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The Greyfriars



Boy's
Herald 11
12

No. 61 (New Series).

PUBLISHED EVERY TUESDAY.

Dec. 25, 1920.



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A MERRY CHRISTMAS

EDITORIAL.

My Dear Chums,—Well, here is the Christmas number, which I expect you have all been looking forward to eagerly. There are so many good things in it that I am sure you will find it difficult to say just which feature you like best of all. I have done my best to pack this week's "Boys' Herald" with the very best complete stories, serials, and articles possible, and if you are pleased with the paper I know that my efforts have been rewarded. On page 10 you will find the particulars of my new "Heroes" Competition. It is a simple and interesting contest, open to all readers, and, as you will see, the prizes are valuable ones and well worth having. So it is up to all boys to enter and try their skill. Everyone has an equal chance to win. As I remarked, the competition is an interesting one, and you will find much amusement in endeavouring to solve the puzzle, so enter to-day and you may find yourself the fortunate winner of a handsome prize. There will be another splendid number of the "Boys' Herald" next week, and as I anticipate a large demand for this, it would be a good plan for each boy to order his copy early in order to avoid disappointment. Our readers are increasing each week, and this means that your own particular newspaper may be sold out if you delay your visit to him until late after publishing day. I still receive many interesting letters from my chums, and I intend in future to answer a certain number of them each week in the paper. I think the idea will appeal to you all. Those letters I do not answer in the paper will be replied to by post, so, you see, I do read every letter, although I know that some boys do not think this is the case. By the way, all my readers who like a long, complete school story should make a point of buying this week's "Gem." It is a splendid number, and is on sale everywhere, price 1½d. Well, boys, I must not let this opportunity slip by without wishing you all a happy and joyous Christmas. This is my heartfelt wish to all the large circle of "Herald" readers at home or abroad.

YOUR EDITOR.



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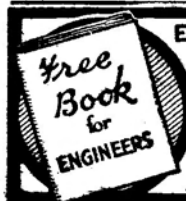
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BY OWEN CONQUEST

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

CHAPTER I.

The Return of the Wanderers.

"HERE'S the giddy prodigals!" Sawyer major, of the Fourth, grinned over the side of the old Benbow, anchored in the tropical sunshine on the Orinoco. There was a buzz of voices on the school-ship.

As Sawyer major called out, there was a line of faces along the Benbow, staring down at the canoe floating alongside.

"They've come back!" "Here's Drake—" "And Toodles! You've grown thir, Toodles!"

It was rather a ragged-looking crew in the canoe. Jack Drake and Co. had been more than a week in the wilds, and the expedition had told upon them.

Their faces were burnt brown by the sun; their clothes were in tatters; they were almost barefooted.

Daubeny, of the Shell, brown, tattered, untidy, would certainly not have been recognised as the dandy of the school-ship. Torrence and Egan showed no trace of their pristine elegance. Jack Drake and Rodney and Tuckey Toodles were in like evil case. Only Tin Tacks, the black gentleman of Barbados, looked much the same as usual. The sun had no effect on his black skin, and his garments had never been elegant. He grinned cheerfully as he caught a rope thrown by Mr. Piper, the boatswain, and brought the canoe under the accommodation ladder.

"Berry glad to be back, Mass' Jack?" he remarked.

"Yes, rather," said Jack Drake. "Now for a ragging from Mr. Packe," murmured Rodney.

There was a yelp from Tuckey Toodles. "You fellows will own up that it was all your fault, I suppose? You'll explain to Packe that I only came to look after you—"

"Shut up, Toodles!"

"Hallo, there's Packe!" said Daubeny. The severe features of Mr. Packe showed at the head of the accommodation ladder as the juniors were preparing to board the Benbow.

Mr. Packe was frowning. "Oh!" he ejaculated. "You have returned, Drake?"

"Yes, sir." "You have been more than a week absent from school."

"Ye-e-es, sir." "Are you all safe?" "Oh, quite, sir."

"I am glad of that," said Mr. Packe. "You have caused me much anxiety."

"Sorry, sir—" "Come aboard at once."

The juniors came aboard meekly. The Benbow fellows gathered round them in a grinning crowd.

"Did you find the giddy treasure?" chuckled Sawyer major.

Evidently the juniors guessed what was the quest that had taken Jack Drake and Co. into the wilds of the Orinoco. A chuckle followed Sawyer's question. The adventurers did not look much like successful treasure-seekers.

"We found the place," said Drake. "And the treasure?"

"It was gone." "Ha, ha, ha!" "Now Toodles won't be able to pay me the bob he owes me," remarked Rawlings. And there was another laugh.

"Silence!" exclaimed Mr. Packe. "Drake, I hardly know what to say to you, and the rest. You have absented yourself without leave—and caused me great anxiety. You were almost given up for lost. You had some absurd idea of seeking for a buried treasure—"

"Ye-e-es, sir." "You might have met your death in the forest," exclaimed Mr. Packe. Drake suppressed a grin.

He did not intend to explain how near death the treasure-seekers had been, more than once, during that trip into the wilds. Their narrow escapes would only have made Mr. Packe angrier, if he had known of them.

"We've come back quite safe, sir," he murmured.

"Quite so! And are you aware that you have delayed the sailing of the Benbow?" exclaimed Mr. Packe.

"Oh, sir!" "Four days ago we should have sailed down the Orinoco, and we have been compelled to wait," said Mr. Packe. "We could not leave without news of you."

The juniors were silent. Now that they were back on the deck of the school-ship, they realised rather more clearly the seriousness of their escapade.

"However, I will not deal with the matter now," said Mr. Packe. "You are in need of rest and refreshment. You may go below, and I will deal with you to-morrow."

Which was not a happy prospect for the treasure-seekers.

However, they went below, for a much-needed change of clothes; and for the remainder of that day they were kept busy relating their adventures to the curious crowd of juniors who wanted to know. The story of the missing treasure elicited many chuckles from the Benbow fellows.

"You're lucky to get back," said Sawyer major, sagely. "Might have been gobbled

up by Indians or jaguars, or might have caught malaria. But you look quite fit on it."

"Fit as a fiddle," said Drake, laughing. "I'm not!" growled Tuckey Toodles. "I've been practically starved. I feel as if I sha'n't be able to eat enough for weeks. I expect I shall be ill to-morrow."

"Then you'll get out of a licking," said Rodney, consolingly.

Tuckey Toodles's little round eyes gleamed.

Rodney's remark had put a new idea into his mind, and his powerful brain was working. When, the next morning, the delinquents were called aft to be dealt with by their Form-masters, there was one who did not obey the call. That was Rupert de Vere Toodles. He was down with malaria in his hammock in No. 8 cabin, and couldn't go.

A Stolen Cure!

THE Benbow was gliding down the mighty stream of the Orinoco, on her way to the Atlantic, when Jack Drake and Rodney presented themselves before Mr. Packe in his cabin. Daubeny and Co. were being dealt with by the master of the Shell.

Mr. Packe had a cane ready. "Where is Toodles?" he asked. "In his hammock, sir," answered Drake, demurely.

"Why is he not up?" exclaimed Mr. Packe.

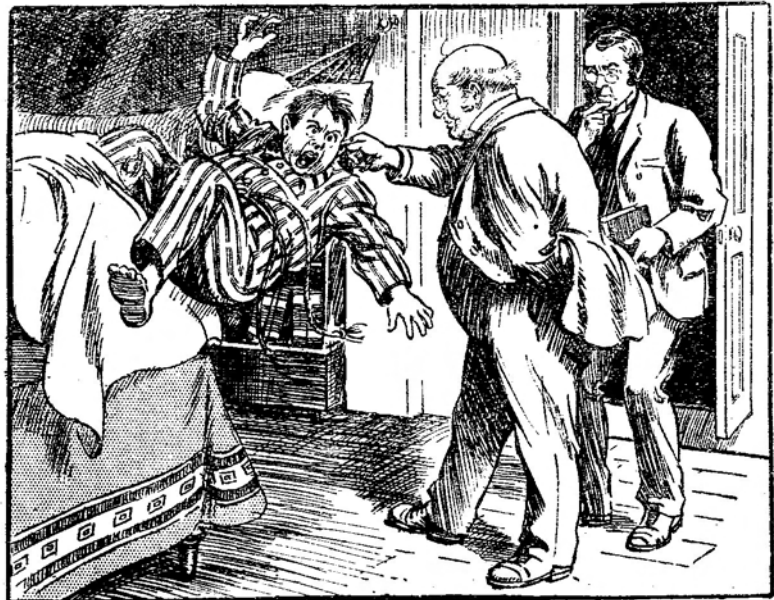
"Malaria, sir—he says." Mr. Packe started.

"The unhappy boy! You see the result of your utterly reckless escapade, Drake, in Toodles's illness."

"Ye-e-es, sir," murmured Drake, looking as contrite as he could.

As a matter of fact, he did not believe in Toodles's illness, but he could not explain that to Mr. Packe.

"I shall cane you both severely," said Mr. Packe; "all the more severely, on



"Bless my soul!" ejaculated Mr. Packe, the truth dawning upon him. "The boy is shamming. Turn out of that hammock at once!" said Dr. Pankey. Tuckey Toodles turned out, and his fat ear was very red from the doctor's cure.

account of what has happened to Toodles." "Oh!" ejaculated the two juniors simultaneously.

They exchanged a glance.

The idea of being caned with extra severity, because Toodles was malingering in his hammock to elude a licking, was not agreeable.

Rodney opened his mouth, and closed it again.

"Hold out your hand, Drake," said Mr. Packe, frowning.

The scene that followed was painful. Mr. Packe had a painful duty to perform, and he performed it painfully.

When Mr. Packe had done his duty, Drake and Rodney limped out of the cabin, rubbing their hands. They had "been through it" before, in the course of their schoolboy careers; but never quite so severely as on this occasion.

On deck they came on Daubeny, Egan, and Torrence. The three Shell fellows were clasping their hands in anguish, and murmuring sounds of woe.

"Had it bad?" asked Drake, with a ghastly grin.

"Ow! Ow! Wow! Yow!"

"That beast Vavouras fairly laid into us!" groaned Torrence. "Jawed us for ten minutes and then let himself go. Ow!"

"Catch me treasure-huntin' on the Orinoco again," said Daubeny, with a feeble smile. "No fear! I've had enough."

"Ow, ow, ow!"

"We've had it extra hard on account of Toodles's illness," groaned Rodney.

"Toodles ill?"

"Not at all; just shamming, the beast. Ow!"

"Never mind; the doctor will take it out of him," said Daubeny. "That's a comfort."

While the five juniors were bemoaning their damages, Mr. Packe and Dr. Pankey were visiting Tuckey Toodles in No. 8. Mr. Packe was looking anxious and alarmed; but there was a twinkle in the medical gentleman's grey eye. He knew his Toodles.

Tuckey Toodles gave a deep groan as they entered the cabin.

He had been keeping a wary eye on the door, expecting the visit. His groan sounded dismal enough, and Mr. Packe looked deeply concerned.

"My poor boy, do you suffer very much?" he exclaimed.

Groan!

"Where is the pain, Toodles?"

"All over, sir," moaned Tuckey Toodles. "Red-hot pincers jabbing at me, sir—"

"Bless my soul!"

"And burning daggers sticking into me, sir," said Toodles, growing eloquent.

"Calm yourself, my poor boy—"

"But I'm suffering fearful agonies, sir," said Toodles pathetically. "I'm not a fellow to complain. But this awful agony, sir—"

"You can do something for the poor boy, doctor?" whispered Mr. Packe.

The doctor smiled grimly.

"I have no doubt whatever that I can," he answered. "Toodles!"

"Yes, sir," groaned Tuckey faintly.

"It appears that you have caught malarial fever—"

"Yes, sir."

"In that case it will be necessary for you to be sent ashore," said Dr. Pankey.

"I have no doubt, Mr. Packe, that the boy can be landed at one of the Indian villages—"

Mr. Packe stared.

Tuckey Toodles sat up hurriedly in the hammock, and nearly pitched out.

"Wha-a-at—what's that?" he stammered.

"If you survive you can return to England later," said Dr. Pankey. "There is no special need for you to return in the Benbow."

"But I—I—I—" babbled Tuckey.

"With the Indians, you will—"

"I'm not going to be left among the Indians!" shrieked Tuckey Toodles, in dire consternation.

"I fear that it is unavoidable, Toodles, if you have malarial fever," said Dr. Pankey soothingly.

"I—I don't think I have, sir," gasped Toodles. "I—I think now that it—it's very likely smallpox, sir."

"Bless my soul! Then you must be sent ashore at once—"

"I—I mean rheumatism, sir—"

"What?"

"Or—or gout," stammered Tuckey.

"My fether has gout, sir, so—so I think it may be gout. Most likely gout, sir. Gout ain't catching, is it? I—I don't want to be left with the Indians, sir."

Mr. Packe stared at Tuckey, with his eyes almost bulging through his spectacles.

The rapid changes in the diseases that afflicted Toodles might well astonish his Form-master.

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated Mr. Packe, the truth dawning upon him. "The—the boy is—is—"

"Shamming," said Dr. Pankey cheerfully. "There is nothing whatever the matter with him. Toodles, you young rascal, turn out of that hammock at once."

"Oh, sir! I c-c-can't! I—I think I'm dying."

"Quite a mistake," said Dr. Pankey.

"For instance, if I should pull your ear, in this way—"

"Yaroooh!"

"And keep on pulling it—"

"Yoooop!"

"I have no doubt whatever—"

"Yow-ow! Leggo!"

"That you will be able to rise. I shall try the experiment, at all events."

"Yow-ow-wow-wow-wooop!"

Tuckey Toodles turned out of the hammock with an activity and celerity very creditable in a fellow who was dying of malaria, rheumatism, smallpox, and gout.

He landed with a bump on the cabin planks. His fat ear was very red from the doctor's cure for his remarkable complication of diseases.

"Do you feel better now, Toodles?" asked Dr. Pankey genially.

"No!" howled Toodles. "Worse!"

"Then I'll try the other ear—"

"Yaroooh! Keep off! I'm better!"

"Are you sure?"

"Ow! Quite! I'm quite well! Yaroooh!"

Dr. Pankey smiled genially.

"I am happy to say, Mr. Packe, that Toodles is quite restored to health," he said. "He is perfectly fit to be caned, if a caning is due."

"A caning is undoubtedly due," said Mr. Packe, glaring at the hapless Toodles over his spectacles. "Toodles, you unscrupulous young rascal, follow me to my cabin at once."

"Oh, dear! I—I'm so weak, sir, I—I can't walk—"

"I will assist you," said Dr. Pankey, stretching out a finger and thumb. Tuckey Toodles dodged.

"I—I'm all right. I can walk."

"I thought so!" said the medical gentleman.

Tuckey Toodles found that he was strong enough to walk to Mr. Packe's cabin. And there he received his due, with a few extra strokes for the trouble he had given; and for the rest of that day Rupert de Vere Toodles, like Rachel of old, mourned and could not be comforted—not that anybody felt disposed to comfort him.

