

VALUABLE PRIZES COSTING THOUSANDS OF POUNDS! Enter Our Great Footballers' Names Competition To-day.

EVERY WEDNESDAY.

The

GEM

2^D

No. 820.
Vol. XXIV.
October 27th, 1923.

LIBRARY
OF

SCHOOL AND SPORTING STORIES

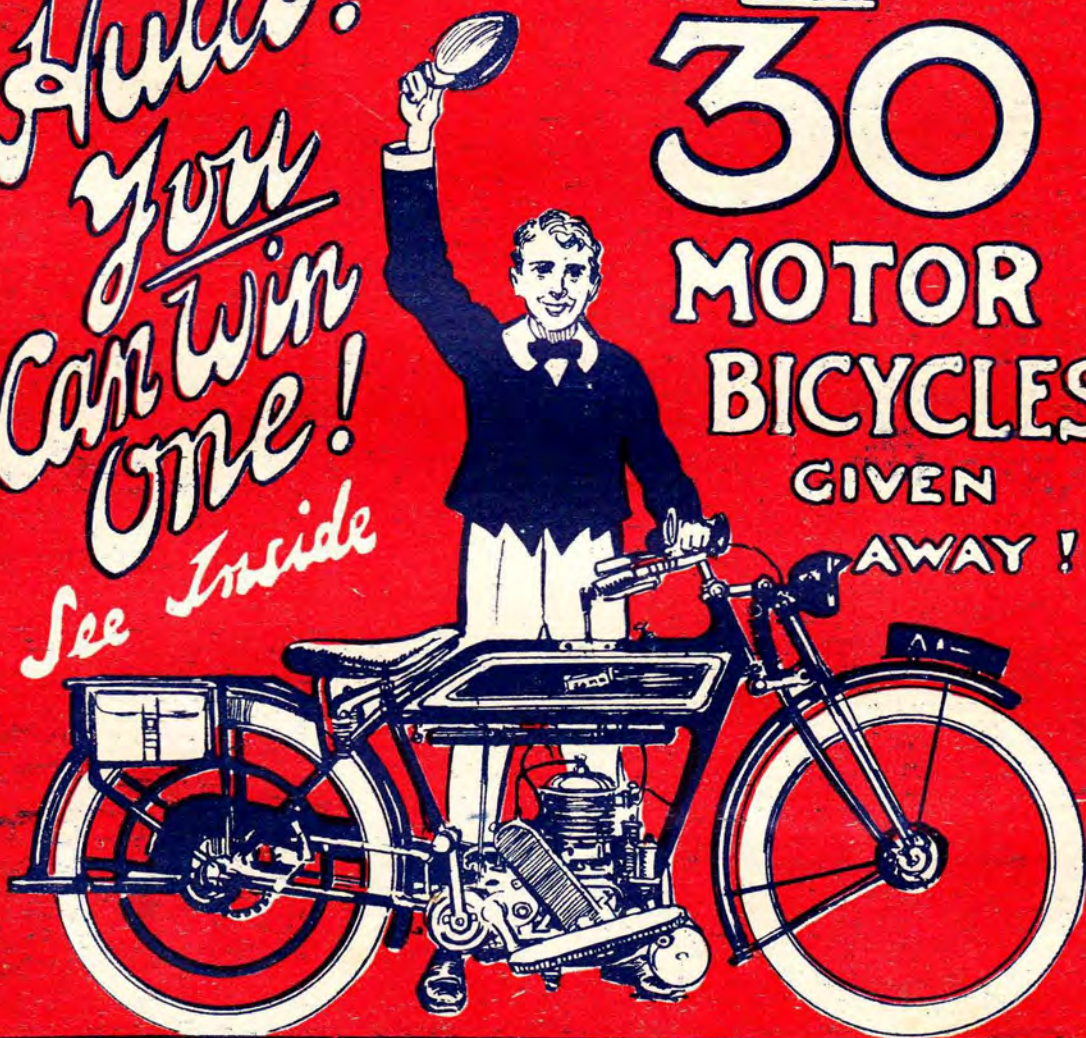
NOT ONE BUT

30

MOTOR
BICYCLES

GIVEN
AWAY!

*Hullo!
you
can win
one!
See Inside*



ENTER OUR GREAT COMPETITION
TO-DAY! THOUSANDS OF POUNDS IN PRIZES

THE PROFESSOR'S PERIL!

(A Grand 20,000 word Story of Tom Merry & Co., in this issue.)



Your Editor Chats With His Readers.

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.

My dear Chums.—Fire away! That's the best advice for this week. Don't let the chance slip of becoming a fortunate winner in the great Footballers' Names Competition.

THE OPPORTUNITY OF THE HOUR!

It's like this. There is an opening for everybody. I want to make this quite clear. This week I am giving a small reproduction of the first set of puzzle-pictures. This makes it the simplest matter in the world for any newcomer to drop right into things, and start from now on. Tell your pals about this grand chance of winning one or other of the 830 splendid prizes which are offered for a correct solution of the pictures given each week in the "Gem." For once in a way being late makes no difference. I know that numerous new readers troop in and join the magic circle of the "Gem" every Wednesday. Well, with the present issue in their hands they can feel at home right away. I hope they will all get busy, the same as others, and weigh in with correct solutions. The prize list is unique. It contains just those things which we all like—motor-bikes, cycles, billiards-tables, and model steam-engines. So see that the grass does not grow under your feet. To-day's the day.

"GLYN, THE GUY-MAKER!"

By Martin Clifford.

There have been many kind inquiries after Bernard Glyn. The schoolboy-inventor bobs up next week in a ripping Guy Fawkes yarn, which shows how it occurred to Glyn to make a guy of Mr. Selby. A dangerous business, but he accomplished the job, and the fat, as well as the lifelike guy, was in the fire. "Selby the Second" was a triumph, but there are ructions in consequence, and the splendid story is full of the most amazing happenings. We know how there is plenty of reason why gunpowder treason and plot should never be forgot, but there is more in the impression one gets that this tip-top tale will never slip out of memory, either. It goes with a roar. Selby has been away pretty often, but nothing aught like this. There are incidents and surprises, and the sea of trouble runs mountains high. You will laugh loud and long over the difficulties of a real Guy Fawkes situation.

THE "HOLIDAY ANNUAL."

Letters are reaching me concerning that magnificent 50,000-word story of St. Jim's which Mr. Martin Clifford has written for this year's issue of the "Holiday Annual." Some brisk readers have got up early in the morning to sample this great story. They say it is prime. So are the other contents of this fascinating volume! Get it to-day!

"THE QUEST OF THE SECRET SIGNS!"

I have another rare treat for next week's "Gem," in this tale of the Estuary Belle and River-wise Ned. This capital series has scored enormously. Next Wednesday we are plunged into a regular grey mystery of Thames mouth, with strange lights which might have baffled others. That they did not prove mystifying to Ned is just another proof of his knowledge of the dark plottings of the river gangs. The criminals are placed in the worst predicament of their lives, thanks to the keenness of River-wise Ned. They will stick at nothing to get back some sinister evidence of their crimes. This is a palpitating story with a midnight tragedy which has the strangest results.

"THE TRIERS!"

By Jack O'Riordan.

Our new serial sweeps away from success to success. Next week's instalment is more thrilling than ever. There is a deep undercurrent to this tale. Look out for some remarkable developments. Good luck to the same Triers, who find themselves up against long odds!

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 820.

NOW'S THE TIME!

No better time than the present to make the "Gem" known to a pal. He will thank you. So shall I. The stories get better each week. I have already referred to the grand Footballers' Names Competition. This is the draw of the season. Get busy on it.

Your Editor:

THIS LIST contains the actual names represented by the puzzle-pictures on Pages 14 and 15. All you have to do is to choose the correct name to fit each picture.

Asburst, Anderson, Armstrong, Aitken, Adams, Amos, Alderson, Allen, Armitage, Archibald, Ashmore.
Brett, Broadhead, Blyth, Boreham, Blackburn, Bradford, Bassett, Brittan, Blair, Ball, Barkas, Birrell, Bradley, Barnes, Bulling, Burton, Branton, Buchanan, Blake, Bowser, Bishop, Barras, Braithwaite, Bullock, Bliss, Bateman, Best, Bagge, Barson, Broadhurst, Broad, Bolam, Breilford, Blinksopp, Beedie, Birch, Bellamy, Bainbridge, Bowen, Burnham, Boyle, Blackwell, Bennie, Ballantyre, Buchanan, Bamber, Byers, Banks, Brooks, Blood, Baker, Bird, Bromilow.
Cockle, Crosbie, Cross, Clennell, Cameron, Chedgroy, Cock, Chadwick, Clough, Curry, Cookson, Cope, Cook, Crilly, Chaplin, Collier, Creekford, Campbell, Crown, Chance, Chipperfield, Crompton, Charlton, Conner, Craig, Cosgrove, Cherrett, Crossley, Carter, Clarke, Cotton, Cunningham, Cairns, Clunas, Connolly, Cassidy, Carr, Cowan, Chapman, Chambers, Clay, Cresswell.



6/- net.

Here you are, Boys! The finest adventure book on the market—one big thrill from beginning to end. It's new this year, so you want to make sure of your copy NOW.

Dunn, Dickson, Dorrell, Dawson, Davies, Donaldson, Dinsdale, Dimmock, Duckett, Duncan, Dominy, Davison, Duckworth, Dockray, Danskin, Dreyer, Denoon, Denyer, Duffus, Dunlop, Dixon, Doyle, Doran, Dale, Emerson, Evans, Ellerington, England, Ellis, Edelman, Edgley, Eggo, Elliot, Edwards, Emmett, Ewart.
French, Ferguson, Ford, Forshaw, Fletcher, Flood, Flint, Feebury, Fleming, Fleetwood, Flynn, Fox, Foxall, Fort, Forbes, Fowler, Fazackerley, Findlay, Featherstone, Forsythe, Frame, Fyfe, Finney, Forster, Wotton, Fairclough, Fern.

Grimshaw, Gill, Gilchrist, Gough, Gillespie, Grimsdell, Gittins, Gibson, Graham, Goldthorpe, Grundy, Gallogley, Gibbon, Gomm, Gregory, George, Getwood, Graves, Greig, Gardner, Gallagher, Glaucy, Greenshields, Gornley, Goodchild.

Howarth, Haworth, Hampton, Harrow, Harland, Hopkin, Hudspeth, Harris, Hamill, Hill, Hardy, Hamilton, Hawes, Handley, Hutton, Hine, Hughes, Heap, Higglebotham, Hoddinott, Hadden, Hilditch, Howson, Hunter, Hayes, Hutchins, Hannaford, Harrold, Howie, Henshall, Hodges, Halstead, Hugal, Hogg, Henderson, Harper, Hulton, Hillhouse, Hair, Hart, Haines, Hole.

Irvine, Islip, Iremonger, Irwin, Jennings, Jack, Jackson, Johnson, Kirtton, Kelly, Kneeshaw, Keenor, Kay, Knowles, Kane, Keenlyside, Kidd, Kilpatrick, Keay.

Linfoot, Longworth, Low, Lindsay, Little, Lonsdale, Lockhead, Longmuir, Lea, Lievesley, Lane, Lockett, Legge, Lofthouse, Lenny, Lyner, Lawson, Lambie, Lacey.

Moss, Mort, Mossop, Meehan, Maitland, Mitchell, Murphy, Morgan, Milton, Mercer, Marshall, Magee, Moore, Martin, Mills, Mason, Mew, Matthews, Moule, Myers, Marsden, Middleton, Maidment, Meahaff, Mee, Moody, Musgrove, Malcolm, Morton, Manderson, Meiklejohn, Muirhead, Moffat, Mutch, Meredith, Marriott, Mackie, Menlove, Milton, Marks, Marsh, McIntyre, McNeill, McKinlay, McNabb, McIntosh, McDonald, McCall, McGorry, McCluggage, McLeau, McCandless, McColl, McLacklan, McStey, McAlpine, McKeena, McInally, McNair, McMin, McBain, McCracken.

Nuttall, Neesam, Neil, Needham, Nash, Nisbet, Nelson.

Osborne, Ormston, Orr, O'Hare, Pryn, Pringle, Price, Parker, Poole, Paterson, Pearson, Penn, Plum, Page, Preston, Probert, Pagnam, Peel, Potts, Palmer, Frouse, Puddefoot, Pender, Pape, Peacock, Pauling, Partridge, Peers.

Quattrill, Quinn.
Robson, Rollo, Raitt, Richardson, Rawlings, Ruffell, Robbie, Rigg, Radford, Ridley, Reay, Ramsay, Robb, Ritchie, Ranskin, Reed, Rooke, Roe.

Spiers, Smart, Stephenson, Seddon, Sewell, Smelt, Smith, Scott, Slade, Spencer, Seymour, Spaven, Sampy, Seed, Storer, Stage, Shea, Steele, Simms, Smalles, Symes, Sturges, Sayles, Spottiswood, Scattergood, Sinclair, Stuart, Sayer, Sutcliffe, Salt, Summerfield, Shaw, Sillito, Sneddon, Somerville, Shone, Streets, Sampey, Stannard, Skinner, Sage.

Townrow, Tarabull, Tremelling, Thain, Troup, Tunstall, Tresadern, Tonner, Thoms, Torrance, Tompkin, Titmus, Tempest, Timmins, Thorpe, Templeton, Townsley, Toner.

Urwin.
Voysey, Vizard, Vallis, Voisey, Vigras, Womack, Walsh, Weaver, Wilding, Whittton, Wadsworth, Woosnam, Woodhouse, Walters, Walden, Watson, Wamscoat, Wood, Williams, Winship, Wolfe, Whitehouse, Whalley, Whipp, Wolstenholme, Waterall, Worrall, Williamson, Weston, Wigglesworth, Ward, Webster, Whitehurst, Waddell, Wright, Wilson, Wren, Widdowson, Wylie, White, Welsh, Walker.
York.

HANDICRAFTS 1924 ANNUAL.

To every boy with a practical mind and a bent for Fretwork and Woodwork, "Handicrafts Annual" presents marvellous value for the money, and provides an instructive and lasting book of reference. It only costs 1/-, and is on sale at all newsagents and booksellers throughout the country. Should readers experience any difficulty in obtaining a copy, the publishers, Messrs. Handicrafts, Ltd., 264/268, Holloway Road, N. 7, have agreed, if you mention "Gem," to send a copy to any address in the United Kingdom on receipt of 1/-, they paying the postage, which actually amounts to 6d.



THE PROFESSOR'S PERIL!

Professor John Rivers, late cracksman, but now of Scotland Yard, finds himself, by a cruel trick of Fate, once more in the toils. His only hope rests upon Reginald Talbot, a junior at St. Jim's. A breathless story of drama and thrilling adventure.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

CHAPTER 1.

A Fruitless Quest!

"LICKED!" groaned Tom Merry.

"Beaten to a frazzle, by Jove!" muttered Manners miserably.

"If only old Talbot had been playing—" began Monty Lowther, with a sigh.

The Terrible Three of the School House came off the football-field looking very disconsolate.

It was seldom that the St. Jim's junior eleven were defeated on their own pitch. Visiting teams usually went away with their tails between their legs, so to speak. But on this particular afternoon Tom Merry's team had been trounced.

Rookwood had done the deed. They had brought a strong side to St. Jim's, and had triumphed by three goals to one.

Fatty Wynn had been absent from the home team. Fatty had been thoughtless enough to contract a chill on the eve of the match, and Harry Hammond had kept goal in his stead.

But Fatty Wynn had not been the only absentee.

Talbot of the Shell, one of the finest goal-scoring forwards who had ever donned a jersey, was away from St. Jim's.

Talbot's absence had been acutely felt. Clive had played in his place, and Clive was a good player; but he had not fitted in with the rest of the forward line. He had lacked that perfect understanding with the other forwards that is essential to success. And the crowd on the touchline had murmured over and over again:

"If only Talbot was here!"

But Talbot was far away, and the St. Jim's forward line had been disorganised.

The victorious Rookwood players were departing in their charabanc. They were chanting a merry song as they went. Tom Merry & Co. tramped moodily back to the School House. They felt their defeat keenly. They had put a good face on it in the presence of the Rookwood fellows; but now that they were alone they gave vent to their feelings of disappointment.

"When's old Talbot coming back?—that's the question!" said Lowther. "He seems to have been away a dog's age!"

"Have you had any news of him, Tom?" asked Manners.

Tom Merry shook his head.

"Not a word," he said. "He's still searching for the professor, I suppose, and he can't find time to write. I don't like this long silence; it makes me feel worried."

"Same here," said Lowther. "During his search Talbot must have ventured into some pretty dangerous places, and—well, it makes you imagine all sorts of dreadful things."

"And there's Miss Marie, too," said Manners. "She's gone with him. They might both have fallen into the hands of the old gang, for all we know. That scoundrel Jim Dawlish, the present leader of the gang, would stop at nothing."

"It's strange that we haven't heard," said Tom Merry. And then he relapsed into a moody silence.

There was no fellow at St. Jim's who felt Talbot's absence more acutely than the captain of the Shell.

Tom Merry and Talbot were great chums. They had been through heaps of thrilling adventures together, and they had much in common.

Tom missed his chum sorely. And he could not help feeling a trifle piqued that Talbot had not written to him, to let him know how the search was progressing.

Quite a long time had elapsed since John Rivers—known to

all his intimates as the "professor"—had mysteriously disappeared.

John Rivers, formerly the evil genius of a gang of cracksmen, was now a Scotland Yard detective. He had finished with the old life, he had turned over a new leaf; he was now an honourable man earning an honest living.

The professor had come down to Wayland for a brief holiday, and the very day after his arrival he had vanished.

He had not gone back to Scotland Yard, and his friends there were now searching for him.

Where he had gone, and why he had suddenly vanished, as it were, into thin air, were mysteries which Talbot and Marie Rivers had set out to solve.

There was one sinister aspect of the case which might have had a big bearing on it.

Jim Dawlish, a confederate of the professor in the old dark days, had lately come out of prison, and he had been seen hanging about in the vicinity of Wayland, where John Rivers had been staying.

It therefore seemed just possible that Dawlish, by some means or other, had entrapped the professor, and made away with him.

Talbot and Marie both feared that John Rivers had been kidnapped, and they had left St. Jim's, by permission of the Head, in order to go and ransack the old haunts of the gang, in the hope of coming across the professor.

A long interval had elapsed since Talbot and Marie had fared forth together on their adventure. But St. Jim's had received no tidings of them.

The Head was anxious, the masters were anxious, and Tom Merry & Co. were anxious to an even greater degree.

Life had not seemed the same since Talbot went away. He had become such a familiar figure at St. Jim's that his absence created a big gap.

The football eleven missed him, because he was one of their star players. Skimpole missed him, because Talbot was the only fellow who listened patiently and sympathetically to Skimpole's Socialistic doctrines. Gore missed him, because Talbot had been in the habit of giving Gore a hand with his prep. In fact, everybody missed Talbot, and St. Jim's seemed a less cheery place without him.

And there was no news!

Small wonder that Tom Merry & Co. were looking gloomy and dispirited as they tramped into the building.

The Terrible Three went first of all to the bath-rooms, in order to remove the muddy stains of their tussle with Rookwood.

After they had "tubbed" they



assembled in Study No. 10 for tea. Tea in Study No. 10 was usually a merry meal. But there was nothing merry about it on this occasion.

Even Monty Lowther, who usually bubbled over with the joy of life, and was for ever making jests and puns, was silent and subdued.

For once in a way the good things on the table failed to attract. The jam tarts seemed to have lost their flavour. The fat, sugary doughnuts, which jostled each other on the dish, were left alone. The appetites of the Terrible Three had failed them.

They said little, but they thought a good deal. And their thoughts were centred on Talbot and his girl chum.

The postman came shuffling across the quadrangle with the afternoon delivery.

Tom Merry threw up the window and thrust out his head. "Any for me, postman?"

The old man went through his bag. Then he shook his head.

"Not this afternoon, Master Merry."

Tom groaned. By every post he had expected a letter from Talbot, but on every occasion he had been disappointed.

He was in the act of shutting down the window when his gaze happened to travel across the quadrangle to the school gates. Suddenly he gave a shout.

"Here they are!"

Manners and Lowther were on their feet in a twinkling. They did not need to ask to whom Tom Merry was referring. Talbot and Marie had returned!

Manners and Monty joined their chum at the window. The wanderers had indeed returned, and the manner of their return was dramatic.

They came slowly in at the school gateway, and they appeared to be on the verge of collapse.

Marie Rivers leaned heavily on Talbot's arm. And Talbot was a slender reed to lean upon at that moment, for he himself was in the throes of exhaustion.

"Why, they're utterly done!" gasped Tom Merry. "They can hardly keep their feet!"

"Poor old Talbot!" muttered Manners, with a catch in his voice.

Whilst the juniors watched, they saw the Head go hurrying down to the school gates. He approached the couple, and relieved Talbot of his burden.

Giving Marie his arm, the Head led her gently away into his own house.

Talbot came on alone. But he was not alone for long.

The Terrible Three hurried down into the quad and rushed up to him and shook his hand—a hand that seemed strangely limp—and then they assisted him towards the building.

They did not need to ask if the search for the professor had proved successful.

One look at Talbot's face was enough. The expression on it was one of utter hopelessness.

Talbot's features were haggard and drawn, and there were dark rings round his eyes, which suggested long abstinence from sleep.

The junior could hardly walk, even with the assistance of his chums.

"You're utterly whacked, old man!" murmured Tom Merry.

"We can see that you've had no luck," Tom went on. "You haven't found the professor, though you seem to have worn yourself to a shadow searching for him. Don't try to talk yet—you're not fit. We'll hear all about your adventures later."

In silence the Terrible Three escorted Talbot to their study. They assisted him to the couch, where he lay at full length, and Manners placed cushions under his head.

Tom Merry made a fresh brew of tea, and Monty Lowther hurried off to the tuckshop for some eggs and rashers of bacon, for Talbot seemed desperately in need of a good square meal.

By this time most of the fellows had heard of Talbot's return, and lots of them hurried along to Study No. 10 in order to see him. But when Lowther returned from the tuckshop, Tom Merry locked the door of the study, and informed all and sundry, through the keyhole, that Talbot was not to be disturbed.

An appetising meal was set before the exhausted junior, and under its influence he soon revived, and was presently able to speak of his adventures. But the expression of utter hopelessness did not leave Talbot's face.

