an attendant with him. The merest glance in their direction and he proceeded to point the two out. A last emphatic gesture and a look on his face like flint, and he had turned on his heel and was gone.

"Gone!" Jack echoed the unspoken word in anguish. He could not believe his eyes. Yet here was the attendant coming out to speak to him.

"Mr. Blundell's compliments," the man said, with respectful emphasis, "and he has nothing further to say to you beyond what he wrote in his note. He will be obliged if you will now leave the club."

"What?"
Jack's face was white as a ghost. Kicked out! Yes, that was what it came to.

"But I am his son—his own son!" he was just about to blurt out in appeal, when pride choked him.

What! Plead with a club hall-porter to go and intercede for him? He would see himself dead first. At the same time he meant to confront his pater and make him listen to at least to a plain denial of all these cruel lies against him. It was inhuman to deny him even such petty justice as that.

Let the door-attendants be as big as houses, he meant to force his way past that guarded portal and make his pater speak to him. He would have time to catch him before he entered the arena again.

Now, in all this the attendant who had brought the message had not been idle. Scenes had happened before, unfortunately, even in a select club like the Imperial Sports. Disgruntled pugilists with a grievance as to stake money, would occasionally come in and start to kick up a row.

That was what the four burly door-keepers were for. They were ex-bruises all of them. At a sign from their chief they hitched up the goldbraided cuffs and got ready.

The only thing was that they were not quite quick enough—not for Jack, at any rate.

For shouldering the attendant suddenly aside into the arms of Kip, he made a simultaneous bound and was up the steps and at grips with the four brass-buttoned bruises, before they had time to blink.

"Now then, you beggars, come out of it. Let me through, do you hear?"

he grated, yanking one by the scruff of the neck, and jerking him down the steps like lightning. Another, seeing his pal go thus, aimed a hasty swipe, only to lose his balance and go toppling after, assisted by a half-arm jolt from Jack in his beer-barrel ribs.

Before Kip had time to move even, Jack had the remaining pair of them round the necks—a head in each arm, and was pulley-hauling them from their perch by main force.

Nor did he ever once call on Kip to back him. That was like young Jack. He was ever a fighter born; asking neither quarter nor aid. Cracking the skulls of the last two sentinels together, he tore himself free of their frantic embraces and made through the doors with a rush.

Kip was after him.
"Go it, laddie. I'm with you," he called. His young gov'nor was doing himself no good by all this, he knew; but his place was beside him through thick and thin. So, with a swing, he deposited the bewildered attendant head-foremost into a big lounge-sofa, and, with a spring and a duck, he was past the door-keepers, too, and away in pursuit.

Members—for there were several such in the ante-room puffing cigars between fights—scattered before their rush. They had to be doubly nimble, too, when the four stout door-keepers, shooed on by their chief, came blundering after.

But Jack was through and in the boxing-hall itself by this time. No need to scan that crowded arena for long for sight of his pater.

The next bout was just waiting to commence. There old John Blundell stood beside the ropes ready to officiate as referee. He made a commanding figure in evening dress.

With frozen gaze and granite face, he watched this miniature cyclone come hurtling at him.

It was the most humiliating moment of his life, he felt. That he—one of the best respected men in that vast assembly—should be degraded like this, by his own son forcing his way in and bawling like a hooligan!

His son—whose self-confession that he was a thief lay in his pocket now, together with the Head's letter expelling him, and young Ken's tear-blotted note nobly appealing to the folk at home not to be "too hard" on his guilty step-brother.

And, all too late, young Jack himself realised the enormity of his behaviour as well. Half-way down the gangway, between the tiers of seats, he halted dead. The eyes of father and son met, the one blazing indignation and hate almost, the other filled with wretchedness.

There was no hope of justice or pity now, as Jack could see.

"Yes; I suppose I've done it. I've behaved like a cad," he bethought himself, when all the ill was done.

And, then the four burly porters were upon him. It was like being overwhelmed by a runaway goods-train. They grabbed him and whirled him up, big as he was, and run him up between the seats again. More of them had collared Kip Cooley, too.

Back through those hateful glass doors they frog-marched the luckless pair, and out and down into the street.

And there they flung them into the gutter with a last breathless heave, where the beams of a brace of policemen's bull-eyes were promptly switched on them, and gruff voices warned them to:

"Pick yourselves up now, you; and look it out of 'ere sharp. D'ye 'ear?"

Moved On!

"NOW, then; d'you 'ear? Move yourselves, quick! 'Op it!"

The peremptory command, backed by the baffling glare of bull's-eye lanterns thrust in their faces, left Jack and Kip no choice but to obey.

Kip, in any case, was far too old a soldier to start butting against the police. As for Jack, all he wanted was to get right away.

He was too humiliated at what he had done. However wrong his pater might be, it was an ill-bred thing to force his way into the old man's club like that and bring disgrace on them both.

So, urged on by a lusty shove, and with big boots treading on his heels, Jack "opped it," as he was bid. And though it was rather more than a fighter's blood could bear, Kip forced himself to follow.

The sight of those four lumping chuckers-out, grinning behind the glass-doors of the club again, made the old boxer see red. But he had the youngster to look after.

Jack was hurrying on ahead blindly. Twice Kip saw him nearly run over. He caught his arm, but Jack threw him off.

"Don't touch me! Don't!" he exclaimed, turning fiercely.

"But where are we going?"
"How do I know, and what do I care? I want to get away, that's all."

"But that's all bosh!" urged Kip. "You can't. You're wore out already, laddie. Come on; let's get back to Billy Leathers for a dry and wipe down."

Both indeed were slathered with mud. But Jack would not listen. The bitterness of justice, shame, and defeat were gripping him. Betrayed by his step-brother, condemned unheard by his own dad, it mattered little now what became of him.

At last, finding himself traversing a long stretch of railings, wherein was an open gate, he swung aside and found himself in Green Park.

Now amid these open spaces he found himself able to breathe again. Kip, as understanding as any woman with a wayward child, began to draw closer. An empty seat loomed out of the foggy darkness. This time Jack made no resistance. Worn out and deadbeat, they sat down.

And then the youngster, big and brawny as he was, cried a bit, and Kip let him.

"He ain't like me," philosophised the old warrior silently, watching him. "I've been hoofed about this bloomin' world too long to worry about one kick, more or less. A young toff like 'im, though, feels it more. And, any'ow, it's darned 'ard lines!"

He still had a dottle of baccy left in his pipe. The sudden flare of the match on the foggy darkness startled Jack back to a consciousness of his surroundings. He blinked and shivered. From far across the deserted park sounded the whine and jarr of motor traffic.