Home Again!

"HOMEWARD bound!" remarked Dick Rodney.

The wide waters of the Atlantic were rolling round the school-ship now.

South America was a blur on the western horizon.

The Benbow had touched at Trinidad,

where Drake and Rodney had had a run ashore, to greet their West Indian chum, Arthur Cazalet, and say good-bye to him. Then the Benbow turned her prow in the direction of Barbados, the last stopping-place before she spread her white wings for the homeward run across the ocean.

Jack Drake looked thoughtful.

"It's been a jolly trip, taking it all together," he said. "Now that it's over, I'm glad we had that run into the wilds on the Orinoco—it will be something to remember."

"Yes, rather!" agreed Rodney. "On the whole, I think I've had enough of mosquitoes and tropical smells, though. We've got to part with old Tin Tacks at Barbados."

"I suppose that can't be helped," said Drake, his brow clouding.

Both the chums had grown attached to the black gentleman of Barbados, and they felt the coming parting. So did Tin Tacks, whose black face wore quite a woe-begone expression.

The faithful coloured gentleman had even suggested that he would come to England to continue attending upon "Mass' Jack"; but that was evidently out of the question. When the voyage of the school-ship was over, Drake would be at a school in the old country, where Tin Tacks would have been rather out of the picture, so to speak. And Tin Tacks himself felt that the English climate was something that it would require all his courage to face.

For the Benbow was going back from the region of perpetual sunshine to an English winter; and Tin Tacks, in spite of his devotion to Mass' Jack, shuddered at the prospect.

An English summer was sufficiently trying to a Barbadian, but an English winter— Even the devoted Tin Tacks felt that it wouldn't do. But his black face grew very lugubrious when Barbados rose over the blue horizon.

"Praps you come back some day, Mass' Jack," he said hopefully, when the Benbow was anchored, and the time came for the black gentleman to go ashore.

"I hope so, Tin Tacks," said Drake.

"In fact, I'm sure to. When I leave school I'm going round the world—we've settled that, haven't we, Rodney?"

"Quite!" said Dick Rodney, with a smile.

"And we'll make Barbados our first port of call," said Drake. "Mind you don't forget us, Tin Tacks."

"Me nebber forget Mass' Jack," said the black sailorman simply. "You find ole Tin Tacks jest de same as ever when you come to Barbados."

Jack Drake wrung the big black hand.

"Good-bye, Tin Tacks, old chap!"

"Good-bye, old fellow!" said Rodney, shaking hands with the black man. "Best of luck!"

"Good-bye, Mass' Jack! Me tink of you coming back, and me keep one eye open, you bet!"

And Tin Tacks went down the side into the boat. There was a blur before his eyes, and Jack Drake felt a lump come into his throat as he watched the boat pull away with Tin Tacks on board.

He waved his hand to Tin Tacks till he was out of sight, and then turned away, to be greeted by a fat snigger from Rupert de Vere Toodles.

"Yah!" said Toodles. "Shaking hands with a blessed nigger. Yah! Oh, my hat! Yoooop!"

Tuckey Toodles found himself rolling along the deck without quite knowing what had happened to him.

He brought up against Dick Rodney, who helped him off with a kick, and Tuckey rolled on helplessly. Daubeny of the Shell, who was standing by the rail, put out a foot to stop him, and caught him by the collar and righted him.

"Ow!" gasped Tuckey. "Thanks,

old chap!" He spluttered with wrath and indignation. "That beast Drake—ow—just because I said he shouldn't shake hands with a nigger—why, you beast, wharrer you at? Yaroooh!"

For Daubeny had spun the fat junior round and planted his boot behind Rupert de Vere Toodles, and the hapless Toodles went rolling again. He picked himself up and fled below. In the Fourth-form quarters, he confided his wrath and his wrongs to Sawyer major, and again met with an unpleasant surprise. So far from sympathising with him, Sawyer major took hold of his ears and solemnly knocked his head against a bulkhead till the bulkhead rang again.

After that, Tuckey Toodles decided to keep his valuable thoughts to himself. It was only too evident that they weren't appreciated at their proper value on the Benbow.

The next day Barbados was only a blue cloud to the south-west as the Benbow plunged on her way through the Atlantic billows. Jack Drake watched the blue cloud sink into the horizon, thinking of Tin Tacks, and comforting himself with his resolution to revisit the Western Paradise in later days.

There was a good deal of excitement on the school-ship as every day brought her nearer and nearer to European waters.

School work went on the same as usual, but the fellows were all thinking of "England, home, and beauty."

The voyage of the Benbow to tropical climes had been quite an enjoyable one, and they had seen strange things in a strange new world; but all of them were glad to think that they would soon be treading their native shores again.

Even the change in the weather, from the eternal sunny smiles of the West Indies to the gales of the North Atlantic, did not dismay them. Tuckey Toodles was sea-sick, of course, but the other fellows bore Tuckey's woes with great fortitude.

There was much discussion, too, as to where they were going after getting home. St. Winifred's was not yet completely rebuilt after the devastation of the air raid in the war, that now seemed so long ago, and there was not yet accommodation at the old school for all the Benbow crowd.

Jack Drake talked it over with Dick Rodney in No. 8.

"The Benbow's going to be laid up," he remarked. "A good many of the fellows will get back to St. Winifred's, but not all. From what the pater said in his last letter, which I got at Barbados, I think he intends to send me to another school, now the voyage is over. He asked me about my friends at Greyfriars."

"Greyfriars!" repeated Rodney. "I know some chaps at Greyfriars," said Tuckey Toodles. "There's a chap there—not half a bad sort—named Bunter. I know him."

Jack Drake granted. He had had the pleasure of meeting Billy Bunter of Greyfriars, and had not been much impressed by that youth.

"I was thinking of Wharton and Bob Cherry, and those fellows," he said. "I don't know what the pater's decided, but if I'm going to another school, I'm going to make it Greyfriars, if I can. And you'll have to do the same, Rodney; we're not going to part."

"No fear!" said Rodney. "Same here!" said Tuckey Toodles affectionately. "If you go to Greyfriars, Drake old chap, I'll manage it somehow."

"You'll manage what?"

"To come as well."

"Don't take the trouble, Tuckey."

"He, he, he! You will have your little joke!" said Tuckey. "My dear old fellow, I wouldn't part with you for anything. Rely on me!"

"Look here—"

"After the way I've stood by you all

through the voyage, Drake, and rescued you from dangers on the Orinoco—"

"Rescued me?" said Drake dazedly. "Yes, at the peril of my life," said Toodles. "After that, I'm not likely to part with you, old fellow. It's a sort of bond of union, you know, having faced fearful dangers together, like—like lions—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Drake and Rodney burst into a roar, and Tuckey Toodles frowned. He reflected that it was just like his study-mates to laugh at the wrong moment.

"Consider it done, anyhow," he said. "I'll never desert you, old chap!"

"I'm afraid you won't!" said Drake disconsolately. "You always were a thumping good sticker, Tuckey!"

Whereat Rupert de Vere Toodles sniffed. This was a most ungrateful return for his affectionate devotion, but Tuckey Toodles had given up expecting gratitude in this hard-hearted world.

Even the chops of the Channel were welcome to the Benbow fellows after their long sojourn in strange climes, and the sight of the white cliffs of England was cheering.

And it was a merry day when the Benbow ran into harbour, and the anchor fell into English mud, and they were able to stretch their legs once more upon British soil.

It was a strange contrast to the sunny

clime they had left far behind, for there was snow on the ground and an icy wind whistled through leafless trees. But they were home in time for Christmas, and that was all they cared about.

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Christmas at Home!

WHARTON!"

A group of three rather serious-faced juniors stood on the deck of the Benbow, lying at anchor at Chadport.

The Benbow crowd had broken up, dispersing to the four corners of the kingdom, and Jack Drake, Rodney, and Toodles remained last. It was their last day on board the old ship. The next day the gallant old Benbow was to be laid up, and before then the last fingers had to be gone.

But they were loth to go. Drake's parents were abroad for the winter, and he was to go to an uncle's; and he was not specially attached to that uncle. Rodney's mother was staying with relations in Devonshire, and though the relations were hospitable, Dick Rodney was not keen to trespass upon their hospitality. As for Tuckey Toodles, he had only to take his ticket for Toodles Towers, if that really was the name of the palatial residence of the Toodles family. But, in spite of the glories of Toodles Towers, often related by Tuckey, he seemed in no hurry to arrive there. It was possible that by the time he arrived Toodles Towers would have diminished to the size of a suburban villa.

Bags were packed and ready, and it was time to go; but the chums of the Fourth were loth to separate. And it was just then that a handsome youth

came lightly on board and glanced round him, and Drake and Co. recognised Harry Wharton of Greyfriars School. They had played cricket at Greyfriars, and they knew the captain of the Romova at once.

He came up to them with a smile. "Just in time to catch you, what?" he said.

"Well, we shouldn't have been gone for an hour or two yet," said Jack Drake, as he shook hands. "Glad to see you. What wind blew you in this direction?"

"I've come for you."

"For us?"

"Yes, if you'll come," said Wharton, with a smile. "Your father wrote to my uncle, you know, so we knew that the giddy old ship was back. If you two fellows would care to come to my uncle's place for Christmas, we'd be jolly glad to have you. We've got some Greyfriars fellows there you know—Bob Cherry and Nugent and Johnny Bull and Inky—"

"My dear chap—"

Drake and Rodney exchanged a glance. There was no doubt that they would like to go; and they wanted very much to keep together for the Christmas holidays. And they liked the cheery Greyfriars crowd who were, possibly, to be their future schoolfellows.

"Say 'Yes,'" said Harry Wharton, cheerily. "My uncle's car is waiting yonder by the wharf, and we'll get home in good time. Will you come?"

"Jolly pleased!" said Drake.

"Thanks no end!" said Dick Rodney.

"I'll be glad!"

"You're a good chap, Wharton," said Tuckey Toodles, chipping in. "I was going to take these fellows to Toodles Towers—"

"First I've heard of it," said Drake. "I was just going to mention it. There's going to be big doings at Toodles Towers this Christmas," said Tuckey blandly. "No end of fun, you know. My people spare no expense on such occasions. But I don't mind giving it up—"

"No need for you to give it up," said Drake.

"My dear old chap, I'm accepting Wharton's kind invitation, if you do," said Toodles calmly.

Harry Wharton smiled a rather perplexed smile.

He was the bearer of a hospitable invitation from Colonel Wharton to Drake and Rodney, but Rupert de Vere Toodles had not been mentioned. It was a delicate situation.

"Look here, Toodles—"

"Don't mench, old fellow," said Toodles, affably. "I'll come. It won't be like Toodles Towers, I dare say—but I'll come. Your uncle will like to hear about our doings on the Orinoco, Wharton. I've heard that he's a big-game shooter. He will be interested to hear how I shot my first jaguar—"

"Your what?" shrieked Rodney.

"My first jaguar. And the alligators I bagged on the Orinoco—"

"Oh, my hat!" said Wharton.

He gazed at Toodles in wonder. Nobody, looking at Tuckey Toodles, would have guessed that he had shot jaguars and alligators.

"I'll tell him all about it," said Toodles. "Quite a thrilling yarn. Shall I get the bags on the car? Unless, of course, you'd like to change your mind and come to Toodles Towers?"

"Eh?"

"Does your uncle expect you back, Wharton?"

"Of course he does," said the puzzled Greyfriars junior.

"You're fixed for Christmas at home?"

"Yes."

"That's a pity," said Tuckey Toodles, relieved on that score, and feeling quite safe in spreading himself, so to speak: "if it hadn't been so, I'd have been delighted to have you at Toodles Towers,

and Rodney exchanged a glance. There was no doubt that they would like to go; and they wanted very much to keep together for the Christmas holidays. And they liked the cheery Greyfriars crowd who were, possibly, to be their future schoolfellows.

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with my pals here. Your car could run us across to the Towers."

"Oh! You see—"
"You ass, Toodles—" began Drake. "Sure you won't change your mind?" asked Toodles blandly. "Lots of fun at my place, you know—carnival on the ice, on the lake in the grounds, and all that—no end of dances—skating—motoring—"

Drake closed one eye at Wharton and Rodney—the eye that was furthest from Tuckey Toodles.

"It's a go!" he exclaimed suddenly. "Let's go to Toodles Towers, you fellows. You'll come, Wharton?"

Harry Wharton looked astonished for a moment; then he understood, and he smiled.

"Right-o!" he exclaimed. "I—I—I could send a wire to my uncle—"

"Exactly!"
"And the car could take us to Toodles's place—"

"Easily."
"Done, then!"

Harry Wharton had "caught on" with great promptness. The three juniors turned genially smiling faces upon Tuckey Toodles. That fat youth seemed rooted to the deck of the Benbow.

"I—I say—" he stuttered.
"Come on, Toodles, let's get on the car."

"But—I say—"
"No time to lose, if we're to get to Toodles Towers by dark!" exclaimed Drake briskly.

"But I—I say—on second thoughts—"
"No time for second thoughts now;

we want to get home for Christmas. Get a move on."

Drake and Rodney and Harry Wharton descended to the wharf, and Tuckey Toodles followed them like a fellow in a dream. His reckless invitation had been accepted—that invitation which had only been so recklessly made because Tuckey supposed that it was impossible for it to be accepted. The hapless Tuckey was caught.

Drake and Rodney's belongings were stacked on the big car that stood waiting. The chauffeur bent over Toodles's bags.

"Leave them alone!" yapped Toodles. "They've got to be put on, Tuckey—"

"I—I—I think—we—we shall be rather a crowd in that car, you fellows—"

"Lots of room."
"I—I don't like being crowded. I—I think I'll—I'll take a taxi with my bags."

"But we want you to show the chauffeur the way to Toodles Towers!"

"Oh! Ah! Yes! I—I—I—"
"Jump in!"

"I—I'll show you the way in my taxi!" gasped Toodles. "See? I'll drive ahead and—show you the way—"

"Don't get out of sight, then," said Drake, with great gravity. "We can't find Toodles Towers without your help."

"Or with it, for that matter," murmured Rodney, unheard by Tuckey Toodles.

"I—I'll be careful!" gasped Tuckey. He scrambled into a taxicab, and his bags were bundled in. The taxi started, and the big car followed in its track. The three juniors in the car were grinning.

They understood Tuckey's unhappy feelings. The hapless Rupert de Vere Toodles felt quite faint at the bare idea of arriving at his father's villa with three unexpected guests, and a big car, and a stack of baggage—to say nothing of the inevitable discovery of the real dimensions of "Toodles Towers." Tuckey was thinking only of escape, and was quite unaware of the fact that Jack Drake and Co. knew perfectly well that he was only thinking of escape. As a matter of fact, the juniors in the big car were thinking of escape, too.

