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# The GEM 2<sup>ND</sup>

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SCHOOL AND SPORTING STORIES

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Week Ending  
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FREE WITH THIS ISSUE!



CHARLES PRINGLE  
(Manchester City F.C.)



## CUT OFF BY THE TIDE!

*A Dramatic Moment in the Grand, Long Complete School Story Inside. You Must Not Miss This Thrilling Tale!*



Address all letters: The Editor, "The Gem Library," The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Write me, you can be sure of an answer in return.

### OUR COMPANION PAPERS.

"THE BOYS' FRIEND" Every Monday  
 "THE MAGNET" Every Monday  
 "THE POPULAR" Every Tuesday  
 "CHUCKLES" Every Thursday  
 "THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL" Published Yearly.

My dear Chums,—It would be impossible for me to do full justice to the magnificent Free Photograph which will be given away with next Wednesday's GEM. This superb portrait is of the famous Clapton Orient F.C. champion,

OWEN WILLIAMS.

The chance now offered is unique. I strongly counsel all my chums to make a point of securing every likeness in the brilliant series of Free Photographs. Each one is signed by the player in question, and the photos are unrivalled for beauty of finish, vividness, and general effect. So mind you look out for the lifelike portrait of Owen Williams next week—a Real, Glossy Photo, the best ever!

### "ALL OUT!"

Just a brief mention of the coming grand yarn of the boxing world. It shows those two excellent comrades of the ring, Ginger Dan and Tu Sin, in a very favourable light. The more one hears of Ginger Dan the better one likes him; and this new story is a nailer in the way it reveals the true sportsmanship of the young fellow. Tu Sin is a good second. Ginger Dan goes straight for victory; when he is asked to be a party to a deception at the boxing-show where he is figuring, his whole sense revolts; he is not taking any! This is a rattling tale of the Fistic Art!

### "THE FIFTH-FORMER'S SECRET!"

Next week's yarn by Martin Clifford goes one better than ever. They take things pretty seriously at St. Jim's, and the coming tale throws into vivid relief the grit and sportsmanship of the famous school. We get a glimpse of something rather fishy in regard to a much-talked-of boxing match at Abbotsford. For reasons which he knows best, St. Leger of the Fifth is intensely anxious that Jack Blake & Co. shall not be spectators of this meeting. Well, once a report like that gets round, what can you expect? Juniors who are urged not to attend a spectacle in which they are naturally interested, are on the qui vive at once. They determine not to be put off. But when they start for the scene of the match they find any number of stumbling blocks put in their way. At the same time, it is rather curious to note that, on the top of all this in-and-

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out work, St. Leger takes it upon himself to ask Tom Merry to keep an eye on a youngster who is coming to St. Jim's. You get a perfect whirl of mystery here, and the interest is unflagging. Then, too, Monty Lowther, simply by chance, happens upon some very startling information regarding the new junior. I am just saying this much in brief outline to put you on the track of as fascinating and brilliantly thought out a story as the GEM has ever published.

### ANTHONY SHARPE.

The lynx-eyed sleuth, who has appeared in so many fine tales, is once more on the warpath next Wednesday. This series of detective yarns has made the hit of the season. This is due in part to the wonderful personality of the crime investigator; but, of course, a well-knit plot—this you can always depend upon—and a baffling mystery to boot, have their share in the popularity of a very notable feature.

### "THE WOLVES OF ST. BEOWULF'S!"

Duncan Storm is on his mettle, as usual, in the new instalment of the adventures of Wobby & Co.

### THE TUCK HAMPER.

Keep your eye on the GEM for the result of the great Tuck-Hamper Competition. The Big Offer was certainly a record in the history of the paper. Of course, the Tuck-Hamper page continues to rivet attention. I have some further very important things in store concerning this popular corner.

YOUR EDITOR.

## "Treasure Island"

By ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON



The most wonderful and exciting story of pirates, the "Jolly Roger," and hidden treasure ever written. You can start it in this week's "UNION JACK" (out on Thursday, March 1st). Order your copy TO-DAY, and ask your newsagent to keep you a copy each week. Ask for

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### "MY READERS' OWN CORNER."

A Splendid Tuck Hamper filled with delicious Tuck is awarded to the sender of what the Editor considers the most interesting paragraph. Half-a-crown is awarded for each other contribution accepted.

(If your name is not here this week it may be next.)

### THIS WINS OUR TUCK HAMPER.

#### UNDER COVER!

A company of young recruits were on field service duty, when the sergeant addressed one of them: "Say, Private Jones, supposing you were on outpost duty, and suddenly a large party of the enemy appeared close to you, what would you do?" "Well," answered the young private, "if I had feet like yours"—the sergeant's rather large feet were the joke of the mess-room—"I should slip down inside them and fire through the lace-holes!"—A Tuck Hamper filled with delicious Tuck has been awarded to A. W. Wrightson, 31, North Street, Gosport, Hants.

### THAT REMINDED HIM!

An absent-minded professor came home one day, after a heavy rainstorm, in a very bedraggled and wet state. His wife met him at the door, and as he greeted her he made the remark that he had forgotten his umbrella. She was surprised to think that he even remembered that he had forgotten anything, and asked him when he had thought of it. With a smile of satisfaction he replied: "Why, my dear, when it stopped raining and I went to shut it."—Half-a-crown has been awarded to Arnold Hodges, 158, Bellevue Road, Durban, Natal, S. Africa.

### NEATLY TURNED!

Young Candid at a concert said to his neighbour: "Did you ever hear such a horribly discordant, ear-splitting—" Old Proudfoot: "Sir, that's my daughter who is playing, and—" Young Candid: "I repeat, sir, such ear-splitting clatter as the idiots behind us are making? Why, I cannot possibly enjoy the exquisite music!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to Theo L. Hank, Seaford College, Seaford, Sussex.

### DON'T FORGET!

A real glossy, splendidly-produced football photo will be given away next week with the GEM, showing a famous player. The likeness will be autographed, and will make a noteworthy addition to your collection.

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 No attempt will be considered unless accompanied by one of these Coupons.

# The PLUCK of EDGAR LAWRENCE!

A Thrilling Story of a Schoolboy's Desperate Fight for His Chum's Life!  
By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

## CHAPTER 1.

### Wanted—A Peacemaker!

"I THINK I ought to take a hand, deah boys!"

It was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of the Fourth, who spoke.

There was an unusually grave expression on Gussy's noble countenance, and there was a troubled look in his eyes.

Arthur Augustus was at tea with Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther, the Terrible Three of the Shell. But instead of discussing the good things on the table, he preferred to discuss a totally different matter.

"It gwieves me, deah boys," continued Arthur Augustus, "to see two fellahs who have always been good fwriends dwift apart."

"Meaning Redfern and Lawrence?" said Tom Merry. "Oh, they'll come together again! It's only a matter of time."

Arthur Augustus shook his head doubtfully.

"They've not been on speakin' terms for ovah a week," he said. "An', instead of makin' any move towards a weconciliation, they seem to be dwiftin' farthah an' farthah apart."

Monty Lowther sighed as he poured himself out a fresh cup of tea.

"Life's full of these little tragedies," he said. "The best of fellows quarrel at times. Why, even Tommy and I have come to loggerheads before now!"

"Twue. But you've made it up again."

"So will Reddy and Lawrence."

"I doubt it," said Arthur Augustus; "unless——"

"Unless what?" asked Manners.

"Unless a peacemakah comes along an' smooths things ovah. I wepeat, I think I ought to take a hand."

"You'll be a champion chump if you do, Gussy," said Tom Merry. "Reddy and Lawrence don't belong to our House, for one thing; and, for another, it's never safe to interfere in quarrels. You know what the poet says:

"Those who in quarrels interpose  
Must often nurse a swollen nose."

"But that's all bosh, deah boy!"

"It isn't. It's sound logic. You'll be asking for trouble, Gussy, if you set up in business as a peacemaker."

"Dashed if I know what the silly old quarrel's about!" said Manners.

"It was quite a trivial thing that led up to it," explained Tom Merry. "That's generally the way. If you were to look into the cause of every quarrel that happens, you'd find that in nine cases out of ten it starts with a mere trifle."

"But how did it start in the case of Reddy and Lawrence?"

"It was like this. The New House fellows had a cycle race, over a distance of five miles, and Redfern was jolly keen on beating Figgins. So he arranged for Lawrence to make the pace for him. Well, Lawrence, instead of going all out, slacked off in the middle of the race, and Reddy lost. He was awfully ratty about it, and he vowed he'd never speak to Lawrence again."

"But didn't Lawrence have any sort of explanation to give?" asked Monty Lowther.

"Yes. He said that some cad must have punctured his bike before the race started. It was a slow puncture, and Lawrence didn't notice it until the race was well under way. Of course, it affected his speed."

"And didn't Reddy accept that explanation?" asked Manners.

Tom Merry shook his head.

"He was in no mood to accept any sort of explanation," he said. "He told Lawrence that the puncture was due to his

own carelessness, and he said that Lawrence ought to have carefully examined both tyres before the race started."

"Well, so he ought," said Monty Lowther.

"I know. But it's sometimes jolly difficult to detect a slow puncture. Anyway, Lawrence didn't notice it; and, instead of helping Reddy to win the race, he helped him to lose it. That's how the quarrel started, and Reddy and Lawrence haven't been on speaking terms since."

"It must be jolly uncomfortable for Owen," said Manners.

"It is. He's sharing a study with two fellows who'll have nothing to do with each other, and he's got to be pally with both without adding fuel to the fire. I wouldn't be in Owen's shoes for a pension."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy who had been deep in reflection for some moments, rose to his feet.

"Excuse me, deah boys."

"Whither bound, Gussy?" asked Monty Lowther.

"I'm goin' to twy an' patch up this widiculous quawwel!"

"Ass! You can bet that Owen's already moved heaven and earth to patch it up, and you're not likely to succeed where Owen's failed."

"I mean to do my best, anyway," said Arthur Augustus, with resolution.

"Well, when you come back in little pieces on the ambulance, don't say I didn't warn you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Headless of Monty Lowther's warning, and leaving his tea unfinished, Arthur Augustus went on his mission. He crossed the quad to the New House, and made his way to Dick Redfern's study. He could see at a glance as he entered that the breach had not been healed.

Dick Redfern, with a frown on his handsome face, sat at tea with Owen.

Edgar Lawrence, the other member of the trio of scholarship boys, was reclining in the armchair, reading—or pretending to read—one of Scott's novels.

A stony silence prevailed in the study—a silence which was broken by Arthur Augustus.

"Weddy, deah boy——" he began.

"Cut!" said Redfern briefly.

"I want you to lend me your eahs——"

"I'll lend you a boot, if you don't buzz off!"

Redfern's tone was unusually aggressive. As a rule, he was quite a sunny-tempered fellow, but his recent quarrel with Lawrence seemed to have soured him.

Arthur Augustus stood his ground.

"Weally, Weddy, you are vewy wude!" he exclaimed, glancing sternly through his monocle at the New House fellow.

"Now, it appears that you have had a little—ahem!—a little misundahstandin' with Lawrence."

Redfern half rose to his feet.

"Travel!" he rapped out.

Arthur Augustus still refused to budge. He had come over to the New House in the role of peacemaker, and he was determined not to leave until he had accomplished his object.

"Better scoot, Gussy," said Owen. "You can do no good here, you know."

"I have come heah," said Arthur Augustus impressively, "for the express purpose of weunitin' two sundahed hearts."

"My hat!"

"This quawwel ought nevah to have awisen. You are a silly duffah, Weddy; an' the same wemark applies to Lawrence. As for Owen, he seems to have failed uttably as a peacemakah."

"I sha'n't be the only failure in that respect!" murmured Owen.

During this conversation Lawrence had not lifted his eyes. THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 756.

from his novel. But his expression showed that he was feeling far from pleased. It was just like Gussy, he reflected, to resurrect the unhappy topic of the quarrel. Arthur Augustus prided himself upon being a fellow of tact and judgment, but neither of these qualities was in evidence now.

The swell of St. Jim's stood for a long time in contemplation. Then, as if fired by a sudden resolve, he darted forward, seized Dick Redfern by the collar, and yanked him out of his chair.

"Hands off!" roared Redfern angrily. "What the thump—"

Arthur Augustus dragged the astonished and indignant Reddy across the study, and halted him in front of the armchair. Then with his disengaged hand he gripped Lawrence by the collar and jerked him to his feet.

For a moment both Redfern and Lawrence were too astonished to make any resistance.

"Gussy, you mad idiot," roared Owen, "what's the little game?"

Arthur Augustus looked grim. "I'm goin' to make these two duffahs shake hands!" he said.

"Stand back!" panted Redfern. "Leggo!" gasped Lawrence.

The two juniors were in imminent danger of having their heads knocked together by the determined Gussy.

Presently, however, they regained the power of action. They wrenched themselves free, and then each of them shot out his left.

The result of this sudden onslaught was extremely painful to the would-be peacemaker.

A fist crashed into Gussy's right ear, and another into his left. He was sandwiched between Redfern and Lawrence, both of whom were wrathful and indignant.

"Yawwooooh!" roared Arthur Augustus, prancing about like a cat on hot bricks. "You—you feahful wottahs! You have no wight to attack me in this mannah—"

Biff!  
Crash!

"Yoooop! Chuck it, you dweadful hooligans!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Owen, who was vastly enjoying the situation. "I should advise you to put yourself on the other side of the door, Gussy. Otherwise, I shall have to summon the stretcher-bearers!"

Arthur Augustus had no desire to linger in Redfern's study. It was anything but pleasant to be converted into a human sandwich, with blows raining upon him from both sides.

With his necktie streaming loose, and his monocle dangling at the end of its cord, Arthur Augustus fled through the doorway. Then he sped away towards the School House as if a pack of wolves was in pursuit.

At the steps of the School House he halted, pumping in breath.

"Oh deah, I feel as if I've been undah a steam-wollah!" he gasped. "It was awful!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

From their study window, the Terrible Three of the Shell looked down upon the dishevelled Gussy.

"Did you succeed in patching up the quarrel, old chap?" asked Tom Merry, with a grin.

"The question is, shall we succeed in patching up the merry peacemaker?" said Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus flourished his fist at the three grinning faces which looked down upon him from above.

"You—you howdied, heartless beasts!" he stuttered. "I am in a tewwible plight!"

"You look it!" said Manners. "We warned you what would happen if you started trying to put things right."

"Going to have another shot at pouring oil on the troubled waters, Gussy?" asked Tom Merry.

"No!" said Arthur Augustus emphatically. "I wegard Wedfern as a wild wuffian—an' Lawrence, too! I did my best to bring about a weconciliation, an' they tweated me with gwoss bwutality! I shall let them go their own way affah this."

So saying, the swell of St. Jim's limped slowly and painfully up the steps, and made tracks for the nearest bath-room.

## CHAPTER 2:

### A Snake in the Grass!

"LETTER for you, Reddy!"  
Figgins of the New House nodded towards the post-rack.

"Let's hope it's a remittance," said Owen, as Redfern reached the letter down from the rack. "There's a famine in the land, and it's ages since we had a study feed."

Redfern shook his head doubtfully. His people were none too well off, and the number of remittances he got were like figs in the average fig-pudding—few and far between.

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"I don't recognise this fist," murmured Reddy. "Wonder who it can be from?"

"Wouldn't be a bad idea to open it and see!" said Fatty Wynn.

Redfern ripped open the envelope, and something fluttered to the floor. Chowle of the Fourth promptly stooped and picked it up.

"My only aunt!" he ejaculated. "It's a tenner!"

"What!" said Redfern incredulously.

"Fact," said Chowle, handing over the banknote. "You're in luck's way, Reddy, an' no mistake!"

Redfern's eyes sparkled as his fingers closed over the crisp, rustling note.

The receipt of a ten-pound note was, in Redfern's case, an epoch-making event. Fellows like Arthur Augustus, D'Arcy and Aubrey Racke frequently received "tenners," and thought nothing of it; but to Dick Redfern such a sum was a perfect goldmine.

Quite an interested crowd had gathered round by this time. "Who's the Good Samaritan, old man?" asked Owen.

Redfern glanced at the letter which accompanied the banknote.

"It's from an uncle of mine whom I'd almost lost touch with!" he explained. "He been abroad for years, building up a fortune, and now he's come home to settle at a place on the Cornish coast."

"You're a lucky beggar, Reddy," said Kerr. "What are you going to do with all that wealth?"

Redfern reflected a moment.

"I shall want a cricket-bat for next season," he said thoughtfully.

"A—cricket-bat?" gasped Fatty Wynn. Fatty regarded it almost as an act of sacrilege to spend money on a cricket-bat. "Fancy squandering money on a thing like that! Instead of buying a mouldy bat, why don't you give a study celebration?"

"I've money enough for both," said Redfern, with a smile. "We'll have a real good slap-up spread this afternoon."

"Now you're talking!"

"Bring your tribe along, Figgy; and I shall be pleased to see you fellows, as well."

The fellows indicated were French, Clarke, Pratt, and Kouri Rao.

Redfern deliberately refrained from extending the invitation to Cyril Chowle. He disliked the weedy Chowle intensely, and he made no effort to hide the fact.

"I'm comin' along, I suppose?" said Chowle.

"There's something wrong with your supposer, then!"

"I've always backed you up," said Chowle reproachfully.

"I don't know about that," said Redfern. "You've often got my back up."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why should I have to take a back seat?" demanded Chowle.

"Well, if you insist upon knowing why, I'll tell you. I've no use for a fellow who doesn't play games, and who smokes cigarettes behind locked doors; and I've no use for a sneak and a rank outsider!"

"D'you get me, Steve?" murmured French.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Chowle bit his lip and turned away.

Redfern's plain speaking had been a good deal too plain for Chowle's liking. But it had been thoroughly deserved, for Cyril Chowle was, without exception, the most despicable fellow in the New House. He was of the same kidney as Aubrey Racke, but in some respects he was even more contemptible than the caddish Aubrey. Whereas Racke had often been known to stand his ground in a scrap, Chowle had seldom been known to do anything but run away.

Chowle was never happy unless he was making mischief. It was he who had brought about the quarrel between Dick Redfern and Edgar Lawrence. Lawrence had thrashed him for going through his private correspondence, and Chowle had vowed revenge. The nature of that revenge was to puncture Lawrence's bicycle, so that he would be unable to make the pace for Redfern in the New House cycling race.

Chowle's scheme had succeeded up to the hilt, and he now had the satisfaction of seeing Redfern and Lawrence drift apart. His one fear was that they might soon make it up again; for a friendship of many years' standing is not easily shattered for good.