"Feel better, laddy?" coaxed Kip. "That's it! Never say die. In six months you'll be laughing at this. You see!"

"Never!" declared Jack.
"Oh, yes, you will! Your gov'nor'll get over it, too. He's been rushed, he has—gammoned!"

Jack made no answer.
"Where are ye going now?" he asked wearily, at last. "Where can we go? I've not a sou."

"No more have I," chuckled Kip. "But that's neither here nor there, as you'll find out when you've lived as long as I have—on my dooks. I've bin to bed starvin' a few score of nights, and never woke up dead yet. You come along with me, back to old Billy's."

"That place? We can't. I don't believe we paid for what we had there before."

"And if we didn't, it wouldn't make no difference. Ah, gilt-knobbed, jewelled in every jint, is Billy. You take my word!"

So back they went to the cab-shelter, the only refuge they knew of in this roaring, foggy Babylon in which they were castaways. And Kip was right.

Being close on theatre time, the shelter was deserted of its usual clients. There was broken-nosed Billy, hero of many a hard-fought battle in days of long ago, just finishing the last of his washing up, whistling like a canary and merry as a cricket.

"What, Kipsey, old sport! Back agin? Sit down beside the stove and make yourselves at home," he welcomed them cheerily.

Though his shrewd, sparrow-like eyes must have taken in their muddy and dejected condition, he asked no questions, but kicked up the stove and got it blazing again. Jack was pushed into the snugest corner and another mug of coffee set in front of him.

And there, listening drowsily to the two old pugs fighting ancient battles over again, he soon fell asleep.

Whereat old Billy, cocking his birdlike eye first at him and then at Kip, whispered to the latter:

"Who's his young nibs, Kipsie? Don't look as if he's enjoyin' his night out exactly. What's the bloomin' game?"

So Kip told him. The birdlike eyes grew rounder and rounder, while Billy scratched his broken nose and rubbed his "cauliflower" ears.

Pip did not tell him quite everything, of course. He did not say, for instance, that Jack's pater was the great and only Mr. John Blundell, king of good sportsmen, whose name as a boxing patron and referee was known the world over.

Kip told Billy just enough to impress on him that for the time being it was a case of "down and out" for both.

"Down and out, me fiddiesticks!" was old Billy's contemptuous snort. "A feller like you, with your talents? I'm surprised!"

"Not me only. Meself, I'd be all right. I've got the young 'un to think about. What am I going to do with him?"

Jack, snoring in his corner beside the snug stovepipe, certainly looked a pathetic enough figure for anyone to be burdened with.

But Billy had been conning him shrewdly. He sized him up for a "good 'un" from the first moment he set eyes on him, and Kip had amply confirmed this. The kid was raw, of course, but he had the makings in him of a rare good lad, one of the very best.

"Then where's your trouble? What's wrong with putting him in the ring?" demanded Billy. "There ain't many better jobs goin' these times, so long as he's got the sperrit. What's his weight agin?"

"Eleven stun six, and not eighteen years old at that. By time he's three-and-twenty and set, and I've taught him all I can, there won't be many as'll touch him—not in Ameriky neither, nor France!" declared Kip, with generous pride.

Billy eyed the sleeping youngster shrewdly.

"And 'e's got pluck, you say? Sooner fight than eat 'is brekfust? Then what price takin' 'im along to Cap'n Braggs for him to 'run 'is rule' over?"

Captain Braggs!

"BRAGGS! The Fightin' Bargee? Why, what makes you think of him?" demanded Kip, surprised at the notion but not amazed.

"'Cause I 'appen to know he's lookin' for jest the same build of lad as your young toff," answered Billy. "You know the cap'n? Made his pile out of

bargeeing during the war, but still lives in the same little 'ouse down Poplar." "I know it," chuckled Kip. "Flag-staff in his backyard, a green 'us you couldn't swing a cat in, and rockworks all over the shop, made of old chiney and cement."

It was evident that this Captain Braggs was a "character." Born on the water to the roughest of trades, he had developed such a thirst for scrapping that in every new port he sailed to he always hoisted a painted "rooster" to his masthead as a challenge to the local population to "come on."

So sporting a soul never lacked patrons among the "big nobbs," needless to say. The Fighting Bargee was matched in many encounters, adding fresh laurels to his name. Latterly, since he had retired from the sea, he had become a patron of the noble art himself.

His hobby now was finding out young talent thirsting to get its foot on the first rungs of the ladder of fame. To make matches for his protégés was easy. There were plenty of "nobbs" always

Kips whistled at this.

"And 'e hadn't got a man at all, you mean?" he queried. "Just talking through his hat?"

"Eggsackly. His ludship woke up next morning, and there it was—five thousand goldie-boys to five 'undred, the fight to take place this werry month, and not a ghost of a notion how 'e was goin' to set about it."

"So he went to the cap'n?"

"Right again! And the cap'n told 'im just what partikler sort of bung-eyed fool he was to get mixing up with muck like the major. But he'd help him out of the mess if he could, and find a man."

"And couldn't he?" demanded Kip, with wistful eagerness, glancing across at the sleeping Jack.

"Yes—oh, yes! The cap'n had a lad, and a good 'un, by all accounts; but after six weeks' training down he's gone wallop with 'fluemonia. So all's in the cart agin."

"And what's the weight?" demanded



Jack's fist caught the Fighting Bargee full on the jaw, and knocked him out as clean as a whistle. "Ha, ha, ha," roared the onlookers.

ready for a flutter on a lad of the cap'n's choosing.

He had one challenge to meet now, and this was what had brought him to Billy's mind.

"You know that Major Slayman and his lot?" he asked; and Kip nodded, a quick flash of dislike at mention of the name. "Well, they've got hold of a feller named Linsky, chap off an Argentine cattleboat somewhere. A reglar 'maneater,' by their way of it, and knows how to use 'is dooks all right."

"Well, then, you know the major," laughed Billy. "Always got a pigeon to pluck, of course. This time it's young Lord Brandish, of the Scots Guards. He gets 'is nibs well lighted up, keeping on blowing about this 'ere Linsky chap. Well, his lordship got fed-up with hearing about him, of course, and began to gas about how he had a man, too, who'd take Linsky on and make a doormat of 'im."

"You know the major's way," chuckled Billy. "'Fore the young dook knoo what he was a-doin' of, he had laid five thousand to five hundred in guineas that he'd prodoce his man to fight Linsky and knock 'im out in five rounds."

Kip, his black, bushy eyebrows bent critically.

"Not over twelve stun ten, that's all. The cattleboat 'man-eater' weighs twelve-five."

"And young Jack there's eleven-six. Near a stun difference. But, by strikes, I'd like to see him také it on!" breathed Kip, the light of real battle gleaming in his dark, restless eyes.