The taxi buzzed on, and turned the first corner, and flew. The big car passed on without turning the corner. At the railway station Tuckey Toodles waited in breathless trepidation to learn whether he was tracked. But he wasn't; he was in no danger, if he could only have known it. Relieved of his terrors at last, Tuckey ventured to take his ticket—what time the big car was whizzing away across country, with three merry juniors chortling in it, en route for Harry Wharton's home and a merry Christmas.

And a merry Christmas it was, in spite of the fact that Tuckey Toodles wasn't there—or perhaps because of it. But the chums of the Benbow were destined to see the fat and fatuous Tuckey again—when, at the new term, they became members of Greyfriars School.

THE END.

Another splendid, long complete story next week.

ANSWERS TO READERS!

ALMOST PERFECT!

"I have been a reader of your paper for several months, and wish to say that I think it almost perfect."

Thus Tony Laurence of Southend. Thanks! I can tell Tony that the latter part of his note refers to a reform which is well in hand. Next time he writes he will be telling me the paper is not almost, but quite perfect. Next please!

A MAN IN MANITOBA!

"I think the stories that you publish should to read by every boy. Grown-up people read them and think they are great. I should like to go to England some time, but I'll have to earn some money first. This is a funny country—winter, now, and yet exceptionally warm."

That is what Ben Rosenberg, of Manitoba Av. Winnipeg says. All right about coming to England, but if he likes a warm winter he should stop where he is. He is going ahead like a house on fire. This may account for the warm season. Perhaps—perhaps not. He is living in a land of wonderful scenery, with lakes on which stately swans disport their graceful selves. I know this because he sent me a first-rate snap of the country.

CONGRATS AND RAGTIME!

"If this letter reads rather comical—it is to tell you how much I like the "Herald"—don't blame me, or the pen either, because how can a person write when someone is playing ragtime? Such is my case."

Well, anyhow, Miss Isabel Cameron, of North Brunswick, Australia, has managed very well. We know what the poet said:

"Oh, it comes as a boon and a blessing to men,
To practise their patience, the post office
Fon!"

Some pens break away at the points. Better a stick dipped in liquefied pitch. I am much obliged to Miss Isabel. She thinks the "Boys' Herald" great. The band strikes up here. The old paper will be greater yet.



The midnight chimes were sounding, when a startled youth came bounding,

In pyjamas, through the doorway of the dorm.

His complexion, when he woke us, was as yellow as a crocus,

And he swore he'd seen a ghastly, ghostly form.

He proceeded to inform us that the ghost was most enormous.

He had seen it softly stealing down the stairs;

It had gone towards the basement, and the look upon his face meant

That it wished to give its victims fearful scares!

"Silly ass!" we cried in chorus. "It's absurd that you should bore us with a story that is simply tommy-rot!"

These romances, grim and ghostly, we have heard before; they're mostly

The inventions of an overwrought young swot!

It is your imagination; but we'll make an exploration

Just to satisfy ourselves that all is well."

"Yes, we'll seek the ghostly figure," said Bob Cherry with a snigger,

"But methinks the merry search will prove a sell!"

Then the staircase we descended, and our way we softly wended

To the pantry, where the Christmas fare was stored;

"A misguided midnight mission," murmured Todd. "No apparition

Dares to lay its skinny hands upon this hoard!"

Then we paused, in awe and wonder, for a shaft of light gleamed under the very door at which we shivering stood;

Harry Wharton snuffed his candle, then he swiftly turned the handle,

And—"We've run the spook to earth!" he muttered, "Good!"

'Twas a plump and portly figure we espied—a great deal bigger

Than the usual sort of spook with clanking chains;

And it wheezed just like a bellows, "Ow-ow-ow! I say, you fellows,

I am suffering from severe internal pains!"

It was Bunter—full of turkey! And for his nocturnal work he

Well deserved a record bumping, Cherry said;

But the Owl was in a poor way, so we heaved him through the door-

way,

And we bore the portly phantom back to bed!

NOW ON SALE!

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This great 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 beats the great Bibisco in a wrestling match. The chums adjourn to the Station Hotel. Here they are classed as common professional footballers, Stringer severely chastising the offenders. (Now go on with the story.)

Rough Justice!

EVERY eye in the luxurious dining-room of the Railway Hotel was fixed upon Stringer, who was holding his fractious captives without a trace of effort. The two little cads who had thought fit to insult the footballers in a public place, yelled and kicked and threatened luridly as their heads came into contact with a resounding thud which rang through the room. Their cries fell upon deaf ears, so far as the imperturbable Stringer was concerned.

The lanky goalkeeper was the embodiment of salutary justice for the time being, and he meant to carry out his self-imposed duties in that thorough manner which characterised everything he did.

"Now, my rabbits," he boomed, complacently, "are you still determined to be obstinate, or must I knock some horse-sense into your mental vacuum? Speak, my bunnies, speak—ere it is too late!"

He forced the heads perilously close together, and he felt the wriggling bodies tense expectantly in his iron grip.

"No, I'll see you jolly well hanged first!"

bleated the thin voice of Archie.

"And so will I!" shrieked his companion, working himself into a frenzy of impotent rage. "What's more, you long bout, I'll jolly well have the police-johnnies on your track for this unprovoked assault. We're gentlemen, and——"

Stringer smiled acidly.

"One, two——" he broke in, meaningly. Still the captives wriggled like tadpoles, beating the air with their clenched fists and hacking viciously at the goalkeeper's shins.

"Leggo! Leggo, you rotter!" they yelled.

Stringer's gaunt features remained mask-like under a shower of abuse.

"Three, my rabbits!" he announced, tonelessly, at the same time bringing his hands together with a sharp movement. His hands were gripping the thin necks of his captives, of course, and so the result of the movement was disastrous—for the captives, that is.

A yell of pain and rage broke from them, and the laughter which rippled round the room did not add balm to their wounds.

"Leggo, you brute!" shrieked Archie. "Leggo, you cad! I'm blazing with indignation!"

"And I'm burning with rage!"

"Quite a conflagration!" was Stringer's dry comment, and another peal of laughter greeted this quaint remark.

"I'm a roaring furnace of outraged dignity!" shrieked Archie, struggling to free himself from Stringer's vice-like grip.

"I'm aflame with the spirit of vengeance!" declared his friend, also struggling and landing wild kicks at his captor.

"We're both burning with mad rage, you brute——" mouthed Archie wildly, "and——"

"Then," broke in Stringer, lifting them bodily from the ground, "I'd better take precautions against your setting this place on fire!"

Carrying the struggling pair with incredible ease, he marched straight towards the end of the restaurant, his eyes fixed upon a large aquarium which must have been built to accommodate a young alligator.

There were no inmates in the glass-tank at the moment, but it was half-full of greenish water.

Archie and his friend in distress were red in the face, and yelling threats and abuse. They were quite ignorant of the fate that awaited them, although the laughing diners had a shrewd idea of what was about to happen.

Stringer came to a halt before the empty aquarium, and still held his struggling burdens suspended in mid-air.

"I'm burning with rage!" shrieked Archie, once again.

"I'm blazing with wrath!" repeated his companion.

"Then it's high time we got the conflagration in hand!" declared the impassive Stringer; and the next moment, hoisting the two young men above his red head,

he dropped them neatly into the placid depths of the green water!

Splash!

The frightened shrieks of Archie and his companion were drowned by the yell of hysterical laughter which broke from the diners.

"Walk up, walk up!" boomed Stringer, in his best showman manner. "Walk up and see the human tadpoles! Here we have the only known species, which exists solely upon creme de Menthe and eggshells! Take a good look at these marvels of the deep! Note carefully that they are possessed of two hands and two feet apiece, for which reason they are called the human tadpoles.

"Here, ladies and gentlemen," Stringer went on, without the suspicion of a smile upon his lugubrious countenance, "the resemblance ends, for the faces of these human tadpoles would be an insult to any self-respecting door-knocker!

"Also——Down, you savage brutes!"

He turned quickly as Archie, blowing like a grampus, wild-eyed and very moist, popped his dripping head over the side of the aquarium.

Stringer placed a finger and thumb upon Archie's aquiline nose and with a dexterous movement managed to submerge him once again.

"You see, ladies and gentlemen," Stringer went on, easily, "these human tadpoles are not so harmless as their appearance would lead you to believe. Indeed, I may say without fear of contradiction——"

He broke off again as Archie and his friend scrambled clumsily and uncertainly to their feet, and thrust their streaming faces above the surface of the water.

They were gasping for breath, and, at the same time, they were desirous of giving Stringer their private and unbiased opinion of himself and all bearing his hated name.

To state that the young gentlemen were annoyed is to put the matter naively, indeed. As a matter of fact, they were far too incensed to articulate, making hideous grimaces in their frantic efforts to express themselves with anything like lucidity.

And all through the inopportune pantomime the lofty dining-room was echoing with laughter, the bell-like guffaws of the men blending with the more subdued ripples of their feminine companions.

Had Archie and his friend hoped to get any help or sympathy from the diners they were doomed to disappointment, for they were known to be little snobs who richly deserved the lesson they were getting at the hands of the inexorable Stringer.

"You see, ladies and gentlemen," cried

the elongated goalkeeper, with a grandiloquent flourish of a big hand, "that these human tadpoles are both dangerous and voracious!"

He snatched a couple of rolls from an adjacent table and turned to the caraged couple in the aquarium.

"Here! Catch!"

He tossed the bread straight at the scowling faces of the "human tadpoles," and the result was both dramatic and unexpected.

It was also humorous—from the spectators' point of view.

Both Archie and his companion ducked simultaneously, and their feet slipped upon the treacherous surface of the tank. Archie promptly grabbed his friend's mop of hair to save himself, whilst the unfortunate under the hair promptly returned the compliment by embracing Archie's neck and clinging like grim death.

The result was inevitable, and both disappeared beneath the scething surface of the water with a wild yell and a splash.

And, watching them through the glass sides of the tank, the diners formed the opinion that Archie was not in the sweetest of tempers, for no sooner did his friend relax his grip than Archie smote him upon the tip of his classic nose with quite considerable violence.

The blow probably brought tears to the recipient's eyes, but, under the circumstances, this fact did not matter.

Now, Archie's friend, being a man of spirit, resented this assault, and he lost no time in retaliating with a hefty punch.

The erstwhile friends glared at each other ferociously for a fraction of a second, and then they leapt forward like wildcats, sending showers of water in all directions.

Shouts of alarm and apprehension escaped the parted lips of the womenfolk, who feared that the maddened combatants were running the risk of a watery grave, and the excitement was at its height when a gruff authoritative voice made itself heard above the din.

"Now, then, what's the trouble here?"

All eyes turned to the manager of the hotel and a police-inspector, who had come through the door and were making straight for the aquarium. The manager looked pale and excited, but the official wore a grim, uncompromising expression.

The inspector pointed to the struggling figures in the water.

"Are these the young hooligans who are causing the trouble?" he asked; and even as his words rang out, Archie and his friend caught sight of his uniform, and their battle royal ceased as by mutual consent.

The two rose to the surface of the water and gazed at the inspector with mute gratitude in their eyes.

The law would save them from the hands of the red-headed Stringer!

They presented a ludicrous spectacle as they stood there, drenched to the skin, with their hair plastered over their eyes; but the police-official's lips did not even twitch. Instead, he bit his close-clipped moustache and frowned heavily.

"Come out of that—you two!" he ordered sternly. "I shall want an explanation of this disgraceful conduct. You may think that it's a 'rag,' but you'll find that 'rags' don't pay in Norchester!"

Archie and his companion gasped in surprise and dismay, for up till then they had regarded the inspector as their saviour. Yet he was speaking to them as though they were responsible for what had happened.

It was at this point that Archie lost his head once again.

"Look here, you constable fellow—" he began angrily, when the inspector interrupted.

"Get out of that aquarium, or I'll charge you with wrongful possession!" he said, with a frown. And Stringer, standing just behind, gave a rumbling laugh. The goalkeeper realised that the inspector knew exactly how matters stood, and that

he also meant to give the little snobs the fright of their lives.

Archie and his friend hesitated for a moment, and then, muttering to themselves, anathematising Stringer and the world in general, they commenced to clamber out.

They succeeded at last, and stood shivering upon the thick pile carpets, cascades of water flowing from their sodden clothes.

"Now clear off home," said the inspector gruffly, "or I may alter my mind and run you along to the station: You can't do as you like in a public restaurant. You may have got a certain amount of amusement and pleasure in swimming about in the aquarium, but if you want to do that sort of thing you'd better save up and go to the public baths!"

Archie went purple in the face, and his eyes stood out of his pallid face like hat-pegs. He looked upon the point of apoplexy.

"This ruffian—this red-headed ruffian," he shrieked at last, pointing a shaking finger at Stringer, "assaulted us! I say he assaulted us!"

"I heard you the first time," said the inspector.

"What's more," went on Archie, his voice shrill and piercing, "I'll have the law on him for it! I'll get—"

"Yes, you'll get a fine cold if you don't run off home," put in the manager quietly. "Now then, off you go—and I won't press the charge!"

Archie looked positively demented at that.

"You—you—you big idiot!" he stammered incoherently. "Don't you realise that it's this red-headed lout who ought to be given in charge? Don't you—"

"Are you little fellows going to be good boys and run home?" asked the booming tones of the Norchester goalkeeper.

Archie and his friend shot a frightened look at the impassive features, and then glanced nervously towards the door.

"Are you going?" asked Stringer threateningly, taking a step towards them.

An uneasy look passed between them, and then, as the lean goalkeeper took another pace forward, they swung round on their heels and bolted straight for the swing-doors of the room, leaving a trail of water in their wake.

The inspector's grim features relaxed as he watched the ignominious retreat, and peals of laughter came from all sides of the room.

"I don't think those young gentlemen will insult you chaps again in a hurry, Stringer," said the police official, who was on good terms with the Norchester goalkeeper.

Stringer permitted himself a wintry smile.

"No, Farrell, I don't think they will," he returned slowly. "But should they think fit to do so, I fear I shall have to be really severe with them."

The players, who had joined their custodian by now, broke into a roar of laughter.

"Severe?" echoed Jack Denyer, with twinkling eyes. "You weren't exactly gentle with the little cads!"

"Perhaps not," boomed Stringer, shaking his red head. "Still, there's always boiling oil, the rack, Chinese torture—"

He waved a big hand expressively.

"Then again, I might box their ears—hard!" he finished.

The Snowman!

THE playing-pitch of Norchester Football Club was covered with a carpet of snow, and the players, standing on the balcony outside the club-house, made wry faces.

"This is a fine how-d'yer-do," grunted Bickley, the right half. "We've got the Christmas fixtures almost on top of us, and then it snows like the very dickens!

If it goes on like this we shall be snowed under!"

Jack Denyer, the young player-manager, laughed light-heartedly.

"Don't worry your head about the snow, old man," he said. "It won't last long, and we'll get an army of urchins to clear the pitch in next to no time!"

Bickley, who seemed to have got out of the wrong side of the bed that morning, was not to be appeased so easily, however.

"That's all very well, Jack," he growled. "The point is that it's snowing like anything now. There won't be any fun in kicking about this morning!"