The breakfast-gong had not yet sounded. Chowle wandered aimlessly along the corridor, and he saw that the door of Redfern's study was half-open. Proceeding towards it on tiptoe, he peered into the apartment.

Lawrence was within. He was pacing up and down in front of the mantelpiece with bowed head, and with his hands plunged deeply into his pockets. He was too pre-occupied to notice that he was the subject of prying eyes.

"This sort of thing can't go on much longer!" he said to himself. "It wasn't my fault that the quarrel arose, and yet—I suppose I was rather hasty. When Reddy accused



Redfern walked over to Lawrence, who was standing at the foot of the bed. "I want a word with you," he said. "You've been toadying up to my uncle, and you're a low-down cad!" Lawrence was about to speak, when Redfern's open palm came down with stinging force across his cheek, leaving a livid mark. "Now, Lawrence, you cad," he cried, "put your fists up!" (See page 10.)

me of deliberately letting him down I got my back up, and said things that I could have bitten my tongue out for afterwards."

Chowle remained in the doorway, listening, with a sneering expression on his sallow face.

"Yes; I was partly to blame," went on Lawrence, as he paced to and fro. "Anyway, where's the sense in sulking like a fag in the Second? I'll see Reddy after brekker, and ask him to make it up."

Having heard Lawrence make this decision, Chowle stealthily withdrew.

"This won't do at all!" he muttered, as he walked away. "Can't have 'em falling on each other's necks after all the trouble I've taken to drag 'em apart."

Chowle went out into the quadrangle. There was a cunning look in his eyes—a ferret-like expression.

Dick Redfern was strolling beneath the elms in the bright spring sunshine. Chowle crossed over to him and tapped him on the shoulder.

Redfern spun round impatiently.

"What do you want?" he growled.

"I want to tell you somethin' that'll interest you," said Chowle. "It's about Lawrence!"

Redfern flushed.

"I don't want to hear anything about Lawrence!" he said curtly.

"But you must hear, otherwise the fellow will twist you round his little finger!"

"What do you mean?"

Chowle lowered his voice.

"Lawrence knows that you've just had a fat remittance from your uncle," he said, "and he's going to see you after brekker, an' try an' persuade you to make it up."

Redfern stared at Chowle in amazement.

"How did you know this?" he asked.

"Never mind how I came to know. It's perfectly true. Lawrence has only been chummy with you in the past for

what he could get. An' now that he knows you've had a remittance, he's dyin' to make it up."

Chowle spoke boldly, and he knew that he ran the risk of being knocked down.

A week before, Redfern would not have heard a word against Lawrence. He certainly would not have permitted a cad like Cyril Chowle to run him down. But now he was in an angry and bitter mood. Moreover, Chowle spoke convincingly, as if there could be no possible doubt that Lawrence was nothing but a toady and a hanger-on.

Was it possible, Redfern reflected, that Chowle was right? Was it possible that Lawrence's friendship through all these terms had been of the selfish order?

It was more than possible—it was probable.

"I'm tellin' you this to put you on your guard," said Chowle. "Lawrence will come up to you after brekker, swearin' eternal friendship an' all the rest of it. An' why? Simply because he knows you had a tenner from your uncle this mornin'—because he knows there's goin' to be a celebration in the study, an' he doesn't want to be left out in the cold!"

Redfern clenched his hands angrily. But Chowle could see that the anger was not directed against himself. He grinned with satisfaction to think how easily he had succeeded in poisoning Redfern's mind against Lawrence.

"I should advise you to send the bouncer about his business," said Chowle. "Give him some plain speakin', like you gave me just now."

"I will!" said Redfern grimly. "I'm obliged to you, Chowle, for putting me wise about this."

His dastardly work accomplished, Chowle nodded and passed on.

The breakfast gong sounded shortly afterwards, and it was in a very bitter frame of mind that Dick Redfern took his place at the table.

"What's wrong, old man?" asked Figgins. "You're like a bear with a sore head."

"Blessed if I can understand it," said Fatty Wynn. "If an uncle of mine sent me a tenner I should be feeling awfully bucked with life!"

"P'raps Reddy's feeling sore because it wasn't a fifty-quid note?" suggested Pratt.

"Rats!"

Lawrence, who was seated opposite Redfern, gave him a friendly glance, which either Reddy did not see or did not wish to see.

Redfern left his breakfast practically untouched, and Fatty Wynn came in for quite a good time in consequence.

When the meal was over, and the juniors streamed out into the quad, Lawrence went up to his one-time chum. Redfern regarded him coldly.

"Look here, Reddy—" began Lawrence.

"I'm Redfern to you, please!"

"Oh, draw it mild! Don't you think this Tommy-rot has gone on long enough?"

"I don't understand you."

"Why shouldn't we be good pals again?"

"There's every reason why we shouldn't!"

"Come, Reddy," said Lawrence, holding out his hand with a frank smile, "let's agree to let bygones be bygones. Life's too short to quarrel."

To Lawrence's dismay, Redfern ignored the proffered hand.

"You're no friend of mine," he said, "and you never have been!"

Lawrence started back as if he had been struck.

"Why, I—I've always been your friend—" he stammered.

"Merely for what you could get!"

The words were uttered coldly, brutally. And Lawrence went white to the lips.

"You—you've no right to say that!" he said hoarsely.

"I have every right. I didn't realise it before, but I do now. Your friendship wasn't the real thing at all. It was simulated. It was worth that much!"

And Redfern flicked his fingers contemptuously.

Lawrence looked utterly bewildered. His brain was whirl.

This was a new Redfern; very different from the cheery, warm-hearted fellow with whom he had worked and played since they came to St. Jim's together as scholarship boys.

"You're wrong—you're quite wrong!" said Lawrence huskily. "I can't think what's come over you lately. You accused me of deliberately letting you down in the cycle race, and now you say that my friendship's never been real—that I've only been pally with you for what I could get."

"You can't deny it," said Redfern, with a shrug of the shoulders.

"But I do deny it! You're accusing me of insincerity; but you're all wrong! I tell you I've been your pal—your real pal—ever since we came to this place!"

"Don't play the hypocrite!" cut in Redfern.

Lawrence clenched his hands tightly together, and for a moment it looked as if he would hurl himself at the fellow who had once been his chum. He controlled himself by a great effort.

"Then you don't believe me?" he asked quietly.

"No!"

"And you won't make it up?"

"Never!"

"Very well," said Lawrence in the same quiet tones. "I'm sorry that you should doubt me like this. Perhaps some day I shall have an opportunity of proving that my friendship isn't the weak, self-centred thing you believe it to be."

"Don't go into heroics," said Redfern. "I might as well tell you here and now that I'm fed-up with you, and I've no intention of coming back on the old footing."

So saying, Dick Redfern turned his back upon the fellow whom he distrusted—whose offer of a reconciliation he had rejected with scorn.

But the day was soon to dawn when Dick Redfern would be sorry that he had ever paid heed to the slanderous tongue of Cyril Chowle!

### CHAPTER 3.

#### A Treat for Seventeen!

THE days went by, and there was no sign of the breach being healed. Instead, it grew wider and wider.

Redfern and Lawrence, whose friendship had once been of the David and Jonathan order, now had nothing in common. They continued to share the same study, but they never spoke unless they were compelled to.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy made no further attempt to bring the two juniors together. But Leslie Owen, who felt very sick at the existing state of affairs, pleaded with Redfern more than once to put his pride in his pocket, and make it up with Lawrence.

"It's no use, Owen," said Redfern, as they strolled together

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in the quad after dinner one day. "I've no desire to be pally with Lawrence any more; in fact, I couldn't be if I tried. He was only a fair-weather pal, at best."

"It's not fair to say that!" said Owen, with spirit.

"Lawrence has been a good pal to you."

"Oh, yes," said Redfern bitterly. "And I've never seen him so friendly as when that tenner came the other day! No sooner did he hear that I was in funds than he came and begged me to make it up."

"You're doing him an injustice!" said Owen heatedly.

"Rats! Do you suppose for one moment that the fellow has ever cared tuppence about me? He regards me as a useful sort of person to know when I'm in funds, and that's where his so-called friendship begins and ends. But don't let's talk about it any more, or we shall quarrel."

"But things can't go on like this!" protested Owen. "It's the talk of the House!"

Before Redfern could reply, the ancient postman hobbled into view. He extracted a letter from the bundle he was carrying, and handed it to Redfern.

"My uncle again," said Reddy, in reply to Owen's questioning glance.

"He's making a tremendous fuss of you now that he's back in England," said Owen. "Did you acknowledge his tenner?"

"Of course!"

Redfern tore open the envelope, and as he read his uncle's letter he gave a whoop of delight.

"Hurrah!"

"Good news?" asked Owen.

"Well, I shouldn't be dancing a merry hornpipe if it wasn't, should I? Look at this!"

And Redfern handed over the letter, which ran as follows:

"My dear Richard,—I was delighted to hear from you, and to learn that you are making good progress at St. Jim's."

"As I mentioned in my previous letter, I have taken an old Cornish mansion, in which I hope to spend the evening of my days. It is a wonderful old place, and commands a view of the Atlantic."

"It is my wish that you should come and spend a long week-end with me, bringing with you as many chums as you like. I have obtained the permission of Dr. Holmes, who is willing to let you make the journey on Friday morning."

"I leave it entirely to you to select the members of the party, but I must insist that Lawrence and Owen are included. I have heard such a lot about them that I could not think of their being absent."

"There is every facility for enjoyment down here, and I am keenly looking forward to seeing you."

"Ever your affectionate,

"UNCLE ROBERT."

Owen shared Redfern's delight when he read the letter; but presently he looked serious.

"This means that you'll have to invite Lawrence," he said.

Redfern nodded.

"I'm bound to invite him," he said; "but if he's got a spark of decency in him he'll decline."

"Why should he?"

"Ass! We don't want my uncle to see that we've quarrelled—at least, I don't!"

"This is a ripping opportunity for making it up," said Owen.

"Look here, old man, if you harp on that chord again I shall be reluctantly compelled to hit out!"

Owen discreetly changed the subject.

"How many fellows are you going to invite?" he asked.

"Let me see. From our own House there will be Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn. They're certs. And I should rather like to invite several fellows who generally have to take back seats."

"Meaning?"

"French and Pratt and Koumi Rao and Dick Clarke."

"Might as well invite all the giddy House while you're about it! Can't you persuade old Ratty to come along?"

"Don't be a chump! Now, from the School House there will be Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther, and Jack Blake, Gussy, Herries, and Dig."

"What about Talbot?"

"Talbot's in the sanny. He's suffering from a compound fracture of the right eyebrow, or something of the sort. Anyway, he won't be about again until Monday."

"Better come round and tell all the fellows you've selected," said Owen.

"All serene!"

Tom Merry & Co. were very jubilant when they heard the news, and they promptly jumped at the invitation. So did Jack Blake & Co., and Figgins & Co.

As for French, Pratt, Koumi Rao, and Dick Clarke, they were delighted beyond measure. As a rule, they were left in the background when any little functions of this sort were



The rescuers pulled with all their strength, and suddenly Owen's head and shoulders appeared above the edge of the cliff. At that same moment the rope snapped, and but for the promptitude of Lawrence and Tom Merry, Owen would have been dashed to a terrible death. They seized him in the nick of time, and by a herculean effort managed to haul him up to safety. (See page 13.)

under way. And they were grateful to Dick Redfern for having thought of them.

"Well, I've invited everybody now," said Redfern at length.

"Barring Lawrence," Owen reminded him.

Reddy frowned.

"I suppose I'd better go along and see him," he said.

"I'll wait here," said Owen.

Redfern found Lawrence seated alone in the study. Lawrence spent the best part of his time in his own company these days. The other fellows—Figgins & Co. and the rest—were still friendly with him, but he seemed to prefer to keep to himself as much as possible. Like Eugene Aram in the poem, he sat remote from all.

Lawrence looked up quickly as Redfern came in. He saw that Reddy was about to speak to him, and his heart beat faster than usual.

Was his old chum about to suggest that they should renew their friendship?

"I say, Lawrence," said Redfern rather awkwardly, "I've just had a letter from my uncle, inviting me to his place in Cornwall for the week-end. He says I can bring as many pals as I like, and I—er— Oh, dash it all, would you like to come?"

Lawrence quite misunderstood the situation. He did not know that Redfern was merely inviting him in order to conform to his uncle's wishes. He fondly imagined that Redfern genuinely wanted him to accompany the party, and his face glowed with pleasure.

"This is awfully good of you!" he said.

"Then you'll come?"

"Yes, rather!"

The readiness with which Lawrence accepted the invitation only served to strengthen Reddy's belief that Lawrence was only friendly for what he could get.

"All right, I'll count you in," he said.

And then he abruptly left the study.

Owen was waiting for his chum in the passage.

"Has Lawrence accepted?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Good! That makes seventeen all together. Reddy, old son, we're going to have a rare old time!"

"Speak for yourself," said Redfern. "I don't see how I'm going to enjoy it, with Lawrence there. Uncle will see at a glance that we're bad friends."

"Well, it's your own fault. I've urged you enough times to make it up, goodness knows!"

For a moment Redfern wavered.

Was it possible that he had wronged Lawrence—that he had done him a grave injustice? Was it possible that his doubt and distrust of Lawrence were entirely without foundation?

And then Redfern recalled the episode of the punctured tyre, and the words that Chowle had spoken.

No, there could be no mistake. Lawrence was a shallow, selfish sort of fellow, who had no idea of the real meaning of friendship.

"If I were absolutely down and out, without a bean in the world," reflected Redfern, "would Lawrence stand by me? I doubt it! If I were in danger of some sort, would Lawrence be prepared to risk his life for mine? No!"

The voice of Leslie Owen broke in upon Reddy's reflections. "Penny for 'em, old man."

"I—I was thinking about—about Lawrence," said Redfern. "And I've come to the conclusion—"

Owen looked up hopefully.

"That I can never be pals with him again—never!"

"Oh!"

"So it's no use referring to the subject any more. I shall treat Lawrence just as I treat casual acquaintances. I shall play footer with him, and be commonly civil to him—if I can—but beyond that I shall refuse to go. Lawrence is no more to me now than—well, Taggles, the porter!"

"I'm sorry for that," said Owen quietly. "Personally, I think you are a pig-headed chump!"

"Thanks!"

"You've made a mountain out of a blessed molehill. You've imagined all sorts of things, and you're prepared to think the very worst of Lawrence. If I'd been in your place I should have shaken hands with him long ago."

"Pr'aps so; but I can't forget so easily," said Redfern.

And there the conversation closed.

## CHAPTER 4.

## From Friends to Foes!

"TAKE your seats, please!"

"Hurry up, young gents!"

There were lively scenes at Paddington Station.

The seventeen St. Jim's fellows had travelled up to London from Wayland, and they only managed to catch their connection by the skin of their teeth, so to speak. Fatty Wynn's affection for the railway buffet had delayed them considerably, and eventually Figgins and Kerr had been compelled to drag their chum away by force.

The guard stood waiting, flag in hand, while the juniors took the compartments by storm.

"Tumble in, Gussy!" said Tom Merry. "Anywhere will do!"

"But this is a third smokah—"

"Ass! You don't want to be left behind, do you?"

"I object to a third smokah!" said Arthur Augustus. "I wequiah a first-class non-smokin' compartment!"

"There's no time to pick and choose," said Dick Redfern. "In you get!"

Arthur Augustus had no option but to obey, for a crowd of juniors "sandwiched" him from behind, and he was fairly hurled into the carriage. The Terrible Three, Dick Redfern, Owen, Blake, Horries, and Digby swarmed in after him.

In the next compartment Figgins and Kerr had managed to dump Fatty Wynn just in time.

Farther along the train Koumi Rao had contrived to secure seats for French, Pratt, and Clarke.

Lawrence found himself in a carriage on his lonesome. Exactly how it had happened he didn't know. He had wanted to travel with Dick Redfern, but Redfern seemed to be purposely avoiding him.

"It was jolly decent of Reddy to give me that invitation yesterday!" he murmured. "But I can't understand why he hasn't spoken to me since. I thought the invitation

would have paved the way towards making it up, but it seems I was wrong."

Lawrence was frankly puzzled.

Why, in the name of all that was strange should Redfern invite him to his uncle's place, and then continue to give him the cold shoulder?

At Wayland, Redfern had been on the point of getting into Lawrence's carriage; but, seeing Lawrence there, he had hurriedly changed his mind and had gone elsewhere.

"I can't make head or tail of it," muttered Lawrence. "Reddy must want to be friendly, or he would never have invited me. And yet he's still treating me as if I didn't exist. Why is it, I wonder?"

The train was on the move by this time, and it was soon thundering through the western suburbs.

From the compartment next to that in which Lawrence sat came sounds of singing. He could recognise Gussy's shrill voice, and Monty Lowther's absurd falsetto.

"They seem to be enjoying themselves," he murmured.

And he felt strangely miserable. He seemed to be out of it all. Try as he would, he could not get rid of the feeling that he was not wanted. Redfern and Owen were together, enjoying themselves up to the hilt. But he—Lawrence—was not able to share in their enjoyment. In a way, he was an outcast—a sort of modern Ishmael.

Of course, his imagination was largely responsible for his thinking thus. All the same, he felt very unhappy.

The train made good progress, but it was fairly late in the afternoon when it slowed up at its destination.

Lawrence rose to his feet and stretched his cramped limbs. He felt cold and hungry—a fact which did not tend to lighten his depression.

"Here we are!" It was Fatty Wynn's voice that Lawrence heard as he stepped down on to the platform. "I say, you chaps, I'm awfully peckish! I feel as if I've been on hunger-strike for about a month. Hope your Uncle Bob believes in keeping a well-stocked larder, Reddy!"

"You needn't worry about that," said Redfern. "You'll be pitching into a four-course dinner in about half an hour's time!"

"Oh, good!"

Redfern's uncle had thoughtfully arranged for a motor charabanc to meet the juniors at the station.

"Are you the young gents for Ocean View?" inquired the driver, as the juniors emerged from the station with their baggage.

"That's right," said Redfern. "And put a jerk in it, George!"

"Pardon me, sir, but my name's Archie!"

"Well, are we going to stand here gassing all night? The reply, Archibald, is certainly not!"

The charabanc was soon thundering along the country lane, past gorgeous scenery.

So far as the majority of the juniors were concerned, this was their first visit to Cornwall, and the ragged grandeur of the view impressed them immensely.

They were cold and tired and travel-stained by the time they reached Ocean View, the residence of Redfern's uncle. But soon they found themselves in the warm, cosy drawing-room.

A log fire sputtered and crackled in the grate, and all was merry and bright.

Redfern's uncle greeted the juniors cordially.