However, it was too late that night for them to offer themselves. Nor did Kip even breathe a word about the project to young Jack, who was now awake, for the cab-shelter was beginning to fill up with hungry taximen, clamouring for supper and hot drinks.

One of these good fellows readily agreed to give Kip and his young mate a shakedown where he garaged his cab. He was making for home now. Half an hour later, on a bod of empty petrol cans, with a coverlet of sacks, the two outcasts from St. Bartlemys were sleeping like logs.

Next morning they were up betimes. Tin cans are no sort of mattress, even for the youngest of bones. Billy had made them promise to come round to him for breakfast. Over this the plans of the night before were broached to Jack.

"Fight for money—me?" was his bewildered comment.

"Yes. Why not? You've got to do something. Boxing is a clean sport, or dirty, as you like to make it," said Kip.

"Oh, I wasn't thinking of it that way!" answered Jack. "I've no contempt for professional boxing, bless you!"

"What I meant was I wasn't worth it, surely. I can't box well enough to earn money at it," he explained.

"Can't you? Well, that's what you've got to try and see; and Billy here has told us about this chance. I vote we go straight down to Poplar now and catch the cap'n. If he don't want you, he won't 'ave you, you can bet on that!" chuckled Kip, with a knowing wink at his brother-pug.

So down they went, after a hearty farewell of Billy. Jack wanted to know all about this formidable Captain Bragg, of course, but the best he got out of his guide was that "he would see."

At last, in a little backwater in the East End, where old retired sailormen have made their last moorings, they stopped before a tiny house.

At this particular house Kip glanced up nervously and then down at Jack again. He seemed as if to warn him about something before going in, but changed his mind apparently. The next minute he had gripped the bellpull, burnished like a ship's binnacle, and the die was cast.

A clang like a fire-gong was the answer. It was the cap'n's old ship's bell actually that he had fitted up. It reverberated through the house, eliciting an answering bellow from upstairs regions.

"Ahoy! Gangway, there!" the cap'n's voice was heard bawling. "Two swabs jest comin' aboard, 'Liza! Ax 'em who they are, and say I'm shavin'!"

A smart servant-girl opened the door. Kip gave his own name, but altered Jack's to Randall, instead of Blundell. Another explosion from aloft intimated for the whole house to hear that the cap'n would be "on deck in two jiffs." At last down he came.

He had a job to do in the garden, he announced, after a keen glance at Jack. They could talk their business while he worked.

Captain Bragg, since Jack had been asleep when this noted gentleman was being discussed, came rather as a shock to that young man.

He was of middle height only, very broad, very hairy, and looked rather like a dressed-up gorilla. He conceded curtly that he had met Kip before, but he glared at young Jack all the time, as if he could have eaten him. Even Kip had not as much to say for himself as usual.

"We were talking to old Billy Leathers," he struggled on rather lamely. "He was telling us about you having a lad who had broken down under training, though you had got a fight on in three weeks' time."

"Well, what if I had? That's my business, ain't it?" demanded the cap'n, still glaring at the unoffending Jack. "Who did 'e tell ye the fight was with—heh? Linsky—was that it?"

Kip admitted it was.

"Well, and what's your game?" demanded the cap'n. "Trying to come it across me, is that it? Going to pretend you've got some other cove as good as my lad, to take his place—heh? You ain't going to have the neck to offer me this thing here, are you?" indicated Jack with scorn.

"Neck be blowed!" was Kip's terse retort. "He'll do your job for you, or I shouldn't have offered 'im."

"What him?" crowed the cap'n, cracking his fingers derisively under Jack's bewildered nose. "A feller like that, with a chest like a rabbit and a face like a guinea-pig! Ah, and a heart of one,

too, I shouldn't wonder! Bosh! Tke 'im out of here! Go on!"

Now Jack's dander was up at this, of course. So when the cap'n began to hustle him contemptuously, he dug in his heels and stood fast. His blue eyes were still rounded with wonder, but his mouth was grim and his jaw firm.

"D'you 'ear?" demanded the cap'n, lifting his voice to him. "I don't know who you are, or where Cooley picked you out of. But if you can gammon him, you can't stuff me! I want a fighter, not a wash-out—a man, not a rabbit!"

And with that he gave Jack an open-handed shove in the chest as a sign to vanish quick.

Now Jack, if it had been a younger man, would have knocked him down promptly. But in a way, he was a guest. Kip had brought him there. Jack expected him, therefore, to give some sort of lead as to how he should resent this reception.

Kip, however, seemed suddenly content. To make matters more disconcerting, heads began to bob out of neighbouring widows at the sound of the cap'n's lifted voice. In fact, two popped up over either garden fence, as hairy and as

in the right, he knew. Again the old ruffian came with a rush.

There was nothing half-hearted about his blows on this occasion. The cap'n was hitting as hard as he knew how. Jack blocked the lead, but the impact of bare knuckles, hard as iron, jarred him through. Was this man a maniac?

"Ha, told you so! Not the pluck of a mouse!" jeered the cap'n. "Calls himself a fighter! Whoosh! Go-r-out!"

However, it was he who was nearly out that time. Jack, deciding that he had a dangerous lunatic to deal with, lashed a right across which just missed the point; then, dancing after the stumbling captain, gave him a left to the chin and right drive to the short ribs, knocking him clean off his feet.

Nevertheless, even after this the old scrapper was up again and rushing the youngster like a tornado. He pummelled Jack until he was a mass of bruises, yet always about the body only.

"Git out of my house! Hook it, or I'll murder you!"

But Jack would have seen himself dead before he would budge now.

He was one mass of blood and bruises, but so was his assailant. The captain, being the older man, began to lose wind. Jack was almost ashamed to hit him now.

But suddenly an irresistible opportunity offered, and down went the Fighting Bargee, knocked out clean as a whistle. At once up went the hats of his two ribald neighbours watching over the fence.

"Captain Bragg, my boy, you copped a surprise packet this time. Teach you to be more careful who you put it across again! Tip him your fin now, and show him it's only your fun!"

"Fun!" echoed Jack, feeling his bruised ribs tingling.

If this was fun, it was the queerest idea of humour he had struck yet. The only consolation was the captain cut a worse figure than he did. His eyes were blacked, and he had a lump on his chin like a pigeon's egg where that last blow had caught him. He sat on the ground, staunching his bleeding nose.

However, the monster doorbell having clanged a minute or two before, a smartly groomed young swell now came briskly into the cap'n's backyard. At sight of the scene which confronted him, he stopped and stared in astonishment, of course.

"Why, Captain Bragg!" exclaimed the new-comer, glancing sharply from him to Jack and Kip. "What in thunder—"

"It's all right, my lord!" the cap'n hastened to assure him.