Jack nodded and looked thoughtful.

"You're certainly right there, old man," he said. "We've all turned up here for nothing, and—"

"Stringer's not here, Jack," put in Bailey.

Jack laughed.

"The cunning old beggar knew there wouldn't be anything doing to-day," he said. "I expect his ginger locks are still reclining upon his pillow."

"Look here, you chaps," said Mallison, excitedly. "I've got an idea!"

"Eh?"

The players all regarded Mallison's "ideas" with suspicion, for brain-waves were not his strong point.

"What is it?" asked Bob Fender, doubtfully.

"Let's make a snowman!"

The players were all schoolboys at heart, and the suggestion caught on at once.

"A great idea, old son!" said Jack, heartily. "I'll make one, anyway."

"And me," put in half a dozen voices.

Mallison beamed with pleasure, for it was seldom that his ideas were received with anything other than scathing criticism or scorn.

"Come on then!" he cried, making for the steps. The others followed him as he kicked his way through the snow towards the playing-pitch.

Laughing and chattering, their cheeks flushed with health, and the nip in the air turning their noses into various shades of vermilion, they at last came to a halt.

"Who shall it be?" asked Jack Denyer suddenly. "Ex-Kaiser Bill?"

The others thought for a moment.

"Why waste time over the effigy of that old reprobate?" growled Blaney, who was a 1914 man.

"Who shall it be then?" asked Mallison, looking round at his chums.

There was a short silence, and then Jack Denyer brought his hand down upon Bickley's broad back with a force that sent the half-back staggering.

"I've got it!" he cried excitedly.

"So have I!" grinned Bickley, moving his shoulders expressively.

"What's the idea, Jack?" queried Mallison.

"Let's make an effigy of old Stringer!" said Jack, and no sooner had he said the words than shouts of approval broke from the other players.

"The very thing, old man!" they cried, laughing. "Come on, let's get busy!"

Great piles of snow were collected, and the youngsters were soon engrossed in their task of fashioning a snowman in the image of their red-headed custodian.

Half an hour's hard work found the trunk completed to the general satisfaction of the workmen, and then arose the question of the head.

"It won't be difficult to get some likeness to his face," said Jack, a trifle doubtfully, "but how are we going to manage about his ginger hair?"

This was a poser requiring much concentrated thought.

"There's a fluffy red woollen mat on the table in the club-house," said Blaney, breaking the silence. "That'll do at a pinch; and I know old Stringer's left a hat there!"

"Good for you, old man!" cried Jack.

with a happy laugh. "Cut across and get the things!"

Blaney set off on his mission, while the others commenced to emulate Jacob Epstein.

Jack Denyer proved himself to be an adept at snow-sculpture, and at the end of ten minutes he had fashioned features which bore some slight resemblance to those of Stringer.

"Now then, Blaney, my son, hand over the thatch!"

Jack made one or two experiments with the red, fluffy mat, and having fixed it to his satisfaction, he crowned the head with Stringer's absurd little hat.

The players gazed at the effigy in mute admiration for some moments, and then burst into roars of laughing approbation.

"Why, it's old Stringer to the very life!" cried Fender. "It's a masterpiece, Jack!"

Jack smiled modestly.

"It's not too bad, certainly," he agreed.

"In fact, I think I'll chuck football and rent a studio!"

The others laughed at the notion, and then someone put a question.

"And what are we going to do with it now?"

Jack grinned mischievously.

"The best thing we can do is to leave it here," he answered. "Let dear old dignified Stringer feast his eyes upon it! I expect he'll turn up this afternoon!"

"What a leg-pull!" gloated Brown, with a wicked grin. "He'll probably chase us all round the ground with a chopper!"

"I'd like to see his face when he sees his double!" said Mallison. "He'll think he's dreaming."

Speculation and prophecy ran riot until the players trooped across the pitch towards the club-house. It was lunch-time, and the cold air had given them an appetite.

"Well, all turn up for the fun this afternoon, you chaps!" grinned Jack, as he bade them adieu. "I shall be here about two o'clock!"

"So shall we, old son!" came the chorus from the grinning chums.

Two o'clock soon came.

True to their word, the Norchester players turned up in full force at the appointed time.

"Are we all here?" asked Jack, looking round at the smiling faces.

"All except Stringer," said Mallison. "I expect he's on the field having a heart-to-heart chat with his twin-brother!"

"Come on then," said Jack Denyer, running down the steps and taking the direction of the snow-clad field.

They could see the effigy from the distance, and it certainly bore a striking resemblance to the emaciated goalkeeper. The build was perfect, and the pale face and sunken cheeks, seen from afar, were a masterpiece.

"It's a wonderful likeness, Jack," remarked Bob Fender. "It'll give old Stringy the fright of his life!"

All eyes were fixed upon the snowman, and the players were within ten yards of it when—it moved!

The youngsters stopped dead in their stride, their eyes staring, their mouths open in blank amazement.

The effigy had come to life!

Then, before they could recover from their amazement, the snowman brought its hands from its sides, and the next moment a snowball—round and hard, and hurled with unerring accuracy—hisssed through the air and struck Jack Denyer full in the face.

Another missile followed and caught Bickley in the mouth, causing him to splutter and cough.

"It's Stringer himself!" went up the yell; and then the players were busy dodging a fusillade of snowballs, a supply of which the "snowman" had by his side.

Thud! Thud! Thud!

Stringer made his attack with tireless energy, and never once did a cold, hard missile fail to find a target. The gaunt goalkeeper was making the most of the element of surprise—which is a big factor in attack—and he had almost exhausted his supply of ammunition before the enemy was ready for the counter-attack.

"Now, boys!" cried Denyer, striking a dramatic attitude. "Up and at the enemy! Are you ready? FIRE!"

The next moment the air was white with flying snowballs, all directed at the human snowball—Stringer!

Flop! Plop! Plop!

Snowballs to the right of him, snowballs to the left of him, volleyed and thundered, but the valiant Stringer refused to go down before the fusillade which broke and powdered upon every part of his elongated form.

Instead, his big hands scooped the snow, fashioned it into the most deadly ammunition, and then propelled it with unerring accuracy into the ears or eyes or mouth of one of the enemy.

mediately. "Old Stringer's partial to snow—it's a favourite dish of his."

"Let's—let's—" floundered Brown, seeking for a really happy inspiration.

Stringer, meanwhile, was lying motionless: not a muscle of his lean form twitched.

"I think, you fellows—" began Jack Denyer, and the words died upon his lips.

As a matter of fact, at that precise moment the players thought they were in the midst of an earthquake, for they were suddenly lifted bodily into the air and sent flying in all directions.

It was not an eruption, however. It was Stringer.

Lying still, he had summoned all his great strength, afterwards rising to lip full height and flinging the players about him as though they had been so many children.

The gaunt-featured goalkeeper smiled grimly as he gazed down at the sprawling forms in the glistening snow.

"Well, my infants, how now?" he boomed, thoroughly enjoying the startled expressions upon the faces of his discomfited companions. "What about



Carrying the struggling pair with incredible ease, Stringer marched towards the end of the restaurant, his eyes fixed upon a large aquarium. There were no inmates in the tank at the moment, and hoisting the two young men above his red head, he dropped them neatly into the green water.

"Come on, my infants!" he roared, his gaunt features glowing with an unusual flush. "Denyer's hosts shall not defeat me! I'll defend the citadel! I open my mouth—"

Plop! A gigantic snowball broke upon his upper-lip and silenced him. Furthermore, the shock of impact sent him slightly off his balance—and Jack Denyer marshalled his forces with a wild yell.

"At him, my merry men!" he cried excitedly. "Up and at him!"

A concerted rush was made for Stringer, and the next moment he had been tripped up and was lying helpless in the hands of his assailants.

Jack Denyer sat upon the red head. "Now, my men, what shall we do with him?" he asked.

"Let's bury him," suggested Mallison. "Bury him alive! Then let us steal away and not tell anyone where we've put the body!"

"No. We might be found out," grinned Jack Denyer, entering into the spirit of the thing.

"Then make him eat a few juicy snowballs," was Blaney's kindly contribution. "That's no good," Jack declared im-

mediately. "What about your uncle Stringer now? What about his feed of snowballs?"

Grinning somewhat ruefully, the youngsters scrambled to their feet and ranged themselves round Stringer.

"Well, my infants," said the lean goalkeeper, "do you want to resume hostilities?"

"No, thanks, old man," grinned Jack Denyer. "I think you've had enough for one day. In fact—"

"Mr. Denyer!"

A lusty hail floated upon the crisp December air, and every eye looked towards the club-house.

"It's young Parkinson," said Jack, as a diminutive, cheekey-looking youngster came running towards him.

"What's the matter, my little lad?" asked the player-manager.

"Tallygram for you, sir," gasped Parkinson, breathlessly.

Jack ripped the flap of the envelope, and extracted the message.

Tell your chums about "Stringer!" Another ripping, long instalment of this great new footer tale will appear in next Tuesday's "Boys' Herald." Please order your copy in advance.—Editor.

£10 IN PRIZES EVERY WEEK!

"BOYS' HEROES" COMPETITION, No. 1.

1st PRIZE £5.

3 PRIZES OF HAMPERS.
(Filled with Delicious Tuck.)

8 PRIZES OF 5s. EACH.

ON this page you will find a picture-puzzle dealing with some famous boys' heroes which you are invited to solve. Bear in mind that each of the pictures may represent part of a word—one, two, or three words, but not more than three words. There is nothing unusual about the wording, and the sense of the sentence will guide you. Solutions containing alternatives will be disqualified.

When you have solved the pictures to your satisfaction, write your solution in ink on one side of a clean sheet of paper, then sign the coupon beneath the picture; cut out the picture and the coupon—do not sever the coupon from the picture—pin your solution to the picture, and post to:

"Boys' Heroes" Competition, No. 1,
Gough House, Gough Square, E.C.4,

so as to reach that address not later than Thursday, December 30th.

This week our puzzle deals with three "Boys' Heroes." The Prince of Wales, Carpentier, the popular boxer; and a famous footballer. Now set to work to win one of our splendid prizes.

This competition is run in conjunction with the "Boys' Friend," and readers of that journal are invited to compete.

READ THESE RULES CAREFULLY!

The First Prize of Five Pounds will be awarded to the competitor who complies with the above conditions, and sends a solution exactly the same as the Editor's original paragraph. In the event of no competitor sending in the right solution, the prize will be awarded to the competitor whose solution is the nearest.

The Second and other prizes will be awarded to the readers whose solutions are next in order of merit.

In the event of ties, the right to add together and divide any or all of the prizes is reserved, but the full amount will be awarded. No Competitor will be awarded more than one share of any prize.

No responsibility can be undertaken for any effort lost, delayed or mislaid and proof of posting will not be accepted as proof of delivery or receipt.

The Editor reserves the right to disqualify

any Competitor's solution for reasons which he considers good and sufficient. The decision of the Editor must be accepted as final and legally binding in all matters concerning the competition, and entries are only accepted on this express condition. Correspondence must not be enclosed with efforts, neither will any be entered into in connection with this competition. Employees of the proprietors of this journal are not eligible to compete.

I enter this competition, and agree to accept the Editor's decision as final. If more than one coupon is sent, Each Must Be Signed.

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

B.H.

Closing date of Competition, December, 30th.

GRUMBLES FROM GREYFRIARS!

Music Hath Charms!

Dear Sir,—I am swotting for an important exam., and for some time past my studies have been rudely disturbed by a wandering musician—wandering in his mind as well as in the other sense.

This misguided youth insists upon playing his violin outside the door of my study.

I am wondering if you can enlighten me as to the identity of this strolling musician, who is fast driving me to distraction. I want to get to grips with him, and when I do, there will be still more music—in a shrill falsetto!—
Yours, etc. LAWRENCE FAULKNER.

(We are well aware of the identity of this wandering musician, who resides not a hundred miles from the Shell passage. But we do not feel disposed to reveal his name. We hope, however, that he will read these lines, and refrain from inflicting his melodies (?) on industrious Sixth-formers. We are prepared to offer him a substantial bribe if he will transfer his attentions to the Fifth-form passage—outside the door of Coker's study!—Ed.)

Not Lost, But Gone Before!

Dear Editor,—I am bringing the following incident to your notice, in the hope that you may be able to throw some light on the matter.

Yesterday I baked two dozen small cakes, and the tray containing them was placed on the counter in my shop. I was summoned to the back door by a tradesman, and when I returned to the counter, both tray and cakes had disappeared!

I am naturally worried at this mysterious loss of my edibles, and shall esteem it a favour if you can suggest to me their present whereabouts.—Yours obediently,
JESSIE MIMBLE,

Proprietress, School Shop.

(Last evening we saw Billy Bunter groaning on the floor of the junior common-room, and he informed us that he was suffering severe "eternal" pains. We are afraid Mrs. Mimble's cakes are beyond recovery!—Ed.)

A Protest from Gussy!

Dear Sir,—I notice, with great indignation, that your contributor, Lord Mauleverer, in his article on "Fashions," disparages the topper. He says it is obsolete and defunct.

Toppers, I would inform my noble friend, are still adopted by the cream of society. Every real aristocrat wears one. I wear one myself!

Straw hats are all very well, but the topper is the finest piece of headgear ever invented. It can be worn on sedate and solemn occasions; and at frivolous seasons it can be used as a football.

I would not willingly part with a single one of my hundred-and-fifty-eight toppers. I regard them as personal friends. I parade them and inspect them every morning. I regret to say that a few of them are in rather a battered condition.

Lord Mauleverer is right off the wicket when he says that the topper is out of date. Nothing of the sort, dear boy. You can say what you like about other hats; but nothing can top a topper!—
Your sincerely,

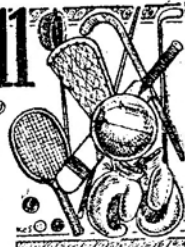
ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY.

(Our illustrious friend deserves to be flayed alive for the abominable pun with which he concludes his letter. Nevertheless, we agree with him that nothing can top a proper topper (bit of a tongue-twister that!) There is just one drawback, however. When a gusty wind is blowing, we often find it necessary to instruct a "copper" to stop a topper!—Ed.)



Sports of all Sorts

BY VERNON-SMITH



IT is the ambition of every red-blooded British boy to be able to use his fists with at least some degree of skill. This desire is a perfectly healthy one, for boxing is one of the best and most beneficial of sports when it is indulged in for love of the game, and in a fair and manly way. But I hear that at present over in New York, and other places in the United States, hundreds of youths are devoting all their spare time to becoming proficient fighters in the hope that they may be able to win big purses such as those offered to Jack Dempsey and Georges Carpentier. This is not a healthy motive for taking up a sport, and, personally, although I am as interested in the doings of the big professional fighters as any of my readers, I feel it is a great pity that money has come to play such a huge part in the cult of "the noble art." I like better the spirit of one of my readers who hails from Clontarf, and signs himself "Cheery." This chum tells me that he is anxious to be able to box well so that he can hold his own at the sport against other fellows of his acquaintance—some of whom are bigger and heavier than himself—in friendly bouts within "the squared ring." How should he train? he asks. "Cheery" is also anxious to do well on the footer field, but from what he says I should imagine he has the stamina neither for boxing nor football at present. In a previous chat I gave some hints on getting fit by means of a few simple exercises and so forth, so it is not my intention to go over all that again. Therefore, I will set out in the limited space at my disposal a few tips with regard to training that will be useful to any fellow who wants to be able to last a few rounds with the gloves without feeling like dropping in breathless exhaustion at the end of them. If "Cheery" follows out this advice he will also find his wind better for a strenuous game of footer.

