

THE EMPIRE ANNUAL FOR BOYS



To - Thomas Scott Bowden
With love from
Granny & Aunt Daisy on his
Birthday 2nd Jan 1921

THE EMPIRE ANNUAL FOR BOYS

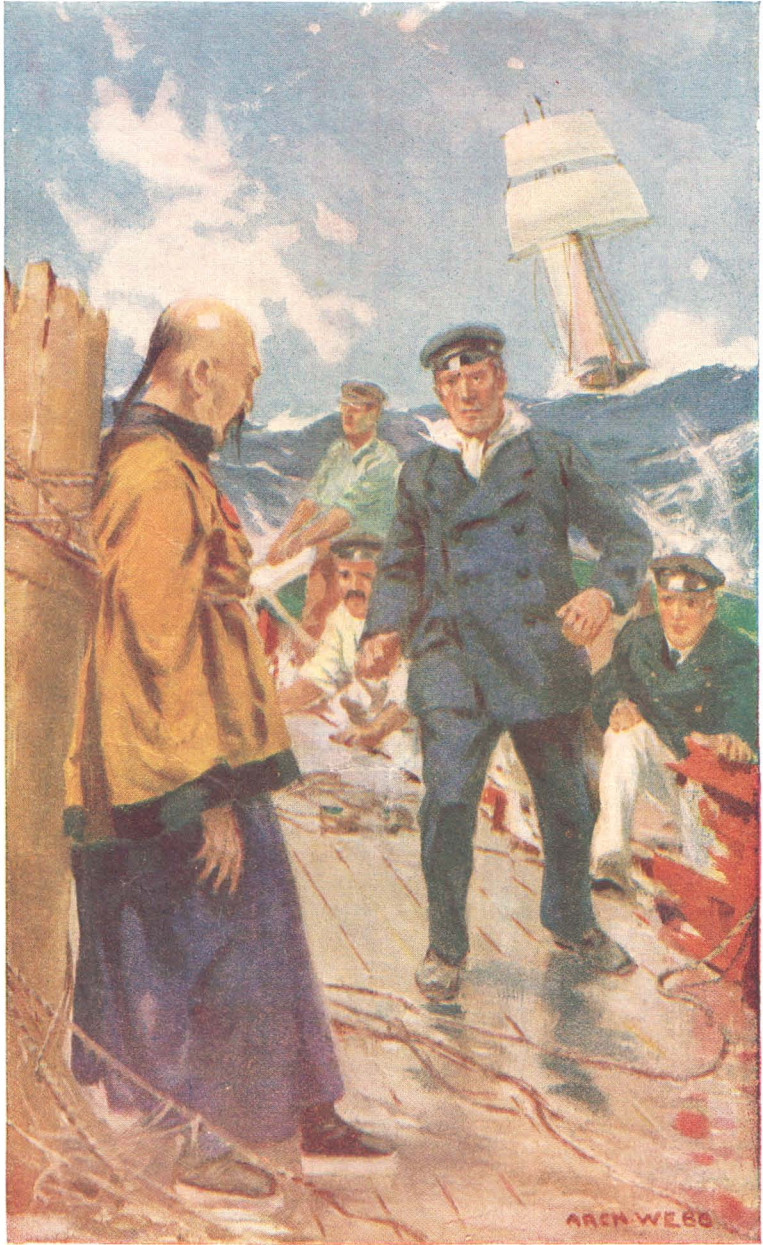
UNIFORM WITH THIS VOLUME

*320 pp. demy 8vo, cloth, with 7 coloured plates, and
16 black and white illustrations*

THE EMPIRE ANNUAL FOR GIRLS

With Contributions by—

Ernest Barry, Florence Bone, Florence M. Burditt, Isabel
Cameron, "Fancier," "Flowery Land," F. M. Holmes, Dr.
Reginald Horsley, Lucy Laing, A. Lincoln, Alice Massie,
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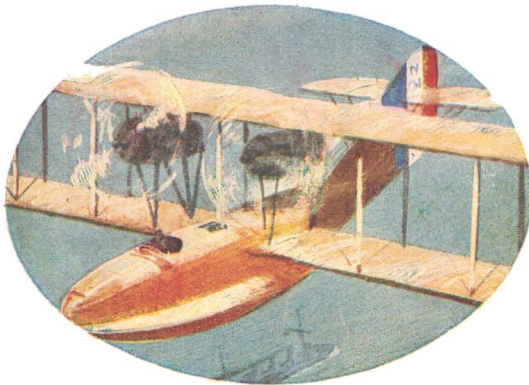
“ THEY MADE THEIR WAY ALONG THE SLIPPERY, HEAVING DECK
TO THE CHINAMAN, WHO SEEMED TO BE IN THE LAST
STAGE OF EXHAUSTION.” [See page 107.]

Empire Annual

FOR

BOYS

VOLUME TWELVE



With Coloured Plates and Sixteen
Black and White Illustrations

R.T.S., 4, Bouverie Street, London, E.C. 4

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The Pauper and the Profiteer

A School Story

BY A. C. BOOTH

1. *The Disputed Desk*

WE were sitting in the Fourth Form Room the night we came back for the summer term. It was rather jolly to see all the chaps again, and hear their tales about the holidays. We were wondering if there'd be any changes that term and discussing the cricket prospects, when somebody asked if anyone knew what fresh chaps were coming.

"Yes," said Walker, "I do."

"Of course," I said, for Walker was the centenarian of our Form. He wasn't exactly brainy, though a rattling good sportsman, and though he was seventeen he simply couldn't rise higher than the Fourth. He had been in the school ten years, and knew the past history of everybody.

"Well, give us a short account of each," said Stuart.

"There are two new ones who will probably come into our Form," said Walker, "and, as it happens, I do know something about them—at least, about one, and perhaps the other as well. Randall's brother was here six years ago—you remember him, Roper, though you were only eight or nine."

"You mean the Randall that died?" I asked.

"Yes, poor chap, I don't expect you would remember him much. He was in the Fourth at the time."

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"I suppose you were there too, weren't you, Walker?" said Stuart.

Walker looked offended and said, "Though you might have expected that my brilliant intellect would put me in the Fourth at the age of eleven, yet the Head, with his prejudice against real talent, was still keeping me top of the First Form."

"Top?" said Stuart.

"But get on with the story," said Douglas.

"I say," said I, "didn't the chap's father die too?"

"Yes," said Walker, "he was killed on the same day as Randall died. It was the third month of the war. At least, he wasn't his father exactly."

"Curious fellow!" said I. "When is a father not a father?"

"When he's a guardian," said Walker. "He and his brother had been adopted by the Major and brought up as if they were his own sons; he'd practically no relations, and every one expected he'd leave his money to these boys, but he didn't, and a distant cousin that he'd never seen got it all."

"Jolly shame!" said Stuart. "And were they, or rather this one, left with nothing?"

"Yes, not a threepenny bit!"

"What a shabby trick for the guardian to play; he ought to have provided for them, after taking them from their comfortable home at the workhouse, or wherever it was," said Douglas.

"Ass, it wasn't a workhouse. They were the orphan sons of his dearest friend, and he always meant to look after them, only he never made a will, like lots of others. I suppose he thought he'd come back safely."

"Well, how does the kid happen to be coming here? This isn't a charity school," said Douglas. "I suppose the distant cousin stumped up."

"Not he, the mean old toad, though he's got tons of money. Norman Randall was taken in by the next-door neighbour, a dear old soul, who's awfully poor herself,

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and who'd been looking after him while his father was away."

"How do you know all this?" said I.

"Oh, my people knew this good lady, and she's denied herself like anything to send him here for two years to school," answered Walker.

"Jolly old sport," said Stuart, and we all agreed.

"Now, what about the other fellows?" said Douglas.

"The gentleman with the aristocratic name?"

"That's Stiggins; of course it's only guess-work on my part," said Walker modestly, "but the name of the distant cousin who got all the tin was Stiggins. Wouldn't it be funny if it was his son who is coming here?"

"Walker, old bean," said I, "your love of family history is carrying you too far. Surely he can't be the only Stiggins in the world—unfortunately."

"Still, it would be a lark, wouldn't it?"

"It would," I said. And it was.

Next morning when we trooped in for first lesson I saw the two new boys standing talking to Miss Graham, our Classics mistress. Randall was fair, pale, and delicate looking, with great blue eyes and a timid manner. Stiggins was the same height and age, but dark and sallow, with a sneering mouth and boasting manner.

I must own that I took an instant dislike to the latter. It annoyed me to see him lolling against the desk while he talked to Miss Graham, and to notice the impudent way he looked round at the fellows while he answered her questions. So the first time he tried to be funny at her expense, two or three of us took him aside at the "break," and told him gently but firmly—not to. He tried it on again later, when he got the Lower Third kids to give a scratch concert with combs, paper horns, and other contrivances. They were kicking up a fearful hullabaloo when Dickson, one of the prefects, tumbled upon them in the classroom. Stiggins got a wiggling that should have taught him something, but he pretended to laugh it off.

Randall, though he looked like a kind of little Lord

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Fauntleroy, didn't live up to the part at all. He was a general favourite, but a most mischievous, irritating little monkey. He seemed to know more ways of teasing than any fellow I've met, and took a great delight in elaborate practical jokes.

Stiggins was only keen on one thing, and that was the war. I believe he was awfully disappointed when it ended, because there were no more descriptions of battles in the papers. He made the most of the Russian campaign, as that was all there was left in the way of fighting. He especially delighted in some of the tales our former Master, Captain Douglas, told one day when he came back for the week-end. He had been in the Secret Service, and of course had some thrilling spy plots to tell about.

Stiggins was always saying how he would have conducted the war, and what Lloyd George ought to do now. He was particularly interested in the doings of the ex-Kaiser, and often said what he would do if he had been shut up in Holland, how he'd get away and set up his kingdom again.

Randall and he hated each other. Stiggins was always sneering at Randall, calling him a pauper, and boasting about his own money.

Then there was the famous quarrel over the desk.

After Randall had been here a few days he discovered that Stiggins was in possession of his brother's desk, for his name, "Stanley Randall," was carved on it very large. So he naturally asked Stiggins to change, as he'd like to have it.

But the other wouldn't, and no amount of public persuasion would make him give it up. Of course, Randall could have asked permission from the Form Master to change, but somehow he didn't like to do that.

So one day he quietly changed all his books, and moved the desk into his own place.

The next day Stiggins had moved it back. They did this every day for a week, and then Randall got up

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early and carved on it, under his brother's name, so that it read—

“Stanley Randall's desk, but now Profiteer Stiggins'.”

This the chaps thought smart, as old Pa Stiggins had made a fortune in boots during the war.

Stiggins was frightfully annoyed, of course, but he only said quite calmly to Randall that he could have the desk now, as he'd spoilt it.

Randall was rather bucked, thinking he'd got the best of it, but next morning he found that his foe had arisen before him and cut out the whole blessed inscription. This made Randall mad because he'd only wanted it for the name.

The Head saw how it was mutilated, and as Randall was sitting at it and he wouldn't say who'd done it, he was made to pay for a fresh piece of wood to be let in, and got a caning into the bargain.

It wasn't much money, but Randall had none to spare and he was awfully wild.

“I'll pay you out, Profiteer,” he said. “I'll make you look so foolish you'll wish you'd never entered the school,” he said.

Stiggins only sneered, and replied in the words of Shylock (we were doing “Merchant of Venice” at the time)—

Till thou canst rail the mark from off that desk
Thou but offendest thy lungs to speak so loud.

After school Randall pulled me aside. “Roper,” he said, “I shall die of shame if I can't have my own back on Stiggins. What can I do?”

I thought a minute and then said, “I've read that you should first find your enemy's vulnerable point.”

“Goodness, what's that? I don't know all your literary crack-jaw words,” he said.

“It simply means, find his weak spot. That's his conceit, isn't it?” I said. “Doesn't he always think that he's a kind of amateur detective? Give him a spy plot to discover.”

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"That's an idea," he said. "Only, the war being over, there aren't any to find out. He knows there can't be spies in England now."

"Couldn't you make something out of his friendship with old Fritz?" I said.

"Ah, I must think!" said Randall.

Fritz, I must explain, was a German prisoner. There were a lot of them stationed at Welvedon, the next village, and Stiggins, who went home every week-end, had travelled in the same train with them, as they came back from their work on the farms around. They had been cutting a lot of the undergrowth in the woods near by. One chap had talked to Stiggins and told him a yarn about himself, that he really loved the English, as his mother was a Frenchwoman, but he'd been made to fight, and yards more of the same rot. Stiggins had got quite pally with him and given him cigarettes and Fritz was awfully grateful.

That evening during prep. Randall, who sat next to me, was very industrious. Presently, while bending over to pick up his pencil, he put a paper on my desk. It was a letter written in a very passable imitation of foreign handwriting. This is how it read:—

MR. STIGGINS, Esq.

Honoured Sir, and kind friend,

I am torn between two feelings, love of England and loyalty to my comrades. Therefore, instead of telling the Herr Sergeant I confide in you. You know that on Saturday the men in the camp are to be sent back to Germany. Two of them, I will not tell who, have made a wicked plan to burn Cowslip Wood. They have arranged to go at 11 o'clock, Friday, to the little hut where we have been working, and set it on fire. Honoured friend, I tell you, knowing your courage and talents. If you tell the authorities, they may not believe, and my comrades will know I have betrayed them. Honoured sir, you have often told me how you would have dealt with spies and enemies, and here is a chance to catch these evil men for yourself. Bring ropes and bind them. I shall never see you again, but shall hear if you succeed.

Your English-at-heart
FRIEND.

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"What rot," I said, when we got out. "You don't think he'll swallow all that."

"I do," he said. "If another fellow received that letter he'd jeer at it, but as it's to *him*, he'll take it in. You see if he doesn't. You know, he had a letter from Fritz once before, when he had a cold, smuggled in by Walker. I've copied the handwriting as closely as I could. It's easy to do, being very flowing and like copper-plate."

"Well, supposing he does fall into the trap, what's the plan? Let him go there and wait in the dark?"

"Oh, no, much more exciting; we'll be German prisoners, and instead of him catching them, we'll catch him!"

"But you don't think he'll go alone? He wouldn't think he could tackle two men."

"No, but if he asks any of the chaps, we'll take enough boys to allow for that," said he.

"But, look here, supposing he doesn't go to the wood, but tells the authorities, it strikes me that we should look foolish then, if they discovered us in the heart of the woods at midnight."

"No fear of that. He won't give his friend away, and he'll want all the credit for himself," said Randall. "Besides, we shan't go out until we see him off, then we can hurry on in front. I know the wood better than he does, and we can be in the hut ready."

"What a lark!" I said.

"Yes. Now, your part, Roper, is to bring your camera and take a flash-light photo of the whole scene, which we can show the school afterwards, and if that doesn't make him sorry he calls me Pauper, spoils my desk, and gets me caned, my name's not Randall."

"Right you are," I said. "He'll feel such a hero, won't he, surrounded by enemies? We ought not to let him find out that it's a spoof till he's had a good brag."

"Yes, we must arrange that somehow," said Randall.

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We determined to get a Welvedon boy to post the letter, though a real German prisoner probably wouldn't have used the post. Still, we would risk Stiggins thinking of that.

When it arrived, I looked over the breakfast table to Randall. "A bite at last," he whispered. "Now is the woodcock near the gin," quoted I, for Stiggins was looking awfully excited. His eyes were bright, and his face red, and he looked as if he were bursting to speak.

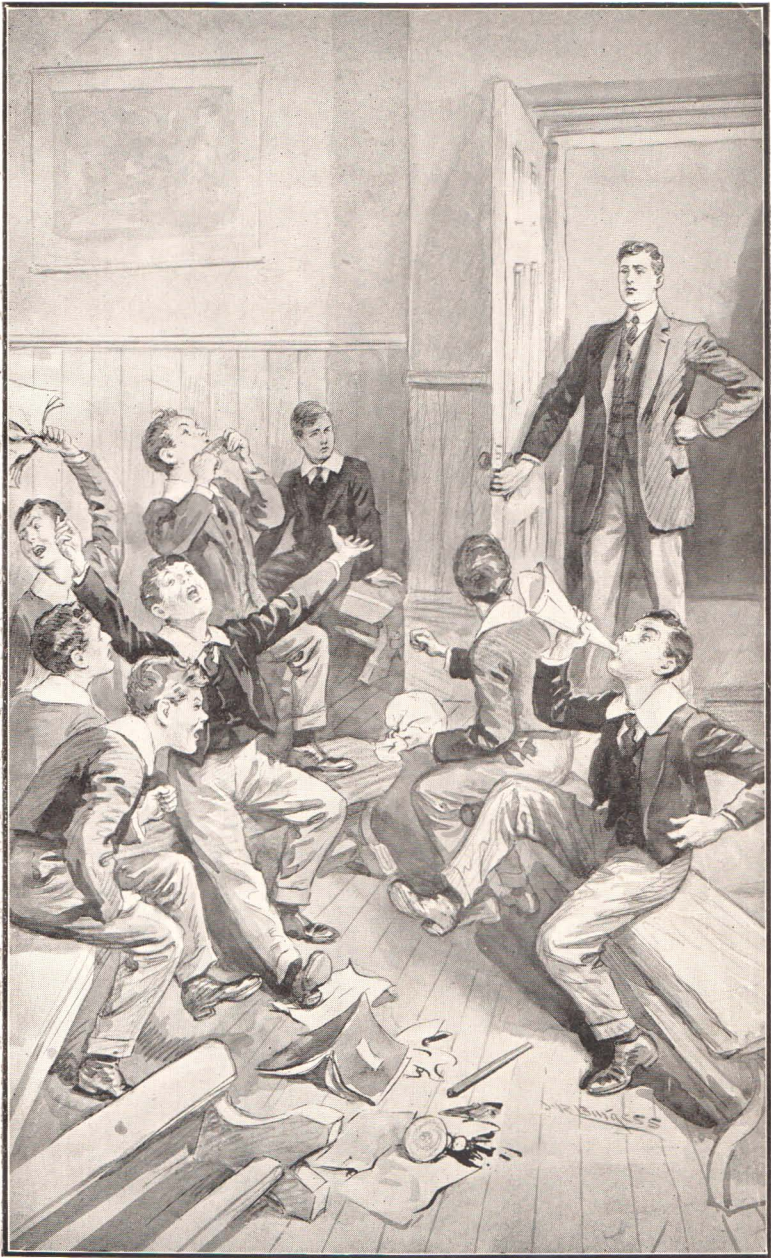
How he kept his own counsel for the rest of the week, I don't know. It must have been a terrible trial to him not to boast about his forthcoming adventure. He was so amiable that we hardly knew him. He even came to Randall and offered to pay him for the damaged desk. "As you're so poor," he said. This made his enemy madder than ever, and he was only restrained from punching him by the thought of what was to come. So with a glad heart and beaming face the Profiteer stepped merrily to his downfall.

2. Odds

At last the fateful night arrived. We had spent all our spare time in collecting and constructing German uniforms. We had obtained some caps, souvenirs from the battle-field, and by sewing a few scarlet and blue patches on our grey flannels, we thought we'd pass muster in the dark.

Four of us were going, Randall, Walker, Stuart, and I. I was merely the photographer and a non-combatant. It seemed rather hard, three against one, but he was likely to be in a desperate mood, and we didn't want our scheme to fall through. Besides, he would probably bring some one with him, though so far we couldn't find out that he'd taken anyone into his confidence.

It was about half a mile to the Cowslip Wood, and another half to the hut. At half-past ten we were ready; we all slept in the same dormitory, and Stiggins in the one below.



"DICKSON, ONE OF THE PREFECTS, TUMBLED UPON THEM IN THE CLASSROOM." (See p. II.)

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"Have you got everything?" said Randall. "Gag, camera, tripod, plates, magnesium powder, candles, and cotton-wool?"

"Yes," I said, "and Stiggins is bringing his own rope! Come on, we must hurry—look, he's down there in the garden."

So we just got out of the window on to the fire-escape, and followed on after him.

"Why, he's come by himself, after all," said Stuart.

"He's a plucky chap," said I. "Randall, you're a revengeful little beast, and I've half a mind not to come at all."

"I never doubted his pluck," said Randall. "It's not courage, but modesty he's in want of. We aren't going to hurt him, anyway, and he's chosen to go, so he can't mind it much."

"No, I don't believe he's got such a thing as nerves," said Walker. "I shouldn't like to go into this wood at night alone, even if I didn't expect to capture Germans; but as Podgson would say, 'Scientific Curiosity' carries a man far."

Presently we came to a narrow turning, and seeing Stiggins keeping on along the main road, whistling and swinging his coil of rope as if it was broad daylight, we plunged by this short cut into the wood.

It was full moon and a lovely summer night. All the same it was rather eerie, as we crept along the path in single file. It was private, really, and here and there a branch had been bent down across the path, to keep away trespassers.

The hut was in a clearing, surrounded by stacked-up piles of logs that the prisoners had cut.

I went in first to light a candle and arrange my camera. The others were to wait outside and keep watch for the enemy.

"Now, mind," said Randall, "nobody must speak a word of English, whatever happens, or he'll give the show away."

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"We certainly shan't speak anything else," I muttered, as I struck a match.

It went out, and I drew the door to, as I struck another.

What happened next is not quite clear in my mind. There was a horrible yell, and a heavy body came crashing into me. I fell on the floor, banging my head so hard that for a minute I saw stars and lay where I'd fallen, vaguely thinking that something must have gone wrong with our plan.

Of course it was Stiggins. He had evidently found a short cut of his own, and got there before us.

Then the others dashed in, Randall actually remembering to call out "Ach Himmel!" Walker was also knocked out by our intrepid foe, and if we hadn't had Randall and Stuart extra our plan would have come to an ignominious end. It took them all their time to keep him still, while I bandaged his eyes, put a handkerchief in his mouth, cotton-wool in his ears, and Walker, after picking himself up and feeling himself all over, proceeded to tie up the valiant hero in the rope he'd brought himself.

Then they grouped themselves artistically, Stiggins in the centre and the others round him. I put a match to my powder. It flamed up and the picture was taken.

Then we departed for home, making Stiggins walk between Walker and Stuart.

After his first fight he made no attempt to struggle. I felt sorry for him, for of course he thought he was in the power of the merciless Germans.

I dropped behind with Randall.

"I say, you don't feel very bucked, do you? If there'd only been the two you said in the letter, you'd be in his place now."

"Oh, shut up," he said. "My face is simply covered with scratches. Look what I got out of his pocket," and he showed me a hand-grenade!

"He's a desperate chap," I answered, as I slipped it into my camera-case for safety. "I suppose we must keep up the farce, or else he'll be still more conceited."

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"Certainly," he grumbled, and we walked on.

When we got back, we marched him up the fire-escape, laid him on his bed, just tied to the head of it, and took away his gag and bandages.

Before I sought my own well (or badly) earned rest, I developed my photo in the bath-room and left it to dry.

3. *Even*

Very early next morning we got up, and Walker untied Stiggins while he was still asleep.

At breakfast he excitedly related his adventures, which were eagerly drunk in by some, and flatly disbelieved by others.

"Come, old chap, you've been reading too many war tales lately," said Robinson. "There's absolutely no sense in what you say; if robbers waylaid you, how could you possibly have got back to bed?"

"No, no, my boy," said Ewald, "it's evident you've had a bad night-mare, but if you *will* keep all your cream puffs to yourself, what can you expect?"

"Ass," said Stiggins. "I tell you it's absolutely true. I know I wasn't dreaming. There's some German spy in this place, or the men wouldn't have known which was my bed!"

"Yes, that's certainly strange," said Walker gravely.

"You've got German spies on the brain," said Randall. "You'll go dotty. I expect it was a kind of delirium tremens you had last night."

"Idiot," said Stiggins. "Look here, what do you say to *that*, then?" and he thrust "Fritz's" letter into his hands.

Randall read it through. "Hem, well, there does seem to be something in it. Look, Roper." And the letter was solemnly passed round and commented upon by all those in the know.

"Do you say there were six against you?" said Robinson.

"Yes, I think so, though it was all in the dark."

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"And you knocked down two or three?" said Ewald.

"Yes, I think so," said Stiggins modestly. "There were only two mentioned in the letter, so I'd have been all right if the cowards hadn't brought more."

I saw Randall turn red, so I hurriedly said, "Well, it was jolly sporty of you, I'm sure, if it wasn't a dream."

Most of the fellows agreed, and Stiggins was quite the hero of the hour.

We intended to let him enjoy his triumph all day, but when he announced after breakfast that he was going to tell the Head, we thought that perhaps it was time to finish up the play, for if an inquiry was made, our scratched and bruised faces might cause uncomfortable questions to be put.

He couldn't see the Head till after lunch, so while he was still surrounded by a crowd of Third Formers, who'd now heard of his adventures, I hurried off to our classroom with my camera case, and showed the photo which I'd printed before breakfast.

It was beautifully clear, and was entitled, "The Profiteer meets with Germans in the lonely wood." Nobody could mistake Randall's laughing face, as he'd pulled off the German cap and false beard he'd made.

The photo was passed from one to another, till the bell rang, and then Randall pinned it on the notice-board. Stiggins scuttled into his seat just as our Form Master entered for the first lesson. It was Religious Knowledge, and I remember that we'd just got to the Plague of Locusts when Stiggins saw the picture.

He wasn't interested in the insects, apparently, and his eyes were wandering about, and lighted on the notice-board. He was in the front desk and it was quite close to him. He stared at it for about two minutes, before he took it in, and then he put his hands each side of his head, and appeared to be absorbed in the lesson, but I could see his face, and I thought that Randall was revenged at last.

The lessons dragged along till "break," one master

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following another, so that there had been no chance for anything to happen.

At last the bell rang, the door was shut, and Babel was let loose.

"Come here, you little beast!" said Stiggins, from the front.

"Not I," said Randall. "I'm quite comfortable here."

"All right, I'll fetch you," said Stiggins, and he raced after him, but Randall dodged round to the front, and then it was a game of hide-and-seek. Round and round the room they went, the fellows cheering them and getting in their way when they could. Stiggins got angrier and angrier, and Randall only laughed at him.

In the awful din nobody heard the bell ring, and nobody remembered that the Head's lesson came next.

"Come on, Pauper," said Stiggins.

"Come on, Profiteer," answered Randall. "Love to Fritz!"

That was the last straw. Stiggins snatched up the camera-case lying on my desk and flung it with all his might at his tormentor. It missed him and fell on his desk, the disputed desk, and then—

There was a roar and a crash, shrieks burst out from the fellows, and a stifling smoke filled the room.

The hand-grenade had exploded.

When the air cleared a bit I looked around. The room was in some mess; a window was broken, and glass was lying about everywhere. The desk was blown open, and one or two chaps were bleeding from cuts from the flying glass. Randall was lying on the ground.

Before any of us could move the door opened, and the Head entered and stood looking at the wreckage. He didn't ask any fool question about what had happened. I suppose it was obvious, but went up to where Randall lay, looking pretty ghastly. Stiggins was bending over him and sobbing, "Oh, don't say he's dead, don't say he's dead! I never meant to hurt him!"

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"Get up, my boy," said the Head. "Your face is cut; go to the matron and get it bandaged."

He raised Randall in his arms, and as he did so the latter opened his eyes and sat up.

"Where are you hurt?" said the Head.

"Please, sir, I think something hit my head," said he. "But I'm quite all right now," and he stood up to prove it.

"Well, sit down, and keep still for a few minutes," said the Head. "Now, anyone else who is hurt come to me."

There were about ten fellows with cuts about their faces and hands.

"Nothing serious," said the Head. "Go to the matron and get attended to."

Then he turned to the six or seven unwounded members of the Form left behind.

"Now, sirs, what was the cause of the explosion—Roper?"

"Please, sir," said I, "we were having a little rag—I mean, we were playing about——"

"You were making a most disgraceful hooligan noise," he interrupted sternly. "I was just coming to stop it, when the accident took place. Well, and in the course of this little joke, what happened?"

"Please, sir, one of the boys threw a camera-case across the room—" I stopped.

"Quite so, and what then?"

"Well, sir, then it exploded."

"What, the camera?"

"No, sir."

"I've heard of loading up Kodaks with films, but not with explosives. Now, don't beat about the bush. What was in the case?"

"A hand-grenade, sir."

"Ah, and who brought it here?"

"I did, sir," I said.

"No, sir," interrupted Ellis, a day boy. "I brought it to school yesterday. I lost it though."

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"I—er, found it, and put it in the case for safety," said I.

"Safety!" said the Head, "in a room where you use Kodaks for tennis-balls! And were you aware, Ellis, that I have forbidden any such things as grenades, shells, or cartridges to be brought to school?"

"Yes, sir," said Ellis.

"And yet you brought it."

"Yes, sir, I forgot."

"Then, go to my study, Ellis."

But Randall interrupted, "Please, sir, it was all my fault from beginning to end. I began the whole thing. Will you cane me instead?"

"And we were all just as bad," said Walker, Stuart, and I in chorus.

"Please, sir," said a meek voice, and a pale bandaged head appeared in the doorway. "It's nobody's fault but mine, for I threw the case, or it would never have exploded. And I cut Randall's desk about, that he was caned for."

The Head looked puzzled, and he laughed. "You're all as bad as one another," he said. "The whole Form can forfeit the next half-holiday, and you boys who have owned up will pay for the damage to the room between you. With regard to the desk, Stiggins, I'm surprised at you, and we'll speak of that matter when you are better."

"Please, sir, don't cane him, we—we've arranged it all between us quite satisfactorily," said Randall, who now that Stiggins had owned up, and been so thoroughly scared, was quite content, and considered matters even.

"Very well," said the Head, "I shall send the carpenter here, and you can all clear up the room, under his direction. Carry the uninjured desks and books into the Science Lecture room."

So we spent the rest of the morning very busily, and there wasn't nearly so much damage as we had thought at first.

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Stiggins went up to Randall and said shyly, "Are you better, old man? I didn't mean to hurt you, you know."

"Quite all right, old chap," said Randall.

"I've been a beast all through," said Stiggins. "I ought to have owned up about the desk."

"Well, it was my fault as well," said Randall. "I'm sorry about yesterday. It was a sneakish thing to do. You were an awful sport when we fought you, wasn't he, Roper?"

"Rather," I said. "He's got no end of nerve; look at the bump on my forehead."

Stiggins looked quite pleased and said, "Well, we may as well cry quits now. You had your innings yesterday, and judging by the room, it looks as if I'd had mine."

Walker was bending over the late bone of contention, Randall's smashed desk, pulling out books and papers, and holding up an ink-bottle which was dripping over everything. When Stiggins said that, Walker called out, "I rather fancy Randall is going to have a second innings. Look here!"

It was a big, blue, and legal-looking envelope that he next produced, and on the outside of it were the words, "The last Will and Testament of John Corbett."

"Wasn't that your guardian's name, Randall?"

"Yes," he said. "Why, this must be the missing will! It seemed impossible that he should really forget us. Where did you find it?"

"It was sticking out from the broken back of the desk," said Walker. "Why, I declare it's a kind of secret drawer!"

"My brother must have made it," said Randall. "I remember he put a secret drawer in his desk at home. See, it's only a piece of wood across the inside. Fancy me never noticing that it had less room in it than the others."

"I expect your guardian sent it to your brother and he put it there for safety," said I.



"WALKER WAS HOLDING UP AN INK-BOTTLE WHICH WAS DRIPPING OVER EVERYTHING." (See p. 24.)

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“Yes, I expect so, and never told anyone about it,” said Randall. “He was ill only a few days, you know.”

“Well, hadn’t you better open it?” said Stiggins quietly.

Randall did so, his fingers trembling. It was quite simple, for everything was left to Randall and his dead brother.

“Old man,” said Stiggins, giving him a smack on the back, “you’ve won, and I’m glad. It won’t make any difference to father, and that will be the end of ‘The Pauper and the Profiteer.’”

Andromeda

A Story of Sydney Harbour

BY V. M. METHLEY

IT is all very well for other *men* to crow over you, because they managed to get into the contingent, but when it comes to a *girl*!

I was only twelve years old in 1914—I couldn't help that, could I—nor being a bit small for my age, as well? I am sure I did everything I could—stuffed and drilled and physical jerked—to make myself grow up to eighteen-size before the time, but it was no good. And when I asked for more than two helps at dinner, the Governor only thought I was greedy and trying to get more than my share of rations: he never realised for a moment that it was patriotism.

And I couldn't help the war ending when it did, nearly a year before my eighteenth birthday—you should blame Foch and Haig for that!

Still, as I say, I didn't mind so much, until Maisie Levitt came back to Sydney. She'd been V.A.D-ing for a year in France—I believe she was pretty good at her job, too—and she came back with her Australian Ambulance a little while after the end of the war.

The swank of her—with two medal ribbons—*medal* ribbons, if you please, for a girl not more than a couple of years older than my sister, Babs! Of course, Babs got up a fearful rave over Maisie, and was always asking the girl to our home on the Harbour. But I saw at once that she was suffering from swelled head.

Andromeda

Perhaps I was not particularly pleasant to her : that's why she never lost a chance of jeering at me, especially after that fool, Babs, let out all the ways that I'd been trying to get into the contingent, before I was really up to the age limit.

The girl, Maisie, took to calling me "Peter Pan"—because I wouldn't grow up—and sympathising with me for not having wangled it! Of course, it was just to make me feel uncomfortable, although, I must say, she did it jolly naturally.

I can tell you, I was sick! I used to bunk off directly I saw that scarlet sunshade of hers coming up the road, and go and throw stones at a rock on the beach, and wish it was her or Babs.

We've got a little beach of our own, a kind of rocky point, like a good many other houses on Sydney Harbour, with a boat-house, and I went down there one day in a thundering bad temper.

Babs and Maisie and a whole push of other girls had arranged a picnic, and wanted me to go too! I fancied I saw myself. A picnic!—as if I didn't have enough of them indoors, without tagging round after them outside as well!

So I went down on to the beach, after they'd all started, and lay down under a big Norfolk-Island pine, and presently it was so hot and quiet that I went to sleep.

I suppose I must have slept for an hour or two altogether. Anyway, when I woke up, the tide had risen a good bit, and the rocks of the Point were nearly covered. I sat up and looked round and felt jolly glad that those fools of girls were all out of the way, so that I could go home and have my tea in peace.

There is a little island about a quarter of a mile off our Point; at least, it's an island at low tide, but it is nothing at all other times, when it's completely covered.

The tide was rising now, and I knew that there wouldn't be much left of the island in another half-hour or twenty minutes.

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But the rocks were still uncovered, and, sticking up over the top of them, I saw a scarlet sunshade, out there on the island.

“Oh, bother that girl!” I thought, feeling pretty disgusted, I can tell you. “Wherever I go, I can’t get away from her!”

I stood up and shook myself and was just off, back to the house for tea, when suddenly I remembered. In a very little while those rocks would be covered, and I didn’t see how the fool of a girl was to get away.

Of course, it was easy enough to see what had happened. Maisie was awfully keen on sketching, and no doubt she’d got the picnic crowd to row her out there and leave her to paint. And then—well, very likely she had fallen asleep as I had myself, and not signalled to them to fetch her off, or perhaps they’d forgotten all about her. Anyhow, however it happened, there she was, and I can tell you, even if you don’t like a girl, it’s pretty beastly to think of her being drowned.

I scrambled down the Point and into the boat-house. It was empty, as, of course, I might have remembered it would be. That beastly picnic, of course! And it would take at least half an hour to reach the next place where I could be certain of finding a boat, and in less than that time the rocks would be entirely covered.

I was just going to begin shouting, and then I thought I wouldn’t, because, after all, the girl couldn’t do any good, if I roused her up. It was kinder to let her go on sleeping, whilst I attended to the job.

There was only one thing to be done. I must swim off to the rocks, and jolly quick, too, if it was to be any good. I suppose you are wondering why I hadn’t thought of that before, especially as I was a particularly strong swimmer, but then, I take it, that you don’t know Sydney Harbour, or, at any rate, some parts of it. There were plenty of reasons against swimming over to the island, but it was no use thinking of them just then.

I sat down and pulled off my boots. Then I took off

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my coat and left it on the rocks ; then, just as I was going to slip into the water, one of the reasons appeared—and a jolly strong one !

A black triangular fin appeared above the water about a hundred yards away, moving slowly along.

There are any number of sharks about Sydney Harbour ; bathing isn't really safe, except in special places. They are savage brutes too, and nothing frightens them ; why, one came right up to the rocks at our Point and grabbed a poor little wretch of a dog, who was standing on them !

Well, I must confess that I left off taking off my coat for a minute, as I stood staring at the fin, but next minute I saw that it did not really alter things a bit. There was only one thing to be done, sharks or no sharks, and I'd got to do it.

That fool-girl was a most awful nuisance, but I couldn't leave her there to be drowned. It reminded me of an old story my mother used to tell me when I was a kid, the one in Kingsley's *Heroes*, you know—about that girl, Andromeda, and the sea-monster. The girl was there right enough and the monster, too, but I felt jolly sick, I can tell you, at having to take on the Perseus stunt ! Besides, it wasn't the same a bit : *he'd* got wings on his feet : he didn't have to swim.

I thought of all this while I was finishing taking off my coat, and scrambling down the rocks ; once in the water, I'd no time to think of anything except that brute of a shark !

I made a tremendous flusteration in the water as I swam, kicking and splashing with my feet and hands. That's the only way to keep off sharks, and it doesn't always succeed, either. Sometimes, it makes them come to look and find out what the fuss is about.

You can fancy that I kept a pretty sharp look-out for that black fin ; you can fancy what I felt like, when it appeared, not more than fifty yards away.

I kicked, I splashed, I shouted—and it disappeared.

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I expected every minute to feel my leg being bitten off. I was sick and cold with fright, as I shot through the water, a jolly sight faster than I'd ever swum before in my life—even when I won the Cup. I caught my knee a most awful whack on the rocks of the island, almost before I knew I'd got there.

As I scrambled up—and there was not much room to scramble by now, I can tell you!—I saw out of the tail of my eye that the black fin was close behind me—only a few yards away. . . . Ugh!

And then I caught a glimpse of another a little bit farther out, coming along very quickly. So you see, Perseus wasn't in it with me—he'd only got *one* monster, and I had a pair of them!

I didn't want to look at them any longer: I turned round to wake up that fool of a girl—and nearly fell off what was left of the island.

She was not there! The scarlet umbrella was hitched up over a point of rock—but there was not any Maisie underneath it.

At first I was jolly glad—and then I was jolly sick. It meant that I'd had all my trouble for nothing. I bet Perseus would have felt just the same, if he'd Gorgonzolaed the monster and turned it into stone, and then discovered that Andromeda had gone home some other way. I bet he'd have said just what I did—even if he *was* a hero, or whatever they call it.

Then I saw a third fin, and realised that Shark No. 1 had asked two little friends to tea. . . . It's a rotten thing to have to say, but that third fin just took all the pluck out of me. I sat down on the top of the rock and stared at it. I felt as if no power on earth would make me go into the water again.

Things had altered now. I jolly well *had* to swim over, when I thought that fool-girl was on the rocks, but now—well, it was a different matter altogether.

So I sat there and stared at the water, which was rising higher and higher, and at the sharks, swimming

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round in circles, so as to keep an eye on me. Then, all of a sudden, I heard a noise, and when I looked up, there was our boat coming towards me, with Babs and Maisie rowing like mad.

I had to swim a bit to get into the boat, but there wasn't any risk, with the two girls banging the water with their oars. And as soon as I was well in, I went for young Maisie, I can tell you. I was feeling pretty riled—naturally.

"A nice idiot you were, to leave your sunshade sticking up like that, making me think you were caught by the tide there!" I said angrily.

And then if that fool of a Maisie didn't burst into tears!—two medal ribbons and all.

"I wasn't an idiot!" she gulped. "It—it was wickedness! I did it on purpose to take you in—to see what you'd do—to play a practical joke on you. I thought you'd be tearing all over Sydney for a boat, or rousing the whole house, but I never dreamt that you'd do anything else—that you'd try to fetch me!"

"You must have thought I was a rotter, then!" I said, a bit sulkily.

"No, I didn't. I thought you were . . . just a boy," Maisie said. "But now—I know differently."

"What d'you mean? What am I, then?" I asked, because I couldn't think what she was driving at.

"Just a *man*," she said.

After all, I don't know that Maisie Levitt will be such a bad sort of girl—when she's got rid of that swelled head of hers. And I'll see to that, I can tell you.

The "Stick up" at Jordan's

A Bushranging Adventure

BY "SOUTHERN CROSS"

IF you're not tired of hearing tales of the bush and of the gentry who terrorised certain districts of Australia many years ago, I can tell you some yarns that will make you sit up and listen. As I lived in my boyhood in that part of Victoria where the bushrangers gained most notoriety, I had especial opportunities for becoming acquainted with their ways. And let me say here that, despite the claims of some story-writers, there was very little, if any, romance attached to these "knights of the road." All with whom I ever came into contact were just common criminals, starting as horse-thieves and usually ending by becoming murderers. They were almost all men of low intelligence, without ideas of chivalry and fair play. They would betray one another with little compunction, and they often showed themselves to be cowards.

Of the notorious bushrangers of my day there were Morgan, Gilbert, "Captain Moonlight," and Gardiner. But you can read plenty of books about these fellows; I couldn't tell you anything fresh about them without drawing upon my imagination. What I want to yarn about here is a curious adventure with a less-known desperado, an adventure in which I played a part. I call it sometimes "The Story of the Hooded Bushranger."

You must know that my father, John Earle, was manager of Jordan's bank at Coowoomba. It was a

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branch bank, of course, because the head offices, as is well known, were (and still are) in Melbourne. But as Coowoomba was the largest township in that part of the State the branch was a very important one. At certain times of the year there was a considerable amount of money in its strong room.

We—my father, mother, brother and sister—all lived on the premises, which were situated in the main street. I went to school with my brother (he was several years my elder) in the township, while my sister, the youngest of the family, had a governess. They were happy days. Coowoomba is a beautiful spot, surrounded by some of that magnificent bush for which Victoria is celebrated, and I enjoyed many a long ride on my pony into the back country.

When my brother Donald was eighteen he secured a position in the police force of the State, being sent to the Melbourne headquarters for his training. He had always intended to become a trooper policeman, and if physique and nerve counted for anything he was a decided acquisition to the force.

My father placed no obstacle in Donald's way. Having some influence in official quarters he no doubt looked forward to seeing him rise to an important position. I remember his laughing words to my brother as the latter set out for Melbourne and his new work.

"So long, Don," he cried. "Come back a sergeant as soon as you can, and clear the roads of our bush pests. There's plenty of work for your hand here."

Donald laughed back. "All right, dad," he said; "I'll do my best. Tell the 'telegraphs' to get busy. I mean to make these bushrangers remember me. Pass the word round!"

"Telegraphs," as you may, or may not, know, were the friends of a bushranger who acted as his secret service men, or spies. They sent word quickly to him of the movements of the police, and it was indeed surprising how speedily some of the fellows were apprised when

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danger threatened them. The news travelled through the bush, from mouth to mouth, with all the swiftness of a telegraph.

While my father jested with Donald in that way there was perhaps a note of seriousness behind it all. Some little time before my brother's departure several people had been "stuck up" outside the township. A bushranger named O'Meally, a desperate character who had broken out of prison twice, was still abroad in the State, and the efforts of the police to run him to earth had proved unavailing. So far, however, he had not operated in our particular district. The "local terror," as our newspaper phrased it, was some rascal who was moved to imitation of O'Meally. You always found that kind of thing when there was an outburst of bushranging. Quite a number of lawless men tried their hand at the game, but their careers were generally very short-lived. We even had a Chinese bushranger once in Victoria. Poor "John"! He got caught after his first "bail up" and was sentenced to a good term of imprisonment.

Well, I must get on with my story. I set out to tell you of the "stick up" at Jordan's and of my adventure with the "hooded bushranger." This remarkable personage first came into prominence in our district after my brother had been for two years at Melbourne. During that period the roads had been fairly free from any outrages, and we had been congratulating ourselves on the peaceful conditions. The bombshell dropped in our midst when Mr. Jarvis, a wealthy station-owner in the adjacent township of Meegul, was "stuck up" just outside Coowoomba and relieved of two hundred pounds which he was carrying in notes and gold on his person.

A friend of ours, driving into the township, found Mr. Jarvis tied to a tree by the roadside. He had been badly knocked about, having made a plucky resistance to the robbery. On being released he made a sensational statement to the effect that his assailant had worn a large hood, covering all his head and falling to his shoulders.

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It was of black cloth, with two eye-holes. The robber, he continued, was a tall man but was not powerfully built. His features being so hidden there was no possibility of further describing him.

This episode, as you may imagine, set everybody's tongue wagging. There was a hue and cry immediately; police officers came up from Melbourne, and the neighbourhood was scoured thoroughly. But the "hooded bushranger" had disappeared as mysteriously as he had arrived. The bush swallowed him up and was seemingly reluctant to disclose his secret.

Then suddenly the miscreant appeared in another part of the State. As before he was hooded. The victim of the outrage, another wealthy squatter, had much the same story to tell as had Mr. Jarvis. On this occasion, however, the bushranger was described as a *short* man; the squatter was positive on this point. Further identification was impossible. That all this added to every one's mystification you can readily understand. A bushranger who could be both tall and short at will was a novelty!

"There must be two fellows at work, then," said my father, when he heard these particulars. "And they are undoubtedly in league. Though, of course, Tom, this second chap may be merely an imitator of the first. I suppose all bushrangers will be wearing hoods next!"

I laughed. My father's words conjured up a vision of old-time highwaymen with crape masks, such as I had read of in books. It seemed absurd to think of those bygone days being brought to life again in matter-of-fact nineteenth century Victoria.

"Well," added my father, "let us hope that we don't get a visit from our hooded friend, here in Coowoomba. I've too much money on my hands at times for my peace of mind. I wish Donald were home again. Another man in the place would make me feel easier."

My thoughts, too, at this time ran often upon Donald. I would have liked to know what his views were as to this

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hooded bushranger. We boys in the township discussed the mystery fully among ourselves, and the fact that I had a brother in the police force at Melbourne gave me a status in the argument that I was not slow to avail myself of. However, we could do nothing but talk. The days and weeks rolled by; there was no further outbreak of bushranging; the mystery remained as insoluble, apparently, as ever.

One morning in July, about a month after the hooded bushranger's second appearance in public, my father received a letter from Donald which he read with a puzzled look. He passed the sheet over to my mother, and I could see by her face that she was equally troubled. They waited until I had left the breakfast table before discussing the letter's contents, so that I was not to know then what Donald had written about.

All that day my father was very silent and pre-occupied, and when, later, I saw him in earnest conversation with Sergeant Tollison, the head of our small police detachment at Coowoomba, I gathered that some danger threatened us. I questioned my mother so closely on the subject that I at last dragged an admission out of her.

"I can't tell you exactly, Tom, what Donald said in his letter," she said. "Your father wouldn't like me to repeat it, I know. But you may as well know that the bank has been threatened. Very likely you and I, and Cissy, will have to go away for a time. We shall see, in due course, if the threat really means anything."

My mother's words spelt only one thing to me—bush-rangers! Without a doubt one of the gentry—the hooded bushranger himself, perhaps!—was going to make a raid on Coowoomba. If that were the case it would be in the last week of the month, just ten days hence, when the bank's strong room would be rather full of money.

The next afternoon I sought out Sergeant Tollison, and, assuming that I knew for a fact what he and my

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father had been discussing, I quickly got him to confirm my suspicions.

"Yes, Master Tom," he said, "young Mr. Donald has learned something down in Melbourne. There's some trouble brewing for us at Coowoomba, and we're to keep our eyes well peeled. Ah! I thought as how it wouldn't be long before that chap paid us a visit. Well, we're going to get some help from headquarters, so we may be able to lay Mr. Hoody by the heels after all."

"Then, it is the hooded bushranger that's expected, is it?" I asked eagerly.

Old Tollison looked at me with a sorrowful expression.

"An' didn't you know that, Master Tom?" he said slowly. "I hadn't ought to have mentioned him, I suppose. But I thought from the way you spoke as you knew all along! Don't you let your father know as I told you, whatever happens. There, be off with you! I'm getting to talk too much!"

And, so saying, he turned and went back into the station house.

For myself, I walked home with my head in a whirl. The "hooded bushranger" was actually coming to Coowoomba! Here was an adventure. I was determined that I, for one, would see something of what was going to happen.

II

Within a week my father had arranged for my mother and little Cissy to go to Melbourne, where we had relatives. He wanted them out of the way should there be any trouble. To my delight I was not included in the party. Dear old Donald, for a reason that you shall learn later, had suggested that I should remain at Coowoomba. It was just as well that he had done so, I told my chums, because I meant otherwise to have bolted back from Melbourne to see the "fun." Boylike, I knew

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little of the grim side of bushranging attacks, of the desperate character of the men engaged therein, and of the disregard for life that these criminals so often showed. It was just an adventure to me, an adventure that promised to hold out plenty of excitement.

Some of the excitement, indeed, came a day after my mother's departure. With the morning's mail came a letter, with the Coowoomba postmark, bearing the following startling information:—

To Mr. John Earle,
Coowoomba.

DERE SUR,

I write this to say as how I mean to pay you a visit soon. You can let the traps know if you please. It won't make no difference. I'm a match for any of them.

"THE HOODED BUSHRANGER."

This insolent, misspelt missive caused us some perturbation, of course. The fact that it was posted in Coowoomba showed clearly enough that the rascal had friends in the township. These would probably be relied upon to help him in his attack on the bank when the fateful day or night came.

To my relief Donald soon after arrived from Melbourne, bringing with him a police officer from the detective department, Marshman by name.

"A very clever fellow," said Donald, speaking to my father. "He'll stay with you in the bank, with another policeman. The moment there's any alarm one of them will signal through to Tollison at the station; we're having a special wire laid on. Then we'll trap the rascals, sure enough."

Donald was under orders to return to Melbourne the same day, so I got little chance to talk to him. What he did say, however, bucked me up no end. He didn't treat me like a kid, as father always did.

"You're just on fifteen, Tom," he said, "and I know you've got a head on your shoulders. You stay by the dad and help him all you can. And when the time comes

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for you to do anything, to carry out any orders you are given, just go straight ahead without any questions and do it. Will you remember?"

I promised readily enough. "I'd like to do something, Don," I said. "You can count on me all right."

"I knew I could," he answered; "it's quite likely you can help us considerably. Just do what you're told and nothing more, when the time comes. Remember that!"

And with these mysterious words he said good-bye.

For the next two days I had enough to interest myself in the preparations made at the bank for the reception of our expected visitors. In addition to Mr. Marshman, another police officer, a younger man, tall and spare of build, came up from Melbourne. This fellow's name was Callow, and at first sight I disliked him. He seemed a sullen, bad-tempered chap. I found him unwilling to talk to me; possibly, he considered himself too superior a person. Mr. Marshman, on the other hand, was quite a jovial sort. He was a short man, rather inclined, you might say, to tubbiness. He liked a joke, and he kept us well amused with his funny stories at the supper table.

Although they were concealed from my eyes as much as possible, I knew for a fact that extra supplies of ammunition had been brought into the house. An extra iron bar of great thickness had been fixed to the outer door, while the shutters to all the windows were strengthened. These things greatly interested old Tollison, who came frequently up from the station to consult my father. He seemed to swell in importance with each succeeding visit. I believe he saw vistas of glory and promotion in the coming business. Poor old Tollison! He never got beyond his sergeant's stripes, though he remained a good many years in the force.

It was on the Sunday following my mother's going away with Cissy—exactly five days from the coming of the "hooded bushranger's" impudent letter—that things began to happen. I don't know how to explain

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it, but on these fateful days there always seems to be a curious feeling in the atmosphere, something electric, as you may say. I noticed that both my father and Mr. Marshman wore a look of uneasiness, and that they spoke very little. As for Callow, he seemed much about the same. Nothing less than an earthquake would have shaken his imperturbability.

All through the morning we remained indoors, my father and Marshman walking about from room to room and talking together. Callow got a chess-board out, and as I was a fair player he and I had a good game. When lunch time came I was well on the road to victory. We resumed the game after the meal, and became so absorbed in it that my father had to call me three times before I realised that I was wanted.

"That's the guv'nor, sonny," exclaimed Callow suddenly, and I jumped up.

"Mate in three moves," I said, as I turned to go; "we'll finish it in a moment or two. Shan't be long." I knew I had Callow beaten. Then, with a loud "Right, dad!" I hurried off to my father's private office.

"Look here, Tom," he said, as I entered, "I want you to ride off with a note to Inspector Macpherson at Yilderie. Get your pony saddled at once. I'll have the letter ready by the time you come back. Look sharp!"

I just dropped in upon Callow to tell him that the game was off for the time being, as I had to do something urgently. Then I made for the stable and got my pony, Billyboy, ready for my errand. In a few minutes I was back in the office to report myself.

"Here's the letter," said my father, passing it over to me. "Tuck it inside your jacket, in an inner pocket, so that it won't drop out as you ride. And don't lose any time, Tom. The message is of the utmost importance. Give it to Macpherson yourself and obey his orders afterwards. By the way," he added, "take the main road. Ride up past Mr. Eastman's house and don't turn off until you come to the wood."



"ALL THINGS COME TO HIM WHO *WAITS!*"

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"There's a shorter way round by——" I began, but my father interrupted me.

"I've told you the route to follow," he said sharply. "Just obey orders, will you? Keep to the main road; you'll get along quite fast enough that way."

"All right, dad," I answered. "I'll do it." And he knew by that that his directions would be followed. The old dad never allowed us boys to question his orders; he exacted implicit obedience from us.

When I jumped on Billyboy and rode off I was mighty proud of myself, I can tell you. That letter I carried had something to do with the trapping of Mr. Bushranger. There couldn't be a doubt about it. And my father had entrusted its delivery to me. You can depend upon it that I meant to execute my mission at all costs.

So up the road I trotted on my seven-mile ride, making all kinds of conjectures as to the wording of the missive. It was broad daylight, of course, and perhaps that fact made me careless. Anyhow, I had left Mr. Eastman's house well behind me, and was right into the little wood that lay beyond his house when I was startled back into realities by a sudden shout of "Bail up, sonny!" At the same moment, two horsemen rode out from the trees and barred my progress on the road.

I could have cried with mortification. There was I, so clever in my imagination, trapped as easily as the veriest booby! Had I had my wits and my eyes about me I might have seen the fellows' horses in time.

Billyboy stopped dead as I reined up.

"Hullo, what's the trouble?" I inquired, trying desperately to appear cool.

"No trouble, son," said one of the men. "We want just a word with you. Where are ye off to, anyway?"

"Nowhere particular," I answered. "Can't I give my pony a bit of a run without asking your permission?"

"Now, don't be cheeky, young feller," said the other man sharply. "We've got an idea where you're bound for, and why. You're Mr. Earle's boy, aren't you?"

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I nodded.

"Yes, I know you are. Come here—and don't try any monkey tricks or it'll be the worse for you." He accompanied this threat with an oath that made me shudder.

I looked quickly to one side for a way of escape, but in that glance I saw a third man ride out into the road behind me. I was fairly caught.

"Come here, I tell you!" ordered the one who appeared to be the leader of the three.

I edged Billyboy towards him, and in a moment I was roughly seized and pulled off the pony's back. At the other's command the second man then searched me. He did his work quickly and thoroughly. Almost before you could say Jack Robinson he had found and snatched out the letter from my inner pocket and was breaking the flap. Still retaining his grip of me he read the contents quickly and passed the sheet to his companion.

"That's the goods all right, Jim," he remarked.

The other man took the letter, read it, and pushed it into his pocket.

"Now, sonny," he said to me, "your errand's done. You needn't go any farther."

I was raging inwardly at my impotence. Through my carelessness and stupidity I had blundered into the hands of the enemy and betrayed my father's plans! The message was without doubt some instruction to Inspector Macpherson, some information as to the plan of campaign. Fool that I was! How angry and disappointed my father and Donald would be with me!

"Now, sonny," went on the man who had pocketed the letter, "you can take it from me that your journey's finished. You'll stay here with us till I give the word to go. Understand?"

I understood. The look on the fellow's face as he spoke told me that I had better not try any hanky-panky.

And there, in that dismal wood, they kept me, all the men entering the thickest part where the trees offered

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the best screen. Close on two hours must have passed thus, the men saying little to each other. As the time passed they appeared to get uneasy, and I saw a frown gathering on their leader's face. At last he looked at his watch for the twentieth time, and then his glance fell upon me.

"You can cut it, son," he said. "Get back home, d'ye see? Straight down the road there, where we can see you. Get your pony an' skip."

I obeyed willingly, glad enough to be rid of this company, though I dreaded having to meet my father and tell him of my failure. Billyboy came at my call and in another minute I was cantering back along the road into Coowoomba.

Imagine my amazement when, as I turned into the main street, I saw a small crowd immediately outside the bank building. Among the foremost figures were my father, Donald, and old Tollison, and between my father and the sergeant was Mr. Marshman, the detective officer. To my further astonishment the last-named was handcuffed! Callow was not to be seen.

What did it all mean? I urged Billyboy forward and was soon dismounted and eagerly questioning Donald. In the meantime the others, with Sergeant Tollison at their head, were heading for the police station.

Donald could not help laughing at my dismay.

"I'm sorry, old chap," he said, "that we had to play a trick on you. You got captured by the bushrangers, all right, didn't you?"

"Yes," I stammered, "they caught me, Don! And, oh, Don, they found the letter dad gave me for the Inspector!"

"That's all right, Tom," he replied, "don't you worry about that. The letter was meant for them—to keep them quiet. We meant you to fall into their hands. If you hadn't followed dad's instructions and had dodged them, things might have gone badly with our scheme. As it is, the rascals fell into our trap splendidly and we

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bagged them both. Only Callow put up a fight and got a crack on the head that knocked him out. Marshman was easy money."

Of course I was all eagerness to know what had happened. In reply to my questions Donald told me how the suspicion had grown that there was treachery somewhere in the police quarters at Melbourne. Donald himself had some reason to mistrust the man Marshman, who was employed in the detective department, and this mistrust had increased to a certainty in his mind that Marshman was actually in league with the bushrangers. It occurred to him that to have a friend at court like that would be a very clever move on the part of the scoundrels.

He had watched Marshman, therefore, closely. Having learnt enough to make him believe that he was on the right scent, Donald made friends with the man and worked with him successfully on one or two small cases. This acquaintanceship seemed to suit Marshman's book all right, for by that time he and his associate were laying their plans to make a raid on Coowoomba. When Donald showed his desire to have Marshman with him when he was detailed to help in guarding the bank, the other readily agreed. He brought along with him the man Callow, who was attached to the police on probation.

At the bank Donald told the two men, of course, all the plans that he and his father were making. He talked freely of how Macpherson at Yilderie had a strong body of men ready to pounce down on the bank when the alarm was given. Marshman and Callow had the members of their gang stationed at two or three points on the main road to intercept any police who might turn up, and it was to assure them that Macpherson had received the signal to come that I was despatched with the urgent message. The letter in question stated that the wires had just been cut after his message had got through; that the main road was guarded; and that I, when I met the force on the way, would come back with them by another route. As I was promptly caught and

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held up, the Inspector could not get the message and would just march straight into their hands. That meant, naturally, that Marshman and Callow would have a free hand at the bank.

But wily Donald had got Macpherson and his men already stationed in Coowoomba ; several of them being hidden in the bank itself. During my absence Marshman, who was the hooded bushranger himself except when it suited their book for Callow to assume the rôle, bailed up my father in the bank just after closing time. The man had found an opportunity to put on his well-known black hood and a terrifying enough figure he made in it.

Then the trouble began. There was a bit of shooting, because Callow, who came to his mate's rescue when Marshman in turn was ordered to "bail up," showed fight readily. However, it was all over pretty quickly. Macpherson and his men appeared on the scene and the two ruffians were overpowered. What is more, the rest of the Inspector's men rounded up most of Marshman's gang up the road, so that the haul was fairly complete.

The capture of the "hooded bushranger" was a great feather in Donald's cap, and it brought him speedy promotion. It brought him, also, a handsome present from the bank directors. Jordan's came down generously with a big cheque.