"I've only been inquiring into the qualifications of a young feller here, as has offered himself to take young 'Tinker Dukes' place in your fight with Major Slayman's cove."

So this was all the meaning of this unprovoked assault? It was the cap'n's way of finding out any yellow streak there might be in a candidate for his patronage. It saved him wasting time and trouble over "quitters."

Kip had known of his little idiosyncrasy all along, of course. On their way to the house he had been strongly minded to warn young Jack as to the reception he would most certainly meet with. But confident that whatever the test the youngster would win through well, he had refrained.

And now this smart-looking young swell who had just arrived on the scene was none other than Lord Brandish himself, the rich young guardsman who had fallen a victim to the wiles of that notorious pigeon-plucker, Major Slayman, and to fight whose cause Jack was making his debut as a boxing "pro."

Another fine instalment of this ripping school tale next week. Make sure of your copy by ordering NOW.

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redolent of the sea as the captain himself.

These new-comers merely grinned at the youngster's discomfiture. They seemed all on the cap'n's side.

Jack began to see red then. He was perfectly quiet about it, nevertheless.

If this big-voice bully touched him again he was going to hit back, and hit hard, no matter the consequences. Nor did he wait long.

For the cap'n, with another shouted command to him to "Git!" hit him this time a full, resounding smack across the face, following it up with a punch in the ribs, which would have winded anyone less fit and hard than Jack was.

So far from this attack evoking indignation from the onlookers, they applauded with glee. The two hairy-faced neighbours nearly fell through their flowerpots, on which they were tiptoeing, peering over the garden fence. Even Kip only looked pleased.

However, if it was a fight they wanted, they had not long to wait. For with a feint and a flourish, Jack gave the Fighting Bargee such a return punch in the ribs as made him fall back on his heels a pace. Then, still after him, Jack not only slapped his face, but landed a flush hit on the nose, which set all the spectators aroar with delight.

The youngster kept his head. He was

HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR FOOTER!

The Offside Rule, by **TOM CLAY**, Right Full-Back of Tottenham and an International

I FULLY expect that so long as there is an offside rule, just so long will people indulge in long arguments as to whether a full-back is justified in throwing his opponents offside deliberately.

Personally, I have no doubts at all on the question. As I understand it, the offside rule was put on the books in order that full-backs might therefore be in a better position to defend their goal—in other words it was a rule put in force to help them. That being so, it seems to me to follow automatically that a player is justified in using the rule to save his goal from downfall.

After all, it would be just as reasonable to argue that the goalkeeper should not use his hands. The laws of the game allow him to do so, and by using his hands he stops quite a lot of balls which would otherwise beat him. Thus, of course, he foils the efforts of the attackers, but as I say the rules allow him to do so. The rules also allow the full-back to throw his opponents offside, and such methods certainly seem to me quite legitimate.

It should be remembered that when a forward is pulled up for offside, it is usually because he is trying to "poach"—to get nearer to his opponents' goal than the run of the game permits.

In the old days before the offside rule came into force, it used to be fashionable for a football team to have what they called an "advance" forward, a player who was sent up the field almost to the goal-line, and throughout the game his colleagues tried to kick the ball to this advance man. The offside rule was adopted to put an end to this sort of thing, and it has been for the good of the game because it has made for combination.

But if forward lines want to revert to this "advance" forward idea, then they can't complain if the full-back in his

turn resorts to the trick of throwing his opponents offside.

Space does not permit me to go into the question of whether the rule ought to be altered. Some people think it would be better for the game if the rule were changed, but so long as it remains on the books in its present form I insist that the full-back is justified in using it as a means of defence.

I am not so sure though, that I ought



The full-back's advance up the field, thus throwing the forward offside.

to tell you boys how to throw your opponents offside, because it is a risky business, and unless it is properly done, the offside move may be a source of weakness rather than of strength.

The simplest method is to move up the field immediately following a clearance, or when a member of the opposing forward line—say the centre—goes far

ahead of his colleagues. Then the full-back can safely advance up the field, knowing that if the ball is passed to the advanced centre-forward, he will be pulled up for offside. Here, though, is the danger. The ball may not be passed to the centre forward—the man in possession may run through on his own, and this, incidentally, is a very good way to keep from falling into the offside trap.

There is another risk, too, which the full-back runs who tries to throw his opponents offside, and that is that one of the half-backs of his team may drop back, and thus put outside the players whom the full-back has been trying to throw offside.

Lastly, the referee may not notice that the forward is offside, and that forward may be allowed to go dashing on and score a goal while the full-back stands waving his arms in a vain appeal for the game to be stopped. It is these things which make me suggest that adopting offside tactics is a doubtful policy, and should only be attempted by the experienced player.

I have often been asked by young full-backs whether speed is really essential to success in this position.

The answer to this question is, that pace is not absolutely necessary, but on the other hand, the player who can move as quickly as the average opponent with whom he comes in contact has a distinct advantage over the slower full-back. The quick player can do things which a slow player must not do. For instance, if a full-back possesses good power of recovery—if he can chase and catch opposing forwards—then he can with safety advance further up the field, but the slow player must stay near "home."

In full-back play the art of anticipation is one of the most important things to learn. Think about the game, and try to discover the intentions of your opponents.

When you have done that, you can then proceed to put yourself in the right position for frustrating the move. Football is to a certain extent like chess, and the most successful player is often the one who can see most moves ahead.

OUR TUCK HAMPER COMPETITION!

PRIZES FOR ALL CONTRIBUTIONS PRINTED ON THIS PAGE

For the best storyette printed on this page a hamper crammed full of delicious tuck will be awarded. Money prizes will be given for all other contributions used. When more than one reader sends in the same acceptable storyette, the prize is awarded to the first reader. Remember your joke should be written plainly on a postcard, and addressed to Greyfriars "Boys' Herald," The Fleetway House, Farrington St., E.C.4—Editor.

BREAKING IT GENTLY!

Young Wife: "Why, dear, you were the stroke at your old college, weren't you?"

Young Husband: "Yes, love."

Y. W.: "And a very prominent member of the gymnastic club?"

Y. H.: "I was the captain."

Y. W.: "And quite a hand at all athletic exercises?"

Y. H.: "Quite a hand! Why, I was the champion walker, the best runner, the head man at lifting heavy weights, the demon bowler; and as for carrying, I assure you I could carry with ease a barrel of beer."

Y. W.: "Well, love, just please hold this baby a couple of hours. The nurse-maid has gone out, and I'm tired."—Money prize sent to Mrs. Babington, 11, Satham Street, Paddington, W. 12.

WELL BAGGED!