BOXING FOR BOYS—SIMPLE WAYS TO TRAIN.

In chatting about boxing training it must be stated that no two authorities have quite the same ideas on the subject. Professional pugilists get their own notions as to what system of training is beneficial to them, and each man puts at least a few pet theories of his own into practice. The old idea that a boxer should eat unlimited raw meat to make him fierce and strong before a battle has now gone out of vogue, however. Of course, as no two fellows are actually alike physically, it is not possible to lay down a full and exact course of training to be followed, for what might suit one boy would possibly harm another. Here, however, are a few general tips which will help all my chums who are anxious, like "Cheery" is, to make a decent show with the padded mitts.

Bear in mind the old adage about "Early to bed, early to rise," and when you rise in the morning have a sponge wash with tepid water, followed by a brisk rub down with a rough towel. Then breathe deeply into the lungs for a few minutes, followed by some simple exercises with a pair of one-pound dumbbells. Eat plenty of good plain food, few sweets, and not too much meat, and on no account smoke cigarettes, which are ruinous to the wind. When the opportunity presents itself get out into the open air, and go for a long brisk walk. Choose for your walk a hilly road if possible, for the exertion of walking up and down hill exercises two entirely different sets of muscles.

THE VALUE OF SPEED!

Now remember that for boxing quickness of the feet is as important as speed with the fists, and, therefore, in training you should always include in the day's work a few minutes with the skipping-rope. A good punching-ball is a rather expensive thing in these days, but if you can afford one it is a very excellent thing for practising on, for exercise with it helps you to attain speed in hitting, and develops quickness of the eye. But whether you can get a punching-ball or not you should do a little "shadow sparring" each day. Shadow sparring is really boxing with an imaginary opponent, and even the best boxers go in for this a great deal, as it exercises all the muscles used in actual fighting, and helps to make you quick in hitting and in footwork. Feinting, ducking, delivering blows from all possible angles, and avoiding imaginary blows, side-stepping, and so forth, can all be practised by this means. Once or twice a week get some fellow who is a much better boxer than yourself to spar with you with the gloves on. On some future occasion I hope to give a few useful tips which are not usually included in books on "the way to box," but meanwhile I will content myself by informing you that much useful information on how to box can be found in a booklet called "Boxing For Boys," published by Messrs. Spalding at one shilling. This can be ordered through any bookseller. I hope my few tips on simple training for boxing will prove of benefit to "Cheery" and others. Remember, chums, I am pleased to hear from any of you who are interested in sporting topics, and your letters shall be replied to either through the post or in this column.

SPORTING ITEM OF INTEREST.

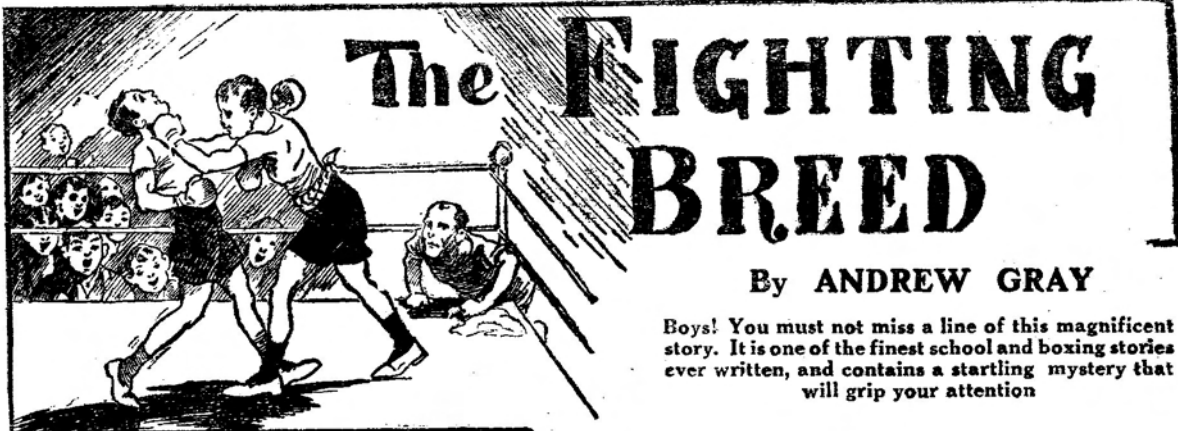
The biggest crowd that ever attended a football match was that which witnessed the England v. Scotland International game at Hampden Park, Glasgow, on March 23, 1912. 127,507 people passed through the turnstiles.

Reading in the newspaper report about the last Test Match against Australia that "Hobbs cut McCartney twice in one over and then knocked him all over the field," and that "when Collins came on Hobbs ran straight out at him and smacked him over the pavilion," Mrs. Mimble decided that cricket is a very cruel game.

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, but is accused of foul play. Furthermore, the Head brings news that the papers in connection with the scholarship examinations have been tampered with, suspicion falling on Jack because of a dirty trick played on him by his stepbrother, Ken. 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 Jack is despised. Through Kip he meets Captain Bragg, the Fighting Bargee, who matches him against Linsky, a regular "man-eater," to win a wager for Lord Brandish.

(Now go on with the story.)

Jack Meets a Friend!

"SO you've offered to help me out of my hole, is that it?" queried young Lord Brandish, eyeing the tall, well-knit figure of Jack Blundell with curious interest.

"You don't look as if you had been a fighting man for long," he suddenly added. For it was obvious to the most casual eye, that this youngster, fresh from St. Bartlemys School, had none of the cut of the prize-ring about him.

Jack flushed. Lord Brandish was quick to mark the heightened colour. There was some secret behind all this, he could see. But he was a gentleman.

"What name are you going to box under?" he asked, as a sign that he wished to probe no deeper.

"Randall—Jack Randall," struck in Kip promptly. For he had seen by the way Jack's lips were shaping that he was going to forget and give his own name.

"Ah, yes—Randall." Jack murmured awkwardly. And again his young lordship glanced keenly at him.

"Very well, then, Randall," he agreed. "If Captain Bragg says you've the right man and your willing, why, I'd be a double-dyed ass, indeed, if I didn't snatch at the offer. You've been told what you're up against, I suppose?"

"Well, not much about it, but enough," replied Jack. "I understand it's to be a fight with someone over some wager you made."

"Good! Splendid!" laughed his young lordship. "And you don't care whether it's Carpenter or Dempsey you're going to take on?"

"Well, I don't see that it affects much. The other fellow's got to be

fought, hasn't he?" was all Jack's answer to this.

Whereat, Captain Bragg slapped his thigh and vowed: "That was a good'n." And the two old retired mariners, who were his neighbours, roared with delight.

Old Kip was beaming like a Cheshire cat, too; as much as to say: "There, I told you so. That's the sort of nibs he is."

It came then to a question of training. But here Kip stepped in.

"There ain't no one going to handle this lad, except me," he warned them flatly. "I've known him before ever he was so high as twelve-penn'orth of coppers, and all he knows about boxing he's got from me." And he glared at Captain Bragg as one dog will bristle at another, when he thinks it is going to try and take away its bone.

However, the Fighting Bargee was content. He knew Kip's quality and repute. And besides, what better proof-mark could Jack have given of his fistic education than the black eyes which the captain was wearing now?

So it was fixed up. Their former champion, the luckless Tinker Dukes, now in hospital with appendicitis, had had his retaining quarters at Gippham. This was a remote village not far from Newbury. Here his sparring apparatus and ring was still set up. Obviously the thing was for the two to get down there and take them over.

"But Gippham!" exclaimed Jack, looking with troubled eyes at Kip.

The latter was so keen and excited about the work in front of him that he had not noticed what omen hung about that name.

"Ah, yes; Gippham," he echoed with disappointment.

"Well, what's wrong with Gippham?" queried Lord Brandish. "Jolly good air and quiet as you like. I live round those parts myself, when I'm not in town. St. Bartlemys School is too far away, if it's that you're thinking about, and that the boys might worry—"

Lord Brandish let the sentence go uncompleted. For a thought had suddenly darted into his feather brain. He had marked that quick look of apprehension in Jack's eyes. Moreover, the youngster was wearing a tie of orange and brown which his lordship had a shrewd recollection was one of St. Bartlemys' House colours.

"Of course," he agreed, hesitatingly, "if you've any big reason against the place—"

"Oh, none at all!" protested Jack suddenly, turning a furious red. "I know Gippham, that's all, but just to pass through it. We'll make it our training quarters, of course. Why not?"

Why not, indeed? But Kip knew.

Gippham village was sufficiently far from their old school in the ordinary way that they need not worry their heads.

But at this season of the year there were paper-chases, and a run through Swatbey Forest and on round Flensham Hills by Gippham Ridge was not unheard of for the older teams. It was a long way round, but a course they took it occasionally.

Dare they risk it? Kip was thinking entirely of Jack. But the latter was characteristic stubbornness, rather than that Lord Brandish should ever dream the truth, he was determined to get straight there now.

And so it was fixed up. And Captain Bragg could run down as often as he liked and see how their new champion was getting on.

"And I shall be over often, too, you bet," laughed his lordship, light-hearted as a schoolboy, now that his troubles were all squared, as he seemed to think.

Yet, as a matter of fact, if he lost that five thousand to Major Slayman over this coming fight, he was going to be in the dickens own mess. His credit was already pledged up to the hilt, and the least that could happen would be that he would have to throw up his commission in the Guards.

The young peer already had his car outside. If they were really keen to get to work straight away, he would run them down right now.

"But your luggage?"

"Oh, we've got none," answered Jack.

"None?" echoed Lord Brandish, as if this confirmed what he was thinking. But he covered it up quickly and seemed to take it as a matter of course that grown men went through life with only what clothes they wore on their backs.

A minute later they were in the car, and with quite a rousing cheer from all the neighbours who had watched Jack pass successfully his "ordeal of battle," away they drove.

In Training!

GIPPHAM, of course, was quite one of the prettiest spots on earth, and luckily far enough away from

St. Bartlemys for the folk there not to know either Jack or Kip. Quartered at a tiny inn called, the Old Fiddle, they were as snug as could be.

Outside, in a high-hedged orchard, an open-air ring was pitched for training, while a palace of a barn alongside made an excellent gymnasium for inclement days.

Kip from now on was a never-ending revelation to Jack. At St. Bartlemys he had been a smart, respectful physical-training instructor merely, keen enough

on the boys who were keen enough on the things he taught them, but in the main a man who kept himself to himself, as he described it.

But now, with the task of training a lad he loved to real ring-fighting, and the additional incentive of helping a right good fellow, as Lord Brandish seemed to be, there was no holding him.

He bossed Jack about and ordered him to bed and when to get up, as high and mighty as if he had been a general. He had him out of his blankets each morning at six, and the two of them had done as much violent exercise between then and breakfast time as most fellows put in in a month.

After that, it was a ten-mile mixed walk, jog-trot and sprint till lunch-time. Then sparring in the afternoon, with all the coaching that cunning old Kip could devise, out of his own vast experience of the gloves.

Kip both charmed, dazzled and scared his young pupil at times. There was much that was positively magnetic about him, with his wild flashing enthusiasm, his thunderbolt rages when Jack seemed slow in grasping some trick or other that Kip was trying to show him.

For the old warrior was all wiles. "Ringeraft! That's what wins fights, and don't you forget it," he thundered at the youngster again and again.

"Brains! My brains and your fists, if you think you can manage that better. You leave it to me and I'll show you."

And then in the evening, tired out with fresh air and strenuous exercise, there was little energy left for anything. Even the old haunting worry of his father's heartless treatment, was dulled.

"But I can't help wondering," Jack said once, "whether someone hasn't been stuffing the dad with even bigger lies than we know. Certainly something absolutely rotten has set him against me. I can't believe it's only the stolen exam-questions. Even with Ken, I could never cut him right off like that without a chance to say he was sorry."

"No. Well, p'raps you're right," grunted Kip snappily. "Anyway, you're down here, my lad, to forget all that and keep a healthy mind. Don't want you worritting about what can't be helped."

"Your guv', I tell you, has been druv into what he's doing," he fired up, jogged out his own drowsiness. "Your stepmother got first whack in with her tongue, and has been too much for him. She don't love you. She wants to see the old man's money, when he dies, go to Master Ken, not you. That's her little game all right."

But Jack was never the one to allow his folk to be talk over in this fashion, even by Kip. So the subject dropped, and, obedient to his trainer's commands Jack went to bed.

But next afternoon it was to be revived again, in a way that proved startling to all parties concerned. Jack and Kip were in the middle of a stiff bout in the ring outside in the orchard, when the youngster cast one wild glance at the sloping hill above them, and straightway vaulted the ropes, and took refuge in the darkest corner of the barn close by.

"Confound you, you young sarn-box; what'd you do that for? What's your game?" thundered his mentor, amazed at this act of mutiny.

"Sh! Shut up, and look. Can't you see?" answered Jack, still peering up from the doorway at the gorse-covered slopes above their training quarters.

And sure enough, Kip saw the reason now. Two little figures in shorts and football jerseys, with big canvas bags slung round their shoulders, were coming loping along, descending to the road

which would take them right past the inn.

"Our chaps paper-chasing! Upper School colours, too!" exclaimed Jack, trembling with undefined panic. "Stynes and Cleever, isn't it? The whole crowd of them will be along next. Great Scott, what beastly luck!"

It was one of these very paper-chases that he had been dreading would come to disturb their peace. What if they found him here? He was thinking. The folk around would quickly get to know, of course. He could never stick it after that.

And all through life it was likely to be the same. Hunted from pillar to post. Kip realised the danger, too. He was not long in dodging into cover of the barn also. And there they watched the two hares go loping by, tossing out wisps of paper-shavings for a trail as they ran, but quite oblivious of the stealthy eyes watching them.

"And here's the rest," announced

subject of Kip's lesson that day, they soon forgot the invasion.

However, they had not seen the last of the paper-chasers yet, it happened. For while their attentions were centred on the work in hand, along from a different point of the compass, a group of Bartlemys seniors came loafing comfortably. These took no heed of the trail, but made straight for the Old Fiddle Inn, and came swaggering inside.

The biggest and most cock-sure was Jack's pet aversion, Nash of the Sixth. Behind came Carlison, also a monitor, Boone, Slater and Bryan of the Fifth, and Ken Allison, Jack's stepbrother and cowardly betrayer. There were three or four stragglers besides that they had collected on their way.