I felt a little sore at being left out of the excitement at the bank, at missing the actual capture of the bushrangers, but, at any rate, I had done my bit towards helping in the capture by keeping the other members of the gang quiet on the main road. I had been made a fool of, as you know, but I forgave Donald that when I knew how I fitted into his scheme. He knew, he said, that I ran no danger of being hurt. My capture alone would be enough to satisfy the men.

So that's all about the "hooded bushranger." Yes, both Marshman and Callow were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment, and I never heard of them again.

Goals and Goal-Scoring

BY JAMES CANTRELL

(ENGLISH LEAGUE, AND TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR F.C.)

I NEVER yet found any boy who played Soccer whose ambition was not to score as many goals as possible! Of course amongst forwards and halves the goal-scoring "mania," as somebody has called it, usually runs riot; but even in the men behind these there is generally an inward desire to shine now and then as goal-getters, however difficult or seldom that may be!

So that, in acquiescing to the wish of the editor that I should say a few words to you on this important matter, I feel quite sure I shall have the attention and ear of every lad who takes part at all in our splendid winter game. For goals are the things we aim at when we play; goals are the things that tell most when the final account is made up at the close of the game, or in the general reckoning of the season's result.

Now, to obtain goals to-day one has to be more smart, more clever, more thoughtful and dodgy than ever. Players have grown more and more wary and able in defence, as the result of years of experience, of better training, of keener study of their parts in the field; and so the path of the would-be goal-scorer in football is not always strewn here and there with flowers. You, as boys, must not fail to remember, when you ponder on how best you can play so as to get goals, that there will be eleven very determined and stern lads on the field equally resolved that you shall *not* get them, if it is at all possible to prevent you.

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The rush-and-go-forward policy of olden days, therefore, will not avail a bit in our own times. I think you will see at once that it will require all the scheming, all the skill, all the subtle understanding of which your own team is capable, if your men are now to score goals against a first-rate eleven. So the first piece of advice I should like to give you, boys, is to play with your heads—or ought I to say, brains?

You must, to start with, have clear ideas of what "combination" really means. You and your fellows must know each other's play to a nicety, and must work together like a machine when passing or taking-on the ball. It is no use whatever your sending the ball to your wing, or your centre, or elsewhere, if the man who ought to receive it and make headway has no notion you are about to let him have it, does not know to expect it from you in this or that position or circumstances, and cannot make the best use of the opening when he gets it. All plans for passing, and repassing, should be talked over and well-laid beforehand, between you and your mates if they are to prove signally successful.

Good passing, accurate passing, skilful passing, never fails to pay and to trouble the defence. But for passing to be what it truly ought to be, in aiding towards the scoring of goals, it should be of the unexpected, unforeseen, kind; it must not be a style of passing obvious from the very start, or one indulged in by every boy's club you come across. The more individual and uncommon your passing is, the better; therefore, again I say, the more you use your brains in laying schemes for offence and defence when playing Soccer, the more successful is your team likely to be.

Don't as a rule kick the ball with your toes. Use the fore part of the side of the boot rather than the full toe; by that means you are enabled to get in far more deft touches, more deceiving moves, than you would otherwise be. And, of course, you must practice assiduously till you can use the left foot as well as the right for

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passing or kicking. The player who always depends on one foot for these things will ever be at a serious disadvantage in certain positions time after time in a match.

But, whilst you and your comrades will do well to plot and plan before any match as to methods of combination which shall delude the enemy, do not forget that again and again a score may result if you deceive him by that most useful of all dodges, viz., going on yourself when he fully expects you to pass! I could not tell you how many times in my own career I have found this trick pay me well and result in a valuable goal for my side!

You see, the value of excellent combination has become so much recognised nowadays, and each part of an eleven has been made to depend so much on the other, that the men opposing you will have grasped, in most cases, long before a player is ready to pass, what sort of a pass he will try to make. And naturally they will take immediate steps to render his pass nugatory.

But not often do they imagine you will at a certain stage take your courage in your hands and go on, depending on yourself to get in a shot at goal. Such a move often utterly demoralises them, and very often finds the custodian quite napping. I have seen many a fine goal obtained as the outcome of such individual determination and courage.

Not selfish play am I advocating for a moment. Oh, no! Never be selfish on the field. But on the other hand, never get rid of the ball merely to obviate responsibility; never pass when you feel you could do better by retaining the ball.

We are constantly being told to-day that Soccer in general is deteriorating, that men (and boys) are not so clever and skilful individually as they used to be in their play. If this is so, doubtless it is so (or seems so) because there is less actual individual effort made than formerly towards kicking a goal, and more de-

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pendence on combination. Well, I advocate one system just as much as the other ; it is a big mistake to forget either during a match !

Now let me turn with you to another matter, wherein week after week I see great failure in our modern playing of Soccer. There is far too much disposition to-day to linger, to dally, ere the man with the ball takes a shot at goal. Whether he be centre, or one of the other four usually best placed for trying such a kick, the same error frequently appears, of endeavouring to get into too favourable (or too near) a spot in front of the net ere one puts in the looked-for kick. This, to my thinking, is a fatal mistake occurring time after time during most matches, but more particularly in school matches.

Don't forget that the longer you take to get in that kick, the more you dally when about to shoot at goal, the more time you give your opponents to obstruct the shot, the more opportunity you afford the goalie to keep the ball out of the net ! On the other hand, the more you can disguise what you intend to do, and the way you intend to do it, the far finer will be your chance of scoring a goal.

Now, the one thing a first-class goalkeeper does not usually look for from a good team, from an eleven noted for its excellent powers of combination, is that a man with the ball some distance out, or at an awkward angle, will try a pot-shot at goal. The goalie is often caught napping when such an event happens ; and you can take it from me that more goals would be scored if it happened far oftener during a big game.

I recollect when I myself was younger reading a similar article to what I am writing for you here. It bore on this point of goal-getting, and it was written by one of the finest exponents of Soccer at that time. The famous amateur's counsel then was—and I commend it to you most earnestly as my own, for I cannot give you any better if I try for a month!—"Shoot, shoot, shoot, and keep on shooting, when you fancy you have a chance of scoring,

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wherever your position may be in your opponent's half of the field."

Might I say a word to you also with regard to the common offside trouble? It would take rather too long for me to set down here all the details respecting what *is* offside and what *isn't*. But I would seriously ask you to master the problem for yourselves during actual play on the field when practising, since it is very important that your side should not be let down at a critical moment during the game because *you* have, perhaps unwittingly, trespassed in this way. Offside is a big complication to young players, so there is all the more need for you to study the thing carefully and avoid such trouble.

Ere I finish these few hints, which I trust may be of some use to you learners, there is also that matter of the corner-kick, which I always think is not understood as it ought to be by many elevens, and particularly by school-boy teams.

When you gain a corner-kick, it is not enough for somebody who can kick hard just to take the kick, whilst your own men get somewhere in front of the goal, and hope somebody or other will manage to put in a shot or a head which, by sheer luck, will send the ball into the net. Your men ought to have better schemes and understanding than that!

When one takes a corner-kick the effort of his team trying to score from it ought to be to put its men in such several positions in front of the goal-mouth that one of them is bound to have an opportunity to score, if this can be managed at all. So whereabouts the men should exactly stand must of necessity depend chiefly on the fellow taking the kick. Your team must know his length, force, and direction of kick almost to a foot, and make its dispositions accordingly. Then every man will know just what to expect when he sees the kicker make a particular move; he will be able to grasp whether the ball is intended to come near him or a comrade, and get ready for this. The opposition will often be tricked

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by such keen understanding, and a goal will be the outcome of the brainy play.

I have always thought that all modern football, both Association and Rugby, depends for success on brain-play rather than the old-time promiscuous kicking and running pure and simple. The latter will not triumph nowadays against clever scheming and quick grasp of chances. The more a team can delude its rival, the more goals it will score, whether the deluding come from skilful individual play or tricky combination. Modern football is a matter of fine brain-work as much as of muscular or bodily cleverness, and the more boys recognise this, the more are they likely to prove superior goal-scorers.

How Chop Suey Made Good

The Chinese Mission Boy who Saved Fort Feho

BY ALEC NICHOL

REALLY his name was Cho Su Ah Lun. But later on in life, when he was knocking about the ports and other places of the world, he got to know a good many Britishers. And, for greater ease in remembering what to call him, they christened him Chop Suey, frequently further shortened to Chop. So, in giving some account of his adventures, it is by that name that we shall know him.

As a mere round-headed Chinese nipper, Chop Suey had turned up one day at the Outlying Mission on the Techili Hills, and offered to do odd jobs. No such assistance being at the moment required, some of the Mission "boys" conducted Chop Suey to an exit of the Mission farm buildings, and projected him out into the surrounding country. It seemed to be the only way of getting rid of him, but it was a failure. When the Reverend Mr. Thomas Witherbee, the devoted Missionary of that district, returned in the evening, he found that Chop Suey had done likewise some hours before, and was then rather prominently engaged in brushing down the front doorstep of the Mission.

Mr. Witherbee took the yellow-skinned lad inside and questioned him, with, however, but poor result. Chop Suey had very little to say for himself. His answer, indeed, to most questions was that he wanted to work at the Mission and that he was "plentee stlong."

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"Oh, you are 'plenty strong,' are you?" repeated the Missionary, looking with some amusement at the stolid and silently determined youngster. "But do you happen to know anything about fowls?"

Chop Suey at once replied that as to fowls he knew everything.

While not in the least believing him, Mr. Witherbee decided to give Chop Suey a trial job in the poultry-yard. Attached to the Outlying Mission there was a small but always well-filled hospital for natives. The patients therein required a regular supply of chicken broth. Unfortunately, the very capable Chinese keeper of the Mission poultry-yard had a pronounced dislike for the task of slaughtering his feathered charges. He preferred to regard them as egg producers rather than as ingredients for chicken broth, and when a fowl was required, plucked and trussed, there was commonly some delay before it was forthcoming. To remedy that state of affairs, Mr. Witherbee engaged Chop Suey upon probation, and deputed to him the duty of wringing the fowls' necks.

Chop Suey, seeming to see a whole world of successful endeavour open before him, entered upon the task with a grim resolve to make a success of it. He went and stood some time looking at the fowls. And when the order came "one fatee birdee white man's chicken soupee," Chop Suey carried out the necessary evolution with such vigour that, with merciful swiftness, he pulled the fowl's head clean off.

That was how the fact first became known that even as a youth, Chop Suey, the Chinese Mission boy, possessed a pair of very powerful hands. As he grew up, so his hands became stronger.

In his capacity of general factotum about the Mission buildings, Chop Suey soon proved his worth. And at the Mission services he was both a most regular attendant and a whole-hearted singer. One way and another, he acquitted himself so well that, in order to extend his

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education and his knowledge of the world, Mr. Witherbee, who was shortly returning to England, resolved to take Chop Suey with him. Three months later he could come back in the charge of another Missionary who was going out to China.

To England, then, Chop Suey duly came. And, to add to his other enlightening experiences, the kind Mr. Witherbee treated him to a visit to a semi-final football match.

It so happened that in this match one of the footballers, a famous player, was rather badly injured. While in possession of the ball and going at full speed, he fell across another player and severely strained his ankle.

Having witnessed the catastrophe, Chop Suey took an immense interest in the progress of the sufferer. He purchased each morning a newspaper devoted to sport, and laboriously found out, word by word, the latest intelligence of the incapacitated player. And by that means he became acquainted with the fact that the owner of the injured limb had made up his mind to consult a celebrated bone-setter.

A bone-setter! What was that?

Chop Suey made inquiry on all sides, but for some time the definition of the term remained a mystery. At his next meeting with Mr. Witherbee, though, the information was promptly forthcoming. "A bone-setter, Chop, my boy?" responded the Missionary, genially. "Why, a bone-setter is a man who is not a regular doctor, you know, but who sets and restores dislocated or broken bones. Wonderfully clever chaps, some of them, and they make great big heap plenty money."

On hearing that, Chop's almond eyes assumed a greedy expression, as they always did when opportunities for ample money-making were mentioned. Noticing which, Mr. Witherbee half-teasingly added:—

"And Chop, there is one other funny thing about bone-setter man. His work, for which get him so much money, is to pull and force the bones back into position, to make

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the bones as they were before. For that he must be strong man. And most of all, he must have very strong hands. Like you, Chop."

From the moment when Mr. Witherbee made that bantering remark, a beautiful golden dream took possession of Chop Suey's untutored brain. Bone-setters earned much money. To be a bone-setter you required to have very strong hands. He, Chop Suey, had very, very strong hands. He would return to China. He would go into business as a bone-setter. And earn much money.

In London's Chinatown near the docks, Chop Suey unearthed a compatriot who had run away from China after failing to pass as a doctor. From this man he learned something of the study of the human anatomy, and when he went back with the Missionary returning to China, he took with him a few useful books on the subject. And all the while he daily practised the strengthening of the muscles and tendons of his powerful hands.

But, alas for Chop Suey's ambitions, he had omitted to remember that in the land of his birth the potential patients of a bone-setter are very few in number. In China the percentage of football players, foreign as well as native, is low. And so, when Chop Suey, up an alley and down three steps, in due course opened in business as a bone-setter, the number of his patients remained considerably more attenuated even than his own meagre qualifications for treating them had they appeared to solicit his aid. The introduction of the European art of bone-setting into China, indeed, fell quite flat.

Sad to relate, this rebuff and shattering of all his hopes, seemed to have an ill effect upon Chop Suey. He burnt his books; and the wooden door-board on which his name was written, a kind of professional brass plate, that he kicked down to the end of the alley in which his small consulting room was located. With the new chief of the Outlying Mission, Chop Suey was never on such good

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terms as with his old friend Mr. Witherbee. And soon Chop began to take up with various undesirable acquaintances.

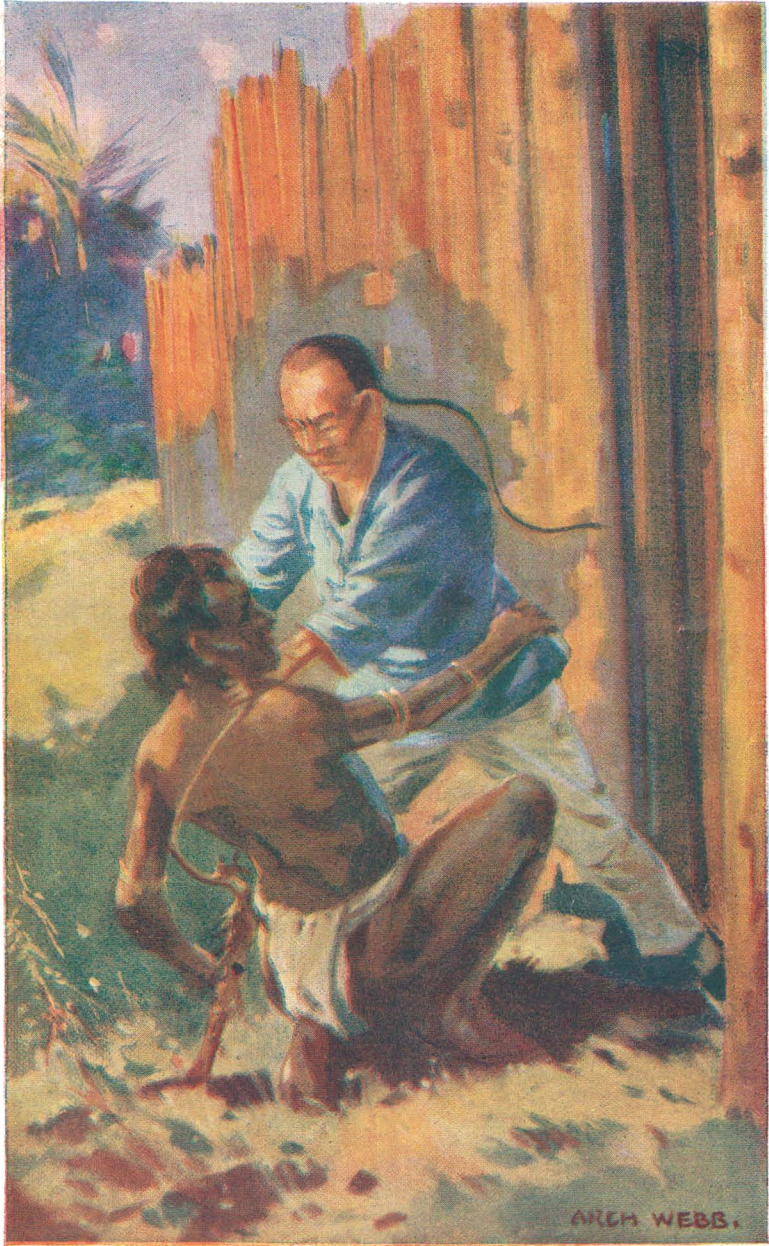
Mr. Witherbee's successor had brought Chop Suey out from England. And for a considerable while he strove hard to keep in touch with him. This, however, was not at all to Chop's taste, and one day he disappeared completely from his accustomed haunts. But not before something regrettable had happened.

In the same little alley was a row of small shops, all of them locked up at night time. From end to end of the row these small shops had been ransacked. And, from the manner of the feats accomplished in securing the spoil, the police declared that the culprit must be someone possessed of very strong hands.

With the further unseemly acts of Chop Suey, the disappointed Chinese bone-setter, we are, fortunately, not at all concerned. For many years he was tossed here and there about the globe, always able to call upon his powerful hands in his pretty frequent time of need, and always, be it said, with loyalty to the British. Bad lot as perhaps he had become, he never forgot his first friend, Mr. Witherbee of the British Outlying Mission on the Techili Hills. And whenever, in the slums of foreign ports or elsewhere, he could aid a British sailor, Chop Suey hastened to do so.

For perhaps, unknown to himself and in spite of the hangdog disregard of consequences that appeared to have come over him, the good seed sown at the Mission had sunk at least a little way into Chop Suey's soul. And there remained the hope that some day, when occasion arose, and wiping off a few of the bad marks that were scored against him, Chop Suey would prove that he was a man.

Then came the war, the war that if it had done nothing else has proved without doubt that even the lowly have valour, and that the world, white, black, and yellow, is peopled with heroes.



“ SOMETHING OF FEARFUL STRENGTH SPRANG UPON HIM AND
BORE HIM BACKWARDS TO THE GROUND.”

[See page 62.]

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When the war broke out, Chop Suey was engaged in a desperate enterprise.

There was a little steam cargo boat, the "Water-lily," that plied at uncertain intervals between Hong-Kong and the tiny seaport of Tu-Pu. Small as she was, the "Water-lily" had often pretty valuable freight. And she also carried native passengers, who were usually Chinese labourers returning to their homes. This time, though, the twenty Chinese passengers on board, who far outnumbered the crew, were not really the harmless labourers they pretended to be. They were, indeed, a choice band of Chinese cut-throats, every one well armed, whose plot was to wait till the "Water-lily" was off a lonely part of the coast, then to overpower the crew, throw the captain overboard, and seize the ship.

And one of the desperadoes was Chop Suey.

Some time before, the naval authorities at Hong-Kong, no doubt scenting possible coming trouble, had ordered that the "Water-lily" should be fitted with wireless. They had, indeed, themselves rigged up the installation on board her. This wireless outfit was the main item opposing them of which the pirates stood in awe. And as Chop Suey was more familiar with Western wonders than any of the others, and as he had such powerful hands, he was deputed to steal into the cupboard-like wireless hutch, at the proper time, and choke the operator at his instrument if he were sitting there. Then the whistle would blow and the "Water-lily" change owners.

The little native temple perched upon the cliffs had already come into sight, and under their loose jackets the Chinese were fingering their revolvers, when the Captain of the "Water-lily" walked towards them, and, raising his hand, addressed them in English.

"You fellows," he said, and they stared as they felt the ship turning under them, "I'm sorry to upset your plans, but war has broken out with Germany, and I am, by orders, returning at once to Hong-Kong. Your

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passage money will be refunded, and I'll see what I can do to send you home when we get there."

He went back to the bridge and the pirates exchanged meaning glances. Now was the time to do the deed, this instant, while the crew were discussing the wonderful news. Captain and all could be taken entirely unawares.

"What did he say?" the pirate leader asked of Chop Suey. Like the others, he had caught the drift of the Captain's words, but Chop Suey was much better conversant with English.

Then Chop told them. But, to the words of the Captain's speech he added a sentence of his own.

"Even now there is big German warship coming towards us."

Piracy was forgotten. For the time being at least, the plot was put away, for the pirates understood their position. Sailing under the British flag, they, too, would be made prisoner, even if they were not sent to the bottom with the ship. They fastened their tunics securely over their weapons, and strained their eyes to catch a first glimpse of Port Victoria.

Already Chop Suey was beginning to make good. And when, the "Water-lily" tied up at the pier, her Captain again addressed the Chinese and asked for one volunteer at a high rate of pay, Chop Suey signed on for an immediate daring run with some Government stores to Borneo.

Now comes the main item in our story of Chop Suey, once a Chinese Mission boy, disappointed bone-setter, and very nearly a pirate.

Chop worked his way out in the "Water-lily," and the much wanted military stores reached their destination without mishap. Enemy agents had been busy on the island; they had stirred up trouble with some of the Dyaks, and, to protect the wealth of certain of the up-country plantations, a fort was to be built. Labourers were hard to obtain. Learning of the war, most of the Chinese were scrambling to get back to their native land

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while yet the seas were open. A few of these were only too glad to join the "Water-lily" for her return voyage. Chop Suey went on inland to assist in the building of Fort Feho.

The outbreak of war had come as a thunderclap. For it no one was prepared, and practically no one could conjecture what it really implied. Great fears were entertained of the appearance of enemy warships and raiders off the coast, and for that reason up-country was deemed to be safer than the seaboard towns. That was the true reason for the springing into being of Fort Feho, which, from force of circumstances, was at first a fort without a garrison or armament. These could, no doubt, be supplied later on.

At the time of Chop Suey's arrival there, however, the fort as it rose on top of a little hill, consisted of wooden buildings and strong rooms, surrounded by a stout stockade, and was intended to be more of a refuge from possibly rebellious Dyaks than as a defence against the Germans. In the latter capacity, indeed, the place would have cut but a sorry figure.

Day after day the traders and planters brought goods and valuables to the fort and locked them up in the strong room. Pending the arrival of soldiers or seamen, when they could be spared, there was a small guard of Chinese who were deemed to be reliable. This guard continued there, shaking in its boots while waiting for the arrival of the real fighters, and on the verge of running away when daily alarming reports came in that the Dyaks had risen and were marching on the place.

Chop Suey, who was employed only as a labourer helping to finish the erection of the fort buildings, took care to keep his ears open as to all that was going forward. His experiences in travelling about the world had rendered him duly acute, and gleaning what information he could, both from the Chinese guard and from the Dyaks who sometimes came to the fort, he held himself ready for whatever might happen.

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He had not long to wait.

"All I can say is that this blessed place is now bung full of loot. It stands here like a ripe plum waiting to be picked. And, if they don't send along a garrison of some sort or other, picked by the Dyaks it is jolly well certain to be."

So declared one of the English planters when he had deposited still another consignment of much worth in Fort Feho.

"I know these are awkward times," he continued, talking to the manager of a rich plantation, who had likewise placed much merchandise and produce within the Fort. "But I think the authorities might have found some protection for our stuff ere this. The troops are thirty miles away; some of them may be on the road here, or they may not. The Dyaks have for weeks been reputed to be on the verge of rising, and the stores that are dangled before their eyes to tempt them, increase every day within the fort, which is really a fort in name only. True, there is the Chinese guard, but they are fellows who are notoriously chicken-hearted. I believe that at the slightest sign of an attempt to take the Fort the whole crowd of them would skedaddle."

That very evening, rumours of a coming Dyak attempt to take Fort Feho reached the Chinese guards, and, as the planter had predicted, they skedaddled to a man. And with the exception of one individual, all the gang of Chinese labourers went with them.

Chop Suey, quite unarmed, found himself to be in sole possession of the richly stocked Fort Feho. And the Dyaks were coming to sack the place before a garrison could be got to it!

Exactly what Chop had succeeded in discovering as to the details of the intended attack cannot be stated. He never said anything touching upon that particular feature of the proceedings, so the precise extent of his information was never made known. Anyway, evening was coming on, when he secreted himself in a little ambush

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just inside a gate of the stockade. And he admitted that he passed away the time manipulating and working loose the muscles of his hands.

From facts subsequently made known, the following intelligence was gleaned as to the plan of attack.

Only a little band of about a dozen Dyaks were concerned in the plot, and they were anxious that the rest of the tribe should remain ignorant of the attempt. That was from two causes. There would be less spoil to divide among many conspirators. And in the remainder of the tribe were many men who were undoubtedly loyal to the authorities. Knowing of the attempt to be made upon the fort, these men would have immediately set off for the coast and betrayed the plotters.

For those reasons, the enemy Dyaks resolved that the fort must, if possible, be taken without raising an alarm. They were unaware that the Chinese guards had fled and that only one man remained to oppose them—and that man unarmed. Each of the twelve was provided with a rifle; two, in addition, had bayonets. And the method arranged was that, while it was yet light, the attackers, emerging one by one from a distant hiding-place, should crawl along the dry ditch surrounding the fort till they came to a little back entrance in the stockade, and thus, singly and unobserved, enter the stockade, and secrete themselves within. At sundown, as they were aware, all the gates of the stockade were closed and locked. And anyone climbing over the palisade or the gates was fairly well certain to be seen by the watcher who was posted in the tall look-out tower.

After dark, as the Dyaks well knew, the nervous Chinese guards were always extra vigilant. On several nights, the reports of the rifles of the guards had broken the stillness of the surrounding forests, repelling the onslaught of an imaginary attack.

Therefore, the orders were:—

One by one, at good intervals, to crawl like snakes to the stockade. Inside, lie flat and silent along the angle

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of the palisade, waiting till all were there. Rifle-club any guard who came to lock the gate. Directly it was dark, creep together to the buildings of the fort and club to death the guards. No shot to be fired if it could be possibly helped.

"These guards," said the ferocious leader of the band, contemptuously, "they are but boys! Look to it, Dyaks, that you see their brains."

But when this very man, in sinewy, silent stealth, reached the stockade, it was no boy that opposed him.

He reached the stout wooden fencing, set his gun against it, and on all fours peeped through the gate a-jar.

But before he could look within, through the narrow opening something of fearful strength, with an impetus that was mighty, sprang upon him and bore him backwards to the ground.

With eyes of a fighting lion that burned yellow with rage, Chop Suey, his terrible hands raised before his face to clutch, grabbed voiceless upon the prostrate figure, and his fingers met round the man's throat.

There was a feeble reaching for the near-by gun. And when Chop Suey sat back on his heels that were under him the Dyak was dead.

With three deep breaths that expanded his chest, Chop Suey was himself again. He dragged the man and his gun inside, and dived back into his ambush.

When the belated small body of troops arrived next morning, absolute quiet reigned over Fort Feho.

But they found the man who had saved the fort still breathing. Chop Suey had a bayonet wound through his chest, and around him were five dead Dyaks, with five rifles and one bayonet. One by one, Chop Suey had choked them all with his hands. The others had turned tail when they came upon their comrades, done for without a sound to tell what had happened.

"We must save this chap at any price, just as he has saved Fort Feho," said the planters, as they carried the

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unconscious Chinaman to a motor car and rushed him to the coast. And from the moment that Chop again opened his eyes, he vowed to help them in that endeavour.

“Chop, him not peggee out,” he said, “him peggee out other fellow.”

So it proved. And when Chop was well again, there was a positive procession of motor cars to conduct him once more to Fort Feho, to a meeting of planters and of military persons, specially convened to thank him. And, given his free choice of generous reward, Chop chose that they should buy him a nice little rubber plantation where the labours of other Chinamen should keep him in comfort.

But if you to-day went there and inquired for a person of the name of Chop Suey, none could tell you of him. For, by written permission that was most gladly given by its rightful owner, Chop Suey, when he entered into possession of his property, adopted the eminently English name of Thomas Witherbee.

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What it Brought to Bob Chatteris

BY GRACE PETTMAN

"I AM jolly glad I am going to school next week," cried Bob Chatteris to himself, as he burst out of the house and ran quickly towards the public park. He had just had a bad quarter of an hour with his aunt, and somehow, these scenes were becoming far too frequent. He was always in the wrong, and his cousin, Basil, always right. No wonder Basil had found this out, and conveniently shelved the responsibility for his own misdeeds on to the shoulders of the orphan boy who had not long been a member of the household.

"There'll be nobody to bear the blame for him when I have gone," said Bob, sniffing vigorously—of course, it could not be said he was crying like a girl, a boy his age! Nevertheless, his eyes smarted a good bit—perhaps it was because the wind was in the east.

"I am glad I am going to be out of the way before that old uncle of theirs from California arrives, though he is just as much my great-uncle as Basil's. They think he is rich and that he will make Basil his heir, and——!"

"Can you please tell me how to get to Porchester Villas?"

Bob started, and turned an embarrassed face towards a benevolent old gentleman who was standing looking at him with a twinkle of mingled amusement and surprise in his eye. He knew something of boys, and discreetly ignored Bob's flushed cheeks and generally disturbed air.

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After all, scraps were scraps, and boys would be boys, you know!

"Porchester Villas?" Bob rose slowly from the seat where he had flung himself down under the trees. "What number do you want, sir? It all depends on that, which way you had better go."

"Number ninety-nine," was the surprising answer, and Bob started.

"Why, that is where I live," and he eyed the elderly man up and down with a faint shadow of interest, for his uncle, a city clerk, did not have many visitors.

"You live there?" said the old gentleman eagerly. "Then perhaps I may walk back with you. I suppose you are Mr. Fowler's son?"

Bob shook his head. "Oh, no; only his nephew."

"His nephew," said the old gentleman, with emphasis on the pronoun. "Then your name is——?"

"Bob Chatteris, sir. My mother was Mr. Fowler's youngest sister."

The old gentleman put out his hand and laid it on Bob's shoulder. "Madge Chatteris's boy?" he said. "Is it possible?"

"My mother's name was Madge," said Bob, his heart suddenly warming towards this elderly stranger. "Did you know her, sir?"

The old gentleman nodded vigorously. "Yes; but only as a young girl—quite young. I heard she had married, and that she was dead, but I had no idea she had left a boy! How comes it you are living with the Fowlers?"

"There was nowhere else for me to go," said Bob sadly, "and they offered me a home for a time."

"Why only for a time?" said the old gentleman quickly.

"Well—they are not very well off," said Bob, flushing as if he knew he had no business to talk of his people's affairs to a stranger; but the fact that this old gentleman had known his mother seemed to excuse everything.

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"They've Basil to consider, so they say; and after next week there won't be room, for they're expecting a rich old uncle home from California."

"Indeed!" said the old man drily. "So you are to be turned out to make room for him?"

"Oh, no, sir!" said Bob. "I should be going, in any case—to school. My father fell at Mons!" Bob lifted his head with the proud air of a hero's son, "and I've just been elected to a scholarship for the sons of men who died on active service."

"Good—very good!" said the old gentleman. "What school is that?"

"Southerndeane College, sir. Do you know it? It's a great place on the south coast. A fellow who has been to school there, can go anywhere and do anything. If I am lucky enough to win a scholarship at the college later, I want to be a doctor, if possible."

The old gentleman nodded vigorously, as if he hurriedly approved. "Quite right, my boy—quite right! Ah, is this the house?"

"Yes, sir." Bob led the way up the steps and, opening the door, stood back for the old gentleman to enter the hall. Then he said suddenly: "I beg your pardon; my uncle is not at home, but Mrs. Fowler is in. Who shall I say wants to see her?"

The old gentleman's face worked curiously; then his wrinkled features relaxed into a smile.

"Say it's Mr. Fowler's uncle, Samuel Climes, from California."

Bob drew a long breath, and stood for a moment dumb with dismay.

"I beg your pardon, sir," he said. "I didn't know. What—what have I said?"

"Nothing you need be ashamed of, my boy," and the old gentleman laid a hand affectionately on his shoulder. "Nor is there any need to tell anyone—*anyone*, mind, that we have met before."

Mrs. Fowler was idling with a novel over the drawing-

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room fire, and to keep Basil quiet while she read she had given him a big box of chocolates. These were promptly hidden the moment Bob appeared at the door: it was no part of Basil's usual procedure to offer his orphan cousin a share.

"Some one to see you, aunt," said Bob. "I was to tell you it's Uncle Samuel Climes, from California."

"Uncle Samuel!" Mrs. Fowler sprang to her feet in dismay, and brushing Bob aside, rushed out into the hall. She was prepared to receive her husband's rich kinsman with a gushing welcome; but she stopped short at the sight of an elderly man whose dress was so homely—shabby, almost—that for the moment she felt convinced there had been a mistake. Instantly her manner changed to coldness.

"Mr. Climes," she said, "I am awfully sorry Mr. Fowler is out. I will telephone to him at the office. Will you come in? We did not expect you until next week."

"It is only by the mercy of God I am here at all," said the old gentleman, who had taken in the situation at a glance and noticed the change in her manner. "I managed to sail rather earlier than I expected—to my sorrow, as it happened. The vessel in which I crossed the Atlantic was torpedoed."

"Torpedoed! Oh, what an awful experience you must have had!"

"Ah! and worse than that; I have had a great loss—I shall be a poorer man for the rest of my life because of it!"

He watched Mrs. Fowler narrowly as he spoke, and saw the welcoming smile fade still further from her eyes. Was she planning already—not how long she should keep him—this eagerly expected relative—but how quickly she could get rid of him, now that the ominous word "loss" had reached her ears? Nevertheless, she made some show of hospitality: gave orders for a room to be prepared for him at once, and waited on him herself at tea.

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While they talked she tried to find out by skilful questioning what his intentions were, whether he had come to London with the intention of making a long stay or not? But Mr. Climes was distinctly non-committal; nor did he reveal very much to his nephew when Mr. Fowler came in earlier than usual, having been summoned by telephone from the office.

Basil had received a long course of parental coaching as to his behaviour in the presence of the rich uncle when he came; but now that it seemed Mr. Climes was poor, Basil soon took his cue from his parents and decided that any great show of attention on his part was obviously not worth while. Only Bob seemed to find time for him during the next few days: time to put him in the way of seeing London, the London he had forgotten since he had left forty years ago, the London which he had come back to find a wholly new city. As for Mrs. Fowler, she was only too thankful to find he was content with Bob's company. Why should she spend her time laying herself out to be agreeable to this old man of whose shabby appearance she felt quite ashamed? His coming had been a bitter disappointment, and she took no pains to conceal it from her husband.

After Bob went off to school the old gentleman was left pretty much to himself. He settled down quietly into the ways of the household, observing much and saying little, but dropping no hint as to how long he intended to stay, or if indeed he expected his relatives to provide him with a permanent home. One evening old Mr. Climes was seated in the study nodding in the twilight over the latest war news, when to his dismay he heard the sound of voices in the room. Anxious to read in the fading light, he had pulled his chair close to the window, and the heavy curtain concealed his presence.

"Something must be done, and that quickly!" Mrs. Fowler's voice full of ill-concealed irritation reached him.

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He half rose from his chair to reveal his presence, but sat down again as he caught the next words. "How long is that awful old man going to stay? He must think we are as rich as we supposed he was! You always said it would be well worth our while if he came home—and I was prepared to do anything——!"

"I can't turn him out, Mary," grumbled Mr. Fowler, "though I must say I am as disappointed as you. He has said nothing about himself or his affairs, except that a great loss had cast a gloom over him and would affect everything."

"But he must be poor—miserably poor," she said. "Of course I know he was torpedoed on the way over, and all that; but if he were well off do you think he would go about in those same shabby old things they rigged him out with when he landed? Of course not! I was hoping such great things from his coming, and now—and now——!"

Mrs. Fowler was almost ready to cry with disappointment. She turned and went out of the room and her husband followed her. As soon as they were at a safe distance Mr. Climes stepped from behind the curtain, his face working curiously, and went up to his own room. When he came down to supper he quietly announced that he would be going into the country the following day and might be absent for a week. Mrs. Fowler could not conceal her relief: Mr. Fowler murmured something about hoping his uncle would look on their house as his home, but the words were spoken in half-hearted fashion and the old gentleman vouchsafed no reply. It was quite evident they were glad enough for him to go. So bitter had been their disappointment that, instead of welcoming a wealthy kinsman with open arms, they had been forced against their will to entertain a poor relation.

A whole week passed: then one evening Mr. Climes returned to Porchester Villas.

"I have not come to trespass on your hospitality," he said quietly. "I have decided to make my home in

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England, and have found a pretty little place on the Sussex coast."

"Oh!" said Mrs. Fowler, with wide-open eyes. "That will be nice for you. If you have a little cottage and a good garden, you will be able to do quite well, perhaps, with it. Some people live quite comfortably out of a small holding, nowadays."

Mr. Climes nodded vigorously, and his eyes twinkled.

"Yes, every garden is of value, especially in war-time," he said, in non-committal fashion. Then, turning to his nephew he added, "By the way, I shall not be very far from Southerndean, where Bob is at college. I want to know whether you are his sole legal guardian?"

Before Mr. Fowler could reply, his wife interposed.

"Jack, let me speak—you will never do justice to yourself! My husband is not legally responsible for Bob in any way," she said quickly. "What we have done for him has been wholly done out of charity. His father expressed some wish before he died, that the boy should make a home with his mother's relatives if possible; but of course we could not afford, in these difficult days——" She broke off, conscious of the steady gaze of the old gentleman's keen eyes, which made her feel decidedly uneasy.

"That clears the ground, then," said Mr. Climes. "If you are not Bob's legal guardian, there is no reason why I should not adopt him as my son—and heir," he added, with emphasis on the last words. "At any rate, his entire future will be my care from now; I have made my will in his favour to-day."

"Your—what?" Mrs. Fowler started up, and her voice rose to a scream.

"My will," said the old gentleman quietly. "I am afraid there is a disappointment in store for you, Mary. You have been too ready to make money the only standard of value in your life. I came to you a stranger: the clothes I wore did not belong to me, but were given to me in pity by those who rescued me from an open boat.

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I told you I had had a great loss—so I had; at that moment I could think of nothing else. But you asked no questions, so I offered no explanation. The loss to which I referred was not the loss of all the presents I was bringing home for you—though these were sunk when the ship went down; nor was it the loss of money, since my fortune is invested in securities in the States, which are not likely to be touched. In California I made a friend, a lone man like myself, and when I decided to return to England he came with me too—he to seek out his friends here while I came to you.

“When the ship was torpedoed we were standing side by side: when the boats were launched we were separated—when the Roll was called at Plymouth he did not answer to his name! His loss is hard to bear, for he had been to me a true friend from the days when I was poor, struggling, and unknown. It would have been easier to bear that loss had you met me with the welcome and the sympathy that I expected. I did not deceive you: you took it for granted that money was the only thing worth losing or worth having. When my will is read, you will find that I have not forgotten Basil, but Bob—lone like myself—will have henceforth from me a father's love, while from him I shall have, I know, the devotion of a son.”

Building the 'Varsity Boat

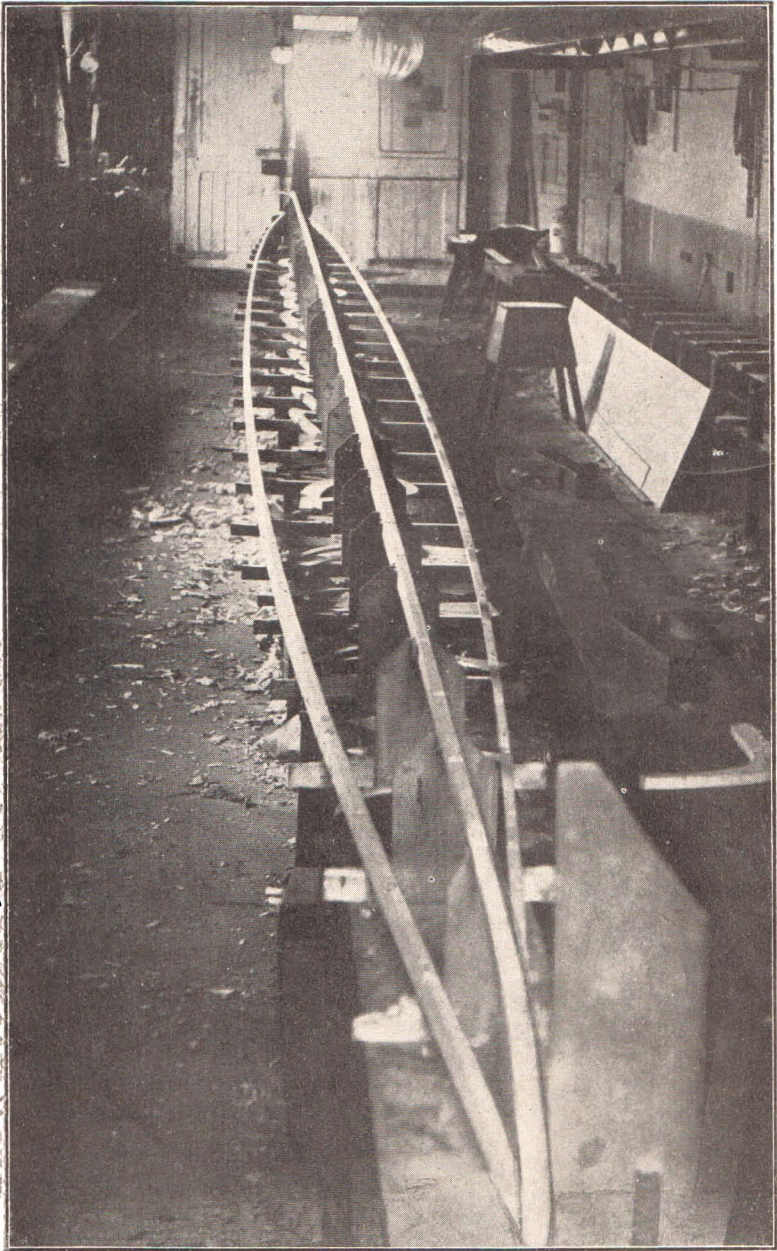
Special Facts About the Cambridge Eights' Craft

BY GEORGE A. WADE

NOT long ago, when speaking about sculling to Ernest Barry, the great champion of the art, he made a remark which struck me very much. "The ideal would be," said Barry, "for every sculler worth the name to have a boat of his own, built specially for him, so as to fit in with his particular needs and characteristics. For every man rows best in a boat wherein he is thoroughly comfortable. That is why the 'Varsity eights almost always—however good their former year's boat may have been—have a new craft built to suit the new crew each year."

It may not be generally known that this is the case. But of course what the famous oarsman said is true; the Universities, as soon as they have got their eights anything like settled for the annual boat race, set about having their new boats built to accommodate the men selected for the contest.

Now, building a craft for the 'Varsity race is a particular department of the boat-builder's business. There are some firms which specialise in this, and amongst them Messrs. Sims, of Putney, stand out pre-eminent, owing to the many times they have been chosen by various crews for this task. Such firms as Salter's (Oxford), Turk's (Kingston), Taggs (Molesey), Messoms (Richmond), etc., have long had a notable reputation for building excellent eight-oared skiffs. But undoubtedly



BUILDING THE CAMBRIDGE BOAT.

Building the 'Varsity Boat

Messrs. Sims, where I went to watch the building of the Cambridge boat, have no superiors at this particular work.

The job is a difficult and intricate one. It is necessary that the craft shall be as near perfection as possible, for the slightest error in its construction would, so I was told, prove very upsetting to many of the crew and might be the means of losing the race. The builders are generally asked to have the new boat ready by the time the crew arrives at Putney for practice on the tide-way, which is usually some three weeks or so before the day fixed for the race!

Messrs. Sims have to their credit some ten winning boats built for the Cambridge eights in various years; so what they don't know about the job can be set aside as not worth knowing. I was told that probably the most delicate part of the task is the shaping of the ribs of the boat. The ribs are far more in number than you would ever guess! They amount to 120, sixty on each side. But what is still more surprising, no two on a side are precisely alike.

Now this entails, therefore, a tremendous amount of careful labour, of very delicate and difficult nicety too, since each separate rib must be perfectly true. No workman who hopes to help make this boat what it ought to be can ever be satisfied by looking at a rib and saying, "That's pretty near! It'll do!" No, he must not be content with anything but perfection.

The wood from which the ribs are made is sycamore. A plank of this wood was laid on the joiner's table during my visit, to show me what was done. Two or three ribs were drawn on this plank as accurately as the most skilled draughtsman could do it, and then each rib was cut out carefully with a bow-saw, and was examined closely to make sure it was exactly of the proper shape, proportion, and thickness.

The next part of the builder's job is to fit the ribs, when all ready, to the framework of the boat. Now,

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the frame is made of American pine, and it may be said that this fitting is really the easiest part of the whole process, if the ribs, and the places for them in the frame, have been perfectly cut. When the fitting is done the ribs are again tested by a chalk-line being drawn over them, whilst the chief builder watches very carefully to see that there is not the least deviation from the shape set out. If there is, that fault must be at once remedied. As proving how wondrously exact the builders must be, I was informed that even an error of a twentieth of an inch is too much, and the plane must be brought in to remedy the fault.

So far we have got the delicate frame of the boat before us, and the next operation is to cover it with what is technically called "the skin." This skin is of the best cedar-wood, and the great necessities in it are mildness and pliability—if the cedar-wood lacks these, it is of no use at all in this respect. To obtain this special sort of cedar-wood the Putney firm has to send to Mexico, where a particular kind of tree just meets the items required. Messrs. Sims said that one might very frequently examine the trunks of forty cedar trees in Mexico without coming across one that possessed the necessary pliability!

The cedar-wood, when found, must be cut into strips whose length is twenty-four feet; width twenty-six inches; and thickness exactly three-sixteenths of an inch! You will easily grasp, therefore, the extreme delicacy of the many operations necessary to complete this part of the programme!

The job of managing this cedar-wood is perhaps the worst of all. For, you see, it has to be curved into the exact shape for covering the whole exterior of the frame awaiting it. To get what they want the builders wet the wood on its outer surface while at the same time they heat the inside surface with gas. By these two absolutely opposite methods the outside of the wood is made to swell whilst the inside similarly shrinks. And

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this process is carried on until each piece of cedar-wood is so fashioned as to fit the framework of the boat with the utmost exactness.

It need scarcely be said that the men engaged on this work have to be most cautious, so as to let the swelling and shrinking go on very slowly and naturally. If they try to hasten it the cedar-wood infallibly cracks and becomes useless, so that the whole of this part of the business has to be done over again. Therefore this section of the work is the slowest and most trying of all.

The next step is almost as ticklish; for, having got the "skin" to fit as perfectly as possible, it must then be nailed on to the ribs. These, as you saw, are very tender and frail, and will not admit of the least rough or unskilful treatment. If you have ever watched a 'Varsity eight getting into their craft at Putney, Richmond, or Bourne End, you will know how very delicately and cautiously every man has to tread lest he should inadvertently send his foot clean through the slight framework.

It takes at least 2000 copper nails to fasten the cedar skin to the ribs, but, when this has been satisfactorily done, the boat is fast nearing completion, though the putting on of the outriggers is a business requiring considerable care. To hold them the builders have to strengthen the top part of the craft, which they do by placing round it a strip of wood known as the "washboard." This is made of Mexican cedar, is five-eighths of an inch thick, and has a depth of some four and a half inches. This must be firm and strong, for the weight of the oars is great, and the strain on the riggers when the crew is off full tilt soon tells on them if they are not just what they ought to be.

Then two other things are needed to finish the building. The first is the covering of the boat with linen at the bow and stern, and finally the varnishing of the whole craft. As the ordinary racing boat has to receive

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five separate coats of varnish, and each of these must be allowed to dry perfectly ere the next is put on, the affair takes time, and is seldom completed under eight or nine days.

Of the making of the oars I shall say a word or two shortly, but first it may be of interest to state that the craft for an average 'Varsity crew is sixty-three feet long, and the cost before the war was reckoned at £1 a foot. This sum for such a frail boat seems costly indeed—it would be well over £120 to-day, no doubt!—but after all, £1 a foot is not expensive when one considers the great skill, extreme care, and long work needed for the building.

The boat is broadest of course, in the centre, where its width is about a quarter of an inch under two feet. It will be grasped that the men, once in the boat, must either keep quite still or only move in regular unison if an accident is not to occur. For the weight of the heavier members in the crew has otherwise a big tendency to capsize the craft, especially when one gets such heavy-weights as some of the oarsmen have been in recent races. The full weight of the boat alone is but some 260 lbs. or actually less than the weight of the two lightest members of the crew together! This means that each oarsman has to pull along some forty-five to fifty pounds weight, including the coxswain.

Now, the fashioning of the oars for the 'Varsity boat is a distinct art, a work in itself, and there is only one firm in it, so far as this part of the work is concerned. This firm is Messrs. Ayling, of Putney, who have made the oars for all the Oxford and Cambridge boats ever since 1869! What a magnificent record, and what a testimony to marvellously good work this is!

The oars are of specially seasoned spruce, which comes from Quebec. The length of such an oar will be almost incredible to the person who has never closely considered this matter. If you look at an average scull in the boat you engage at Kew or Barnes, you will find

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it is roughly somewhere from seven to eight feet. But the oars for the 'Varsity race have to be twelve feet three inches long!

Would you think it made any difference which oar this or that member of the crew used? It does very much. For the blades vary in width, so as to suit the various men, and the variation may extend even to half an inch for the heavier members. If you have done much rowing you will appreciate what even that difference may mean. The weight of the 'Varsity oar thus runs between eight and a half pounds to nine and a half pounds, according to the position and weight of the rower. Bow and stroke use lighter oars, since stroke has to set the pace, make his crew as lively as he can, and keep the boat going strong all the time, which would not be easy, if at all possible, with heavy oars in his hands. Bow has to be "nippy," and to make the boat jump out of the water, so to speak, for which also he must have an oar not needing a big tug every time he pulls it.

I think, therefore, you will allow, after reading this, that a vast deal more is hidden in the words than most people suppose when they read shortly before the race that "The Cambridge crew went out for the first time this morning in the new boat built for them by Sims, of Putney, and expressed their delight with the beautiful craft."

Binnie and the Bomb

An Episode on Board the "Mahatma"

BY SYDNEY BARR

To a certain extent the war gave youth its chance, as far as matters of the sea were concerned. Under normal conditions, Binnie knew, he would have had two or three years more to wait for engineer rank, even on such a tramp steamer as the "Mahatma," but now they snapped him up readily enough, and he dodged periscopes across the big drink, westward going, while he learned his job. By the time the tramp made outward past Sandy Hook, Binnie felt that he could have taken charge of the "Aquitania" engine room without trouble, but, perhaps fortunately, he was not given the chance.

The "Mahatma," a member of a convoy, drowsed across the big drink easily enough, and Binnie enjoyed the trip not a little. There was a spice of excitement in the possibility of submarines, and still more was there excitement when, a day off the Irish coast, the noise of gunning came over the water, and one of the attendant destroyers sent up smoke enough to poison the skies, and raced away to northward to join in the destruction of an underwater pirate. She came back at nightfall, and there was talk of one more gone under for good, at which such officers and men who were not on duty swapped yarns with each other about the submarines they had missed and seen. That is, all save Texeira swapped yarns, and Texeira always kept himself apart from the others.

He had shipped at the home port, as had Binnie, and

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apparently he had satisfied the port authorities that his name hid no enemy alien personality. Binnie, in whose watch Texeira was, had nothing with which to blame the man in any way, and yet he disliked the swarthy youth, and distrusted him more than he disliked him. Texeira did his work well, but he had a stealthy, slippery way with him; if one spoke incautiously on any subject, Texeira was pretty certain to come up from behind with an oil-can and a swab; there were times, too, when Texeira's eyes would gleam up through a grating almost like the eyes of a cat in the dark. He was an uncanny beast, Binnie decided, though quite trustworthy as far as his work went.

Teixeira was proud of one thing—his life-saving waist-coat. It was one of those fabric-covered rubber things, with a little tube in the pocket, and, if the wearer were thrown into the water, all he had to do was to take the tube out of his pocket and blow into it, when the vest would inflate like a football bladder. This vest Texeira always wore, and on cold nights he put on over it a pilot jacket which was the nearest thing to officer's attire that could be worn without actually looking like an officer. Binnie, observing these things, cared not a bit what Texeira wore, so long as he did his work.

They got a sight of the Irish coast, and came on for a southern port, along the channel that was held clear of mines and periscopes, as a general rule. It was Binnie's watch down in the engine room when they were due to pass Land's End, and Binnie was down below, observing the behaviour of main eccentrics, when he heard footsteps hurrying up above him, and ceased his observations to look up.

He was almost, but not quite, certain that it was Texeira who hurried up the ladder. On the grating over his head lay a large egg-shaped thing, at one end of which a piece of tape smoked and spluttered. Binnie went up that ladder to the grating above like a monkey, and there at his feet lay a bomb big enough to blast the

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whole engine room to fragments, with a length of fuse at one end, smoking, and the smoke creeping down towards the bomb. Binnie had his knife out of his pocket and open in a couple of seconds, and he sawed through the fuse as near to the burning end as he dared—sawed so vigorously that with the last jab, which severed the fuse, he snapped the blade of the knife off short. He left the burning fragment of fuse to care for itself, tucked the bomb under his arm, and raced up on deck.

His first idea was to throw the bomb into the sea, but on second thoughts he put it down gently on a coil of rope, and called to one of the men on watch.

"Guard that," he said. "It's harmless as long as you don't touch it. I want to find the man who brought it aboard."

With that he set off round the decks, beginning at midships on the port side and going forward of the boat. There was light enough for him to see a couple of yards ahead as he went, but no more, and he made his way along the boat's low waist, climbed the ladder to the foredeck, and came round to the starboard side, still without finding anything. Then he came down the ladder from the foredeck on the starboard side, and in the gloom at the foot of the ladder stood Texeira—there was no mistaking the man, for his eyes gleamed in the dark, like a cat's—and he was blowing at the little tube of his life-saving vest as if time were of importance.

"Stop blowing, Texeira," Binnie said, "and come back with me. It won't go off, yet."

Texeira let go of his blow tube with a snarl, and made a grab at the rail. He had raised himself halfway up it, ready to drop over the side, when Binnie stabbed at him with the broken-bladed knife, viciously and hard. The thrust went home, as Binnie intended it should, through the almost inflated vest, and with a hiss Texeira shrunk to his natural size. At that, realising that his opportunity of throwing himself into the sea with a chance of getting

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to the coast was gone, Texeira dropped back off the rail and turned on Binnie, savagely.

It was not a fight in the ordinary sense of the word, for the man who began it, Texeira, knew that if Binnie lived he would not. Thus it was both more and less than a fight, for Texeira cared not what trick he used, and Binnie understood that he had to win or die at Texeira's hands. The broken-bladed knife had flown from his hand at the first impact, or he would have used it without compunction on this man who would have sent a whole ship's company to the bottom with that murderous bomb.

Clinched, they rocked against the rail for a minute or more, Texeira trying to get Binnie off his feet that he might throw him over the side, and Binnie hanging on with a monkeyish grip—he was smaller than Texeira, but lithier and more rapid of movement. They went down on the iron deck with a thud, and Binnie contrived so to twist as they fell that Texeira's head came in contact with the deck plating, while he was uppermost. But the knock seemed to matter little to Texeira, and they rolled over and over along the deck, still clinched tight—until Binnie found that Texeira was trying to get a hand on his throat.

At that he sent out a couple of yells for help, and at the same time, with his arm round Texeira, got a grip on Texeira's wrist. The other struggled to get that wrist free, but Binnie held on to it and pulled and pulled until he knew that Texeira's arm must be twisting painfully. He got the wrist well back, gave it a final tug, and then let go altogether and punched Texeira a mighty punch in the stomach.

"Got you!" he said, as Texeira doubled up under the punch and steps sounded along the deck. He sat on Texeira to get his breath back, giving him one more punch where he judged it would do most good, and lifted up his voice—

"This way, whoever you are!"

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Texeira wriggled at the sound, and Binnie, realising that the struggle had torn his coat, hit him in the wind again to keep him quiet and inoffensive, another vicious punch. A figure loomed over him in the darkness.

"Get a grip on one arm of this carrion," said Binnie, "and I'll take the other. He's got to be roped."

The man obeyed without a word, and they lifted the dazed Texeira to his feet and bade him march. He moved drunkenly, slowly, between them for a few yards, and seemed to sway.

"Ca—can't keep up," he gasped.

Binnie was wary, but the other man not so careful. Texeira felt a slackness in the grasp on his arm on one side, and staggered on another half-dozen paces. Then he swayed as if about to fall forward, kicked the seaman who held him in the stomach with a back thrust of his foot, and wrenched clear of Binnie. He had a four-yard clear run to the rail, and he leaped it and went over.

There was one man of Binnie's watch left below in the engine room to reverse the engines on the call of "Man overboard!" They lowered away the boat, but the darkness made it impossible to find a man who did not want to be found, and after nearly an hour the boat was hauled aboard again. By the time that the boat came up to its davits Binnie had reported the occurrence, and there was the evidence of the sailor and the bomb to back it.

"We can't get Texeira's evidence, evidently," said the captain. "He's swimming it home in preference to staying aboard for the rest of the trip. But I should like to congratulate you, Mr. Binnie, on what I should call a remarkable presence of mind—and courage—for so young an officer. I'll see that recommendations are made in the proper quarter about this affair when we reach port."

And that is why Binnie, still an engineer officer in the merchant service, wears a little bit of ribbon on his shore-going chest. At sea he does not bother about it, but, when stories of submarines and other perils of the

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war period are being swapped, Binnie is generally asked to weigh in with his yarn of the bomb that won him the bit of ribbon. And as a rule he does as he is asked, adding at the end that he had the unpleasant task of identifying a body that was washed ashore as that of Texeira, who was fool enough to risk swimming it.

A Surprise for Shut Canyon Camp

A Tale of a Bear Hunt

BY E. CHARLES VIVIAN

THEY set their camp out on the edge of nowhere, as Kenney expressed it; but Kenney was raw to this game of camping out and killing his food before eating it, although he was the oldest member of the party. Burke and Fisher had had trips of the sort before, and Hookey, the half-breed whom they trusted for washing up, wood-chopping, and the multifarious duties of a camp away from the sound of a train-whistle, had made more trips of the kind than he could count. Kenney, being new to the game, was full of theories; he did not believe in setting a camp out on the edge of nowhere, as he called the cliff that overlooked Shut Canyon; he wanted it pitched down in a pine-shaded hollow that looked like paradise, and carried about an ounce of mosquitoes to each cubic inch of space. Once he had tested the mosquitoes—and they had tested him—he changed his mind, and agreed that the top of the cliff was better, although it involved a fairly long distance to carry water.

“Anyhow,” he concluded, with regard to that point, “Hookey does most of the carrying.”

From the camping ground they could look down on the tops of pines in the canyon; at night they could hear wolves away off in the woods, but no wolves came near them, for the snow was months away, as yet. Down in

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the woods, in fact, it was "perspiraciously warm," as Fisher expressed it, though the camp on the cliff-top was always cool—too cool for Kenney's liking, when they turned out in the early hours. He made much play with a heavy sweater that had been white when the camp was first set out, but was grey before they had been fixed there a week. He had the completest, nattiest outfit for this sort of holiday that one could possibly imagine, and little idea of its uses. By virtue of his age, he considered himself fit to instruct both Burke and Fisher, and even to criticise Hookey, and neither smiles nor silence could convince him that he had much to learn. Until, one day, he shot a hawk and brought it in proudly as material for dinner, when Burke's laughter annoyed him.

"It's good bird, anyhow," he said.

"Cook it, Hookey," Burke bade. "Kenney shall have it all to himself for dinner, and I'll be satisfied with trout, for once."

Next morning Hookey announced, before they went off to the woods for the day, that he had come across bear tracks. Immediately Kenney got excited, and wanted to see. Hookey took him some 200 yards along the cliff top, and showed him the tracks.

"Pooh," he said, "it's a small one, anyhow."

"You see 'um close—you not think 'um small," Hookey replied.

"One gun, one soft-nosed bullet—good-bye bear," said Kenney.