Wharton: "I say, Bob, old Bogs has just got the sack!"

Bob Cherry: "He has! Whatever for?"

Wharton: "Why to carry the letters in, of course!"—Money Prize sent to C. Mills, 24, Beresford Road, Kingston-on-Thames, Surrey.

OUR TUCK HAMPER WINNER.

What Worried Him.

A Scotchman was returning home late one foggy night, accompanied by a bottle containing a "wee drappie," which he carried in the pocket of his trousers. As he was crossing a busy thoroughfare, however, he was knocked down.

When he came to his senses again he found himself in hospital with a doctor bending over him. "What's happened?" he asked.

On being informed of the accident, and that the medical examination was not yet completed, but several broken ribs had up to then been discovered, he cried out excitedly, "Dinna bother about ma ribs mon, but take off ma throosers at once—there's somethin' trickling doon ma leg, an' for goodness' sake tell me that it's blood!"—Tuck Hamper sent to Nora McLoughlin, 63, Loadman Street, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

IN SEASON-ING!

The soldier awoke to consciousness in hospital.

"What is this on my chest?" he asked the nurse.

"A mustard-plaster. You've had pneumonia."

"And what's this on my feet?"

"Salt-bags. You've had frost bite."

"Well, what's this on my head?"

"Vinegar," replied the nurse. "You have suffered from brain fever."

A soldier from the next bed interrupted.

"Say, nurse, hang a pepper-box on his nose and he'll be a bloomin' cruet!"—Money prize sent to A. W. Coltart, 47, Madeline Street, Princes Park, Liverpool.

MISUNDERSTOOD HER.

A West-London hawk was busy selling pickling cabbages the other day, when an old lady came up to him and said:

"Can you tell me the way to Turnham Green?"

"Wot d'yer want to turn 'em green for?" said the man. "Can't you see they're for pickling?"—Money prize sent to Victor Gill, Weymouth House, Greenbank Road, Ashton Gate, Bristol.

More Money Prizes and another Tuck Hamper Next Week!



THE MYSTERY OF THE MIDNIGHT MAIL

An amazing new detective tale from the annals of Raymond Steele and his young assistant, by that popular author,
W. MURRAY GRAYDON

READ THIS FIRST.

Peter Chumleigh, a sturdy lad of fifteen, who is the grandson of the squire of Chumleigh Hall, Devonshire, arrives in England from the United States with his grandfather's servant, William Gregg. Suspicious of two rogues named Sleath and Flindt, who tried to kidnap Peter in New York, Gregg calls on Raymond Steele, private detective; and Steele, with his young assistant, Oliver, go down to Devon on the midnight mail on which Peter is travelling. The train is wrecked, and a body which appears to be that of Peter Chumleigh is discovered. Steele and Oliver, however, believe Peter to be still alive. Peter is imprisoned in a building on Dartmoor, and Oliver, who is seeking him, is also captured. Ralph Vandering, Peter's uncle, whom Steele has been shadowing as a suspect, meets Sleath accidentally at Bonner's Hotel. Peter and Oliver are instrumental in making their escape, but Sleath and Flindt make chase. Raymond Steele arrives, only to find that Peter has been recaptured. Steele engages the help of Inspector Larking and his men.

(Now go on with the story.)

A Strange Disappearance.

"BY Jove, you surprise me! I heard nothing of the affair."

"No, I had it kept quiet, for good reasons. And now we must go in pursuit of the villains, Larking. There are four of them in all, and they are desperate fellows. It isn't much more than a quarter of an hour since they fled, but I doubt if we shall be able to—"

Steele paused, glancing around him. "Where is Molly Garrish?" he inquired.

"I don't know," Oliver answered. "I didn't miss her until just now. I am not sure if she came back with us."

The girl had disappeared. Having called her name, and got no reply, Steele hastened into the house, and returned shaking his head.

"She isn't there," he declared. "What can have become of her?"

"I'll bet she has gone after the men," said Oliver.

"She would hardly have been so foolish, my boy."

"Then where is she, gu'nor? Perhaps she thought she might be able to rescue Peter."

"I dare say you are right. I don't know what else she could have had in her mind. The pluck child! But what a reckless thing to do! I hope she doesn't run into danger. We must try to overtake her."

Steele was silent for a short interval, his brows knit in perplexity. He was worried about the girl, but there was

more important things to be thought of.

"I have been considering what to do, Larking," he said. "The odds are against us. Oliver has discovered the hiding-place of these men. They know who he is, and they know that I am at Tor Farm. They won't dare to stay at the house. They had a blue car which they abandoned as a blind near Princetown, but they probably will have another one somewhere in the vicinity of the dwelling. If so, they will promptly take a flight in it, and without much doubt they will strike for London by way of Exeter."

"They won't seek fresh hiding in Dartmoor, I am certain. Let three of your constables drive back in your car along the first cross-road that runs into it from the west beyond the valley of the Dart. They will watch for young Chumleigh and his abductors, and try to stop them if they come by. The rest of us will set off on foot to the valley, and if your quest should fail, as likely it will, we will push on to the place I have mentioned."

The inspector nodded.

"Very well," he assented. "It will be a wise precaution."

He spoke briefly to his men. Three of them got into the car, and as soon as they had driven off in the direction of the road, Steele and Inspector Larking and the lad, with the three other constables, struck across the open moor. Oliver was in the lead.

"I'll take you as Peter and I came, gu'nor," he said. "It is the nearest route, and I think I can find the way back. We shall save time, though we will have to climb down a stiff hill."

The moon would rise presently, but it was still pitch dark. If the farmer's daughter had gone towards Tom Cobleigh's dwelling she must have extinguished her lantern, for not a glimmer of light could be seen ahead. The little party travelled as fast as they could, striding rapidly over the heather from swell to swell; and as they went along Steele related the whole story to the inspector, and bade him to keep it to himself for the present.

In less than an hour they came to the crest of the hill that dropped to the valley of the Dart, and with considerable difficulty they descended the steep and rugged slope, groping in the murky gloom, and swinging from ledge to ledge at the risk of neck and limbs. Having safely got to the bottom, they held down the channel of the stream, with the roar of the current dinning in their ears.

"We haven't much farther to go now," said the lad. "A few more minutes, and we shall be at the—"

"Hark!" interrupted Inspector Larking. "What was that?"

As he spoke a shout rang faintly on

the air above the noise of the water, and it was followed the next instant by the muffled report of a revolver.

"That brave little girl!" exclaimed Steele. "She has been discovered by the men, and they have fired at her, and probably killed her! They must be still at the house! We must be as quick as we can. Hurry, Oliver, hurry. Lead the way!"