All unconscious of Jack's presence, not a stone's throw away, they swanked and swaggered and called for drinks.

"Bust paper-chases, I say. Bust all exercise, in fact. Give me an armchair and a jolly good frowst over a fire, all



They were so intent on a "feint, duck and swing over," which Kip was trying to teach, that they were blind to everything else. Then Bryan began to barrack and jeer, and in a trice the pair swung round.

Jack in a whisper. "That's old Sheare leading. He always does when I'm not there. I generally lick him. And there comes Hardman and Brewster and a whole bunch of them behind."

It was a good chase. The hounds were hard on the scent. But unless fewer had turned out for the run, the pack must have shed a good many stragglers on the way.

Only about thirty seniors straggled into view from first to last, picking their way down the steep hillside, dropping into the road and jogging past the inn. They were too intent on the trail, and "sticking it" to glance inside, into the orchard.

"Thank goodness! I don't believe even one noticed the boxing-ring. He would have been bound to turn and stare if he had," laughed Jack, his spirits rising again.

And so, having waited for another long twenty minutes, in case there were any stragglers still to pass, they took the ring once more. What between stiff rallies at in-fighting, which was the

the time," boasted the great Nash, with a leer at his satellites.

"Do you hear, landlord! Give it a name, you chaps. We'll make an afternoon here, and tell old Dowler we got lost, or sprained our ankles. Eh?"

Some of the others looked a little scared at this notion. But Ken, always Nash's toady, jeered them out of that, and Carlison, Boone and the other seniors, being all birds of one feather, reckoned it a top-hole idea.

"A pack of cards, eh, and a jolly fire to get round? What could man want better, 'stead of chasing after a couple of silly asses spilling paper about the bully country, what?" leered Nash again. He was wondering how much "tin" the stragglers had between them, that he could relieve them of.

For he was a proper sharper, was Nash of the Sixth.

They called for beer, but the landlord having his doubts whether this was allowed by Dr. Dowler, told them the tap had run dry.

"What? Well, this is a rotten sort of house!" blustered Nash furiously.

"Nothing but ginger-beer and swill like that, I suppose?"

However, they found a fire in the taproom, and a greasy pack of cribbage cards. But it was not cribbage they played. Nash saw that.

He won. So did Ken. The latter in his turn had not been through the same, skinning process by Nash without learning some of the tricks of the trade.

When Ken had whined to Jack, that night of the confession, that Nash had made him steal the exam-papers as the price of various debts, it was the truth. But even then he still owed money around.

He had been able to clear this off since; though at what cost to his soul and further injury to his stepbrother, only he and Nash as yet knew.

Still that was over. Jack was a santonious straight-laced beggar, after all. They both hated each other, Ken told himself, though he knew that was a lie. Jack had always been a good pal to him, whenever he would permit him.

But all life was a lie now. Ken decided. He did not care what became of him. He was going to skin all the money out of these "flats," just as he had been skinned himself.

So flipping his cards recklessly, he let his cunning eyes range; stealing sidelong glances at his neighbours' hands. And then he would give Nash the benefit of his information thus gained, by a lift of the eyebrow, or a stealthy wink. Before an hour was out, most of their victims had parted with all their tin to come for the remainder of the term. Some had lost such things as cameras, and stamp collections besides.

One suddenly flung down his cards, and got up flushed and angry. He would play no more. Nash fixed him with a dangerous sneer. There was all the makings of an ugly row. But the other flounced to the window instead and forgot his anger in a glance.

For emerging from a barn across the orchard, just then, came two figures as familiar as his own.

"Great Scott!" he gasped. "Why look, you chaps! Cooley and that fellow Blundell, out here!"

The Stolen Money!

"**B**LUNDELL! Never! Where?" But when they came scrumming round the window, they saw that it was true. Only Ken refused to look. His heart seemed to be standing still. Nor was Nash much more at his ease.

"By hookey; you're right," he said thickly. "What infernal sauce! Fancy their coming only this far all the time. What are those fools of police doing?"

"Police!" echoed Bryan of the Fifth. He was not quite of Nash's "swim," and like the rest of St. Bartlemys, had not the smallest conception of the plot of which Jack had been the victim.

"The Head would never have put the police on to Blundell for priggish exam-papers."

"It wasn't only exam-papers. There was money besides," exploded Nash, speaking in panic. "He pinched the whole of the entrance-fees for the boxing before he left, if you want to know."

"What!" The exclamation was universal almost. Jack they knew had been treasurer of the recent school competitions. The money was not entrance-fees really, but each boy who put down his name, had to deposit half-a-crown which was refunded to him if he turned out on the day. Otherwise, it was

forfeited. With between forty and fifty entries, this amounted to a tidy sum. So Jack had pinched it. Taken it with him when he bolted that night.

"Phew!" whistled Bryan, who could never have credited it. "Let's go out and tackle the beggar with it, I vote," he said boldly, and before Nash could stop him, he and the others were trooping out to go round to the orchard gate.

The bully could have bitten his tongue out now for his folly. One glance at Ken's face awakened him to what he had done.

Ken and he had stolen this money between them actually. They knew that Jack would have it in his study, and that if he remembered it, which was unlikely, he would never take it with him.

So at the first breath that Jack had bolted, they had managed to slip in unseen. There, sure enough, in a small cash-box in his desk was the booty they were after. Forcing the lid, they abstracted the money—over five pounds in all—and left the box then for the Head to find, and draw his own conclusions.

And now, though the whole mob was standing at the gate, Jack and Kip, sparring in the ring, were still oblivious that they were being watched.

They were so intent on a "feint, duck and swing over," which Kip was trying to teach, that they were blind to everything else. Then Bryan began to bark and jeer, and in a trice the pair swung round.

"Back-up, you fellows! Show him what you think of him!" exhorted Bryan, not anxious to attract all the attention on himself. "Booh! So we've found you out, eh? Where's that money you pinched, you mouldy thief!" he shouted.

The others took up the cry then. They howled for Nash to come out. He knew all the facts. Meantime, they hooted Jack, while some of the more waggish began to imitate police whistles and sing out "Stop thief! Police!"

Jack was thunderstruck. With his gloved hands resting on his hips, he glowered back at the group at the gate, wondering, with rising anger, what it all could mean.

"Where's old Nash? Make him come out. And young Ken, too. Tell him his precious stepbrother is here," insisted someone again.

Mention of those two names stung their victim to a livelier grasp of things. Nash, for obvious reasons, was still skulking inside the tavern. Here Ken and he were snarling, each accusing the other. Ken was rating Nash for a mouthing fool for bringing this fresh trouble down on them.

"I never wanted Jack to know," he was protesting. "I wanted him to go on thinking it was the exam-papers only."

"But your pater knows. They've been told at home, surely?"

"You bet!" laughed Ken with a sneer. "His gun'nor knows, and has kicked him out. But now—"

The shouts from outside to show themselves echoed in just then.

"He'll be whipping the floor with both of us. That's what it will come to," whinned Ken, contemplating a bolt by the window, and a back way. Nash would have followed his lead, but secret retreat was impossible. They covered in the taproom.

Meantime Jack had come stalking across to the gate. Most of the barkers began to break and scuttle when they saw this. But Bryan, relying on Nash appearing, stood his ground. The others then turned also.

"What's this I hear you say?" demanded Jack coming up to Bryan. "Something about money. What money? Out with it." His eyes wore a gleam that bade Bryan beware. But the latter was no coward exactly.

"The boxing entrance-fees you took away with you, Nash says, the night you bolted."

If he had struck Jack across the face he could have not produced greater effect. He saw him recoil, a look rather of horror than of resentment in his eyes.

It was the first time Jack had recollected that money in his cash-box, as a matter of fact. The bitter events of the past two days had entirely driven it out of his memory. It was of his own carelessness that he was thinking; in not settling up about it with someone before he left.

But his evident shock was misinterpreted.

"That's stumbled him!" jeered Cleever. "He can't answer, you see."

"Answer what?" roared Jack. "That I took it with me? Is that the latest lie? So Nash is putting that about, is he? Let me find him."

With a hand on the gate he vaulted into the middle of the group and knocked half of them spinning. They were glad, nevertheless, to scuttle out of his way.

"Nash, you lying beast! Come out of there," called Jack into the door of the inn. "Come out and repeat what you've been telling these chaps, and I'll smash the stuffing out of you."

But all the answer was wild squeals of protest from a pig-sty in the fenced yard behind the inn. Nash and Ken, though they could see no way of escape, undetected, had decided to climb out of the window at least. Another moment they might have been over the fence and chancing a breakaway. But Jack's voice unnerved them with panic.

There was a pig-sty in the yard—empty they hoped. But there was no time to see. Into it they hopped, and dived for the low door.

Unfortunately there was a sow and nine lusty piglets taking their siesta inside. Up they were tripped and over they were bowled, all among the slush and filthy straw.

"Nash, you hound! Ken! Do you hear me? I'll bring an apology out of you for this, if I have to break your necks," called Jack, who had advanced into the taproom, only to find the birds flown.

However, the commotion from the pig-gery beyond soon set him on the trail, Bryan and the others came crowding after. Only Kip had halted to a motor-car, come driving up to the inn from one direction, and a cyclist from the other.

Meantime, Jack had got busy with a stout pole. He was ramming about with the end of this, stirring up porkers; but occasionally getting a lusty prod at human flesh.

"You've got to come, you curs!" He was threatening the fugitives above the screeching of the pigs. "If I have to pull the roof off, I'll have you out of it."

At that moment, happening to look up, who should he see but Lord Brandish following Kip into the yard, while behind him, pale, perplexed; but bristling, stalked Mr. Jeeves, the master of the Sixth.

Another fine long instalment of this ripping school tale will appear in next week's issue of the Greyfriars "Boys' Herald." Make a point of ordering your copy NOW!

HOW TO KEEP GOAL!

By JACK MEW—the Goalkeeper of Manchester United.



I SOMETIMES wonder whether the footballer who elects to become a goalkeeper should consider himself lucky or unlucky. You see, his position is different from that of any other player on the field, for strictly speaking he is entirely on his own. That means that he does not depend on anybody else for success, and to that extent, perhaps, the goalkeeper may consider himself lucky. On the other hand, there is really nobody to help him to pull through successfully. So as the question appears to cut both ways we shall have to leave it undecided.

Before proceeding to talk about goal-keeping and how it should be done, however, I want to point out my exact meaning when I stated above that the goalkeeper is different from any other player on the field. He is different in that he stands alone, and he is also different in that, ninety times out of a hundred, he stands between his opponents and goals.

When the goalkeeper is beaten a goal generally follows. The mistakes of forwards, half-backs, and even full-backs can often be remedied, but if the goalkeeper makes a blunder then it is long odds that a goal will be recorded against his side. This fact—that he is the "last hope"—

is the one thing about his football which the goalkeeper should never forget.

For instance, the goalkeeper simply cannot afford to take one unnecessary risk; he must always ask himself if he is adopting the safest methods. No matter what sort of shot is sent in, the goalkeeper must treat it very seriously, because if he does not he may make one mistake which will cost his side the goal and the match. In a score of different ways, at least, can the goalkeeper carry out this "non-risk" policy.

Suppose that a long and comparatively slow shot along the ground is sent in, I



No goalkeeper should make a habit of kicking at shots to which he can apply his hands first.

have often seen young goalkeepers take a flying kick at the ball on such occasions, and for the most part, of course, they kick clear. But they are taking risks, and once in ten perhaps, or it may be only once in twenty, that a slow travelling ball will elude the boot of the goalkeeper, and he will have to turn round and pick it out of the net.

Hence I say that, whenever he can possibly do so, the goalkeeper should use his hands to the ball. The rules of the game allow him to do so, and he should

always avail himself of the privilege. Perhaps once in a way the circumstances will be such that the goalkeeper simply has to run the risk of kicking at a travelling ball—say when there is a race for possession between the goalie and a forward. But no goalkeeper, whether young or old, should make a habit of kicking at shots to which he can apply his hands first.

Every football ground does not possess a perfect pitch, and a football may do queer things, even when it is travelling slowly. Well do I recall, for instance, when I was a young goalkeeper, taking a flying kick at a slow travelling ball. It really looked as though I could not miss it, but it struck a bump in the ground just in front of me, and the next second I was picking that ball out of the net—a sadder, but possibly a wiser player. Anyway, I don't take risks of that sort in these days.

Practically the same thing applies to punching a ball.

If the goalkeeper is in a tight corner, and surrounded by opponents, then he has no option but to get rid of the ball as best he can, and a punch is often the only way. But never punch when you have time to catch and kick clear. Unless you happen to have a fist like Joe Beckett, say, a punch can at best only land the ball a little way down the field, and at worst it is a very risky proceeding, for the ball may be slippery and instead of going down the field in that dramatic way which brings forth the applause of the onlookers, it may curl off your fist into the net.

In the case of high shots, I often think it is advisable to tip the ball over the bar rather than run the risk of trying to catch it if my opponents are coming dashing up in the effort to rush me and the ball into the net. Many a goal has been given away, and many a match lost because the goalkeeper has tried to catch a shot which he should have been content to tip over the bar.

Jack Mew

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 read. Remember your joke should be written plainly on a postcard, and addressed to Greyfriars "Boys' Herald," The Fleetway House, Farringdon St., E.C.4.—Editor.

AND THEY MIGHT HAVE—

Following a street accident, Pat volunteered to go to the nearest hospital and fetch a doctor. After his message was delivered, he began to take some interest in the patients.

"What are you in here for?" he asked one.

"I've got tonsillitis, and I've got to have my tonsils cut out," was the answer.

"And you?" he questioned another.

"I've got blood-poisoning in the arm, and they're going to cut it off," was the reply.

"Howly smoke!" said Pat in horror. "This ain't no place for me. I've got a cold in my head!"—Money prize sent to R. W. Beesley, 5, Castle View, Millom, Cumb.

HER FAVOURITE DISH.

A mother was taking her baby boy and girl to be christened one Sunday afternoon, and the girl was to be named Kate and the boy Sidney.

But when the vicar asked her what names do you give these children? the poor mother was so overcome with nervousness that she replied: "Steak and Kidney!"—Money prize sent to George Huggett, 11, Wentworth Road, Maner Park, E.12.

A KNOWING HORSE.

A man in search of work, found his way up to Aberdeen, and succeeded in getting a job as a carrier with a horse and van to drive round.

One day he was going on his round as usual, when suddenly the horse stopped and refused to budge. After exhausting his vocabulary, the unfortunate man scratched his woolly head in despair. At that moment a boy passed by, and asked him what was the matter. The man told him, and they both looked at the horse, who was standing quite docile.

A brilliant inspiration suddenly struck the boy, and he solemnly lifted one hoof and then the other. But when he came to the last hoof, the old horse refused to have it lifted. After a struggle, in which the driver helped, the hoof was raised, and there on the ground lay a sixpence!—Tuck Hamper sent to R. Baker, 67, Malta Road, Leyton, E.10.