"You ask bear to wait while you get gun?" Hookey inquired maliciously.

"Sure," Kenney answered. "You're too smart, Hookey, altogether. Wait till I meet that bear, though."

He went back to Fisher, who was busy oiling his rifle.

"Say," he said, "let's give up to-day's trip out, and go and look for this bear. He's only a small one, and we might follow up his tracks."

"Half the country round here"—Fisher did not even look up to answer—"is bare rock, and if you can follow

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bear track over hard rock you're smarter on the trail than I am. And Burke said he saw wild turkey, yesterday—I want wild turkey to eat—better than hawk."

"Let the hawk rest, anyhow," Kenney suggested. "You may have made worse mistakes in your time, youngster."

It was a form of address that Fisher particularly disliked, for though Kenney was some five years older, he could outpoint Kenney on nearly every kind of woodcraft.

"Oh, Burkie," he called, "Kenney wants to track bear."

"Turkey!" came from inside the tent. "Smell 'um roasting—Kenney can go after bear on his lone while there's turkey round."

"I have an idea you're both a bit scared of bear," Kenney observed.

Fisher looked up, and scratched his nose with the bolt of his rifle, leaving an oily streak there.

"Say," he said, "have you ever met real bear, on the half-shell?"

"Have you?" Kenney countered.

"Close and handy," Fisher answered, "and I wasn't amused. There were three of us then, and two of us nursed the other for a fortnight—it just about spoilt our camp that year. If you get him slick, first shot, well and good, but if he gets a chance to close with you he's tough—and ours was fatally hit when he closed. You may be a hero, Kenney—I'm not."

"Good old Jim!" came from the invisible Burke. "Turkey for me, every time—I'm playing for safety, too."

"Two to one, Kenney," Fisher observed. "We'll stalk the turkey on his native heath, for to-day."

Kenney gave in without more words, and, when Burke came out, they went down the cliff face at a point where it was a little less than precipitous, out toward where Burke had seen—or imagined he had seen—wild turkey

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the day before. They scoured acres of woodland, and, as Fisher expressed it, "picked up a few odds and ends," but never a sign of turkey did they meet. At noon Kenney ventured to bemoan the loss of the bear.

"Think of taking a real grizzly skin back home with you," he said.

"Or going home with the grizzly inside him," Fisher amended.

"Anybody knows grizzly don't eat you," Kenney said contemptuously.

"No, but he'll braise you, as the cooks call it, ready for cooking," Burke replied, "and turkey won't."

"Your turkey's a myth," Fisher snorted, "and it's time to put for camp. We've got enough to still the pangs of hunger, and if anyone thinks we're short, we might shoot a——"

He hesitated, grinning at Kenney.

"Go on," Kenney retorted, nettled. "Say hawk, and get it over."

"I may be poor, but my manners are perfect," Fisher answered. "I wouldn't say hawk for worlds."

They got up to go, and collected their belongings.

"But," Fisher remarked, in the middle of his preparations, "there's nothing to prevent my thinking it, is there?"

"If I were Kenney," Burke suggested, "I'd throw chunks of rock at you till the sky looked like a snow-storm."

"But then," Fisher observed, "you always are a bit inclined to waste your energies, till there's some work that wants doing."

He consulted a compass that he carried. "West by south," he announced, "and we'll hit the canyon somewhere. We ought to make it about an hour before sunset, if we're good."

They set off, treading easily on a carpet of pine needles, the accumulation of countless years. In spite of a light breeze that came to them down the aisles of the woods,

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the warmth of the day brought them all to a state of reeking perspiration before they had covered a mile.

"Hope that bear's out in the up-country," Burke observed. "Much too warm for a scuffle here."

From time to time Fisher consulted his compass, and so they kept on until a stiff climb brought them out on the cliff that bounded Shut Canyon on its northern side. There they stopped for rest and observation.

"Miles too far down," Fisher said. "We've got to trail up here till our bones ache, to strike camp. Nothing for it but to get on, though."

He slung a little collection of feathers and fur—the day's bag—over his shoulder, picked up his gun, and led off. A half-mile or so along the top of the cliff Kenney called a halt.

"Hold on," he said, "I can see a variation of diet."

He pointed across to where the stump of a dead tree rose out of a thicket. "Bees," he announced, "and where there's bees there's honey."

"Bees have hot tails," Burke remarked, "and I'm for camp."

"We might mark it down, and come at night to see what we can get," Kenney suggested.

"I don't see Burke losing his beauty sleep for honey or anything else," Fisher said, "and I'm not anxious myself to monkey with a bee tree."

"Anyhow, I'm going to see what the chances are," Kenney said. "I've seen combs quite easy to get, sometimes, in the south."

"Let him," Burke observed, "we've plenty time."

Kenney put down his gun, and went over toward the bee tree. They saw that he went to the edge of the thicket and stood watching for a minute, and then began to push a way through the straggling undergrowth toward the tree. He got quite close to it and stood looking, and then he pushed his way a little nearer. They saw him make one or two swipes at the air, brushing away an invisible assailant, and presently, it seemed,



"THEY WENT OVER THE CLIFF, A BUNDLE OF SHINING CLAWS AND STARING BEAST EYES AND WAVING LEGS." (See p. 89.)

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the assailant brought up reinforcements, for Kenney ducked and backed, thrashed his way through the undergrowth, and began to run toward them.

At that Fisher dropped his load, ready for rapid retreat. "Don't bring 'em here, Kenney!" he shouted, "we're not curious." And Kenney, seeing the wisdom of keeping such troubles as these to himself, altered direction, steering a course toward the camp, along the cliff edge. His arms were working like windmill sails as he tried to beat off the bees, and his rate of travel was considerably better than anything that either Burke or Fisher had guessed possible, from him.

"Come on, Burkie," Fisher advised, "he'll make camp in about five minutes, at that rate. We'll get there in time to doctor the stings."

They had a clear view of Kenney's twinkling legs, though the distance between them and him rapidly increased. They saw that he went on and on, still fighting the air.

"Honey," Fisher said, "is an expensive luxury."

He spoke just as Kenney, running madly, came to where the track along the cliff edge dipped down to a little ledge and passed round a bend that would take the sprinter out of sight. But just at the bend, as Kenney ran, there rose up a shaggy mass that showed itself bristling with claws and teeth, and Kenney, unable to stop, butted full into its grip. There was a yell from him and a roar from the startled beast, and both overbalanced from the ledge—they went over the cliff side as one, a bundle of shining claws and staring beast eyes and waving legs.

"Bear!" Burke exclaimed. "We've got to get down and find what's left of Kenney, Fisher—better take the guns."

They dropped all but their guns, and sought a place where, with some difficulty, they could make a way down into the canyon. They went hurriedly and silently, afraid of what they might find down in the depths, and

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when they had got down to the level they fell over rocks and tree stumps in the eagerness to get to their comrade.

"There's no hope, though, after a drop like that," Fisher said. "Poor old Kenney—he was a good sort, if only he hadn't been quite so cocky."

He spoke rather loudly, for Burke was a little in front of him. Then he heard a laugh, and a voice spoke:—

"I'll get you to write that out, when we get back to camp, Fisher. I can carry it round as a testimonial."

And there, hidden from them both by a fallen tree trunk—until they had rounded it—sat Kenney, holding a handkerchief to the side of his face.

"The bees," he said, "are doing scouting work up top, I guess—they didn't come down with us, anyhow. And I've caught my first bear."

He sat, they saw, on a monstrous carcass, and there was light enough to show a pool of blood down by its neck—the vertebra, they found afterward, was cleanly severed by a blunt wedge of rock, on which the animal had fallen squarely, and, save for the scratch on the side of his face, which was so deep that it scarred him for life, Kenney was uninjured. He was badly bruised, of course, but counted his bruises as no injuries.

"Worth while," he said. "I've got the biggest bear yarn to tell that ever happened."

Fisher sat down and laughed till the echoes of his laughter came back down the canyon.

"What are you laughing at?" Kenney asked, in a nettled way.

"I'm seeing you trying to get anyone to believe that story," Fisher answered.

"Your best way is to show the skin, and keep quiet about how you got it," Burke advised. "Miracles like this don't happen every week-end, and if you try to tell how you pushed a grizzly over the edge of a cliff and killed him at the foot, you'll get pushed past Munchausen every time."

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Kenney, still holding on to the scratch on the side of his face, thought it over.

"I believe you're right," he said at last. "If anyone told me, I wouldn't believe it, now I come to think. But it's my skin."

"Sure," Fisher said. "We'll get Hookey to come down and get it for you, and show you how to dress it. It's your skin, and it's your job to explain how you got it. But don't monkey with bee trees—you may not be so lucky next time if there's a grizzly round the corner."

"If I were Kenney," Burke said, "I'd make the air cloudy with rocks in your direction, Fisher. Let's get along to camp and tell Hookey, and get dinner off——"

"Hawk," Fisher completed, "and wind up with honey."

Romances of Stamp Collecting

Scraps of Paper with Stories Worth Telling

BY RAYMOND RAIFE

FOR some time past there has continued a great boom in philately. Never before was there such a demand for postage stamps of all countries, or ever previously so many collectors of them. Stamp collecting has, indeed, at last come into its own, for without doubt it is one of the most enjoyable and beneficial of hobbies, universal in its appeal, and fascinating alike to old and young, man and woman, boy and girl. Mere scraps of paper though they be, postage stamps are positively packed with meaning, every one of them has a tale to tell. The history of philately teems with interesting fact and incident, and to the surprising romances and entertaining happenings that concern postage stamps and the collecting of them there is practically no end. That being so, let us select a few true stories in relation to postage stamps that will help to prove the contentions we have just made concerning them.

The first stamp of British Guiana was a 2 cents, rose, issued in 1850. It was not a postage stamp at all according to present-day ideas, being to look at simply a circular printed label. When, however, this stamp figures to-day in the catalogues of the stamp dealers, there is usually no price placed against it, which means much.

Not so many years ago a lady living in Demerara was turning out an old box of odds and ends when she came across a couple of these stamps of British Guiana

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on an envelope addressed to herself. At once she remembered having seen these same stamps included in a list of stamps wanted, and for which high prices would be given. She took the stamps to the minister of the place of worship that she attended, and told him :—

“I have found these stamps, which I believe are worth a good deal of money. Try to sell them, and whatever you get for them you may have for the funds of the church.”

An announcement was made that the stamps were for sale, and in time the news reached a very keen collector in New York, who at once commissioned a friend to go to Demerara after them. On reaching there, though, this individual fell ill of yellow fever and was unable to proceed with the transaction. Meanwhile the stamps continued to be talked about, and though several other offers were pending, a member of the Legislative Council of British Guiana bought them for the sum of £210. The money was duly handed to the church funds.

Now for the swift sequel.

The buyer of the stamps sold them to a celebrated firm of stamp dealers in London for £550. That firm passed them on to a continental stamp dealer for about £700, and very soon they were sold to a Russian nobleman for £1000. In telling this authentic story of the old lady's find, the remark is usually made that it was a pity the church funds did not reap greater benefit from her good feeling.

As is well known, our present King is an enthusiastic collector of stamps. When his Majesty was Prince of Wales he wrote of stamp collecting to a friend saying, “it is one of the greatest pleasures of my life.” Now, the 2d. blue “Post Office” Mauritius stamp of 1847 is a great rarity; yet there was a certain person who had owned such a stamp for years without knowing its real value. It had been accidentally discovered in a small collection started by a schoolboy forty years before. One day, however, its possessor took the stamp to a

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well-known London firm of art, literary, and philatelic auctioneers, and was straightway assured that provided the stamp was widely advertised a big sum would be obtained for it at auction.

A start was made towards effecting such publicity, when the stamp owner called again and said he wished to withdraw his treasure from the sale. He had been offered £1000 for it. This was certainly tempting, but the auctioneers believed they could do still better. They advised their client that he would do well to refuse the £1000, and their confidence was amply justified.

At the crowded sale, on January 13, 1904, this superb copy of the 2d. "Post Office" Mauritius fetched £1450, which is the record price for a single stamp offered at public auction. And the purchaser was King George. Not that this fact was known at the time. Hearty cheers broke out when this notable lot was knocked down, but the purchaser's identity was not then established. Our King was at that time Prince of Wales. His representative at the sale bid just like anyone else, paid the money in bank notes, and took the stamp away with him. With such a purchaser, though, and for such a stamp at such a price, it was quite unlikely that further details of the transaction would be suppressed. Before long the philatelic world delightedly heard the truth. Since when the 2d. Mauritius has always been looked upon as being the chief ornament of King George's splendid collection.

Briefly told, the story of the famous stamps that are known as "Post Office" Mauritius is as follows:—

These stamps, 1d. red and 2d. dark blue, were issued in September, 1847. They were engraved by a jeweller at Port Louis, and printed off one at a time. The process was tedious, and when 500 had been in this way produced, new plates were engraved, each containing twelve stamps of slightly different design. These were issued in 1848. The original "Post Office" Mauritius must thus always be extremely rare and command a high price when it comes into the market. Probably

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about thirty copies are known to collectors. In addition to his Majesty's record 2d. blue, the King has a fine copy of the 1d. red, which was purchased for £850. The design on the stamp is a crudely executed Queen Victoria's head with jewelled crown, and it is termed a "Post Office" Mauritius because those two words are upon the left-hand border.

In 1848 there appeared a 2d. blue "Post Paid" Mauritius that displayed a curious error. The word "pence" on the stamp was wrongly spelt "penoe," which has had the effect of sending up the price of the stamp to £51.

Most of the estimates made as to the value of the King's collection are little more than guesswork. An eminent philatelist has charge of the stamps, and needless to say he does not talk for publication. There are one or two experts who in order to clear up scientific points and so on have been permitted to view the collection, and the opinion of these gentlemen seems to be that the King's stamps are worth anything between £12,000 and £20,000.

A distinguishing feature of the King's collection is the unique series of stamps cut from the imprimatur sheets at Somerset House.

The Stamp Department at Somerset House has charge of the output of stamps of Great Britain. When a new plate is made for the printing of stamps, the first impression is sent to the Stamp Department. This is imperforate, and is known as an imprimatur sheet, being intended both as a proof and for the purposes of registration. One sheet only from each plate is issued in this form, and by official regulation, no more stamps may hereafter be cut from the sheets at Somerset House, which renders the King's collection of imprimaturs all the more remarkable.

Which is the most popular stamp? provides a form of question which in the writer's opinion is quite easily answered. There can be little doubt but that the tri-

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angular Cape of Good Hope stamps merit the description of being the best known and favourite of all others. Some of them, though not all, are very rare. If you look in the catalogue you will see these "triangulars" set out at various prices ranging up to £10 each for the 1861 "wood-blocks" used. But some have gone to much higher figures than that.

What is known as the "wood-block" series of triangulars was printed by Messrs. Saul Solomon & Co., of Cape Town. Each sheet of stamps was printed from sixty-four separate stereotype blocks, and the fact that the entire sheet was made up of these many parts was partly responsible for a mishap such as philatelists cannot help being fond of. Owing to an accident in printing, one of the blocks for the 1d. stamps got into the set of blocks of 4d. stamps, and a 4d. stamp block got mixed up with the 1d. ones. As a result, a few copies of the 1d. stamps were printed in blue, which is the colour of the 4d. stamp, and a few of the 4d. were printed in red instead of in blue.

Those facts became speedily known to collectors, and those two errors are amongst the greatest rarities. An unused copy of the 1d. blue has never been found. Used copies fetch from £50 to £75. One unused copy of the 4d. red error is known. Used, they fetch from £60 to £100. The unused copy realised £500.

Yet, with triangular Capes as rare as that, a dealer once for £5 bought a bag full of them. He had an office at Plymouth, or, to be more correct, he used a corner of his father's shop, a chemist's, for the purpose of selling stamps, and, one morning when he was busy arranging his wares, two sailors walked in carrying a kit-bag that contained a large quantity of Cape triangulars. Very little bargaining was done, and very soon the cheerful tars walked out £5 the richer and leaving the contents of the kit-bag behind them. Amongst this were large strips and blocks of the 1853-57 Perkins Bacon stamps, and plenty of the so-called wood-blocks.



"ONE MORNING TWO SAILORS WALKED IN, CARRYING A KIT-BAG THAT CONTAINED A LARGE QUANTITY OF CAPE TRIANGULARS." (See p. 96.)

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In after years the dealer said he thought he made rather more than £500 out of the easily arranged transaction, and that although he sold his new acquisitions at most modest prices. A year after making that remarkable purchase of Cape triangulars the dealer wrote to a customer as follows:—

“I can supply you in any quantity, 1d., 4d., and 6d. Cape of Good Hope, 10d. a dozen; genuine old wood-blocks, 3s. a dozen.”

In face of the modern figures quoted above, this piece of history concerning “three-cornered Capes” certainly provides at least one surprising romance of stamp collecting. How quickly some stamps have appreciated in value is well instanced by the example of the King’s record 2d. blue Mauritius. In unused condition its value in 1864 was 4s.—so that in forty years its worth went up £1449 16s. Another classic example often quoted is that of a gentleman who started collecting in 1859 and kept careful account of all his payments for stamps. He expended the sum of £69 on his collection, which he sold in 1896 for £3000.

As suggested by the example of the “penoe” Mauritius, it is mainly errors in printing that occasion the high prices of particular stamps. Of this there are some notable instances.

Thus, in 1869, the United States Government issued a series of stamps of which the 15 cents and the 24 cents were really little works of art. But for other than that excellence do they command their present prices. The former stamp, printed in blue and brown, represented the landing of Columbus. In purple and green the latter stamp depicted the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Both scenes were taken from well-known pictures that hang in the Capitol at Washington.

These two-coloured stamps were, of course, printed from two plates, and by accident one sheet of each value had the second colour printed the wrong way

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up. In consequence of which the persons appearing on either stamp are standing on their heads. And, from 40s. to 50s. for the ordinary variety, the price of the inverted stamps unused ascends to an easy £100. The 30 cent blue and rose is likewise to be met with having an inverted centre, the victim in this case being the American eagle. All three are, however, extremely scarce.

Rarest of all types of error is that which is known as the "no value" error. And of this, Gibraltar provides the classic example. Stamp printers of the highest class turn out some splendid work. As might be supposed, their output is usually subjected to most rigid and minute examination. Acceptance of which undoubted fact makes it all the more difficult to understand how a consignment of stamps plainly revealing a most startling error could escape instant detection and withdrawal. For every big batch of stamps is supposed to be examined first by the printers, then by the receiving Crown Agents, and lastly by the Post Office on receipt of the consignment.

Be that as it may, this 1889 issue for Gibraltar was of the same design for all issues, and owing to some cause or other, a few rows of stamps were turned out with a blank space in the panel of the stamp design where the value should have appeared. Report has it that all these "no value" errors were bought up by a local tobacconist, who at once got into communication with stamp dealers in London. Perhaps not unnaturally, these traders at first thought the whole story to be a fairy-tale. Seeing, however, enforced conviction, and the stamps were very soon on offer at the price of £3 each. Ten centimos was the value that should have appeared upon this carmine stamp, of which it is believed that less than 250 were printed.

According to not a few reputable authorities, the rarest stamp in the world is the 1 cent, 1856, of British Guiana. And much controversy has raged as to whether this is an orthodox issue or an error. For this stamp,

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forming perhaps the chief item of the famous Ferrary collection, is the only specimen known to exist. British Guiana, we see, has furnished its quota towards the making of philatelic history.

In that colony during the year mentioned, the authorities produced a very roughly type-written stamp of 4 cents, black on red or magenta paper. It is supposed that by some mistake the engraver made the value of one of the stamps 1 cent instead of 4 cents. Diligent search in the most likely quarters during the last fifty years has failed to produce this stamp's duplicate. Its original price was 2d. What sum it would command in the market to-day is a matter for conjecture. But those whose business it is to appraise such things, are emphatic in putting its worth at more than £2000.

There is a series of Buenos Ayres stamps, showing the design of a steamer, that were quite roughly turned out in 1858. In the four corners of each stamp there is a white spot, which actually indicates the place where the nails were driven through the plates to secure them to the wooden mountings. The rarest of these crudely engraved stamps are the 4 pesos, red, and 5 pesos, orange, which have sold for £22 5s. and £33 respectively.

The most tremendous error in all philatelic history originated in the United States. To commemorate the opening of the Panama Canal, a new series of four values was planned, namely, 1 cent, green, 2 cents, red, 5 cents, blue, and 10 cents, orange. The pictures on these stamps were intended to be, respectively, portrait of Balboa—the first man to cross the Isthmus to the Pacific; view of the Gatun Locks; view of the Golden Gate; picture depicting the discovery of San Francisco Bay. Duly the 1 cent, 5 cents, and 10 cents, appeared, and then the news came that by some extraordinary mistake the scene portrayed on the 2 cents stamp was a view of San Pedro Miguel Locks instead of the Gatun Locks, though the stamp was inscribed with the latter name.

Directly the matter came to light, the U.S.A. Govern-

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ment withdrew the whole issue of that denomination and destroyed it. A new printing was made, showing the view of San Pedro Miguel as on the error, but inscribed "Panama Canal." This is probably the most expensive error of printing ever committed by a Government. For the destroyed quantity consisted of more than 20,000,000 stamps.

Stamps used on the aerial post lines are destined to have a great vogue among collectors. In "airplane" stamps the United States is well represented. At the time of writing, the New York and Washington air line has three special stamps to its credit, for, as charges for conveying the mails by aeroplane were reduced, the original 24 cent blue and carmine stamp was succeeded by the 16 cent green, deposed in turn by the 6 cent orange-red. The selling price of these stamps may be said to be 2s., 1s. 4d., and 6d., respectively. Each of them has the same device, a biplane, and there is one easily detected variety that is of considerable value.

From some cause or other, one sheet of the stamps was printed with the biplane vignette upside down, the aeroplane being, as it were, half-way through the performance of looping-the-loop. These "biplane" stamps are printed in sheets of 100, and only one sheet of this error was issued. That sheet was purchased by a New York collector for £4000, which is a big price to pay for such a recent issue—£40 per stamp.

The story of the special stamps used for the first transatlantic aerial mail is not known to everybody. This was the gallant Hawker and Grieve attempt and the mail was recovered. On the 3 cents stamp of the "Caribou" issue of Newfoundland, the following words were printed, "First Trans-Atlantic Air Post, April, 1919." There were 200 of these stamps, of which eighteen were damaged and destroyed. Ninety-five were used for the mail. Eleven were presentation copies, of which two were sent to the Governor of Newfoundland with the request that one should be transmitted to King George.

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Seventy-six stamps remained, which were sold at £5 a-piece, in aid of the fund for the widows and orphans of fishermen and sailors.

With relation to the postage stamps of some of the States of what is termed the New Europe, there is an ample crop of novel news items. Latvia, or Lettonia, or Lettland, for there are three or four ways of naming it, supplies a rather surprising record when we come to consider the question of upon what material the earlier stamps of this Republic of the Letts were printed. Towards the end of 1918, after the defeat of the Germans and the occupation of Riga by the Allied Forces fighting on that front, the Lettish Republic strove to at once organise a regular postal service. Owing to the great dearth of proper paper there was practically none ready to hand for making postage stamps. So all sorts of expedients were resorted to.

A large number of German war maps were utilised that had been captured with the material left during the German retreat. The stamps were printed on the backs of the maps, 228 stamps on each complete ordnance map. The maps were varied for the different sectors, and maybe some eighty different maps were used. Nor was this all. For there are other Latvian stamps, serving as mementoes of the return of peace and as pledges of the new nations' policy of progress, that are printed upon cigarette paper, ruled school paper, and even upon paper that seems to have had some relation to the labels of jam jars.

During the progress of the war the Turks issued a quite elaborate series of commemorative stamps to celebrate various of their actual and their make-believe victories. But a day came when the French seized all the Turkish stamps in the territory that is known as Cilicia. There is a story that all who run may read, written across the big bold stamp showing a Turkish sentinel on guard amongst huge shells, the picture being topped by the Sultan's sign-manual. For right across the base of this pictorial boast is splashed the French over-print of Cilicie.

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In the scramble of collectors to become possessed of new issues large sums have been gained by forgeries and deception of all kinds. On November 11, 1918, Esthonia, the independent republic of the Esths, was proclaimed at Reval. During the German occupation German stamps overprinted "Postgebiet Ob. Ost" were in use. Then a variety having an additional overprint of the word "Eesti" appeared on the market and sold at high prices. As a matter of fact, these stamps were "made in Germany" and sold there by a former resident of Reval. He amassed quite a nice little fortune with these stamps, which were extensively sold in England through the medium of dealers resident in neutral countries.

By this time of day most persons who look about them, and even if not actually themselves philatelists, have seen the very fine Belgian "Victory" stamps that show the gallant King Albert wearing his steel helmet, and that belong to what is familiarly known as the "tin hat" issue. Here, once again, romance steps in, arriving, as we may say, in the person of the clever and courageous artist Jean de Bast, who designed these striking stamps. For during the war, he illustrated certain clandestine publications such as the "Ame Belge." On one occasion he even indulged in the dangerous pleasantry of introducing his signature in the arabesques of the design, at the risk of being shot if he were discovered, and far more than that, he carried on the extremely risky occupation of engraving forged seals and the like for passports and similar documents used in carrying on espionage against the German Government of Occupation. When we look on these finely executed "tin hats," we should bear in mind the man who evolved them, as well as remembering the King who did not lose his soul.

Cornering, as it is called, is a very old practice with a certain class of philatelic manipulators, so to describe them, and the many new issues of the last few years have afforded opportunity for much enterprise in

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this direction. In the usual way cornering is conducted as follows:—

Say, business is arranged with a South American republic. The whole unissued remainder of certain issues is bought. Generally a stamp is chosen that is readily saleable, in other words, one that is in good demand with collectors. In small quantities the dealer will then put the stamps on the market in such a way as not to affect the price materially. Likely enough, the quantities purchased run into millions. The cost price is therefore low, and the profit is often handsome.

Positively desperate attempts have been made to corner certain issues of the stamps of some of the smaller new States of Europe. In other instances, rarities have been purposely created, as in the case of a stamp of inartistic design that as soon as printed was condemned. But then came the idea that if the condemned stamp were sold at the post offices for two days only, there would be easy sale of the remainder to the dealers at enhanced prices, which proved to be quite true.

It is a singular fact that though the lion is a noble-looking animal, he but seldom makes his appearance upon a postage stamp. The British Lion, in particular, is philatelically shy, though some years ago he very nearly did come to life on the postage stamps of India. The design, however, of a robust and well-maned lion ambling along under a rather stumpy palm tree, was not accepted by the Indian Government. Many persons regretted its rejection. Paraguay is one of the few countries that show a lion on their stamps, and, of course, lions do not come from Paraguay.

But last autumn New Zealand came to the rescue, and by the issuing of her 3d. "Victory" stamp—one of a set of six—at last did tardy justice to the King of Beasts. This imposing stamp shows a fine impressive lion at rest, with a sun resplendent for the background. Printed in dark purple-brown colour, this stamp has been very generally hailed as being magnificent, and of it has been

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said, "This is a bold and dignified design, and a highly appropriate emblem of the powerful part taken in the war by the Empire on which the sun never sets." In addition to his merit sheerly as being a splendid specimen of a lion, this animal undoubtedly owes some of his popularity to the circumstance that he looks exactly as if he had come straight from the Nelson Column in Trafalgar Square, London. There are lions and lions. This, without a shadow of suspicion, is none other than the British Lion himself.

Another queer phase of philately is emphasised by the postage stamps of Curaçao. The postmaster of that small Dutch island makes his own postage stamps, and endeavours to sell them at twenty times their face value.

Cut off from the Netherlands by the war, the postage stamps of Curaçao began to run short. So the ingenious postmaster went into the stamp-making industry for himself. He procured some sheets of thick buff paper and had each sheet divided into forty squares by perforations. On the top of each square he had "Curaçao" printed in black, the figure "1" in the centre, and the word "cent" at the bottom. And the "design" on the stamp, affording also a guarantee of authenticity, takes the form of the three letters of the postmaster's own initials! Some 51,000 of these provisionals were placed in circulation, home-made stamps that, selling over the counter in Curaçao at 1 cent, were offered in thousands to the outside world at the rate of 20 cents apiece.

The Mandarin of Li-moon

An Adventure in the China Seas

BY ALEC G. PEARSON

I

"SOME wreckage broad on the starboard bow!" hailed the look-out man on the forecandle head.

Captain Vincent, who was standing on the aft deck talking to the chief mate, focussed his binocular glasses on the lump of wreckage, over which the foam-crested seas were breaking.

"Looks like a dismasted junk, waterlogged, and with her decks awash," he said. "What do you make of her, Thompson?"

The mate had been looking through the ship's telescope.

"Yes, that's what she seems to be, sir," he replied. "A danger to navigation, for on a dark night a vessel would be on top of it before it could be seen. And—my word!—there's a man on board of her! Clinging to the stump of the main-mast. Do you see him, sir?"

"Yes. A Chinaman. Lashed to the stump of the mast, I think. If he is still alive we must save him, Thompson."

"He's waving an arm."

"Yes, I see he is. Get the cutter ready for lowering, and call all hands on deck. We'll ask for volunteers to man the boat."

"There's a heavy sea running," said the mate doubtfully.

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"But we have an all-British crew," replied the captain, "and they don't hang back when there's danger to be faced."

The chief mate issued the necessary orders, and the boatswain's shrill whistle mingled with the howling of the gale. It was not difficult to get volunteers for the somewhat perilous work in the boat, even though at that time a Chinaman was not regarded by British seamen exactly as a "man and a brother."

"But we can't leave the poor fellow to drown," growled the boatswain, "though we don't expect any gratitude from a Chink for saving his life."

"May I go in the boat, uncle?" It was Hal Vincent, the captain's nephew, who had asked the question. "I can pull my weight on an oar, and I'm used to boat work."

The captain looked with a half smile into his nephew's young, eager face. Hal Vincent was a smart, athletic young fellow, sixteen years of age, and was training to become an officer in the Merchant Service.

"I think Mr. Thompson has all the men he requires," replied Captain Vincent. But his eyes twinkled. "All right; away you go," he added.

The schooner was brought up in the wind, with only her close-reefed mainsail and fore staysail set; the boat was lowered, and the men took their places—Hal at the bow oar. Mervyn, the second mate, was in charge.

"Give way, men!" he ordered.

The rowers bent their backs to their work, but it was a hard pull over that rough sea, although they only had about a quarter of a mile to go. Sometimes on the foaming crest of a wave, then deep down in the trough, when it seemed that the frail little craft must certainly be overwhelmed, they struggled on until they were close under the derelict's stern.

Mervyn steered the boat round to the lee side of the hulk, which would act to some extent as a breakwater, and shouted, "Way enough!" The oars rattled in on

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the thwarts, and Hal stood up with the end of the painter in his hand. Then as the boat rose up on the crest of a wave he sprang on to the derelict and made the rope fast.

The second mate followed him, and together they made their way along the slippery, heaving deck to the Chinaman, who seemed to be in the last stage of exhaustion.

"Are you the only one left on board?" asked Mervyn, speaking in Chinese. He had acquired a good working knowledge of the language, having been for some years on the China coast.

The man nodded his head.

"Of the others," he said feebly, "some were washed overboard, and the rest went away in the small boats, which was folly, for they will all assuredly be drowned."

They helped him into the cutter, and then started back for the schooner which had been sailed round to leeward of the derelict. For it would have been utterly impossible to row the boat to windward against such heavy seas.

They got back safely though they were pretty well done up with their exertions. But there was a good jorum of hot coffee waiting for them in the galley, or a tot of grog for those who preferred it.

II

The schooner "Enterprise," commanded and owned by Captain Vincent, was engaged on a peculiar and dangerous mission. For some time past the China Sea had been infested by a band of ocean outlaws, under the leadership of a man who was known as the Yellow Pirate. He had been so named because his junks flew a plain yellow flag.

He was a Chinaman, but his piratical crews were a mixture of Chinese and Malays. As a rule he confined

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his activities to raiding small coast towns, or capturing native craft which were carrying valuable cargoes, but about a month previously he had struck out on an entirely new line.

He had kidnapped, and carried away to his secret stronghold, an English boy, the son of a rich merchant in Shanghai. Never before had he committed an outrage of this description, and at first it was thought that Eric Reynolds was being held to ransom, in the usual brigand fashion. But no word came from the Yellow Pirate. An appeal was made to the Chinese authorities to hunt the pirate down, but they made no attempt to do so. Indeed, they had their hands full at the time with a Boxer rising.

At last, in desperation, Mr. Reynolds chartered the "Enterprise" to search among the islands for the headquarters of the pirates, and to effect his son's rescue by any means which Captain Vincent thought best. For Eric was the one person in the world for whom the Shanghai merchant had any affection.

So the "Enterprise" well armed, and carrying a double crew, set out on the quest. And perhaps the most delighted person on board the schooner was Hal Vincent, for here was a chance of a very real adventure.

The Yellow Pirate, in himself, was something of a mystery, for apparently no one had ever seen him, except, of course, his own followers. And he appeared to be well served, for it would never have been known what had become of young Eric Reynolds, had not a Chinese sailor who had escaped from the pirates, declared positively that he had seen the boy on board one of the pirate junks. As the man was quite trustworthy his statement was not doubted.

The "Enterprise" had been cruising among the islands for ten days, on what Captain Vincent was beginning to fear would be a vain quest, when one morning—it was the third day after the rescue of the man from the derelict—a strange, swift-sailing junk was sighted right ahead.

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"We'll have a closer look at that fellow," said Captain Vincent. "From what I can make out of her she hasn't the appearance of a trading junk."

There was a moderate breeze from the south-west, and with every stitch of canvas set the schooner was making good progress, with the water foaming under her bows and streaming away in a broad white wake astern.

But it was a long chase, and it was not until two o'clock in the afternoon that the "Enterprise" had drawn up level with her. The junk was then about half a mile away to leeward. Hal was having a good look at her through his telescope, when he saw a flag flutter out at her main-mast head. He gave a shout.

"They've hoisted the yellow flag!" he cried. "She is a pirate junk!"

"Clear decks for action!" ordered the captain briskly.

The "Enterprise" carried two twelve-pounder, quick-fire guns, and in a very short space of time they were ready, with the crew at their stations and eager for the fray.

But it was the pirate that opened fire first, and she gave them a bit of a surprise. For she was armed with modern guns without a doubt, and not the old-fashioned muzzle-loaders usually carried by piratical junks. There are always some of the commonplace sea-brigands in the China Seas, but they seldom attack European vessels.

The shell struck the water about a cable's length astern of the schooner, and then Captain Vincent gave the order, "At 900 yards' range. Let 'em have it, boys!"

The very first shot from the "Enterprise" scored a hit, smashing in the junk's bulwarks on the port side. Then both vessels went at it hammer and tongs as fast as the gunners could load and fire, but the pirate wasn't making such good shooting as the "Enterprise." One of her shots, however, smashed the schooner's mainboom, and wounded three men, and then the next minute it was the turn of the "Enterprise" to score. Her two guns

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had been fired at the same moment, and both shells crashed into the junk's high poop, exploding and doing a considerable amount of damage.

That finished the fight. The junk's helm was put up, and she ran off before the wind, her best point of sailing. The pirates had had enough, and the crew of the "Enterprise" gave a rousing cheer. "Our last two shots must have wiped out a lot of those beggars," exclaimed Hal; "and on our side we have no one killed."

He looked round as he finished speaking, and saw the Chinaman they had saved from the derelict, regarding him with a very curious expression.

III

The "Enterprise" had come to an anchor in a quiet bay of Li-moon Island in order to repair damages, and the rescued castaway was being questioned by Captain Vincent before he was put on shore. Mervyn was acting as interpreter. "Ask him whether he can give any information concerning these pirates," said the captain. "If he knows where their headquarters are?"

Mervyn put the questions, but the Chinaman shook his head.

"I can tell nothing," he replied. "But if the honourable captain will send a message to the mandarin of Li-moon, he may learn something."

"Where can I find the mandarin?" asked Captain Vincent.

"I will take the message," was the reply.

He was taken on shore in the ship's boat, and about two hours later a man came off in a sampan with the mandarin's answer.

"Let the nephew of the honourable captain be sent. The mandarin would speak with him. He will come to no harm. The messenger will guide him to the mandarin's abode."

Hal was eager to go, but Captain Vincent didn't like the idea.

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"You can never trust these Chinks," he said. "Why, this mandarin may be in league with the pirates for all we know."

"Better let me go, uncle," said Hal. "I'm not afraid."

"I know you're not, my lad," replied the captain, "but that's not the point. Why does this mandarin want you in particular to go to him? Of course, that castaway chap told him all about the schooner, and who was on board, but I can't understand his reason. I'm afraid of some treachery."

But in the end Hal got his way, and going on shore with the messenger was led by him to the mandarin's house. It was a secluded place, but the room into which Hal was conducted was luxuriously furnished in the usual Oriental style. For a few minutes he was left alone, and then the mandarin entered. Hal stared at him in amazement, for although he was now richly dressed, and wore a mandarin's cap with the red button, he recognised him at once. It was the castaway who had been rescued from the derelict!

"I bid you welcome to my house," he said, in excellent English.

"Why didn't you let us know who you were, when you were on board the 'Enterprise'?" Hal exclaimed. "And you never mentioned that you could speak English——"

"I had reasons for not doing so," interrupted the mandarin. "But let that pass. I asked for you to be sent to me, because I am grateful for some little acts of kindness I received from you on board the schooner. Also I am grateful to you, and the others, for having saved my life. And because of these things I am going to make reparation."

"Reparation!" echoed Hal. "For what?"

"For having carried off the son of Mr. Reynolds," was the startling reply. "Years ago I suffered a great wrong at the hands of Mr. Reynolds—who is not a good man—and as an act of vengeance I carried away that which he values even more than his money—his only son."

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"*You* carried him off!" cried Hal. "But we were told it was the Yellow Pirate."

"I am the Yellow Pirate!" said the mandarin of Li-moon.

He struck a gong, and an attendant led in a pale-faced boy, about fourteen years of age.

"This is Eric Reynolds," continued the pirate-mandarin. "I give him into your charge. You can take him back with you to your ship."

"I am feeling a bit bewildered," Hal confessed. "It is all so strange, so unexpected. And it is difficult to understand how you can be a mandarin, and——"

"At the same time a pirate," interposed his host. "The explanation would take too long, my friend. But you will remember that my men do not kill, except in fair fight. And remember also that in China all things are possible, and most things come to pass. Good-bye, and may good fortune attend you."



FLIGHT!

(From the painting by Gordon Browne, R.I.,

Lar's Exchange

An Incident of School Life

BY SHERVILL BLAKE

THE streets wore a deserted air. A broiling sun, obtrusive in the ardour of its gaze, blazed upon a listless and long-suffering earth. A father and son, emerging from a shop, watched the approach of the only other figure to be seen. Its course resembled that of a cart up a steep hill, each successive tack bringing alternately into view the swelled and bulging sides of a large, purple nose. Nearing them the old man came to an uncertain halt.

"M'boy," he said, "you b'long to Dale's?"

"Yes."

"S nice cap—nice cap."

He lurched across the pavement.

"Look 't me," he resumed. "I wore that cap once. No, 'twasn't me—'twasn't me. But I know some one who does. Oh, I know him. You'd hardly think it, but he's——"

The father took his son's arm and led him away. At the corner of the street curiosity prompted the latter to look back. A tall boy was approaching the old man. After a furtive glance around, he took his arm, and they went slowly down the dusty street. The father had to call to his son to rejoin him.

A day or two afterwards, at the public school some ten or twelve miles distant, the fags of Dale's were holding a conference.

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"Rum start this!" sighed Croome. "No more good times in our house!"

"Might as well make me præpostor," growled the Nigger, *alias* Thomas Crane, as he seated himself carefully in a little lake of ink. The frequency of partial eclipses from which divers portions of his body habitually suffered, from the superposition or absorption of solids or fluids of darker tint, had earned him his sobriquet.

"The worst-tempered brute in the school," said Randal, with a chorus of approval.

"What's he chosen for?" asked Ryan minor, with the air of inviting gods and men to friendly discussion to answer that question if they could.

"Oh, that's right enough," replied Croome. "It was his turn last time, only he asked to be excused. Said it interfered with his reading or something. Chief's made him now."

"If he don't want to, and we don't want him to, whyever——"

"Shut up," broke in the Nigger. "Let Randal start on that old beggar, and he'll be asking us to remember some of his stuff in a minute." He left the authorship of said stuff delightfully vague. "The question is—what are we going to do?"

An ominous silence.

"Wretched beast has the pull of us," said Ryan minor. "Vote we give him a wide berth."

"Look here, you fellows, I think we're making a big mistake about his temper and all that. I'm not going to say he hasn't got one, of course, because I've felt it myself; but we shan't find him so bad as we think."

Well might stony amazement fall upon them. Little Lar, the wildest, fiercest opponent of all that resembled tyranny, standing up for Eyre! The speech struck them dumb; even the Nigger could find nothing to say.

"All very well for you!" said Croome, at last. "You haven't got to fag for him."

Lar's Exchange

Little Lar's face was very red, but his eyes were sparkling.

"If it can be managed, I'll change with you, Croome," he said.

"Will anybody tell me what this is all about?" queried the Nigger, of the ceiling apparently. Then, descending suddenly to earth: "If there's anything behind, you may as well explain, Lar."

The Nigger was senior fag of Dale's, and little Lar but a new arrival amongst the juniors. From the eminence his position bestowed on him, therefore, he patronised, lectured, and defended the latter, little though that young gentleman seemed to heed the first two, or to need the third.

The glow in little Lar's cheeks deepened, and he hesitated—not ordinary characteristics of his.

"I can't, Nig," he said.

"Can't?"

"No."

The Nigger would have got angry if he had not been so astonished.

"And do you really mean to say you are ready to exchange Brayley for Eyre?"

"If Croome doesn't mind, and we can get leave."

Croome didn't seem to mind much. He waived his rights to Eyre's fagship with magnanimous alacrity.

"And what will Brayley say?"

"I think I can make it right with him. Eyre will be the trouble."

"Shouldn't wonder," sardonically.

Another ominous pause. Lar broke it, speaking very fast.

"You fellows are astonished, I know. If I could tell you, I would. All I can say is, I made a bit of a discovery and—and came to a conclusion," he added lamely, and looking very much ashamed of himself, "and I'm going to carry it out if I can, and I look to you not to worry me over it."

Lar's Exchange

Such an oratorical effort awed other competitors from the arena, and the group melted away, lost in speculation concerning this remarkable resolve of their comrade's.

There are some lads who are favourites with every one, boys and masters alike. Little Lar was one of these. On his bodily development nature had placed restrictions; on his flow of spirits her tap was a faulty one. Normally, it was turned on to the full; turned off, it leaked. Hence his "dets" formed a fair numerical percentage of his lessons, though it is but just to him to say that they were as genially worked as benignly accepted and rashly incurred.

On the afternoon of his arrival a critical but afterwards admiring group condescended to help him unpack his hamper. On the top was a curious cardboard box, whose shape travestied the human form. It was black, with a face of singularly wooden aspect.

"He's brought his Lares with him," said Randal.

They ate the contents of the box, and bestowed the name, with the case, upon its owner. Randal called him "Lares" at first, but the Nigger roundly asserted that he had no idea of the fitness of things, and forthwith dubbed him "Lar". He descended to no explanation of his alteration, but it was unanimously accepted.

Lar's first achievement was a memorable one. He made a complete conquest of the Nigger. He drew him out of his solitude and the constant observation of his mice; he contradicted him to his face, and maintained his point when every shred of argument had been torn from it; he interested him in sports, and bowled him three times in succession to show him that no one need despair; he completely won his heart by accepting a terrific licking from Doyle rather than acknowledge that his advice had lost the match for Dale's fags in their encounter with the heroes of Merlet's; he did everything but cure him of his passion for covering himself with ink, and here his own habits barred the way. In return for these benefits, the Nigger took him under his especial

Lar's Exchange

protection, which he did not want, and worked his proles for him, which he did.

It was, therefore, in no very amiable frame of mind that the senior fag had listened to the incomprehensible desire expressed by his friend. Everybody knew Eyre was clever, but they also knew he was ill-tempered and morose, besides having the reputation of being the most selfish fellow in Raneham. And here was Lar wanting to leave Brayley, the captain of Dale's, to become fag to a fellow like this. A mysterious thing is a worrying thing, and worry begets irritability, and irritability seeks a vent. In this case a likely opportunity offered. The Nigger observed that little sneak Croome, who had jumped so eagerly at Lar's offer, turn back again towards the room they had just quitted. Fell suspicion smote him, and when Croome had disappeared he stole up to the door. He arrived just in time to hear him say :—

"Because you see, Lar, it's not too late yet. I shouldn't like you to say afterwards I'd hurried you into the thing, to get myself out of a hole or something of that sort. And he *is* a beast, whoever sticks up for him."

The Nigger marched off to his study, and banged the door behind him.

Lar's interview with Brayley was not a long one. The talking was all on his side, and he grew quite discomfited by the senior's silence. He felt, however, that he owed it to him to explain the motives actuating him, and he persevered to the end. Brayley rose.

"Will you shake hands with me, young 'un?" he said.

Lar, with horrible, inexplicable sensations about him, did so.

"When do you want to change?"

"Oh—ah—at once, I think, if you——"

"Very well. Rough on me, though. Come and tell me how the affair goes. And, young 'un, don't abandon me altogether, you know."

Lar's Exchange

"Really," thought Lar, as he sought the partner of his second conference, "this is not so easy after all. Feel worse than if old Bray had been rowing me."

As Croome and he approached Eyre's study the sounds of altercation and blows saluted their ears.

"Sneaking around my door, were you?" said a suppressed, incisive voice, as its owner cuffed the offender soundly. The victim's explanation that he only wanted Croome, was lost in the noise created by his vigorous efforts to escape. The next moment a violent lurch against the wall announced to him that he was free, and he flew at top speed down the corridor. Eyre withdrew into his study.

Croome's eyes said to Lar as plainly as eyes could: "There you are. Told you so. Said he was a beast, didn't I?" But his voice said: "Better put it off, Lar, hadn't we? Don't seem a good time."

Lar replied by taking his arm and gently pushing him up to the door, at which he knocked. It opened very suddenly. Eyre was seated at his table, the end of a strap attached to the door still in his hand. The suspicious look changed a little at the sight of Croome.

"What is it?" he demanded.

"Please, Eyre, Lar wants to ask you something."

"Who's Lar?"

Croome was wont to quote this afterwards as a great joke. "Fellow didn't know who Lar was!" he would say, with infinite contempt.

"Me," said the individual in question.

"Delighted to hear it. What do you want with me?"

"Croome and I want to change our fagging."

Now Eyre, isolated as he kept himself, knew perfectly well that he was no favourite in the school. He never took the trouble to think whether his fags were better or worse treated than most, but he knew that he had never had one who liked him. They went from him with the utmost readiness, and only those to whom Hobson's

Lar's Exchange

choice was presented filled their places. Hence Lar's proposal was inexplicable to him, and what he did not understand he suspected.

"Whose fag are you?" he asked.

"Brayley's."

"Doesn't bully you, does he?"

"No!" indignantly.

"Better stop where you are, then," and he returned to his books.

Croome made a last effort.

"You see," he said, "Lar's room is near this, and mine is beyond Bray's, and it's no end of a fag sometimes to be up to time——"

"It must be, judging from results."

The artful Croome saw his advantage.

"I *am* unpunctual," he owned ingenuously. "But I shouldn't be if I was as handy as Lar."

"I'll promise to be regular," added Lar. "Bray 'll tell you I'm pretty good at that."

Eyre closed his volume with a vicious snap.

"Does Brayley know of this?" he inquired.

"Yes."

"And does he want you to go?"

"No."

"No?" A gleam passed into the questioner's eyes. "Come here."

Lar marched up to him, and endured a long and penetrating scrutiny.

"I agree," said Eyre briefly. "Come again after prep."

"Thank you," said Lar.

Outside, he did not seem very gay over the success of his mission. The joy of victory shone from Croome alone. That young gentleman's self-satisfaction was complete. It radiated from every pore, and led him to commit follies that, in his more sober moments, he would have scorned. These settled into an easy, assured air. He dug Lar in the ribs.

Lar's Exchange

"We did him all over," he said.

The necessary formalities having been gone through with Mr. Dale, Frank Forrest, commonly called Lar, was appointed fag to Wilfred Eyre, *vice* Henry Croome, exchanged.

After preparation Lar presented himself punctually. Eyre received him coldly, and briefly pointed out any peculiarities there might be in his new duties. In conclusion he added:—

"There are two things I caution you against doing. The first is to interfere with my books and papers in any way, and the second is to enter here after eight. You won't forget these two?"

"No."

"That's all."

Lar withdrew slowly. He thought he had never heard so unpleasant an accent as that laid upon the quiet "You won't forget these two."

Below stairs, the senior fag of Dale's had delivered himself of some oracular advice. *The* subject was being threshed out in all its bearings. Every one but the president of the assembly had a suggestion to offer, sometimes two or three, in each of which the originator successively believed. The fount was deep, but such plentiful draughts soon exhausted it.

"What do you think, Nig?" asked Randal, as the lull became pronounced.

The president surveyed his toes as they protruded gracefully over the edge of the master's table.

"Do any of you actually know anything about this?" he demanded.

They were obliged to confess that their position was one of complete ignorance of fact.

"Then," came the crushing rejoinder, "I think we shouldn't come to any harm if we held our tongues about it."

Term sped swiftly on. Lar found his duties by no means onerous, but all had to be performed, and to time.

Lar's Exchange

His relations with Eyre remained *in statu quo*. The latter scarcely ever noticed him. He looked to the work done, and had never a thought to spare for the worker. Days would pass in which they would barely interchange a word, and that only on the great question of demand and supply. Yet Lar never seemed to mind; his bright face never lost its glow, nor his brisk movements their smartness. Deeply as Eyre would have sneered had anyone told him so, he would have missed that cheerful presence from his room.

With his coevals Lar had several rows in defence of his patron, and it came to be tacitly understood that this subject was taboo. He volunteered no explanation to them, and they had ceased to expect one. His popularity at first suffered somewhat, but none could withstand little Lar for any length of time, and he had fully resumed his position in their councils of state.

An untoward incident, however, involved matters again. Ryan minor, Randal, and Croome had arranged a grand supper in one of the classrooms. Dreading discovery, they had deferred the festival until twelve o'clock. At the hour agreed, they crept, fearfully and wonderfully clad, to the appointed rendezvous. Their way led them past Eyre's study, at which point a faint light showed on the boards at their feet. Bending down, they perceived that it came from a space of some three inches under Eyre's door. The view of light shining from under a door was no new sight to them. They had watched with patience until its disappearance from under some master's door had informed them the road was clear, but on these occasions the light had been visible along the whole base. People do not deliberately cut light off from the outside world without an object. The very keyhole was blocked up. Schoolboys are an inquisitive race, boarders especially so. These boys would have done many things not permitted by the regulations of their house to solve this tantalising mystery, but the only course that would have led to an explanation of it—namely, the

Lar's Exchange

battering in of the door—they dared not attempt. Moreover, hesitation meant possible detection, and what detection meant they did not care to think.

Arrived in the classroom, they forgot for a time the object of their journey. Distance, and consequent safety, fed the flames of their curiosity into quite a blaze. The supper was shorn of much of its enchantment. The consumption of the glorious indigestibles that was to have been such an epicurean delight resolved itself into a match against the clock of mere absorption of matter, and they returned with the utmost caution towards the fascinating gleam. The darkness of the corridor was unbroken; the light had gone. Randal gently tried the door, and finding it locked they retired to their beds discomfited, but determined.

The next day Lar was strolling off to the fives court when the Nigger joined him.

"Heard of last night's spree?" he inquired casually.

"No. What was it?"

"Supper at twelve in room six."

"Oh. Whose?"

"Our chaps from dorm. ten. They seemed excited about a light from under some fellow's door."

Lar faced his companion. There was a suspicion of moisture in his eyes; but the Nigger wore a very sulky look, and would not glance at him. They parted in silence, Lar proceeding straight to Eyre's room, where he fortunately found the owner.

"I say, Eyre, can't find my 'Aulus Gellius' anywhere. Don't remember bringing it here, but think I may have done somewhen. May I search a bit?"

Eyre nodded.

"Bother it!" muttered Lar, after an apparently exhaustive but useless hunt. "Some of those young beggars last night must have hidden it for a joke."

Eyre looked up.

"What do you mean by 'last night'?" he demanded.

"Oh—why—there was some fun, you know."

Lar's Exchange

"As a præpostor, I ought to thresh this matter out." He grinned. "But the methods of recreation employed by yourself and friends are not of overwhelming interest to me. Their time is different. What time was it?"

"Oh—rather late."

"As late as twelve?"

"About that."

"Thanks."

When the door had closed on Lar he threw himself back in his chair, and surrendered himself to a train of thought that brought his brows together.

"What a miserable coward I am!" he burst out suddenly. "To me there is no actual disgrace in it; but I care. Oh yes, I care." A little later: "That young beggar and his bosh about 'Aulus Gellius'! Did he mean to warn me I was watched? Why should he warn me? What does he care for me? And yet, why did he ask to become my fag—*mine*? These young brutes are all hypocrites. I hate 'em all, and—and myself, too."

He got up, and walked to the window. Lar was crossing the quadrangle with a very lagging step. To a friend this would have been significant. Even Eyre watched him until he was swallowed up in Merlet's.

The conspirators laid careful ambush, and kept vigils in succession, but the only person they discovered in the corridors after 10 p.m. was Mr. Dale, who turned their misdirected energy into the channel of poetry and Virgil.

From this time there arose a slight cloud between Lar and certain of his friends. They felt he knew something of this interesting mystery, and were aggrieved that he withheld the information from them, a course of conduct they regarded as beneath his dignity as a Dalian, and a fag. A few words from him might have obviated the necessity of their late watches and much consequent anglicising of the "*Æneid*," though in fairness to them it should be stated that they bore him no malice for the incurrence of this superfluous practice in heroic verse.

The secret conviction that something was brewing was

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confirmed by an experience of Randal's. He affirmed that he had been awakened in the night by soft but hurried footsteps in the corridor. It sounded to him as though some one had run by, either with naked feet or with only his socks on. He leapt out of bed, rushed to the door, which stood slightly ajar, and was about to advance into the passage when he again heard footsteps approaching rapidly. These, too, passed quickly down the corridor, and all became still again. From the glimpse he had caught of this second figure he had formed the suspicion that it was one of the masters. Trembling with curiosity, he yet dared not venture out of the room, and contented himself with a few vigorous efforts to arouse Ryan minor, who wakened indeed, but only sufficiently to give vent to a growl. After this failure he turned into bed, and had just arrived at a grand solution to the affair when he fell asleep. The next morning he remembered the incident with great clearness, but he had forgotten the solution.

When a day or two afterwards, a special meeting of Dale's was convened in the hall, it was felt the explanation was near. No one doubted the object of the meeting, and expectation ran high, not even the seniors being free from it. The Chief himself was there, and it was to a very attentive and motionless audience that he spoke.

"The circumstances," he said, "which have rendered this meeting necessary, have given me much annoyance and pain. It is a well-known rule amongst us that at nine o'clock in summer the house-gate is shut, but that permission may be obtained in exceptional cases to remain out until ten. At that hour the gate is locked, and exit or entrance until seven the next morning is forbidden. During the last five years there has been but one solitary instance of the breaking of this rule. It is therefore with the greater reluctance that I am compelled to state that a systematic violation of it has been in progress for some weeks past. The offence has been conducted with such secrecy and caution as to defy

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the modes of detection hitherto employed. We have, however, reason to believe that only one boy is concerned in this, and we have traced him to his dormitory."

The Chief paused, and looked around. Every eye was upon Eyre, who was sitting so low that scarcely anything of him was visible amongst the others of the Sixth.

"The measures we have taken in conjunction with the præpostors having proved ineffectual, we shall be compelled—unless the appeal I am about to make be met in the way I trust it will—to adopt such a system of espionage as shall ensure the discovery of the offender, or the discontinuance of the offence. This is the greatest disgrace to which I can put any house, and it is in the hope that extreme measures of this nature may be avoided that I now ask the offender to step forward, and save his house from disgrace at his hands."

Again was Eyre the cynosure of every eye, but he did not stir. Suddenly a slight movement arose at the back, and a boy was seen advancing up the hall. In his white, set face, and mechanical gait, it was with difficulty that they could recognise the merry features and lissom figure of little Lar. Suspicion sank into amazed incredulity, and then both were swallowed up in expectation.

The Chief was clearly nonplussed. For the briefest moment a trace of amusement showed itself in his eye, as he viewed the diminutive proportions of the self-confessed author of so solemn a gathering. He turned and spoke a few hurried words to Mr. Dale. Then he again faced Lar, who had come to a halt in front of him.

"Your name is Forrest, is it not?"

A stiff nod.

"Do you confess to this systematic breaking of bounds?"

Another nod.

"And for what purpose?"

The lowered eyes were raised for a moment to the Chief's face, and fell again at once, but there was no reply.

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The Chief spoke again to Mr. Dale. The unexpected had happened once more. When he turned from his colloquy it was only to dismiss the boys, and to bid Lar follow him.

In knots of twos and threes, Dale's wandered off. Far from being elucidated, the mystery was, in their eyes, plunged in greater obscurity than ever. The idea of Lar's guilt was scouted all round. He was screening somebody, they averred, and there was great consensus of opinion as to the somebody screened.

His brother fags gathered together in puzzled and gloomy silence. A peculiarly confusing thought loosened Ryan minor's tongue.

"What I want to know," he said very determinedly, "is *why* Lar sticks up for that cowardly sneak, who hasn't the courage to own up when he's all but bowled out."

How a government would hate this boy! He was always "wanting to know." These fellows always start a babel, too.

"I'll bet he's at the bottom of it."

"Look how he sat. He was ashamed to show his face."

"Vote we tell the Chief about his light!"

"He always prowls around, pretending to see we're safe in."

And so on. The Nigger alone had not spoken; but presently he calmed the tumult.

"Steady there. What should you tell the Chief if you went? Isn't most of this talk of yours just moonshine? What do you know against Eyre beyond the matter of his light, which might easily be explained? Precious fools you'd look, wouldn't you?" Having thus shown them the slough of folly in which they were wallowing, he proceeded to disport therein also, observing: "If that—that fellow lets Lar come to any harm through him, I'll—hang it! I tell you there'll be a row," and he glared at the circle around him.

"That's your sort, Nig! Let's go and screw him in."

Lar's Exchange

Wrathful though the Nigger was, his judgment had by no means deserted him.

"No hurry," he said. "Let's wait till to-morrow to hear the Chief's decision."

Meantime Eyre, locked into his study, sat motionless, his head buried in his hands. Presently he leapt up, his face working. The perspiration stood in little isolated beads upon his forehead, his thin lips were set in a rigid line. Short ejaculations escaped him from time to time.

"It has come. Of course it has come. You knew it would come. Wretched little beggar, why couldn't he sit still? I could simply have given it up, and no one would have known. You fool! it might all have been stopped if you'd had the courage of a rat. If you'd asked right out, the Chief would have given you permission, and he would never have told. You burked it, and see the result. This little——"

He stopped, an indefinable change passing over his face. Some instants he stood thus. Then he muttered: "*This boy knows*—has probably known all along. If so— if so, he has been shielding me! He wanted to be my fag! Yes, he has been shielding me!"

He sat down. The next moment he was on his legs again.

"What does it mean?" he asked fiercely. "What am I to him? Why does he thrust himself into my affairs?"

The ebullition passed, and he leant against the wall. When he spoke it was very low.

"*My fag!* And he has obeyed me to the letter. He has kept prying youngsters off me. He warned me when danger threatened. He has accused himself to save me. If I make no movement he is ready to take the punishment."

His anger flickered out again.

"Why has he done it? Why?"

He wanted a tangible reason for kindness. He sought for one. When it came, it threw him helpless into his chair.

Lar's Exchange

"Does he *pity* me?"

He writhed. The dormant chord had been struck, and would sound. To add to the difficulty of his struggle, his nature and habits arrayed themselves against him. But the chord sounded on, and presently began to soothe him. By the time a knock came at his door his course lay well marked before him.