CHAPTER 2.

Talbot's Story!

"**F**EELING better, old man?" Tom Merry regarded his chum anxiously as he put the question.

"Tons better, thanks!" answered Talbot, with a faint smile. "A jolly good meal was what I badly needed."

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 820.

I've not had time to think about meals—or sleep, either, for that matter. And Marie—well, she stuck it out like a heroine!"

"Where have you been?" asked Manners.

"Pretty well everywhere," said Talbot. "We ransacked all the old haunts of the gang, in the hope of finding the professor, or getting hold of a clue as to his whereabouts."

"And you drew blank?"

"Not entirely. We got news of the professor; but it wasn't good news, I'm sorry to say."

The Terrible Three looked grave. Instantly the fear leapt into their minds that the professor had been kidnapped, and that it was impossible to trace him.

They waited for Talbot to speak; and quite a long time elapsed before he did so.

"I'm going to tell you fellows the whole story," he said at length; "but it's not to go farther than this study."

"We'll keep our own counsel," said Tom Merry.

"I know you will. I can trust you; but I shouldn't like every Tom, Dick, and Harry to know what has happened. It came as a bombshell to me, I can tell you. As for Marie, she's jolly nearly heartbroken."

"But—but why?" gasped Tom Merry. "Surely things aren't as bad as all that?"

"They are as bad as they possibly could be, Tom."

"The professor has been kidnapped?"

Talbot shook his head.

"Then what—?"

"He has gone back to the old gang," said Talbot, in dull tones. "He has deserted his job at Scotland Yard, and he has thrown in his lot with that precious scoundrel, Jim Dawlish."

Talbot paused.

A silence fell upon the assembled juniors—the silence of utter stupefaction.

This was a blow indeed—a veritable bombshell!

Tom Merry & Co. had never dreamed that the professor would come to this. He had long ago given up a career of crime, and they had not doubted his sincerity.

If ever a man had thoroughly and completely reformed, and risen on stepping-stones of his dead self to higher things, that man was John Rivers. From being a prince of crackmen, he had become an official in the detective force, where honour and integrity were of the first importance.

And now—according to Talbot—the professor had fallen again. He had lived down his chequered past, and risen to honour and position—only to crash once more, and to become what he had been in the beginning—a thief among thieves.

The silence in Study No. 10 grew almost painful. It was broken at last by Tom Merry.

"Talbot! Surely there must be some mistake?"

"There is no mistake," said Talbot wearily. "I wish I could think there was."

"The professor has gone back to the gang?"

"Yes."

"But—but what caused him to do it?"

"Let me explain," said Talbot. "When I was in London, down in the slums, where the gang used to have its headquarters, I ran into Jim Dawlish. I at once demanded to know where the professor was, and he said: 'The professor is one of us now. He has come back to the gang.'"

"Dawlish was lying!" shouted Manners.

"I wish I could think so," said Talbot, with a sigh. "But I've every reason to believe that Dawlish was speaking the truth. You see, he had a hold over the professor. He knew of an unsavoury incident in the professor's past. Some time ago, in the days when the gang was flourishing, an old scientist met with a mysterious death—and Dawlish declares that he died at the professor's hand."

"Oh!"

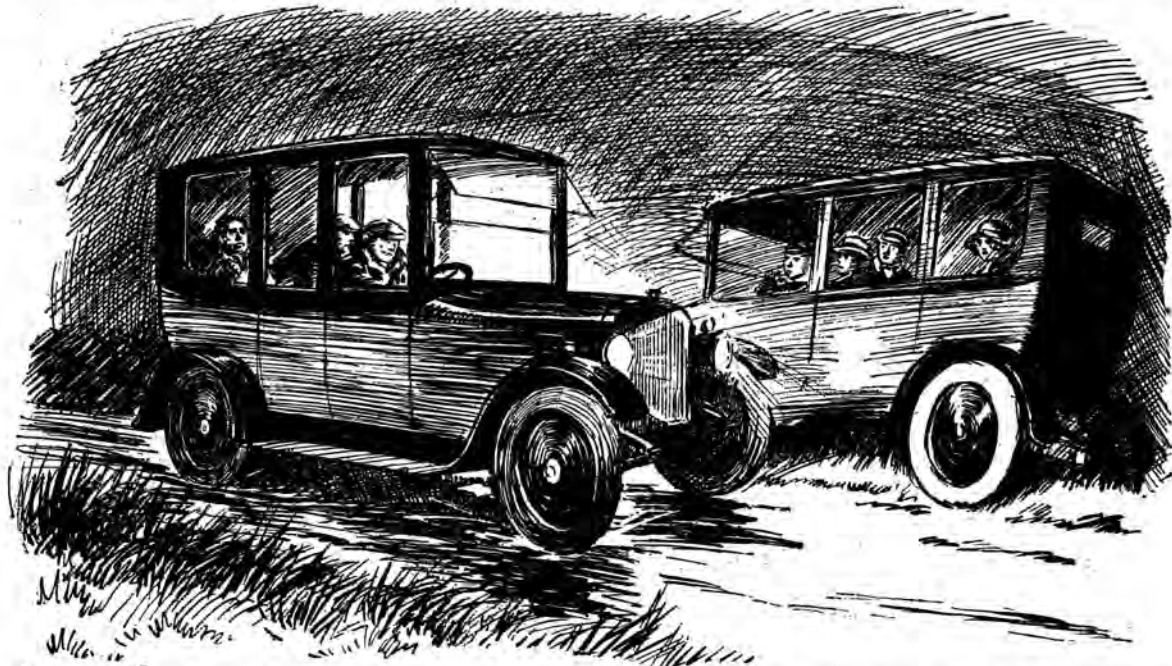
Tom Merry and his chums looked white and startled.

"Dawlish says he actually saw the professor strike the fatal blow," Talbot went on. "Of course, he can't get the professor charged with murder, because there were no other witnesses. At the same time, Dawlish could have made things very unpleasant for the professor. He could have lost him his job at Scotland Yard. He could have dragged him down to financial ruin."

"Great Scott!"

"When Dawlish met the professor in Wayland," said Talbot, "he blackmailed him. He said: 'If you will join forces with me, and come back to the gang, I'll keep my mouth closed in connection with this unsavoury affair. But if you refuse, I'll tell Scotland Yard what I know, and you'll be hounded out of your job!' The professor was in a ghastly dilemma, but he had to make his choice one way or the other, and he made it. He has gone back to the old game—cracking cribs, and so forth. Dawlish had him in his power, and he was helpless."

The Terrible Three listened to Talbot's story in amazement. They would have liked to discredit it; but it seemed only too true.



"Look out, Mr. Calthorpe!" cried Talbot. The detective averted to the side of the road as the approaching car came along at a scorching pace. There was a rush and a whirl, and the car shot past, with scarcely an inch to spare. "Jove! That was a narrow squeak!" muttered Tom Merry. "I thought there was going to be a fearful smash-up!" (See page 16.)

The professor's hand had been forced, and he had been compelled to join up once more with the old gang.

"That is about the blackest news you could have brought back with you, old chap," said Tom Merry.

Talbot nodded.

"It would have been better if I had come back and told you the professor was dead," he said. "A man's honour means more than his life."

"The professor ought not to have caved in to Dawlish," said Manners. "He ought to have let him do his worst."

"Oh, it's easy to talk!" said Tom Merry. "But supposing one of us had been in the professor's shoes? He was driven to the wall, don't forget. He simply had to do Dawlish's bidding. The alternative was ruin."

"But it's a thousand pities the professor has gone back to the gang," said Monty Lowther. "Think what it means! All the good work of years undone in a single moment."

"That's just how I look at it!" groaned Talbot. "It's awful! It's sort of knocked me all of a heap. And as for Miss Marie, it's nearly broken her heart. It's preying on her mind so much that she's ill. You saw the state she was in when we arrived? She could scarcely stand!"

Talbot's lip quivered, and he looked like breaking down. He knew only too well what this meant to Marie. How could the girl have any happiness hereafter, with the painful knowledge that her father had doubled back on his tracks, as it were, and become a criminal again?

"Directly we heard this news about the professor," said Talbot, "we were keener than ever to find him—to plead with him to break with Dawlish—to save him from ruin and disgrace, before it was too late. It's no exaggeration to say that we combed the East End of London for him. We visited all the old haunts. We hunted high and low for him, by night as well as by day. But we didn't find him. Dawlish says he doesn't want to be found. He's busy cracking cribs—he's become a swell mobman again. To think of it—the professor falling back into the old life, after years of honest work and straight living!"

Talbot broke off with a sob. He buried his face in his hands.

Tom Merry & Co. were intensely sorry for him. But what could they say to cheer him in that dark hour? Words were indeed weak in such a case. Expressions of sympathy were empty and hollow. Their best way of showing sympathy was to preserve silence—a silence which conveyed to Talbot that they understood.

Talbot looked up at last. His eyes were glistening.

"If only we had found the professor, we might have been able to plead with him, and to get him out of Dawlish's clutches," he said. "We searched everywhere, as I say; but

we had to give it up at last. Marie was utterly worn out; she couldn't go on. So we came back to St. Jim's."

Tom Merry looked thoughtful.

"I suppose Scotland Yard has no idea that the professor has gone back to the old life?" he said.

"No," answered Talbot; "they are searching for him everywhere, wondering where he has got to. And supposing they should find him? Supposing they catch him in the act of committing a burglary? It will be ruin—ruin far more terrible than Dawlish could have brought him to by raking up that unsavoury affair of the past."

Talbot rose to his feet, and paced to and fro in the study.

"The worst of it is, we can do nothing!" he muttered.

"We've simply got to stick here and await events. At any moment I shall expect to hear of the professor's arrest. And that will be the finishing touch!"

"The professor's jolly cute," said Monty Lowther. "He's not likely to get into the clutches of the law. I expect he's disguised himself and changed his name."

But Talbot was not to be consoled. He had grave fears for the professor, who was at this very moment being searched for by the sleuths of Scotland Yard.

If the professor was caught at his old games, and arrested, it would indeed be the end of all things. Marie Rivers would have to leave St. Jim's—it would be impossible for her to remain, with her father a convicted felon. And Talbot himself would have no heart to face the future.

An atmosphere of gloom hung over Study No. 10, and it was likely to linger for some time to come.

Things were at their very blackest. And in that dark hour Talbot and his chums would have done well to remember the words of the old scribe:

"Heaviness may endure for a night; but joy cometh in the morning!"

CHAPTER 3.

In the Hands of the Enemy!

MANY miles from St. Jim's, in a lonely house on a desolate seashore, the professor was a prisoner.

His prison was not a pleasant one. It consisted of a miserable attic in the house-top. It was a small, ill-ventilated room. The tiny window was barred, the door securely bolted.

A bed of sorts had been squeezed into the room; and on this bed the professor now lay, reviewing past events.

The adventures of a year seemed to have been crammed into the past week.

To begin with, the professor had gone down to Wayland in order to enjoy a quiet, restful holiday.

Jim Dawlish had then appeared on the scene, like a ghost from the past. He had asked the professor's help in solving a cipher, which related to buried plunder—the lifetime's hoard of an old lag whom Dawlish had met in prison.

"If you will help me in this matter, professor," Dawlish had said, "we will find the plunder, and go halves, and live in luxury for the rest of our days."

But the professor had refused to listen to the voice of the tempter.

"I will solve this cipher," he said, "and if I find it relates to stolen money which lies hidden, I must do my duty, and place the matter in the hands of the Scotland Yard authorities."

This had displeased Dawlish greatly. But the professor was firm.

Dawlish then sought to blackmail the professor, by resurrecting the affair of the old scientist. But John Rivers had not, as Talbot and the others believed, yielded to the black-mailer. He had defied him to do his worst.

Dawlish had then attacked the professor, and overpowered him, and brought him by car, at dead of night, to this lonely house on the desolate shore. He had also stolen from the professor's pocket the solution of the cipher.

But the professor had been wise. He had omitted, from the solution, the most important thing of all the name of the place where the plunder was buried.

Dawlish had threatened him, and kept him without food, and done his utmost to drag from the professor the name of the place where the money was hidden.

At last the professor had pretended to give in. "I will tell you where the plunder is," he had said. "It is hidden in a disused well, at a place called Kingsmere."

Greatly elated, Dawlish had gone off to find the treasure, leaving a man named Pat Donovan to guard the professor.

But Dawlish had been sent on a wild-goose chase. For the plunder was not hidden at Kingsmere at all, but at a place called Wymering.

Dawlish was still away, searching for the plunder. And, in his absence, the professor had made a bold bid for freedom. He had overpowered his warder, Pat Donovan, and escaped into the nearest village.

But alas for the professor's hopes of freedom! The villagers had been informed by Dawlish that the professor was a lunatic.

"I am his attendant," said Dawlish, "and if ever he happens to escape, collar him and take him back to the house."

This was precisely what had happened. The villagers had pounced upon the professor, and marched him back to the grim-looking stone-built house on the shore.

John Rivers reviewed all these happenings as he lay on his crude bed in the attic.

It would be worse than useless to make a further attempt at escape. Pat Donovan was on his guard now, and he was not to be caught napping a second time.

The professor was in a far from cheerful frame of mind. He knew what Talbot and Marie and the others would be thinking. They would suppose that he had gone back to the gang; and he had no means of letting them know that this was not so.

Cramped in that stuffy little room, without food, and

without the consolation of his pipe, the professor awaited the return of Jim Dawlish.

When Dawlish did return he was likely to be furious with the professor for having put him on the wrong scent. And the prisoner's future prospects were far from rosy.

"Dawlish will feel like murdering me when he finds I've fooled him!" muttered the professor. "He'll move heaven and earth to get me to tell him the name of the genuine hiding-place; but I won't do it. Come what may, I'll stand firm!"

Having made this resolve, the professor dropped into a doze.

When he awoke it was dark. He could hear the steady plashing of the waves on the shore. And he could hear Pat Donovan moving about in the room below.

And then he heard another sound—that of a car coming along the shore road.

"Dawlish!" muttered the professor.

He could hear the car crunching to a standstill on the shingle. Then came the sound of footsteps approaching the house, and the door-knocker was banged furiously, awaking strange echoes.

Pat Donovan hurried to the door and opened it, and the professor heard Jim Dawlish enter. He could scarcely help hearing him, for Dawlish was in a towering rage. He growled savagely at Donovan, and then appeared to be knocking furniture about downstairs.

"I'm in for it!" muttered the professor, with a smile. After a brief interval footsteps were heard ascending the stairs.

The professor sat up on the bed. There was a shooting back of bolts, and the door of his little prison was thrown open without ceremony.

Jim Dawlish strode into the room, carrying a lighted lantern. Beyond him, on the landing, stood Pat Donovan. In his hand glinted a revolver. He evidently anticipated that the professor might make another dash for freedom.

But John Rivers was in no state to do that. Lack of food had lowered his vitality, and he felt as weak as a kitten.

Physically, the professor was a wreck. But his will was as strong as ever, and he was fully determined not to yield to his enemy.

Dawlish started off with a stream of invective, to which the professor listened in silence.

"You cunnin' fox!" snarled Dawlish, as soon as he was able to speak coherently. "I might have known you would fool me, an' send me on a wild-goose chase! I went up to London, an' collected my pals, an' we started out to search for Kingsmere, where you told me the loot was buried. We found it after a terrific lot of searchin', an' we hunted for the disused well that was mentioned in the cipher. We explored every square inch of the place, an' then it began to dawn on me that you'd fooled me, an' given me the wrong name. For there wasn't a sign of a disused well in the place!"

The professor gave a quiet chuckle, and that chuckle had the effect of increasing Dawlish's fury. He strode towards John Rivers with clenched fists, as if he intended to strike him. But he controlled himself with a great effort.

"This is no laughin' matter, I assure you!" said Dawlish. "You fooled me, professor, an' you shall suffer!"

"I have suffered already," said the professor. "You cannot do much more than keep me bottled up in this hole, without food and comfort."

"Oh, can't I? What's to prevent me puttin' you out of the way?"

"Killing me, you mean? Several things prevent your doing that. In the first place, it needs a certain amount of pluck, of sorts, to be a murderer, and your fear of the scaffold would be too great. Secondly, it wouldn't be in your interests to put me out of the way, as you call it. You would still be unable to find the hidden plunder. The secret would die with me!"

Dawlish scowled.

"That's true enough," he said. "I can't kill you. But I can keep you on a starvation diet, givin' you just enough food to keep the spark of life goin'. I'll reduce you to such a weak state that you'll be as clay in my hands; an' then you'll have to tell me the truth concernin' this buried plunder, which I'm fully determined to get hold of!"

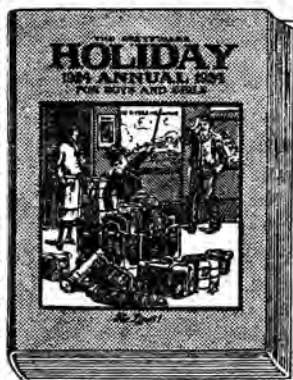
"Other people can be determined as well as yourself," said the professor. "You haven't a monopoly of that virtue. And I am determined that you shall never know where the plunder is concealed. You can carry out your diabolical scheme, and bring me to the verge of starvation, but it won't benefit you one jot. You may weaken my body, you can't weaken my spirit!"

Dawlish laughed harshly.

"Brave words!" he sneered. "Very melodramatic, an' all the rest of it. But wait till you're practically at your last gasp. You'll be too weak to oppose me, then. You'll be only too glad to give in."

THE FINEST VOLUME OF ITS KIND AND COMPILED BY YOUR EDITOR.

Ask your newsagent to show it you.



**SPEND YOUR MONEY
WELL BY BUYING**

**THE
"HOLIDAY
ANNUAL."**

**PRICE
6/-**

It contains splendid
extra-long complete
stories of St. Jim's, Grey-
friars, and Rookwood.

GET IT TO-DAY!



The pursuers were nearly up to their quarry when suddenly there was a shout of alarm from Donovan. The car gave a wild lurch to one side, and before Dawlish could bring it under control it had run clean off the road, to take a drop of about four feet on to the mud-flats below. Instantly Mr. Calthorpe slowed up. His face was pale, and the faces of Tom Merry & Co. were pale also. (See page 17.)

The professor was silent. Dawlish stood scowling at him in the lantern-light.

Presently Dawlish changed his tactics.

"Look here, professor," he said, more amiably, "do be reasonable! You've only to tell me where this loot is hidden an' you shall have your freedom. Think what it means. Pure air to breathe, good food to eat, free to go where you will, an' do what you please. Freedom's a fine thing, professor."

"So is honour," said the professor. "And I'd rather forfeit my freedom than my honour. I expect this seems strange to you—you, who do not know the meaning of honour. Your standards are too low, Dawlish. You've no moral code."

"Don't preach to me!" said Dawlish, trying hard to keep his temper. "I'm givin' you a chance of freedom, an' more. For if you tell me where to find this buried loot I'll keep to my original promise, an' let you go halves."

"Thank you for nothing!" said the professor.

Dawlish was amazed at the attitude of his prisoner. He could not understand why the professor did not embrace such a splendid opportunity of securing his freedom. He had only to mention the name of the place where the hoard of plunder was concealed, and he would not only be free, but he would become a rich man, for the hoard in question was valued at many thousands of pounds.

"So you're determined to hold out, professor?" said Dawlish, at length.

John Rivers nodded.

"Fully determined!" he said quietly.

"You realise what it means—hardship, discomfort, semi-starvation?"

"Yes, I have taken all that into account."

"And yet you still refuse to tell me where that stuff's hidden?"

"I refuse!"

The professor spoke with an air of finality. And it dawned upon Jim Dawlish that he was merely wasting his breath. Nothing, it seemed, could make the professor budge from his attitude.

"Very well," said Dawlish grimly. "There's goin' to be a battle between you an' me, professor, a battle that will be fought in silence. I shall keep you here, in this rabbit-hutch, from which you haven't a dog's chance of escape. Every two days or so I shall bring you just enough food an'

drink to keep you from goin' under. You won't be allowed a single comfort, barrin' the bed on which you are now sittin'. No books, no tobacco, nothin' to relieve the monotony of your imprisonment. Either you will go off your head, or you will do exactly the opposite, an' come to your senses. You'll give in."

"Never!"

"Never's a long day!" said Dawlish, with a hard laugh.

"I won't waste any more words on you, professor."

He crossed to the door.

"Good-night, an' pleasant dreams!" he said, as he passed out.

The door was slammed, locked, and bolted. And the professor was alone once more.

He scarcely dared to think of the future, of the dreary succession of nights and days that stretched before him. He felt, with the poet, "Is not to-day enough? Why do I peer into the darkness of the day to come?"

All hope of escape had been abandoned. Similarly, all hope of being rescued had been given up.

He could get no help from the police. Officers of the law were very scarce in that desolate part of the country. That lonely shore had not been patrolled by a policeman for years, if at all. It had not been thought necessary.

Neither could the professor get any help from the villagers, from the tradespeople who called at the house daily with provisions. They all thought that he was a lunatic, and that Jim Dawlish was his attendant.

Talbot and Marie would have hastened to the rescue of the professor had they known where he was. But how could they know? Only by a miracle would they have lighted upon this lonely spot, and miracles didn't happen nowadays.

There was no ray of hope to lighten the professor's gloom. A black wall seemed to loom up before him, and despair was in his heart.

But he had one consolation even in that hour of dark despondency. He had played the man. He had not yielded to Dawlish. He had preserved his honour inviolate. And honour, as Shakespeare observed, was "far more precious dear than life."

It would have been easy for the professor to have given in, to have told Dawlish where the stolen plunder was hidden, thereby securing his freedom.

But the professor had not chosen the easy way. He

preferred to do what was right and honourable, regardless of the consequences.

He heard Dawlish and Donovan going downstairs. He heard the sound of chairs being drawn up to a table, and then the clink of glasses. The two rascals were about to indulge in a drinking bout. Even if they became helplessly intoxicated, however, it would not help the professor in any way. Escape from the window was impossible, owing to the stout iron bars; and the door was far too solid and substantial for the prisoner to break down.

The professor lay awake, listening to the sounds from below.

Louder and louder grew the voices of Dawlish and Donovan as they proceeded with their potations. And presently they broke into a harsh, raucous chorus.