"It's good to see you, Dick, after all these years!" he said, shaking hands with his nephew. "I'm glad to see you've brought a large party. The more the merrier! Will you introduce me to all your chums?"

Dick Redfern performed the introductions, and Uncle Robert shook hands all round. He seemed particularly interested in Lawrence and Owen, of whom he had heard a great deal.

When Lawrence was presented Redfern flushed uncomfortably.

"This—is is Lawrence, uncle," he stammered.

"Ah, I've a warm corner in my heart for any chum of Dick!" said Uncle Robert, beaming at Lawrence. "And you and Dick are great pals—what?"

Lawrence did not reply. He would have given anything to have been able to answer the question in the affirmative.

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Fortunately, Uncle Robert did not notice that Lawrence had omitted to answer his question. He was busy shaking hands with Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, who was waxing eloquent.

"I am vewy pwoud to meet you, sir!" said the swell of St. Jim's. "It gives me gweat pleasuah to be your guest, an' I feel suah we shall have a wippen' time, an' that ewewy-thin' in the garden will be lovely!"

"Hear, hear!" said Jack Blake.

Uncle Robert smiled.

"You seem very down in the mouth, my boy," he remarked, turning to Fatty Wynn. "Is anything the matter?"

"Well, sir, p'raps I ought not to say so, but I'm suffering from lack of nourishment."

"Stow it, Fatty!" growled Figgins, treading heavily on his chum's toe.

"Ow!" gasped Fatty Wynn.

"I'll guarantee a complete cure for your ailment in a few minutes," said Uncle Robert. "Ah, there goes the dinner-gong! This way, my boys."

And the guests were ushered into the old-fashioned dining-room.

Dinner was a huge success. But there was one incident which took the gilt off the ginger-bread, so far as Dick Redfern was concerned.

Reddy seated himself midway down the table, between Owen and French.

Uncle Robert was at the head of affairs, and Lawrence was seated immediately on his right. They were enjoying an animated conversation, and Uncle Robert seemed to think quite a lot of Lawrence.

To Redfern, whose mind had been inflamed with suspicion by Cyril Chowle, it seemed as if Lawrence was doing his utmost to get into the old gentleman's good books.

shall ask the boulder what he means by it when we get back!"

Owen looked uneasy.

"Wish to goodness you'd agree to bury the hatchet!" he said. "There was enough trouble at St. Jim's. We don't want a continuation of it down here."

"But I'm not going to stand by and see Lawrence worming himself into my uncle's good graces!" said Redfern. "It's the old game. He's only doing it for what he can get out of it!"

Tom Merry & Co. were silent. They did not agree with Reddy, but they felt that it was no business of theirs.

On reaching the coast the party broke up, and wandered at will along the rugged shore. But they were unable to do much exploring, for the dusk fell, and it became difficult for them to get their bearings.

"Better give it up for to-night," said Redfern at length. "Let's all get together, and start back."

And he gave the cry of the Scout patrol to which all the juniors belonged.

A number of forms loomed up in the dusk.

"That you, Reddy?" came Jack Blake's voice.

"Yes. Are we all here?"

"Gussy's missing."

"Oh crumbs!"

"He went off on his own, and we can't find the silly duffer anywhere," said Herries.

"Just like Gussy, to go losing himself," said Monty Lowther.

"Let's hail him," said Tom Merry.

And over a dozen stentorian voices bawled:

"Gussy!"

The juniors strained their ears for a response, but they heard no sound save the plashing of the waves.

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In reality, Lawrence was doing nothing of the sort. But Redfern could not help feeling otherwise, and his lip curled contemptuously.

"What's the programme after dinner, you fellows?" asked Tom Merry presently.

"It's still light enough to explore the old smugglers' caves on the coast," said Redfern. "What do you think, uncle?"

Uncle Robert glanced at his watch.

"If you set out immediately after dinner, it will be all right," he said. "But don't linger too long in the caves. As you doubtless know, the tide comes in with treacherous suddenness at this part of the coast, and I should not like you to run into danger."

"We shall be back in a couple of hours at the outside," said Redfern.

Now that they were refreshed by a rest and a hearty meal, the juniors felt just in the humour for an excursion to the smugglers' caves. And as soon as dinner was over, they put on their hats and coats.

"Coming along, Lawrence?" inquired Owen—for Lawrence still remained seated.

Lawrence shook his head.

"I'll hang on here, if you don't mind," he said.

He could not help feeling that Redfern did not wish him to accompany the party. Besides, he felt that Uncle Robert would not care to be entirely deserted—that he would like somebody to talk to.

"Just as you like," said Owen, with a shrug of the shoulders. The juniors started on their expedition, Redfern walking in front with Owen and Tom Merry & Co.

"Why isn't Lawrence coming?" asked Redfern.

"Goodness knows!" said Tom Merry.

"Would you like me to tell you? It's because he prefers to stay at home and toady up to my uncle!"

"Oh, draw it mild, Reddy! Lawrence isn't that sort of fellow!"

"But he is! I was watching him during dinner, and he was moving heaven and earth to get on the right side of uncle. My hat! It makes me feel savage to think of it! I

Tom Merry looked anxious.

"Hope the silly chump don't go running into danger!" he said.

"Oh, he'll turn up later on, like a bad penny!" said Jack Blake.

"But we can't go back without him," said Redfern.

"You fellows can go back, and Dig and I will hunt for the frabjous idiot!" said Blake.

Leaving Blake and Digby to locate the whereabouts of Arthur Augustus, the rest of the juniors went back to the house.

"So you have all returned, safe and sound?" said Uncle Robert, meeting them in the hall.

"We've mislaid Gussy," said Redfern. "But Blake and Dig have stayed behind to look for him. They'll be along in a jiffy, I dare say."

Uncle Robert nodded.

"I have been having a most enjoyable chat with Lawrence," he said. "He is a most interesting fellow. I congratulate you upon your choice of chums, Dick!"

Redfern frowned.

"The toadying worm!" he muttered.

"What did you say, Dick?" inquired Uncle Robert.

"Nothing, uncle—nothing that matters, anyway."

"You had better toddle off to bed now, my boys. You must be tired out. I am going to smoke a cigar in the library until D'Arcy and the others come in. I have arranged for you to share a room with Lawrence and Owen, Dick. I thought you would like to be with your best chums."

Redfern looked far from grateful.

"The butler will show you to your rooms," said Uncle Robert. "Good-night, my boys!"

"Good-night, sir!"

When Redfern and Owen went into their room they found Lawrence already there. He was standing by the open window, listening to the distant roar of the Atlantic.

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"I want a word with you, Lawrence!" said Redfern in tones of concentrated anger.

Lawrence spun round in surprise. The look on Redfern's face puzzled him.

"What's the trouble?" he asked.

"You've been toadying up to my uncle! You know he's got money, and you've been doing your best to get on the right side of him!"

"Here, I say—" protested Owen.

"Dry up, Owen! This is my affair, and I'm not going to mince my words. You're a low-down cad, Lawrence!"

"And I'm sorry to say," replied Lawrence, who was remarkably cool in the circumstances, "that you're mistaken!"

Smack!

Redfern's open palm came with stinging force across Lawrence's cheek, leaving a livid mark.

"Come on, you cad!" cried Redfern, almost beside himself with rage.

Lawrence put his hands in his pockets.

"I'm not going to fight you," he said quietly.

"Then, you're a beastly funk, as well as a toady!"

"You can call me all the fancy names you like, but I'm not going to scrap here. I'm your guest and your uncle's guest, too—"

"And you're afraid of going down in his estimation, I suppose!" said Redfern with a sneer.

Lawrence did not answer.

"Well, you know my opinion of you," said Redfern, starting to undress. "And I shall never change it."

"I think you will—some day," said Lawrence quietly.

No further word passed between the trio.

Owen would have spoken, but he realised the hopelessness of trying to bring about a reconciliation. In his present mood Dick Redfern was not to be reasoned with.

The seeds which Chowle had sown had taken root. Redfern's friendship for Edgar Lawrence had turned to distrust, and the distrust had grown to something approaching hatred. He regarded Lawrence as the rankest of rank outsiders.

Would he ever have cause to change his opinion?

That remained to be seen.

## CHAPTER 5.

### A Night Adventure!

**L**AURENCE was the last of the three juniors to get into bed.

Scarcely had he extinguished the light when there came a tap on the door.

"Come in!" growled Redfern.

It was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy who entered. He carried a lighted candle in one hand and a curious-looking parchment in the other. He was fully dressed, and he was fairly quivering with excitement.

"Hallo, Gussy!" said Owen, sitting up in bed. "Where on earth did you get to?"

"I was in one of the caves, deah boy—an' I've made a most staggewin' discovery!"

Neither Redfern, Lawrence, nor Owen looked at all staggered. Arthur Augustus had a perfect mania for making discoveries, which generally turned out to be of no importance.

"I was explowin' one of the caves, when I came across an old tin box," Arthur Augustus went on. "I opened it, an' it contained this vewy valuable document, tied up with stwing."

"What sort of a document is it?" asked Redfern, interested in spite of himself.

"It wrelates to a hidden tweasure, deah boy."

"Gammon!"

"If you've come here on a leg-pulling stunt, Gussy," said Owen, "we'll jolly well bump you!"

"Weally, Owen—I am not attemptin' to pull your leg. This parchment contains a wewefence to a hidden tweasure."

"Have the other fellows seen it?" asked Lawrence.

"Yaas."

"And what do they say about it?"

"Lowthah declares that it's a hoax. An' Tom Mewwy an' Blake an' the othahs are of the same opinion."

"And they're right, of course!" said Redfern. "We all know what a gullible idiot you are, Gussy."

"Weally, Weddy—"

"Let's see the parchment," said Owen.

Arthur Augustus handed round the document, in turn, to the three juniors.

The parchment was old and faded, and had the appearance of being genuine. It was unsigned and undated, and contained the following lines of doggerel:—

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"He who seeketh treasure vast  
Buried here in time long past  
By the smugglers of Trevaile,  
Who on distant seas set sail,  
First must find the Witches' Cave,  
Sheltered from the turbid wave;  
Hidden from the prying gaze  
Of those who sought, in ancient days,  
To molest the smugglers bold  
And deprive them of their gold.  
If he dig with might and main  
'Twill be to his lasting gain,  
For, beneath the sandy floor,  
Half a dozen feet or more,  
Lies a casket full of gold.  
Precious stones, and wealth unfold.  
Let him who deems it worth the while  
Seek out this cave—and Fortune's smile!"

"Well?" said Owen at length. "What do you think about it, Reddy?"

"I'm afraid it's a fraud," said Redfern. "You see, it's written in quite modern English. And yet—"

"You think there's just a chance that there might be something in it?"

Redfern nodded.

"It's worth an investigation, anyway," he said, getting out of bed.

"But—but you're not thinking of trying to find the Witches' Cave to-night?"

"Certainly!"

Arthur Augustus looked quite alarmed.

"It's impossible to venture out to-night, Weddy!" he said.

"Rats! There's no such word as impossible."

"But it would be fah wisah to wait till daylight—"

"I'm going now, while I'm keen on it," said Redfern.

"I shouldn't be able to go to sleep, anyway."

"Well, if you must be a dashed fool, then I'll be a dashed fool, too!" said Owen.

"Are you coming along?"

"Of course! I'm not going to let you go wandering about the caves by yourself."

Lawrence looked grave.

"If you take my advice, you'll stay where you are," he said.

"Thanks—but you can stuff your advice under the pillow," said Redfern.

"It's a rough night. There's an awful gale blowing up—"

Redfern spun round irritably.

"I've decided to go, and there's an end to it," he said.

"Owen can please himself."

"I'm coming along, of course," said Owen.

And the two chums, despite the joint warnings of Lawrence and Arthur Augustus, made ready for their foolhardy enterprise.

For it was foolhardy; there could be no question about that. It was blowing great guns outside, and the roar of the breakers, as they dashed themselves upon the rocky shore, was almost terrifying.

Even Arthur Augustus, who was usually game for any sort of adventure, hung back now. He was very keen on locating the buried treasure—but not keen enough to want to venture forth on such a night.

"If I tell Tom Mewwy & Co. what you mad duffahs are up to, they'll hold you back by force!" said Arthur Augustus.

"Then the best thing you can do is to hold your tongue, Gussy!" said Redfern.

Arthur Augustus looked worried.

"I think I ought to let them know—" he began.

"If you do, your life won't be worth living! Ready, Owen?"

"Quite ready, Reddy!" said Owen, with a grin.

And the two chums set off on their hazardous mission. They went down the stairs very cautiously, not wishing Uncle Robert to be disturbed. For Reddy's uncle would certainly have put paid to the expedition had he known what was in the wind.

Redfern slipped back the bolts of the front door, and the next moment the two adventurers were out in the elements.

"Jove, what a night!" panted Owen, as he battled his way down the drive in the teeth of the gale. "We're a pair of prize chumps, Reddy!"

"Chumps or not, we'll find the Witches' Cave!" said Redfern.

"We shall want spades!"

"Of course! I'd quite forgotten. I'll nip back and get a couple."

"And bring a lantern, too!" called Owen, as Redfern retraced his steps.

In a few moments Reddy rejoined his chum with the articles in question. And together they set out towards the shore.

Owen was feeling quite alarmed, though he would not have



Lawrence was not a strong swimmer, but in the present crisis he had more stamina than his chum, and he made a last desperate effort to reach Redfern. Gripping him under the arms, he held him up until a powerful billow carried them towards the shore, where willing hands were waiting to assist them. (See page 16.)

admitted as much for worlds. His alarm would have been even greater had he realised the magnitude of the risk that he and Reddy were running. They were unacquainted with that part of the coast, and they did not know that their path was beset with peril.

The descent to the shore, from the cliff-top, was both steep and dangerous. One false step, and the taker of it would be dashed on to the rocks far below. But there were roots and stubble to which the juniors could cling, and they went down with the confidence of skilled acrobats.

Half-way down, Redfern paused, clinging to a protruding ledge.

"All right, Owen?" he queried.

"Yest I say, we sha'n't be able to get up this way!"

"Why not?"

"Ass! It's much too steep! It's one thing to descend a cliff, but it's quite another matter when it comes to climbing up again!"

"Then we shall have to walk along the shore for about a mile, until we come to St. Ronan's."

"What's that?"

"A fishing-village. It'll be a beastly fag, going all round the world to get home, but if it's impossible to climb the cliff, that's our only course!"

"Well, you take it from me, old man, that it'll be quite impossible to climb up this cliff. Why, it's almost sheer!"

The two chums continued their descent. Both had narrow squeaks from falling on several occasions, and it was little short of a miracle that they managed to reach the shore in safety.

They paused at the base of the cliff, pumping in breath.

The roar of the breakers was deafening, and the wind wailed and whined like a soul in torment.

"Well, we've got here!" said Dick Redfern, in tones of satisfaction. "And now the real business begins. We've got to find the Witches' Cave!"

"I wonder: witches the Witches' Cave?" said Owen.

"Oh, dry up! You're as bad as Lowther with your beastly puns! I wish that blessed parchment had given us some clue as to the whereabouts of the cave. We might be fooling around all night!"

"Well, don't blame me!" growled Owen. "It was you who suggested this mad trip!"

"Where ever the cave is, it's well hidden, according to the parchment," said Redfern. "It must be at the back somewhere."

A moment later the two explorers were threading their way through quite a network of caves.

The lantern enabled them to view their surroundings easily, but it was not until nearly an hour had expired that they came across a cave which corresponded to the description in the parchment.

"This seems to be the place!" said Redfern, in tones of excitement. "Anyway, we'll try our luck, and start digging!"

The lantern was set down on the sandy floor, and the two juniors took off their coats and set to work.

For a long time they slogged away industriously, neither of them speaking.

Their task was a stupendous one, and both were well-nigh exhausted by the time they had dug to a depth of six feet.

There was no sign of their labours being rewarded.

At last the diggers looked up, and their eyes met.

"Nothing doing!" grunted Owen.

"Afraid not. This can't be the right cave!"

"You're not going to continue the search to-night, I hope?" said Owen, in alarm.

Redfern shook his head.

"I've had enough," he said, "and so have you, judging by your appearance. You look absolutely fagged!"

"I feel it!"

"We'll leave our spades here, and come back to-morrow!" said Redfern.

"Later on to-day, you mean," said Owen, glancing at his wrist-watch. "Do you know what the time is? It's two o'clock!"

"My hat!"

"How are we going to find our way out of this place?" grumbled Owen.

"Follow your leader!"

They donned their coats, and Redfern walked in front with the lantern, Owen following close on his heels.

It was no easy matter to find an outlet, for the place was honeycombed with caves.

After stumbling along for some moments, however, the juniors found themselves out in the open, with the wind buffeting their faces, and the roar of the breakers dinning in their ears.

"Here we are!" exclaimed Redfern.

Then he stopped short, with an expression of alarm.

"We're ankle-deep in water!"

"Of course we are, ass! Can't you see that the tide's coming in fast? If we stay here until it's at the full, we shall be food for fishes! We'd better pop back into the caves!"

Redfern shuddered.

"I'm not keen on spending the night—or what's left of it—in the caves!" he said. "They seem to be—well, haunted. Didn't you hear queer noises while we were digging just now?"

"No."

"I did!"

"Then it must have been the sea—or your imagination. But if we're not going back into the caves, what's the next move?"

"We must walk along the shore to St. Ronan's!"

"Wade along, you mean."

"Well, we must get there somehow. Come on!"

Owen was in none too sweet a temper. He wished that he had remained behind with Lawrence. After all, the quest for the buried treasure had proved nothing more than a wild-goose chase. And Owen felt utterly worn out.

The prospect of wading over a mile to the fishing-village was anything but pleasant.

The two chums set off side by side. The lantern had been extinguished by the fury of the gale, and the juniors were soon drenched to the skin by the spray which lashed upon them.

The going was difficult, too; and every now and then they stumbled upon a rock, or were knocked up against the solid wall of the cliff.

Meanwhile, the water was rising rapidly. It had been ankle-deep at the outset; it was up to the juniors' knees now.

"We shall be doing the breast-stroke soon!" panted Owen. "Don't make asinine jokes!" said Redfern, with chattering teeth. "When are we going to sight St. Ronan's, I wonder?"

At the end of half a mile the juniors halted in dismay.

Their progress was barred by a headland—a solid wall of cliff jutting out into the sea.

At low tide it would have been possible to walk round the headland. Now, it was an utter impossibility. And to swim round it was equally impossible, for the sea was far too rough to admit of such a feat.

Redfern and Owen exchanged glances of despair.

"We—we're done!" faltered Owen.

"Absolutely!"