Brayley started visibly at the face that met his view.

"You don't look well," he said kindly, but a trifle constrainedly.

"I am getting better."

An awkward pause. Brayley was evidently ill at ease.

"Truth to say," he began, "I want to talk to you about this affair of Lar's. You've seen a lot of him lately. Do you think he can have done this?"

"Do you like Lar?"

"Very much."

"Better than Croome?"

"Much better."

"Then, why did you let him change with him?"

"Why, you see, he wanted to—very badly."

They eyed each other.

"I am going to the Chief," said Eyre.

"I thought you would."

"Thank you. Will you come?"

The Chief never kept anyone waiting if he could help it. The first glance at their faces brought him to the keenest attention.

"Will you please send for Lar—Forrest, sir?" asked Eyre.

Lar came, very pale. Eyre looked defiantly around.

"My father is a drunkard," he said, and waited; but no one spoke. "I have broken bounds, not Lar. I went to fetch writing work I did for him. He is an attorney. I should have owned to breaking bounds anyhow. I tell you the other, sir, because these two know."

Those who have had to deal with the Chief could imagine how he would treat such a case. He dismissed

Lar's Exchange

Brayley at once, and Lar with a few questions. In after years Eyre recalled that miserable day as a turning-point in his life. He loved to remember how that gentle and firm influence had knocked off the hard clay with which he had encrusted himself. He even hoped it disclosed a serviceable vessel beneath.

Half an hour afterwards he entered the hall.

"Where is Lar?" he inquired.

No one knew. A few expressed audible comments on his asking for anyone. He made the circuit of the classrooms, and in one of them he came upon the Nigger and his court. They stared at his question. Deeply engaged in discussing the situation, they had not heard he was at liberty.

"He's very fond of pegging down to the river, but he can't have gone on such a day as this," said Croome.

He had not finished when Eyre was out of the room, the Nigger close behind him. One moment the court and a few stragglers hesitated, and then there was a wild rush after them. A few caught up the Nigger, but Eyre was far ahead and running as if in the pink of condition. The wind blew in sudden gusts in their faces, the driving sleet almost blinding them. But for the powerful infection of excitement and the sight of the Nigger ploughing on in front many would have turned back. Was it likely anyone would venture on the river in such a wind as this?

Eyre, with clenched teeth, sped swiftly on. He had been thinking of this boy's character lately. Only two meadows, but what long ones they seemed! The panting rabble saw him, as he approached the banks, bear away to the left. The first thing that caught their eyes was a boat, bottom upwards. Yet a little nearer and they discerned a shapeless mass toiling painfully to the bank. They were in time to assist Eyre and his burden up the side.

Eyre waited just long enough to satisfy himself that Lar had not swallowed any great quantity of water, and

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then, wrapping him in the coat of which the Nigger had divested himself, and ignoring several offers of assistance, he bore him rapidly to the school hospital. Truly Dale's had reasonable grounds for considering themselves an ill-used set. Were ever boys so harassed with mysterious events as they? "What is coming over the place?" Ryan minor asked, and no one was venturesome enough to reply.

In the evening the elucidation came. Brayley, at Eyre's request, told them such portions of the latter's story as he deemed it necessary they should know. He added that by this time Eyre had left. The Chief had in no wise desired it, but he had offered no opposition to his vehement desire to go at once. All this Brayley told them as briefly as possible.

"Dale's have cause to be proud of to-day," he continued. "It has shown us one of our number, frequently misunderstood and ignorantly disliked, in his proper light. The incident of this afternoon has revealed what was in him, and if he had stayed with us we should have given him a warm reception (cheering). This is one cause for congratulation. But we have another. I allude to little Lar (thunders of applause). The fags of Dale's are to be envied their comrade. You all know what he has done—how, rather than tell the inner history of another, which that other clearly desired should be kept secret, he has fallen into disfavour with some of you—(cries of 'No')—and how he has shielded that other with a degree of feeling and thoughtfulness that would have done credit to the oldest of us. I'm not good at talking of this kind of thing, so I will only say that I'm proud of being captain of a house that can boast such fags as little Lar"; and Brayley sat down amidst a perfect storm of cheering.

When this subsided a commotion began at the other end of the room. Encouraging remarks were heard: "Of course you must." "Go it, Nig," "Now's your time," "Somebody must," and so on. Thus adjured, a reluctant

Lar's Exchange

figure arose, but as he was even then barely visible, he was hoisted unceremoniously on to a form. From this elevation the Nigger made his first and last speech at Raneham.

"Old Bray—I beg your pardon—(loud laughter, drowned in cheers)—I *will* call him old Bray—(enthusiasm) Old Bray says we ought to be proud. And so we are, and small too. Some of us had formed an opinion about ——" (the Nigger paused, and nodded in the direction of the North Pole to signify the departed Eyre), "and about Lar, too, for that matter. And a pretty figure we cut now, with our opinions." He glared scornfully on his abashed following, who had not expected this thrust. "We're jolly well ashamed of ourselves, that's what we are; and we mean to take a lesson from it. That's all I've got to say" (sudden and loud cheering). Here the Nigger, with utter disregard to this statement, and to the fact that he was supposed to be replying for Lar, proceeded to call for "three cheers for little Lar!"

Brayley rose, and led them off.

Far removed from this din, Lar was slowly recovering from the effects of his immersion, following upon the strained tension under which his nerves had laboured all the day. There had been no danger from the first, but absolute quiet had been prescribed for him. In this state he did not notice the entrance of a visitor, who stood watching him for some moments, and then dropped suddenly on his knees beside the bed.

A morning or two afterwards, a small package arrived for him. It contained a new school copy of "Aulus Gellius," which bore the inscription—

"From W. E. to L. L.
One lesson learnt at last."

Face to Face with a Fer-de-lance

A Snake-Hunter's Adventure on the Orinoco

By J. REILLY

I AM a snake-hunter by profession, travelling all over the world, and I supply most of the big dealers in this department of natural history. Mine is a dangerous business, on the whole, and there is no lack of excitement in it. I could pitch you yarn after yarn about my captures of boas, pythons, cobras, etc., but perhaps this one will do for the time. It was a thrilling experience I had in South America.

My companion, Saturnino, like most of the Venezuelan Indians of the lower Orinoco, was small in stature; in fact, you might have called him squat, for his head only reached to my shoulder, and his palm-leaf hat was so broad-brimmed that it made him look even shorter than he was. Up in the trees he was as agile as a monkey. On the ground he was quick-moving and light-footed. In passing over fallen trunks and dodging under festooning vines he made no disturbing noise. His every step was swift and almost silent. A better hunter I never had with me.

It was well after noon one day when he and I set out for the tree covered with orchids, from which he had been frightened away a short time before by numerous coral snakes, driven by an inundation to take refuge in its branches.

Leaving Cipriano, the other Indian, at the palm-thatch

Faced by a Fer-de-lance

hut, Saturnino and I made our way down the hill towards the river. The gloomy forest towered to a majestic height above us. Its far-off green roof shut out every ray of the sun, so that we walked on among the great pillar-like tree-trunks as if in the twilight of some vast cathedral. The thick undergrowth and frequent vines delayed us, but with our slashing *machetes* we cleared a path to the orchid-clad tree.

The orchids were as rich as Saturnino had said, and were all in bloom. It took him such a long time to collect them, however, that I lost patience waiting for him, and rambled about alone through the undergrowth bordering on the cacao-plantation. I had hopes of meeting with a boa-constrictor or a fer-de-lance or a bush-master. But I saw no snake, nor any other animal except an armadillo, which bolted out of a hollow tree when I poked in my stick.

It was late in the afternoon when Saturnino joined me. He had left his orchids in a heap under a cacao-tree.

"I have more orchids than I can carry home," said he, "and you have found no snake; therefore I will hunt along with you for a while, so that you also may go back with a contented heart. Snakes are hard to see among the leaves, and four eyes are better than two."

At this time we were in a thicket of young palms about waist-high, and their foliage was so dense that I had to part them with my stick to see the ground beneath them. Every moment we would stand still to listen, because, in snake-hunting, ears are often of more service than eyes, and so it proved on this occasion.

From away down the river came a noise, a chattering of discordant voices, which I recognised at once for the cries of those most unmusical birds, the *guacharacas de agua*.

Saturnino looked me in the eyes. "Do you know what they say?" he asked.

"No," said I, "I don't know what they say, but I do know what they are."

Faced by a Fer-de-lance

"Well, they are scolding," said he. "It is very likely that they see a snake. Let us go down there at once. If we can get near enough to see how the birds turn their heads to look at the snake we may see him."

Off at a trot went both of us, ducking under vines and jumping over fallen trees. Getting within about two hundred yards of the spot, we saw the wing-flapping scolders. Then we began to creep forward through the undergrowth, slowly and cautiously. We dared not show ourselves, lest we should frighten the birds away.

Keeping low and well under cover, and using our ears alone to guide us, we were soon in the thicket on the very verge of the river bank.

Cautiously we peeped out through the leaves. Yes, there were the birds, not quite fifty yards away, in a tree growing on a little island, bare and flood-washed, in the very middle of the river. The noise they made was disagreeably loud and harsh. Still as death, we both lay hidden in the thicket, so that we might watch the *guacharacas*, and be able to judge by their excited movements as to the whereabouts of the snake.

Now, the tree in mid-stream on which the chattering birds were perching was partly dead. It had two main branches: one, leafless and rotten and covered with fungi, stretched towards our side—the north side—of the river; the other, well clad with foliage, spread away from us in the direction of the southern bank.

I noticed that the birds alighted freely on the dead arm reaching out towards us, but that they perched only among the outermost boughs of the leafy branch at the farther side; on the long and stout shank of this living limb they never alighted at all. On this shank, therefore, I strove to discern the snake. With the naked eye I could not perceive that any snake was there.

Telling Saturnino to lie still, I took up my field-glasses. Yes, there he was, a good-sized snake, lying in a brownish coil on the body of the branch, close by a bird's nest. Mosses, orchids, and other epidendrums

Faced by a Fer-de-lance

grew on the bark all about him, and partly screened him. While I still looked through the glass, he was busily engaged in dragging a young bird from the nest.

I hastily judged him to be the tree-boá (*Xiphosoma hortulana*), and I thought he was acting strangely in seeking prey during daytime; for these arboreal boas hunt by night, and during several years in South America I never saw them hunting by day. They are fierce biters, have very long teeth, and are much dreaded by the people; but they are really not venomous. As they are very interesting and little-known snakes, I desired to get this one for my collection.

Hastily putting away the binocular, I caught up the long snake-stick, burst out of the thicket, and ran down to the water's edge. By sounding the river with my stick, I found that near the bank it was not more than three or four feet deep. I stepped in at once and waded through; but the water reached my armpits before I climbed out on the little island at the foot of the tree.

Without losing an instant I shinned up the trunk, and, stick in hand, sat sidewise in the fork, meaning to get a very near view of my supposed tree-boá swallowing his young bird. But it was no tree-boá. To my horror, I found myself sitting within four feet of a large fer-de-lance, the most terribly venomous snake in tropical America.

At sight of me he let the fledgling drop from his jaws. He grew excited, and prepared to repel attack. His vibrating tail rattled audibly against the rough bark of the limb on which he lay. His triangular head was elevated and drawn back, as if he meant to dash at once at my face.

His cat-like eyes and thread-like tongue-points, trembling incessantly in the air like the restless antennæ of a nervous insect, gave him such an aspect of sinister malignity that even I, who had lived with snakes for years, felt my blood run cold. And yet I was almost a yard out of his striking distance—perfectly safe, in fact,

Faced by a Fer-de-lance

unless he should take it into his head to come closer to me, and this I knew he would not do unless I irritated him. Even then he would be much more likely to plunge down into the river.

This last I by no means wished him to do, for in my collection I had no snake of this variety—*Bothrops atrox*—and I was very anxious to capture him. If he and I had been upon the ground I could easily have settled the matter by holding him down with my stick pressed across his neck, while I gripped him with my hand round the throat close up to the head. But here, perched in the fork of a half-rotten tree, leaning out over the water, I did not at once see how to proceed. At last I decided that there was no way but to snare him.

Taking a roll of cord from my pocket, I cut off a short piece, and with it formed a running noose, which I tied firmly to the end of my stick. Fortunately the cord had been well wetted in my pocket while I was wading across the river; consequently, being somewhat stiff, it stayed well in position, and was hardly at all blown about by the wind.

Now, if I were simply to reach out with my long stick and try to get the noose dangling from it over the snake's head, he would very probably become suspicious, bite at it once or twice, and then plunge down into the water. My long experience with snakes told me that I must keep his attention concentrated on myself, while my stick and noose approached him slowly and unnoticed.

Accordingly, in order to engage his attention, I began wagging my head violently from side to side. At the same time, with imperceptible slowness, I kept advancing the stick and noose nearer and nearer to him. At last it hung right in front of his nose. Just then I stopped the head-wagging, braced myself well in the tree fork, and with one little swoop of the stick I caught him with the noose, well behind the jaws, lifting him clear from the branch.

Dangling now in the air above the water, he struggled



“TO MY HORROR, I FOUND MYSELF SITTING WITHIN FOUR FEET OF A LARGE FER-DE-LANCE.” (See p. 135)

Faced by a Fer-de-lance

so vigorously to get loose that I feared he might injure himself; so I called out to Saturnino to bring me the snake-bag, which I always took with me. Now, Saturnino had put our lunch of boiled beans and roasted parrots into this very bag, and was just at this moment eating from it, while he stood at the water's edge.

The instant I called he shook the provisions out of it, rolled it up, took it in his mouth, and plunged into the water to swim over to me with it, for the river was too deep for him to wade. I watched the fer-de-lance dangling from the end of my pole. Then every instant I would turn my head to see Saturnino swimming to me dog-fashion, his head thrown back, with the bag held between his teeth.

He climbed out of the water on to the little island near the foot of my tree. He had got out with both knees on the bank, had taken the bag in one hand, and was about to stand upright, when, almost screaming the word "*Carrajo!*" he tumbled backward into the river, and began to swim frantically away to the opposite shore. He held the bag in his hand the whole time.

"What's the matter?" I asked repeatedly; but never a word could I get out of him until he regained the other shore.

"What is it, Saturnino? Are you scared?"

"*Carrajo!*" he replied. "*Hay dos otras coimas al pié de arbol!*" ("Gracious me! There are two other deadly snakes at the foot of the tree!")

I looked down, and there, sure enough, were two more fer-de-lances, coiled and waiting. Needless to say, I considered myself lucky to be seated so high up in the fork above. They must have been there when I first went to the foot of the tree, and I must have planted my foot between them, or stepped right over them, when I started to climb it. I suppose that my excitement about the snake on the branch prevented my seeing them. It seemed a miracle that I had not been bitten.

However, I had no time to moralise over it. There

Faced by a Fer-de-lance

was I, sitting in the fork of the tree, with a fine, full-grown specimen of a very imperfectly known and rarely captured viper dangling in a noose on my stick, and fast strangling himself to death, while two of the same death-dealing serpents lay on guard below. A fatal bite would almost certainly be my lot if I should venture to come down. Yet, if I meant to save my ensnared captive alive, I must soon free him from the noose and get him into the bag.

I tried all my powers of persuasion to induce Saturnino to cut a long bamboo, tie the bag to the top of it, swim with it nearly to the island, and pass it up to me.

But he obstinately refused. He was in abject terror of the two snakes at the foot of the tree. He wanted to run up to the hut, get the gun, and shoot them.

"No, no!" said I. "That would never do! It would be dark before you could return. Besides, my snared snake would in the meantime die."

Seeing that I could get no assistance from the frightened Indian, and that I was thrown entirely on my own resources, I set to work vigorously and acted as follows:—

Taking my roll of cord from my pocket, I lashed the snake-stick firmly to the branch. This left me free to get rid of or to capture the snakes at the foot of the tree. Of course I meant to capture at least one of them. I cut a stout branch about five feet long, with which to hold down the reptile's head, so that I could safely grip it behind the jaws. Now, as I did not dare to come down out of the tree while two such deadly creatures lay coiled at its base, I broke off pieces of rotten branches and threw them down, to make the snakes move off a little way. I took care to throw the sticks on the narrow space between them and the foot of the tree. At first I called on Saturnino to help me, but he began throwing such heavy missiles that I had to ask him to desist.

My throwing was apparently of no use until a heavy chunk of rotten wood struck one of them on the head. Then he made an instantaneous dart into the river, and swam away to the southern bank.

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By this time I had used up nearly every piece of rotten branch I could lay my hands on, so I tried a gentler method with the one that remained. I threw my hat at him, thinking to scare him. To my disgust he bit at it, vibrated his tail, and stayed as he was. Then I took off my coat and dropped it on top of him, completely covering him up.

As I expected, he at once glided out from under it. But instead of coiling again in a place where I could catch him, he disappointed me by going down into a hole beneath the tree.

Thus, at last, the danger was gone, and I could come to the ground without fear.

Cutting the lashing that had kept the snake-stick in place, I dropped it, snake and all, to the ground, and then slid down after it. If I had not quickly grabbed the stick he would have been into the water with it, as he was fast dragging it off.

Holding both arms high over my head, one hand clutching hat and coat, and the other the stick with the snake, I entered the water and waded through to the other bank.

Getting Saturnino to hold the bag open, I hung the snake within it, cut the noose from his neck, and let him drop to the bottom. After I had tied it up we could hear him thrashing his tail against the sides of it.

As it was nearly dark, we could not now stay to get the snake that had gone into the hole. So we went off with our one prize to the palm-thatch hut on the hill-side, where we made a delicious supper on a fat armadillo that Cipriano had thoughtfully baked for us.

The Mystery of Carach Dhu

How Herr Borck was Laid by the Heels

BY ALFRED COLBECK

I

"WE'VE had a ripping time, Len."

"Splendid! Uncle's friends 'll have a rare supper out of these. Look at this chap," and Len hooked his long finger into the gills of a big brown pollock, and lifted it high above the well littered with the finny spoils of their afternoon's fishing. "Isn't he a whopper?" The pollock curved out spasmodically, and, releasing the tension, caught Len a resounding slap on his bare forearm. "Ugh!" he exclaimed, as the pollock dropped into the well again. "I'd no idea he was alive."

"It's his last kick," laughed Teddie.

"I'm glad I threw my line into the wash of the rocks," said Len. "I shouldn't have caught him else. He's the biggest of the lot."

"But not the finest."

"Of course he's the finest. The biggest's the finest."

"That doesn't follow," contended Teddie. "Look at this John Dory."

"He's a freak," pronounced Len.

"And at these grey mullet," pursued Teddie.

"The pollock could swallow them all," asserted Len.

Teddie chuckled, and said drily, "He might. And that would improve his flavour. What about the mackerel?"

"Oh! the mackerel. They're — they're—peacocky — iridescent," conceded Len, who had caught some of the mackerel. Glancing over the bows, he continued, "We're

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nearing the island. Toss them across, Teddie, and I'll string them together."

Just then, a third lad, in a blue jersey, who had been lolling on the fore-peak, sprang to his feet, and cried suddenly, "What's that?"

Len and Teddie forgot the fish and turned instantly to gaze where Jack was gazing. But there was no visible explanation of Jack's outcry. All they could see were the fantastic black rocks of the headland half a mile away, frowning heavily above the tide, with the blue water racing in, separated by the triple points, and breaking between them into snowy foam.

"A seal maybe," quietly remarked the old fisherman, Peter, who was seated on the after-deck, dangling his dumpy legs over the well, and gripping the brass-bound tiller with his sinewy hand. "Was it a seal, Jack?" he shouted hoarsely, above the hum of the wind and the wash of the sea.

"No!" said Jack, swaying to the roll of the buoyant craft, and keenly searching the water in the western opening of Carach Dhu, "—a man."

"Nonsense," returned Peter. "You're mistaken, boy. Carach Dhu's no place for bathin'. It must ha' been a seal."

"I saw him dive," asserted Jack.

"Has he come up again?" asked Peter.

"Not yet," replied Jack.

"Nor will he. You're mistaken. A man!" and there was a touch of scorn in Peter's repudiation. "A born fool of a man, I should say, to risk his life needlessly in the boiling seas right under Carach Dhu! Besides," he went on, "how would he get there? Tell me that!"

Jack did not attempt to tell him. He simply re-asserted, "I saw him dive," and then dropped upon the deck again. The moving boat had placed a jutting point athwart the western opening of Carach Dhu. The contention could not be settled now. But Jack held on

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silently and tenaciously to his conviction that the diver was a man.

Teddie tossed the fish across, and Len began to string them together. Peter, with a protesting rumble in his throat, devoted himself to the steering. Jack reclined beneath the jib, and recalled the vision of the naked figure rosily clear against the black rocks, poised for an instant above the blue waters, then vanishing. The boat swung rhythmically over the billows, brought the island gradually abeam, rounded it, and slipped slowly into the harbour.

"Will you be going out again to-morrow?" asked Peter, as Len and Teddie stepped into the punt.

Len struck in before Teddie could reply. "No!" said he. "We shall be strolling down the coast to-morrow. Can Jack join us?"

"What say you, Jack?" queried Peter.

"If you'll let me off," pleaded Jack eagerly, his face alight, and his eyes gleaming.

"I s'pose I must," returned Peter, pretending to hesitate.

"All work and no play
Makes Jack—"

he quoted, and stopped, wrinkling his sun-tanned cheeks into a dry smile.

"'A dull boy,'" finished Teddie. "But Jack isn't dull. He couldn't be. We'll make a day of it, Jack," he continued, turning to the fisher lad, "—a buster of a picnic. Len and I will be the providers."

"Where shall I meet you?" asked Jack.

"On the quay," said Len, "at 10.30 sharp," and he pushed off the punt shorewards.

"Why did you mention the stroll, Len?" said Teddie, when they were out of hearing. "And why did you propose that Jack should join us? You picked up my *Yes* and turned it into a *No*. I thought we were going out fishing."

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"I'm not quite satisfied about the diver," answered Len deliberately.

"It's nothing to do with us," protested Teddie.

"Hasn't it? We'll hear what Jack says," replied Len.

The two lads were cousins. Len was the elder by two years. He was seventeen; and he was sharing the holiday at this secluded seaport with Teddie, and Teddie's father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. Raybone. He was in the Raybone employ, and had been for over a year. Teddie was still a schoolboy, and eagerly looking forward to the time when he, too, should be a worker. Mr. Raybone had arranged with Peter, the fisherman, to take the lads out whenever they wished to go, and to give them what sport he could, line fishing. Mrs. Raybone could not be induced to venture upon the sea however calm it was, so her husband remained ashore with her. And he had accidentally met with two business friends who were staying in the town, and who had promised to drop in for supper on this particular evening. Jack, sixteen, was a grand-nephew to Peter, and Peter's assistant during the summer months.

The supper passed off merrily. Both guests praised the fish, and one of them, Dr. Jex, playfully complimented Len and Teddie on their success as deep-sea fishermen. Len remembered Dr. Jex as an occasional visitor to the works. Teddie had not seen him before. He was a man in middle life, small, rubicund, bald-headed, double-chinned, close-shaven, talkative, with clear blue eyes twinkling behind a pair of gold-rimmed and brightly polished lenses. The other guest, Mr. Bayne, was a stranger to both the boys. He was older than Dr. Jex, quieter, graver, long and lean, with a shock of white hair, a softly curling moustache, and a carefully trimmed thin silvery beard. During the evening his reflective brown eyes often rested pleasantly, yet appraisingly, upon the two boys. The others laughed heartily at Dr. Jex's jokes, but he only responded by a slow smile, and a toleration half humorous and deprecatory, as if

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he thought it a little beneath the dignity of the doctor to indulge in them. He rarely spoke, but what he did say was illuminative, like the flashing of an electric spark into the slight pauses of the free and easy conversation.

Len and Teddie said nothing about the diver. This trifling incident of their afternoon's cruise was of no moment except to them. After supper the three gentlemen stepped into the garden, Mrs. Raybone buried herself in a book, and Len and Teddie were left to their own concerns.

Jack was waiting for them next morning, when, at 10.25, Len and Teddie appeared on the quay. He was Jack transformed, in his best rig-out, stockinged and booted, and so more comfortably in keeping with his nattily dressed companions. Teddie asked him to take charge of a leather-cased thermos flask. He and Len were each carrying a satchel bulging with delectables.

They crossed the beach at the back of the town, climbed the low cliff, and set their faces towards Carach Dhu.

"That's where I saw him dive from," said Jack, an hour afterwards, pointing out a small detached rock, clear of the surge, but well within the western opening.

They were all three stretched side by side on the top of the cliff, their faces outward, watching the billows roll into the opening, and then rebound from the smooth black rock 150 feet below them. The top of the cliff projected, beetling, and they could not see the actual impact—they could only see its effects: a sea flung back, and caught in the inrush of the succeeding sea, tossing madly, but quickly overcome, forced back, and filling the opening with flying spray and resonant thunder.

On either side of them the cliff was sheer, as if it had been sliced down by a knife. Farther out the rocks were split into pinnacles. The flat table-like rock, at which Jack was pointing, was detached and solitary. The seas broke against it, sometimes over it, and, when the tides were high, submerged it completely.

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"You didn't say how he got there," remarked Len.

"No!" replied Jack. "He could only get there in one way."

"How?" asked Len.

"By swimming out from the cave," said Jack. "And then," he went on reflectively, "it would be no easy task. For the entrance is always under water."

"The cave!" exclaimed Teddie. "What cave?"

"The cave directly beneath us," answered Jack.

"Have you been in?" asked Teddie.

"Several times," said Jack. "And, when you are in, at low water, you can see the big gaping hole in the black rock through which the seals come. There's sand inside, lovely sand, quite a long slope of it."

"But, Jack, how did you get in," queried Len, "if the entrance is always under water?"

"*That* entrance," explained Jack, "—the one the diver used when he swam out to where I saw him. You see," Jack proceeded, drawing his brows together, "he had to get in before he could swim out. That's the puzzle."

"Couldn't he swim in?" asked Teddie.

"What? After jumping from the cliff?" put in Jack. "It would be madness. And we saw no boat about. So he couldn't have swum in from the open sea. No!" he asserted. "He must have got in either by the chimney or the passage. He was naked when I saw him. His clothes were inside."

"You haven't told us yet, Jack, how *you* got in," Len reminded him.

"By the passage," said Jack.

"Where's that?" asked Len.

"In the next opening," answered Jack.

"Couldn't he get in by the passage?" queried Teddie.

"Not unless he's very slim," asserted Jack. "It's a secret passage. Very few know of it. And it's narrow, and crooked, and nearly blocked up in places by jagged rocks. No! I don't think he got in that way."

"Where's the chimney?" asked Len.

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"Up the hill-side," said Jack. "If he knew of the chimney, he might manage it, with a long knotted rope," and he turned to point out the position of the chimney. "Why," he exclaimed, "there's some one seated near it, with his back against the big rock! He's watching us. He's got a pair of binoculars. I saw him drop them. I wonder if it's he?"

At Jack's exclamation, Len and Teddie turned also, swiftly. The man rose, evidently noticing that they had spotted him, and disappeared behind the rock.

"That's strange," said Len.

"He's spying," ventured Teddie.

"And hiding," added Jack.

"And so," concluded Len, "if he's the diver, he's interested in the cave. Let's go in! Shall we, Jack? Can you take us through the passage?"

Jack's eyes travelled measuringly across Len's shoulders and hips. "I could do it," said he, "and Teddie; but it would be risky for you."

"I'm not *so* fat," protested Len. "I can wriggle. My muscles are like rubber. You go first, Jack, and show us the way. I'll follow. Then Teddie. If I stick fast—which isn't likely—Teddie can push and you can pull; and I shall get through somehow. Shall we try?"

Jack glanced up the hill again. "Come along!" said he. "He cannot see us in the next opening. It's sheltered by the wall."

Jack led them to the top of a slope of shattered rock which stretched across the opening from side to side. The eastern portion of the cave had probably fallen in. The rock was of all shapes and sizes tumbled about in bewildering confusion. The flaky foam, at the foot of the slope where the seas were breaking, was caught by the wind, tossed upwards, and blown in like feathers. There was no indication of a passage. But Jack picked his way confidently down the slope, and presently disappeared, legs foremost, between the stones. The thermos

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flask, held at arm's length, went last. Len looked in dubiously.

"Go on!" said Teddie.

"Wait a mo'," responded Len, taking off his satchel. "I must pull this after me. You'd better do the same with yours, Teddie. Jack's right. It's like a badger hole."

Soon they were all three wriggling and turning and twisting backwards through the long aperture accidentally left by the tumbling stones. It grew darker as they wormed their way in. The light filtering through the interstices at last quite failed them. Len's clothes suffered badly. A double angle, towards the end of the passage, nearly baffled him. Under Jack's instructions, he took a half turn, crooked his knees round the second angle, and dragged himself through. Listening, as he rested after the effort, he heard a soft thud, and against his moist cheek the current of air strengthened as it passed him from the cave.

"I'm in," said Jack. Len began to move again. "Easy!" Jack advised him, feeling for his legs. "There!" as he seized them. "It isn't far. Drop!"

In a moment Len was on the sand.

Jack helped Teddie down in the same way.

It was as dark as a dungeon. "We must hold hands," said Jack; and he led them across the sand to another passage through the heart of the rock. The sides of the rock were smooth and damp, and so contracted that they brushed them closely, but the passage was high enough for them to walk erect; the light increased, a green light, intermittent, wavering, accompanied by the booming of the billows on the outward face of the rock, and the lap of the water in the interior of the cave.

"What a jolly place!" exclaimed Teddie, emerging, and looking across the breadth of the chamber. "I don't know how you fellows feel, but I'm decidedly peckish," and he dropped upon the sand. "Let's have luncheon here."

Len and Jack agreed. The satchels were unstrapped,

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the thermos flask opened, and they made a hearty meal. The sea, thundering without, whispering within, awoke the echoes in the recesses of the cave. Their own voices came back to them uncannily. The green light played about the seaward end. The water, pouring translucent through the submerged arch, formed a sheltered pool, flooding out beyond the extremities of the arch across the whole width of the cave, and falling in ripples on the steep slope of the wet silvery sand. Above the tide line, where they were seated, the sand was quite dry. The cave was very dim. The light was not strong enough to reveal clearly the rocky partition behind them. From their present position there was no appearance of an outlet. But the air was sweet, drawn in by the chimney, forced out through the passage, the pool in its gentle rise and fall acting like bellows or a great green lung.

The flask was emptied, and the remnants of the repast replaced in the satchels.

"What if a seal should come in?" said Teddie.

"We should scarcely see him," asserted Jack. "He'd scent us, and turn, and be out again like a flash."

"Quicker than the diver," added Len. "But neither of them could come in without leaving some indentation in this soft dry sand. Look where we've been sitting," said he, in proof of it, as they rose simultaneously after restrapping the satchels. "There ought to be some trace of them," and he started off, slowly, searching as he went, along the tide line, with Jack and Teddie at his heels. Suddenly he tripped and fell prone.

"That's another indentation," laughed Teddie.

"I didn't see the rope," said Len.

"What rope?" asked Jack.

"The one I tripped over," answered Len.

Jack and Teddie stooped to examine it, and Len twisted round and clutched it.

"No wonder you didn't see it," said Jack. "It's the colour of the sand."

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"Almost," assented Len. "A trifle whiter, glazed, and very smooth."

"Taut, too," continued Jack, "and as thick as my wrist. It's a cable."

"And covered with—now, what is it covered with?" asked Teddie. "It's like asbestos. And, my word! isn't it hard?" Slipping his hand along it, and following it down the wet sand, he added presently, "It dips into the sea."

"And goes back into the cave," announced Len, tracing it in the opposite direction.

Jack stood still, puzzling over it, but unable to come to any conclusion.

"It passes through the rock," continued Len, his voice sounding hollow in the distance.

"And that means," cried Teddie, from the margin of the pool, "we've lost the end of it, and it has no beginning."

"We've lost the end of it," repeated Jack, roused from his reflection. "That's in the sea. But it must begin somewhere. It passes through the rock, you say," he went on, approaching Len, bending down to feel at it, and to assure himself that Len was correct. Teddie joined them, and felt at it also. It was much darker here than by the pool. "Then," said Jack, "we shall find it on the other side."

"What other side?" asked Len.

"I'll show you," said Jack. "Keep close to me. This is only a wall. There's a way to the inner cave."

He led them along the face of the wall until they reached an opening, a split in the rock, almost vertical, and wide enough to admit them easily. They emerged into a higher and wider chamber, faintly illumined at its extremity by a shaft of soft white light that fell directly from the roof and rested upon some object beneath it, which, in the dimness, looked like a rounded rock, short, detached, and capped in the form of a half-grown mushroom.

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"The chimney's there," said Jack, pointing to the roof, where the light entered, seventy feet above them and quite inaccessible.

"What's that under?" asked Len.

"I don't know," answered Jack. "I haven't seen it before."

They proceeded along the inner side of the wall, feeling with their feet, and, midway, they touched the cable again. Crouching, they all three traced it, straight as an arrow, to the bulbous erection under the light. Then they discovered that it was not a rock, but an oxidised steel cylinder, riveted, and covered by a revolving cap. The back of the cap was obliquely shorn away. This open portion was protected by a sheet of thick glass.

"It's a ship's binnacle," exclaimed Jack, peering in.

"Is that a compass card within?" asked Len.

"It looks uncommonly like one," returned Jack. "I wish the light were stronger. What's the good of a ship's binnacle fixed upon the solid ground? The needle would be stationary. And yet—and yet——" continued Jack, amazed, fascinated, as he gazed within, "it's moving."

Len and Teddie brought their faces close to Jack's, and saw the delicately balanced and sensitive compass card swing a point or two, waver, and then swing back again.

"How do you account for that?" asked Teddie.

"I cannot account for it," answered Jack, with a touch of awe. "It's a mystery."

"And suspicious," commented Len.

"Suspicious?" echoed Jack.

"I'm thinking of the diver," said Len. "He's a spy."

"And plotting mischief," added Teddie.

"What? With this thing?" asked Jack. "Is it a signalling apparatus?"

"Perhaps," said Len. "And it may be connected with the movements of submarines. If he'd only come in we could——"

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He stopped abruptly. For, far above them, in the vicinity of the outlet, there was a sound of moving feet. Expectantly they raised their eyes. But they saw nothing. The huge rock shut out the sky.

Len, who had held his breath, resumed and finished, "—we could nab him."

"How?" asked Teddie, in a low whisper.

"We must think about it," returned Len. "He mustn't get the better of us. We mustn't allow him to escape. He wouldn't come in if he saw us here. Let's retire, and talk it over—formulate a plan of attack, and take him unawares."

Jack hesitated, an objection on the tip of his tongue, but, leaving it unspoken, he followed Len and Teddie to the outer cave.

"We must tie him up with his own rope," said Teddie.

"When we've got him," responded Len. "My plan is this: I'll work round to the right, while you work round to the left, cautiously, crawling over the sand. When I'm near enough I'll rush him. That will be the signal for you. Close in behind, and leap upon him, swiftly, with all your weight and strength, and, together, we'll pin him to the ground. The rest will be easy."

"We may be mistaken," ventured Jack. "He may not be a spy. He may have as much right to enter the cave as we have. An unprovoked assault would be a very serious matter for us."

"An unprovoked assault!" repeated Teddie scornfully. "Why did he turn his glasses on us? Why did he hide behind the rock? Why has he secretly fixed up this suspicious contraption inside the cave? Some one hereabouts is conveying information to the commanders of the enemy submarines. Dad says so. No! Jack—we must nab him. It's a big chance for us, and we mustn't let it slip."

"We're three to one," said Jack.

Len, who had listened gravely to Jack's objection,

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replied, "I'll challenge him. I'll give him an opportunity to explain. We may lose the advantage. It'll be a tougher fight."

"But a fairer," returned Jack, "and it would clear us."

When, after this whispered conversation, they crept back through the split in the rock, they were surprised to see a long rope ladder suspended from the chimney, and a man seated behind the binnacle, leaning well forward and apparently scrutinising the movements of the card. A light glowing within the binnacle was reflected on the man's breast in a luminous disc. His face was above the disc, shadowed, almost invisible.

Len dropped silently to his knees. Jack and Teddie followed his example. Slowly, cautiously, they worked their way round, to the right and to the left, in preparation for the attack. Once, disturbed, the man looked up and across the cave, listening. They stopped, motionless, breathless, watching him, until he bent forward again, and fixed his gaze upon the card.

When within three yards of him Len rose, and cried, "I say——"

The man sprang up, and, instantly, Len was nearly blinded by a brilliant electric torch flashed directly into his eyes. He never finished the challenge. He forgot it and everything else, and hurled himself upon the man, only, however, to reel backwards, from a tremendous blow upon the chest.

"Say on!" a mocking voice demanded.

Teddie and Jack leaped at him, knocking the torch out of his hand, and were bearing him to the ground, when, to their amazement, he burst into loud laughter awakening all the echoes of the cave.

Len was on his feet again, staring, and Teddie and Jack, overcome by the laughter, relinquished their hold.

"Raybone!" shouted the man, "Bayne!" and again his laughter pealed forth uncontrolled. "Come down quickly! I'm in a lion's den, Raybone! Your cubs are



"TEDDIE AND JACK LEAPED AT HIM, KNOCKING THE TORCH OUT OF HIS HAND." (See p. 132.)

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here, and another with them, Bayne! To the rescue—both of you! I shall be devoured. Oh! dear me. I'm done for," and he fell into a sitting position, pressing his hands to his sides, and laughing until the tears ran down his face.

Teddie, astounded, exclaimed, "Dr. Jex!"

"Dr. Jex!" echoed Len, astounded also, and panting from the blow.

Jack, who had never heard the name before, remained open-mouthed, but silent, wondering what would happen next.

"If you'll pick my torch up," said Dr. Jex, "you may verify the discovery."

This set Len and Teddie searching, while Jack, sailor-like, noticing the swaying ladder, stayed it for the descent first of Mr. Raybone, then of Mr. Bayne.

"How did you get here?" asked Mr. Raybone, addressing the boys.

Len began to tell him by mentioning yesterday's fishing and Jack's sudden outcry when he saw the diver, and then, without continuing, he turned abruptly to Dr. Jex, and said, "Are you the diver?"

"I am," confessed the doctor, with an engaging smile.

"Then who's the other chap?" asked Teddie.

"That's too big a conundrum for me," said Dr. Jex. "I wasn't aware of the other chap unless you are referring colloquially to my colleague, Mr. Bayne."

"No! no! no!" cried Teddie impatiently. "We mean the fellow that spied upon us through his binoculars, and when we spotted him, hid behind the rock."

"I should welcome a little more light," said Dr. Jex.

So Len took up his tale again, and told them why they had come to Carach Dhu. He described the man, so far as he was able, how their suspicions had been awakened by his concealment, and how, afterwards, their suspicions had been confirmed by the discoveries within the cave. It amounted practically to an apology for their attack on Dr. Jex.

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And Dr. Jex once more surprised them by saying, "I should like to meet him."

"What are these things for?" asked Teddie. "We thought the spy had fixed them up to send out information to the beastly submarines."

"No!" said Dr. Jex. "Mr. Bayne and I fixed them up for an exactly opposite purpose—to gather in information about the beastly submarines."

"Oh! I see," returned Teddie, "the boot's on the other leg."

"Precisely," replied Dr. Jex, smiling.

"Will you tell us how these things work?" asked Len.

"They're not completed yet," said Dr. Jex. "With Mr. Bayne's consent, I may, later. The completion will involve another dive or two. You have forgotten Mr. Raybone's question. How did you get here?"

"Through the passage," answered Len. "Jack'll tell you."

They all turned to Jack. He was confused at first, but, recovering confidence, he told them of the secret way through the long slope of shattered rock.

"That's a way I hadn't heard of," said Dr. Jex. "Can we see it?"

"I can show you the entrance," replied Jack.

Before they reached the entrance, they were aware that a man had been caught, and caught securely, in some queer twist of the passage. He was breathing heavily, and violently struggling to free himself, but all in vain.

"It's the spy!" cried Teddie.

"Probably," said Dr. Jex. "We must help him out."

He was wedged in the double angle where Len had stuck fast. Jack knew the extricating trick, and instructed him, as he had previously instructed Len; and the man, panting, relieved, but far from happy, dropped into their midst.

Mr. Raybone started as he recognised him. Mr. Bayne bowed politely. Dr. Jex said, "I thought so. The game's up, Herr Borck. You are a prisoner."

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II

When Julian Borck dropped into the midst of the little company, revealed by the electric torches of the three men, he felt like Dr. Jex said he was—a prisoner. Nay, more—he felt he had foolishly wriggled through the tortuous passage into a trap self-baited. An overweening curiosity had tempted him in—an overweening curiosity prompted by a desire to circumvent the suspected scientific designs of Dr. Jex and Mr. Bayne against the local movements, and the marauding intentions, of his country's submarines.

He had run down the hill-side, and he had arrived just in time to see Teddie's head disappearing within the aperture, and the drawing down of the satchel. Here, thought he, was an easier, and a more secret, entrance to the cave than by the chimney or the arch. He marked the aperture, and waited impatiently for the reappearance of the lads. Concluding, at last, that they must have forgotten him, if, indeed, they had seen him at all, or else that they had climbed out by the chimney, he ventured in, cautiously, legs first, and wriggled on, slowly, until the double angle baffled him. And there, wedged, he would have remained, but for Jack's help, the victim of his curiosity and of his prospective counter-designs, until the breath had gone out of him and his desperate struggles had fitfully waned and ceased.

Neither Mr. Raybone nor Mr. Bayne spoke to him, and the lads were silent. Mr. Raybone recognised him as a pre-war-time distinguished visitor to the electric engineering works of which his father was the founder and he was now the head. The start was involuntary. Mr. Bayne contented himself with the sarcastic bow. The lads were mystified. By tacit consent the initiative was left with Dr. Jex.

"It would appear so," said Borck, in excellent English, referring to Dr. Jex's assertion that he was a prisoner, and, at the same time, glancing uneasily about him.

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So small was this part of the cave, a mere ante-room to the larger chambers, that the seven filled it.

"And appearances, Herr Borck, for once, are what they seem to be. They correspond to the reality," returned Dr. Jex. "But we are uncomfortably crowded here. May I trouble you, Jack, to lead us back again?"

"Through the passage, sir?" asked Jack amazed.

"Not this passage, Jack," replied Dr. Jex smiling, "the other. Like Herr Borck we are scarcely slim enough for this. Lead the way, please, with Len and Teddie, through the other. We will follow you, one at a time, I, then Herr Borck, then Mr. Bayne, then Mr. Raybone, Indian file. We cannot walk abreast. The passage will not permit of it. Anything amiss, Herr Borck?" for, with the first step forward, the face of the German twitched spasmodically as by a sharp darting pain.

"I must have sprained my ankle," said he.

"That's unfortunate," remarked Dr. Jex. "Lean against the side. You'll manage it."

He emerged limping into the subdued green light of the large chamber. The lads were waiting uncertain whether Dr. Jex wished them to lead the way to the inner part of the cave or to stay by the pool. The prisoner did not hesitate. He hopped down the sandy slope, and dropped into a sitting posture on the rim of the lapping waters. He removed his boots and stockings from both legs, thrust the left into the pool, wincing, and leaned well forward to rub the submerged ankle. His right leg was closely drawn up against his body. He appeared to be in great pain. And yet, unobserved by the watchers, who had gathered behind him in a loose group, he was furtively measuring the arch with his eyes, and calculating the probable depth of the water beneath it. He groaned, and pretended to wipe the sweat away from his contracted brow. Then, with his face drawn awry, he pulled off his coat, and rolled it up as if to support the injured ankle; and, ere they were aware of it, helped by his extended hands, and the crook of his

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right knee, he lurched forward, curved and dived, and disappeared through the arch amid the outcries of the whole company.

"We can still keep an eye on him, sir—Teddie and I, by crawling back through the passage," volunteered Jack, hot-foot to be off.

"No!" said Dr. Jex. "Let him go. It was a clever ruse."

"And a good riddance," added Mr. Bayne.

"Why?" asked Dr. Jex.

"Because, prisoner or no prisoner, it is well for us that we have only one cable out, and he has missed it—well for us, too, that he has not seen the binnacle. These would have given him a clue. Now he's none the wiser. And," he repeated, "it's a good riddance."

"Perhaps it is," said Dr. Jex musing. "If we couldn't keep him—and he's as slippery as an eel—it was better that he should go early rather than late; and, as you say, he's none the wiser. Still—" and he paused, reflectively, "I'm sorry. I thought we had him."

"You knew he was here?" put in Mr. Raybone.

"I suspected it. I wasn't quite sure," admitted Dr. Jex. "I ran across him on the way down, and again after our arrival, and guessed at his identity. But I wasn't quite sure. He's a man of disguises. Now I know. And it must be he, who, in some astute fashion, is conveying information about the home-coming craft to the commanders of the German submarines."

Len listened attentively to all that was said about the cable and the binnacle. Helped by his experience at the works he had already formed some idea of their probable use. Teddie and Jack were yet in the dark—indeed, they thought little or nothing about them. Their interest was centred in Borck. So they pricked up their ears when Len asked abruptly, "Who is he?"

"Julian Borck?" queried Dr. Jex. "A German scientist, and a fellow-student of mine and Mr. Bayne's at Heidelberg. Your uncle knows him."

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"Do you, dad?" interposed Teddie quickly.

"Yes! I know him," acknowledged Mr. Raybone rather bitterly. "I have shown him over the works more than once."

Teddie whistled his surprise, and exclaimed, "By jingo!"

They had now returned to the inner cave.

"What's the good of a binnacle, sir, fixed upon the land?" ventured Jack.

"Ah!" said Dr. Jex. "That's what Julian Borck would have asked himself, if he had seen it, and, with a sight of the cable, too, he would have answered his own question. We have still to run out a second cable, Jack—Mr. Bayne's cable: this is mine. We'll postpone the explanation until Mr. Bayne's is ready. And, doubtless, Mr. Bayne will welcome the assistance of the three," and, nodding at Jack, he turned his sparkling eyes on Len and Teddie.

Immediately they were all eagerness, and Mr. Bayne said, "I shall be very glad of your help, to-morrow, say, at three."

"But——" began Jack, and stopped, blushing.

"Well?" said Mr. Bayne, with kindly encouragement.

"Oh! it doesn't matter," returned Jack, turning away.

"It does matter," contradicted Teddie warmly. "It'll be rotten for Jack if he cannot come. And his old uncle——"

"I see," struck in Mr. Bayne. "Don't you trouble, Jack. I'll arrange with him."

They left by the chimney. Borck's coat, empty, except for a spotted white handkerchief, was rolled round his boots and stockings, tied into a bundle, and placed under Len's care. Jack and Teddie held the ladder taut for the ascent of the others, and then climbed up themselves, Jack last of all. The exit was close under an enormous rock lying at an acute angle over another rock firmly embedded in the soil. The two formed a burrow open only at one end—the other was blocked by bunching

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gorse and heather. The ladder was hooked into a couple of holes worn in the lower rock. Each one, as he came up, crept out, except Dr. Jex, who waited for Jack; and, when Jack appeared, the ladder was drawn up, unhooked, folded, and stowed away in a natural pocket of the covering rock cunningly hidden beneath a mass of sea-pinks and spleen-wort ferns.

"Where's Borck?" asked Teddie, shading his eyes against the strong sunlight, and scanning the broken water and the triple points of Carach Dhu.

"Gone, long ago," answered Dr. Jex, "and probably disguised again by this time."

Len laughed, and said, "You didn't expect he'd be waiting for us, Teddie?"

"Not exactly waiting for us, but I thought he might be spying on us. He's a powerful swimmer if he's made his way through that," and Teddie pointed at the madly surging billows below.

"He is," responded Dr. Jex, "a very powerful swimmer."

At three the following afternoon, Mr. Raybone and the boys crept back under the huge rock. Dr. Jex and Mr. Bayne were already in the cave—indeed, they had been there, employed busily about their scientific contrivances, for several hours. Jack descended first. The swaying ladder was nothing to him. Mr. Raybone, however, preferred to have it stayed. He came second, then Len, then Teddie. Mr. Bayne had not only made arrangements for Jack to join them, but he had engaged Uncle Peter, under a pledge of secrecy, to bring a gig round to Carach Dhu, and, from four to five, to stand off and on in the western opening, ready to assist, if assistance should be needed.

The second cable had been passed through the dividing wall; one end of it was coiled on the sandy slope close beside the water; the other terminated in double ear-pieces, like those attached to a stethoscope, and were now resting across the binnacle. Detached, and leaning

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against the binnacle, was a trumpet-shaped contrivance which immediately attracted Teddie's attention.

"Hallo!" said he. "Have you brought a gramophone in? Where are the records?"

"In the sea," replied Dr. Jex.

"In the sea!" repeated Teddie. "Then it isn't a gramophone?"

"No!" said Mr. Bayne. "I haven't chosen a name for it yet. But, if it answers, I may call it a udataphone."

"O-o-h!" returned Teddie, round-eyed, and much impressed. "A udataphone!"

Len was enlightened, but Teddie was as much in the dark as ever.

Jack was by the binnacle, gazing at the illuminated compass-card, and wondering what could possibly cause it to oscillate, fixed, as the binnacle was, upon the immovable land. Neither gramophone nor udataphone appealed to him. The oscillating needle was the mystery. Len was lost in reflection. But he could see farther than Jack and Teddie. And so, when the explanations were given, he could take them in more readily.

"You see, Jack," said Dr. Jex—and Teddie turned to listen—"the needle is affected by wires that run through the centre of the cable. What is the trend of the land outside the cave?"

"East-sou'-east, sir, and nor'-nor'-west."

"That's near enough, Jack, and we are facing the sea. The needle can only be affected between those two points. Not counting them, we have between them, in the half-compass, fifteen bearings. There are fifteen wires running through the centre of the cable. These, at the other end of the cable, submerged, and just beyond Carach Dhu, project like tentacles. They are spread out, fan-wise; and, extremely sensitive, they respond to the presence and movement of any under-sea craft that may be prowling within their range."

"And the needle indicates where they are," added Jack, marvelling.

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"In what direction," corrected Dr. Jex, "—not how far away. Mr. Bayne's udataphone will supplement the compass, and so help to locate them."

"But the needle is moving now," said Jack.

"Slightly, and always swinging back again to the magnetic north. Boats—fishing craft and others—are passing within its radius; and the keels affect it slightly," he repeated. "The deeper moving submarines will completely affect it, and bring its powers into full play."

Satisfied, Jack turned with Teddie to the new instrument that Mr. Bayne was now carefully examining. "It's an ear," said Mr. Bayne, "not a transmitter of sounds, but a collector. You see this delicate membrane at the base of it? A network of filaments are spread over its inner side, and these, by and by, will be linked up with the wires of the second cable."

"And where will the ear be placed?" asked Teddie.

"In the sea, beyond the tentacles of the first cable, if Dr. Jex can so manage it—Dr. Jex, Jack, and your uncle."

"With the gig?" queried Jack.

"With the gig," returned Mr. Bayne. "The ear would be useless without a brain behind it. And the brain would be useless without a mind within it. And these God only can provide. This mechanism of mine is only an extension of what I already possess. I connect God's gifts, mind and brain, with my own invention by means of these appliances," and he placed within his ears the two pieces terminating the cable like the ear-pieces of a stethoscope, "and I listen for the throbs of the engine of a submarine as a physician listens to the pulsations of the heart."

"But how will you know how far away it is?" asked Jack.

"Experience will teach me," said Mr. Bayne, "—experience and careful calculation. It will depend upon the distinctness of the sounds. With the udataphone

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and the magnetic needle, working side by side, we should be able approximately to fix the position, and to indicate the area within which the aviators and the submarine-chasers are likely to find their prey."

"By wiring them?" queried Teddie.

"Privately," replied Dr. Jex. "The switch-board's here," and, with a click, he opened a curving door in the middle of the binnacle.

"And it's connected up?" asked Teddie.

"Yes! You haven't seen the wire?"

"Not a sign of it," answered Teddie.

"It runs under the sand," said Dr. Jex, "in a rubber tube, and emerges by the rock-face at the bottom of the chimney, then, close to the rock, it ascends and passes out through the gorse and heather, and so, concealed, reaches an insulator on the road above us."

"—m—m—m!" and Teddie compressed his lips in wondering reflection.

"Are you ready?" asked Mr. Bayne, consulting his watch.

"Quite. Ah! it's five minutes to four," said Dr. Jex, glancing at his own watch. "Come along! we mustn't keep Peter waiting," and he led the way to the pool.

Mr. Bayne carried the trumpet-shaped contrivance, a part of his udataphone, under his arm. While Dr. Jex undressed, he attached a light-weight line to the neck of it, and another to the end of the coiled cable.

"I'll take one line, sir, if I may," offered Jack, surmising at once what was intended.

"Can you swim?" asked Dr. Jex.

"Like a seal, sir," answered Jack confidently.

"Have you done this dive before?" questioned Dr. Jex.

"No! But I can manage it," Jack asserted.

"Strip, then! You shall take the second line," said Dr. Jex, "the one attached to the cable. Wait until I clear the arch. Dive deeply! And swim on! Save your strength for the rising, then, before you break the surface, put every ounce of strength you have into

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a long forward stroke. The point is, Jack, to rise beyond the surge and take advantage of the rebound."

"Yes, sir—I understand," said Jack, half-stripped already.

Teddie quietly withdrew. The operation within the cave would be limited to the fastening of the lines about them, the plunge, and the evanishment. The more exciting part of it would take place in the open. So, worming his way through the passage, Teddie ran from the second opening to the first, and dropped prone on the top of the cliff to watch. Dr. Jex was astride the rock, puffing and blowing, when Teddie arrived, and Jack was being borne towards him on the rebound of an immense wave. Bows on to the opening Peter was waiting with the gig. Dr. Jex did not even look at him. He was intent upon helping Jack. When, however, Jack was astride the rock beside him, he half turned, and hailed Peter, trumpet-wise, through the hollow of his curved hands. Peter answered the hail. A word or two passed between them, unheard by Teddie—they were swallowed up in the surge of the sea. Peter urged the gig forward. Dr. Jex rose, balanced himself for a moment on the outward edge of the rock, plunged, and scrambled, dripping, over the bows of the gig. Not until he was in, and aft, did Jack plunge, imitating Dr. Jex; and Peter, as soon as Jack was in, standing, and putting all his weight into a couple of reverse strokes, sent the gig backward into smoother water.

Jack drew in his line, hand over hand, rapidly, until the cable appeared. Slowly, so as not to injure the ear, Dr. Jex drew in his line. Lifting the ear carefully into the gig, he examined it, and, apparently satisfied with the examination, he screwed the neck of it firmly into a socket which formed the cable end. Weighted lines were fastened to the cable to prevent the ear floating, and, at the same time, to lift it clear from the bed of the sea—for, washing there, it might have been broken, or choked with weed or sand. Cable and ear were dropped

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gently overboard and instantly disappeared beneath the rolling green seas.

Their task accomplished, the two returned, Dr. Jex leading as far as the rock, and Jack leading from the rock to the cave. Dr. Jex, who was the stronger swimmer, if not the nimbler, knew that he could better render Jack assistance by this exchanged procedure, if Jack should happen to need it.

"Hurrah!" shouted Teddie, springing to his feet, when, after Dr. Jex's plunge from the rock, he lost sight of them.

"And why hurrah?" asked a quiet voice behind him.

Teddie, startled, wheeled about, and stared across the level at an old man, with a long grey beard, who was gazing at him through a pair of blue-tinted spectacles. A daily newspaper hung drooping from his fingers as if he had just been reading it. He was seated on a folding stool. Over him, held by his left hand, was a huge blue cotton umbrella.

"Oh! nothing," said Teddie, suspicious, notwithstanding his mild appearance.

"You shout hurrah for nothing?" queried the old man. "Only a boy would do that—a boy full of life. It's the joy of living, I suppose, and watching—what?"

"What?" repeated Teddie impolitely.

"The divers," said the old man, while his eyes flashed behind the lenses, and his lips curved into an enigmatic smile.

"The divers?" echoed Teddie surprised. For this strange old man was seated too far back to view the opening. "Did you see the divers?"

"I saw the gannets dive," he replied.

"Where?" asked Teddie.

"In the deep waters," said he, "where that fisherman is," pointing at Peter, who, pulling homeward, had come within their range of vision. "They are very deep there; but, farther out, where the ships are, they are deeper still."

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Teddie, regarding this as self-evident, set him down as a simpleton. And yet, reflected Teddie, as he hastened away, was he as simple as the gratuitous information suggested? If he had seen his eyes flash again, and the smile harden into mockery, he would have known that his mildness was assumed, and that a sinister meaning was veiled by his apparently innocent words.

A quarter of an hour later Teddie mentioned him to Dr. Jex, and ran through the conversation while he and Jack were dressing. "Hurry out again, Teddie—hurry," broke in Dr. Jex excitedly, before he had finished the recital, "and see if he is still there. Keep him, if you can, and, if you cannot, watch him. Don't let him elude you. Wherever he goes follow him. Jack and I will be with you presently," and he hastened his rough toilet as Teddie darted away.

But, when Teddie reached the western opening, the old man had vanished. Dr. Jex and Jack, climbing out by the chimney, ran swiftly down the hill-side. Teddie met them with a blank face. A prolonged search, under Jack's guidance, who, more familiar with Carach Dhu than Dr. Jex and Teddie, led them into all kinds of unsuspected nooks and crannies, failed to reveal him, or any trace of him; and, disappointed, they went back slowly up the hill, Teddie with them, descended the ladder, and rejoined the waiting three within the cave.

Len and Teddie, in the new and absorbing interest created by the installation of the scientific appliances in and off Carach Dhu, forgot their line fishing completely. Peter was neglected. He resumed his occupation as an ordinary fisherman, master of a lug-sailed smack, with a crew of five, including himself and Jack, and sailed out most days on the chance of a haul of herring or mackerel. Jack could only visit Carach Dhu when Peter freed him. Len and Teddie were there constantly, the self-constituted assistants of Dr. Jex and Mr. Bayne. Mr. Raybone, concerned lest they should disturb the vigilance of the scientists, would have remonstrated with

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them and kept them away; but the scientists both assured him that they were really helpful, and that their cheerful company was a relief to the tedium of the long hours spent within the cave.

Submarines entered within the radius of the instruments twice during the next fortnight. The compass followed them steadily; the udataphone revealed not only the throbbing of the engines, but the churning of the propellers; wire-directed from the cave chasers and sea-planes rushed out and located them. One was destroyed. The other escaped.

At the beginning of the third week, Len called the attention of Dr. Jex to the compass, which had suddenly swung west-north-west. Dr. Jex, alert, was at the binnacle in an instant. Len watched with him. The needle wavered for a moment at the extremity of the radius, and then returned slowly and steadily to its northerly position. Passing it, however, it still continued slowly and steadily to move along the other quarter, until it reached a point almost east-by-north, stopped, wavered again, and remained wavering between the two points east-by-north and east-north-east.

"We have it," said Dr. Jex, glancing at Mr. Bayne.

Mr. Bayne nodded, smiling, with the stethoscope attachment in his ears. He had not heard him, but he knew, by his expression, what he meant. "It's a big one," said he, "and nearer, much nearer, than either of the other two. Shall I wire?"

It was Dr. Jex's turn to nod.

Mr. Bayne relinquished the ear-pieces to Teddie. The submarine was resting. But Teddie could detect an occasional pulsation, and the turn of the screw, that kept it, submerged, against the strong current of an ebbing tide. The message flashed over the wire. The reply came. Mr. Bayne resumed the ear-pieces. Dr. Jex fixed his eyes within the binnacle. Len looked over one shoulder, Teddie over the other. The needle oscillated, but never passed beyond the two points. For a long

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time they waited, silent, motionless, with bated breath, trying, but vainly, to picture the scene outside. Again Mr. Bayne passed the ear-pieces to Teddie, and stepped forward to watch the needle.

"My hat!" exclaimed Teddie.

At the same instant the sensitive needle swung swiftly back to the magnetic north.

"What is it?" asked Len, springing towards him.