TIT-FOR-TAT.

Port and Trop, two rival butchers, were at daggers drawn. One day Port displayed a notice that his meat was being supplied to all the best families around him. Trop not to be out-done went a step further, and displayed a large sign to say that he was now under an appointment to His Majesty. That night, when all was dark, Port journeyed forth on a mission. And the next day the public were very much tickled to see over Trop's shop:

"God save the King!"—Money prize sent to A. E. Marshall, Windmill Hotel, Blossom Street, York.

HIS TEMPERATURE.

A nigger who had been taken suddenly ill sent for a doctor of his own colour. The black doctor was attending him for some time, but the nigger, seeing that he wasn't getting any better, sent him away and sent for a white doctor.

The white doctor came. "Did your last doctor take your temperature?" he asked.

"No, doctor," groaned the patient. "The only thing he took was my watch!"—Money prize sent to Ernest Macklin, 1, Mount Pleasant Parade, Ranelagh, Dublin.



THE MYSTERY OF THE MIDNIGHT MAIL

An amazing 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 sixteen, 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. Peter is imprisoned in a building on Dartmoor, and Oliver, who is seeking him, is also captured. Ralph Vanderling, 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. Peter is recaptured. Steele, with the assistance of Inspector Larking, track down the fugitive's car which lays wrecked and abandoned. An idea occurs to Steele. "I know what has become of Peter," he says. (Now go on with the story.)

Steele's Find!

"I KNOW what has become of Peter," Steele repeated.

"You're jolly clever if you do," said the lad. "What do you mean?"

"Come along, my boy, and I'll show you. I want to make an investigation at once."

"Where are we going, guv'nor?"

"Back to the bridge. We may find something there which will prove my theory."

Two of the constables were left with the car, and Oliver and the detective set off along the road, followed by Inspector Larking and the constables. A brisk walk of a quarter of an hour brought them to the bridge that crossed the railway-line. Steele played the light of his torch on the dusty surface of the road, and pointed to a couple of footprints; and then, stepping to the right, he made another and more significant discovery. It was an old bridge of stone, and on the top of the low, flat parapet, on which was a soft growth of lichen, could be distinctly seen the prints of two small feet.

"Ah, I know now what you meant!" exclaimed Oliver.

"And so do I," said the inspector. "The mystery is clear now."

"Yes, it is just as I supposed," Steele replied. "Here is the proof. A goods-train was passing beneath, you will remember, as the car went over the crest of the bridge. Meanwhile, Peter Chumleigh had contrived to get his wrists free, and, seizing his opportunity, he sprang from the car, leapt on to the parapet, and jumped for the train."

"Plucky chap!" remarked Inspector Larking. "I hope he landed on a box-car or in one of the open trucks."

"The chances are that he didn't," said the lad. "He may have fallen and got killed."

Steele nodded gravely.

"That is more than probable," he assented. "We will soon see."

Hastening to one end of the bridge, they descended a grassy embankment, and made a thorough search on the line, going some distance in both directions. They discovered no trace of the missing youth, however, and their anxiety was relieved. Not doubting that Peter Chumleigh had landed in one of the trucks, yet fearing that he might have been injured by the leap, they rapidly returned to their car, talking as they went along.

"What are we to do now?" asked Oliver. "That is the question."

"We will have to look for Peter," Steele replied. "He will, of course, get off the train at the first stop, and that may be within a few miles. And then, if he had not been injured, I dare say he will set off towards Chumleigh Hall, which will be in this direction."

"But Ralph Vanderling and the others may meet him, guv'nor, and capture him again. They will suppose that he will do what you have just spoken of."

"That is what I am afraid of. They have a long start of us."

"They are on foot, though."

"Yes, which is to our advantage, my boy. It all depends on how far the goods-train will go before it stops or slows down, provided that young Chumleigh has not been injured."

Steele's deductions were logical. He had reason to fear that the youth might be recaptured should he get off the train and walk towards Chumleigh Hall.

"We must follow the railway-line closely if we can, Larking," he continued. "Will it be possible?"

"Yes, there is a road that skirts it for miles," the inspector replied. "I will guide you to it. I know all this part of the country well."

They had reached their car, which they had left guarded lest an attempt should be made by the fugitives to steal it. During their absence the wrecked car had been destroyed, burnt to a twisted mass of metal, and as it was a lonely neighbourhood nobody had been drawn to the spot by the flames.

"We must hurry," said Steele. "Time is precious. Take the front seat, Larking. I want you with me."

They were soon spinning to the south, but they did not go very far in that direction. Instructed by the inspector, Steele turned twice, and, finally, a third time, swerving to the right into a road that led due east.

The moon was still shining brightly, and to the left, within a hundred yards, the railway-line could be dimly seen across a meadow. On the other side was a low, wooded range of hills. A whistle shrieked in the distance, and an express train went thundering past towards Plymouth like a

fiery serpent, with a trail of sparks pouring from the engine.

"I can't get over that amazing tale you have told me, Steele," said Inspector Larking. "I hope we will pick up that young chap. If he falls into the clutches of those villains again they will do for him. He will be put to death."

Steele shook his head, and spoke of what had been in his mind for several hours. He had mentioned it to Oliver, but not to the inspector.

"Oh, no, he won't be," he declared. "I am not a bit afraid of that now. Before my boy escaped this evening he heard the men Sleath and Flindt discussing the murder plot with Ralph Vanderling, as I have told you. They, of course, suspect that he overheard them, and in the event of their recapturing Peter Chumleigh they certainly will not dare to do him any harm. They would drop Vanderling from the game, knowing that there would be little or no chance of getting any money from him, and open fresh negotiations for the youth's ransom with Squire Chumleigh."

"Well, I am glad that you take that view," Inspector Larking replied. "I dare say it is right. If that rascally uncle of young Peter suspects that you are aware of his wicked intentions he will not go any farther in the matter, knowing that he would be sought for and arrested if the youth were to be killed."

"You are counting your chickens before they are hatched, guv'nor," said the lad. "Peter is free, and as for those four men, I'll bet all they are thinking of is to get up to London as quickly as they can to hide from you."

"I would like to believe that," Steele answered, in an absent tone, "but I can't."

In the course of a mile the railway-line receded a little, and the meadows dwindled into wooded country. The hills on the opposite side climbed higher. Teignmouth was not far to the east, and it was likely that the goods-train had made a halt there. Steele was apprehensive. He pulled up to extinguish the lamps, and before he took his seat he listened for a short interval, hearing nothing but a faint, throbbing sound in the direction of Exeter. He drove on for three or four hundred yards, straining his eyes into the gloom ahead of him, watching for a glimpse of the four men or of Peter Chumleigh. Presently he stopped the car again, and got out. Something that glistened dully had caught his eye. Moving several paces to the left, he stooped and picked up a pearl button of a pale, grayish colour.

"What have you found?" asked the lad, coming over to his master.

"Only a button," Steele replied, showing it to him.

Oliver stared at it for an instant.

"My word, I know who that belongs to!" he exclaimed.

"To Peter Chumleigh, my boy?"

"Yes, guv'nor, I am certain! The

blue-serve jacket that Peter was wearing had just such buttons on it."

"It would seem that the youth has passed by here, then. Yet we did not meet him. I am very much afraid that—"

Steele paused. He drew his electric torch from his pocket, and switched on the light. "Ah, what's all this?" he murmured. "Keep away, Oliver. Don't come any nearer."

Inspector Larking stepped from the car, bidding the constables remain where they were, and he and Oliver stood back a little from the detective, watching him as he played the glare of the torch around him. Steele moved slowly to and fro, scrutinising the dusty surface of the road, now and again muttering to himself.

"What are you looking at?" the inspector presently inquired.

"At signs of a struggle," Steele answered. "There are confused footprints here, and a number of them. It is easy to see what they mean. Peter Chumleigh came along the road from the direction of Teignmouth, and when he reached this spot he was seized by those four scoundrels, who saw him approaching and concealed themselves. There was a desperate fight in which a button was torn from the youth's jacket. His assailants soon got the better of him, and then they must have dragged him into the woods yonder. There are no footprints to show that they departed in any other direction."

"By Jove, Steele, it is just as you feared!"

"Yes, the poor boy has been captured again."

Crossing over to the woods on the left side as he spoke, Steele flashed his torch into the dense undergrowth, and shook his head.

"The ground is hard," he said. "There are no further traces of the men. It will be a difficult matter for us to—"

"What's that?" Inspector Larking interrupted.

A faint shout rang at no great distance. Rapid footsteps were heard, and from a gate that was beyond the detective and his companions, and within thirty or forty yards, appeared the dusky figure of a man. He came running to the little group, and gazed at them breathlessly as he stopped. He was a well-dressed, elderly man of stoutish build, with a grey moustache and a florid complexion.

"My car!" he spluttered. "I have just discovered that it is missing! Can you tell me anything of it? Have you seen the thieves? I am Major Brampton! I live yonder at the Cedars. I had been to Totnes in the car, and when I returned—" He paused for breath, shaking his fist in his rage.

"How long has the car been gone, sir?" Steele asked him.

"Not very long," the inate gentleman replied. "It was only half an hour ago that I came home. I put the car in the garage at one side of my dwelling, and a few minutes later I remembered that I had forgotten to lock the door. I hurried out, and found to my amazement that the car had been stolen."

"Didn't you hear it depart, sir?"

"No, I didn't hear a sound. The scoundrels must have pushed it very quietly down the drive to the gate, and for some distance along the road before they got into it."

"What kind of a car was it, major? Give me a description of it."

"It was a Freville of the latest model. A large two-seater with a powerful engine."

"And the colour of it, major?"

"It was only one colour. A dark brown."

Steele exchanged significant glances with Oliver and the inspector. There could be no doubt as to who the thieves were, under the circumstances. Peter Chumleigh had fallen into the hands of Herbert Sleath and his accomplices, and after they had

captured him, knowing that there was a pretentious dwelling in the vicinity, they had gone there with the youth, and daringly stolen Major Brampton's car.

"We may be able to help you, sir," Steele said to the gentleman. "This is Inspector Larking of Newton Abbot who is with me. We have been looking for four men who are wanted by the police, and I believe they are the same persons who stole your car. You can leave the matter to us. We will do what we can."

"The scoundrels!" raved Major Brampton. "Make every effort to find them! I'll offer a reward! I will gladly pay—"

"You will hear from us if we succeed," the detective interrupted. "Good-night, sir."

He whipped back to the car with Oliver and the inspector, and off they went as fast as they could, in the direction of Teignmouth. Knowing what the plans of the thieves were, they were hopeful of overtaking them somewhere on the way to London and before the night was over.

said the inspector. "We'll have to abandon the chase. There's nothing else for it!"

"I'm not beaten yet. Is there any residence in the immediate neighbourhood where we could borrow a car?"

"No, Steele, there isn't one, I am sure. We'll have to walk to Newton Abbot, and get the telegraph-line to working."

"No, it won't do." Newton Abbot is too far."

Steele was silent, pondering the situation. He was furiously angry. He had lost another opportunity of rescuing Peter Chumleigh and catching the men, and it was a keen disappointment to him.

"Come along, Larking," he bade.

"The constables can stay with the car. We will have it repaired later. You and I and Oliver will push on to Teignmouth, which is only a mile or so distant. You will send telegrams to the police at Exeter and Taunton, Frome and Bridgewater, giving a description of the brown car. And I will wire to Scotland Yard, to a



Inspector Larking stepped from the car, bidding the constables remain where they were. Oliver stood back a little from the detective, watching him as he played the glare of the torch around him. Steele moved slowly to and fro, scrutinising the dusty surface of the road, now and again muttering to himself.

But to their dismay, when they had gone less than a mile, two of their tyres burst in quick succession. Steele pulled it up in time to avert disaster, and the whole party jumped out.

"Two tyres gone!" exclaimed the lad. "What could have caused it?"

"We might have broken our necks!" declared Inspector Larking. "We came within an ace of crashing into that tree!"

Steele said nothing. There was a suspicion in his mind. Taking his torch from his pocket, he walked back for several yards, playing the light on the road.

"Tacks!" he cried. "Large ones, and plenty of them! They are scattered about in profusion. The cunning rascals. They anticipated that they might be pursued when they fled from Cobleigh's house in the valley, and they were prepared to cripple any car that might come after them. One of them must have had a couple of boxes of tacks!"

"Well, they've done for us properly,"

friend of mine there, instructing him to have a watch set for the car on all the roads leading into London from the west and south-west. We will set a wide trap, and it may succeed."

The inspector nodded.

"Right you are," he assented. "It will be best to go to Teignmouth."

And with that he set off at a brisk pace to the eastward with Steele, and the lad.

A Futile Search!

THE telegrams that might or might not intercept the brown car having been despatched from Teignmouth, late though the hour was, Steele and his companions walked back to the car with a couple of tyres which they had purchased by knocking up the proprietor of a garage. They returned to Newton Abbot at an early hour of the morning, and after a few hours of sleep at the Red Lion Hotel Steele drove over to Chumleigh Hall and had a talk with

the old squire, relating to him all that had occurred, and instructing him to send word to him in London if he should get another letter from the men who had his grandson in their power. They had not written again, nor had Steele supposed that they would, since they had entered into negotiations with Ralph Vanderling.

He remained at Newton Abbot until the next day, and then, no report having been received from anywhere in the West Country or from Scotland Yard, he and Oliver travelled up to town, discussing the situation during the journey. Possibly Herbert Sleath and his accomplices had changed their plans, and were somewhere down in Devonshire; but it was more likely that they had slipped through the net which had been spread for them and reached London, the safest hiding-place in the world. From Paddington the detective went straight to Scotland Yard, to find that no news of the brown car awaited him there; and that night he sat for hours in his consulting-room in Welbeck Street, deep in thought, smoking pipe after pipe.

"We are not going to have an easy task," he said to Oliver. "Those scoundrels have got the better of me. I am pretty sure they are concealed in London. I haven't much doubt of it. But it will be a difficult matter to run them to earth. It isn't as if they were criminals whose favourite haunts are known to the police."

"And what of Ralph Vanderling?" asked the lad. "Do you suppose he is still with the others?"

"I should think not. They would have dropped him, I am certain, because they dared not do any harm to Peter Chumleigh, and therefore could not expect any money from Vanderling. They have probably parted company with him by now. Their next step will be to open fresh negotiations with Squire Chumleigh, and I dare say I shall soon hear from him to that effect."

"Very likely, gov'nor. As for Mr. Vanderling, you want to arrest him if you can, don't you?"

"Yes, Oliver, of course I do."

"Then you had better make inquiries at Bonner's Hotel in Ryder Street."

"I shall go there to-morrow my boy. There is little or no chance of Vanderling being at the hotel, though."

The next morning Steele called at Bonner's Hotel, and made guarded inquiries; and, as he had judged, there was no information to be had concerning Ralph Vanderling. He would have been bold indeed had he ventured back there.