"There's no way out, that I can see. We can't climb the cliff, and we can't get back to the caves, because the water would be more than waist-high by the time we got there."

Owen had put the situation in a nutshell.

There was no loophole of escape for the reckless juniors. In their eagerness to discover the buried treasure, they had forgotten the treacherous tide against which Uncle Robert had warned them on their arrival. And now they were caught like rats in a trap.

Dick Redfern's face was deathly pale. He possessed plenty of pluck—pluck enough, even, to face death, provided there was a sporting chance of coming through successfully. But there seemed to be no chance now.

As for Owen, he was completely unnerved. He lacked Redfern's stamina, and the exertions of the past few hours had exhausted him. In addition, his lower limbs were numbed by the icy water, and he was shivering with cold.

"What—what can we do?" he asked helplessly.

Redfern made a despairing gesture.

"I'm not faint-hearted," he said. "If there was a shadow of a chance of getting out of this fix, I'd jump at it. But there's not a single, solitary ray of hope. You're certain we can't climb this cliff—I don't mean to the top, but to some ledge that's above high-water mark?"

Owen shook his head.

"It's absolutely sheer at this part," he said.

"Then," said Redfern slowly, "there's nothing to do but to wait for—death."

Owen gave a faint shriek.

"Don't!" he cried. "Don't say that!"

"We must face the facts," said Redfern in a dull tone.

"We can at least shout for help," said Owen. "There's just a chance that we may be heard at St. Ronan's."

"And supposing we are heard? What boat would put out in a sea like this?"

"They may have a lifeboat. Anyway, we ought to raise a shout. It's our only chance."

They stood with their backs to the cliff, gazing out across the dark and turbulent expanse of water.

Owen's school cap was whisked from his head, and it promptly became a plaything of the seething billows. The junior shuddered at the thought that in an hour's time—perhaps less—he and Redfern would share a similar fate.

"Help! Help!"

The juniors shouted with the full force of their lungs. But the storm was raging with such intensity that it was extremely doubtful whether the shout would be heard.

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"Once again!" muttered Dick Redfern.

"Help!"

It was a cry of wild despair from the two juniors who were at the mercy of the incoming tide.

And there was no answer, save for the screeching of the seagulls and the incessant roar of the breakers.

"Owen—Owen, old man"—Redfern's voice was husky—"I—I'm afraid this is the end!"

Reddy's chum did not answer. And the two juniors stood together, side by side, awaiting the terrible fate which seemed inevitable.

## CHAPTER 6.

### The Pluck of Edgar Lawrence!

LAWRENCE had not slept a wink.

He was greatly alarmed for the safety of Redfern and Owen. And as the hours dragged slowly by his alarm grew.

Boom! Boom!

The muffled notes of the grandfather clock downstairs announced that it was two o'clock.

Lawrence could endure the suspense no longer. He got out of bed, switched on the light, and dressed rapidly. Then he went softly along the corridor, and tapped on the door of the end room, which he knew to be occupied by the Terrible Three.

There was no response. Lawrence turned the handle of the door and entered, groping for the electric switch.

The sudden flood of light caused Tom Merry & Co. to open their eyes. They sat up in bed with startled expressions.

"Why, it's Lawrence!" ejaculated Tom Merry, blinking at the intruder. "What the merry dickens—"

"Reddy and Owen went out hours ago, to explore the caves," said Lawrence, "and they're not back."

"My hat!"

"You mean to say they went out on a night like this?" gasped Manners, listening to the rattling windows and the creaking doors. "They must be potty!"

"They went out to try to find the Witches' Cave," said Lawrence. "Gussy showed them the parchment—"

"You don't mean to say they put any faith in that tommy-rot?" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"They thought there might be something in it."

"Well, of all the mad duffers!" snorted the captain. "I suppose we'd better go and search for them?"

"I'm going," said Lawrence. "You fellows can please yourselves. But I thought I'd better come along and tell you."

"We'll come, of course," said Manners. "Better wake Figgins & Co., too."

The juniors lost no time in getting into their clothes. Figgins and Kerr and Fatty Wynn were roused, and they promptly volunteered to join the search-party.

"I gave Reddy credit for more sense than to swallow that ridiculous story of the treasure!" growled Figgins.

"Same here," said Fatty Wynn. "What do you suppose has happened to the silly duffers, Lawrence?"

Lawrence looked serious.

"It's possible that they've been cut off by the tide," he said.

"Oh crumbs!"

"Cheerful sort of cove, aren't you?" said Monty Lowther. "Going to be an undertaker when you grow up?"

"I can't help thinking something serious must have happened," said Lawrence, "or they would have been back long before this."

The storm was at its height when the seven juniors set out on their mission. They were scarcely able to keep their feet, owing to the force of the wind.

"I fancy I know what's happened!" shouted Tom Merry. He had to shout, in order to make himself heard. "I expect Reddy and Owen are sheltering in one of the caves, until the tide goes out."

"But it's possible that they might have tried to walk along the shore to the nearest village," said Lawrence. "They may have had a race with the tide—and the tide may have won."

Tom Merry shuddered.

"Wish you'd say something cheerful, for a change!" he said.

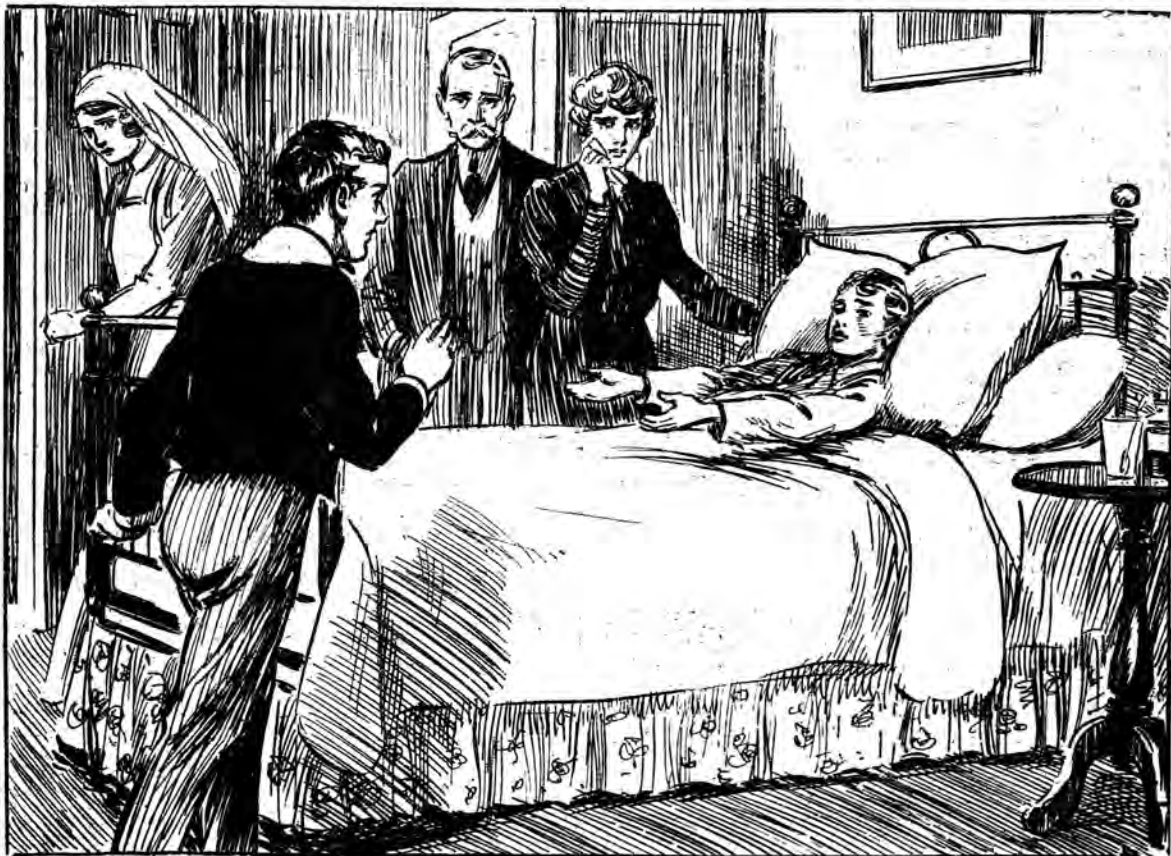
"It's no use pretending to be cheerful," said Lawrence. "I've got a premonition that Reddy and Owen are in a jolly tight corner."

"In that case, let's hope we shall come on the scene in time to rescue them," said Kerr.

Battling their way in the teeth of the gale, the juniors came at length to the wind-swept summit of the cliff.

Lawrence threw himself flat, and wormed his way forward until he was able to peer over the edge of the cliff.

"Can you see anything?" asked Figgins.



Marie Rivers opened the door of the sick-room and Redfern entered. He had a hazy glimpse of his Uncle Robert and of a weeping lady in black. Then he caught sight of his chum, stretching out feeble, beckoning arms towards him. He staggered towards the bedside. "Lawrence, old man!" he cried. "I've been a cad and I'm sorry. Forgive me!" His hot tears fell upon the sick boy's pillow as he spoke. (See page 18.)

"Tide's coming in fast," said Lawrence. "I only hope—Listen!"

A faint cry was borne to the juniors' ears. It seemed to come from far below.

"Help! Help!"

Tom Merry & Co. exchanged startled glances.

"They—they're down on the shore!" muttered Manners.

"And Lawrence says the tide's coming in fast!" said Fatty Wynn.

"Then they're in danger!"

"Frightful danger!"

Lawrence, still peering over the cliff, made a megaphone of his hands, and gave an answering shout.

"Ahoy! That you, Reddy!"

Faintly from below came an affirmative answer.

Lawrence sprang to his feet. He was white to the lips, but his face was set and determined.

"I'll be back in a jiffy, you fellows," he said.

"Why—where are you going?" asked Tom Merry.

"I'm going to see if I can get hold of a rope."

So saying, Lawrence hurried away, and his form was swallowed up in the darkness.

Some moments before, he had noticed an old hut standing on the cliff-top, several hundred yards distant. And he was hopeful that he would find a length of rope there. If not, he would have to go on to St. Ronan's and arouse the fishermen.

Lawrence was in luck.

There were two separate coils of rope in the hut, and he deftly joined them together by means of a stout knot. Then, slinging the rope over his shoulder, he hurried back to his schoolfellows.

"Got a rope?" inquired Tom Merry.

"Yes."

"Good! Is it long enough to reach to the bottom of the cliff, do you think?"

"Yes; I knotted a couple of ropes together."

Once again Lawrence peered over the edge of the cliff, straining his eyes into the darkness. And presently he discerned two forms, crouching against the base of the cliff.

"Reddy!" he shouted. "Stand by! We're just going to lower a rope!"

Dick Redfern heard the words, and they were as music to his ears. He had been in despair, he had abandoned all hope of being rescued, but the cheering words of Lawrence changed the whole outlook.

Reddy was in a terrible plight. The water was almost up to his waist, and at any moment he was in danger of being swept out to sea.

As for Owen, he was in an even worse plight. Exhaustion and exposure had rendered him almost unconscious, and but for his chum's supporting arm he would have fallen an easy prey to the hungry billows.

A moment passed—a moment of tense anxiety. And then the rope came dangling down within Redfern's reach.

"Thank heaven!" he muttered.

Had Redfern been selfishly disposed, he would have sought his own safety first, leaving Owen to take his chance.

But that was not Redfern's way. He realised that his chum was in a far worse extremity than he; and he at once proceeded to secure the end of the rope round Owen's waist.

"What—what's happening?" murmured Owen faintly.

"We're saved, old man. We're saved!" said Redfern joyfully.

Then, raising his voice to a shout, he added:

"Haul up, you fellows!"

The rescuers on the cliff-top concentrated all their energies on hauling Owen up to safety. It was not an easy task, and the rope seemed terribly frail. Would it bear the strain? Would it support its human burden until he was safe and sound on terra firma?

Suspended, as it were, between sea and sky, Owen gradually ascended the face of the cliff. Occasionally he clutched at a root or a ledge in order to steady his progress.

And at last, after what seemed an eternity both to rescuers and rescued, his head and shoulders appeared above the edge of the cliff.

At that same moment the rope snapped asunder through continuous contact with the jagged edge of the cliff.

(Continued on page 16.)

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## EDITORIAL!

By Tom Merry.

There is no branch of sport that has a more universal appeal to youth than motor-cycling. Its devotees are everywhere, and those who do not possess machines of their own are always thrilled by watching the speedmen of the road. The very contemplation of a motor-cycle brings to mind thoughts of power and speed.

Who among the vast ranks of the ordinary "push" cyclists, I wonder, does not sometimes feel a pang of envy when, out on the open road or grinding up a stiff hill, he sees a motor-cyclist zip by with a honk! honk! of his hooter and the burble of a powerful, sweet engine? One has to taste the joys of motor-cycling in order to fully realise them. Once they get you in their grip, you are a motorist for life!

The St. Jim's Winter Motor-Cycle Trial a few weeks ago was a great success, and was well supported. The competitors lined up outside the gates of St. Jim's. Some of the machines were really beautiful to behold. Kildare fired the pistol, and they were off! At least, some got away quickly, others had to be pushed forward several yards before the machines would start. The noise was deafening. Glyn's machine was the star outfit of the day. He made fastest time for a lap of one mile, his speed being sixty-four miles an hour! Kildare, Darrell, and Rushden were official time-keepers. It was a real sporting event, and was enjoyed by the competitors as well as the onlookers.

Motor-cycling has more of the element of danger in it than pedal-cycling, of course, but isn't that one of the things that puts the spice into sport? Motor-cycles of to-day are as different again as the machines of ten, or even five years ago. How we used to grin in the old days when, pedalling along easily on our jiggers, we saw the hapless motor-cyclists lining the highways desperately tinkering with their smelly, oily machines that had jibbed, or shoving the heavy things home, weary, dirty, and perspiring! Motor-cycle designing has made great strides since then, and even the cheapest motor-cycle nowadays is quite as reliable as a "push" bike.

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## REPLIES TO MOTOR-CYCLING QUESTIONS!

By Monty Lowther.

(Editorial Note.—As soon as the fellows heard that we were bringing out a special Motor-Cycling Number, several wrote with queries, suggestions, etc., respecting motor-cycles. We were so busy that we allowed Monty Lowther to attend to some of the correspondence. The results given below are really what one would expect from Monty!)

G. A. Grundy.—"The motor-cicle I hired dewring the last summer vac behaved in a very erratic manner, although I gave it plenty of oil. The garage chap said I had over-oiled the beastly thing. Was he rite?"—Quite right, Grundy. Human beings also behave rather erratically when too well oiled. (Taggles, please note!)

A. A. D'Arcy.—"Pway, deah boy, what do you considah the most suitable wig-out for motah-cyclin'? Also, how am I to manage about keepin' my monocle on at high speeds?"—When you venture forth on a motor-bike, Gussy, an airman's suit would be advisable if you indulge in flying over hedges, etc., but if the machine persists in running you into ponds, rivers, and the like, I would recommend a diving outfit. To remedy the monocle snag, have a special goggle made, to fit over one eye.

H. Skimpole.—"I am contemplating the purchase from a fellow in Rylcombe of a motor-cycle of 1901 manufacture, name unknown. Do you happen to be acquainted with this particular machine, and do you think it would be a profitable investment?"—We do happen to know this notorious Foden-chaser, Skimmy. The local lads call it the "Brooklands Pet." If you spent a little extra on fitting up the machine with a new frame, wheels, tyres, engine, tank, saddle, handlebars, and brakes, it should turn out all right.

Baggy Trimble.—"Do you rekomeed putting water into the petrol tank to thin out the petrol?"—Decidedly no, Baggy. You are more likely to thin yourself out by having to push the machine home!

## RATTY'S ROUGH RIDE!

By George Kerr.

Chonk! Chonk! Whirrr-rrrrrr!

We knew what it was directly those weird noises disturbed the serenity that Saturday afternoon at St. Jim's.

Figgins rode in on a motor-cycle combination, narrowly missing Taggles and the gatepost, and stopped with a jerk and a bang.

"My hat!" said Fatty Wynn. "Is this the outfit you've hired, Figgy, for us to go for an afternoon's run on?"

"Rather!" grinned Figgins. "Sho can go! Plenty of room in the sidecar for you, Fatty. There's a cushion on the carrier for you, Kerr. My hat, here comes Ratty! Hope he's not going to chip in!"

"Groogh!" puffed Mr. Ratcliff. "That—that vehicle will just suit my purpose, Figgins. Ride me over to Wayland with all the speed possible! I have a train to catch, and have already missed the connection at Rylcombe!"

"Get in, sir!" said Figgy, darting a sly wink at us.

Mr. Ratcliff climbed into the rickety sidecar, Figgy started the engine, and the outfit jerked forward and round, and buzzed out of the gates of St. Jim's with noise and smoke galore.

Figgy's eyes were gleaming. He had Ratty in his power now, and he meant to get a bit of his own back on the tyrannical Housemaster. The road from Rylcombe to Wayland was in terribly bad condition. Figgy picked out all the worst bumps and ruts and potholes, and sent the sidecar whizzing over them.

Bump! Clatter! Rattle! Bump! The bumping and jolting was more than that ancient sidecar could stand. The back and forward connections snapped, and the top lug came out where the locking-nut had shaken loose with the vibration. Sidecar and machine parted company.

"Yarrrroooooogh!" howled Mr. Ratcliff, as the sidecar took a turn to port and shot out of the roadway. "Help!"

The chassis dug deep into the earth, and the sidecar was overturned. It shot Mr. Ratcliff into the air like a rocket, and he landed up in a ditch that ran alongside the road.

He walked back to Rylcombe that day, covered from head to foot in mud!





But for the promptitude of Lawrence and Tom Merry, Owen would have been dashed to a terrible death. They seized him in the nick of time, and by a herculean effort managed to haul him up to safety.

Owen promptly collapsed. This crowning ordeal had proved altogether too much for him.

But he was saved!

"Our work's only half done," said Tom Merry. "Reddy's still down there. How on earth are we going to get him up? The rope's gone, and— Where are you going, Lawrence?"

"To see if I can bag another rope!" came the hurried reply through the darkness.

Lawrence sped away with winged feet in the direction of the fishing village. The elements raged around his head in all their fury; but he did not heed them. One thought only occupied the junior's mind.

Dick Redfern was in danger!

The bitter quarrel which had arisen at St. Jim's, and which had been carried on down in Cornwall, was forgotten now.

Whatever Redfern's opinion of Lawrence might have been, Lawrence still regarded Reddy with feelings of friendship and affection. And he meant to move heaven and earth, if need be, to save him.