"An explosion," answered Teddie, "a terrific one."

"They have it," said Mr. Bayne, unconsciously using Dr. Jex's words, with a change of pronoun, however, very significant; and, moved by the same impulse, they clasped each other's hands in mutual congratulation.

Not until evening did they learn what had occurred, and then from various actors in the scene, piecing the details together.

Peter, in charge of the fishing smack, three men with him who had shares in the boat, and Jack ventured out that day farther than usual, hovering, in their search for mackerel, just within the limit authorised by the Admiralty. Soon after a successful haul, the periscope of a submarine popped up, followed quickly by the conning tower, and the long bare deck with the parted water pouring over it and falling on either side. It was close a-port. Peter could not get away. Most of the catch was still enmeshed, and the lug sail, lowered, hung to starboard, heavily. The covering of the conning tower was pushed up, and man after man climbed out, until a dozen or so stood staring at the smack, while one, the commander, hailed her harshly, peremptorily, in broken guttural English, but English easily understood.

Peter answered the hail, and said, "What is it you wish?"

"I do not wish—I order," he replied haughtily. "Leave your boat! Lower the dinghy, and come aboard, all of you."

"And what then?" demanded Peter.

"We shall sink the smack," said he.

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"How?" asked Peter.

"By bomb. You are not worth a torpedo," he answered scornfully. Then, stamping his foot, he bawled out, "Did you hear me?" For Peter had taken no steps to carry out the order. "I needn't waste a bomb on you. Gun-fire will do it," and he turned towards his men. But, before speaking to them, he said, as if finally, "You can go down with the smack."

Peter made no reply. He still stood calmly by the tiller. The fishermen continued deliberately to shake the mackerel out of the net. Jack had stepped aft and joined his uncle. He was keenly watching the movements on the submarine. Dressed as a civilian, and therefore conspicuous in the midst of the crew, a man leaned against the conning tower, smiling, with his eyes steadily fixed upon Jack and his uncle. Jack, after a momentary shock, stiffened, his nerves tense as a bow-string, as he recognised Julián Borck. He saw him whisper to the commander, just as the order was on his lips—the order to his gunners, preventing its issue, and causing the commander to turn again and gaze with an added interest at Peter and Jack. It was only a moment, however, before he shouted sternly, "I must have you aboard."

"Keep him waiting, uncle, as long as you can. Offer him the fish, dally with him, go slowly, let him fire even," pleaded Jack. "Only keep him waiting."

"Quick!" the commander called out, observing Jack's lips, but unable to hear what he was saying.

Borck looked on with a sardonic smile.

"We have plenty of fish," said Peter.

"My men will see to that," replied the commander. "Come aboard!"

Peter left the tiller. Jack helped him to lower the dinghy over the smack's counter. They fouled one of the ropes purposely and fumbled over its release. The fishermen went on quietly with their work. Neither Jack nor Peter looked around. They feared to sug-



"THEY PUSHED OFF, AND SCRAMBLED UPON THE WET DECK OF THE SUBMARINE." (See p. 169.)

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gest by the slightest action what they were both expecting.

Impatiently, and with increasing wrath, the commander cried, "Call your men!"

There was no help for it. Peter said, "Now, lads!" and the men left the net and dropped into the dinghy. They pushed off, and scrambled upon the wet deck of the submarine.

The commander sent four of his own men, with a basket and a bomb, aboard the smack, two to fill the basket with fish, two to place the bomb low down within the hold and light the fuse.

Borck edged up to Jack, and said, "It's a deep dive, and a long swim, from here to Carach Dhu. If you should get back—if *you should*," he repeated slowly, dubiously, ominously, maliciously, "tell your young friend, Teddie, that the old man was right—it's a deep dive, and a long swim—and give my compliments to Dr. Jex and Mr. Bayne."

Jack did not answer him.

"And *you* should know," he continued, turning to Peter, "that Carach Dhu's a dangerous place for gigs, almost as dangerous as to be sucked under without a gig in the swirl of a descending submarine."

Peter also remained silent.

The men returned from the smack.

"Embark!" said the commander, pointing to the empty dinghy bobbing alongside. The three fishermen took their places. When Peter and Jack stepped forward, the commander intervened, and said, brusquely, "Not you."

"But—" began one of the fishermen, remonstrating.

"Push off!" said he; and, because they hesitated, he put his foot upon the bows, and nearly thrust them under.

At that very moment they were all aware of a prolonged musical drone, and, lifting their eyes, they saw, far away in the sky, what appeared to be a gigantic

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dragon-fly. As their eyes fell, they saw also two grey points, low down on the water, converging rapidly towards them.

A sharp order rang out from the commander. The men ran for the conning tower. One by one they disappeared. The commander motioned Borck to precede him. Borck turned his eyes mockingly on Jack at the very foot of the ladder. Jack sprang upon him, seized him round the middle, rolled over with him, and, still holding on, toppled into the sea. Peter jumped after them. The commander shrugged his shoulders, ran up the ladder, dropped into the conning tower, clashed the cover to, and, immediately, the boat began to submerge. But the sea-plane was over it. The chasers swept round and across the rippling waters. A depth charge descended. The detonation threw up a fountain of white water. Bubbles rose, and wreckage, and a patch of oil spread widely, iridescent, upon the surface of the deep.

The bomb aboard the smack exploded among the fish. The decks were blown out, and the bulk-heads damaged, but the hull was intact and the smack still floated.

Peter, who had struck out from the submerging boat, was hauled into the dinghy, little the worse for his immersion. Jack was picked up by one of the chasers. His hands were clenched firmly in the coat collar of the unconscious Borck. When Borck was brought round, painfully, by artificial respiration and an application of pungent restoratives, he found that he was really a prisoner, too closely watched over to escape, and too feeble; and, when the chaser ran into port, he was handed over immediately to the authorities to be dealt with as his deeds deserved.

True Travellers' Tales

Telling of Wonders from All Over the World

BY R. R. LANDROCK

THE title of "travellers' tales" is one that is usually bestowed in a kind of amused disbelief upon some astonishing yarn or other told by a returned explorer. Not always is it suggested that the account as related is one that has been deliberately concocted. But the statements put forward are accepted with a grain of salt, and the conclusion come to that, with the latitude that is often allowed to those who have been abroad and seen things, the retailer of the story has made it more wonderful in the telling. He has embroidered upon the original, and caused it to become more surprising still. In other words, he has evolved a travellers' tale.

Years ago, as we have all proved by reading, voyagers and travellers commonly did bring home astounding reports. These told of weird places and marvellous men, of forbidding freaks of nature, and of wild life in all sorts of fearful forms. To-day, we smile at these fanciful mixtures of fiction and fact, but at the same time find pleasure in winnowing them of exaggeration, and revealing what is their modicum of truth. For the tellers of these tales we make certain allowances. We remember that they lived in ages when trained observation was more or less an unknown quality. And as these were the "first men in the moon," treading paths previously untrod, their fears of the unknown lent power to their imaginations. Added to which, there being no one to check their state-

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ments, they were prone to the human failing of liking to make our flesh creep and our hair stand on end.

But, really and truly, the stories of some explorers and travellers call for not a particle of accentuation in order to render them of absorbing interest. The world is still full of wonders, and the roamer who can reach its out-of-the-way places, may even to-day provide himself with material for travellers' tales as extraordinary as they are accurate. Some such that have been told during recent years will well bear repetition.

To this day the vast Sahara has not been completely explored. Ten years ago an unmapped oasis, Tobogba, was discovered, three days east of Siwa, through great salt marshes. Tradition persistently has it that in the centre of the Sahara, not far from a little group of unknown oases, there exists "a city of burnished copper." This story has come down through the ages, and every now and again an Arab is encountered, who, generally upon his death-bed, makes the claim to have visited the city or to have viewed it from not far away.

Some few years ago an expedition headed by an American archæologist set out from the Pyramids of Gaizeh for a fifty days' search in the North Central Sahara. This time the city of burnished copper was to be located. Unfortunately for the attempt "the rope was too short for the job," as was at the time reported. Proof was obtained of the existence of structures of burnished copper westward of the Siwa Oasis. Senussi tribesmen, amongst others, swore to this. The expedition was, however, unable to reach these structures, as it had given the Egyptian Government a signed promise not to proceed westward of Siwa, sixteen days' camel ride west of Cairo.

According to the evidence of an Arab examined by the French some time ago, the city, or collection of structures, of burnished copper is situated in a hollow in the desert. For years at a time this hollow is filled up with sand and the copper houses are hidden. Inscrip-

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tions have been found in the temples of the "King's Treasure" and Jupiter Ammon at Siwa, having reference to the city of burnished copper, and a fresh attempt to discover it is to be made.

Africa—North, South, East, West, and Central—has ever been the birthplace of wonders, and without doubt more are yet to come from the same quarter. The Mfumbiro volcanic region, south of Lake Albert Edward, was known to have been at one time tenanted by a race of pigmies. Pigmy races, if weak, are always cunning, and travellers penetrating the Mfumbiro have said that though unseen they felt that the little people were still alive and actively about them.

That remained a belief only until, in making his way from Ruwenzori down the Congo, an English explorer went high into this wild mountainous and difficult country. So doing, he really drove the pigmies with their poisoned arrows before him, though none were caught sight of till the upper heights were reached.

The tops of the volcanoes, which latter are for the most part extinct, are covered with dense bamboo. Here lurk large numbers of a race of pigmies who make their abode there. And, strange to say, though they are a people believed to have all died out, these pigmies actually live by raiding, at night time, the villages on the lower slopes. Their stealings are put down as being the depredations of various kinds of wild animals, and the pigmies carefully conduct operations in such a manner as to seemingly confirm that suspicion. Although the expedition in question spent more than a month among the volcanoes, it was found impossible to get into close communication with the people at the summit, and that even though numbers of these elusive small folk were to be seen dodging amongst the bamboo stalks. They are of diminutive stature, and distinct from the pigmies of the Congo forest.

One of the strangest travel stories of modern times was told by Sir Aurel Stein when he reached England after

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two and a half years' journeying, undertaken by order of the Indian Government, through Eastern Turkestan, Westernmost China, the Pamirs, Russian Turkestan, and along the Perso-Afghan border. His business was to find new routes, if possible.

Crossing into Chinese Turkestan, round dried-up Lop Nor, he discovered a sand-buried site in the Taklamakan desert. Here were stacks of ancient documents written on wood in an early Indian language dating from the third century A.D. Farther on he came to a large ancient orchard, still showing with uncanny clearness an elaborate arrangement of fruit trees and vines carried over trellis, all dead. The settlement had been abandoned 1700 years ago.

Through the Lop desert the explorer followed the earliest route by which the Chinese carried trade and influence into Central Asia from the end of the second century before Christ. By this route the ancient Chinese conveyed all their silk, and in the cemeteries were found numerous pieces of exquisite Chinese silks and brocades. Near one point, the salt desert was thickly strewn with ancient ammunition in the shape of bronze arrow-heads, probably from some arsenal. From the ruins of watch-towers found in continuous succession along the great defensive wall, the explorer time and again recovered written records on wood dating from the first century before and after Christ. Sometimes these "notes" as to ancient history were so voluminous that they filled a cart.

Mention of the dead orchard calls to mind a journey of exploration of an Englishman in the Forbidden Desert in the hinterland of Tripoli. One of the most notable things on the trip to Murzuk was the extensive petrified desert that the party passed through. For ten hours they travelled across an area of petrified trees, varying in circumference from seven feet to a few inches. Of course, every branch in this forest was lying prone. This fact, together with the presence of marine shells,

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showed that this part of the great Sahara had at one period been submerged! As was remarked at the time, this last was indeed a happening that if read of in the journal of some by-gone explorer would certainly have been looked upon with suspicion. And, truly enough, sea-shells in the Sahara provide a circumstance that, lacking positive proof, does border on the incredible.

Then again, who nowadays would believe the yarn, if encountered in some ancient book of travel, that there exist mountains that are made of soap?

In a mountain near Elko, Nevada, there is an inexhaustible supply of what seems to be the same as pure soap. It is good for washing with and lathers readily. One may enter the mine armed with a big knife, and cut as large a piece as is required. It is beautifully mottled, and on being exposed to the air hardens somewhat and improves, just as soap does. At one time it was used in the lavatories of the Pullman cars. When, however, its peculiar origin became generally known, passengers began to appropriate it so extensively for souvenirs that the company was forced to go back to the manufactured article.

The existence of supplies of this free soap at one time proved to be a great attraction to Indians. When living in a more or less wild state there are few native races that do much in the way of washing. A main reason for this is that without soap of some kind a wash is by no means satisfactory and satisfying. When news first reached the Indians about the "soap clay," as they called it, they refused to believe it, but the testimony of one investigating Redskin resulted in a general rush to the soap mountain.

Long before Defoe's genius gave us the immortal conception of Robinson Crusoe, accounts of men sequestered and living alone in various parts of the world were in favour with travellers and much enjoyed by those who read them. After Defoe's time such incidents, often falsely told, became positively fashionable. True tales,

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though, of the kind are by no means rare. Here are two of the most recent concerning new Robinson Crusoes.

During the hunt for the German Cruiser "Konigsberg," in and near the mouth of the Rufiji River, an armed merchantman, told off to find one of the store-ships, was ordered to Aldabra Island, 400 miles east of Zanzibar. Nearing the beach, a boat put off with a white man in it, a Frenchman, who was the only European on the island. He took a party to his shanty, where, as we may say, Man Friday duly appeared. From the diary of a mid-shipman who was present we will make some extracts. It says:—

"When we arrived at the house a gigantic black man handed us each a green cocoanut in the husk, with a hole cut in the end, full of delicious cocoanut milk. The Frenchman had run out of tobacco, and when we offered him a cigarette he nearly wept with joy. He was cut off from the outside world and did not know that a war was on. He had two magazines and a newspaper, but had read them over and over again so often that he knew them by heart. When we offered to send him papers, tobacco, etc., from the ship he did not know how to thank us. After being on the island about four hours our ship appeared, so we had to put off. On leaving he made us a present of a live turtle weighing about 350 lbs. And we sent him biscuits, milk, tobacco, etc., and enough reading matter to last him for six months."

The traveller who tells our second yarn of the kind is none other than the well-tried navigator Lieutenant Commander John King Davis, Second-in-Command, under Sir Douglas Mawson, of the Australian Antarctic Expedition, 1911-14, who says:—

"My first visit to Macquarie Island in 1909 led to the discovery of a solitary sailor, living close to Nugget Point. He had served in the Royal Navy for over twenty years, and had come to Macquarie Island as one of the crew of a small schooner which visited the place once a year to collect sea-elephant oil.

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"When the ship was ready to sail 'Crusoe II' announced his intention of remaining on the island. As he was deaf to all persuasion stores had been landed for his use. His hut of two rooms was warm and cosy. Each room had a stove. He was not living alone on the island because he liked solitude, he was actually making money.

"As a matter of fact, the man was collecting the oil of sea-elephants, penguins, and sea-lions. Already he had a valuable store of it, housed in a galvanised iron building near his hut. This house contained various appliances for converting blubber into oil." Macquarie Island is foggy and wind-swept, but this peculiar fellow was positively enjoying his lonely life there. Strangest feature of all, he scorned the chance offered him of returning to civilisation. "I am happy here," he said to Commander Davis. "I have all I want. I'm glad to have seen you, but I don't want to leave the island."

Immense cave dwellings of a prehistoric race, a colossal elephant of bronze, cannibal tribes, a garden of Eden in a valley, poppies with flowers eight inches in diameter, and a huge castle governed by a woman chief, were among the discoveries of one of the latest British expeditions to the unknown borderland between China and Thibet.

Visiting a great monastery the explorers distributed cheap mirrors to the children, and the report got about that they were thus trying to blind them. An impressive musical and choral ceremony was held, the object of which was to solemnly curse the visitors. The latter took photographs of the dread rites, so exasperating the performers that the expedition had to hurriedly move on. Not inhabited for over a thousand years, the cave dwellings, never before studied, had each a fire-place for the living and a tomb for the dead. Superstitious fear had always kept the natives away from these caves. Even the guides would not venture near them. Some of the eight-inch poppies discovered in a high mountain pass were sent to Kew.

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In what we may term the old-fashioned traveller's tale an exceedingly frequent topic was cannibalism. That cannibalism is still occasionally indulged in by the aboriginal tribes of the northern territory of Australia is generally accepted among the white inhabitants of the country. Traders engaged in the trepang fishery often get far off the accustomed track, and one of them, investigating a gruesome subject, found that when a native died ashore news reached his ship that there was to be a feast. He himself landed, visited a camp, and with his own eyes witnessed plenty of proof. He tried to find out why the natives should indulge in so horrible a practice in a region abounding with fish, flesh, and fowl. And, perhaps most amazing item of all, he came to the conclusion that it was due to ingrained laziness rather than to any unnatural craving for human flesh. The natives preferred to eat the food thus provided to their hand rather than go to the small trouble of spearing a few fish or a kangaroo.

Three thousand miles up the Amazon River, a young American explorer not only found cannibal Indians, but lived in friendly intercourse with them, in a country hideous by night with the terrible cries of animals and the never-ending croaking of millions of frogs, and unbearably hot by day. These cannibals of the fierce Mangeroma tribe proved to be, in a sense, discriminating diners, choosing their bill of fare not from all and sundry. They only eat their enemies, conquest providing perhaps a piquant sauce. Peruvians are their pet aversion, and they catch them in traps, but mercifully despatch them without torture.

Some of the islands of Melanesia, which means the "black islands," were once pronouncedly cannibal. But, as providing welcome relief from the forbidding facts just chronicled, we will give the following, brought home from Australasia by a devoted member of a Christian Mission that labours there :

"The first field-glasses seen in the New Hebrides

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brought bitter disappointment in their train. As one of the mission clergy was walking along the shore, the native at his side pointed to a tiny figure in the distance. 'There goes one of my enemies,' he said. The white man drew out his field-glasses and adjusted the focus, then handed them to his companion, who gazed through them in excited amazement, beholding his foe apparently close at hand.

"Dropping the glasses, he seized his arrows and looked again. The enemy was far away, as at first; once more he snatched the magic glasses, once more exchanged them for his arrows, and once more was baffled. To lose such an opportunity was hard indeed. A bright thought suddenly occurred to him. 'You hold the glasses,' said he to the missionary, 'and then I can shoot him.'"

In more than two or three of the books written by old-time travellers, there are allusions to natives who converse by whistling, and also to whistling trees.

The aborigines of the Malabar Islands, a modern inquirer tells us, employ a perfect whistling language, by means of which they can communicate with each other over long distances. A stranger wandering over the islands is frequently surprised to hear from a hill-top the sound of loud whistling, which is quickly repeated on the next hill, and so is carried from summit to summit, until it dies away in the distance. By means of this whistling language news travels fast.

Likewise founded upon truth is the tale of whistling trees. Throughout North Kenia, in Central Africa, there grow small thorny trees, four to eight feet high, the leafless branches of which are covered with hollow spherical seed pods, black, and about the size of a plum. A certain insect bores a hole in this shell, the wind blows through and thus produces a musical note, like an æolian harp. These whistling trees grow many near together. They cover the mountains for miles, producing sounds in all keys, with every breath of wind. As the breeze blows

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the notes increase in sound, then die away in a mournful wail that is most unearthly.

It is pleasant to thus prove the good faith of the pioneers of travel when they came to set down their experiences. Most of them were honest, even if easily deceived. And we are gratified to know that very few of the Munchausens have been English.

After being lost sight of in unknown Asia for twenty months, three British travellers returned to India with a good deal of odd new information. For the first three months of their five-thousand-mile journey they wandered among the forests and along the numerous waterways of the Upper Yenesei, west of Lake Baikal. With the help of horses, canoes, rafts, and reindeer, they made some new routes through these trackless wilds. There they discovered, and spent some time among, a most interesting and shy race of forest dwellers. These are a strange people who live in the depths of the forest and practise the worship of trees and animals and of nature generally.

Neither Mongol nor Siberian, these folk have been driven into the recesses of the mountains by incoming Mongol and Tartar tribes. And to the astonishment of the explorers they were found to own immense herds of reindeer.

On the western edge of the great Gobi desert the travellers passed for two months through the territory of the Wang or hereditary Khan, who, without troubling them, kept himself posted as to their movements by the employment of daily runners. The Khan lives in a colossal palace made of mud and surrounded by gardens of iris and lilies. He rules in regal state, amidst summer-houses in the shade of gigantic elm-trees, orchards, stables, and mews for falcons. The whole reminds one of the descriptions in the Arabian Nights.

Now let us mention an extraordinary belief that has long existed concerning that beautiful animal, the giraffe.

In the old natural histories and books of travel the

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giraffe is referred to by the name of the cameleopard, which we are sometimes there told is "a strange, tall, spotted creature, conspicuous by day owing to its spotted hide and great height, but invisible by night." What does that mean, invisible by night ?

Well, the giraffe is a comparatively defenceless animal. It has no teeth with which to tear its foes or big horns by means of which it can toss them. True, the kick of a giraffe hits you fully hard. But that is an uncertain protection against the swift, stealthy spring of a hungry lion. For safety's sake, then, the giraffe spends the night well out in the open, and far away from the accustomed paths of man. That being so, the giraffe is rarely seen by human eyes after sundown. Even those who have occasion to march across country after dark, very seldom come upon this animal, for the giraffe has keen senses, and is off and away at the first faint whiff of coming danger.

Like Europeans, the natives never see the giraffe, save in the daytime. In consequence of that, there are certain tribes which firmly believe that the giraffe is really a small animal, very difficult to detect in the long grass, *but which at once expands when it gets into the sunshine.* As may be imagined, no white man for a moment accepted this preposterous yarn as true ; none had the remotest idea that the giraffe positively did arrive at its known bulk only when the sun's rays were upon it. And even in the staid proceedings of some of the important learned societies, there have been critics who did not scruple to say that this giraffe story originated not with the natives themselves, but with returned travellers, whose intention was to sensationally embellish their own adventures.

In so far, however, as they reported this queer conviction of the natives the travellers' tales were true ; many times now has the existence of this legend been proved. The most extraordinary instance comes from the Zoological Gardens at Cairo and has thus been described :—

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“A man had been hustled away by the police from the giraffe's cage. He was accused of creating a disturbance by incessantly opening his umbrella in front of the giraffe. ‘Yes,’ said the prisoner, ‘I wanted to make the giraffe grow as small as a rat. It is a well-known thing that the giraffe expands with the sun to his present size, and that he is really only as small as a rat at night. It is believed, but it is not proved, that if you can get him into the shade during the day he rapidly decreases in size, and I wish to try.’ The police said the man had been arrested more than once for having broken into the gardens at night. Questioned by them, it was found that he had only broken in to see the giraffe as small as a rat. And the officials reported that this idea is very prevalent among natives.”

The School Medal

And the Laying Low of Tod Dandle

BY MAY WYNNE

It was probably the war which put it into Tommy Dinton's head first, and it was pretty natural seeing all the talk there had been lately of V.C.'s and D.S.O.'s, etc.

Tom had one grouse in life and that was his age. Why, instead of being fifteen now in this present year of grace, had he not been nineteen in 1914, eh? Then, without doubt, England would have rung with the name of Thomas V. Dinton. As it was, Tom's enthusiasm had to flow in narrower channels.

"Look here, you chaps," he urged the school council, "why can't we have our own medal? I've thought it all out. A medal for any act of distinguished bravery and courage on the part of any of the College boys during term. We'd call it the S.H.C.F.V.—St. Hubert's Cross for Valour. That would be the ticket. This is St. Hubert's College, and the old boy—St. Hubert—*was* a fine sport, so it's suitable all round. We'll make a subscription, and have a couple of medals struck by Johnson's in Wigford, eh?"

The idea went down like hot cakes. Many of the boys had fathers and elder brothers who were or had been heroes in the Great War, and the youngsters were all agog to follow such glorious footsteps. Dinton and Ogilvie—Ogilvie was the head boy at present—got leave to go down to Wigford, and in due time the medals in their neat cases arrived at the College.

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The Head had heard by this time of the S.H.C.F.V., and Ogilvie—who hailed from Canada—said he had been tickled to death by it.

Anyway, he gave the school a five minutes' congratulatory jaw about it, and said he was glad to find the true British spirit amongst his boys.

That was all right, and Tod minor licked young Spratt that very afternoon in a gory contest for the rightful possession of bulls-eyes just to prove the T.B.S. was alive and kicking at St. Hubert's. But in reality the boys were in deadly earnest over the medal game, and not one from Upper Sixth to Lower Fourth but did not want to be the first to win the honour.

There were a fair amount of bogus deeds of heroism. For instance, Robins fell into the school stream and Jack Diggle fished him out, but he didn't get the S.H.C.F.V. ; he merely got a bad cold, and a stern reminder from Ogilvie not to make a fool of himself.

Still, others did go on making average idiots of their heroic selves, for a week or so ; then the big footer match of the team began to loom into view, and for a time the S.H.C.F.V. fell into the shade.

It was just the luck that some folk are born to, which carried the footsteps of Carlfield and Riggart round by the school gates that November afternoon when the Head chanced to be being interviewed by Dandle. Tod Dandle had been "odd man" in the employ of the College, till the extreme oddity of his ways led to a conviction of theft, and Mr. Dandle had spent the last twelve months of his valuable time cooling his heels in the county jail. Of course if Dandle had only recalled the truth of that stirring verse—

"He that prigs what isn't hisen
When he's scotched will go to prison,"

he might still have been odd man at St. Hubert's. So it was all his own fault. But Dandle didn't see that. He vowed it was entirely the fault of Dr. Kelway—the Head



“CARLFIELD SWUNG ABOUT JUST IN TIME TO SAVE HIMSELF
BEING FLOORED BY A TREMENDOUS BLOW AIMED
STRAIGHT AT HIS MORTAR-BOARD.” [See page 189.]

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of St. Hubert's, and he was now telling that gentleman so in forcible language.

The Head had evidently had enough of Mr. Dandle's oratory for, as the boys passed, they heard him pitching into his late servant, laying it on truly and well.

Dandle muttered, growled, and, still threatening, went his way.

Carlfield had been giving Riggart *his* opinion of the superiority of Belgian hares over Dutch rabbits, but after the Dandle episode he went as silent as a sick goat.

"Toothache?" asked Riggart, "or was Mother Woolley's dog in a blanket too much for your little Mary? The suet was beastly mouldy."

"Rot," retorted Carlfield, "we ain't all used to dining at Buckingham Palace. It's not the pudding. It's Dandle. I've an idea that brute means mischief."

Riggart chuckled, he knew old Rodge was thinking of the S.H.C.F.V.

"If you find it's a case of red vendetta you can call me in," he promised—and went his way forgetting all about Dandle.

But Carlfield did not forget. He was a bit of a sport, was Carlfield, and as good a half-back as the football team had ever boasted, but he had strained the muscles of his left foot a week earlier, and to the deep regret of his fellows had had to knock off footer for the rest of the term.

"What's wrong with Rodge?" Ogilvie asked Riggart, "even if he can't play I should have thought he would like to watch the game; but off he goes by himself like any old sulk. Find out what's wrong."

So Riggart put the question without any dodging.

Carlfield grinned.

"All right," he said, "I'll tell you, Joe, but mind you, it's not got to go any farther. You remember that chap Dandle? Well, he's got a down on the Doctor, and as sure as my name's Roger Carlfield he means to take his revenge."

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"Sounds a bit cheap, eh?" grinned Riggart. "Orrid melodrama. Innocent schoolmaster. Revengeful servant, 'cetera."

But Carlfield didn't mind chaff.

"Wait a bit," he urged, "and prove the pudding. Dandle has taken to the bottle. He spends his time at the 'Sickle and Hoe.'"

Riggart swallowed down banter, for he could see Carlfield waxing keen.

"Not that *I* visit the pub," grinned Carlfield, "but I've been round about the wood near—blackberrying."

"Wonder you're not on the sick list then," quoth Joe. "Don't you know that after the 12th the devil turns his tail on blackberries."

"I don't eat them," said Carlfield, "but I scout. You come with me down to the woods, and with luck——"

"S.H.C.F.V. *all* the time," muttered Riggart.

The "Sickle and Hoe" was a pretty little pub with woods all round it at the back. There were woods on the other side of the road, too, and it was into these that the boys plunged.

They were in luck. Hardly were they ensconced behind a convenient bank when out came a man and a boy. The man was Dandle.

Of course he had been drinking. Many people do.

But Dandle had been drinking too much. His little button of a nose was red as a cherry bob, his manner truculent. He gripped a bludgeon as formidable as a Sinn Feiner's shillelagh, and with his other hand he grasped the coat collar of a squirming youth of fourteen.

"Now, you young limb o' Satan," roared Dandle, "off you goes to the College" (he gave the College an ugly name), "and take this note to the back door on the private side. There ain't no answer, an' you'd best look slippy. Scoot!"

He said other things too, quite shocking things about Dr. Kelway and the College. But they had nothing to do with White William's orders. The youth was named

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White William owing to his possession of a shock of almost white hair. I don't think I am misjudging him in telling you there was nothing else white about William—inside or out.

He was off like a rabbit on Dandle's errand, whilst Dandle himself went back to the "Sickle and Hoe" for a last "bracer."

Carlfield caught Riggart by the elbow.

"Now then," he urged, "the short-cut home. I want to catch our hero at the gates."

It was a hot sprint. In fact, as Riggart was well aware, it was a record, and how Carlfield managed it with his strained foot was a marvel. Some grit too, for Rodge's face was set in grim tension, and the sweat which rolled down to his neck was not only over exertion.

They reached the school gates and were playing marbles in the road against all sort of rules and regulations when White William hove in sight. William was a marble player himself. He paused at sight of the two and watched the game.

"Yah," he mocked Carlfield; "didn't yer see he were bound to take yer alley."

Carlfield laughed. "Look here," he urged, "you can have a shy if you like. Here are the marbles. I'm sick of being beaten."

White William peered up under thick white lashes.

"I'se got to take this letter into the private h'entrance of the College," said he.

Carlfield beamed innocently.

"I'll take it," said he. "What? To the Head, eh? Any answer?"

He possessed himself of the letter and White William grasped the marbles. In two minutes he and Riggart were in the depths of a game of skill. Riggart joined his chum ten minutes later.

"Well?" he asked.

Carlfield was very quiet, a sort of bottled-up quiet which told of inward thrills.

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"Yes," he said, "I opened the letter. It was supposed to be from Mrs. Watwayne at the Park Lodge, saying she was very, very anxious to see the doctor on most important business connected with one of his young gentlemen. It was a very fine red herring for a trail, and the doctor would have been after it with his tail up all along the line."

Riggart rubbed his curly head.

"I'm afraid," he urged, "I'm no good at a detective game. What does it mean?"

Carlfield knitted his brows.

"That's the question," he retorted.

"The doctor would be off to Park Lodge to get his answer, and *my* theory is that if he did he'd be wanged on the head by that drunken rascal Dandle. Dandle got his wife to write the letter—so *I* think—and means to trap the poor old Head as he goes to investigate a trumped-up tale."

Riggart gaped.

"Did you make it all up?" he asked, "or is it true?"

"Don't know," quoth Carlfield, "but I'm going to find out. The first thing is to get the doctor's gown and mortar-board. We're all right for height."

"Stark staring," groaned Riggart; "they'll have to fit up a padded room."

"Go and put your head in it then," urged Carlfield; "but if you have an ounce of imagination *or* sport, you'll fall into line and help me. You see, if I tell the Head my suspicion *he* will at once ask why I opened his letter and then he'll go on to vow I'm the young gent that Mrs. Watwayne wants to denounce."

"Oh, I see," said Riggart.

"That's right," mocked Carlfield; "glad you've got one of your senses. Now, come along. *I'm* going to masquerade as the Head walking through Wilby Park to the Lodge. You will lurk at a handy distance and buck in to the rescue if Dandle plays the dirty. Twiggy?"

"It's a Midsummer Night's Dream," retorted Riggart;

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"but I've always been used to humour the feeble-minded. You'll deserve the medal twice over if the show comes off."

"That's what I was wondering," said Carlfield modestly. "None but the brave, etc. Wait a jiff. I hope there won't be any difficulty in burgling the kit."

Apparently there was, for Riggart waited a good solid twenty minutes before his chum's return.

But Carlfield came in triumph.

"I thought we were diddled," he said, "but I gave Jane a couple of bob to guard the passage after promising her that the doctor would probably give her public thanks for services rendered lately."

"Old gas-bag," scorned Riggart. "I say, though, you've got the Head's Sunday best."

"Couldn't be helped. The old boy was wearing his everyday, and I couldn't ask him to oblige. Now, I'll get into my togs down by the Fairy Grove."

"Good old fairy," chuckled Riggart, but in spite of his mockery he was beginning to get the wind up.

Five minutes later a pompous form of medium height, with mortar-board drawn low and ample skirts of black alpaca billowing around it, marched decorously down the grove between noble elms and stately pines.

The shades of night were beginning to play the game, and as Riggart kept scouting in the rear he experienced quite a respectable squiggle of excitement worming itself down his back.

It was quite the right sort of place for an adventure and——

The figure in gown and mortar-board halted, hesitating a second. Had that been a snapping of twigs, the hurtling forward of a heavy body?

Snakes *and* fishes, this was going to be some game!

Carlfield squared his shoulders and swung about just in time to save himself being floored by a tremendous blow aimed straight at his mortar-board.

The next moment he was facing Dandle. The dim

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light and the gin whereof he had been copiously partaking deluded Dandle into still believing his enemy was indeed before him.

“Yah—yah—” yelped Dandle. “A’ll teach you, mister, to turn a honest man out of ’is comfable home. I’ll give yer such a threshing as’ll make yer a jelly for the rest of yer natrul. I’ll——”

He made a rush like that of a mad bull, but Carlfield was prepared—not altogether though, for the drunken man, whirling his bludgeon in mad rage, managed to catch his arm in the downward stroke.

Some blow! But the pain roused the boy, who sprang forward, and the next moment the two were rolling on the ground.

Riggart would have been up before, but had caught his foot in a rabbit hole and turned a most unpleasant somersault into a mass of brambles. Now he reached the two and stood helpless, for which was which, and which was other from t’other, he could not immediately say. Over and over, bunched in a tight and most unloving embrace, tumbled the adversaries. Alas, for the Head’s Sunday gown. His mortar-board lay flattened under the weight of the two. Hampered as he was Carlfield had managed to hold his own, though Dandle’s drunken strength was a thing to quail at. Over and over they rolled, with Dandle trying to get thick fingers round the other’s windpipe.

But Riggart had his chance now, and fell upon it as a hawk drops on its quarry.

Even then it was some job to get the brute off Carlfield, who was growing faint with the pain in his injured left arm.

Riggart’s method had to be drastic.

He just caught up the bludgeon and took the chance in knocking Dandle silly. If he hadn’t done that Carlfield might have come off badly. As it was, he was pretty well all in when Riggart managed to help him to his feet.

Riggart was in a sweat. He had thought it was all

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over with his chum, and his own knees were shaking with the horror of black tragedy.

"Look here," he said, "I must get help. That beast will—will be coming round soon, and he's as dangerous as a mad dog. I'll sprint back to the 'Sickle and Hoe' and get the landlord to come along."

Carlfield muttered something and collapsed. He really could not help it.

Riggart did a record, and cleared the high bank into the road like a thoroughbred. As luck had it he plumped right down in front of a couple of police constables who always took an interest in the locality of the pub. They heard Riggart's story and believed it in spite of some incoherence.

"I know that Dandle," said one of the policemen, "a five year sentence would do him good. He's no use to anyone."

"Better bustle," urged Riggart, "I'm anxious about my chum."

And the constables obeyed.

There was a frown on Dr. Kelway's face as he read out the names that evening.

"Carlfield," he repeated. "Carlfield, Riggart. Carlfield, Riggart."

Mr. Dean stood up. He was about to report the missing boys when there was a stir in the doorway.

"Riggart," the Head was saying.

"Here, sir," said Riggart modestly.

You should have seen the Head's face!

Every boy present spun round to see what could have caused that gentleman such amaze.

It was a pretty tableau. Two police constables supported a limp figure in a draggled, torn, and muddied black gown, whilst another decidedly dishevelled youth clasped in his hand a flattened mortar-board.

St. Hubert's was all agog to hear what had happened.

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It was pretty sickening of the Head to march that thrilling-looking quartette off *nolens volens* to his own study, and in spite of the commands for silence the boys' tongues wagged in wild speculations as to the meaning of the drama.

The opinion of the majority was that both Riggart and Carlfield were thoroughly in the soup, and were lucky if they got off with less than expulsion.

For, mark you, those were police constables in charge of them, and—oh, ye shade of St. Hubert!—had it been noticed that Carlfield was actually sporting the remnants of the doctor's Sabbath day gown?

On the whole, regret tinged the criticism of the speculators.

Both Carlfield and Riggart were sports—thorough sports, and their schoolfellows were genuinely sorry that they were in trouble.

The masters were talking together.

The Doctor's exit had been so unusually hurried that he had forgotten to dismiss the school. What would his wishes be in consideration of—

The return of the Head silenced questioners—it silenced the speculators too. You might have heard a pin drop as Dr. Kelway marched to his place behind the desk. He was looking very grave. But not the sharpest eyes amongst the many pairs watching him could discover a trace of anger.

"Boys," said the Head, as he faced the school, "boys, you will, I am sure, not rest till your curiosity is satisfied, and so I shall not wait till the morning to tell you of the splendid heroism displayed by two of your schoolfellows, to which, under Heaven, I believe I owe my life." Then, in a few graphic sentences he related the story of Tod Dandle's revenge, and the way it had been turned aside from its object.

There was a twinkle in the Head's eyes as he related how—ahem—Roger Carlfield had assumed mortar-board and gown by way of disguise, whilst his stern voice

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broke with emotion as he described the fight in the wood and the pluck of their schoolfellows.

“Riggart,” added Dr. Kelway, “wishes, however, to impress on all that he is *not* competing for the St. Hubert’s medal, which belongs solely and entirely in this case to Carlfield, who not only tracked down this Dandle but deliberately risked his life against a vengeful drunkard for my sake. You will understand, boys, how *I* feel personally about this matter, and I do not think I am mistaken in my supposition that you want to show *your* feelings in the usual way—so—Ogilvie, you will lead the cheers.”

And lusty cheers they were, though Ogilvie would have told you they were nothing—no nothing at all—to the yell which those hundred and fifty throats managed to emit on the grand holiday occasion when, amidst a perfect tornado of cheers, Roger Carlfield—looking an O.K. hero with his limp and his plastered head, not to mention the trifle of an arm in a sling—went up to the Doctor’s desk to receive the St. Hubert’s Cross for Valour which the Head pinned on to his coat.

“Hip, hip, hoorah!” roared the College—with one voice. And, as the boys crowded around their own first be-medalled hero to shake off his hand pretty nearly in their enthusiasms, not one but registered a vow to be hero number two. Of course there were plenty to say that old Riggart ought to have had that honour, but Riggart himself was more than satisfied with the Doctor’s “Consolation Prize” of a silver watch, though he told Carlfield in confidence, he meant to add the medal to it—on the next occasion.

Unfortunately, however, Tod Dandle being safely housed at the expense of the country, there didn’t seem too likely a chance.

But—one never knows one’s luck!

The Keeping of Kim

A School Story

BY D. A. POCOCK

I HOPE you're keen on dogs. I don't hope it only as a test of your character, but also because, if you're not, I don't see how I am ever to make you interested in this story; however, I think it's fairly safe, for practically all decent people do like dogs, and I take it for granted you're a pretty good sort, or you wouldn't be reading the "B.E.A."

It all happened this summer term, and it began through Plunket and myself getting a rage for Natural History.

Now, please don't imagine that I mean we turned into swots all of a sudden, and spent our spare time, when we might have been bathing or playing cricket, dissecting dead frogs and poring over books on the internal arrangements of tortoises—that's not the idea at all. But we'd always been frightfully keen on animals and all natural real things that were alive; and that term—partly, I think, because it was such ripping weather that anything to do with out-of-doors seemed interesting—we got hotter on them than ever; and a hint that the science master dropped, about our having a jolly good chance of the Natural History prize if we stuck to it, didn't make us any less keen.

Of course, we didn't give up games altogether, but the compulsory cricket-practices were enough to keep our hands in, and most of our really free time—half-holidays and so on—we spent going off together on Natural

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History expeditions, and jolly interesting they were. By keeping on the watch, we managed to get some perfectly ripping snapshots of wild things at home—like baby-squirrels in their nests, and birds feeding their young—and added a lot to our bird's-eggs collection; and one or two things we found were interesting enough to pass muster for the school museum. By degrees we got to know most of the hedges and ponds and copses, for miles round, like a book; but there was just one bit of land where we never went, and that was a place called "Bembridge Farm." It seemed a great pity, for it was an over-grown kind of place that looked like being a good hunting-ground for the sort of things we wanted; but the owner, Farmer Stubbs—a huge, red-faced, bull-necked and bull-voiced old chap—was such a hatefully disagreeable old bear that it simply wasn't good enough.

It wasn't merely that he'd have licked us to a "cert" if he found us on his ground—we wouldn't so much have minded risking that—but he'd have been sure to haul us up to the school with some long-winded story about the awful damage we'd been doing; besides which, he'd got some half-starved dogs about the farm which looked as savage as he did, and as our liking for dogs didn't by any means include ditto for having their teeth in our shins, we judged it was better to steer clear.

But when one of old Stubbs' farm hands told us one day of a kingfisher's nest that there was, just at the outskirts of the Bembridge land, we changed our minds. A kingfisher's nest was the thing of all others that we'd been wanting to add to our collection of bird snapshots, and for an object like that we decided to risk old Stubbs and all he could do to us, and go over to Bembridge the very next half.

We found the nest easily enough, got some ripping snaps, and were just going to clear out as fast as we could, when we heard a queer sort of whining, whimpering noise; it was faint, but quite distinct, and we stopped to listen.

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"What the dickens is that?" I said, turning round.

Plunket turned, and suddenly made a bound forward, pointing; and there on the ground were some ominous spots of red.

We followed the blood-trail into a wood—it was plain enough, though it wavered a good deal—and in a few yards we came upon a dog lying on the leaves, moaning, and evidently badly hurt. We thought at first it had caught its foot in a trap or something like that; but when we looked closer, we saw that whatever had been done to it hadn't been done by *accident*. There are certain marks that can be made by a whip and by nothing else. For a moment we bent over the poor little brute in silence, and then Plunket looked up, perfectly white with rage.

"What *cad* has——" he began, and broke off, as if nothing he could say would be adequate.

Then we got to work, with water and our handkerchiefs. It stands to reason we hadn't got to be really good at knowing about wild things like adders and field-mice without having any idea of dogs and what to do for them, and pretty soon we'd done all for this one that could be done just then; it evidently thought at first we were going to hurt it some more, and looked at us in the most pitiful way, being too weak to try to bite, but it soon found out we weren't, and licked our hands feebly. Then Plunket picked up the camera and things, and I lifted the dog carefully and hid it under my coat, and we ran.

Don't rush off with the impression that a dog-stealing act was in our minds. I don't believe either of us had thought as far as that, or had any idea what we were going to do permanently; our one notion was just for the moment to get that dog away from the utter *cad*—presumably old Stubbs—who'd been treating it like that.

We ran until we thought we were satisfactorily clear of the Bembridge land, and then pulled up short.

"What on earth are we going to do now?" I panted.

"I know one thing I'm jolly well *not* going to do,"

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returned Plunket through his teeth; "I'm not going to let that beast Stubbs (of course it was him) get hold of the poor little brute again!"

"But, hang it all, man," I remonstrated, "we can't steal the dog!"

"Well, I'm not going to, am I?" snapped Plunket, irritably, though what he had said had sounded exactly like it. "I—I don't know exactly what we're going to do later on, but—oh, anyway, we've simply got to keep it for the present! Borrowing isn't stealing! Let's keep it till it's fit again, and then see what to do; another doing from old Stubbs, while it's like it is now, would simply finish it."

"All right," I agreed, "but where? It's no good going back to Belmont—we shouldn't be allowed to keep a dog there."

That was what I *said*, but what I *meant* was that we shouldn't want one of the masters interfering and saying we must advertise our find at once.

Plunket thought a minute, and then answered excitedly, "I know—the hollow oak! It would be quite shelter enough for weather like this, and nobody would think of looking there."

I've told you how well we knew all the woods about, and I remembered directly what tree he meant; so, instead of going back to school, we turned off to the copse where it grew, and having inspected it, decided that it would make quite a decent temporary kennel. I left Plunket to stuff the hollow with dry leaves and moss, to make a bed for the patient, while I cut down to the village—not our particular village, but one where we weren't so well known—to get dog-biscuits and things, and we doctored and fed and petted and made friends with our discovery, and at the last moment laid him comfortably in the oak. We tied him up so that he shouldn't escape, and then dashed back to school, just in time for call-over, feeling immensely bucked with things—having a mystery gives such a fresh tang to life!

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Our find was an Irish terrier of the wiry, curly sort, with huge brown eyes; we didn't know what his name might be; so (as I was reading Kipling's book at the time) we called him "Kim," which was short and snappy, and seemed to suit him. We were horribly afraid old Stubbs would advertise and describe his loss, but he didn't—perhaps, as Plunket grimly suggested, he wasn't keen on answering the possible question, "Any marks on the body?" So we were left in undisturbed possession of Kim, and it was amazing how he thrived on our hands. It was quite evident that he'd been starved and neglected as well as beaten, and now, with proper treatment and feeding—not only plenty to eat, but the right sort of food, and bathing, and dog-medicine—you could almost see him putting on flesh. He got livelier, too, every day.

It was a case of "nourish and flourish," as the cocoa advertisement says—but the worst of it was, as he got better and there was less and less excuse for keeping him any longer, the more we saw what a perfectly ripping little beast he was, and felt less and less inclined to give him up to anybody, let alone old Stubbs.

He certainly reciprocated our feelings! I shouldn't think anyone had ever been decently kind to him before, judging by the way he appreciated our attentions!

Summer term at Belmont was a much easier term than either of the others, and one or t'other of us was able to slip down to the hollow oak several times a day to keep him supplied with food and sociability; and the moment we appeared he would yap and quiver with joy, and wag not only his stump of a tail, but all the back half of him in the absurdest way; and directly he was untied he'd simply fling himself on to us and seem to be trying to lick us all over at once! I think he was keenest on Plunket, but I didn't mind that, for I'd known beforehand that he was extra-specially good at getting on with animals; and besides, I'd got a dog of my own at home, and Plunket hadn't, so it seemed only fair that he should have an extra share of Kim.

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We took every chance of getting him exercised, and he always went with us on our naturalising expeditions. Of course, we had to keep him hidden under our coats until we were well away from habitations, but out in the wilds we let him run free, and he had the time of his life! We were rather afraid of his being caught without a collar or address, which would have meant exposure as well as the fine, so Plunket tied a luggage-label round his neck, and wrote on it, "Kim, The Hollow Oak."

"That'll do," he said, grinning. "If a policeman reads that, he'll think it's the name of some house hereabouts; it's not a bit more idiotic than what people *do* call their houses!"

At first we kept a sharp eye on him, for fear he should run back to his old home, but, my word! there wasn't much fear! Once, for a test, we took him some way in the direction of Bembridge, and the nearer we got to the farm the lower went Kim's ears and tail, and he slunk behind us and finally sat down altogether, flatly refusing to budge. He thought, poor little beggar! that he was being taken back, and directly we turned back he was simply leaping all over us, beside himself with relief; and you can fancy the episode didn't make us any keener on restoring him to his owner really.

Yet we knew it had got to be done; Kim was perfectly fit again, and it simply wouldn't be honest to go on keeping him, unless old Stubbs would let us buy him outright, which we felt sure he'd be much too furious to do. But we kept putting it off, and saying we'd keep him one day longer, and till he'd finished that lot of biscuits, and for one more half-holiday, and so on—you know how one does!

Meantime, bar that beastly feeling at the back of our minds, we enjoyed Kim hugely, and our Natural History, especially the nature-snapshot collection, got on better than ever; for having to keep Kim secretly exercised made us both keener still on going off by ourselves on expeditions, instead of always playing games, and glad to

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have an excuse that passed muster. Now that we had found the kingfisher's nest, our next ambition was a sand-martin's; we couldn't find any near at hand, but we knew there were some at a big sand-pit a few miles away, and we got "extended leave" one half, so as to go over there—taking Kim with us, of course.

The pit was in a very out-of-the-way place, but proved well worth finding; for, about half-way down, the deep cliff walls of it were honeycombed with nests. Kim's barking startled the sand-martins, and we got some ripping snapshots of them, flying in and out of the queer little holes which you might think had been made by water or something if you didn't know; but that wasn't enough. What we wanted was to get the camera close up to a nest and get a snap of the family inside, and it didn't promise to be easy, as none of the nests were sufficiently near the top of the pit to be got at by merely leaning over; but we had been prepared for that, and brought a thick rope with us on purpose. This Plunket knotted round me under my shoulders, and I swung myself over the edge of the pit, while he stood at the top and held on tight, and Kim danced around, frantic with excitement and evidently marvelling what we were at.

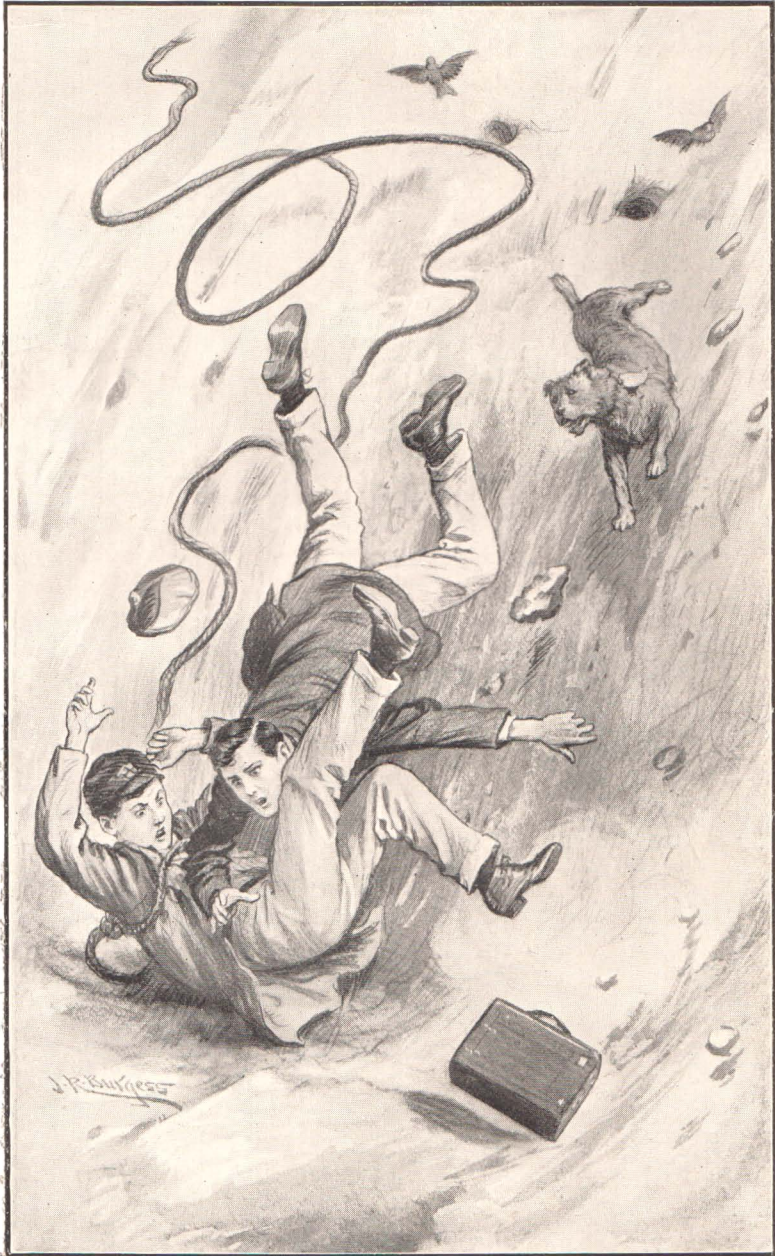
If you've never tried to take a photograph in that position—dangling in space by a rope—you can have no idea how weird it feels. I kicked out, struggling to get my feet braced against the sand-cliff, and tried to get the camera into position, while the martins came flapping about almost into my face; but I couldn't get low enough to be any use.

"Let out more rope!" I yelled to Plunket.

"I can't!" he shouted back. "You've got all there is!"

"Then stand nearer the edge," I urged, wedging my boot into the sand and dazed by the wings all about me.

He must have taken my advice, for the rope jerked and lengthened, and then—there was a yell, a slither of falling



"THE ROPE WENT SLACK, AND I DID A WILD PLUNGE DOWNWARDS . . .
WITH PLUNKET ON THE TOP OF ME!" (See p. 201.)

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sand-stone, the rope went slack, and I did a wild plunge downwards and was rolling about at the bottom of the pit with Plunket on the top of me!

Luckily the sand-pit was only an ordinary pit, not a real, deep quarry, and more luckily still the sand at the bottom was loose and soft; so we didn't break any bones, only knocked the breath out of ourselves most effectually and squirmed about on the sand trying to get it back, while Kim, who'd either fallen over too, or flung himself after us—probably the latter—licked and pawed us, whining with dismay and evidently thinking we were done for.

"How—how—did it—h-h-happen?" I gasped out at last.

"Grass-roots—I was standing on—gave way," Plunket panted, sitting up and holding his foot, which had been twisted by the fall. "That comes of taking your assish advice and standing right at the edge. Now, how the dickens are we going to get out of this?"

I looked up and around and really didn't see any sort of answer forthcoming.

The pit, though it wasn't deep enough for the fall to have killed us, was quite a respectably-sized hole—there was no chance of either jumping, or pulling ourselves up out of it; and as for climbing, sand-cliff isn't especially easy to climb anyway, because it crumbles away so, and in this case the cliff sloped forward a bit instead of back, so that it would be perfectly impossible. The pit was a good deal hidden by trees and shrubs, so that nobody would see it, and us, and come to the rescue; and though, of course, we could shout for help, it was ten to one there would be nobody to help in that lonely place, and even if there were, you know how muffled voices are, coming up out of the ground.

We stared at each other pretty blankly. "It just looks to me," said Plunket concisely, "as though we'd come to stay."

"Of course," I suggested, "if it got really late and we

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hadn't come back, the Belmont people would send out search-parties."

"They wouldn't have any idea of the right place to look in, though—it would be a case of needles and haystacks, if they *did* look," Plunket pointed out. "We didn't tell anyone where we were going;" indeed, we'd taken precious good care not to, for we didn't want to be found in company with Kim.

"The rope's too short to be useful, or we might have tried to lasso a tree and pull ourselves up," I said, "and even if Kim could get out"—for he was making frantic endeavours to do so—"he doesn't know the way to Belmont."

"And if he did," Plunket added, "nobody would connect him with us."

The situation certainly seemed at a deadlock.

We were not really in a funk about it—that is, no grisly idea of being left to starve, and having our skeletons found there centuries afterwards, was in our minds; we were perfectly certain we should either be found, or find a way out for ourselves, before so very long. But we did see that there was quite a possibility of our having to spend a whole night in the beastly sand-pit, and that wasn't a very jolly prospect, especially when we were hungry already, as we were, and it was turning cold and beginning to rain, which it was.

"Blow the sand-martins!" said Plunket vindictively—and at that moment there was a yelp of joy from Kim, as with a long, scrambling bound (you know how dogs do it, and he was too light for the sand to give way with him) he flung himself up out of the pit. He stood at the edge a moment, barking, and evidently encouraging us to follow his lead, and then, as we didn't, turned round and bolted off through the wood.

"Lucky beggar! *He's* out of it, anyway," said Plunket.

"And we've probably seen the last of him," I added. "He's certain to be caught now."

The thought didn't buck us up at all. Although we'd

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known all the time that we should lose him sooner or later, it wasn't any pleasanter now that it had come off—to say nothing of the fearful row we should probably get into, if he were caught and traced to us.

Indeed, altogether, though there wasn't any real, permanent danger, I never wish to be in a more perfectly beastly situation. We were frantically hungry—we'd already missed tea, having got leave to do so and meaning to get some at a cottage—and the ankle Plunket had twisted hurt him abominably; it was now pouring with rain, and the thin flannels we'd put on, expecting a fine afternoon, were soon soaked through; we couldn't see any way of escape, and could only stay where we were, anything but jolly, anticipating a night out (it was getting darkish already) and wondering what was happening to Kim, and how much longer we should have to stop in that wretched—and literal—hole.

To pass the time, and as the only plan we could think of, we started piling up sand from the bottom, so that we could stand on it and at last get out that way; but we had only our hands to dig with, and the sand was too loose to "pack" a bit, so we knew it would take simply hours and hours.

Then, suddenly, we heard a sort of scrimmaging noise going on in the wood.

"Hallo! Somebody *is* coming this way after all!" cried Plunket. "Yell!"

We jolly well did! But our hopes were crushed almost as soon as they were raised; for, in the middle of our shouting, Kim rushed out and stood barking above the pit.

"Only Kim after all!" I groaned; we were glad enough to see the little beast again, but it was a pretty sickening disappointment all the same. But we'd hardly time to feel it, for the crashing continued, and, between the trees, and forcing his way through the undergrowth, there suddenly appeared Mr. Mallowe, one of the masters at Belmont! and behind him, lumbering up, puffing and swearing, came Farmer Stubbs.

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How on earth they got there—by what possible chance they could have been following Kim's lead, when Kim knew nothing whatever of Belmont and wouldn't go near Bembridge Farm for a dog's fortune, we simply couldn't imagine! But we'd no time to wonder about it just then, for old Mallowe had thrown himself flat at the edge of the pit, and was leaning over and calling to us to throw him one end of the rope and hold tight to the other, and he'd haul us up, one by one. It wasn't any easy business, but he did it, and I leave you to judge whether it was a relief or not, to find ourselves out of that hole!

"How on earth did this happen, boys?" exclaimed Mr. Mallowe.

We started in, both at once, to explain about the sand-martins, when old Stubbs, who had been standing about utterly useless while Mallowe was doing all the rescuing, burst in; like the "Jum-jum," he "lived in perpetual passion," and was evidently bristling with a grievance.

"Drat they sand-martins!" he shouted. "What I want to know is, what ha' you two been adoin' with my dawg?"

The crux we'd been looking for ever since our annexing of Kim had come; but the saving grace of the situation was the presence of Mr. Mallowe.

If he'd caught us alone, Stubbs would have pretty well thrashed the life out of us—we could see that in his face—but even he couldn't touch a Belmont boy in front of a Belmont master!

So I didn't feel particularly funky as I answered, "It was this way. About a month ago we went down to the edge of the Bembridge land to look for a kingfisher's nest, and we found your dog lying on the ground beaten nearly to death. We can prove that's true, sir," I added, turning to Mr. Mallowe before Stubbs could speak. "Look at the scars under his coat!"

I saw Stubbs' face change at that. Very gently, Mr. Mallowe parted the hair on Kim's back, and I saw

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his face go—like Plunket's had when we first found Kim in the wood.

"Go on," he said grimly.

"What ha' you been *doin'* with my dawg? That's what I'm asking you," growled Stubbs.

"No harm, anyway—you can see that for yourself," said Plunket quickly. "Just compare the state he's in now with what he was when you had him!"

Now, the condition of the Bembridge Farm animals was a by-word in the neighbourhood; so that shot went home, though Stubbs only growled in reply, "So you stole my dawg, did you?"

"No, we didn't!" I said hotly. "We never meant to keep him altogether. You know that's true, sir? You know we wouldn't steal, or tell lies either?"—I appealed to Mr. Mallowe, and he nodded—"But we *did* borrow him without leave, just to make him fit again, and we've done it too—we've changed him from the beaten, half-starved, dirty, ragged-looking cur he was, into what you see he is now!"

"And you ought to be jolly glad," put in Plunket, "that we only did *what* we did, instead of going straight to the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals people and giving information!"

"Hear, hear!" Mr. Mallowe put in, very quietly, but in a tone Stubbs evidently didn't like at all.