They heard nothing more. At reckless speed they raced along the narrow and twisting margin of the river, tearing on and on, floundering over stones and crashing through thickets. Presently they had a dim glimpse on their left of the lonely dwelling perched on the high wall, and when they had gone thirty yards farther they plunged into the stream, and waded breast-deep to the opposite bank. The winding foot-path was close to one side of them, and swiftly and warily, Steele and the inspector, with revolvers in their hands, mounted to the level space by the house. They could hear nothing but the noise of the Dart, nor could they see any ray of light.

"Too late!" Oliver said dejectedly. "They are all gone!"

"I knew they would be," Steele replied. "They cleared out as quickly as they could, as soon as they got back."

"We'd better make sure of it," urged the inspector. "Don't jump at conclusions."

Thrusting his weapon before him he stepped through the kitchen door, which was open. The others followed, Steele taking an electric torch from his pocket, and flashing on a golden beam. No attack was made on them. They hurried from room to room, briefly searching each of them; and then, having found nobody in concealment, they returned to the kitchen. Peter Chumleigh had been carried off by his enemies, and Tom Cobleigh had accompanied the other men because he dared not stay behind.

"If only we knew which way they went," muttered Inspector Larking.

Steele did not answer. He was thinking of the shouts and the pistol-shot that had been heard some minutes before. He stepped outside, and with a sickening dread in his heart, playing the torch around him, he scanned the stretch of level ground. Suddenly he stopped. He was certain he had just heard the crackling of bushes.

Darting to the right, he turned the beam of light into the thickets that overhung the river, and saw a moving figure a yard or so below him. A voice called to him, and a moment later Molly Garrish appeared on the brow of the slope. Her skirt was torn, and there were scratches on her cheeks and hands. She was panting for breath.

"Ah, here she is!" exclaimed Oliver. "You foolish child!" said Steele. "I hope you aren't hurt!"

"No, not a bit," the girl replied, throwing her dishevelled hair off her face. "I bruis'd my arm, that's all."

"You shouldn't have done such a reckless thing. Why did you desert us, and come after those men?"

"Because I was sure they wouldn't stay at the house long, and I thought I might learn something by listening to them before they left. And so I did, sir. I hid in the bushes in the top of the path, and the men stood talking close to me. They had a car over in the next valley, they said, and they were going straight through to London by way of Exeter. That's all I learned, for one of the men saw me crouching under the thicket. He fired a revolver at me and missed, and I was so frightened that I slipped over the bank and rolled down to the stream. They must have supposed I was shot, but I was only sort of dazed by the fall. When I came to my senses, and heard you above, I climbed up. I'm all right now."

"Did you see the youth, Molly? Was any harm done to him?"

"No, sir, I think not. His wrists were tied behind him, and there was a handkerchief across his mouth. He struggled with the men when they took him away."

It was just as Steele had feared. He had judged that, the dwelling being so far from the railway, that Sleath and Flindt would have got another car after they destroyed the one they had used for abducting Peter Chumleigh.

"Perhaps your men will hold the scoundrels up and capture them, Larking," he said. "There is little or no chance of it, though, as the odds are four to three." He turned to the girl. "Is there a road in the other valley that leads to the Ashburton Road?" he inquired.

"Yes, sir, there is," Molly Garrish answered, "I will guide you to it."

"No, you have done enough for us, child, and you have had a nasty fall. You had better give us instructions, and go back to the farm."

"I would rather come with you, sir. I can easily walk home afterwards. It won't be very far."

The offer was accepted. Led by the girl, who was familiar with the whole neighbourhood, the detective and his companions began to ascend the steep declivity on the left. And as they mounted higher and higher, scrambling amongst boulders and tangled undergrowth, Steele considered the situation, and took a cheerful view of it. That the fugitives would be caught by the constables who were watching for them he did not believe, but there was no longer in his mind the dread that Squire Chumleigh's grandson was in danger of his life. He had come to the logical conclusion, while he was crossing the moor from Tor Farm, that circumstances had altered in favour of the youth.

"Herbert Sleath and Jason Flindt will abandon their murderous intentions," he said to himself. "It has, of course, occurred to them that Oliver must have overheard their conversation with Vanderling before he escaped this evening, and, knowing also that I am on the track, they will certainly not dare to put Peter Chumleigh to death. I dare say they will break off completely with Ralph Vanderling, refusing to have anything more to do with him, and will renew their negotiations with Squire Chumleigh."

The top of the hill having been reached, Molly Garrish led the little party down the farther slope, and when they had got to the bottom of a wide valley, after a difficult descent, they paused by a rough and winding road that was no more than a cart-track. There were dense woods at the side of

it. The detective flashed his torch through a fringe of trees into a shallow glade, and the light shone on flattened grass and heather.

"Look!" he bade.

"I see," Inspector Larking replied.

"Here is where they kept their car." "Yes, that is obvious," Steele assented. "They haven't got much of a start, and as they will find it very rough going, we may gain on them between here and the main road."

"My men may capture them. There is a chance of it."

"A slim chance, Larking. I am not counting on it."

They did not waste any time. They promptly set off again, moving as fast as they could, and as they pressed along the narrow track, which was rutted and stony, they faintly heard at intervals, when there was a lull in the wind, the muffled throbbing of the car they were in chase of. For nearly two miles they followed the track through the desolate

inspector. "It wasn't our fault. We broke down, and had to stop for repairs. What of those men? Have we missed them?"

"Yes, they have just passed," Inspector Larking angrily replied. "If you had arrived a little sooner, we might have caught them."

"We'll get them in the end," declared Steele. "I am almost certain we shall. They have a smaller and less powerful car than ours, I believe."

"And now be off to the farm, Molly," he added, turning to the girl, and clasping her hand. "You have done us a good service, and I won't forget it. You'll see me again one of these days."

"Good-bye, Molly!" said the lad. "Take care of my bicycle until I come for it."

"Get in—all of you," bade Steele. "There is no time to be lost."

He sprang to the driving-seat as he spoke, and as the others piled in behind him he grasped the steering-wheel.



They were close upon the fugitive car, which must have burst a tyre and skidded, for it had capsized and the petrol tank had caught fire. Four men had scrambled out of it, apparently unhurt and were darting across the road.

valley, and as they emerged from it on to the wide road that ran from Ashburton to Princetown, they had a fleeting glimpse of the fugitives some distance to the right of them.

"By Jove, there they go!" cried Inspector Larking. "Towards Ashburton!"

"And where are your men?" asked Steele, gazing around him in surprise. "They aren't in pursuit, or we should see them."

"I can't understand it. They should have been waiting here for an hour or more. Confound them! They knew what they were to do. I clearly told them to—"

"They are coming now, Larking. Something must have delayed them."