"Come, landlord, fill this flowing bowl
Until it doth run over!
For to-night we'll merry, merry be,
To-morrow we'll be sober!"

Not until the small hours of the morning did the house become quiet. And then the professor settled himself on his hard bed and sank into a dreamless sleep.

CHAPTER 4. Talbot's Mission!

"THINGS are pretty desperate!" said Tom Merry.

They certainly were.

Several days had passed—dark, dreary winter days—and no news had come to hand concerning the professor.

"I'm worried about poor old Talbot," Tom Merry went on. "He seems to have taken this very deeply to heart—the professor's relapse, I mean."

Manners nodded.

"I've never seen such a change in a fellow," he said. "He seems to have lost all interest in life. He can't settle down to anything. Linton had to speak sharply to him in class for not paying attention, and he goes about like a fellow in a dream. He's right off his form at footer, and he eats practically nothing."

"He'll be ill if he goes on like this," said Monty Lowther. "Miss Marie's ill already," said Tom Merry. "The awful worry has been too much for her. Talbot says that every time she picks up a newspaper she expects to read of her father's arrest."

The Terrible Three were strolling in the quadrangle in the wintry dusk.

They were very concerned for Talbot, but they could do little to cheer him. It was wiser, they felt, not to mention the professor's name in his presence.

A shadowy figure came towards them in the gloom.

"That you, Talbot?" called Tom Merry.

"Yes."

Talbot joined his chums, and fell into step with them. No word was uttered for fully a moment. Then Talbot spoke.

"I can't stick it any longer, you fellows!" he muttered. "This suspense is awful! It's sending me half potty. Until I know exactly where the professor is, and what's happened, I sha'n't be able to rest. I feel I ought to be doing something, instead of kicking my heels in this place."

"But what can you do, old chap?" asked Tom Merry.

"Very little, I'm afraid. Still, I can do something. I can go up to Scotland Yard and try to convince them that the professor had nothing to do with the death of that old scientist."

"My hat!"

"What good will that do?" asked Manners.

"Well, if I convince Scotland Yard of the professor's innocence, and then have another shot at finding him, and tell him he has nothing to fear from that blackmailer Dawlish, he might sever his connection with the gang at once."

"That's true," said Tom Merry. "It's a wheeze well worth trying, anyway. But do you think the Head will give you permission to go up to London again?"

"If he doesn't," said Talbot grimly, "I shall take French leave. I can't endure this awful suspense any longer. It's made Marie ill, and it will get me down, too, if I stay here. I'm going to ask the Head right away, but I thought I'd mention it to you fellows first. So long!"

Talbot strode away through the dusk. He went straight to the Head's study and made his request to Dr. Holmes.

The kindly old gentleman was touched by the troubled look on Talbot's face.

"I understand how you feel about this matter, my boy," he said. "You are worried almost to distraction about Mr. Rivers, and you feel you ought to do everything possible to help him. I shall not stand in your way. You may

go to London to-morrow, and I trust your mission will prove successful."

"Thank you, sir, very much!"

Talbot enjoyed a sound sleep that night—the first time for many nights.

He was early astir, and he caught the first train to London.

As he sat in the corner seat of the railway-carriage Talbot mapped out in his mind what he should say when he got to Scotland Yard.

His one object was to convince the authorities that the professor was innocent of causing the old scientist's death. Once this was done Dawlish would no longer have a hold over John Rivers. Talbot would try yet again to find the professor, and, having found him, would assure him that all was well, and urge him to break with Dawlish at once.

On reaching London Talbot went straight to Scotland Yard. He stepped into the great building and was immediately buttonholed by a policeman.

"Whom do you want to see, my lad?"

"One of the big officials," said Talbot. "Mr. Calthorpe, for preference."

"What's your business?"

"It's private," was the reply, "but very urgent."

"Your name?"

"Talbot, of St. Jim's."

"Wait here a minute," said the constable gruffly.

Talbot waited, and was presently informed that Mr. Calthorpe would see him.

He was escorted to a room on the first floor, where a well-built, clean-shaven gentleman was seated at a very orderly table. Everything in the room spoke of method and neatness. Documents were carefully bundled together, there were no stray papers, and everything was just so.

"Good-morning!" said Mr. Calthorpe, glancing keenly at the St. Jim's junior. "I seem to have seen you before."

"I expect you have, sir. I'm a friend of Mr. John Rivers."

"Ah! You have news of him?"

Talbot shook his head.

Mr. Calthorpe looked disappointed. He was a personal friend of the professor, and the latter's disappearance worried him immensely. He had made every effort to trace John Rivers, but in vain.

"Sit down, my lad," he said, "and tell me what you want to see me about."

"I'd prefer to stand, sir, if you don't mind," said Talbot. And then he tried to recollect the little speech he had mapped out in the train. It had been a very eloquent speech—a piece of oratory worthy of a Mark Antony—but Talbot could not for the life of him recall a word of it now.

"Well?" rapped out Mr. Calthorpe, with a slight show of impatience.

"I—I've called to see you, sir, about Mr. Rivers. There's a man called Dawlish who's been trying to blackmail him."

"How do you know that?"

"Dawlish told me so himself. A few years ago an old scientist—a Dr. Garnett—died rather mysteriously, and Dawlish declares that Mr. Rivers killed him."

"Indeed!"

"At that time," said Talbot, "Mr. Rivers was a crackman. He was breaking into a safe at the scientist's house, when the old man came downstairs in his dressing-gown and interrupted him. Dawlish declares that he was watching through the window and saw Mr. Rivers turn on the old man and strike him down with a jemmy. I want to say that that's a dastardly lie! I know Mr. Rivers—the professor, we call him—better than anybody, and I know that he would never have attacked a defenceless old man, even in those days. As for murdering him—why, the whole thing's a trumped-up falsehood!"

Mr. Calthorpe smiled slightly.

"Calm yourself, my dear boy," he said.

"But—but don't you realise what this means, sir?" exclaimed Talbot. "Dawlish has threatened to tell this story to Scotland Yard and get Mr. Rivers hounded out of his job!"

Mr. Calthorpe laughed outright. And there was something heartening and cheery about his laugh.

"You are making much ado about nothing," he said.

"We know this man Dawlish, and we also know Mr. Rivers. Indeed, the latter is a personal friend of mine. Do you think we should listen to Dawlish if he came to us with such a story?"

"He's a very plausible rogue, sir," said Talbot.

"And he would need to be. He'd never be able to convince us that Mr. Rivers had anything to do with the death of old Dr. Garnett. That affair, my dear boy, is dead and done with. We are well satisfied that Mr. Rivers did not cause the old man's death. Do you think we should have given him a billet here at Scotland Yard if we thought he had been mixed up in a murder case? Our records show that Dr. Garnett's death was due to heart disease, aggravated by a fall."

Talbot drew a deep breath of relief. He himself, in his heart, had feared that the professor was not altogether guiltless; but now he knew for a fact that John Rivers was innocent, and he could almost have jumped for joy.

Mr. Calthorpe noted the junior's relief, and he rose to his feet and patted Talbot on the shoulder.

"There, there!" he said kindly. "There is nothing whatever to worry about. It was very gallant of you to come here and defend Mr. Rivers, but it is quite unnecessary. His job is quite safe; it is being kept open for him. He has unaccountably disappeared, but my men are searching for him everywhere, and I expect news of him at any moment."

Talbot's heart sank once more.

Again the terrible fear crept into the boy's mind that the detectives would find the professor, and discover that he had joined forces with Dawlish, and was pursuing a life of crime.

If only he could find the professor, and assure him that his job at the Yard was safe, and that Dawlish was powerless to ruin him!

He must make another search. His leave of absence from St. Jim's was indefinite. The Head had not told him to be back at a certain time. He must set out once more on the trail of John Rivers, and find him before the detectives did so.

Talbot thanked Mr. Calthorpe, who shook hands with him cordially and bade him be of good cheer.

"As soon as I get news of Mr. Rivers I'll send you a telegram," he said. "I know how anxious you must be; and his daughter must be pretty well distracted. Good-bye, my boy! I hope we shall soon have something favourable to report."

When Talbot left Scotland Yard he proceeded straight to the East End.

lifted her up from the depths of despair, and gave her a definite hope to cling to.

Marie's illness—which had been mental, rather than physical—left her, and she was able to resume her duties as nurse.

Of course, the situation was still serious. The professor had not yet been found; and if he was indeed in the hands of Dawlish he would be passing through a period of great hardship and privation.

However, Talbot and Marie hoped for the best. And they found much more consolation in hope than in useless repining.

It really seemed as if the clouds had begun to lift at last!

CHAPTER 5.

The Dawn of Freedom!

"PROFESSOR!"

Jim Dawlish called the name. He applied his knuckles to the door of the professor's prison, and awaited a response.

A faint voice came from within.

"Have you come to torment me again, Dawlish?"

"No. I want to know if you've come to your senses yet?"

"You mean will I give in?"

"Precisely!"

"Then the answer is as usual—no!" said the professor. His voice was weak, but his dauntless spirit had not yet been crushed.

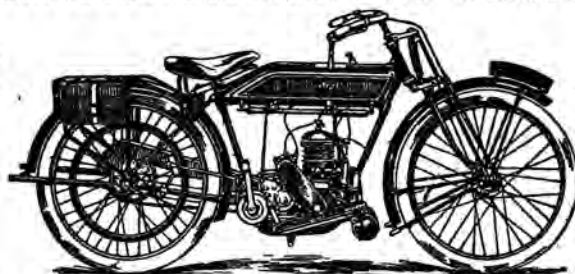
Dawlish muttered a savage imprecation.

"How much longer are you goin' to keep up this fool's game?" he asked. "You'll have to give in sooner or

NOTE!

There are thirty of these valuable motor-bikes to be awarded in our

GREAT FOOTBALLERS' NAMES COMPETITION!



The 2 1/2 h.p. "James" Motor Cycle.

830

Prizes all told—costing Thousands of Pounds. Turn to pages 14 & 15 and start solving the Easy Puzzle-Pictures Now.

THEY'RE SO SIMPLE!

Diligently he searched all the old haunts of the gang. He plunged into the underworld of London in search of the professor. He went down into dark places, where vice flourished, and where virtue was sneered at and trampled down. He rubbed shoulders with a strange motley of men—with thieves and drunkards and begging-letter writers and men of many nationalities.

But Talbot never found the face he sought. Once he encountered an old member of the gang and questioned him earnestly and searchingly. But the man denied that the professor had gone back to the gang; and his denial gave Talbot a new hope.

Perhaps, after all, he was mistaken. Perhaps the professor had defied Dawlish, and refused to yield to his demands. In this event, Dawlish would probably have kidnapped John Rivers and shut him up in some isolated place.

All unconsciously Talbot had struck the correct line of reasoning. And after he had ransacked the underworld in vain he came more and more to the conclusion that the professor was under lock and key—a prisoner in the hands of his enemy.

But, without a single clue to guide him, how could Talbot discover the professor's prison?

The junior spent three long days in searching, but they yielded nothing. He covered many miles, and went into many strange places, but still he could not find the face he sought.

At last Talbot abandoned the search and went back to St. Jim's.

He was somewhat lighter of heart than when he had started out. He had the satisfaction of knowing that the professor's job was safe; and then there was the hope that John Rivers had not gone back to the gang, after all.

On his return to St. Jim's Talbot paid a visit to Marie Rivers in the sanatorium. He told her what had transpired in London, and she also told her that he did not believe the professor had resumed a criminal career.

Talbot's news had a wonderful effect upon Marie. It

later, an' tell me the name of the place where the loot is hidden. You can't hold out for ever."

"I think you'll find that I can," retorted the professor.

"Hang you!" snarled Dawlish.

He had expected his prisoner to give in long before this. But he did not know the stern stuff of which the professor was made. John Rivers showed the same iron fortitude as his forefathers, who had suffered cruel tortures on the rack and in the pillory, rather than be false to their faith.

The professor had held out valiantly through the long, weary days and the seemingly endless nights. And he showed not a sign of wavering. Come what may, Dawlish should not get the information he sought.

"You'll be at the end of your tether soon," growled Dawlish. "An' when you're at death's door, p'raps, you'll come to your senses. I sha'n't come near you again for twenty-four hours. That will give you time to think it over an' take a more reasonable view of things."

The professor made no answer, and Dawlish stamped noisily down the stairs.

A marked change had come over the prisoner. Hardship and deprivation had told upon him. He was appreciably thinner, and his face was pinched and drawn.

Never in his career had the professor been in such a hopeless plight. Not a single loophole of escape presented itself.

At rare intervals Pat Donovan brought the prisoner some food—just sufficient to stave off actual starvation. It would have been useless for the professor to have attacked the man on any of these visits, for he was now so weak that he could scarcely stand.

Was it never going to end—this long period of helpless captivity?

Occasionally the professor dragged himself to the little window and gazed out across the wide expanse of sea. But he saw no one to whom he could shout for assistance.

From time to time tradespeople came to the lonely house. The baker's boy and the grocer's boy were daily callers.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 820.



The rope was securely fastened around Talbot's waist and he was lowered into the well—

The professor shouted to them and tried hard to make them understand that he was a detective, and that Dawlish had kidnapped him.

The boys, believing the professor to be a lunatic and subject to delusions, merely giggled at him. And at last the professor gave up appealing to them. Dawlish had quite succeeded in convincing all the local people that the professor was a madman.

The next twenty-four hours seemed an eternity—a slow-moving cycle of years.

Each hour was just like the last, except that it seemed longer and more wearisome.

The professor was denied the consolation of books and of his pipe. There was nothing to relieve the tedium of his captivity. He had only his thoughts to keep him company—and his thoughts were far from cheerful.

At last he heard footsteps ascending the stairs.

The professor clenched his hands, still determined not to give in.

On this occasion the bolts were shot back and the door was opened.

It was Dawlish who entered. He brought refreshments, in the form of a hunk of bread and a small jug of cold water.

"Your dinner, professor," he said ironically. "Sorry there's nothin' to follow!"

The professor was lying on the bed. He said nothing; he did not even look up.

"Have you come to your senses yet?" asked Dawlish.

No answer.

"Are you goin' to give me the name of the place where the loot is hidden?"

The professor shook his head—not very vigorously, however, and Dawlish thought he was beginning to waver.

Placing the bread and water on the chair, Dawlish produced a notebook and pencil from his pocket. He thrust the pencil into the professor's hand and laid the notebook open on the bed.

"Write it down!" he said persuasively. "I can see that you're at the end of your tether. Write down the name of the place an' you shall go free!"

But if Dawlish imagined that the prisoner was on the verge of yielding, he imagined a vain thing.

The professor hurled the pencil on to the floor, and it rolled under the bed. That was his answer to Dawlish, and it was more effective than any words would have been.

"What!" cried Dawlish, in amazement and anger. "You still refuse to do as I ask?"

The professor nodded.

"All right!" said Dawlish savagely. "I'll leave you alone for another twenty-four hours. You can't hold out for ever, an' it's not a bit of use opposin' your will to mine. You fool! Can't you see that you're at my mercy? There can be only one endin' to a battle of this sort. I'm bound to win, sooner or later!"

The professor still remained silent.

"Praps you are hopin' that somebody will come to your rescue?" Dawlish went on. "If so, you can banish the hope right away. As I told you before, the police never penetrate to this lonely spot; so you can get no help from that quarter.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 820.

As for the local people, they're all convinced that you're off your rocker. I tell you, man, you're utterly at my mercy!"

The professor realised this only too well. But it made no difference to his resolve.

"I don't care how long I have to wait," said Dawlish, "but I'm goin' to find that hidden hoard which was mentioned in the cipher. You alone know where the loot is hidden, an' you're goin' to tell me—not to-day, praps, or for many days; but you'll tell me in the long run!"

Dawlish gave his captive a final glare, and stamped angrily from the room. In his furious exit he forgot he had left behind him his notebook and pencil. These were likely to prove serviceable to the professor later on.

The door was slammed, and bolts were shot into place, and once again the prisoner found himself alone.

But a hope had now risen in the professor's breast. He had writing materials, and he would be able to draft a message—an S.O.S. call for help.

How could such a message be dispatched? This was indeed a problem; but it was a problem that might solve itself later.

The professor reached out for the hunk of bread, and ate it ravenously. It was indeed a frugal meal, but to a man in a state of semi-starvation it seemed a royal repast.

Having devoured the bread and drained the small jug, the professor felt much stronger. He got off the bed, and burrowed underneath it for the pencil.

Then, tearing a leaf out of Dawlish's notebook, he wrote a message to Talbot of St. Jim's.

The message was written in code—a code which Talbot would be able to decipher, but which would be double-Dutch to anyone else.

On being decoded, the message would read as follows:

"Am a prisoner in Dawlish's hands. Position desperate. Cannot hold out much longer. Am in a stone-built house which stands by itself two miles to the west of the village of Greycliffe. Dawlish and Donovan are here, both armed, so be very careful when attempting rescue. Come quickly!—JOHN RIVERS."

Now came the baffling problem of dispatching that message to Talbot.

Fortune, however, was beginning to smile upon the man whom it had deserted so long.

Early next morning the professor kept watch at the little window of his prison. And presently he espied a solitary figure coming along the shore. It was the figure of a young man in a Norfolk suit—obviously a tourist, for a haversack was slung over his shoulder.

The professor dared not shout, for he would have attracted the attention of Dawlish and Donovan. But he drew out his handkerchief and waved it vigorously from the window.

The man in the Norfolk suit came on, looking about him with interest. And presently he caught sight of the fluttering handkerchief at the little window.

Looking rather mystified, the tourist approached the solitary stone-built house.

The professor then thrust his arm between two of the iron bars, and released the folded piece of paper, which circled through the air, and fluttered down, alighting at the tourist's feet.

The young man picked up the document. On the outside was written:

"Please convey this to R. Talbot, St. James' School, Rylcombe, Sussex. It is most urgent—a matter of life and death!"

The tourist stared at that message in blank astonishment. He was about to call out to the professor, but the latter instantly silenced him by placing his fingers on his lips.

Fortunately, the stranger was intelligent enough to understand. He could tell by the professor's face that the matter was indeed urgent. He thrust the note into his pocket, and nodded his head, as much as to say, "All right. I'll see that this is delivered." Then he turned and strode away rapidly along the shore.

The professor's eyes followed the man until he was out of sight.

Then, with a deep breath of relief, the prisoner withdrew from the window. He felt that his luck had turned now, and that this was the dawning of his freedom.

Everything had worked like a charm, and neither Dawlish nor Donovan had the slightest suspicion of what had transpired.

If all went well, the message would be delivered into Talbot's hands, and a rescue-party would set out from St. Jim's with all speed.

"I have only to hold out a little longer, and help will be here!" muttered the professor. "The Toff will find ways and means of bringing a rescue-party to this place. With luck, they will arrive to-night!"

Weak and exhausted as he was with his long imprisonment,

the prospect of a rescue was balm in Gilead to the professor. He had endured great hardship and privation; but the end was in sight now.

The professor's hopes were centred upon Talbot of St. Jim's. And Talbot, who never failed a friend in time of crisis, was not likely to fail now.

A few short hours, and deliverance would be at hand!

CHAPTER 6.

News at Last!

"**F**EELING fit enough to play this afternoon, old chap?"

Tom Merry bore down upon Talbot in the quadrangle of St. Jim's and clapped him on the shoulder.

Talbot turned a smiling face to his chum.

"Yes, rather!" he said. "I know I've been right off form in recent games, Tom, but I've been worried out of my wits about the professor."

"And you're still worried?"

"Not nearly so much. Do you know, a big weight seems to have slipped from my mind. There's been no news of the professor—it's so long ago since he disappeared that some people are beginning to say he must be dead—and yet I've got a feeling that things aren't nearly so bad as we thought at first. I can't explain the feeling, or why I've got it, but it's there! I'm absolutely certain now that the professor hasn't gone back to the gang."

"My hat!"

"I've also got a feeling—call it a premonition, if you like—that we shall get news of the professor very shortly."

"What ever makes you think that?" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"Goodness knows! I've got nothing to go upon. It's just one of those curious premonitions that people get from time to time."

"Well, I hope you're right," said Tom.

In his heart Tom Merry did not share Talbot's optimism. He had already given up the professor for lost. But Tom was not going to throw a damper on his chum's spirits by saying what he feared.

Moreover, Tom Merry had little faith in premonitions. He had often had a premonition that a calamity of some sort was going to happen—and it hadn't! He had also had a premonition, many a time and oft, that the postman would bring him a remittance from home—and the postman had not done so.

Talbot, however, seemed to be convinced that news would soon come to hand concerning the professor; and Tom Merry hoped that, for once in a way, the premonition would be fulfilled.

St. Jim's had a match that afternoon with their old and keen rivals, Gordon Gay & Co. of the Grammar School.

Tom Merry was delighted to find that Talbot was fit to play.

"Hope you'll find your best form this afternoon, old man, and pile up the goals!" he said.

"I'll do my best," said Talbot.

He spoke with all his old cheerfulness. And the two chums went into the School House together to change into their footer togs.

The Grammarians brought a strong team over, and they looked as if they meant business. But St. Jim's also meant business. Their defeat by Rookwood still rankled, and they were eager to make amends.

It was a glorious afternoon, cold, but sunny. And a big crowd turned out to witness the match.

"I twust, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, "that we shall give a much bettah display this aftahnoon than we've given pwviously. Have you got your shootin' boots on, Talbot?"

Talbot nodded.

"I fancy we shall pull it off," he said.

The Grammarians won the toss, and they set St. Jim's to face the sun.

There was a babel of voices as the teams lined up.

"Play up, the Saints!"

"On the ball!"

"About time we won a match, you know!"

Tom Merry kicked off, and the St. Jim's forwards were soon making tracks for goal.

Talbot was in fine fettle. There had been some talk of dropping him from the eleven, because of his indifferent form in recent matches. But he gave of his best now. He would have opened the scoring in the first minute had not the Grammarians' goalie brought off a sensational save.

St. Jim's attacked fiercely. Fatty Wynn, in goal, was unemployed; and Figgins and Kerr, the two backs, were lookers-on in Vienna, so to speak. The halves were busily engaged in backing up the forwards, and the forwards were in sparkling form. Tom Merry led the attack, and Talbot and Levison on the right wing, and Gussy and Blake on the left, worked like Trojans.

The Grammarians' defence held out gallantly for twenty minutes. And then came a crop of goals.