"Well, the dawg's mine, and I mean to 'ave 'im," he snarled, fingering his stick and looking ready to eat us; and he put out his hand to him, but drew it back jolly quickly, for Kim showed his teeth. "Let 'im alone now, you! Come on, then, you cur! The dawg'll know 'is own master!"

He spoke a true word there—for Kim jolly well did! Inch by inch, his head and ears down and his body almost touching the ground, he backed away from Stubbs, growling and quivering, every hair on his body bristling with fear and hate.

Then Plunket made the least movement; I don't really

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think he meant it for a signal, but Kim took it as one, and in a bound he was in Plunket's arms, snuggling against him, pawing him and licking his face. Stubbs was right—there wasn't much doubt about his knowing his master!

I dare say if Mr. Mallowe hadn't been there, Stubbs would have dealt with him, as with us, in double-quick time; but I'm sure he hadn't liked the sound of that "Hear, hear," and I fancy thoughts of the "S.P.C.A." were in his mind. Old Mallowe gave a queer sort of cough, and said:—

"Really, Stubbs, these boys do seem to have done very well by the dog, and he does appear to be greatly attached to them—indeed, he must be so, or he would not have come rushing up to us as he did just now, when I was speaking to you at Bembridge Farm, and making such frantic endeavours to get us to come to their rescue—almost tearing my coat, indeed, he tugged so hard trying to drag me towards the sand-pit—I never saw an animal trying so desperately to speak."

Plunket and I exchanged glances. So *that* was the mystery—that was how Mallowe and Stubbs had "happened" to follow Kim to the pit! But think what it meant—the plucky, thinking, splendid little beast! Though he was in such mortal terror of Stubbs, yet he must have run straight to the farm, of his own accord, to carry the news, in his dog way, and get us help. I saw Plunket's arm close tighter round him, and I felt a lump in my throat.

"And I really think, Stubbs," Mr. Mallowe continued in a conciliatory tone, feeling in his pocket, "that if a sovereign, or even thirty shillings!"—Good old Mallowe! I took a vow at that moment that I'd simply slave for him ever after, even though he teaches "maths." which I loathe and abhor. But at the mention of money, Plunket flashed round upon Stubbs.

"Look here," he said eagerly, "my father sent me a five-pound note for my birthday; will you sell me the dog for that?"

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It was an absurd price to offer, for Kim wasn't by any means a pedigree dog—lots of his "points" were wrong really, and he'd never have fetched so much in an ordinary market; and I saw by the gleam in Stubbs' eye that not even for the sake of his dignity would he let a bargain like that slip—to say nothing of getting out of what might mean a public "show up" of his unpleasant methods at Bembridge Farm.

"Th' ungrateful cur's nowt to me," he said morosely. "Hand over the cash." Without a word, Plunket produced the fiver and passed it over; his father had meant him to get a bicycle with it, but he didn't in the least mind giving up that—for Kim.

Old Stubbs pocketed the money, gave us a parting glare all round, and turned away; but one queer thing happened, for just before he got out of sight he turned round and said in a new tone—growling still, but somehow different—"I'd like ye to know that I've never treated an animal worse than what my feyther used to treat me, when I was a lad your age. Happen we were both wrong; maybe that sort o' thing's as bad for a man's temper as it is for a dawg's."

With that he slouched off, and Mr. Mallowe said, in a low voice:—

"There goes a shamed man."

Then he congratulated Plunket and me on getting so well out of a tight corner, and said he'd give Kim quarters himself for the few days of term that were left; and he told us to cut back to school as quickly as we could, change into dry things, and ask the matron to give us our tea. So I helped Plunket along (his ankle was only twisted, not really sprained), and we both hurried back to Belmont! "simply galumphing with joy," as you can easily imagine!

A few days later came prize-day and breaking-up, and Plunket and I found (for at Belmont you don't know until the last moment) that we had got the Natural History prize all right. I say "we" advisedly, for

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our "exam." papers were a draw ; so we divided the prize—some ripping animal-books—between us. Besides which, Mr. Mallowe was so much interested in hearing, through the affair of the sand-martins, about our nature-snapshot collection, that he introduced us to a naturalist friend of his, who actually took a few of our best snaps—including the kingfisher ones—to put in a bird-book he was writing! You can guess we were pretty proud of *that!* I've quite made up my mind to be a naturalist of some sort when I grow up.

But something else better still came of our adventure, and that was—whether because Kim's horror of him, contrasted with his behaviour to us, had gone home, or from pure funk of Mr. Mallowe and the S.P.C.A., I don't know—but from that time on there was a huge improvement in old Stubbs' treatment of his animals. You ought to see the beasts now, and compare them with what they were like at the time we first found Kim! It's quite refreshing.

That's really all I have to tell in this yarn, except—well, just Kim.

Plunket took him home at the end of term—that was only fair, as he'd bought him—but I go and stay with the Plunket family for a bit nearly every holidays, and Kim always remembers me, and gives me no end of a welcome ; and we've arranged that when Plunket gets into the Navy (and he's going to Osborne soon), any "vac." that he's at sea, I'm to borrow Kim.

He's a simply priceless little beast, and gets more perfectly ripping every time I see him.

Dear old Kim!

The Game of Bowls for Boys

Practical Hints for Young Beginners

BY THE REVEREND WYNDHAM EARÈE (VICAR OF BRIMPSFIELD, AND ENGLISH INTERNATIONAL AT BOWLS)

AT the request of your editor I have consented to say a little about how to play bowls, to recount some of my own work and successes in that ancient and famous old English game, and to give a few hints which may be useful to boys desirous of trying to become really expert at bowls. So that anything which is set down here about my own exploits in championship and international games will, I am sure, be taken by you who read it not in the light of any boasting on my own part, but merely as a guide and proof of the proficiency you too can acquire in the sport if you are willing to learn from those who know, if you will constantly practise, and ever seek earnestly to improve your play.

How I myself began to be a bowler was in this way. I had always as a clergyman been a great believer in getting into close touch with the men and boys of my parish; and with that view, when doing duty in New Zealand as a vicar, I had joined the local cricket club, chess club, etc. When it was later on proposed to start a bowling club, I entered into the project with much enthusiasm, for I knew several of the men about me were very keen on bowls. May I here mention that at this time I had not the slightest knowledge of the game, from what may be termed the expert point of view? All that I did know was that one took a big wooden heavy bowl and rolled it as near as one could to another white ball

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far away! I had practically never even tried to do this before, nor to play bowls at all in the proper scientific way!

Well, we eventually got our bowling club in full swing, and for a time nothing particular happened, except that we all much enjoyed the pleasure the fine game gave us. Then, somehow, it began to dawn both on me and my friends that I was showing superior ability as a bowler, so I was made "skipper" of our team in the N.Z. North Island Bowling Association Rink Contest. I hardly recognised myself, so to speak, in this rôle, for it was certainly one I had never for a moment anticipated at one time. But we did very well on the whole, and so my reputation as a bowler did not diminish.

On coming back to England in 1904, to St. George's Church, Leicester, I won our club championship from scratch. I was also selected, much to my delight, to play at the Crystal Palace that year against Dr. W. G. Grace's team, and the same season I was one of the winning team for the Midland Counties Cup. The next year I was appointed to the living of Angersleigh, Somerset, and had to spend the greater part of that summer in getting things into shape in my new parish, so that it was 1908 ere I had time to do much bowling again. In that year I won the Taunton championship, and the gold medal; in the following season I was runner-up, and obtained the gold medal; whilst in 1909 I was again champion and gold medallist.

Now came a striking event in my career as a bowler, one to which I look back with increasing pleasure to-day, in the light of the good fellowship and striking friendship which was shown between Canada and England during the late terrible war. I was selected, as one of the British International team, to visit Canada, and was placed on the Committee and made skipper. So delightful and enjoyable was the tour that I was presented with the (signed and sealed!) Freedom of no fewer than eight Canadian cities by their respective mayors.

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And later I was requested by the Committee to write (which I did) an account of the tour, entitled "Playing the Game."

In 1911 for the Open Championship of Wales I played and beat a former champion of Cardiff by one of my record scores, viz. 21 to nil. This year also I became the winner of the West of England championship, and next year I gained the Taunton championship and gold medal once more. As I repeated this performance in 1913, it made me the winner outright of the "Daniel Brown" Championship Cup, which had to be won three times in order to be kept.

I played for Somerset in its first county match, against Gloucestershire, and I was also in the English International team at Belfast against Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. And, ere I finish giving this account of how I myself became an International bowler, though I had never taken up the game at all until a full-grown man, may I mention, as a little hint to you lads, that, enthusiastic though I became at bowls after finding I could bowl well, I never in all my life let the desire to play, the fixing of a match, or the competition for any trophy, interfere in the least with the carrying-out of my full parochial and clerical duties?

And that would be really my advice to you boys. Bowls is a peculiarly fascinating game. Hardly any other can give such a charm to a delightful summer's evening. What can be more attractive than a lovely bowling-green with its tree-shade on all sides, with perhaps a glorious old English house close by, and with the glamour of all that is ancient, joyous, and leisurely on a hot day? But, boys—duty first! Never let your love of, and desire for, sport come into contact at all with your duty, with your call to necessary work, with your carrying-out of more serious engagements.

Now about the next hint for youthful aspirants to honours at bowls. Somebody once said with respect to learning any sport, "Commence young, and you will never

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grow old!" But a man who took a cynical view of cricket and football, chimed in with, "No, for you will probably die young, either from a strained heart or over-work!" That man clearly was not a believer in sport at all, nor did he evidently appreciate the difference between doing a thing well and over-doing it. In any case, you know this, that was not what I meant. I mean that if you begin to learn bowls when young you will never *feel* old. For the game is so pleasant, so calming to one with nerves, so enjoyable after a spell of anxious work in office, warehouse, or factory that you will find it do you all the good in the world, just giving the rest, recreation, change, and healthy sport requisite to keep you well and in good trim.

Now, as the small white ball known as the "Jack" is the first thing to be bowled in any game, let me say a few words about it. Many a game has been lost, or won, owing to a badly-bowled Jack. Sometimes you will hear one speak of "Throwing the Jack," but this is, to my thinking, a bad expression. The Jack should never be "thrown;" it should be bowled as carefully as you would your own bowl. Practise bowling the Jack by yourself until you feel fairly sure you can send it whatever length you want, or so near that as makes little difference. Your skipper will soon find out during a game what length your opponents like best, what length suits them most; and he will ask you as the "lead," if he knows he can trust you in this, to give your rivals just the opposite! I can hardly impress this on you too much, so remember it, for it is a vital point!

Don't, as a beginner, start by buying a new pair of bowls for yourself, but borrow from friends and try various pairs until you find the weight and size which best suits your hand. Then most certainly get your own pair of bowls, and make a practice of playing with them and no other.

Hold the bowl with your thumb in the centre, between the two discs, and—may I warn you seriously here?—

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don't be persuaded against this by anyone, whatever he may say. You will thank me ultimately for this stern advice, if only you will persevere in this matter, for such a method will prevent your delivering the bowl on one side. Put your right foot on the mat, and look to see you have the "bias" right for what you are about to attempt. If the proverbial "half-crown" were really charged for each wrong-biased bowl, there would certainly be far fewer bad bowlers to-day. Perhaps you will excuse my saying here that so important do I regard this, and so careful am I myself about it when bowling, that I believe I have only once in any match bowled a "wrong bias" bowl, and even to-day I feel half ashamed of that one.

Don't put the bowl up to your eye before bowling, as some men do. This only wastes time and isn't really any benefit to you. And don't—a very frequent mistake, with young bowlers especially—look at the Jack as you deliver your bowl, but at the distance from it your bias will take. Then, as to the actual bowling itself.

In the act of delivering the bowl swing your body forward with your arm, that is, step forward with the left foot as you let the bowl slide off your fingers. Your hand should be as near the ground as possible, so that the bowl is not "pitched" from it, but rolled.

Now watch carefully your bowl as it comes to rest, noting any defects or "tricks" in the green itself which have influenced the bowl whilst on its way. Then stand right behind your opponent when he is delivering his bowl, and observe closely what happens during its progress, for the same reason.

Supposing, then, that you have learned how to bowl more or less satisfactorily, let me assume you are to "lead" in a rink game. The golden rule for you here is, "Never be short!" Be up to the Jack, or even a little past it, but take great care never to be short. Why?—you may ask. Because, if the Jack should be afterwards what is called "carried," that is, moved on by another

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bowl, your own bowl will be utterly hopeless. And anyhow it will, if a short one, be in the way.

If playing "second," don't regard this, as some foolish people do, as "silly second." Be up, if your leader is not, in the shot. If "third," which is a very important position, don't mind what your bowl is going to look like when it rests, but try to do exactly what your skipper wishes. If you are "skip"—though please don't hanker after this position for a long time, as you will be learning for years if you are the sort of lad to make a fine bowler later on!—consult with your "third" as to the best shot to try for, since he becomes your "skip" for the time, and remember that it is better to draw a safe "second" shot than to try to score a risky "first," if your opponents are lying three or four.

I would also say to you, always take care to encourage your players. A bowler who is "off colour" cannot be bullied into doing better. We all have our off-days, when most things seem to go any way but what we should like. Be a sportsman, my lad, out and out, and do everything to uphold the honour of the grand old game. Never lose your temper on the rink except over any bad language of others, which should not be tolerated at all. Remember too, that this one-time "royal" game was nearly driven right out of England for a long period, owing to the drinking and betting which became associated with it. So determine that you will not only do nothing yourself to bring about a similar fate for bowls to-day, but that you will resent others doing it. Don't ever let it be said of you, or of your comrades, as a Scotsman once said to me of his team when they lost, "Mon, if they'd taken more green and less drink, they'd a' played a far better game!"

Saving the Colours

A rescript of an old MS. concerning the doings of one Harry Palgrave, Ensign, circa 1857-1858, between Lucknow and Sultanpur

BY T. W. SCOTT

It is easy enough, nowadays, to traverse the road between Lucknow and Sultanpur. You go out, past what is left of the Dilkusha Palace (they have buried two of the men I knew, there, and their tombs are beside the ruin of the palace); you go on, straight, leaving the Gumti river away on the left, and there is a clear and almost straight road all the way up to Sultanpur itself—it is rather a track, after the first twenty miles, but still the way is clear and easy to follow.

But in the time when I learned that road, it was not so easy. It was early in the days of the great rising, and John Nicholson had not then won his fame. I was up by Sultanpur with half the regiment—the other two squadrons were away to the east, putting down the trouble, as we thought, for we had no idea, then, of the size of the rising. We were camped out between two mango topes, and got the order "boot and saddle" at about half-past eleven one night—dates and times matter little, I think. Now, from "boot and saddle" to marching off parade is half an hour, as a rule, but we were ready, that night, to march off within twenty minutes. I remember Parkes making some remark on how quickly they all turned out, and there was need for it.

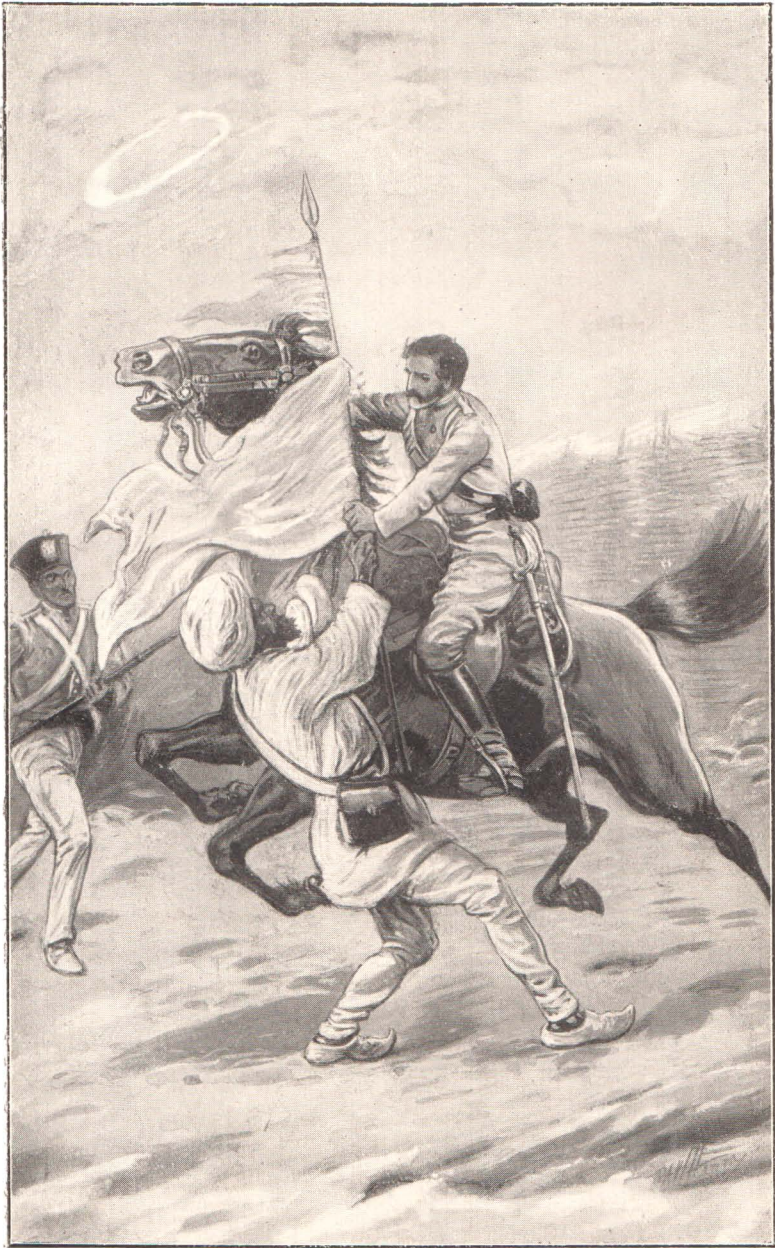
There was a moon—horse work is worse than useless

Saving the Colours

in the dark, in India, but enough of moonlight to read by makes a difference. We went off parade quietly enough, and I had the colours, with a troop for escort—my own troop. The major in command knew where we were going, but we never got there, for we had made perhaps half a mile on the way down the Lucknow road when the scores of mutineers had us stopped. Our scouts and advance guard, it appears, had gone under with hardly a sound, for some of the *sipahi* were good at jumping out and knifing, and the two squadrons came in for musket fire at close quarters. Even in that light emptying saddles was easy work.

Now, as I said, I do not know where we were going, except that it was somewhere down the Lucknow road. But I do know that with hardly a minute's warning I was in it, with the troop, and there was the blaze of muskets, and the rattle of firing, and cries, and shrieks of wounded horses, and all the paraphernalia of a regular battle, though we were but two squadrons—I call them squadrons, being more used to the new way of naming, now, and at this time they *are* squadrons. It was a mess, that business, ending in every man for himself, almost; I remember coming out, still going on the way we had set out, with six men of my troop and the colours still gripped. There had been a minute in the fighting when one of the sepoys, still wearing the pouch belt of the uniform he disgraced, made a grasp at the colour staff, but before I could do a thing he went down, and I think it was a bullet from one of his fellows that finished him. Luckily for me, it did not touch my horse.

Seven of us, myself and the six of the troop, got out, and what became of the rest of the two squadrons I did not learn till after, nor does it much concern the doings of that night. We seven pulled in, about half a mile from the scene of the fighting, to listen and find out if there were need of us—you must understand that I had the colours to guard, and it seemed to me that my busi-



“ONE OF THE SEPOYS MADE A GRASP AT THE COLOUR STAFF.” (See p. 216.)

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ness was to get them into safety as soon as might be. Understand, too, that we were not fitted for this sort of work; half a cavalry regiment, in such close country, is useless against infantry, as long as it is unsupported by either guns or infantry, and if our major had had any idea of the extent of the force out against us we should never have been up there alone as we were. That is by way of explanation, though my own record, and even the events of the night, ought to absolve me from any charge of leaving that fight too early. It was a sudden scrimmage from which we seven came out half-dazed, and wondering that we were still alive.

I told myself and the six men that we would make for Lucknow, though not one of us had ever traversed the road before. Three went ahead, and with the other three, a sergeant and two privates, I came on with the colours. The night was very still and very clear, and there came to us no sound of pursuit nor sign of our fellows for a time, until I reined in with my three, thinking I caught the sound of galloping behind us. It was a single horse, and so I called to all to halt. By and by up came Ferrers, sergeant in the next troop to mine.

"Major's compliments, sir," he said, "and he bids you ride for Lucknow and tell them there are at least two thousand of the mutineers marching down as reinforcement there. Spare no horse, but get there."

In that was confirmation of my own will, but I own that I was loth to let Ferrers go back. Still, I had no right to detain him, and back he went—back to be killed, as it chanced. As for me, I kept the formation of threes, and rode—we made a good fifteen miles, by my reckoning and by the time, before there came any trouble, and then a couple of dozen dusky shapes sprang into the track, prepared to dispute our way. Once again one of them leaped and grasped at the colour staff, but this time I used the end of the staff as a lance butt, and crashed his skull in so that it became his last leap. My fellows had

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their swords out, and there was a pretty little piece of fighting there for a few minutes, for those who had first come out at us had support in the thickets beside the road. They made an end of Sergeant Adams, who was a man for whom I had great respect; one of them shot him so that I saw him fall with half his head blown away, and it went to my heart that we must leave him without burial, yet so it had to be. There were many bodies laid about before we had them convinced that we were not to be stopped on our way, but at the last a clear space opened before us, and we galloped on, a man short, and that man one of the best.

There followed a monotony; when we had got beyond musket shot, we ceased from our galloping to a trot, and then to a walk, for it was a far journey for our horses. And one of them, ridden by an over-heavy trooper, showed signs of exhaustion, this being in a country of which we knew not what bush or mango tope might hide death. It behoved us to go warily and be careful of our mounts, if we would come to Lucknow with the tidings that I had from Ferrers, and with the colours that it was my duty to guard. Warily we went, and steadily, till we came to an open place, and there we halted while one of the men sought water for the horses. In the end he found a well at the corner of a tract of cotton land, and we made shift to draw water for the horses, and to ease them of carrying us for a matter of minutes.

I had with me one man who had a nose for this night work, and moved by some suspicion he asked me that I would let him go forward on foot alone for a way, while we others waited. This I gave permission for, and he set out, being after a time lost in the distance in spite of the bright moonlight, for the man was a born scout. In some twenty minutes, when I had begun to fear that he was lost, he suddenly stood up beside me and saluted.

"We are cut off, sir," he said. "There is a body of the mutineers holding the road before us."

They had placed themselves, it seemed from what he

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said, across the road, anticipating that our two squadrons would come down this way, and prepared to receive and stop them all. They slept, now, but with regular guards posted against surprise from the Sultanpur side, and to win through them without wakening them was impossible.

"How far away?" I questioned him.

"Three-quarters of a mile, sir, perhaps," he answered, "and perhaps less than that."

"And how near may we come before we come under notice of the guards they have set?" I asked again.

"Some half the way, sir," he told me, "for there is a little fold of the ground that will hide us thus far, unless they hear the horses."

"To that rise," I said, "we will walk our horses. When we have come to it, we will mount, and dash our way through them as a surprise."

This I said as a suggestion, for in such case it was hardly fair to my men to command without giving them chance of reply. And they, seeing that there was no other way, made no demur; we took the reins and walked, leading the horses on such soft ground as we could find beside the hardened track, until we came to the rise of which my scout had spoken, and all the way I thanked the chance that had bidden us search for water just at that point, and the still greater chance that had made my scout ask to go out and spy the way ahead. There, at the beginning of the rising ground, we set ourselves in files, swung up to our saddles, and rammed spurs home.

We went down into a screaming, wakening mass of men, who knew not what strength came against them, so that some scrambled to be clear of us, and others fired muskets at random, and others ran at us with their steel agleam in the moonrays, which were now thrown nearly level across the land, since the moon was near on its setting. I saw the man beside me lean over and thrust, and for my own part I caught one Sepoy full in the face with the butt of the colour staff, so that he went backward, brained, as a tent-peg is split. This for my own part,

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for in the breathless minutes of the rush there was no chance to see what others did or suffered, and then the six of us were through, galloping down a clear track, with a medley of yells and shouts coming to us from behind, but knowing that, save for anything that might lie near to Lucknow, we were no longer cut off.

So we drew in again to a walk, and were riding on, steadily, while in the eastern sky came the first glimmer of false dawn, and suddenly my scout, without word or murmur, fell from his saddle flat to the ground. At that I and another dismounted hastily and bent over him, to find that the front of his tunic was soaked in blood—uncomplainingly and perhaps unknowing of his hurt he had ridden till he fell and died, for he was dead ere we could raise him, and that without a word. I had heard that there are some wounds that numb a man so that he is unconscious of them, but never before had I seen this, nor do I know now if he felt his hurt and would not speak, or if it were that he felt it as a small hurt, and hoped to reach safety before there was need to speak.

However that may have been, we laid him beside the road, not daring to stay to bury him, and I, for what he had done, recited one prayer that I knew from the burial service before we mounted again and went on. Often I think of him, lying quietly there beside the road, having given life to the saving of the colours, and met his end as a brave man should. He was but one of the many, to whom be all honour for their work in the great rising of which these were the first days.

We could not take him on, and we could not bury him, for there was no time. Dawn now showed clearly, and it was our duty to hasten, for every hour made the chance of our eventual escape a lesser chance. Since the dead man's horse was more fit than that of one of my men who survived, I bade him make the exchange, leading the exhausted beast, and thus we made the rest of our way, down through the growing heat of the morning. And, in the end, we saw the camp fires of our own men

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round about Dilkusha, and knew that our journey was ended.

When I had seen the torn colours of my charge placed safely under guard, and had made report, I got permission to take out a troop to where lay the man who had given his life for our safety—for so it seemed to me. We rode out to where his body lay beside the road, and there buried him. After that, I went back and slept, safe in the shadow of Dilkusha, and content in the knowledge that in spite of all that had happened the colours had been kept from harm.

The Precipice—and After

A Startling Adventure in the Alps

BY OLAF BAKER

My first two years at my Swiss school were drawing to a close ; so also were the funds which enabled me to be there. My people were not sufficiently well off to allow of unlimited schooling, and unless I could do something to lighten the expenses of my education, I should be obliged to return to England, and enter my father's office immediately. The prospect of office life filled me with anything but joy. I wished, above everything, to continue my studies, and, if possible, enter for the Bar. If I could only stay for another year, I thought my command of French would be sufficient to warrant my getting some private pupils for English abroad, or French in England.

But the third year was the problem. Once in every two years a scholarship was offered at my school, which, in addition to the distinction it conferred, carried with it a solid sum of money. If I could gain this, my father had promised that I should stay for the extra year. So, as my heart was set upon doing so, I entered my name for the scholarship, and devoted my utmost efforts towards securing it. One of the subjects was Botany—a thing which sounds easy enough, as compared with Greek and the higher mathematics. But when, in addition to an exhaustive scientific knowledge of the structure of plant life, it was necessary to produce a more or less complete collection of the rarer alpine varieties, the matter was by no means so simple as it seemed.

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During my two years at school I had made a friend of one of the older French boys, by name Louis Lorraine. As time went on we became close pals. He also took a great interest in Botany although he had not entered for the scholarship; and so it came to pass, that, as he was extremely anxious that I should gain it, we made all our botanic excursions together. My collection was nearing completion. Louis, in his unbounded enthusiasm, declared it was the finest ever made. One or two of the rarer varieties, however, were lacking in order to make it complete, especially one of the gentian family which was extremely rare. It was to secure, if possible, a specimen of this flower that one day, very early, Louis and I started up the mountains in search of it.

We were in high spirits. It was a glorious morning, with vast sculpturesque masses of cloud drifting slow on a north-west wind across the intense blue of the alpine sky. Louis was in particularly good form, insisting upon talking nothing but English, and making such a glorious hash of it that he sent me into fits of laughter. That was one of the jolly things about Louis: he didn't in the least mind what "howlers" he perpetrated in the British tongue, nor how much you laughed at him for them. The more I laughed, the more it egged him on to commit fresh grammatical atrocities.

It was midday before we reached the upper slopes of the great mountain of Le Dent du Nord. Most people intending to climb this mountain took guides, as certain parts of it were extremely dangerous, but both Louis and I regarded ourselves as complete mountaineers, and a guide was not to be tolerated. We passed various parties on the way up, provided with guides, ropes, alpenstocks—in short the entire paraphernalia for a hazardous ascent. But as we had equally provided ourselves with the last two requisites, we felt amply justified in dispensing with the former, together with the rest of the impedimenta of brandy-flasks and goodness knows what beside.

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On and on we went, keeping the sharpest look-out for plants, particularly for the one we were seeking. But although we searched in all sorts of likely spots, some of them not a little dangerous, not a single specimen of it could we find.

"I expect we aren't high enough yet," I said. "Professor Descamps says it is seldom to be found much below snow-line."

"It will be grown best on a 'igh cloud," Louis observed laughing. "If we always keep on the up-go, we shall make a finish in the sky!"

And in spite of his joking way of putting it, it really did seem as if the plant we were seeking must be a native of the upper air for all the signs it gave of terrestrial foothold. Yet, far from losing hope, the non-success we met with only served to strengthen our determination to find the gentian, no matter what it cost us. By degrees, the path had become more and more difficult—a mere track scraped, as it were, across the mountain.

"We must rope ourselves," I said. "The path isn't good enough."

"If 'e is not a good path, she is a vair good rope!" Louis remarked complacently.

I was too much in earnest over the necessary business to correct him. At last we had fastened the rope in the most approved mountaineering fashion, and were ready for any adventure. Yet although we had done this as a measure of safety, the very fact of having taken such a precaution made us more wary as to how we proceeded; for now a false step might prove fatal, not only to one, but to both of us. The path became more and more dangerous, as we advanced. And, so far, we had not seen a single specimen of the plant we were in search of.

At last we came to a place where the path abruptly came to an end, as if destroyed by an avalanche during the previous season.

"It's all up," I said. "We can't go on."



"DOWN I WENT, FASTER AND FASTER. IN VAIN I TRIED TO ARREST MY
DOWNWARD COURSE." (See p. 229.)

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But Louis' sharp eyes had caught sight of the continuation of the path some thirty yards ahead.

"'E is there!" he said. "See! 'e is still to continue!"

"You mustn't say 'he,'" I corrected him. "A path is neuter. It's 'it.'"

"Whether 'eet' or 'e,' no matter, so long as 'e continue," he remarked imperturbably.

"Well, I don't see how we're to get to where it continues, anyhow," I said.

"There! and there! and *there!*" Louis said, pointing emphatically.

Following his violent indications, I saw the points of precarious foothold he had discovered. It was quite true that if one jumped with the agility of a mountain goat, something might be done. And anyhow, if Louis was willing to take the risk, I certainly wasn't going to hold back. Before I had time to reply, he had already got ready for the attempt.

"I jump," he said. "Giff me, mind, plenties of rope!"

Hardly had the warning been delivered, than he shot into the air. For a moment my heart was in my mouth. Then he reached the foothold in safety and turned round to me with a laughing face. Without waiting to consider the thing in cold blood, I followed his example. There was barely standing room for the two of us. Above towered the mountain. Below, the precipice fell away to a depth of a thousand feet. But I had caught the contagion of Louis' excitement, and was ready for anything. Besides we were in the middle of things now. Impossible to turn back. Again Louis jumped. Again I was beside him. In spite of its danger, the thing became a huge joke. We laughed aloud.

The next time Louis was not so fortunate. He jumped an inch or two short. For one awful moment he seemed to fight with the precipice, as he endeavoured desperately to make good his hold. Then, just as he seemed slipping and I felt the rope tighten, he grasped the roots of a small pine-tree and pulled himself into safety. When

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my turn came, I took good care to leap with all my might. The pine-tree shivered to its roots as I flung myself upon it.

After that a scrambling climb brought us to the continuation of the path, where we could proceed again in comparative safety.

We had been going for some little time when, all at once, I saw what looked like a little clump of the plant we wanted, growing some distance below us in a cleft of the rocks. But it was so far down that it was impossible to make sure unless I could reach some point where I could get a closer survey. I pointed it out to Louis. He, however, was sceptical. He thought the plant was too large for the one we were in search of. He agreed, however, that a nearer view of it was necessary before we could decide.

We were in the high altitudes now, and there was a good deal of snow in a half-melted state. It was necessary to move with extreme caution, as it was very difficult to see what dangers lay concealed beneath it. To reach the object of our search it would be necessary to get down to a ledge about thirty feet lower than the path. By careful going, and a judicious use of the rope, I thought the attempt, hazardous though it was, just feasible. Then came the argument as to which of us should go first. Of course we each wanted to do it, but Louis pointing out emphatically that he was the lighter of the two, and that, if any accident occurred, it would be the heavier and the stronger of us who would have to stand the holding strain of the rope, I reluctantly gave way, and, I am afraid, with not too good a grace.

Two seconds after the discussion closed, Louis was over the edge of the precipice, and the descent had begun.

For the first twenty feet we managed well enough. Then things began to get more difficult. There was a short but sharp slope during which progress was made extremely precarious owing to the treacherous nature of the partially melted snow. Once or twice Louis

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slipped, and my heart came into my mouth, but I dug my alpenstock into the snowy ground and threw all my weight back as I felt the rope tighten. Each time the catastrophe was averted. Still the experience was not agreeable, and I was extremely thankful when the last bit of the slope had been traversed, and we were safely on the ledge at the farther end of which the little plant grew. It was just like Louis, that, when we actually reached the spot, he should draw himself carefully out of the way so that it was I and not he who should have the honour of plucking the plant. It pleased me of course at the time, but I was too much excited at actually gaining possession of the object of my search, to appreciate the action in its full significance. Afterwards, when too late, I thought of it bitterly. The only thing I then cared for was that, at last, I held in my hand the prize coveted for so long, which would place me in a position to compete for the scholarship with far higher chances of success.

We retraced our way safely along the ledge, and then began the return across the perilous slope. We were about half-way across, when to my horror I saw a large mass of snow loosen itself from an overhanging spur above us and come sweeping down. There was no time to get out of its way. The only thing to be done was to throw oneself flat on the ground, and hang on for all one was worth. Louis saw the danger almost as soon as I did and followed my example. There was a thud, a powder of flying snow, and then I heard a cry. The sound went through me like a knife. I raised myself, and saw to my horror that Louis had been half buried in the fall, and been carried down to the very brink of the precipice. I had hardly time to be aware of this when I felt the rope tighten. I threw myself down again. The strain increased. I heard Louis cry to me to hold on. This I was already doing with all my might and main, though there was nothing to hold on to but the ground itself. What was actually

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happening down there I could not see. I could only guess, by the tug and tremor of the rope, that my friend was making a desperate struggle to gain some foothold, and that he was gradually slipping down.

The precipice! once over the edge of that, nothing could save him. And if he went, I must go too. Our fate was inextricably bound together. The thought of our impending doom was like a ghastly nightmare that made me almost mad with fear. Otherwise I should never have remembered the knife in my pocket. No; *that* was unthinkable! Louis had risked his life to serve my ends. If we must perish, it should be together: I would never purchase my life at the cost of his. I set my teeth, and feverishly endeavoured to dig my nails into the half-frozen ground. It was of no avail. Slowly, by all too perceptible degrees, I was dragged downward towards the abyss. If I could only get my alpenstock fixed, I should have something in which I could hold. Louis gave a gasping, inarticulate cry that was more like a sob. In that stifled sound the whole appalling tragedy seemed condensed. It was the last agonised appeal of despair.

With a supreme effort, I got on my knees, and dug my alpenstock furiously into the snowy ground. It struck something hard, and would not hold. I made a second desperate effort. This time it held. I shouted out to Louis to try and pull himself up. I think he must have made a desperate effort to do so, for there was a series of spasmodic jerks upon the rope. Then they ceased, and there was the steady pull of a dead weight as before. It was terrible. I felt that my own strength was slowly being exhausted, *even if the alpenstock held!* In that last fearful pause, I grew more and more convinced that the continued strain on the rope would eventually drag it from its hold. And then? A cold perspiration bathed my brow. The horror of the thought was too appalling. It was then that the end came.

All at once I felt the alpenstock loosen from its hold.

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As it did so, there was a violent tug upon the rope, and I was dragged backward.

Down I went, faster and faster. In vain I tried to arrest my downward course. The pull was too terrific. I snatched, I clawed at the snowy ground, seeking desperately for any object, any roughness even, to which I could cling. I found nothing—nothing save the cold surface of the slope, inhospitable as the surface of the grave.

Louis must be well over the edge now, for all I knew swinging helplessly over the awful abyss. The rope seemed cutting me in half. In a moment or two I felt that all would be over.

All at once the strain ceased. I made a desperate effort, and managed to stop. What had exactly happened I could not tell, but I supposed that Louis had gained a foothold somewhere, and was able to hang on. This, however, might be only temporary. Brief as the respite was, it allowed a breathing space and hope.

For some minutes I lay absolutely still, panting and exhausted. I did not know how close I myself was to the edge of the precipice, but judging by the rate at which I had travelled, I felt I must be only too perilously near. It was owing to this that I had the horrible apprehension that if I stirred a limb I should dislodge myself from my precarious position and roll helplessly to my doom.

After a little, however, I pulled myself together, and, with extreme care, turned my head.

From this position it seemed to me as if only a foot or so separated me from the brink of the chasm. Very carefully I pulled the rope. It gave limply to my hand. But perhaps Louis was not so far down as I imagined, and was able, therefore, to allow a certain amount of slack. I pulled in more of the rope. Still it came without any resistance. Impossible that I should still be pulling in nothing but slack. Louis must have freed himself from it while I had been resting. As for the

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reason of this action there could be only one answer. He had unfastened the rope so that there should be no further fear of pulling me after him! Knowing his utterly unselfish nature as I did, I could not be surprised. I went on pulling in the rope. When the end of it was in my hand my heart leapt into my mouth. It had *not* been unfastened ; *it had been cut !*

What my feelings were after this discovery may be imagined. Utterly despairing of any hope for himself, Louis had determined that, if possible, my life should not be sacrificed as well as his. Yet even though his position must have seemed all but desperate, he must have felt that there might still be some slender chance of being saved at the last moment, in case I could have made good some hold by hand or foot, so long as the rope was between us. To sever it, was to sever that last slender hope, irretrievably, and to send him to certain death. None but a hero could have made the decision, with the full knowledge of the consequences, and have carried it out without faltering. Yet Louis had done this supreme act of devotion—done it for *me !* As I realised it, I felt almost as if I had been guilty of his death.

With a terrible fear in my heart, I crawled to the very brink of the precipice and looked over. Not a sign of Louis—nothing but the sheer descent of that appalling precipice that looked like the abrupt edge of the world! Upon what had happened down there in that awful gulf, I did not dare to dwell. I shouted, listening with agonised intensity for an answering cry. Nothing came—nothing but hollow echoes that mocked my voice. As I gazed, horror-struck, a mist swam before my eyes and I turned giddy and sick. I dragged myself with a shudder a foot or two from the edge and lay down till I could steady my nerves. As soon as I felt sufficiently recovered, I made my way carefully across the slope, and regained the path.

How I got home I do not know. If I came to danger-

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ous places, I never stopped to consider how best to surmount them, but went right on regardless of consequences. One ghastly thought goaded me forward—the utter disappearance of my friend which, under the circumstances, could mean little else but death.

At times I felt so weak with the strain of what I had gone through that I was obliged to stop for rest. Once or twice, I think I must have become semi-unconscious, for there were blanks in my memory which I could not fill.

It was dusk when I reached the first houses of the little town. To reach the school I had to pass Louis' home. As I neared it my feelings grew more and more terrible. How should I dare to break to his parents the appalling news? Lights burned in the window to the right of the door. For a moment or two I hesitated. A panic seized me. *I could not do it!* I walked quickly past towards the school. Yet every step I took increased my sense of shame. The longer the news remained undisclosed, the greater the delay in sending out a rescue party, which must of course be done as speedily as possible. To withhold what I knew would be an act of moral cowardice utterly unworthy of the friend who had given his life for mine. I turned round quickly and retraced my steps. But when I reached the house I did not dare to enter at once. Instead I stole up to the lighted window, and peeped in.

The room was brilliantly illuminated, and full of people. Their interest was evidently centred on a figure that lay on a sofa close to the stove. When I saw the face, I gasped with astonishment. It was Louis!

I rushed to the door with a shout of joy and burst into the room.

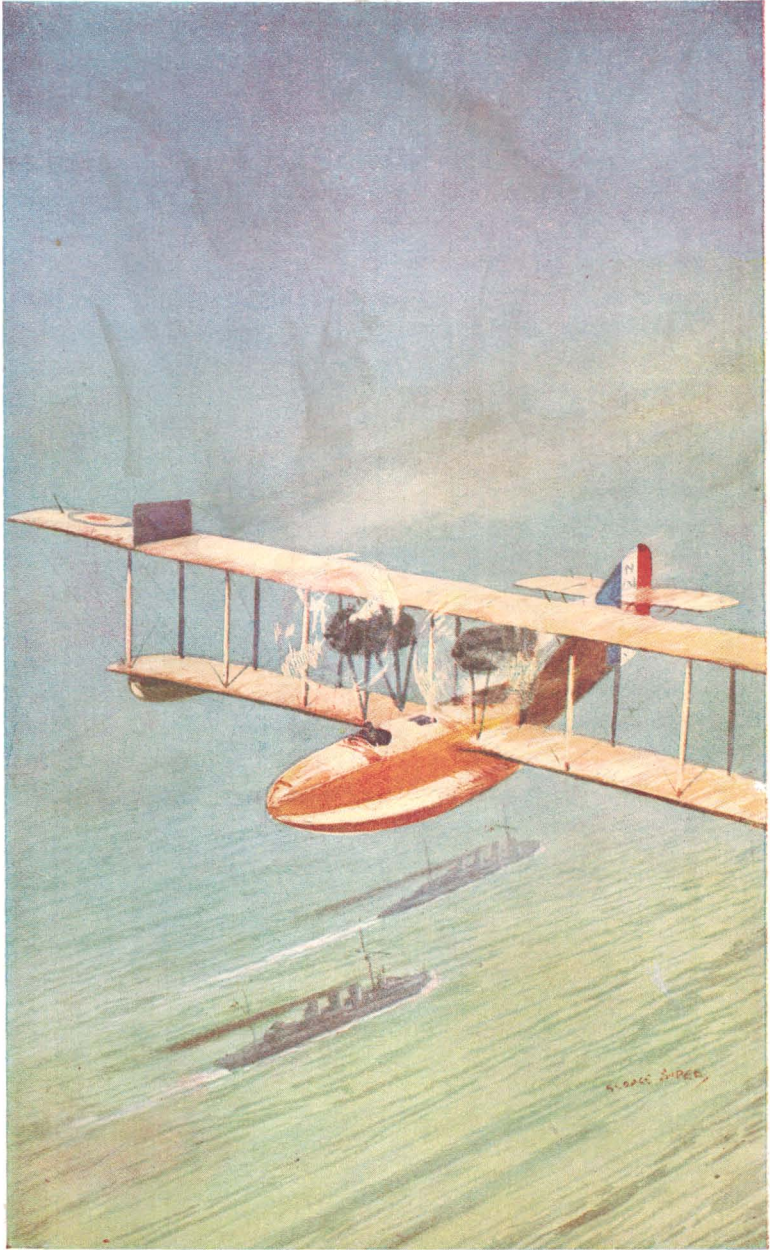
“Louis!” I cried. “Louis!”

In a moment I was kneeling at his side, with his hand held fast in mine. He was too exhausted to speak, but he gave me a smile that I shall never forget. They pulled me away from him by main force.

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The story he told next day, when he was sufficiently recovered to talk, was more like a fairy-tale than a record of sober fact. When he had first felt himself falling, he had used the most desperate efforts to recover his foothold, and it was only when he was actually over the edge of the precipice that he had finally given up hope, and had realised that, unless he cut the rope, I as well as he must inevitably be lost. As to what had happened after he had performed this supreme act of heroism, he could not exactly say. He seems to have fallen clean down the precipice into a drift along some lower ledge. From this he had managed to extricate himself, and had then made his way to the foot of the precipice in a long hazardous descent during which he must have had a series of hair-breadth escapes. More dead than alive he had somehow struggled home.

Over the fireplace in my study is an illuminated card in an elaborately carved Swiss frame. It states that the Premier Scholarship at the *Collège Lamartine* in a certain year, was presented to me for proficiency in general subjects, including Botany, and for the finest collection of the rarer alpine flora. Immediately underneath hangs a photograph of a young French boy with a round and laughing face.



A FLYING BOAT.

About the Flying Boat

The Wonder-Craft of Air and Sea

BY E. CHARLES VIVIAN

THE flying boat of to-day is a descendant of the ordinary land aeroplane, from which it differs in many respects, but, mainly, in being built with a view to rising from and descending to water instead of land. Originally, the land aeroplane was taken as it stood, its undercarriage of wheels was taken off, and a couple of floats were fitted under the fuselage or body to support the whole thing above the water. This original modification is persisted in up to the present day, in some types, but the character of the machine itself has altered. The "seaplane" is more heavily and stoutly built than the land aeroplane; its engines are designed more with a view to reliability and long service than is the case with the land machine, where, building for war purposes, speed was the first consideration, and lightness and carrying power came next.

In the seaplane, the engines are almost invariably of the water-cooled type, which admits of longer service without overhaul; it is necessary that reliability should be considered more, even at the expense of greater weight, for while a forced landing on land may be accomplished without danger to pilot or passengers, at sea it is a very different matter, and a drop to the water may mean drowning as well as total loss of the machine. Thus there is not the same scope for lightness and speed—the pilot of a land aeroplane always considers the seaplane a clumsy and unhandy craft to manage, after working

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with his own type. Moreover, there is the necessity to consider damage by water, which modifies the build of the machine and the amount of protection needed by the engine, for a seaplane, alighting on the water, can make a pretty considerable splash, and unless there is efficient protection for mechanical parts sea water soon renders them unserviceable. Thus, altogether, there is good reason for the extra weight and difference in build of the seaplane and flying boat as compared with the land machine.

It was an American, Glenn H. Curtiss, who brought the flying boat to prominence. Curtiss was one of the designers and builders of the very early days of practical flying, and, seeing how a seaplane was fitted with floats under the fuselage, he conceived the idea of doing away with the floats so as to save weight and air resistance, and making the fuselage act as its own float. The object was only attained with difficulty, at first, for there was propeller clearance to be considered, and various other factors in building which rendered it desirable that the floats should be retained to lift the whole fabric well above the water when at rest. But, as the illustration shows, the propeller difficulty was overcome by putting the propeller up between the planes instead of on the nose of the fuselage; the fuselage itself, or body of the machine, was constructed of strips of specially prepared wood, rendered water-tight much after the fashion of a canoe hull; balance was adjusted with due regard to the position and height of the tail-planes, and the flying boat, graceful in outline compared with the float-carrying seaplane, took the water. Both flying boat and seaplane still compete with each other, but there is little doubt that the flying boat will oust the older type altogether, both on the ground of compactness and ease of handling—it scores as much on the latter point as on the former.

In the flying boat, as in other types of flying machine, one of the most remarkable points is the steady increase of power that has come about as the machine has

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developed. In the early types, eighty to a hundred horse-power was common, and in fact was standard practice; by the end of the war this had gone up to over three hundred horse-power for ordinary patrol work, while twin and triple-engined craft, for special purposes, doubled and trebled this power, the main objects being to increase the effective flying range and, in the case of multiple-engined craft, to give greater safety as well. For multiple-engined craft are so constructed that, if one engine goes out of action, it is possible to get home on the remaining power available, while with a single engine a mishap means total loss of power—a serious matter while over the sea.

In addition to patrol work of ordinary nature, spotting for submarines and assisting convoyed vessels, the war work of the flying boats included the dropping of bombs and depth charges, and even the firing of torpedoes; this latter department of activity was just being brought to perfection when the war ended; it called for great skill on the part of the pilot, and very accurate judgment, for, with a vessel travelling at something like ninety miles an hour, it is no small matter to release a torpedo with such accuracy that it will hit its mark, more especially as the mark, in the case of an enemy submarine or surface craft, is also travelling on its own course. In addition to this, seaplanes and flying boats did good service over land at times, taking part in bombing expeditions over the German land bases—the naval air service did much, up to the end of hostilities, to make Zeebrugge and Ostend unhealthy resorts, and their machines went inland to Bruges and other land centres of enemy activity.

So far as peace work is concerned, there are many ways in which the flying boat can make itself useful. There is one great project afoot at the present time for establishing what may be called a harbour service for ocean liners. As things are now, a liner has to use up much time and incur a very great deal of expense in docking at ports along the route, perhaps staying only

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a few hours before setting out again—the West Indian service, where a stop of about half a day is made at the Azores, is a case in point. It is suggested that, without the trouble of coming in alongside a quay, involving payment for services rendered by tugs and payment of dock dues as well, liners might drop anchor outside a port of call, and get their intermediate passengers, mails, and baggage transferred to the customs' house on land by means of a seaplane service instead of in the old way. Much time and trouble would be saved, as well as cheapening of the steamship service, by this method of working.

In addition to this, there is a possibility in the near future of regular flying boat services between point and point. The North Sea offers an immense field of activity for passenger-carrying craft, fitted as they can be with every comfort, and reducing the time of the passage to about a quarter of that taken by sea-going vessels, in addition to getting rid of the possibility of sea-sickness for those who dread that ordeal. This, although a busy highway of the sea, involves but a short passage, but once such a service starts it will certainly be the signal for many more enterprises of the kind. England to Ireland, Brindisi to Alexandria, Suez to Bombay, and even Holyhead to New York, are routes that inevitably suggest themselves as bringing work for the flying boat, as aviation progresses. The Atlantic passage, of course, is a thing of almost impossibility, as far as passenger services are concerned, in this year 1920, but every day sees some development in aeroplane and flying boat design, and at the present rate of progress it will not be many years before flying services compete with steamship services on the great passenger routes of all the world.

The day when the flying boat was regarded as "unsafe" has gone by; here and there an accident occurs, mostly with some new and untried type of machine, or else through the training of an unhandy pilot, but on the

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whole the risks of ordinary sea travel are as great as those of the flying boat; statistics of accidents go to show that, as regards the number of accidents incurred in a certain number of miles travelled, there are more unsafe methods of locomotion than flying either over land or sea.

Most of those who live near either the east or south coasts of England are familiar with the appearance of both flying boat and seaplane. The former are among the most graceful of flying craft, skimming the water like great birds on starting, and lifting to take the air in a way suggestive of immense power as well as perfect grace. The biplane type is almost universal, but some of the later and larger flying boats have three tiers of planes, giving much greater lift, and also enabling the machine to be built with greater compactness and strength than in the biplane type.

Undoubtedly, so far as grace of outline was concerned, the most beautiful type of all was the old-time monoplane, which was adapted to sea service in some cases by the fitting of floats. But the box formation gained by placing one plane above another, instead of having all the lifting surface at the same level, gives far greater strength; the "strutting," or staying by rigid braces and wires, is a complex and difficult matter with monoplane work, and it is much simplified when two or three planes are placed one over the other so as to admit of their affording mutual support. Thus the monoplane is almost regarded as a "back number" even among land machines, while in flying boat design it is practically ruled out by the fact that there is too small a superstructure, over the fuselage, to afford room for the placing of the propeller well out of reach of the water.

It is not generally known that, with the speed at which a flying boat propeller revolves, contact of the propeller blades with the water is not only disagreeable, but very dangerous as well. Any obstruction in the path of a propeller blade revolving at full speed, no

About the Flying Boat

matter how small the obstruction may be, is likely to shatter the blade; a bucket of water thrown into the track of a propeller, when the latter is being driven by an engine running "all out" would very probably result in the propeller being resolved into mere fragments, and for this reason the blades of the propeller must be placed so as to be well clear of waves in starting and alighting. This is especially important as regards starting, for though a flying boat may alight with its propeller almost stationary, the engine has to be "opened out" to a very high rate for starting—the initial lift is one of the big efforts that the machine has to make.

The flying boat for war purposes was built with a view to efficiency regardless of comfort, but some of the craft of to-day could give points to a millionaire's yacht as regards luxurious fittings. Special warming apparatus, using the exhaust gases from the engine, softly padded seating, special glass screens and side windows to afford protection from the wind, are only items in a long list of luxurious furnishing of the passengers' section of the interior, designed to attract intending passengers away from steamship services to the newer, swifter means of locomotion. The time is coming when the flying boat will be a commonplace of travel, thanks to the enterprise of designers and constructors of these craft; for the present they are rivals to the swallow in grace of flight, and are rather underrated by those who lack technical knowledge of their capabilities and fail to understand that the flying boat promises serious rivalry to the older boat that sticks to the water all the time.

“Scalps” to the Rescue

A Little Exhibition of Broncho-busting

BY MAY WYNNE

WE all called him “Scalps” from the first day he came to St. Nick’s. Beastly cold day it was too, and, as we bundled out of the bus which brought a cargo of us up from the station, there stood the solitary new boy to greet us. He had arrived the day before and had been thirsting for our arrival. You’d never have known him for a new boy. Shy? Cæsar’s ghost! You couldn’t think of the word with that old freckled face grinning from ear to ear.

Tinker (we called him Tinker, but he called himself Tinkeldy), the English master, got unpacked out of that sardine-tin first and went up to him.

You remember how Tinker always stutters at the first go off.

“Ah,” he said, “g-glad to see you here, w-waiting for us, T-Thompson. You are T-Thompson, of course —from C-Canada?”

“Right first time,” applauds Scalps. “Thompson with a p. D’rect descendant from the first son of Tom. Come from Canada where we scalp our neighbours when they refuse to keep their hair on. Say, shake.”

And Tinker was so flabbergasted he actually shook hands.

That settled Scalps’ name and career. We simply rocked over the scene. Tinker was choking with wrath, but he knew if he once got really waxy he’d stand

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stuttering till midnight. So he lay low and “got at” Scalps later on in class.

That was Tinker’s low-down way. He never came out into the open, but he never forgot to hit back on the sly.

Not that Scalps cared for whackings or jawings. The only thing that stuck in his gizzard was lines. He looked as miserable as a drowned cat if he was sentenced to a hundred lines, and you bet Tinker found *that* out. Not that I’ve time to yarn on about Tinker. Scalps used to say he wished he could be metamorphosed into a dormouse and he would apply for Mad Hatter’s job of shoving him into the tea-pot.

“Guess I’d roast him some hot,” Scalps would chuckle.

We guessed so too. At the moment Tinker showed every sign of coming out as top-dog every time.

The big bags in the Upper Sixth and Fifth jaw-bated us well on our shortcomings.

“You can put your heads in bags and be boiled *after* the footer match,” Ronkin explained sweetly, “but till then keep out of mischief if you can. Suppress that Canadian johnny and mend your manners, or sure as there are eggs in omelettes we shan’t have the football supper.”

That was the threat from head-quarters, so we all behaved beautifully for a week excepting when Scalps made up a topping parody on “How doth the little busy bee”—only for bee he substituted flea. That set Tinker off stuttering properly for he was an admirer of old Watts, but Scalps apologised and all went well till the Saturday.

It was jolly well what you might expect to happen. We’d so suppressed and compressed ourselves inside every rule that we were bound to bust. So we didn’t blame Scalps. If he hadn’t spotted those hay-ricks in Farmer Duttock’s yard some one else would.

“Joicks!” yelled Scalps, “I’m Chief Yellow Feather, and you bet I’m going to wipe out all you measly Algonquins.”

“Scalps” to the Rescue

That was enough. We proceeded to wipe each other out for about an hour. Then Duttock appeared and we could hear Scalps “open fire.”

“Afternoon, farmer,” he began, in his best cheery manner. “My chums and I have come back to say we ought to be ashamed of ourselves to have made your yard in such a muck. If there’s anything we can do——”

Duttock let him get as far as that simply because Scalps had taken the wind out of his sails.

But by now he had recovered, and he was just commencing a volley when up came one of his hands, all of a sweat.

“Ben Jarvis has bin thrown, bos,” the man panted, “by the black colt. He was tryin’ to get him past the old traction an’ up went the colt’s legs, down went ‘is ‘ead, an’ over went Ben. We’ve brought him up to the ‘ouse, the missus thinks it’s his collar-bone as is broke.”

Duttock bellowed. You couldn’t call it anything else, and his language was not Parliamentary.

Once more that simpleton Scalps butts his head in.

“Colt,” says he, quite chirpily. “Say, farmer, have you got a colt that wants breaking? I’ll do the job. It’s my line. Did a bit of broncho-busting when I was a nipper—so high.”

Duttock choked. If he had had his whip, I fancy Scalps would have got “broken” there and then.

As it was, whilst the farmer choked, one of the men pointed a sly finger to where a handsome black colt had come trotting up to the rail as though to hurl his defiance.

“There y’are, maister,” said the man. “I reckon Dandy Dick’ll take your sarse out of you.”

Scalps needed no second invitation. To our horror he was up over those rails in a twink. We just gaped, thinking the chap had gone stark, staring mad.

Scalps stood on the rail and held out his hand, singing a queer little tune of introduction. Dandy Dick pricked his ears and looked artful.

“Scalps” to the Rescue

“Bring that young feller back,” roared Duttock, “I don’t want him breakin’ ’is silly neck in my field. I’ll learn ’im a proper sorter busting—”

Then he stopped. Scalps had finished his tune and brought the colt close to him. Then, stooping, he seemed to whisper in his ear. The next second he was astride him.

You *should* have seen the show then. Even Duttock forgot to swear and stood gaping like his men. The boys came out from behind the rick and gaped too. We hadn’t a word between us to say. We were just spell-bound.

The colt had shown his indignation at being tricked by a whipper-snapper boy by galloping madly off into the middle of the field.

Then he began. It was the queerest *dance* you ever saw a four-legged creature perform. First on hind legs, then with head to the ground, then up in the air altogether. But, like the old man of the sea, Scalps stuck on. He was just like a limpet, the black colt couldn’t budge him. And at last, tired of trying, he stopped, spun round, and set off again at a gallop. Now I suppose Scalps called it his turn, for he not only allowed Dandy Dick to gallop, he *made* him do it. Round and round, with Scalps using arms and legs like a windmill. The black colt began to flag, but Scalps wouldn’t have it. Furiously he belaboured the animal, forcing it up to its enemy the threshing machine to inspect at close quarters, then round again.

Old Duttock never moved. The men were cheering and laughing.

“Never seed nothing like it,” declared one of them. “If that there’s bustin’, bust me if it’s not busted the colt.”

“Pluck?” queried another. “I should say that lad don’t know t’ meaning of fear. Oughter go to a cirkus. Wot’s ’e made of?”

I expect Dandy Dick was asking that question, as, meek as a lamb, he was taken to inspect his snorting foe,

“Scalps” to the Rescue

found him harmless, was introduced to other bogeys, and finally brought sweating back to the gate which had been flung open by Farmer Duttock himself.

“See the conquering——” piped little Willis, but we squashed him.

Duttock took both Scalps’ hands and nearly wrung them off.

“You’re a fine lad,” said he, “and I’m much obliged to you. My word! it made me sweat to see you at it fust. Thought you would have your back broke. But you’ve broke the colt instead an’ saved me a world of trouble. Now, come away up to the house wi’ your friends and try some of the missus’ home-baked.”

Scalps laughed—but he was pleased as Punch. “You bet we’re going to clear the hay first, old sport,” he said. “We’d no business to make that muck. When it’s clear, I guess we’ll make the home-baked look silly.”

He was a true prophet. We soon had the yard as neat as a new pin, and then trooped back to the farm kitchen where Mrs. Duttock had got us a ripping spread. Fried eggs and ham, if you please, pails of hot tea, home-made butter, jam, scones and cake, all in proper *sensible* quantities. My word, how we did eat, but Scalps beat us all hollow.

“Broncho-busting’s the game for appetite,” he told the farmer, who was just egging him on to finish the cake. “Whenever you happen to have another colt which wants its manners mended, you’ll send for me.”

The farmer laughed till his sides ached as he promised, and we all went back to St. Nick’s feeling like fat pigs ready for Smithfield. It wasn’t a bad sort of feeling either, so we gave old Scalps a rousing cheer at the school gate. The worst of it was the Tinker heard us and wanted to know what was wrong.