The whole district was locked in the grip of a blinding storm. But Lawrence sped on. He did not pause until he came to a cluster of fishermen's cottages, situated on the rocky foreshore.

Lawrence thumped loudly on the door of the nearest cottage. And presently a face appeared at an upper window. "Who's there?" inquired a gruff voice.

In a few brief sentences Lawrence explained the situation. And shortly afterwards there was a sound of shuffling footsteps, and the door of the cottage was opened by a bearded fisherman.

"I want a rope!" said Lawrence breathlessly. "Quick! It's a matter of life and death!"

The old fisherman shook his head gravely.

"We ain't got no rope that'll answer the purpose," he said. "There's only a life-line, an' that won't be nearly long enough to reach down to the bottom o' the cliff!"

A look of distraction came into Lawrence's eyes.

"Can you do nothing—nothing?" he asked tensely.

The fisherman answered in the negative.

"But you have a boat of some sort, surely?"

The man pointed dramatically towards the leaping billows.

"No boat could live in such a sea," he said.

"But we can't leave my pal to drown—"

"If there was any possible way of savin' 'im, sir," said the fisherman, "I'd be on to it like a shot. But there isn't."

"Show me where there's a boat!" cut in Lawrence quickly.

The fisherman gasped.

"You—you surely ain't goin' to venture out in such a sea?" he exclaimed. "It's madness!"

"Madness or not, it's the only chance. Come and get me a boat, and give me a push off!"

There was an imperative ring in Lawrence's tone; and the fisherman found himself obeying against his will. He donned his sea-boots and oilskins, and led the junior to one of the strongest rowing-boats on the beach.

"If I was a single man, sir," he said, as he pushed the boat down towards the swirling waters, "I'd come with you. But I've a missus an' three youngsters to consider, an' I've no right to throw away my life in an 'opeless cause. For that's what it amounts to, sir."

"Do you believe in a Providence?" asked Lawrence, as he took his seat in the boat.

"Why, yes, sir. But—"

"Well, I fancy that Providence will be on my side to-night."

"Eaven bless you, sir!" said the fisherman huskily.

"You're a rare plucked 'un, an' no mistake! I'll wait 'ere, an' if I'm able to give you a 'and in gettin' to shore, I will."

A moment later the boat was launched, and it bobbed up and down on the waves like an egg-shell.

The old fisherman followed its course with anxious eyes.

"Eaven 'elp 'im!" he muttered, again and again. "But I'm afraid 'e'll never get through alive!"

For some moments Lawrence was utterly bewildered by

the movements of the boat and the fierce din of the breakers. He was totally unable to obtain control of the vessel, which was dashed hither and thither—the plaything of a stormy sea. But presently he found himself in calmer waters, and he pulled on the oars with all his might.

He was indeed taking his life in his hands. At any moment he might be capsized, or dashed upon the rocks.

But he did not falter. With strong, swift strokes he rowed on, straining his eyes towards the base of the cliffs for a glimpse of Redfern.

And at last he saw him—a huddled, inert figure, waist-deep in water.

"Reddy! Reddy!" he shouted.

Redfern gazed out to sea like a fellow in a dream. He had resigned himself to his fate; and even now, it seemed that the voice he heard could not be real.

But it was real enough. It was the voice of Edgar Lawrence, the fellow with whom he had quarrelled—the fellow whom he had described as the rankest of rank outsiders.

Gradually Dick Redfern tumbled to the situation.

Lawrence had set out in a boat to save him—Lawrence, whose profession of friendship he had derided, and rejected with scorn.

"Hang on, Reddy! Hang on, old man! I'm coming!"

Redfern craned forward eagerly.

"Lawrence! Is it really you?"

"Yes. Couldn't get another rope, so I've brought a boat along. It was the only way."

"Heaven bless you for this, Lawrence!"

A moment later the boat bumped against the side of the cliff.

"Let me give you a hand," said Lawrence.

And with great difficulty he succeeded in hauling Redfern into the boat.

"You must be nearly done, Reddy!" he gasped.

"I am! But let me take one of the oars. My hat! It seems impossible that any boat could live in a sea like this!"

"Well, it's lived up till now," said Lawrence cheerfully.

"And if it made the journey out all right, it can make the journey back. But let's save our breath. We shall need it."

They pulled vigorously on their oars, but progress was painfully slow.

"I fancy we're shipping water!" panted Redfern, at length.

Lawrence nodded.

"Carry on with the good work," he said, "while I try and bale her out."

The only thing available for baling-out purposes was Lawrence's school cap. He did his best, but the water seemed to come in faster than ever.

Presently Redfern gave a shout.

"I can see the beach at St. Ronan's!" he exclaimed.

"There's a light bobbing about."

"That's one of the fishermen with a lantern," said Lawrence. "He's waiting for us to come in."

But would they ever get in? It seemed doubtful—doubtful in the extreme.

Redfern rowed his hardest, and the boat drew nearer and nearer to the friendly shore.

Thirty yards more—twenty yards—a dozen!

And then the inevitable happened.

The boat suddenly foundered, and the two juniors were precipitated into the seething waves.

Had Lawrence's magnificent effort to save his chum proved futile? Had he practically succeeded, only to be balked at the eleventh hour?

In the ordinary way Dick Redfern was a strong swimmer, and he could have fought his way to the shore without a great deal of difficulty. But the terrible experiences through which he had passed had weakened him, and sapped his vitality.

"I—I'm done!" he gasped, as his head rose above the surface of the water. "Look after yourself, Lawrence. Save yourself, if you can!"

Lawrence was not a strong swimmer. Redfern had beaten him times out of number in the swimming contests which had taken place in the River Rhyl, near St. Jim's. But in the present crisis he had more stamina than Redfern, and he resolved to make a last desperate effort to save his chum.

Finding himself beside Redfern, he gripped him under the arms. Scarcely had he done so when a powerful billow swept them towards the shore.

It was now only a matter of a few yards, and willing hands were waiting to assist the two juniors as soon as they came within reach. For Tom Merry & Co. had come down to the shore, and had learned from the old fisherman of Lawrence's perilous undertaking.

How Lawrence managed to cover the intervening distance with his burden he never knew. A great weakness assailed him, and his senses seemed to reel. But he grimly told himself that he must not give up—that he must hold on and hold out until he had accomplished his object.

And presently, as in a dream, he heard a babel of voices, and he found himself lying at full length on the sand. A

couple of fellows were bending over him, and he thought he recognised Tom Merry and Owen.  
A question struggled to his lips.  
"Reddy?" he gasped.  
"Safe and sound, thanks to you!" he heard Owen say.  
And then there was a great roaring in his ears, and he became engulfed in impenetrable darkness.

## CHAPTER 7.

### The Valley of the Shadow!

**D**AWN flushed up over sea and land.  
The storm had abated, leaving little trace of its violence.

At Ocean View, the residence of Redfern's uncle, Edgar Lawrence lay in a state of delirium. And the St. Jim's juniors, heavy-eyed and haggard of face, sat together in the drawing-room, discussing the terrible events of the night, and the illness of the fellow who had risked his life for another.

For Lawrence was ill—very ill indeed. Everything was being done for his comfort.

Uncle Robert's housekeeper, a kind-hearted woman who had had much experience of nursing, presided in the sick-room.

Lawrence's soaking garments had been removed, and he had been placed between the warm blankets, while a fire had been kindled in the grate.

Redfern's uncle, usually so buoyant and light-hearted, was looking very grave now. He came into the drawing-room from time to time to report progress.

As for Dick Redfern himself, he sat as if stunned. His face was buried in his hands; he was suffering agonies of remorse.

He had been saved from a terrible death by the fellow he had wronged. For there was no doubt in his mind, now, that he had wronged Edgar Lawrence greatly. He had allowed himself to be influenced by Chowie's poisonous tongue; he had allowed himself to think that Lawrence was not capable of real friendship.

And Lawrence, by his heroic action, had given the lie direct to that supposition. He had proved himself a friend indeed—a supreme pal.

Redfern had called him a hypocrite—a fellow who professed friendship where friendship did not exist!

Small wonder that Dick Redfern suffered agonies of mind as he sat there, surrounded by his schoolfellows, waiting feverishly for better news of the sick boy upstairs. But no better news was forthcoming.

When Uncle Robert next came into the room, a dozen pairs of eyes regarded him questioningly.

"He is still delirious, my boys," said the old gentleman. "His condition is one for grave concern. As soon as the post-office opens, I propose to telegraph to his mother. He has no father, I understand?"

"No, uncle," said Redfern.

"Might I make a suggestion, sir?" said Tom Merry.

"Certainly, my boy!"

"I think it would be a good thing if Marie Rivers were wired for, too. She's the school nurse at St. Jim's, and if anybody can pull Lawrence through, Miss Marie can."

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Then I will certainly wire for the young lady," said Uncle Robert. "I have already summoned a doctor from Falmouth. He should be here shortly."

The hours dragged slowly by. No change was reported in Lawrence's condition.

When the doctor arrived the delirium had passed, and Lawrence lay in what appeared to be a peaceful sleep. But the medical man, after making an examination, looked serious.

Uncle Robert eyed the doctor keenly.

"Can you hold out any hope, sir?"

"Very little. I am afraid."

"The poor lad is in a critical condition?"

"Very. He contracted a particularly severe form of influenza, owing to exposure, and I fear that pneumonia has supervened. With the most scrupulous care and attention, it is just possible that he may rally; but we must be prepared for the worst."

"Good heavens!"

Uncle Robert was deeply distressed. He did not go down again to the drawing-room. He could not bear the look of pain on his nephew's face.

It was not until three o'clock in the afternoon that Marie Rivers arrived at the Cornish mansion. Marie was

(Continued on page 18.)

## OUR EASY "ONE WEEK" FOOTBALL COMPETITION OPEN TO ALL!

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accompanied by a pale-looking little lady in black, with a widow's veil over her face. This was Mrs. Lawrence. Both were admitted at once to the sick-room.

And all this time Tom Merry & Co. had remained downstairs, not caring to go out, not touching the food which the butler had pressed upon them. Even Fatty Wynn's appetite had utterly failed him for once.

When four o'clock came, Dick Redfern could stand the suspense no longer. He rose to his feet and tottered from the room.

He was in the act of ascending the stairs when he encountered the doctor.

"How—how is he, sir?" he asked, his tone tense with anxiety.

The doctor glanced sympathetically at the troubled face that was raised to his own. He laid his hand on the junior's shoulder.

"Bear up, my boy," he said kindly. "We must hope for the best."

"Does that mean that you fear the worst?"

The doctor did not answer. His silence was more eloquent than words. It revealed to Redfern the terrible truth. Lawrence was dying!

Redfern threw out his hands in passionate appeal.

"Can nothing save him?" he cried wildly. "Oh, don't say that he's dying! Anything but that! He sha'n't die! He mustn't die! He's my chum! He risked his life for me, and I want him to live, so that I can make amends! I wronged him—I called him a false friend—and all the time I wasn't worthy to lace his boots! Don't say that there's no hope!"

And Redfern almost broke down.

"As I said before, we must hope for the best," said the doctor. "Everything possible is being done to preserve the poor lad's life."

Redfern turned and went blindly down the stairs.

An icy fear gripped his heart. Try as he would, he could not shake off the thought that Edgar Lawrence would never again return to St. Jim's.

The long day turned to its rest, and dusk fell over the Cornish landscape.

Heavy of heart, and with a set, stony face, Dick Redfern sat in the drawing-room. Presently the door opened and Marie Rivers came in.

The girl's face was pale, and she had been crying. But it was in calm tones that she said to Redfern:

"Will you come upstairs, please?"

Redfern rose, and followed Marie from the room.

"Is—is he worse, Miss Marie?"

The junior's lips could scarcely frame the question.

Marie caught Redfern's hand and held it tightly.

"He is thought to be dying," she said softly. "But he is happy—he has no fears. He wishes to speak to you before—before the end."

Redfern would have fallen but for Marie's support. He had feared the worst all along, and yet, now that he knew there was no hope, his senses seemed to swim.

The news was more overwhelming than any that Redfern had ever received.

Edgar Lawrence was dying. Death, the reaper, was shortly to claim him—in the springtime of his youth!

Marie Rivers softly opened the door of the sick-room, and Redfern entered. He had a hazy glimpse of his Uncle Robert, and of a weeping lady in black; then he caught sight of his chum stretching out feeble, beckoning arms towards him.

He staggered towards the bedside.

The look on Lawrence's face impressed him strangely. There was no trace of fear in the frank, almost eager, blue eyes, and the cheeks glowed with an unnatural radiance.

"Reddy, Reddy! Dear old boy!"

The voice was almost a whisper.

Redfern took one of the slim white hands in his. And then, in a wild torrent of words, he expressed contrition for all that had passed. He said he was an utter cad ever to have doubted the value of Lawrence's friendship; he pleaded for his chum's forgiveness; he said that he would give anything to be able to die in Lawrence's stead.

And as he spoke his hot tears fell upon the sick boy's pillow, his lips quivered, and finally he broke down completely.

"Don't reproach yourself, Reddy—don't, old man! The past is done with now, and I've nothing to forgive. But I want you to be with me at the finish. I don't want you to go away any more. You'll think of me sometimes, won't you, Reddy? You won't drive me out of your thoughts?"

"Dear Heaven, no!" muttered Redfern brokenly.

"I'm not afraid to die," Lawrence went on. "I don't think any fellow need be, if he's gone through life with a straight bat. Don't cry, mater—don't cry, dear! It's all for the best. After all, death is but the beginning of a new life—a better, a fuller life. I've never been a religious fellow, as you know, Reddy, in the usual sense of the term. I'm afraid the Head's sermons used to go in at one ear and out at the other. But I believe that the real religion is that which a fellow carries about with him in his daily life—the sort of religion that prompts him to play the game, to help those who are weaker than himself, to put honour before everything. That sort of fellow may not go to church for a year—for twenty years. But God won't forget him when his time comes. God never forgets a sportsman."

Lawrence lay back upon his pillows. All hope had been abandoned now. The boy was dying.

But the doctor was a man who never took anything for granted. In the course of his long practice he had seen miracles. He had seen eleventh hour recoveries in the most desperate cases of illness. In his heart he feared the worst; but he meant to fight for his patient's life till the very last.

Lawrence closed his eyes, and lay quite placid. Both his mother and Dick Redfern took it to be the sleep of death. So did Marie Rivers. But the doctor, bending over the still form, found that life still lingered. Lawrence had fallen into a natural sleep.

A gleam came into the doctor's eyes. There was a fighting chance, after all!

"The boy sleeps," he murmured. "It is possible, even yet, that he may rally. Kindly remain here, Miss Rivers. I must ask the others to leave the sick-room."

Mrs. Lawrence moved to the door. Dick Redfern, pulling himself together, assisted the lady from the room. A newborn hope was in their hearts—a hope that, after all, Death, the reaper, had not prevailed.

All that evening, all through the long night which followed, Edgar Lawrence slept. At daybreak his breathing became easier, and an hour later he opened his eyes upon a world which he had never expected to see again.

"My dear boy," said the doctor gently, "you have turned the corner. The crisis is past, and sleep has saved you."

Lawrence struggled to find words. A strange wonder came over him.

"Doctor, do you mean that—that I shall live?"

The medical man nodded.

"As I say, the crisis is past," he said. "Careful nursing will do the rest."

And that was where Marie Rivers came in. Never was a more skilful and devoted nurse than Miss Marie.

Although the crisis was over, Lawrence was in a dreadful weak state, and the building up process would be a long business, and one which would need delicate handling. And who could better handle it than this girl, who had once been a Little Sister of the Poor?

The joy and relief experienced by Lawrence's mother and chums when they heard the news can be better imagined than described.

From that time Lawrence made slow but satisfactory progress until he was fairly on the high road to recovery. Tom Merry & Co. returned to St. Jim's as soon as he was out of danger.

Cyril Chowle, when he learned how near Lawrence had come to losing his life, was stricken with remorse, and he made a frank confession to Dick Redfern of the part he had played in connection with the once shattered friendship. And Redfern, who had learned the value of forgiveness, freely forgave the fellow who had wrought so much mischief.

Edgar Lawrence did not rejoin his school-fellows until three weeks later. He was given a rousing reception at St. Jim's, and his reconciliation with Dick Redfern was likely to prove permanent. Lawrence was a tried and proven chum, and Reddy would never again doubt the sincerity of his friendship.

That thrilling and almost tragic week-end in Cornwall will linger long in the memory of the St. Jim's fellows, and the story will be handed on to future generations of school-boys—that imperishable story of the pluck of Edgar Lawrence!

THE END.

(Another rousing, long complete story of the chums of St. Jim's next week, entitled: "THE FIFTH-FORMER'S SECRET," by Martin Clifford. Order your copy Early!)

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A Story of the Adventures of Six Stalwart Chums in the Wild West.

## By GORDON WALLACE.

### CHAPTER 1.

#### The Fire at Jefferson's Farm!

CORPORAL NEVIN, stationed at Thunder Creek, well away north in the Peace River district of Alberta, had been like some members of the famous force that he adorned, might have taken strong exception to this familiar use his shanty was being put to. But, being a Britisher himself, the worthy corporal shrugged his shoulders many times at the irregularities of conduct that he observed about some of his fellow-countrymen out there. And he just paused on the threshold of his shanty now, and, picking at his little close-clipped moustache, smiled—and hoped his sergeant or the inspector would not appear just at the wrong moment.

For his usually spick-and-span cabin seemed to have been converted either into a gymnasium or a boxing stadium; probably both. Anyway, there were half a dozen fellows occupying the shack now, and they were all enjoying themselves in a certainly very noisy, if healthy, manner.

Jim Raven, a tall, well-built young Yorkshireman, was hard at it with boxing gloves, engaging "Digger" Harrison, an Australian, in hot contest. Smiler Dickinson, a thoroughbred Canadian, was giving Pete Craddock a tough time with the singletick—or what substituted for a singletick. Real sportsmen don't always worry about the style of their equipment. A couple of small ash plants, cut down just outside the shack, served well enough for singleticks. Pete Craddock, being a Yankee, and one of the best, didn't mind being pounded black and blue by a home-cut stick any more than he would have minded being drubbed by one bought out of Yeaton's store at Edmonton.

On the floor were two struggling forms; one of them, with arms folded, was doggedly keeping his elbows to the boards, while the other was trying his utmost to roll his adversary over on to his back. But Sandy Graham—all the way from Dundee—wouldn't go on his back; not even Pat O'Hara could make that doughty Scot do a thing he didn't want to do.

So these six well-known visitors to Corporal Nevin's shack enjoyed themselves. For sport was their passion. And the North-West Mounted Policeman who watched, had to smile as he observed that

this arrival had not been noticed by one of them.