"I recall the gentleman," the manager said. "He was an American. He left several days ago, and I haven't seen anything of him since."

During that day and the following day, assisted by Oliver and by some of the cleverest men attached to Scotland Yard, Steele searched for Peter Chumleigh and his captors, and searched in vain. He was inclined to believe that they were not in London, but on the following morning he was informed that the dark brown car had been found abandoned in the East India Dock Road, in the district of Poplar. He made prompt inquiries in that neighbourhood, and returned to Welbeck Street unsuccessful.

"I learned nothing whatever," he said to the lad. "The car was abandoned in the night, and there was nobody near it when it was observed by the police. You know what the neighbourhood is like, Oliver. On the side towards the river is a maze of dark and squalid streets, and if young Peter was in a drugged state, as doubtless he was, the men could have led him for a mile or so without attracting any attention."

"I should think that they had a hiding-place in readiness," Oliver replied.

"I dare say they had," Steele assented, "and in the vicinity of the Thames. But

we have no clue that might lead us to it, my boy."

"Well, gov'nor, we'll have to keep pegging away."

"I am counting on Squire Chumleigh now. I am expecting a letter from him at any time. And when I get it we may have an opportunity of setting a trap for Sleath and his accomplices."

There had been no word from the squire as yet, and there was none the next morning. Steele was beginning to feel worried now. He feared that negotiations for ransom might have been opened without his knowledge. He went off to the East End again, and came home for luncheon. He was too impatient to wait any longer. Towards the close of the day he sent a telegram to Chumleigh Hall, and he received an answer at eight o'clock that evening, as he and the lad were at supper. He eagerly tore the envelope open, and when he had glanced at the message it contained he read it aloud. It was very brief, and it ran thus:

"Your wire came too late. Squire Chumleigh left for London at three o'clock this afternoon.—WILLIAM GREGG."

Steele shrugged his shoulders. "Confound it," he muttered. "I don't like this!"

He paced to and fro, his hands thrust into his pockets, a shadow in his eyes. Oliver looked at him in amazement.

"What's wrong?" he asked.

"Everything is wrong, I am afraid," Steele irritably replied.

"I don't know what you mean. I thought you would be pleased, as the squire is on his way up to town."

"Yes, that's the worst of it. He must have had a letter from those villains!"

"No doubt he has. It is what you were expecting, and it will help you to—"

"You don't understand what is worrying me, my boy. Squire Chumleigh may leave me out of the matter. I fear that he intends to keep some appointment with Herbert Sleath and his accomplices, and agree to pay fifty thousand pounds to have his grandson set free. He should have stayed at home, and written to me, instead of coming to town."

"I shouldn't worry, gov'nor. I'll bet the squire will call on you first."

"It is not likely that he will. On the other hand, I don't want him to come here. I hope he won't. It would be most imprudent. He would almost certainly be shadowed by one of those scoundrels, with the result that negotiations would be broken off, or made more difficult."

"You might meet him at the station. Do you think there is time?"

"No, my boy, it is too late. The train has got to Paddington by now. I don't know what to do. If only he had—"

Steele paused and listened. A cab had stopped out in the street, and the next instant a bell was heard to peal below. There were voices in the hall, and footsteps on the stairs. Then the detective's servant rapped on the door and opened it, and into the consulting-room walked Squire Chumleigh, carrying a bag and a stick.

The servant shut the door, and Squire Chumleigh, dropped his bag and stick on to a chair.

A SEASONABLE SUGGESTION.

What are you going to give your small brother, sister or chum for Christmas?

That may be a difficult question to answer, for it is not easy to choose a present that will suit your pocket and at the same time be bound to please the recipient. Therefore, this suggestion should be of the greatest help to you:

A GRAND COLOURED CHRISTMAS PANTOMIME MODEL, with BOOK OF THE WORDS,

that will keep boys and girls amused for hours, can be obtained by asking your newsagent for

"CHUCKLES."

The Children's Champion Coloured Comic.

OUT ON FRIDAY. Price 1d.

"Well, here I am," he said.

"You are the very person we have been talking about," Steele replied.

"Vanderling and I caught the three-thirty at Newton Abbot, and we arrived at Paddington a quarter of an hour ago."

"Vanderling?" Steele cried.

The squire looked from one to the other in perplexity.

"Why are you so surprised?" he inquired.

Steele shrugged his shoulders. He had so far kept the old gentleman in ignorance of the American's villainy, and he now proposed to reveal the truth to him. But he was in no hurry.

"Where on earth did you run across Mr. Vanderling?" he asked, evading the question that had been put to him.

"I had a visit from him yesterday," Squire Chumleigh calmly replied. "He came to the Hall in the morning."

"What explanation did he give you?"

"He said he had heard that my grandson was alive and a prisoner, and he wished to know if anything had been heard of the men who had kidnapped him. Where he got the news I have no idea. He did not tell me. He spent the night with me, and we travelled up to town together this afternoon."

"Where is he now?"

"I left him at Paddington, Steele. He said that he was going to Bonner's Hotel, in Ryder Street, and that he would be staying there for several days."

Raymond Steele paced the floor with restless steps, a pipe in his mouth, a gleam of perplexity in his eyes. What he had learned made him very apprehensive.

"By the way, only one thing can have brought you to town," he said. "You must have had a letter from those scoundrels relating to young Peter."

"Yes, so I did!" Squire Chumleigh exclaimed. "I received it this morning."

He pulled an envelope from his pocket as he spoke, and gave it to Steele, who drew the enclosure from it, and read it aloud. It had been written from the same address as the previous letter, and it ran thus:

"Dear Sir,—You have ignored our former communication, and we do not propose to give you any further extension of time. Our price is the same, and we will not accept a penny less. Fifty thousand pounds in cash is what you must pay for the release of your grandson. He was a prisoner on Dartmoor, as you are doubtless aware by now; but he has been removed to London, and he is in a hiding-place that nobody could ever find."

"If you are willing to accept our offer you must do so promptly. You will not get another opportunity. Come up to town to-morrow, and sharp at the hour of ten on Thursday night, be at the Blue Lantern public-house in Chisfields, Limehouse. You will be met outside by a person who will address you by name, and will lead you to us, when we will settle with you the final arrangements for the boy's ransom. We solemnly warn you to obey the following instructions. Do not show this letter to anybody, do not speak of it to anybody, and do not bring any person with you."

Furthermore, we repeat the warning we gave you before. If you confide in Raymond Steele or the police, or try to set a trap for us, it will cost your grandson his life, and your life also. Do not fail to be at the place named, and do not attempt any treachery. Faithfully yours—"

Having read the letter again Steele tossed it on to his desk, and dropped into a chair. His heart was lighter than it had been.

Another long instalment of this exciting serial in next week's Greyfriars "Boys' Herald." Avoid disappointment by ordering your copy EARLY.

THE MYSTERY OF THE MINCE-PIE

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

By PETER TODD?

IT was Christmas-eve. There was an air of seasonable good cheer about our apartments in Shaker Street, Herlock Sholmes, wrapped in a quiet comfortable dressing-gown of mauve, pink and green checks, was reclining in his armchair. Between his thin lips was a large meershaum pipe, at his elbow stood a foaming tankard of cocaine, and under his long, handsome blue chin rested his unique Vadistrarius violin. The violin under the lean, capable hands of my famous friend, was emitting the strains of that well-known Christmas carol, "Rest you merry gentlemen." Unfortunately the lodgers in the flat above refused to be rested. They stamped on the floor with their hob-nailed boots, they dropped enamel plates and started an atrocious gramophone in opposition. But then they weren't gentlemen.

Imbued with the spirit of goodwill on earth, inseparable from the season, I laid aside the Treatise on Rat Poison I had been studying and perused with kindly interest the obituary notices of some of my late patients.

In the midst of our Christmas-eve festivities, a sharp knock sounded on the door. Suspecting it was Mrs. Spudson in search of her annual Christmas-box, I reached for the vase on the mantelpiece where we kept our savings and emptied the serenade-ha'penny it contained into the palm of my hand. Then our landlady entered followed by a tall young man wearing a heavy fur overcoat and a look of intense worry on his face.

"Mr. Turnham Greene," announced our landlady.

I placed Mrs. Spudson's Christmas-box in my pocket as Sholmes raised his lean form to greet his client.

"Just roll the cask of cocaine under the table, Jotty, and draw a chair to the fire for Mr. Greene."

As Mrs. Spudson withdrew, the client dropped into the chair and interlaced his fingers nervously.

"Mr. Sholmes, I need your help," he said. "Six months ago I got married and—"

Herlock Sholmes nodded sympathetically.

"The more dire a man's need the more ready am I to afford my aid," he said. "You can speak quite freely before my friend, Dr. Jotson."

"Thank you, Mr. Sholmes," returned Mr. Greene. "But it is on account of the mysterious disappearance of a diamond ring belonging to my wife that I want your capable assistance. You see, Mrs. Turnham Greene and I intend having some guests to dinner to-morrow night, and to add a spice of fun to the proceedings, I bought an imitation diamond ring to place in one of the mince-pies. This afternoon while Mrs. Slackbake, our cook, was chopping the mince, my wife assisted by making the pastry. It was her first attempt, Mr. Sholmes, and she did it especially to please me."

Mr. Turnham Greene shuddered slightly.

"Well," he went on, "after a time my wife went out to purchase a few pounds of monkey-nuts and other Christmas luxuries, and Mrs. Slackbake

cooked the mince-pies. Then the cook, who is employed by us by the day, went home. Early this evening, my wife remembered that she had taken off her diamond ring prior to making the pastry and had left it on the kitchen table. The imitation ring was there—the real one was gone!

"Thinking Mrs. Slackbake had dropped the diamond ring into one of the mince-pies in mistake, we obtained a hammer and chisel and opened them; but could find no ring. I rushed off to the home of our cook to question her, but I suppose I was tactless in my anxiety. Mrs. Slackbake thought I was accusing her of stealing the wife's ring, and she seemed to get a trifle annoyed. Anyway, she threw a scraper and a flower-pot at me and threatened to spoil my face completely if I showed in her neighbourhood again. Really, I do now suspect that woman of having stolen my wife's ring, and I want you to investigate the matter. Only find the



He served the guests with pudding about the size of a piece of loaf sugar, the remainder he put on his own plate.

ring, and I will write you a cheque for any amount you care to name up to fifteen bob."

"Such generosity always produces my best efforts on behalf of a client," murmured Herlock Sholmes. "To-morrow your wife shall be in possession of her ring again, Mr. Greene. Meanwhile, leave your address and that of your cook's."

When Mr. Turnham Greene had departed, Sholmes entered the capacious dressing-room, where hung his numerous disguises. Throwing aside costumes designed for an Admiral of the Fleet, Boy Scout, gas-fitter, jockey and hall porter, he produced a battered old uniform which had been presented to him by P.-c. 49, when that notorious officer had left the Force and gone into the comic song profession.

"It's the policeman's blue that attracts the cooks," chirped Sholmes as he emerged dressed as a Bobby. "Stay here, my faithful Jotty." He made a hasty exit. From his

remark I judged he was about to pay a visit to Mrs. Slackbake.

A couple of hours later he returned, but to my numerous questions he only returned the cryptic remark, "Hi!" Not until the following evening did he again refer to anything in connection with the Turnham Greenses.

"Come Jotty," he said. "Get on your best bib and tucker; to-night we dine with the Turnham Greenses. I wangled an invitation this morning to their Christmas dinner."

Having ordered Mrs. Spudson to hold over the fish and chips until Boxing Day, we set out in high spirits. Our reception, I thought, was a trifle chilly, due undoubtedly to the fact that my friend had not the diamond ring to produce. However, Sholmes soon made himself at home. He insisted on sawing the turkey, cracking the nuts for everybody, pouring the ginger-beer and helping the Christmas pudding.

With some dismay I noticed that my amazing friend was suffering from a severe lack of proportion. He served the Turnham Greenses, their guests and me, with a cube of pudding about the size of a piece of loaf sugar. The remainder he placed on his own plate. Even though the dinner was a change from the kippers and pancakes of Mrs. Spudson, Sholmes might have controlled his voracity. Once he nearly choked with a large mouthful of pudding and had to bury his head in the large red pocket-handkerchief.

After dinner a distinct chilliness was to be noticed in the attitude of our hosts and their guests towards us. I longed for the festive activity of the operating theatre, but Sholmes was a host in himself. He helped to build up the fire, but even when he playfully dug Mr. Greene in the ribs, that young man never even smiled. Instead he referred brusquely to Sholmes' promise of the previous day.

"Oh, the diamond ring?" said Sholmes. "Of course—how forgetful of me! Here it is!"

He placed his fingers in his waistcoat pocket and withdrew the object in question.

After that the atmosphere cleared. Everybody shook Sholmes by the hand and Mr. Greene presented him with some cigars and nuts. Then we played "Begger-your-neighbour," and afterwards Sholmes produced the violin he had brought and rendered that pathetic little ballad "Everybody calls me Tarzan."

Not until Mrs. Spudson had helped us up to our apartments and we were trying to hold the mantelpiece still, would Sholmes reveal the manner in which he had discovered the diamond ring.

"It was simple, Jotty," he said. "In my policeman's disguise I paid attentions to Greene's cook, Missis Slackbake, and in return the good woman informed me that instead of putting a ring into a mince-pie, she had placed it in the Christmas pudding as her dear old man used to do. I took good care to serve the pudding to-night myself, so there was a hundred to one chance I should find the trinket. When my molars encountered the ring, I placed it in my pocket to produce at a more dramatic moment. As you know, Jotty, I do not give my method away to clients—save of course in exceptional cases at the end of the story. "Goo'-night, my dear fellow—Merry New Year—Hi!"

More about Herlock Sholmes Next Week.

No. 61.
Dec. 25.
1920.

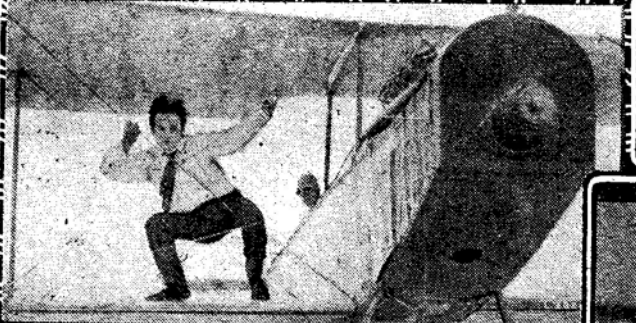
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HOUDINI, THE HANDCUFF KING.

On this page are some interesting photographs illustrating scenes from Houdini's film, entitled: "The Grim Game." Besides possessing a wonderful secret which enables him to release himself from all bonds, chains and padlocks, Houdini is a man of great courage, and on more than one occasion he has taken his life in his hands in order to provide his audiences with a thrill.



Walking along the wings of an aeroplane in full flight



Houdini in a tight corner. But his master mind will soon come to his aid.



He is a great fighter. Here you see him holding his own in spite of great odds against him.