Tom Merry got the first with a fine solo effort. Blake scored the second from Talbot's pass. And Dick Redfern, with a powerful drive from twenty yards out, netted number three.

The crowd went into ecstasies.

"Hurrah!"

"Go it, the Saints!"

"You're all over them!"

Nothing daunted by the fact that they were three goals down, the Grammarians kept pegging away.

Gordon Gay broke through on his own, and tested Fatty Wynn with a fierce low shot. Fatty threw himself full length, and pushed the ball away. But Frank Monk rushed up and banged it into the net.

"Goal!"

Half-time arrived with St. Jim's leading by 3-1.

"It's our game, deah boys!" panted Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, as he came off for the "breather."

"Don't be too sure, Gussy," said Tom Merry. "There's time enough for lots of things to happen yet. But Talbot's in rare form, so we ought to win."

The Grammarians lined up for the second half with grim faces. And they did their level best to pull the game round. Gordon Gay made a dash for goal, and, though "sandwiched" by Figgins and Kerr, he managed to get in his shot. Fatty Wynn grabbed at the ball, but it came whizzing in at such a pace that he could not hold it. Eluding his frantic clutch, it crashed into the net.

"Three to two!" muttered Tom Merry. "We mustn't let 'em draw level, whatever we do!"

But the Grammarians were having all the play now. They swarmed round the St. Jim's goal, bombarding Fatty Wynn with shots.

Fatty brought off many wonderful clearances, but he was beaten again before the game was much older. Kerr had the misfortune to handle the ball inside the penalty-area, and Gordon Gay made no mistake with the "spot-kick."

"Three all!" exclaimed Jack Blake. "We've struck a bad patch, and no error! You said it was our game, Gussy, but it looks like being anybody's game now."

Arthur Augustus nodded.

"We must pull up our socks, an' gird up our loins, in a mannah of speakin'," he said. "It will nevah do to let these fellows lick us, aftah we were on top."



Switching on his electric-torch, Talbot thoroughly explored the bottom of the well.

Fast and furious was the play after this. Each side struggled desperately for the lead.

Fatty Wynn stopped a hard drive from Frank Monk, and another from Wootton major. And then Figgins, with a mighty kick, transferred the ball to the other end, and the St. Jim's forwards came into the picture once again.

Tom Merry & Co. swarmed round the Grammarians' goal like flies round a honey-pot. But they could not score. That goal seemed to have a charmed life. Shot after shot missed by inches or just skimmed the crossbar.

The game looked like fizzling out in a draw. Spectators were already drifting away from the playing-field. But they little knew what they were missing, for, with only a few minutes to go, Talbot scored two beautiful goals in swift succession. The first was a smashing shot from point-blank range; the second was a high, curling shot, which the goalie could not quite reach. He began to wish that, by taking thought, he could add a cubit to his stature.

The Grammarians were a beaten side now, and they knew it. They played up gallantly to the bitter end, but they failed to add to their score; and the St. Jim's eleven ran off, worthy winners by five goals to three.

Quite a crowd gathered round Talbot to congratulate him, for he was the match-winner.

It was a proud moment for the handsome Shell fellow, but a rather embarrassing moment, too, for his back was thumped with a vigour that was quite painful. So hearty were the congratulations that Talbot felt like saying, "Save me from my friends!"

But relief soon came.

A man in a Norfolk suit was making his way with rapid strides towards the group of footballers.

Tom Merry & Co. glanced curiously at the stranger. His face was flushed, and he was panting.

"Which of you is Talbot?" he inquired.

Talbot stepped forward, and the man in the Norfolk suit drew him aside.

"I have a message for you," he said, taking a folded piece of paper from his pocket.

Talbot's heart gave a bound. Instinctively he seemed to know that the message was from the professor. His premonition that he would soon get news of John Rivers had been swiftly fulfilled.

The junior opened the folded missive, and saw that it was in code. It would take him some little time to decipher it. But he could already interpret the name of the sender—"John Rivers." And he experienced a thrill of joy. For this proved, at any rate, that the professor was still in the land of the living.

"When was this given to you?" asked Talbot, turning to the stranger.

"This morning. I hoped to have got here before, but there was no direct train route. I had to change twice, with a long wait at each junction. The message was dropped to me from the upper window of a house many miles from here. It all seems very mysterious, and I don't pretend to understand what it's all about. But it seemed to be urgent, so I brought it to you personally rather than entrust it to the post."

"It was awfully decent of you to act as messenger," said Talbot.

"Not at all! I am on holiday, and my time is my own; in fact, I rather enjoyed the journey here."

Talbot nodded.

"I don't want to offend you," he said, "but I'd like to give you something for all the trouble you've taken."

The young man laughed outright.

"Nonsense!" he said. "I wouldn't hear of it!"

"You must at least stop and have some tea," said Talbot.

"Well, I don't mind doing that."

Talbot beckoned to the Terrible Three, and they joined

him at once. They could see by his radiant face that something out of the ordinary had happened.

"You've got news, old chap?" asked Tom Merry quickly. "Yes—at long last," answered Talbot. "The professor is alive. I can tell you that much, at least. Whether he is safe, or in danger of some sort, I shall soon discover. He's sent me a message, but it's in cipher, and it will take me some little time to unravel it. Meanwhile, I've asked this gentleman to stay to tea. It was jolly good of him to bring the message."

"Yes, rather!"

The juniors were feeling quite excited as they escorted the stranger up to the School House.

What was the nature of the professor's message? Was he safe and well, or was he in peril and needing assistance?

The Terrible Three were on tenterhooks. As for Talbot, his heart was pounding against his ribs, so great was his excitement.

Tea was swiftly prepared in Study No. 10. The visitor to St. Jim's was hungry, and he did full justice to the good things on the table.

Tom Merry & Co. were too excited to eat, and Talbot ignored tea altogether. He flung himself into the armchair, and set to work to decipher the professor's message.

News had come to hand at last, after many long days of weary waiting.

Talbot despatched Monty Lowther to the sanny to summon Marie Rivers; and the atmosphere in Study No. 10 was electric with excitement.

Marie soon came. The girl's cheeks were flushed as she stepped into the study, and she glanced quickly at Talbot.

"You have news, Toff?"

"Yes, Marie. There's a code message from your father. I've nearly deciphered it."

Marie sat down, and waited patiently. Tom Merry offered her a cup of tea, but she waved it aside. Her eyes were fixed eagerly on Talbot's face, which had become very grave.

When he had finished his tea, the stranger took his departure. Then Talbot announced that he had deciphered the message, and a hush of expectancy fell upon the assembly.

CHAPTER 7.

To the Rescue.

"YOUR father is in danger, Marie!"

Talbot made the statement bluntly enough, for he knew that Marie Rivers was a girl who always liked to hear the plain truth at once, without any needless evasions.

Marie rose to her feet. Her lips were trembling.

"Where is he, Toff?"

"He is a prisoner in Dawlish's hands, at a lonely house near Greycliffe."

"A prisoner. Then—then he has not gone back to the gang?"

"No."

"Thank Heaven for that!"

"Hear, hear!" chimed in the juniors fervently.

It was a vast relief to those present to find that the professor was still a man of honour. He had not yielded to Jim Dawlish; he had not been intimidated by that blackmailing scoundrel. The fears which Marie and Talbot had at first entertained were now proved to be groundless. The professor had been true to himself and true to his honour; and Marie and Talbot inwardly reproached themselves for ever having doubted him.

It was, indeed, a relief to find that the professor was true blue. But the relief was mingled with great anxiety, for John Rivers was in danger.

RESULT OF OUR GREAT CRICKET COMPETITION!

£300 in Cash Prizes!

IS YOUR NAME HERE?

In this competition twenty-one competitors correctly forecasted the order in which the seventeen County Cricket Clubs finished up at the end of the season. The First Prize of £100 has therefore been divided among:

Rosa Acworth, 8, Crief Road, Wandsworth; G. Bees, 80, Old Street, Clevedon, Somerset; Leslie S. Brown, 16, Fulham Street, Beeston, Leeds; Arthur J. Collison, 70, St. Olave's The GEM LIBRARY.—No. 820.

Road, East Ham, E. 6; B. Cook, 17, Greenhill Avenue, Allerton, Liverpool; L. F. Dalby, 7, Spring Road, Ipswich; H. Edwards, Westminster Bank, Fishponds, Bristol; W. Fincher, 16, Bishop Street, Wolverhampton; William Hibbert, 9, Hardwick Street, Hunslet Carr, Leeds; Arthur F. Jones, 60, Beversbrook Road, Tufnell Park, N. 19; Jack Kirk, 2, Westwood Terrace, Far Headingley, Leeds; Wm. Milnes, 30, Dolly Lane, Newtown, Leeds; L. Oakley, 215, Warwick Road, Sparkhill, Birmingham; S. S. Perkes, 37, Back Street, Dudley; F. G. Pickwick, 9, Cicely Road, Peckham, S.E. 15; Arthur E. Tomlinson, The Common, West Hallam, near Derby; Charles Walter, 109, Curzon Road, Maidstone, Kent; Robert Ward, Old Post Office, Pontrhydyrun, near Newport, Mon.; Miss D. Welch, 103, Chesterfield Road, Bristol; A. N. Wells, 85, College Avenue, Gillingham, Kent; F. Whittington, The Cambria, Cambria Road, Loughboro' Junction, S.E. 5.

So many competitors qualified for the third and fourth grades of prizes that division amongst them of the amounts offered was impracticable. The Second Prize of £50, the Third Prize of £30, and the one hundred and twenty prizes of £1 each have therefore been added together and divided among one hundred and sixty-seven competitors whose lists each contained two errors. The names and addresses of these prizewinners can be seen at the GEM Offices.

Correct Order of Finishing:

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Yorkshire. | 10. Derbyshire. |
| 2. Nottinghamshire. | 11. Gloucestershire. |
| 3. Lancashire. | 12. Warwickshire. |
| 4. Surrey. | 13. Essex. |
| 5. Kent. | 14. Leicestershire. |
| 6. Sussex. | 15. Worcestershire. |
| 7. Hampshire. | 16. Glamorgan. |
| 8. Middlesex. | 17. Northamptonshire. |
| 9. Somerset. | |

"Read the whole message, Toff," said Marie. Talbot obeyed.

"Am a prisoner in Dawlish's hands," he began. "Position desperate. The professor isn't in the habit of using extravagant language, and when he says the position's desperate, you can safely wager that it's pretty serious."

Marie nodded.

"Go on," she said.

"Cannot hold out much longer," Talbot read. "Am in a stone-built house which stands by itself two miles to the west of the village of Greycliffe. Dawlish and Donovan are here, both armed, so be very careful when attempting rescue. Come quickly!"

Marie clenched her hands tightly together. She seemed to hear her father's voice, borne to her through the intervening space. "Come quickly!"

GET BUSY NOW IN OUR GREAT FOOTBALLERS' NAMES COMPETITION—

"We must go at once, Toff!" she said.

"Yes, yes; at least, we fellows must go. We must tell the Head of this message, and get his permission to leave at once. But you can't come, Marie!"

"And why not?" flashed the girl.

"Didn't you hear what the message said? Those rotters are armed. There will be danger, and we're not going to ask you to share it, Marie."

"What nonsense! When are you going to stop thinking of me, Toff, as a poor, frail thing in petticoats, who would faint at the mere sight of an armed man? I am coming. I insist upon coming, and there's an end to it!"

Talbot realised the futility of further argument. Wild horses would not have prevented Marie from hurrying to the assistance of her father.

As for the Terrible Three, they were tensely excited. Here was an adventure after their own hearts—to dash to the rescue of the professor; and to risk grave danger in the process. They would not have missed this for anything. Even if the Head refused to give them permission to go, it would not stop them. They were keenly in favour of starting for Greycliffe at once; but Talbot restrained them by pointing out that there were no more trains that evening.

"The last train has just gone," he said, consulting a timetable. "I hope the fellow who brought the professor's message was in time to catch it—if he's going back to Greycliffe, that is."

"What beastly luck!" said Tom Merry. "We shall have to wait till the morning."

But Marie would not hear of waiting.

"We must make the journey this evening somehow!" she said. "Every hour—every moment, perhaps—is precious. My father is in danger, and we must save him."

There was a moment's pause, whilst the juniors debated in their minds how they should make the journey.

Suddenly there was a tap at the door. Tom Merry would have sent the intruder about his business, but before he could speak the door opened, and a tall, well-built man stepped into the study.

Talbot recognised the unexpected visitor at once. It was Mr. Calthorpe, of Scotland Yard.

"Sorry if I'm butting in on a private conversation," said the detective, "but I've called to see if you've any news of Mr. Rivers."

"By Jove!" ejaculated Talbot. "You couldn't have dropped in at a more opportune moment, sir. I've just had an urgent message from the professor."

"He is safe?" said Mr. Calthorpe quickly.

"No, sir; far from it. Let me read you the message."

Talbot read the professor's note, and the detective was visibly impressed.

"I have indeed dropped in at an opportune time," he said. "Great Scott! To think that John Rivers is in the hands of those scoundrels! We must act quickly. Fortunately, I have my car here, and we can start at once. I take it your chums are anxious to come, Talbot?"

"Not half!" answered Monty Lowther.

"Good! There is ample room for the four of you in the car."

"I'm afraid you will have to find room for five!" interposed Marie Rivers.

Mr. Calthorpe turned quickly to the girl. She had been standing in the background, and he had scarcely noticed her hitherto.

"Why, you are Miss Rivers!" he ejaculated.

"Yes; and I am coming with the rescue-party."

"But, my dear girl, you will be exposing yourself to serious peril—"

"I am not a coward, Mr. Calthorpe," said Marie quietly. "My father is in need of help, and I should be the last to hold back. I am coming, whatever you say."

"Very well," said the detective. "I can see that you have quite made up your mind. You had better accompany me to the headmaster's study, all of you. I must obtain his permission for you to come."

Talbot led the way to the Head's study. Mr. Calthorpe followed, and the Terrible Three and Marie brought up the rear.

The little procession excited a good deal of interest as it passed along the passage. Everybody wondered what was in the wind. But there was no time to stop and enlighten the curious throng. Time was precious.

The Head was delighted to hear that there was news of the professor; but his kindly face clouded over when he learned that John Rivers was in the hands of his enemies.

"We must hasten to the rescue, sir," said Mr. Calthorpe. "These boys are very keen on coming, and so is Miss Marie. If you could see your way to grant permission—"

The Head hesitated. He was responsible for the welfare of the juniors, and he did not like the thought of their running into danger. But there was such an eager, pleading look in their eyes that Dr. Holmes finally consented.

"You must take care of yourselves, my boys," he said. "You also, Marie. But for the fact that Mr. Calthorpe is here, I should not have let you go. Dawlish is a desperate man to deal with, and you will be running a grave risk. However—"

The Head sighed, and wished the members of the expedition good luck in their enterprise. He saw that they were determined to go, and that, if he had withheld his permission, they would have taken "French leave."

Mr. Calthorpe thanked the Head, and the little party passed out into the quadrangle.

Dusk had descended like a black pall over St. Jim's. The early stars glimmered faintly overhead. The atmosphere was cold and dry; and it seemed an ideal night for the business in hand.

By this time the spirit of adventure had the juniors fairly in its grip. They scorned the thought of peril. Their one end and aim was to rescue the professor from the hands of his captors.

They clambered into the spacious car, and Mr. Calthorpe sprang nimbly into the driver's seat. It had taken him but a moment to start up the engine.

"Now we're off!" muttered Monty Lowther, as the car bounded forward. "This is better than travelling on an antiquated railway, any day."

"Yes, rather!"

The juniors were in good spirits, and they chattered incessantly as the big car leapt along the darkened road.

Only Marie sat silent. The car was exceeding the speed limit, but to the girl it seemed to be crawling.

Try as she would, Marie could not shake off the fear that the rescue-party might arrive too late to save her father.

Long hours had passed since the professor had sent that message to Talbot. What had happened to him in the meantime?

—THE PRIZE LIST IS THE BIGGEST EVER YET PLACED BEFORE OUR READERS!

Marie shuddered as she asked herself the question. But her lips were firmly set, and her eyes stared straight ahead as the car rushed onwards through the night.

CHAPTER 8.

The Race on the Road!

"HOW much farther, Mr. Calthorpe?" asked Talbot.

"We're nearly there, I guess," replied the detective.

He slackened speed a little, and peered about him. "We're passing through Greycliffe, if I'm not mistaken," he said. "I once spent a holiday here, and I can recognise that curious church-tower. We've only two miles to go."

There was a buzz of excitement amongst the juniors. Tom Merry found himself trembling from head to foot—not with fear, but with excitement.

(Continued on page 16.)

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 820.

THESE WONDERFUL PRIZES MUST BE WON



GRAND "FOOTBALLERS' N

**First Prize,
£100**

**30 MAGNIFICENT "JAMES"
MOTOR-CYCLES**

(Complete with Lamp,
Horn, and Licence-
holder. Value £50).

10 Two-Va
Wireless
Sets.

20 GRAMOPHONES. 40 FOOTBALL OUTFITS (Boots, Stockings, 250 BOO
50 Pairs of BOXING GLOVES. 100 Pairs of ROLLER SKATES. and other
Consolation P

RULES AND CONDITIONS

which must be strictly adhered to.

SECOND SET!

1.—The First Prize of £100 in cash will be awarded to the competitor who sends in the correct, or nearest correct, solution of all eight sets of the pictures, according to the Editor's official solution.

2.—The Second Prize of £50, and the others in the splendid variety of prizes will be awarded in order of merit.

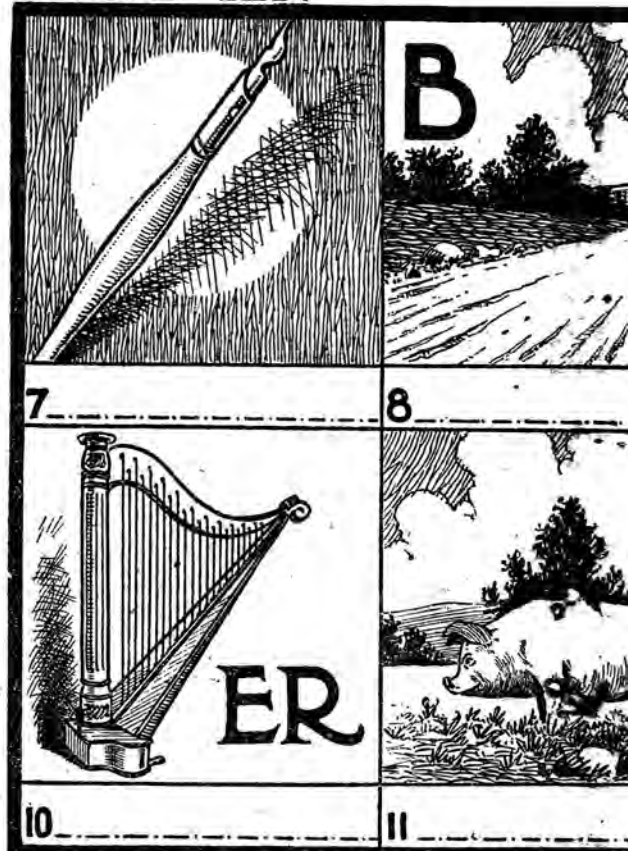
3.—All the prizes will be awarded. If two or more competitors tie, however, the prize, or prizes, or their value, will be divided, and the Editor reserves full rights in this respect.

4.—No solution may be sent in until all the sets of the pictures and the necessary coupon have been published. Full directions will then be given.

5.—The names under the pictures must be written IN INK.

6.—Employees of the proprietors of this journal are not eligible to compete.

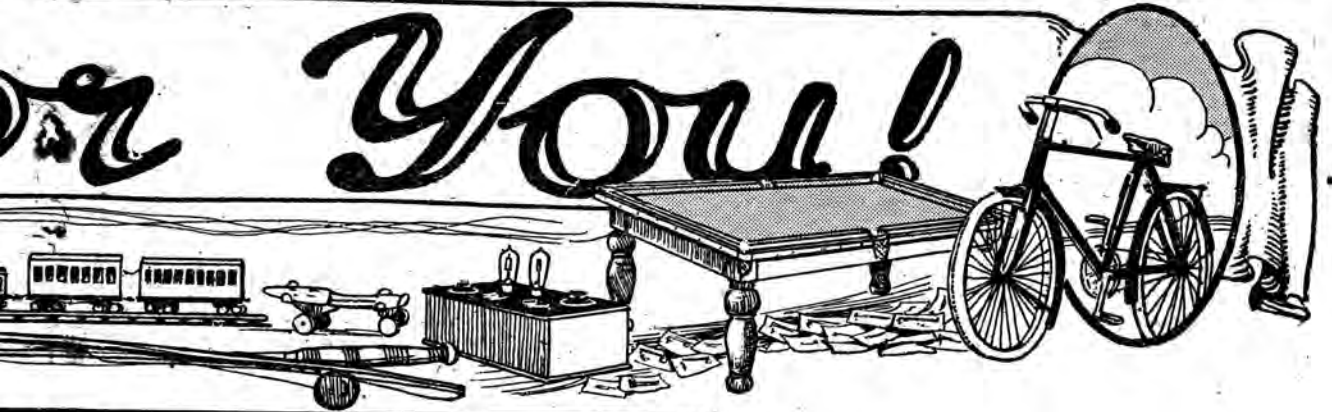
7.—Entry to this competition is on the full understanding that the Editor's decision is final and legally binding throughout.



DON'T LET SUCH AN OPPORTUNITY SLIP BY. NOW LOOK OUT FOR

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 820.

WON! NOTHING DIFFICULT HERE, BOYS!



S' NAMES" COMPETITION!

Two-Valve
Wireless
Sets.

**100 SPLENDID "JAMES"
COMET BICYCLES** (Complete with
Lamp, Bell, etc.).

**Second Prize,
£50**

100 BOOKS and other
Prizes. **6 "RILEY" BILLIARDS TABLES.** **100 FISHING RODS.**
100 MATCH FOOTBALLS. **20 MODEL STEAM LOCOMOTIVES** (With
Rails).

SECOND WEEK!