Jim Raven, by a well-planted punch on the point of Digger Harrison's jaw, sent the Aussie reeling back into Nevin's bunk. The force with which the big-built Cornstalk went down caused the bunk to creak and crack suggestively. And, just at that moment, Smiler Dickinson gave the Yankee a thwack on the shoulder that fetched out a yell of pain from Craddock and caused him to drop his stick. And, also simultaneously, Sandy Graham gave himself a heave that sent the Irishman flying from his back.

"Excellent!" laughed Corporal Nevin; and the three who had come out top, temporarily, in these three sporting encounters, turned to greet the man whose quarters they were making such free use of. "An excellent entertainment. Now, may I trouble you to tidy up my shack, gentlemen? By the time you have taken the frying-pan off my bed, put the cookstove back into place, brought the table and chairs in from outside, and cleaned up all the mess, you'll have thought out some explanation of this disgraceful act of trespass."

The six sportsmen—and that is what they loved to be known as: "The Sportsmen of Thunder Creek"—grinned at their red-coated friend. But they obediently set to work to straighten up the mess they had made. They were not long about it, for they could do useful work quite well and quickly when they liked.

"This is a funny time to be doing this, isn't it?" said Nevin, "half past six in the evening! I thought all you boys, who work for farmers as hired men, were kept busy till it's time to go to bed!"

"We're all out of work," said the Sportsmen, in chorus. "Stony broke and nothing to do; nothing to smoke and nothing to—"

"That's bad," said Nevin. "How did you come to be out of work at this busy time of the year?"

"I—well, I got the sack," said Jim Raven. "Old Jefferson fired me—and I'm darned glad! Digger, who was working on the same farm, chucked up the job as a protest."

"I'm afraid you're never going to settle down to become really good colonists," said Nevin, shaking his head. "You think far too much of your sports,

it seems. All the farmers round here say—"

"Oh, they say a lot about us," grinned Jim Raven. "Mostly untrue. That's because we can't agree with them that life should be a long seventeen-hour-a-day grind, seven days a week. Anyway, those of us who haven't got the sack have jumped the job, and we're all out of work. Care to enlist us, corporal?"

"No," said Nevin. "We have certain ideas in the Mounted about work, as well. I'm afraid—"

There came to the ears of all within the shack the sound of a madly-galloping horse's feet. At once Nevin went to the door, to see a mounted man thundering up—a man who, as soon as he reached the shack, hurled himself from the horse's bare back and stumbled inside. He was a bearded man, dressed as a far-Western farmer, which meant he was dressed anyhow, so that he looked as though he did not own a cent.

He stumbled over Nevin's door-log as he made his entrance, and shot inside the shack head first. It was Jim Raven who caught him, thus probably saving him from bumping his head against the hard edge of the iron stove.

"Let me go!" growled the man; and Jim let him go, so that he fell to the floor after all. "Darn you!" he said by way of thanks.

"Don't mention it, Mr. Jefferson," said Jim, with a chuckle. "That's a little job I won't charge you for, though you still owe me two months' wages."

"Fire!" yelled Jefferson, coming clumsily to his feet.

"Where?" asked the Sportsmen together.

"My stacks!" howled Jefferson. "Blazin' like blazes!"

"No!" said the others jokingly. But here Corporal Nevin seemed to realise that Jefferson had ridden up for a specific purpose.

"Got something to report to me, Jefferson?" he asked.

"Shore—my wheatstacks are on fire!" yelled Jefferson. "All of 'em," he added. Then he fixed Jim Raven with his eye. "Immediately after I sacked you, they began to burn," he said darkly.

"Not guilty—I hadn't any matches," said Jim, refusing, still to be serious. "Pity you didn't sack me later, then."

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you'd have had Digger and me to help put the fire out."

"Shut up, boys," said Nevin. "This seems serious. Have you got your horses with you?"

The boys had. Unlike most Canadian hired men on farms, these Sportsmen spent the best part of the wages they earned on the upkeep of saddle horses.

"Then get 'em, and come along with me," said Nevin.

Two minutes later a madly-riding party was heading in the direction of Jefferson's farm; which was a good four miles from Corporal Nevin's shack. Nevin, superbly mounted, led the way; the Sportsmen, who also would never have troubled to ride "dud" horses, were close on his heels, while, a poor last, mounted on a animal that had already done a good day's work on the land, rode Jefferson, the breeze he made in his flight sending his sandy whiskers flying back over one shoulder like a pennant.

After they had got out of the bit of woodland in which Nevin had constructed his quarters, they were able to look over a wide stretch of plain, and to see, in the distance, a haze of black smoke that certainly told of fire. Seeing it, Nevin, who was as conscientious a mounted policeman as could be found in the force, spurred his horse to a faster gait. The Sportsmen gave a loud yell, and tried to race their uniformed friend. Jefferson got left even more hopelessly behind.

"Always told Jefferson he was a prize ass to build all his wheat stacks in one place," howled Jim Raven. "But he called me a durned fool Englishman, and—"

"Sha'n't be able to do much," said Nevin over his shoulder. "There were people nearer than us to come to for help."

The party drew rein at length near to the crackling, roaring furnace that the blazing stacks made. Bone-dry as the packed sheaves were, with a gentle breeze to fan them into a fiercer flame, the odds against saving any of this wheat was immense. But quickly Nevin organised his resources.

There was no water handy, of course. Those stacks that were blazing their worst could never have been extinguished. But Nevin and the Sportsmen saw there were four stacks, and on the windward side of the fire, that were scarcely touched yet. And there were seven good riders and a farmer available.

"How many wagons have you got, Jefferson?" bawled the corporal.

"Two. What d'ye want 'em for?" Jefferson began.

"Fetch the wagons, boys, and hustle. Fetch forks, too," ordered Nevin; and four of the Sportsmen at once turned their horses' heads in the direction of Jefferson's farm buildings, a quarter of a mile away. Jim Raven and Digger Harrison were two of the four, and they raced till they got to the yard. Having, up to an hour or two ago, been employed as farm-labourers for Jefferson, they knew just where things were to be found. They found harness, threw it on to their own horses, and hooked the pairs thus obtained to the wagons. Yelling like mad Indians, and driving those saddle-horses at a speed that threatened to overturn the wagons, they returned over the long stubble to the scene of the fire.

Still the unburned stacks had not caught. And from then on those Sportsmen worked like—well, sportsmen. They tore those unconsumed stacks down and threw huge forkfuls of sheaves into the wagons. When the wagons were full, they galloped away with the loads and dumped them well away from the fire.

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Time after time they did this, toiling till the sweat rolled down their faces. Yet they yelled and laughed as they worked, heedless of the scorching they got, of the acrid smoke that made them cough almost perpetually. Their horses required firm handling, but the work went beautifully, so that they saved for Jefferson a large amount of his crop. But when the stacks they were working on caught, Nevin saw the futility of striving further, and ordered his men to stop.

All the time Jefferson never did a hand's turn to help, but just danced about the blaze, got in the way of the younger men, and shouted futile criticisms at them. If the Sportsmen hadn't been sportsmen to the finger-tips, probably they would have thrown up the struggle before they were ordered to do so. But, smilingly, they toiled on as long as anything could be gained by working.

"That's the best we can do," said Nevin, at length, gouging smoke and grime out of his eyes. "And, Jefferson, you've got to thank these lads for what they've saved."

"Huh!" said Jefferson. "Insurance company'll have to do the thankin'. Stacks is insured, of course."

"The insurance people will want a lot of convincing that you were properly fire-guarded," said the corporal. "Now all has been done that can be done. I'll have to make investigations."

"My guards was ploughed all right," said Jefferson. He eyed Jim Raven nastily. "Or I told this feller to plough 'em, and if he went off boxin' instead of—"

"I ploughed all according to Hoyle," said Jim; "so you don't need to blame me for this, boss."

Nevin was walking round the ruined stacks now, looking mighty thoughtful. He did not always take life dead seriously, but that is how he took his work. There was something of grimness about his handsome lips as he stared about him. And at one point he stooped and picked something up from the stubble.

"It was raining up till eleven o'clock this morning, wasn't it, Jefferson?" he asked sharply.

"Yes," said the farmer, and he looked quickly at that which the corporal had picked up. "Say, whose is this?"

Nevin held out a somewhat elaborate wallet, made of grained leather, with silver-mounted corners.

"Isn't it yours?" Nevin asked, while the Sportsmen looked on in interest. They were always interested in Nevin when he was at work.

"Mine! What 'ud I want a fancy thing like that for?" asked Jefferson. "Looks more like the thing one o' these Sportsmen might carry about with 'em to keep their wages—what they don't earn."

Jim Raven stepped forward at that, his fists clenched. The laughter had gone out of his eyes now. He was the accepted leader of this gang of Sportsmen, and he was quick enough to see what Jefferson was hinting at.

"Suggesting one of us?" he began. But Nevin at that moment laid a firm hand on the Yorkshireman's shoulder and drew him away from the uneasy-eyed Jefferson.

"Quit this," said Nevin curtly. "There's something very suspicious about this stack-burning business, Jefferson. This wallet has been dropped down here since the rain this morning. Now, whose can it be?" He opened it. Then he bit his lips sharply, and shut it up again with a slap, and began to search the ground once more.

"Any clues?" asked Jim Raven.

Nevin said nothing, but mounted his horse and slowly rode away from the scene. Nor did he invite the others to accompany him.

"Boys," said Jefferson nervously, "I ain't makin' any charges, but I'll bet the corporal's got on to the scent of somethin' big. Mind ye, it don't matter to me, 'cause them stacks is insured. But I reckernised that wallet, same as he did. Don't belong to any of you boys. I was only joshin' you. That wallet's Jack Patterson's."

"What!" exclaimed the Sportsmen. "Jack Patterson's!"

"Shore!" said Jefferson. "An' I'm afraid it's well known as how Patterson an' me ain't on good terms. You yourself, Jim, remember as how he threatened to make me sorry because I insisted on his payin' me back them three horses he bought on credit recently. We had words. You heard 'em, Jim, and—"

"Jack Patterson didn't do that, though," said Jim Raven harshly. "Jack's an Englishman, too, and a sportsman. It's all lies! He's as clean as you're dirty, you old—old skunk!"

"Say," protested Jefferson; then he backed away from the fierce-eyed leader of the Sportsmen of Thunder Creek, "not so much o' yer impudence, you durned young shiftless loafer. Jest because Patterson's a pal o' yours, d'ye think he can't be mean to them as he don't like? And warn't Patterson on my farm less'n half an hour before I knowed the stacks was burnin'? And ain't that his wallet, anyway? Waal, you ask Nevin."

Jim Raven, white-faced, seized Jefferson savagely by the handkerchief that was knotted about his neck. Jim had a lot of things up against this near-minded, grasping homesteader, the man for whom he had worked like a slave for two months during the busiest time of the year. He had put up with a lot of insults and spiteful remarks. But now he considered he was angrier with Jefferson than he had ever been. And so he swung the farmer nearer to him, then swung him away, and Jefferson collapsed with a grunt on to the stubble.

"You say that again about Jack," he breathed, standing over the farmer, "and I'll—"

Sandy Graham laid a hand on his leader's arm and soothed him. Everybody else among this gang of sportsmen was angry at the insinuation that Jefferson had thrown out against Patterson; for Patterson was a good friend of theirs; but most of them saw it was helping nobody to offer the farmer violence.

"He'll have a case against you if you smash him, Jim," said Sandy cannily. "And we all know what a mean rotter he is. Let up!"

"Come on, boys," said Jim, grinding his teeth, but offering Jefferson no further violence. "Let's go and get the smell of that animal out of our nostrils."

"I'll report ye for assault!" growled the farmer, picking himself up. "I'll get the country cleared out of you useless, loafin', sportin' gazebos. I'll—" He shook his fists after the Sportsmen as they secured their horses, mounted them, and rode away from the scene of the stack-burning.

## CHAPTER 2.

### A Protector Wanted!

THE Sportsmen rode fairly silently for half an hour, at the end of which time Jim Raven drew rein, and looked back across the plain.

"What if Jack Patterson did do that, in a moment of pique?" he asked his comrades.

"Waal," said Craddock, "I guess he did a mighty dirty and a very senseless thing, if he did. That's so."

"He must have known Jefferson's stacks were insured," said Digger Harrison. "Couldn't have hoped to get any sort of revenge on that old gink, Jefferson."

"I'll allow," said Sandy Graham, "that Patterson was mighty annoyed when Jefferson insisted on taking those three unpaid-for horses back in the middle of the heaviest rush of work. But Patterson never took that way of avenging himself."

"What I mean to say," said Jim, "is, what if the judge and jury decide Patterson did it? They're as hot as mustard on offences against the settlers up here. Heard about a fellow getting seven years once for setting a prairie-fire going deliberately."

"That's about what Patterson would get, if they found him guilty," said Smiler Dickinson gravely. "But he didn't do it."

"There's Jack Patterson's kid," said Jim. "Young Syd. Eight years old; no mother; the only relative that kid has in all the world besides his dad is old Patterson, his grandfather, the man who kicked Jack out years ago, because he hated the sight of the girl Jack married. What'll happen to Syd if his father gets time?"

"Oh, pshaw!" said Smiler Dickinson. "Don't harp on it! Say, we'll go to Patterson's place and see what he's been doing with himself all day. He'll be able to account for his actions."

They rode on again. By this time the sun had well set and the short Canadian twilight was coming to an end. A moon was hanging in the sky, and the whole aspect of the plains was one of beauty and peace. But there was not much peace in the hearts of the Sportsmen.

For the first time in their lives, perhaps, these careless, irresponsible young fellows—and there was not one of them a day more than eighteen years of age—had cause to think deeply. Life to them up to now had been a thing to live as easily and as carelessly as possible. Even the backbreaking work their employers, the farmers of Thunder Creek County, had set them to do had not quelled them.

Being all good sportsmen, they had soon gravitated towards each other, had soon formed amongst themselves a little clique that had earned for itself quite a bad name. For most of those money-seeking farmers in the North-West have no time for sport and amusement. They are always set on making money or trying to make it, and, if Britishers who come along as hired men fail to get as enthusiastic about making cash for their bosses, they are generally stamped as useless.

The only established farmer in the district whom they really liked was an English widower of thirty odd years, a gentleman, and one of a noble family at home. He, too, was a sportsman—had pulled an oar in his 'Varsity eight; had held a boxing Blue. He and Corporal Nevin were the only two for miles around who ever had any patience with the sports-loving six who were led by Jim Raven.

Now one of their two friends seemed like going under suspicion of having committed what was undoubtedly a wicked crime against the community. Stack-burning is a bad offence at any time. Apart from the damage such a fire does to the owner of the stacks, or to the insurance company that covers the risk of their burning, it must not be forgotten that there are people in overcrowded Europe who depend upon the



Suddenly the door opened and a bearded man shot inside the shack head-first. Jim Raven made a grab at him, and was only just in time to save him from bumping his head against the hard edge of the iron stove. "Fire!" yelled the old man as he pulled himself together. "My stacks! They're burning!"

Canadian wheatfields and their fruits for the wherewithal to live. A stack-fire such as had taken place at Jefferson's farm might take the very bread from hundreds of men, women, and children who live in countries where agriculture is not the principal industry.

So the Sportsmen were worried, and badly wanted to know what their friend, Patterson, had been doing with himself that day; for they did not want him to have to stand the blame of this dirty act.

When they reached Patterson's place—which was just a typical northern homestead, with buildings made of hand-hewn logs, they found only one member of that establishment at home. A small boy, dressed in blue overalls, came out from the horse-stable as the six rode into the wire-enclosed yard.

As soon as he saw them, he gave a yell, threw away the fork he had been working—or playing—with, rushed up to the mounted party, and, before any of them could dismount, had seized Jim Raven's stirrup-leather in both hands, and had hauled himself up hand over hand until he was able to take a seat behind the young Yorkshireman.

"Gimme a ride—gallop like fun!" he shrieked. He was a fine little chap, was Syd Patterson. He was fairly big for eight, clear-complexioned, curly headed, straight as a young poplar.

"Not just now, old chap," said Jim. "Where's your dad?"

"He went off, just now," said Syd. "The corporal called a few minutes ago, and dad went with him."

The Sportsmen exchanged glances. "Did he say good-bye to you, sonny?" asked Digger Harrison.

"No! Whaffor?" asked Syd, staring. "Ain't dad comin' back?"

"I—suppose so," said Jim Raven lamely.

"Corporal gave me a letter, and said I'd give it to one of you Sportsmen, when I saw you," said Syd. "I'll get it."

He scrambled to the ground and raced into the house. He returned a moment later, waving a piece of paper, which he handed to Jim—who certainly was his favourite of the gang.

Jim, biting his lips, read the few words scribbled thereon in Corporal Nevin's firm hand-writing.

"Take charge of the kid, you fellows," was written on that bit of paper. "Am taking Jack Patterson down the line, but I'm sure he isn't guilty, and the thing'll be straightened up very soon. In the meanwhile, the kid'll want looking after. Try Mrs. Grooms, at Red Wheat City—she's English, and decent enough."

"Gosh!" breathed Jim Raven, handing the note to Digger Harrison, who read it and passed it on.

Syd watched the faces of his big, careless friends in amazement.

"Go and get me a dipper of water, Syd," said Jim. The boy ran off again. "Now, you chaps," the leader of the Sportsmen went on, "I guess Syd hasn't got to know about this—ever! Get me?"

"Nevin's arrested Jack Patterson!" said Sandy Graham. "Then he must have had good grounds! Boys, what are we going to do about it?"

"Bedad," said O'Hara, who, for an Irishman, spoke very little, "it's up to us to protect this kid some. Jack Patterson is our friend. We've got to do the friendship stunt ourselves now. Say—"

"Of course, Patterson'll prove he's innocent," said Jim.

"Sure," said the others; "but it's

going to take him a while. I reckon we'll have to hand Syd over to Mrs. Groome, at Red Wheat City."

### CHAPTER 3.

#### Raising the Wind!

**C**ORPORAL NEVIN was not the sort of man to talk professional matters, even with his friends. The Sportsmen of Thunder Creek got very little information out of him regarding the stack-burning case. All they knew was that Jack Patterson was committed for trial by the inspector before whom he was taken, and that the trial would come off at the assizes in Edmonton within a few days.

He also hinted that evidence was very strong against Patterson. But he seemed more particularly concerned over the welfare of Syd.

During the days that elapsed between the arrest and the trial, Syd stayed in the motherly care of Mrs. Groome, a woman who, like her husband, had not been particularly fortunate in Canada. Groome was just a labourer on the Red Wheat section of the C.P.R. He and his wife had a healthy young family of their own. But she played the mother nobly to Syd, though she certainly could not afford to keep him.