Little Willis was so full of good cake he actually perked up.

“It was only us cheering Thompson, sir,” said he “he’s bringing home his Scalps.”

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It was hard luck on the kid getting forty lines for impudence, but Willis didn't mind. He said he'd do a hundred lines if only Scalps would promise to take him to the next broncho-busting.

And so said all of us.

In the Ruined Priory

The Story of a Ghost Hunt

BY V. R. NENDICK

I

WILL ALDIS was building a snow figure one Wednesday afternoon in December, when his own special chum—Erny Farish—ran up.

“Shade of Michael Angelo!” exclaimed the latter, “who’s that? Ajax defying the lightning—with a snub nose, too! I say, Will, have you heard of the row in Number Four dormitory last night?”

“No, delicate flatterer, I have not,” was the icy reply.

“Ballyhooly wasn’t in it, according to Dewing——”

“And Dewing can usually tell a good tale.”

“True, he can; but this one is against himself,” laughed Farish. “Best joke I have heard for a long time.”

“Oho! let’s hear it then,” cried Aldis; “you have made me curious.”

“It was like this,” began his chum. “You know Fitz Baby——”

“I might have guessed he was in it,” rejoined Aldis. “They cannot let that fellow alone, just because he was born meek and gentle.”

“Meek and gentle!” echoed Farish. “Fitz has changed colour.”

“No!”

“He has, though. Listen,” was the reply. “You know Fitz sleeps like a top—goes to bye-bye as soon as he has tucked himself in, the unnatural beast. Well, last night

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was rather cold, and, as soon as Fitz began to snore, out jumps Fred Hiscot and pinches Baby's counterpane. The joke caught on, of course. Harry Gaylor commandeered one blanket, Charley Emson another, and finally Tom Dewing annexed the sleeping angel's sheet. Then they all settled down to enjoy the extra warmth. However, Fitz soon snorted and woke up; he made a fearful row until he got the hang of things. Then he yelled out to the others to return the stolen property; but they had fallen into a heavy sleep, of course, and all his bellowing could not rouse them. Now comes the surprise. All of a sudden Fitz jumped out, rolled up his pillow so as to be able to grasp it firmly, and, before anyone guessed his purpose, he was over at Gaylor's bed trying to play golf—with Gaylor's head for the ball——"

"Not Fitz!" interposed Aldis in amazement.

"Fitz himself," continued Farish. "Naturally Gaylor arose in his might, but he was knocked off his pins and rolled under the bed. Thereupon Fitz marched off with his blanket in triumph. Next he paid a visit to Emson's bed, then to Dewing's, and so on. The thing culminated in a general Donnybrook Fair. You see, many innocent fellows got attacked in the darkness, so all joined in. Then up came Mr. Jorman and promised them all a visit to the Doctor's study on Thursday, when the Head returns."

"And this was Fitz Baby?" marvelled Aldis.

"Fitzwilliam Balby himself; it won't do to call him Baby now."

"What a shock for the other fellows," exclaimed Aldis.

"Dewing is just mad about it."

"Bravo Fitz—Fitz the warrior!" laughed Aldis. "It is too funny."

"Now they are all thirsting for his gore——"

"They had better beware," cried the other. "Balby is evidently a dangerous fellow. Of course, they are on for reprisals. What is their game? Do you know?"

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"Partly. Fitz does not believe in ghosts——"

"So I understand. Well?"

"They are working him up to visit the ruined old Priory on Saturday night, where they hope to show him one or two," chuckled Farish.

"But we are all going skating, if the frost holds."

"Yes, but they will slip away afterwards—see? They will take sheets and some phosphorus; Emson and Dewing are to be the ghosts."

"Poor old Baby," cried Aldis. "It isn't fair. They'll frighten the life out of him."

"But will they—after last night?"

"It would be rare fun if he came off best, Farish."

"Would it not? Why, here the victim comes," exclaimed the other, as Master Fitzwilliam Balby—otherwise Fitz Baby—sauntered towards the chums with the greatest unconcern and deliberation.

"Well, I for one hope that he will prove victor and not victim," whispered Aldis; then he added aloud to the mild-looking junior, "Hullo, Fitz! so you are going to exorcise the Priory ghost, eh?"

Balby was a big, lumpy fellow for his age, inclined to stoutness. He had the face of a seraph, with large, dreamy eyes. His manner and walk were peculiarly grave and deliberate, his speech aggravatingly slow and placid.

"So they have been plumming you up, too," monotoned Balby. "I sometimes fear that the fellows in my dormitory have gone mad, Aldis."

"Force of association, dear boy," suggested the senior genially. "What is their latest enormity?"

"Have they not told you that?" returned Balby, not seeing the sarcasm. He never did.

"I did hear something of—of investigation, was it not?" fenced Aldis. "You are rather keen on ghosts, I believe."

"I'd like to see one," smiled Fitz amused.

"Then you are going?" suggested the other,

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"No, I am not. It's all stuff. There is no such thing. They are on for a silly lark, that's all," drawled Balby.

"Do you think so?" returned Aldis gravely. "I am disappointed. I thought it was a straight affair. Of course, there may be no ghost; but then, there *may*, you know."

"You don't think they are larking, then?" queried Balby slowly.

"Call it scientific investigation, Fitz," suggested the other.

"Are you serious?" asked Balby surprised. "I'd go—if—but there! Do you believe in ghosts, Aldis?"

"I am open to learn, and hoping to learn," replied the senior impressively. "Your experience would be valuable. If you do decide to go, be sure you tell me all about it, won't you?"

Aldis turned to resume his snow-building, and Fitz walked away pensively, wondering whether he ought not to undertake the investigation, if only for the benefit of Aldis.

Saturday came round in due course, and the frost held, so the skating was a huge success. As the boys packed up to go home, eight of them stole away singly to re-unite at a pre-selected rendezvous.

"Look here, you fellows," cried Dewing, when all had come up, "it won't do for us all to be seen together. Gaylor, you and Fitz go round by the road, Emson and I will go across the fields, the rest had better go through the wood. We all meet in the room at the back of the chapel."

This—being pre-arranged by the conspirators—was agreed to, so the party divided. Dewing and Emson had much the shortest route, Gaylor and Fitz by far the longest; yet Dewing and his companion soon broke into a run, while Gaylor sauntered most deliberately.

"Got the phosphorus all right?" asked Emson, when well away.

"Yes; and you the sheets?"



"HISCOT SUDDENLY EXCLAIMED 'WHAT'S THAT?' AND RUSHED TO THE PARTLY-SHUTTERED WINDOW." (See p. 251.)

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"Two large ones. Let's see, there is a stone ledge in the little chapel; we can stand on that and look like giants, eh?"

"Capital," chuckled Dewing. "We'll give Fitz fits."

The two conspirators chortled over the coming fun all the way to St. Kenelm's Priory.

This ancient building had been an imposing place in its time. Even now, as it reared its crumbling ruins far beyond the tree-tops, it was a most impressive sight. Great gaunt walls draped in clinging ivy, crazy remnants of roofing, a broken arch or two green with moss, and huge mounds of tumbled débris were all that was left of former glory.

As the two boys neared the mouldering ruins, the snow commenced to fall heavily. So they mounted the slope with bent heads to avoid the driving flakes, and the grim shape of the old Priory seemed to loom up suddenly before them out of the darkness.

And dreadfully weird it looked. Unconsciously they became silent and drew together, staring up at the grim and towering mass in the moonlight. A fearful sensation crept down their backs, though they would have died rather than own to it.

"There's—there's the doorway," said Dewing, in an awe-struck whisper. He shuddered involuntarily.

"Y—es," assented Emson, in a voice curiously unlike his usual spirited tones. "Stri—strike a—a light, Tom."

Tom Dewing lit a candle; by its feeble glare they crept cautiously into a square, gloomy chamber. Suddenly a huge moth flew into the light, extinguishing it, then darted full into Dewing's face; the boy dropped the candle in momentary terror.

"What did you drop it for, you ass?" hissed Emson, tremulously.

Dewing's unsteady fingers were groping about feverishly among the rubbish on the floor. He recovered the candle and re-lit it with much difficulty.

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"What are you shivering and shaking like that for?" growled Emson.

"This beastly wind—so cold," muttered his friend.

"Stick the candle in that corner for safety," suggested Emson. "Phew! I'm shivering too. Where's the shelf? Oh, there!"

"You climb up," whispered Dewing. "They'll be here soon. Gaylor is to give Fitz the slip as soon as—what's that?"

A low, deep growl vibrated through the place. It was followed by a peal of muffled laughter.

They listened with painful intentness. All was silent again.

"The sooner those fools come the better," croaked Emson, peering about furtively.

"I see them," shouted Dewing, with indescribable relief, as a group of boys came struggling up the hill. "Up with you."

Both clambered on to a long stone shelf in a corner. One produced a pair of sheets, the other some phosphorus.

"I'll do you first, then you can do me," suggested Emson. "Turn round this way and let——"

He broke off suddenly as a wild, unearthly moan rose and fell on the night air. The phosphorus dropped from his shaking hand, and he clutched Dewing's arm nervously. As the awful sound died away it was succeeded by another nerve-racking peal of hideous laughter.

"Eugh!" screamed Dewing, tearing his arm from Emson's painful grasp. "Look—that dark corner—something—it moved."

He jumped back, lost his footing, knocked the light over, and rolled to the floor.

II

Meanwhile, Fred Hiscot and the others were slowly mounting the Priory hill in the face of the driving snow.

"Hurry along," he cried, "or we shall be all snowed up."

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They took the last slope at a run, and—like the others—came upon the grim, dark mass of the Priory with startling suddenness.

"Looks a bit uncanny like," muttered Hiscot. "Won't Fitz have a shock! Clubb, you lead the way. Mind that ginger beer, you ass; we don't want to wreck it after lugging it so far."

The party had brought with them some dainties with which to beguile the waiting minutes.

They gained the room behind the chapel, the appointed meeting-place, and found a table there. Coats, caps, and mufflers were discarded promptly. Little progress, however, had been made with the meal, when Hiscot suddenly exclaimed, "What's that?" and rushed to the partly shuttered window.

A deep blood-curdling growl rolled forth from somewhere.

"Stop—hark!" gasped Arthur Clubb; "there—again!"

A hollow voice began to gabble somewhere in the room above them. Then a piercing human scream of terror rang out.

The group of boys stood transfixed.

Suddenly two flying figures dashed out of the doorway and plunged blindly downhill.

Hiscot watched them from the window and reported the fact to his companions.

"It's the ghost!" cried Dixon, turning white.

Clubb was equally alarmed, while Gaylor hastened to join Hiscot.

"What on earth can it be?" queried Gaylor.

"I don't know," answered the other. "It seems to be up there—in the roof."

It was a voice—talking plainly.

"*I a-am th-y fa-fatherrr's ga-host,*" came the voice in hollow tones, which seemed to float in the air above them.

"There!—and there's something moving in that dark corner!" shrieked Dixon, and instantly bolted from the room.

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Panic is notoriously infectious. These boys were bold enough—in daylight. Now they scrambled from the place and stampeded wildly in the direction of the College.

And now, outside, who should they encounter but Emson and Dewing, covered with snow. In their hurried exit from the Priory each had fallen into a snowdrift. The conspirators joined forces.

When well away, they stopped and drew together, discussing the matter in awe-struck whispers. After a time Hiscot recovered somewhat and proposed going back, but he was not much in earnest. Clubb, however, unexpectedly seconded him, so he had to go.

The rest waited, chattering excitedly, marvelling at the temerity of the venturesome pair.

The two boys started back at a run, soon the run became a walk, nearing the Priory the walk degenerated into a hesitating crawl.

The daunting glamour of the great, upstanding ruins seemed to overpower them, their eyes pierced the gloom with increasing awe.

Then Clubb stopped short, pointing his trembling finger towards the dark, arched doorway, forty yards distant. Something white and filmy was slowly coming into view. Yes, it was coming out.

The two lads turned precipitately and vanished in headlong flight.

Meanwhile, let us return to Gaylor, who had gone round by way of the road, accompanied by the hero of that famous fight which had already passed into school history as the Battle of Tuesday Night.

As soon as they reached the vicinity of the ruins, Gaylor discovered that he had a stone in his boot.

“Don’t wait for me Fitz,” he urged; “we don’t want them to get in front. I’ll catch you up.”

So Balby went on alone, unsuspectingly, whereupon Gaylor immediately turned off to join the other conspirators, aflame with anticipation.

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In the thick snow Fitz lost his way; it took him some time to regain the right direction. When he eventually reached the ruins there was no sign of his friends. He strolled round to the chapel doorway.

"Sheltering in here, no doubt," he muttered. "What a fine old ruin. Now I should—— Dear me! who's that?"

He distinctly heard a human voice behind him.

"Now, you fellows," drawled Balby, "come out of that."

A low, hollow moan was the only response.

"That'll do," rejoined Fitz, entering the doorway. "Oh, I can see you . . . there you are. . . . Ah! I've got you."

He made a sudden dive forward and seized what seemed like a white figure. Ugh! It crumpled up in his arms.

"Wh—what——" stammered he, dropping the white thing hurriedly.

For a few seconds his heart stood still.

Then he struck a match and saw that it was an ordinary sheet. And on the corner of it were some red letters.

"St. K. C." read off Fitz in wonder. "That's St. Kenelm's College. That's our show. How came this here? Been a burglary? Oho! let's look about again."

He struck another match and glanced round the little chapel.

"What's this? A school cap, by all that's wonderful! Is there a name inside? Yes, T. Dewing. Poor old Tom! I hope he is all right. But he was at the skating. Can they have got here and been set upon? What's that white thing? Another sheet."

With many a dubious shake of the head Balby collected the articles and rolled them into a bundle. For a few minutes he kicked his heels in the doorway, waiting for the others to come. Then all at once a thought flashed across his mind.

"Done!" he murmured. "Those fellows never

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meant to come. No doubt they are over yonder laughing at me standing freezing here. They merely saw me off and then trotted back home. Humph!"

He picked up the bundle and looked out at the snow with a grimace.

"May as well keep dry if I can," he muttered, unrolling the sheets again. He folded them together and threw them over his head and shoulders, whence they covered him down to his boots. Then he marched quietly out of the chapel and took his way homeward, considerably disgusted.

When he reached the College, he wondered whether he ought not to go straight to the "Head" about the supposed burglary. Fortunately, he caught sight of Aldis and decided to take the senior's advice.

"Hullo! Hobgoblins, ghouls, howls, and growls!" was Aldis's greeting. So you know all about the Priory ghost now?"

"Worse—much worse! This is real," replied Fitz gravely.

"Ah! real is it? I did not believe the others. What has your scientific investigation established?" bantered the other.

"Don't jest, old fellow. I'm in earnest," protested Fitz.

"Of course you are. And you look pale, too. Quite the right colour for the part. Had a fright?"

"Well—a little——"

"Queer customers, those ghosts, Fitz. You shouldn't meddle, really you shouldn't," scolded Aldis, in mock gravity. "They might have carried you off—spirited you away. Think of our loss."

"The things have been missed then?" queried Fitz, all at sea.

"Things? What things?"

"The booty the burglars took away."

"Burglars? Hullo! what's this?"

Balby flung down his bundle, unrolled it and disclosed

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two sheets and a cap belonging to St. Kenelm's College. Aldis looked down at them and then at the broad face of Fitz.

"I found them in the Priory chapel," said the latter gravely.

"You went there, then?"

"Of course. You know it was arranged——"

"Yes, yes—and what about the howls, the groans—the——"

He stopped. Balby was staring blankly at him.

"The moans, the groans, the howls, the growls?" persisted Aldis.

"I am afraid you are jesting, Aldis," said Balby deprecatingly.

"D'you mean to say you heard nothing at the Priory?" gasped Aldis.

It was plain from Balby's face that he had not.

Aldis threw open an inner door and called out:—

"Here, you fellows! Fitz has come home—safe and sound, clothed, and in his right mind—more or less——"

"What has he heard?" clamoured several at once.

"He has heard nothing—seen nothing!"

"Then he has not been there," chorussed the boys.

"But he has. Look! He has brought back two college sheets—what will the housekeeper say? And a cap—who lost a cap?"

"I did," cried Emson and Dewing in an amazed duet.

"It is yours, Dewing. Fitz has undoubtedly been there," decided Aldis. "Look here, you fellows have been pitching a fine tale; I have half a mind to pitch into you. Balby is the only plucky one among you. I believe you are a lot of sippy——"

"What we told you is absolutely true," averred several.

"Did you find any ghosts?" inquired Balby smiling.

"We heard them—lots!" declared Dewing.

"And saw one as plain as I see you," added Clubb.

"Honour bright!" corroborated Hiscot.

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"Perhaps that was one of the burglars," hazarded Fitz.

"Look here, Balby," explained Aldis; "half a dozen of these heroes have been up to the ruins. They said they heard groans and growls, moans and howls, enough to freeze a red-hot poker. I am afraid they did not wait long to investigate; in fact, they bolted—that is to say, they retired with discreet if not dignified rapidity——"

"But we went back and saw——" struck in Hiscot mortified.

"Oh, yes," resumed Aldis. "Two heroes went back and were actually chased out of the chapel by a monstrous figure in white, which——"

There came a knock at the door; a man's face peered in.

"Come in, Inskip," cried Aldis, recognising the ostler of the "Busterbroke Arms." "What's up? Hullo! did you find that?"

Inskip was holding out the bedraggled cap of Charley Emson!

"Just caught sight of it, at the ruins," he explained.

Every boy present pricked up his ears.

"At the ruins? When was this?" added Aldis quickly.

"Oh, about an hour ago, say."

"Did you notice anything funny about the place?"

"Can't say I did. You see, I was just passin'——"

"You heard nothing unusual—no peculiar sounds, eh?" pressed Aldis.

The silence and tension were painful indeed.

"No. That is to say—well, I did—in a way——"

"Tell us all about it!" yelled the excited boys.

Inskip looked dumbfounded at the sudden outburst.

"Do tell us!" repeated Aldis.

"Well—since you ask," began Inskip, "it's like this: I was sent down to the station to-night to fetch two gents and their conjuring traps; I was to drive 'em up to the 'Grange.' Lord Busterbroke is 'avin' a rare lot o' parties and jollifications up at the 'Grange,' 'cause 'is eldest son's come of age. These two gents were jugglers,

In the Ruined Priory

or somethin' o' that sort, come down from London for the occasion. Just as I was drivin' past the ruins the mare shied and pitched us all out, breakin' one shaft. I sent the boy back on the mare to fetch another trap. It was snowin' awful just then, so I leads the two gents up into the great hall of the ruins for shelter. Then the fun began! To while away the time one of the chaps started showin' me some of 'is tricks; then the other put a little thing in his mouth, and my word! if he didn't imitate every animal under the sun! Laugh? I roared! Then t'other gent chips in. He was a ventic—ventric—what's the word?—one of those chaps what can send a voice anywhere they please. He did 'ave a lark in that old place! It seemed to take his fancy. He made a voice talk somewhere up in the roof till I began to feel real creepy—I did, indeed! Then the other fellow howled like a wolf, roared like a lion, bayed like a dog! Talk about menag'ries! My sides ached with laughin'. I was right-down sorry when the boy came back with another trap. Then it was I noticed the cap stuck on a bush, and brought it along.

The assembled boys listened with rapt attention. The faces of the conspirators grew longer and longer as they realised the significance of Inskip's story. The rest were nearly choking with suppressed merriment.

"Thanks, Inskip," said Aldis, whose face had been a study. "Emson, this is your cap. You owe Inskip a shilling; I will pay it and you can pay me."

Inskip departed with a hearty "Thank you, sir." Then the pitiless storm broke out. Those who were not in the conspiracy saw the joke, and made no secret of it. The plotters were absolutely dumbfounded.

For twenty minutes they were tormented mercilessly by their persecutors, who begged derisively for imitations of the sounds which had driven them so ignominiously from their purpose.

"I suppose you arrived too late to hear these horrific sounds, Fitz?" laughed Aldis, walking over to where

In the Ruined Priory

Balby sat innocently wondering at the pandemonium around him.

"I fancy I did hear a strange sound or so," returned Fitz mildly, "but I put it down to these fellows, you know. So I just threw the two sheets over my head and shoulders—to keep off the snow—and tramped home.

"Sheets over your shoulders?" exclaimed Aldis, his eyes lighting up with new intelligence. Oh, I see it all! I see it all! This is too funny! The tables are turned with a vengeance! I say, boys! Hiscot and Clubb *did* see the white figure of a ghost——"

"Of course we did," snapped Hiscot.

"And the ghost was Fitz Baby himself!" laughed Aldis. "He wrapped himself in the sheets to keep off the snow, thereby innocently sending Hiscot and Clubb off in a frantic sprint for dear life!"

Master Fitz William Balby sat staring at them all in mild astonishment. He could not understand why most of the boys broke instantly into a fresh hurricane of boisterous merriment, while the amazed conspirators themselves were at length compelled to laugh at their own downfall.

The real truth of the case did not break in upon his mind until he was getting into bed that night; then it came to him suddenly, and he startled the dormitory by bursting into a fit of uncontrollable laughter. No one joined him in his merriment.

Camping and how to Enjoy it

A Delightful Way of Spending a Holiday

BY K. R. G. HUNT

The bed was made, the room was fit.
By punctual eve the stars were lit ;
The air was still, the water ran,
No need was there for maid or man,
When we put up, my ass and I,
At God's green caravanserai.

—R. L. S.

I LOVE those lines, for they just hit off the whole spirit of camping, and if anyone of you who reads them does not feel his soul yearn within him, if he does not instinctively feel the lure of the open country, then let him read no further, for nothing I can write will move him to leave his bricks and mortar—his seaside lodgings or respectable humdrum hotel.

But it is just because every boy is by nature a camper that I want to try to tell you something about it. Every boy—or girl too, for that matter—who delights in a picnic, is a potential camper ; for camping is merely a glorified picnic, with the added advantage that you come into much closer touch with nature and the big things of life. For, after all, it is in the half-lights that things happen, that visions are seen, and your average picnicker starts too late and packs up too early to get on more than nodding terms with old Mother Nature. But he who lives with her, who surrenders himself to her keeping, who sleeps o' nights on her bosom, for him are her

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secrets which she never reveals to a mere chance acquaintance.

He it is who hears her stories told by the sighing pines as night enfolds the hill, or by the ripple of the stream whose music plays him to sleep at night, and calls him to bathe in the dawn. He it is who knows the stars, and greets them all as friends, who sees the glories of the morning mists over the river, and is admitted to that rare fellowship of birds and beasts which the city-dweller never knows. And though he may vary his camping, he will always have these experiences, and though he knows them well, yet they are ever new, and their delight never grows old.

For you *may* vary your camping, even here in prosaic old England, which, after all, is not nearly so prosaic as we are apt to believe, only we coop ourselves up in cities and towns, and so seldom seek the adventures that await us. For camping will offer you an infinite variety. My first camp, for instance, was a walking tour in company with three other bipeds and a four-footed ass. Yes, looking back on it, I admit that the only important difference between the five of us was in the matter of the number of legs. But at least I never tried it again, and next year a good stout horse drew our cart for us through the New Forest and along the southern coast, until we reached Lyme Regis, and then we cut across Somerset to Minehead.

You will see from this that my idea was to tour, and as light-weight camping was yet in its infancy, some means of transport had to be evolved. First the donkey, then the horse, but neither was entirely satisfactory. Farmers who will otherwise readily grant permission to camp sometimes look askance at a horse, and whatever you do, you must not camp in England without leave. So the next year saw us paying frequent visits to the carpenter's shop, until on the first day of the summer holidays a neat, but capacious, little hand-cart was ready, and loading this with tent, blankets, food, and cooking

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utensils we set off to walk from the neighbourhood of Derby to Land's End. What a tour that was, and what a delight every day to see new country, to feel we were some thirty miles nearer our goal than the previous night, to sit round our wood-fire—for your Primus stove cooks, but it does not hearten—while the merry tale and song and chaff went round, and pleasantly tired limbs were relaxed in well-earned ease.

And so next year saw no change in our method of transport, but only in our destination, which this time was John o' Groats. This was a tramp of 640 miles, and once again we found our hand-cart all that could be desired. But by this time light-weight camping was coming in, and next year the majority of the old party set off to cycle to the shores of the Mediterranean, camping as they went. But even this does not exhaust the possibilities of a moving camp, for there is still the river, and river-camping is possibly the oldest form of all camping, as it is certainly the nicest. Can you imagine those old days when the hardy explorer pushed up a river to its source, and each evening as the shadows lengthened pushed his small vessel ashore, and rigging up his paddles spread over them skins of the animals he had killed in the chase, or rough blankets, or whatever else he had by him ?

And the romance of this earliest of all sports is not dead yet. Try it for yourselves and see. You that dwell in England, hire a boat, or punt, or canoe at Oxford and push *up* the river (not down, for that is to visit the haunts of men), past Godstow Bridge where Fair Rosamund lived, and Pixey Mead, Eynsham and Bablock Hythe, Newbridge, Kelmscot, Buscot, and Lechlade. Don't the very names lure you on ? And when you feel pleasantly tired, when the sun is westering down, and the fish begin to rise and now and again the silent shape of a great owl flaps across your vision, pull your boat ashore, and pitch your tent, kindle your fire and cook your evening meal : and over you will come a great contentment, such

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as you can know only at such times as these. Or if the weather is settled and you have a punt, moor her to the bank, and spread your blanket on the cushions which cover the flat bottom, and lie and watch the stars till the murmur of the river and the scents of the peaceful night lull you to sleep, to wake with earliest sunrise to another day of never-ending delight.

Yes, river-camping is, I think, the best of all camping. For one thing there are so many bends in a river, and round each bend lies a new view, and the possibility of a new adventure. And besides this, a river nearly always affords those two great necessities of a camper—wood and water. But above all, you have all the advantages of a moving camp, without the one great disadvantage. This, perhaps, needs a word or two of explanation. It will readily occur to all of you, however slight your knowledge of camping, that in the main there are two different kinds of camp, viz. fixed and moving. Each has its advantages. The charm of a moving camp lies in the fact that each day, each hour in fact, brings you new adventures, new views, new comrades and acquaintances. Moreover, you have that inexpressibly charming feeling of "getting somewhere."

Against this you have to set the difficulties of transport, the fact that each day your tent has to be struck in the morning, and pitched again at night, and that it, together with the rest of your goods and chattels, has to be packed up. Also each evening brings you the necessity of obtaining permission from a fresh landlord, and fresh arrangements have to be made for procuring such necessities as bread, milk, vegetables, fuel, etc. In a fixed camp, of course, the advantages and disadvantages are just the converse of these, but we must add to the advantages the fact that you can thoroughly explore your special bit of country, and that if you have some special hobby which you run in conjunction with camping, such as photography, fishing, ornithology, sketching, etc., you are freer to follow it than you would be were you to be

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constantly changing your ground, and moving on to fresh sites.

Now, if you have a predilection for river-camping you will find that the moving camp loses half its difficulties. In the first place, the great question of transport is at once settled. Your vessel, whatever she may be, will easily accommodate you and your kit, and you have the happy knowledge that a few extra pounds make very little difference, so that if you are in any doubt about an extra blanket or so, or if you hesitate whether to take only a folding V.P.K. or a half-plate camera, you can plump for the bulkier kit. This, I can assure you, is a very big point. Moreover, as I have said above, there is more fascination in a river than in a road. It is not that the scenery is necessarily prettier, but rather that the twists and the bends are more frequent, and that each twist and each bend holds out such infinite possibilities. I need not add that there are unlimited facilities for bathing.

Now let me offer you a word or two of advice as to your vessel. If you are one of a large party, by all means take two or three, each of a different kind. On a long day's voyage you will find it very restful to change the punt-pole for the sculls, or the sculls for the canoe paddle. But if you are alone, or with only one companion, then I should be inclined to be guided by two considerations. If distance is your object, and always supposing you are on a really navigable river, wide enough throughout its length to admit of sculls being used, I should advocate a dinghy or rowing-boat of some kind. Also if you are likely to have to do much towing from the bank the boat has this great advantage, that the rudder will enable you to counteract the drag of the rope, and keep a straight course.

On the other hand, given a suitable river-bottom there is nothing to beat a punt, and besides the poetry of its motion you have the added facts that it is the easiest of all vessels to pack, and the most comfortable of all to

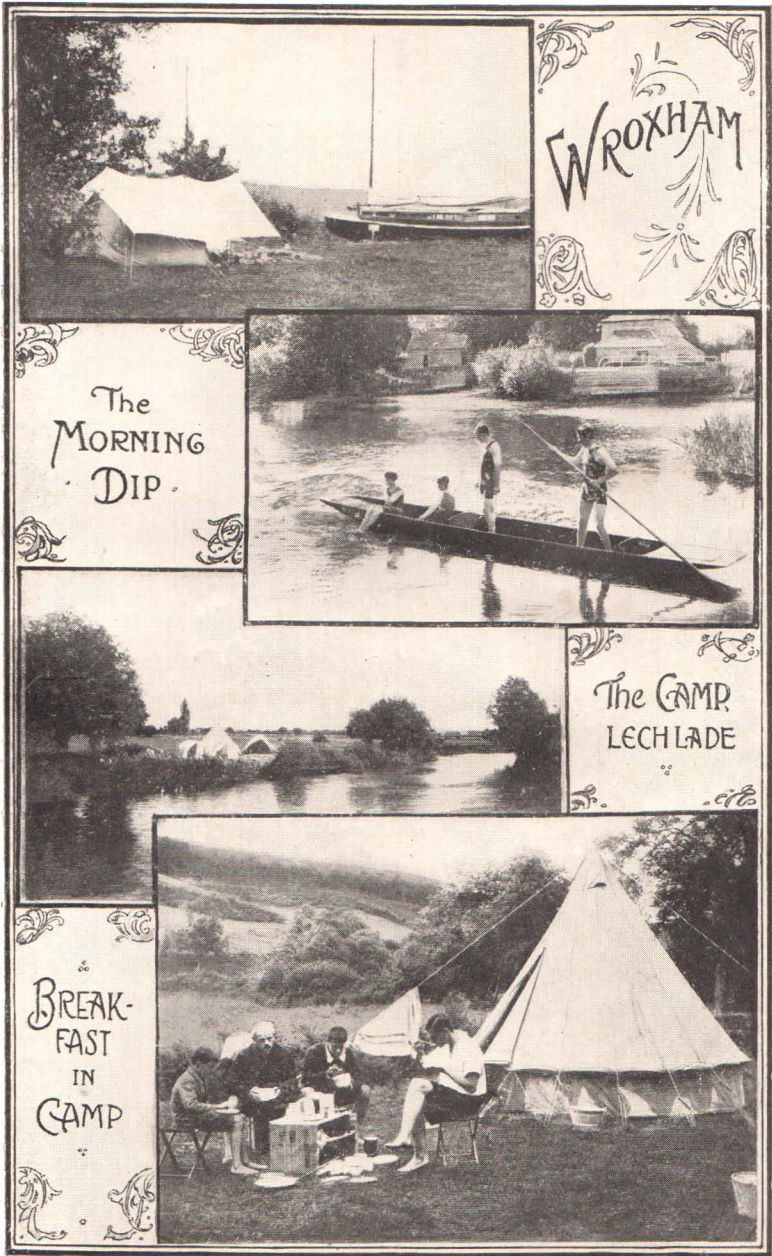
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sleep in, should you feel inclined to dispense with the tent on a fine night. The canoe I should vote for only under two conditions—first, that the stream is so narrow that no other vessel can be employed, and secondly, if you are skilful enough to use a pole with a canoe.

And now, what about tents? Above all things, avoid the bell-tent. It is, at best, a cumbersome affair, and there is a lot of waste room in it. By far the best type is a ridge-pole tent of some sort, and if you are buying a tent you cannot do better than go to the Amateur Camping Club and inspect some of the light-weight tents they make. You will probably think, when first you see them, that these cotton-lawn tents are not weather-proof. You may take it from me that with a fly-sheet these tents will stand *any* rain. I was out in one during that terrible storm in Norfolk in 1912 when six inches of rain fell in six hours, and half a county was inundated, yet not a drop of rain came through. If you have time to make it, and are going in for fixed camping, you will find nothing more comfortable than a gypsy tent, and you may be sure that these professional campers know what is best.

But unless you intend staying some time in each place I should not recommend this type. If means are limited, and you are satisfied with a makeshift but efficient shelter, you may get an old rick-cover and suspend it on a rope fastened from two trees, pegging out the corners, and cutting a V-shaped piece to fit either end.

I have told you little or nothing of my own experiences—they would, I think, fill a book—but I have endeavoured to hint at some of the various means of transport. There is, however, one thing I have said nothing about which is always the subject of the would-be camper's first question—cooking. Most people seem to think that one subsists on nothing but tinned food. Nothing could be further from the truth. I am not going to give you recipes, but you can live like a gourmet in camp, only, for a start, do not be *too* ambitious. Start slowly, and do not think you know everything.



CAMPING JOYS.

Camping and how to Enjoy it

One or two points for the real novice. Never camp in a hollow, and do not pitch your tent immediately under trees. A hedge affords excellent cover from the wind, better by far than a haystack. Loosen all guy-ropes in wet weather. Be tidy—there is nothing so annoying as finding the butter mixed with your pyjamas, or your paraffin with your milk. Always keep by you some dry kindling wood—ever so little will do. A small fire cooks better than a furnace. A merry heart will laugh at rain. And finally, good luck go with you in the greatest of all sports.

Old Smudge

A Story of the American Civil War

BY J. K. HILDRETH

ALONE in the silent and deserted engine-yard, Wat Emerson sat eating his scanty breakfast of coarse, dry bread and raw onions.

He had been aroused at daybreak from his bed of old sacking in the corner of the "round-house" by the distant booming of heavy guns. As he munched his tasteless meal, he thought of the time when, in the farm-house far away in the north, he had been awakened by his mother's cheery voice, "Up, up, Watty boy; bacon and eggs, dear." He could almost see the door, covered with honeysuckle vines, the row of hollyhocks down the path, and the sunflowers at the foot of the garden, whose bright faces seemed to laugh and nod at him as he sat by the window of the living-room, studying his lessons. Oh! if he had but known how happy he was in those days, surrounded by the love and comfort of home.

He had thought his life dull, then. He had dreamed of going out into the great unknown world which lay beyond the circle of blue hills, and of winning fame and wealth. He had been restless and uneasy, hating the long hours in school, his few household tasks, feeding the cow and weeding the garden. He felt himself ill-used and deprived of the chance of being or doing something—he did not know what—but certainly something wonderful.

A change had come at last. He had lost his dear

Old Smudge

mother. The farm had been sold to pay the debts upon it, and, without relatives, friends, or money, he had gone away from the old place, carrying his belongings in a satchel on his shoulder.

He was not long in discovering that the world was not the glorious thing he had imagined. He had drifted about, earning a scanty living by hard work, until finally he had found employment here.

At first he had been merely a helper in the engine-yard. But, his activity, patience, and intelligence soon won the approval of his superiors, as well as the goodwill of the men, who took pains to teach him many things about the engines. So that, young as he was, he had more than once run a trip of a few miles.

Having finished his bread and onions, Wat arose and walked slowly down the track towards an engine standing some distance from the round-house, the only one remaining. He went round it several times, rubbing up a bit of brass here, and a steel rod there, with the oily rag he carried in his hand. Then he mounted the cab, and opening the furnace door, looked in.

"Shavings, wood, coal, all right," muttered the boy disconsolately. "All ready to start, Old Smudge, are you not? But when will you ever start again? Who wants you any more than they want me? Both of us deserted and left to meet whatever may come. Poor Smudge! perhaps you feel as lonely and neglected as I do."

When the first sound of the cannon came booming over the southern hills, every one connected with the road had gathered up his property and fled away. Wat Emerson, having nowhere to go, stayed in the round-house, which was a shelter at least.

Old Smudge stayed too, nobody seemed to care for it either; and in his desolation, the boy felt almost as if the engine were a silent, but sympathetic friend. And so he had filled the boiler with water and the furnace with fuel, and, having nothing else to do, had oiled and

Old Smudge

rubbed and polished the machine until every part was in perfect order.

Now and then, while busied about Old Smudge, the boy paused to listen to those far-off sounds like repeated claps of thunder intermingled with continuous rattling. He knew that a great battle was in progress not many miles away. "But what does it matter to me?" he thought gloomily. If he had been twenty instead of fifteen, he might have been a soldier, and perhaps done some fine deed, and so raised himself in the world. As it was, he was only a poor neglected boy, whom nobody cared about, who would never have a chance to show the stuff he was made of, but would have to live out his life as a dirty, ill-paid drudge for people who cared nothing about him.

So, as the booming grew heavier and the volleys of musketry louder, he merely shrugged his shoulders and went on polishing Old Smudge.

Presently his attention was attracted by a measured thump! thump! up the track, where the glittering rails swept around a curve and out of sight. There was a crackle of musketry, rather nearer than that which he had heard all the morning, and five minutes later a horseman came galloping furiously around the turn and up the track towards him. The rider lay flat upon the neck of the animal, which staggered as it ran, and finally, a hundred yards from where Wat stood watching their progress, open-eyed and astonished, both horse and rider tumbled in a heap. After a short convulsive struggle on the part of the beast, and a futile attempt of the man to get to his feet, both seemed to collapse and lie still.

Then Wat regained his presence of mind, and ran down the track towards the two unfortunates. As he drew near them, he saw that the rider, who had fallen over his dead charger in a faint, wore the uniform of a lieutenant. He was a young fellow, and as he lay, with ghastly face and closed eyes, Wat felt a great pity for him, and catching up a bucket ran to the pump and brought some water,

Old Smudge

which he dashed into the officer's face, and soon restored him to consciousness.

"My leg is broken," he said feebly, trying to rise, "but I must get on. Help me to the saddle."

"It's no use, sir," said Wat, "the poor horse is dead."

"Is there no other horse to be had?" asked the officer, gazing round him wildly. The boy shook his head.

"No," he said, "and if there were you could not ride him."

The lieutenant appeared to recognise the truth of this, for he sank back groaning. "What shall I do? I *must* get there; I *must* get this despatch through"—he pointed to a paper in his belt—"or our army will be lost. The enemy have surrounded us, and unless we can get word to—" he paused abruptly, and looked at Wat suspiciously. "Perhaps, though in friendly territory, you are on the other side?"

"No," said Wat promptly, for he had recognised the officer's uniform. "So far as a boy like me can have any side, I'm on yours."

"You have a good face," muttered the officer. "I think I can trust you."

"You can, indeed," replied Wat earnestly. "I would do anything to help you. I wish I had a horse."

"It would be too late now," returned the young man, listening to the sound of firing, which had grown much nearer and heavier to the northward in the last few minutes, "they are closing in across the railroad. We are lost!" He seemed about to faint again. The boy pressed more water to his lips, which revived him.

Wat's eyes had been roving about the yard in an anxious effort to think of some means of helping his new friend. As they fell upon Old Smudge a sudden idea rushed into his mind. "If you really will trust me," he said, "I will try to get your message through. I think I know a way to do it."

The officer rose on his elbow, and gazing at him eagerly, exclaimed, "What is it? Tell me!"

Old Smudge

"There is Old Smudge, the engine yonder," replied Wat hesitatingly. "She is all ready to start in fifteen minutes. I don't think they have had time to tear up the track yet. I——"

The officer grasped his hand convulsively. "The very thing! Heaven bless you, lad. If you get through you will save our army."

"I'll try it, anyway," said Wat firmly. "Tell me what to do."

The officer drew the paper from his belt. "You see it is addressed to the commander of the division at Midland, forty miles north of here." He paused in the act of handing it to Wat. "It must not fall into the hands of the enemy," he said earnestly, "no matter what happens to *you*, you understand."

The boy nodded. "I will burn it in the furnace if they catch me," he replied. "They shall not get it, I promise you."

The officer smiled faintly. "You are a bright fellow," he said, giving the paper to Wat.

"But if I have to burn the message, and still get through myself, what shall I say?" asked the boy.

"Well thought of!" said the lieutenant. "If you reach the general, tell him this. The army is surrounded, and if he does not bring up his troops by noon to-morrow we shall be defeated and captured. See here"—and with a stick he drew a number of lines in the sand at his feet. "This is the situation of our army and the enemy's forces. Can you remember it and describe it to the general?"

Wat studied the rude chart until he had fixed it in his mind. "All right," he said; and the officer obliterated the lines with his hand.

"I am ready," he added, putting the despatch in the bosom of his shirt and rising to his feet. "I'll start at once; but first I must make you comfortable."

The lieutenant would have protested, but the boy raised the young man, and supporting him upon his

Old Smudge

strong arm, helped him to the round-house, where he laid him upon his own rude bed, bandaged the injured leg as well as he could, and put his bucket of water near him.

"Now go," urged the officer. "I am all right for the present."

"If I'm not killed or caught, I'll make the run to Midland in less than two hours," said Wat. "It's forty miles, and Old Smudge will do it easy in that time."

Shaking hands a last time with the wounded man, whose eyes filled with tears as he whispered a farewell to the brave boy, Wat ran to the engine, and started a fire beneath her boiler.

The black smoke poured from her stack, and soon a deep humming sound in the interior proved that the steam was rapidly rising.

"Old girl," said Wat, addressing the engine, "we are in for it this time. It may be the last trip for both of us. But we will do our duty, won't we, come what may?"

In a surprisingly short time the hand of the indicator in the cab showed Wat that there was steam enough for a start. With beating heart he opened the valve, the wheels began to revolve, and the huge machine glided smoothly over the network of tracks in the deserted yard. As he passed the open door of the round-house, the young officer from his bed waved his handkerchief, and the boy swung his hat in response.

Once out in the open country, Wat pulled open his valve still farther, and Old Smudge, panting, puffing cheerily, rapidly increased her speed. Faster and faster she spun along the rails, the wind whistling about the boy's head, as he leaned anxiously from the window. With every mile his spirits rose, until he almost forgot his own danger in the intoxication of the wild rush and roar of the engine.

Thus far, Wat had detected no signs of the enemy, but as Old Smudge swept around a curve, he saw, half

Old Smudge

a mile beyond, a line of gleaming bayonets crowning a hill. As he swiftly approached, he could see a movement among the troops. An officer ran down towards the tracks, waving his arms as a signal to stop. But Wat only opened the valve still wider, and Old Smudge bounded forward at a still swifter pace.

He saw a squad of men lower their guns. In another moment a fringe of fire flashed forth. Wat ducked his head, and it must be confessed that a cold chill ran over his body as the bullets came whizzing about the engine. One of the missiles struck the window-sill above his head. Another pierced the smoke stack; but no harm was done, and before the men could fire again Wat and his engine were out of range.

"All right, so far, old girl!" cried Wat cheerfully, as he threw more fuel into the furnace.

She had now made twenty miles, or one half the distance to Midland; and having run the gauntlet of the outpost, Wat began to feel more hopeful of reaching his destination in safety. But as he closed the furnace door and glanced through the cab window along the track ahead, his heart stood still. Not 500 yards beyond, he saw a group of men in the uniform of the enemy, busily engaged upon the road bed. He understood what they were doing in an instant. They were tearing up the rails! Whether any of the tracks had yet been displaced, he could not make out. Old Smudge was booming along at a thirty-mile pace, and even had he wished he could not have stopped the engine in time. With a feeling of desperation he opened the valve yet wider, and Old Smudge roared and panted onward as if she understood her own peril.

Some of the men swung their arms above their heads; others ran for their muskets, stacked beside the road. But with bent shoulders and his hand upon the valve-bar, Wat stuck bravely to his post. On swept the great machine. The men scattered from the tracks. There was a rocking, thumping, and swaying, as the engine

Old Smudge

passed over the loosened, but not yet wholly unspiked, rails. A scattering volley, which did no harm, and once more Old Smudge was pounding along in safety, snorting defiantly from her pipe.

"Well, Old Smudge," said Wat, straightening up and wiping the perspiration from his forehead with his sleeve, "we have got the best of them again. Luck seems to be on our side." His lips suddenly closed. His triumph had been premature! He knew too well what that dark brown line crowning the hill, round the base of which the tracks curved, meant. It was a newly erected earth-work, and those black objects protruding along its side were cannon. One shot from either of those cruel, gaping mouths would instantly finish Old Smudge's career, and his own as well.

Involuntarily he stretched forth his hand to the valve-bar, to close it and bring the engine to a standstill—to surrender, in fact. Indeed, there was very little hope of escape. At so short a range the battery must surely disable Old Smudge and bring her career to a disastrous end. But in another moment the blood flowed back to his brave young heart. His hand closed on the bar, but it was only to open the valve still wider. Feeling certain that he must be captured, even if he escaped with his life, he took the despatch from his bosom and threw it into the furnace. Then, with the calmness which comes of settled resolution, he went to the tender and began throwing in lumps of coal, until the furnace glowed like a volcano, and the boiler thundered and rumbled with the vast volume of steam enclosed in it.

"Let her burst!" muttered Wat recklessly. "It will be only a quick way of getting out of it. I don't care. But oh, if I could only get through!"

Boom! A heavy projectile screamed twenty feet over the cab. Boom! Another struck and tossed into air the rails Old Smudge had just passed. Boom! Clang! A shot whizzed over the engine so perilously near that the bell was torn from its brackets and whirled jangling

Old Smudge

beside the track. With a feeling of utter desperation, Wat pushed down the bar to the last notch.

The furnace, crammed to the door, sent forth a terrific volume of heat, the dial of the steam-gauge showed 130 pounds pressure—a burden such as Old Smudge had never borne before in her whole existence. The piston-rods slid back and forth like gleams of lightning. Her huge drivers whistled upon the tracks with a fierce, crashing sound. The engine, running at such a frightful speed, rocked and reeled as if every plunge must be her last. With his face deadly pale, his teeth set, one hand upon the valve-bar and the other bracing his body against the side of the cab, the young engineer gazed out upon the glittering rails, hardly remembering the huge balls from the battery which screamed about him, now ploughing up the road in front, and now ripping up the tracks and sleepers behind.

Boom! One last gun, just as the engine was whirling out of range of the battery, and with a crash that flung Wat upon his knees in the cab, the ball struck Old Smudge's left driving-rod and tore it from its pinions.

For an instant, Wat believed that all was over. Old Smudge tottered and seemed about to pitch from the rails. But the gallant engine kept on with one driving-rod, and the steam pouring from her injured side in vast volumes.

Her speed was now decreased by half, but the battery was safely passed and only ten miles remained to be accomplished.

With his steam-valve wide open, constantly throwing on fresh fuel, Wat managed to keep the wounded machine in fairly rapid motion.

The sun had long since sunk behind the western hills, and plunging onward in the growing darkness with an engine which, for aught he knew, might blow up at any moment, the brave boy stuck to his post. Slower and slower ran poor old Smudge. She was plainly giving out. Wat could hear her groan like a human being in pain.

Old Smudge

Ten minutes later the boy, gazing anxiously through the cab window, saw lights glancing along the track ahead. He knew that these must be the outposts of ——'s division which he was seeking.

As the engine crawled up to the spot, Wat answered the hoarse challenge of the sentries by closing the valve and bringing her to a halt.

Springing out he approached the soldiers, who, with their weapons lowered, were peering at him through the gloom.

"Who are you, and where do you come from?" hailed an officer, raising his lantern to inspect the boy's face.

"I bring a message of life and death from the army," answered Wat. The officer looked at him suspiciously.

"Where did you get that engine?" he asked. "Give an account of yourself, young man."

"Take me to the general without an instant's delay," said Wat. "I have made a forty-mile run on that engine to bring a message from the army, which is surrounded, and must be lost if not relieved by to-morrow noon."

The evident sincerity with which he spoke seemed to impress the officer, and Wat speedily found himself in the centre of a squad of silent men, marching towards the general's head-quarters. Ten minutes' walk brought the party to a large tent, lighted by a lantern on a plain pine table, beside which sat an elderly, soldierly-looking man dressed in a general's uniform.

"Well, boy," said the general, fixing a pair of penetrating eyes upon the lad, "who are you, and what do you want?"

Wat told him his name, and in a few words related his story.

The general listened quietly, then arising, gave a message to the orderly at his tent door, and presently a number of officers entered and gathered about the table.

"Tell your story over again," said the commander sharply; and Wat repeated his experience.

Old Smudge

"Well, gentlemen, what do you say?" said the commander, looking at the group of officers.

"The scouts report heavy cannonading for the last two days," said one.

"But we have no knowledge of the state of affairs," said another.

"Give me a pencil and a piece of paper," interrupted Wat. "The wounded lieutenant told me just how it was."

The pencil and paper were furnished; and while the general and his staff gathered silently about the table, Wat drew from memory the position of the contending armies, as the young officer had sketched it in the sand.

When the sketch was finished, the general looked at it long and attentively, then it passed from hand to hand around the group.

"We must move at once!" exclaimed the eldest and highest in rank, and the others agreed in turn.

"And what are we to do with this boy?" said one of the number.

"He shall have some supper in my tent, and rest until we are ready to start, then he shall go with me," replied the general.

"Will some one take care of Old Smudge?" asked Wat, looking anxiously around. "Draw the fire, fix the broken driving-rod and clean her up a bit, you know?"

"Do not trouble yourself about that, my boy," replied the general kindly. "We have plenty of engineers in the division who will put your Old Smudge in good shape."

While eating his supper, the general questioned Wat long and closely. When the troops began to move, the boy was given a horse and ordered to ride close at the commander's right hand.

It is not necessary to recount that eventful night's march. You will find the story in any volume of history. We need only say that the reinforcements arrived in time to save the day.

Among the names mentioned in the commanding

Old Smudge

general's despatches was : "Walter Emerson, a boy of fifteen, whose unexampled courage and coolness saved the army. He is recommended to the notice of the Government." And the Government did notice him.

At the close of the war, as every one knows, there was a grand parade of the veterans, before dispersing to their homes.

You would never have recognised Wat Emerson, the poor, neglected, badly clad engine-boy, in the smart lieutenant of engineers, riding beside a young captain, his old friend the wounded officer, in the brilliant staff of the general-in-chief.

The Haunt of the Bunyip

An Adventure in Central Australia

BY L. B. THOBURN-CLARKE

I AND my brother Ted Bailey had been prospecting out back in the Great Lone Land for some months without any success worth speaking about. We had decided on returning home when one of those vague rumours, which come from no one knows where, reached us. There was gold to be found near some immense cliffs somewhere in the interior of Australia.

We could not hear anything more definite but this was enough. Instead of turning our steps homeward we made for the nearest mining camp, loaded our camels, and struck across the desert.

Our party consisted of Ted and myself, our cook, a Japanese, and a camel-man to look after our four camels. Two prospectors named Dan and Phil Kelly, who heard of our expedition, threw their lot in with us. Altogether we made a nice little party of six.

We had found very little water at our last "soak" (a natural water-hole in which water collects during rain). There was only enough to water our camels and partially fill our tank. As it was only just sufficient for present needs we hurried onwards towards the next "soak."

The three days during which we travelled as fast as our camels would go seemed never-ending. When we had finished our last drop of water our agony of thirst grew almost unbearable. We none of us could tell how we got through the last few hours of that journey.

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We reached the "soak" just at sunset. It was quite dry. I sat down on the edge of the "soak" and gazed anxiously around. A long stretch of red sand, broken here and there by brown ironstone ridges, stretched away into the distance. A few gimlet gums that reared their long lean trunks and branches against the evening sky seemed calling for the rain that never came. A cloudless hot sky above, glorious with all the various tints of an Australian desert afterglow, a picture of opal colouring. I would have admired it at another time, but now, with the dried up "soak" in front of me and the thirsty camels behind, I felt as if this last straw had indeed proved too much and literally broken my back. I looked around at the rest. They had thrown themselves down on the red sand gazing into the empty "soak" with despairing eyes. The camels hung their heads and moaned in a dejected manner.

"Where's the next 'soak,'" asked Ted.

I had to own that I did not know. I had hoped to fall in with some blacks as the district was quite new to me.

"You won't find any blacks about here now the 'soaks' are empty," put in Dan Kelly, as he stolidly smoked his pipe. He was an old hand in the desert. Presently he got up and wandered about examining carefully the shrubs and stunted bushes. The rest of us sat still and watched him. He returned in a few seconds with his hands full of brown roots which he placed endways in a "billy."

"I think we can get enough water from these for all of us to have a drink. It is the root of the West Australian Water Tree," he added, as I questioned him eagerly. We gathered more roots, and in about an hour each "billy" full had yielded about a pint of sweetish water. It was not much, but we drained it eagerly and ate our suppers. It was a bright moonlight night. The vivid Australian moon, that seemed to hang just out of reach in the steel-blue sky, made everything almost as clear as day. After a discussion as to ways and means it

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was decided that Dan, as the best bushman, should mount one of the camels and ride off to find either some blacks or a "soak." I saw him depart with a feeling of despair, but it was the only thing possible to save our lives.

The night passed. The next morning we procured a little more water from the water trees, but it was not enough to slake our burning thirst. The camels, poor brutes, lay on the sands moaning sadly in a vain endeavour to express their sufferings. The day dragged on slowly. Just as evening set in Ted saw a figure in the dim distance ; at first I thought it was a mirage, but as it came nearer we saw it was Dan.

He was welcomed by an eager crowd. Had he been successful ?

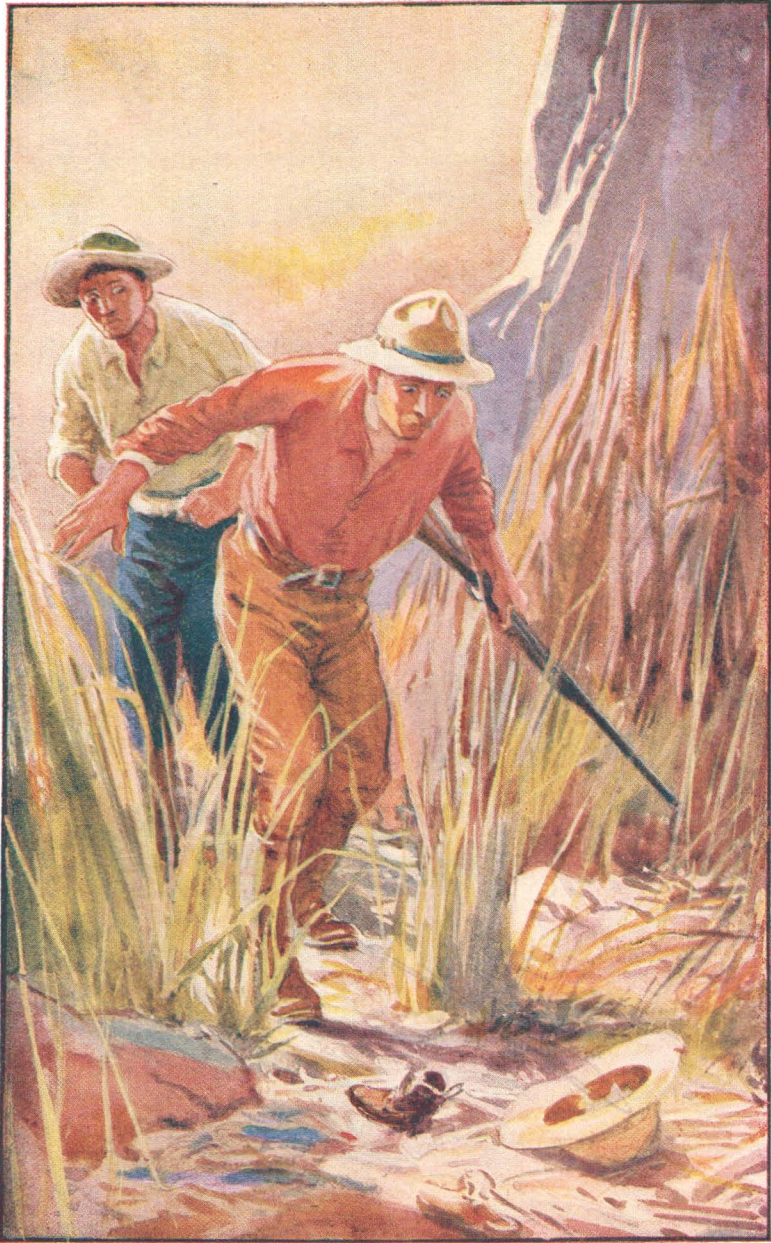
"Yes," he cried joyfully. "I've found some blacks. Made them guide me to a big pool of permanent water, filled my tanks and here I am. There's plenty of food for the camels, crowds of birds, and it's also near some cliffs. I could see them on the far horizon."

The precious water was doled out, and we at once struck camp so as to travel as far as possible before sunrise ; as the pool was fifteen miles off.

At last we reached it.

It was all Dan had described it and more. A long, limpid pool, surrounded by trees and good grass country. It did not take long for us to decide on making this our main camp from which we could prospect in every direction. We were surprised at no blacks being near such a fertile spot. But Dan assured us they never came to it unless very hard up for water. They gave him no reason, however, beyond the fact that none of their tribes would go near the pools.

For a week we revelled in the fertility around us, and then Dan and I decided to make a trip for the cliffs one afternoon. They proved to be about six miles away. The way to them was marked by a chain of pools and fertile spots. Apparently no white man had ever trodden



“ LOOKING DOWN, I FOUND THAT IT WAS THE JAP’S ‘ WIDEAWAKE ’
AND A SHOE THAT SHOWED A SINISTER ROW OF TEETH MARKS.”

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the edges of these pools. Only lizards and birds held their kingdom there. Ducks and black swans floated upon the surface of the water, while gay parrots and other birds chirped gaily among the numerous trees that grew around them. We were plainly following the course of some underground river, whose waters evidently welled up and kept the pools full. Probably at some long distant time the chain of pools had been a magnificent river watering a fertile plain.

But if everything was life and joyousness out in the brilliant sunshine, so everything under the cliffs was dark and gloomy. They towered above us for several hundreds of feet, making two huge walls rising sheer from the desert with about a hundred feet between. These two walls ended abruptly at the part we faced, but stretched in parallel lines as far as the eye could see. No sun could penetrate into the depths between, where a dark stretch of gloomy water lay fringed with dank reeds. It appeared perfectly leaden, though above the sullen quietness there arose a roar as of falling waters, yet the brown surface was quite unruffled by any ripple.

We penetrated through the reeds anxious to find out the mystery. It was so dark and gloomy under the cliffs that as we entered their shadow we felt chilled as with a sudden cold. The farther we penetrated the colder grew the air, and I felt terrified of something intangible, but did not like to own it to Dan, though he looked white enough under his sunburn. Every now and then our feet crashed into something that smashed under our tread.

"Feels like bones," said Dan.

I started, his voice echoed weirdly up and up the gloomy cliffs. I could not answer for fear of those echoes, but struck a match, and stooping, looked among the reeds.

"Bones?" Yes, they were bones. Lying in great masses as even I could see with the faint light from

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my match. Bones of animals who must have died ages ago, they were so old and brittle.

With a shudder Dan and I hurried on guided by the sound of falling water.

At last we reached it. Even in that deadly gloom it was a magnificent sight. The walls met, and from a cavern about half way up poured a mighty volume of water, which apparently disappeared into the body of the earth, yet left the still pond beyond the influence of its swirling descent.

"One of Australia's buried rivers," said Dan. We turned from the scene and retraced our steps towards the sunshine. Again we crashed through the reeds growing dankly over the bone-strewn ground until at last we reached the open air. "I'm glad I've seen it," added Dan, as we seated ourselves in the hot sunshine on a sand ridge that overlooked the gorge. "But I don't want to go in there again. I don't mind owning now that I felt frightened."

"So did I," I rejoined. "I felt as if some thing was watching us. Some awful object that might become visible at any moment."

"I didn't feel so bad over it as that. Look!—look!—look!" he cried excitedly, pointing to the pool below us.

I looked, but beyond a circle of ever-widening ripples could see nothing. "What was it?"

"I can't tell what it really was. It was just a momentary glimpse of a horrible something." He shuddered, and began to walk slowly towards the pool.

"Come back," I called. He paid no heed and walked steadily onwards, his face wearing the most ghastly look of horror I have ever seen on any human face. Again I called. He appeared not to hear me.