ALL YOU HAVE TO DO

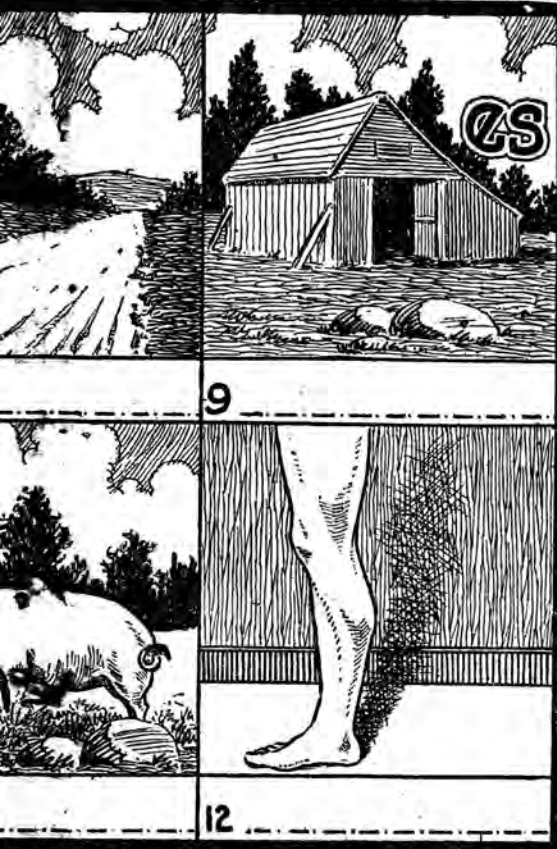
is to write **IN INK** in the allotted space under each of the puzzle-pictures the name of the Footballer which you think the picture represents. Thus No. 1, in the first set of pictures shown again below, the picture clearly means **BALL**. In the same way you have to discover the names indicated by the other pictures.

In all there will be **EIGHT SETS OF PICTURES**, so keep your solutions until the other sets appear.

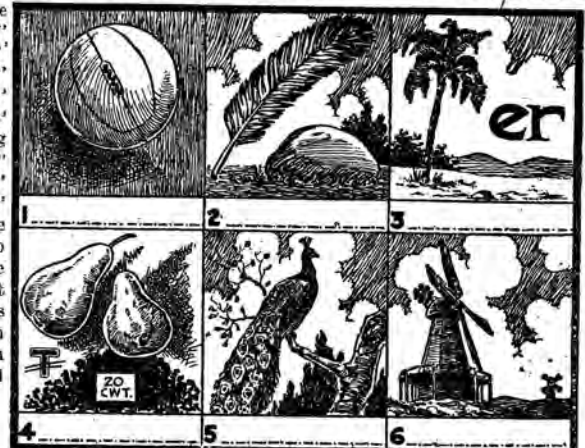
DO NOT SEND YOUR ENTRIES YET.

To help you still further there is a list containing the names of prominent footballers to choose from on page 2.

FIRST SET of pictures for readers who have not yet entered this grand new football competition. **BEGIN WITH THESE!**



Readers of the "Champion," "Boys' Realm," "Union Jack," "Boys' Friend," "Pluck," "Boys' Cinema," "Young Britain," "Magnet," the "Popular," the "Rocket," and "Nelson Lee Library" are also taking part in the Contest, so that additional attempts may be made with the pictures from these allied journals.



FOR THE THIRD SET OF PICTURES WHICH APPEARS NEXT WEEK!

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 820.



"Feeling in fighting trim, Tommy?" asked Monty Lowther.

Tom nodded grimly. "If it comes to a hand-to-hand scrap, I fancy we shall make ourselves felt!" he said.

"Hear, hear!" said Manners. "I say! What a rotten road this is! There's hardly room for two cars to pass."

"There's another car coming, too," said Talbot. "Look out, Mr. Calthorpe!"

The detective promptly swerved to the side of the road. He went as far as he dared, for it was the shore-road, and on the left-hand side was a morass of mud, for the sea came right up to the road at full tide. If the car were to plunge into that muddy morass it would be a hard job to extricate it.

The car had slowed down almost to a standstill. But the driver of the other car did not slacken speed. He came on at a scorching pace, and the juniors feared a collision.

There was a rush and a whir, and the car shot past, with scarcely an inch to spare. So swiftly did it shoot by that the juniors were only able to catch a fleeting glimpse of the driver.

"Jove! That was a narrow squeak!" muttered Tom Merry. "I thought there was going to be a fearful smash-up!"

"Same here," said Monty Lowther. "Talk about a camel passing through the eye of a needle! Most drivers wouldn't have attempted to pass in such a narrow space, but that fellow went for it baldheaded!"

"A reckless road-hog!" was Mr. Calthorpe's comment. "He might have smashed us up, and his own car into the bargain!"

The other car had now disappeared into the night. And the rescue-party dismissed it from their minds and went ahead.

The juniors looked about them as they went, and presently Manners gave a shout.

"There's the house!"

A solitary building loomed into view. It stood in lonely isolation on the shore, like a silent sentinel of the night. No lights gleamed from the windows. The place seemed to be deserted.

Mr. Calthorpe brought the car to a standstill.

"We'll go and investigate," he said as he jumped out. "You had better stay here in the car, Miss Marie."

"Nonsense! I am coming with you."

"Keep well back, then, for these scoundrels, Dawlish and Donovan, are armed."

The party approached the house with caution. Mr. Calthorpe led the way, and he tried the door. The handle yielded to his touch, and he pushed open the door and stepped into the dark building.

The juniors followed him in, their hearts beating tumultuously.

No alarm was made in the house; no movement was made to check the intruders.

"Seems to be no one here," muttered Mr. Calthorpe.

He took out his electric torch, and started to explore each room in turn.

There were signs of recent occupation. On the table in the sitting-room were a number of decanters and a pack of playing-cards. But there was nobody there.

Having thoroughly explored the downstairs regions, the detective mounted the stairs, the others following. They were hoping to find Dawlish and Donovan asleep in one of the upper rooms.

But the bed-rooms were untenanted. And it did not take the party long to discover that the house was deserted.

The last room to be explored was the little attic in which the professor had spent his captivity.

"This is undoubtedly the room where Mr. Rivers was imprisoned!" exclaimed Mr. Calthorpe. "There are iron bars on the outside of the window, and this door is particularly stout and strong. The prisoner has gone, and so have his captors."

"We are too late!" said Marie Rivers, in tones of despair. Then Talbot gave a sudden shout.

"What about the car that passed us on the road? It came

from the direction of this house. And it's only too probable that the professor was on board, and that Dawlish was driving."

"My hat!" gasped Tom Merry.

"I think you are right, my boy," said Mr. Calthorpe. "The fact that the car was travelling at such a reckless speed was, in itself, suspicious. Oh, why didn't I think of this at the time?"

"We must start off in pursuit," said Talbot briskly. "They can't have had more than fifteen minutes' start."

"This way," said Mr. Calthorpe.

And he dashed down the stairs, with the others at his heels.

Out of the house they darted, and scrambled into the car, the engine of which was still running.

Mr. Calthorpe had great difficulty in reversing the car, owing to the narrowness of the road. But he effected the manoeuvre at last, and the chase began.

The St. Jim's juniors lay back in their seats and discussed the extraordinary situation.

"Why have they taken the professor away, I wonder?" said Tom Merry. "They surely didn't get wind of the fact that we were coming to the rescue?"

"No, I don't think it was that," said Talbot. "When Dawlish kidnaps a man he doesn't believe in keeping him too long in the same place, in case people start to get suspicious. He's taking the prisoner to another of his haunts."

"That's what I think," said Marie Rivers. "Oh, Toff, do you think we shall catch them?"

Talbot smiled.

"This car can overtake anything on the road," he said.

"And Mr. Calthorpe's just the man for the job. He's going all out."

The detective was certainly making the fur fly.

It required no little skill to drive a car at top speed on a narrow, rutty road, and at night-time. But Mr. Calthorpe had taken part in motor races in the Isle of Man and elsewhere, and what he didn't know about motoring wasn't worth knowing.

The car leapt along that lonely stretch of shore road like a live thing.

Of course, there was a chance that Dawlish's car had turned off that road and gone inland. But the detective had to risk that. He had very good reasons for thinking that Dawlish would hug the coast. For this was a lonely road, unpatrolled by police, and Dawlish would be safe from awkward inquiries.

For mile after mile the detective's car raced along in quest of its quarry. It bumped and jolted on the uneven road surface, and the passengers were thoroughly shaken up. But they didn't mind little discomforts of that sort.

It was a closed-in car, and Tom Merry, leaning from the window, stared steadily ahead, in the hope of sighting the other car. But there was nothing to be seen, and Tom's hopes began to sink.

The wind from the sea fanned his face as the car rushed on. His position was uncomfortable in the extreme, but still he strained his eyes ahead through the darkness. And presently his patience was rewarded.

Away in the distance gleamed a red rearlight.

"Hurrah!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "We're on the right track!"

"Can you see the other car?" asked Manners excitedly.

"Yes. We shall catch up to it in a few minutes at this rate."

"Oh, ripping!"

It was impossible for Mr. Calthorpe to quicken his speed without serious risk. For the road was worse than ever now. It had not been made for motorists. There were deep ruts, and many obstructions in the shape of small boulders.

However, the detective maintained as good a speed as he dared, and he saw, to his satisfaction, that he was gaining on the car in front.

Dawlish and Donovan were aware of the danger. Dawlish was at the wheel, and he was driving with reckless abandon. But his car was not a road-racer, and he knew that this thrilling chase could have only one ending.

In the back of the car was the professor. His wrists were tied together; but there was no need for this precaution, for he was weak and ill after his terrible experiences.

Pat Donovan was also in the back of the car, guarding the prisoner.

Donovan peered through the little window at the back, and saw that the other car was gaining rapidly.

"Put the pace on, Jim!" he shouted. "They're nearly on us!"

"Hang you!" shouted Dawlish, without looking round.

"How can I go faster than I'm goin' already?"

"They'll catch us, man!" panted Donovan.

"Open fire on them, then! That'll make them keep at a respectable distance."

Donovan clenched his fist and dashed it through the little glass window. Then he levelled his revolver through the aperture, and fired.

Crack, crack!

Donovan's aim was erratic, owing to the violent rocking of the car.

The bullets whizzed harmlessly over the top of the oncoming car.

Donovan fired again—this time with more success.

There was a splintering of glass. The bullet had gone clean through the windscreen of the pursuing car. But Mr. Calthorpe, at the steering-wheel, did not turn a hair. Fortunately, he was unscathed.

"That was a jolly near squeak!" murmured Monty Lowther. "Fancy that rotter firing on us like this! Hope he soon runs out of ammunition, that's all."

But Donovan had plenty more ammunition, and he continued to fire.

Mr. Calthorpe carried on as if nothing was happening. His speed did not slacken. He did not anticipate that he would be hit, for the night was intensely dark for one thing, and Donovan's aim was far from true. Perhaps the scoundrel did not really intend to hit anybody. He was merely trying to frighten off the other car.

But the pursuers were not to be frightened off. They were nearly up to their quarry now, and the desperate chase was coming to a climax.

Jim Dawlish gritted his teeth, and drove on more recklessly than ever. He was determined to evade capture.

The road was in such a shocking state hereabouts that it was rank folly to travel at excessive speed. And Dawlish was not such a skilful driver as the man behind him.

Suddenly there was a shout of alarm from Donovan, who ceased firing.

The car gave a wild lurch to one side, and before Dawlish could bring it under control, it had run clean off the road.

There was a drop of about four feet on to the mud-flats. The car went careering over the edge, and the driver was hurled out of his seat as it took the drop.

Crash!

The car had descended on to the muddy shore, and had heeled over on its side.

Instantly Mr. Calthorpe slowed up. His face was pale, and the faces of his passengers were pale also.

The calamity had occurred so suddenly and unexpectedly that the onlookers sat spellbound.

It was not of Dawlish that they were thinking, though Dawlish must be badly injured, if not killed outright. It was the professor who claimed their concern and anxiety.

How had John Rivers fared in the disaster? Was he pinned under the wreckage? Or had he, by some miracle, escaped scot-free?

"My father!" muttered Marie Rivers, white to the lips. "Open this door, Toff! Let me out! I must go to him!"

Like a fellow in a dream, Talbot pushed open the door, and Marie jumped down from the car and hurried to the scene of the calamity.

Tom Merry & Co. followed with Mr. Calthorpe. And they wondered, with a sickening sense of dread, whether their exertions on behalf of the professor had been in vain.

Was he alive? Or had the worst happened?

The answer was speedily forthcoming.

CHAPTER 9.

A Life in the Balance!

"HE is alive! Thank Heaven for that!"

Marie spoke with deep emotion.

The professor was certainly alive, for he was conscious, and uttered his daughter's name.

Gently they lifted him from the wreckage. Gently they bore him towards Mr. Calthorpe's car.

Tom Merry and Talbot scrambled up on to the road, and the others handed up to them the human burden. For the professor was injured. That was clear enough, though the extent of his injuries could not yet be ascertained.

Between them, Tom Merry and his chum carried the professor to the car and lifted him in, and laid him at full length on the seat.

"Professor," muttered Talbot huskily, "are you much hurt?"

"Not seriously, Toff. My right arm seems to have been crushed, but it is not broken. Don't worry about me. Go and see what has happened to the others."

The juniors marvelled that the professor, at such a moment, should show concern for the fate of those who had despitely used him.

"If they are killed it is no more than they deserve!" said Talbot, in a hard tone.

"You must not talk like that, Toff. Base and bad as those men are, I do not wish them ill."

"Stay here with the professor, Tom," said Talbot. "I'll go and see what's happened to Dawlish and Donovan."

But before Talbot could carry out his intention Mr. Calthorpe and Manners came into view. They carried between them a limp, unconscious form. It was that of Jim Dawlish.

"He appears to be suffering from concussion," explained the detective. "I don't think it will prove serious."

"And the other man?" queried Talbot.

"He is practically unhurt. But I have handcuffed him and relieved him of his revolver. He is our prisoner."

The inanimate form of Jim Dawlish was lifted into the car. Then Monty Lowther and Marie Rivers came up, with Pat Donovan walking between them. He was scowling fiercely, but his wrists were fastened, and he was helpless.

"You're a 'tec, I suppose?" he said to Mr. Calthorpe.

That gentleman nodded.

"An' you're goin' to run us in?" asked Donovan.

"Precisely!"

"What are we goin' to be charged with?"

"Dawlish will be charged with kidnapping, and you will be charged with aiding and abetting him," said the detective. "There will be an additional charge of blackmail against Dawlish. I fancy he will have to go back to prison for a considerable period."

Donovan muttered a savage imprecation. Mr. Calthorpe silenced him instantly.

"I will not tolerate abusive language in the presence of this young lady," he said. "Get into that car."

Donovan sullenly obeyed.

The car now had as many passengers as it could possibly carry. Talbot and Tom Merry squeezed themselves into the front seat alongside Mr. Calthorpe. The others got in at the back; and there was a joyous reunion between Marie and her father.

They had much to talk about, and they were oblivious to the presence of the others.

The professor related all his adventures, and he made light of the terrible hardships through which he had passed. But his voice belied him, for it was weak and faint. More than once he had to pull himself together to prevent himself from lapsing into unconsciousness.

In the dim light Marie could scarcely see her father's pinched and haggard face; yet she realised only too well that he was ill—that he was going to be very ill.

It was not the motor mishap which was responsible for the professor's condition. It was the long period of imprisonment in the stuffy attic, and the lack of food and comfort, which had brought him so low.

"You are ill, father," said Marie softly. "We will take you to St. Jim's, and I will look after you, and make up to you for the terrible time you have had."

The girl's face was bending over that of her father. He

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 820.

BOXING BEST BOYS' BOOKS SCHOOL

THE BOYS' FRIEND LIBRARY.

Fourpence Per Volume.

685.—THE NAMELESS FORWARD.

A Masterly Yarn of Stirring Football Adventure. By JAMES EGERTON WING.

686.—THE HAYGARTH CARAVANNERS.

A Bollicking Story of the Four Macs at Haygarth School. By JACK NORTH.

687.—OMAR THE MAGNIFICENT!

A Gripping Story of Adventure Abroad. By MAURICE EVERARD.

688.—THE DEVIL-TREE OF EL DORADO.

A Breathless Tale of Amazing Happenings in the Wilds of British Guiana.

THE SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY.

303.—THE LOST EXPEDITION.

A Fascinating Tale of Mystery and Adventure in British Guiana, introducing GRANITE GRANT and MILLS JULIE.

304.—SOLVED IN THIRTY-SIX HOURS.

A Thrilling Story of Amazing Mystery and Detective Work. By the Author of "The Great Revue Mystery," etc., etc.

305.—THE MANSION OF SHADOWS.

A Most Absorbing Romance of Detective Adventure in England and Mexico.

306.—THE SHIELD OF THE LAW.

A Tale of Sexton Blake and Tinker in London and Paris. By the Author of "The Arctic Trail," etc., etc.

MYSTERY NOW ON SALE! ADVENTURE

raised his uninjured hand to caress it, and he discovered that there were tears on Marie's cheeks.

"Why, Marie, you are crying! Do not distress yourself, my dear girl."

But they were not wholly tears of distress that Marie shed. They were tears of thankfulness and relief. For she had found her father, who was so dear to her and who was still a man of honour. And nothing would give the girl keener pleasure than to nurse the professor through his illness.

The car was speeding rapidly along the deserted roads. But it was not until the small hours of the morning that it reached Wayland.

Mr. Calthorpe halted outside the police-station, and Dawlish and Donovan—the former having recovered consciousness—were given into custody. They would have to appear before the local magistrates, and would doubtless be remanded till the next assizes.

The car then sped on its way to St. Jim's.

Taggles, the porter, was considerably annoyed on being awakened at two in the morning by the violent clanging of the gate-bell. But he had to come down in his night attire and light a lantern and unlock the school gates.

"Wot I says is this 'ere—" began Taggles.

But Mr. Calthorpe did not wait to hear what Taggles had to say. He steered the car through the gateway and into the quadrangle.

The car slowed down, and willing hands lifted the professor out. He was set on his feet; but he was utterly unable to walk, and the juniors carried him round to the sanatorium.

It was not until the professor was put to bed in the sick-bay, and the electric light was switched on, that Marie noticed how weak and ill he really was. His sufferings had left their mark indelibly upon his features. He was utterly worn out, and those who had rescued him felt that they had done so in the nick of time.

The doctor was summoned from Rylcombe. Mr. Calthorpe, whose energy seemed inexhaustible, fetched the medical man in his car.

A careful examination of the patient caused the doctor to look very grave.

"The arm will soon mend," he said. "The injury is comparatively slight, and there is nothing to fear from that quarter. But the man is in a dreadfully weak state; indeed, he must have had wonderful fortitude to have held out so long."

"Give me instructions, doctor," said Marie Rivers, "and I will faithfully carry them out."

After attending to the injured arm, the doctor wrote out a number of instructions with regard to the treatment of the patient, and he promised to call again on his morning round.

Tom Merry & Co. and Talbot, realising there was nothing they could do, went off to bed. But sleep did not visit their eyes that night. Their brains were too active. Over and over again they recounted in their minds the thrilling adventures of that memorable night. And then their thoughts would turn to the professor, lying ill in the sick-bay, and they prayed fervently for his swift recovery.

As for Mr. Calthorpe, he did not even go to bed. He seated himself at the bedside of his friend and colleague and watched beside him through the night.

Marie worked untiringly. She prepared food for the professor, but he was too far gone to eat it. And then Marie realised that it was indeed a desperate case, and that her father was at death's door.

She tried to coax the professor to eat, but he was physically incapable of doing so.

Often during his imprisonment in the stuffy little attic the professor had pined for the time when he would be free to enjoy a good square meal. But now that he had his heart's desire he was unable to gratify it.

Marie administered brandy, and this revived the patient, but only for a time.

The professor's wan cheeks began to take on a hectic flush, and he started to talk in a strange and inconsequent way. He ceased to recognise his daughter, and his eyes were fixed upon the ceiling in a glassy stare.

The tears welled to Marie's eyes as she gazed tenderly down at him.

"He is delirious," murmured Mr. Calthorpe.

Marie nodded, and her deft hands rearranged the pillows, making them more comfortable.

The professor was talking wildly.

"I won't give in, Dawlish! I'll never tell you where the plunder is hidden! You can keep me here for a month—a year—but you shall never know! I will die first—I will die!"

The very words sounded like a death-knell, and the two listeners shivered.

Still the professor went on talking.

"I have solved the cipher! I have solved it! Do you

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 820.

hear? It relates to buried plunder—the proceeds of a lifetime of burglary. You shall not tamper with stolen property, Dawlish! I must hand this cipher over to Scotland Yard. What do you say? Will I join forces with you, and go halves with the plunder? Never! I'm not going back to the old game; I've finished with all that. Ah! So you think you can blackmail me, do you? Take that!"

The professor raised himself up in his bed. His clenched fist struck again and again at the empty air.

Striving hard to check her sobs, Marie gently coaxed her father to lie down. She laid his head on the pillows, and stroked his fevered brow.

It was a terrible time for the man and girl who were keeping that anxious vigil.

Not until the first grey gleams of dawn came stealing in at the windows did the delirium pass. Then the professor closed his eyes and sank into a profound slumber.

There was no rising-bell that morning. It soon became common knowledge that John Rivers was lying desperately ill in the santry.

A silence brooded over St. Jim's whilst the professor's life hung in the balance.

Morning lessons proceeded as usual. But there were several fellows whose thoughts were not concerned with Latin or Greek. Talbot was one. Tom Merry was another. They could not concentrate on lessons. They were thinking of the grim struggle which was taking place in the santry—the struggle with the Reaper whose name is Death.

From time to time, during that long and anxious day, news filtered through concerning the professor's condition. And each bulletin that was issued revealed the fact that the patient was in a highly critical state.

But the professor was a man of extraordinary vitality. In the old days, he used to make it a boast that he would never die in his bed, and he now fought tenaciously for his life. He told himself again and again that he must win through, for Marie's sake. If he went under, the girl would be heart-broken. There could be no question about that.

Marie tended her father with all the skill and energy at her command. She did not leave his side throughout the crisis. No nurse could have ministered to the professor with greater devotion; and it was this devotion, coupled with his own vitality, which saved the professor's life. For that evening he turned the corner.

The crisis was over, and the doctor announced that all danger was past.

St. Jim's received the news with joy and thankfulness, for John Rivers was a great favourite with the fellows, and they had all prayed earnestly for his recovery.