"Just by way of preparation for the worst," said Nevin to the Sportsmen, the day before the trial, "we ought to talk over the affairs of that kid. Patterson's farm is mortgaged up to the hilt—so is his crop. If he gets sent down the line, there won't be a bean to keep Syd. He'll be thrown on the public. There's a poorhouse at Edmonton, of course."

"He won't go there," said Jim Raven. "I've got a mother of my own in England. I'll send him there, and she'll look after him."

But the others looked at him, for they knew that Jim Raven's mother was not much richer than Mrs. Groome. Furthermore, they don't take even children from the Far West of Canada to England free of charge. And, it is safe to say, these Sportsmen had not more than twenty-five dollars amongst them. They were always too generous to keep money for long, not that they earned much. They were all too restless to stay in one job for long at a time, and in the winter they made practically nothing. A deplorable admission for six healthy young fellows to make, perhaps, but that was so. None was able to make more than a bare living for himself.

They talked over the future of Syd till late in the night, and came to the conclusion that, had they plenty of money, Syd would be all right, whatever happened to his father. But they did not decide so easily where money was to be got.

The following day the trial took place, and when it was over they heard, through Nevin, the result. Jack Patterson had been found guilty, of course, and had been sentenced to five years in the penitentiary. The evidence against Patterson had been plentiful it seemed. Jefferson had produced some; others had had words of a damaging nature to say. So Patterson went out of sight of his fellow men, and Syd was left to face the world as the child of a convicted felon.

After the trial, the authorities wanted to take charge of Syd and make a pauper of him. The Sportsmen at once prevented that. The boy disappeared mysteriously from Mrs. Groome's care as soon as it was known that a charitable society wanted to take charge of the

child, and even Corporal Nevin could not find out where Syd had vanished to. "We're that kid's godfathers from now on," said Jim Raven, "and we'll have to smuggle him out of the country somehow, and get him to Yorkshire, to hand him over to my mater. Question is, how? Sell our horses? They'll raise a tidy sum!"

What they could get for their six horses might amount to just about enough to pay Syd's fare home, and the return fare of the Sportsman who would accompany him, for the sort of horses they rode were not fabulous in price, though good enough animals.

"Fine lot of fellows we'd be without our nags. Why, they're necessary for us," said Sandy Graham, not stingily, but sensibly.

"Wonder if Nevin's got any money?" asked Jim.

"Darned nerve we'd have to ask Nevin, seeing he's got the job of tracking the kid and handing him over to those pauperising people," said Craddock. "No, we won't ask him."

They did not. But, curiously enough, Nevin, who did not tell everybody all he knew, made a suggestion to them; and there was a twinkle in his eye as he did so. He was the man detailed to find Syd Patterson, and he honestly did not know where to look for the child. But he more than suspected that the Sportsmen knew where he was, and he also knew what the Sportsmen's intentions were regarding their "godson."

"Don't know whether you're interested, you fellows," said Nevin, "but they're talking about you down at Red Wheat City." This was about a week after the conviction of Syd's father. "They're saying that you and your sports are all tin-horn bluff."

"Oh!" said Jim disinterestedly. "They say," said Nevin, "that there isn't one of you who would care to put the gloves on and box a man who's come up, throwing his weight about and claiming to be able to put it across anybody who cares to try it out with him."

"H'm!" said Jim, interested at once. For, though they were all good all-round sportsmen in this gang, Jim was admittedly the best boxer of the crowd. "Who is he?"

"Fellow come up here to advertise himself a bit," said Nevin. "Calls himself 'Spike' Needler. He's a light-heavy-weight. Reckoned a bit of a terror, too. Why he wants a scrap here I can't quite say, but there's money behind him."

"How much for a fight?" asked Jim eagerly. The others gasped as they heard him. They had never let professionalism enter into their love for sport before. "Five hundred dollars?"

"Gee!" exclaimed Craddock. "As a matter of fact," said Nevin. "that's just the amount Needler's backer is prepared to put up. He's set on making a champion of Spike, and to advertise the man, to get him good opponents, he's willing to offer anybody five hundred dollars who can stand up to Spike for the full twenty rounds, or knock him out in less."

Jim looked at Corporal Nevin, who was smiling quietly.

"Can you fix up a fight for me with that gink?" he asked bluntly, "in a week's time. I'll have to train a bit, but not much."

"I mentioned you to Needler's patron," grinned Nevin. "You can have a fight when ever you like, and Red Wheat City will be interested in it."

The long and short of it was that the fight was arranged, and by Nevin in the main. And so great was the interest aroused in Red Wheat City that by the time the fight was due to take place the

whole of that little frontier town was agog. Nor was the interest confined to Red Wheat City. Towns for many a mile south sent their spectators. For it had long been the ambition of the more sporting members of the province to have a champion of Northern Alberta. Up to now they had not discovered one.

### CHAPTER 4.

#### A Double Knock-Out!

**A**LL arrangements were admirably made. Hogarty's implement store at Red Wheat City was requisitioned. Ample seating accommodation was fixed up. Other, less important and more local, sporting events were arranged to fill in the programme. And Jim Raven certainly had quite a lot of local support, for he and his clique were well-known as sportsmen and little else, and, whatever the local farmers thought about such, there were men in the towns who loved a sportsman.

The Sportsmen of Thunder Creek, in a body, watched the preliminary events on the programme, which were passable. Where these events lacked sport, they provided considerable amusement.

Then came the chief item on the programme, the item everybody present had paid their good money to see, the fight between Spike Needler, the ambitious would-be champion of Western Canada, and Jim Raven, leader of the Sportsmen of Thunder Creek. When the master of the ceremonies announced this fight, there was a shuffling of feet, and all eyes were turned eagerly towards a young man who, attired in a dressing-gown of gaudy pattern, climbed into the ring, to be introduced by an elaborately-dressed gentleman, who chewed a cigar about a foot long.

"Gentlemen," said this gentleman, "I want you to take a real look at Spike Needler, who's the coming champion—not of Western Canada, but the world! He's had some good fights already, and he's going to have some more. I'm doing this with him now to show the people of the North-West that they've got a right good man here. And I'm also, in the interests of sport, giving clever boxers a chance to be able to say, later, that they've had the gloves on with Needler."

"So confident am I in what Spike can do, that I offer five hundred bucks to any local lad who can stand up to him for twenty rounds, or put him down for the count. It's a lot of money, but Spike'll defend it for me. The first man up here who's undertaken to fight him is Jim Raven, one of the Sportsmen of Thunder Creek. Most of you know him."

There was quite a cheer greeted Jim's name, and when he clambered into the ring it was renewed. He looked very fit, but Jim Raven always did look and feel that. He shook hand cordially with Spike Needler, who was a fine specimen of the present-day professional boxer, as hard as nails, trained to the last ounce, and not at all bad-looking.

The spectators got their money's worth right from the opening of the first round. That round was a fairly quiet one, for Needler was not the sort of man to undervalue any opponent. Nor was Jim a reckless amateur, eager to make a show. He knew that he was in for a stiff time for probably an hour or more, and he was very, very anxious to win. Yet he refused to believe that he was fighting for money. He said he was fighting to play the godfather decently to young Syd Patterson. That was a worthier cause than mere money.

So in the first round they both fought feelingly, and each found out a great

deal about the other's style and hitting power. On the part of Needler, that professional found out that Jim Raven was as neat as a cat on his feet. For his weight—which was well in the light-heavy-weight class—Jim was extraordinary nimble. He was quick in his hitting and guarding. Needler, on the other hand, was more solid on his legs—more inclined to bore in and get to work with a short-bent left or right. He could take a heavy punch without appearing to feel it unduly.

At the end of the first round both knew they were going to have a good fight; so did the spectators. The demeanour of Jim's comrades as at the ringside they watched every move was tense, eager, and quite hopeful. For they had faith in their leader, had these irresponsible godfathers of Syd Patterson.

Round two opened somewhat briskly. There was a sharp interchange of heavy blows. Jim got a heavy, bruising blow on the chest that made him gasp, that almost put him down. But when Needler stepped in to give him a finisher, Jim, instead of trying to straighten himself up suddenly, remained crouched for a second, while Needler tried to probe for an opening. Needler failed once, and then it was that Jim straightened up and brought his right up stiff at the same time. He caught Needler a terrific jar under the chin that fetched a grunt from the professional man and made him blink.

The spectators began to yell encouragements to Jim, who closed his ears to them, and doggedly fought, keeping his feet despite many a heavy punch, until the end of the round.

Round three passed off without any special incident. It was all hard, stern fighting, and Jim went to the floor once only, however, to come up to his feet before the referee appointed had time to count. At another stage of this same round Jim began to press his opponent so heavily that Needler went back to the ropes, and then Jim battered him cruelly, till it seemed as if the pro would have to go over them. But the call of "Time!" probably saved him that mishap.

Whatever these two fighters had thought about each other before the fight, they were very mutually respectful of each other when they came up to commence round four; for it is safe to say that Needler had never anticipated that Jim would stick out three rounds against him. It was also noticed that Needler's backer was puffing his long cigar rather fiercely as the boxers came face to face again, smiled into each other's eyes, and touched gloves.

Needler, this round, seemed to have made up his mind to finish it before they could call "Time!" again, which was very praiseworthy on Needler's part undoubtedly. He was thinking of his employer's money. But it rather upset Needler's arrangements when Jim Raven showed that he had an intention something like that working in his mind.

The result was that they came together with a clash, and there ensued a spell of in-fighting that made the spectators almost lift the roof off with their shouts.

Jim was the first to hit the boards as a result of this, and this time he waited till almost the last count, in order to rest. As he came to his feet Needler rushed him, and nearly fouled, though quite unintentionally. Jim stepped sideways to avoid the rush, and as Needler passed him gave the man a dreadful punch in the lower ribs that made him grunt. As Needler wheeled, smiling no more, but snarling, he got in a flush hit on the pro's mouth that fetched more blood. Another thudding smack on the neck Jim delivered; then brought his left



The little boy rushed up to the mounted party, and before any of them could dismount he seized Jim Raven's stirrup-leather in both hands and hauled himself up into the saddle. "Gimme a ride!" he shrilled. "And gallop like fun!"

round and fetched Needler one right on the ear.

"Gosh, lad!" hissed the professional; and at the same moment he delivered a jolt at the angle of Jim's jaw that felled him, dazed him, and left him listening blankly to the cold, methodical countings of the referee; while, smiling his triumph, but gasping a little, Needler stood back.

At the seventh count Jim came to one knee; at the eighth he came to both, resting one glove on the boards. Crouching like a lynx ready to spring, Needler waited for him.

"Nine!" chanted the referee. "Oh, get up!" yelled Digger Harrison at the ringside. "Try again, Jim!"

Jim's head was reeling, his teeth were clamped till they ached, but he managed to hurl himself to the upright. At the same time he jabbed upwards, strengthlessly, he thought, but as hard as he knew how. Then he felt a shock. It didn't hurt him. It just made him crumple up and roll to the boards, while the referee dispassionately resumed his counting. Nor could he move a limb, though he could hear the counts distinctly. He could hear the strange noises made by the spectators, and he heard the word "Ten." He was knocked out!

His seconds—Digger Harrison and Smiler Dickinson—dragged him to his corner and put him on a stool, where they began to administer to him.

And Spike Needler's second did the same with their man!

"A double knock-out, old sportsman!" Dimly Jim heard the words whispered into his ear by Digger Harrison.

"Eh—what?" asked Jim, coming round. "Not beaten, then?"

"Double knock-out. Spike took the count same time you did," said Digger. "Remains to be seen how Spike's backer's going to behave now. You

ought to get the money. You were to stay twenty rounds or knock him out. Nothing was said about him knocking you out at the same time."

"Gosh! Then we're going to get Syd home," said Jim drowsily.

They did. For Spike's backer was a sportsman throughout. He did not quibble about paying the five hundred dollar stake. On the face of it, he couldn't have done it and still kept on boosting his man.

It was Jim who took Syd home to Yorkshire, after certain matters had been settled by Nevin with the authorities. The money he won just about paid their fares and enabled him to hand a few pounds over to his mother, who, once she had seen Syd, took him to her heart, and promised to keep from him the secret of his father's shame.

"But we'll have to keep on finding money to keep him," Jim said to his pals, when he got back Thunder Creek way. "I've made up my mind that he's going to get the best education possible. Question is, how shall we raise the wind?"

"Oh, keep our eyes and ears open," said Digger Harrison, "and utilise our knowledge of sport. There ought to be some chances. Anyway, we're committed to play the godfather properly to young Syd, and I'd hate the notion of going back to the farm to earn it!"

THE END.

**THERE** will be another story of the Sportmen of Thunder Creek shortly.

In the meantime make sure of reading next week's complete story, entitled: "ALL OUT!" by ordering your copy NOW!

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### THE FIRST CHAPTERS.

Jack Wabbygong, James Ready, Sweet, and a Chinese named Lung, chums together in the great school of St. Beowulf's, together with Viscount Waffington, a relation of the Countess of Castlewood, are instrumental in bringing about the capture of a gang of international burglars.

John Lincoln, one of the governors, takes an interest in the lads, and arranges to take them on a world tour.

The great day comes, and aboard the Pole Star the happy party set off on their great adventure.

After an exciting sea trip, the Pole Star drops anchor at San Carlo where the boys make things so lively they have to dash back to the ship to avoid arrest. Immediately they get back they are told they are to rout out a number of pirates—a prospect they hail with joy. The journey is continued until the coast of Morocco is reached. Here the party land, and, armed to the teeth, they advance upon the stronghold of Suini Baba, the pirate chief.

"Stampede his cattle, and then round them up by the sandhills," orders John Lincoln. "Then wait further instructions!"

(Now read on.)

### A Night of Wonders!

THE niggers had all piled themselves in their hut, and were yelling at the top of their voices that the freets were loose.

The panic began to spread to the small but spirited Arab stallions, which tugged at their pickets and kicked at their heel-ropes, squealing and biting at one another. Then, as the camels finished the first lap, some of these had broken loose and charged round the circle in pursuit of the camels.

"Get to the horses—quick!" said Sulieman. "Before they all break loose!"

The boys ran to the plunging horses, each picking out his mount and soothing it.

Mr. Hobbs had some difficulty in getting on the back of his mount.

"Give us a hoist, Master Wobby!" he pleaded as he tried to scramble on the back of a fretful little flea-bitten Arab, in a way which quickly showed the experienced Wobby that he knew as much about horses as an average dromedary knows about algebra.

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"I thought you said you could ride horseback!" said Wobby reproachfully.

"So I can—on a roundabout!" puffed Mr. Hobbs.

"Well, see if you can stick to that bunch of trouble!" said Wobby, hastily hoisting his stout friend on to the Arab's back and running to its nose, soothing it in some queer fashion of his own.

"You ought not to have come out here, if you couldn't ride, Hobby!" he said. "You are a lame duck in the gang if you go down!"

"Don't you worry about me!" replied Mr. Hobbs rather irritably. "You see, I'll stick to 'em like a postage stamp!"

Lal Singh, with all the instinct of a Rajput horse-thief, had picked out the best horse of the lot.

Really, it was Laila, the pet Arab of Suini Baba himself, which had been sent down to the coast for a course of sea-bathing for its legs, and a change of grazing, a rough-looking but almost priceless animal, with a chest like a barrel and the legs of a deer.

And Lal was off, chivvying after the racing camels with the intent of steering them through the opening of the zariba.

Jim Ready, who had the bear by the lead tried to mount his horse and to hold the leather strap, but he found that, though Dempsey's disguise as an old Moorish lady might deceive the eye of a human being, the scent of bear could not deceive a horse.

So the horse he was trying to mount backed away from the robed and veiled figure in affright.

"You'll 'ave to chuck the tow rope off that bear, Master Jim!" said Mr. Hobbs. "The 'orse won't 'ave none of 'im, and I don't blame it either!"

Jim saw the wisdom of Mr. Hobbs' words. He took the lead from Dempsey's collar. Dempsey would have to follow them as best he could.

Jim had not much fear but that Dempsey would follow them up all right over the sand dunes. Dempsey was very good at following a trail, and if by chance he fell in with a lion he would be able to stand up to the lion and give it a very good run for its money.

Dempsey, finding himself loose, stood there dancing round on his hind legs, a strange and irresolute veiled figure. He looked for all the world what he represented himself to be—an elderly Moorish woman caught up in some unexpected turmoil.

The camels were charging round the circle again, followed by the horses, at a thundering gallop. But they were no longer running on their own. A white-robed, turbaned figure, mounted on a magnificent Arab, charged at their side, giving forth shrill cries.

Lal Singh was in his element here. A Rajput has nothing to learn in the matter of lifting horses, and, as for camels, Lal had had plenty of experience with the famous racing camels of the Bikanir deserts.

Horses and camels alike seemed to understand what was required of them as they raced round the edge of the circle, and Lal, coming along like a Derby winner, turned them.

Away they shot through the gap of the edge of thorn, every horse charging after them. The stampede was complete.

Mr. Hobbs' horse went off at such a speed that it came near sending Mr. Hobbs over its head, for the Arab steed is trained to start from a standstill and to pull up like an electric train.

By a miracle, Mr. Hobbs kept his seat, and away they went over the marsh, their steeds following in the trail of the stampede. Not a single horse or camel was left, only that veiled bear, Dempsey, who stood irresolute for a moment.

By rights, Dempsey should have followed the stampede, but he did not. He sniffed the air as he stood there with his paws folded over his stomach under his robe, and down wind from the little encampment of the camelers came the appetising smell of cooking.

They had been preparing their supper when this razzia was made on their zariba. The supper was a big pot of kous-kous, or native porridge of dhurra meal, sweetened with the honey of the wild bees, found in plenty amongst the rocks of the Atlas spurs.

The bear stood irresolute. He could have passed the kous-kous, which is a sort of billsticking paste. But the honey that is made by the wild bees on the thyme-covered slopes of the Atlas Mountains is the finest honey in the world.

**ANSWERS**  
EVERY MONDAY—PRICE 2:

There is no honey to touch it. And for Dempsey, whose nose at night was as good as a pair of the sharpest eyes, the air was filled with the sweet temptation of this delicious honey.

So, instead of following the boys, he toddled off, still walking on his hind legs, to the stone hut, where the terrified camel hands were cowering, thinking that all the efreet and devils of the mountains were loose that night.

"Allah il Allah!" groaned the chief herdsman. "May the blessed Imaums protect us. All Eblees is loose to-night! Let us keep close together, brothers, and call upon the blessed Santon Mulai Ben Zuzan, whose name be extolled."