There flashed through my mind stories of persons being fascinated by snakes, and I rushed after him catching up to him just before he reached the edge of the pool.

He fought madly, but I was half a head taller and

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stronger and soon dragged him bodily away. I carefully looked away from the water though I heard it swirling violently, for I dreaded that the awful fascination might grip me as well.

I drew Dan away for some distance, and then we both sank exhausted with the struggle on the hot sand. He sat up and rubbed his eyes. He shuddered, but I noticed that he did not look towards the pool. After a few minutes we got up and walked rapidly from the spot. Dan was trembling as if he had ague, and by the time we reached the camp he could hardly stand. I gave him a good dose of quinine and he turned into his blankets at once.

All that night he raved in delirium, sometimes shrieking to me to look at the pond, then moaning in terror. The next day he seemed quieter and slept through the greater part of it. But the delirium and fever returned in the evening. This continued for a week when the fever left him. He was so white and thin that he looked like a wreck of his former self. I was much relieved at his recovery, as I depended on him a good deal, his knowledge of the blacks and bushcraft being extremely useful in the dreary wastes we should have to traverse before we reached civilisation.

The rest of our party had been anxious to go to the cliffs, but had put it off at my request until Dan was better. Now he begged them not to go.

"Nonsense, Dan," laughed Ted. "What did you see?"

"I can't describe it. Jack knows it was real."

"But you didn't see anything, Jack?" asked Ted.

"No, because I would not look, but I felt it was there. Not for all the gold in Australia would I face that pool again," I said.

"Well, Phil and I are going. Jappie and the camel-man have gone to-day. I saw them sneaking off quietly about an hour ago."

I gave an exclamation of impatience. "Why didn't you stop them, Ted?"

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"Why should I? If you didn't want anyone to go, you should not have aroused our curiosity."

I watched Dan anxiously. He was shivering and glancing nervously around him. I feared he was going to have a return of the fever.

My attention, however, was attracted by a most awful hubbub in the distance, and a roaring camel came galloping into camp with the Jap and camel-man clinging on to its back. They were dreadfully irate with the poor brute who flung itself down on the ground near me, throwing its riders full sprawl upon the sand, and roared with might and main.

The Jap explained, as he picked himself up, that the two had ridden to the cliffs. The camel had bent to drink at the pool. As it did so something swirled in the water, and, with a roar, the camel had galloped off to the camp in spite of their both dragging on the nose rope.

The poor beast looked a pitiful object shaking in every limb, its roars now changed to heart-rending moans.

"I'm sorry, old chap," said Ted. "There was something in your yarn after all, and it was not merely Dan's fevered ravings. I really thought it was all moonshine. The camel would not get into that state over nothing."

Phil said much the same, and the two promised not to go near the mysterious pool. I felt relieved, as my hands were full looking after Dan who had had another relapse.

The camel-man too seemed inclined to be queer, and I knew he'd be down with fever before morning. If it had not been for the long strip of waterless desert between us and the nearest mining camp, I should have struck our tents and left the place. That was impossible, so I contented myself with giving Dan and the camel-man a strong dose of quinine, and turned in leaving Phil on watch. I had not slept very long when I was aroused by the howling of dingoes. There must have been quite a large pack hidden among the surrounding trees. The noise they made was deafening, and awoke the whole

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camp who turned out of their blankets very angry. The moon had set, but the stars were very bright, and the trees surrounding the camp could be plainly distinguished. Hundreds of fiery eyes glowed under their shade, while the weird, blood-curdling howls rose and fell as I listened.

I seized my gun in a sudden rage, and fired in among the glowing eyes. They disappeared like lightning and all was quiet again.

We returned to our beds, but as soon as we dropped to sleep, the dingoes came back again. The same thing was repeated over and over again, until dawn drove the wild dogs back to their lairs. Then we dropped to sleep. We slept heavily until the sun was high in the heavens. When I awoke the camel-man was missing. No one had seen him go, though Ted and Phil had watched in turn during the night, only a few yards away from where he slept wrapped in his rugs.

Leaving Phil and the Jappy to look after Dan, I and Ted searched for the tracks of the missing man, and found them at last leading in the direction of the cliffs.

Returning to the camp, we mounted the riding camel and started off. When we reached within half a mile of the cliffs the brute flung himself on the sands and declined to move any farther. We had to dismount. Almost before we were off, the animal, with a wild flourish, had flung itself on its feet and was off at a mad gallop for the camp.

"Phil will be alarmed," put in Ted.

"It can't be helped, now we are so near we must go on. For heaven's sake, don't look at the pool under the cliff, Ted. Look at the edge, at anything, but don't look at the water."

"Poor old Jack, you're getting unnerved."

"I should think I am. If it would only rain we could get away. It is an accursed place."

We hurried on, and in a few minutes reached the ridge that overlooked the pool. The camel-man lay close by

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its edge apparently asleep. But when we reached him we found he was dead.

Turning our backs resolutely on the pool we carried the body up to the ridge. There was no sign of any wound. He looked just as if he had died in his sleep, and a faint smile lingered on his brown face. Laying the body down we turned away from it, and silently dug a shallow grave in the hot sand of the ridge. When we had completed our task we turned to find the body had disappeared. It had vanished completely. It might have been a vivid dream for all evidence to the contrary. There was nothing to show except the faint impression on the sands where the body had lain, and a still slighter trail leading down to the water, that it had ever existed except in our imagination. We had heard or seen nothing while busy digging the grave.

Ted looked scared. I caught his arm to prevent him rushing towards the pool, and together we hurried back to the camp. When nearly there we met the Jap coming to look for us. Phil had been alarmed at the camel's return without us.

Dan was just about the same, but as the evening approached he grew more restless. After the disappearance of the camel-man we were afraid to leave him alone for a minute. That night I watched Dan. I insisted on the others sleeping close beside me. Then with a loaded rifle beside me I sat and waited. At midnight I arose and seated myself in the densest shadow of the "boughshed." I could not explain why I did this, but some reason prompted me at the time. I had hardly seated myself, when I happened to look towards the cliffs. To my astonishment I saw in the starlight a long black object moving slowly across the white sandy ridge that edged the fertile zone. I had hardly caught sight of it when it vanished. Nor could I see what it was in the starlight. A weird indescribable barking sound echoed around. I sat watching for a few minutes, then sprang up and hurried out from my shelter. Nothing met my view

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except the glowing eyes of the dingoes who commenced their weird chorus. I dispersed them with a shot and returned to Dan. He was very quiet, and I lit a lantern and looked at him. He was sinking fast, and in spite of all we could do died just at dawn.

Phil was broken-hearted and threw himself on the sand, refusing to be comforted. At midday we buried Dan under a grove of cypress trees about half a mile from the camp. We dug the grave deep and covered the body with a quantity of leaves. While on the top of all we piled masses of iron stone to prevent the dingoes tearing up the remains. I would have given anything to have left the spot, but until after the rains it would be madness to attempt the eight days' journey over the deserts with only empty "soaks" in front of us. The horror of it all weighed upon our spirits, and we grew gaunt and hollow-eyed. All except the Jap. He was always gay and bright, and never worried over anything. But he was filled with a keen desire to hunt for the gold said to lie at the foot of the cliffs. He was a lazy little beggar, and never walked an inch farther than he could help. It was in vain that he tried to get there on the camels, they always brought him back quicker than he started.

Every day I anxiously scanned the sky for rain, it was were absolutely cloudless. The weary time passed slowly.

Phil had never seemed to have recovered from his brother's death. He was greatly worried over the dingoes trying to burrow under the stones to get to the body. Night and day he haunted the spot.

One day he was missing, and we found him lying dead on the stones that covered his brother's grave. He had died of a broken heart. Ted and I buried him beside his brother, and piling more stones over the grave we left them alone together.

We walked silently back to the camp and, seating ourselves, gazed moodily at each other. We were too

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despondent to talk, or to notice that the Jappy was not there. Tea-time came, and we realised his absence for the first time. We hunted up the camels, but all four were feeding quite quietly and evidently none had been taken out.

"He's gone after the gold," said Ted. "Shall we go and look for him?"

"No," I said decidedly. I had no wish to venture near the cliff pool again. "He went against my orders, if he doesn't return he is most likely dead, and we could do no good."

We prepared our tea silently, and then feeling sleep out of the question sat and talked until dawn.

I was rejoiced the next morning to see a solitary black-fellow come up to the camp. He spoke English fluently for a black, so could understand us when we told him our tale.

"You better come along o' me," he said. "I show you how to cross, way back. You all die if you stay here."

"But the Jap?" I urged.

He showed his teeth in a grin.

"Bunyip got him," but in spite of his grin, he looked around nervously. "Bunyip live in pool under cliffs—Bunyip all call same as Christian Devil. He black heathen devil animal. I, Christian, so I not afraid." All the same he appeared dreadfully frightened. "Long time back my tribe lived here. Bunyip kill all of them except one, he runned away and tell tale. No black-fellows come here now. All stay away. Bunyip hungry kill Japp man."

Ted and I could not leave the place without giving the Jappy a chance, and as the black, Burra, promised to return for us that evening, we set out to see if we could find the Japp. We chose the midday as the time for our search, Burra saying that the sun shone into the gorge at midday and frightened the Bunyip into its den.

We pretended not to heed his story, but the fact of the

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sun shining into that gloomy place proved a great attraction to us.

Burra was right. The sun, now at its zenith, shone right into the gorge, and all looked bright and joyous in the glorious brilliancy of the Australian sun.

I did not feel any sense of horror now, and yielding to Ted's wishes guided him through the dank reeds to where the cataract thundered from its rocky prison.

If the sight had been grand in the gloom, it was doubly so now as the murky brown waters poured in one mighty volume down the face of the cliff and disappeared into an immense yawning cavern below. We gazed for some time, then, seeing the shadows beginning to creep down the cliff, I turned and drew Ted with me. As we crossed the bone-covered ground I bent to examine the bones. They were those of animals and blacks, the skulls of each being mingled in wild profusion.

Ted and I were hurrying onwards for the light was failing, when I caught sight of something hidden among the reeds. Looking down, I found that it was the Jap's "wideawake" and a shoe that showed a sinister row of teeth marks.

Just then the shadow descended. Mad with unreasoning terror, I tore out from the gorge, followed by the equally terrified Ted, nor did we slacken our pace until a good distance lay between us and the deadly haunt of that unknown peril, that had evidently killed the Jap, leaving only the "wideawake" and bitten shoe behind.

That evening, guided by Burra, we left the camping ground, determined to chance the crossing of the desert, and leave the dreadful associations with the nameless terrors of the gorge far behind. As we rode away the long, mournful howls of the dingoes echoed upon the hot desert wind, while above all came the weird, haunting bark that had startled me the night Dan had died. Once more I saw the long shape traverse a ridge of white sand between two pools, followed by a loud splash

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as of a heavy body striking the water with extreme violence.

"Bunyip, he come to get you, and angry you gone," remarked Burra, as he urged the camel he rode into a quicker pace. "That him thrashing the water. Maky much noise."

We rode fast and silently onwards, covering many miles, but the sound of the splashing water haunted me.

Where had I heard the same sound on just such a hot night as this? Then I remembered. Crocodiles at play in the Roper River. Could the creature that haunted the pool under the gorge be a crocodile? I wondered. Quite possibly it was a monster that had remained imprisoned in the pool when the river ceased to flow above ground. And with that plausible theory I have ever since accounted for the natives' "bunyip."

On the Long, Long Trail

Stories of the Canadian North-West

By A. L. HAYDON

SOMETHING of late—a book or a picture—has brought back Canada to my mind vividly. In memory I have been roaming through Northern Ontario, by wood and lake and river, riding across the Saskatchewan prairie, smelling the sweet grass and the flowers of the rich ranch-lands of Alberta, treading the boarded side-walks of Calgary (are they all of stone or asphalt by now, I wonder?) and looking across to the foothills of the Rockies. And with these memories, very dear to me, comes the remembrance of two brave men of the north-land, whose stories have always held a place in my mind. You will not, I hope, think them unworthy of record.

Of the first I will tell the tale as I heard it from the lips of Jules Bonami, lumberjack and sometime trapper in the north-west, the while he brought me down the Ottawa by canoe. I had known Jules of old, and many a yarn had I listened to by the camp fire or beside the stove in his comfortable little home at Beauceage, near Lake Nipissing. He had hunted and trapped far and wide through the country to the north and west of Hudson Bay, through the lone, waste lands of Keewatin. The name of Jules Bonami was well known to all who traversed that part of the north-west, to the fur-hunters, the factors, and to the many tribes of Indians who fished and trapped between the Nelson and the Coppermine.

I have only to shut my eyes now to see Jules' swarthy

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face as he bent to the swing of his paddle, and to hear his soft voice, as low almost as the ripple of the water round the bow of the canoe, as he related this tale of the outlands.

"I have tole you—have I not, m'sieu?—of many strange happenings way up there," he jerked a hand in the direction of the north. "Truly, I have met with many men and seen many things. There comes to my min' one story now, because it is only a day or so ago that Lepelletier, whom we met on the lake, tole me of the death of the man. He was an Englishman, this one of whom I speak, and he was one of the mysteries—one of those who come here from some place they never mention and who never return. Canada is for so many of them a grave in which they bury all that of the past, and we do not question them. They are of the present only.

"This man, he call himself Cartier—as you would say, Carter, is it not?—Yes, but we say Cartier, and it is so that I always call him. He was tall, very tall, m'sieu, and so strong that no one ever dared to try a fall with him. I have seen him throw a steer, I tell you, and he was powerful like the Greek god Hercules. He was brave, too; as brave as any man I have met. Also, because he live so much alone in the wild country, and because, I think, he had so much to forget, he was a silent man. Scarcely to me would he speak, and but little to others. What it was that drove him to our country we never learned. The only thing about him that we knew was from a story which the Indians brought us. They had it that Cartier had a partner once, that this man had done him a great wrong, that there had been a quarrel, and that Cartier had wrought the other an injury. Maybe it was that he killed his enemy: we did not know. These Indians spoke of the other man as an evil thing. Cartier they loved and feared.

"Not many years ago, m'sieu, I was trapping up by

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the Du Rocher, where fur was plentiful. There was with me an Indian, an Athabaskan. He was a good trapper, like me, and we make good hunting that time. So we got together many pelts, until one day the bad weather come. There was a blizzard and the snow lay very thick. Houshi and I built a rough shack for our shelter. That storm it last three days. Then, when it is all finish and we make a fire and cook some food, I hear the cry of a wolf. Then many cries, and the sound of a gun. Houshi say he hear some one shout also, but I do not hear this. An Indian's ears are better than mine, perhaps. So Houshi and I take our guns, and we go to the place from which the cries come.

"There we found, m'sieu, in a belt of timber, two men. One of them had been much hurt by the wolves. He was lying against a tree, very still and his eyes closed. There was blood on the snow where it had fallen from his leg and his arm, for the animals had bitten him badly. The other man—and it was this Cartier, of whom I spoke—was striking about him at five or six of the wolves. He had a great club in his hand, for something was wrong with his rifle. He had fired but one or two shots with it and had killed a wolf.

"He was a very strong man, as I have said, m'sieu. Even as we came up I saw him split open a wolf's head at a blow. But another of the creatures leapt in quick at that moment and fastened upon him. I dared not fire, though my gun was raised, and I watched Cartier as he seized the great thing's jaws with his bare hands and wrenched them asunder. With his hands he killed the wolf, m'sieu. Houshi and I shot the others, so that there was no more danger. As for Cartier, when he had wiped his hands, he thanked us in a few words. The other man by the tree, he say nothing. I do not think that he knew we were there even.

"'This poor fellow,' says Cartier to me, 'is very ill. He has lost his sled and his dogs. We mus' get him to the Fort on the lake quickly. I will take him now.'

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“Then he sent Houshi and me on in front to get our dogs ready, so that the sick man might be carried swiftly down to the settlement. And when I look back I see this Cartier rouse the other, and pick him up in his strong arms, and hoist him on to his back. That other man he was big and heavy, but Cartier make no trouble of him. He walk straight on, swinging his rifle and following our tracks. It was several mile as you reckon it, that he walk, and he carry the sick man all the way, with little rest. That was what this Cartier did, m’sieu. Then he come to us where we had the dogs all harnessed, and we bandaged the man’s legs and his arm where the wolves had hurt him so badly; and we wrapped him in blankets and furs upon the sled.

“So, m’sieu, we brought that poor, wounded fellow down to New Fort, where there was one who had been a doctor in the big cities, and his life was saved. For that he had to thank Cartier—not me, nor Houshi. We only got the dogs ready and helped to bring him south. It was Cartier who carried him, who did what nursing was required, and who tended him like a son.

“I was in the big room of the Fort, myself, when the sick man was being cared for. That doctor he knew Cartier already; he spoke to him as a friend. And he said to Cartier as I stood there: ‘This is Gallois—I recognise him. You will know his face. And here is his name.’ He showed it written on a little tag in the man’s coat collar.

“Cartier say nothing. He only look, and his face was grave. ‘Yes,’ he answer at last, ‘it is Gallois.’

“‘You knew, then, all the time?’ ask the doctor.

“And Cartier, he shrug his shoulders and say, ‘Perhaps.’ That was all: ‘perhaps.’

“Then he tell the doctor that he can do no more. And he take out some money and he put it into the other’s hand, saying: ‘Do all that is wanted. I have forgotten—and forgiven.’

“Then he turn and go out, with a little nod to me and

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to Houshi. I never saw him again. But the doctor of the Fort he tell me how this Gallois was the man who had done Cartier so great a wrong in the years gone by. He was an evil man, as the Indians had told. His life had nothing good in it, one would think. Let us hope, m'sieu, that from that day he was a better man. Let us hope that the good God touched his heart, and that he make something of the life Cartier had given him again.

"So Cartier went back to the trapping, and to the great silences. In those long years he had thought much, as a man does who is alone with himself. God comes very near to such a man, m'sieu, when he lives in the wild country. A man becomes either good or bad, and sometimes he becomes a very bad man. With Cartier, because he had a soul, it was for good. I know that really in his heart he had forgiven this Gallois all his wickedness and treachery. The whole story I do not know, m'sieu. It is enough that the other man was a rogue. But Cartier was too big for revenge. God spoke to him, and perhaps there was something in his own life for which he prayed for forgiveness.

"And only the other day he die—up there among the lakes and the woods, in the great silence. I wonder how many such there are in our country, m'sieu, these men who come from nowhere and who seek a place to rest in."

The second tale that I often think of is of a Mounted Police trooper who did a brave deed some time back in the north-west. This man, Constable A. Pedley, was stationed at Fort Chipewyan, on Lake Athabasca. There were only three men at this lonely outpost of the Royal North-West Mounted Police, a sergeant and two constables. So when, one day, a patrol of the R.N.W.M.P. found a job for the detachment to undertake, only one man could be spared for it. The patrol had just happened upon the cabin of a half-breed in which a missionary—an evangelist—had been taking shelter for some months. The latter, under the strain of winter conditions and the monotony of existence with a man

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with whom he could not converse, was mentally affected. It was desirable that the police should look into his case, and Pedley accordingly was detailed for the task.

Pedley took a dog team to the breed's hut, found the missionary by this time a raving madman, and carried him back to the post at Fort Chipewyan. It now remained to get the poor fellow down to Fort Saskatchewan, the nearest large post to the south. As Pedley was the stronger and the more experienced of the two constables, the duty fell to his lot. The other two members of the little detachment had to stand by the post.

So Pedley set out on his long trip, in the second week of December. His course was to follow the Athabasca River so far as was possible and hit the trail south to the Fort. In all the journey was well over 500 miles. That is nothing for a Rider of the Plains to contemplate, but with a madman for companion it is another matter. On leaving the lake post the mad missionary was well wrapped in furs, while his feet, already frost-bitten, were encased in large moccasins. He was put into an Eskimo sleeping-bag and fastened to the sled by straps. For most of the journey Pedley travelled on foot, running with the dogs and helping to pull the sled over bad places.

I have read Pedley's report of this trip, and I remember how he speaks of the great depth of snow encountered and the severity of the storms. The temperature ranged between 20 and 50 degrees below zero. You can gather something of the difficulties and terrors of the journey from Pedley's brief notes. When camp was made in the evening the madman would often refuse his food. The constable had to feed him forcibly, to keep life in his charge. It was important, too, that the missionary should be released from the sled occasionally for exercise. At these times he had to be watched to prevent any attempt at escape. Once, indeed, he did break away, and Pedley had a long chase and a fierce struggle before he recaptured his man.



"HE WALKED STRAIGHT ON, SWINGING HIS RIFLE AND FOLLOWING OUR TRACKS." (See p. 294.)

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At another time the two were held prisoners for forty-eight hours by the most terrible snowstorm of the trip. For protection Pedley lashed the madman in his fur bag to one tree and himself to another, while the upturned sled served as a wind-shield to the dogs. Apart from the storms there were timber wolves to be reckoned with, large and dangerous animals whom he had to keep at bay with big camp fires and often with his rifle. But all these dangers and difficulties were surmounted bravely, and the R.N.W.M.P. trooper with his charge won through to Fort M'Murray, on the Athabasca River, where he found a solitary half-breed Indian in residence. There was a rest of two days here and then the constable hit the trail again.

On this latter part of the journey the madman gave even more trouble. His violent outbreaks increased. When released he would make for the dogs with a heavy stick. He attacked Pedley more than once, and the constable once more had to chase him over the prairie and subdue him by main force. "I am a pretty strong man," says Pedley, in his report, "but in the wind and numbing cold it was really a difficult job to carry him a quarter of a mile to camp."

Something over four weeks from the day on which he left Fort Chipewyan Constable Pedley drove his team into Fort Saskatchewan to deliver, as instructed, the unfortunate missionary entrusted to his care. The latter, when examined by the surgeon, was found to be badly frozen about the feet, while the exposure to the cold had caused paralysis of the tongue. Under the care and attention now given him at the Fort hospital he speedily recovered, and it is pleasing to be able to record that he was discharged cured in body and mind about six weeks after his arrival there.

As for Pedley, he had completed his task; it was up to him now to return to Fort Chipewyan to report himself again for duty. But the strain of that terrible five-hundred-mile journey proved to be too much for

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the plucky fellow. Though he faced the terrors of the lonely trail again with a brave heart he broke down in a day or so at Lac La Biche. He became violently insane, was brought back to Fort Saskatchewan, and was ordered away to the asylum at Brandon. It was six months before Pedley recovered his reason, and many months after that ere he was fit to resume any duties. Even now, years after that terrible experience, he bears the mark of it upon him. He is still—or was not so long ago—in the service of the R.N.W.M.P. I saw him at headquarters at Regina, where I learned the story of his remarkable trip, and I am proud to have known Pedley. His exploit is one of the many big things that the Mounted Police have to their credit—one of the things that are “all in the day’s work,” but nevertheless very wonderful and arresting. Hats off, then, to the gallant “Riders of the Plains!”

Swimming and Diving

Some Practical Hints for the Beginner

By "LIFEBUOY"

IN jotting down these notes on swimming and diving I am assuming that my readers are not strangers to the art. I do not purpose trying to teach a boy how to swim; what I hope to do is to give the young novice some hints as to how to improve his knowledge. Every boy, of course, ought to know how to take care of himself in the water. Swimming is one of the most healthful exercises, and it is a most useful art to acquire. At any time, when in the vicinity of sea, lake or river, one may be called upon to render aid to some person in difficulties in the water, and the able-bodied man or boy who is helpless to do anything but stand on the bank and, perhaps, shout advice, should for ever regret that he never took the trouble to learn to swim.

In the illustration accompanying this little article you will see the principal swimming strokes depicted. The breast stroke will be the one that you have first mastered. This need not be described here, but from it the young swimmer may progress to the strokes that make for greater speed in the water. The overarm stroke is one to be learnt and, really, the best method to acquire it is to watch some good exponent at a club race in the baths. The leg kick is an important factor; as one well-known writer puts it: "In order best to understand it, one should imagine the legs close together as on the completion of a dive, with the body turned on the side, either on the right or the left. Most swimmers turn on

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their right side. The legs are opened and brought together again, the left, or upper, leg, being kicked a little forward, the knee slightly bent, and the foot kept in its ordinary position, not allowed to hang free. The right, or lower, leg is then bent double until the foot comes close to the thigh, the foot then swinging as on a hinge. The left foot is now sent a little forward, and then the whole leg straightened with a strong swish, the right leg at the same moment being kicked towards it. A big swirl is thus caused, and effective propelling power is obtained. Both feet should be kept near the surface during the stroke, but at the end of it the right foot is slightly lowered to come under the left."

With regard to the hands, remember to keep the fingers closed and the hands flat as they pass through the water. The pull with the upper arm should be made quickly through the water, and there should be a smart recovery. Bend the arm a little so as to clear the chest, and on entering the water sweep it back close to the body, straightening it as it leaves the water near the position of the hips. The legs should begin to open when the upper arm is opposite the shoulder, and the kick should be made when it leaves the water.

It is important, by the way, to keep the head low and steady in the water while attempting this side stroke. Be careful not to move the head up and down, to avoid any water entering the mouth, for instance. Keep the latter well closed and breathe through the nostrils. The apex of the head is used as a cutwater to the body, easing its progress through the water.

The trudgeon, or trudgen stroke, may be described as a double overarm stroke. It is begun by starting on the breast with one arm extended in front, while the other lies back at the side of the body. The forward arm, with the palm of the hand outwards, is then forced down through the water until it takes a position similar to the other arm, which in turn is brought up and over the head into the water. The stroke is repeated with

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each arm alternately. The swimmer's leg kick is the same as that used in the side stroke, but is shorter. As the legs are being recovered one arm is making a stroke and the other is being brought out into position for the next. This causes the swimmer's body to roll over on to the breast, and as the next stroke is being undertaken the body turns over a little to the opposite side. No doubt you have seen fellows using this trudgeon stroke when playing water-polo, and you will then have noticed the swirl of water that it occasions.

What is known as the "nautilus" is to lie in the water on one's back, with the hands by the sides, and raise the legs upright alternately, splashing them down as released. This is a slow form of progression, naturally, and is only to be recommended as a relief exercise to ordinary swimming.

For practice in becoming at home in the water the somersault, or "head over heels" is a good thing to learn. Bend the body at the hips, straighten the hands along the sides just as if intending to throw the water over the back; bend the head forward and under the water, using the feet as in ordinary swimming; and so make a complete somersault. The reverse method—"heels overhead" is effected by lying on the back, drawing up the legs with the knees straight, then paddling sharply with the hands, while the feet are brought over the head. The swimmer's body becomes over-balanced and the somersault is made. See the illustration referred to for a picture of this form of fancy swimming.

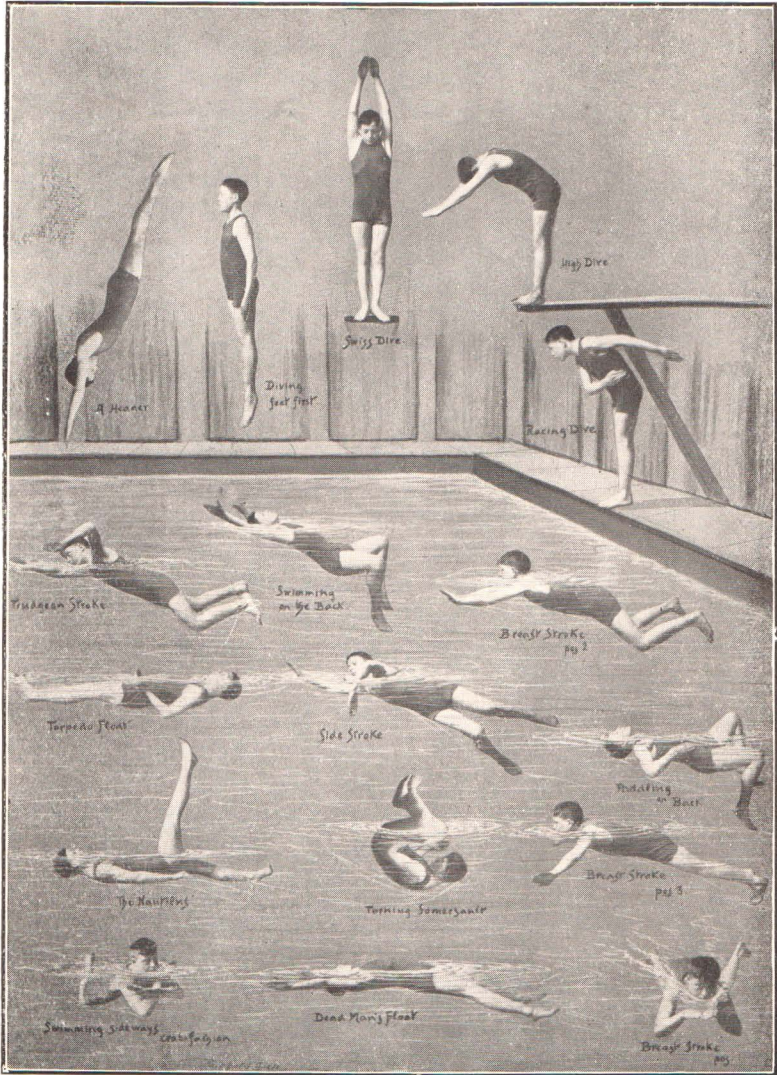
Swimming on the back and paddling on the back are pleasant methods to adopt, when one is tired of the breast or side stroke. In the former you lie on your back and throw the arms up and behind the head, with the fingers closed so that the hands exert full pressure in cutting the water. During this movement the legs are drawn up in readiness for the kick which takes place as the hands strike the water. In paddling the action is

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left almost entirely to the legs. These are raised in turn, kicking out in the water. The hands may be used to paddle slightly at the sides or may be kept resting on the hips.

Diving, or taking a header into the water, ought to be practised by every boy who learns swimming. It is the proper and most graceful manner of entering the water, and it only needs a little confidence to make the first essay. Diving proper, in its more advanced stages, should be left for the time ; it is enough to begin with the header. This may be taken from the edge of a bath, from a boat on a stream, or from a river-bank. In the latter cases, however, take the precaution to sound the depth of the water before making the attempt. Otherwise accidents may happen with more or less disastrous results. After the novice has become accustomed to taking a header from a bank or from the edge of a bath, and can enter the water at the proper angle without making a clumsy plunge, he should try the running header. A short run is all that is necessary. A spring-board, such as is often found at open-air bathing places, is an excellent thing to practise from.

The test of a good header, of course, is to enter the water like an arrow, making as little splash as possible. If the plunge is taken properly the swimmer will glide down into the water at an angle of forty-five, coming up with arms extended and hands held together, palm to palm. While practising headers it is a good thing to start swimming under water, increasing the distance as time goes on. Every boy who tries this will be surprised at the progress he will soon make, especially if he practises in a large bath. A small tin plate should be thrown in and brought up from the bottom. You will have to keep your eyes open under water, of course, and that is a simple matter to do, though I usually find that most boys funk this as likely to "make the eyes smart." Nothing of the kind happens. The strange feeling of water touching the eyes quickly passes away ; there is



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no real discomfort. Any boy can accustom himself to it by first practising in an ordinary wash-hand basin.

One way of entering the water is with the feet first, as is shown in the illustration. This is not a graceful method, and is not to be commended as preferable to the ordinary header. It is certainly a safer method, as there is less chance of accident this way when jumping into a little-known piece of water. This brings an important fact to my mind, a fact which has been impressed on it by many experiences. When taking a header or jumping from a boat always do so from the stern. There is more resistance to the feet there than at the boat's side, and the plunge will be made all the better. In getting back into the boat, also, always come to the stern. With a vigorous kick of the legs, a spring and a good pull of the hands on the transom, you can scramble breast-wise on to the stern. This needs a little practice, but is not difficult to master.

When we come to high and fancy diving it is necessary to speak more carefully. No boy should essay these advanced forms until he has become proficient in diving from a moderate height. High diving should be practised under the eye of an efficient coach. The Swiss dive, the swallow dive, racing dive, and other varieties are all worth learning, and add much to the swimmer's enjoyment of his pastime. Given good lungs, a strong heart, and plenty of confidence, the young swimmer may be recommended to enlarge his diving powers as he progresses in the art.

There are many books on the subject that may be studied, but some practical instruction by an experienced diver will go a long way to teaching him the several styles. Then, with so much literally at his finger-ends, he may consider himself a well-equipped water-dog.

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A School Story

BY REV. EDWARD LUMMIS

"POOR old chap!" said Tompkins minor. "Jolly hard luck, ain't it?"

Tompkins sat next to me at dinner. There was going to be no afternoon school that day. In the summer term we had an extra half once a fortnight, and this was the first of them. It was glorious weather.

"What's hard luck?" I answered.

"Your having to stay in from cricket practice, and sweat away for the Lambton. Catch me sticking in school on a day like this!" said Tompkins. It would certainly have been out of character in him.

"Who told you I was going to stick in?" I said; for I did not like Tompkins' patronising tone. One or two boys looked round my way on the chance of getting another player to make up a side.

"Why, you don't expect to get it without sweating for it?" said Tompkins, in much surprise.

Now, up to that moment I had half-intended to spend the afternoon with Farrar's *Greek Syntax*; but the temptation to get out was very strong, and this remark of Tompkins decided me.

"The Lambton's worth having by itself," I pronounced in the grand style, "but not with a humpback and a pair of spectacles thrown in. If I can't get it without giving up cricket practice I shan't get it at all." This speech evoked general assent, which gratified me.

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On the field I came across Mr. Corbould, our house-master. "You here, Exmouth!" he said. "Are you not going to have a try for the Lambton?"

"Yes, sir, I think I might try. Do you think I have any chance?" If I had not been convinced that I had every chance I might not have taken things so easily; but it would be much more glorious to get the scholarship without seeming to have had any particular struggle for it, than to be put down as an ordinary sweater. Still, it is best to phrase things modestly when you are talking to a master. They have such a nasty way of snubbing you.

"Yes," said Mr. Corbould thoughtfully; "yes—now that poor Siddoway is out of the running I should think you have *some* chance. Of course Grundy is a dangerous competitor—but you *might* come out ahead of him, if you work. Nothing is gained by giving up hope, is it?"

Now, in order to make you understand how this answer filled me with three or four different kinds of shame all at once, and made me feel smaller than I had ever felt before, I shall have to explain several things; and more especially who Siddoway was, and why he was out of the running.

When I was about twelve years old my father was presented to the living of St. Paul's, Layton. The nearest town was miles away, and the only school within reach was the National school in our own village. Until then my father had been my only tutor, but now he sent me with the other village boys to the National school. "They will teach you your geography and arithmetic better than I can," he said. "Besides, it will do you good to mix with the other boys, and knock some of the nonsense out of you." So the sons and daughters of the blacksmiths and miners became, to my disgust, my schoolfellows and daily companions.

The miners and blacksmiths of Layton form a clan by themselves, and have been isolated for generations. They are very proud and vindictive, and exhibit a shyness

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which looks very like stupidity, but is really nothing of the kind. Their children could see, without much penetration, what my feelings towards them were, and all took pains to keep clear of me—all except Bob Siddoway. Bob and I became friends almost at once, and stuck to each other. Of course I was very lordly with him; the son of a fitter in an engineer's factory could only be adopted as my companion by an act of continuous condescension. But Bob laughed at me, and did not mind my lordliness; and since he could beat me at most games and knew as much as I did, and since the villagers were as blind as bats to any distinctions of a merely social kind, I had to play the part of patron rather quietly, for fear of looking ridiculous. In spite of all this, Bob and I liked each other immensely.

After a while Siddoway left school, and was put to work with a butcher. I dropped him then. I left the National school soon after, and went as a day-boarder to a crammer's to be prepared for a scholarship at Hilchester. What does my father do next, but take it into his head that Bob Siddoway is fit for something better than butchering, and get him to come to our house every night to take lessons with me! You may fancy how much I liked it.

Well, in course of time we went up to try what we could do at Hilchester, and were both successful. I was well up in the list, while Bob just scraped into the last place by the skin of his teeth. That was a splendid thing for him. It meant a free education until he was sixteen, and, if he got the Lambton, for two years more, with another four at a university, and books enough to furnish a room. But I privately intended that he should not get the Lambton. He and I would be in for it in the same year, and I wanted it for myself.

It was in the Easter term—the hockey term as we called it—that Siddoway fell out of the running. The Lambton seemed a very long way off, with the Easter holidays and a whole term more in front of it, but still

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it was in the air; and the Fifth, as most immediately concerned, did its work all the better for that. We were both in the same form then, for Siddoway had got a double advance at Christmas, and we were more together than we had been since we came to Hilchester. Another thing that made chums of us was this. My father had bought me a bicycle, and our curate, who was just then buying a new machine, had given his old one to Bob. Being northern boys, we did not care for hockey; so when the rest of the world was breaking its shins in the play-field we two used to go careering over hilly country roads.

"Come for a spin with me to Norton Godfrey," I said to him one half.

"I should like to," said Siddoway, "but I think I had better work. I am going in for the Lambton, you know, and it is only three months off."

"Going in for the Lambton! Of course you are. So is Hopkins minor, so is Grundy—we all are."

"Yes, but it means more to me than it does to you fellows," said Bob.

"What has that to do with it? You must play fair, you know; no sweating till the cricket term. Come along; it's just the day for a ride."

He consented without much trouble, and off we went.

Now, the ride to Norton Godfrey was a long one, only to be attempted on a full half, and the road was very rough and hilly. About a mile this side of it one of my tyres came off, and we lost a lot of time in finding a man to fasten it on again. That left us less than we ought to have had for the return journey, and, to make matters worse, the wind was against us and the afternoon had turned much warmer. Our only plan was to put it on as much as we could up the hills, and to let our machines carry us down as fast as they liked.

All went well until we reached Ribsdon Bank. This is the highest ground between Norton Godfrey and

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Hilchester; but while the ascent from Norton is very gradual, and broken by occasional hollows, the slope on the school side is continuous for a little over a mile, and leads right down to the level ground. The rough and winding road, together with occasional sudden dips in the descent, makes this hill very dangerous, and in ordinary circumstances we should have ridden it with caution. To-day, however, the chance of making up lost time by taking this part of the way with a rush was too great a temptation to be resisted. Away I went with my feet on the rests, and Siddoway after a vain cry of warning, followed suit.

I know of nothing so exhilarating as the sensations of a cyclist at such a moment, when you sit back in the saddle, give the reins to your machine, and feel it leap forward with you like a live thing. Even on an open moor, when you can see the road straight and clear before you, and hardly a hint of danger is present, the physical excitement is grand. There is the swift rush through the air, with scarce a sense of the ground beneath you; you are whirled onward with less effort than an eagle; the still air beats upon your face like a fresh breeze; you see the great world rolling backward, and every furlong seems like a conquest; it slips away easily as in a dream. Not the strongest swimmer or best of skaters can attain so much freedom from the clogs of the body. And if, as now, the road is hidden and an obstacle may spring up at every turn, there is added another delight, akin to that of a cavalry charge. There is a pleasure in knowing that you stand by your own will absolutely committed. You cannot now stay your course, and every power is alert to guide it. Every large stone or deep rut is descried farther away than it can usually be seen, and your headlong wheels avoid it, without conscious steering, as if they were part of yourself. In a few moments you know the wild rush will be over; how it will end you have not time to think.

Something was rumbling and panting ahead of us.

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That was the first impression which disturbed our high-strung pleasure ; at a sharp turn of the road, which swung us round like a sling, we saw what it was—a traction-engine, preceding us downhill. It was in the middle of the narrow road, leaving bare room for a bicycle on each side of it, and by an instinctive flash of intelligence it was settled that I should pass it on the left, Siddoway on the right. As we drew nearer, however, the great thing lurched over to the right-hand side of the way, and a horse, maddened with fright, dragging behind it some metallic instrument with glittering points, dashed past it up the hill. In another moment I should be hurled against the horse. I made a frantic effort to turn aside, tore off the ill-secured tyre which had delayed us, and was flung to the ground. In the fragment of time during which I was falling I remember noticing that the spot where I should be thrown was muddy and soft. There was a violent shock, something flashed past me down the hill, for an instant I lay expecting the hoofs and sharp hooks to be upon me, then all was darkness.

After the cloudy bewilderment in which consciousness dawns, my first distinct idea was one of mild astonishment at finding myself still alive. Then somebody gave me a stimulant, and I became gradually aware of dull pain everywhere, and a very great pain in my shoulder. It took some little effort to remember the word "left," and say in my own mind "my left shoulder." I found myself muttering the words aloud. Then a recollection came of my fall, and the impressions it had registered in my brain. Something among these acted like an electric shock. I was wide awake at once, and tried to rise, but failed. Then I said, "Where is Bob?"

A voice beside me said, "This 'ere one's a-coming to." Somebody else had been hurt, I thought, and said again, "Where is Bob?"

"Just you rest quiet, young gentleman," said the same

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voice. "You may thank your lucky stars you ain't a corp."

The thought of what had flashed past me as I fell grew into a boding fear.

"How was the horse stopped?" I said. "Is Bob hurt? Was it he that——?"

"He rid roight up again' the horse, that's what he done. He stopped him sure enough," said the countryman; "leastways he stopped him from hurting *you*. And there they be a-trying to bring him round."

By moving my head, I was able to see a little group of men a few yards off. There were two men from the traction-engine, and a gentleman kneeling in the road, with his back towards me. I tried to spring up, and half succeeded; but only to fall heavily back and sink again into unconsciousness.

What I learned during my fortnight in the school infirmary amounted to this. Bob Siddoway, who was a yard or two behind me, and to the right, when he saw me fall, instantly felt and acted upon a noble impulse. Swerving round between me and the approaching runaway horse, he had driven his bicycle full against the terrified creature. The horse shied violently and fell into the ditch by the roadside, where it lay trembling and was soon secured. Bob himself was brought into violent contact with one of the shafts, and flung by the force of the blow right across the road against a hind-wheel of the traction-engine. The doctor, who was hurriedly brought from a house hard by, where he was visiting a patient, found us both unconscious; but after rapidly examining me he bestowed all his attention upon Siddoway, whose injuries were very serious. He was still, they told me, in the greatest danger. Several fractures had been treated with success, but injuries to the brain and spine were chiefly feared. At the best it would be many months before he could get about; so Siddoway was out of the running for the Lambton.

There was no doubt that Bob had saved my life. The

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swiftness of his act had been so great that he could have had no time for conscious motives : it was the work of an instinctive impulse, springing spontaneously from the stuff of his everyday character. I wondered whether the same impulse would have moved him if another rider had been his companion. I felt sure that affection for me, and gratitude towards my father, had been at its root. But, if so, how deeply they must have worked into his nature !

In some of the few lucid periods he had experienced Bob had learned the success of his effort ; and this, the doctors thought, was doing him as much good as any of their remedies.

You may well suppose that all this affected me very deeply. Within a few weeks I was back at school, and the absence of my former chum was a constant reminder, if reminder were needed, of what I owed him. And yet, by the time that the holidays were over and the cricket term well begun, the impression made by those events had all but faded. There were times, of course, when I thought of them, and news of Bob was always being sent to me ; but the greater part of the time was spent as if they had not occurred. I was even able to think of the Lambton, and look forward to my getting it as a practical certainty, without always remembering that Siddoway was now out of the running.

But when Mr. Corbould spoke as he did in the cricket-field, my conscience smote me through and through. It seemed as though Bob's being out of the running was the only thing that gave me a chance. I saw clearly enough what I had never before recognised. Siddoway, whom I had patronised, was a better man all round. And he had not only risked his neck to save mine : he had by the same act given up his chance of the Lambton scholarship, and all it meant to him, and left me my chance. It seemed like a duty to him that I should get it. As I thought that, another idea came into my mind, and acted like a spur. At all costs I must get the Lambton. But

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Mr. Corbould had spoken of Grundy as a dangerous competitor, and hinted that my chance was small. With so much more to be ashamed of, it was hardly worth my while to feel any shame at having overvalued my own powers at Grundy's expense. There was a way of retrieving something—yes, if Bob would but recover, of retrieving all. I turned back from the cricket-field, and spent the afternoon with Farrar's *Syntax*.

At the end of term, before the speeches, Dr. Robson read out the names of prize-winners, and the prizes were distributed. At Hilchester we never knew these names until they were actually announced, and very great was our excitement over the awards. At the very end came the greatest excitement of all, the Lambton scholarship. As the doctor began you might have heard a pin drop. This is what he said. You must imagine the cheers:—

“Lambton Scholarship of £90 per annum for four years, tenable at Oxford or Cambridge; with an extension to a King's Scholar of his scholarship at this school for two years:—

“James Harper Exmouth.

“*Proxime accessit*: Herbert Grundy.

“*Accesserunt*: Edward Hopkins, Charles Delahay.

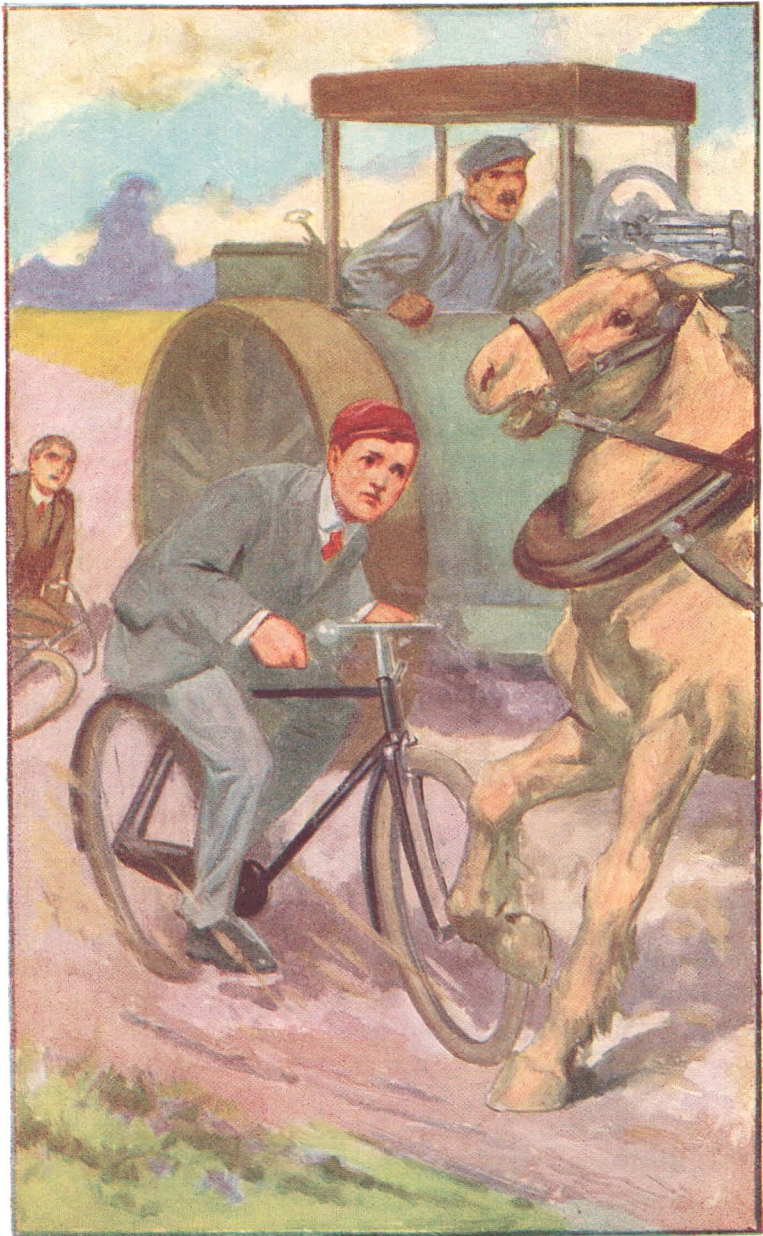
“Exmouth, whose work during the term has been exceedingly good, obtained the first place and the scholarship by 1,792 marks.

“Grundy, 1,347. The governors wish to express their appreciation of Grundy's work by a special prize of £10 in books.

“Hopkins, 843.

“Delahay, 812.

“In connection with this scholarship the governors have had to consider an extraordinary application. Exmouth, the successful candidate, had requested that in the event of his success the scholarship might be awarded, not to himself, but to another boy whom he named. He also gave his reasons for this request.



"SWERVING ROUND, HE HAD DRIVEN HIS BICYCLE FULL AGAINST THE TERRIFIED CREATURE."

[See page 310.]

The Exmouth Scholarship

“The governors have come to the conclusion that this is not a proposal to which they can accede. The nature and purpose of the scholarship render it necessary that it should be held by the boy who has earned it, and by no other.

“The governors, however, have much sympathy with the reasons which led the successful candidate to prefer this request. The boy whom he named is one who would very probably, if he had been able to compete, have secured a very high place in the list of candidates, and the circumstances which prevented his doing so are such as to shed the highest honour on himself and on the school.

“In these circumstances the governors have decided upon the following course. Out of funds at their disposal they will endow a special scholarship, extending only to the tenure of one holder, but in other respects exactly similar to the Lambton. I proceed to read their award ;—

“Exmouth Scholarship, involving two years’ free education at this school, and £90 per annum for four years at Oxford or Cambridge ;—

“Robert Siddoway.”

Before the end of the year Bob’s recovery was complete. There could be no truer friends than Siddoway and I have been since then.

The Word of Don Guzman

An Incident in the Career of Captain Horace
Singleton, Ocean Free Lance

BY ALEC G. PEARSON

FROM Cape Sable to Trinidad, and from the Windward Islands to Yucatan, the "Cormorant" privateer, and her eccentric commander, were well known, and it may be added, well hated by the foes of Britain. Many attempts had been made to capture the dreaded vessel, but Captain Singleton was skilful as well as brave, and neither he nor his ship ever fell into the hands of his enemies.

"I have no desire," he had said, "to grace the inside of a French or Spanish prison"—as a point of fact his opponents had sworn to hang him at his own yard-arm if ever he was caught—"and I have determined that no other flag than that of Britain shall ever fly over the gallant little 'Cormorant.' If I should ever find myself in so tight a place that I had either to surrender or blow the ship up, well—I should *not* surrender."

The time came when he had to choose between these two evils, and the manner in which he kept his word, and dramatically ended his career, is a story worth the telling. It may yet be told.

After a brief interval of peace, war had again been declared in 1803, very much to the satisfaction of Captain Singleton, who was thoroughly tired of inactivity. Gleefully he put to sea again, but luck seemed to be against him at first. After dodging about amongst the islands for three weeks, his total gain was one prisoner, a Spanish planter, whom he valued at a thousand dollars, that being the amount the planter was able and willing to pay for his release.

On the morning of the twenty-second day of the cruise,

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the "Cormorant" was running before a westerly breeze along the southern shore of Porto Rico, about a mile off the land. Captain Singleton was on deck spying through his telescope at the white houses of a town which lay at the upper end of a long and narrow harbour.

"That is San Salvador," observed Captain Singleton, handing the telescope over to the chief officer.

"I know it," growled Martin. "It isn't towns we want to see, but enemies' ships. So long as they're not battleships or cruisers," he added, as an afterthought; "they are a bit outside our weight."

Captain Singleton tapped the lid of his gold-mounted snuff-box, and helped himself to a pinch of snuff. Then with a cambric handkerchief he flicked away some grains which had fallen on to his waistcoat. He affected the manners of a London dandy, yet behind this foppishness he was a man of strong character and determined will.

"Do you happen to know the pilotage of that harbour, Martin?" he inquired, pointing to San Salvador.

"I was never inside of it," replied the chief mate.

"Ah!" Captain Singleton had another look at the place through his telescope. "The entrance is very narrow, like the neck of a bottle with a kink in it. But I can just make out a buoy painted in red and yellow stripes, which no doubt marks the fairway. If that is sufficient guide for a Spanish ship, it will be sufficient for us."

Martin stared at his commander aghast.

"But you surely ain't dreaming of entering that harbour, sir?" he exclaimed. "There is nothing to be gained by attacking a town——"

"I am going in," interrupted Captain Singleton, "under a flag of truce. I want some fresh meat and fresh vegetables, and—I have run out of scent. For such supplies as I require I shall offer in exchange our Spanish prisoner. An act of courtesy on my part which will surely be appreciated by the Governor of San Salvador, as—valuing our planter at a thousand dollars—I shall lose by the transaction."

"Probably lose your life," grumbled Martin, "if you intend to trust one of these Spanish Dons."

"Haul the ship close up into the wind, Mr. Martin,"

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ordered the Captain. "Our course will be due north for the harbour mouth."

When Singleton spoke with that quiet air of determination, the chief mate knew there was nothing for it but to obey, and that promptly. He carried out his instructions, and half an hour later the "Cormorant," conned through the narrow channel by Captain Singleton, was brought to an anchor in the harbour, with a white flag flying at the fore.

After a suitable interval a boat containing Don Guzman de Vargas, the Governor, two other officers, and a dozen armed men, put off from the shore and came alongside. Don Guzman did not board the "Cormorant." Evidently he feared to trust his precious person on the deck of the privateer.

Leaning over the taffrail, Captain Singleton stated his requirements. Fresh meat, vegetables, and scent, in return for a subject of His Catholic Majesty of Spain, who was a prisoner in the cabin.

Don Guzman had hard work not to betray the surprise and satisfaction which he felt. The dreaded privateer had walked—or, rather, sailed—into a trap. The flag of truce on such a vessel need not be respected. Already Don Guzman was figuring out in his mind the credit which would accrue to him on capturing this notorious sea rover. But outwardly he was most polite and courteous, and bowed with an elaborate flourish as he made answer.

"The arrangement shall be carried out, Señor Captain, as far as lies in my power. But for the scent—well, there may be difficulty. However, I will endeavour to obtain some. And now, señor, if you will hand over the caballero whom you hold as a prisoner I will take him on shore in my boat."

"What guarantee," demanded Singleton, "have I that you will fulfil your part of the bargain?"

"Surely, señor, the word of the Governor of San Salvador is sufficient guarantee?"

"One does not doubt the word of a gentleman because he happens also to be an enemy," said Singleton, "nor can I haggle as though we were a couple of tradesmen bargaining over a piece of merchandise. Señor Governor, your word is sufficient."

The Word of Don Guzman

So the prisoner was released and conveyed on shore in the Governor's boat; but the Captain of the "Cormorant" waited in vain for the fresh meat and vegetables which were to have been sent off at once in exchange.

"It would seem that Don Guzman's word is forfeit," said the Captain at nine o'clock that evening, as he brought his night-glasses to bear on a palm-crowned headland on the eastern side of the harbour entrance. "He has had a couple of 12-pounder guns placed amid those trees in such a position that they command the narrowest part of the fairway, just about where the buoy is moored, and the guns are fairly well masked by the trunks of the palms. A good natural defence for the harbour, which our friend the Governor seems only just to have thought of."

"He means to fire on us when we are sailing down that narrow channel," exclaimed Martin wrathfully. "There's a bit of treachery for you. At that short range the gunners can't miss. They'll dismast us, we shall bump on a sandbank, and there'll be an end of the 'Cormorant.'"

"It is an awkward situation," admitted the Captain, "but I will see what can be done." He paused and, leaning over the rail, stared for a few minutes at the lights of the town. Then he added, "I shall go on shore, Martin, in about an hour's time. Have the pinnace lowered, and manned with eight picked men, well armed."

The tough old mate shrugged his shoulders, and went for'ard to give the necessary orders. At four bells (10 p.m.) the boat shoved off from the "Cormorant's" side, and was rowed with muffled oars to a strip of beach about half a mile short of the town. Keeping close in under the land where the shadows were deepest, the boat could not be seen more than half a cable's length away.

Evidently Captain Singleton had a plan by which he hoped to circumvent his enemies, but he did not reveal it to his men until they were all on shore. It was a scheme involving a considerable amount of risk in the carrying out, but that mattered little so long as there was a possibility of success.

The Word of Don Guzman

At a little after midnight, seven men were making their way in single file along a street of the white town which nestled on the side of a low hill at the top of the harbour. The night was dark and the stars were hidden; the streets were unlighted. With the exception of these seven there was no living soul visible in the place.

Their objective was the Governor's residence, and presently they halted by the wall which surrounded his garden. There was a wooden gate near by, and the leader of the party rapped on it with the butt of his pistol. After a short delay it was opened by a sleepy sentry. For a few moments he stood blinking in the darkness, and, not being able to recognise the indistinct figure in front of him—

"Who are you? What do you want at this hour?" he demanded.

"You will know in good time," came the reply; and as the words were spoken a long cloak was flung over the sentry's head and shoulders, and he was thrown to the ground. Then with a swiftness and dexterity which was surely born of considerable practice, he was bound hand and foot and gagged, after which he was laid down behind some bushes out of the way.

The raiders entered the garden and slipped noiselessly along the path which led to the house. They were Captain Singleton and six of his men. The remaining two had been left in charge of the boat.

About a quarter of an hour later Don Guzman de Vargas was aroused from his slumbers by feeling something cold pressed against his cheek. Opening his eyes he saw—by the dim light of an oil lamp which stood on a side table—a man standing by his bed. The intruder held a pistol, the cold muzzle of which against his cheek had woke him up.

Don Guzman was not a man of courage, and in a very shaky voice he asked the same questions as the sentry—

"Who are you? What do you want?"

"I'm the Captain of the 'Cormorant,'" was the reply. "Get up, and dress quickly. And if you value your life, make no noise. I am not alone. There are armed men waiting outside in the corridor."

The wretched Governor had no choice but to obey.

The Word of Don Guzman

He shivered with fear, but he dressed and followed his captor.

"There's a man lashed on to the fairway buoy, sir," reported Dan Watson, a bullet-headed seaman, who looked like a prize-fighter. "One of them swell Spanish officers, I think. Couldn't have lashed himself up there, sir, surely?"

It was just daybreak, and the crew of the privateer were at the windlass heaving up the anchor. The fore-topsail was sheeted home, and the foresail was hanging in the bunt- and leach-lines, all ready to be set. There was a breeze blowing off the land which would take the ship right out of the harbour, provided the Spanish gunners did not sink her.

"The man on the fairway buoy, Watson," answered Captain Singleton, "is His Excellency Don Guzman de Vargas, Governor of San Salvador. I dare say the crew of the pinnace, who were with me last night, will be able to give you a full and true account of how he got there."

Dan Watson touched his hat, grinned, and turned away.

"The Cap'n knows a thing or two," he muttered, delightedly. "I should never have thought of that dodge blow me if I should!"

The officer in command of the two guns which had been placed in position on the headland, for the express purpose of sinking the "Cormorant," was just about this time reading a letter that had been delivered to him by a negro messenger. It was from Captain Singleton, and, translated, ran as follows:—

"If you fire on my ship as I am leaving the harbour, you will run a grave risk of hitting Don Guzman de Vargas, who is lashed to the fairway buoy. But if your gunners miss him, my gunners will not—that is, if you venture to open fire on us. The life of your Governor depends on your action. I have scuttled all your available boats—you don't seem to have many—so until you have patched one of them up, you cannot rescue him from his uncomfortable position. Let me assure you, in conclusion, that I always keep my word; in which respect—among others—I differ from Don Guzman de Vargas."

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The Spanish artillery officer swore a number of oaths, which, however, did not serve to mend the situation. Then he gazed across the narrow mouth of the harbour to the fairway buoy, on which Don Guzman was seated astride, with a leg on each side of the huge ring to which he was lashed. As the buoy danced up and down in the water the Governor cut a very undignified figure; he shouted angrily to the officer to know why he did not send a boat, and in the next breath implored him not to fire at the British privateer, lest one of the shots should hit the buoy. Evidently he had no faith in the marksmanship of his gunners.

Meanwhile the "Cormorant" had got under way and was gliding smoothly out of the harbour with wind and tide. Captain Singleton, standing at the break of the poop, kept a watchful eye upon the guns in the palm grove.

"It is to be hoped," he murmured, as he gently waved his perfumed handkerchief under his nostrils—for he had contrived to obtain both scent and fresh provisions—"it is to be hoped that the Governor of San Salvador is not an unpopular man with his officers; for if by chance he is, my plan may be a failure."

Apparently the Governor was not unpopular, for the guns remained silent, and the "Cormorant" sailed out of the harbour in safety.