It was Talbot who first heard the glad news, and he lost no time in making it broadcast.

The shadow which had hung over the old school was lifted, and the professor had won through in his stern struggle for life. He was sleeping peacefully now; and there were smiling faces and words of cheer to greet him when he awoke.

Now that her father was out of danger, Marie retired to her own room for a much-needed rest. But she was back again in the sick bay before the professor awoke. And when at last he opened his eyes, it was to see her smiling down at him.

"Marie!" he murmured.

The girl slipped her hand in his.

"All's well, father," she said gently. "I can't tell you how glad I am that you have pulled through. Yesterday all was darkness and despair. To-day the sun is shining again, and the whole world seems to be humming for joy! But you must take things quietly, father; you must not talk too much—yet."

"But there is one thing I want to say," murmured the professor, with a smile, "and that is a thanksgiving."

Marie understood. She slipped on to her knees, and together they gave thanks to the Great Healer who had wrought miracles in time long past, and Whose touch has still its ancient power.

CHAPTER 10.

The Triumph of Justice!

"HOW'S the patient this morning?"

It was Mr. Calthorpe who asked the question. He had no need to ask it, really, for the professor's attitude spoke for itself. He was sitting up in bed, and making a hearty breakfast.

"I'm in splendid fettle, my dear Calthorpe," said the professor. "But Marie is an exacting nurse. She has ordered complete rest for another week, and she says I am not to get up on any account."

"I should think not!" said Mr. Calthorpe, with a smile. "Why, man, don't you realise that you've been at death's door? You can't expect to be frisking about like a young lamb directly afterwards."

"No; I suppose not. But it's rather a pity, because there's an important job of work to be done. However, as

it will be a week before I find my feet again, I must hand it over to you."

Mr. Calthorpe seated himself on the bed.

"You're going to send me on a treasure hunt?" he asked.

"Precisely! You remember that cipher I sent you?"

"Yes; I couldn't make head or tail of it."

"Well, I solved it, and found that it related to a vast hoard of plunder. A very clever old burglar, who died in prison a short while back, handed the cipher message to Dawlish. This plunder is the accumulation of a lifetime of burglary. Dawlish was very eager to get on the track of it. He threatened to keep me a prisoner until I divulged the whereabouts of the hoard. But he never got the information out of me, though he tried all he knew."

Mr. Calthorpe nodded.

"The way you held out was magnificent," he said. "If you care to tell me where the spoils are hidden I will go and unearth them; and Talbot and his friends shall accompany me. I have no doubt they will thoroughly enjoy a treasure hunt."

"Enjoy it! Why, they'll simply revel in it! The plunder is hidden in a disused well, at a place called Wymering. That is all I am able to tell you. But it gives you plenty to go upon."

"You wish me to locate the loot, and hand it over to the proper authorities?"

"That's it! It is all stolen property, and a great deal of it will probably be identified by the owners, and restored to them."

"Capital!" said Mr. Calthorpe. "We will start on the expedition at once."

Needless to state, Tom Merry & Co. were highly excited when they heard of the proposed quest.

Mr. Calthorpe had no difficulty in obtaining the Head's permission for the juniors to accompany him; and the Terrible Three and Talbot were envied by all their school-fellows when they were whirled away in the detective's car.

The village of Wymering was in Hampshire. It was a hamlet rather than a village. It consisted of a few scattered farmhouses and an ancient church, and a good many acres of rich pasture-land.

The old criminal could not have chosen a more convenient spot for the concealment of his spoils.

Tom Merry & Co. were in great spirits as they sped through the country lanes, and crossed the border from Sussex into Hampshire.

"Wonder how long it will take us to find the giddy treasure?" said Monty Lowther.

"Not long, I fancy," said Tom Merry. "It's buried in a disused well, according to Mr. Calthorpe; and an old well ought not to be difficult to find."

"We ought to have brought Herries' bulldog with us!" chuckled Lowther. "Old Towser would scent the treasure a mile off!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The party had lunch at an old-fashioned hotel, and it was not until the afternoon that they reached Wymering.

Mr. Calthorpe garaged the car in a spacious barn, by permission of an old farmer.

"Do you know if there is a disused well hereabouts?" asked the detective.

The farmer nodded.

"Oh, ah!" he said, speaking in the broad dialect of rural Hampshire. "There be an old well in 'Arrison's Medder. It ain't been used for nigh on an 'undred years."

"And where is Harrison's Meadow, pray?"

"It be about a mile from 'ere, as the crows flies."

"But we're not crows!" said Tom Merry, laughing. "Tell us exactly how we can get to this place."

The old farmer gave full directions.

"Which I ought jest to mention that the well's sitty-wated on private property," he added. "There's a big notice up—'Trespassers will be Persecuted.'"

"We'll risk the persecution," said Mr. Calthorpe, with a smile. "Does the owner of the well live here?"

"Well, zur, thereby 'angs a tale," said the farmer. "The well belongs to Ned 'Arrison, an' 'e disappeared from the district about a year ago. Some folks say as 'ow 'e's in prison."

"Indeed!"

"'E were a bit of a wrong 'un, I do believe. Nobody around 'ere seemed to like 'im. There used to be a time when the village youngsters played near the top o' the well, but Ned 'Arrison, 'e drove 'em off, an' 'ad the well closed in at the top with stout planks."

"This is very interesting," said Mr. Calthorpe. "By the way, how does one get to the bottom of the well?"

The farmer scratched his head thoughtfully.

"You'd 'ave to take a rope, zur," he said. "There's steps goin' down the side o' the well, but they don't begin till fifteen feet down. You'd 'ave to be lowered by a rope to get to the steps."

Mr. Calthorpe thanked the farmer for his information, and

slipped a couple of half-crowns into the old man's hand. Then he borrowed a coil of stout rope and various implements, and led the way towards the disused well in Harrison's meadow.

Three or four fields had to be crossed, and then the well came into view. It was situated in the centre of the ill-kept meadow, and long, rank grass grew around the top of it.

Mr. Calthorpe, with the willing assistance of the St. Jim's juniors, set to work to prise up the planks which covered the top of the well. They had been driven so firmly into the ground that it was no easy matter to remove them. But they were shifted at last, and the yawning aperture was revealed.

Tom Merry peered over the edge of the well. A musty odour came to his nostrils.

"Seems jolly deep," said Tom. "I can hardly see the bottom."

"The question is, who's going down to explore?" said Mr. Calthorpe. "I don't mind having a shot, but it's preferable that a lighter person go down. Then there will be no danger of the rope snapping."

Talbot volunteered at once for the job. The rope was securely fastened around his waist, and he was lowered into the well.

It was not a nice experience.

There was no water in the well, but the walls were damp and slimy. And the atmosphere was almost unbearable.

When he had descended about fifteen feet Talbot planted himself firmly on the topmost of the stone steps.

Step by step the junior descended to the depths.

It seemed an eternity before he reached the base of the well. And when he did reach it he found an accumulation of rubbish. There were sticks and stones, and tins and jars, and a miscellaneous collection of useless articles.

Talbot set to work to pile all the rubbish into one corner.

"Not much romance about this," he murmured. "I'm almost sorry I volunteered to come down. The odds against a treasure being hidden amongst this rubbish are about a thousand to one!"

But Talbot, though half stifled by the oppressive atmosphere, did not mean to be hauled up until he had thoroughly explored the bottom of the well.

He had brought his electric torch with him, and he needed it, for it was very dark down in the depths.

It was not until Talbot had cleared away all the riff-raff that he came upon what he sought. This was an oblong tin box, with a handle at each end.

Talbot lifted the box, and its contents clinked and rattled. "By Jove! This is the treasure, right enough!" he muttered. "Who ever would have dreamed of coming across it among all this rubbish?"

He unfastened the rope that was around his waist, and securely attached the tin box to the end of the coil. Then, raising his hands above his head, he gripped the rope tightly and gave a shout.

"Haul up, there!"

Those at the top of the well promptly complied with the command. And in due course Talbot found himself in the sunlight once more, taking in great gulps of the fresh, pure air.

There was a shout of excitement from the Terrible Three.

"You've found it, Talbot?"

"Yes. And I'm glad to be up here again, I can tell you!"

Mr. Calthorpe clapped the junior on the back.

"This is splendid!" he said. "I rather feared, when you first went down, that the professor must have misconstrued the cipher. It seemed impossible that the plunder should be concealed in such an extraordinary place."

The adventure was over now. And the detective took the juniors back to St. Jim's in his car. After which he conveyed the tin box to Scotland Yard, where it was opened in the presence of a number of officials. It was found to contain jewellery, money, banknotes, and valuable trinkets, and the plunder was assessed at several thousands of pounds.

Justice had triumphed, after all. In spite of all his scheming, Jim Dawlish had not been able to discover the stolen property—thanks to the plucky manner in which the professor had kept his secret.

Dawlish and Donovan came up for trial at the next assizes, and the judge, bearing in mind their past record, did not err on the side of leniency.

For kidnapping and blackmail Dawlish was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment, and Donovan got three years for being an accessory.

As for the professor, he was soon speeding along the high road to recovery. And when he was well enough to go back to his duties at Scotland Yard the St. Jim's juniors gave him a rousing send-off, in the shape of a bumper celebration. For they all agreed that John Rivers was one of those rare products for which Diogenes had searched in vain—a man!

THE END.

(Look out for a grand Fifth of November yarn next week, boys: "GLYN THE GUY-MAKER!" It's a splendid story, and will make you roar with laughter.)

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 820.

MacGregor has a Rude Awakening, and no Mistake!



CHAPTER 1.

A Strange Dream!

IT would be difficult to say whether you'd call Mr. Marcus MacGregor a Roman-Scotsman or a Highland-Roman, or whether a Christian name, which seemed to echo the splendour and glory of the city by the Tiber, should be coupled with a surname that fairly reeked of heather and haggis. However, it's not his christening which concerns us, so it doesn't matter very much.

His profession? Well—er—let us say a disappointed scribe. That sounds so much more respectable than a struggling author. And his address? A dusty, bed-sitting-room of small dimensions on the third floor of a shabby lodging-house not a hundred miles from the chilly, journalistic atmosphere of Fleet Street.

What! Yet another question? His pet subject? *Invasion!!!* Not only with a capital I, but with every other letter likewise, and a trio of arresting exclamation marks at the end to wind up with! Some would have called him an alarmist; but, then, some are so ignorant. Others would smile and shake their heads, tapping their brows mysteriously with their forefingers. But, as is well known, those who are afflicted with insanity themselves are ever the first to discover it in their neighbours.

What matters if the results of his labours had hitherto appeared in no other type than that of the tired-looking Remington on the table under the window? What matter, we repeat, when all his previous efforts were to be thrust into the background by the marvellous ingenuity of the work he was at present completing—“*ARE OUR DEFENCES EFFICIENT? IF NOT, WHY NOT?*”

What matter, yet once more, that Great Britain had passed through more than four years of warfare with the very enemy who had occupied Mr. MacGregor's mind for quite a slice of a century without a single German landing on English soil, save as a prisoner? There would have been an invasion—only we happened to win.

But when peace had been signed and the Hun tied up, Marcus thought it better to choose some other foe for his forthcoming invasion business. So, having scrubbed his brains and removed the last traces of Germany from their cells, he decided to resurrect the “Yellow Peril.” Yes, that would be excellent. We were bound to be invaded some day

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 820.

or other, and what was more likely than by the Eastern races? The subject had been discussed before. Many, indeed, still looked upon it as a very real danger, and undoubtedly it was one. China was waking up, and copying the ways of the “white devil” rather too accurately for safety.

Leaning back in his chair, Mr. MacGregor let his gaze rest absently on a large bluebottle creeping up the dusty window-pane, and slowly drawing nearer to a patch of brightness thrown by the setting sun. He had just made up his mind that the insect represented Great Britain groping for the light, when the sound of voices on the landing outside attracted his attention. One belonged to his landlady, but the other—a man's—he did not recognise.

However, a few minutes' intent listening told him that the topic of conversation was not interesting in the least—merely that the room adjoining his own, which had been vacant for weeks past, was now about to become tenanted.

Marcus bent forward again, and tapped away at his keyboard, until a dull pain between his shoulders and up the back of his neck informed him that even the desire to enlighten one's fellow-men has its limits.

Dusk by this time was closing in, so, replacing the dented, metal cover of his machine, he commenced preparing his frugal supper. This consumed, he presently retired between the sheets, having always believed that the “early-to-bed” proverb particularly applied to one engaged upon such important work as opening the eyes of a nation.

He dropped off to sleep, and dreamed, as he usually did, of marching legions, lumbering artillery, and bursting shells. But, accustomed though he was to it, to-night it seemed to be much more vivid than heretofore. It was extraordinary, marvellous, those whiplike words of command, the tramp, tramp, tramp of moving feet, the rattle of accoutrements; and then the coping-stone of it all fell into position. Marcus suddenly awoke, **BUT THE DREAM SEEMED TO CONTINUE!**

The room was full of sound; the very bedstead shook with the vibration of

stamping feet! *WHAT* was it? *WHERE* was it? On the stairs? On the landing, or—Great Bismarck! *NO! IT WAS IN THE NEXT ROOM!*

Unable to stand the din, Marcus leaped out of bed, and hammered on the dividing wall. But there was no reply; and the result was the same when his bruised knuckles were reinforced by one of his boots.

Suddenly, however, the noise ceased, to be followed by the opening and closing of a door many times, and the sound of feet descending the stairs. Marcus cautiously stepped out on the landing, and, tiptoeing to the banisters, peered down into the void; but, save for a distant shuffle and the bang of the street door, he could see or hear nothing.

CHAPTER 2.

The Rude Awakening!

SHIVERING, he crawled back to bed, but was up early next morning, fully resolved to see the inside of the adjoining room. He stole quietly forth and turned the handle of the mystic door, but it was locked; and when he glued his eyes to the keyhole, to his intense disgust he found that something had been plugged into the other end.

In aggrieved accents he mentioned the occurrence to his landlady, but got little satisfaction from that quarter. Mrs. Miggs was one of those people who talk about their neighbours during the day and attend missionary meetings for the good of benighted cannibals in the evening. She was a woman of opposites, in short, and though she dearly loved to busy herself with other people's affairs, she was ever first to discourage such a practice in anyone else.

Anyway, when Mrs. Miggs had listened patiently to what Mr. MacGregor had to say, she replied, speaking somewhat after the manner of a scriptural passage:

“Them as ‘as bits o’ paper to scribble on, let ‘em scribble; but poke not their long noses into other folks’ doin’s!”

Furthermore, she stated that she had obtained a very good price for the room. The gentleman who had engaged it had paid cash down—*LIKE A GENTLEMAN*—which remark Marcus, in the guiltiness of his soul, interpreted as a gentle hint that his own rent was some three weeks overdue.

The two succeeding nights passed off

ANSWERS
EVERY MONDAY...PRICE 2:

in precisely the same manner, the din in the next room beginning just after Mr. MacGregor had retired to roost, and continuing for a solid hour at least.

But the next night broke all records—or seemed to, for he was suffering from a bad neuralgia attack, and the noise made him feel as though the very roof of his head was being lifted off.

The following morning, another expedition to the neighbouring keyhole again proving fruitless, Marcus returned to his own room and commenced searching for a weak spot in the dividing wall, which was merely lath and plaster. Opening the large blade of his pocket-knife, he probed here and there until, at last, he found what he wanted.

In a short time he was gazing into the chamber of mystery, but all he could see were bare walls, a bare floor, and two dirty windows looking out on the lane-way at the back.

"Confound!" he muttered disappointedly. "Nothing there! But wait, my beauties—wait till to-night, and I'll know all about you, or my initials aren't 'M. M.'!"

About the same hour that night the row commenced as usual. Mr. MacGregor sat up and listened. Somebody was making a speech—and a stirring speech, too, it appeared to be.

He slipped out of bed, and stepping softly to his spyhole, peered through. Then he uttered a gasp of horror.

For the farther wall of the room was lined with what were, apparently, Chinese troops. Those yellowish faces and strange uniforms certainly couldn't be British! An officer stood in the foreground, addressing them in rousing tones and gesticulating wildly with his hands. As a matter of fact he was speaking in English—not Chinese—though, partly because of the intervention of the wall and partly on account of Mr. MacGregor's stupefaction, he might have been spouting Choctaw so far as Marcus was concerned. It was not what he heard, but what he saw that caused the amazed Marcus' jaw to drop and the eye that was glued to the spyhole to grow as big as a small saucer, whilst a strangely uncomfortable feeling commenced to irritate every vertebra of his spine.

What was this panorama which was unfolding itself before his astonished gaze? What could be the meaning of—A-a-ah! The clouds of doubt were suddenly riven by the light of understanding. The Yellow Peril! It had blossomed from a dream to reality at last! Britain was invaded by the East, and this was evidently one of many secret meetings which were being held in various parts of London. For months past the enemy must have been arriving in small numbers in the metropolis, where uniforms and arms had been secreted by agents, and—Good heavens! Those bodies would combine and overwhelm the city at a given signal. The Chinese people were as thick as sand-grains on the shore—

A great sense of patriotism possessed Marcus. It was so great, indeed, that he didn't trouble about an excess of clothing; but, clad only in a dressing-gown, a pair of slippers, and a red night-cap, he softly opened his door and crept down the stairs and out into the street.

The air was bitterly cold, but his patriotic fire amply counteracted that as he shuffled off in the direction of the police-station round the corner.

The inspector in charge nearly dropped off his stool at the sight of the apparition which suddenly burst in upon him.

"Wot the—?" he spluttered, and then stopped stupidly.

"Man, man, waste no words!" gasped the nightcapped vision. "The enemy is within our gates! Collect as many men as you can and follow me! We should have the military—"

"Rubbish!" said the officer, smiling. "Fool!" roared Marcus. "Do you not understand? We are invaded! The Yellow Peril—"

"Meanin' a banana-skin, o' course?" The inspector was grinning sceptically now. "Look 'ere, old chap! Colney 'Atch ain't so very far away, ye know!" Mr. MacGregor danced about in despair.

"Quick, man! For the sake of your wives and little one!" he gabbled, getting a trifle mixed. "I implore you to act at once!"

The inspector deliberately removed his cap and scratched his head, gazing at the animated and curiously garbed object all the while.

"They say it's best to humour 'em, or they're apt to get dangerous!" he muttered to himself. Then, aloud: "All right, sir! I'll be with ye in two ticks! Tom! Jack!"

Two burly constables entered the office, and the strangely assorted quartet set out for the lodging-house.

They stole up the stairs and followed Mr. MacGregor into his room. The commotion was still in full swing as the inspector gazed through the little spyhole, and a startled gasp of amazement burst from his lips. There certainly were foreign soldiers there—no doubt whatever about that! He turned quickly.

"Jack," he whispered, his voice not quite steady, "slip back to the station an' collect every mother's son ye can find! Call 'em off the beats if necessary! Then come back 'ere and whistle

when ye've got the 'ouse surrounded! This is serious—dooood serious!"

When Jack had departed on his errand the inspector, Mr. MacGregor, and the remaining constable quietly took their stand outside the chamber of horrors. The rattle of accoutrements, the tramping of feet, and so forth, still continued unchecked. Then:

Pho-c-e-e-p!

The sound of a police-whistle—the prearranged signal—came up from the street, and the inspector raised his fist, hammering lustily on the door.

"Open, in the name of the law!" As though by magic, the noise ceased. Then came the sound of bolts being drawn. The door was flung open and a tall man advanced. Between the fingers of one hand a cigarette smouldered, whilst those of the other gripped a thick sheaf of papers.

"What is the meaning of this?" he inquired, raising his eyebrows slightly.

"Meanin'?" roared the inspector. "Meanin'?" He glanced past the stranger towards the crowd of soldiery beyond. "Surrender an' come quietly—you an' them other furrin swabs! The 'ouse is surrounded!"

"Indeed!" The other calmly twirled his drooping moustache. "And why, may I ask?"

"Why?" spluttered the officer. "W-why?" stammered Mr. Marcus MacGregor.

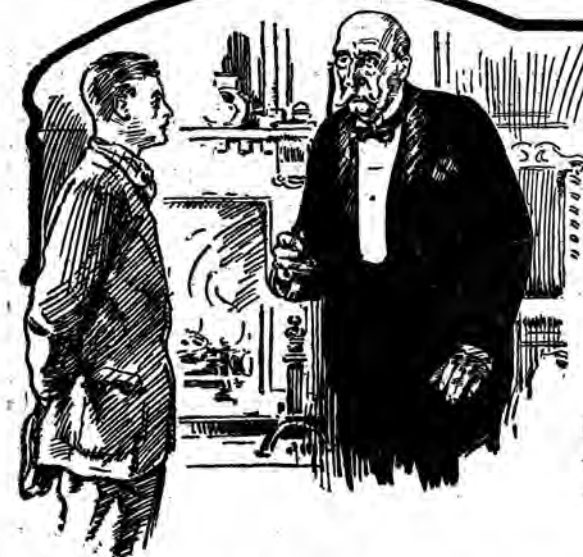
The constable was too astounded to utter even that single monosyllable.

Meanwhile, the man's bored look had slowly changed to one of amusement. He drew out his card-case and handed a slip of pasteboard to the dumbfounded inspector, who, looking down, read:

(Continued on page 26.)



The farther wall of the room was lined with Chinese troops, and an officer stood in the foreground addressing them in rousing tones and gesticulating wildly with his hands.

A Gripping Yarn of the Footer Field!Start Reading It To-day!

THE TRIERS

BY
JACK CRICHTON



Fate deals hardly with Jack Morton, yet he sets to work to build up a team of keen triers who will show Boltwich what real football is like!

A Straight Left!

JACK MORTON, Logan, and Stevens walked slowly and thoughtfully away from the common on which the rough-and-ready game with the Hurricanes had taken place.

They were not very much perturbed by what George Clifton had said to them, although it made them hate him all the more; but they were serious enough, for, quite apart from the football aspect of the situation, here were three hardy young fellows out of work, and all through the evil disposition of "this one man."

"He's a cheery proposition, I must say!" exclaimed Steve Logan, as they entered the town; "but we'll be even with him yet, boys, and we can't do better than to get ahead with this new team!"

"In the meantime," quoth Jack Morton, "we have a slight matter concerning bread-and-butter to cope with!"