Mulai Ben Zuzan was a particularly holy man, who had lived in the city of El Nif. He had been famous for his good deeds and his pious life, about the only respectable man who had been born in the city of El Nif in the course of a thousand years of rapine and pillage.

The camel drivers were calmed by the fact that this hut in which they were seated was the old stucco and stone tomb which had been built over the grave of the only saint who had ever come out of El Nif.

They had built their little cooking fire on the slab under which the good Mulai was buried in a sitting position, according to custom, so that he would be ready when the two Recording Angels, Munkir and Nakir, should come to wake him at the last trump to give account of his deeds.

Muttering and shivering over their charcoal fire, the four herdsmen looked up the veiled figure of an old woman at the door of the hut.

Just as in the night all cats are grey, so do all Moorish women, in their universal sheeting of thick white blanketing, look alike.

The four herdsmen gave a sigh of relief.

They were sure that their visitor was old Fatima, the negress who lived in a little hut over the marsh, and who often came to them at nights to share their humble supper of kous-kous and their pot of coffee.

Fatima was old and ugly, and did not mind her face being seen. She was also a white witch, who could cure rheumatic pains with a strip of snakeskin, and who could stop colic with a powder made of the liver of a jackal. She was just the sort of visitor that the four frightened niggers needed to quiet their fears.

"Enter, O Fatima. Thou art welcome, and thy place is empty!" said Kandor, the chief herdsman. "This is a night of wonders. There are many lions howling about, and, just now, an efreet or ghoul with a great tail came into the zariba and stampeded the horses and camels. We are poor men, and we are frightened, for we saw other white shapes, which were, doubtless, potent dives and jinns. And the camels and horses are all gone!"

The veiled figure stood there hesitating.

"Nay, sister," said Kandor. "Have no fear. All are friends here! Here is Jubub, who has come down from the hills with his camels. To-morrow he was to have taken a caravan of salt to our dread master, Kaid Sidi Suini Baba, but now his camels are gone, and doubtless the lions will get some of them. Woe is me!"

He made a place for their visitor on the small angareeb or hide bedstead, on which they were seated to keep them off the earth.

Dempsey entered the dimly-lighted hut, which was illuminated only by a brass oil-lamp fed with rank olive oil, and squatted down on the bedstead.

His paws were hidden in the great sleeves of his robe.

"The kous-kous is now ready, sister," said Kandor. "And here is honey of the hills of the finest. When thou hast eaten and partaken of our coffee, thou shalt give us a charm against all these terrors which beset us, and thou shalt make magic so that the horses and camels shall return to the marsh. Then we shall not be flogged."

He drew from under their seat a huge pot of fragrant honey.

This was more than Dempsey could stand.

"Wouf!" he grunted amiably.

From the sleeves of his kaftan shot out two great paws, grabbing the pot with huge, curved claws. Above these hairy paws his fore legs were shaven, giving him the aspect of wearing fur gloves.

"Wouf!" he repeated again, and, tossing his great, shaggy head, he threw back the hood of his cloak and thrust his nose into the honey, guzzling it greedily.

The four niggers stared at the shaggy head of the supposed Fatima in horror.

"Woe is me! There is witchery abroad. Behold Fatima! She is turned to an efreet!" yelled Kandor.

There was a simultaneous rush for the door, and the four niggers leaped out into the night, running for their lives, leaving Dempsey in possession of the hut.

Dempsey wiped up the honey in no time. Then he dipped his paw into the huge pot of warm kous-kous and finished it up in no time.

There was nothing more to eat.

Dempsey decided that he liked these four kind niggers who had fed him so well. He was pleased to be ashore also,

and he thought he would like a night out with these kind friends.

He dropped on all fours and, snuffing, picked up their trail amongst the lines of confusing scents of camels and horses and strange men.

Then he waddled away after them in the direction of the city of El Nif.

### Captured by Moors!

"WHERE are you, Jim?" cried Wobby in the darkness of the sand dunes.

The stampede of camels and horses had rushed on, Lal Singh shepherding it through the darkness with all the cleverness of a Rajput horse-thief.

Lal Singh had nothing to learn at all about driving horses and camels. He had been brought up with them all his life.

Furthermore, in this razzia, or raid, he had picked out the best mount of the lot, for Laila, the mare he bestrode, was Suini Baba's own mare, a stiff little Arab worth her weight in silver.

Wobby had not taken long to get acquainted with the mount he had picked up in the darkness. This was an ill-tempered, squealing nag, but once gripped by Wobby's legs it recognised a horseman and a master.

Wobby had slowed down. He could have kept up with Lal Singh and the drove had he cared to do so, but he had forged alongside Mr. Hobbs in the gloom.

Mr. Hobbs had sent up an S.O.S.

"Crumbs, Master Wobby!" he called. "Don't leave us! I'm all up at Harwich with this horse. Sometimes I'm on its neck, sometimes astern. I can't keep



The party of Moors dashed into Wobby & Co. Jim Ready felt a foot neatly placed under his own, and he was sent flying over his steed in a cloud of sand. In another second the boys were surrounded.

amidships, and the beggar will 'ave me in the ditch in a minute or two!"

"Right-ho!" answered Wobby cheerfully. "Stick to it, Hobbo! You'll soon learn to ride in country like this!"

He looked up at the great sand dunes of El Nif, which reared up their mighty crests against the stars like a huge broken sea.

Waff and Stickjaw had reined in alongside Wobby.

"Where's Jim?" demanded Wobby. "I saw him struggling with that infernal bear, trying to get him along. We ought not to have brought the bear. It's a mistake to bring Dempsey out on a do like this!"

A moment later a white figure came galloping up in the darkness.

It was Jim!

"I had to let Dempsey go!" he said breathlessly. "My horse wouldn't stand the smell of him!"

"Don't wonder at it!" grumbled Mr. Hobbs. "And if you don't let that there kangaroo run, Master Wobby, my 'orse will kick me into the middle o' next week!"

The stampede had disappeared, and the little group were left alone amongst the dunes.

They listened for a moment for the thunder of the departing hoofs, but the sand deadened all sounds. They could not even hear the grunting of the camels. The stampede had hurried along, following the line of the coast, which would bring them between John Lincoln's party and the shore.

"They're all right," said Wobby, with a grin as he listened and heard only the rasping of the shifting sands in the night wind. "The sooner we get after them the better. It's all right, Hobbo, we won't ride quickly!" he added.

They moved on through the dunes at an ambling trot. Wobby, with the forethought of a boundary rider, had picked up a star to steer by. But the paths among the dunes were a labyrinth, and, though he knew it not, he was soon steering his party slightly inland, diverging from the track taken by the stampede.

He kept on for five minutes, whilst Mr. Hobbs' horse played pitch and toss with him.

"Crumbs!" groaned Mr. Hobbs. "Never again will I ride 'orseback! If this 'ere 'orse is going to get on, I'm going to get off, an' that quick!"

Before Mr. Hobbs had time to speak again, however, his nag, with a jerk, shot him neatly over its head, dumping him into the sand, where he sat hanging on to the halter and staring into the horse's face.

"Well, you are a one, you are!" said

Mr. Hobbs. "Why didn't you tell me you was goin' to try to stand on your head?"

"Get up, Hobbo!" said Wobby. "I've got a sort of feeling that we are getting farther and farther away from the sea. We must make straight for the beach and get along the sands. This is no place for us! We are getting too near the town!"

"Well, I'm going to lead my 'orse," said Mr. Hobbs. "I'd sooner push 'im to the beach in a wheelbarrow than ride 'im! And when I get there I'll drown 'im. 'E's a bit o' no class. But there, I never did spot a winner in my life!"

Wobby gave a sigh of relief.

"Here come some of the boys!" he said, as along the alley between the high dunes came galloping a party of horsemen attired, like themselves, in white robes and turbans.

But a second glance told Wobby that he was mistaken.

"Beat it, chaps!" he gasped. "It's not the boys! It's the bhoys!"

But there was not time. The party of horsemen dashed into them and over them. Jim Ready felt a foot neatly placed under his own, and found himself tumbled off his horse on to the sand.

A racing horse, bestridden by a savage, yelling rider, stepped on Mr. Hobbs' stomach and bowled Wobby and his steed over in a cloud of sand.

In another second they found themselves surrounded and thrown down and bound.

Wobby had just time to slip Nobby from his leash.

"Hop it!" he ordered.

Nobby, in three bounds, was over the nearest sand dune and gone, whilst three wiry Moors threw themselves on Wobby and bound his arms with camel cords till he felt more like a cricket bat than a boy.

"We've struck lucky, lads!" he said cheerfully. "El Took, the nigger up town, has got the wire and sent out his Lifeguards! These are the Lifeguards!"

"Blackguards, I should say!" spluttered Waff, whose mouth had been filled with sand.

A blow across the mouth from a black hand told Waff that silence in this part of the world was golden.

They were kicked to their feet, and their horses were secured. Then their captors started to drag them off through the dunes, fetching a wide circle towards the town.

"I suppose we are prisoners!" whispered Waff.

"Looks like it, don't it!" said Wobby as he strained at his bonds. Wobby was rather crestfallen.

"We've won the donkey in the raffle this time!" he muttered.

"It's a lark!" whispered Waff, delighted at this adventure.

"Glad you think so," replied Wobby dryly. "It may not be such a lark when these lads get us into their village. It's lucky for us that our crush isn't so far off. They may be able to do a bit for us. But we've clean backed the barrow up the wrong alley this time!"

"I was a goin' to remark—" began Mr. Hobbs in his deep, grumbling voice, "I was a goin' to remark—"

Whack! came a whip of hide on Mr. Hobbs' back, with a force that made him squirm.

"I was a going to remark that we'd better be quiet," said Mr. Hobbs. "But I'll remark likewise that I've marked the nigger that roasted my ribs just now, and if I don't put a tomato eye on 'im afore I've done, my name ain't 'Obbs!"

After that Mr. Hobbs was silent, and the little party were dragged through the dunes on to the great clear gravel plain before the town.

By the red glare of the burning fires they could see massive walls and great gates and towers.

These had never been built by the degenerate pirates of El Nif. They were the remnants of a vast civilisation dead and gone, amongst which these ruffians had their mud huts, just as swallows build amongst the ruins.

A yell went up as the group of horsemen and prisoners came into the circle of the fires.

"Nazarenes!" yelled the leader of the party, the big black nigger who had slashed Mr. Hobbs over the back.

At the hated name a swarm of evil-faced men and boys, ragged, and as savage as dogs, came rushing out from the huts about the mighty Roman gate of El Nif.

It was plain that these were as dangerous a lot of fanatics as could be gathered together anywhere.

"Nazarenes!" they yelled.

Grashing their teeth and rolling their eyes, they struck out with sticks at the bound captives.

Waff, who got a heavy wipe over the shoulder from a stick overbound with brass wire, began to think that this was not quite such a lark as he thought it was. But their guards closed round them, and Waff was pleased to see the lout who had struck him get a wipe from the hide whip which sent him tumbling back into the pack, howling like a dog.

"My aunt!" whispered Wobby. "This is a rough house. We are right up the

(Continued on page 27.)

## MIDDLESBROUGH COMPETITION RESULT.

In this competition one competitor sent in a correct solution of the pictures. The first prize of £5 has therefore been awarded to:

W. BLACKHALL,  
76, Pleasant Street,  
West Bromwich.

The second prize of £2 10s. has been divided among the following five competitors, whose solutions contained one error each:

Albert Woodcock, 9, Warton Terrace, Bootle, Liverpool; A. R. Barnard, The Bun-

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galow, Chapel Farm, Braintree, Essex; Jack Bird, Bonds, Chumleigh, Devon; Douglas Whitman, 4, West Street, Sutton, Surrey; Maud Brooks, 16, Nichols Square, Hackney Road, E. 2.

The ten prizes of 5s. each have been divided among the following twenty-one competitors, whose solutions contained two errors each:

Wm. Brooks, 16, Nichols Square, Hackney Road, E. 2; Percy Brooks, 16, Nichols Square, Hackney Road, E. 2; Blanche Brooks, 16, Nichols Square, Hackney Road, E. 2; S. Daft, 25, Fairmile Avenue, Streatham, S.W. 16; Ben McMahon, 60, Clyde Street, Belfast; Charles H. Morton, 8, Brunton Terrace, Howarth Street, Sunderland; H. Judge, 141, Brettenham Road, Edmonton, N. 18; F. Apps, 67, Craigierne Road, Blackheath, S.E. 3; E. Rushton, 19, Clarence Street, Fenton, Stoke-on-Trent; W. Cousins, 5, Topsfield Par., Crouch End, N. 8; Fred

Cave, 59, Edward Street, Grimsby, Lines; T. Topping, 62, Ivor Road, Sparkhill, Birmingham; Eric Nunn, 19, New Road, Sawston, Cambs; W. M. Hole, 60, St. Edmunds Road, Plainmoor, Torquay; James Brook, 17a, Corporation Street, Halifax; Mrs. Lucy Roshier, 146, Thornley Street, Burton-on-Trent, Staffs; James A. Parker, 34, Corporation Street, Walsall, Staffs; Arthur Butters, 245, Roberts Street, Grimsby; Albert Bruton, 73, Staniforth Street, Birmingham; Olive Knowles, 9, Burton Street, Brixham, Devon; E. Ashworth, 759, Oldham Road, Failssworth, Manchester.

### SOLUTION.

Middlesbrough is regarded by large numbers of football supporters as a fairly modern club, but its record goes back a long distance. Middlesbrough has had some hard times, and when it was compelled to find a fresh ground, the bill ran into thousands of pounds. But it has a splendid fighting record.

## "THE WOLVES OF ST. BEOWULF'S!"

(Continued from page 26.)

Ikey Cut this time. These nugs would tear us up like paper if they got the chance!"

And that surging mob would have torn them to pieces. But, at a cry from their conductor, soldiers, as ragged as the mob, came rushing out from the guard-rooms within the ruined gate.

These were armed with long gaspipe matlocks, and they closed round the prisoners, bringing the butts on the naked toes of the yapping mob.

"That for thee, O son of a burned mother!" cried one, and stubbed his piece on the toes of the ringleader of the louts.

"Ai! Ai!" yelled the lout as he lifted his crushed foot and howled in anguish.

"Stand back, children of Ebies!" cried the leader of the guard, getting more ferocious when he found himself backed by the troops of El Took. "These are meat for thy master, the potent El Took—not for ye, ye pack of scurvy dogs!"

He laid about him with such lashes of his hide whip that the rag and bobtail of El Nif ran back, and the guard closed across the arch.

"Phew!" muttered Wobby as they were dragged into the streets of this strange city. "It's not often that I'm frightened, but that push of snake-headed tykes was enough to frighten anyone."

The boys looked around them with curious eyes. They were being dragged between huge ruined buildings that reminded them rather of the ruins of Rome than of an African city.

The ruined walls and columns of magnificent palaces surrounded them, all fretted and defaced by the ever-cutting sand of Africa.

Here and there rose a shabby palm.

Amongst the ruins were huts of mud and reed, from which jibbering faces, hardly human, peered out at the party as it hurried on.

Presently they came to a great square whitewashed building without windows, a regular Moorish dwelling.

It was the only decent house in this town of hovels and ruined palaces, and it was the residence of El Took, the nigger governor and viceroy of the dread Kaid Suini Baba.

There was a hole in the white wall, rather than a gate, and a guard of two soldiers, who were sleeping with their long matchlocks leaning against the wall, woke and sprang to their arms at the sound of horses' hoofs.

The guard slipped down from their horses and hammered a signal on a pair of great wooden doors, which were opened by means of some invisible cord pulled from within.

The boys and Mr. Hobbs were dragged through a courtyard which offered a very great contrast to the howling desert and ruins without, for here was a Moorish garden filled with great bushes of datura, which filled the air with the scent of its long, white, trumpet-shaped flowers.

"These are the tea-gardens!" whispered Wobby as they were hurried up a flight of marble steps into a great hall surrounded by graceful arabesque pillars and Moorish stucco work which hung like filmy lace.

(What fate awaits Wobby & Co. now? Next week's ripping fine instalment is thrilling throughout. Make sure of reading it by ordering your GEM early.)

## WHO IS THIS DETERMINED TACKLER— CHARLES PRINGLE?

(Read What Our Football Expert Has To Say About Him.)

IN the concluding weeks of last season Maxwell Woosnam, the famous amateur centre half-back of Manchester City, was so badly hurt that it was obvious that it would be a long time before he was able to play again. Indeed, up to the time of writing he has not reappeared in the Manchester City team. The gravity of the accident to this mainstay of the Hyde Road team rendered it necessary that they should make a real effort to obtain a worthy successor, and with this end in view the manager went to St. Mirren, and paid a big price to obtain the transfer of Charles Pringle, the centre half-back.

It is not wise to believe all the stories which are told in regard to transfer fee amounts, but we have good reason to know that Pringle cost Manchester City every penny of three thousand pounds. However, this very fine player seems likely to be worth the money.

Strange to relate, however, when he started as a centre-half for Manchester City, at the beginning of the present season, he was by no means an unqualified success, and the people of Manchester were somewhat disappointed at the play of a man who had crossed the border with such a big reputation. But Pringle, like many another Scot who comes to play in England, discovered that there was a very big difference in the matter of pace between English and Scottish football, and it took the newcomer to Hyde Road a considerable length of time to settle down. In fact, he did not begin to give of his best until he was moved to the left half-back position, but his play in recent weeks has been much admired, and it is suggested

with a certain amount of confidence that he has only to retain his present form to gain some more caps.

He is a typical Scottish player, which means that he is a complete master of the art of ball control, and is also sufficiently versatile to play in practically any position. While he was with St. Mirren he played in every department save that of goal, and there are people who say that if he had not finally settled down to become a good half-back, he would have made a very excellent forward. Pringle has also played some very sound games at full-back, so is obviously a useful man to be on the books of any club.

Born at Paisley, Pringle first joined the big club of his native town in 1916, and during the six seasons he was with them played most consistent football all the time. In the last two seasons he appeared in thirty-eight and thirty-nine League matches respectively, getting a few goals in each campaign. In the spring of 1921 he realised a long-cherished ambition when he was chosen to play for Scotland against Wales, and in that season he also appeared for the Scottish League against the Irish League. Then it was that his fame began to spread abroad, and there was more than one manager from England who called at Paisley to inquire whether the club would part with their artist. He came very near to joining Notts County just prior to signing for Manchester City.

Although by no means a giant, he stands 5 ft. 7½ ins. and weighs 11 st. 4 lbs., Pringle has a pair of broad shoulders and is very strong in the limbs, making him a determined tackler.

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