The car was approaching from the direction of Dartmeet, its lamps flaming out of the darkness. It drew rapidly near, and the constable who was driving pulled up at sight of the little group.

"I'm very sorry, sir," he said to the

away they went, Molly Garrish waving to them until they vanished from her sight. And then, remembering that her father might be at home and wanting his supper, the brave little girl hastily bent her steps towards Tor Farm.

A Stern Chase!

IT was still quite dark, but the moon was on the rim of the horizon. It mounted higher, shedding a silvery glow through the scattered clouds, as the police-car held to the chase. Raymond Steele was in cheerful spirits. He had learned what route the men meant to take, and he was confident that, barring accidents, he would be able to overhaul them.

He drove at full speed, straining his eyes into the gloom. The lights of Ashburton twinkled in the distance, and in five minutes the little town was reached. The pursuers did not stop there to make inquiries. They sped rapidly through, and a mile farther on, coming to where

the road forked, they pulled up for a few seconds. Steele got out, and flashed his electric torch.

"The other car has turned to the left," he said, as he took his seat. "I saw the marks of the tyres."

"They are bound for London, as Molly Garrish told us," Oliver replied. "We shall probably catch them this side of Exeter."

"I doubt it," said the inspector. "I am afraid they will give us the slip. They are cunning rogues."

Steadily and swiftly they raced on, spinning through the night, passing slumbering farms and cottages.

Presently they heard a rattling, rumbling noise, which they knew to be a goods-train moving slowly. And a little later, as they flashed out from the woods, they got a glimpse of the fugitive car, distinctly visible in the moonlight. It was a quarter of a mile or so beyond them, with its hood up, and it was drawing near to a raised bridge that spanned the railway-line.

"My word, there they are at last!" exclaimed the lad. "We've been gaining on them! I wonder if they have discovered that we are after them?"

"I should think not," Steele replied. "They could not have heard us approaching, and I don't suppose it has occurred to them to look back."

"They are as good as caught," Inspector Larking declared eagerly. "Another mile, and we'll have them."

The goods-train was thundering beneath the bridge as the leading car reached the foot of it. It dashed up the slope, and vanished over the crest of it, and the next instant shrill and angry shouts were heard.

"What does that mean?" said the inspector. "Do you think they saw us?"

"No, I don't," Steele answered. "The shouts must have some other meaning."

A minute more, and they were at the bridge. In a trice they were over it, and now they perceived, to their surprise, that the other car had halted forty or fifty yards ahead of them. Two of the men had stepped out, and were about to retrace their course, as it seemed. But at once they sprang in again, having observed the pursuers, and resumed their flight.

"That's queer," murmured Steele. "I can't understand it."

"Faster, gov'nor, faster!" urged the lad. "We'll soon have them!"

Steele made the car hum. It tore on like a living thing, fairly leaping from the ground. For a mile it slowly but

surely lessened the space between pursuers and pursued, which had dwindled for twenty yards when at length the other car got to a sharp bend of the road. It had hardly more than disappeared when a muffled report was heard. Immediately there was a shrill clamour, and a heavy, shattering crash. Then silence.

"By heavens, they have had an accident!" cried the inspector.

Steele's hand shook as he gripped the wheel.

"That poor boy!" he said. "I hope he hasn't been injured!"



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A moment later they turned the curve with decreasing speed, and beheld a startling and horrifying sight. They were close upon the fugitive car, which had come to grief. It must have burst a tyre and skidded, for it had capsized at the edge of a field on the right, and the petrol-tank had caught fire. Four men had scrambled out of it, apparently unhurt, and were darting across the road to a plantation on the other side. They plunged into the cover, and were lost to sight.

"Only four of them!" Steele said. "They weren't carrying or dragging anybody. What of Peter?"

"He has been killed, gov'nor!" exclaimed the lad. "He must be under the burning car!"

"I'm afraid so," said Inspector Larking. "If he hadn't been hurt, those scoundrels would have taken him with them."

Steele hadn't a doubt that such was the case. He pulled up a few yards short of the scene of disaster, and jumped out with his companions. In spite of the intense heat, they ventured near to the burning car, which was now a mass of flames, burning furiously. But, to their relief and astonishment, they could not see anything of Peter Chumleigh. He was not in the car, nor was he under it.

"What the deuce can have become of him?" said Oliver.

"I can't imagine," Steele answered. "He wasn't with the men, I am sure, and he couldn't have made his escape without our seeing him."

"Perhaps they left him behind, hidden somewhere near Tom Cobleigh's house," the lad suggested.

"Ah, that is the explanation," the inspector agreed.

Steele shook his head.

"No, I don't believe it," he replied. "They wouldn't have abandoned the youth. It is more likely that—"

Breaking off abruptly, he ran across the road to the left. "Come along," he added, "we must go after those scoundrels. They haven't got far."

Diving into the woods, they pressed ahead as fast as they could, the detective leading the way. For a quarter of a mile they went blindly on, groping through trees and thickets, and stumbling over clumps of bracken. At length they stopped on the bank of a narrow stream that flowed smoothly and noiselessly. All was quiet. Beyond them was a wooded hill that rose to a considerable height.

"It is no use going after them any farther, I suppose," said Oliver.

"No; we'll have to give up," Steele replied. "They have probably gone in some other direction."

They retraced their steps, discussing the mysterious disappearance of Peter Chumleigh. They could not account for it. The youth had not been killed in the disaster, and he had certainly not been with the four men.

Steele was as puzzled as the others. Then an idea occurred to him. He wondered he had not thought of it before.

"I have solved the mystery," he declared. "I am sure I have. I know what has become of Peter."

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The Rule of the Road



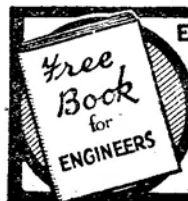
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THE CASE OF THE DENTIST!

Are you reading these amusing stories of Herlock Sholmes, the World's Worst Detective,

By PETER TODD?

I.

"EXTRAORDINARY!"

Herlock Sholmes gave his breakfast egg a playful tap with the poker and looked across the table.

"What is extraordinary, my dear Jotson?"

"That the Fellows of the Royal Zoological Society have not yet sought your assistance, Sholmes." I indicated a paragraph in the "Daily Outrage" which I had been perusing. "Binko, the blue-faced baboon, one of the most venerable residents of the Zoo has gone."

"Escaped?"

"Yes, it appeared that while Binko was toying with his usual breakfast kipper yesterday morning, the keeper inadvertently left the cage door unlocked. In consequence, the aged ape sauntered forth into the cold, hard world—or, that portion of it known as Regent's Park—and has not been heard of since. I repeat, Sholmes, that it is extraordinary that the responsible authorities have not yet sought the assistance of your trained intellect and acute perspicacity."