The other two laughed at his way of putting it, but it was all serious enough.

"As for me," said Ronnie Stevens, after a little, "I've got my uncle, and I dare say he'll be able to fix me up in his building yard. It's you two I'm worrying about. Why not go and see Harry Turner? He's a sport!"

"What!" exclaimed Jack. "Harry Turner, the boxer?"

Ronnie nodded quickly.

"He's a real good sport, and I know he doesn't like George Clifton much, for he used to give Clifton some lessons in the gentle art once, and Clifton behaved like a kid when Harry mixed it a bit. He's doing well, they say, with that motor business of his, and he might take you two fellows on. And, I say, he's not a bad goalie, either!"

"That he isn't!" exclaimed Steve Logan seriously. "If he wasn't so taken up with his prize-fighting he could have played for Boltwich long ago. He's a very good goalie!"

"He's fighting Baby Bolton soon, isn't he?" asked Jack, thinking hard.

Ronnie nodded again.

"Yes. Think he's foolish to do that. The Babe is real class, and a brute of a fellow, and I'm afraid he will knock the

dickens out of Harry, worse luck, for I hate that fellow Bolton, a great hulking brute, who would knock a girl about as soon as a man. But there is no stopping Harry. He's mad on this scrapping game, and he's fighting the Babe for fifty pounds aside at the baths, Saturday week!"

They had reached Jack's home and had stopped of one accord.

"Well," said Jack, "I won't ask you fellows to come in, for the old mother isn't very fit, but it's a bet then—we start from now to get even with George Clifton. It's a pact, eh?"

On that they shook hands again.

"We'll raise a team to knock stuffing out of his club," said Steve Logan, "and we'll show him up before all Boltwich before we have done. And to-morrow we'll go and see whether Harry Turner will join us as goalie; and perhaps we'll get a chance of seeing whether he can offer us a job. Will you come along, Ronnie?"

"No, you two fellows go yourselves. I'm certain about my uncle. He's always wanted me to go and work for him. Didn't like the idea of me being a funkey. You two go along, and good luck to you."

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE!

For the sake of his invalid mother, Jack Morton, a lad of seventeen, calls upon his grandfather, Sir Jasper Clifton, for aid. It was by no means a pleasant undertaking for Jack, for his mother, much against her father's wishes, had married a worker in Sir Jasper's mill, who was now dead. Sir Jasper, however, is taken up with the lad straight away, saying that he will alter his will and make him co-heir with George Clifton, another grandson, and Jack's cousin, and whose great interest in life is the Boltwich Football Club. In high spirits, Jack gives up his old job to take up work at Clifton's. But Sir Jasper dies that night. Thinking only of his mother, Jack goes to George Clifton, but his appeal proves futile, Clifton telling him that the will is unaltered, and that he is not wanted. Jack's anger is aroused, and, meeting Ronnie Stevens, whom George Clifton had deemed it wise to sack, the two lads, former players of Boltwich F.C., determine to fight Clifton.

"We'll get a team that won't be beat," said Stevens, "and call them the Triers. Then we'll play against Clifton's eleven!"

Clifton learns of the lads' intentions, and, appearing upon the scene during a match, orders the lads off the private playing-pitch. (Now read on.)

So they shook hands and parted, and Jack went in to reassure his old mother about the situation.

But he wasn't too bright himself. The position was serious enough in all truth. It was all very well to talk about forming a club to beat Boltwich, and it was equally very fine and large to dream of humbling George Clifton; but they were up against a stiff proposition, and where the end of it would come he had no idea. Still, it was with grim determination that he turned in that night, and with like determination that he went down into the town early next morning to try to find Harry Turner.

He knew Harry only slightly, but had heard quite a lot about him. He was a splendid young fellow, and clever with the gloves. He owned a comfortable little motor business, which he ran very well when he wasn't fighting someone. He was a really remarkable young goalkeeper, except that he was not quite certain to turn up for a game, if there was a fisticuffs match within a hundred miles of Boltwich!

But when he reached the garage where he hoped to have found Harry, he was received with a startling piece of news.

"He was in a bit of a smash yesterday," said one of the lads working in the garage, "and he hasn't turned up yet. You might find him round at his place!"

Jack started.

"Bad smash?" he asked.

The lad grinned.

"Not so bad," he explained; "but he's sprained his wrist pretty badly, and you can imagine how he likes that, with this fight with the Babe coming off so soon."

"Won't be able to tackle him, eh?" asked Jack.

The lad shook his head quickly.

"Goodness knows!" he said. "You can't tell with Harry Turner. He swears he'll fight, even if he has to fight with one hand. There is more in it than meets the eye, you know, between Harry Turner and the Babe!"

Jack showed his surprise.

"Oh?"

"Yes; they've had it in for one another for years. Not quite certain what it was, but I think the Babe has owed Harry a grudge ever since they were kids. You know the sort of brute the Babe is."

"Sure thing!"

"Well, I know it'll be some fight if

they do meet, though how Harry thinks he's going to stand up against a professional scrapper like the Babe gets me. Anyhow, maybe you'll find Harry round at his place. He's probably shadow boxing with one fist by this time!"

Jack thanked the lad and turned away. He had hoped that Steve would be here by this time; but there was no sign of him, and he was forced to go along by himself. A surprise was waiting for him.

He rounded a corner, towards Harry Turner's house, in the middle of the town, and there he saw a small crowd of people, looking on at a couple of young fellows who were exchanging high words.

Above the row Jack heard the strident voice of Babe Bolton. He quickened his pace and reached the scene of the excitement.

To his surprise he saw Harry Turner facing the professional boxer. He was as pale as death, and one arm was in a sling. A good-looking young fellow was Turner, but now he was biting his lip, as though it was all that he could do to keep his temper under the vile insults the cowardly Babe was hurling at him.

"Sprained wrist!" the latter was shouting. "I like that! I knew you'd never turn up. You wouldn't fight me, Harry Turner, not even if you were behind a machine gun!"

And the crowd, which seemed to be composed mostly of bullies friendly to the Babe, laughed at the words.

Jack went closer, and saw that Harry was alone.

"I always knew you were a good plucked 'un, Babe," said Harry quietly. "Always fond of beating up women and kids, and you're a perfect hero with that poor mongrel of yours."

"You—you—" The Babe had moved forward. He was livid with rage, for on several occasions

he had been taken to the local police-court on account of his brutality to a wretched mongrel, whose only beauty was a pathetic devotion towards the hand that thrashed it so unmercifully.

Now he raised his great fist and shook it fiercely in his rival's face.

"You wait till you've got that fist of yours out of that there sling," he said, "and then—then I'll show you!"

Turner said nothing. He realised that it is not very sporting for a disabled man to trade on his disablement, and so he tried to keep his temper.

But in another moment the Babe had gone too far. Stepping back, with a wicked leer, he spat into Harry's face.

With a roar of fury, Harry struck out; but, of course, he was almost helpless, and before anyone could stop him the Babe had flung round a terrific right to the jaw, and Harry fell back, staggering, to the ground.

The Babe's cronies, standing about, laughed.

Jack jumped forward in a second. He was shivering with disgust, and without ado he shouldered his way through the crowd and stood over the fallen lad.

"You cur!" he said, facing the Babe.

For a moment there was absolute silence. People didn't go about Boltwich calling the Babe a cur. It was neither good for one's health nor complexion. And here was a stalwart lad, if you please, but only a lad in comparison to the prize-fighter, looking him in the eye and calling him that to his face.

The Babe licked his lips. He had tasted blood now, and he wanted more. "And who may you be?" he hissed.

"My name's Jack Morton," the lad said, and pushed Harry Turner back as that young man, now on his feet, tried to restrain him, "and I repeat that you

are a hulking beast, and not fit to mix with decent folk!"

"Ughhhh!" exclaimed the Babe, and once again that vicious right came circling round.

Now, Jack was no pre, but he knew how to mix it a bit; and, what was more, he used his eyes and his common-sense, and had seen how the Babe left himself open when he hit at Harry.

As the bully's right came round he ducked like lightning, and, jumping in, landed with all his strength over the Babe's heart.

The brute staggered back, with a grunt. In another moment he would have recovered himself, and the fight would have been over; but Jack was not giving him that other moment. Even as the Babe staggered momentarily, his left flashed out and reached the Babe's jaw while he was still unbalanced.

It was a beauty, given with all the vigour at Jack's command and timed to a second. It was a flash of genius. Probably never again in his life would Jack Morton execute such a blow; but sufficient to the day was the blow, and in another moment Babe Bolton was measuring his length upon the Boltwich kerb, while a gasp of amazement went up from the crowd.

Even as the Babe fell, things looked nasty. His friends were gathered round him, and now one of them rushed at Jack. But help was at hand in the bulky form of a constable, and in a very few moments the crowd had disappeared, and the Babe stood alone in the hands of the law.

"I say," exclaimed Harry Turner, growing very white, "let him go, constable! We—we don't want anything like this! We've settled our account with him!"



As the Babe staggered momentarily Jack Morton's left flashed out and caught the bully a stinging blow on the point of the jaw, sending him toppling backwards to measure his length upon the Boltwich kerb.

Dazed, the Babe fought for his freedom, but the constable held on to him easily enough now.

"Oh, I'll let him go!" he said. "I only wanted to see if he wanted any more from this young chap! Great, hulking brute, you are, aren't you?"

He sent the Babe, vowing vengeance, about his business.

Jack turned to Harry.

"Sorry I wasn't sooner, Harry!" he said. "I was coming to see you, but I couldn't stop the brute in time!"

Turner put out his uninjured hand.

"My dear chap," he said, "you were splendid! I've never seen a left like that in my life!" He grinned, his own cut and bruised face quite forgotten. "Didn't know you could use your mitts like that, Morton! You must have a go with me one day!"

Jack grinned.

"Oh, it was the biggest fluke in the world!" he explained. "I don't want any goes with you, or any with the Babe—"

"He won't forget you!" said Turner rather seriously. "You will have to keep a sharp eye on him, and no mistake, now! I'm sorry you've run yourself in for the brute's hatred! He's a nasty piece of work!"

Jack shook his head.

"Oh, that's all right!" he said. "I will look after myself!"

Turner regarded him curiously.

"Didn't you just say that you were coming to see me? What for? Anything I can do for you?"

Jack smiled at the question. There was, indeed, a great deal that the other could do for him.

"Yes, there is," he said; and thereupon he started in and told Turner the whole story.

He did not rub it in too much against George Clifton. In the first place, that didn't seem very sporting; and, in the second, he didn't know how Harry Turner thought of his cousin. But he told how bad had been his luck, and inquired as to whether there was any chance of a job.

Turner gave a quick answer, holding out his undamaged hand like the good fellow he was.

"Of course," he said, "both you and Steve Logan can come along to my place if you like. I can fix you up. And I'll certainly come and keep goal for your side. But I can't promise to turn out just yet awhile."

"No, of course not!" said Jack, delighted and very grateful. "You are a real sport, Turner, and I thank you very much! I don't think you'll ever regret helping us. But I would be an ass if I expected you to turn out as goalkeeper for us with a wrist like that!"

Harry Turner laughed.

"It's not my wrist," he said.

"Eh?"

"It's my fight with Babe Bolton on Saturday week!"

Jack gave a start, and stared at Harry as though he had suddenly taken leave of his senses.

"Your fight with the Babe!" he cried.

"Are you mad? You'll never be able to fight him with your hand damaged like that!"

A quiet smile came into young Turner's face, and he shook his other fist in the direction of the departed boxer.

"I am going to fight him—or die!" he exclaimed. "I'm off now to the doctor to have it massaged, and I assure you that on Saturday week I'm going to get into the ring against the Babe, and I am going to put up the fight of my life! Of course, it is rather cheek of

me to think I can lick him, but I am going to show him that I am not afraid of him—great, hulking brute that he is! I say, Morton, perhaps you'll come along one day and have a few rounds with me before the fight?"

Jack nodded in sheer admiration.

"You bet I will, Turner! And jolly good luck to you! I think we are going to be some combination before we finish! You've simply got to thrash the Babe—and I'm going to thrash that cousin of mine before I am done with him!"

"That's a bargain, then?" smiled Harry Turner.

"Yes!" answered Jack. "Rather!"

Birds of a Feather!

GEORGE CLIFTON nodded pleasantly as he walked into the musty office of Messrs. Brown & Clifton, solicitors.

He was glad to find young Jeff Clifton, the junior partner of the firm, alone, for Clifton was by way of being a pal of his, and was certainly a person of his own kidney. Indeed, they were often called the "two Clifs," and not in any very pleasant sense.

Old Mr. Brown, the head of the firm, who had been Sir Jasper's solicitor, was a man of quite a different sort, and George Clifton never saw him if he could help it.

"Hallo, Clifton!" cried George. "I was just passing, and thought I'd look in! Any news about the probate?"

Clifton rose and shook hands with George, while he gave him a chair and a cigarette. He was a thin, blonde young man, rather sportingly dressed, affecting checks in his clothes and loud colours in his socks and ties. But there was a certain thin shrewdness about his face and eyes which took away from him any appearance of being a fool.

"Oh, it's going on like all these things, Clifton," he said. "We are hurrying it as much as we can, but, of course, with such a big property it all takes time. Any trouble?"

George blew out a great cloud of smoke as he shook his head.

"No, no, no!" he exclaimed. "None at all. I was just passing, and thought I'd look in for a chat. By the way, seen the local rag this morning?"

"The 'Journal'?"

"Yes."

"Yes, I've seen it. Why?"

"That fellow Babe Bolton seems to have kicked up a bit of a scene in the street yesterday morning, didn't he? Aren't you backing him next week?"

Jeff Clifton gave a disgusted grunt.

"Yes, I am, the silly fool! He makes me sick. Quite apart from making himself unpopular by knocking a damaged man about, like a great bully, he's getting himself in worse and worse with the police. I'm getting fed up with him. I shall see him through this fight, and then I shall wash my hands of him. Of course, it was bad luck that a reporter chap should have seen the little affair with Turner and this young Jack Morton. But I am not going to be mixed up with Bolton any more. Never got a penny to bless himself with!"

"What?" asked Clifton, with a suspicious quickness. "I should have thought that he made a lot at this boxing game. He's quite hot stuff, isn't he?"

The young solicitor answered with another disgusted nod.

"Oh, yes!" he said. "He's real good when he trains and tries. But he has never got a bean to bless himself with. Head over heels in debt all the time.

He's a bad lot, and I'm finished with him! He'd sell his soul for a five-pound note!"

George Clifton rose, knocking the ash from the end of his cigarette. He was doing his best to appear quite unconcerned.

"Well, I must get along. I only looked in to hear about the probate. Tell old Brown to get a move on. I'll probably come along to the fight on Saturday week. I hear that this fellow Turner is going to fight after all. Any chance?"

Clifton went to the office door with him, answering:

"Not an earthly! Silly idiot to take him on. Yes, come along. I'll get you a ring-side seat, eh?"

"Yes, thanks! I'll try to come. Cheerio!"

"So long!"

George Clifton passed out into the street, and walked along slowly, as though idly thinking of pleasant things. But once he was out of the sight of the solicitors' office he paused for a moment, and thought very hard. He had taken a sudden resolution, and even if it were a dangerous one, he was determined to carry it out.

He hastened towards his home, walking, instead of going back to the mills to find his car, keeping a sharp look out, as though looking for someone.

He was not disappointed.

He had almost reached his house when he saw a couple of figures striding along the road at a great pace. They were the Babe and his trainer.

As they came up to Clifton he stopped them with a pleasant word.

"How goes it?" he asked. And Babe Bolton flushed, rather pleased, for, since the death of Sir Jasper, George Clifton was, of course, the big noise in Boltwich. And the Babe hadn't, until this moment, realised that he himself was known to such an important person.

"Fine, thank you, sir!" he said.

"Going to knock the stuffing out of young Turner?" asked Clifton.

The Babe grinned rather self-consciously. He had made himself mighty unpopular by his attack on Harry Turner in the street. Somehow, the story of the affray had got into the local Press, which was never kind to the Babe. And it had not omitted to make it very clear that an unknown young fellow, named Jack Morton, had knocked the Babe flying. So now he wasn't quite sure how George Clifton meant his remarks.

"Oughter!" he muttered.

Clifton nodded quickly.

"Of course you ought to, Bolton," he said. "The fact of the matter is, you ought not to be matched against amateur stuff like this. You want the right man behind you, and you could make money. Why don't you come and have a talk with me one day?"

The Babe flushed. He could scarcely believe his ears. The fact of the matter was that he had so disgusted his various backers, promoters, trainers, and friends, that he had scarcely anyone who would help him in his fights now, and he had to look around as best he could for fights where he could, more often than not, back himself.

"I'd like to, sir!" he said eagerly.

"All I want is someone with the brass, and a good business head, to back me, and I could make a heap of cash for my camp. I can use these all right"—he put up two terrific fists—"but, of course, a chap like me, what hasn't had a lot of schooling, needs some smart fellow behind him to look after the dibs."

George Clifton glanced at his watch, as though he were in a hurry.

"All right!" he said. "You come and have a talk with me—er—what about this evening?"

He glanced at the Babe.

"Sure, sir!" said the boxer, more and more delighted, "if that would be all serene for you?"

"Yes," said Clifton. "But look here, Bolton. I don't want any talking until I've made up my mind. I am a man who likes to keep his own counsel."

The Babe closed one eye.

"I'm as mum as the grave, sir," he said, which was true, for he was of such a suspicious nature that he never talked much. "You trust me, sir! Where shall I come?"

George Clifton considered quickly, and then nodded.

"Know the Three Stars along this road?"

The Babe grinned.

"Sure, sir! Bill Heston's house. He's a pal of mine!"

He was also a pal of George Clifton's, being the local bookie, and a highly reputable character. But George said nothing about this. He could trust Heston, and perhaps he might be of use later on.

"Well," he said, "meet me there at nine o'clock this evening, and we'll have a quiet chat about things. I don't like to see a Boltwich boy like you wasting his chances. But mind you, the first time I hear you talking about me being behind you I quit! Now Sir Jasper is dead I have a big position in Boltwich, and I may not want people to know I'm backing you."

So they parted, the Babe striding off at a terrific pace, highly elated, and George Clifton entering the long avenue towards his home, with a quiet smile of self-satisfaction on his handsome, evil face.

The Babe was waiting for him in the parlour of the Three Stars when he arrived that evening. A word had been sent down to Bill Heston, and the Babe had been shown into the cosy, private room, and was reading the evening paper

at his comfort when George Clifton, very epic and span, in his dinner-jacket, and with a long cigar, followed by Bill Heston, massive, florid, and grinning, came into the room.

They shook hands.

"Suppose I can't ask you to have anything, Bolton?" said George.

The Babe grinned.

"Well, sir," he said, "properly speaking, I oughtn't to take anything. But this isn't a real fight. I could lick him with one hand, and I think just one glass of Mr. Heston's ale wouldn't do me any harm."

George raised his brows as though he did not approve of such a procedure, and then ordered the drink, together with a whisky-and-soda for himself. They waited until the drinks arrived, and then sat back comfortably, George watching the boxer through his cigar smoke.

"Well," he began, "here we are, and we can talk-business now. By the way, Bolton, what truth was there in that story in the 'Journal' this morning about you?"

The Babe flushed furiously. He had been hoping all the afternoon that Mr. Clifton had not seen the thing. It was not the sort of thing that a gentleman in Mr. Clifton's position was likely to care about.

"Oh, that!" he said, but not being very ready of tongue, had not a story ready.

"What's this about some young fellow named Morton having a go at you, and knocking you down?" questioned Clifton. A snarl came to the Babe's lips.

"He caught me when I wasn't looking!" he cried fiercely. "Anyone can knock a bloke down like that, Mr. Clifton. Wait till I get him!"

George raised his brows.

"I'm not surprised," he said—"not at all surprised! I know something about that young man. He's a bad egg! I should be glad to hear you'd given him a sound hiding, Bolton. He needs it. A cowardly thing to hit you when you were not looking!"

For just one moment the Babe suspected that the other was being sarcastic. His brain was not very quick, but the thought came to him that any decent-minded fellow would regard his own attack on Harry Turner as being the action of a real cur. But suddenly, as he looked at George Clifton, he realised that there was evidently more in this meeting than he had understood, and that the man opposite him evidently meant what he said about Jack Morton.

"Well," he exclaimed, "I haven't got much time now, training for the fight, and I can't take any risks, but one day I shall get hold of Master Morton, and then—what-ho!"

"I wish you would, Bolton!"

George had not meant to put his cards quite so plainly on the table, and even as he spoke he almost regretted it. He was putting himself into this fellow's hands. But, still, he had been on the way of doing that sort of thing for years now, and it would have come about sooner or later in any case. Besides, he had the cash. He could pay, and he had not the slightest doubt in the world that Bolton would serve the man who paid best.

"Wish I would?" said the Babe, under his breath.

"Yes," Clifton leaned across the table, half smiling. "You see, Bolton, I'm in a very peculiar position. I own half Boltwich now, and I have to mind my p's and q's, as it were. I can't go about knocking people down."

"No, sir—no!"

"It wouldn't do, in my position," George went on quickly; "but this young dog has behaved very badly to—a lady friend of mine, and I want him soundly thrashed! Get me?"

The Babe grinned.

"Don't you worry, sir," he said. "When I meet him, I'll give him one for myself, as well as you!"

"Yes, he's a cheeky young dog. I understand he's trying to start a rival

YOURS for 6d.
AN EXCEPTIONAL OPPORTUNITY.
Special Offer of—
High-Grade Registered Professional Italian Model.
ACCORDEON
Superfine Solo Instrument; handsome Polished Cabinet, with 12-fold Metal-bound Bellows; 10 Keys and 4 Bass Chords. This instrument is the acme of perfection in construction, and a magnificent example of carefully studied mechanical detail, unequalled for excellence of tone and power. 6d. Deposit and 1/- postage only is required, and we will dispatch this superb Accordion to your address. If entirely to your satisfaction, balance is payable 2/- within 7 days, and 3/- monthly until 25/6 is paid—or complete balance within 7 days 21/6, making Cash Price 22/- only.
J. A. DAVIS & CO. (Dept. 88), 26, DENMARK HILL, CAMBERWELL, LONDON, S.E. 5.