Sholmes pushed the remains of his breakfast-egg aside and stirred a liberal teaspoonful of cocaine into his coffee.

"H'm," he remarked. "I suppose they have taken the usual inexplicable course of reporting the loss to the police."

"My dear Sholmes," I exclaimed, "but surely men of intellect as we may presume the Fellows of the Royal Zoological Society to be, would do nothing quite so foolish?"

"There is no limit to human folly, my dear Jotson."

"True, Sholmes. But in this case, even if the authorities are unconcerned themselves about the loss of the aged baboon, they should consider the feelings of the public. Binko was more than a mere monkey—he was an ancient institution as firmly established as some of the Fellows themselves."

I sighed reminiscently.

"No longer will his shiny bald head, snub nose, toothless gums, and blue chin decorate the iron bars in the precincts of the Monkey-house. No longer will small boys prepare apples full of mustard for his consumption. No longer will old ladies have the simple pleasure of seeing the trimmings of their hats removed by the dexterous fingers of the grand old blue baboon. The cage is empty. And the authorities are blind to the fact that you alone, my dear Sholmes, can fill it!"

"Eh?"

To my astonishment, Herlock Sholmes took a firm grip on the poker, and advanced on me threateningly.

"My dear Sholmes, I—"

"Were you suggesting that the substitution of my person for that of the blue-faced baboon would be calculated to deceive the public?"

"No—no, not at all," I hastened to assure my extraordinary friend as I retreated round the table. "As you are clean-shaven, and the baboon in question has a fine crop of whiskers, there can be no—"

Herlock Sholmes gave a howl of rage.

Why my amazing friend should be so annoyed, I had no idea.

That I should have suffered a severe contusion of the cranium is certain, had not a knock at the door sounded.

Sholmes hastily slipped the poker up the sleeve of his dressing-gown as Mrs. Spudson ushered in a short, sallow man wearing spectacles.

"Mr. Diggan-Wrench," announced our landlady.

"Mr. Sholmes—" began our visitor excitedly.

"Be seated, my dear sir, and help yourself to the cocaine," said Sholmes soothingly.

The visitor dropped into a seat. Sholmes subsided into an armchair opposite and placed the tips of his bony fingers together.

"Now, Mr. Wrench," he murmured. "You may speak quite freely before



There was the ancient baboon cracking nuts with a pair of forceps.

my—er—friend, Dr. Jotson. You are a dental surgeon, are you not?"

The visitor gave a violent start.

Sholmes smiled easily.

"The excessive development of the ligaments in your right wrist, Mr. Wrench," he explained, "and your unconscious habit of moving your hand as though deaving invisible corks from imaginary bottles, proclaim the fact that you are either a dentist or a wine steward. The fierce, peculiar joy which flits ever and anon across your face, however, led me to deduce that the former was your profession."

"You are right, Mr. Sholmes," said Mr. Diggan-Wrench, "and I am not unknown in my profession, being a member of the Royal Institute of Qualified Molar-Extractors, and Secretary of the Dentists and Butchers Union. My success I attribute to the fact that I am an artist, I take positive pleasure in my work. Never do I manhandle a molar or undermine a wisdom tooth, but a thrill of joy and satisfaction passes through me."

"But, Mr. Sholmes," continued our client, "to-day I have suffered a loss

which has upset me more than I can say. Among my instruments, I possessed a pair of forceps which I had retained ever since my student days. At the end of them; I have had the pleasure of seeing hundreds of my patients writhe. This pair of forceps has been stolen!"

The voice of Diggan-Wrench trembled with emotion.

"When and where did you last use this pair of pincers?" asked Sholmes.

"The forceps?" said the Dentist.

"This morning in my surgery in Soho, I left them on a small table while I was attending to the removal of my last patient on an ambulance. There were carpenters working outside the building, and I strongly suspect one of those unscrupulous fellows took the forceps with the notion that they would come in handy for the extraction of tin-tacks."

"The case interests me, Mr. Wrench," said Herlock Sholmes rising. "For the pleasure of elucidating the mystery, I will assist you. Come."

In less than fifteen minutes we reached the dentist's surgery in Soho. It was situated on the first floor, and, entering the building, Sholmes became galvanised into intense activity. With a lens borrowed from one of my microscopes, he carefully examined the floor, the furniture, and even the window-sill.

Suddenly he straightened himself.

"My work here is finished, Mr. Wrench," he said. "You shall hear from me later."

In the street Sholmes hailed a newsboy and purchased an evening edition. Knowing that he had scientifically deduced that Flying Duck would win the three-thirty, the circumstances did not strike me as peculiar.

"Come, my dear Jotson," he said, suddenly casting aside the newspaper, "let us spend the afternoon visiting our relations in the Zoo."

"But, my dear Sholmes! The case of the dentist—"

Hooking his stick round my neck, my amazing friend assisted me on to a passing bus.

Arriving at the Zoological Gardens, Sholmes led the way straight to the Monkey-house. He halted before the cage of the truant Binko.

"Look, Jotty!" he cried.

I gave a gasp of amazement. There, sitting in the cage was the toothless old blue baboon cracking nuts with a shimmering pair of dentist's forceps.

Sholmes threw a monkey-nut at the ape, and, in response, Binko threw the forceps at Sholmes.

"And now, my dear Jotson," said my amazing friend, as he fondled his damaged eye, "we will return Mr. Wrench his priceless pincers."

Not until we had returned to Shaker Street after a visit to the delighted Mr. Diggan-Wrench, did Sholmes satisfy my curiosity.

"The case was simple, my dear Jotson," he said. "On the window-sill of the dentist's surgery, I discovered the footprints of a creature I rightly deduced to be a monkey. In the newspaper this afternoon I read that Binko had been recaptured from an Italian organ-grinder in Soho. As Binko was toothless, what was more natural than that he should have climbed into the dentist's surgery and stolen a pair of pincers with which to crack the nuts his ancient jaws could not effectively deal with? Simple, as you see. Pass the cocaine, Jotson."

THE END.

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The son of a white missionary has a little native playmate.

Most of you have read stories dealing with the glistening isles of the South Seas and the strange people who live in the faraway tropics. On this page are some interesting photographs of scenes in a new film called "The Idol Dancer," and they give an interesting glimpse of some of the quaint types to be found in the South Seas. Above are two photographs showing the white ruler of a tribe of fierce head-hunters.



The missionary welcomes some of his friends who have just arrived on the island.



In the South Sea Islands are many white fugitives from justice. Here you see one exchanging articles for valuables.

Photos: Western Import Coy.