HEIGHT INCREASED 5/- Complete Course.
IN 30 DAYS.
No Appliances. No Drugs. No Dieting. The Melvin Strong System NEVER FAILS. Full particulars and Testimonials, stamp—Melvin Strong, Ltd. (Dept. 8.), 10, Ludgate Hill, London, Eng.

YOURS for 6d.
This handsome full-sized Gent's Lever Watch sent upon receipt of 6d. After approval send 1/- more, the balance may then be paid by 6 monthly instalments of 2/- each. Guaranteed 5 years. Chain free with every watch. Ladies' or Gent's Wrist Watches in stock. Cash returned in full if dissatisfied.
ON PLACE TERMS. Send 6d. now to—
SIMPSONS (BRIGHTON) Ltd. (Dept. 122)
94, Queen's Road, Brighton, Sussex.

By Appointment to H.M. Queen Alexandra.
You can never have too much of
SHARP'S SUPER-KREEM TOFFEE

WIRELESS
EFFICIENCY WITH ECONOMY. Crystal Detectors, 11d.; Permanite, 1/-; Hertzite, 1/-; Variometers, 300-600 metres, 4/6; Milled Knobs, 3d.; Complete Cat. 3d. stamps.—Dept. A, UNITED ELECTRO SERVICE CO. 42, St. Mark's Road, LONDON, W. 10.
35-ft. EXCITING FILM, 9d.—Each Film in neat tin box with our BIG BARGAIN LISTS. Complete Cinema Outfits from 4/9 (post 6d.).—A. E. MAXWELL, George Street, HASTINGS.

team to Boltwich. Heard anything about it?"

The Babe started. "Yes, sir," he said. "I did hear something about it. Didn't take much notice. Seemed too foolish. Something about Steve Logan—"

"Yes, I had to sack him," George Clifton went on quickly, "for sheer impertinence. They've got Logan and a fellow named Stevens—"

"What! Ronnie Stevens, who plays half-back?" asked the Babe.

"Yes; and there is a rumour in the town to-night that Harry Turner is going to keep goal for them!"

"Eh?"

"Your opponent of next Saturday week, Bolton!"

"Well, sir, there won't be much of him left after the fight, but there's no denying that if that chap cared to take up Soccer, instead of thinking he could box, he might keep goal for England! They've got the making of a team there—eh?"

Clifton brought his fist down on the table with a curse.

"My dear man," he said, "four players don't make a team! But I don't want anything to come of this. Get me? I—I have reasons of my own. I need not go into them. Here"—he suddenly put his hand into his pocket, and pulled out a pocket-book, from which he took a crisp Bank of England note—"here's something for your training expenses!"

The Babe took the note with a greedy hand, and stared at it dumbfounded.

"Fifty jimmies!" he exclaimed. "Fifty quid, sir! What for?"

Clifton waved a generous hand.

"My dear fellow," he said, "I'm interested in you. I want you to beat Turner. You understand I can't very well promise to back you and put good money behind you until you've beaten a novice like Turner."

"You're a real gentleman!" said the Babe, in honest admiration, although, perhaps, it was not exactly a compliment to be called a gentleman by Bolton.

Clifton held out a hand.

"Well, now I must get back home. I have some letters to write. And good luck to you!" he went to the door, and then turned. "I'd like to hear of you making a mess of young Morton before long!"

The Babe started, and then grinned.

"Yes, sure!"

"He's the moving spirit of this new team, and without him they'll come to nothing. I don't care how much you knock him about," he said, in a low voice, "and you can depend upon me that you'll have me and all my money behind you, Bolton!"

The Babe was too surprised to speak, but he nodded. He understood. George Clifton wanted Jack Morton badly smashed up! He understood!

"I get you, sir!" he said, and stood staring after his new friend, until his ugly face broke into a cheerful grin, and, feeling the fifty-pound note in his great fist, he sank back into his seat, and called for another drink.

Their First Match!

"WELL," said Jack Morton, looking round the small group of young fellows, who stood about him in the gymnasium, "that's agreed. We call ourselves the 'Triers'—eh?"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 820.

A week had passed, and there were perhaps six or seven young fellows gathered together to watch Harry Turner go through his paces. His training quarters were in the local gym, and Jack had already been added to the list of his sparring partners.

But to-night they had been holding the first meeting of the new club—the Triers.

Steve Logan was there, of course, Ronnie Stevens, Harry Turner himself, young Jim Fraser, Jack Morton, and a young gentleman of the most immaculate appearance, in smartly-cut tweeds, a monocle, white spats, and an amber cigarette-holder as long as a small-sized cane—young Laurie Robson, a young gentleman of means, much given to spending many hours with his tailor, and with a surprising turn of speed on the right-wing of a football field, besides being an aeroplane pilot of absolutely foolhardy daring.

Laurie Robson had happened in to the gym that evening by chance, and after a few words with Harry Turner he had insisted upon being let into their secret.

"George Clifton is, dash it all, an awful outsider, don't you know, you fellows, and I'd jolly well like to give him one in the jolly old eye. You can have a field in my place for your ground if you like. Wouldn't mind turning out for you myself, if need be!"

So he had spoken, and the lads, scarcely able to believe their luck, had accepted gladly. Laurie Robson had a big estate close to Boltwich. He had plenty of money, and if he was going to help them as well as Harry Turner, there really was a hope that they could put up a decent show.

"Well," asked Jack, who was in boxing kit, just having finished a bout with Harry, "there's no doubt we can get a team together by next Saturday. Shall we accept this challenge from the Hurricanes?"

For the Hurricanes had challenged the new club. They were still smarting over the licking they had received on the common, and having been let down in a fixture, had discovered Jack and asked him if he could bring his team along.

"Sure," said Steve Logan, "we'll play 'em, but I'm all against Harry Turner keeping goal for us!"

Harry flushed up at once.

"I—I—" he exclaimed. "Of course I'll keep goal!"

"You'll do nothing of the sort!" returned Steve. "You—you have got to beat that fellow, Harry. We are all keen on you doing it. All Boltwich is. No; we'll get someone else to keep goal for us, and you can turn out afterwards when we get settled down."

Harry Turner gave in with an ill grace.

"All right," he said; "but you are a miserable lot of pals, I must say. And don't blame me if they put it across you!"

Morton laughed.

"They won't," he said. "The Triers are not going to be beaten. They are going on until they have beaten Boltwich themselves. All right; I'll see their skipper, and say we'll turn out on Saturday. So good-night, all!"

"So long!" said Jack.

And, having shaken hands all round and then changed, he went out into the night.

It was dark and cold, and he walked along quickly. Things were going well indeed. He was delighted with the way they were turning out. After all, his

grandfather's money didn't matter a bit, except as far as his mother was concerned, and he was doing his best to forget it. All he wanted was to look into George Clifton's eyes one day and know that he was even with him.

"And it may not be so long—" he muttered to himself.

He stopped short with a jerk, for he had almost bumped into a man coming in the opposite direction.

A rough hand caught him by the shoulder and spun him round.

"Where do you think you're going to?" a brutal voice demanded.

"I'm sorry!"

"Sorry!" the man leered through the night, and suddenly Jack recognised the ugly face of Babe Bolton. "So it's you, Mister Jack Morton, is it? I was just looking for you. You're the very chap I want to see. Put your fists up. I'm going to teach you not to try and be clever with me! Now, come along, quick!"

(Face to face with his enemy, the bruiser, Jack Morton is in a very ugly corner. Next week's great instalment will tell you what happens. Don't miss it.)

"BRITAIN'S PERIL!"

(Continued from page 21.)

"Mr. J. Johnson Jones, Lifelike Cinema Company,"

"Then—then this 'ere 'is all a bloomin' livin'-picksher affair?" the officer stammered.

"Precisely!" was the reply. "A rehearsal!"

"But," pursued the inspector, still unconvinced. "I thought ye 'ad studios, an'—an' things like that?"

Mr. J. Johnson Jones laughed.

"Well, you see," he put in, "this is rather a big thing we're doing just now—a spectacular drama based on the Boxer Rebellion in China some years ago—and there is very sound reason why strict secrecy should be observed until we are ready to produce. We have suffered rather badly of late at the hands of an unscrupulous rival firm—I needn't mention names—who have managed to crib some of our best stunts. Therefore, we engaged this room, among other places, to carry out as many of our final preparations as possible on the quiet."

The inspector's cap came off for the second time that night, and he scratched his head in perplexity once more.

"I'm afraid, sir, we've made a bloomer!" he said presently, turning, with a grin, to where Mr. MacGregor had been standing.

That worthy, however, was no longer there—but a violent slam of the next room door plainly intimated that any further publicity was not desirable to him just then.

Neither, it might be mentioned, does the tap, tap of the tired-looking Remington any longer awake the echoes of that dusty landing.

THE END.

(River-wise Ned undergoes another thrilling experience next week in: "The Quest of the Secret Signs!" Don't miss reading this on any account.)



Tuck Hampers and Money Prizes Awarded for Interesting Paragraphs.

(If You Do Not Win a Prize This Week—You May Next!)

All Efforts in this Competition should be Addressed to: **The GEM LIBRARY, "My Readers' Own Corner," Gough House, Gough Square, London, E.C.4.**

A TUCK HAMPER GOES TO LIVERPOOL!

NOT AT ALL!

"Oh, no," said little Jackie sarcastically, "there ain't no favouritism in this house, not at all. Yet, if I bite my nails I get a rap over the knuckles, sharp, while they let baby bite his whole foot, and all they say is: 'Ain't he cute?'" A Tuck Hamper, filled with delicious tuck, has been forwarded to A. McLeod, 152, Molyneux Road, Kensington, Liverpool.

THE MAJOR SCORED!

A major found himself in a large restaurant between two young men who began making fun of him. "I see, gentlemen," he said at last, "that you are making fun of me. But I assure you that I am neither a fool nor an ass." "Oh," said one, "Perhaps you are between the two?" "Exactly!" was the major's prompt reply.—Half-a-crown has been awarded to D. Finlayson, 4, Wilder Place, Galashiels.

TIME WON'T PERMIT!

A young north countryman was brought up before a London magistrate for stealing a bicycle. "I've a good mind to give you three months' imprisonment," said the magistrate, frowning. "Yer can't," replied the offender disdainfully. "Indeed!" fumed the magistrate. "And why?" "Because," said the man from the country, grinning, "I've only got a three days' ticket!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to William Sankey, 66, High Street, Troedrhawfuch, near Tirphil.

ACCIDENTAL.

Dentist: "Thought you said this tooth hadn't been stopped before?"

Patient (feebly): "Neither has it."

Dentist: "Well, there are traces of gold on my instrument."

Patient (more feebly): "Perhaps you've struck my back collar-stud?"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to Harry Carter, 42, Well Street, Plymouth, Devon.

NOT QUITE EXACT!

African Planter: "Where's the rake, Sambo?"

Sambo: "Wid de hoe, massa."

Planter: "Where's the hoe?"

Sambo: "Wid de rake."

Planter: "Well, where are they both?"

Sambo: "Why, both together. You 'pears bery 'ticular dis morning!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to Thomas Church, Five Oaks, Horsham, Sussex.

HARSH!

"My dear Mrs. Smith, I think your daughter recites remarkably well, don't you?" "Yes. All she really needs is a short course of electrocution to sort of finish her off, as you might say!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to Stanley Rixon, 60, Sibley Grove, East Ham, E.6.

TUCK HAMPER COUPON.

The GEM LIBRARY.

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

LEARN HOW TO MAKE all kinds of Furniture & Fitments at home.

If you can use a hammer and a saw you can soon learn how to make all kinds of household furniture. Carpentry work comes natural to everyone. With the help and guidance of

The Practical Woodworker

you will be able at the first attempt to turn out sound, well-finished work, and after a little practice, when you "get your hand in on it," you will find yourself able to make articles of furniture that would be a credit to any craftsman. Over 50 experts were engaged to compile and write this book, with the result that it is the finest and most workmanlike instructor you could have. There is no other book like it in existence. It is a complete working guide to Carpentry, Cabinet-making, Upholstery. To have the "PRACTICAL WOODWORKER" at hand is like having an expert at your elbow telling you and showing you how to do every little detail from the beginning right through to the very end. Another most important point is that the articles you make from the instructions in the book will be a credit to you, because they will have all the appearances of being produced by a first-class craftsman.

A few of the Articles YOU can make at home in the evenings.

A Trellised Arbour—a Garden Arch, Chairs, Tables—Plain Side Table, Kitchen Table, Simple Table, Typewriter Table, Office Table, Writing Table, Simple Occasional Table, Chess and Draughts Table, Square Fancy Table, etc., etc.—Cupboards and Wardrobes, Bed-rooms, Bedsteads, Beehives and Fittings, Tents, Bolts, Bookcases, Boot and Shoe Racks, Cabinets, Smoking Cabinets, Chair Swings for the Garden, Chesterfield Settees, Pigeon Cotes, Rabbit Hutches, Poultry Houses, Chest of Drawers, Dressing Table, Greenhouses, Garden Frames, Clock Cases, Gramophone Cabinets, Furniture for the Hall, Incubators, Picture and Photograph Frames, Kennels, Mirror Frames, Office Cupboard and all Office Furniture, Desks, Rustic Arches, Garden Seats, Pergolas, Garden Bungalow, Provision and Meat Safes, Vases, Ventilators, Wheelbarrows, Window-Frames, Domestic Woodware, Steps and Ladders, Staircases, Flower-Stands, Stool and Book-Trough Combined, Tea Caddy, Garden Canopies, Toys, Umbrella Stands, Upholstered Seats, Walking Sticks, Hat Racks, Rustic Garden Furniture, Tubs and Churns, Summer Houses, Dressers and Sideboards, Coalhoes, Doors, Sheds and Outdoor Erections, Garden Baskets, Small Portable Cycle Shed, Sanatorium, Tool Shed or Garden Shelter, Motor-Cycle and Side-Car Shed, Garden Room, Table Drawers, Clothes Airer, Baby's Play-Pen, Boot-cleaning Box, Dustless Cinder-Sifter, Mantel Fitment, Card Table, Cots, Work Benches, Linen Chests, etc.

Over 6,000 WORKING ILLUSTRATIONS that actually show you stage by stage what to do and how to do it.

Get this Book FREE

If you will fill up and post this coupon to us, we will send you a handsomely illustrated book which describes in detail all the help and assistance you will find in the pages of the "Practical Woodworker." You will find this a very useful book and well worth reading. Tear off the coupon now and fill in your name and address. Remember, the book is free, and will be sent post free to any address.

Cut out and Post To-day.

To the **WAVERLEY BOOK CO., Ltd.** (Dept. Gem O.), 96, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Please send me, without charge, your Free Illustrated Booklet, containing all particulars as to contents, authors, etc., of the "PRACTICAL WOODWORKER," also information as to your offer to send the Complete Work for a merely nominal first payment, the balance to be paid by a few monthly payments, beginning after the Work is delivered.

NAME..... (Send this form in unsealed envelope with id. stamp.)

ADDRESS.....

Gem O., 1923. THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 820.

Yours for 3^d. ONLY.

The "Big Ben" Keyless Lever Watch on THE GREATEST BARGAIN TERMS ever put before the British Public by one of LONDON'S OLDEST-ESTABLISHED MAIL ORDER HOUSES.

Free An absolutely FREE Gift of a Solid Silver English Hall-marked Double Curb Albert, with Seal attached, given FREE with every Watch.

SPECIFICATION: Gent's Full-size Keyless Lever Watch, improved action; fitted patent recoil click, preventing breakage of mainspring by overwinding. **10 YEARS' WARRANTY**

Sent on receipt of 3/- deposit; after approval, send 1/- more. The balance may then be paid by 9 monthly payments of 2/- each. Cash refunded in full if dissatisfied. Send 1/- now to

J. A. DAVIS & CO.

(Dept. 57), 25 Denmark Hill, London, S.E. 5.



He's got the job! — though it's

IMPORTANT
Every Engineer, Apprentice or Parent throughout the United Kingdom will find it for his advantage to immediately get into touch with the Technological Institute of Great Britain.

DO YOU WANT a position that will grow daily in its fascination? Do you want to start making more money than you ever thought possible? We have done exactly this for thousands of men—this is the book which gave them their start—Get it—FREE.



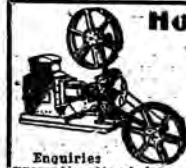
Mechanical Eng.
Electrical Eng.
Motor Car Eng.
Motor Starting and Lighting.
Machine Drawing
Mathematics.
Building Construction.
Civil Engineering.
A.M.I.C.E.
A.M.I.Mech.E.

A.M.I.E.E.
Electric Installations.
Power House Design.
Plumbing & Sanitary.
Aeronautics Eng.
Commercial Eng.
Structural.
Alternating Currents.
Shipbuilding.
Marine.

B.O.T. (Marine).
Telegraphy.
Wireless.
Boiler Making.
Electric Welding.
Heating & Ventilating.
Survey and Levelling.
Internal Combustion Engines.
Workshop Practice.

YOU MUST STATE SUBJECT WHEN WRITING FOR BOOK.

The Technological Institute of Great Britain,
39, THANEY HOUSE, 201, THE STRAID, LONDON, W.C. 2.



HOME CINEMATOGRAPHS AND FILMS.

Our New Season's Illustrated Catalogue of Toy and Professional Machines, from 5/6, and Accessories, now ready. Films, all lengths and subjects, for sale or exchange.

FORD'S (Dept. A.P.),
13, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1.

FREE! 16-page WIRELESS MAGAZINE

specially written for beginners, given away free with this month's issue of *Modern Wireless*—the great "How-to-Make" Wireless Magazine. Buy a copy to-day and read how easy it is to build a Set to listen to the splendid Concerts now being broadcast every evening. On sale at all Book-sellers, 1/-, or 1/3, post free from **RADIO PRESS, Ltd.,** Devereux Court, Strand, W.C. 2.

BLUSHING SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS, SHYNESS, TIMIDITY

Simple 7-day Permanent Home Cure for either sex. No Auto suggestion, drill, etc. Write at once, mention "G.M." and get full particulars quite FREE privately.
U.J.D. 12, All Saints Road, ST. ANNES-ON-SEA.

If you like Football this is YOUR Game for the long winter evenings.

TABLE FOOTBALL

A most exciting indoor Game just like Real Football.

Printed in Three Colours with Rules and Discs Complete. Size, 17 ins. by 20 ins. Price 1/3 Carriage Paid. Specially Mounted, 2/3.

RADNOR Coy., 10, South Street, London, E.C.2.

HALF-PRICE

The "BIG-VALUE."—A Fine New Model Accordion, 10 x 9 x 5 1/2 ins., Piano-Finished, 11-Fold Metal-Bound Bellows, 10 Keys, 2 Basses, Etc. Sent by Return Post, to approved orders, for 1/- Deposit and 1/3 Postage, Etc., and promise to send 2/- fortnightly till 17/6 in all is paid. 2/- Tutor Free. — Cash Price 15/-. Post Free (Elsewhere Double). Delight of Money Back. **FREE**—Catalogue of Big Bargains. — **PAIN'S** Presents House, Dept. 9B, Hastings. (Established 34 Years.)



CRICKET.—Play Cricket at home with "CRICKETTE"—the finest indoor game ever invented. Price 3/6, post free, from **RAVELOCK SUPPLY CO. (Dept. C), 73, Basinghall Street, E.C. 4.**

HOME CINEMATOGRAPHS.—Send for Lists of Machines, Films, etc. Sample Film, 1/-. Post Free.—Desk E, **DEAN CINEMA CO., 94, Drayton Avenue, W.15.**

When Answering Advertisements Please Mention This Paper.

2/6 Weekly



or 39/6 cash buys a Mead Gramophone with giant metal horn extra loud soundbox, massive oak case and 40 tunes. Carriage paid. 16-days' Trial. 200 Needles and 5/- "Hoo-let" Gramophone game. **FREE.**—Table Grams with Wireless Set. Portables and Cabinet models at HALF SHOP PRICES. Write for Art Catalogue.

MEAD Company (Dept. G105), Birmingham.



HEIGHT COUNTS

in winning success. Let the Girvan System increase your height. Wonderful results. Send P.C. for particulars and our £100 guarantee to Enquiry Dept., A.M.P., 17, Stroud Green Road, London, N. 4.

I SAY, YOU FELLOWS!

You simply must see what the Editor and your Companion Readers are saying about "Billy Bunter" Lantern Slides. Send 6d. postal order for a Sample Slide, and get the Latest Novelty, the Cinema Screen, **FREE.** Write now to **A. CRISP, 61, STOURBRIDGE ROAD, KIDDERMINSTER.**

CHOOSE 40 STAMPS, 6d. from packet of 500. postage. Many fine Stamps in this lot. — **E. L. CORYN, 10, WAVE CREST, WHITSTABLE, KENT.**



FREE! FREE! FREE!

WE SEND ABSOLUTELY FREE THE MYSTIC DANCING CHARLIE CHAPLIN to all who send postal order (sixpence) for our Illustrated Catalogue of Magic Tricks, Puzzles, Jokes, etc.—THE ECLIPSE NOVELTY CO., Dept. K, Francis Terrace, LONDON, N.19.

WIRELESS

COMPLETE CRYSTAL RECEIVING SET GUARANTEED 25 MILES. **3/-** HAYDINE & CO., 687, Fulham Road, London.

FREE

Catalogue of Boots, Suits, Costumes, Watches, Rings, Clocks, Accordions, etc. Easy terms from 3/- monthly.—**MASTERS, LTD., RYE.**

FILMS, CHEAP!

100-ft. Sample, 1/6, post free, with list. Machines from 7/6.—"RADIO" FILMS, 34, CHURCH ST., WEST HAM, E. 15.



MAGIC TRICKS, Etc.

VENTRILOQUIST'S INSTRUMENT. INVISIBLE. Astonishes. Mystifies. Imitates Birds, Beasts, etc. Lot 1/- (P.O.). **WONDER CO., 43, George St., WESTON-SUPER-MARE.** (Business by Post only.)

STOP STAMMERING! Cure yourself as I did. Particulars Free.—**FRANK E. HUGHES, 7, SOUTHAMPTON ROW, LONDON, W.C.1.**

LOOK!—An Enlargement for 1/- postage. Guaranteed genuine, and every card taken with copies. This offer is limited, so send your photograph NOW to **TAYLOR'S PHOTOGRAPHIC PRINTING WORKS, 121, Keator Street, BOLTON.**

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 820.